

Arts, Culture and Politics

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

# fnewsmagazine

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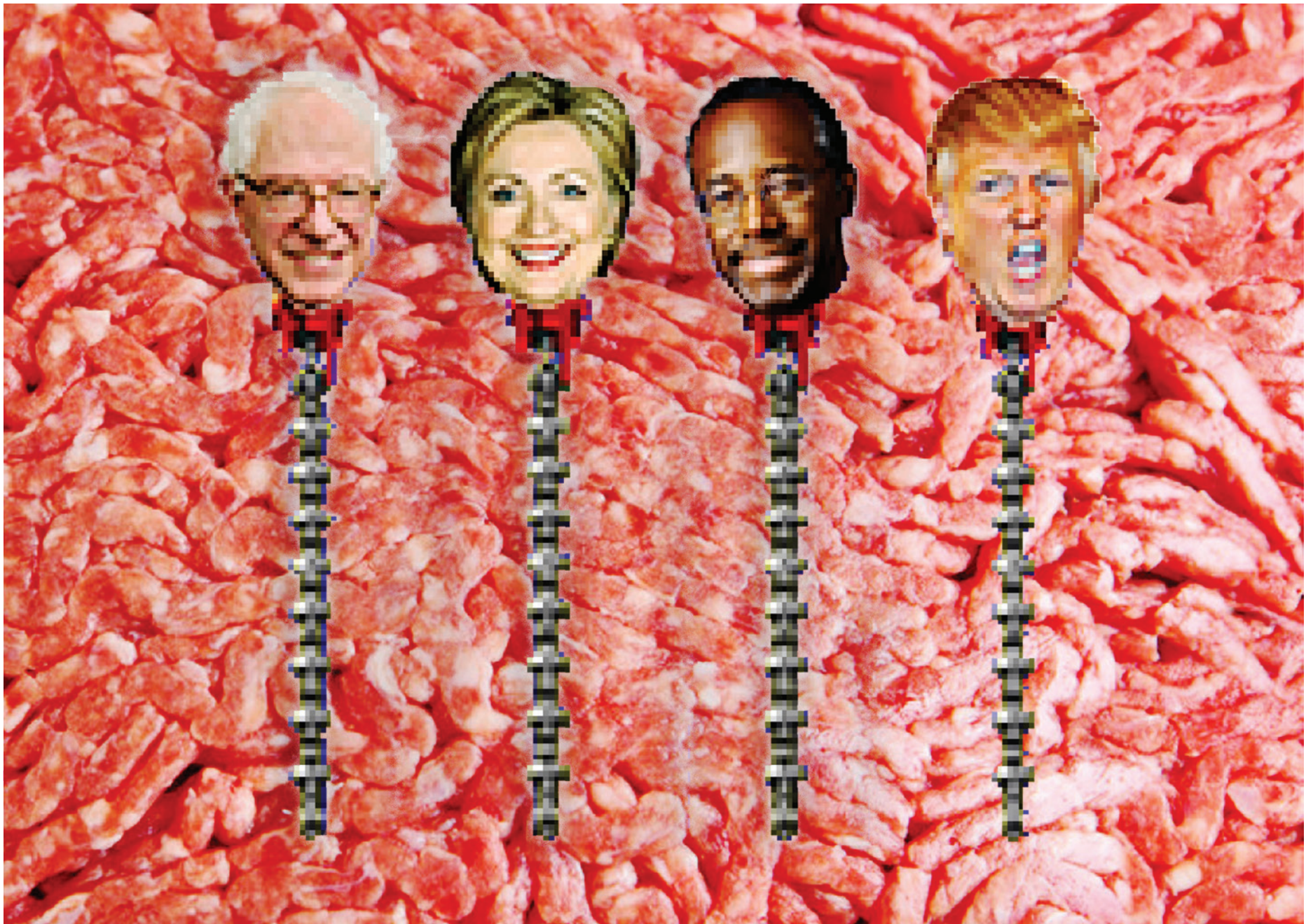
Wes Craven's Legacy





# The F NEWS Mini-Grant!

Last month's winner of the  
Mortal Kombat Competition: Dalton Carter



2016 Fatalities, Dalton Carter

\$50

Every month, F Newsmagazine challenges the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's community of students, faculty, staff, and security guards to submit artwork within a certain theme.

For this month's F Newsmagazine mini-grant, we are asking for a design or plan for Donald Trump's border wall. All interpretations and art forms will be accepted. The winning submission will not only receive the \$50 prize from us, but will also be featured in F Newsmagazine, and tweeted to Trump for his consideration.







Cover: “New Monsters” by Amber Huff

fnewsmagazine since 1984

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**Starring...**  
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2 Jeb Bush

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# In Brief

► Caleb Kaiser



## Irving, Texas Is a Clusterfuck of Racist Teachers

Fourteen-year-old Ahmed Mohamed, an inventive ninth-grader, deconstructed a clock this month. In an ideal world, that sentence would be the entirety of this story. However, we're talking about Irving, Texas, where paranoid white people believe themselves relevant enough to merit terrorist attention. Ahmed's clock went off during class, prompting his engineering teacher (and the rest of the school's administration) to accuse Ahmed of building a bomb, because he is Muslim and this is Irving, Texas. Ahmed was arrested by five police officers and questioned at length before being released to his parents. NASA, President Obama, and a host of other national figures have joined most of the nation in supporting Ahmed and asking, "Where the fuck is Irving, Texas?"

## Godspeed You, Pope Emperor

Pope Francis, also known as "Cool Pope," just dropped enough hot fire to extend summer through December. Traffic was shut down inside the seventh circle of Philadelphia as Pope Francis made his way through the city, and much of America waited with anticipation for the Pope's address. Nothing in any address he made while in America — not his messages of charity, equality, or environmental reform — could measure up to his announcement of a prog rock, multilingual opus titled, "Wake Up!" scheduled to drop in November. No word on a possible Kendrick feature.

## A Different One Percent

In a section of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, an area which according to the Oslo Accords should have been under a Palestinian control over a decade ago, the Israeli government has issued orders to tear down over 13,000 Palestinian buildings. In this section of the West Bank, called Area C, there are designated zones for construction, set up by the Israeli government. If you remember two sentences ago, the Israeli government should have ended their occupation decades ago.

## His Tears Dry On Their Own

John Boehner, a fearless leader and public crier, has just announced his resignation as the House Speaker. Despite President Obama's reassurance that Mr. Boehner, a Republican, is a "good man," his own party seems less convinced. Over the last few years Boehner has seen his control hampered severely by crumbling bipartisan relationships and waning support from an increasingly far-right Republican party. According to Boehner, the decision came naturally to him. In a video posted by CNN of his speech Boehner said, "I decided today is the day I'm going to do this, simple as that."

# 8 Tips for Art Panelists

► Ryan Blocker

You've been invited to be on an art panel. No need to panic. Here are eight simple, easy-to-follow tips to help you look like a bonafide expert.

- 1 Never agree with someone else's definition. It makes you look weak. When the moderator asks you to introduce yourself and state your name, reply with, "Well, we have to think [air quotes] critically about what we mean by [air quotes] name? One answers to a number of [air quotes] names over the course of one's life?" I cannot overstate the importance of air quotes. It shows you understand everything is subjective.
- 2 Name theorists and philosophers as often as possible. It's not crucial that you actually form an argument. Simply mentioning that Foucault was person who wrote things suggests to people that you read the things that Foucault wrote. It's not even necessary that your sentences have verbs. Just a list of theorists makes you sound like an intellectual badass.

- 3 Remember that throwing shade isn't just for Real Housewives and drag queens. Whenever possible subtly suggest that someone isn't well-read or is a sellout. In an extreme situation you may need to suggest that someone's research project has been done better by someone more famous. This insult is especially biting because a publisher has likely already told them the same.
- 4 Be a cisgendered white man. If you are not a cisgendered white man, you may often find yourself being talked over, interrupted, or dismissed too frequently to contribute meaningfully to the conversation. You should practice being white as often as you can prior to the panel. Mention to friends how much you love "The Wire." Enjoy the comedy of Sarah Silverman. Practice makes perfect!
- 5 Be nostalgic. Art history tells us there was once a time when everything was perfect. Artists were free to be artists and criticism was critical.

- 6 Never test any of your presentation materials prior to speaking. Fumble around with the computer for at least five minutes. Insist that PowerPoint "looks different on your computer." Being angrily confused by technology suggests that you have studied your topic so intensely and for so long that you missed the technological developments of the past decade.
- 7 Think of Q&A as a second panel. People will talk at length about their own research projects masked as questions. Be prepared for this: "What do you think about this narrow research focus? You didn't talk at all about this very narrow research focus. I think it's a shame that this very narrow research focus was overlooked. My current book project is about said very narrow research focus."
- 8 It all comes back to the question, "What is [air quotes] art?"





► Jarad Solomon

Every month F Newsmagazine features the unfinished work of three School of the Art Institute of Chicago students, faculty, staff, security guards and I don't know, local animals? Just someone please just take a photo of what you're doing and send it to me. Anything, it doesn't even matter! Please just art here now. Somebody, anybody!

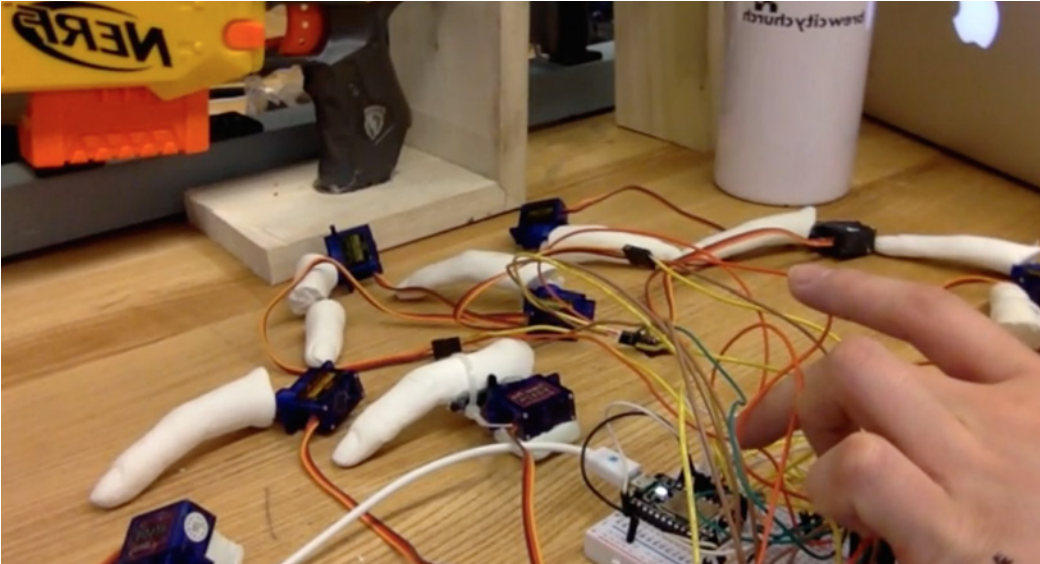
Then there's the super cool follow-up: a month from now I check on you. How'd it go? Did you finish it? Is it dope? Wanna take a photo of it again and send it so it can be right here? Or did you have an existential crisis about it and take care of some plant instead? I guess we can put your plant here? I don't know? Or art? YOU DECIDE.

► Jarad is a second year graduate student in the Art and Technology Studies Dept at SAIC.  
His email is jsolom@saic.edu — send him something



HAERIN RYU

I deal with obsession. Through this work I try to talk about my experience and what I feel causes my obsession. I'm currently trying to make fingers out of plaster which will be tapping together. Some of the fingers will be fine, but others will be broken.



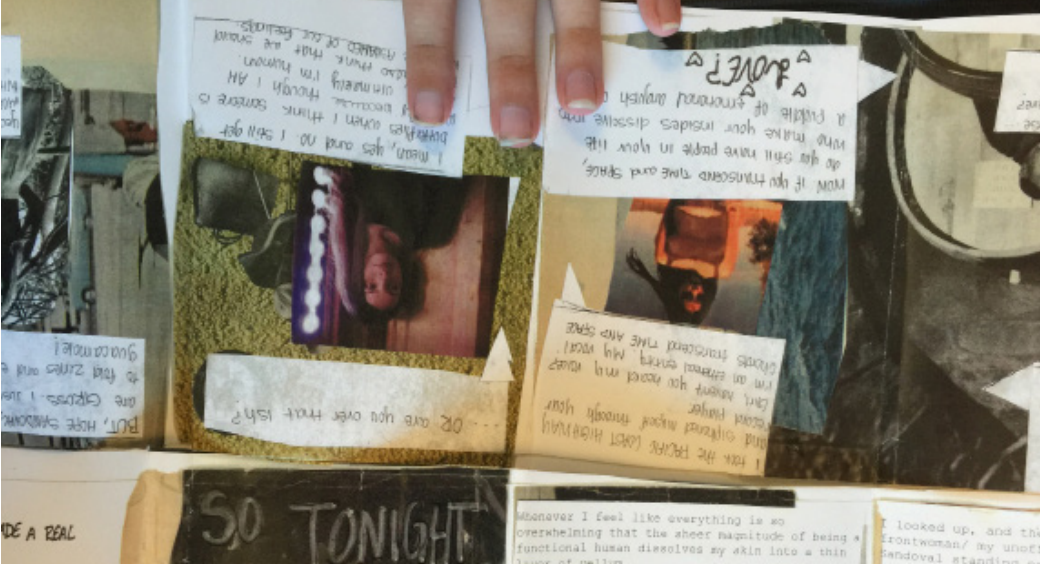
NATHAN BRAUNFELD

I am a second year MFA in Art and Technology Studies. I am currently working on a project that began this summer where I mapped and traveled the length of a recently completed oil pipeline. The work is progressing through photography, sculptures, and perhaps a written text.



ROSIE ACCOLA

This is actually my first comic, it's about Hope Sandoval from Mazzy Star. All of the background images are from a Life magazine from the '50s. At times, I prefer zines to more traditional prose formats, it's so open as a medium ... you can do anything.







# How to End Your Dry Spell

## Social experimentation in the name of Tinder

► Priyoshi Kapur

I identified five major categories most men on Tinder fell under: Frat Dude, Outcast, Gym Rat, Animal Lover, and Sensual Man.

Hey, let's face it: Those of us who are single likely have this mischievous little app downloaded on our phones. Even if you haven't downloaded Tinder, you probably at least have a friend who is constantly swiping left, looking for a hottie. Tinder gives us all the chance to find our ultimate one-and-only, all with the swipe of a thumb.

If you've used the app, you are probably familiar with the term "dry spell." Urban Dictionary defines the term like this: "A dry spell is where you go for a length of time without getting any." Replace "getting any" with "getting any matches," and you've defined one of the most common problems people have with Tinder. If you have ever run into this problem, it's most likely because you aren't playing the game correctly, or you aren't including enough dogs in your pictures.

After hearing that many of my close friends and family suffer from Tinder dry spells regularly, I decided to create a social experiment to test what kinds of people get the most dates; and I wanted to focus specifically on men. I identified five major categories most men on Tinder fell under: Frat Dude, Outcast, Gym Rat, Animal Lover, and Sensual Man. I drew my stereotype conclusions from the five photos Tinder lets

you post along with your profile. My goal was to test each stereotype in order to see which kind of guy got the most dates, or even swipe-rights (i.e., matches). I was hoping to see a trend that would be able to help guide my peers to get a date on Tinder.

I asked five of my close male friends to change their set of photos to match a specific stereotype. Each friend was given one of the five stereotypes; I provided the photos. Their corresponding biography paragraphs were identical: "University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), 20 years old." Over the next three weeks, each friend was asked to swipe right 100 percent of the time. They would wait until a girl swiped right, and then they would provide this standard conversation to ask a girl out:

HEY  
(WAIT FOR RESPONSE)

HOW ARE YOU?  
(WAIT FOR RESPONSE)

I AM ONLY IN TOWN FOR 7 DAYS, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GRAB DINNER SOMETIME?  
(WAIT FOR RESPONSE)

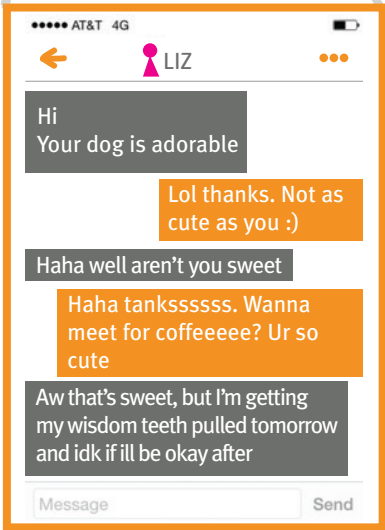
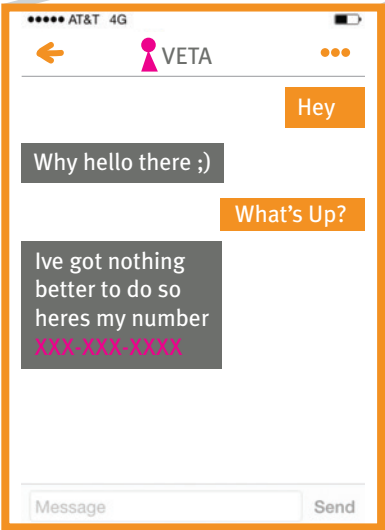
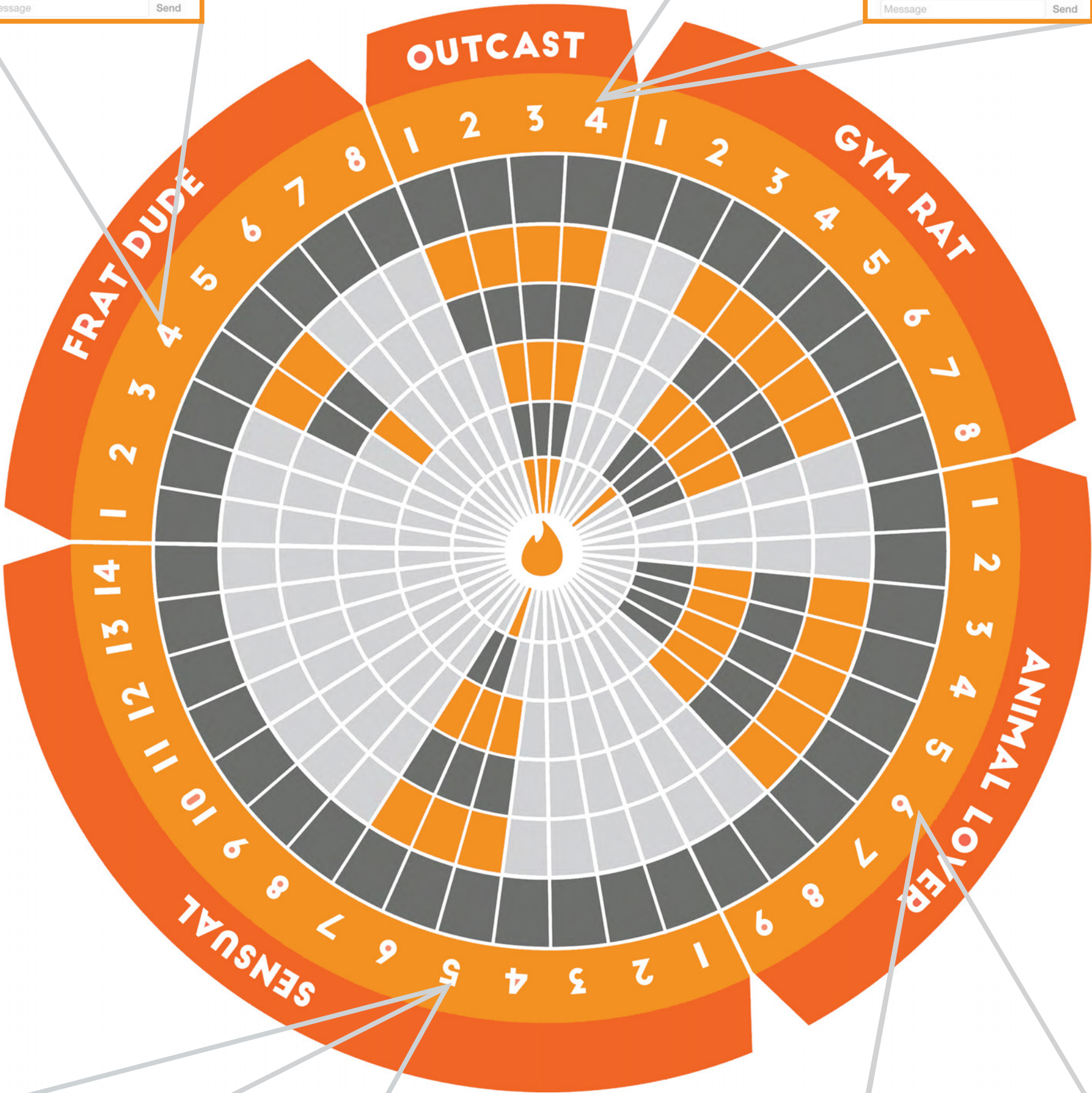
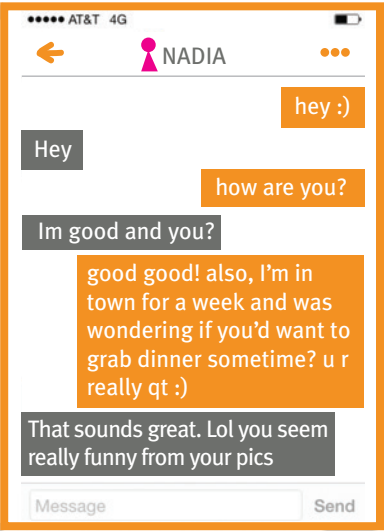
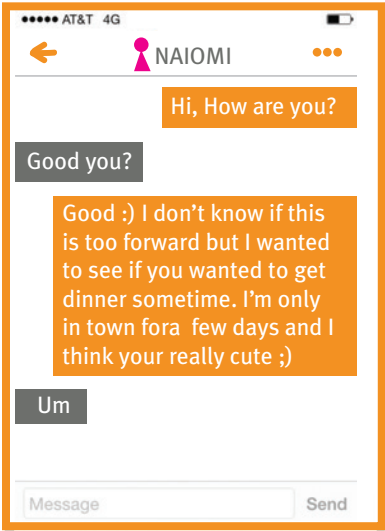
At the end of the three weeks, I created an infographic that showed how far each stereotype got in their race to date. As you can see, the Sensual Man stereotype achieved the most swipe-rights. However, the winner of the entire race was a shock. While the Outcast received the least number of swipe-rights, he actually ended up with the most actual dates.

I took this as a chance to re-think how people are using Tinder. Most people tend to post posed and unnatural photos, like the Sensual stereotype, but they rarely get very far. I figured that this must be one of the reasons why my peers suffer dry spells. In order to get dates, you have to post photos of yourself being yourself, which is what the Outcast did. He is able to get more dates because girls find him interesting.

It turns out that in order to win the Tinder race, you just have to be yourself.

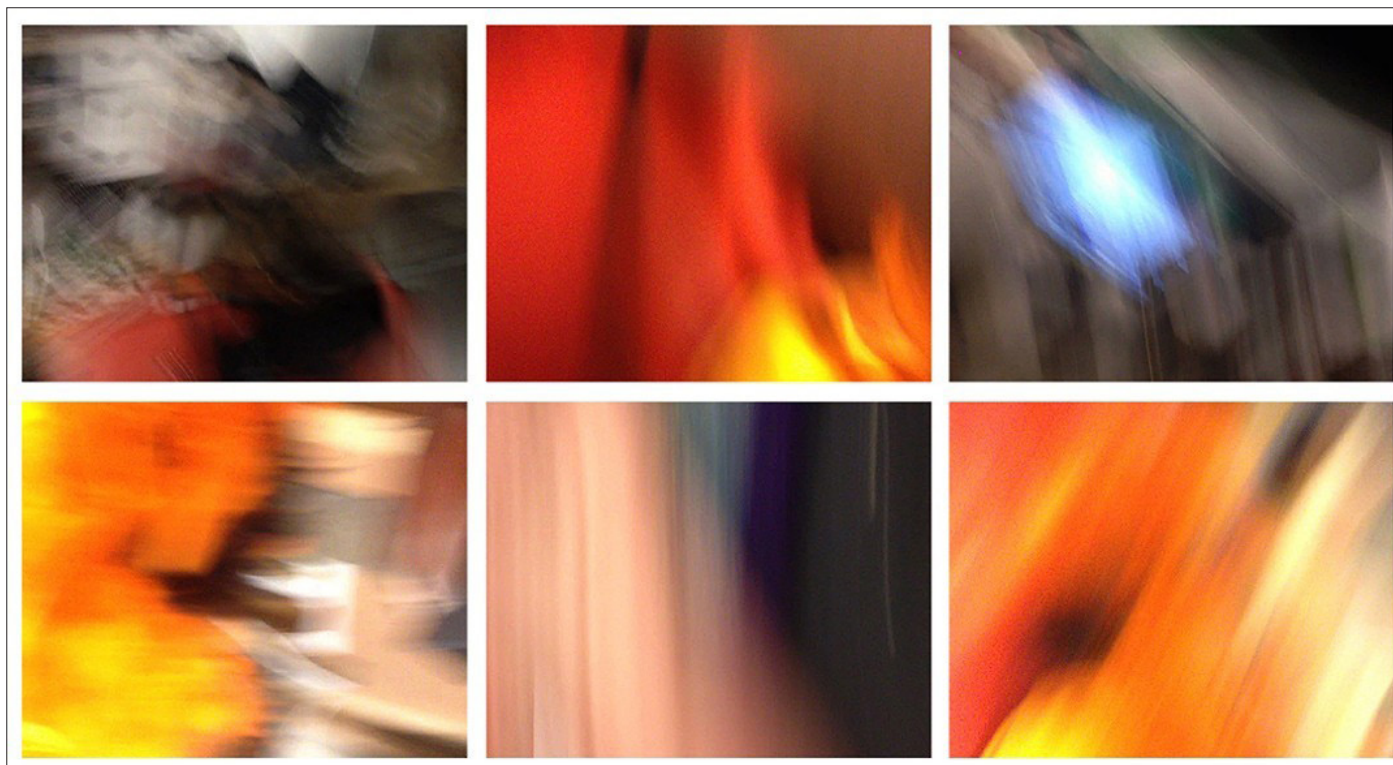
► Priyoshi Kapur is a third-year undergraduate student at SAIC. She studies Visual Communication Design/Art and Technology, and Motion Graphics. Her friends dared her to get a Tinder for five days, and she received 40 swipe rights within that time.







# 5 QUESTIONS



Check out the rest of her work at [aliciaeverett.com](http://aliciaeverett.com)

## Alicia Everett

5 Questions profiles SAIC students and faculty at work, in the school, and beyond. This month, F Newsmagazine spoke with Alicia Everett, an MFA candidate.

► Paula Calvo

"My abstract body of work is quite different and consists of digital prints of video stills from cybersex performances."



### 1 What drove you to explore sexuality from a technology-based perspective?

I have been a social whore since I could smile. A career in sales of commercial software and hanging out with programmers exposed me to the first forms of social networking in a DOS-based environment well before the likes of AOL existed. I have met thousands of people in person from social networking online. You could say I have an ethnographical obsession with technological interactions from a pro-sexual, hetero, cis female perspective. At its most basic level, my work explores how forces of a graphic, sexualized, and visual techno-culture exert power over the way we share and interpret information in our electronic interactions.

### 2 How does your photographic work differ from your new 3-D pieces?

My new 3-D work is an extension of my photography, which started with my ongoing, archival collection of "dick pics." I began a campaign with [shareyourcock@yahoo.com](mailto:shareyourcock@yahoo.com) because I regretted not having saved all the images I received over the years. For me, dick pics are the veritable tip of the iceberg. They are a direct reversal of the gaze and an entrance into the depths of our constantly evolving systems of personal communication in techno-culture from a feminine perspective.

My abstract body of work is quite different and consists of digital prints of video stills from cybersex performances. The abstraction of the motion references the perceived intimacy and autonomy of technical communications, the tangled conditions of degradation and empowerment, and the gray area between public and private. I think of this work as painting with virtual life, and I attempt to use color, line, and movement to create a sense of the feminine tensions underlying the work. These tensions, within personal pornography and my research, include the negative influences of the industry of pornography, revenge porn, and social conditioning of the female body in the forms of objectification and degradation. This is, at the same time, contrasted with positive

narratives that include pornography's use in healthy relationships, body acceptance, sexual empowerment, and the ability to use body image to manipulate the standard language of sexuality.

My new 3-D work combines and extends the concepts of the photographic work. It is a coming home, materially, because I am a sculptor at heart, and I needed to dig my fingers in clay. Ceramics are made of the earth. They are carnal, molded with the hands, and one of the oldest forms of art. The history and qualities of ceramics as a material, layered with the concepts I study, are intended to create parallels and juxtapositions that integrate historical context and conceptual breadth. My ceramic forms mimic the bodily parts of my abstract still prints and will include imagery that requires viewer interaction, further complicating ideas of public and private.

### 3 What are you reading or working on this summer?

This last year was spent heavily researching a wide variety of history and theory related to my work, so I am going light on reading for the summer. I am working in the office of Continuing Studies, assisting [School of the Art Institute of Chicago photography professor] Ollie Rodriguez with a few projects, and enjoying the extra time in my studio. I am spending time with family, connecting with friends, and playing online.

### 4 What social media do you use? What kind of content do you post?

I mostly use Facebook, since almost everything makes its way to Facebook, but I also Reddit occasionally. I use social media to keep up with news and events and to participate in cultural discourse. I attempt to manipulate the algorithms on Facebook to achieve a prioritized feed of my interests like art, politics, feminism, and sexuality. That means I don't comment or 'like' many posts of kittens, babies, or other irrelevant content. For the most part, I post content that might be of interest to my "friends" and has not already saturated the Web through other postings. I have also just recently returned to Instagram.

I was motivated by a visit with Sean Fader to the Denny Gallery during last winter's New York study trip. Sean's work, #CollectiveAuthorship, a response to Richard Prince's appropriation of his work, altered my perspective and enticed me to experiment with Instagram as a platform for artistic expression. When I first logged back on, I was reviewing my old posts and remembered my mother once said it disturbed her to see images of her children beside those of sexuality. It conjured ideas of motherhood in reference to societal expectations and led to my first series of postings, #MyMomOnceSaid. The postings are examples of the juxtapositions in the documentation of my life as a mom and as a woman. Instagram also provided the perfect platform to share images of work related to #GiftsFromFriends, which I receive frequently and always wanted to show in some way. I am not sure how this will progress, but I am enjoying my reconnection with Instagram.

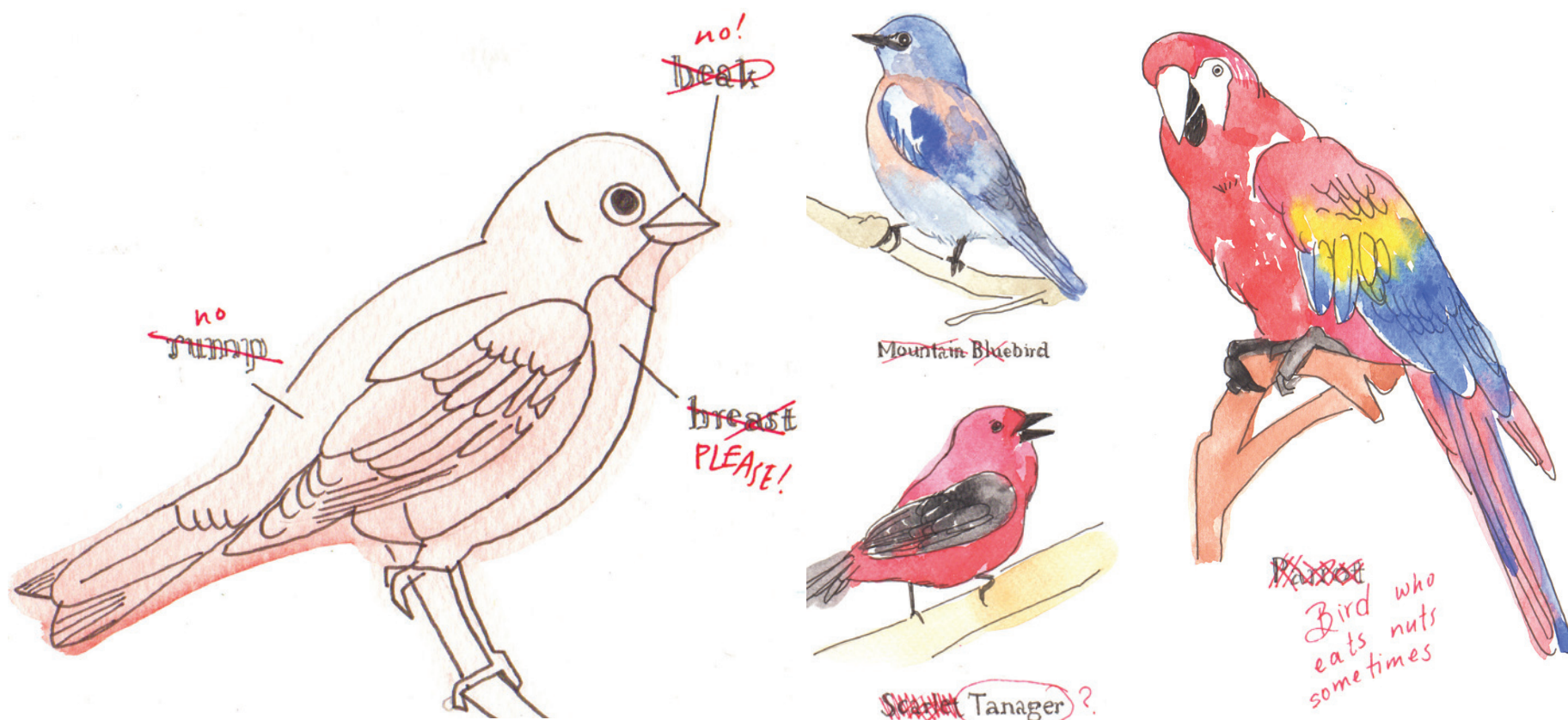
### 5 What are some of the authors and artists you have explored during your time at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago?

Not in any particular order, some of the authors I have explored are Ariella Azoulay, Andrea Fraser, Sadie Plant, Claire Bishop, Judith Butler, Boris Croys, Guy Debord, Linda Alcott, Hakim Bey, Susan Sontag, Michel Foucault, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Betty Friedan, Maggie Paley, Michael Paraskos, Kayt Sukel, Mary Roach, Ariel Levy, Kelly Dennis, Maud Lavin, Georges Bataille, David Harvey, Matteo Pasquinelli, Jacques Rancière, and Walter Benjamin.

Some of the artists that come to mind are Hito Steyerl, Ryan McGinley, Andrea Fraser, Oliver Laric, Maria Llopis, Frances Stark, Jason Briggs, Betty Tompkins, Judith Bernstein, Yayoi Kusama, Jason Salavon, Arturo Herrera, Ron Geibel, Richard Prince, Claudia Pajewski, and of course many faculty, among others.

► Paula Calvo is a second-year MA Art History candidate at SAIC, a writer, critic, curator, and photographer. She is originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina.





# Responsible Birding for the Modern Progressive

Prepare for the fall migration with these helpful, ~~self-loathing~~ tips

► Sophie Lucido Johnson

BIRD HAPPENINGS

You're a progressive. You're thoughtful. Let's just say it: You're a good person. So it makes sense that the last time you found yourself bird-watching, something didn't sit right with you. We've all had the moment: You're looking through your binoculars, spying on a blue jay, when you realize that you're looking through your binoculars, spying on a blue jay. Now you want to know: How can you love birds without objectifying them?

You've already done the most difficult thing, which is to understand your own shortcomings. It's not really your fault: We were all born into a species of privilege, and it will take a long time for us to undo the wrongs of our forefathers. That said, there are steps you can take right now to be a better birder.

First, do away with the labels. "Mountain bluebird?" "Scarlet tanager?" Birds don't see color, and neither should you. Don't even get me started on "tufted titmouse." How would you feel if a bird called YOU a tufted titmouse? Think about that the next time you start to pull out your field guide.

The key is to ask yourself: "Would this bird identify himself this way?" For instance, do you think any bird would self-identify as a "splendid fairywren?" Probably not. I mean, the bird might call himself that at a party in front of his peers, but that's probably just a semi-ironic reclaiming of the term. It's only empowering when he says it about himself.

If you can't call the birds by the names

they call themselves (due to the inevitable language barrier), then try to use bird-first language. "Parrot" might become "bird who is large and lives in the rainforest and eats nuts and can imitate the human voice, which can be a little unsettling, especially at night." By putting the bird first, you're recognizing that the bird is not merely his characteristics. He cannot be pinned down.

It's also integral that you completely do away with your binoculars. If you're hesitating, ask yourself what you use them for. Do you use them so that you can spy on birds while they have sex with each other high in trees? Or perhaps to gaze into their nests to glance at their newborn offspring? Talk about an invasion of privacy! Birds build nests because they don't have opposable thumbs and can't build houses. They want to be left alone, just like you do sometimes. Would you ask a person in a wheelchair to run a marathon? These points are closely related.

If you want to look at birds, let the birds come to you. If they don't feel like it, too bad! Birds don't owe you anything. They've been mercilessly slaughtered by your family members for thousands of years. Don't act like you don't know where chicken sandwiches come from. Yes, Arby's. But also, birds.

When a bird decides to trust you enough to approach you willingly, honor her as an individual. Ask her about her family and what she wants to do over the weekend; avoid focusing on her physicality. It's easy to want to be like, "Oh my god,

your wings are so shiny and your neck moves so imperceptibly fast!" You'll just have to unlearn those tendencies. A bird is more than her body, and she deserves to see that echoed in her interactions.

Here are a few more don'ts. Don't ask to touch a bird's feathers. Don't use labels like, "beak," "rump," or "breast." Don't suppose that just because a bird has a certain kind of plumage she comes from a particular habitat. Don't make puns with the word "talon" in them. (Example: "Wow, you're very talon-ted!") Don't tweet (actually or technologically).

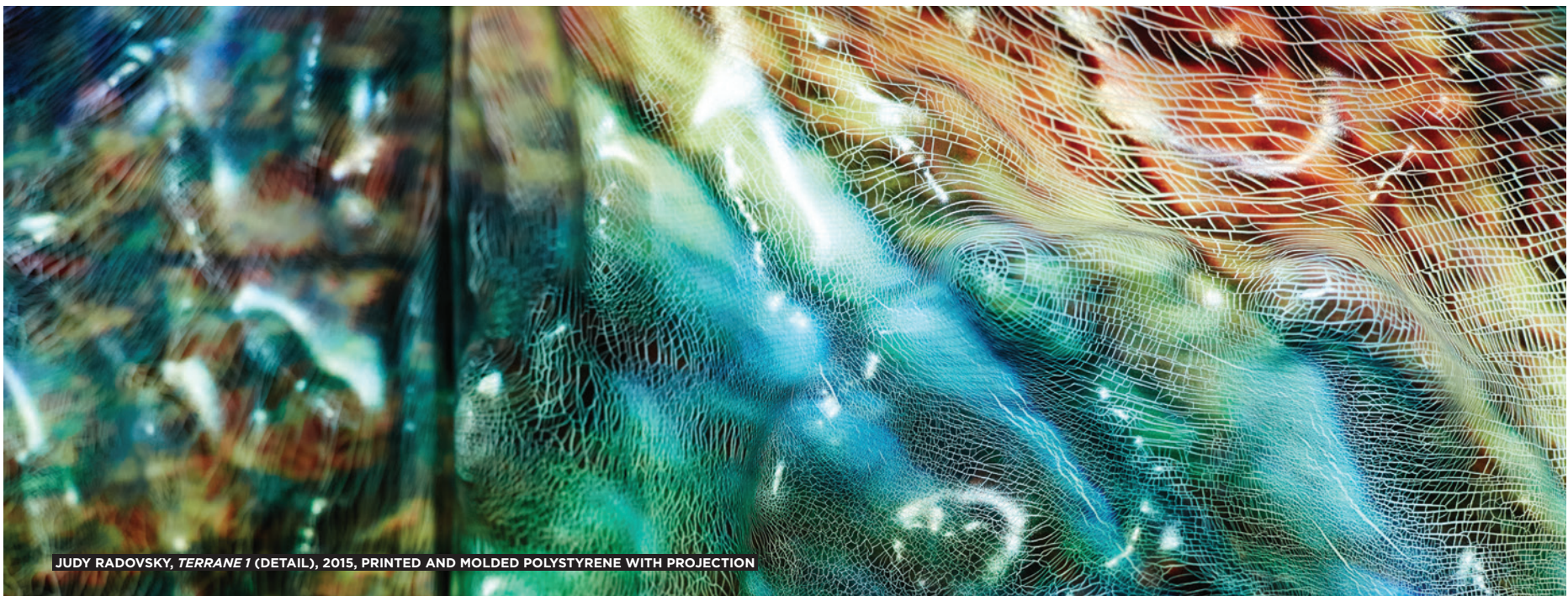
Finally, a note on all the images of birds that I've seen cropping up on jewelry, clothing, tote bags, and pocket flasks lately. We're already alarmingly complacent in the blatant biological appropriation that is plane travel. (Wright Brothers? More like, WRONG, brothers!) I beg you: let's not wander down the road of avian exploitation any further. The other day, I saw a girl who was wearing BIRD-PRINTED UNDERPANTS. This has gone too far. (Otherwise, that was a good date, though.)

► Sophie Lucido Johnson is the web editor for F, and has written for Jezebel, The Nation, McSweeney's, and more. She is also the editor-in-chief of the literary humor magazine Neutrons Protons. She is in the MFAW program at SAIC.

You've already done the most difficult thing, which is to understand your own shortcomings.

Can we talk about BINOCULARS?!  
I mean... WTF with these BINOCULARS?!  
Might as well self-identify as a Hate Crime Perp.  
AMIRITE?





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# Wes Craven: A Legacy of Horror

Remembering the man  
behind the monsters we love



► Rosie Accola

In a way, the Freddy's dynamism could serve as a metaphor for the expansive nature of Wes Craven's career, which spanned almost four decades.

When Wes Craven passed away on August 30 this year, he left behind a prolific body of work—and a man so disturbing he could slash his way into your dreams. Wes Craven forever changed the landscape of horror movie villains with the advent of Freddie Kruger. Previous horror villains like “Friday the 13ths” Jason Vorhees or Michael Meyers were static. They crept about silently with a menace that was both awkward and emotionless. Freddy, on the other hand, was undeniably alive. He had a cache of witty comebacks as sharp as his knife-pronged glove, and a sense of style. He had charisma, and that dynamism gave way to a sense of humanity (complicated by his career as a child murderer). Freddy could go anywhere; he wasn't just quarantined at summer camp. Most terrifying of all, he existed in the one place not governed by reality, where people are typically free of consequences—their dreams. That's where the brilliance of “Nightmare on Elm Street” lies. Krueger loses his powers when people refuse to succumb to the fear he incites. Craven was painstakingly aware of the reciprocal nature of fear itself, fear only grows when we give it the power to do so.

In a way, the Freddy's dynamism could serve as a metaphor for the expansive nature of Wes Craven's career, which spanned almost four decades. His death on August 30 shocked Hollywood and horror buffs alike. Johnny Depp credited Craven as “the guy who gave me my start, from my perspective, for almost no reason.” Long before Johnny Depp served as the dictionary definition of “heart throb,” he was a struggling musician picking up acting jobs along the way to support his music career. His role as Glenn in 1984's “Nightmare on Elm Street” served as his “big break” into the mainstream media.

Craven, on the other hand, was originally a humanities professor at Clarkson College of Technology. He started working in the film industry in post production and wrote, directed, and edited his first film, “The Last House on the Left,” in 1972.

The Last House on the Left is a gruesome film centering around the kidnapping and sexual assault of two teenage girls who were kidnapped by a gang of recently

escaped convicts while on their way to a concert in New York City. The film was relatively well-received by critics. Famed film critic Roger Ebert gave it 3.5 stars out of four saying; “What does come through in ‘Last House on the Left’ is a powerful narrative, told so directly and strongly that the audience (mostly in the mood for just another good old exploitation film) was rocked back on its psychic heels.”

After “Last House on the Left” Craven went on to direct a string of horror-genre staples like “The Hills Have Eyes” and “Swamp Thing.” In the early '80s Craven read an LA Times article about an American family who had escaped the Killing Fields in Cambodia. The young son had been having vivid nightmares about the ordeal which left him afraid to go to sleep, so he tried to stay up for days at a time. When he finally did go to sleep, much to his parents' relief, he died...in the middle of a nightmare. Craven stated that, “there was a youngster having a vision of a horror that everyone older was denying. That became the central line of ‘Nightmare on Elm Street.’”

In addition to functioning as a must-see slasher flick, “Nightmare on Elm Street” also acts as a brilliant showcase for teen angst, pushing the us vs. them mentality that teenagers harbor to a breaking point, by involving a charred child molester in a weirdly Christmas-esque striped sweater. It's got all the components of a classic “teen” movie: a hunky jock (Johnny Depp), a “bad” boy (Nick Corri) and a resourceful, smart protagonist who ultimately saves the day (Heather Langlefield). Craven's understanding of teen social dynamics gives his films the air of a gory John Hughes flick. This is not to say “Nightmare on Elm Street” isn't campy, it is the epitome of camp, but Craven is surprisingly self-aware as a director.

In 1996's “Scream”, which he directed, Ghostface (the film's enigmatic slasher) references the “Nightmare on Elm Street” franchise in the opening minutes saying, “The first one was good but the rest of them sucked.” Craven's sense of self-awareness in “Scream” also translated into a wider acknowledgment of tropes that the horror genre collected over the years, like the

classic “virginal babysitter.” It gleefully mocked what makes horror so great, the bumps in the night and the foolish bravery. The genre-wide mockery also opened up a market for horror parodies like the “Scary Movie” series.

Scream also plays on the idea of the duplicability of horror movie killers. Ghostface's costume is simple, within days of the first killings students of Sidney's high school are already sprinting down the hall dressed in billowing black cloaks and white plastic masks. It looks like a literal representation of the eight sequels that “Nightmare on Elm Street” spawned (not counting the 2010 remake).

“Scream” plays on the one aspect of horror that no one really wants to admit, horror is marketable. Gore sells, we as a culture are fascinated by it. The TV journalist in “Scream” is constantly trying to catch her “big break” as Ghostface flails around slaying the entire town, because she knows that if she's the one to break this story, fame will follow. Ghostface is the product of a culture that Wes Craven (and Freddy Kruger) created. Though the “Scream” franchise was not written by Craven himself, Craven's influence is felt throughout. “Scream” is the direct result of a Halloween season saturated by rubber Freddy masks and life-sized Jasons peeking out of Halloween store windows, a holiday shaped ostensibly by killer culture ... and the idea that these crazy, campy films could seep into someone's reality, into the halls of their high school even, is what makes “Scream” so great. People dismiss horror as a genre with a seasonal expiration date, but Wes Craven knew that these films had the potential to shape our cultural discourse and to force us to examine what frightens us the most.

Overall, Wes Craven's impact can be felt in nearly every corner of the film industry. His casting finesse brought us the great gift of young Johnny Depp in a crop top, and his awe-inspiring imagination left us sleepless for weeks on end. He was truly, a horror maestro.

► Rosie Accola is a sophomore in the BFAW department. She makes too many zines and loves punk rock and petting dogs.





# Miley Cyrus and Her Dead Petz

Provocateur Miley Cyrus bores with latest album project

► Rosie Accola

In reality, it's an annoyance at best. Miley Cyrus certainly tried to expand her musical boundaries as an artist, but that doesn't mean they moved.

As time goes on, Miley Cyrus devolves into an increasingly frustrating cultural paradox. She touts the benefits of solitude and inner peace while steadfastly flooding the Instagram feeds of the masses with an endless stream of selfies and sculptural art pieces covered in tiny toys. Miley has the potential to enact positive social change. According to their website manifesto, the proceeds from her Happy Hippie foundation go towards providing "homeless youth, LGBTQ youth and other vulnerable youth populations with consistent support services, education and employment opportunities." Miley is capable of empathy, yet her steadfast refusal to acknowledge the culturally appropriate nature of her actions (everything from the twerking to the VMA dreadlock extensions) just makes her seem petulant.

She's a happy hippie, as long as your analysis of her is devoid of any sort of constructive criticism. Even though in 2015, we are two years post-Twerk-seen-'round-the-world, the authenticity of Cyrus' actions is constantly questioned. Perhaps our inquisitive nature towards her is only reflective of the sense of cultural ownership that often accompanies child stars. We have watched Miley grow up from a gangly and seemingly good-natured teen to a seemingly brash, sexually liberated twenty-something ... we know Miley, don't we?

If "Bangerz" was her club beats saturated bildungsroman, "Miley Cyrus and Her Dead Petz" is her sloppily penned attempt at a philosophical treatise. Unlike "Bangerz," which was definitely a pop project, "Dead Petz" attempts to combine psychedelia with mainstream pop sounds. The result is a genre-confused record that sounds more like the musical equivalent of Forever 21 selling Woodstock-inspired sweatshirts than a successful co-mingling of two musical genres ... it's definitely not the best of both worlds.

Cyrus released her latest project on the free music streaming service, Soundcloud.

Unlike Spotify or Apple Music, Soundcloud allows artists to upload their tracks for free, thus making it popular among unsigned artists and bands. Cyrus' decision to release her latest album on the platform is indicative of her efforts to assimilate herself into the Indie music scene. In an attempt to seem truly DIY, Cyrus dropped \$50,000 of her own money to release the album outside of her label.

The record itself is a staggering 23 tracks, ranging in length from 46 seconds to five minutes. It's an arduous listen requiring almost infinite patience and stamina. It's the sonic equivalent of trying to put your drunk friend to bed, nonsensical with milliseconds of lucidity frustratingly interspersed throughout otherwise underwhelming tracks.

Throughout the album, the influence of the Flaming Lips' Wayne Coyne is clearly apparent. The little jangly sitar-influenced guitar riffs that pops up throughout the album are a Flaming Lips' calling card. Coyne and Cyrus' unlikely friendship is visually documented on Instagram and other social media platforms. It's a vexing bond that produces glitter-smear selfies and singles like "Dooo It," which Cyrus performed live at this year's MTV VMAs alongside draguantes of "RuPaul's Drag Race."

The album seems gimmicky at best. Cyrus' attempts at authenticity, like the mumbly monologues about being "fucking homies and shit" on tracks like "BB Talk," read as caricatures of a carefully constructed persona that Miley has spent years concocting.

There are moments where she aches to be seen as alternative, and what should be seen as a sincere effort in the name of art comes off as so cringeworthy that I reflexively close the Soundcloud tab on my browser. Lyrics like "I had a dream/ David Bowie taught us how to skateboard/ but he was shaped like Gumby" sound more like a magnetic poetry set sponsored by Urban Outfitters than an artistic revelation.

The only stand-out tracks are the ones

that are quite literally about her "dead petz." "The Floyd Song (Sunrise)" is a meditative tribute to her deceased husky, shrouded in flowing guitar riffs and an unwavering bassline. At one point, Cyrus' voice breaks as she sings seemingly on the verge of tears. It's a brief glimpse of genuine sincerity that gets lost throughout the rest of the album.

The most poignant track on the record is Miley's heartfelt ode to her deceased blowfish, Pablow. In a moment of borderline existential absurdity Miley notes that going out for sushi after watching one of your aquatic pals go belly up isn't the best decision noting, "I got soup/ and I ordered rice/ but watching my friends eat my friends ruined my appetite." She also suggests that Pablow should attempt to find love with a seahorse named Sadie in the big sea in the sky while ignoring that interspecies post-corporeal lovin' isn't super-possible.

Tracks like "Pablow the Blowfish" indicate that Cyrus' grasp on both lyricism and reality itself is tenuous. The awkward nature of the lyrics could indicate Miley's attempts to be more involved in her own songwriting process. The unpolished lyrical structures lend themselves to a more "indie" feel for the album as a whole, but they're also awkward for the listener.

Overall, "Miley Cyrus and Her Dead Petz" is an underwhelming musical endeavour. In theory it sounds good — Miley singing about dead fish ... sure, why not? — in reality, it's an annoyance at best. Miley Cyrus certainly tried to expand her musical boundaries as an artist, but that doesn't mean they moved.

You can listen to the album at [www.mileycyrus.com/andherdeadpetz](http://www.mileycyrus.com/andherdeadpetz).

► Rosie Accola is a sophomore in BFAW. She can't have any petz in Chicago, but her air plants are going strong.





# From Mixtapes to Mainstream

A review of The Weeknd's most recent album

► Ada Wolin

**B**eauty Behind the Madness," the latest album from Canadian singer The Weeknd, is suddenly everywhere. This is Abel Tesfaye's 2nd studio album, following on the heels of 2011's "House of Balloons," as well as numerous mixtapes. However, it is only a slight exaggeration to call Tesfaye's rise to notoriety 'meteoric,' with a VMA performance under his belt, an appearance in the "50 Shades of Grey" soundtrack, and a vast amount of critical and commercial success, all within the last year. Fans of Tesfaye's trademark narcotic sensibility will see it fully realized in "Beauty Behind the Madness," a lush and dreamy soundscape of an album. Tesfaye has hit his aesthetic stride this time, and that alone may save the album from some of its flaws. It just sounds so good.

The album starts off strong with "Real Life," a track that is simultaneously dark and satisfying, sprawling and concise, edgy and accessible. Then on to "Losers," one of the strongest songs on the album, which features a nice break from the oft-monotonous vocal flow of the album. A catchy clap-track and piano verse set the song nicely off-kilter, and the whole production sounds like it's coming from the bottom of some murky depths, maintaining the mysterious haze pervading the album as a whole. "Losers" touches upon a rare moment of genuine emotional intensity, a breaking point in Tesfaye's concernedly aloof demeanor. "Can't Feel My Face" is just as catchy as it's cracked up to be, of course, and because of this can be politely called an 'homage' to Michael Jackson, complete with breath catches and dancey bass.

But the sweet and murky haze can't hide the weak points of the album, namely Tesfaye's lyrics, which occasionally reach points of unpardonable shallowness.

The Weeknd is a character, "with the hair, singing 'bout popping pills, fucking bitches, living life so trill," a self-created mythos that

is hard-living, disaffected, jaded and self-aware. At Tesfaye's strongest lyrical moments, we feel that melancholic urge to lose ourselves, at its center an intriguing poetic loneliness. But even taking this character into account, there are moments when the poignancy wears thin; "I only call you when it's half past five, the only time that I'll be by your side, I only love it when you touch me, not feel me, when I'm fucked up that's the real me," he sings in "The Hills," a song a little too heavy in its themes of dissipation not to prompt some eye rolling.

The bad boy persona has grown more self-aware on this album, as Tesfaye seems to lean back a little and assess his sudden fame. "My cousin said I made it big and it's unusual, she tried to take a selfie at my Grandma's funeral," he sings in "Tell Your Friends." This self-reflexivity is a welcome change from the unending tales of hedonism and debauchery that Tesfaye hammers home in much of the album. But more difficult still is Tesfaye's elusive female anima, who, while continuously shape-shifting, is ever-present in the vast majority of the album. She is a type, she is every woman that Tesfaye's character seems to circle in perpetuity, as he scrapes at the surface of emotional connections. She is frustratingly one-sided, a mere prop for Tesfaye's loner plight. For the amount of airplay she gets, she seems to deserve a little character development.

Let's be real for a minute and address one fact: the female-as-a-prop phenomenon is not new to pop culture. It exists in almost every form of mass entertainment, and has for a long time. Take for example the 'manic pixie dream girl,' a term coined by film critic Nathan Rabin to describe a movie trope that uses a quirky, ultimately idealized woman to shake up the plot of the introspective (male) protagonist. Ultimately, she does not really exist outside of the hero story, and usually ends up disappointing him in some

way or another, but hey, she helped him grow as a person. So why is this relevant? Tesfaye's songs are cinematic. The Weeknd, as a character, is as curated as can be. Tesfaye is presenting an edited version of what it's like to be him, and he's choosing to take his introspection on a detour through his interactions with this woman. As she rides the wave of Tesfaye's 'trill' life, she presents a subtle, perhaps more humble way of proving just how crazy his life really is. All in all, though, Tesfaye's use of this female character as a device is tolerable in comparison to the instances when she takes a little more shape. In those fleeting moments, she is almost always at one end of a hyperbolized spectrum: shallow and desperate, or perfect. Either way, she is not really human.

Fortunately for Tesfaye, however, his aesthetic instincts are so sound that these lapses into banality are masked. The music possesses a subtlety that the lyrics at times lack, and the result is always striking, even if a little redundant. It will certainly be interesting to see Tesfaye's songwriting, already starting to reflect on his change of circumstance, evolve with his elevation to pop icon. It is reassuring to see him remain true to the dark and hazy sound that got his foot in the door, even as he forays into far poppier material. Tesfaye has created a world with his music, and it is nothing at all like real life.

XO

► Ada Wolin is a second year student in the BFAW program.

The Weeknd is a character, "with the hair, singing 'bout popping pills, fucking bitches, living life so trill," a self-created mythos that is hard-living, disaffected, jaded and self-aware.





# Annalise in Shondaland

Exploring the politics of hair in “How to Get Away with Murder”

► Ryan Blocker

Black female characters are not purely the product of harmful and negative stereotype or stifled by the burden of respectability.

In September 2014, critically acclaimed African American actress Viola Davis gave an interview with Whoopi Goldberg and Rosie Perez on “The View” to promote her new television series, “How to Get Away with Murder.” In the show, Davis portrays the sexy, conniving, and brilliant attorney Annalise Keating. Davis, a Juilliard-trained actress with multiple Golden Globe/Oscar nominations and two Tony Awards, spoke of her enthusiasm and gratitude over being chosen by television writer/producer Shonda Rhimes to lead the show. Co-host Whoopi Goldberg turned to her to ask a question. Davis clearly seemed to know what was coming.

Just a few days before the interview, television critic Alessandra Stanley at the New York Times wrote about television, Shonda Rhimes, and her primetime shows, “Scandal” and “How to Get Away with Murder.” In the article, Stanley wrote, “As Annalise, Ms. Davis, 49, is sexual and even sexy, in a slightly menacing way, but the actress doesn’t look at all like the typical star of a network drama ... Ms. Rhimes chose a performer who is older, darker-skinned and less classically beautiful than Ms. Washington or for that matter Halle Berry, who played an astronaut on the summer mini-series ‘Extant.’”

The article faced a lot of backlash on social media and even from Shonda Rhimes herself. Davis laughed when the question came, but her face and tone gradually turned serious. She calmly stated, “I’m glad that Shonda Rhimes saw me. I think that beauty is subjective. I’ve heard that statement [less classically beautiful] my entire life. Being a dark-skinned black woman, you heard it from the womb. And classically not beautiful is a fancy term for saying ugly. And denouncing you. And erasing you. Now ... it worked when I was younger. It no longer works for me now. It’s about teaching a culture how to treat you. Because at the end of the day, you define you.”

“How to Get Away with Murder” is now a history-making television show. For her

role on the show, Davis became the first African American in history to win an Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama. Davis’s acceptance speech consisted of some of the most powerful words uttered on the Emmy Stage.

Much of the talk around the show in my own life and in public dialogue has centered around the character’s hair. In several pivotal moments of the show, Annalise’s hair is used to serve the story’s narrative. There have been such strong reactions to these moments within public discourse that it became clear that hair — black women’s hair in particular — represented so much more than aesthetic choice. Because of this, I decided to speak with black women about their opinions of the show and their own hair journeys.

In the episode “Let’s Get to Scooping,” Annalise discovers that her husband has had a sexual relationship with one of his students. Horrified and saddened, Annalise goes to her room, removing her makeup and wig to reveal her natural hair. It is short, coarse, and matted from being underneath a wig. The whole Internet lost its collective mind. Upworthy featured an interview with Davis and Ellen Degeneres titled “Her Character Was Only Supposed To Remove Her Makeup Before Bed. Then Viola Davis Made It Real.” There was a Buzzfeed post called “Nothing Else Mattered After That Wig Came Off On ‘How to Get Away With Murder.’”

In an article on NBC News, Yaba Blay, co-director of Africana Studies at Drexel and author of “(1)ne Drop: Shifting the Lens” on Race describes the scene as “unapologetic” and “powerful.” She writes, “In so many of the media images around black women, they come to the space as is. Audiences hardly ever get a three-dimensional look into them. We never see Olivia Pope do her hair, touch her hair, anything.” The power of the scene lies in the reality that although black women are frequently represented on television, the

intimate moments of their lives are seldom presented on screen.

My friend Dana offered, “It’s not just that it’s a black woman’s hair. It’s a certain kind of texture. Tracee Ellis Ross wears her hair natural all the time, and it’s beautiful. But it’s a more understandable kind of hair. Viola’s hair is the kind of hair that you fix or manage. It’s the kind of hair that you solve.”

Consider that the TSA has only recently loosened restrictions on searches of black women’s hair. Even the U.S. Army rolled back recent bans on a number of hairstyles for not being representative of Army standards of grooming — most of which were hairstyles commonly worn by black women.

However, for all of the work the scene does in validating black women’s hair, the character’s natural hair is revealed for the first time in a moment of deep personal pain. My mother, Nevetta, claimed, “People were saying ‘Now [Shonda] didn’t have to do all that with taking off the wig.’ We are so embarrassed by our own hair. That’s our hair! That’s what it looks like.”

Sydney Stoudmire, executive director of Women Made Gallery and owner of a hair business, offered similar insights. She said, “People are very protective of those moments. Some people don’t want to see it. ... I was happy because I know how many people saw that.” For some, removing the wig represented a vulnerability that went too far and that couldn’t be entertaining.

Hair was linked to a personal journey for everyone I interviewed. Each of the women has “gone natural,” meaning they have stopped using chemicals or heat to straighten their hair. Sydney has been heavily involved in the natural hair movement since her time in college when she started a support group for black women with natural hair. “I had this weave on my head, and it felt like a weight. I just cut it out. I felt liberated,” she said. “I started a Facebook group as a support group for girls with natural hair. The group was called





Supernatural.” In the Supernatural Facebook group, women talked about the stigma of natural hair, their concern with being seen as attractive and professional. “It was more than hair,” she said.

Dana has gone natural as well. Dana is biracial and grew up in a predominantly white community in the Seattle area. She spoke of her experiences wishing she had hair like those around her. “I was the only one with hair like mine,” she said. Dana spent years undergoing chemical hair straightening but grew tired of the time commitment and cost and saw going natural as both a personal and even financial liberation. She said, “When you go natural, you have to redefine what is beautiful to you. If you thought that long hair was pretty, you have to learn that short hair can be pretty. If you thought that straight hair was pretty, you have to learn that coarse, tight curls are pretty too.”

In another episode entitled “Mama’s Here Now,” Annalise is distraught over the loss of her husband. She is more vulnerable and helpless than she has ever been, and she cannot leave her bed. In a moment of exasperation, she calls her mother, Ophelia, played by Cicely Tyson. Ophelia also wears a wig. The symbols of Annalise’s depression are her unkempt house and her natural hair. Sydney explained it this way: “It became clear there was a pattern. Her natural hair was with a fight with her husband, she’s drinking alcohol, or she’s crying. I remember feeling that and recognizing that.”

Despite having called her mother, Annalise seems disappointed and upset by Ophelia’s presence in her home. One of the emotional climaxes of the episode erupts in an intense argument between Annalise and Ophelia in which Annalise reveals that she was sexually assaulted by a man she calls “Uncle Clyde.” Annalise confronts her mother, demanding to know why she did not adequately protect her since she was aware of the assault. Without revealing too much,

the scene highlights that Annalise’s low self-worth and deep shame are related to this traumatic moment. What’s the sign of her profound shame? Her natural hair.

Before Ophelia leaves, she and Annalise exchange an intimate moment of reconciliation. Ophelia says, “Let me at your hair. Your kitchen is tired.”

In this moment, Annalise sits bedside while her mom combs her hair. Her natural hair this time is the symbol of resilience, intimacy, and the maternal bond. Up until this point, Annalise’s natural hair has been a signifier of separation from others and brokenness.

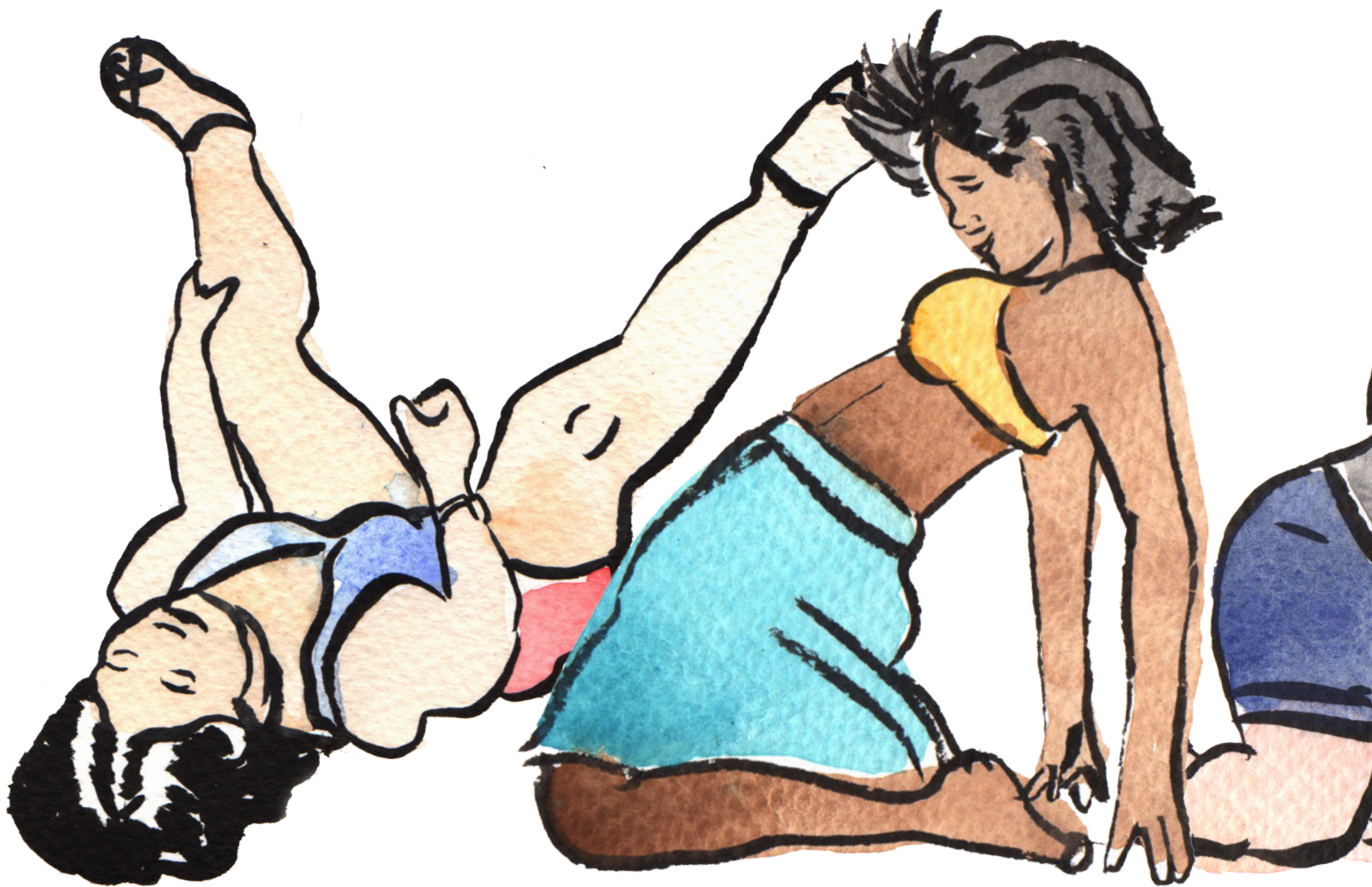
We are starting to see black women represented in novel, intimate, and complicated ways on primetime television. Black female characters are not purely the product of harmful and negative stereotypes or stifled by the burden of respectability. They are queer, trans, sexy, villainous, heroic, flawed, and have undeniable agency. Perhaps we come closer to liberating black women as a whole when we complicate the ways that they are understood in public space and by encountering varied portrayals of black women.

In speaking with my mother, it was clear she was acutely aware of how her natural hair may affect her professional life and may even cause some to deal in stereotypes about her suspected criminality. She said she gets followed by store security if she wears her hair natural or in braids. My mother did not know what her natural, unprocessed hair looked like until she was in her 50s. Her personal journey highlights the struggle to define individuality as a black woman. I think it is appropriate to end this exploration with her words: “I do not conform, and I love it.”

▷ Ryan Blocker is a second-year graduate student in the Arts Administration and Policy Program, his loves his mama.







# Air Sex Is Surprisingly Cooler Than

Coming to (the thought of) you soon

► Sophie Lucido Johnson

I have seen people make imaginary love to mimes, giants, every type of animal, and, in one case, “The fist of the Universe Herself.”

The lights dimmed, and I heard the crowd begin to throb. The 300-person-plus audience had outgrown the small front bar stage at Portland’s Hawthorne Theater, and we had moved our operation into the much larger main stage in the back, which was normally reserved for all-night post-punk shows and mosh-ridden hardcore sets. This was not that. The DJ started playing my track — an elaborate homemade mash-up of “I’ll Make Love To You” by Boyz 2 Men, “Wrecking Ball” by Miley Cyrus, and “Put It In Your Mouth” by Akinyele. I walked on stage, looked up and out at the curious faces, and unzipped the (imaginary) jeans shorts in front of me. It wasn’t until I took out the (invisible) man’s (make-believe) (and enormous) penis, though, that the crowd went completely wild.

Air Sex is like Air Guitar, but instead of shredding a nonexistent Gibson to your favorite hair-metal band, you climb up on nonexistent torsos and do, well, whatever you want. (Hair-metal bands are optional, but by no means discouraged.) In the years I have been a judge at Air Sex competitions (yes, there are judges), I have seen people make imaginary love to mimes, giants, every

type of animal, and, in one case, “The fist of the Universe Herself.” People use props (sometimes invisible, although not always); people get dressed up; people practice all year long. It’s always a spectacle, no matter what size the crowd.

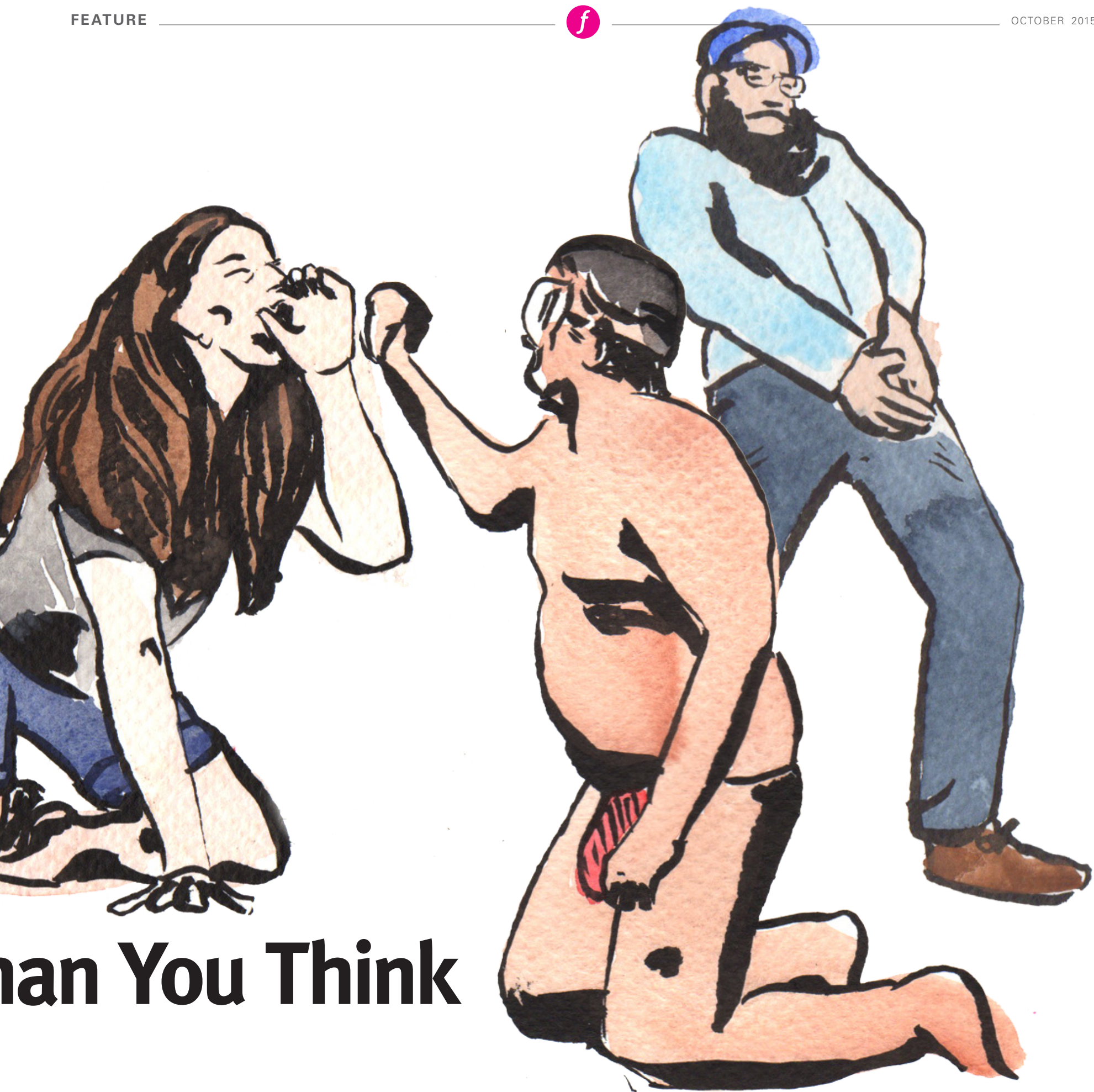
Here’s how the show works: for about an hour leading up to the main event, Air Sex producers walk around the venue gathering sign-ups for the show. Anyone can sign up — all you have to do is write down a song (an example is “Pony” by Ginuwine — which is what pretty much every girl who has dabbled in sorority life chooses), and a stage name (this is a challenge for people, but it’s usually a sex pun, like “Ding Dong the Legs Are Spread” or “Puss-Seammonster”). Then Chris Trew, who hosts the show and travels around the country with it, comes up with a show order, and contestants are brought to the stage to perform their routine in front of a panel of celebrity judges — usually consisting of comedians, sex shop owners, porn stars, minor sports personalities, and Twitter superstars; once David Arquette did it, and another time Amy Heckerling (who wrote “Clueless”) sat on the panel. The three best contestants are chosen, and then they

come back up to perform in tandem to a surprise song. Finally, the audience chooses a champion, as determined by applause.

I spent two summers on tour with Trew and Air Sex, and fell completely in love with the whole thing. My grandmother wasn’t thrilled with it (“People will find out, and you will be unemployable”) but I was on a sort of YOLO kick so I didn’t care. At first, like most people, I didn’t know what to make of a show called Air Sex. When you hear it described, it’s kind of hard to understand how such a weird idea can be an entire touring enterprise. First-timers who end up at Air Sex shows on a Friday night — usually because they had a moment of incredulosity when they saw it advertised in their local indie weekly and had to see for themselves — are unanimously awkward and giggly. On tour, I was often tasked with walking up to strangers and asking if they wanted to compete. Ninety-nine percent of the time, people would let out a stupid guffaw before saying, “Um, NO. I just came to, like, see what this was all about. I have to drink more before I can even WATCH this thing.”

For those who have been around the Air Sex block, however, there is something





# man You Think

almost religious about the show. I didn't understand this at first — I was in the awkward, giggly set myself. But then I started watching people perform their Air Sex routines with a sort of enthusiasm that surpassed the typical zeal with which people participate in other forms of comedy. People really got into Air Sex. It took me some time to understand that this was because Air Sex gives people the chance to make public their deepest desires and fantasies; to dwell in their unabashed sex-positivity; and all-the-while to acknowledge the potential inherent silliness of this whole intercourse thing we all spend so much time thinking about. At its best, Air Sex is, oddly, incredibly beautiful.

Of course, that's not always the case. Sometimes men (and yes, they are always men) openly objectify women who perform. Sometimes men (again, yes, always men) come on stage and start to initiate clearly non-consensual sex with their invisible partners. Trew, however, is an expert at keeping the space safe, positive, and loving. I have watched him kick people out who come to Air Sex shows with lewd intentions faster than those people probably come. (Burn.)

The best part of an Air Sex show, in fact, is

when women perform honest, unabashedly sex-positive routines in which you can tell that they enjoy having (invisible) sex, and that they take ownership over their own preferences. There is something deliberately and unapologetically feminist about Air Sex in those moments; if I'm being honest, it can get me almost teary-eyed.

The greatest example of a feminist and sex-positive Air Sex routine I have ever seen came (no pun intended) right out of Chicago. Her stage name is Cuntastrophe, and after winning the Chicago Air Sex Championship in 2013, she went on to win the Air Sex Season 5 World Championship (which is documented in the fantastic documentary, "Air Sex: The Movie.") In her award-winning routine, Cuntastrophe believably plays with an array of invisible dildos and vibrators, trying to find the best orgasm possible. There is something so earnest and beautiful about watching her explore her sexuality on stage, and hearing her talk about how proud it makes her to be able to do it.

Cuntastrophe inspired me to create my own Air Sex routine, which I debuted in Portland (where I am from) last Christmas vacation. My mom and dad came to the show,

and my sister (whom we dubbed "DJ BJ") ran the sound. I spent some time beforehand writing down what my biggest fantasy would be, because I wanted my routine to be the most honest and awesome performance of my life. There were strap-ons and girls of all shapes and sizes. There was a man who I knocked to the ground and tried a reverse cowgirl on. There was even an explosive orgasm composed of pure glitter. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. My mom told me she was "really proud."

Air Sex will be making its way through Chicago again as part of its East Coast Tour. The show will take place on October 25 at 8 p.m. at the Chicago Underground, and tickets are \$12. I'll be there, relishing in what has become one of my favorite shows on earth.

► Sophie Lucido Johnson is the web editor for F, and has written for Jezebel, The Nation, McSweeney's, and more. She is also the editor-in-chief of the literary humor magazine Neutrons Protons. She is in the MFAW program at SAIC.



OCT / 15

## Event Highlights

### Start Up Your Web Presence *Saturday Skill Share*

Sat, Oct 10, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
Sharp Building, RM 327

In participation with  
Crain's Small Business Week  
#SBW15

### What's My Job? Alumni Conversations

Mon – Wed, Oct 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.  
The LeRoy Neiman Center

In collaboration with Nick Lowe  
and the *Work Experience:*  
*What's My Job?* Junior Seminar  
#SAICWMJ

### Documenting Your Work *Saturday Skill Share*

Sat, Oct 24, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
Sharp Building, RM 327

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**Portfolio Review with  
Curators, Dealers & Writers**  
[with Student Union Galleries]  
Wed, Nov 4, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
MacLean Ballroom

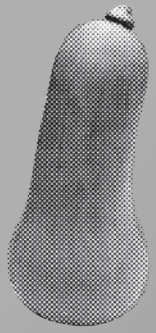
**Co-op Internship Fair**  
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# Remembering Yuan Song

► Megan Byrne

A 31-year-old second degree student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Yuan Song, passed shortly after completing his BFA degree this summer. Song seemed to have an impact on the lives of almost everyone he took class with. One long-time friend and classmate, Shuting Zheng a student in the Designed Objects department, said, “He was always trying to make someone feel better, always using humor, always lending a hand and helping out.” It seemed to be agreed among many that Song’s willingness to help those around him was so rooted in his practice. Amanda Taves, who was one of Song’s closest friends, said: “He would do anything for you, he was engaged and tried to help with your practice in whatever way he could. He was so sure, smart and giving.”

Yuan Song graduated first with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from the University of Science and Technology in Hefei, China, China’s premier school for scientists and mathematicians. After his graduation, Song began working at the China Photography Publishing House as a translator and editor. According to Shuting Zheng, it was during this time that Song became very interested in creating art, influenced by the famous Chinese artist/activist Ai Weiwei. Song created some art as an homage to Weiwei that “got him in trouble with the police. They didn’t want him to create this kind of thing.” In response, Song applied to school in both London and Chicago. Choosing Chicago, Song came to SAIC to study photography.

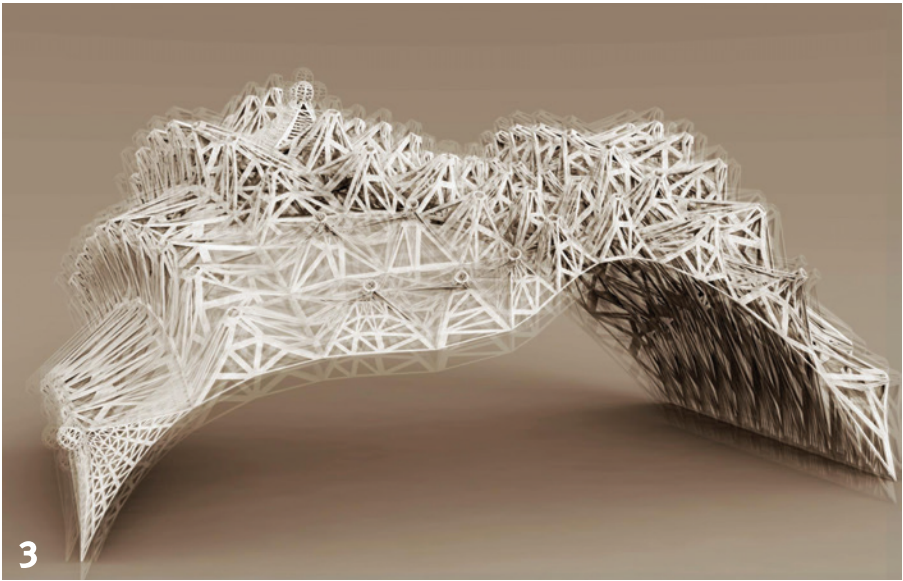
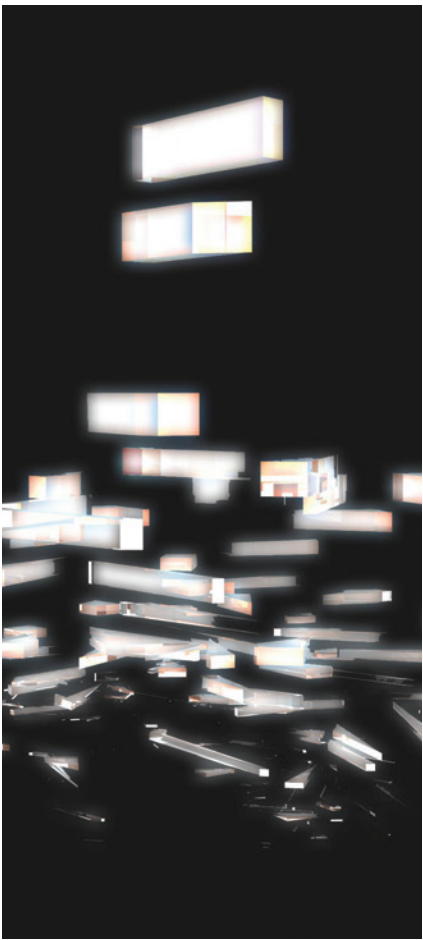
He took classes in Photography at first, eventually branching out into different departments like Art and Technology and Designed Objects. Song’s work, much of which can be found on his Instagram account, is rife with humor. Zheng said, “His art reflected who he was. His fine art, things like photos and drawings, those were kind of

silly. His designed objects, all of the furniture he made, that work was so elegant.” Song worked as an assistant for Lee Weitzman, who runs a furniture studio near the Pilsen neighborhood.

Song was a skilled mathematician, using programs like Grasshopper, which is an algorithm for the program Rhinoceros, he created complex 3D images that frequently looked like photographs of sculptures. His art practice was informed by his degree in mathematics. Song explored his practice alongside some of his friends who were PhD candidates, and together, they developed a start-up project called iFind, a battery-free tag you could apply to purses, keys or cats (among other things). The startup raised close to \$550,000.

Song was always trying to teach other students how he created his work, calling for an open dialogue with them. Zheng said, “Yuan posted photos to his social media of the things he was making, he wanted to teach people how to replicate what he was making.” Above all things, Song was loved for his dedication to improving the art practice of those around him. At SAIC, when Song would walk down the hall with Amanda Taves, “Everyone was so excited to see him, they wanted to tell him what they were working on, and he was always interested. He always wanted to contribute, to exchange ideas.” Song seemed to be endlessly giving, always interested in helping those around him; his light-hearted presence “extended beyond the classroom,” according to Taves. Song’s legacy is still very present at the school, as it is the intention of fellow classmates like Zheng to try and collect his work and to put it on display so that people might come to know Song’s brilliant, complex work.

► Megan Byrne is a fourth-year in the BFAW program.



1) Yuan with a table he made in Erik Newmans’ “Fundamentals of Furniture” class 2) An image created by combining mathematic algorithms and coding 3) Created on Grasshopper





# LUMA at 10

## Loyola University Museum of Art celebrates its first decade with “greatest hits” exhibition

► KT Hawbaker Krohn

This Western understanding of faith shouldn't be the only one at work.

Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA) is on a mission from God. Take that however you want. In celebration of its 10th anniversary, LUMA brought together a “greatest hits” sampling of most-loved exhibitions that could defy understandings of Jesuit culture.

Upon looking through LUMA's 10th anniversary celebration, the resonating concept of “reconciliation” surfaces. Here is a museum trying to reconcile a beginning with a future, faith with curiosity, divinity with humanity; strained pairings that lined up well with this institution's mission of “illuminat[ing] the enduring spiritual questions and concerns of all cultures and societies.”

“Most don't know about other faiths,” said LUMA's founding director, Pamela Ambrose, who also serves as Loyola University's Director of Cultural Affairs. “We try to show creativity that deals with spirituality, whether it's found in abstractions or in the form of narrative. Our exhibitions deal with the artist who wants to express spiritual concerns.”

“Of course, you'll meet some who will argue that all art is spiritual, but I think that we're putting out artwork that intentionally explores broader aspects of spirituality.”

Ambrose pointed to Lewis deSoto's “Paranirvana (Self-Portrait)” as a piece in the exhibition that draws a vivid line between intentional and unintentional spirituality. Originally part of LUMA's 2006 exhibition “The Missing Peace,” deSoto's enormous sculpture depicts Buddha as he lay dying of food poisoning. In this story, Buddha gives lessons on samsara, the circle of life, death, and reincarnation, with the hope that one day all living things would eradicate suffering

through karma and end this cycle.

“We inflate the Buddha at beginning of the day to evoke life, and then we deflate it to symbolize death at the end of the day,” Ambrose illustrated, her bangles brightly clinking together as she drew out the sculpture's pathway.

In the same room as “Paranirvana” floats Andy Warhol's “The Silver Clouds.” Also brought to LUMA first in 2006, this installation is the result of Warhol's collaborations with Billy Kluver, an engineer with Bell Labs. Comprised of Mylar, helium, and fans, “Clouds” looks like wild clusters of silver pillows. With the fans blowing from the different angles of the room, these featherlight “clouds” barely touch the ground as they move about, inviting interaction from the audience as they stroll through.

This piece truly fits the exhibition's flavor profile. Warhol's interest in the emerging space technologies of the 60s informed the choice of materials and echoed in the work's atmospheric theme. In the piece is the hubris of space exploration, the idea of humankind pushing the limits of nature to become conquerors.

Without the interaction of visitors, the “clouds” will waft naturally within the space, pushed by the “wind.” When patrons interact, however, they disrupt this movement and push the “clouds” according to their desires. So, here is another tense reconciliation, one between nature and humanity, where participants control the atmosphere and, in a sense, become God.

It's a misrecognition that Ambrose recognizes in the classic, cinematic depictions of Christianity that sparked her own career as an artist engaged with spirituality and religion.

“I learned about God through pop culture, in the big, sweeping epics from Hollywood,” she described, recalling the grandiose, Technicolor productions that once entertained audiences on a biblical scale. “But, this Western understanding of faith shouldn't be the only one at work.”

Ambrose believes that the goals for LUMA's next 10 years include coming out of its “infant” phase and building its niche audience to include the diverse population that a city university allows.

“It's been a big challenge to reach out to the communities we're trying to represent, but I think the nature of our exhibitions and their leanings towards social justice will invite that in the future,” Ambrose said.

Upcoming exhibitions for LUMA include a project that addresses the problems of global slavery and sex trafficking, and another that looks into the “seriously religious life” within a Brooklyn-based Hassidic community. Ambrose hopes that these diversified exhibitions will help foster the museum's growth, as she envisions expanding both the space of the museum and its outreach programming.

During the interview, Ambrose noted that “really good art reveals itself slowly,” and through its complicated, deliberately intersectional programming, “LUMA at 10” fits this definition beautifully.

► In a fit of post-undergrad “excitement,” KT left her retail career and is a Master of Arts candidate in New Arts Journalism. She enjoys watching “The Golden Girls” and collecting loyalty points from the gyro delivery place like it's a sport.



# #SAYHERNAME

## Chicagoans gather to demand justice for Rekia Boyd

► Steven Ford

On an overcast Thursday night, protesters gathered at the Chicago Police Department (CPD) Headquarters at 35th and Michigan. The protest was organized by Black Youth Project 100, a group whose stated goal is “to create justice and freedom for all Black people.” About 200 activists gathered to demand that the CPD fire Det. Dante Servin, who shot and killed 22-year-old Rekia Boyd in 2012, be fired. Servin is the first CPD officer in twenty years to face charges for a fatal shooting.

The Independent Police Review Board (IPRA), which investigates claims of misconduct by Chicago Police officers, announced yesterday that it is recommending that Servin be fired. At last month’s hearing, BYP100 protesters packed the meeting and effectively shut it down.

Speaking before the meeting started BYP100 member Jason Ware said, “The recommendation isn’t the end, it’s the beginning of the process.” Activist Todd St. Hill said of IPRA, “This accountability mechanism is a scam. It’s illegitimate.” St. Hill went on to say, “We want accountability that people in the city have a say over,” not a hand-picked board that he says favors police.

During the IPRA meeting, Board President Lori E. Lightfoot stated that even though the board has issued a recommendation, Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy still has 90 days to issue a ruling on the matter.

After the board restated its ruling, members of the public were called to the podium to speak to the board, most expressing sustained anger at the 2012 killing.

The final speaker was Rekia Boyd’s brother, Martinez Sutton. Like many other speakers before him, Sutton demanded that Servin be fired and that he be denied police pension benefits.

The portion of the meeting that was open to the public ended, and the board adjourned until October. Protesters left noisily, again calling for Servin’s firing. The protesters gathered outside CPD headquarters and headed east on 35th Street, chanting slogans as they marched into the night.

► Steven Ford, a former middle school English and ESL teacher, is a prior-degree student currently studying photography.



The members of the Independent Police Review Board unanimously recommended Dante Servin be fired.



# Turning Our Backs

## The people we let starve at Dyett High School

► Caleb Kaiser

Hunger striking —willfully starving yourself as an act of protest — is a tactic associated with the most desperate and deprived, reaching out for some semblance of equality. Historically, this act calls to mind Gandhi fasting to protect the independence of India; 10 Irish prisoners dying to protest political persecution under Margaret Thatcher; Cesar Chavez starving to establish fair wages and workers' rights for Latino and Filipino farm workers. Now, there is another group to include among these icons: 15 parents and community members from Bronzeville, a neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, who starved themselves over 34 days in order to protect their children. As a city and nation, we all must endure the shame of admitting this crime: We ignored an entire neighborhood so thoroughly that they were forced to go 34 days without food before officials would take notice. Many narratives have emerged in the media regarding the Dyett High School hunger strikers, also known as the Dyett 15, but for all Chicago's complications and nuance, this issue is clear. Chicago cares so little about residents of poorer, predominantly minority neighborhoods that the city government was willing to watch 15 people die before agreeing to give their children a quality education.

What sort of role in society are we conditioning kids for when they eat lunch on the floor?

In 2012, Walter H. Dyett High School was scheduled for closure by Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The process, as designed, lasted four years, with no new students being allowed to enroll. Jobs were cut, students were pressured to transfer, and the building fell into such disrepair that students were forced to enter their school through the back door. Historically, this neighborhood was the famed "Black Metropolis," which Gwendolyn Brooks, Louis Armstrong, and Ida B. Wells all called home. Dyett provided the only realistic educational option for many neighborhood families, and with its closure, children of this historic neighborhood were left without any legitimate access to quality education. As you might expect, a community this rich in history and tradition refused to let its children be abandoned.

In 2013, the Coalition to Revitalize Dyett High School was launched, comprised of concerned parents, teachers, and community activists who saw the loss of the neighborhood's only open-enrollment public school as unacceptable. After announcing Dyett's closure, the coalition pressured CPS into accepting proposals for a new high school, to be established at the site of the former Dyett High School. The Coalition to Revitalize Dyett High School brought together members of the community as well as education experts to draft a proposal for what they called the Dyett Global Leadership and Green Technology High School. The proposal, which drew a great deal of support, would focus on world studies and sustainable technology, preparing students for modern society both in terms of business and culture. The coalition also demanded a fully elected local school council be put in place, and that the community be guaranteed meetings with local alderman and CPS officials. If you sense a theme in how the city handles neighborhoods like Bronzeville, you'll see this coming: CPS ignored every demand.

At its core, this is a situation in which citizens were actively ignored by public leaders on every level before, during, and after a 34-day hunger strike. What is missing from many distracting narratives offered by Chicago media outlets is that the people who undermine this community are the same people who claim to serve it.

The man most immediately reachable for students at Dyett was interim principal Charles Campbell, assigned to Dyett to oversee its closure. While it is easy to sympathize with a

man given such a heartbreaking task, Mr. Campbell does his best to make it difficult. Parent and hunger striker Irene Robinson, when asked about Charles Campbell, answered quickly: "He needs to be in jail, the way he treated our kids. He never supported them. He never fought for them." She detailed the way he, and by extension CPS, treated the students, saying, "They tortured them their whole senior year, making them take classes online, degrading them. They [the students] had to watch other children enjoy their pool and their basketball court."

This man revealed how seriously he took Dyett students when CPS put out its call for proposals for a new school. Where the Coalition to Revitalize Dyett pushed for a curriculum which treated its students as children capable of the highest academic achievement, Campbell submitted a proposal he called the Washington Park Athletic Career Academy. The school, for lack of a better word, would teach children statistics by having them enter a fantasy football league. This is not satirical. This is actually the position of the man chosen to educate Dyett's children.

A tier above Charles, in terms of authority, is Alderman Will Burns. As the alderman of the 4th ward — which consists of Bronzeville, Oakland, Kenwood, and parts of Hyde Park — Burns should be the Dyett protesters' most immediately accessible political outlet. He is perhaps the most complicated person on this list, as he has a track record of being pro-education. However, he is very close with Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and therefore will not come down on the same side of an issue as the mayor's opponents. With the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) backing the Dyett Global Leadership and Green Technology High School, Burns has moved quickly to characterize the protesters as a political group who are "holding the community hostage" with their hunger strike. In 2014, the coalition had to camp out on Will Burns' lawn just to secure a meeting with the alderman. Meeting with and representing community members is an alderman's primary function.

Even Burns supporters,

CAMPBELL

BURNS



such as the Chicago Sun-Times, admit the alderman “can be arrogant, not listen closely enough to community concerns and is often tightly aligned with the mayor.” Parents involved in the hunger strike were not as soft in their criticism. “Will Burns sat idly and did not want to meet with the community. Where was Will Burns when our 13 children were going in the back door of at Dyett? Where was Will Burns when we went to jail protesting? There was no engagement from the board, the mayor, or Will Burns. Every effort that was made concerning Dyett came from the people, it came from the community.”

Speaking of the board, it is difficult to discuss CPS without mentioning its CEO, Forrest Claypool. Recently appointed in July 2015, replacing the controversial Tim Cawley, Claypool was brought on not for his experience in education, but for his political and financial prowess. A former chief of staff for both Mayor Daley and Mayor Emanuel, Claypool is also the former head of the Chicago Park District (CPD) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Claypool has moved quickly to present himself as the face of compromise in the Dyett fight, while simultaneously belittling and ignoring the protesters. On September 13, Claypool announced that CPS would re-open Dyett as an open enrollment arts school, portraying this decision as a great compromise on the part of the city. What Claypool did not mention in his speech was that as he spoke, the hunger strikers were locked out of the building under police guard. Irene Robinson commented on this, saying, “For the last four years that’s how we’ve been treated — like criminals.”

Jitu Brown, one of the hunger strike’s leaders, said Claypool only informed him of his decision 15 minutes prior to the public announcement. Even after the coalition’s proposal garnered significant community support, its key elements were noticeably absent from the arts school announced by Claypool. The parents involved in this fight believe that an arts school is not a solution for the community’s problems, as without the elements proposed in their Global Leadership and Green Technology High School, their students will not graduate with the same quality education that students in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods will enjoy. Forrest Claypool is a politician and businessman who, in his recent threat to layoff 5,000 teachers, made it clear that his aim is to nurture the city’s fiscal interest,

## CLAYPOOL

even if that means abandoning what should be the city’s primary investment — its children.

In Chicago politics, all roads lead to Rahm. Throughout his career, Mayor Emanuel has been responsible for the closure of over 50 schools. Being so busy displacing over 12,000 students, Rahm obviously has little time for 15 starving people. Following years of refusing to meet with the coalition, including one incident in which protesters chained themselves to the fifth floor of his office, Emanuel only sat down to talk after protesters threatened to shut down more town hall meetings. At one point, during a speech in which protesters yelled out for the mayor to answer their questions, Emanuel condescended, “I have three teenagers at home. I’m really okay with this.” For members of a predominately black neighborhood, having a Mayor ignore and insult them by comparing their concerns to that of a wealthy teenager is doubly painful. In 2013’s historic school closings, which shut down 50 of Chicago schools, 88% of displaced students were black. When looking at the difference between how Emanuel handles minority neighborhoods and wealthier white neighborhoods, it is hard to disagree with Irene Robinson when she says, “This is a hate crime.”

No matter how complex each official is, in this situation there is a clear line one can draw through them all. They each, individually and as a group, have denied the people they are supposed to represent any agency, and have consistently dismissed the outcry of parents, even as they starve. As Robinson said, “Who allows parents to go 34 days without eating? They have disrespected us, but most of all, they’re hurting our kids. What parent in their right mind loves their kids and allows this to happen? We love our kids.”

What sort of role in society are Chicago officials grooming children for when they eat lunch on the floor? When they take special needs classes in a stairway? What is at risk here is, as Robinson says, the possibility that “the hate that they have spread among these schools, into our

## EMANUEL

children, will spread to communities all over and into other children.”

And yet, even as they are ignored, the community remains hopeful and tenacious. Robinson went on to say, “It’s our vision that our kids will have high quality green technology, where we would be building leaders. All kids should have the right to a quality education. The community stood with us because we are the community.” This is a shame the whole city must bare. We’ve allowed people of color to be persecuted, degraded, ignored, and denied representation on such a level that even a hunger strike was not enough to help them. As Robinson said, “It’s like telling a mama to give up on her child. How can you tell a mom to just give up? I’d die for my kids.”

▷ Caleb Kaiser is an undergraduate in the BFAW program. He is from the Kentucky/Cincinnati area.

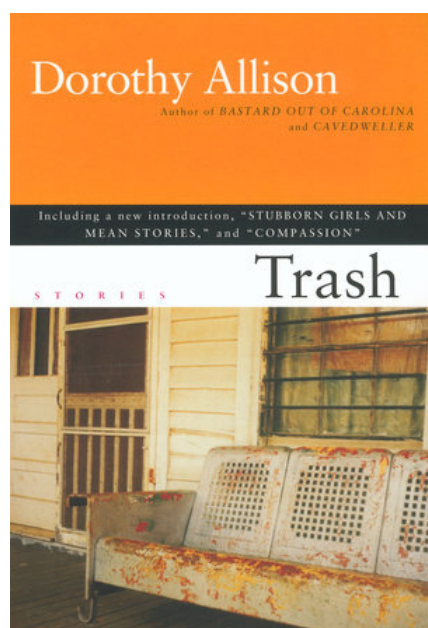




# The Trash We Inherit

Dorothy Allison's short-story collection proves itself to be a classic

► Megan Byrne



Abuse is a part of life,  
so is death, so is humor  
and Allison isn't afraid to  
discuss any of it.

For as long as Flannery O'Connor has been read, America has been enamored with the stories of the South. It's a world so foreign to the rest of America, ripe with salt marshes and the densest foliage. It is this ability to smother and obscure, to grow from even the barest soil, that makes the South so alluring. Beyond that, there is the concept of legacy, something many Southern writers take seriously. So much of Southern writing grapples with this idea of inheritance, of belonging to this mystery. At the same time, this tradition of storytelling has contributed, in some ways, to a false notion of a charming and quaint South, where simple people believe in ghosts and naive romances abound. With this in mind, we are forced to take notice when a writer willingly takes part in this tradition, only to wield an ugly realism not in keeping with "Southern charm." It is for this reason that Dorothy Allison's "Trash" is an American classic.

My mothers' family, who are from all over the South, consist of dairy farmers, car mechanics, marines, and mine-workers. Mom took us to West Virginia twice a year to see her grandmother, who would regale us with stories of her husband, who caught a man looking at her from his car at a red light, pulled him out of his open window and beat him half to death, calmly getting back in the car and waiting for the light to turn green; that same husband hiding canned beer in the freezer behind old fish to "mask the smell," so my great-grandmother would never find it. I experienced some of the niceties of Southern storytellers, the long-drawled ramblings of aunts who ran brothels for Confederate soldiers from hundreds of years ago, meanness and vengeance being well intended on each syllable of "Bless her heart."

Allison as well is a Southern woman capable of conjuring the unspeakable in a casual tone. In fact, "The Meanest Woman Ever Left Tennessee," is a story she wrote about her grandmother, whom she never met. Allison imagined her grandmother from the details she inherited; she imagined what she might've said, re-imagined how her

grandmother died, and she put that on paper. She created a story that, for all purposes, created a legacy for her grandmother.

So then, it only makes sense that I would love Dorothy Allison who writes that "the central fact of my life is that I was born in 1949 in Greenville, South Carolina, the bastard daughter of a white woman from a desperately poor family...." Dorothy Allison released her short-story collection, "Trash," in the late '80s, published initially by Firebrand Books, a feminist and lesbian publisher out of Ithaca, N.Y.; it was subsequently purchased by Penguin and then published with new content by Plume in 2002. This collection was awarded Best Lesbian Small Press Book and Best Lesbian Fiction by the Lambda awards in 1989.

In the introduction, Allison talks about what it is to be outraged white trash, the kind of poor American Ronald Reagan would have loved to broadcast on network television. Allison holds nothing back, or at least it appears that way, in her collection "Trash." She tells stories of growing up a lesbian in a time where she couldn't get a credit-card without a male co-signer, stories about being poor, stories about being a bastard. Allison pens stories that would make a classic Southern writer like Harper Lee blush, whose books ring of the sort of new-Southern democracy that shames white trash, trash who according to Allison are: "men who drank and couldn't keep a job; women invariably pregnant before marriage, who quickly became worn, fat, and old from working too many hours and bearing too many children."

The legacy Allison belongs to, then, is the legacy of good stories that have tough female protagonists and tougher humor. One of the many amazing parts about Allison is that she understands what it takes to construct a good story. She understands point of view and musicality in sentences, she understands shame, that "we knew ourselves despised." She makes her family human, even if villainous; the reader understands the villain as a product of survival. In one of her stories,

"River of Names," Allison commemorates one of her many dead cousins:

"Caught at eighteen and sent to prison, Jack came back seven years later blank-faced, understanding nothing. He married a quiet girl from out of town, had three babies in four years. Then Jack came home one night from the textile mill, carrying one of those big handles off the high-speed spindle machine. He used it to beat them all to death and went back to work in the morning."

This story is a part of a list, where cousins slit their wrists after giving up children, get used as human shields, are spun around by abusive elders as their limbs pop out of sockets. Abuse is a part of life, so is death, so is humor, and Allison isn't afraid to discuss any of it.

I had the privilege of seeing Dorothy Allison speak at the Chicago Humanities Festival in 2012, where she talked about many things: her part in the early-feminist movement; being a lesbian from the South (a concentration for many of the better stories in "Trash"); and most touchingly, how much she loves storytelling. Allison has the mystery and meanness that Southern women often do, but she holds nothing back. Her intention isn't to be polite — it isn't to guide you gently through a charmed childhood in the South — her intention is to tell you honest to God stories, it is to give voices to people she fears might be forgotten as time goes on, it is to make the memory of these people, of these times survive.

Not long ago, I heard from a friend that "Good literature isn't in conversation with other good literature. Good literature is in conversation with the world." If these are our standards, and I hope that they are, then Dorothy Allison is one of the best storytellers in modern American literature.

► Megan Byrne is the Managing Editor for F Newsmagazine, former writer for The Daily Meal, and loves buttery carbs. You can find her fiction work on Necessary Fiction.





# One Day’s Prayers

## Shane McCrae’s necessary new collection

► Caleb Kaiser

How much of ourselves can we escape? It is not uncommon to hear terms like “reconcile” used in discussions of identity, language that presents identity as an equation to be balanced intellectually. Shane McCrae suggests something different in his new collection, “The Animal Too Big To Kill,” (out this Fall from Persea Books) which begins with a quotation from Hebrews 13:3: “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.” Throughout seventy pages of poems, McCrae shows us a line between what we can and can’t help being, and how that line fluctuates.

Questions of faith, race, class, and responsibility form the foundation of “The Animal Too Big To Kill,” and yet these poems again and again resist the realm of political critique. In the title poem, McCrae addresses the Lord directly, admitting, “And I accept I need to be reminded/ I can’t escape responsibility/ for being the kind of creature that requires signs Lord from You.” Faith is not a question to be answered; it is a condition that cannot be escaped. McCrae doubly admits to being the sort of Christian who needs signs from the Lord, as well as the kind of person who sees signs from the Lord. These poems are not arguments, they are conversations, the kind we cannot help having in the backseat of our minds. This is apparent in more than just McCrae’s content, but in his form itself.

A traditional understanding of polished form and meter, at least in historical context, might lead someone to characterize McCrae’s form as “fractured” or “fragmented,” neither of which do justice to McCrae’s brilliance. One of the most recognizable features of

his poetry is the driving meter of each line, how the poems become hymns, how your head nods as you read. For example, while explaining his experience as a person of color raised by white supremacists, he talks of his childhood drawings:

Swastikas everywhere Lord / and you believe somebody said it on TV blacks had it easier / In Germany than in the U.S. in the 30s and

You want to live there then to not be Hated by whites to kill with them

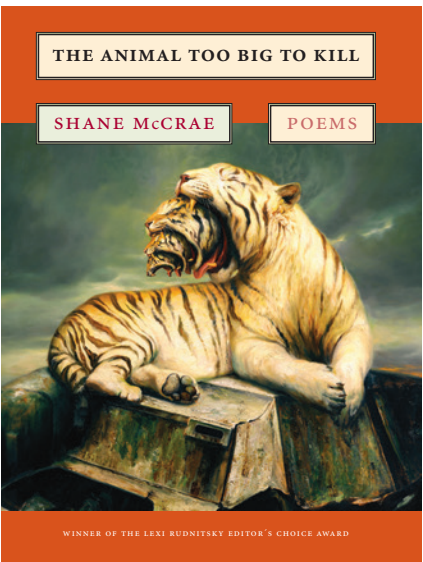
This meter is organic, an unending rhythm which models the constant conversation going on in one’s mind. This endless nature is pushed to the extreme in the poem “The Seven Last Words of Christ,” a 23-page poem broken into sections according to Christ’s seven statements from the cross. With a great deal of repeated language and rhythm, McCrae discusses not only faith, trauma, reality, and dreams, but how this intense personal dialogue translates into physical intimacy. The poem details (among many other things) a man who has the same repeating, terrifying dream, and describes a hypothetical conversation between him and a new lover, the type “Of conversation/ New lovers have/ Naked people/ Together who have/ No history to-/ gether except/ They have consumed/ Each other talking/ And it might be/ You haven’t met/ The person you/ Will fuck tonight/ And for the next/ Six years I won’t/ Record the con-/ versation here.”

This is at the heart of these poems. You do not simply invite someone into your internal world, you consume them. You are not informed by them, you are freed. This

limitation of language, its inability to fill the same space as this physical intimacy, is explicitly named when McCrae says he doesn’t want “a claiming language,” he wants the language that “our bodies used to free each other.” We see so many different points of culture touched upon in this collection, each intuitively flowing into the next. The ethics of owning each other through language, as in the just-quoted “Claiming Language,” connects naturally to a discussion of slavery in “I Know It’s Hard for You to Believe You Still Benefit from Slavery.” This conversation gives room for McCrae’s discussion of growing up “black white trash,” which gives way to a heartbreaking personal narrative describing his mother’s slow death and his thoughts on faith.

The brilliance of McCrae’s form allows these concepts to bleed naturally into each other and for every poem to hum into the next like a record left spinning. It is in this complicated concept of identity that we come to know McCrae’s understanding of freedom, that it exists between two people, be it the Lord or be it a lover. You would be hard pressed to name a book more important to the conversation of race and identity in the last five years than “The Animal Too Big To Kill,” or an account of love more compelling than McCrae’s. Only after seeing him experience the safety provided by intimacy, the space to accept what we cannot escape and stare down trauma with frank honesty, will you understand his book’s dedication “To Melissa, who frees.”

► Caleb Kaiser Zach Cooper spits hot fire.



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**WINTER 2016**  
**JANUARY 3-16**

**INFORMATION  
SESSIONS:**

**OX-BOW OFFICE**  
**SULLIVAN RM 1425**  
**SEPTEMBER 21**  
**OCTOBER 7**

**MERIT SCHOLARSHIP  
APPLICATIONS DUE:**  
**OCTOBER 19**

**IN PERSON & ONLINE  
REGISTRATION:**  
**NOVEMBER 16**

- ENGAGE IN A SMALL COMMUNITY OF DEDICATED ARTISTS
- ENJOY FOCUSED TIME WITH FACULTY
- EARN 3 CREDITS FOR A 2-WEEK COURSE
- FULFILL A PORTION OF THE SAIC OFF-CAMPUS STUDY REQUIREMENT AT OX-BOW'S 115-ACRE CAMPUS IN SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN



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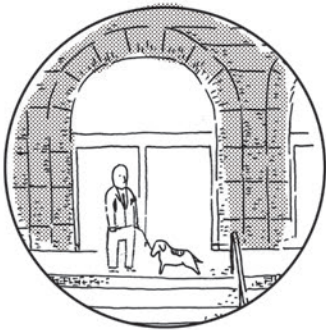




# Life, Death, and the First Year at SAIC

► Alex Kostiw and Megan Byrne

SAIC'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY WAS BECOMING A BIG AFFAIR, WITH EVERYONE THINKING ON IT IN THEIR OWN WAY. FOR MOST IT SEEMED TO BE A TIME TO CELEBRATE FUNNY LITTLE THINGS



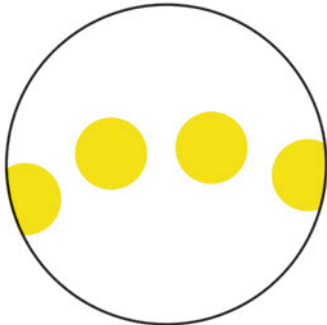
LIKE THE OLD "SECURITY GUARD DOGS" (BEAGLES) AT THE MUSEUM DOORS IN THE 1920S

AND SECRET STUDENT CUSTODIAL SOCIETIES.



SKEPTICS SPECULATED THAT THE BIG ANNIVERSARY HAD BEEN FUDGED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

MEANWHILE, PARTIES, TRIPS, AND PROJECTS WERE IN MOTION BY THE TIME I MET WITH A COMMITTEE BY JULY 27.



I DON'T THINK I WAS MANAGING EDITOR YET, BUT I WAS THERE TO DISCUSS F'S COVERAGE OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY.

THERE IS THIS GREAT LETTER.

TOM BUECHELE, DEPT. HEAD OF IRFM



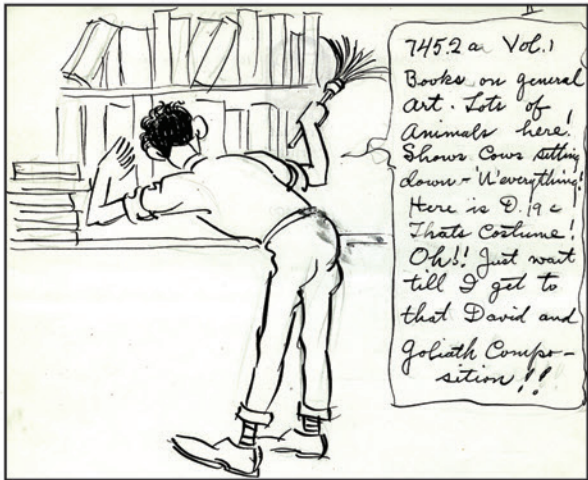
LOUIS FERSTADT WAS A SAIC ALUMNUS. HE WENT ON TO CREATE COMICS, MURALS, AND PAINTINGS, SOME OF WHICH ARE QUITE WELL-KNOWN.

HIS LETTER, WRITTEN IN 1922, WEAVES IN AND OUT OF THE BUSYNESS OF LIFE, DEATH, AND AN UNSATISFYING FIRST YEAR AT SAIC

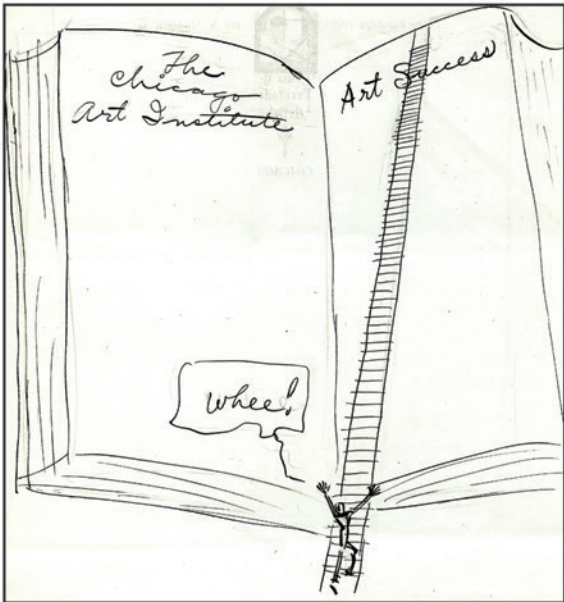


ALL OF THESE THINGS TIMELESS IN THEIR OWN WAY.

FERSTADT LEFT HIS JOB AT THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE AND TOOK A JOB DUSTING OFF BOOKS AT THE RYERSON LIBRARY.



AFTER THAT JIM FERSTADT TOOK A CUSTODIAL JOB THAT PAID FOR HIS TUITION AT SCHOOL.



FERSTADT WAS FORCED IN 1921, FOR FINANCIAL REASONS, TO CONTINUE HIS STUDIES AT NIGHT. THAT YEAR, MENTORED AND TAUGHT BY A MR. STICKROTH, AND HE FINALLY FOUND THE ENVIRONMENT THAT MADE FOR

an evening class my happiest, most productive and most educational year of my life!

WHEN STICKROTH FELL ILL, FERSTADT BECAME DISSATISFIED ONCE AGAIN, DUE TO ITS LACK OF INTEREST IN STUDENTS AS WELL AS FACULTY. HE CRITIQUES SAIC FOR

Teaching Art like Business Colleges teach stenography...

I WENT BACK TO THE EMPTY F OFFICE AND REREAD THE LETTER.



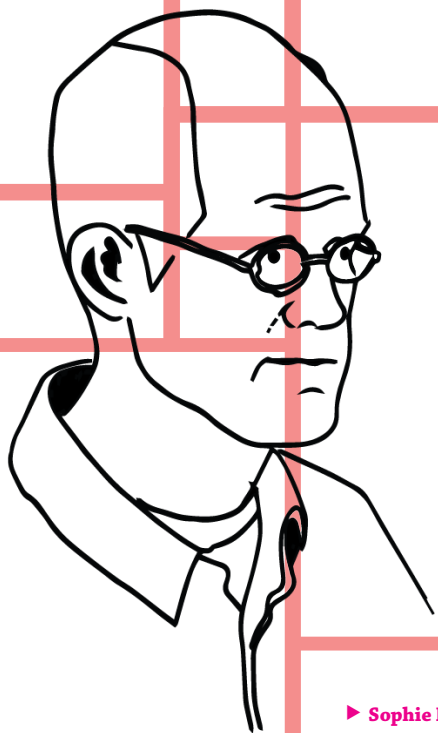
THE LETTER IS A STRANGE GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST. WHILE SO MUCH HAS CHANGED AT SAIC OVER 150 YEARS, EMPATHIZING WITH FERSTADT IS BY NO MEANS A HURDLE.



OUTSIDE WAS HEAVY WITH HUMIDITY, TOO, AND MY CLOTHES STUCK TO MY SHOULDERS.

THE HAZINESS, I FELT, AIDED MY UNDERSTANDING OF THAT LETTER. THE IMAGE OF FERSTADT SLUMPED OVER HIS EASEL, THE TIREDNESS AFTER A LONG DAY.





# The Obsessively Beautiful Chris Ware

## Just beyond the spotlight's edge

► **Sophie Lucido Johnson**

The corrigenda on the back inside cover of Chris Ware's first graphic novel, "Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth," offer an apology. It is difficult to tell what exactly Ware is apologizing for: The note is a brief, heartbreaking essay on how closely (and somewhat accidentally) the details in "Jimmy Corrigan" align to Ware's own life and estranged father, with whom he briefly reconnected. Ware had intended to give the book to his father after it had been published, but couldn't: His father died of a heart attack before Ware had had the chance to spend more than a few hours with him. It's a weird apology. It feels more like a tiny shout into the dark cruelty of the world.

Weird apologies, however, are a strong suit for Ware. He apologized a lot throughout his conversation with Hamza Walker at Thursday's Visiting Artist Program (VAP) talk. He apologized at length when he took a sip of water. He apologized when he felt like he was misinterpreting a question. He apologized mid-sentence at one point, adding, "Anybody who wants to leave, can. I won't be offended." In fact, the first thing that came out of Ware's mouth when he sat down for the talk was, "I profoundly apologize for whatever I bring here." After the audience laughed, he said, "One of the reasons I became a cartoonist was so I wouldn't have to do this."

Sitting on the huge stage in front of a full audience and a grand projection of a sample of his work, Ware looked strikingly approachable. He wore khakis and a button-down shirt with his sleeves rolled up, and he kept sitting on his hands and shifting his feet. He looked a lot like an optimistic guy at the beginning of a promising first date. If you didn't know differently, you'd never guess that he was one of the most celebrated living artists, or that he had had a massive impact on the way people worldwide saw comics.

Ware is one — and a significant one, to say the least — in a line of cartoonists who transformed the word "graphic novel" from a superhero-comics-digest term into something with a lot more possibility and breadth. In the shadows of Robert Crumb, Harvey Pekar, and Art Spiegelman (who became a mentor for Ware when he was at the University of Texas), Ware and others began exploring narrative, memoir, and realistic fiction in comic form. Ware published "Jimmy Corrigan" in 2003, which was named one of Amazon.com's 100 Books to Read in a Lifetime. He published "Building Stories" in 2012: An unprecedented box set made up of 14 gorgeous color comic books.

Ware's technical skill and obsessive attention to detail are unusual for a comic artist. That makes sense, considering his training: Ware studied painting and printmaking at the University of Texas and later pursued his MFA in printmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Perhaps the main reason Ware ultimately committed

himself to comics, which came out multiple times in the conversation, is that comics are unpretentious and accessible. They aren't to be marveled at on a gallery wall, or thought about for long periods of time; they exist to be consumed quickly and without a lot of mental energy. They make art and story available to all.

"The difference between comics and visual art is that visual art is meant to be looked at, and comics are meant to be read," Ware said, responding to a question about whether he ever had competing interests. "It's like the difference between speaking and singing."

Ware wants to make the kind of art that someone can take home without having to spend a lot of money; he wants art to be open and available to everyone, without the distance that seems to exist between a painting and the viewer at a museum.

"When you see a painting in a museum, and you don't understand it, you blame your own lack of knowledge. When you see a comic strip, and you don't get it, you think the guy who made it is an idiot," Ware said, smiling.

Something immediately apparent about Ware in watching him talk is that he is exactly the type of everyman he wants to make art for. He squarely eschews pretension, refusing to talk about "the art scene." When he spoke about his influences, he came off more like an excited, nerdy fanboy than anything else. As he clicked through slides showing the work of George Herriman (Krazy Kat), Charles Schultz (Peanuts), Frank King (Gasoline Alley), and Charles Burns (Black Hole), he spoke exclusively in superlatives. Even as he showed work by up-and-coming artists who are less established than Ware, he waxed on in reverence and awe.

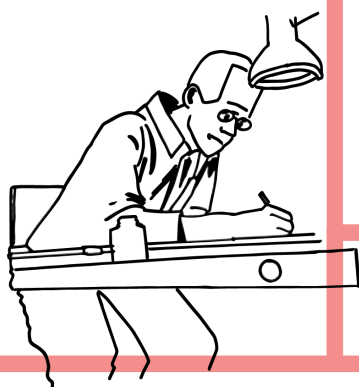
It is exactly this quality which makes Ware such an exceptional artist: He has a deep empathy and love for his fellow man, and he seems to feel a sense of responsibility to create art that is deserving of the eyes of others. This is why he spends an entire week drawing just a page of comics, and apologizes for work that is all-but flawless: He believes in humanity, and wants his work to be a contribution.

Ware's conversation with Walker served as this year's William and Stephanie Sick Distinguished Professor lecture, and also marked the inaugural event in SAIC's VAP — a public forum that will this year feature Jeff Koons, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Kunle Adeyemi, Sarah Vowell, Rona Pondick, Richard Mosse, and Christian Boltanski. Ware will be teaching at SAIC this year as a part of the William and Stephanie Sick Distinguished Professor program.

► Sophie Lucido Johnson is the web editor for *F*, and has written for *Jezebel*, *The Nation*, *McSweeney's*, and more. She is also the editor-in-chief of the literary humor magazine *Neutrons Protons*. She is in the MFAW program at SAIC.



It feels more like a tiny shout into the dark cruelty of the world.





# Costume Ideas

Halloween at art school is unexpectedly sexy

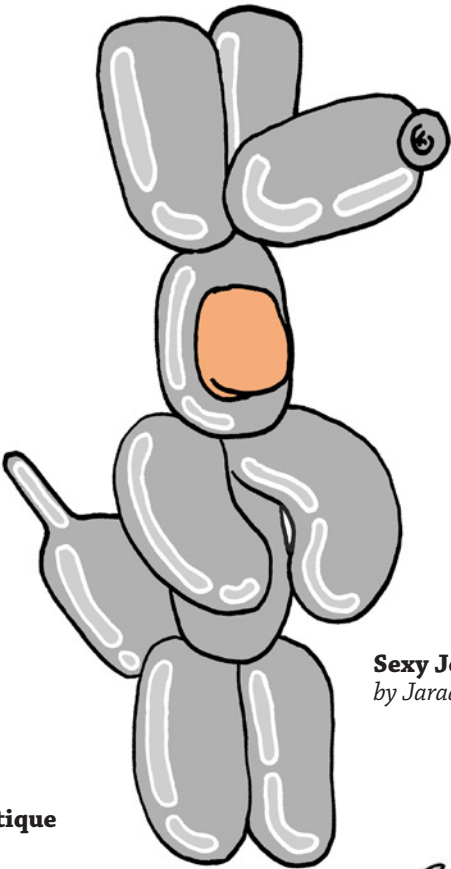
► Jarad Solomon, Alex Kostiw, Zach Cooper, Priyoshi Kapur



**Sexy Art Institute  
Lion in December**  
*by Jarad Solomon*



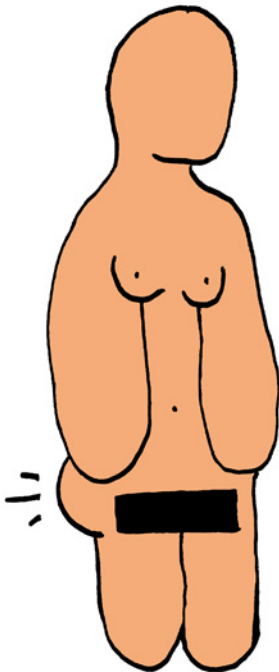
**Sexy anxious art  
student during critique**  
*by Alex Kostiw*



**Sexy Jeff Koons balloon dog**  
*by Jarad Solomon*



**Sexy moon head**  
*by Alex Kostiw*



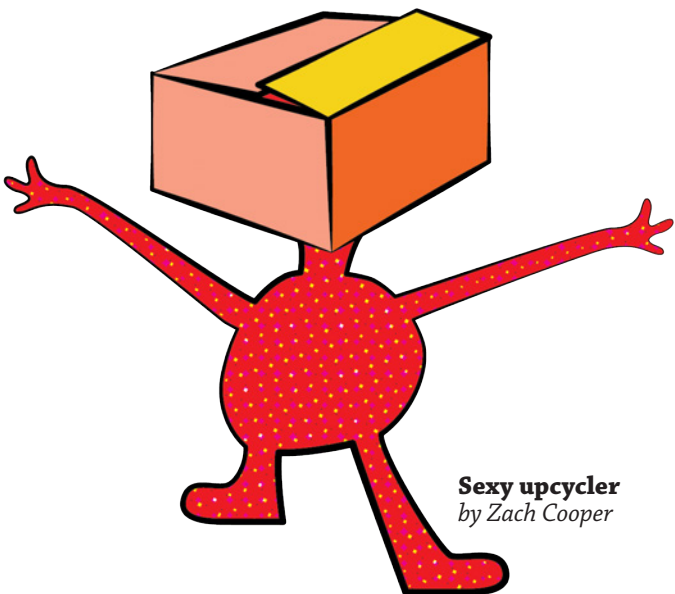
**Sexy performance  
artist**  
*by Jarad Solomon*



**Sexy prepared fish**  
*by Priyoshi Kapur*



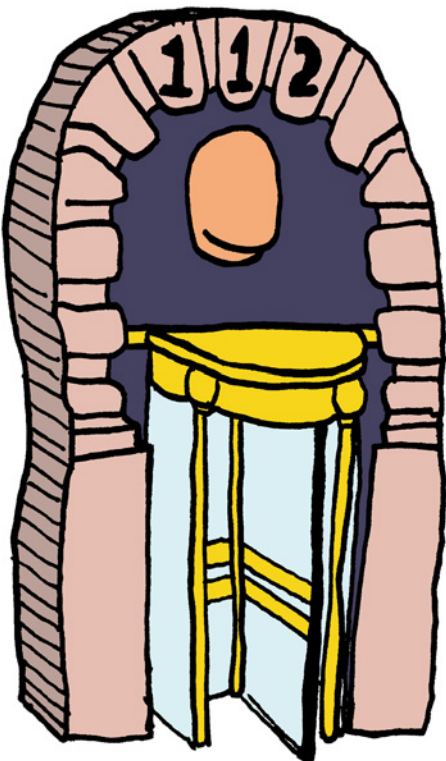
**Sexy pen**  
*by Alex Kostiw*



**Sexy upcycler**  
*by Zach Cooper*



**Sexy owl on the  
back of your head**  
*by Alex Kostiw*



**Sexy MacLean**  
*by Jarad Solomon*



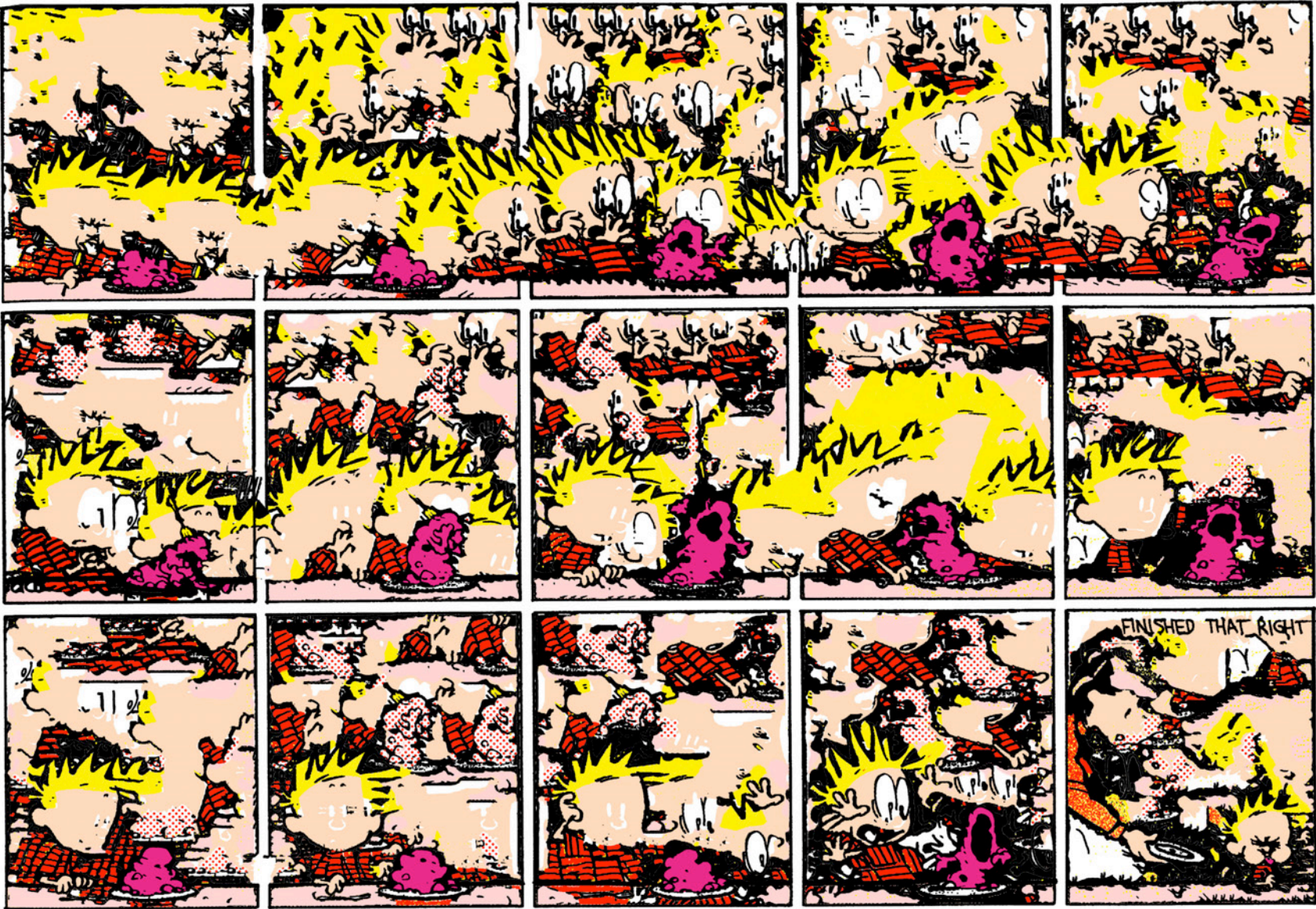




# Halvin and Cobbes

INSPIRED BY  
BILL WATTERSON

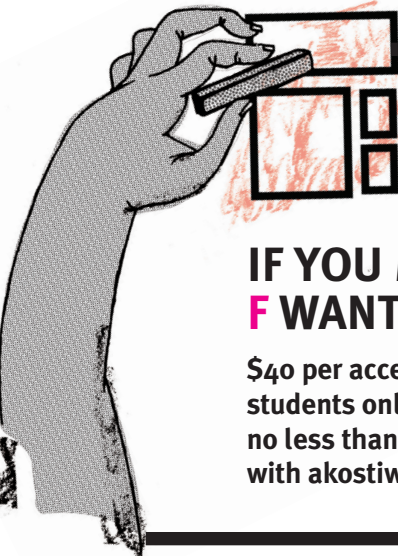
A SERIES BY  
JARAD SOLOMON



► Jenna Kang



► Dena Springer



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CLOCKWISE  
FROM TOP RIGHT

Nick Cave  
*Speak Louder*, 2011  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Jack Shainman Gallery,  
New York  
Photo: James  
Prinz Photography

MCA Family Day  
Photo: Joshua Longbrake  
© MCA Chicago

Kyle Abraham/  
Abraham.In.Motion  
*When the Wolves Came in*  
Sam Pratt, Catherine  
Ellis Kirk  
Photo: Tim Barden

