

Arts, Culture and Community | The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

fnews magazine

12
15

Renoir Sucks
Gentrification
in Pilsen
2015 BFA Show



The F News December Chewbacca Grant Winner: Eric Perez



A Letter From the Editor and Art Director

■ Megan Byrne & Jarad Solomon

Here at F News we've got you and your holiday shopping in mind. Picking the right gift wrap for your loved ones is no walk in the park. It's a trudge through a salty slush of stressful decisions. Should you go with some classic non-denominational abstract paper? Maybe with shiny colors and lines? Or how about some heart warming kitsch? Santa heads? Snowmen? Evenly spaced snowflakes or ornaments? Naked elves? We're partial to the elves.

So we've made a gift for you, the gift of sparing you from buying wrapping paper. This month, F has created three different covers as a gift for you. That's right! We're that nice!

On the editorial side we also have some gifts for you, including an interview with Amanda Gutierrez that talks about the serious ramifications of gentrification in the Pilsen neighborhood; a deeper look into the much criticized Renoir Sucks At Painting movement; and student features from the fall 2015 BFA show preview. Staff writer Bronté Mansfield takes a look at the failure of the recent film "A Light Beneath Their Feet," Arts Editor Ryan Blocker entertains some overlooked aspects of the Henry Louis Gates lecture last month at the Diversity symposium, and the F Staff offer some alternative candidates for the Democratic Party presidential primaries.

Whatever you're celebrating this month, we're happy to help you do it.



Gift Wrap One
"Orange You Glad It's December?"
by Alex Kostiw



Gift Wrap Two
"Dashing through the Globes"
by Amber Lynn Huff



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The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

fnewsmagazine since 1984

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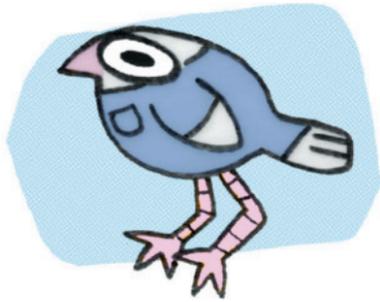
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In Brief

■ Caleb Kaiser



Kit For Cure

The pathologists who examine tissue samples for cancer are typically highly educated, rigorously trained, and part of an experienced treatment team. Factoring in undergraduate education, medical school, residencies and fellowships, more than a decade of schooling is required to be a pathologist, and even then it can be difficult to identify cancer in certain tissue samples. One group of American doctors realized that good eyesight is an asset when examining tissue, and that pigeons have very good eyesight. Taking the obvious next step, the doctors then organized an experiment wherein pigeons were trained to identify cancerous tissue samples in medical images. After 14 days, the pigeons individually reported an 85 percent success rate. As a group (wherein they would “vote” on each image), they averaged 99 percent. Researchers were quick to reassure us that they were not suggesting we replace pathologists with kits (the term of veneration for pigeons.)



Young Carson ft. Freedom

If you haven't paid much attention to the Republican presidential primary, let us catch you up. Donald Trump is racist, xenophobic, and seemingly unstoppable in the polls. Trump's most threatening opponent is Dr. Ben Carson, who discovered his love for surgery after trying to stab a relative. After recounting his violent (and possibly fictional) youth, wherein he allegedly attacked fellow children with bricks and knives, Carson saw virtually no improvement in the polls. Deciding he needed a new strategy, he released a short rap aimed at a younger black audience. The track, titled “Freedom”, features Carson stump speeches interspersed with verses by Aspiring Mogul, a rapper you never knew existed until this moment. No word on a forthcoming Trump diss track, but we remain hopeful.



Coming at the Cruz Missile

Speaking of Republican candidates who have both passionate fan bases and no hope of election, Ted Cruz took shots at President Obama recently. President Obama gave an interview in Manila where he addressed the refugee admittance policy put forth by many Republicans, one in which only Christian refugees would be given sanctuary. Obama said, “I cannot think of a more potent recruitment tool for ISIL than some of the rhetoric that's been coming out of here during the course of this debate.” Cruz, deviating from his typical tactics of questioning the president's religion or place of birth, responded with a tried-and-true comeback, telling Obama to “come back and say it to my face.” We can only assume this telling-to-his-face would take place behind football field after third period.



Justice Department VS. Gainz

The US Justice Department has indicted six executives of USPlabs, the company who brought you sweet, sweet gainz potions like Jack3d and OxyElite. Anyone familiar with the science of muscle sculpting will understand the company values a solid “Straight Flexin” Instagram post more than healthy livers, which more than once had to be transplanted into their customers. After news of the indictments broke, shares of beloved pump providers, including GNC and Vitamin Shoppe, fell steeply. Internet superstar and patron saint of gainz, Dom Mazetti, has gone on record saying that the government is seizing Jack3d and “using it to rebirth stars” We are at this time unable to confirm any allegations of mass-stromy by the government.

School News

■ Violet Callis



SAIC Announces Engagement with Homan Square

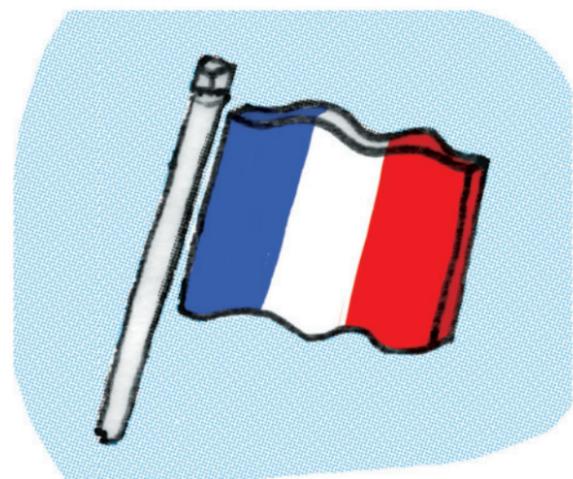
On Tuesday, North Lawndale leaders announced that the School of the Art Institute of Chicago is among eight non-profit groups moving into the Sears Tower located on the Sears, Roebuck and Co. campus in Homan Square. Mayor Rahm Emanuel was joined by SAIC President Walter Massey to celebrate the reopening of historic tower.

Scheherazade Tillet, an SAIC artist-in-residence, will move into the tower in December and the school will start offering courses early next year.

SAIC has made a long-term commitment to providing educational art programming at the new Nichols Tower, said Walter Massey, president

of the Art Institute. In the spring semester, Tillet will teach an art therapy course, and in the fall, Cheryl Pope, an SAIC Fashion Department faculty member, will lead a course.

The Art Institute will also team up with other nonprofits in the tower to lead three pilot courses: “Management Studio,” an art-in-culture management project geared toward 18-24 year olds in the community, “Inside Innovative Minds,” an eight-week afterschool program for students from North Lawndale charter schools, and “That Reminds Me of a Time,” a class focused on writing, live presentation and digital archiving for students ages 12 and up.



Students Studying Abroad Safe after Paris Attacks

After the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, School of the Art Institute of Chicago staff were able to quickly make contact with two SAIC students studying in Paris. The students confirmed they are safe and not in need of any immediate support. SAIC President Walter Massey wrote in an email, “Lawrence Rodriguez, Director of International Affairs, and his team remain in contact with these students to ensure they receive support from SAIC as well as their host institution.”

Ciera Olsen, who is studying photography at Ecole Nationale Suprieure des Beaux-art in Paris, told F, “I was home alone at the time and didn't even know it had happened until I received a message from

a family member asking if I was alright. I immediately googled and discovered what had happened. I couldn't believe it. It didn't even feel real at first but looking outside it was clear it was. Instead of looking out my apartment window to see people joyfully out late drinking, I saw the streets empty except for police officers doing rounds and carrying guns nearly the size of my legs. It really started to hit me at Monday when there was a vigil at school, during that moment of silence as the bells at Notre Dame rang I could feel the pain and sadness in the room. I am beyond grateful to be safe.”

Massey wrote, “We are saddened by the recent attacks, and our hearts go out to all of those affected.”



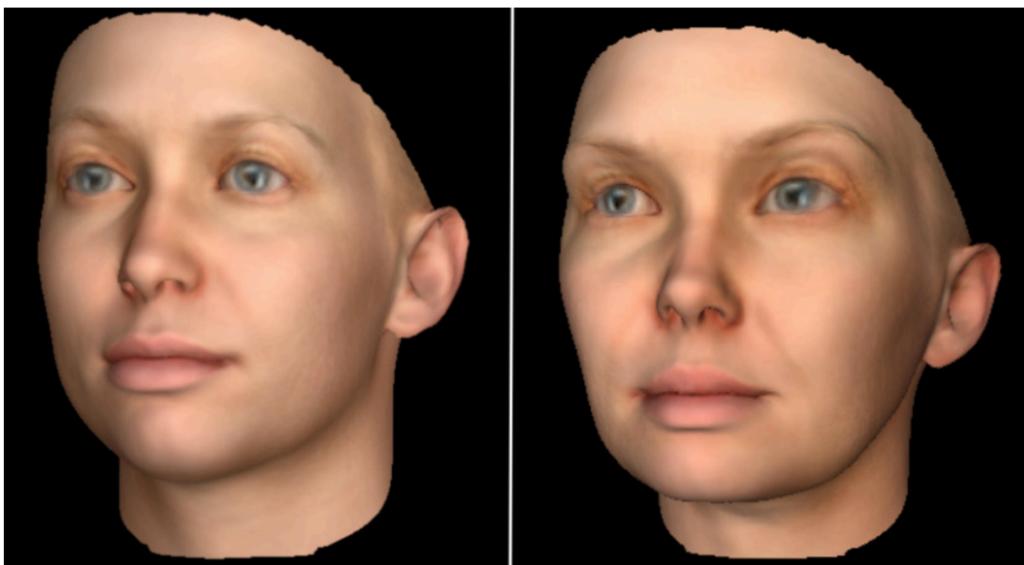
All right world.

Here we are again.

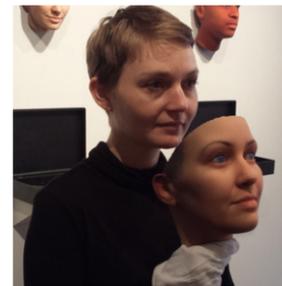
Another month, another three in-progress "doings" from the SAIC community. We've got Heather, a professor in the Art and Technology Studies department; Andrew, an active member of the brand new Bio Art Lab at SAIC; and Alexandra, who I met at Open Studio Night. She's cool.

"What The F" is a monthly look at whatever strange things three of SAIC's community members are doing. Go to Fnewsmagazine.com to find the post-month follow up.

■ 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



Heather Dewey-Hagborg



Forensic DNA phenotype portrait of Chelsea Manning with the sex parameter left "neutral" (left) and assigned female (right). Radical Love is an homage and exploration of gender identity stereotypes in forensic DNA phenotyping. The portrait was developed in collaboration with Paper Magazine in response to whistleblower Chelsea Manning's inability to be photographed while incarcerated as a political prisoner.



Andrew Rutherford



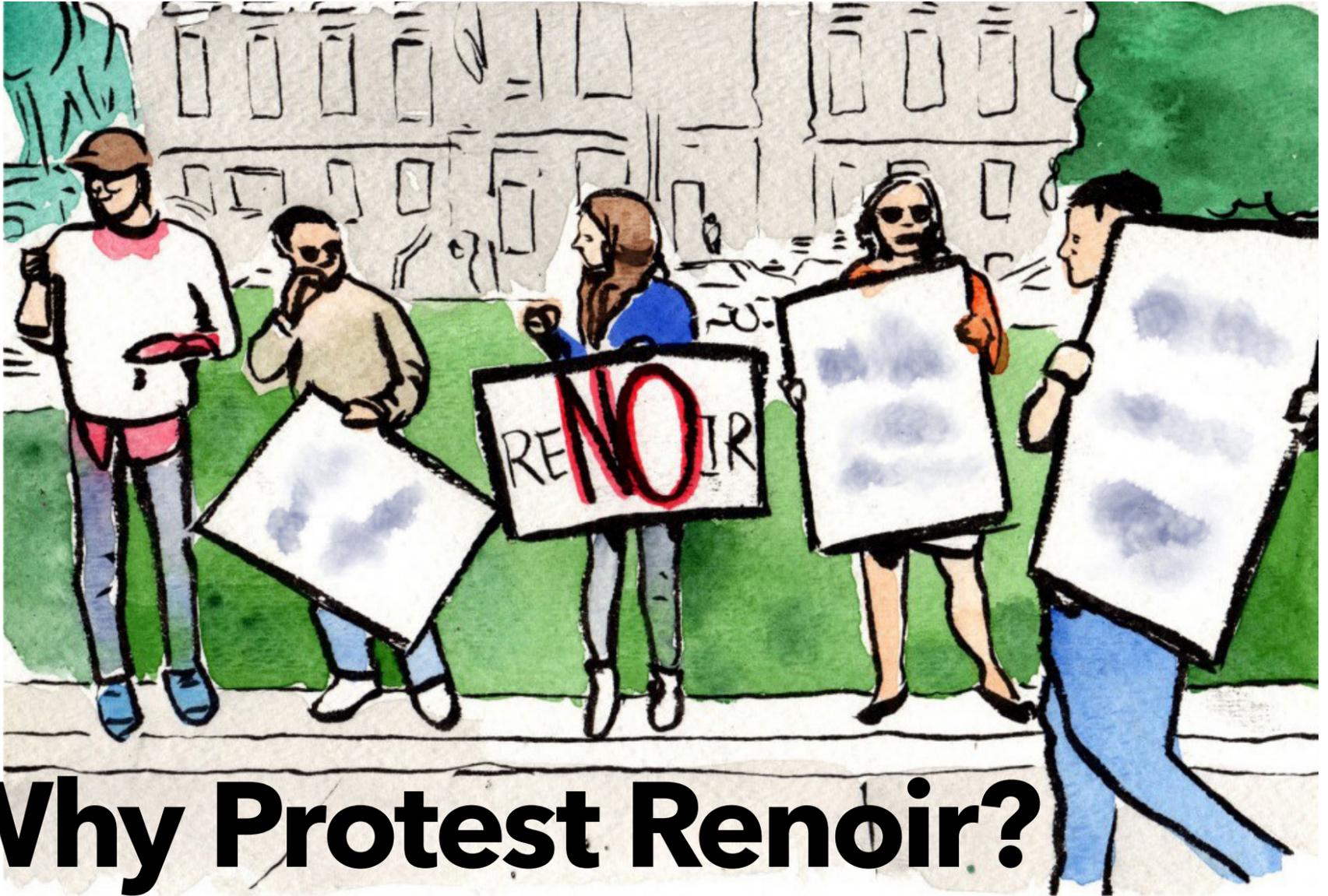
Kombucha Synthesizer explores the potential for collaboration between humans and non-humans. A bio electric SCOBY controls three digital oscillators. You tune the organism and the organism tunes you.



Alexandra Peyton-Levine



I've been thinking about language, and what goes unspoken. By taking videos of well-known speakers and cutting the footage down to exclude spoken words, I aim to isolate the moments of contemplation and expression that exist between their words. This edited video of the President addressing the Charleston church shooting shows his pensive pauses and expressions of deep emotion that may not be completely addressed by his words.



Why Protest Renoir?

When faux-picketing accidentally gets real

■ Sophie Lucido Johnson

While Renoir Sucks at Painting started as a joke, it's turned into an opportunity.

The Renoir Sucks At Painting movement set up camp outside the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) two weeks ago. With more than 60 Renoir paintings in its collection, the AIC was the perfect candidate for a protest. It joined the ranks of the Frick and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Norton Simon in Los Angeles; and the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, which have also been protested by the self-described “grassroots movement.” Since their inception, these protests have garnered the attention of the entire Internet, with every major news organization — The Guardian, the New York Times, NPR, The Atlantic, and plenty more — reporting on them.

In Chicago, roughly two dozen people — including the movement’s organizer, Brooklyn-native Max Geller — stood in front of the museum distributing flyers advertising their Instagram page (it’s @renoir_sucks_at_painting, and it’s very amusing), and barf bags that read, in hand-written CAPS, “IN CASE OF RENOIR.”

There is little about this viral protest sensation that hasn’t been written already. Geller is a generous spokesman, and has given lengthy interviews to news outlets all over the world. The first wave of stories all fell under the, “Isn’t this crazy?” “news” category. Write-ups and photo galleries splashed the front pages of Weird-But-True click-bait sites for a few days in early October.

Then people began to get critical. Facebook erupted in fury that anyone would take time to protest something so trivial as Renoir’s painting in an era of real suffering and injustice. The Boston Globe ran an opinion piece calling the protest “sophomoric,” and concluded that it “was not so much a protest as a coordinated cry for attention.”

Lately, though, the media has started to pay more serious attention to Renoir Sucks at Painting. ArtNet News picked up the story that Geller is a full-time political activist, focusing most of his energy on Pro-Palestinian issues. (Indeed, Geller had flown to Chicago not to decry Renoir, but to attend a protest outside the Jewish National Fund’s national conference.)

One of the most interesting pieces of media about Renoir Sucks At Painting is an

interview with Geller from the WGN Chicago morning show. The video shows one show host sarcastically thanking Geller for “fighting the good fight,” while the other host laughs incessantly, proving to the audience that she gets the joke. She opens by saying, “Seriously, people are thinking this is all for a joke, right? This is all for a spoof? I mean, seriously.”

Geller, in a purple dress shirt and tie, eyebrows raised, says, “I mean, Renoir really does suck at painting.” The hosts seem displeased with his earnestness.

“You called me the next Sam Adams, the new son of liberty,” Geller says. Then he adds, “But I just saw that on Saturday in Chicago, 66 young Sam Adamses, literal sons of liberty, got arrested protesting outside the police convention, and you’re interviewing me.”

The news anchors don’t want to talk about the “66 young Sam Adamses” who got arrested in Chicago. (Those protesters were among hundreds of people gathering in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign; they marched outside the International Association of Chiefs of Police’s annual conference exposition on October 25.) They want to joke with Geller about Renoir, and they seem frustrated that he’s unwilling to play along to their satisfaction.

“The thing right before me was they were talking to a woman whose job it is to photograph rich people who want pictures of themselves ballroom dancing with their dogs. I’m pleased to tell you that I did not succumb to the pressure of laughing with them,” Geller told me over the phone.

In general, it seems, Geller has stopped laughing. While Renoir Sucks at Painting started as a joke (yeah, he admits it), it’s turned into an opportunity, and Geller is too smart an activist to not take advantage of it.

The spot on WGN Chicago had been carefully planned. When Geller was invited to do the show, he called friends and activists in his network to discuss what he could use the television platform for. They decided that the best use of air time would be to bring attention to the Black Youth Project 100, which the morning news show would not otherwise have covered.

And that’s not the only conversation that has come out of the viral success of Renoir

Sucks at Painting. The campaign has opened up conversation around access, white supremacy, and feminism in the art world at large.

“I’m very interested in using the platform of Renoir Sucks At Painting in giving a week of posts to feminist writers who can talk about their experience looking at Renoir’s misogynistic mythologizing of women,” Geller said.

At the same time, Geller’s unwilling to concede that protesting oppressive structures in art was ever the point of Renoir Sucks at Painting. The point of Renoir Sucks at Painting, he insists, is that Renoir sucks at painting. All the useful conversations that have blossomed in effect are what Geller describes as “happy coincidences.”

“I do sort of feel like this is a Pygmalion project, or Faulkner’s parchment paper. People see whatever they want to see in it,” Geller said.

What is perhaps most interesting about Renoir Sucks At Painting is its traction. People continue to be charmed, annoyed, abhorring, and opinionated about it. Its number of Instagram followers — about 10,600 when this piece was published — continues to grow daily. Renoir Sucks at Painting seems to have found the sweet spot between a joke taken to its ultimate extreme and the real frustrations around structures of cultural oppression.

In conversation, Geller comes off as a little unsure of what he is supposed to say about all of this, but he’s articulate and impassioned enough to pull it off. Having spent most of his adult life in self-described “movement spaces,” Geller knows what he believes, and he’s equipped with the rhetoric to talk about it to anyone who will listen.

“It’s all very weird and interesting. Never in my wildest dreams did I think this would happen,” Geller said. “Don’t get me wrong: It’s not a bad place to be.”

■ Sophie Lucido Johnson is the web editor for F, and has written for The Guardian, VICE, Jezebel, The Nation, and others. She is a cat person.



Drinks We'd Walk For



6 best Happy Hours within walking distance of school

■ Sarah Wheat

Have you ever found yourself sitting through a “Wandering Uterus” or “Spun Out of Butter” seminar (yes, these are real classes) at SAIC and just thought, “Man, I really need a drink right now.” For us here at F this happens at least once a day, so we have made it our job to scope out all of the best places to get a drink within walking distance of campus. We are like walking encyclopedias of happy hour schedules and that does not just pertain to drinks, but food as well! So, if you are a grad student who just needs a drink every now and then to keep from self-destructing or punching someone in the face, or if you are just someone living on a low budget who wants to meet up with friends in the evening, this is the list for you. If you have any other suggestions that are not mentioned here, make sure to write us on Facebook or Twitter (@fnewsmagazine) to let us know what your favorite spots close to school are.

Italian Village

0.3 miles from School
71 W. Monroe St.

This is by far the weirdest place I've been in Chicago thus far. That includes strange art galleries out in industrial Pilsen and a random Airstream (camper) put on top of a building in Ravenswood. Despite its weirdness, you should not be deterred from visiting this Epcot-like version of a small, northern Italian village. Walk upstairs and take a look around, but you should aim to sit in the bar area located to the left when you walk in because that is where the magic is. On weekdays from 4-6 p.m., as long as you sit at the bar and have an alcoholic beverage, you can enjoy ALL YOU CAN EAT pizza for free. That's right, FREE. It's insane. You have to check it out.

Plymouth Pub, Restaurant, and Rooftop Bar

0.4 miles from School
327 S. Plymouth Ct.

Plymouth Pub is the second closest location to school with by far the best deals. The atmosphere is far from fancy and presents a chill place to relax with friends in the afternoon. This bar has so many happy hour deals for food and drink that it might be hard

deciphering what is actually offered. The good news is that no matter what you order, it is probably discounted somehow during happy hour, which is Monday-Friday 3-6 p.m. Every day there is a different food special for \$4, but select appetizers and beers are half price every day. If you are really in the mood, or have a group of six who all want the same beer, a beer tower is definitely the way to go.

Flaco's Tacos

0.8 miles from School
725 S. Dearborn St.

Flaco's Tacos is a special favorite of the F staff because there's really no going wrong with this tiny Mexican joint. The food is normally cheap, but the drink deals are really where it's at. There's a different drink special every day, all day, but our favorites have to be Monday (\$3 margaritas), Tuesday (\$3 sangria), Wednesday (\$8 coronarita, a Corona turned upside down in a huge margarita), and Saturday (\$4 Sangritas). Needless to say, we come here a lot. If you want to eat for REALLY cheap, come on Tuesday for \$1 special tacos.

Joe Fish

1.0 miles from School
445 N. Dearborn St.

If you are into oysters, this might just be the best deal you can find close to campus or maybe even Chicago. While having \$1 oysters every day (even the weekends) from 3-7 p.m. is not particularly special in Chicago, having a delicious \$5 Sauvignon Blanc to pair them with is. Treat yourself and enjoy these extremely delicious oysters (you can pick which specific town on the East and West coasts you want to order from), while snickering about how much all the well-dressed people around you are paying for their non-oyster meals. If you are trying to pre-game for a night out with a group of about eight friends or are just in the mood to drink a nice cocktail out of a super fancy punch bowl, try one of Joe Fish's delicious punch bowl options. It ends up being around \$10 per person if you are a group of about eight with each person refilling their glass twice. Trust me, you will leave ready for a night of dancing.

The Library

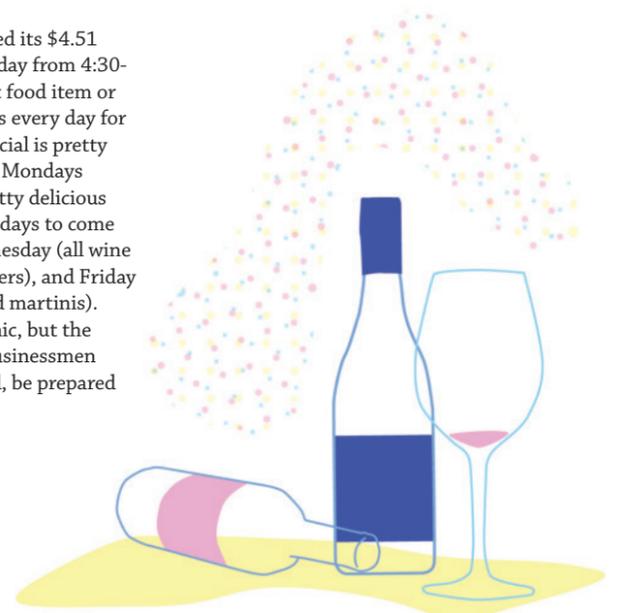
1.2 miles from School
230 W. Kinzie St.

This location is a little bit farther away and somewhat fancier, but totally worth the trip. Located inside of Gilt Bar, the secret speakeasy-like atmosphere of The Library will make you feel like Al Capone in the 1920s. The interior is beautiful and the wait staff is excellent. Simply approach the hostess stand and let them know that you would like to sit in The Library. Here's the kicker: While this bar has pretty steep prices on food and drink, their house wines are \$5 a glass and come in very sizable portions. I would recommend stopping by for just a glass of wine and to soak up the classy atmosphere. Try to sit in one of the round, velvet booths. If you feel like venturing into more expensive territory, the cocktails are some of the best I've had in Chicago, and I've tried plenty.

Zed451

1.4 miles from School
739 N. Clark St.

Two weeks ago, Zed451 started its \$4.51 happy hour deal. Monday-Friday from 4:30-7 p.m. you can enjoy a specific food item or category of drink that changes every day for \$4.51. What they have on special is pretty amazing. If you're hungry, on Mondays you can order any of their pretty delicious flatbreads for \$4.51. The best days to come if you want to drink are Wednesday (all wine by the glass), Thursday (all beers), and Friday (Grey Goose mixed drinks and martinis). The atmosphere is modern, chic, but the clientele consists mostly of businessmen wanting to let loose. That said, be prepared for it to get pretty rowdy.



■ Sarah Wheat is the Social Media Manager for F Newsmagazine as well as a graduate student in Modern and Contemporary Art History at SAIC.



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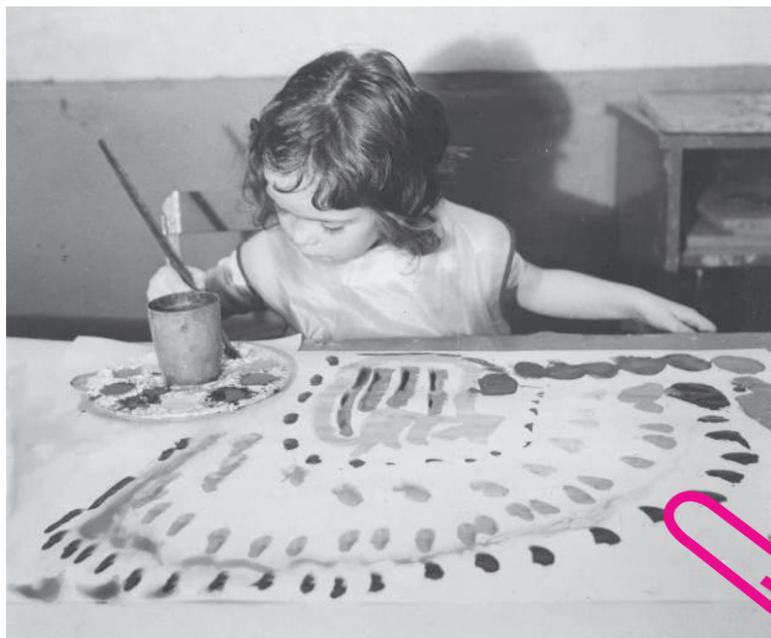
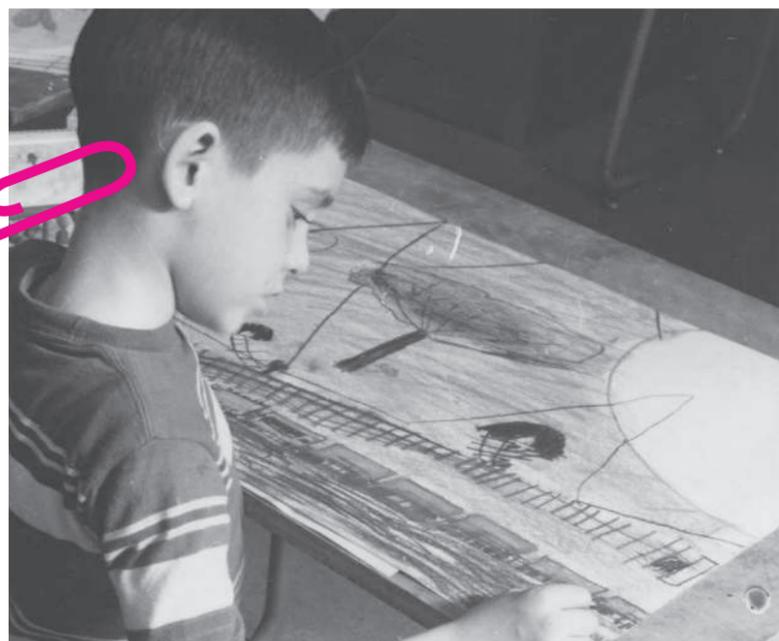
Celebrating SAIC's 150th birthday by sharing cute photos of kids making art

■ Megan Byrne



The School of Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has a long history providing arts education for children, and most recently, has opened its doors to Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In 2012, CPS announced its Arts Education plan, and said that “each school and community, no matter the neighborhood or academic emphasis, will be called upon to embrace the notion that each and every student must be provided with the arts as an integral part of the academic day.” Some of the goals include art classes for CPS students, offering opportunities for students and parents, and providing development for a successful CPS art curriculum.

SAIC reached out to CPS in 2013 and provided aid for their plan. In honor of SAIC's noble action to not selectively provide art education, but help create educational platforms for all neighborhoods of Chicago, here are some photos of children at SAIC through the years painting sailboats, surpassing their elders with focus and talent, and being really, really cute.



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A Lens on Pilsen

Filmmaker Amanda Gutierrez talks gentrification

■ Sabrina Greig

Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood is a place of extremes. The neighborhood's principle artery, 18th street, greets residents with colorful murals against sweet aromas of fresh baked bread. A few blocks north on 15th Street, a rusty freight train zooms by to carry shipments to the Loop. South of the pink line CTA stop is the coffee shop Bow Truss, whose minimal aesthetic welcomes hipster newcomers to the neighborhood. Beyond its charming exterior, Pilsen is changing.

The steady encroachment of trendy coffee shops and contemporary artist venues has made it impossible to overlook the capitalist cycle that has targeted several working-class neighborhoods across the nation: Gentrification. Gentrification, the gradual displacement of working class communities by middle income groups, is a looming reality to Pilsen residents. Though the neighborhood has been gentrifying for the past 11 years, the transformation of spaces into upper middle-class cultural meccas is making it increasingly difficult for long-time residents to stay.

Pilsen's hybridity has served as a source of inspiration for School of the Art Institute (SAIC) artist and professor Amanda Gutierrez from Mexico City. Gutierrez said, "In my second year of graduate school at SAIC, all of my work was related to immigration and the Mexican diaspora here in Chicago. What my work tries to emphasize, though, is that it's not only Mexicans in Pilsen who have experienced this type of displacement. We have to understand Pilsen as a neighborhood made by migrants. At first, it was inhabited by people from the Czech Republic, and then Mexican migrants that

arrived to Chicago in the 1950s. This fusion between two migrant cultures within one space is what fascinates me."

Gutierrez uses documentary film to tackle the cultural erasure that can occur when gentrification targets a community. She led a walk as part of her project *Out of the Map: Critical Itinerary of Displacements*, that departed from High Concept Laboratories in Pilsen. She had the opportunity to screen her 2005 documentary "En Memoria," in which she additionally provided live reenactments of some of the interviews featured in the film.

"One of the main characteristics of this documentary is that you don't see talking heads expressing ideas; you only see voice overs and the empty spaces that people live in. This is because displaying a person's face often induces audience members to render an identity, and in this case, I'm trying to highlight the way in which the race identity in gentrification can be very problematic," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez believes that neutralizing the identities of participants allows viewers to look more complexly at the issue of race, which, in her opinion, is a feature of the capitalist system. According to Gutierrez, it is used as a strategy to brew antagonisms amongst community members.

Gutierrez is from Mexico City and says, "Even though I'm Mexican, it doesn't mean that I'm not part of the problem or the phenomenon. After talking to several people from alternate perspectives, I understand that it's a problem more so about class, than race," she said.

An artist community like SAIC can unknowingly contribute to the process of gentrification because of this often-unspoken

element of social class. Gutierrez said, "Art institutions play an important role in the gentrification in Pilsen, not because they want to be gentrifiers, but because art is one of the most common commodities, the real estate market uses to attract attention to a neighborhood. They're looking for something that's fashionable and hip."

Gutierrez's art practice brings attention to the ways in which artists can be used as vehicles to advance a political agenda. As artists and art enthusiasts, we must be aware of our function within a system larger than ourselves.

"Artists are used as the scapegoats to rehab a place culturally, aesthetically — we essentially become a capital tool. Sadly if you have good marketing, you can make a Mexican mural a really enticing advertisement for the neighborhood. Which is what's happening right now. In the end, we start bringing attention to a genre of art and culture that doesn't speak to the original community which was already there," she said.

So how do we help end this cycle? Gutierrez underscores the importance of awareness. "We should be aware that our culture is being used and exploited without us even noticing. This means we can either impose our own artistic universe within a gentrifying space, or we can contribute to it and share our talent with others. And with my knowledge and art practice, I invite people to share ideas together," she said.

■ Sabrina Greig is a second year graduate student in Art History, Theory, and Criticism and passionate about the social politics behind architectural history and urban planning.

Artists are used as the scapegoats to rehab a place culturally, aesthetically — we essentially become a capital tool.



Unexpected Spaces

Playing hide-and-seek at the Chicago Architecture Biennial

■ Jac Kuntz



The Chicago Architectural Biennial is the first of what hopes to be a long history of global architectural experimentation, research, celebration, and discourse. With over 100 architects and artists from more than 30 countries, the exhibition is a reflection of a breadth of innovation and provides insight into some of contemporary architecture's progressive trends. One trend, that of activating under-utilized space, proves that architecture can be flexible, self-aware, and conscientious.

Anyone who has played hide-and-seek with a toddler can attest to youngsters' inventive use of space. Visiting the Chicago Architectural Biennial, memories of wedging oneself like a contortionist into the awkward space behind the bookcase, in a cabinet, or under a bed in an effort to be awarded the glory of "last one found," are fresh in the mind. Children are untainted by conventional notions of proper utility. In short, they use objects and spaces however they very darn well please. It takes a great deal of "unlearning" for adults to approach form and space with this mode of creativity, but it is this kind of creativity that many architects of the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial harnessed to activate unused or out of use spaces, heralding a new trend in the field: The Lost-and-Found Space.

"The Lost Space of Architecture in the Context of Urban Lost Space," by Alireza Memarian and Navid Niazkar, calls attention to these concepts of "underutilized" space. The piece suggests a kind of responsibility on the part of the architect, creating the space and being aware of the qualitative aspects of space in design. It states, "Awareness of space is more than a mental activity ... it occupies all domains of our sense and feelings, which needs a vast presence of essence to find a perfect response [and utility]." It is an interesting notion, to assert that architects be held to a kind of ethical accountability for the proper usage of the space they created, and wouldn't exist if they hadn't. It does seem justified from a perspective of greater scope, in light of global social problems like overpopulation, overcrowding, and market production excess.

Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates recently reclaimed what was already available, transforming and resurrecting something not in use with the Stony Island Arts Bank in Chicago's South Side — a cultural repository serving the local community. All (Zone), a firm from Bangkok, Thailand, activated the

unused space of an urban parking garage to construct their "Light House" prototype for sustainable and economically minimalistic living. Moss Architectural firm constructed a full-scale house, "The Corridor House," within the cavernous ballroom of the cultural center. The prototype proposed an unconventional blueprint, one comprised entirely of hallways and open passages — spaces usually only occupied by wall décor. "Rural Collage: Strategies for the Chinese Countryside" by Rural Urban Framework, took this idea of under-utilized space to a grander scale of urban design as a strategic means to shift congested city populations to available, outlying landscapes.

Some firms demonstrated ingenuity within the Biennial exhibition space itself, using it as a micro-model for architectural possibilities. The arching, skeletal steel structure of "Passage," by SO-IL of New York, enhanced the experience of a hallway ramp, drawing the eye up to a space usually void. "Makeshift," by Studio Albori in Milan, Italy, showcased their improvised reuse of architectural elements under the stairs of the third floor, creating a private and nuanced space for lounging.

Of all of the firms in the exhibition, Atelier Bow-Wow was granted the most complex space to activate. "Piranesi Circus" uses the "inaccessible but visible," four-story courtyard in the center of the building. The firm designed the space with the whimsical mind of a child, using suspension bridges, ladders, swings, and staircases that hung from and ascended to lost-and-found, unseen places of the imagination.

Most of these projects took one of two forms: a playfully inventive use of space, designed for the nooks and crannies of the exhibition, or a highly idealized proposal for population distribution and accommodation. With the proper funding and support, the idealized plans for communal living and urban organization might be actualized. The significance of the Biennial is its ability to spark the discourse that paves the way for grand-scale solutions. And though ephemeral, the imaginative, site-specific designs are a part of that too — singular examples of what could be a future of conscientious and creative use of unactivated space.

■ Jac Kuntz is a masters candidate in the New Arts Journalism Graduate Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

1 "Randolph" PEDRO&JUANA (Mexico City, Mexico) 2015. Team: Maximillian Reuss, Ana Paula Ruiz Galindo

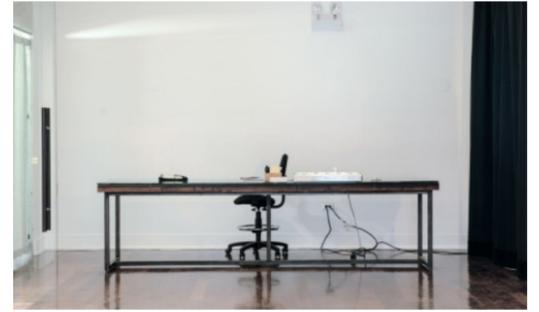
2 "Making Camp" Lateral Office (Toronto, Canada) 2015. Team: Lola Sheppard, Mason White, Alexander Bodken (lead), Kinan Hewitt Safoura Zahedi, Laurence Holland, Cherry Fung, Kate Holbrook-Smith, Daniela Leon, Karan Manchanda

3 "Rock Print" Gramazio Kohler + Self-Assembly Lab, MIT (Zurich, Switzerland / Cambridge, US) 2015. Team: Fabio Gramazio, Matthias Kohler, Skylar Tibbits, Andreas Thoma, Petrus Aejmelaesus-Lindstrom, Volker Helm, Sara Falcone, Lina Kara'in, George Varnavides, Stephane de Weck, Jan Willmann

Bank Shots

Theaster Gates' art library opens on South Side

The Stony Island Arts Bank re-opened its doors after nearly thirty years this October. Originally called Stony Island Trust and Savings Bank, the 17,000 sq. ft. building is located on Chicago's South Side in the historic Jackson Park Highlands district. The center was sold to South Side-based artist Theaster Gates for \$1 by the city of Chicago in 2013. The purpose of the building, according to the Rebuild Foundation, a non-profit headed by Gates, is to "serve as a space to preserve, access, reimagine and share their heritage — and a destination for artists, scholars, curators, and collectors to research and engage with South Side history." Gates, known for his community-driven installation art and architecture, repaired the abandoned building for \$4.5 million. The bank will store vinyl archives of Frankie Knuckles, the father of house music, as well as the personal magazine and book collection of John H. Johnson, the founder of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazine.



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Looking Inside 'Medusa's Cave'

Barbara DeGenevieve's solo show at Iceberg Project

■ Lauren Altman

As I entered the gallery at Iceberg Projects, I was immediately struck by Barbara DeGenevieve's presence as she stared at me from a large, black and white photograph across the room. A white-knuckled fist peeked around a wad of silvery hair in a photograph to my left. Next to it, the writing on the wall said, "I realize the impact this will have. But I can't stop, I'm too far gone, forgive me."

"Medusa's Cave" — DeGenevieve's posthumous exhibition — presents poetic, disquieting imagery that stir emotions. In the next room, cartoonish drawings of a skull and a set of white, jagged teeth hang side by side. Fragments of handwritten text and hundreds of photocopies of a woman's eyes repeat in each picture. I learned from Madison Brotherton, DeGenevieve's former studio manager, that the text in these pieces came from the suicide note that hung next to DeGenevieve's portrait in the first room. The note and the woman's eyes both belonged to her mother.

In the series titled "Cliche Verres," surreal images of DeGenevieve's face, her mother's eyes, body organs, distant mountains, and Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" hover unsettlingly over dark, murky landscapes. Above, a sadomasochist dialogue appears in gray text across three black panels: "Take the blindfold off. I want to watch you want me, you say. Your arrogance and voyeuristic request arouse my own exhibitionism."

The piece, titled "I and You," marks a pivotal shift in DeGenevieve's work — by veiling the subjects' identities, she invites analysis and response from multiple vantage points. Sadomasochism is used as a device to pose broader questions about society's understandings of taboo: Is it defined by the nature of the activity, or who engages in it? While previous works explored loss and identity through personal narrative, this piece is a political statement that requires an audience.

In the film, "The Panhandler Project," DeGenevieve pays five homeless men \$100, gives them a day of meals, new clothes, and a night in a hotel room to pose nude for photographs. While the first sitter, Gordon K. Wooton, relaxes on the bed naked, DeGenevieve explains that her peers would accuse her of exploitation because she asked him to take his clothes off. He responds, "Academically, homeless people are not being misused ... If I was being paid \$50,000 a year, I'd take my clothes off!" While the project is undoubtedly controversial, it is also light, comical, and human. It speaks to her courage and willingness to risk her reputation to question how we view homeless people in society — certainly not as sexual beings, if we see them at all.

In "Desperado," DeGenevieve meets Daryle Smith, a charming man who unexpectedly tries to get her into bed. After visible inner deliberation, she switches roles from filmmaker to subject and a whirlwind romance unfolds, dissolving boundaries between the academic behind the camera and her subject, a seemingly less credentialed former truck driver. In an interview featured in the film, DeGenevieve challenges the knee-jerk response to her project. "I want people to see it and react to it. I don't care what the reaction is. You're trying to make Daryle into a victim, into

an object into whatever it is that's negative about this relationship that we had. Instead of looking at this as something other than slumming it, that's where you go. The lowest possible point you can push me to," she says.

Circling back to the photograph at the entrance of the show, I learned that DeGenevieve's portrait is missing critical information. It was originally part of the triptych, "You Have a Hole," compounded by an abstract cityscape and a series of white, Morse code-looking dots on black panels.

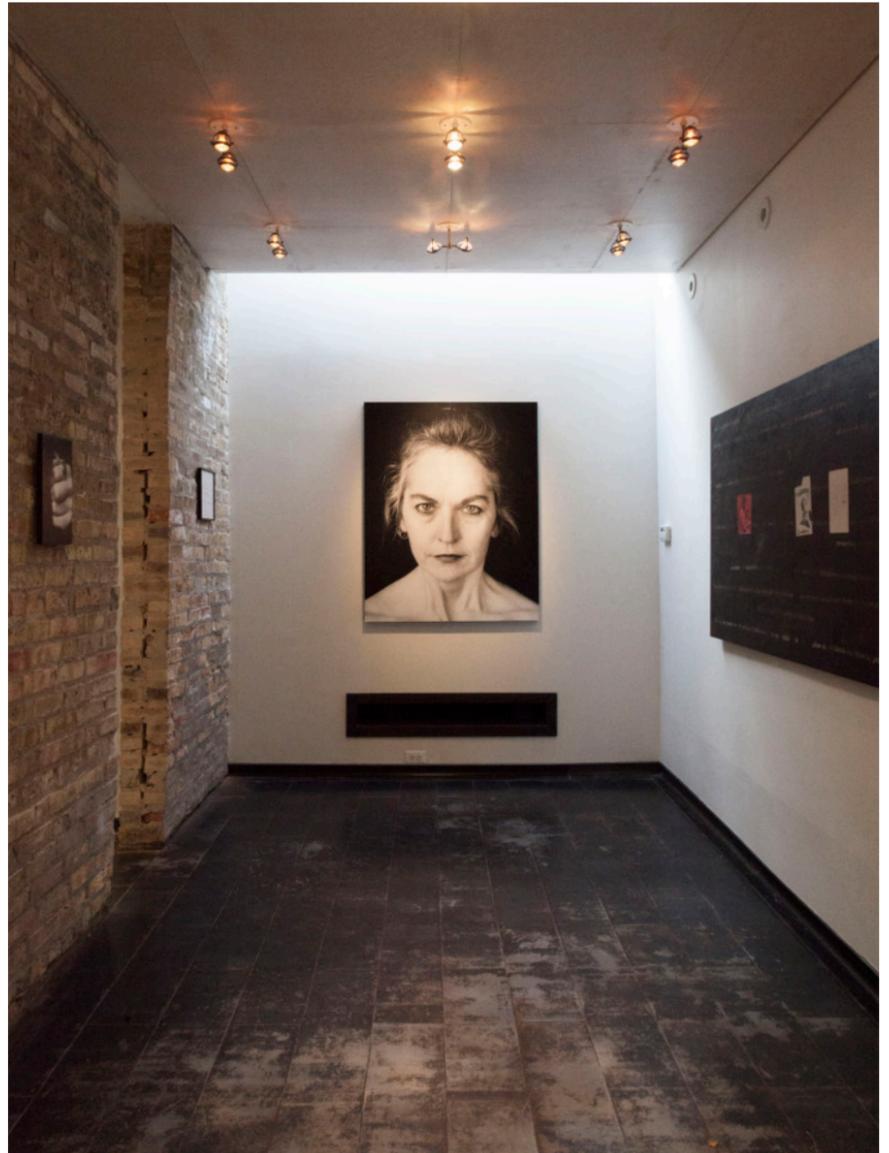
Madison Brotherton remarked, "Barbara often said, 'Years don't matter, just titles,' yet there were no titles in the show. The context [of this piece] is completely slain and it becomes an editorial-looking photograph — handsome, but lacking the substance of the original work. She didn't make the photograph of herself to be hung that way." While Iceberg Projects presents a survey of DeGenevieve's visual oeuvre, (she was also a writer), the portrait is more of a tribute than it is representative of her practice. Also earlier this fall, Defibrillator Gallery presented "What Would Barbara Do?" a series of DeGenevieve's films alongside works by former students and others engaged with issues she supported. Performance artist Rashayla Marie Brown, DeGenevieve's former student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and now the school's current director of student affairs for diversity and inclusion, shared anecdotes with DeGenevieve critical to her thinking about expectations of black women in American society, and then had a conversation about normative dating behaviors with her audience. She even called an ex during the performance (it went to voicemail), and danced to Beyoncé's song, "Grown Woman."

Both of these shows mark the transitional point in an artist's career where a community takes on the role of preserving and continuing a legacy. While "Medusa's Cave" features decades of DeGenevieve's work honing a practice that uses sexual identity as a platform to confront and expand on larger notions of race, class, and gender, "What Would Barbara Do?" reminds us of the importance of mentorship, of passing along the skills and invaluable insight necessary for continuing social advocacy through art.

■ Lauren Altman is an artist and writer currently studying in the Department of Painting and Drawing at SAIC. Her work explores the personal narrative embedded in issues of identity and gender, as well as art as a form of social advocacy.

From top to bottom, counterclockwise:

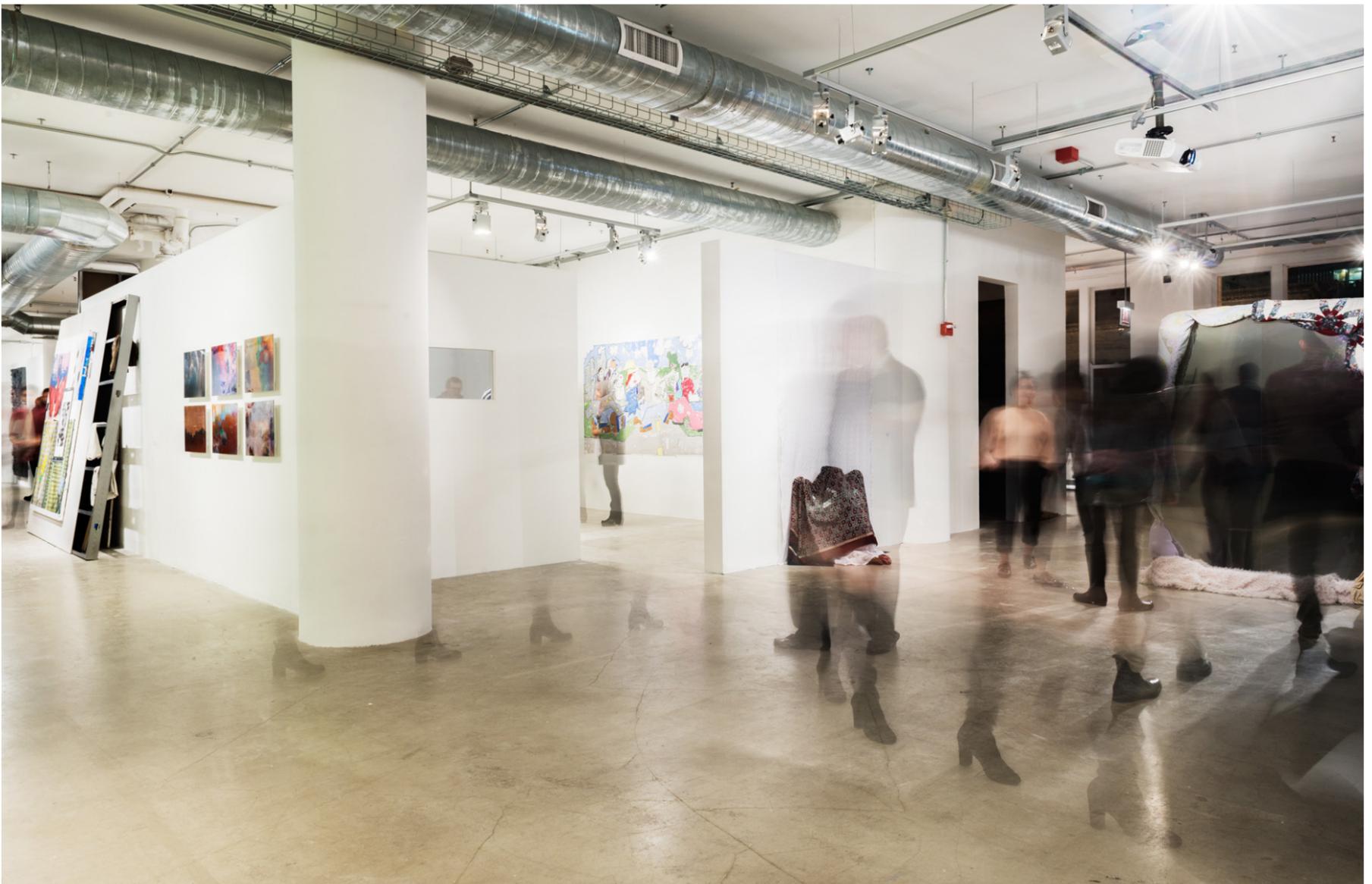
A black and white portrait of DeGenevieve hangs near the gallery's entrance. DeGenevieve's skull drawings featuring images of her mother's eyes and text from her suicide note line a hallway. A photograph shows DeGenevieve's clenched fist with painted nails and large ring wrapped around a lock of her greying hair.



Our Actual Graduation

SAIC's BFA show gives students a fitting farewell

■ Megan Byrne



To see more photography and coverage of the 2015 BFA Show, visit fnewsmagazine.com/2015/11/our-actual-graduation.

I often hear jokes about being a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Of course, they usually have to do with septum rings and the overuse of the word “aesthetic” or “conceptual,” as those seem to be the easiest targets. F has even, once or twice, mocked the pretentious (and the frequently nonsensical) language of artists. At the fall 2015 BFA show, which opened its doors for a private reception on November 20, I expected to find plenty of fodder for these jokes; but I was proven wrong and found out something really wonderful about being a student at SAIC. The show felt completely unpretentious, which one might suspect could have come from the free wine and beer provided by SAIC. Actually, though, it had much more to do with the relief most artists felt completing their last step towards their BFA degree.

Students dealt with ideas of anxiety, agency, nostalgia, artifice, and human need. Some seamlessly weaved between themes, acutely aware of the pieces' effect on the viewer, and took careful consideration with interaction.

Megan Finch, a fourth-year student whose work was in the show, used a raw canvas with screen-printing technique and acrylic to transfer her piece, “Perfect Montana,” onto the wall. It was something that confounded most viewers, because the work looked like it belonged on a canvas, but as I watched, each

viewer went to the side of the piece, looking for the thin magic layer, and were always surprised, pointing to their friends or loved ones that this was on the wall.

Somy Kim, a fourth-year student in Art and Technology, created a zoetrope for her piece “Need,” imitating (and modernizing) the nearly 3,000-year-old Persian animation technique. She created an installation that showed her acute awareness of relationships between humans, as her piece required one person to stand in front of a distance sensor to activate these animations so that other viewers could see them.

Each student I spoke with about their pieces had incredible things to say about their conceptual practice and what it meant to them that their piece was in this show.

It is worth noting that, as every year, the BFA show varies remarkably. From mixed media installations combined with poetry, to sculpture, to sound installation, to large-scale paintings, there were no two works that struck were even similar.

One of the greatest achievements of the show was a small space located to the left of Sullivan Gallery titled “Gallery > 53.” Set up by undergraduate Carolina Poveda, a fourth-year student concentrated on photo and fibers, the poster in the space indicated that “Gallery > 53” was not her own gallery, but she used her

“privilege as a student of this institution” and created a space for artists who work outside of SAIC because, as she put it, “They deserve recognition, visibility, and access.”

The six total artists represented in “Gallery > 53” were Chicago, California, Texas, and Maryland. Containing a variation of artist works — including sculpture, photography, and installation work, the gallery was an excellent example of art as activism. A poster outlining Poveda’s vision made the viewer aware that there were greater social and political forces at work in the show.

“Having gone to this school I will leave with multiple connections and access to scarce resources, so I figured that my last big show as a student should be a piece about accessibility, which is something I work with a lot already,” Poveda told me.

The show indicated that to be a successful student at SAIC, each undergraduate had to develop a tactical sense in their conceptual practice, being aware of the myriad ways that their art could affect the viewer. They created themes that were important to them, utilized their skills honed over the past years attending studio courses at the school, and were ultimately tremendously important.

I spoke with some students at the show about their work, and what how these pieces fit into their practice.

■ Megan Byrne is a fourth year student in the BFAW program. This is her last issue of F Newsmagazine, and it makes her sad.



Somy Kim

"Need"

This piece is made from plywood for the structures, the inside elegus drive for the blinking lights. I used 1- $\frac{3}{4}$ inch acrylic sheets for creating the animations, and the distance motors and distance sensor. There is distance motor inside each of these pieces so the distance sensor controls the speed of the distance motors. When the motors are activated and spinning really fast, the LED lights start blink, and it then creates the animations. An easy way to think about how the animations are made is to think about a pizza, but each part has a different image, so that when it spins really fast, each frame combines and creates an animation, which is the basic function of the zoetrope. There is a distance sensor inside of the sculpture so the rest of them act as zoetropes, and because of the distance sensor inside of this sculpture, someone has to be standing in front of it in order for the entire piece to work. Ironically, the person standing in front of this sensor cannot see the work, but they need to be standing there in order for other people to have this experience. So that's the purpose of why it was created, I wanted to talk about physical relationships, so I "Need" someone.



Joan Yubin

"I heard you were coming, so I ate the cake" and "Project"

I created these two pieces with oil paint on linen. I think a lot about my place in being a part of this time during some pretty rapid advances in technology, and readily available technology to almost everybody in first world countries, and the way that changes how we value the moments we live through. I think with all of these snapshots we are able to take every day on our phones, selfies et cetera, it's important to capture your moments as though you are somehow capturing yourself in them, like they used to be. I'm not suggesting that we regress or go back in time necessarily but just to reinvestigate what it means to be represented in a time of endless possibilities of representing yourself instantaneously.

The "Cake" painting definitely has more to do with societal norms, what kind of behavior is accepted and what's not. I just kind of thought it was funny, this image of me eating a cake with my bare hands kind of goes against everything my mom might've taught me is ladylike. It was a fun way to rebel against the things that might be expected of me.



Sae Jun Kim

"Sidewalk Trees"

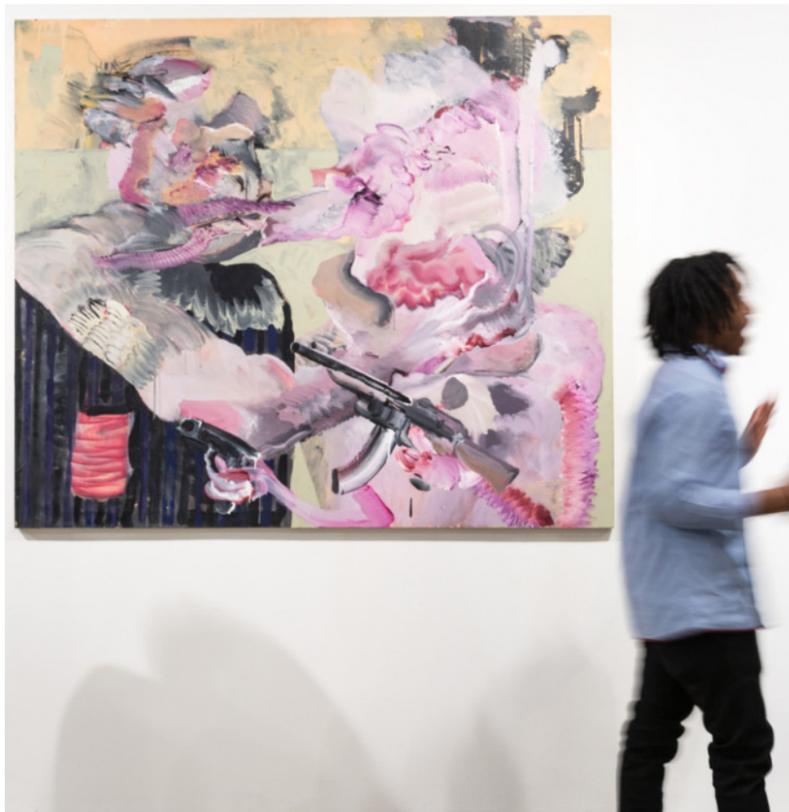
The material itself is made of concrete, and then the concrete is casted onto real bark. The object I was casting is a tree, which I casted with a rubber mold, and fit it onto this metal bar, and then poured concrete into it. This piece speaks to the made up world that we live in, when we're in a city or urban area we long for nature, so we bring it in but it's manicured and so made up. Just like a sidewalk tree, a single tree growing in a square box is not supposed to happen in nature. So I'm not saying we shouldn't have sidewalk trees, but maybe I'm saying that we should look at it with the focus of it being out of place.



Sidney Tilghman

"On The Hunt, Green Number 2" and "Good Form"

One is a print and drawing and the other is a woodblock relief print. The sculptures are just wood, done in the woodshop. I have a background in architectural theory and criticism so I kind of started there and I was working a lot with the landscape. I joined a rowing team over the summer, so I became very interesting in how people interact with the landscape especially through sports and activities. I've also worked at a putt putt and I'm from Virginia where fox hunting is somehow still prominent.



Mark Citerone

"Relentless Antagonism"

This painting was done on stretched canvas, cotton duck canvas on Stretcher bars. This piece involves all water-based media, acrylic motion based paints, vinyl paints, also known as flash and minwax enamels.

For me, painting is a practice of working out conflict through material, it doesn't necessarily have to be with paint, but, I come from a tradition of drawing, and so my paintings end up like effigies of my thought patterns and processes. This painting is about interpersonal conflict and structures of hierarchy, having agency and power over another person and the kinds of situations that this sort of thing results in.



A Path to Embodiment

Carrie Brownstein's modern fangirls

■ Sammi Skolmoski

It's not hard to see how she came to feel "disembodied" after years of giving her whole self over.

By 5 p.m. there was a one-block line around the corner from the Museum of Contemporary Art. A frazzled Carrie Brownstein hustled by in a manner she would later liken to a feral cat, unable to find the proper entrance. To see any other rock legend panic at the threat of tardiness might have been humanizing, but not with Brownstein. It only made her myth expand in the minds of her fans — this guitar-slaying hyper-intellectual feminist of monumental influence is also punctual! It was almost too much to bear.

Yes, we fangirls were out in full force on Friday, October 30, to hear Brownstein in conversation with Pitchfork's Jessica Hopper as part of the MCA's collaborative In Sight Out series.

For those who don't know (that is fangirl speak for "duh"), Brownstein released a memoir, "Hunger Makes Me a Modern Girl," detailing her own transformation from Olympia fangirl into willing participant as founding member and guitarist for riot grrrl harbingers Sleater-Kinney.

"I will read from my book for one and a half minutes because that's the only appropriate time to read aloud to anyone from anything," Brownstein said to laughter before doing precisely that.

What followed was an hour and a half of deeply engaging discourse about her motives for and approach to writing, and her unexpected reasons for doing so. Those reasons were, as explained just minutes into the conversation, to move from someone who long felt disembodied into a state of embodiment, and to be "a willful protagonist" in her own narrative.

Brownstein said the book was originally pitched as a collection of cultural criticism akin to her longstanding NPR Music blog Monitor Mix. "But what I found in terms of the discourse I was having with the readers was that people appreciated when I sort of inserted myself into the story," she said. "That's what they wanted to hear."

Another small push in the direction of memoir was something essayist Charles D'Ambrosio said in an interview in the New Yorker about writing "making the distance go away." Brownstein said she realized that to close the liminal distance between her present self and her Sleater-Kinney self would be a great step forward on the path to becoming embodied. "The story of how and why I started playing music — it

involved a very deliberate trajectory," she said. "I really set out to get to Olympia. I wanted to tell that story."

It should be mentioned that at the inception of the book, there were not yet whiffs of a Sleater-Kinney reunion; it was just a fortuitous progression in that it "gave me an epilogue," she laughed.

There was also the matter of addressing that initial trepidation about inserting herself into the narrative in a way that was neither overly vulnerable nor too vulnerable enough, in a format that resisted both salacious gossip and monotonous tour diary, that never teetered too far toward superficial levity nor dark reality. Quite a task.

Brownstein broached that concern in two ways. The first was to realize that the "self" represented in her book was not a singular voice. "In each situation that we have, we're different people," she said. "You might be a daughter, you might be a musician, you might be a band mate, a friend — and so each part is written from that perspective. Then you don't feel stuck in thinking, Is this the definitive version of this? No, I can go back and rewrite it from a different facet. It was an empowering process."

The second was to adopt an openness to contradiction. "People are scared of their own authorship," Brownstein said. "I had to be OK with contradiction." Hopper loosely connected this idea back to an early mission of riot grrrls — to embrace the perceived contradiction of, say, a feminist who wears lipstick.

While Brownstein didn't publish anyone else's versions of events, she did excavate and consult documentation, primarily in the form of letters written and received during Sleater-Kinney's time on the road. "[Artist] Miranda July and I had an epistolary relationship for years in relation to a real-life friendship," she said, "and we have often documented instances in our lives through the writing of letters to one another." Brownstein said even these relics were not regarded as absolute truth, but rather "helped to color some of the memories that had faded."

Perhaps the most charming example of Brownstein's keen self-awareness came out of the descriptions of these letters, and her surprise at the high level of diction used therein. "I was really loquacious, and I was like, 'Ah, I am still like that!' I still

can be garrulous and circumlocutionary in the way I speak. It was a little silly to hear that voice coming out of someone who was younger than I am now," she said.

Brownstein is a natural performer. In a lot of ways she is reminiscent of Steve Martin, and cites him as an idol (though she said that comparison begins and ends with her dance moves). She first used performance as a way to enter social spaces at a very young age. "It was kind of ridiculous how, in almost any social situation, I would just insert myself into it via performance — very clumsily, often without any training," she said. But that initial clumsiness may have been responsible for Brownstein's signature performance style, which can be reduced to a single word — genuine.

Her performative instincts also seem driven by her long history of music fandom — and really, who is more genuine than a fangirl? Her best bits on the show "Portlandia" would not land as perfectly as they do if she weren't so acutely aware of and delighted by the scenes she's skewering, and her guitar and singing styles would not be nearly as emotive if it she hadn't spent years as a devout audience member herself. "[Fandom] isn't a passive experience; it isn't a temporary state," she said. "It has transformative power, and there was never anything cute or paltry about it."

As someone who openly wept through Sleater-Kinney's entire set at Pitchfork fest earlier this year without quite understanding why, that is the most perfect way to describe watching Brownstein play. You are in love.

When she brings that level of care and authenticity into craft — or in her case, crafts — it's not hard to see how she came to feel "disembodied" after years of giving her whole self over to fans across multiple disciplines. Now she's added yet another channel, situating herself as just as viable a force in the literary world as any of the others she artfully inhabits.

■ Sammi Skolmoski is a second year Master's Candidate in the MFA department.





Bad Feminism IRL

Roxane Gay smashes the patriarchy one tweet at a time

■ Rosie Accola

There's a misconception within the feminist blogosphere that in order to be a "good" feminist, one must shun all frivolous aspects of popular culture. This misconception creates a discourse wherein it seems impossible for a love of popular culture and a desire for intersectional feminist discourse to coexist. Roxane Gay is a New York Times contributor, college professor, and self-proclaimed "Bad Feminist." Her book of essays of the same name is a New York Times best seller. She sat down with SAIC alumnus Lindsay Hunter, whose book "Ugly Girls" is out now, in conjunction with the Chicago Humanities Festival on November 6.

Hunter and Gay started off the night by taking gleeful jabs at the patriarchal nature of the literary world. "I'm just wondering how you're able to write over your vagina," Hunter quipped.

Gay responded by saying, "It never crossed my mind that my gender would act as an impediment." She added, "It's interesting to see how many older men treat me like a graduate student at work."

In addition to writing, Gay is also an English professor at Purdue University's College of Liberal Arts. She referred to the patriarchy's influence in our overall society as "Oxygen but poisonous," saying that she often deals with "imposter syndrome."

"Imposter syndrome" is a term used to describe the inability to internalize or accept the merit of one's own accomplishments. The fact that someone whose books have been national bestsellers and holds a Ph.D. still feels as though her voice is not worthy is indicative of the problems with patriarchy.

Gay went on to say that she wished she had "that level of self-delusion" possessed by her male contemporaries. This raises an important question: If Roxane Gay feels like this, what are the rest of us supposed to do?

Gay also spoke at length about her relationship with the public and the sometimes vicious criticism she receives as a writer. In frustration, she joked, "I'm not an opinion vending machine."

She discussed how some of her harshest critics often resort to criticizing her physical appearance. "I wish people would challenge me on my ideas rather than just saying 'you're ugly,'" Gay said.

Gay addressed the unrealistic expectations we place upon public figures, saying, "We expect them to never have missteps or politics with which we disagree, and that's not realistic."

Ultimately, Gay adores popular culture. She said she likes Twitter because "it helps with being lonely ... You get to be at a crowded cocktail party in your pajamas with a bottle of wine." She also (hilariously) enjoys tweeting answers to the rhetorical questions around which publications like People Magazine structure their tweets.

The onslaught of criticism that Gay receives in conjunction with her outspoken social media presence can seem unrelenting. "No matter what I say, someone attacks me for it and it gets to a point where it's just not fun anymore," she said.

Once, Gay made a sarcastic quip on Twitter about a depressed billionaire whose mansion included a wall of candy. Gay wondered — as I did — if your life includes an entire wall of candy, how bad can it be? What she didn't know was that the melancholy billionaire in question was Markus Perren, the creator of Minecraft, who also happens to be clinically depressed.

Suddenly, Gay had hundreds of e-mails in her inbox from angry Minecraft fans accusing her of being insensitive towards mental illness. Gay responded saying that she honestly didn't know this when she wrote the tweet. She told the audience that her own bloodstream was "90 percent Prozac."

Interactions like these have become a part of Gay's daily life as her notoriety increases and her number of Twitter followers approaches the 100,000 mark.

In addition to discussing her social media presence, Gay also spent a significant portion of the night detailing plans for her upcoming memoir, "Hunger," which is slated to be released June 7, 2016. Gay described the project as a "memoir of my body."

Gay offered several insights into the hypercritical public discourse surrounding obesity. "When you're obese, you don't have any secrets. Your body becomes a public text," she said.

Although she said that this memoir was difficult to write, she was glad she did. "It helped me understand how I made my body this way and sort of ... undestroy myself," she said.

Gay is already bracing herself for an emotionally draining publicity tour for the project. She recently did an interview with the Chicago Reader which ran under the headline, "Chewing the Fat with Roxane Gay." She stressed the importance of a support system when one is active in the public eye, joking about how Gay and her girlfriend came up with every possible

offensive headline for "Hunger" over a bottle of wine, just so Gay could prepare herself.

The idea of support is an important one for Gay. She's over the term "ally;" rather, she prefers to focus on the idea of "solidarity," which stresses embracing difference and uniting over a common goal.

Gay emphasized the importance of realizing that sometimes activism doesn't necessarily center around one's own narrative. This principle could be also applied to the art of the narrative essay, where Gay says it's important to ask, "Do I look outward as much as I look inward?"

She made a point to remind the audience that "we are the best people to call our own communities out."

During the question-and-answer period, several people came to Gay to express their insecurities surrounding their own activism. A Muslim woman expressed skepticism towards critiquing her own community and Gay consoled her that the place of an activist is "a lonely but necessary place."

A group of high school girls timidly approached the microphone. They explained that they tried to start a feminism club at their school, and had hung up some feminist posters. The posters were quickly torn down, and they were left feeling disheartened so they came to Gay looking for advice. Gay told them to come back swinging and this year, "put twice as many posters up."

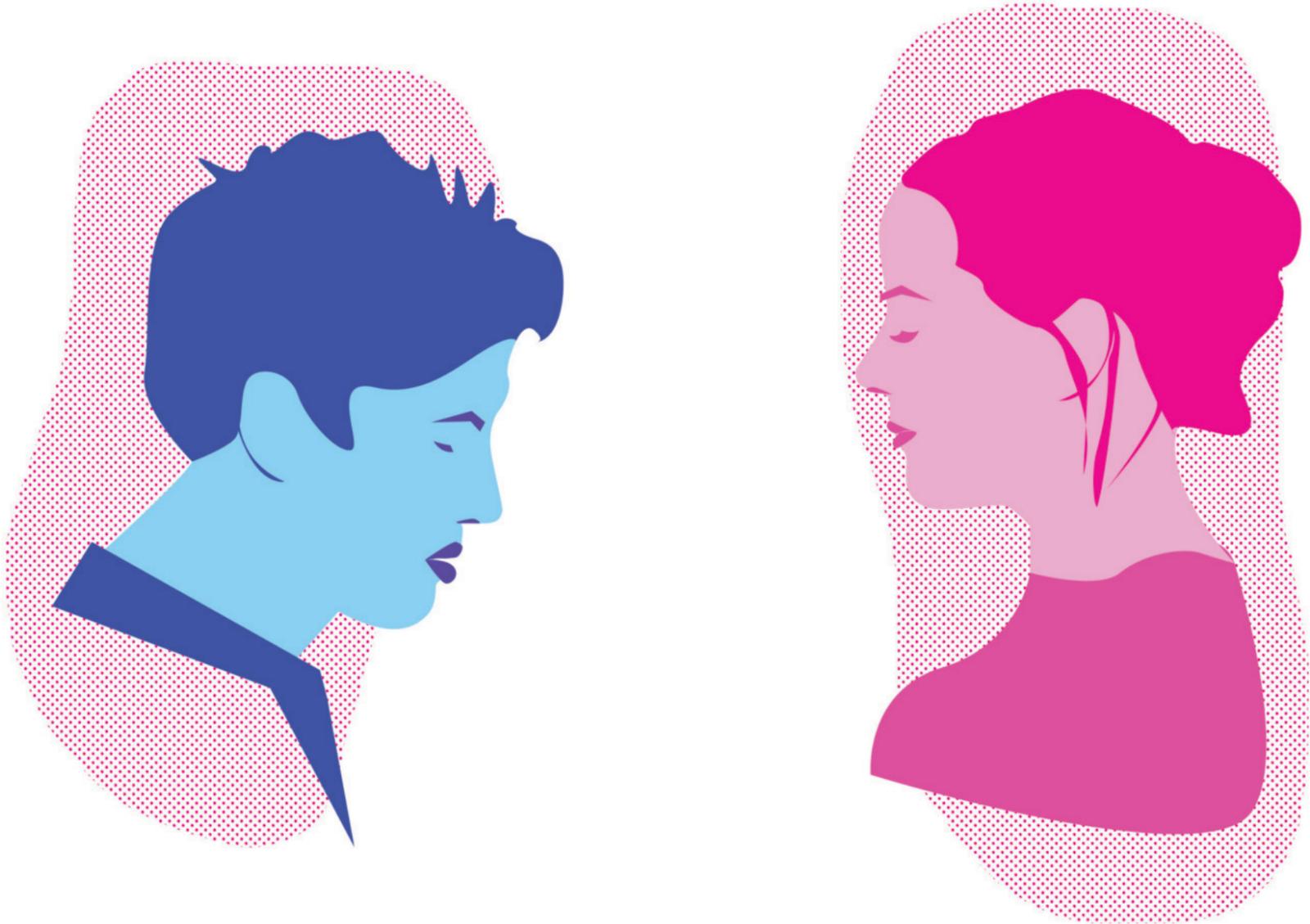
As the talk wrapped up and people poured out of the auditorium, I heard some older middle-aged women remark about how, "these girls need a new Lillith Fair." This remark irked me. It felt as though they were missing the point. Gay repeatedly stressed the necessity of intersectionality and how our identities don't exist in a vacuum. Gay is the antithesis of Lillith Fair's white-washed hetero girl power. These young girls don't need Lillith Fair! They have Roxane Gay.

■ Rosie Accola is a second year student in the BEAW program. All she wants to do is fold zines and smash the patriarchy.



She wished she had "that level of self-delusion" possessed by her male contemporaries. This raises a question: If Roxane Gay feels like this, what are the rest of

Nothing Bright About It



"A Light Beneath Their Feet" falls short of other classic Chicago films

■ Brontë Mansfield

Ever since John Hughes blessed '80s teens with relatable and rollicking coming-of-age stories like *The Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, and *Pretty in Pink*, high school movies have had predictable ingredients: an attractive but outcast girl, a guy she wants but can't have, a mean girl, an impending dance, and graduation dawning over of the horizon. While the formula remains much the same, new high school films are now about both universal teen experiences — bullying, popularity, sexual awakening — and uniquely contemporary issues. Recent teen-centric flicks have tackled cyberbullying, coming out, and in the case of *"A Light Beneath Their Feet"* (2015), a film screened at the Chicago International Film Festival in October, mental illness.

"A Light" is close to home in the same way John Hughes' films are: both take place in Chicago's nearby suburban sprawl. Directed by Valeria Weiss with a screenplay by Moira Leeper, the Chicago Film Festival selection shares more than setting with one particular Hughes film; in many ways, "A Light" is a slipshod retelling of the 1986 classic "Pretty in Pink." In Hughes' film, Andie (Molly Ringwald) takes care of her single and depressed father during the last weeks of her senior year. Not only does she force her father out of bed every morning, she also has boy problems to boot: a loyal friend who loves her, a rich dirt bag who hates her because he can't have her, and another nice but "richie" kid whom she has fallen heads-over-awful '80s shoes for. Hughes' film plays like a typical teen movie, but quietly explores the tension between the rich and the poor, depression, and the struggles of single parent households. Deep stuff for a film with a prom dress-making montage.

Billed as an "indie dramedy," *"A Light Beneath Their Feet"* chronicles the dysfunctional relationship between high school senior Beth (Madison Davenport) and her bipolar mother, Gloria (Tayrn Manning, of *Orange Is the New Black* fame). In the weeks before prom and graduation, Beth must choose between attending her dream school, UCLA, or going to nearby Northwestern to continue caring for her troubled and self-obsessed mother. Because no high school movie is complete without teenage romance, Beth pines for fellow outcast Jeremy, but is blind to the affections of her gas station coworker. Starting to sound familiar?

The film's writer was a graduate of Evanston Township High, and while she may have been inspired by other Illinois-to-Hollywood success stories like Hughes, Leeper's attempt at an emotionally compelling screenplay falls short of films made thirty years ago. Where Hughes uses topical comedy to diffuse wisdom on the difficulties of growing up, Leeper's writing is clumsily blatant and filled with strained profundity. (The title itself comes not from the film's pivotal relationship between mother and daughter, but from when Beth and Jeremy are talking on a playground and imagine that there is light from within the earth to warm their feet — a flopped metaphor for who knows what, prompting puzzlement at best and deserved eye-rolling at worst).

The biggest flaw of this film is its depiction of bipolar disorder, a complex mental health issue that seems misunderstood by Leeper and delivered with an utter lack of nuance or sensitivity. Gloria is depicted as a delusional, irresponsible, and paranoid — symptoms

more characteristic of schizophrenia than bipolar disorder — always seeming one public meltdown shy of a straight jacket. Viewers familiar with Tayrn Manning from *"Orange Is the New Black"* may even find themselves conflating Gloria with Manning's proselytizing meth-head Pensatucky — not exactly the right vibe for a suburban single mom struggling with a mood disorder.

Leeper often relies on the mere inclusion of mental illness to create the emotional depth her characters and dialogue cannot conjure. Leeper's screenplay is filled with simplistic metaphors and dialogue that seems like it is pulled from refrigerator magnet poems. When asked why she wants to attend to UCLA, Beth's only reason is that the weather in California is predictable. In the Midwest, she says, it's unpredictable. What an original metaphor for bipolar disorder.

Characters and ideas are often introduced to further the plot, then dropped as soon as they are no longer convenient. Beth's coworker makes puppy-dog-eyes at her a couple times, then disappears from the movie, like Leeper started to craft her own version of Hughes' *Ducky*, then forgot to give him a personality or purpose.

Jeremy is described as a social pariah forced to move to Beth's high school to escape the gossip surrounding his statutory rape by a former teacher — this troubled backstory is never more than black icing on a sponge cake of faux-wisdom. Fanning the fires of unrequited teenage love and inexplicable plot points, Jeremy is already involved with blue-haired and bitter Dashulla — the daughter of Gloria's psychiatrist. As the movie crawls towards a climax, Dashulla calls a pharmacy pretending to be from her father's office and changes Gloria's prescription with her magical

knowledge of pharmaceuticals, sending the struggling mom tailspinning — pretty harsh revenge for Beth going to prom with Dashulla's former fuckbuddy.

When Beth is at the dance, her mother shows up at the school cafeteria, arranging all of the school's cooking utensils as she threatens to kill herself. This is the moment Beth chooses to tell her mother that she is going to UCLA. In the film's last scene Beth visits her mother in the hospital. She loosens the padded cuffs on her mother's wrists, crawls in bed and they say they love each other. Leeper crafts a thoroughly unsatisfying and noncommittal ending.

The poor writing of "A Light" is especially disappointing given the otherwise high quality of the film's acting and cinematography. Davenport quietly conveys the inner turmoil of being a teenager and being responsible for a parent; somehow, her eyes always look like they are just on the verge of tears, leaking out Beth's hormones and exhaustion.

Despite its best efforts, "A Light Beneath Their Feet" never achieves anything like the brilliance of other suburban Chicago high school films, leaving movie-goers to long for the bubble-gum brilliance of John Hughes. There is no over-the-cake-kissing, no Ferrari-crashing, no Bender victoriously punching the air to the sounds of "Don't You Forget About Me" — only a half-baked movie that ends with the unfulfilling tang of a low calorie sweetener.

■ Brontë Mansfield is a first year New Arts Journalism student.



Grimes 2.0

Recording artist reinvents her creative process

■ Rosie Accola

Claire Boucher — known to the world as Grimes — has been hailed by the mainstream media as a combination of a woodland nymph and a Tumblr grrrl's dream come true. She entered mainstream media with her 2012 single "Oblivion," a deceptively catchy electro track about bodily autonomy and the fear of being sexually assaulted. The combination of bizarre electro beats and hidden quips surrounding feminist discourse cemented Grimes as an artist to pay strict attention to. She's not just a charming addition to the pop canon; she's a necessity.

"Art Angels," Grimes' follow-up to 2012's "Visions," was released November 6 via 4AD records. A prolific lyricist and producer, Grimes initially scrapped her follow-up to "Visions" in 2014, telling *New York Times Magazine*, "It sucked ... so I threw it out and started again."

Some fans speculate that project was scrapped due to negative fan reactions towards the first single, "Go," which was initially penned for and subsequently rejected by Rihanna. While this narrative is widely accepted by the mainstream media, it neglects to consider that Grimes is first and foremost a working artist. Any artist will shed a project they aren't fond of; it's a natural part of the creative process.

In the same *New York Times Magazine* profile, Grimes spoke about the ways she has reconstructed her creative process. Famously reclusive, Grimes recorded "Visions" in 2012, in a cabin in the Canadian wilderness. This time around, she relocated to L.A. where she spent her days "hanging out with people and bouncing ideas off my friends."

The result is "Art Angels": a raucous electro conglomerate featuring tracks with Janelle Monáe and Taiwanese rapper Aristophones. The album is immediately more sonically vibrant than any of her previous work. Gone is the pervasive melancholia of 2010's "Halfaxa," and in its place is a renewed zest for life.

Take for example, "REALiTi." Initially a scrapped demo, the bouncy downbeat paired with lyrics like, "I have peered over the edge and seen death," inject a deep sense of existentialism into the otherwise very poppy music.

This propensity to question life itself adds a level of transcendentalism to Grimes' music that is otherwise unheard of in the field of pop. Unlike her contemporaries, she approaches pop music's tendency to romanticize everything — people, and the proverbial "club" — with a skeptical distance.

On "Butterfly" she sings, "If you're looking for a dream girl/ I'll never be your dream girl." This may be a response to the media's tendency to paint Grimes as a manic pixie archetype. Most of this record is not thematically centered around themes of love or the intricacies of a romantic relationship, which sets it apart from other pop albums. Rather, Grimes tackles issues of power dynamics in music industry, using her music as a tool for casting a wide critical lens.

"Art Angels" is not devoid of forays into more traditional pop sounds. In "Venus Fly," which features Janelle Monáe, a hypnotizing bass downbeat grounds the track, and allusions to Madonna's "Me Against the Music" are peppered in. An elegant violin solo is interspersed into the bridge.

"Art Angels" ultimately allows Grimes to fully showcase her talents as a producer in tangent with her already fascinating lyricism. She scored her first producer credit on "SCREAM," which features Aristophones. Grimes doesn't actually sing on this track. Instead she lays down a ferocious bassline and provides ambiance with her own chilling shrieks. Grimes is listed as a producer on every track of this album; her holistic approach to music making does not go unnoticed in the male-dominated field of sound engineers.

The first single off the album, "Flesh Without Blood," features joyous ricocheting guitars interspersed over Grimes crooning, "Baby believe me/ yeah you've had every chance to destroy everything that you know." There's pep that would impress a cheerleader in the bridge, utilizing a bouncy drum beat. In comparison to her previous work, "Flesh Without Blood" definitely has a poppier sound, but it doesn't compromise Grimes' lyrical sense of whimsy.

Many Grimes fans are facing the classic hipster conundrum wherein one of their favorite artists is going "pop." But Grimes' musical authenticity cannot be deterred by mainstream success. At the end of the day, she'll always be capable of writing hypnotically catchy tracks with B horror movie titles. No amount of headlining tours will change that.

■ Rosie Accola is a sophomore in the BFA Writing department.

At the end of the day, she'll always be capable of writing hypnotically catchy tracks with B horror movie titles.



Finding Your Roots

Henry Louis Gates at the Reframing Visibility Symposium

■ Ryan Blocker

Famed scholar and documentarian Henry Louis Gates Jr. spoke to a small but enthusiastic crowd in Rubloff Auditorium at the Art Institute of Chicago on October 8 as part of the Diversity Action Group's Reframing Visibility Symposium.

Gates, currently the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and the director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, was the keynote speaker for the weekend-long event which, according to DAG, sought to "bring students, faculty, and staff together in conversation around issues of identity and representation in the contemporary art world at large and in our own community at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago."

Gates is perhaps one of the most important and influential living scholars on African American history. He has written numerous books, including "The Signifying Monkey" and "The African American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Century." However, Gates is perhaps most widely known for his two PBS series, "African American Lives" and "Finding Your Roots." Both series trace the ancestry and genealogy of prominent celebrities, artists, performers, and scholars.

Some may recall that in 2009 Gates was arrested in an attempt to enter his own home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A white police officer, Sergeant James Crowley, responded to a resident's 911 call of a possible break-in.

Unsurprisingly, there was a media frenzy. Many people, including President Obama, claimed racial profiling.

"I don't know, not having been there and not seeing all the facts, what role race played in that [Gates case]. But I think it's fair to say, number one, any of us would be pretty angry; number two, that the Cambridge police acted stupidly in arresting somebody when there was already proof that they were in their own home; and, number three, what I think we know separate and apart from this incident is that there's a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately. That's just a fact," Obama said of the incident.

Obama later backpedaled and invited both Gates and Crowley to the White House Rose Garden for a reconciliatory meeting that has been referred to as the "Beer Summit."

Gates began his lecture at AIC speaking at length about his long, close friendship with SAIC President Walter Massey. Just moments prior, President Massey introduced Gates as his friend "Skip." Gates praised Massey for his efforts to diversify corporate America through his tenure on the boards of Bank of America and McDonald's.

Gates let the audience know early on that he had real art credentials. "I'm on the board of the Whitney and the Studio Museum," he said. He expressed that he always had a love for art, briefly mentioned that David Adjaye designed the Hutchins Center at Harvard, and informed the crowd that one of his most recent projects was a book on Frederick Douglass's four treatises on photography.

Gates prefaced the substance of his lecture with a brief video clip from "Finding Your Roots," which featured Oprah, Maya Angelou, Chris Rock, Senator John Lewis, among others. The majority of the lecture, in fact, focused on the PBS documentaries.

Gates' interest in family history and genealogy started as a child when he came across the photograph of an old relative after he attended the funeral of his very fair-skinned grandfather, whose appearance confused and fascinated him. Much later in life Gates had a moment he described as "an epiphany," when he realized he could join his interest in family

history, African American scholarship, and the burgeoning science of gene-mapping.

Gates claimed that he first approached Quincy Jones for the show "Find Your Roots" in the hopes that Jones could convince Oprah Winfrey to join the production. Gates needed 6 million dollars to fund the show, and saw Oprah as the key to coming into those funds.

Gates said to Jones, "What if I could do for you what Alex Haley did for himself?" Jones was interested, but Gates pressed further, asking if he could get Oprah to get on board with the project. Jones said no but encouraged Gates to write Oprah personally. Oprah eventually called Gates and agreed to get on board.

"Rich people don't call you with bad news," Gates told the audience.

Oprah's participation gave Gates leverage with network executives. "How would you like to know what tribe in Africa Oprah Winfrey's ancestors are from?" he pitched.

"It was like an ATM machine (sic) descended from the sky. 'How many millions do you need?'" Gates said.

PBS picked up the show, which garnered a large viewership and critical acclaim.

Gates later expanded the franchise to include other demographics after someone confronted him saying the show was "racist" to focus solely on black people. Gates asked one of his advisers if this was a valid claim and wondered if he should expand the show to profile prominent white figures.

The adviser reportedly responded, "There are a lot more white people drinking Coke than black people." And "American Lives" was born.

Gates used what he referred to as "the Noah principle" for the new show: He featured two of every kind of person. Two white people, two Jewish people, two Asian Americans, two black people, and Meryl Streep, because, as Gates said, "I love Meryl Streep."

Gates did not say much about the more academic research part of the project until the end of the lecture. In this section, Gates highlighted some interesting historical and genealogical insights. He said that of the millions of Africans who were a part of the transatlantic slave trade, only 388,700 slaves came to the United States between 1619 and 1860. Forty-four percent of these slaves came through Charleston, South Carolina. Gates pointed out that few slaves were brought to the United States because it was one of the only slave systems that "grew" its slave economy—slaves were bred so that slave populations became a self-sustaining institution.

Gates also discussed the three most popular myths of African American genealogy. The Igbo Princess Myth is a popular mythology among some black Americans who believe they are descended from Nigerian royalty. There is seldom any proof of such history.

Another prominent story is the My family was never enslaved myth. Some black people believe that their ancestors were never enslaved. According to the myth, the ancestors gained freedom early on and the descendants thus never encountered slavery. It's often associated with the myth of the Igbo princess. A wealthy white man is so enraptured by an Igbo princess's beauty that he buys her freedom at auction, thus freeing her and all her descendants.

The Cherokee Grandmother Myth is the belief that black people are descended from Native Americans. This is perhaps one of the most popular myths. According to Gates' genealogical research, most African Americans have negligible Native American ancestry. The typical admixture of African Americans is 73.4 percent African, 24.1 percent European, and only .07 percent

Native American. Gates says that black people have created the myth of Native American intermarriage as a way to distance themselves from the shame that was the ubiquity of slave rape by white men.

Saying "my grandmother was Cherokee" was a way to account for the differences of features in black Americans and black Africans by identifying with another group of oppressed peoples. Gates illuminates that such solidarity was perhaps more complex. The Five Civilized Tribes — Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole — were deemed "civilized" in part due to the fact that they owned slaves.

Gates ended the lecture with an invocation to motivate young black children toward education. He seemed to be speaking with a sort of nostalgia and irritation at "kids today."

"When I was a black kid, the blackest thing you could be was an educated black man or woman. Not a basketball player or entertainer," he said. He ended with, "We can help to take the community — not back to the future — but black to the future."

When pushed slightly in the Q&A about youth today not aspiring to be educated, Gates persisted. He claimed that his critique was about systems of access, and made an interesting claim about increased access to education for black youth. Gates said that reparations should take the form of "more affirmative action." He advocated for the kind of affirmative action programs that allowed him to go to Yale.

The lecture had a very informal tone, which was perhaps not the sort of academic engagement DAG had hoped for. The talk focused primarily on how Gates' shows came to be, and less on the complex topics they engages with — slavery, race, and individual people's relationships to America's beautiful and painful histories. Nevertheless, Gates was energetic, engaging, and insightful.

Surprisingly, Gates did not discuss — nor was not asked in Q&A — about the recent scandal with Ben Affleck in which leaked e-mails revealed that Gates caved to pressure from Affleck to cut a portion of the show that revealed one of his ancestors to be a slave owner.

Affleck issued a public apology, and Gates also apologized after PBS found him guilty of violating their editorial standards.

It's disappointing this was overlooked in the lecture for several reasons. For one, Gates talked at length about the financial needs of the shows and the external pressures that shaped it into what it is. Talking about the Affleck controversy could have provided an interesting insight into that negotiation.

Secondly, "getting it wrong" is a great entry point into conversations about representation and visibility. The fact that a MacArthur Genius, Peabody Award-winning professor of African American history at Harvard could get it wrong shows the complexity of these conversations and that there is still space in the dialogue even when you err.

The Gates lecture and the Reframing Visibility Symposium point to SAIC's efforts to engage with the issues of representation and inclusion. Hopefully, as Dean of Faculty Lisa Wainwright has expressed, the SAIC community will understand this dialogue as "a collective responsibility to sustain these discussions throughout the year in our classrooms, studios, and in the ways we interact with one another daily."

■ Ryan Blocker is a second-year graduate student in the Arts Administration and Policy Program and is engaged with issues of social justice and representation in art.

The talk focused primarily on how Gates' shows came to be, and less on the complex topics they engage with.



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Dem Nominees

■ F Staff

Given that the Republican candidates are outwardly absurd — incessantly spewing harmful ideas on “national security” and farcical ideologies around policy, we’ve made some equally insane suggestions for the Democratic nomination in order to even the playing field. Here they are:



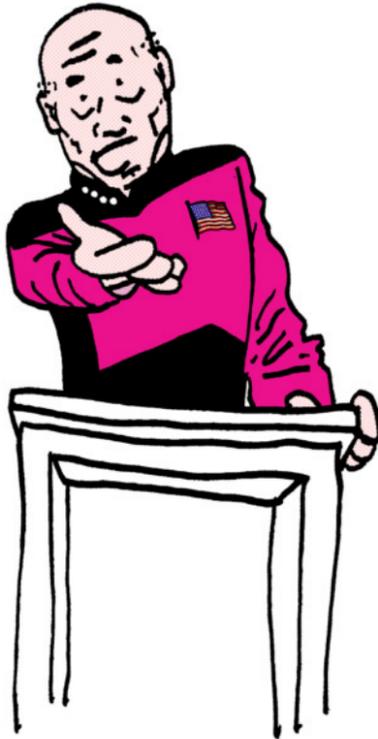
Mickey Mouse, nominated by Caleb Kaiser

PROS

- Kept Disneyland safer than John McCain’s bomb shelter.
- Started Ryan Gosling’s career.
- Power bottom.

CONS

- Dabbles in racism.
- Would refer to John Kerry as “Mouseketary of State.”
- Helped form N’Sync.



Jean-Luc Picard, nominated by Daniel Brookman

PROS

- Progressive: fought for android rights.
- Ticket has the most baller VP since Biden: Will Riker.
- Ted Cruz has literally declared him a Democrat.

CONS

- No hair.
- Was a part of the Borg.
- Ted Cruz has literally declared him a Democrat.



Lando Calrissian, nominated by Sophie Lucido Johnson

PROS

- Learned what a compromise with Darth Vader really means; practically ready for Republicans.
- Has a toothy smile and seems always camera-ready.
- Good at smooth talking around crime lords.

CONS

- Professional gambler.
- His moustache might be described as “kinda sketchy.”
- Has too many battle scars to not be considered a hawk.



Adele, nominated by Rosie Accola

PROS

- Has the voice of a mournful angel.
- First POTUS to win both a Grammy and an Oscar.
- Her hair is a flaxen beehive.

CONS

- Misses presidential age cut off by a solid decade.
- Technically isn’t from America.
- Could show up out of the blue uninvited.



Sharkula, nominated by Jarad Solomon

PROS

- Makes all of his own flyers and stickers.
- Able to breathe underwater / underblood.
- Schools fools.

CONS

- Hates wizards.
- Drunk skunks.
- Diarrhea.



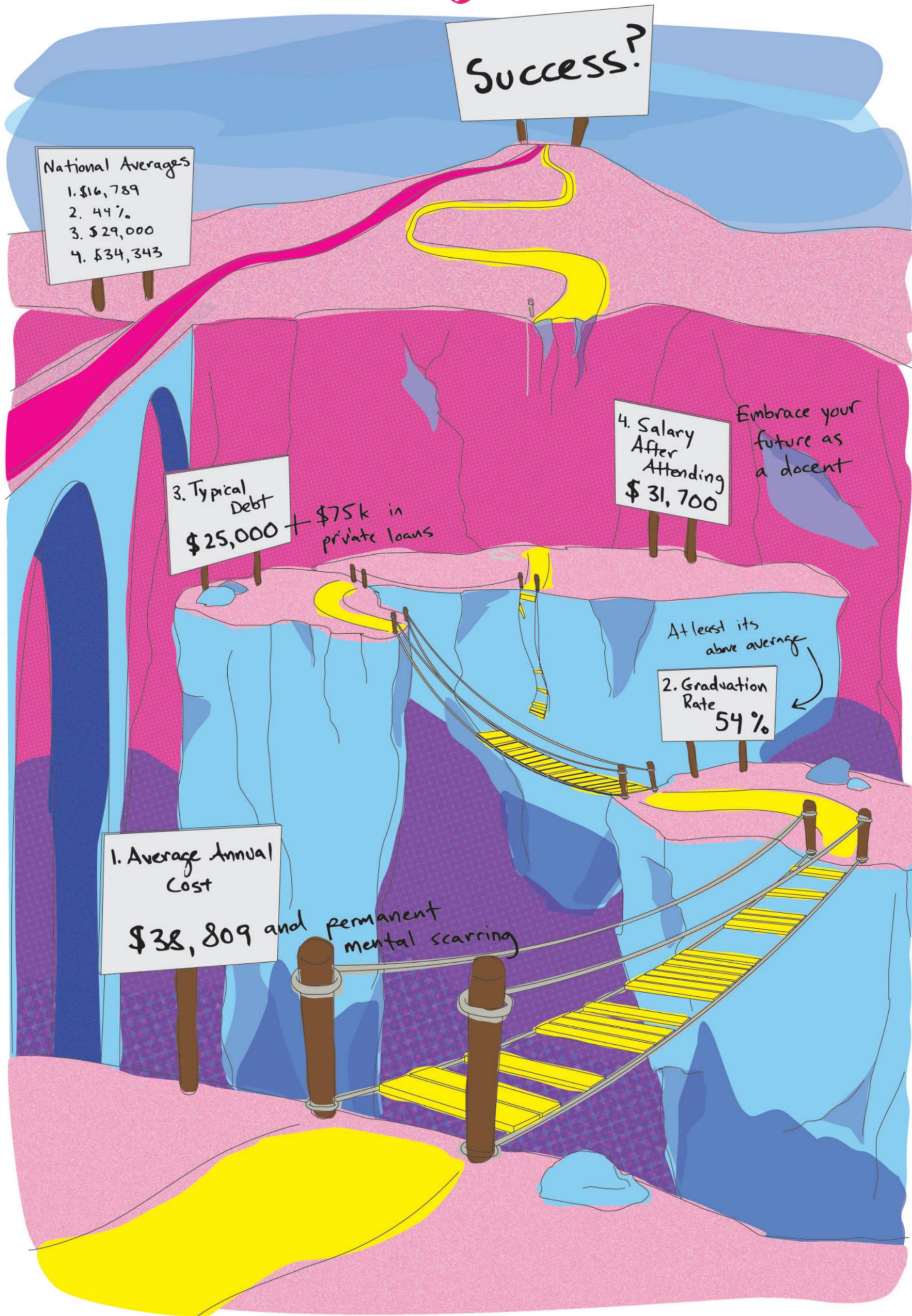
Air Bud, nominated by Shadow Man

PROS

- He sits. He stays. He shoots. He scores.
- A DOG AS PRESIDENT, PEOPLE.
- Running mate could be an unlikely animal friend.

CONS

- Can’t compete with Reagan’s IMDB.
- State of the union would probably just be: “woof woof woof woof bark squirrel.”
- Is a smug fucker.



SAIC Undergraduate Path to Success

by Zach Cooper

All statistics are from federal financial aid recipients.

1. Net price after aid from school, state, and federal government.

2. Graduation Rate after six years for predominantly four year degrees.

3. Typical debt for undergraduates from federal loans. Private loans not included in figures.

4. Average salary 10 years after graduation for students who received federal aid.

Stuffin' Your Stockings

A handful of minicomics that make perfect gifts

■ Alex Kostiw

The season of giving is upon us. Holiday songs have hit the radio. Bright décor has lit up your neighbors' windows. People are flocking to malls armed with wish lists. For those of us with slim wallets, or a lot of friends, or a love of indie publishers and artists — or a combination of the three — we have the perfect recommendation: minicomics. Nothing says you care like a \$4-10 thoughtful, (often) hand-made, hand-picked book. Here are our favorites, available from local booksellers just for you.

Virago

Krystal DiFronzo
\$4 at Quimby's

The narrator of "Virago" is as resolute as the minicomic's design is thorough. Black and green color the pages and even the thread binding. Dense drawings and stripped-down prose deliver a short, poignant story about strength and invincibility.

Perfect for kids whose youth makes them feel like they can do anything; anyone nearing 30 who needs a reminder that they're not that old.

Paramnesia

Oscar Arango, Victor Devlin, Scott Partridge
\$5 at Chicago Comics

Issue #1 is brought to us by the Culture Initiative, a Charlotte, N.C.-based arts forum. Risograph printed in an edition of 200, this piece unfolds into five drawings. Keep it on your shelf or hang it on your wall. And be on the lookout for issue #2.

Perfect for day dreamers; folks who maybe aren't into comics; illustrators.

Fixated: Three Fictional Stories about Obsession

Corinne Mucha
\$5 at Quimby's and Chicago Comics

Corinne Mucha's stories ask all the important questions: What in our lives is actually in our control? Can we ever gain control, or is it just an illusion? What does it mean to know ourselves? Find the answers in this collection.

Perfect for data analysts; anxious friends; English majors.

Limonchik

Mikkel Sommer
\$5 at Quimby's

The latest installment of minicomics in kuš! komiksi's series is all winners, but our favorite is Mikkel Sommer's "Limonchik." The dog that the Soviets launched into space in 1957 finally returns to earth. Charming art won't prepare you for what happens next.

Perfect for dog lovers; fans of "The Martian"; survivalists.



Baseline Blvd.

Emi Gennis
\$8 at Chicago Comics

Emi Gennis tells a breakup story, but it isn't your typical one. Most of this beautiful comic consists of landscapes and views from a car, which create a quiet, meditative space. Flashbacks to a troubled relationship build tension, telling us everything we need to know with as few words as possible.

*Perfect for drivers; minimalists; fans of ***serious*** comics.*



Breaking is Opening

Sab Meynert
\$10 at Chicago Comics

The oversized "Breaking is Opening" isn't exactly a minicomic, but it's impossible to kick off the list. The comic envelopes you in intricate red drawings that, with the text, remind you what it feels like to be in love. Wrap this one up in our cover and keep it out of the stocking.

Perfect for your dearest friends and lovers.



■ Alex Kostiw has too many books.

The Benaissance

Exploring the candidacy of Ben Carson through art

■ Ryan Blocker

A recent piece in "The Guardian" highlighted the strange art in Ben Carson's home, much of which seems to be an ode to himself. His walls are covered in stills from the TV movie about his life, "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story" starring Cuba Gooding Jr., numerous portraits of himself, and one painting of Carson alongside a disturbing rendering of Jesus. Inspired by these works, F News magazine has commissioned art for an upcoming exhibition focusing on Dr. Carson's contributions to the 2016 presidential campaign.



Benadryl (1984)

Audio taken from Ben Carson's speeches, hospital patient

Ben Carson has a very, very, very relaxed demeanor. Some have accused Carson of not having the stamina for the presidency. Carson has responded to critics by saying, "My energy levels are perfectly fine." Which is something a human person would say and definitely not something an android created by the Illuminati would say. He continues, "As I've said many times, there have been many times where I've operated 12, 15, 20 hours, and that requires a lot of energy. Doesn't require a lot of jumping up and down and screaming, but it does require a lot of concentration." In Benadryl, we hear Carson sedate patients without anesthesia. He is able to put them to sleep simply by talking about his tax plan.

Hotline Ben (2015)

Video

Ben Carson recently released a campaign song entitled "Freedom" featuring the rapper, Aspiring Mogul. It is part of a campaign push to court young, black voters. His campaign describes the ad as "reaching out and talking to them in a language that they prefer and in a language that, and in a cultural format that they appreciate." "Hotline Ben" invites audiences to question long held assumptions about the supposed intelligence of brain surgeons, to wonder how similarly Ben Carson and Drake might dance (probably very similarly), and to ask "Who the fuck thought this was a good idea?"





Benaissance Jesus (1995)

Oil on Canvas

Benaissance Jesus was graciously loaned to us by the Carson family. Combining the aesthetic elements of a 70s gay porno and a "Just Say No" anti-drug poster, this work is perhaps the most provocative of the show. It raises numerous questions for its viewers: Why does Jesus look like a Klingon? Why is he wearing a bathrobe? Did Ben Carson find Jesus at a bathhouse? Notice the triangles. Wake up, sheeple.



Ben'd and Snap (2015)

Rubber bands, paranoid curmudgeon

In an interview on CNN, Ben Carson got testy with Alisyn Camerota when she had the audacity to ask him what his words meant and why he put them in that order. When the host quoted his words directly to him, Carson scolded her saying, "No. Again, there you go with sensationalism. That's what you try to do. You hope somehow that will resonate with people who don't think for themselves. I've got news for you, people are a lot smarter than you think they are, and they know exactly what I'm talking about." Carson has been known to get angry with the media whom he sees as out to get him with their "gotcha" questions. In Ben'd and Snap, we see Carson pull and yank at a ball of rubber bands and angrily shout complaints about the "liberal media" as each one snaps.

■ Ryan Blocker is in the Arts Administration and Policy program. He believes Ben Carson, Raven-Symone, and Ted Cruz were created in a lab by the Illuminati.

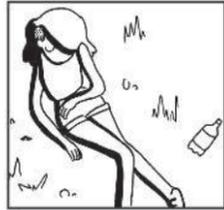
comics

■ Sacha



My mom agreed to participate in an experiment during her teenage pregnancy

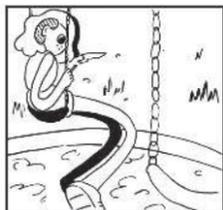
She took all these crazy drugs that doctors gave her



They were looking to create the perfect human

A human who can't suffer
A human with a definite lifespan

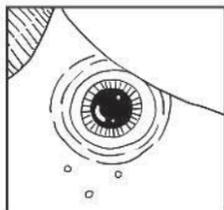
It was a huge success, so mom was compensated generously



I mean like, I'm ok with it

I was never too clear on the details

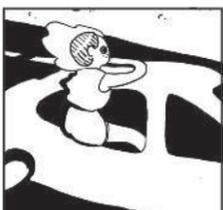
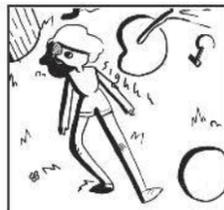
I just know that I'm encouraged to do whatever I want with my body



I have a lot of friends that worry about me

I tell them it doesn't matter because I'm always in perfect health

they probably don't believe me

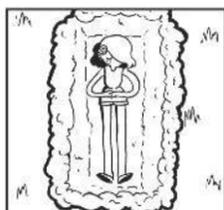
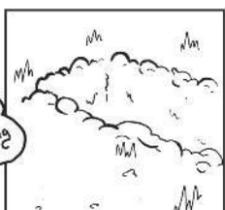


I don't really think that I'm...

scared of anything

What brings you to my office, then?

Is there something that is troubling you?



I dug a hole in my yard and tied there for a while

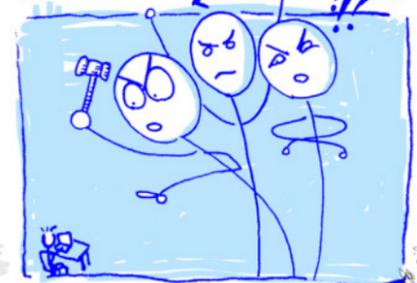
Mom cried when she saw



She brought me here

■ Eric Perez

Saic '19: The Ultimate Facebook Experience



■ Alex Kostiw



You've never been here before. Everything is strange to you.



But you are with a good friend, who grew up here.

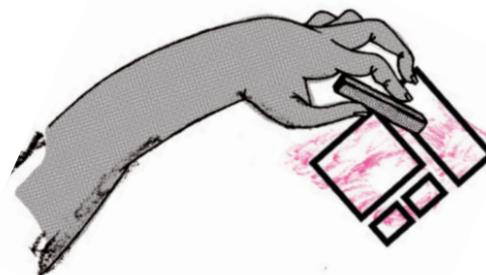


Look at the face of your friend, blending into the place seamlessly.



Has she been a stranger all along?

X-Men Unlimited vol. 1, no. 7, December 1994



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