

fnewsmagazine

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago | Art, culture, and politics

FEBRUARY
2016



1947 - 2016

Mapping Immigration Policies 10

Starman Waiting in the Sky 16

A New Rey of Hope 28

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VISITING MINDS
LASTING INFLUENCE

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in the Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects

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ON THE COVER

"And the Spiders from Mars," Alex Kostiw

This month, we remember David Bowie in only the way a bunch of art school publication misfits could: with a big, bold, beautiful Ziggy Stardust lightning bolt struck across our redesigned cover. While some of us may not have been there in person to see that glamorous alien superstar take his stage in style, we all live nonetheless in the post-Bowie soundscape. And it's been a very different universe since. Keep challenging the status quo. Make weird stuff. Be you. He's our starman waiting in the sky. *Flip to page 16 for more.*

LETTER FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR AND ART DIRECTOR

Ryan Blocker and Sevy Perez

Our first print edition of 2016 represents some of our New Year's resolutions. The eagle-eyed among you will notice that we've cleaned the place up a bit with our new and streamlined visual architecture. Using a new aesthetic system and only the Bariol and Chaparral Pro typefaces in fixed settings and nuanced weights, we're freeing up real and metaphorical space to focus on what matters most.

For us, that means quality and quick-response through consistency and clarity. We can produce better content and more beautiful designs and illustrations faster than you can fill out a student evaluation form. For you, that means a more seamless reading experience, and with increased white space and diversified page designs more ways to enjoy the creations of the many talented people here at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).

And editorially, we've been doing some weightlifting. As we're transitioning to a digital-first publication, we increase our coverage of news, politics, entertainment, and art to produce daily, high-quality content for the web. This February issue features the best of that content.

In our 5 Questions column, we sit down with graduate student Tracy Montes to talk about her collaboration with incarcerated women in Mexico. We map a side-by-side comparison of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates' immigration policies. Sophie Lucido Johnson talks about the addition of a kickass female character to the "Star Wars" franchise and unpacks its cultural impact. Rosie Accola explores the immense and complex legacy of rock legend David Bowie. So turn the page and get lost. And may the Force be with you. Always.

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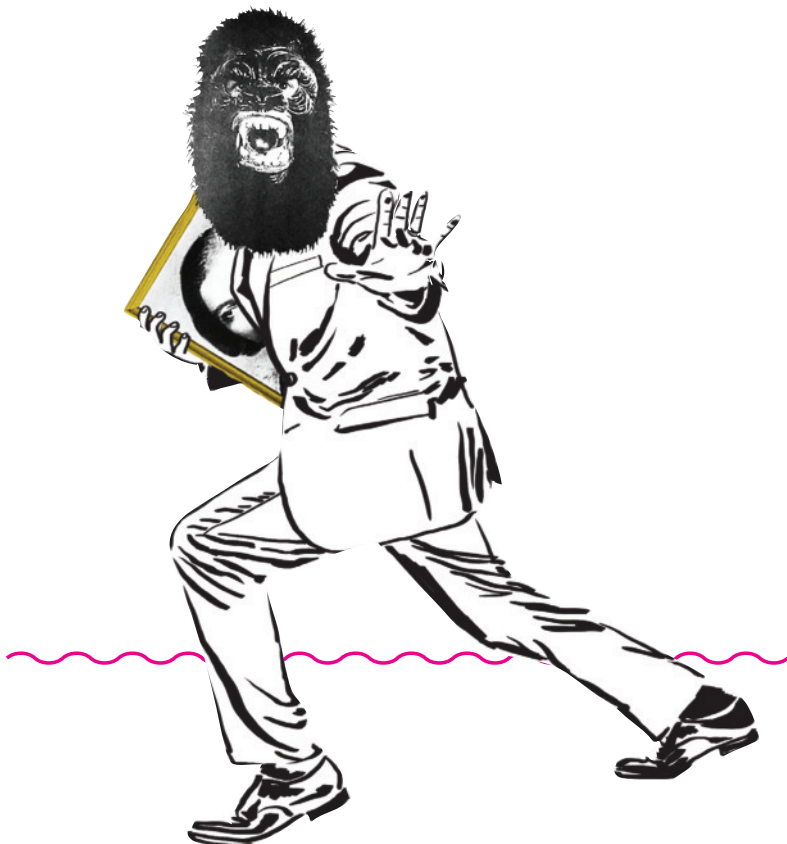
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Briefs



THE F QUESTION

Do you think Mayor Rahm Emanuel should resign? Email your responses to our school news editor, Violet, at violetcallis@gmail.com and possibly see your answer featured on fnewsmagazine.com and in the next print issue.

Arts

“The New Contemporary” at the Art Institute of Chicago

“The New Contemporary,” which opened in December, is currently on view in the Modern Wing at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC). The collection estimated at \$400 million was donated by philanthropists Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson back in April. According to the museum, the donation was the largest gift the Art Institute of Chicago has ever received. The show consists of 44 works by artists like Jeff Koons, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jasper Johns, among many others. The Chicago Tribune quotes Art Institute curator James Rondeau as saying, “Chicago in general and the Art Institute in particular have been historically poor in collections of classic pop art, and this in one single gift changes that forever.”

Guerrilla Girls appear on Colbert

Three members of the anonymous, feminist, activist collective known as the Guerrilla Girls appeared on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. In the interview, the women chronicled the group’s long history of intervention in the art world calling attention to racism and sexism. One member said, “In 1985, when we were baby guerrillas, some of us were baby guerrillas,

and we looked around and saw that all the opportunities and almost all the money in the art world was going to white males.” When Colbert asked if “art can speak for itself,” she responded, “Every aesthetic decision has a value around it. And if all the decisions are being made by the same people, then the art will never look like the whole of our culture.”

Ariell Johnson, first black woman to own comics store on the East Coast

Ariell Johnson, the owner of the Amalgam Comics & Coffeehouse located in Philadelphia, has become the first black woman to own a comic book store on the East Coast. In an interview with Philly.com, Johnson said of opening the store, “I was hyper aware that comic books are dominated usually by white men, but when I was creating the store, I wasn’t really thinking about myself [or] about being first.” She continued, “To not see yourself ever represented as the hero or the protagonist does start to wear on your self-esteem and your self-worth because it’s like you’re not valued enough to learn more about or write a story about.” Johnson explained that diversity in comics should reflect the diversity of the world. “It’s healthy to see other people represented because it helps you relate to people,” she said.

News

More voices join #OscarsSoWhite outrage

Will Smith, Jada Pinkett Smith and Spike Lee, are among the names of those who will be boycotting this year’s Academy Awards. For the second year, the Academy has nominated only white performers in all of the acting categories. Actors George Clooney, Mark Ruffalo, and Lupita Nyong’o have added their voices to the criticism, with Nyong’o sharing her disappointment at the “lack of inclusion” in an Instagram post. The Oscar-winning actress said that she “[stands] with [her] peers who are calling for change in expanding the stories that are told and recognition of the people who tell them.” In a recent development, the Academy released a statement saying the organization will implement new policies that will “[double] the number of women and diverse members of the Academy by 2020.”

Flint, Michigan, water crisis continues

President Obama signed emergency legislation that will provide relief in the recovery efforts in Flint, Michigan. The measure will allow up to \$5 million in Federal relief to residents who have been exposed to high levels of lead in their tap water. The water in Flint became contaminated after the

city switched from the Detroit water system to the Flint River. The water was corrosive and not properly treated which caused lead to from old pipes to make its way into resident’s homes. Governor Rick Snyder has come under fire for his handling of what is now one of the worst man-made American disasters in recent memory.

Campaign to oust Mayor Rahm Emanuel intensifies

A protester interrupted the U.S. Conference of Mayors press conference in Washington D.C. to bring attention to the shooting of unarmed black teen, Laquan McDonald, and to call for Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s resignation. April Goggins stood in front of the podium holding a sign that read “16 Shots & A Cover Up #LaquanMcDonald #RESIGNRAHM.” This comes a few days after protests occurred at the mayor’s Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Breakfast. The Chicago Tribune reports that “the Chicago Teachers Union held its own breakfast at the same time, and teachers again called for Emanuel’s resignation.” Demonstrators stood outside of Emanuel’s ceremony shouting “Shame on you!” and blocking the entrance. Several ministers boycotted the breakfast, and protests continued inside the event space.





#NoFilter

Six Instagram profiles you should follow

Hannah Chirillo



Luke Pelletier
[@lukepelletier](#)

This SAIC alum/painting/photo/musician powerhouse is my go-to for motivation to stop insta-stalking all of the aforementioned profiles, drag my lagging ass out of bed, and go create something in the world that may or may not end up in the Instagram blender of selfies and hobbies.



Gabriella Bowden
[@gabriella_bowden](#)

Cool enough to not need a filter, Bowden's style is basicore to the bone. Your thumb isn't even close to ready for how deep of a scroll it's about to descend into this art student's dreamy life that we all pretend exists outside of our Tumblr dashboards.



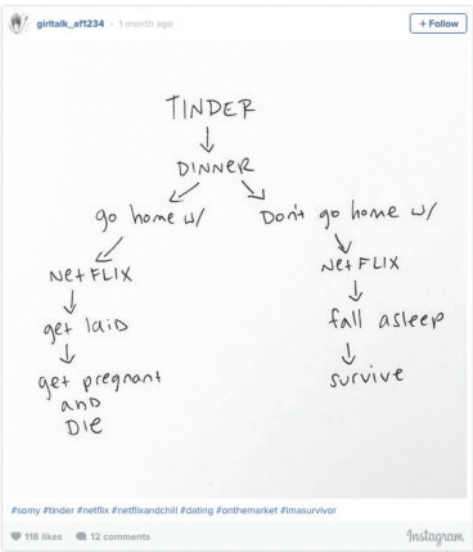
EVERYTHING IS TERRIBLE!
[@everythingisterrible666](#)

EVERYTHING IS TERRIBLE! proves that those weird, awkward home movies never actually disappear. Instead, they vaporize into a riotous multiverse to join a cyclone of failed '90s jingles and creepy pre-Internet propaganda, before being regurgitated back into the mindfuck smoothie that is Memory Hole.



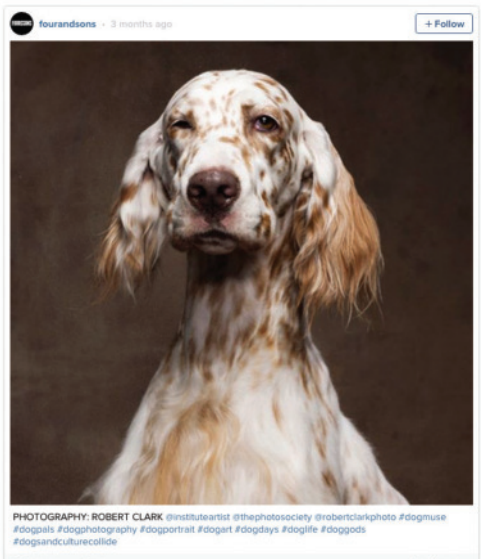
Lee Tilghman
[@leefromamerica](#)

If avocado toast is a canvas, Lee from America is the Fauvist of our time. The recipes she shares are simple, bright and digestible without any heavy-claim ingredients those Cubist healthletes intimidate us with.



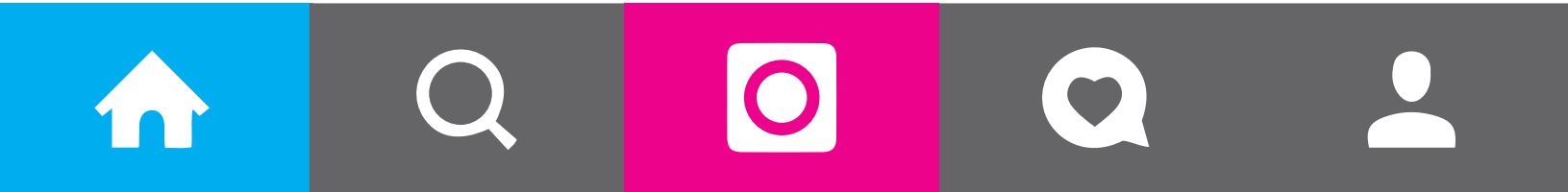
Desiree Melancon
[@girltalk_af1234](#)

Here we find the dirty cartoon brainwork of one of snowboarding's rawest members: Desiree Melancon. Melancon's account is a mind map of snappy illustrations accompanied by probably the most unabashed narrative of a girl's raunchy side that can be composed via hashtags.

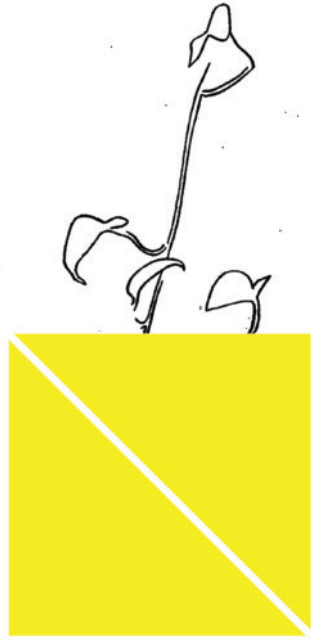


Four&Sons
[@fourandsons](#)

Dogs have a modeling industry, too.



fnewsmagazine.com



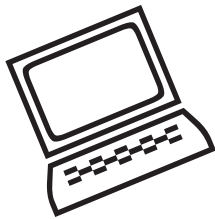
REMEMBERING

web feature:
Ellsworth Kelly
retrospective

See everything in this issue and
more at fnewsmagazine.com.



FLAXMAN LIBRARY SPRING 2016 EVENTS



3/5

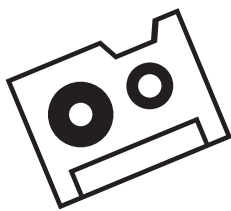
Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

1st Floor Neiman Center

12-5pm

bring your own laptop

visit bit.ly/1mmwOCJ for more information



4/4 - 4/21

***Library Mixtape Exhibit:
Faculty, Staff, Student & Alumni Edition!***

visit libraryguides.saic.edu/mixtape to participate!

Field Guide to North American Progressive Persons, Sorted by Conversational Grunts

Sophie Lucido Johnson

In most major metropolises (with the exception of Houston), a party, cocktail, brunch, Brooklyn bungalow, book release, craftersnoon may provide a thriving habitat for a bevy of Progressive Persons. Even for the relatively experienced, it can be difficult to identify individual types. With so many Planned Parenthood tote bags (each with a copy of Ta-Nahesi Coates’ “Between the World and Me” tucked inside just enough so the title sticks out just over the top), it is all but impossible to differentiate. Luckily, Progressive Persons betray their true nature in conversation; one can identify them by their distinctive calls. At first listen, these conversational grunts — “Hmm,” “Mmm,” “Mmmmmmmmm,” etc. — sound nearly identical, but with this simple guide, you’ll soon hear their subtle idiosyncrasies.

This complete field guide can be found at www.fnewsmagazine.com.



Mm. Short and emphatic, intentionally added after someone says something that might be described as a metaphor, or, by another type of crowd, as melodramatic.

An Artist: This type of person is more interested in “the politics of emotions” than they are in facts, unless the facts are outstanding enough to elicit significant emotion. This type of person goes to a lot of rallies and protests and is often tasked with coming up with some of the group chants, because they’ve dabbled in the slam poetry scene for a while. A variation of this type is An Artist — mostly distinguishable by a baffling wrist tattoo of what might be a river, and an asymmetrical and/or multicolored hairstyle.



Oh! Yes! Yeah yeah yeah. Confident and a-twitter, filling a silence wherein most people ordinarily add something new to the conversation — for example, a follow-up question or a similar anecdote. This call is usually immediately followed by an expression of desire to use the bathroom, or to get another drink.

An Ignorant Enthusiast: This type of person is not sure how they got into this conversation. Around the second sentence, this person realized that they were way out of their depth. But since they’ve already started nodding, they realize they are stuck and there’s no way out. This type of person wishes they cared about this topic. They’ve been meaning to get around to learning about it, actually, but they just don’t. Instead, they have noticed a little bit of food on the collar of the shirt of the person they are talking to, and they’re thinking about what kind of food that is, and wondering if there is any food at this party. They haven’t seen any. Oh, God. Has their conversational partner been walking around ALL DAY with that food on their collar!? Gross!



Mmmm. Long and drawn-out, no reverberation, low tone, interjected non-disruptively over someone’s story about all the misuse of gender pronouns at a work meeting.

A Joiner: This type of person listens to the headlines portion of Democracy Now twice a week for social purposes, and cut the Forever 21 labels out of their T-shirts after that big slave labor piece went viral on Facebook last month. Also identifiable by a pair of non-prescription, plastic-rimmed glasses, the purchase of which benefited an animal shelter for blind or near-blind dogs.



Mmm hmm! Mmm hmm! Mmm hmm! Excitable, loud, high-tempo bursts of sound, accompanied by vigorous nodding and a slightly open mouth, as though the person needs to add something really important to the conversation as soon as possible.

An Intellectual: This type of person subscribes to over 20 print magazines that all identify as “nonprofit organizations.” The person is willing (if not excited!) to loudly approximate statistics that they have read on the following subjects: the prison industrial complex, other types of complexes, farm-to-table cooking, coconut oil, the colonization of the Oxford comma, James Franco, and overfishing as it relates to food deserts. This type of person also commonly begins sentences with, “I was going to write an article about this, actually.”

SAIC Dirty Deeds Confessions
7 hours ago

I don't hate the rich Koreans because they're paying for my scholarships! Nice work guys :)

Like · Comment · Share

SAIC Dirty Deeds Confessions
about an hour ago

Annoyed with the Koreans that go to the school that present shitty last minute projects and waste time during crit. Annoyed with snobby fobs. Koreans talking shit about people in Korean when the person is 3 feet away. Koreans sticking their nose in shit it doesn't belong in. Gossiping Koreans fanning around mommy and daddy's money. Fucking Koreans

Like · Comment · Share

SAIC Dirty Deeds Confessions
about an hour ago

every damn asian in my class falls asleep during critique. you can't seriously still have jet lag...

Like · Comment · Share

Will We Be Silent?

Students shed light on anti-Asian prejudice at SAIC

Megan Cho

In 2013, I came across a Facebook page called “SAIC Dirty Deeds Confessions,” an unofficial page not affiliated with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Hiding behind anonymity, some of my schoolmates were not afraid to publicly bash students from Asia on the page, especially those from Korea.

Being a Korean student at SAIC, I decided to have a conversation with Campus Life officials about the hateful posts. I was told that the school was not responsible for the unaffiliated Facebook page. That was it. I’ve never met someone who has spoken out about this issue since then — neither within the international students’ community, nor in the broader school environment.

Two years after I saw those message boards, still wondering if the anti-Asian sentiments persisted, I decided to talk to other Asian international students about their experiences with stereotypes. The students I talked to said that they felt frustrated, annoyed, and angry to be associated with negative perceptions, but were reluctant to turn such feelings into a critical discussion about the school community.

“I’m aware that there is this ‘rich kid’ stereotype about Asian international students,” said one of the people I talked to (who did not wish to be identified), “but it is true to a certain extent, because there are students from Asia who act like the stereotype, so I don’t know if I can deny it.” When I asked him if he identified with the sentiment, he said no, and although the existence of such a belief bothers him, there is not much he can do about it.

Other interviewees acknowledged the prevalence of these attitudes at SAIC but were similarly reluctant to express their personal feelings about the issue.

Why do some of these students feel discouraged from rejecting these narratives? Why do they seem to prefer remaining silent? I imagine

behind their silence is a complexity beyond the simple explanation: “Well, there *are* people like that.”

I asked Asian international students about experiences that led them to feel similarly disheartened.

According to SAIC’s website, “Most grants, scholarships, and loans from public and private sources in the United States are restricted to U.S. citizens or permanent residents, limiting the amount of information international students can find about financial aid from U.S. sources.” Because of those restrictions, international students at SAIC have limited access to scholarships, student loans, and jobs, which often causes them to depend more on their families’ funding. However, because of such inevitable reliance on family funding, international students are often viewed as “not having it hard enough.”

Sunyoung Hwang, a senior BFA student from Korea, said that a peer constantly asked about the costs of her materials. “In the last class of the semester, we did an activity that we wrote things we best liked about each other,” said Hwang. “I was paired with that classmate, and she wrote that I always spent a lot of money on materials for what she liked about me.”

Many students expressed discomfort regarding the school’s general treatment of Asian students, pointing to a lack of classes on diversity, teachers of color, and all-school level discussions on racial/cultural issues.

An international student from Korea who wished to remain anonymous said, “Although I must acknowledge that the separate Korean and Chinese student advisors can be a helpful resource for some who are not comfortable speaking to regular academic advisors due to a language barrier or cultural difference, I don’t like that the faculty members direct a student to the Korean or Chinese student advisors without a question if the said student is Korean or Chinese.”

The interviewee continued: “They treat us as if we have to go through our cultural representative to solve

any problem on campus, even if we don’t have a language barrier, or the problem is unrelated to a cultural experience. It just feels like they don’t want to deal with Korean or Chinese students themselves and relegate their responsibility to these specific advisors.”

Another interviewee who wished to remain anonymous shared her experience of being labeled as a foreigner by school faculty. She was sexually harassed on the train, but when she discussed this with a school official, the official was unhelpful. She explained, “[My adviser] said I encountered that because I look like a tourist. She also recommended that I wear more humble outfits and not carry expensive cameras.”

After speaking with these students, I couldn’t help but ask: Are some of us simply quiet and complacent, or are we just tired of discussing these issues because others haven’t listened?

The Facebook page provided an anonymity that protected hateful speech. And interestingly, anonymity was also important for some of the interviewees — and perhaps for good reason. But how might these realities intersect in a way that further diminishes the voices of Asian students on campus?

International students go through a lot to be admitted to SAIC. Merely attending the school is a tremendous amount of work — not only because of the burden of retaining immigration status paper trails, speaking a foreign language at college level, and keeping up with American culture in order to conduct small talk with peers. And what may seem to some like insignificant slights can actually contribute to an omnipresent feeling of marginalization.

These discriminatory remarks take up a significant portion of our lives. Some of us feel pressured to assimilate and have sometimes been made to feel less visible on campus. So the question remains: Will we be silent?

Are some of us simply quiet, or are we just tired of discussing these issues because others haven’t listened?

Megan Cho is a 4th-year BFA student at SAIC. Cho’s works revolve around topics of transition, translocation and translation.



Documenting Puerto Rico's Debt Crisis

Daniel Delgado

Puerto Rico faces a financial crisis and public debt that could soon impact its ability to provide basic services to its residents. According to the New York Times, the U.S. territory has an estimated \$72 billion debt. The economy has been failing for the past decade. The situation is also deeply personal for the more than 100,000 Puerto Ricans who live in Chicago. It's personal for me. I am Puerto Rican, and I am well aware of the impending threat of this crisis with each passing moment. The same is true for my family on the island — my grandparents who were born and live there, my cousins, aunts, and uncles. They are living with the consequences of the crisis as it casts a constant shadow over the island.

The Puerto Rican community on the island and in the U.S. mainland have asked Congress to authorize the restructuring of all or part of the debt. The Republican majority in Congress has denied the Puerto Rican government and its public corporations access to bankruptcy to restructure its debt and jumpstart the economy. According to the New York Times, recent talks with creditors to restructure the debt have fallen through.

The crisis is mirrored in its infrastructure that is fractured and broken down. The people of Puerto Rico want to have a hospitable living environment and move toward a better future.



Clockwise, from top: Sal's, an antique store which sold beauty products in Río Piedras, is one of the many commercial establishments that have been forced to close their doors due to financial hardship. The old headquarters of the Teatro Modelo (Modelo Theater), located in the De Diego Avenue in Río Piedras, is for sale after its commercial retail store failed to be successful. Before the recession started in 2006, towards the end of the 1990s, the construction of a baseball park in the municipality of the island of Vieques remains unfinished. The abandoned structure of a foreclosed company sits next to the bay in Old San Juan.



Daniel Delgado is a photographer and graphic designer majoring in both fields at the School of Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC).



The 2016 Presidential Candidates on Immigration

Ryan Blocker

Campaign promises

- Support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA);
- Advocate for “humane, targeted immigration enforcement”;
- End family detention;• Close private detention centers;
- Promote avenues for naturalization;
- Allow families to participate in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) regardless of immigration status;
- Provide pathways to citizenship.

- Break up deportation programs and detention centers;
- “Ensure our border remains secure while respecting local communities”;
- Expand DACA and DAPA;
- Provide whistleblower protections for persons who report labor abuse;
- Stop local law enforcement from carrying out immigration duties;
- Employ “humanitarian parole” to reunite families who have been wrongly deported;
- End family detention and for-profit detention;
- Halt policies that allow law enforcement to engage in racial profiling;
- Welcome Syrian refugees.

- Expand deferred action;
- Provide sufficient training to U.S Customs and Border Protection;
- Provide Affordable Care Act healthcare options to DACA and DAPA recipients;
- Only use detention as a “last resort”;
- Close “inhumane detention centers”;
- Expand due process protections in the detention system;
- Get local law enforcement out of the business of enforcing immigration policy;
- Create an independent agency to set U.S. Immigration Policy;
- Protect the Diversity Visa.

Background

- Co-sponsored Senator Ted Kennedy’s 2004 bill and supported the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act;
- Co-sponsored the DREAM Act in 2003, 2005, and 2007;
- Sponsored the Legal Immigrant Children’s Health Improvement Act in the Senate;
- DREAMERs and immigration activists have protested at Clinton’s campaign events for her refusal to distance herself from Obama’s high number of deportations;
- In 2008, Clinton said that she opposed drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants;
- Said in an interview that unaccompanied minors who have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border should be “sent back as soon as it can be determined who responsible adults in their families are.”

- Son of a Polish immigrant father;
- Invited the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to Washington to testify during a Senate hearing about abusive labor practices;
- Voted for the immigration reform bill in 2013;
- Strongly criticized President Obama’s decision to delay his executive action which would postpone a large number of deportations;
- Bernie Sanders at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) conference: “Deferred action should include the parents of citizens, parents of legal permanent residents, and the parents of DREAMERs.”

- Was the first Democratic candidate to release an extensive and comprehensive immigration plan;
- While governor of Maryland, O’Malley supported the Maryland Dream Act, which provided in-state tuition rates to undocumented immigrants;
- Has been supported by a number of immigration activist groups and DREAMERs organizations for the specificity of his policy and strong track record on immigration issues;
- As governor of Maryland, O’Malley allowed undocumented immigrants to obtain driver’s licenses;
- Argued for the moral obligation to accept 65,000 Syrian refugees.



Hillary Clinton



Bernie Sanders



Martin O’Malley

Key:

Affordable Care Act (ACA): Often referred to as Obamacare, the 2010 legislation that allowed for the expansion of Medicaid to cover uninsured Americans

Birtheright citizenship: The citizenship guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to anyone born in a country or territory regardless of the citizenship of the parents

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP): The federal law enforcement agency responsible for regulating trade and immigration

Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP): A program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides low cost insurance to families with children, in some states coverage may also extend to pregnant women

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act: A 2007 bill that would have provided a pathway to citizenship for the millions of undocumented residents in the U.S.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): A 2012 policy out of the Obama administration that allowed some people who entered the U.S. as children to obtain a work permit and avoid deportation

Deferred Action for Parents of American and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA): A policy that would provide deferred action to the undocumented parents of children born in the U.S.

Deferred action: An immigration status granted by the executive branch that can delay deportation

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM Act): Legislation that provides protection which would permit some immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. to apply for temporary legal status



and to eventually receive legal status and become eligible for U.S. citizenship, if they enlist in the military or attend college. This act also provides some access to in-state tuition rates

DREAMERS: Refers to the people between the ages of 15 and 30 who meet the requirements of DACA; the young people who grew up in the U.S. and were brought to the country as children. The term has also come to represent the political, economic, and social aspirations of the group

Diversity Visa. A Visa drawn from random selection and provided to people from regions with low immigration rates to the United States

Green Card (United States Permanent Resident Card). A document that identifies an immigrant as a lawful resident of the U.S. and allows for employment in the country

U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE): The federal agency out of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for investigating and enforcing border policies; the agency tasked with removal, detention, and deportation of undocumented residents in the U.S.

Legal Immigrant Children’s Health Improvement Act: Allows “lawfully residing” immigrant children and pregnant women to enroll in Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program

Medicaid: Federal and state healthcare program for low income families and individuals and some individuals with disabilities ; recipients must be citizens of the U.S. or lawfully residing in the country

Nonimmigrant visa: A document given to people with permanent residence outside the U.S. but who will be in the U.S. for a short period of time for things like tourism, work, etc.

Sanctuary city: A city that does not prosecute undocumented persons living in that city

Visa: A document that allows temporary entry to a country.



Donald Trump

Background

- Has no experience as a policy maker or elected official;
- Referred to undocumented persons as rapists, drug dealers, and criminals;
- Uses the slur “anchor baby” and refers to undocumented persons as “illegals”;
- Has claimed that a large number of terrorists may be among the Syrian refugees;
- Has blamed illegal immigration for high unemployment in black and Latino communities.

Campaign Promises

- Build a wall across the southern border of the United States and force Mexico to pay for its construction;
- If Mexico refuses to pay for the wall, the U.S. will utilize a number of economic threats including “impounding” all remittance payments derived from illegal wages; [increasing] fees on all temporary visas issued to Mexican CEOs and diplomats (and if necessary cancel them)”;
- Issue an indefinite halt on all immigration of Muslims
- Making the requirements for asylum-seekers and refugees more stringent;
- Deport all undocumented persons living in the United States;
- Defund sanctuary cities;
- End birthright citizenship;
- Triple the number of ICE agents at the U.S.-Mexico border.



Ted Cruz

- Born in Canada to a Cuban father and an American mother;
- Previously advocated for path to legalization for immigrants, but changed his stance during his bid for the presidency;
- Supported high-skilled immigration and an increase in the number of green cards until his bid for the presidency;
- Has said, “We should prioritize refugee status for religious minorities, especially Christians, Jews, and others being systematically tortured and murdered by radical Islamists in Iraq and Syria today”;
- Previously supported birthright citizenship and then went on to later change his stance.

- Build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border;
- Triple the number of Border Patrol officers;
- Allow ICE agents to permanently detain of undocumented immigrants;
- End sanctuary cities;
- Allow local law enforcement to take on immigration issues
- Criminalize people who overstay their visa;
- Prevent any undocumented person from receiving government benefits;
- End birthright citizenship;
- Insists on biometric tracking of undocumented persons that would allow the government to track people like “Amazon and Fedex can track packages.”



Marco Rubio

- Son of Cuban immigrants;
- Co-authored a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform plan in 2013 that would have fostered a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants but later dropped his support when the plan was stalled in the House of Representatives;
- Was seen by many as one of the few Republicans in the Senate who was committed to substantive immigration reform but began to distance himself from a number of his policies when other conservative candidates and conservative media criticized him for being soft on the issue;
- Has expressed support for undocumented immigrants applying for green cards.

- Take “existing visas away from family-based immigration and toward work- and skill-based immigration”;
- Recruit highly-skilled immigrants who will help “improve the middle class”;
- Provide employers with methods to check the legal status of new hires;
- Support an entry and exit tracking system to prevent visa overstays;
- Those who qualify for a temporary nonimmigrant visa would have to pay a fee and a fine, have a background check, and prove a proficiency in English. They would not qualify for government benefits.



This Suffering Deemed Necessary

The psychic toll of watching recorded police violence

Ryan Blocker

Back in November of 2014, Cleveland police shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice for playing with a toy gun in a recreation area. A witness called 911 to report that “a guy” was waving and pointing a gun that was “probably fake” at passers-by. The witness’ doubt about the gun was never relayed to the officers. Nor was the fact that the caller also said that Tamir was possibly a “juvenile.” Only after Tamir’s death did the officers identify the weapon as a pellet gun with the orange safety cap scratched off. Officers Frank Garmback and Timothy Loehmann claimed that Tamir reached for the gun in his waistband when they arrived on the scene, and Loehmann opened fire.

After local and national pressure, the Cleveland police released the surveillance footage of the encounter to the public four days later. The footage revealed that Loehmann shot Tamir before the officers had even stopped the car. Officer Loehmann quite literally jumped out of the moving car and fired within seconds of arriving on the scene. The video also shows that neither officer administered first aid. I, like millions of others, watched Tamir die on camera. A Cleveland grand jury also

watched Tamir die on camera, and declined to prosecute the officers that killed him.

Cleveland Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty released enhanced security footage and a frame-by-frame analysis of the encounter. According to CBS News, “The analysis doesn’t appear to contain any new or substantive information and doesn’t clearly show whether Tamir, as police officials have maintained, was reaching into his waistband for the pellet gun when Loehmann shot him less than two seconds after getting out of the car.”

Officers Loehmann’s and Garmback’s statements were made available to the public for the first time in December. In them, the officers double down on their initial claims, stating again that they believed Tamir to be a threat. Loehmann wrote in the report, “With his hands pulling the gun out and his elbow coming up, I knew it was a gun and it was coming out. I saw the weapon in his hands coming out of his waistband and the threat to my partner and myself was real and active.”

A forensic expert hired by the Rice family claims Tamir wasn’t reaching for the toy at all as he wouldn’t have had time to do so given that the officer fired so quickly. It should be noted that no charges have yet been brought against the officers.

I remember distinctly what it was like to play with a toy gun. One Christmas, my parents bought my brother and me toy laser guns. They were gray with red lights that flashed whenever you fired, and you carried the toy by the shoulder strap. There was also a belt with a sensor that would make a high-pitched siren sound if you were hit by the other person’s laser.

My younger brother and I hid in closets, ducked under the stairs, and ran in and out of bedrooms and bathrooms firing at each other until the pitch of the sirens grew increasingly flat and the batteries died that same day. We were astronauts, superheroes, villains, cops, robbers, allies, enemies, and sometimes all at the same time.

At 12, I still felt compelled to play, but there was a seriousness to it now — a sacredness. It became crucial that the rules of play matched the rules of the actual world. I remember asking for and receiving a toy shotgun. I went into the kitchen, found a black permanent marker, and colored the bright orange, plastic cap at the tip that marked it as a toy. The ink from the marker would fade, and I would return from outside to apply a fresh coat. I helped my brother do the same. My mother was horrified to see what we had done, and made me wash off the guns with fingernail polish remover. She was afraid of us getting in trouble, I understood that. She didn’t seem to understand how important it was for them to look real. Play was serious work.

My mother was panicked to see the toy I had rendered dangerously real. I scrubbed and scrubbed the

safety cap of my gun until it was bright orange again. She understood the fragility of my young, black life in ways that I could not and perhaps still cannot.

I recognized from the Tamir Rice video the postures of adolescence. His pacing, playing with the toy, becoming bored with an idea, turning to a new one, slipping in and out of the seams of play. It confused me how he could have been read by the officers or bystanders as anything other than a child. Even the 911 caller had acknowledged it.

I watched the video because I am part of a number of activist circles who argue passionately (and I believe rightly) that videos like these are important in seeking legal justice, speaking to the need for increased surveillance of police officers, and impressing upon the public the gravity of racialized police violence. It did none of those things for me in that moment. I had simply chosen to bear witness to something traumatic.

Mamie Till famously held an open casket funeral for her son Emmett who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, and her actions are credited with launching the Civil

What does it mean when a tool used to bring about liberation — a profoundly unreliable tool — also causes trauma?

Rights movement. Similarly, Tamir's mother, Samaria Rice, has fought for the video to be released to the public and has become an advocate appearing in a number of television programs and interviews.

The power of Mamie Till's decision was in part due to the rarity of the image. There was certainly a history of lynching photography, but it had been intended to be a site of celebration for whites and shame and terror for blacks. In rejecting the narrative of shame, Samaria draws from the lineage of Mamie and sees her son's death as a call for social change. But in the age of the hyper dissemination of information and the saturation of images, what is the psychic toll of seeing an Emmett Till every week? The videos somehow manage to be both horrifying in what they reveal and mundane in their regularity. And what is the toll when these videos don't bring about justice at all? Samaria Rice said in an interview with MSNBC after the grand jury's decision not to indict, "Due to the corrupt system, I have a dead child. I feel like breath has been taken out of my body once again."

I think often now of the strangeness of this ritual of watching brown and black people being brutalized and killed on camera. It is a profound strangeness; this practice of families requesting to watch the

deaths of their loved ones, and then being pushed into decisions about the spread of those images.

I write now in the aftermath of the release of the video of the killing of Laquan McDonald, a 17-year-old who was shot 16 times by Chicago police, yet another child we have watched die on camera. It took approximately 400 days for the footage to be made public. There are even reports that police officers tampered with security footage in a nearby Burger King. Shyrell Johnson, the lawyer for Laquan McDonald's family, said that Laquan's relatives did not want the video released because they believed it would be "too painful for the family and community" to watch repeatedly.

What of the families like that of Laquan McDonald who wish to grieve privately, do not desire to become activists, and are retraumatized by the spread of those images? Legally, their anxieties do not trump the court ruling, and perhaps in the long run, their personal feelings are less important to the movement to end racialized police violence. However, what does it mean to grieve personally and intimately a loved one whose death goes viral?

In truth, these videos are often necessary in pursuing a legal outcome, but they do not guarantee convictions or even charges (as is the case for Tamir Rice and Eric Garner). However, white supremacy is so powerful that the absence of these videos almost certainly leads to the absence of justice. Since the release of the footage of Laquan McDonald's killing, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has fired Police Chief Garry McCarthy and the head of the Independent Police Review Authority Scott Ando has resigned. The video only came to the public attention due to the actions of a whistleblower.

The national dialogue on race has shifted profoundly thanks in large part due to the efforts of groups like #blacklivesmatter. There has been a renaissance of activism on college campuses. The media is held accountable in racial discourses in ways that were not even possible just ten years ago. These are important gains and are undoubtedly linked to the mass spread of information made possible by social media and the prevalence of images of racial violence. The videos make the larger public aware of the daily realities for many black and brown people. And it's fair to say that actually living with the fear of racialized police violence is likely more serious than the fear produced by watching that violence on camera. But might those images intensify that lived fear particularly for people of color?

What does it mean when a tool used to bring about liberation — a profoundly unreliable tool — also causes trauma? My thoughts turn to this unacknowledged pain — this suffering deemed necessary — for people of color of who are constantly inundated with images of this racialized brutality as we struggle to build a more perfect union.





Apichatpong Weerasethakul (MFA 1998, HON 2011), still from *Cemetery of Splendor*, 2015

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SAIC Graduate Three Years into Residency at Parents' House

Artist Kenneth Wells takes his practice and crushing student debt to childhood home

Ryan Blocker

In January 2013, Kenneth Wells, graduate of the painting and drawing department at School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), accepted a residency at his parents' home in Greensboro, NC. Three years into the program, Wells seems to be finding his stride.

"I deal with themes of youth and memory in my work, and I utilize personal ephemera a lot. Being in a space so familiar to me provides interesting avenues to explore. My mother has kept all of my tee ball trophies and this Lion King blanket, so it would be interesting to do something with those," Wells said.

He started the search for residencies after his graduation at the end of May 2012, but felt that many of the programs didn't address his specific needs. Wells explained, "I was ideally looking for low-cost housing and a place to come to terms with my massive student debt."

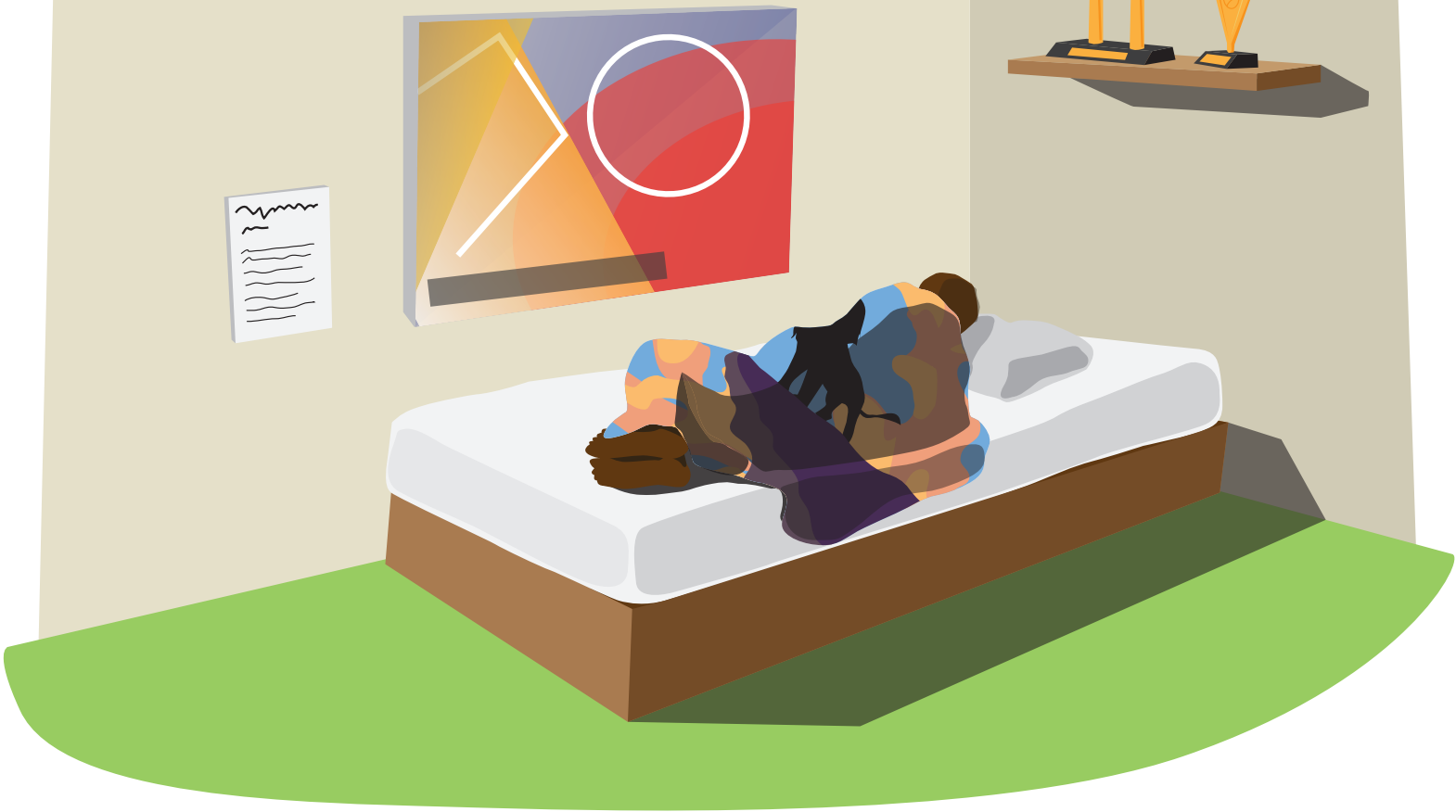
Wells' mother, Susan, was on the two-person committee that made the decision to offer the residency to Wells. She spoke of

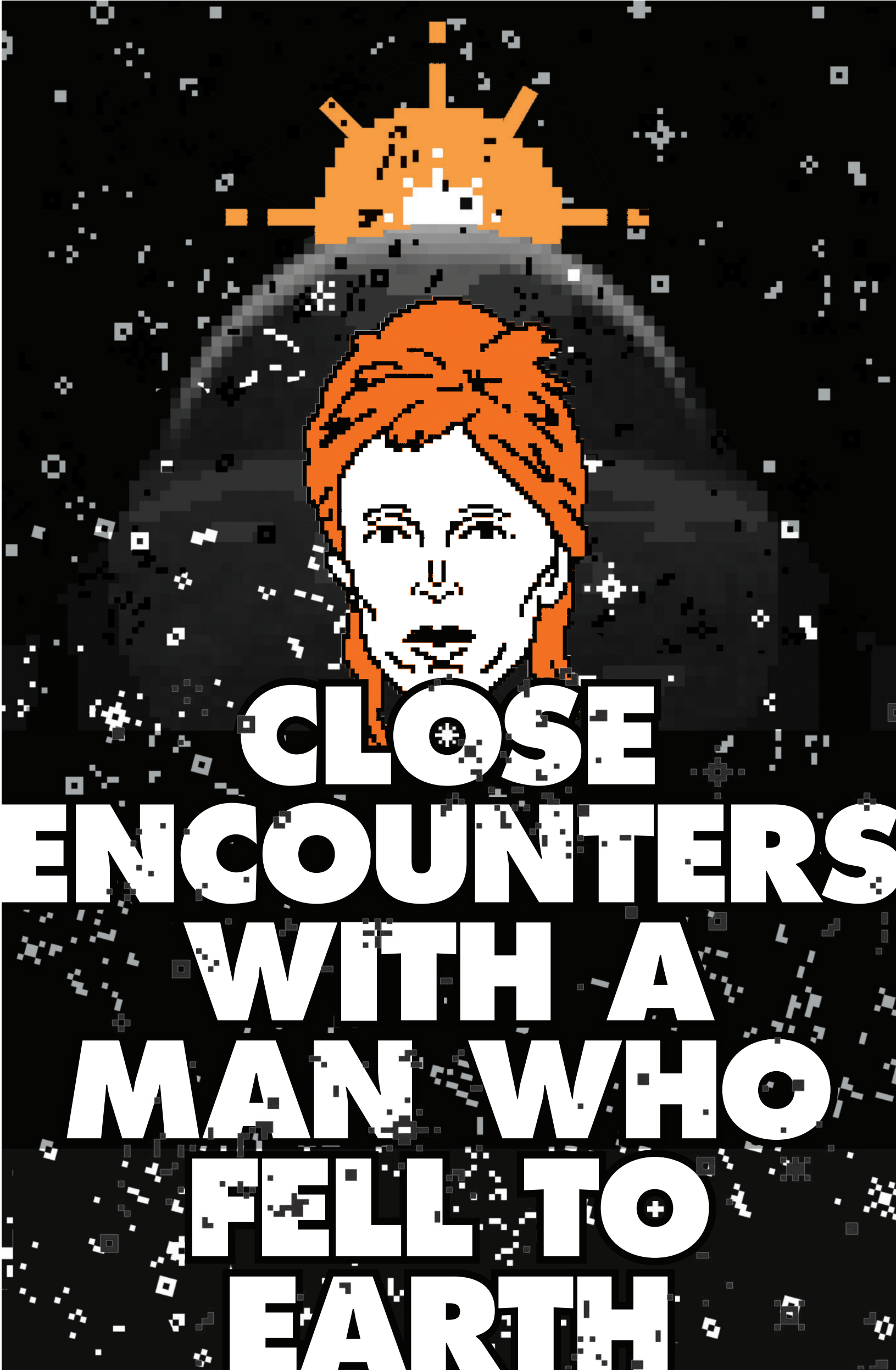
the highly selective process, saying, "Kenny is our only son. We love him very much, and we always wanted him to come back to Greensboro. It's so cold up there!"

Although Wells is trained as a painter, he made quite the impression on his parents during his time at SAIC with his provocative performance series titled, "Hey Mom. I Need Some Help With the Rent." In the series, Wells texted and called his mother and father — oftentimes without having spoken to them in weeks — just to ask for money.

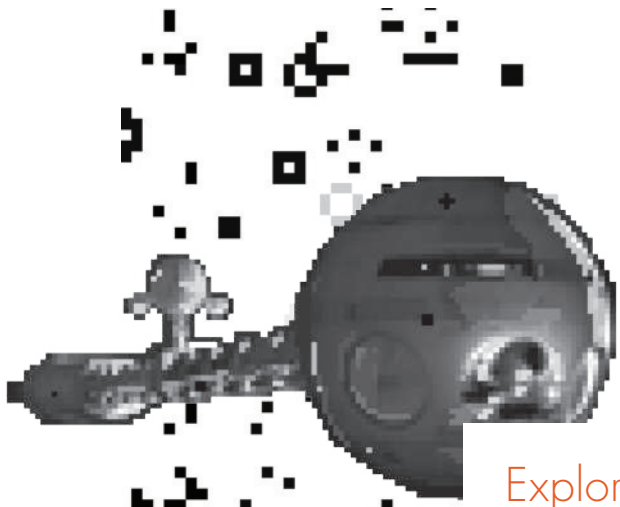
Wells said of the series, "I wanted to investigate a particular element of human interaction. Trust. Would these people interacting with my practice actually give me money? I also wanted to understand how the cell phone was mediating this interaction. Especially when you consider that they were also paying for that."

When asked if he was looking to continue his residency, Wells said he was exploring his options. He spoke of potentially taking up another residency with his grandparents in Charlotte.





**CLOSE
ENCOUNTERS
WITH A
MAN WHO
FELL TO
EARTH**



Exploring David Bowie's complicated legacy

Rosie Accola

He was to me what the possibility of alien life was to other people; I wasn't quite sure if a being that perfect actually existed, but I loved the possibility that David Bowie was out in the universe somewhere. When I saw the "David Bowie Is" exhibit last year at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), I snuck several photos of his powder blue tuxedo from the "Life on Mars" video. Mostly I poured over the minutiae of his existence, the scraps of paper with lyrics scrawled on them, the keys to his Berlin apartment, and any proof I could find that he was human.

As a musician, an entertainer, and the gender-bending guardian of misfits everywhere, Bowie seemed almost otherworldly. He even cultivated this in many of his personas. When I heard of his passing in the early hours of January 11, I was gutted. I scoured the Internet for evidence that it could be a hoax, all the while dumbfounded that his birthday was a mere three days prior.

The intersection of between public grief and the concept of celebrity is a bizarre one. Bowie told only those closest to him about his illness. Despite his onstage theatricality he was an extremely private person, he announced the release of his 25th studio album "Blackstar" with no indication of slowing down despite the fact that he quit touring in 2001. His was 69 and quite ill, but his death seemed untimely. Within minutes of his passing, fans and other celebrities shared tributes, and his star on the Hollywood walk of fame was quickly covered with heaps of candles, flowers, and of course, glitter.

I imagine the void David Bowie leaves in our cultural consciousness will feel more like a gaping wound for some time. His influence on the music world is undeniable. He made unlikely combinations of rock and roll, theatrical cosmic narratives by rowdy blues-inspired guitar chords. Whether he was

an anthropomorphic Diamond Dog or befriend some spiders from Mars, Bowie was an innovator that shaped future generations of rock and roll.

Bowie taught the Sex Pistols' frontman, Sid Vicious, the value of a good persona. Vicious even crafted his own Ziggy Stardust-inspired spiked hairdo. At the same time in mid-1970s Britain, Bowie also taught a young singer named Susan Ballion the value of eyeliner and an atmosphere of mystery inspiring her transformation into Siouxsie Sioux, eventual Goth Goddess and front woman of Siouxsie and the Banshees. His mile-high cheek-bones dusted with blush and melodramatic gaze served as an affirmation to the Cure's Robert Smith that a little lipstick never killed a man.

Bowie reveled in the performative aspects of gender, working tirelessly to subvert the expectations of masculinity with the help of spandex, sequins, and artifice. He acted as a queer icon at a time when heteronormativity was the only norm. During a time that stressed hegemony and narrow "family values," Bowie stood at the cultural forefront, bold and unafraid to obliterate the norm, acting as a beacon for weirdos

everywhere. For give decades, many people who have felt marginalized can recall a time where they felt as though Bowie was somehow in their corner.

It's easy to heap praise on Bowie, especially at a time when the current music scene seems woefully devoid of raucous, cosmic tunes like "Suffragette City." However, it's also important to remember that a flawless music catalogue does not necessarily reflect a flawless life.

Bowie's contributions to our cultural discourse cannot be ignored, but at the same time, Bowie was also a part of a culture of 1970s rock and roll misogyny. Much like Elvis, or Led Zeppelin, Bowie was well aware of the seductive power of the rock star — and he used it to his advantage.

continued on page 18 ▶

Bowie was well aware of the seductive power of the rock star — and he used it to his advantage

◀ continued from page 17

In the early 1970s, when Bowie was in the thick of his “Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars Tour,” he had sex with Lori Mattix, a 15-year-old fan. At the time of “Ziggy’s” release in 1972, Bowie was 25. This news is startling to some fans, causing them to question the morality of publically mourning Bowie. As a culture, we want so badly to believe that the performers and artists whose work touched our lives, are good people as well as good artists, but ultimately no one is perfect. Bowie was a powerful and influential person and he took advantage of it. Regardless of whether it was “the crazy ’70s” at the time, Bowie was a grown adult and he knew what he was doing.

In an interview with the website Thrillist, Mattix said that she had no regrets, stating, “I was an innocent girl, but the way it happened was so beautiful. I remember him looking like God and having me over a table. Who wouldn’t want to lose their virginity to David Bowie?”

Does placing Mattix in the role of the victim also deny her own sense of agency, while also invalidating her perspective? Is her consent negated by the fact that legally speaking in the State of California, a fifteen-year-old cannot consent to sex? Moreover, as fans, how much are we willing to overlook his struggles with addiction, his cutthroat ambition in order to preserve the uncomplicated narrative of Bowie as a starman in the sky? Conversations like these are tough yet necessary. Bowie was an agent of cultural change; there is no denying that, but we must also hold him accountable for his actions while also acknowledging existing power structures within rock and roll that still enable this behavior to occur today.

When a celebrity death occurs, it seems as though we are fed a pre-planned “highlight reel” of the celebrity’s greatest accomplishments while strategically ignoring any wrongdoings. Bowie’s legacy is one of a glamorous, glittery, drug-fueled, patron saint of misfits. It’s not all good, but it’s not completely horrible either. To view his contributions with an unquestionable reverence or to simply write him off as an abuser is dehumanizing.

Bowie was human, and his death is the ultimate reminder of that. We need to stop blindly accepting the polarizing narratives of fame wherein a celebrity is either perfect or a bacchanalian train wreck, and realize that with fame comes an unprecedented level of complexity.

Step four of the five stages of grief is acceptance, and if we are going to properly acknowledge David Bowie’s contributions to our cultural discourse, then we also need to make peace with the fact that no matter how much Bowie’s music meant to us as a culture, no matter how many conversations he opened up about gender fluidity or sexual identity, most of us never really knew him.

There is a surprising intimacy to Bowie’s music. It can easily assume a spot on any Valentine’s day mixtape or soundtrack for a long drive at night, but it also maintains a comfortable distance between the narrator and performer. When you listen to a David Bowie song, it’s nearly impossible to tell who he is singing about. One of the most fascinating things about Bowie was his ability to sculpt a persona. As I examine his legacy, I find myself continually drawn to the space between the end of David Jones and the start of Ziggy Stardust.

Bowie cultivated an aura of benevolence. If you watch old interviews with him you can easily spot a hint of bemusement in his smile, it’s hard not to believe that he really was looking out for you. Maybe that’s why the loss of Bowie has been so painful. He was a constant cultural presence, sneaking his music into countless film and television soundtracks, it’s still impossible to comprehend that he’s gone. Millions of fans were able to form incredibly nuanced relationships with his music — a connection that spawned careers, lightning bolt tattoos, and early attempts at flexing the boundaries of the gender binary.

Bowie’s impact was felt worldwide. Even the German Foreign Ministry thanked him for helping bring down the Berlin wall, tweeting, “Good-bye David Bowie. You are now among #Heroes. Thank you for helping bring down the #wall.” Followed by a link to 1987 performance of “Heroes” in West Berlin wherein Bowie sent well wishes to “all our friends who are on the other side of the wall.” Perhaps this performance is the best indication of the unifying power of Bowie’s music. No matter how young or old you were, whether you knew him as Ziggy or the Goblin King, Bowie’s music had the power to bring people together. I think we need to take a moment and appreciate the irreplaceability of David Bowie — ruminate on how he both subverted and enabled the rock and roll scene, and realize how lucky we were that he fell to earth, if only for a bit.

Rosie Accola is a sophomore at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is still mourning her space boyfriend.

No Place Like Home

Curator
Mark Pascale
talks
'Homegrown'
at the Art
Institute of
Chicago



Violet Callis

Featuring works on paper from 120 alumni artists, “Homegrown: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the Permanent Collection,” shows at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) until February 14. The exhibition features artists discovering their style as they go, often trusting intuition and pursuing personal interests to reach a new vision.

Many artists featured in the show respond to the novel environment of Chicago, as Leroy Neiman did with nimble fashion illustrations from his school days. Life’s later periods concern others; 20 self-portraits from Ivan Albright, painted near the time of his death, retain a sense of unknowing as he depicts his changing looks with signature surreal detail.

A sense of artists arriving at their intentions through the process of making unites the exhibition. “Homegrown” curator and School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) Printmedia instructor Mark Pascale discusses three of the artists featured in the show who each adopted this openness to discovery, despite their widely varying work.

Ray Yoshida

Ray Yoshida’s “Eeee!” (1999) presents shreds of landscapes and scenery cut from comic books: a corner of a window, a piece of tiled floor, or a starched collar. Yoshida methodically arranged his cutouts in collages, playing with pattern and grids. A sense of mystery and presences fills the work.

“Homegrown” also includes an early drawing, filled with fuzzy shapes and soft, organic forms. Pascale said, “The early drawing in the show really shows Ray at a turning point.”

Born in Hawaii, Yoshida (1930-2009) studied at the University of Hawaii, but left after being drafted into the Army during the Korean War. He received his BFA from SAIC in 1953, going on to teach at SAIC for four decades.

Yoshida served as an important mentor to the Hairy Who and the Chicago Imagists, a group who specialized in distorted, representational art in the 1960s and ‘70s. “Homegrown” features the work of fellow Chicago Imagists Roger Brown, Christina Ramberg, and Ed Paschke.

Pascale explained Yoshida’s influence on the group, “He was certainly an important mentor to them and a very good friend to all of them. They weren’t a club; they were all individual artists who had their own ideas. They just happened to exhibit together once or twice. At any rate, if you think about people who revere Ray, and still revere him, there’s quite a wide range of students.”

Pascale said of Yoshida’s sensibility, “He had a really great eye for design, for intention, and for ideas. He was also unrelenting in his criticism. You never got away with anything with him. In a way, it meant he cared, even if it was negative, which is something hard for young students to understand.”

“Ray was quite slight, but he had a big personality,” Pascale said. “He had a very elegant way of being in the world.”

Lenore Tawney

Lenore Tawney’s woven works thrived on taut contradictions, relying on a system of opposing forces organized by obscure internal principles. Her “Drawings in Air” transformed thread to create delicate and easily disrupted yet vital fiber forms. She also worked extensively with collage, and “Homegrown” includes one of these works, “Connoissance” (1967), which features silhouettes of Egyptian pharaohs and two texts on paper resembling papyrus. Tawney constructed the piece freehand, similar to the way that a textile might be constructed using a loom.

Tawney (1907-2007) worked in a fabric factory as a teenager in Loraine, Ohio, before moving to Chicago at age 20, where she attended evening classes at SAIC. She was an innovator in placing the “women’s work” of weaving in the realm of respected art, at a time when it was discounted as a feminine form.

Tawney’s inspirations included the art historian Helen Gardner, who taught at the school in the 1930s and wrote “Art Through the Ages,” a standard art historical text which can be found at Ryerson Library. Pascale said of Gardner’s approach, “The way that she taught art history was to not separate cultures; they’re written about chronologically, but she did not segregate artists from different cultures.”

Pascale continued: “She took students to the Oriental Institute, where they would see mummies and Assyrian temples. To them, these were artists making a major contribution to the cultural heritage of their societies, and so they were treated with the same respect with which she would treat a named artist from much, much later.”

Tawney often chose text written in languages that she could not speak. When the words in her works were translated, she said, “They would mean just what I had intended.” Pascale commented on this approach: “Whatever your interpretation was, it was just as good as anyone else’s. There’s a wonderful generosity about that spirit, and there’s also a real truthfulness about it.”

Gustave Baumann

“Piñon Grand Canyon” and “Bright Angel Trail,” by woodblock printer Gustave Baumann (1881-1971), reveal an intense vision of a landscape lyric at one turn and dramatic at another. “Homegrown” includes a wide selection of Baumann’s work, from early etchings to his well-known portrayals of the American Southwest. The formality in Baumann’s early work makes his bright California woodblocks’ thrill clear—their grace all the more apparent for their painstakingly carved origins.

Born in Germany, Baumann moved to Chicago at age 10 and began night classes at SAIC at 16 in 1897. Baumann went on to study at the School of Arts and Crafts in Munich, where he discovered the medium of woodblock printing. He ultimately settled in Santa Fe after traveling through the Southwest, where he spent a lifetime rendering the local landscape.

The show highlights Baumann’s innovation in the form of overprinting colors, featuring seven woodblocks employed in the printing of one of his prints, “Apple Blossoms.” Another print, “April,” incorporates aluminum foil as the background for a blooming tree, showing his knack for experimentation and playfulness.

“Homegrown” includes a variety of Baumann’s Christmas cards, calendars, marriage announcements, stationery, and placards hawking woodblock printing to advertisers.

Curator Mark Pascale explained, “During the 1910s, Baumann was working at the Brown County Art Guild, which is a very old artist colony in Nashville, Indiana, sort of similar to Ox-Bow. That work was very much in the realm of an arts and crafts style, as well as being illustrative. He was trying to make a living.” Baumann emerges as an artist who played multiple roles in a way that today’s students might look to in the present job market.

Violet Callis is a senior in the BFAW program.

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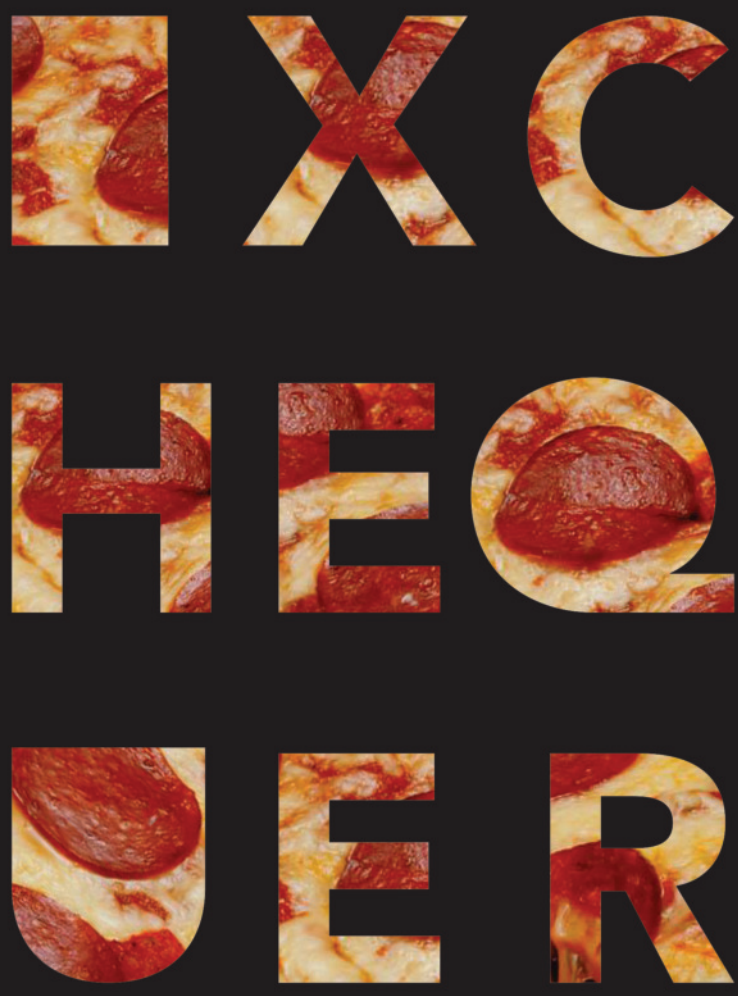
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5 Questions with Tracy Montes

SAIC artist talks about her collaboration with incarcerated women in Mexico

Ryan Blocker

5 Questions profiles School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) students and faculty at work, in the school, and beyond. For this month's edition of 5 Questions, I interviewed Tracy Montes, current first year in the arts administration and art history dual program at SAIC. Montes received her undergraduate degree in art history with a minor in women, gender, and sexuality studies from the University of Washington, in Seattle. She spent her adolescence in Mexico, but spent her young adult years in Seattle. In 2014, Montes taught art history classes at a women's prison in Mérida, the capital of the state of Yucatán in Mexico. In the interview, Montes spoke at length about her struggles and successes with the project, the impact the women had on her life, and approaching her collaborators from the vantage point of humility and mutual respect.

1 Can you tell me a bit about your practice? How would you describe your work/process?
My background is in art history, and it was not supposed to be. It was supposed to be graphic design. But I took a class that was a requirement. The professor who taught that class inspired me so much that I wanted to change my major, and went on to major in art history. I minored in women's studies at the same time. I was hoping there could be a way for me to share what I'm learning. I'm the first person in my family to go to university, and I'm paying for school by myself. I just feel like I have been able to knock down certain barriers. But it shouldn't be just for my own benefit; I wanted it to be for others. So, I got the idea of working with inmates. I wasn't sure if it was a good idea or a feasible thing. I just wanted to go knock on doors, talk to different prisons and directors and pitch them my idea and see what they think, to kind of combine art history with working with the inmates. I would describe my practice as very DIY, just going for it, not being afraid of people telling you "no" or not understanding where you're coming from. Because nobody is going to believe in what you're doing as much as you are.

2 Can you tell me a bit about the project with the women in the prison?
My idea was basically to organize a workshop or a class, an intensive class, focusing on art from the fourteenth to the twenty-first century. It was really fast paced. So we covered things from the Renaissance and then all different kinds of -isms: Surrealism, Cubism, Impressionism, and contemporary art, performance art. Based on the things that I shared with them, we would engage in discussions and make activities together.
You have to understand that a lot of them didn't know how to read or write. They had maybe never left their city or traveled. I just wanted to make it alive for them, make art history alive. So that was mainly the format: me going there for two and a half weeks. It was four hours everyday. At the end we would have a chance to chat for a little bit.

3 What did that experience teach about your own practice?
You can have an idea and just take it and not be afraid to keep going no matter what happens. No matter how many no's you get, keep going. It took me three years from the time that I had the idea to the time I could solidify it and make it happen. So it was a lot of persistence, a lot of patience, and also a lot of difficult times. There were a lot of times I doubted myself. But I had to go above that. There's a quote by Emily Dickinson that says, "If your nerve deny you, go above your nerve."
All of the people who believed in me, my professor, my friends, they kind of helped me go inside myself and not hear all of those voices, that were telling me, "No, it's not possible. You need a fiscal sponsorship. You need a 501(c)(3). You need to be a registered non-profit." I was able to get book donations from [an editor] in Mexico City who donated books about art history; the Seattle Art Museum donated posters and books as well. It was just amazing how people just came and gave. Some of them donated some money because I made a Kickstarter campaign.

4 Do you keep in contact with any of the women?
The 23-year old, she was an architecture student before she got into the prison. But before I left, she asked me for my email. And she said she wanted to be in contact with me when she left, when she was finally able to get out, but I haven't had contact with them. I think about them literally all the time. I do keep in contact with the director and with the coordinator who allowed me to do it.

5 Was there anything about the work they produced that surprised you?
The collages that they made were mind-blowing to me. With just paper, glue, and clippings, they were able to put so many of their emotions onto a piece of paper. It was interesting to see that this symbol began to appear in almost every collage. The symbol was the image of a clock or a watch that they had incorporated in some way. If you see just one, maybe you don't notice it. But when I saw that same symbol throughout the collages, it really broke my heart because their sense of time is completely distorted. They are kind of fighting against time, in a way, because they can't just wait to get out. It's almost like a huge weight they have to lift every day, and they can't really talk about it because they are all in the same situation. I was not expecting to see that, to see it come out through the collage in that way.
One of the inmates told me at the end, "You know what? Before you came, I really felt that this thing, art history, was really boring. I thought it was just going to be really like, 'What's the point?' But after what we've been talking about, I actually think it's really interesting when you learn how to see." Everything was worthwhile when she told me that, because you never know how much you can affect someone. But that's always the goal, right?

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.

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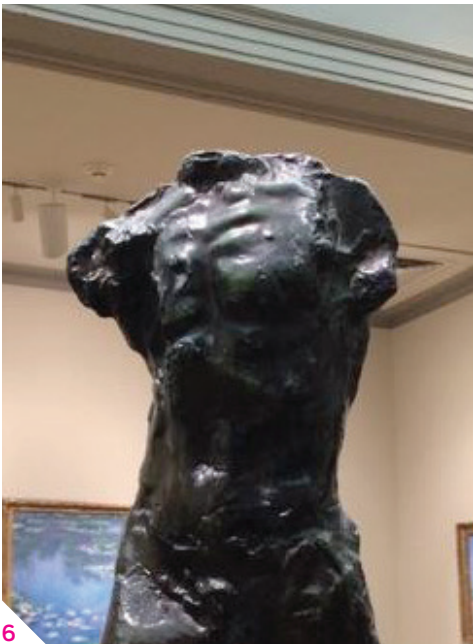
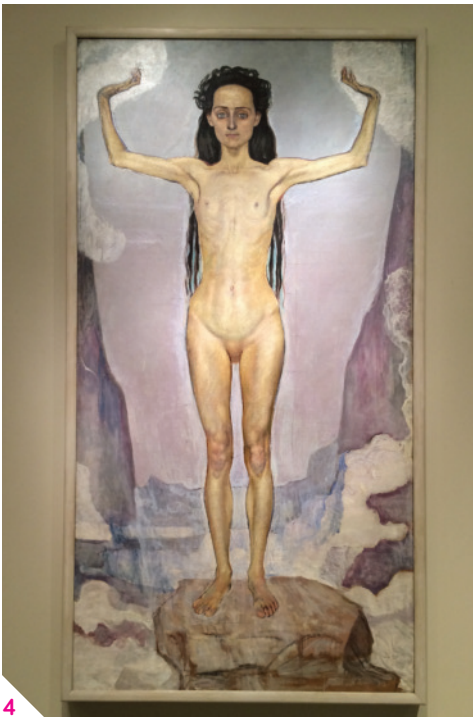


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See artists transform classic works in Layar app



Jarad Solomon

While the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) and School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) share a great deal of history, they just don't hang out as much as they could. Because one caters to the work of old masters and the other to the work of students, they have grown increasingly distant over the years. But through the app Layar, the institutions draw closer together just in time for SAIC's 150th anniversary. Layar offers user-created augmented realities — including an augmented reality within the museum's galleries in conjunction with European Painting and Sculpture Chair, Gloria Groom, and her curatorial staff.

The app is free. Simply download it from the App Store or Google Play. Then open it and view select paintings and sculptures in the AIC's collection with your phone to see the works of old masters in new ways. You can start with the photographs of the paintings on this page.

Augmented reality is emerging as an art medium that lets people view digital media embedded in real-life objects through their smart phones and tablets. In this case, the augmentation is the work of students in Claudia Hart's Virtual Installation course (they have nicknamed Layar "the Romantic App" for their focus on art from the Romantic era).

Hart, practicing artist and instructor at SAIC, says that the project was "specifically meant to create a dialogue between the virtual and the paintings of the 19th century that so strongly reflected the cultural impact of photography and film. Impressionist painters ... were inspired by the impact of dramatic new scientific discoveries on the public imagination. The Romantic App is meant to address that fact by inviting our students, the first denizens of post-Internet culture, to express this transformation in their own ways."


Jarad Solomon is a second-year graduate student in the Art and Technology department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

- 1 Artwork: "Haystacks," Claude Monet
Augmentation by Jarad Solomon to show blended color relationships within the serial
- 2 Artwork: "The Drinkers," Vincent Van Gogh
Augmented by Farrell Lamothe with merchandise featuring the original painting
- 3 Artwork: "The Ancestors of Tehamana," Paul Gauguin
Augmented by Anthony L. Blackhood to fade in and out with three-dimensional ice cream cones
- 4 Artwork: "Day (Truth)," Ferdinand Hodler
Augmented by Cassandra Davis holding fabric
- 5 Artwork: "Vase de Tulipes," Paul Cezanne
Augmented by Kristen Shea with apples and cloth
- 6 Artwork: "The Walking Man," Auguste Rodin
Augmented by Nick Flaherty with Facebook iconography



‘The X-Files’ Reopened

Investigating the unearthly chemistry between Mulder and Scully



Brontë Mansfield

Since the premiere of “The X-Files” in 1993, the names Mulder and Scully have been synonymous with slow-burning sexual tension and enduring partnership in the face of monsters, aliens, and government conspiracies.

The couple departed drastically from previous television detecting duos featuring hapless women and brilliant men (think the model-turned-investigator opposite a young Bruce Willis in “Moonlighting” or MacGyver and his endless rotation of pretty companions in the ’80s). In a remarkable move for early ’90s television, Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully flipped the script on traditional gender roles: Where Mulder was feeling, intuitive,

and driven by his emotions to believe in the unbelievable, Scully was a shoulder-pad-wearing scientist, a medical doctor, reserved, skeptical, and compelled by empirical evidence. Scully was not concerned with marrying or having children. Mulder was far more open with his feelings than his partner. It made for some of the best seasons of television in history.

Since Mulder and Scully have returned to the small screen, it is worth revisiting their relationship and what, precisely, made it so subversive. Because their relationship has been talked to death in think-pieces and endless listicles, I have pulled out three under-appreciated episodes that offer insight into the Mulder/Scully dynamic. You won’t find these three mid-series episodes on any “Best of” lists, but they still offer some great moments.



Mulder's Past Life Regression in "The Field Where I Died" Season 4, Episode 5

"The Field Where I Died" is a woefully neglected episode of "The X-Files." Its subject matter is more bold than most monster-of-the-week episodes: For forty-five minutes, the show set aside its usual bogeymen to grapple with concept of reincarnation, a real tenet of several religions. The episode, which centers on a woman in a cult named Melissa, not only explores the concept of past lives in a pretty revolutionary way — it aired in 1996, after all — but also offers tremendous insights into Mulder and Scully's relationship.

In the episode, a hypnotist guides Mulder through a past-life regression, in which a person looks back into lives they have lived in others times and places. Meanwhile, Scully looks on skeptically but sympathetically. Mulder remembers a past life as a woman in WWII-era Poland, and life as a soldier in the Civil War. He reveals that Melissa, the woman from the cult, is his soulmate, appearing as his wife or husband in each incarnation — but more importantly, that he has been incarnated with Scully as well.

"Souls come back together," Mulder explains, entranced. "Different, but always together. Again and again, to learn." Mulder says that Scully was his father in Poland, and his sergeant in the Civil War. In both incarnations, Scully dies in front of Mulder, and he is devastated.

What is so important about this episode is that it establishes that Mulder and Scully are not soulmates. Scully always incarnates as Mulder's closest friend, his fiercest protector, and his constant companion and champion. Their sexual relationship is secondary to their friendship, proving that their love is deeper than unconsummated lust.

Scully Flying Solo in "Chinga" Season 5, Episode 10

Some have "resting bitch face," but Scully has "resting skeptic face." As Mulder runs across the country in search of vampires, Big Foot, and little green men, Scully patiently follows behind, tasked with disproving his supernatural theories. However, on rare occasions, Scully is forced to confront the unexplainable, and "Chinga" is one such occasion. Although she is meant to be on a quiet New England vacation, Scully gets tangled up in an investigation after finding a grocery store full of people attempting to claw their own eyes out. With Mulder back in DC, it is one of the few episodes where we see Scully flying solo (and how bored and useless Mulder is on his own).

With "Chinga" co-authored by none other than Stephen King himself, the episode's monster-of-the-week — a murderous, talking doll — comes as no surprise. As the episode plays out, Scully is forced to accept the possibility of a paranormal force at work, while Mulder insists he think nothing supernatural is afoot. This switch is indicative of growth for both of the characters, with Scully growing less skeptical and Mulder more reliant on evidence than gut feelings. The moment when Scully finally throws the porcelain doll in a microwave and nukes it to death is a campy nod to Scully's growing belief in the unbelievable.

Although not a great episode of "The X-Files" (it was unwittingly titled with a Spanish curse word), "Chinga" is worth watching for one scene alone. When Scully calls Mulder to consult on the case, he asks her if she thinks something supernatural is afoot. She rattles off a laundry list of paranormal indicators — "Like evidence of conjuring or the black arts? Or shamanism, divination, Wicca, or any kind of pagan or neo-pagan practice? Charms, cards, familiars, blood-stones, or hex signs, or any kind of the ritual tableau associated with the occult; Santeria, Voodoo, Macumba or any high or low magic" — Mulder interrupts her with an enthralled "Scully? Marry me."

When Mulder blurts his proposal, Scully simply retorts, "I was hoping for something a little more helpful."

Playing House in "Arcadia" Season 6, Episode 15

After six seasons of excruciating sexual teasing, the writers threw fans a huge bone with "Arcadia." The episode is about Mulder and Scully going undercover as a married couple to investigate a series of disappearances in a too-perfect planned community. Much to Scully's chagrin, years of quiet lust come pouring out of Mulder's very happy mouth — most of his lines are marriage jokes and eager public displays of affection that betray a real desire to be with her. The second day of their undercover mission, a neighbor asks how their first night went. Mulder cheerfully replies, "It was wonderful. We just spooned up and fell asleep like little baby cats. Isn't that right, honey bunch?" Scully can barely contain her reflexive eye-rolling as she replies, "That's right, poopy head."

As always, Mulder takes on the more stereotypically feminine role of emotional, affectionate partner, while Scully scoffs. The episode even expertly mocks the machismo, misogynistic husband when Mulder jokingly demands Scully make him a sandwich and she responds by throwing her latex gloves at him wordlessly.

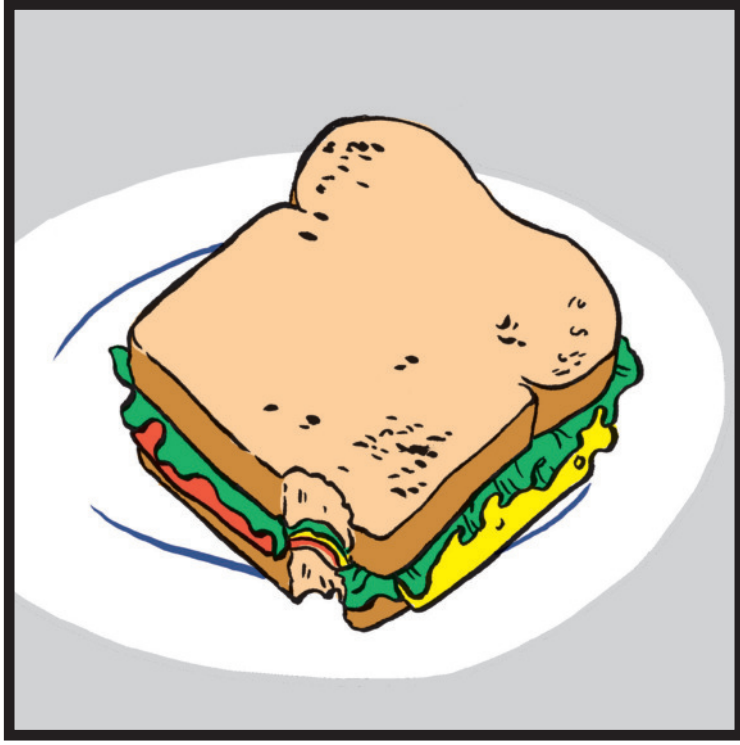
What this episode lacks in spooks and scares — a trash monster? Really? — it more than makes up in brilliant gender-role-subverting banter.

Mulder and Scully's revolutionary relationship was born out of the subversion of audience expectations — both of how men and women act and relate to each other, and how we expect their interactions to play out on TV. We have them to thank for other role-reversed and fantastic sleuthing couples (think Booth and Brennan in "Bones" and Linden and Holder in "The Killing") and for teaching television writers the magnificent power of the "will-they-or-won't-they" seasons-long sexual tension.

Hopefully, Mulder and Scully's relationship will continue to produce ground-breaking, stereotype-defying television in its 2016 revival — but maybe without past lives, killer dolls, and undercover suburbanites this time.

"The X-Files" returned in a six-episode mini-series that premiered on January 24 on Fox.

Brontë Mansfield is a first-year Arts Journalism Masters student at SAIC, trying to find the Mulder to her Scully, or maybe just a decent writing gig.





The Endearing, Relatable ‘Master of None’

The fresh and funny, latest effort from Aziz Ansari

He navigates New York City, dealing with common problems — everything from finding a job to finding a condom — while simultaneously addressing larger issues, such as racism and racial stereotyping

Falak Vasa is a sophomore in the FVNMA and Performance departments. When Vasa isn't watching Netflix, he is looking up things to watch on Netflix.

Falak Vasa

Aziz Ansari's character, Dev, in “Master of None” dates a man's wife because the man cut in front of him in line at the ice cream store and took the last King Kong Banana Split. Dev has long, banal conversations with his rag-tag group of friends that seldom add anything to the story. Ansari's bizarre sense of humor is both relatable and awkwardly funny, and ultimately, it makes for must-see TV.

Dev is an actor and son of Indian immigrant parents. He navigates life in New York City, dealing with common problems — everything from trying to find a job to trying to find a condom — while simultaneously addressing larger issues, such as racism and racial stereotyping. Casting Ansari's real-life parents on the show while drawing connections between the character Dev and Ansari himself, “Master of None” exists in the transient space between documentary and fiction.

Unlike his previous role as Tom Haverford on “Parks and Recreation,” (oh, how I miss you!), Ansari's Dev is the lead in “Master of None” and carries the show. The show does not pretend to be anything that it isn't,

even providing clear, direct titles to its episodes, like “Parents” (about parents) or “Indians on TV” (about Indians on TV). The titles further push viewers to think about this artfully shot show as a documentary. Co-created and co-written by Alan Yang, who plays Brian (son of Chinese immigrant parents who sometimes shares Dev's problems), “Master of None” is abundant in awkward characters. There's Arnold (often referred to as “a giant” on the show, but actually quite adorable) and Denise (the moral compass of the group and general bad-ass).

In the episode titled “Old People,” a weird-looking robotic seal named Paro is introduced. Paro might just be one of the creepiest, cutest things imaginable. Inheriting this creature after his grandfather's death, Arnold grows attached to it. There is something so human about this storyline; it reminded me of all those times in my own life I have found unexpected objects cute or desirable. The episode also emphasizes caring for one's grandparents, spending time with them, getting to know them, understanding their lives, and valuing their experiences. The episode exemplifies the uncomfortable creepiness, hilarious banality, and

underlying morality that are prevalent throughout “Master of None.”

However, there are often times when the plot becomes almost too predictable and the moral lessons too obvious. Reading the title of the episode is, in many cases, enough to get its gist. Although good intentions cannot be discredited or overlooked, if a person wants to simply relax, a moral lesson might be more annoying and frustrating than it is useful. However, this criticism might be slightly unfair because the show does exactly what it aims to do, and its aim is in line with the main function of Netflix for people like me: to let you disengage all brain functions and lie in bed, suspended in a sea of Cheetos.

Being able to watch a show like “Master of None” on Netflix — a show that allows its viewers to enjoy the banality and awkwardness of life while simultaneously learning valuable lessons — is an option that rarely exists elsewhere. If anything, the show makes for easy viewing, swinging between humor and addressing serious issues. When you do binge-watch (because let's face it, there's no other way to stream Netflix) “Master of None,” my only advice is, keep an eye out for Paro. Paro is amazing.

Two Stories of First Loves

Film 'Carol' falls short where graphic novel 'Honor Girl' succeeds

Sophie Lucido Johnson

There's a quintessential love-at-first-sight moment toward the beginning of "Carol." The scene takes place in the toy section of a department store in the 1950s, where Therese (Rooney Mara) works. She is doing inventory in the doll collection when, across the bustling holiday crowd, she sees Carol (Cate Blanchett) for the first time. She freezes with that telltale look of instant infatuation. She looks like she is practically unable to breathe. An anxious woman and her daughter jostle into Therese's line of sight and interrupt with a question about dolls (isn't that always how it goes?), and by the time they're satisfied, the beautiful woman is gone.

But Carol has noticed Therese. Within moments, they're chatting about dolls and train sets, and the chatting begins to look a lot like flirting. When Carol leaves, she forgets her gloves. Therese notices the gloves, and she wonders the same thing the audience does: Has she left them behind on purpose?

The story of "Carol" is familiar. It's a straightforward tale of love and longing, complicated only by the era in juxtaposition to the characters' sexualities. In the '50s, being gay was considered a woeful abnormality, indicative of extreme mental unrest, and was treated as an under-the-table crime. Carol's sexuality puts her relationship with her daughter in jeopardy, on the grounds of a so-called "morality clause."

Blanchett and Mara are indeed marvelous, and both were recently nominated for Academy Awards for their performances in the film. Mara particularly shines, because her character is a person we all recognize in ourselves: She is falling in love for the first time in her life. She looks down more often than an ordinary person would, smiling softly. She subtly conceals her excitement when she speaks. There is a quality to her person — her affect, her walk, her gaze, all of it — that betrays her. She looks like someone who honestly

believes that maybe, just maybe, magic might exist.

Maggie Thrash published a somewhat comparable story in September 2015 with her graphic memoir, "Honor Girl," which tells the story of her own first love. It takes place when Thrash is 15, and at a similarly taboo place: an all-girls summer camp.

Toward the opening of "Honor Girl," Thrash depicts a scene reminiscent of the department store encounter in "Carol." Maggie, a chronic sleepwalker, has a conversation with an older counselor named Erin about what it's like to go to sleep chained to a bed. Erin thinks it's "definitely cool." Maggie thinks Erin is definitely cool, too, but she doesn't want to let on. Erin leaves an arts-and-crafts card with Maggie, and Maggie falls asleep looking at it.

The story arc of "Honor Girl" pretty much matches the one in "Carol" note-for-note. Maggie and Erin like each other, and they know that they like each other, but they can't let anyone else know that they like each other, because it's not allowed. "Honor Girl" takes place at a Christian summer camp for girls; Erin is 19. People at camp start to suspect that something is going on. Wrenches are thrown in plans, and the love is never really given the space it needs to bloom.

Both "Carol" and "Honor Girl" present stories about the kind of love that young people expect to experience. There are moments in each where the world seems to turn inside out. Therese in "Carol" and Maggie in "Honor Girl" are both dizzy in the thick of it; they laugh when nothing is funny; they break rules without thinking twice. Both stories do an admirable job of magnifying injustice. They take place inside inflexible, unaccepting worlds; and yet the honesty of the love — the desire, the pain, and the devotion — cannot be disputed. If there are people out there who still don't recognize the price that LGBTQ people have paid for their love, each of these stories shines a noble light.

However, "Honor Girl" succeeds in one vital area where "Carol" fails. "Honor Girl" — which is a memoir, after all — recognizes this first love for what it is: a first love. First loves, regardless of gender, usually do not last. When we are young, we are not fully formed enough to know the things we want. First love can make you feel drunk. You can believe with all your heart that you will never want to be with anyone else for as long as you live. But it inevitably changes. The pain of that change is one of the most quintessential parts of being human.

"Carol" makes the opposite seem true. Therese is presented as a person who knows exactly what she wants. Therese and Carol, despite the fact that the audience never really sees them getting to know each other or learning each other's idiosyncrasies, are implied to be soul mates. They see each other across a store, and they fall in love. Although there are hardships, this lasts forever. The end.

"Carol" is based on a 1952 novel titled "The Price of Salt," by Patricia Highsmith. The idea that anyone can know who they ought to spend the rest of their lives with at the age 19 is a 1950s idea, but it's a dangerous one. And it's been pretty persistent. The entire romantic comedy industry is constructed around the idea that a young person can meet someone, spend a few weeks getting to know them, encounter hijinks, but ultimately end up together, forever.

It's important for all people to feel represented when watching television, reading books, and seeing movies. "Carol," unfortunately, does little to advance that agenda, because the audience sees a couple apparently made for each other, despite no discernible emotional connection. This is not what love really looks like.

"Honor Girl," on the other hand, offers a similar set-up, with an ending that more closely resembles real life. It's completely heartbreaking; it shreds the reader to pieces. But on the other hand, it tells the truth. And really, isn't that what we want our art to do?

Both 'Carol' and 'Honor Girl' present stories about the kind of love that young people expect to experience. There are moments in each where the world seems to turn inside out



'Star Wars' Is (Finally) for Girls

How I learned to lose my art school snobbery and embrace the Force

Sophie Lucido Johnson

Admittedly I've never really been a "Star Wars" person, but I date "Star Wars" people. I have never dated anyone who wasn't crazy about "Star Wars," and so I sometimes come off as someone who is into "Star Wars." I know a lot of the characters' names, since I have seen every "Star Wars" movie multiple times in order to appease my former boyfriends and girlfriends. I also know all the words to the Weird Al Yankovic song "The Saga Begins." (Just because I'm not that into "Star Wars" doesn't mean I'm not that into Weird Al.)

One boyfriend made me go see "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace" with him on opening day. I did not wear a costume, but my boyfriend went with Princess Leia buns in his hair. I was shocked to find that even in the tiny town of Walla Walla, Washington, where we saw the movie, people bothered themselves to spend the night in the Megaplex parking lot to wait in line and get the best seat. Because I was unwilling to spend the night in a parking lot with people who wore false ears and linen pants tucked into their boots, my boyfriend and I had to sit in the back of the movie theater. This is a fact that I think ultimately led to the demise of our relationship.

When the movie began, people cheered. They hummed along to the score that played while the "In a galaxy far, far away" text scrolled on the screen. To say that they clapped when Yoda made his first appearance would be an understatement: They practically stampeded. It was the Beatles at Shea Stadium in there; all for a little film footage of a poorly animated CGI character with a fussy voice.

People told me that "Episode I" was a huge let down, but I didn't really feel like it was. I didn't love episodes IV through VI (which inexplicably make up the original trilogy, for the uninitiated). I knew I should love them, but I didn't really know why. If you ask someone why "Star Wars" is great, they will give you one of two answers: They'll either say something about The Force, or they'll say, "It's just awesome, OK?! What's wrong with you?"

When subsequent boyfriends and girlfriends asked me which "Star Wars" movie I liked best, I always named whichever title I could remember in the moment. This was usually "Return of the Jedi," which still strikes me as the superior movie title of the bunch. Occasionally I would say "The Empire Strikes Back," although I usually couldn't remember what that one was called, and often called it "The Revenge of the Empire."

Since George Lucas announced "Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens" would come out in 2015, my Facebook news feed (as well as every American's Facebook news feed) has been drowning in gossip about it. First, everyone had a collective orgasm over the knowledge that a trailer was going to drop. Then the trailer dropped and people lost their minds. Then, a fraction of idiots got mad that there was an African-American actor apparently playing a Jedi. Then, an onslaught of way smarter people got mad at the idiots who were mad in the first place. I mostly tried to ignore all of this.

Since I started attending an art school, it's been pretty easy to ignore "Star Wars." In a class I had the Monday after "The Force Awakens" opened, I asked my classmates if anyone had seen it. At first, no one even responded. Then a fellow student

It's stupid that it took until 2015 for girls to be driving the spaceships

said, "What's 'The Force Awakens?'" I responded that it was the new "Star Wars" movie. She said, "Oh. I didn't know that they were still making those."

I thought, "I have found my people." However, I currently have a boyfriend named Luke who does not go to art school. His mom named him Luke after Luke Skywalker. And so it was necessary that we see "The Force Awakens" on opening weekend. I wasn't especially excited about this outing, but it wasn't bumming me out, either; I like to stay relatively hip to the cultural lexicon, after all.

I give you this context so you will understand the weight of what I am about to tell you: "The Force Awakens" is great. It's smart, it's accessible, and it's textured. It does a terrific job of layering upbeat moments with action sequences and unexpected dramatic turns, so the viewer never gets too depressed or too bored. The leads — a renegade with a lot of learning to do and a stubborn British girl who's great at running, piloting, and shooting — are wonderful. They have good chemistry, and they're funny. The new droid is cuter than any other droid in history, and its interaction with other droids might as well be on an Internet cat website for its sheer *aww* factor.

But here's what really makes this movie work for me: The girl gets most of the badass lines, and does almost all the cool stuff! Her name is Rey, and she's tough, smart, and thoughtful. During a climactic fight scene, a dude swoops in to save her life, but falls

to the ground, and she ends up saving both of them. (I'm trying not to spoil too much; I hope it's not a shocker that the two heroes survive at least one battle with a bad guy.)

It's amazing how much more interested in "Star Wars" I became when the primary focus of the story was someone who looked like me, emoted like me, and kicked ass. This should be old news by now. It's stupid that it took until 2015 for girls to be driving the spaceships.

I want to believe that "The Force Awakens" — along with 2015's other female-friendly action movies like "Mad Max: Fury Road" and "Spy" — might open the door for even more ladies on the silver screen to be protagonists in action flicks.

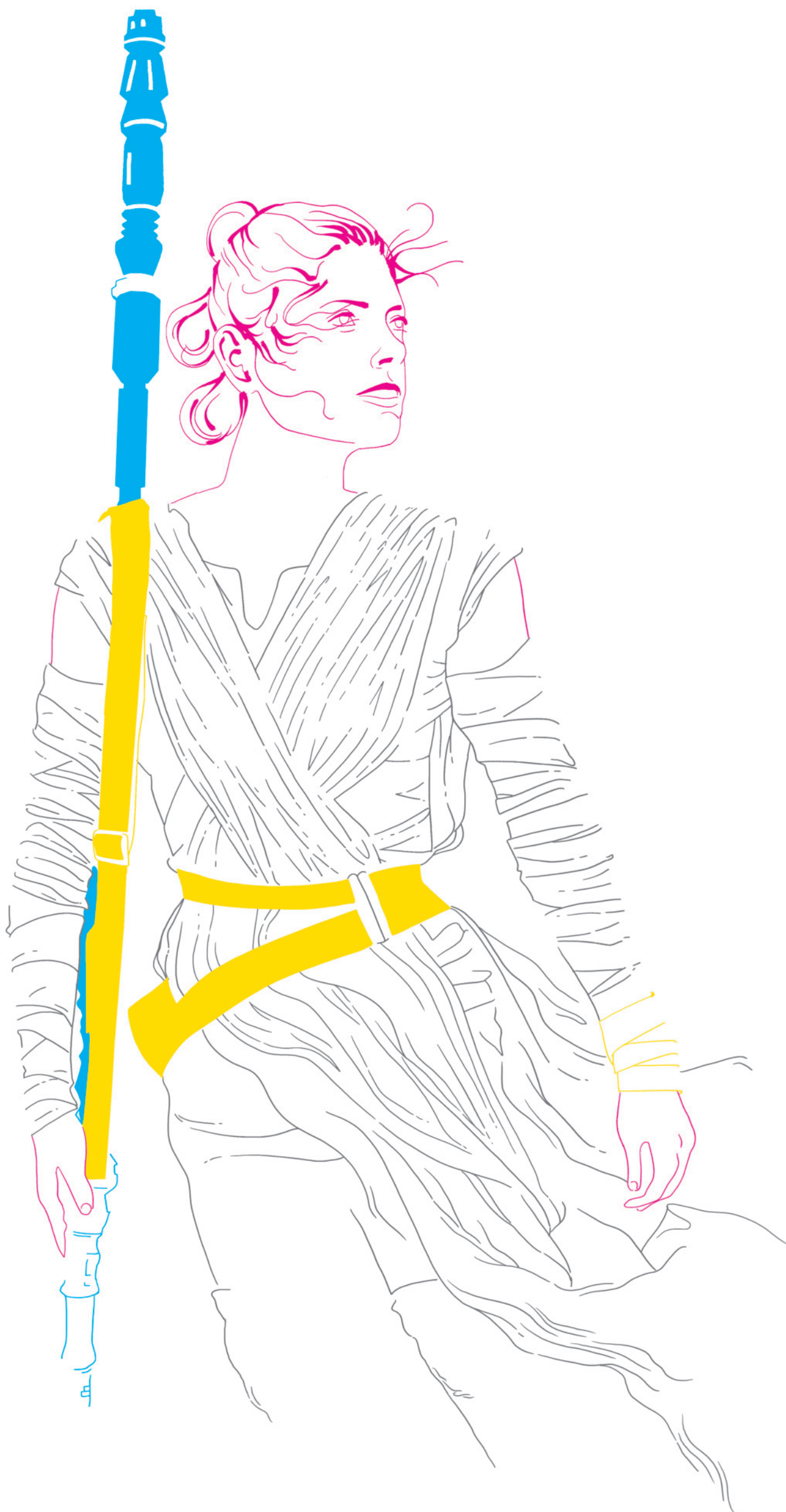
And yet, as corporations develop merchandise around "The Force Awakens," Rey's character is conspicuously absent. Last week, consumers were up in arms that a Monopoly set commemorating the movie featured only male game tokens. (Hasbro, which made the game, recently said they would add a Rey token following the backlash.)

The Twitter hashtag #WheresRey trended last week as merchandise in general excluded the female protagonist, and pictures of toy stores like Toys "R" Us were shown stocking solely male action figures. If this sounds redundant, it should. Similar criticism sprung up last summer as Marvel merchandise released following the latest "Avengers" movie largely omitted Black Widow, the only female character.

And the truth is that a female protagonist in a "Star Wars" movie is a relatively small victory in Hollywood terms. As Maureen Dowd's recent article in the New York Times Magazine pointed out, no woman director has yet released a \$100-million Hollywood action movie. (Patty Jenkins' "Wonder Woman" will come out in 2017, when it will become the first.) From 2007 to 2014, women made up only 30.2 percent of speaking or named characters in the 100 top-grossing fictional films. There's still a long way to go.

"The Force Awakens" is refreshing because Rey (played by tough-faced newcomer Daisy Ridley) is awesome. She's the hero of the movie, and for girls like me who have been dragged to movies like this forever, that feels like something different. Even if nothing else is new — the landscape, costumes, and the Millennium Falcon remain unchanged — there's a girl in the driver's seat. And that's worth the cost of admission.

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.



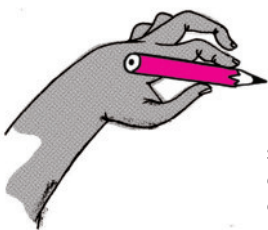
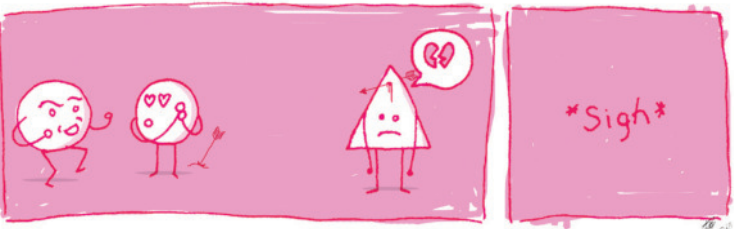


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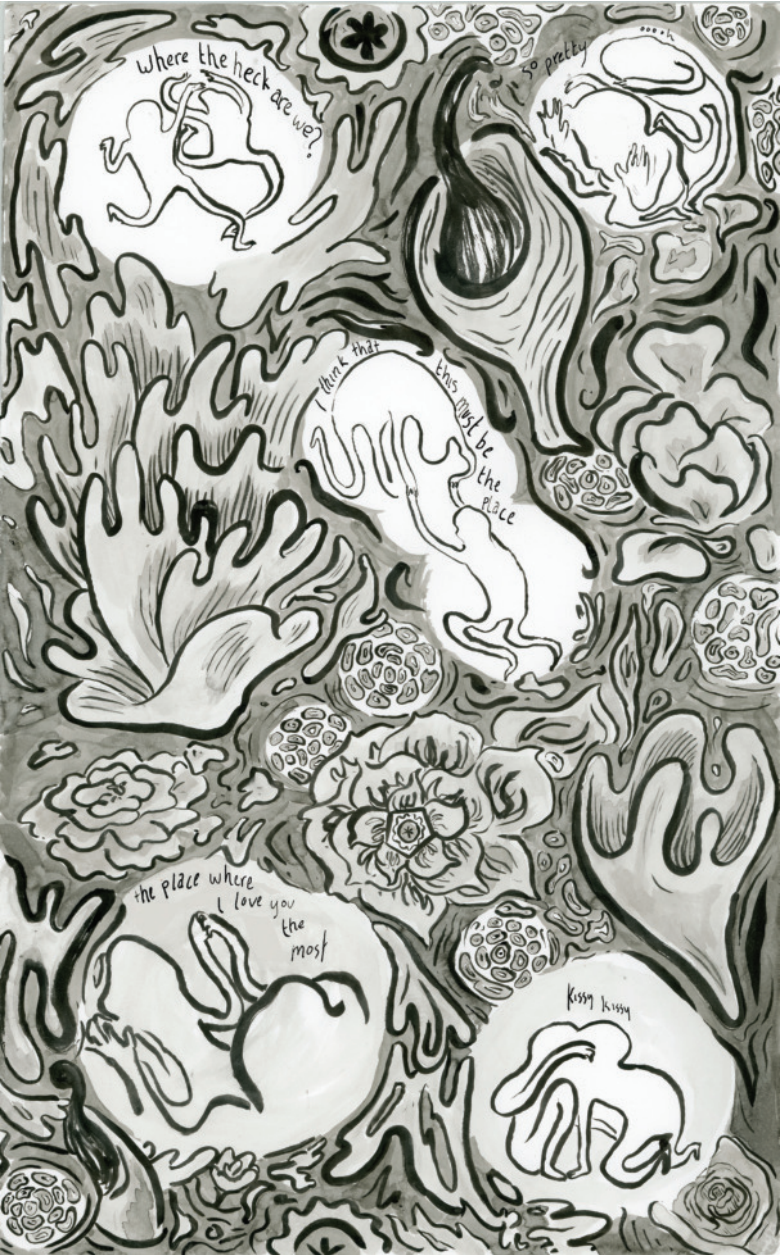
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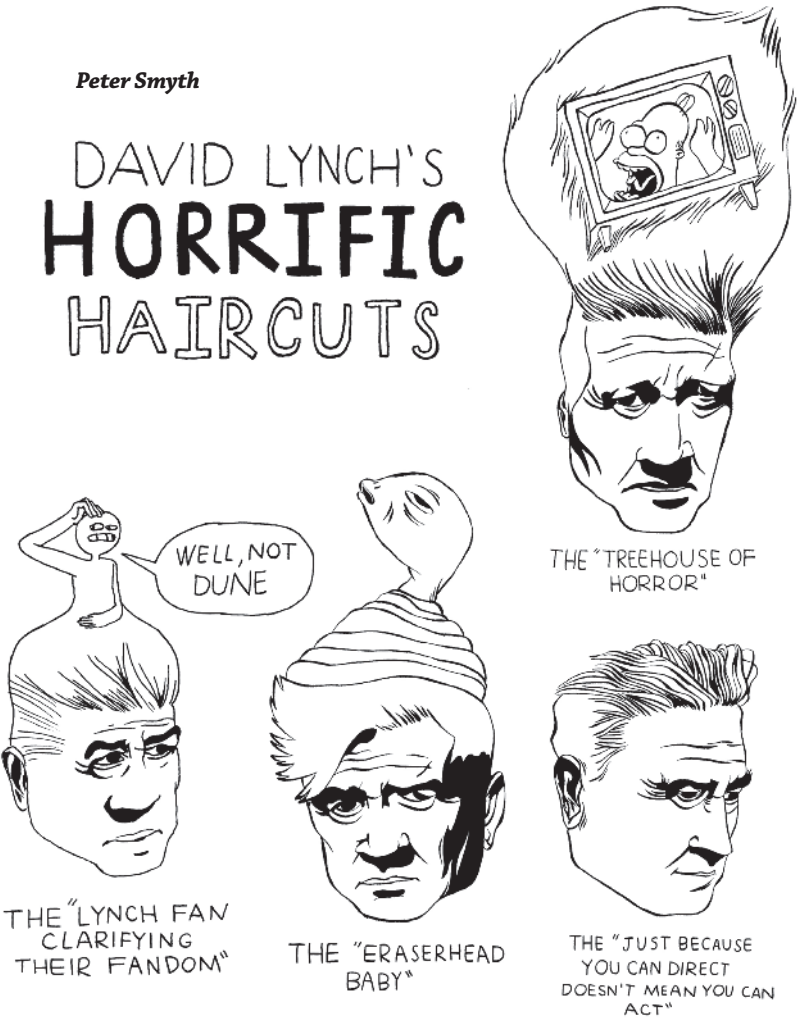
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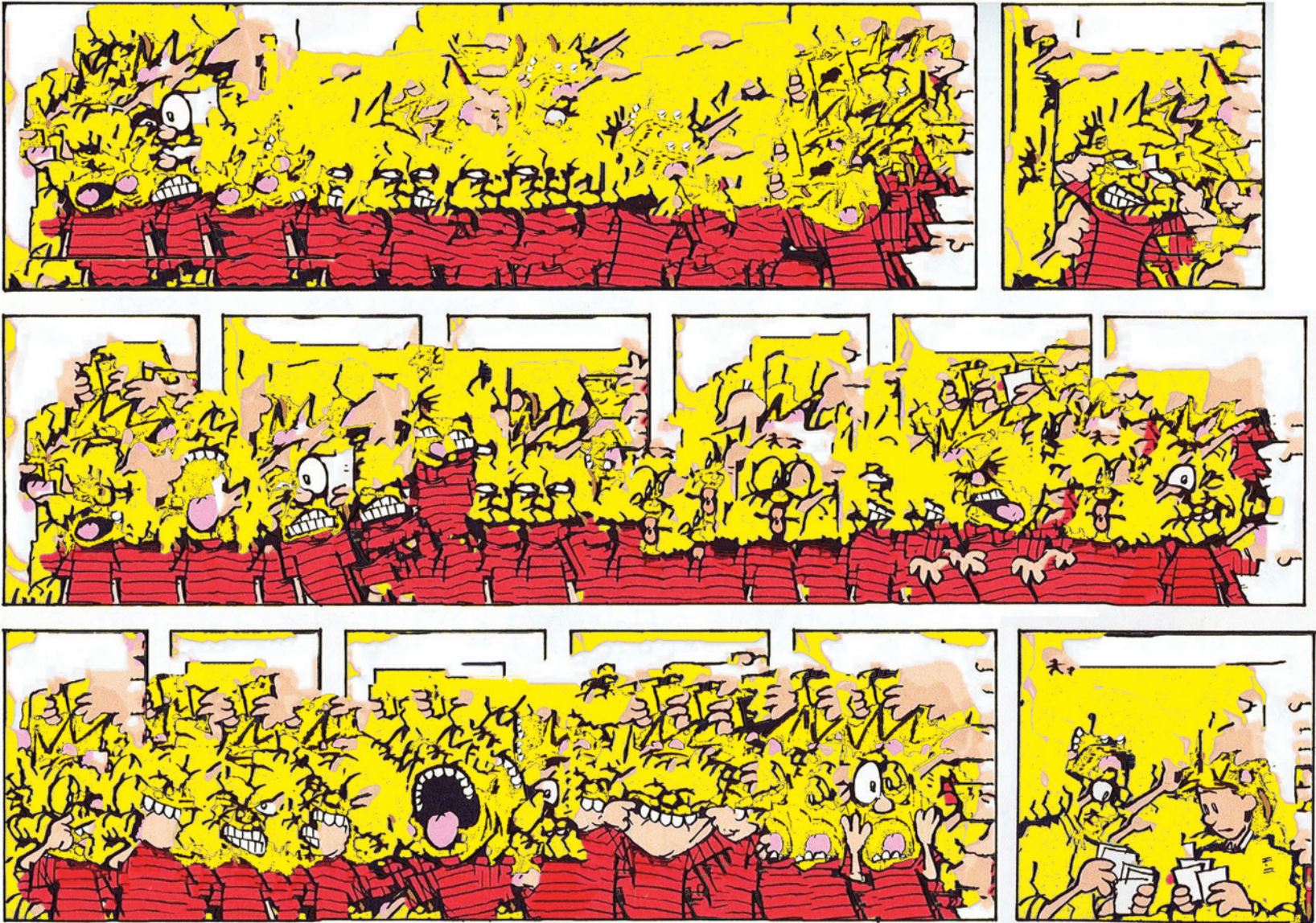
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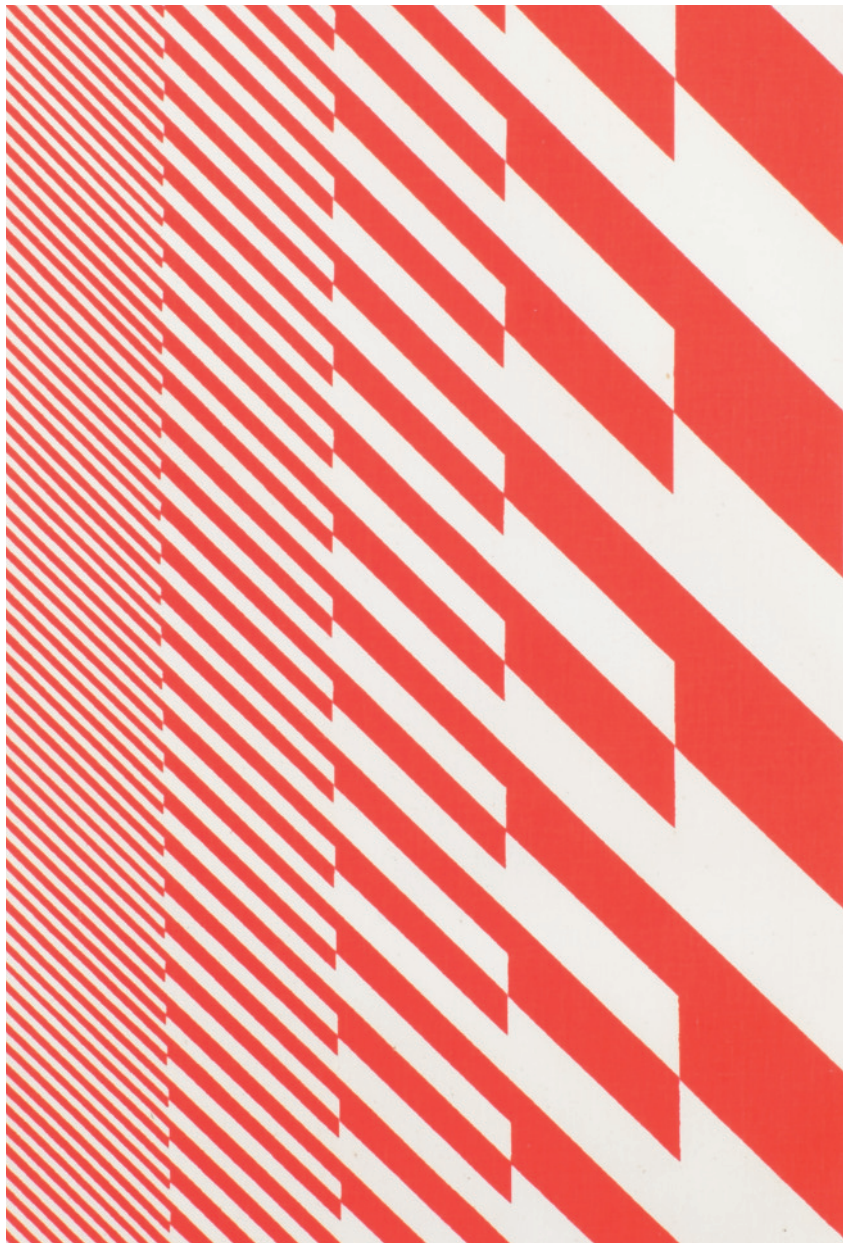
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Kathryn Andrews, "The World's Most Famous Clown" Pop Bag with Occasional Performance (Blue Variation) (detail), 2014. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Fredrik Nilén

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