

fnewsmagazine

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

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FINALE



SAIC SHOWS 2019

April

ArtBash 2019

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4:30–7:00 p.m.

IMPACT Graduate Performance Festival

Performances: April 12 & 14

Reception: April 19, 7:00 p.m.

Exhibition: April 22–May 3

Historic Preservation Thesis Night Reading

April 18

5:00–8:00 p.m.

Traces: MA Visual and Critical Studies Exhibition and Symposium

April 26–27

MFA Show

April 27–May 15

Reception: Friday, April 26
7:00–9:00 p.m.

April 2019

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Night Come Tenderly, Black

A review of Dawoud Bey's show
at the Art Institute of Chicago

by **Leah Gallant**



“Untitled #1 (Picket Fence and Farmhouse)” and “Untitled #25 (Lake Erie and Sky)” Photographs by Dawoud Bey, courtesy of the artist and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Monuments mark not only specific people and events, but also cultural assumptions of who and what deserves to be remembered. They depict two things at once: Their subjects and the desires of those who had the influence to decide what lives were worth casting in bronze.

But for every historical placard or memorial statue, there are many more stories whose significance goes unmarked. Some of these absences are places of contained motion: the place where a sign was carried in protest, the place where a ballot was cast. What are the places that become recognized as sites of public celebration or public mourning? Of shared loss or shared gain?

The landscapes in “Night Coming Tenderly, Black,” photographer Dawoud Bey’s current show at the Art Institute of Chicago, are decidedly unremarkable. But these tidy houses behind their picket fences and dense sweeps of forest all depict places of great significance: stops on the Underground Railroad around Cleveland, Ohio, and Lake Erie. They imagine the journeys of African Americans escaping slavery by fleeing North to Canada, moving from safehouse to safehouse under cover of darkness. They are images not of place but of transit. Quiet, expansive, and menacing, doleful, like the opening scenes of a film, they imply a narrative about to unfold.

This body of work, which was originally commissioned for Cleveland’s 2018 Front Triennial, is a departure from Bey’s primary focus in portraiture and street photography. People have

always been at the center of his work. In “Class Pictures,” he shot teenagers at high schools around the United States, then paired their portraits with short autobiographical statements. His series on the Birmingham bombing, which opens at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in April, Bey pairs contemporary subjects the same age as the children killed with adults the age they would be in 2014 had they survived. The images radiate a sense of trust: Even though they’re strangers, the sitters gaze at Bey like they’ve known him their whole lives. But it’s important to him to stay nimble in his approach. “I’ve never wanted to be my own oldies show, settling into a comfortable groove,” he told the New York Times.

The possibility of a human figure looms in the images of “Night Coming Tenderly.” Many show no human trace at all, just cut-outs of dense forest and vine that seem to expand beyond the confines of the image. “Untitled #17 (Forest),” seems to promise a figure. I keep searching the young, thin-trunked trees and crosshatched branches for a hint of a shoulder or a pair of eyes. But there is nothing, not even a trace of human contact: no plastic bag tattered in the wind, no lovers’ names carved into a trunk.

The photographs themselves seem to come from several epochs at once. They are black and white, but mostly they are various tones of black and silver. They are so reflective they could have been printed on patches of oil. The houses look largely unchanged from the 19th century, but there are

a few hints that the photos are contemporary. A satellite dish sprouts from the rooftop of one, a boxy air conditioning unit juts out of the second story window of another. This gives the image the slight aura of being from a mythical, counter-historical time. “These pictures are not meant to be documentary in any sense,” Bey writes in his wall text. They depict points on a possible route. This placelessness is accentuated by the uncertain light: It is either dusk or dawn, and although it seems to be winter because the trees are leafless, there is no snow.

Outside of the main gallery of Bey’s work is a salon-style wall arrangement of photographs, mostly landscapes, portraits, and street-shots that Bey has selected from the Art Institute collection. An Ansel Adams print of white birch trees against a black sky bristles with precise energy. In another context, these landscapes might be nothing more than banal scenes, nature romanticized in an era when a photograph was still measured by the impeccability of its printing. But in this context — sharing a wall with a Carrie Mae Weems photograph of a black man’s back, a document of welts stretching his length; Malcolm X holding a newspaper and smiling thinly; a white audience looking on in bored entertainment at a lynched man — they become ominous. Through Bey’s lens, the landscape offers up its dark, and occasionally hopeful, histories.

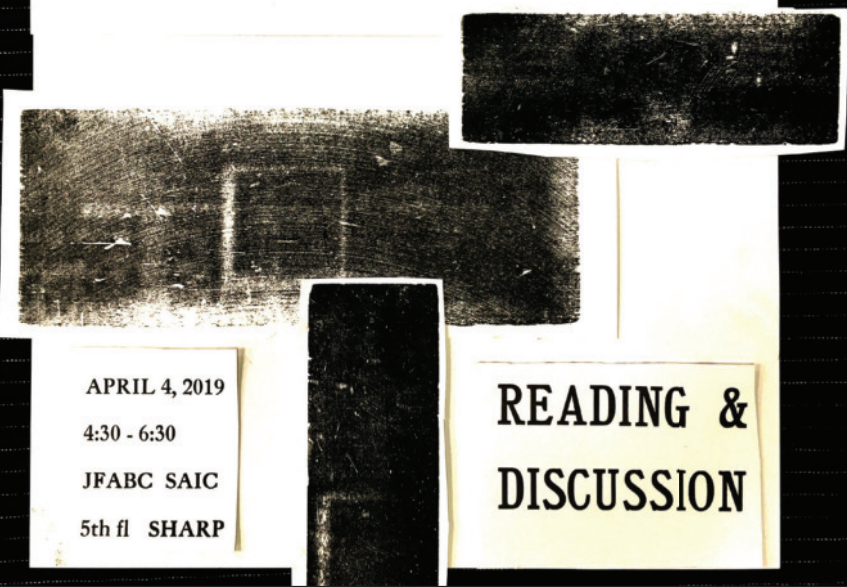


Leah Gallant (MANAJ 2020) is the Arts Editor at F News-magazine. Like Brad Pitt, she is mostly made of water.

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Blood, Guts, and Art Snobs

Netflix's art slasher film "Velvet Buzzsaw" misses the mark

by Leah Gallant

The homeless man-robot hobbles around on crutches in a bloody and torn Uncle Sam outfit, his eyes blazing with a hellish light. He is, of course, a specimen of contemporary art. In the opening scene of art world horror movie "Velvet Buzzsaw," which was recently released by Netflix, the patron class flits by at Art Basel Miami, pausing for a closer look at the grotesque caricature of poverty. This isn't an exaggeration of the contemporary art world: The biggest crowd of selfie-takers at the fall 2018 Art Expo Chicago was circled around a lifelike sculpture of a homeless man stretched out in a sleeping bag on the floor.

The evil art in question is the estate of Vetril Dease, who lowly but ambitious gallery attendant Josephina (Zawe Ashton) discovers dead in their shared apartment building. When she starts poking around his flat, which has conveniently been left unlocked, she finds a lifetime of paintings stashed away. You might expect the haunted masterpieces of an evil artist to look something like the work of Ivan Albright, Otto Dix, or pre-filmmaking David Lynch, but Dease's style is deeply unremarkable: It's just basic bitch figurative painting. This joke never gets its punchline, it just hangs out in the background of the film.

Josephina uses her discovery to rise in the ranks of the art world, becoming partners with her former boss, the cunning gallerist Rhodora (Rene Russo), who rules with a Miranda Priestly-like grip and looks eternally 67 going on 37. The characters are as two dimensional as works in a flat file. There's Morf Vandewalt (Jake Gyllenhaal), an unrealistically powerful art critic who Josephina begins dating; an art handler (Billy Magnussen) who wants the world to know that he, too, is an artist (he made that painting covered in Fruit Loops); and various other conniving gallerists.

We learn that Dease's family burned to death under mysterious circumstances. His former co-worker ended up dead with a knife in his back, and that signature dark brown pigment he used is blood ("his own, presumably," the archivist says, after a dramatic pause). But everyone is already losing their shit for Dease, and the collectors, with a little cooking the books to increase its value, are lining up to take a work home. Skipping any escalation of creepiness, characters then start dying off one by one in gory, visual culture-themed ways. Since the paintings do some, but not all, of the actual killing, and other previously unhaunted art objects also do some of the killing, these demises only occasionally move into the orbit of the plot's logic.

"Velvet Buzzsaw" wasn't made by and for art people, and its primary purpose is not social critique. So it's surprising how much satire it gets right. Some artists, once established, are just as beset by self-doubt as when they started out: Piers, a washed-up artist played by John Malkovich, stares forlornly at the lone mediocre painting he's managed to make in the past year. Gallerists are people who sell products, and the products just so happen to be art. In the upper echelons, there are tight corners in which to date or change jobs, and when people go to openings, they never talk about art, they just talk about who is fucking whom. There's no shortage of

ranty texts and malformed artworks railing against the market and social mores of the art world, but it's interesting to see these critiques lobbied in a film made for a much broader audience — the 150 million or so Netflix subscribers.

Dease's life history takes cues from Chicago outsider artist Henry Darger, a reclusive hospital custodian who created a 15,145-page-long epic in secret. It wasn't discovered until shortly before his death by his landlords, Nathan and Kiyoko Lerner, who went on to oversee his estate. Darger's work was bizarre — in his pastel-colored landscapes, the young girl protagonists, most of whom are intersex, are being hung or strangled by the men who pursue them — but he was no murderer. Darger saw himself as a protector of children; it is speculated that he suffered from abuse during his time at a youth asylum. Dease, on the other hand, is thoroughly demonic. The assumption that outsider artists or people with mental illness are miserable and murderous is one of the attendant stereotypes not of artists, but of the mentally ill in a society where funding for social services is constantly being cut.

This weird nexus between art and evil is creepy because it's so far from the idealistic assumptions we foist on art. When art is not transcendent but cursed, it implies some deep chasm in the moral fabric of society at large. Hence "The Picture of Dorian Grey," the obsessions with Hitler's art, and, for that matter, George W. Bush's. The highest, most dewey-eyed aspirations of art as a shared human language, the best and finest secretions of culture and progress, are here upended.

Skipping any escalation of creepiness, characters start dying off one by one in gory, visual culture-themed ways.

If there is a lesson, it is that greed and ambition corrupt. Just about everyone gets the Dease touch. The exceptions are Damrish (Daveed Diggs), a street artist who must choose between his collective and the gallerists who promise to make him a global sensation, and Coco (Natalia Dyer), a 22-year-old from Michigan with an intern-like aura of permanent cowering. Moral of the story: If you wish to avoid death by giant interactive mirror ball, join a collective or be from Michigan.

"Velvet Buzzsaw's" skewed depiction of culpability is the most glaring misrepresentation of the art world. Gallerists, critics, and blue-chip artists may loom large in name, but they're never the primary powerbrokers of the art world. The nexus between art and evil exists, but the real power, and the real greed, can be traced back to the ultra-wealthy who sit on museum boards. Warren B. Kanders, for example, vice chairman of board of trustees at the Whitney Museum, has an estimated \$700 million net worth. He's also CEO of Safariland, the defense company that manufactures tear gas used on immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. There is real horror in the art world, but it's not juicy enough to fill 90 minutes of Netflix pulp. And besides, a fable about art and evil set in the Sackler Wing of the Met, or the boardroom of the Whitney, or the stalled construction site of Guggenheim Abu Dhabi wouldn't be a horror movie. It would just be straight reporting.

Leah Gallant (MANAJ 2020) is the Arts Editor at F News-magazine. Like Brad Pitt, she is mostly made of water.

Mannequin Music

Reflecting on Lee Blalock’s electrically-infused new show

by **Ella Roche**



Lee Blalock’s Solenoid mask “instr/augment.” Photography by Sophia Barr Hayne.

The title of Lee Blalock’s current show at the Experimental Sound Studio (ESS), “I Sing the Body Cybernetic,” is a nod to Walt Whitman’s poem “I Sing the Body Electric,” in which Whitman expresses his fascination with the spirituality of the human body. Blalock, an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Art and Technology Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), also centers their work around perception of the human body. Through live performance by electronically activated sculptures, this show probes the possibilities of body modification through technology, as well as the traditional definitions of what constitutes performance.

Once a month from February through April, a new iteration of this series is installed at ESS. Every iteration consists of a mannequin or set of mannequins outfitted in different wearable electronics and accompanied by an algorithmically generated sound piece. The sound and active parts of the wearable piece are both controlled through a max patch, so that one cannot happen without the other. The mannequins’ performances are meant to represent different genres of music, from post hardcore to art rock, but their physical forms also serve as canvasses for a future of posthuman possibilities, a future where robots could function autonomously as artists and creators.

The second iteration of the work, a band called ULL4, is currently on display at ESS. Upon walking into the gallery, the viewer is faced with a single mannequin, the sole humanoid “performer” in the band. It is painted grey and outfitted in climbing gear, inflatable medical bags, an oxygen mask, and a cape of black balloons which conceals a tangle of thick black chords and an arduino. This composition alone presents a perfect example of how to conceal and reveal the hardware of a tech-integrated sculpture. The components used in the actual activation of the garment are integrated into its overall aesthetic and easily blend into the non-electronic parts of the work.

ULL4’s accompanying EP is a work of sound art called “AIR/BORN.” When the sound begins to play, the room is a charged mixture of playfulness and static anxiety. A creeping mix of tonal frequencies, industrial static, and jumbled voices plays in tune with the inflation of the medical bags on the mannequin. Each inflation signifies the beginning of different sections of the vocal audio. These inflations suggest respiratory by the mannequin, allowing it to physically participate in the composition of the sound. When these transitions are complete, NASA transmissions fill the space and although one can only decipher bits of the conversation, a feeling of escalating tension is very present. From the conversation, there seems to be some kind of problem landing an aircraft; the voices within the recording start to sound increasingly nervous. Coupled with recordings of countdowns mixed into the ambient background noise, this composition evokes a slow climb, almost as if the viewer is floating into space.

The tone of this iteration is heavy, fringing on oppressive. The work is aesthetically and electronically alluring, and involves a variety of tools, hardwares and softwares that contribute to and alter its concept. But without an exterior framework, it is difficult to connect the elaborate outfits and

The room is a charged mixture of playfulness and static anxiety.

narrative of the soundpiece to the original description of the mannequin bands as representing different genres of music. The various references and symbols at times overwhelm the piece’s intended meaning.

However, the performance is not meant to exist only within the confines of the physical world. In addition to its installation in the gallery, it also exists online. On the website, there is documentation of Blalock’s static performers — the mannequins within the physical space — along with the audio tracks from each iteration and a brief description of the performers’ genres. The disassembly of each work is followed by the online release of an interactive music video for the soundpiece and performers as well as a live-streamed interview with Blalock and the performers.

The online component does a great deal to make the connection between these mannequin sculptures and their presences as individual artists. It brings them to life in a different way than the electronic activation of their wearables, giving them a platform for further expression. It’s a highlight, because it invokes the vastness of the internet, where simulations of art and physical reality circulate endlessly. The documentation acts like proof of life on the internet.

“I Sing the Body Cybernetic” works at the intersections of posthuman theory, fashion, technology, and sound art. The wearable electronics allow the initially lifeless mannequins to become a part of the work and exist as representations, and the technology allows the entire project to function without any human intervention after the “on” button is pressed. With the synchronic activation of sound and physical performance in the gallery space, and the extension of these performers into a virtual environment, the work questions boundaries between artist and artwork. In this context, the representation of the artist and the work that they perform are made up of the same body, physically and digitally connected so that one cannot exist fully without the other. Blalock acts as a puppet master for each one of these bands, proposing a new way of presenting sound and performance through a multi-layered system of algorithms, activations, and virtual and physical platforms.

“I Sing the Body Cybernetic” is on view at Experimental Sound Studio, located at 5925 North Ravenswood Ave., through April 28, 2019. Gallery hours are Sundays from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. and by appointment.

Lettuce Discuss Salad Comb-uchar

How Amy Klobuchar treats her staff — and how the media treats her

by **Grace Wells**

Standing next to the Mississippi River during a snowstorm, Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar announced her bid for President as a Democrat in the 2020 Primary. Just 12 days later, The New York Times published an investigation into how Klobuchar treats her staff, highlighting a particularly infamous event involving a salad comb that has colored coverage of and conversation with the senator.

If you didn't catch The New York Times report, here's the gist of the salad situation. On a 2008 trip to South Carolina, Senator Klobuchar asked an aide to carry her salad onto their flight. Bags in tow, the aide lost his handle on the plasticware for the salad, dropping it on his way to the terminal. Unfortunately, the flight was so short that the plane's staff didn't have extra plasticware for the Senator to use. Furious, Klobuchar "berated" the aide before pulling a hair comb from her purse and proceeding to use it as a fork. After finishing her salad, Klobuchar tasked the aid with cleaning the salad from it for her.

The incident isn't isolated. The New York Times also detailed instances when Klobuchar allegedly threw office objects like binders and phones, committed Senate ethics violations in making aides do her dishes, and showed "will- ingness — in excess of other senators — to embarrass staff members over minor mis- steps or with odd requests." Sources told The Times that Klobuchar's office handbook enforced odd requirements of her staff. Employees who took paid parental leave were, upon re- turning, required to remain in their positions for three times as long as they'd been gone or re- quired to pay back what they earned on leave.

Aides who contrib- uted to The Times' piece, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation by Klobuchar, recounted saving abusive emails from the Senator on their last day in office as evidence of her behavior. These sources also claimed that if Klobuchar was unhappy with a staff member's decision to leave she would contact their future employer to have their job offers revoked.

When first asked about the allegations published in The Times, campaign spokes- woman Carlie Waibel explained that "the senator has repeatedly acknowledged that she can be tough and push people hard. But these anon- ymous stories — some of which are just plain ridiculous — do not overshadow the countless experiences of people on the senator's team who she has been so proud to work with."

The Minnesota Democrat has faced allegations of mistreatment from staff members before; at 36%, Klobuchar had the highest staff turnover rate in the

Many have pushed back against the allegations against Klobuchar, calling them sexist in nature.

Senate between 2001 and 2016. She now holds third place for highest staff turnover rate.

February articles in Slate and The Huffington Post allege multiple candidates for positions on her 2020 campaign withdrew as reports of her mistreatment of staff garnered attention.

When asked for comment by The Huffington Post in rela- tion to the salad comb incident, Klobuchar's former legislative aide, Tristan Brown, said that speculations about Klobuchar's workplace ethics make him cringe. "I rarely hear that said about male bosses in Congress, despite the fact that half of Congress is tough to work for," he added.

Many have pushed back against the allegations against Klobuchar, calling them sexist in nature, highlighting disparities in the way female bosses are perceived compared to their male coun- terparts, the nature with which their behavior is characterized, and the amount of public atten- tion given to allegations of mis- treatment. Until 2016, the two congressional members with the highest staff turnover rates were both women: Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D, Texas) and Senator Klobuchar. Amongst the 10 Senators with the highest turnover rates between 2001 and 2016, there are 7 women total; that number shifts to 4 out of 10 for the House of Representatives. Of the 1,982 Senators who have ever served, 56 have been women (2.82%). Similarly, of the 11,037 Representatives in the House who have ever served, 325 have been women (2.94%).

When speaking with The Times, re- sponding aides explained that while they agree that female bosses face disproportio- nately negative scrutiny in Congress, atten- tion paid to Klobuchar's behavior should "not be dismissed as gender bias." Many of the aides said they had worked for both men and women, for lawmakers both com- passionate and unkind, without encoun- tering anyone else like Ms. Klobuchar. During her panel at South by South- west, Senator Klobuchar was asked whether she found the critique of her office behavior to be sexist. Klobuchar's response? "I'm not going to go there. Whatever it is, I just can't waste my time analyzing it, because the stakes are too high, and I care too much."



Illustration by Ishita Dharap

Grace Wells (BFA 2020) is a Managing Editor at F News- magazine. She didn't know what else to put in her bio, so just picture her chugging coffee somewhere.

Jussie Smollett’s Media Rollercoaster

Press and personalities on both sides of the political spectrum have things to say by **Casey Carsel**

ver the last two months news publications and celebrities on all sides of the political spectrum have had their eyes glued as much on Chicago-based actor Jussie Smollett as on the media coverage itself. A Cook County grand jury indicted Smollett on March 14 on 16 counts of disorderly conduct, to which Smollett pled not guilty. “The media has been shameless in this,” Co-Chairperson and Field Organizer of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression Frank Chapman told F News-magazine. “I have never seen that many television cameras and reporters in any case I’ve been at court for. Laquan MacDonald’s case was a high-profile case but they didn’t stack it up like that ... Why the Roman carnival? Because he’s famous, black, and gay.”

“This publicity stunt was a scar that Chicago didn’t earn and certainly didn’t deserve.”

Smollett allegedly staged an attack and then claimed he was the victim of a hate crime. Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson announced at a press conference on February 21 that Smollett paid two men he knew \$3,500 to fake the attack. Superintendent Johnson criticized the media attention on the case, noting that he wished “the families of gun violence in this city got this much attention.” He maintained that Smollett had been treated as a victim until “we received evidence that led detectives in another direction.” “This publicity stunt was a scar that Chicago didn’t earn and certainly didn’t deserve,” Johnson said. Smollett has also been charged with a single felony count for allegedly faking receiving hate mail the week before the attack. Prosecutors outlined their case against Smollett at the conference, claiming that Smollett, dissatisfied

with his salary, instructed his alleged attackers to put a rope around his neck, call him slurs, and pour gasoline over him. The prosecution speculated that Smollett thought this attack would help promote his career. Tina Nguyen for Hive observed the Smollett case as an example of the GOP’s resentment for being labelled a racist party. “The opportunity to take the rare, public victory lap, then, was irresistible for some,” Nguyen wrote. Debra Heine was one of the many reporters to take this lap. “There were inconsistencies in Smollett’s story from the beginning, not to mention a continuous flow of leaks from Chicago cops indicating that they were investigating a potential hoax,” Heine wrote for PJ media. In an article for AZ Central, Bill Goodykoontz responded as a former police reporter to accusations of media bias, writing that reporters must “go with as much information as you can as quickly as you can get it; there is a tacit understanding on everyone’s part that the story will evolve.” In a statement released February 16, Smollett’s attorneys wrote that “like any other citizen, Mr. Smollett enjoys the presumption of innocence, particularly

when there has been an investigation like this one where information, both true and false, has been repeatedly leaked.” On Twitter, Ava DuVernay spoke against rushing to accept Smollett’s guilt. Despite the inconsistencies, I can’t blindly believe Chicago PD,” DuVernay wrote. “The department that covered up shooting Laquan McDonald over a dozen times? ... I’ll wait. Whatever the outcome, this won’t stop me from believing others. It can’t.” When speaking on the phone with F Newsmagazine, Chapman voiced his own doubts about the Chicago Police Department. “I don’t know what motivated the police, but I know they’re not to be trusted, based on past actions. They portray themselves as pursuers of justice in hate crime cases, but that’s not their record,” he told F News. “The Chicago Police Department did something they very rarely do in the African American community: They did a thorough investigation and came up with evidence within 48 hours ... of a hoax. That’s energy they don’t usually spend on our community.” Activist and CEO of Project Islamic Hope Najee Ali held a press conference

denouncing the alleged actions of Smollett. “Jussie Smollett is nothing but a modern-day version of Tawana Brawley,” Ali said, referring to the alleged rape of Tawana Brawley in 1987. Brawley, then 15, accused four white men of raping her and leaving her in a garbage bag, covered in feces, with racial slurs scrawled on her body. A grand jury concluded that Brawley was not the victim of sexual assault that night and she may have staged the state in which she was found. “Smollett’s actions and lies will make real incidents of racist attacks and homophobia much easier to immediately dismiss,” said Ali in his statement. When asked about Ali’s statement, Chapman was critical: “Who gave him investigative powers? Has that organisation done their own investigation or are they going by what the police said? For people to jump the gun ... that’s contempt prior to investigation. They don’t have the authority to try him. You don’t determine guilt and evidence like this.” As of Tuesday, March 26, all charges against Smollett have been dropped. F Newsmagazine will continue to update this story online as it develops.

Passport to the Polls

Indian citizens living abroad struggle to exercise voting rights
by **Karishma Dotia**

This February, the Election Commission of India clarified that Non-Resident Indian (NRI) voters have not been extended the right to cast their votes online in the upcoming national elections. According to estimates from the Ministry of External Affairs of India, there are about 31 million NRIs living in different countries across the world. Currently, NRIs can vote, but only in person. They must register online for Voter IDs, go to their constituencies back in India with the original passports issued to them when they had moved abroad, and cast their votes. However, to be eligible to vote, they must also possess a valid Indian passport. Most importantly, they must be at least 18 years of age as of January 1 of the year in which the electoral roll is published.

Many of the Indian undergraduates at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) come to the United States when they are too young to vote in Indian elections. Once they are of voting age, many aren't able to go home and vote because the elections are usually held between early April and late May, when these students are busy preparing for final critiques and year-end submissions. This year's election is scheduled to be held in seven phases, beginning on April 11, when preparation for finals is at its peak at SAIC. The last phase happens on May 19, right after the semester ends, when international students are about to leave the United States for the summer.

Amay Kataria (MFA 2020), a student in the Art and Technology department, told F Newsmagazine, "I feel I have no say," adding that he feels "disconnected from the Indian political system and my country because I won't be able to exercise my rights in this election term as well." The 2019 Indian general election overlaps with his college schedule and graduation ceremony. Having left India at the age of 18 to pursue higher education, Amay has not been able to vote in the elections in the past 11 years.

Amay adds,

"If there was a proxy system of voting in place for NRIs like me, who may not be able to fly back home during the election season, we would feel more included and have our say in our country's progress."

Proxy voting is a system where a vote is cast by one person as a representative of another, when the latter is not present in their constituency during the election period. In India, this system is currently in place only for Service Personnel. The 2017 Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill may allow NRI voters to avail the proxy voting service. This Bill has passed in the Lok Sabha — House of the People — but is yet to be signed by the Rajya Sabha — Council of States — after which the provisions in this bill could be enacted. This would permit an NRI to choose an adult relative or friend who is registered in their constituency as their proxy. The proxy can then cast the NRI citizen's vote on their behalf.

In an interview with the Arabian Stories, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, an Indian Parliamentarian and Chairman of Indian External Affairs Ministry Standing Committee, said that even if the bill does pass in the Rajya Sabha, NRIs will not be able vote in the 2019 general elections. "The government would have had to frame the various rules and procedures to oversee proxy voting," Tharoor said. "That would have been a time-consuming process and therefore, I do not believe that they would have been ready to implement it for the 2019 elections."

An SAIC Liberal Arts faculty member from India, who requested anonymity, feels skeptical about the proxy system. They have been in the United States since 2011 and told F News, "I would be more comfortable voting in person — maybe at a nearby Indian embassy in

There are about 31 million Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who can only cast their votes if they fly back home.

the city — where I could physically cast a vote without worrying about how my proxy vote in India could be manipulated by another person."

In the last general election to choose a new Indian government, about 830 million citizens were eligible to vote and more than 550 million people cast their ballots. This term, election authorities speculate the number will swell to 900 million. There are about 31 million Non-Resident Indians who can only cast their votes if they fly back home.

The faculty member at SAIC also feels that of the many Indians who live abroad, few permanently return to India or plan to anytime soon. Many left India when the country had very different cultural, political, and social landscapes than it does now. With outdated ideas of the contemporary political scene in India, the faculty member adds that it can be a major drawback for NRIs to impose "idealizations of the past through their votes."

Sujit Joshi, a graduate student in the SAIC's Designed Objects department, feels the same way. Joshi explained that NRIs returning to vote "often would not necessarily have the context of current societal situations and political representatives to decide for their constituencies." However, he believes that an online voting system at a nearby Indian embassy might be an effective way to ensure that NRIs — who frequently travel back to India — can exercise their rights.

Currently, flying back to India is the only option for NRIs who are registered to vote. According to the electoral roll data of 2014, only 11,846 of the estimated 10 million NRIs were accounted as "overseas electors," or NRIs who go home and vote. In the last three years, the number of overseas voters has jumped to 24,348, though it is still a minority of the total NRI population. With current estimation of the NRI population at 31 million people, many look to the Indian government to address this growing issue.



Illustration by Catherine Cao

Karishma Dotia (BFA 2020) is a student in the Designed Objects department. She seeks to solve word problems, but hates math problems.

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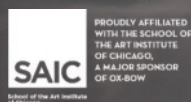
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The Growing Swell of The Japanese House

Dream pop artist Amber Bain offers listeners an ethereal, emotional dream

by **Peyton M. Sauer**



The Japanese House is an up-and-coming indie dream pop act from Buckinghamshire, England. Twenty-three year old singer-songwriter Amber Bain named the band after a place from childhood, a vacation house where she presented as a boy named Danny. Danny met and gained the affection of a neighbor girl who was heartbroken to find out that “Danny” was actually Amber. Roughly 17 years later and not yet wanting to reveal her real name in the music world, Amber began releasing music under the nostalgic moniker in 2015. The Japanese House is signed to a record label called Dirty Hit, which has also signed artists like The 1975, Pale Waves, Wolf Alice, and more.

Comprised of four songs, The Japanese House’s first EP “Pools To Bathe In” (2015) offers an intimate look into the life of a young queer artist struggling with love, mental health and her place in the world. With highly emotional songs like title track “Pools To Bathe In,” “Sister,” “Teeth” and “Still,” Bain establishes her undeniable love for language and an honest lyric. Match that with her clear, soothing voice and a melancholic, harmony-based tone, and it produces the individual and truly unique style that The Japanese House has become known for.

Just a few short months after her first EP, The Japanese House released a second EP of four more songs, “Clean” (2015). While this EP has traces of “Pools To Bathe In” within it — especially in the meditative lyrics and smooth harmonies — the addition of uplifting percussion, increased use of synth, and her experimentation with voice as an instrument make for a more complex collection of songs. At the time, fans of The Japanese House speculated that Bain was actually The 1975’s frontman Matty Healy — whose name appears alongside bandmate George Daniel’s as producers of the EPs — due to the “ambiguity” of her voice and her

veiled identity. Bain responded to the confusion openly and discussed her own hardships concerning a “true” identity, and how she struggled with talking about her experiences as well as facing them in real life.

In 2015, The Japanese House began her first tour as an opening act for The 1975. This opened a lot of doors for Bain, who started to gain more recognition for her work as a singer-songwriter and musician. The Japanese House went on to release two more EPs consisting of four songs each in the following two years; “Swim Against the Tide” (2016) and “Saw You In A Dream” (2017). Both EPs saw an evolving maturity and sureness within the lyrics while she continued to maintain the honesty and melancholy that is a constant in her writing. Upbeat yet moody singles like “Face Like Thunder” and “Saw You In A Dream” became popular on many alternative music stations, which expanded her fan base significantly. She also toured again as an opener for The 1975 in addition to doing her own shows.

Last year, The Japanese House began releasing singles, starting with a song called “Lilo” (2018), in preparation for her first full-length album coming out spring 2019. “Lilo” was accompanied by a chillingly vulnerable music video featuring her ex-girlfriend Marika Hackman, who is the subject of the song. This is one of the first times Bain has openly shared personal information so plainly — something she admits is hard for her, but also extremely important to the vulnerability she hopes to convey in her upcoming album.

Before her most recent visit to Chicago, The Japanese House released another single, “Follow My Girl” (2018). This single is one of the more upbeat songs she’s ever released,

Her songs call out to her audience more than ever, asking to be comforted, to be listened to, to be empathized with.

with lyrics such as “I’m part of a collective, oh I nearly reached it/In the distance, caught the light/I can fix it, make it bright,” and was perhaps one of my favorite songs from her set. She also performed quite a few songs off her unreleased album, some of which are heavily influenced by electronic pop. Others have strong ties to her first EPs, and more still are completely new. However, this experimentation with sound seemed to help her maintain a sense of connectedness throughout the set, as if each song was carefully constructed to be in conversation with another.

Since the ending of the American leg of her tour in December 2018, The Japanese House has released two more singles — “Maybe You’re The Reason” (2019) and “We Talk All The Time” (2019). So far the singles stay true to Bain’s honest, raw nature, while intensifying the sense of intimacy and emphasizing Bain’s “dreamy pop” aspirations. Her songs call out to her audience more than ever, asking to be comforted, to be listened to, to be empathized with.

The Japanese House’s first full-length album, “Good at Falling,” will be available March 2019, just in time to relieve some winter blues and carry you into spring. The album is sure to be full of tear jerkers as well as songs to dance to, so I recommend giving her a first listen alone in your bedroom, tissues and go-to dance moves both on hand. To listen to Amber’s angelic voice live, her next visit to Chicago is April 29, 2019 at the Bottom Lounge, where she promises to play both new and old songs for recent listeners and dedicated fans alike.

Dazzle-Diamond Kiddos

Jessica Hopper’s “Night Moves” will make you fall in love with Chicago

by Kaycie Surrell

The dedication alone indicates that this will be a book about hooligans. On the third page, there’s a small black and white picture of Jessica Hopper and her “down for whatever” best friend. JR is present in many of her journal entries from “Night Moves,” her second book — released in 2018 by The University of Texas Press. You’ll know Hopper from her 2015 release, “The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic,” a compilation of her essays, reported pieces, zines, and reviews. You’ll also know her because she’s a Chicago legend.

First of all, the fact that it’s called “Night Moves” for the iconic Bob Seger song is very cool. It is, of course, the perfect choice for the beginning of a playlist to accompany Jessica Hopper’s memoir spanning 2004 to 2009. A time when she was in her late 20s and early 30s riding her bike through the Chicago streets, going to shows with her friends, writing for the Reader, blogging, making fanzines, and generally being the coolest girl you wish you’d been best friends with.

“Night Moves” made me like Chicago. Honestly. When I picked up the book, I decided to dog-ear the pages that made me really feel something. By the end of it I had dog-eared over half the book. This from me, someone who moved to the city in summer and was damning it by fall. Chicago grows on you slowly. It isn’t sure about you, and it can be a little standoffish. But the way Jessica Hopper writes it, it feels like slipping on a familiar jean jacket when the weather is finally warm enough.

Her introduction sets the scene, letting us know she moved back to the Midwest from LA at 21 in 1997; and what’s covered in the book is a few years into her “two-decade run in Chicago.” Hopper calls the book “a testimony, of sorts, to my obsession with the city.” It’s an interesting moment in time. That was the year that insurance companies started covering birth control, for one thing. Oprah turned 50. Hillary Clinton was ranked the 25th toughest tough guy in Men’s Journal magazine’s “25 Toughest Guys in America” issue. According to the Chicago Tribune, 2004 was the year a woman sold her 10-year-old grilled cheese sandwich bearing the image of the

Virgin Mary for \$28,000 to an online casino via eBay.

Hopper wasn’t yet a professional writer, but she was on her way. The book is split into three sections. The first is “friends, bikes, the long night” and hits you with one of what will surely become known as “a classic Hopper,” because the lines are just that good. The first book starts off with one of those punchy early pieces, “Emo: Where the Girls Aren’t,” originally published in 2003. She writes, “Forget bombs and the real impact of trickle-down economics, it’s all about elusive kisses and tender-yet-undeniably-masculine emotional outbursts. Mixtapes across America became soiled with torrential anthems of hopeful boy-hearts masted to sleeves, pillows soaked in tears, and relational eulogies. Romance of the self was on.”

Her first entry in “Night Moves” is just as emotional — “Out in the city, everyone was on a date, and all the dates were going to parties on bikes, on polished toes peeking from sandal heels. All the girls with bare shoulders. It must be a great thing to love those girls.” Woof. Just like that it’s the middle of summer and I’m on that bike right beside her and there’s probably a gaggle of us just sweating and riding together. It’s only the second page and already Hopper feels like a friend.

“Night Moves” will make you fall in love with Chicago and remind you that you’re doing just fine. Defiantly self aware, Hopper’s memoir is earnest and nostalgic in a way that isn’t obnoxious. She writes about house parties where she and her friends make New Year’s resolutions, they go to dance parties, go to bars, host craft nights, get into car accidents, and live their lives. In “Tie a Yellow Ribbon ‘Round the Ol’ Apple Tree” she writes, “If I am not living my most advanced politics at the age of 29, then what am I doing?” and it feels like validation.

The way she writes about Chicago makes it feel like it’s someplace you really want to come home to. If you moved to the city from say, the Ozarks, it might be difficult

to replace your backdrop of low rolling mountains with tall buildings, trains, and bad traffic. But when Hopper compares it to California, it’s still the Midwest. She calls the city “home” and writes about standing in the Harold Washington Library atrium, kissing a copy of “Neon Wilderness” for good luck, and asking God what’s next. She writes about living her teenage dream.

For aspiring writers who also happen to be women, it’s refreshing to read someone who is constantly thinking in terms of their place in a scene that can play dirty. The second section of “Night Moves” is called “bands, shows, water with ice” and in an entry titled “Career Op” she recalls talking to freshman girls at DePaul University about being a woman in the music business. In the piece she answers questions on how to deal with 30-year-old creeps hitting on teenagers at shows and venue owners not taking them seriously. She relates and gives it up to these girls and their “fighting spirit.”

The final section is named for the city and rumbles in with immediate rent and landlord troubles — a Chicago staple. She heads off with JR, the best friend, to look at apartments and winds up sitting in front of the Daley Center, carping about some tourists taking too many pictures and questioning where someone has to come from to want a picture of the center and the grand Picasso. She writes, “To love this city, I attest, you must also hate it dispassionately.”

“Chicago” is all landmarks and secret places, and the library, and Ukrainian churches, and biking down Damen Avenue. It’s a testament to living in a city that “doesn’t give a shit and loves you how you are, because it is every bit as married, bereft, and cocky as you are.” Hopper’s writing is as sharp and punchy as it is eloquent and intimate. She assures you that even if you’re not from Chicago, it will get to you eventually. “Night Moves” starts in the summer and ends in the fall. The final entry “Violation of the Purely Imaginary” is a goodnight kiss to Chicago’s “dazzle-diamond kiddos” and all the young, wild things. It’s a bible for those of us who can’t help but whisper, “We were there.”

HOSTLESS AND AFRAID

Progress is elusive at 2019's
Academy Awards

by **Kristin Leigh Hofer**

In 1973, Sacheen Littlefeather, an Apache actress and activist, attended the Academy Awards in a buckskin dress. She was there on behalf of Marlon Brando, the favorite to win Best Actor for his role in “The Godfather.” When Brando was announced as the winner, Littlefeather walked onstage and raised her hand in refusal when offered the statuette. Forced to distill the 15 pages Brando had given her to read, she stated that the actor could not accept the award because of “the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry,” and spoke of the ongoing conflict at Wounded Knee, where 200 Native American activists were under attack by nearly a thousand federal law enforcement officers. She paused, looking down, for a smattering of boos and applause, before thanking the audience on Brando’s behalf.

When Jada Pinkett Smith boycotted the Oscars in 2016 over a startling lack of diversity among the nominees, she cited Littlefeather as a source of inspiration. That year, host Chris Rock addressed the #OscarsSoWhite controversy in front of an uneasy audience. In his monologue, he took the time to belittle Pinkett Smith’s protest before joking that the year would bring about change after all, “This year, in the ‘In Memoriam’ package, it’s just going to be black people that were shot by the cops on their way to the movies.”

Perhaps this is what the Academy was trying to avoid when it scheduled Queen and Adam Lambert, who has been performing with the band for several years, to open this year’s show with a performance of “We Will Rock You.” In an attempt to cast the widest net, the Academy decided it would proceed hostless, hoping to not turn away any viewers primed to critique after Kevin Hart stepped down.

Hart’s host status lasted only a few days before controversy arose regarding homophobic tweets and jokes he made in the past. He initially refused to apologize, stating that he had already addressed the issue, and stepped down. A day later, he apologized, but said he was firm in his decision not to host. Unhappy to let sleeping dogs lie, Ellen DeGeneres invited Hart onto her show and asked him to reconsider. DeGeneres was widely criticized, and news of a hostless ceremony followed close behind.

Without a host, the show was thirty minutes shorter than last year. The Academy had been hoping to produce a ceremony that ran under three hours (it ended up running three hours and 23 minutes), but reversed its decision to present certain awards during commercial breaks after public backlash, especially from industry professionals. The show kept a brisk pace and stayed interesting with a slew of memorable presenters and emotional speeches.

**The winner
of the highest
honor of the
evening was
best predicted
by chance.**

Melissa McCarthy and Brian Tyree Henry presented the award for Best Costume Design dressed in exaggerated royal regalia, complete with stuffed bunnies, a nod to “The Favourite.” Keegan Michael-Key floated down from the ceiling like Mary Poppins herself to introduce a performance of the nominated “The Place Where Lost Things Go.” Every musical performance was upstaged by the much-discussed, romantically-charged performance of “Shallow” by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper.

Hannah Beachler, the first black nominee and winner for Best Production Design, thanked “Black Panther” director Ryan Coogler and shared the mantra, “I did my best, and my best is good enough.” The award for Best Costume Design went to Ruth Carter, also for “Black Panther.” Carter, the award’s first black recipient, began her speech by asserting, “This has been a long time coming.”

The night continued to be historic for black talent. Samuel L. Jackson announced “BlacKkKlansman” the winner for Best Adapted Screenplay and embraced a jubilant Spike Lee onstage. The sound was cut from the first few seconds of Lee’s speech, which he began by saying, “Don’t turn that motherfucking clock on.”

Mahershala Ali won Best Supporting Actor for his role as Dr. Donald Shirley in “Green Book,” a film based on real events that has been criticized for centering whiteness in its simplistic narrative of racial harmony. Shirley’s descendants claim the film is inaccurate in its depiction of Shirley and his friendship with his chauffeur, Tony Vallelonga, whose son co-wrote the script and never consulted them. When Ali took the stage it seemed bittersweet, especially compared to his win in 2017 for his role in “Moonlight,” which felt joyous and unexpected.

At its most charming, the Academy Awards is a display of movie magic that feels both classic and of-the-moment. In the wake of #OscarsSoWhite and #MeToo the show has felt regressive, and viewership has declined. In 2017 and 2018, with Jimmy Kimmel as host, the show mixed celebrities with tourists and moviegoers in an awkward attempt to include ordinary people in the ceremony. “This is so much better than the Oscars,” said Gal Gadot as she led a procession of actors into a movie theater to pass out candy, hotdogs, and sandwiches.

The Academy has added hundreds of new members in recent years to address a lack of diversity amongst the voting bloc, and seeing who wins each award can feel like an attempt to tally progress. Playing along at home, my biggest challenge when I’m filling out my ballot is balancing who I hope will win and who I think the Academy will choose. For categories I feel strongly about I usually can’t help but follow my heart, despite a lack of buzz. This year, a friend who had only seen one of the nominated movies handled the ballot efficiently by choosing the nominee listed in the middle for every category. It was too late by the time he realized the nominees were listed in alphabetical order and an attempt to choose randomly resulted in many selections of “First Man.” Of course, he was the only one to correctly pick the Best Picture winner, “Green Book.” The winner of the highest honor of the evening was best predicted by chance. Suddenly, progress felt elusive.

Growing Up Graveside



When life gives
make playground
by **Kira Ryter**



*She would have
been three
years older
than us if she
were still alive.*

On the eastern side of Pittsburgh, where the Ohio, Monongahela, and Allegheny rivers meet, are the quiet neighborhoods of Shadyside and Squirrel Hill. Between the junction of these two neighborhoods is the vast expanse of Frick Park and the historic 650-acre Homewood Cemetery. My house bordered on this cemetery. My childhood home looked like every child's drawing of a house: a square with a triangular roof, snugled in between two other houses of the same shape.

Everything about the place where I grew up was normal and pleasant. There were lots of opportunities to run around; it was our own personal playground. It wasn't until I got older that people started to say it seemed creepy to live in front of a cemetery and asked if I had seen ghosts. It wasn't creepy to me, and to this day I can't say I believe in the traditional form of what a ghost is.

At that age we didn't understand what death was or why contemporary Western culture had such a distanced reaction to it. It wasn't always this way. In the Victorian era, graveyards were locations to gather and spend leisure time. This was before municipal parks and public spaces, and many families would picnic among the dead. Since then, cemeteries have become a quiet, reserved place, tucked secretly and peacefully away, forgotten until death comes knocking. On the rare occasion of a funeral, my neighborhood would see the parade of somber black figures seep in and quietly mourn their loved ones before trickling out again. It was at times like those that the atmosphere would change and we understood not to play there.

Although the cemetery had regular operating and visiting hours enforced by a formidable gate, none of the locals ever abided by those rules. Instead, there were known spots in the fence where if you lifted one of the less-rusty wrought iron spikes, you could enter and exit as you wished.

It was a quiet and friendly neighborhood, with lots of kids and families that I knew. My best friend lived perpendicular to me on the neighboring street; from my bedroom window overlooking a corner of the graveyard, I could see her window. We first met in our neighborhood daycare; as we grew older we'd frequent the convenience store that was owned and operated by the daycare teacher. In the summertime we would climb the cherry trees and build fairy houses out of mud and fallen fruits, sticks, and leaves. We also wrought havoc on our neighbors' backyards, especially the one with the treehouse. It was a rite of passage to get to the top by climbing up the rope instead of using the ladder. We would also snack on the fresh vegetables picked from the gardens nearby. Once there was a dumpster parked in the street and all the kids climbed in and rooted around for treasures.



you cemeteries,
ds out of them

At one point there was a pond, which has since been filled in, that was nestled in the farthest southwest corner of the cemetery. It was a place where you could sit by the edge and listen for all the frogs. Occasionally, some of the neighbors would bring their bug-catching kits and we'd run around through the grass with nets. On warmer nights, after dinner, my family would take walks through Frick Park and the cemetery, and I'd bring my kite to trail behind. In the fall, when the leaves dropped from the tall oak trees and peppered the ground, we would dash through and arguably disrupt the standard peace and quiet of the cemetery. If it was dry enough, we would play hide-and-go seek and gather large piles of leaves to lie in on top of the graves. There was a neighbor we never saw unless it was Halloween. He'd dress up as a pirate and decorate his house like the helm of a ship. It was terrifying and took a lot to muster up the courage to climb the long stairs and claim our candy loot.

When winter came around, on good snowy days we'd go through the gate in my friend's backyard (one of the known loose points) and trek up the hill to go sledding. One year I remember going down the hill too fast and hitting a small grave marker that threw me into the air. I landed so hard it felt like I had broken my tailbone. After playing we'd go inside to eat instant ramen and hot chocolate and watch movies like "Grease" or "West Side Story" on VCR.

The cemetery was a big place, and before smartphones and Google Maps we used landmarks to navigate. We had favorite graves to visit, too. One of them was the grave of a young girl who died around age six or seven. She would have been three years older than us if she were still alive. Her grave had a tiny frame with her photo and we always dropped by to say hello. We thought it would be good to make sure she wasn't lonely. Another favorite was a giant white pyramid grave marker that looked like something that belonged to some rich benefactor. We also had favorite mausoleums, which were the ones with the windows you could peek inside of. They were just dark, dusty, quiet rooms.

The only time I remember being scared was when I could hear footsteps pacing across the floorboards in the attic above my room. It was stuffy and crowded and full of junk and there was a weird feeling up there. I was never certain if it was the floorboards of an old house creaking or just my imagination.

As an adult and practicing artist, growing up near a cemetery has impacted my work. A lot of my art has been influenced by where I grew up. The stories I have from childhood spent in a vast and historic cemetery are unique and shaped my understanding that a ghost is not just a physical entity but also memories and feelings of moments you've lived.



Kira Ryter (BFA 2020) studies photography, fashion, and fibers. Her current obsessions include dried hibiscus flowers and lavender soda.



“ring ring” ...
JK it’s on vibrate.

by **Jill DeGroot**

Mycockatiel, Princess, has learned several of the most popular iPhone ringtones. Her favorite is “Radar.” But she also knows, “Xylophone,” “Signal,” and “Opening.” (She can also mimic the Facebook pull-to-refresh sound with impressive fervor.)

Cockatiels don’t always mimic, but they do learn contact calls to communicate things to their human companions like, “Come here!” or “I’m safe, are you?” They pick specific sounds that will capture our attention as quickly and clearly as possible; what my cockatiel has selected for me just so happens to be trademarked by one of the most powerful tech giants in the world.

And that’s not her fault, it’s mine. She noticed that I woke up to “Radar” every day, at 7 a.m. So when Sunday rolled around she noticed I didn’t set the alarm. Princess took it upon herself to fill in for my off-duty alarm clock. I’ll just change the alarm sound then, I thought, “Xylophone” is fine. Princess couldn’t be fooled. She learned that ringtone, too. And the next, and the next.

Just last year, Apple’s data reported 1.3 billion active devices including MacBooks, iPhones, iPads, Apple Watches, and Apple TVs. We wake up to our devices, store them in our pockets, and react to their beck and call. We care how they look, their size, shape, the definition of the display, the quality of the internal camera. We care about new emojis, facial recognition capabilities, whether the screen will crack when we drop it, but we don’t care about what our notifications will sound like.

If you’ve ever browsed the ringtone options under an iPhone’s sounds folder, you might have thought to yourself: “These are awful.” Vague beeps, chirps, and twinkles, repetitive arpeggiations and sequences from an electronic synthesizer, all several-seconds-long but looping. Some are annoying, some corny, some flat-out grating. But you’re in luck! If “Old Car Horn,” “Time Passing,” or “Boing” don’t

tickle your fancy, you have 89 similarly disappointing options to choose from.

The origin story of the 25 original Apple iPhone ringtones is a bit of a mystery in the tech industry. Apple has never credited a composer for the device’s default and well-known sounds. There is no mention of a sound designer in Walter Isaacson’s 2011 biography of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

In 2013, Apple Insider discovered that Owl City’s Adam Young, the musician behind the 2009 smash hit “Fireflies,” had listed working with Apple on “sounds for iOS7” under his discography. What exactly his role was in the creation of Apple’s sound is unclear. What we do know is that the sounds added to the original 25 ringtones were crafted from electronic instruments, while the classics were meant to sound as close to real-world instruments as possible.

Apple Insider also noted that Young could have potentially worked with Apple to remaster the older sounds for iOS 7. Regardless of who might have created or remastered these sounds, here they are. They’ve followed us into 2019.

In 2006, I treasured my 0.3 minute-per-text Motorola V170 flip phone, and there was nothing I wanted more than

We wake up to our devices, store them in our pockets, and react to their beck and call.

the \$2.99 “Fergalicious” ringtone. Fergie’s distinct “T-T-T-T-T Tasty” would let the rest of my 6th-grade class know exactly who was coming around the corner of our middle school hallways. But now, the iPhone “Ping!” is practically universal. It seems impossible to escape, say, the sound of a digitized marimba, ringing from the front row of the New York Philharmonic during the quietest part of Mahler’s Ninth, making us think “Is that my phone?” This sonic ubiquity has us fumbling through pursues, digging into pockets and back packs to turn our ringers off in universities, museums, workplaces, and dentist offices. We’ve relinquished control over our public sonic identities with a blind complacency. Apple’s sonic branding has become integrated into your lives. For one million dollars, could you tell me what an Android ringtone sounds like?

We need expertly designed sounds that enrich our lives, make us healthier, and provide us with choices that suit our independent wants and needs at any given moment. Can we imagine a world with better ringtones, message alerts, and



alarms? Research has shown that our phone’s jolting sounds can actually have a negative impact on sleep patterns and mental health. Researchers have also offered solutions for better living when it comes to the sounds fed to us by our devices. For example, pink noise (think white noise, but with lower frequencies) or brown noise (think white or pink noise, but without any high frequencies) can substitute literally any of the iPhone jingles as a better alarm or alert.

Though nobody has claimed the iconic iPhone “marimba” jingle as their own creation, some speculate that it was born out of Steve Jobs’ desire for a high-fidelity, sophisticated ringtone, straying from the MIDI 1902 guitar riff found on the Nokia. You might argue that utilizing an 18-note marimba melody as a ringtone is useful and not wholly awful. It’s true that “marimba” is actually fairly similar to the original Bell Ringer that sounded when Alexander Graham Bell made the first phone call in 1876. Easily detectable to the human ear, it registers just between 2 to 4KHz. But tell me, in 2019 does this sound spark joy?

Some consider 1995 the year the ringtone died. Nokia had just patented the button-operated vibration feature for mobile phones. Considering phones are no longer land-line-locked and they’re almost always touching our bodies, it makes sense for our devices to naturally default to vibrate or silent. Sound serves us not.

With exponentially increasing functions of our phones (emailing, task tracking, texting, face-timing, photographing, health monitoring, social media posting, and more), we’ve effectively transitioned to relying on our on-screen notifications, eliminating any need for an auditory alert. In fact, if you own an iPad Pro 11-inch, iPad Pro 12.9-inch, iPhone X or later, your phone will default to an Attention Aware feature. By simply looking at your phone, your device will intelligently respond by lowering the volume of your alerts.

With the latest release of iOS 12, Apple has designed features to make our experience “faster, more responsive, and more delightful.” Do Not Disturb During Bedtime will allow you to dim your display and silence your device overnight until you unlock your iPhone the next morning. You can create schedules for the Do Not Disturb setting so that your phone will silence itself during certain events or parts of your day. Apple won’t create devices with better sounds, but they don’t seem to mind providing solutions for us to shut them up indefinitely.

Many tech forecasters have speculated online about what the yet-to-be-released iOS 13 has in store for iPhone users. Unfortunately, it seems as though redesigned ringtones will not be included on the list of new features. There may come a day that these little ditties are finally laid to rest. But until that day, “marimba” lives. Now if my bird could only learn “Fergalicious” ...

Jill DeGroot is a Chicago-based editor, writer, and performer. She is the co-artistic director and editor of Cacophony Magazine.

Not Your Mother's Professionalism

The evolution of the casual workplace

by **Cat Strain**

When I was in high school, my father would tell me, “Don’t do anything that’ll make it so you can’t get a job” — advice I considered, then promptly forgot. My rebuttal: “Why would I work for a company that wouldn’t let me be myself?” My parents never took personal offense with how I wanted to dress, but any modifications I made to my appearance were met with concern that I would become unemployable. But that’s simply not true anymore.

Young adults have started to pick at the old, rusted, wheels in the workplace machine, intent on repairing something that could come to life again to serve them better. Women are ditching heels and opting instead to wear high-end sneakers to the office. Dyed hair, facial piercings, and shirts that displayed my collarbone — items my father warned me would get me fired — have become acceptable in professional settings. I’m in graduate school now, with two piercings on my face. Perhaps there is a different way to get things done than the way they have always been done.

When I hear the term “professional,” I immediately conjure up the image of a conservative white man. The wife, white picket fence, 2.5 kids — the American Dream. Businesses are then made by and for these white, male, cis-gendered individuals. Now, it’s difficult for more traditional professionals to cope with the shift in culture. The United States government is currently experiencing this flux. The House of Representatives turned blue in the 2018 Midterm Elections, and the United States elected a record-breaking number of women and people of color to serve in Congress last year. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (US Representative for New York’s 14th congressional district) speaks to her community over Instagram, where she cooks mac ‘n’ cheese live and kicks ass on the House floor.

How things have been done isn’t cutting it. The freshman reps have already tracked down representatives during the shutdown, introduced a Green New Deal, and they’re even a little bit Socialist. Rather than conforming to a clean-cut, white-washed code of ethics dictated by Septuagenarians who don’t understand how the internet works, young Americans and our new reps are gunning for a government that takes public interests to heart and focuses on intersectional issues. They are building a new foundation for a healthy and culturally productive institution.

What constitutes a professional? Is it the style of dress or someone’s character? I decided to conduct a brief survey through F Newsmagazine. Respondents between the ages of 20 and 50 both within and outside of SAIC were asked how they define professionalism, if it’s still an important concept, and if their interpretation of professionalism changed when applied to their field of practice. While the number of contributors was small (15 people), there was a consistent parallel to each response in regards to what they viewed as “professional.”

How things have been done isn’t cutting it.

The majority of responses pointed to the core values of professionalism as “accountability, responsibility, respect, [and a] clean and neat appearance.” When you search “professional,” the image search returns with a slew of stock photos of men wearing button-ups engaged in a firm handshake. It has been imprinted on our minds to associate the image of an upper-middle-class man as the ideal of what a person leading a successful life should look like.

However, when asked later in the survey about the ways professionalism is applied today, an interesting distinction was made. Respondents agreed that the foundation of professionalism was characterized primarily by dress and respect in the workplace. But they also clarified that the ways in which contemporary professionalism can appear and how it functions is often more flexible. Professionalism has morphed into being “on-brand.” Even Forbes is suggesting ways to beef up “what you stand for in your career and life” via personal style and online aesthetics to reflect who and what you stand for. Media companies like Bustle and Refinery29 are posting articles on “15 Simple Ways To Exude More Maturity At Work.” These pieces aren’t about conforming, but making sure you’re presenting your best self and doing your best work.

SAIC Editor Dustin Lowman spoke to this cultural shift: “The particulars of a society’s values always change. As new demographic groups achieve positions of prominence and authority in the world, those groups’ values factor more heavily into society’s overarching values.” As professionalism is commandeered by the largest voter-eligible age group since the Baby Boomers, the younger generations are reshaping how labor ethics function and how to get work done.

“Professional” has been divorced from traditional suit-and-tie standards of dress, but not character. It can no longer be a static concept. We’re shaking up the social structure and the status quo, which means colored hair and tattoos shouldn’t get in the way of a promotion.



THE TAX MAN COMETH

The Art Institute and SAIC have public tax forms you can view online. Here’s what they say.

by **Casey Carsel**

The IRS 990 forms for all organizations recognized as tax exempt by the IRS are viewable on ProPublica’s Nonprofit Explorer. As an institution with the tax code designation 501(c)(3) — in this case, a higher education institution — the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) is defined as a nonprofit. The tax filings of other higher education institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Columbia College Chicago, California College of the Arts, and Rhode Island School of Design are also available.

When viewing this data, a couple of grains of salt must be taken. First, it takes a while for each year’s taxes to become available — the most recent data one can access for the Art Institute is for the fiscal year ending in June 2016. Second, the Art Institute of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), for tax purposes, are one combined entity with no differentiation. This means the amount spent on security, for example, includes the security expenses of both SAIC and the AIC (it totals at \$5,908,177).

With those caveats in mind, here are a few interesting statistics from the fiscal year ending in June 2016.

REVENUE



Investments \$85,774,276
Contributions & Grants \$173,092,401
Programs & Services \$392,250,900

Total \$670,652,415

Programs & Services Breakdown

- Tuition/Fees** \$169,316,138
- Museum Admission** \$17,389,840
- Art Sales** \$5,005,245
- Member Program** \$1,086,741
- Other** \$6,422,559

EXPENSES



Grants etc. \$83,039,478
Salaries etc. \$246,793,114
Other* \$270,488,544

Total \$298,907,826

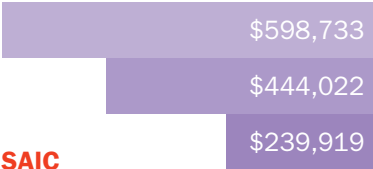
Notable Other Expenses

- Advertising** \$2,629,732
- Office** \$11,053,945
- Occupancy** \$23,390,169
- Travel** \$3,893,046
- Accession/Book/Other Art** \$16,400,128
- Exhibitions** \$2,187,744

REVENUE LESS EXPENSES

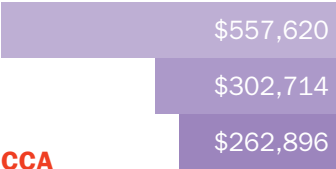
\$60,062,547

THREE HIGHEST-PAYING POSITIONS (HIGHER EDUCATION)



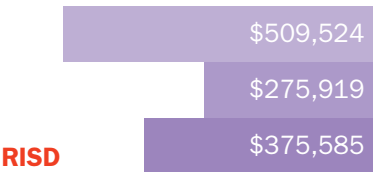
SAIC

Walter Massey (President)
Elissa Tenny (Provost)
Lisa Wainwright (Faculty Dean)



CCA

Steven Beal (President)
Laura Hazlette (Treasurer)
Melanie Corn (Provost)



RISD

Rosanne Somerson (Interim President)
Pradeep Sharma (Provost)
Jean Eddy (COO)



CCC

Stanley Wearden (Provost)
Michelle Gates (VP Business Affairs/CFO)
Patricia Bergeson (VP Legal Affairs)

Note: Information from the fiscal year ending in June 2016. Graphics by Catherine Cao

Casey Carsel (MFAW 2019) is Managing Editor at F News-magazine. Her Japanese isn’t helping her Yiddish.

Survey Says, February 2019: TV

Only eight called TV “evil”

by **Dustin Lowman**

Every month, F Newsmagazine conducts surveys across the student population, seeking to learn what students think about various prominent cultural topics. The first survey, conducted the first week of February 2019, focused on students’ TV-watching habits.

The cultural role of TV is in an extreme state of flux. As viewer-ship migrates en masse to internet-based media, broadcast TV has become one more entertainment industry dinosaur. New channels and shows are produced at a seemingly exponential rate. What has traditionally been considered too niche for TV network broadcast — say, the World Chess Championship — has proven viable in this new internet-based, low-cost model. It’s an unprecedented moment in the history of TV, where the boundary between producer and consumer has narrowed considerably.

F asked students what they watch, when they watch, how they watch, and their opinions on TV’s overall moral value. Conducted in the SAIC Nieman Center Cafe, the survey produced 45 responses; though a low sample size, and limited to whoever happened to be present that day in that location (future surveys will include web forms published in advance of and available after the date of the in-person survey), the results are not decisively representative of the student body writ large. However, the data does allow for some tentative conclusions. Here are some of the more significant findings:

Generally, students are watching full episodes of Netflix comedies before bed. “Full Episodes” surpassed “Clips” 32 mentions to 9. Netflix dominated all platforms with 31 mentions (followed by YouTube, 17). “Comedy” was the lead genre with 26, followed closely by Drama, 21, and more distantly

by Reality, 7. Streaming was most common “before bed” with 32 mentions, followed by “during meals,” 14. In all, 13 respondents checked “Full Episodes,” “Netflix,” “Comedy,” and “Before Bed,” with an additional 12 respondents checking any two or three of those categories. Most surprising about this is how Full Episodes won over Clips, which other data would have you believe are more likely to engage viewers.

Students mentioned a total of 42 shows, six shows mentioned more than once. That’s almost a show per person. Twelve people listed more than one as their “favorite show.” This aligns with the notion that contemporary TV is a medium defined by plurality, not singularity. Of shows mentioned more than once, Game of Thrones led the pack, with 4.

Streaming is the future. 42 forms listed only online streaming services as platforms of choice. Broadcast TV showed up on only three forms, and was never mentioned as the exclusive favorite. This, too, aligns with contemporary understanding of media, given that most students probably don’t have access to broadcast TV, but do have immediate access to a deluge of internet content.

Students have faith in the Goodness of TV. 26 responses marked only “Good,” 8 marked only “Evil,” and 9 indicated both. One student who marked “Good” went on, calling TV “the best stress reliever.” Those who marked “Evil” tended to elaborate a bit more colorfully; one labeled TV “The essence of why everything sucks,” and another asked, “Is it evil to monopolize the endorphins of the public?”

Illustration by Shannon Lewis

Dustin Lowman (MFAW 2020) is the SAIC Editor at F Newsmagazine. In 2020, he would like to see a cardigan elected president.



Typography for Non-Designers

VISCOM 3140
JACOB RISTAU


What does language mean in the visual arts? How do words and images interact in works versus around works? What are the basic skills, methods, and theories of typography, and how might they inform non-design practices? This course is a rigorous and critical, pragmatic, project based exploration of visual representations of text/writing in non-Graphic Design works. The class will frame text and language considerations around its form, and scaffold out from learning in the disciplines in which students’ practices are rooted.

SUM 3W4, 2019

MON – FRI, 9:00AM – 4:00PM
JULY 29TH – AUGUST 16TH

Diversity or Diversion?

NEXT



The NEXT Initiative promises change, but will it pan out?

by **Leo Smith**

Most universities aspire to be considered “diverse.” The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) is currently undertaking seven strategic planning goals, known as the NEXT Initiative. One of these goals is “Continue to Cultivate Diversity and Inclusion.” What should a diversity initiative strive for? Where is SAIC lacking? Whom do diversity initiatives serve ideally, and whom do they serve in reality? What is the work of equality? Can it be truly encouraged from a top-down perspective?

Jeff Ward, special assistant for executive communications in the office of the president, is optimistic about the process. He worked on the previous strategic planning cycle as well as this one. “We’re a place that values dialogue,” he said of SAIC. “People want to talk.”

That dialogue was encouraged at an open meeting for the Diversity Initiative, held on the afternoon of Friday, March 8.

The NEXT Initiative is currently in its second stage. Seven specialized “Action Groups,” composed of faculty, staff, and students, are evaluating each action item, which include affordability, interdisciplinarity, and diversity. The Action Groups were formed by open application in the fall.

Students and staff who were not accepted have been invited to share their ideas at open meetings such as this one, which was hosted by the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Several dozen people attended the meeting, filling the room’s seating capacity.

How does the SAIC community view the concept of diversity? One meeting attendee, Academic Advisor Turnip Van Dyke, read a quote from scholar Sara Ahmed on the particular institutional appeal of the word “diversity.” Van Dyke suggested that the term is appealing because it has become non-threatening and no longer prompts us to think seriously about equality. Van Dyke said they wanted to “ensure that collegial discomfort is a positive” and to “expand and share that discomfort.”

A graduate student taking the microphone shortly afterwards echoed this sentiment. “Who’s holding the power? Who is asking us to think about diversity? Why?” they asked.

One way to answer these questions is to look at what the administration has done in the past to bolster “diversity.” In the previous strategic planning cycle, from 2009-2013, the second goal of seven was to “Build Diversity.” From a set of policy recommendations generated by the initiative, the position Director of Academic Affairs for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was created. This role was filled by Christina Gomez, who is now co-chair of the current Diversity Action Group.

These are concrete administrative changes, but their impact is harder to measure. The student body demographics remain out of proportion with the demographics of Chicago at large. For example, while Chicago is 32% African American as of the 2010 census, SAIC reports only 3.3% of the student body identified as African American in 2018. This is roughly equal to historical statistics — SAIC’s Office of Multicultural Affairs reported 3.4% African American students in 2002, 7 years before the previous Diversity Initiative began.

One part-time faculty member spoke up about her experience as the only professor of color in her department. She reported feeling “retaliation” for her political activism, and said she had no place to register her concerns or seek support. She was eventually “edged out” of the department. She said the administration needs a place for that support, better diversity training, and more accountability for full-time staff.

According to minutes from the Diversity Action Group’s meeting in December, the main discussion focused on how to make faculty diversity training more effective. Minutes from later meetings have yet to be posted.

In the March open meeting, speakers voiced other concerns relating to diversity, like the high cost of tuition. According to a 2017 study by The New York Times, median family income for an SAIC student is \$104,600, and 47% of students come from families in the top 20%. Most undergraduates pay around \$50,000 annually.

Anne Harris, associate professor of Painting and Drawing, pointed out that class issues are inextricably linked to diversity questions. She said she sees this all the time with her graduating students: Those who graduate with debt are less able to make art than those who graduate without it.

Who is represented now, in galleries? Harris asked. White, straight, heterosexual men, because, she said, they have the money to sustain an art career. SAIC’s high tuition rates, Harris said, “perpetuate the system.”

“If we put graduates into the world who can’t make art, we’ve failed,” she said.

International students also spoke up at the meeting. One graduate student expressed feelings of abandonment by the administration, and asked that they take “more responsibility”

for international students. Ward reported that some Action Groups have proposed improving faculty training to better support international students.

Almanya Narula (MA NAJ 2019) suggested another concrete action: Make institutional hiring changes. Employ more students, and give them jobs “besides office assistant [positions],” especially international students. Diversity, she said, would follow naturally.

Several students made suggestions on disability policy and accommodations. One student suggested the school make all doors and entrances accessible, for two reasons. First, because some students have temporary disabilities that are not represented in demographic surveys, such as broken legs. Second, because an accessible campus raises the likelihood of recruiting disabled students.

Another student pointed out that accommodation letters only apply to students with documentation, but that not every student has access to medical documentation. Students with undocumented mental health issues fail classes and drop out from this lack of support.

“Who persists versus who doesn’t? It’s always because of money or because of health,” said Ward. When asked what ideas had been proposed in Action Group meetings, he said the main proposal was, again, support for faculty. So many disparate accommodations requests can become overwhelming to a professor. One popular suggestion was a “best practices rubric,” so the faculty “doesn’t feel like they need to invent it every time.”

The final Action Group meetings were held in March. Each group submitted a list of recommended steps to the Steering Committee, which will shortly begin consolidating the list and taking the recommendations into the “Implementation” phase.

The Steering Committee is composed of the co-chairs of each Action Group, as well as additional staff and faculty. This committee will decide which ideas get funded in the 2019-2020 school budget. According to Ward, there is a lot of personnel overlap between the budget committee and the NEXT Steering Committee. Funding decisions will be made by this overlapping group.

Closing out the March open meeting, Dean of Faculty and co-chair of the Diversity Action Group Martin Berger thanked participants for coming. He said he wanted to reassure everyone that many of these ideas had been discussed in the Action Group meetings already.

The Entrepreneur

by Kathleen Gullion

A man looked at Chicago and thought: Wow, she really let herself go. All these cranes, all this piss in plastic cups on the sidewalk. What happened to her tall grasses? Her wild onions and blue jays?

The man was an entrepreneur, which means he had a rich, slightly distant father and kept a little notebook full of ideas. Growing up, his mother kept a garden in their backyard, full of kale, tomatoes, and squash. The harvest would feed them all summer long until September, when the plants started to wilt. His mother would be in the garden on hands and knees, trying to suck the last days of life out of the plants. The final week of September, all they had to eat for dinner was three tiny tomatoes, and she told them, “September is the month of managing death.” But in May, she was always back in the garden.

People like gardens, he learned from all of this. And he was a people-pleaser.

Entrepreneurs make things better, and looking at his city, he thought, I can make it better. He marched up to the mayor and said, “This city needs a garden.” The mayor shook his hand and said, “I like the way you think, boy.”

It cost a lot of money. There was tons of bribery and forgery and adultery involved. Very scandalous, very political. They tore down a parking lot and laid down mulch. They replaced Volvos and Subarus and Toyotas with chokeberry and goldenrod and honeysuckle. Walls of ivy blocked the garden from the highway’s relentless roar. The man wanted the garden to feel like Eden, a place people could escape their sins. When they finally finished, the newspaper headline read, “They Paved the Parking Lot, and Put Up Paradise!”

An actuary on her lunch break milled about the garden, reminded that she had the potential to be wild, too. A stock-broker contemplated the black-eyed Susans, thinking, we’re a part of it and it’s a part of us. It was a great success, and the entrepreneur felt proud, because people finally liked him.

He was surveying his kingdom when a man in flip-flops walked by, mouth hanging open like a bass.

“Is this it?” the man asked his wife, whose mouth also hung open like a bass. “This is the Eden the papers talked about? This is just a bunch of dirt.”

The entrepreneur remembered the three-tomato dinner with his mother and father at the end of September many years ago. He had looked down at his share, one single tomato, and asked his mother, “Is this it?”

Her hands had been caked in dirt, her nose sunburnt. He wanted to call her now, and say, “That, that was everything.”

But he didn’t have her phone number, just money and a little notebook full of ideas.

Frank & Fran: Where Do We Go From Here?

The Final Episode of the F-Exclusive Mystery Series
by Jesse Stein

Fungus' speckled tongue snapped in the breeze. He leaned over the pushcart like a rotting mast-head, warhammer outstretched. The tunnel was abysmally dark and he had forbidden Fran from using her flashlight. He relied on smell alone to locate and bash the track-switchers right or left. "No lights, no. Barry will see, and he will sink back into the mud. Trust Fungus, young warrior."

Frank tucked his chin, bracing against the rattling iron cart, knees close against the lead pipe. It was impossible to measure time or distance in the trembling void, but he figured they'd traveled at least a mile, and his nerves whispered louder the longer he waited.

If Fran's arms were growing tired from pumping the lever, she wasn't complaining. She kept their pace steady, coasting around corners and climbing hills, slowing down when Fungus tapped the side of the cart twice, speeding up when he tapped thrice.

The air curled around them, growing more familiar, more human. Frank caught a shard of a voice, a crack of light in the ceiling, as they sped along in their secret world hidden by crumbling walls and hollow power lines. Fungus hocked a loogie and tapped four times, the signal to stop and walk.

"Easy, yes, this is the place, the stage." Fungus lurched and jumped and gyrated his stomach free from the edge of the cart

"This is crazy. Is it crazy?" Frank wiped his palms on his pants and practiced a new grip on the lead pipe, trying to remember the baton competitions his sister had participated in before she married Hershel Blintz, the Orthodox butcher and part-time mohel.

"Don't get prissy on me now, Frank." Fran adjusted his grip and did some aerobic stretches. "Remember, Alicia's life is on the line."

"Goddammit, you're right. Alicia would do the same for me."

"That's the spirit."

"Hush now, hush. We must creep and slink and mind your toes! The tunnel breathes, it has a voice, must not wake it, else all will be lost."

Fungus skittered across the ground on all fours, grunting softly, nostrils flaring. Frank held onto Fran's elbow. Slowly they edged forward, suffering in silence the mystery drips from the ceiling, breathing with the tunnel, moving with its lungs.

ALL RIGHT, DANCERS. BACK TO ONE. BACK TO ONE.

The curve in the tunnel caught the red underbelly of a spotlight, throwing vile shadows across Frank's hands. At least, he could see his hands again.

AND A 5 6 7 8

A bass line slapped in the murk. Heels on concrete echoed along with a high-hat rattling triplets. An organ swelled out minor chords, the horns faded in, then a voice. A voice stewed in spicy honey and as clear as sunlight. Fran stifled Frank's squeal.

Eyes closed, Fungus laid his ear on the track. "It begins."

They edged forward an inch at a time, until they hit the curve. Fungus licked his teeth and pointed into the darkness, beckoning them to follow. Frank risked a look into the light and saw reflective barriers cutting off the subway platform from any disturbance. A bullhorn barked out a steady set of instructions. Fran yanked him along.

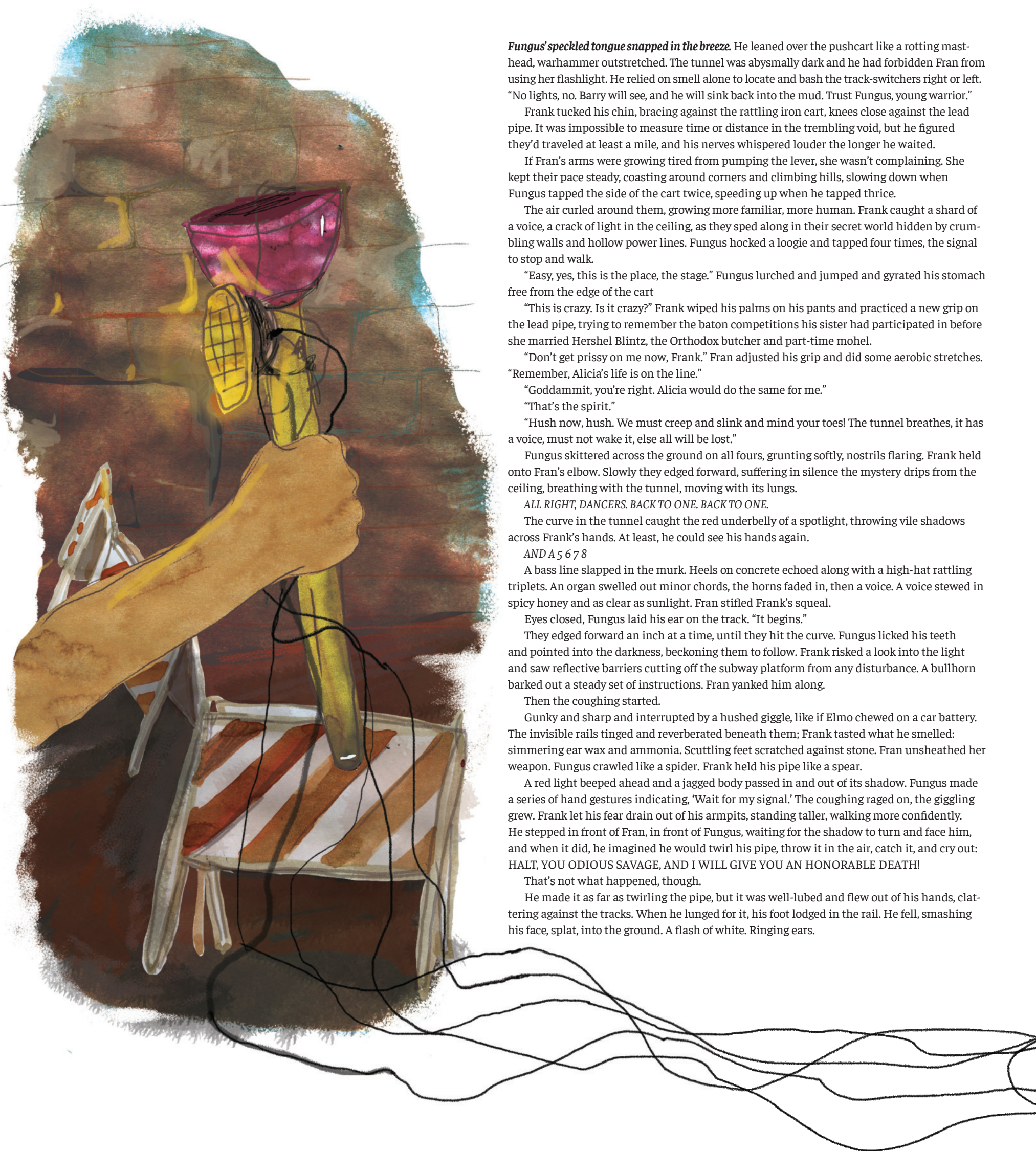
Then the coughing started.

Gunky and sharp and interrupted by a hushed giggle, like if Elmo chewed on a car battery. The invisible rails tinged and reverberated beneath them; Frank tasted what he smelled: simmering ear wax and ammonia. Scuttling feet scratched against stone. Fran unsheathed her weapon. Fungus crawled like a spider. Frank held his pipe like a spear.

A red light beeped ahead and a jagged body passed in and out of its shadow. Fungus made a series of hand gestures indicating, 'Wait for my signal.' The coughing raged on, the giggling grew. Frank let his fear drain out of his armpits, standing taller, walking more confidently. He stepped in front of Fran, in front of Fungus, waiting for the shadow to turn and face him, and when it did, he imagined he would twirl his pipe, throw it in the air, catch it, and cry out: **HALT, YOU ODIIOUS SAVAGE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU AN HONORABLE DEATH!**

That's not what happened, though.

He made it as far as twirling the pipe, but it was well-lubed and flew out of his hands, clattering against the tracks. When he lunged for it, his foot lodged in the rail. He fell, smashing his face, splat, into the ground. A flash of white. Ringing ears.



He looked up at a raging battle. Fran had leapt over his crumpled form. She traded blows with a man-sized dreadlock — Barry. His time in the tunnels had honed his combat skills. Though he looked like a naked mole rat from a Denny’s septic tank, he moved like electrified water, dancing from toe to toe, ducking Fran’s gusty swings. He fought eyes closed, tasting the air before each step, leaving a reflecting pool of yellow and black spit around his soot-stained lips. Fungus grunted and howled with each sweep of his mighty warhammer, missing every time.

Frank stood up, leaning on his pipe, and saw Barry’s contraption, the blinking red light attached to a plunger. Six wires ran into hand-drilled holes in the wall. He was going to blow her up, the bastard. Through the ground he heard Alicia, giving firm but gentle directions to her team, utterly unaware that her life hung in the balance, that her life was in his hands, Frank’s hands. He twirled the pipe, threw it in the air, caught it and cried out,

“FOR ALICIA!!!!!!”

He ran like a pole vaulter, mouth open, catching everyone off guard. Barry turned towards the yell and Fran broke her flashlight against his kneecap. Fungus hooked his warhammer around his neck, reining him back. Frank charged, not feeling his feet on the ground, not feeling his muscles contract, or his lungs burn. He closed his eyes and ran until his fist hit Barry’s chest, until the warm blood splattered his face, dripping down his chin, pooling on his boots.

Barry looked up at his murderer, this villain who thwarted his revenge. Copper bubbled up in his throat, coating his molars. He saw his mother from the backseat of their car, bathed in sunlight, holding her pencil like a microphone and singing with her eyes closed, rolling her hips. His father grinned under coke bottle sunglasses, tapping his thumb on the steering wheel. His mother reached the pencil microphone towards him. The blood flowed freely from his mouth now and he couldn’t breathe.

“What the fuck, Frank?” Fran wiped blood from her cheek.

“What happened?” Frank let go off the pipe. It stayed buried in Barry’s chest. Barry moved his tongue, his fingers gripping at nothing, and breathed his last.

“Fearsome! Savior! Miracle!” Fungus dropped his warhammer and jumped around while Fran dragged Frank by the collar.

“We gotta get the fuck out of here now!”

“Fearsome!”

“Fungus, what do we do with the body?”

“Leave it to Fungus, yes. We have ways down here.”

Frank looked at him one last time, “Poor Barry.” He was just a kid, no older than they were.

Fran dragged Frank down the tunnel and threw him in the pushcart. They rode in silence, down the tunnel, past the secret room, until they hit the ladder to the hatch, and the shed above. Frank was useless. Fran had to fireman carry him up the ladder and set him down in a pile of leaves. She rifled through his pockets and pulled out his phone.

“What did I do?” Frank’s voice croaked out from a place deeper than ever before.

“You saved the songbird of America. Shut up. Hello? Yes, I’d like to report a strange man in the train, yeah, Purple Line, Linden stop. Looked like he had a bomb or something, went into a tunnel behind the tracks. No.” Fran hung up and smashed the phone against a rock.

“Fran.”

“Frank.”

“What about Fungus?”

“He knows the deal. We’re done here. Come on, you can finally show me how to make that Old Fashioned you’re so proud of.”

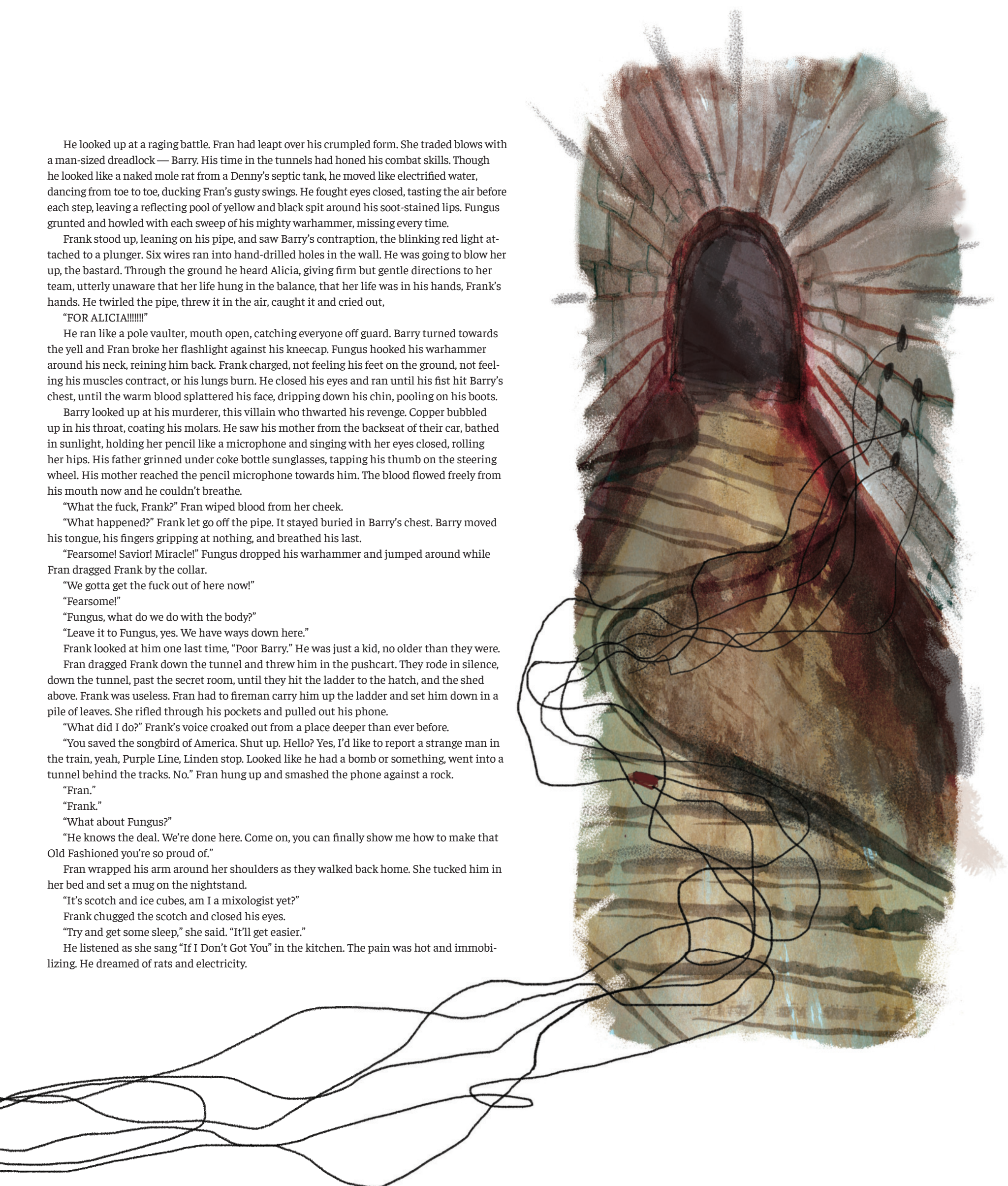
Fran wrapped his arm around her shoulders as they walked back home. She tucked him in her bed and set a mug on the nightstand.

“It’s scotch and ice cubes, am I a mixologist yet?”

Frank chugged the scotch and closed his eyes.

“Try and get some sleep,” she said. “It’ll get easier.”

He listened as she sang “If I Don’t Got You” in the kitchen. The pain was hot and immobilizing. He dreamed of rats and electricity.



This is Jesse Stein’s (MFAW 2020) first published work since the third grade, where he definitely didn’t peak.

The Future

by Laura De Sousa

I hope you'll be happy with her
I hope she'll be blonde
and laugh at your jokes
I hope she'll love dogs and Peroni and sing along to your
songs in her car
I hope she'll be pretty with a soft nose and sparkling eyes
I hope she'll be the girl that everyone wants
but only you can have
and she'll work a 9-to-5 and be content with the one bedroom
you'll share
I hope you'll get married and start the family you've always
wanted

and maybe I'll run into you at a bar,
years from now
and your rings will catch the light.
you'll introduce me to her and
she'll tell me how nice it is to finally get to go out
since you've been working and she's been keeping up with
the kids.
I think I'll be happy for you then.
When you look at her the way you used to look at me.

I think I'll be really happy.

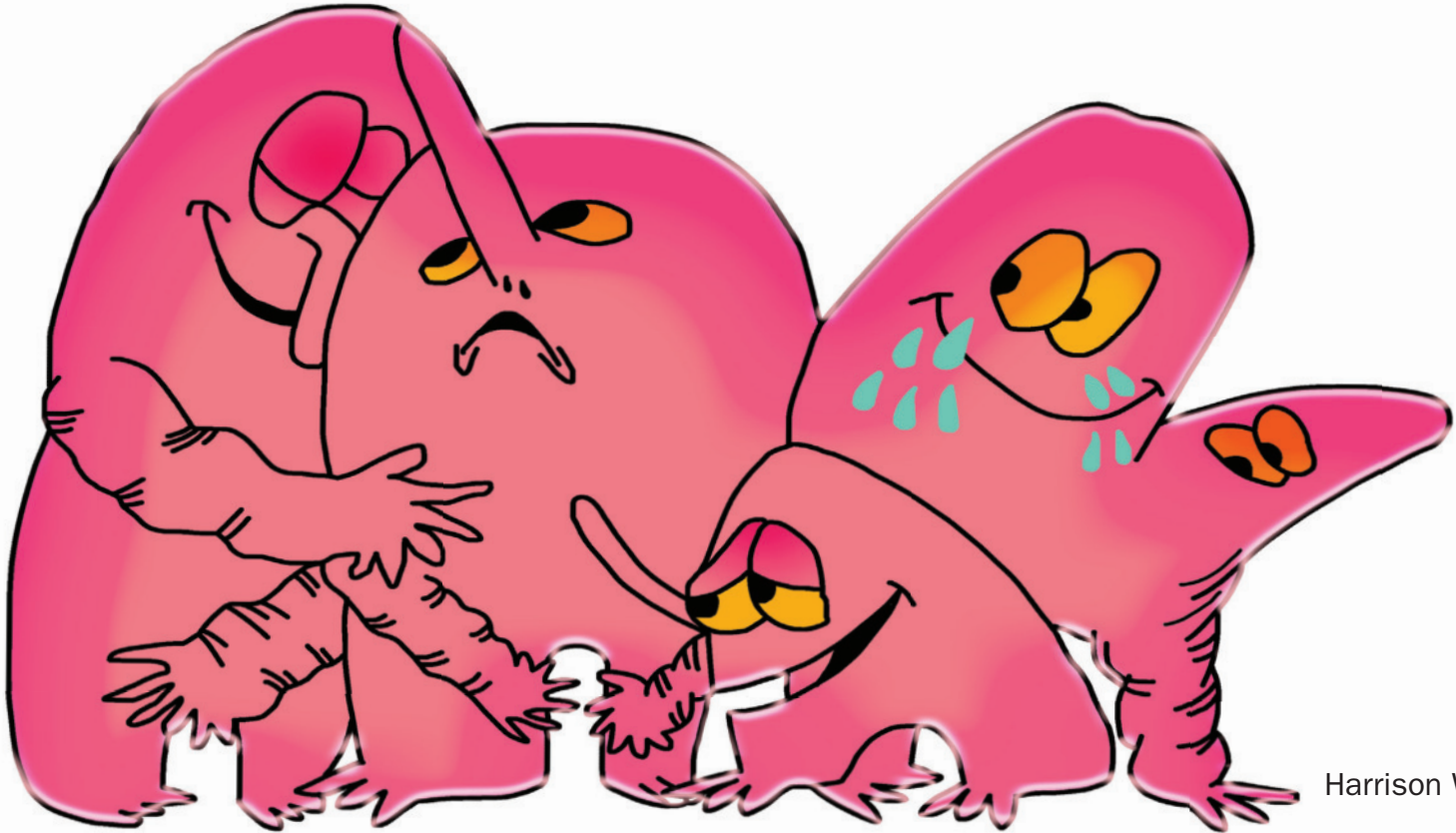




Zifei Xia

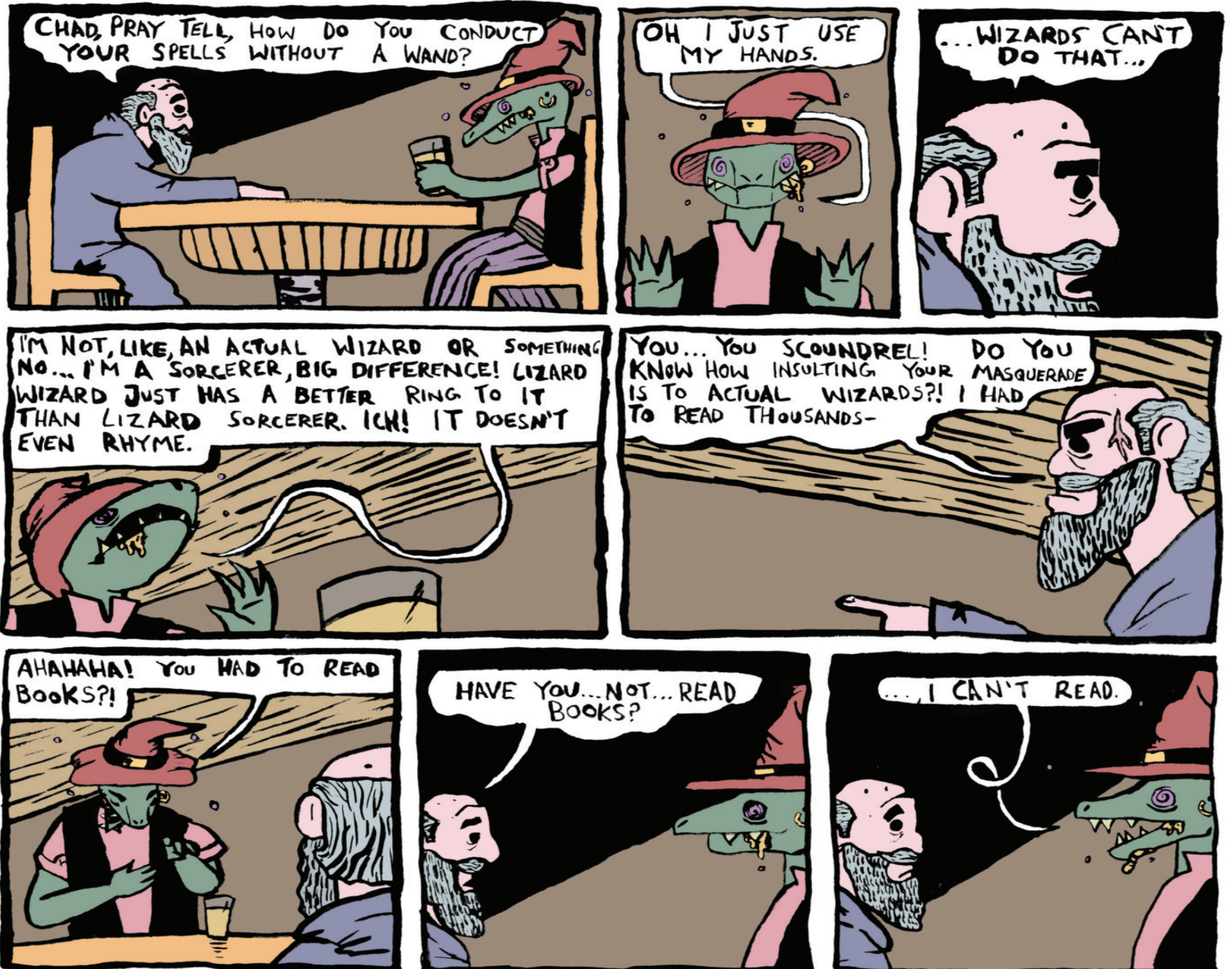


SELF PORTRAIT



Harrison Wyrick

CHAD THE LIZARD WIZARD



Finn Walker

DENTURES IN THE SINK

SOHA DIAZ





COLD BOY

Bridget Bilbo



Follow Eric J Garcia at El Machete Illustrated @instagram or friend Eric J Garcia on facebook.

Amwww
YEAH
BUOY!



Art and Technology Studies * 50th Anniversary Programmed Events:



ats@50

Art and Technology Studies
1969-2019

24 hr Art Hackathon

April 6, 2019 (Saturday) 8PM - April 7, 2019 (Sunday) 10PM
MacLean Building, 112 S. Michigan Ave., Ballroom

Coordinators Doug Rosman and Mara Iskander
Registration and website <http://hacksaic.art>

Space Art Symposium

April 11, 2019 (Thursday) - 4:15-5:30PM
Sharp, 37 S. Wabash Ave., The LeRoy Neiman Center

Panel Speakers Annick Bureau, Art Critic/Director of Leonardo OLATS
Eduardo Kac, Professor and Chair of Art and Technology Studies
Xin Liu, Arts Curator for the Space Exploration Initiative at MIT
Moderator Mark SubbaRao, Dir Space Vis Lab, Adler Planetarium

ATS FEST: A Celebration of 50 years of Experimentation

April 12, 2019 (Friday) - 4:30-8:00PM
MacLean Building 112 S. Michigan Ave.,
ATS facilities on the 4th floor and basement
Food and drinks will be served

- **Wearable performances and real-time interactive events**
Organized and curated by Lee Blalock
Location 4th Floor | 4:30-8PM
- **Opening reception to "Future Conditions"**
Curators Duncan Bass and Madison Young
Location ATS Flex Space, Rm 400 | April 12 - May 4, 2019
- **Learn to bend hot glass in 20 min**
Host ATS faculty Greg Mowery
Location Basement, Light Lab, Rm B1-16 | 5:30-7PM
- **Learn to solder in 15 min, build a *Day of the Geek* badge**
Hosts ATS faculty Ziv Cohen and Jenna Boyles
Location Basement, Kinetics Lab, Rm B0-07 | 5:30-7PM
- **Experiment with Olfactory Art in 20 min**
Host ATS faculty Tedd Neenan
Location Basement, Bio Art Lab, Rm B1-19 | 5:30-7PM

Artist Talk: Tamiko Thiel

April 30, 2019 (Tuesday) - 4:30-5:30PM
MacLean Building, 112 S. Michigan Ave., ATS Black box Rm 402

Olfactory Art Exhibition

May 10, 2019 - June 11, 2019
Opening Reception May 10, 2019. 4:30-5:30PM
MacLean Building, 112 S. Michigan Ave., ATS Flex Space, Rm 400

Ars Electronica 2019

Sept 5 - Sept 9 2019
ATS Graduate Exhibition at Ars Electronica 2019, Linz, Austria
Curator Duncan Bass

ats@50

ats@50: Art and Technology Studies 1969-2019
An 80-page publication interweaving personal, historical, and scholarly accounts of the department, faculty, and alumni.
To receive a copy of *ats@50* please write directly to Anna Yu: ayu@saic.edu

Previous Events

ATS Graduate Exhibition at Ars Electronica 2018
Sept 6 - Sept 10, 2018
Curator Duncan Bass

"Natural Language"
Jan 3, 2019

Organizer Judd Morrissey
An evening of readings and performances of electronic writing & poetic media, co-sponsored by the Electronic Literature Organization and Art and Technology Studies

Winter Lumen II Light Exhibition
Dec 14, 2018 - Feb 17, 2019
Curators Greg Mowery and Kacie Lees

Photo of Lee Blalock's *Solenoid mask instr/augment* (2018), by Sophia Barr Hayne

Branislav Jankić

Branislav Jankić (MFA FVNMA 2019) is a Yugoslavian multidisciplinary artist who works in photography, film, sculpture, and performance. In his work, he draws on childhood memories, cultural traditions, tales, and rituals, along with studies in philosophy and psychology. He looks to use his personal experiences and immediate environment to create artworks that speak to his audience in a wider context. SAIC Editor Dustin Lowman recently sat down with him to discuss the motivations behind his adventurous, provocative work.

Dustin Lowman: Going through your work, I noticed this tendency to push outside of normal life, into grotesquerie. In “The Ascent of Kevin,” you smeared feces on a pair of white shoes, and in “Jesen,” there was masturbation, murder, and a character licking jam off a wall. Where does that come from?

Branislav Jankić: I was taken from Yugoslavia, my native land, because of the war. I found myself in Germany, travelled to Italy, and then came to New York. For “Jesen,” I was thinking about the way the body operates under circumstances like war and oppression. It comes out of trying to think of my childhood, where I come from, and who I am. For “The Ascent of Kevin,” it was more, “What is a fetish? How does someone deviate from what we consider normal?” It fascinates me. How are humans capable of altering something in the brain?

DL: What was it like growing up in a war zone?

BJ: There would be battles. You never knew what was going to happen tomorrow. Everyone had a gun. Even in

celebrations, people would shoot, and you wouldn’t know if it was war or not. But at the time, I didn’t really have anything to compare it with. Later on, then you realize, “Oh, there is something slightly off.” Sleep tics, sleep-walking, where does this come from? You can see that it comes from being extremely afraid in the night, not knowing what will happen tomorrow, not knowing where your father is, being alone. That’s terrifying. My mother was living in Germany during that time.

DL: How did you develop a relationship with your mother?

BJ: Before the war she tried to visit once or twice a year. But then once the war came, the country closed. So there was no communication between us. She managed to come in 1995, and with fake passports, literally kidnapped us from our father. She said something like, “I’ll take them for ice cream,” and took us out.

DJ: So your father didn’t know.

BJ: No. It was her idea that whatever is happening here is not ending well. And she was right. It didn’t end well. You know, I see myself as a Yugoslav, my mother had a fake

Yugoslavian passport, and she taped our pictures in it. And we used that to escape through Germany. I remember that statement, “I’m a Yugoslav,” would mean you don’t belong to any of the groups, and they don’t know what to do with you. So it saved your life, because you wouldn’t be drafted.

DL: What was it like to make a film about your mother when she was in such failing health?

BJ: The idea was to be as close as possible to something that normally you would want to turn away from. It was extremely brutal for me personally. There were some times when I went out and puked, and was like, “That’s it, I can’t do it. I don’t want to do it.” I worked with a great person, a great friend and cinematographer from New York. At those moments, he would say, “Okay, get your shit together. Whatever it is personally hurts now, but this is what we are here for.” He did this several times — “Hey, I know it’s hard, but if you walk away, that’s it. This story will never be told. So get it together.” It was like using the camera as a shield, being behind it, squeezing everything internal that you have, and releasing it afterwards, versus breaking apart in the moment.



For “Ognjena Marija (St. Mary of Fire),” Jankić filmed his mother telling her life’s story in the final two weeks of her life. Image courtesy of the artist.

