

The cover features a clay sculpture of a fashion designer with spiky black hair, a white tank top, and a yellow measuring tape, working at a sewing machine. Two models are in the background: one in a long red dress and another in a black dress. The background is a light blue wall with the text 'SAIC FASHION 2010'.

f

A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART, CULTURE AND POLITICS

MAY 2010

NEWSMAGAZINE

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

SAIC
FASHION
2010

Blood, sweat & Stitches

Sneak peek at fashion
department as show nears

Crisis of Criticism Continues

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THE ARTIST'S STUDIO AS HISTORY.

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Kerry James Marshall. *Untitled (Painter)* (detail), 2009. Acrylic on polyvinyl chloride. 44 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 43 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (113.4 × 109.5 × 9.8 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, gift of Katherine S. Schamberg by exchange.
Photo © Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Photo by Nathan Keay. © 2009 Kerry James Marshall

May

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(The Duke)

Riding off into the sunset

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The tulips are in the median of Michigan Avenue again. This can only mean one thing: The Spring semester is winding down.

Now that President Wellington “Duke” Reiter resigned in April (check fnewsmagazine.com for an exclusive interview), and the school is searching for a new president, dean of faculty, and provost, students returning to school in the fall may bear witness to many changes.

F will continue to keep you updated about what these changes are, and how they will impact your experience at SAIC. For this month’s “F News Question,” we asked you for feedback about what can be done to improve the school. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

In light of this, we are producing our first-ever “FOCUS: SAIC MOVING FORWARD” special issue, featuring articles and interviews designed to explore different aspects of the School and to continue discussing the changes that students want to make. For instance, why don’t we have school-wide exercise facilities, or a student meal plan? How does

the lack of diversity within the school administration, faculty, and student body impact the many aspects of SAIC? You can find these discussions and more within the supplement, available on in-school F newsstands beginning May 7.

We continue to work diligently to see that F offers students the forum to speak their minds. The objective is always to help enrich your experiences at SAIC, whether it is soliciting comments from you about pertinent events and issues; profiling student artwork; offering in-depth coverage of the School’s various departments; or conducting interviews with established artists who are based in Chicago and throughout the world.

You can help us fulfill these goals. Our staff will be growing over the summer — students who would like to become involved with our award-winning publication, e-mail editors@fnewsmagazine.com.

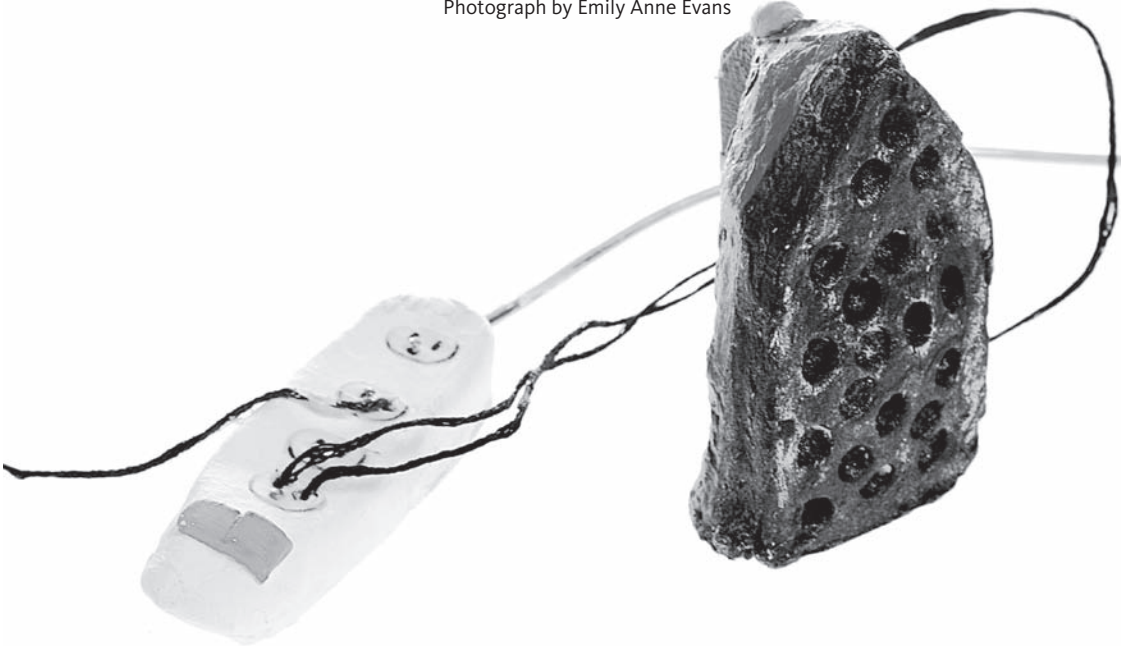
Enjoy the sunshine (while it lasts),

Emily and Brandon

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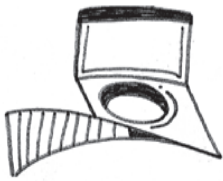
Building upon the SAIC Experience

F Newsmagazine asked SAIC students, faculty and staff, “What changes and/or improvements would you like to see at SAIC? The administration has many plans and projects already in progress; however, as a sounding board for the SAIC community, F is compiling ideas directly from you — the people who will be most affected by the decisions made.”

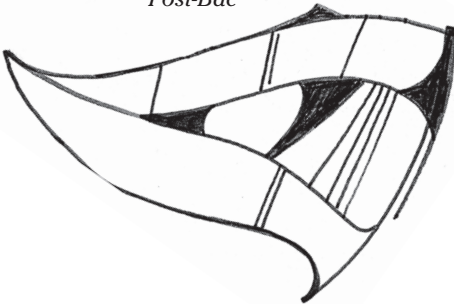
Here, we present some of the responses we received. We will be sharing all with the administration; some may result in change, some may not. Regardless, we want your voices to be heard. We encourage comments on fnewsmagazine.com, or you may continue sending your responses to editors@fnewsmagazine.com.

In our supplement on changes at SAIC (to be on in-school news stands May 7) we will be publishing responses on departmental improvements directly from the department chairs themselves, along with in-depth articles and an exclusive interview with outgoing President Wellington “Duke” Reiter.

I believe our school lacks school pride/spirit.
I think it's time people started wearing school hoodies, sweatpants, key chains, stickers, etc. I mean we've got great artists here. Let them design things. Goodies for students, by students.
We even have a school mascot (Arty the Lion) and school colors (Gold and Teal) that nobody really knows about. So why aren't we promoting these things? Does it have something to do with us not having a sports program here?
Kazuki Sebastian Guzman Anno
Sculpture
3rd Year Undergrad



SAIC prides itself on making students the best artists they can be; but, that is a paradox if my chief preoccupation coming out of school will be “where in the world can I find the \$600 a month to pay back my student loans?”
SAIC also prides itself on valuing diversity, but how diverse can a school be when the only people that can attend come from a highly privileged background?
[I think] the way the school functions needs to be re-evaluated if its core values are to be fulfilled. What about making programs smaller and introducing tuition waivers for people that are the first to go to college in their families? What about childcare facilities or affordable family housing? What about offering different models to “make it” as an artist besides competing against one another for gallery representation and grant money?
Anonymous
Painting and Drawing
Post-Bac



I think space is a major issue for students. It seems rather odd that the advanced painting students have larger studios than the advanced sculpture students. Artists need studios to work and space to store work in progress. This basically doesn't exist so people don't explore scale the way a student should.
Most importantly, the base space is great but it is virtually impossible to get access to it (after faculty and grads have their priority sign up). There has to be some kind of space for installation that is accessible for undergrads. One or two smaller sites would make a big difference. That's all I can think of now that Duke is gone.
S.O.B. (Studios Over Branding)
Sculpture
3rd year Undergrad



Having a secure place to store bikes in the Sharp Building.
Robert T. Rasmussen
Telecommunications Technician
The Art Institute of Chicago
Sometimes simple changes can make huge differences. I'd love to see coat hooks in classrooms, clocks in public areas, and lots and lots more storage available.
Jill Frederickson
Interdisciplinary
2nd Year Undergrad



[I would like to see] a stronger framework for better communication internally between the departments and the student body.
[Also,] a stronger partnership between the museum and the school, allowing for more cross programming. Like SAIC-only events at the museum and a more developed internship program specifically between the museum and the school.
MaryLou Ibadlit
Arts Administration and Policy
1st Year Grad

The most basic thing that the student population at SAIC needs [is] space. Speaking on behalf of many students who have voiced the same opinion, we are severely lacking in both studio and classroom space.
In many cases, classrooms are packed beyond limits, where people are forced to sit on the floor or take notes on their laps because there are not enough desks. As far as studios go, space is at a minimum as well.
In my experience in the fiber and sculpture departments, there is hardly enough space to conduct a class because there is not enough physical space to allow all the students to be working at once. Whether this [is] because the room is not big enough to accommodate the larger class size, or because the room is used as storage for all five weekly classes it holds, I find it simply unacceptable that SAIC allows students to experience such conditions.
With talk about ways to raise our retention rate, I think it's important to look at the student experience and consider that for the amount of money students pay to go to SAIC every year, some might not find it worthwhile to stay at a school that doesn't even have enough room for them to work. That, in fact, this lack of space might legitimately be hurting our learning experience and the development of our work.
Emily Kozik
Fiber and Material Studies
3nd Year Undergrad



I would like to see a much larger computer lab, especially more 11x17 scanners!
Trinnace “Nace” V. Sayles
Painting and Drawing
BFA 2010



I began in the Painting and Drawing Department, but moved quickly to Animation and Photography. Why? Because my teachers did not support me in my painting endeavors. Nor did they teach me any technical skills.

I am not an artist yet, I am training to become an artist. That is why I am at SAIC. The only teachers I learned any technical skills from in my past three years of being at SAIC are Richard Deutsch and, in hand-drawn animation, Matthew Marsden and Chris Sullivan. This is a problem.

Conceptual thinking is helpful when instructors are supportive of you and your ideas — it is not fun when an instructor wants to see you make their project. [In my opinion] Ann Chen and Freedom Lialios are wonderful at supporting your ideas, no matter what they are. They want to help you convey the message you're trying to convey effectively.

Also, much of my work is based on my emotions while making the work. The pieces themselves are products of my desire to feel good while making work. Having emotional releases such as making artwork is vital to my survival in a cramped city such as this. It is my way of letting go, but for most teachers, this is not important. This is hard for me.

I am not saying that they are wrong. [Just that] the well-being of students should be a priority.

I've also dealt with lots of teachers picking favorites, and just helping those students intensely. In some cases it has been me, and I have been incredibly grateful. However, when it is not me, I get the short end of everything. Insight is lacking when talking about my work and the teacher has little interest in anyone other than his or her favorites.

Mark McWilliams
Film, Video and New Media
(Animation); Photography
3rd Year Undergrad



I would really like to have a longer spring break. I think we are all students that work very hard and deserve more than four days — including the weekend — off. A significant break (one week) would be really nice, and much appreciated. Not to mention less slave-driver-esque.

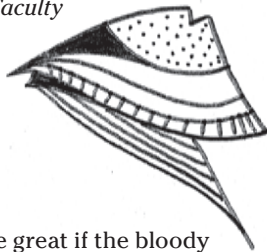
Chris Pinter
Visual Communications
1st Year Undergrad

One simple thing, create a 3D view of the campus, that has the different departments and offices color-coded with a key. So that, when we need to go to a certain office or location, we can simply access the 3D model, spin it around, click on the key that denotes the department, or class location and it is highlighted.

This is a very simple task that can [probably] be done through the AIADO Department to create the 3D map; the CRIT people to set up a web page for the map (or who ever does that here); and the VISCOM people, or others, can organize it. How great would it be to see the actual campus, with all the various buildings, color-coded in a 3D map?

A progressive art school located in a metropolis area should have this. It is not complicated to achieve and can be done internally. Not only can this help new students and faculty, but it can also act as a selling point that demonstrates some unity within the school between the various art disciplines — even though it may seem like segregated elements it can be displayed as a united group in this urban setting.

Paul Dean
Architecture,
Interior Architecture and
Designed Objects
Part-time Faculty



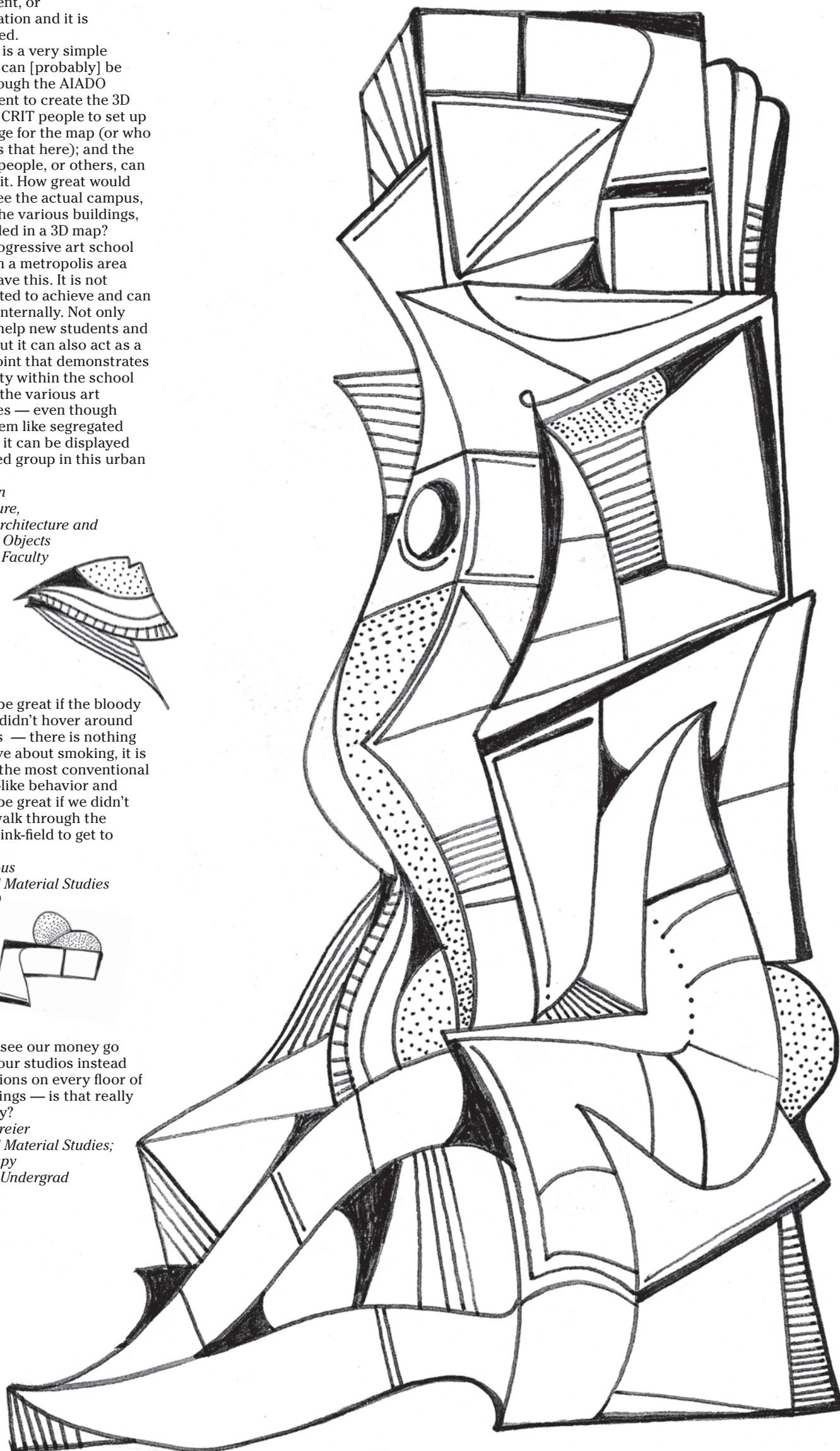
It would be great if the bloody smokers didn't hover around the doors — there is nothing subversive about smoking, it is possibly the most conventional lemming-like behavior and it would be great if we didn't have to walk through the cancer stink-field to get to class!!!!

Anonymous
Fiber and Material Studies
MFA 2010



I want to see our money go towards our studios instead of televisions on every floor of the buildings — is that really necessary?

Abigail Dreier
Fiber and Material Studies;
Art Therapy
2nd Year Undergrad



Illustrations by Colin Grimm



Deconstruction

An overview of SAIC's Fashion Department

**PHOTOS AND TEXT
BY JENNIFER MOSIER**

Chicago-based designers have made powerful impressions on the fashion world – and as a result of that, the capital of the Midwest has made its mark as a fashion training ground.

SAIC's Fashion Design Department produces designers and collections of noteworthy caliber, benefitting from the School's artistic philosophy of allowing inspiration from other departments to influence the designers' concepts.

SAIC embraces a conceptual approach to fashion, different from fashion schools that center their curriculum on the business aspects of the industry, like fashion marketing. Instead, there is a strong focus on the garment and its relationship to the body.

Students engage in deep explorations of the intellectual and creative facets of the fashion industry. Undergraduate and graduate programs focus on building relationships between art and fashion within current design practices.

Fashion students are attracted to SAIC for those very reasons. "I chose SAIC because it was close to home but more because of the prestige and connection to the Art Institute of Chicago," remarked Atalie Gagnet, sophomore fashion student. "I'm personally allowed to explore my own ideas and designs that emphasize my individual originality."

Once accepted, it's a three-year sequence of sleepless nights spent in a close marriage with the department's sewing machines.

The fashion department has six full-time faculty (two of whom are full-time visiting

artists), 17 part-time teachers and staff members who oversee the department.

The core classes of the curriculum begin in the fall with Fashion and Construction Design. Amy Dane-Falkowski, the department's Administrative Director, compares the curriculum to that of a design school in Europe. "We give students a full look at becoming a fashion designer," she says. Students learn technical basics and are encouraged to think on a larger scale when it comes to enhancing their designs.

In addition to coursework, students can take advantage of a variety of resources. For instance, new additions to the department are the fashion labs, which are available to all students. They are intensive training grounds, tailored for students to enhance skills such as design construction or fashion illustration.

On the seventh floor of the Sullivan Building, just across the hall from Dane-Falkowski's office, is the Fashion Resource Center, which holds an extensive collection of designer and couture garments, fashion-related books, archived runway shows and magazines.

As instructor and Assistant Director of the Fashion Resource Center, Caroline Bellios says, "This is not a museum. The resource center is a hands-on experience where we don't have to wear white gloves." Students are allowed to enter the giant walk-in closet and study the construction and design of garments as well as the hat and shoe collection, beginning in the 1960s and including a few 19th

century specialty pieces.

In addition, the fashion department's budget also goes toward equipment maintenance, instructional supplies, models on which to test garments, and small equipment purchases.

An even more valuable resource for students is the fact that the SAIC fashion department faculty and alumni are well connected to the fashion world, and they work with students throughout the program to find internships and jobs within the fashion industry.

With an alumni list boasting such notable designers as Cynthia Row, Maria Pinto, Matthew Ames and Gary Graham, it's clear that the fashion department is producing designers meant to lead the industry, not just exist within it.

Each spring, the department hosts its annual FASHION show. While traditionally a select group of graduating seniors present their work at this show, May 2010 marks the inaugural graduation of MFA students from the Master of Design in Fashion, Body and Garment program, who will also be participating. Competition to participate in the show is fierce and students devote long, arduous hours in preparation for the event.

Wearing the students' designs, professional models will walk the catwalk in the Modern Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago – a seminal use of the space for both the museum and the designers. For the graduating students, the show represents the culmination of a rigorous, conceptually challenging program, preparing them for the cutthroat world of fashion and design.





“This is not a museum, The resource center is a hands on experience where we don’t have to wear white gloves.”

—Caroline Bellios
Fashion Resource Center, Assistant Director





From Dance to Fashion

A conversation with SAIC Fashion Design faculty member Katrin Schnabl



Photo by Thorsten Jansen. Courtesy of Katrin Schnabl

“In fashion, things become fashion when people engage them in their lives. Just because I make things doesn’t mean they’re fashion just yet.”

—Katrin Schnabl



Photo by James Prinz. Courtesy of Katrin Schnabl

INTERVIEW BY AMANDA ALDINGER

AMANDA ALDINGER: You just recently costume designed DanceWorks Chicago’s performance of “The One Hundreds,” choreographed by Twyla Tharp. What was that process like?

KATRIN SCHNABL: This particular Twyla Tharp piece has a conceptual underpinning that allows for quite some freedom in terms of how it’s been interpreted and how it’s been dressed or clothed. There’s a pedestrian feel to it, so I said that we could use ready-to-wear from my collection.

AA: So they’re all your designs?

KS: Technically, I didn’t design the costumes, because [the garments] had already been designed. “The One Hundreds” is a series of 100 different phrases or sequences that the dancers learn, and then put together. In a similar way, the pieces that I put out there have certain elements that I reconfigure, and continue to reconfigure on the dancer’s bodies. So conceptually, I’ve done something very similar to what is inherent to the piece.

AA: You’ve done a lot of costuming for modern dance, but you’re also a fashion designer. How do those two processes differ?

KS: It’s interesting the way that dance shapes how I design. My mind thinks much more on a body that moves. Working with dance and contemporary dance is really a lot about what I don’t do — what I strip away — creating pieces that have a contemporary feel that speak of emotions and sensations similar to what the choreographer has in mind. It’s really about these dancers communicating their ideas, not about them wearing my clothing. And that’s the key difference. Fashion is very much this idea that you look at an individual at a time. It taught me a very interesting sense of

distilling ideas and really getting to the bottom of something.

AA: What is that building process like?

KS: I do just enough so when a person, a dancer, a fashion-conscious individual wears my clothes, they kind of recreate themselves in a way, having a heightened sense of themselves in that moment. Just a little bit of a modern moment. That’s what I’m hoping to do with everything that I do.

AA: When you speak of a “contemporary feeling,” what do you mean when you say “contemporary?”

KS: I think it’s that we’re still shaping our time — we’re still not sure what the shape of our time is. In hindsight it’s always clear to identify — it’s in hindsight that you can even see when it started. I don’t think you can make a trend, but I think you can spot a trend. In fashion, things become fashion when people engage them in their lives. Just because I make things doesn’t mean they’re fashion just yet. There’s a lot of anxiety right now about things - economically, ecologically. I think that an ecological anxiety is a sign of our time.

AA: Does that ecological anxiety influence your designs at all?

KS: That’s something that I’m tapping into with a sense of trepidation and determination and helplessness. Am I trying to create commercially viable solutions to this problem? No, not yet. It’s more trying to come up with a response. And by that I mean, a vocabulary.

AA: What kind of a vocabulary?

KS: I’m very interested in shape, in pattern. In this idea that a flat form becomes a fluid form on the body. And that this fluid form can be recorded as a flat form.

Every little angle, every little curve, every little line matters, because it asks the fabric to fall a different way, and it asks the material to do a certain motion.

AA: When did you start developing an interest in clothing? It’s obvious that you think about clothing. ...

KS: All the time!

AA: When did that start?

KS: Very early. Very early.

AA: What spurred your interest?

KS: That’s a good question. ... I don’t know. I’ve always investigated how to make things, even when I was very little. When everyone had Barbie dolls, I would go to the store, look at the packaging and then recreate it at home. I had a very gangly body when I was young — I was very skinny and very tall, and nothing fit me. So I would start to come up with ways of making things fit. My mom complained that I was terrible to go shopping with because I always had an opinion on things — that they could be good if only I could “do this.”

AA: You grew up in Germany, right? And then you wanted to explore dance in New York, and that’s what brought you to America?

KS: Right. It’s kind of like your pilgrimage to mecca. I was really interested in modern dance, and I wanted to go to New York for a year and then bring back those experiences. Then one became two, and two became four, and four became eight, and I’m still here.

AA: Do you like it here?

KS: I do. I’ve spent basically my adult life in America, and I’m American now. I really feel that ... in hindsight, things always make sense. I don’t know if it would have

been the same, staying in Germany. It felt very natural, the way that everything kind of progressed. And yet it wasn’t premeditated — I wasn’t saying “I’m going to be a fashion designer,” it was much more that I really, really loved live performance. I’m very philosophically engaged in everything I do — it’s a very personal thing, but it’s something that I’m very eager to share.

AA: What is it like to have these highly developed theories behind your conceptual pieces, and then to know that not all of that thought and energy you’ve put into your garment construction will be communicated to your general audience?

KS: I think that’s a question that I haven’t really been able to fully address. Part of it is that there are a number of things going on. For one thing, it’s only lately that fashion has been looked at as a cultural contributor, versus a commercial steam engine. So the way fashion has been written about has been very belittling. Meaning, it has to be cute, it has to be sexy, it has to be very quickly palatable to be even talked about. And it has to be trend-driven.

AA: As a conceptual designer, how does that affect you?

KS: For one thing, I don’t really write so much about [my garments] and I don’t really spend much time on the conceptual side of it, simply because I know it would be useless. I can still make the clothes and tone down my discussion — focus on the color palate and the detail. I don’t think I consciously try to make people think in a certain way. How often does one look at a painting ... and you don’t know what that artist was thinking, but you respond to it in a very visceral way — I’m very interested in that. I feel that the pieces have to stand by themselves. I’m not offended if you shorten the pants I made, I’m not offended if you take the sleeves off. That’s what you should do if you want to really own them, to give them a life of their own.

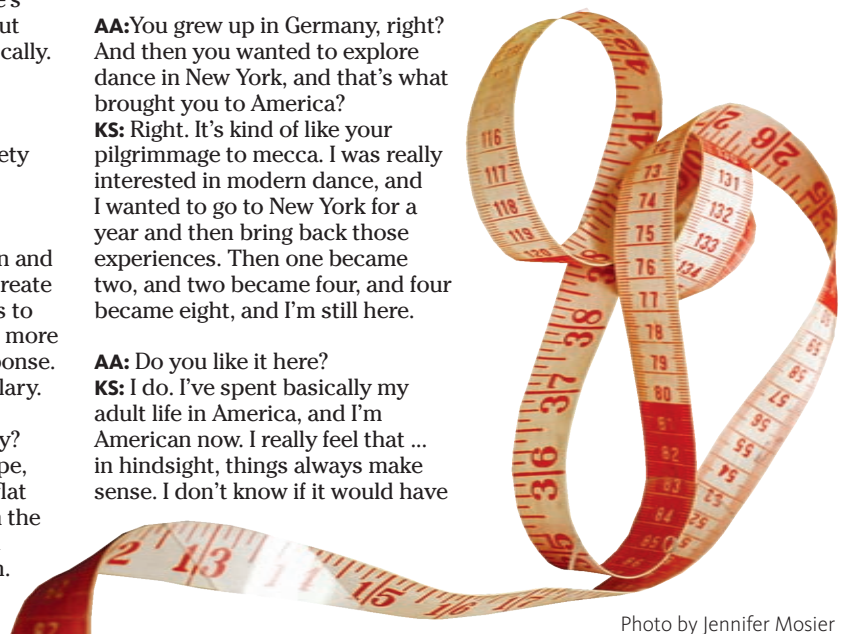


Photo by Jennifer Mosier



Walking Art

SAIC's graduating seniors prepare to present their final collections

BY BRITANY ROBINSON

Art marries fashion in SAIC's Department of Fashion Design, and the school's annual fashion show illustrates that — not only in terms of the show's locale, but also in the hoards of fashion and art aficionados who pay up to \$500 to see the avant-garde work of up-and-coming fashion designers, as well.

For graduating seniors, it is the culmination of four years of hard work and the ultimate satisfaction of completing a program founded on "survival of the fittest."

Grace Lee Eunhae and Tahlia Elinoff are both graduating this May. With less than a month until the big show, both girls sat down with F Newsmagazine in their studio to discuss their time at SAIC and their still-developing final collections.

Elinoff cites Dick Tracy comics and the exaggerated shapes of the 1940s as major influences on her work. Her completed looks include a billowy blouse with an enhanced, pouffy neckline and structured A-line skirt that sculpturally exaggerates the protrusion of a woman's hips. At home in her studio, her own outfit — a chic floral sundress and leggings — mirrors the femininity and simplicity of her designs.

On the other end of the spectrum, Eunhae has created a menswear collection that challenges the perception of men's fashion as "boring." The sleeves she struggles to assemble on her mannequin measure around four feet long and hang to the floor like tiered slinkies. This is just one example of her interest in unlikely shapes and exaggerated forms.

"I think it's funny when you take something that's so intimate and you blow it up into this big thing and it just becomes a joke," Eunhae said regarding the exposed boxers and sagging waistline of a pair of pants she paired with the slinky sleeves.

The fashion department's class of 2010 is a testament to the program's difficulty. Eunhae and Elinoff began their undergraduate studies with roughly 60 classmates, and only 14 graduating seniors have earned the honor of presenting their collections at FASHION 2010 — the rest have dropped out along the way.

Both Eunhae and Elinoff admit that it's been a difficult journey. Eunhae recalls an early critique with a particularly harsh teacher, in which she broke down in tears, overwhelmed by the criticism and the lack of sleep that students in the department frequently endure. "People don't understand how much work goes into the fashion department," remarks Elinoff. "Everything is just so time-consuming."

Despite the hours of work, Eunhae and Elinoff both appreciate the unique approach that SAIC and the city of Chicago take towards fashion. "It's a lot more conceptual," said Eunhae of SAIC's program, when

comparing it to other schools.

"You're free to express what you want in fashion, which you can't do in New York. New York is more confined by mainstream media," Elinoff agrees, admitting that Chicago lacks an impressive fashion "scene," but makes up for it with their "fashion as art" approach.

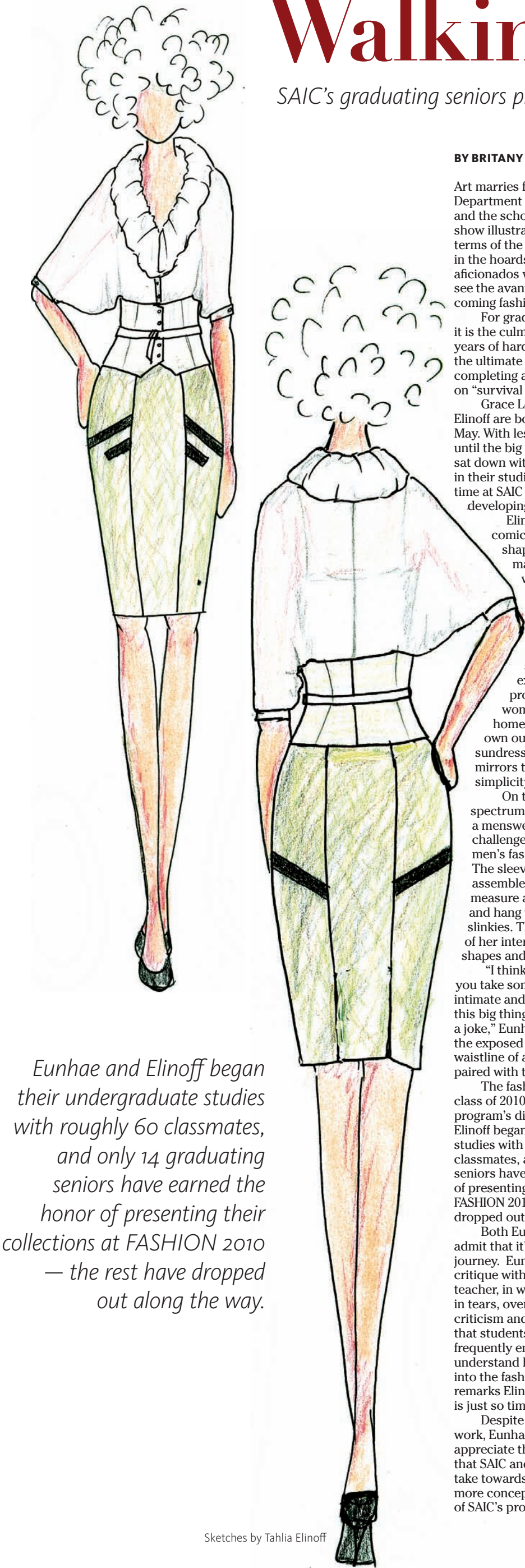
Nick Cave, an SAIC fashion professor, echoes the "fashion as art" philosophy in the fashion show's official press release: "The Art Institute of Chicago provides a vibrant cultural resource for our students, and through this extraordinary event we are proud to shine a spotlight on the many ways that SAIC students are also making significant artistic contributions to the fabric of the museum."

How do Eunhae and Elinoff feel about this spotlight? An understandable mix of elation and fear seems to motivate both graduating seniors to ensure that every last detail of their collection is perfectly completed. Elinoff can't wait to see her garments on the models when they walk the runway, and Eunhae is looking forward to seeing her parents in the audience.

When the lights go down and the music comes on, all of the hours of sketching, sewing and disheartening critiques will be well worth it. The fashion show allows graduating seniors to present themselves and their work as the future of fashion — to the school, the city, and the greater fashion community. It's their time to shine, and they'll do it in style.

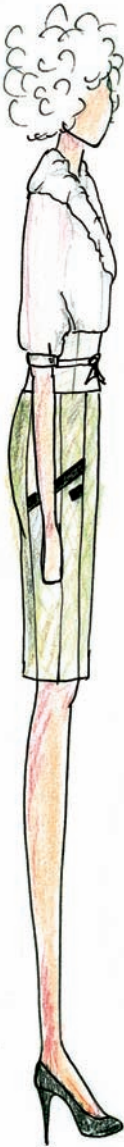


Sketch by Grace Lee



Eunhae and Elinoff began their undergraduate studies with roughly 60 classmates, and only 14 graduating seniors have earned the honor of presenting their collections at FASHION 2010 — the rest have dropped out along the way.

Sketches by Tahlia Elinoff



Ox-Bow

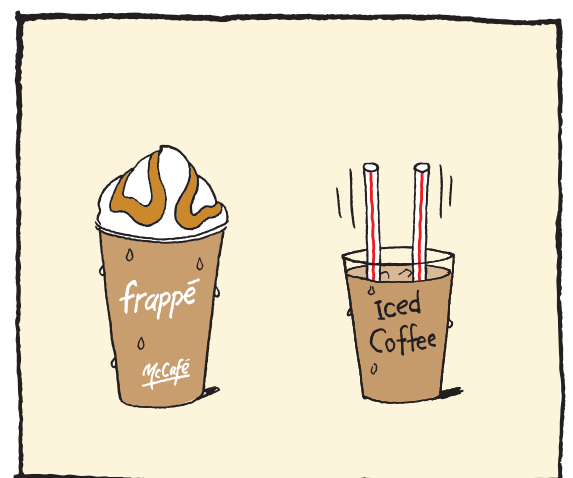
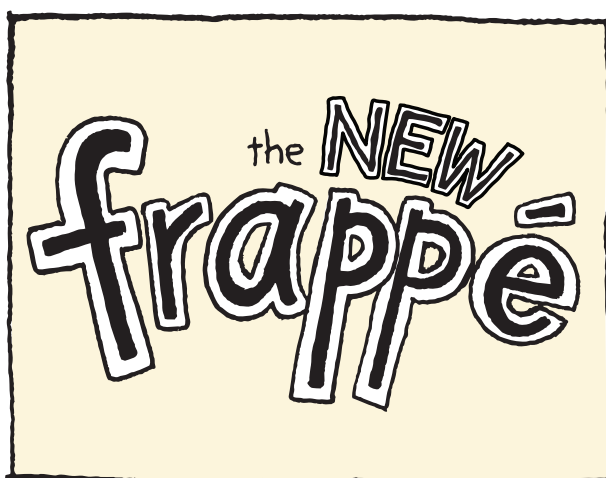
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ANDY SLATER

Sound Department, 3rd Year Undergrad
velcrolewis.com

"Being legally blind, I draw on my lack of vision to create audio spaces and environments that I can't see," Andy Slater said in a recent interview with F Newsmagazine.

Slater has recently returned to SAIC after a ten-year absence; he originally studied in the sound department at SAIC from 1995-2000.

In his time away from school Slater has been performing "all over the place" with different rock bands. Slater said that he has played "everywhere from gallery spaces to larger clubs."

Slater describes his band The Velcro Lewis Group as "psychedelic R&B ... that is rhythmic and heavy." For this project, Slater sings and plays his "Didley Bow," which is a self-made instrument made of wood with a single string. "I play it with a slide, finger-picks, violin bow, and a hammer to hit it." This summer The Velcro Lewis Group will be touring the East Coast, and releasing a full-length album titled "White Magick Summer."

From 1994-1997, Slater performed with The Sinewaves as a live band. However, all of the musicians he worked with previously have relocated, so he now composes and records as The Sinewaves by himself. Currently, he is piecing together a live ensemble that will perform shows in the fall.

For The Sinewaves, Slater plays analog

synthesizers and hacked electronics. He has modified numerous Casio samplers, toy instruments, and other electronic games and devices that have become technologically obsolete (such as a Texas Instruments Speak and Read device).

SAIC alum Frank Pollard has recently started collaborating on The Sinewaves project, and Slater is in the process of scoring and composing soundtracks for Pollard's video work.

After working with different rock bands over the years outside of SAIC, having artistic autonomy again is something Slater enjoys. "Because my goal with sound recording is to create something personal to me," Slater said, "it's only suiting that I work by myself."

This isn't to say that parts of the experience here haven't also been frustrating. "Being the only blind person in the school, faculty and students included, it's been a struggle," Slater said. "Having to be my own advocate and work on my own is basically the equivalent of taking another course. It's taken up more time than my homework."

You can catch The Velcro Lewis Group in Chicago May 10 at the Whistler, May 15 at Quenchers, and June 4 at Bottom Lounge. And, be sure to tune in to Slater's radio show "The Dad Show" every Tuesday from 12:30 p.m., to 3:00 p.m., on freeradiosaic.org.

Audiophiles

BY BRANDON KOSTERS

A monthly look at members of the SAIC community whose creative impulses propel them towards producing sound and imagery. If you or someone you care about is an audiophile, write to BrandonKosters@gmail.com to tell us about it.

KENDRA "CALL ME ON THE ALLOPHONE" CALHOUN

Sound Department, 2nd Year Undergrad
Free Radio SAIC, Station Manager
callmeontheallophone.com

BRANDON KOSTERS: What bands are you in?

KENDRA CALHOUN: Call Me on the Allophone; Names Divine; Manhattan Raid (with alum Jillian Musielak); RRRRAINBOW FAMADNESS CURANDERAS.

BK: Summarize your practice in two sentences.

KC: My practice is filthy and self-aware. And ecstatic.

BK: What instruments do you play? Have you built any instruments?

KC: I play guitar and sing and write songs. I am working on a tape guitar in my Instrument Construction class with Eric Leonardson. I have built a series of allophones, which I am constantly rebuilding.

BK: What do you mean by "allophone?"

KC: I mean variations of phonemes as in phonetics and how the same thing can be said in an infinite variety of ways. Also, I think allophone implies a universal communication device through sound. An "allophone" kind of sounds like an instrument, but it's not, it's just a variant of a phoneme, but it could be an instrument, and I mean, language and the infinite ways people communicate is instrumental and musical. You know, everything is the same.

BK: Which artists have informed your practice?

KC: Marge Calhoun, Neil Young, Erica Adams, and Damian Languell.

BK: List your five favorite albums, or the five albums you have been listening to the most lately.

KC: Neil Young, "On the Beach"; Neil Young, "Harvest"; Neil Young, "Trans"; Neil Young, "Neil Young"; Neil Young, "Dead Man Soundtrack."

BK: For you, what connects your music to your visual art? And, what is the difference between producing a piece of visual work and producing a sonic piece?

KC: I produce more sonic work than anything else because it's the most fun for me. All of my audio, visual, audio/visual, and literary work uses the same intuitive decision making process I've developed over time by studying various media and becoming aware of the sameness of everything. This understanding is reflected in the rhythm and clarity of my productions.

The major difference among the different types of work I produce is the time it takes to produce them. It takes me significantly longer to finish anything using words because my word-work is obsessed with intention. It is hard to select the most appropriate preposition for every sentence and then express 20 different ideas with a single concision that can be understood instantly. Typically my left, more non-conscious brain is most articulate, so I produce non-word works much faster.

BK: How has attending SAIC informed your practice?

KC: It has helped me develop a unique style — what ARTHI 1011 with Professor Daniel Quiles calls a "mark." The freedom to study a variety of media develops an understanding of everything's sameness and this has led to an ecstatic art-making experience. Thank you!

BK: Tell me about your experiences playing music prior to coming here?

KC: Before attending SAIC I thought my experience playing music was, and would be, something I could do that could be listened to. Now I don't know what playing music is or means.

BK: With the music, what is the ultimate goal for you?

KC: Potato Rock.

BK: And, are there places where you perform regularly?

KC: Yes, I like to do the open mic at Quenchers on Monday nights.



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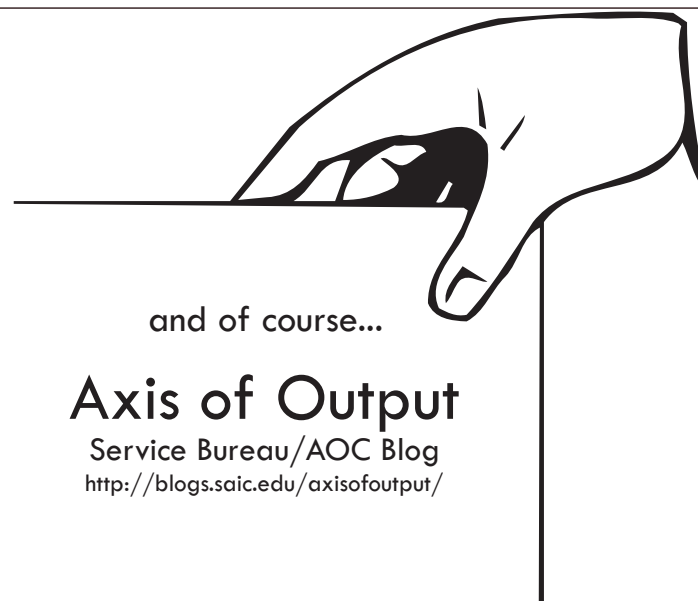
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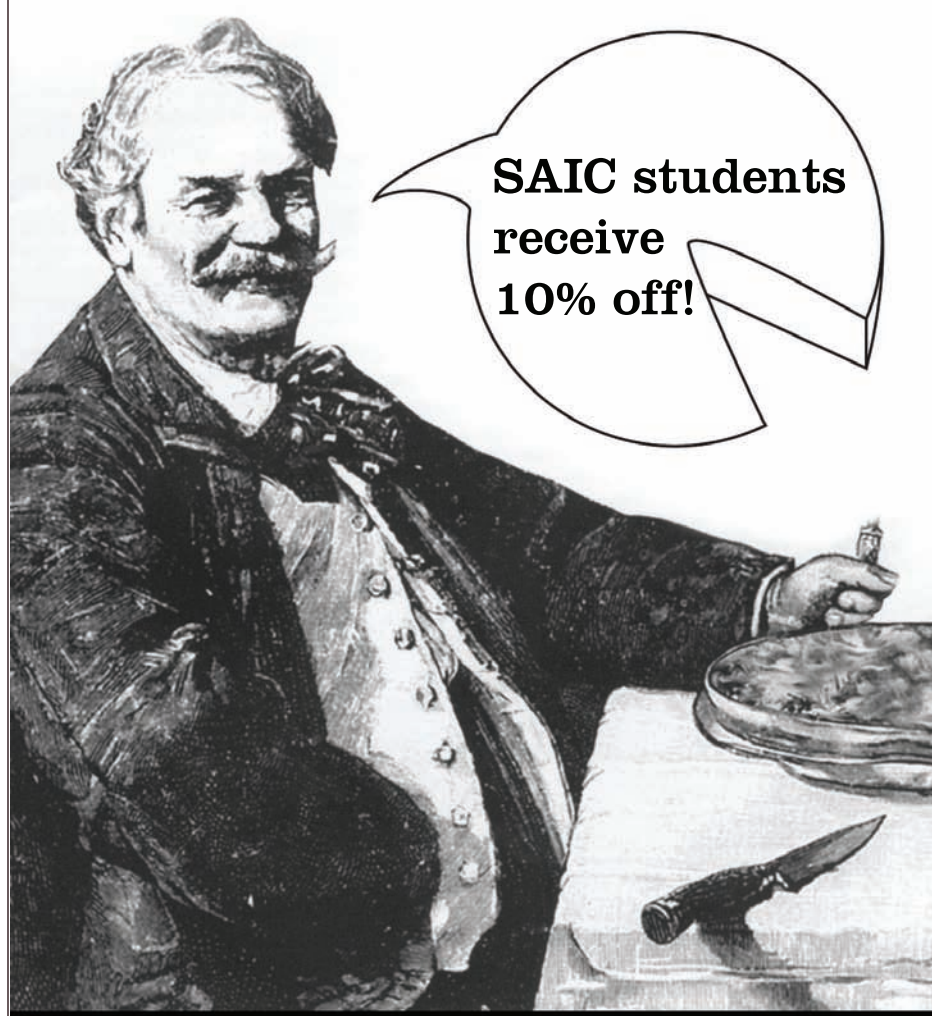
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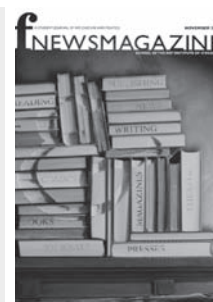
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Art that Unifies

A look at Humboldt Park's Rumble Arts Center

BY KATIE BATEMAN



Laboratory Dancers during their Sunday dance class at Rumble Arts Center, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.
Photos by Marie Socha

"1,100 inmates released from prison each year are relocated to Humboldt Park," said Brook Wolf, director of the Rumble Arts Center. "Those 1,100 people could be potential scholars with the tools and classes that [we] provide."

Wolf, an SAIC alum, is the director of the Humboldt Park-based organization which helps its participants to integrate creative tasks with important life skills through creating hope for a better life, using that hope to engage in a service program, and ultimately channeling those experiences into a job.

"We focus on the inner workings of a relationship between the mother/father and child, as well as bringing the community together through the range of classes that we offer," Wolf said.

Some of the classes include figure drawing (taught by Wolf), comic book and illustration, African drum and dance, Filipino and Indonesian martial arts, yoga, writing, and a hip-hop dance classes for kids and adults.

One of the dance classes called "Let Me See Yo Footwork!" is taught by "The FootworkKINGz (FWK)" who were on the popular television Show "America's Got Talent" and were a part of "Madonna's Sticky and Sweet" 2009 tour. In total, there are 23 teachers, all of them volunteers.

In addition to working with families, Rumble Arts also plans to offer classes to former prisoners. Wolf notes that because they have difficulty finding jobs once leaving prison, there is so much uncertainty "that makes them feel inadequate."

She hopes to "aid in helping these individuals to have hope and to feel that they

have somewhere to go."

"These programs at Rumble Arts do not focus on progress reports or a grading system, while other after school programs may," Wolf said. "Rumble Arts gives students the ability to have an outlet from a rigorous academic art system, [and] a taste is given to those who want to pursue that next step into a career."

The Rumble Arts Center also owns a gallery space located on the first floor of their two-story building, which they rent out to others for different events and shows, as well as hold their own cultural events.

With the rental income, the center is able to provide the supplies needed for established classes, as well as providing for the newer classes being established.

"The more we are able to rent the gallery, the more we are able to give back to the classes, it's kind of a cycle," Wolf said.

The Rumble Arts Center is also affiliated with the organization "Food Not Bombs." Every Saturday they provide hot meals, as well as fruits and vegetables, (provided by Whole Foods) for the public on the lawn of Humboldt Park.

This is another way of helping out the community during these hard financial times, by building opportunities for individuals to create and gain knowledge in spite of monetary hardships.

"It's hard to believe that we began to offer classes here only a little less than two years ago," Wolf said. "It's still very much a baby to me." The infrastructure of Rumble Arts began with a few classes and, though expanding, continues to maintain the same important goal it started with: unifying the community.

RUMBLE ARTS CENTER

3413 W North Ave
Chicago, IL 60647
(773) 278-4441
Website: www.rumblearts.com
Email: rumblearts@gmail.com

MISSION STATEMENT

Rumble Arts Center is an all ages, multicultural, community arts organization serving Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. We offer donation-based classes in art, music, dance, yoga, martial arts, writing, and performance in addition to regular cultural events. By providing educational opportunities for all ages, we actively cultivate an environment where entire families can come together to learn, teach, and play under the same roof. ... In this way, we build meaningful, mutually rewarding relationships with local artists, our neighbors, and other community organizations that share our vision of making the arts a thriving presence in our daily lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit rumblearts.com for a complete class schedule.

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Free Booze

OR



Tale of Two Liquors

Grolsch, Pernod, and the Chicago art scene

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

For the past three years, there's been no avoiding them: those emerald green bottles with their distinctive flip tops — difficult to open for the uninitiated, but seductively efficient for those in the know. Grolsch, the Dutch lager (distributed domestically by MillerCoors), has been an indelible presence in the Chicago art scene since 2007, donating beer to nonprofit arts organizations across the city, commissioning projects and sponsoring major events like NEXT.

Until January of this year, that is. In December 2009, Grolsch announced that it will no longer subsidize free drunkenness. "As a result of tightened budgets, we're in the process of evaluating several art sponsorships in Chicago and beyond, including the NEXT Fair," Grolsch Brand Manager Brian Schmitz informed Time Out Chicago in January.

A New Drink in Town

Around the same time that Grolsch decided to withdraw from the Chicago art scene, another shade of green began to appear in the hands of art aficionados: the unlikely drink that is Pernod Absinthe. Also in January, Pernod began sponsoring threewalls, donating cases of the anise-y elixir for openings and special events, and providing free shots of absinthe for the MCA's Free Fridays from February through April (potentially to be continued).

While at first glance this may seem like little more than a banal tale of corporate ups and downs in an era atmosphere of ever-tighter fiscal belts, it actually speaks to a nexus of questions regarding the goods and evils of corporate sponsorship of the arts — something that's hardly new, often questioned and never resolved.

The Problems of Sponsorship

Time Out Chicago Art and Design Editor Lauren Weinberg expressed her distrust of such marketing strategies when Grolsch made its dismal announcement, declaring on the TOC blog: "I'm not drowning my sorrows. Grolsch wasn't being gracious; it was pursuing a marketing strategy that didn't pay off. ... The beer had strings attached: During the past year, I lost count of how many show invitations I received that bore the embarrassing 'Creativity... sponsored by Grolsch.'"

Former Grolsch collaborator and current SAIC student Allison Glenn (dual M.A. '12) disagrees: "An in-kind contribution of Grolsch

to a non-profit arts organization is a fantastic way for these establishments to focus on their programming while insuring that they can cover costs," she told F. "The company always came across as very professional and discreet in their logo placement and advertising requirements."

Corporate Dollars at Work

Glenn worked with Grolsch reps here in town, curating arts programs for Grolsch events (like the Jon Raffman Koolaid Man in Second Life screening at the Empty Bottle) and coordinating with the company when it sponsored events at the ALLRiSE Gallery, where she worked before starting at SAIC.

That Grolsch was going above and beyond donating liquor, to commissioning curatorial endeavors and art projects, speaks to the aggressive nature of this cross-marketing campaign. Grolsch has become indissolubly associated with the arts — not just in Chicago, but across the world. The brand has sponsored art fairs from Miami to Johannesburg.

Why Grolsch Failed

Clearly, though, it was a campaign that wasn't very successful, at least locally. Jeriah Hildwine, author of the Snack Report blog on the Chicago Now site — hence unofficial expert on all things consumable — explained to F that recession aside, Grolsch may have "figured out that the people who will drink Grolsch for free at art openings won't necessarily go out and buy it later. Honestly, as much as I loved all the free Grolsch, I have to admit that I've never paid for a Grolsch in my life. ... and I doubt I will."

"I loved drinking Grolsch for free," he continued, "it's a fine beer, but the fact that I drank it for free pretty much every Friday for two and a half years doesn't make it the beer I'll buy for myself at the liquor store. If anything, and this is a kind of shitty thing to have to admit, but getting something for free for a while may be a sort of disincentive to paying for it later."

Pernod Tests the Waters

Time will tell if Pernod will have the same problem. For the moment the company is taking a less aggressive approach, partnering up solely with the MCA and threewalls in Chicago, and sponsoring institutions like the Guggenheim in New York, LACMA in L.A. as

well as an annual art contest.

Locally, Pernod's bid for recognition is perhaps riskier than for Grolsch. Beer has historically been a Midwestern drink of choice, as opposed to Pernod's strong-tasting symbol of Parisian decadence. But Pernod is trying to cultivate new taste buds. In an e-mail interview with F Newsmagazine, Pernod Brand Manager Brian Eckert maintained that the brand is committed to pairing up with local organizations and publics who show a "strong interest and support for creativity and the expressions of creativity, a characteristic that Pernod has possessed since its creation in 1805."

Right. Creativity, and a remarkable ability to get people drunk really, really fast. Even with less of a physical presence in the scene (and Eckert was ambiguous as to whether Pernod has plans to expand to other local organizations), the new drink has generated plenty of buzz, thanks to the allure of the fact that it was illegal for a long time in the U.S. because of its suspected narcotic properties. Boasting a strong, unusual flavor and high alcohol content, it packs a much greater punch than a bottle of beer.

Jeriah recalls sampling the "Absinthe Cocktails at Irena Knezevic's opening [at threewalls] ... I was a fan, definitely. I had three of them and then spent five minutes trying to put my coat on. I had it upside down."

The Ethics of Free Booze

Free inebriation can be great, but what of Weinberg's complaint that, in fact, there is no such thing as a free lunch?

Might it not be disillusioning that even in the supposedly free forum of the alternative, nonprofit arts space, we can't escape the spectral hand of the multinational corporation?

Apparently, most people don't really care. As Jeriah states, "What I like about the refreshments is that they're the one thing that we don't have to take seriously. They're just fun, and nice."

But even more than that, he continued, the donated booze is also "a sort of reimbursement for the viewer's time, transit fare on the CTA, and of course to make up for the fact that sometimes the art isn't all that good. I can't tell you how many times I've been to a night of openings and come away thinking, 'Well, that art all kind of sucked, but at least I got my drunk on.'"

"I'm not drowning my sorrows.

Grolsch wasn't

being gracious; it

was pursuing a

marketing strategy

that didn't pay off."

—Lauren Weinberg,
TimeOut Chicago



Headline design by Nicole Briant; Illustration by Kira Mardikes

LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY ALLI BERRY

ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION Thursday, March 18

Shouts of dissent echoed through the streets of the Loop as protestors gathered on the seventh anniversary of the Iraq War. The evening began in Federal Plaza with activists speaking on behalf of education, healthcare reform, and other programs that are overlooked while military spending continues to increase. A four-mile march to "Bughouse Square" followed.

Fatima Hindi, an Iraqi refugee, described the repercussions of US military involvement abroad. "No[body] can feel what I feel now. Some militia and some soldiers killed my family in 2003 and in 2005. And two weeks ago they killed my sister's family, and killed my friends, and kidnapped me, and raped me ... I [didn't] have one cent to buy milk for my daughter. I hope and I wish you understand [the] situation in Iraq. [The] media says things but nobody really understand[s] what [the] situation is."



TEA PARTY RALLY Thursday, April 15

Crowds and flags of a different sort filled Daley Plaza as members of the Tea Party, a grassroots movement, gathered to display their opposition to health care reform, taxation, and immigration policy. Though not present at the Chicago rally, major public figures in the movement include Fox News host Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, and Representative Ron Paul of Texas.

Joe Walsh, a 2010 Republican Illinois congressional candidate, emphasized the movement's role in reducing federal government. "They are not going to stop. President Obama, Nancy Pelosi and, yes, Melissa Bean — they will not stop. They have to be stopped. They have to be stopped. Do me one final favor. When our friends in the media try over the course of these next seven months to call you a fringe movement, I want you to smile. I want you to smile at them and I want you to keep on marching, and you know what? Future generations will thank you. Future generations will thank you."



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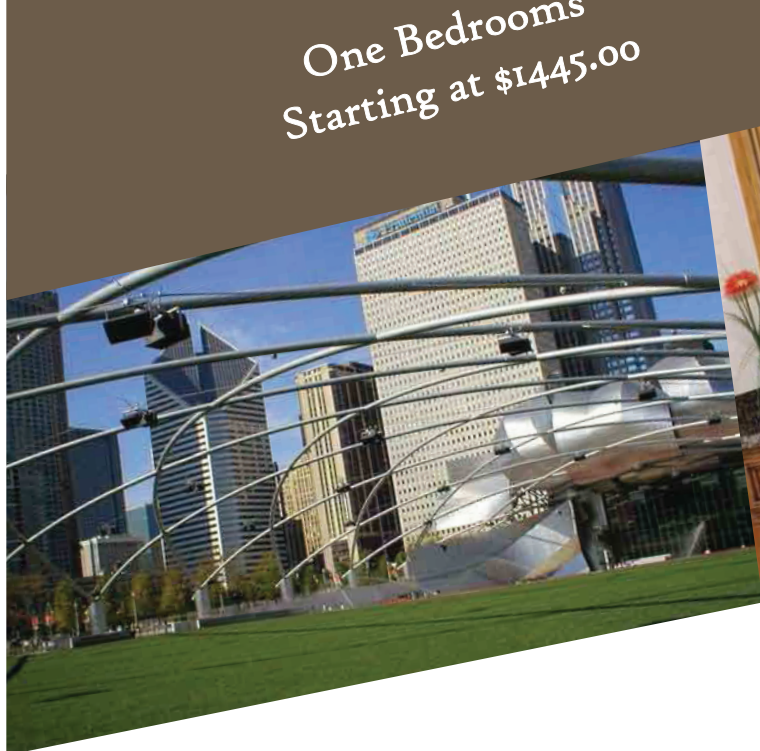
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Around the Coyote *bites the dust*

Chicago arts institution is forced to close its doors

BY JENNIFER SWANN

Founded in Wicker Park in 1989, Around the Coyote exhibited local, international, and emerging artists for longer than most current SAIC undergraduates have been alive. That is, up until this past winter, when their much-needed fundraiser only raked in \$2,000. This was the final straw for unpaid Executive Director Allison Stites, who decided that Around the Coyote could no longer operate on its own hind legs.

It was time for the art festival that once characterized Wicker Park and the budding Chicago arts community to find a new home for its programming.

A Failed Fundraiser

Held on December 19, the Winter 2009 fundraiser cost only \$30 to attend, and offered an open bar, dinner, and new installations by 28 artists. Invitations and advertisements piteously declared, “Save Around the Coyote from the brink of extinction! We won’t make it through the winter without your help.” But when attendance was nonetheless disappointingly low, Stites, who had once served as Development Director but had been volunteering her own time to serve as Executive Director for the past year, saw no reason to continue struggling. ATC had obviously lost its support in the Chicago community.

Sure, resources diminish quickly in a bad economy, and art buyers aren’t necessarily willing to throw down the money they might have a few years ago; but still, why did ATC fade into the abyss of failed arts organizations while Chicago art fairs like Artropolis grow bigger every year? Stites credits the failure partly to the recession and her step down from a paid leadership position, which caused a decrease in ATC’s grant writing, sponsorship, and donations.

“Since 2005, I have thought about basically every possible way the festival could continue in a stable way,” said Stites via email with F Newsmagazine. “Our festival was largely dependent on the donations of venues from local property owners and the donations of walls, lighting and labor from a major donor. That support was always uncertain year-to-year based on the amount and type of available space, how early we could get the property owners to commit. Always a Herculean effort was required to get enough secured space in enough time to properly promote the event; and if we would have to pay for all the walls, lighting and labor [for] it would be donated.”

A Problematic Past

Economic factors aren’t the only problems Around the Coyote has had to contend with; the organization has also struggled with a less than stellar reputation in Chicago’s art community. Catherine Forster, director of Chicago-based new

media outlet LiveBox, met Stites in 2005, when she was invited to curate a new media component of Around the Coyote.

Forster turned down the offer at first because she had been advised as an SAIC student not to get involved with the festival, which had a reputation for accepting all submissions and including work of questionable quality. Ironically, the work Forster showed at Around the Coyote back in 1996 drew the attention of an SAIC faculty member who encouraged her to enroll in SAIC for her MFA, which she received in 2002.

Forster accepted the offer after realizing that Stites’ vision for the festival had shifted. ATC was no longer the neighborhood-centric, anything-goes festival that Forster remembered from the 1990s, where studios, galleries, lofts, and even churches, were taken over by artists and visited by thousands of people during the course of the weekend. “All kinds of things were happening in the streets, and the quality was really questionable,” said Forster about the festival before artists like herself were invited to curate and select the work, charge fees to have a booth, and thus transform the event into a more rigorous, quality-oriented arts organization.

Forster signed on to expand and curate the media arts exhibition in 2007 and has curated a media space every year since she and Stites decided that the film, video, and new media work she curated would not be solely dependent on submissions to the festival, and that the work would not just be local, but international as well. But even with its careful selection of work, ATC struggled to find its audience amid frequent location changes — everywhere from galleries in Wicker Park to lumber yards in the West Loop.

“I think one of the problems was that [ATC] hadn’t really convinced the broader art community that they had moved up in quality and [that] they were becoming something much more interesting and edgy,” said Forster, who claims that the festival had upset their old audience of local artists in Wicker Park by way of exclusion, but hadn’t been embraced by a new audience elsewhere. “There was just no place for them anymore,” Forster said.

“It seems, usually, people either loved what we did or hated what we did,” said Stites via email. “With each executive director over the past 20 years there have been different aesthetics, different programming goals and different ways of executing the programming.”

“My focus since 2005 was on professionalizing the exhibits; gaining access to established galleries, art patrons and curators for the artists in our festivals and gallery exhibitions; and raising the quality of the art we showed in

hopes of showing what a serious independent and alternative art scene there is in Chicago.

“With the amount of resources we had, and a real amount of baggage and misperceptions to overcome about who we were, I feel I was able to do that a little bit better each year, and I’m proud of what ATC has offered while I’ve been there.”

Promoting Young Artists

Around the time ATC was “professionalizing” its image, SAIC students like Patrick Cunningham, a 2nd year Art and Technology graduate student, saw opportunities to gain experience curating at a festival that wasn’t quite fine art, but had certainly made a name for itself with in the city. “Around the Coyote gave young artists the chance to get accustomed to professionally show their work; install and prepare and do that sort of stuff. It’s sometimes more difficult to gain that experience right out of school or even in school,” said Cunningham, who began curating pop-up art shows in vacant retail spaces for Around the Coyote in 2009.

“I think for many organizations, if not all, there is a natural life span,” said Stiles. “My hope is that with Around the Coyote closing, the baggage we carried is shed, and there is room for other organizations to step in to continue the best of what we did — and to do it hopefully better. I hope people can build on what we built and I’m doing my best to make sure the lessons we learned aren’t lost.” Stites is donating ATC’s old equipment such as computers, lighting, and office furniture, to small, non-profit Chicago arts organizations in need.

Future Plans

Around the Coyote’s programming will be redistributed around the city as well, such as the free children’s art education program, which will continue through the Chicago Park District. Some of ATC’s gallery exhibitions will be transferred to other local galleries, and Stites will shift her energy to curating a pop-up gallery program throughout Wicker Park and Bucktown, which she hopes will fill some of the void left by ATC. Perhaps most notably, Stites, in addition to dozens of displaced ATC participants like Forster and Cunningham, will continue to curate independently for other Chicago galleries and organizations, the majority of which will exhibit emerging artists.



Patrick Cunningham, installation views of *The Ease of Oak* exhibition at the Fall Around the Coyote Festival. Image courtesy of the artist.



Patrick Cunningham, *Sugar*, exhibition at Spring Around the Coyote Festival. Image courtesy of the artist.

“My hope is that with Around the Coyote closing, the baggage we carried is shed, and there is room for other organizations to step in to continue the best of what we did — and to do it hopefully better.”

—Allison Stites
Around the Coyote, Executive Director

Direct Lending

SAIC Moves to New Student Loan Initiative



Illustrations by Jee In Park

BY AMANDA ALDINGER

SAIC students will pay lower interested rates on federal student loans, one benefit of The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. The new loan program, the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, will eliminate private lenders as middlemen and channel the savings into more loans and an expansion of the Pell Grant program.

Patrick James, Director of Student Financial Services, explained the changes to F Newsmagazine, noting that “SAIC has had to make numerous changes to get ready for direct lending.. This includes establishing relationships and obtaining approvals with different government entities involved in processing Federal Direct Student loans, changes to the PeopleSoft system setup, and creating new communications for student and parents.”

On the whole, the new system will be much more effective. “The Student Financial Services office expects to deliver loan funds quicker to the student through the Federal Direct Loan program,” James said. The new bill simplifies the rather complicated FAFSA form. “The form itself was a real barrier to access to college, and by making it much more thoughtful, simpler ... that’s already in place,” commented Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in a news briefing on March 30 to discuss the new bill.

The elimination of fees that were previously paid to private banks will save nearly \$68 billion over ten years. The savings will be used for student loans and increases

in Pell Grants, need-based grants provided to undergraduate students that do not require repayment - making it easier for students to repay their loans after graduating. The White House estimates that with these savings, they will be able to provide 820,000 more Pell Grants by 2020, as President Obama has

“We can either continue to subsidize banks, or we can invest in education. And we’re absolutely choosing to invest in education.”

—Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

now doubled the amount for the grants.

The availability of more grants is a huge positive, considering the amount that students are taking out in school loans is increasing steadily. “We have seen an increase over the past few years, which has happened for a few reasons. Many families, given the economy, have depleted portions of their savings that they had originally set aside for college tuition. In addition to that, the federal government has provided legislation that allows higher annual borrowing limits for freshman, sophomores,

and graduate students,” James explained.

Although some have worried that these new rulings, as well as the government’s direct involvement in distributing loan money, will lead to tax hikes, Secretary Arne Duncan assures the public that this is not the case. “This is not asking taxpayers to subsidize anything. This is, frankly, simply removing subsidies to banks and putting those savings into education. It’s the only way as a country we’re going to build a long-term, vibrant economy. We have to invest to get there.”

With that in mind, the new bill has cushioned the blow of student loan repayment by reducing interest rates associated with loans. The new interest rates for the Federal Direct PLUS loans will now be 7.9 percent, instead of the 8.5 percent rate currently charged through the FFEL program. According to Secretary Duncan, “students who borrow money starting in July 2014 will be allowed to cap their repayments at 10 percent of their income above basic living requirements, instead of 15 percent. Moreover, if they keep up their payments, they will have any remaining debt forgiven after 20 years instead of 25 years - or after 10 years if they are in public service, such as teaching, nursing or serving in the military.”

In addition to the possibility of loan forgiveness, a new income-contingent repayment option has been created, which would give Federal Direct Stafford Loan Borrowers flexibility in their repayment plans

The Health Care Reform Bill, and how it affects students and young people

Young adults ages 19-29 make up 30% of the country's uninsured population. The healthcare reform seeks to address this population in three main ways: increasing employer coverage, extending dependant coverage, and expanding eligibility for Medicaid.

Changes occurring within the next six months:

- Starting September 23rd students can be covered as dependants under their parents' insurance plan until age 26—the plan cannot drop the insured, even if they become sick, or cap the amount paid in a given year.
- If your parents are uninsured, you will still be required to purchase a coverage plan.
- The new law forbids insurance rejection for pre-existing conditions in children and young people. In 2014, this will be extended to all people, regardless of age.
- Insurance companies will be prohibited from placing lifetime caps on coverage.
- There will be a new independent appeals process. Consumers in new insurance plans can appeal decisions made by their health insurer through both internal and external processes.
- New private plans will be required to provide free preventive services with no co-payments.
- If you become very sick, your insurer cannot drop you from your insurance program.

By 2014:

- If unemployed, you can be eligible for Medicaid (healthcare funded by state and federal government) if your income is below \$14,400 a year (133% of the federal poverty level).
- If income is still four times below the poverty level (\$43,320 per year) you will be required to buy insurance from a state-run health insurance exchange.
- Buying insurance through a state exchange is an option if you are ineligible for a public program and your employer's premiums are too high.
- You can also become eligible for a voucher from your employer to buy coverage in a state insurance exchange.
- For those who are still unable to afford insurance, you can apply for a hardship waiver. Penalties will be charged if you can afford insurance but choose not to purchase it. These penalties generally start at \$95 but can be up to \$695 or 2% of yearly income.

Information Sources: The Associated Press; The New York Times; Crosscut; The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation; HealthReform.gov. For specific links please visit fnewsmagazine.com. Compiled by Alli Berry.



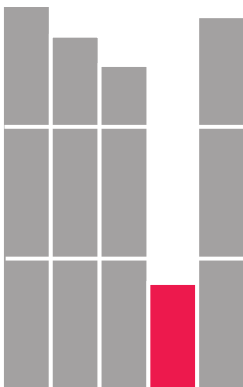
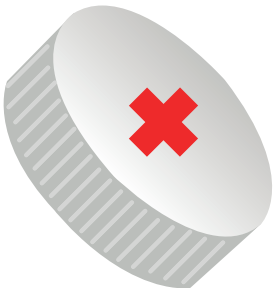
to help alleviate undue financial hardship. This plan features specific requirements based on family size, income level and the total amount of student loans borrowed.

For Secretary Duncan, these new provisions, which make education more accessible to all individuals interested in receiving higher education, is a no-brainer. “We can either continue to subsidize banks, or we can invest in education. And we’re absolutely choosing to invest in education. The private sector is going to have a huge role to play in the servicing of these loans. Where they can keep default rates low, where they can build good relationships with individuals as well as the universities and the institutions, they have a great, great business opportunity to grow their work.”

Although the original amount allocated to this initiative was reduced after intense lobbying by loan companies, James assures students not to worry. “The Pell Grant program [has] grown given the state of the economy and more students qualifying for Pell Grants.”

According to President Obama, “In the United States of America, no one should go broke because they chose to go to college.” It’s safe to say that most SAIC students would agree.

If you’d like more information on the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, and what it means for you, contact Student Financial Services at 312.269.6600, or visit their office in the Sullivan Building, Suite 1218.



BETTER BOWLING NAME:

**COBRA or
LAZER?**

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Friendly Formalism, Whimsical Buddhism

REVIEWS BY ARIEL L PITTMAN

Ps & Qs: Friendly Formalism for 2010

Curators Shannon Stratton and Jeff M. Ward describe “Ps & Qs” as “surprisingly friendly formalism,” an exhibition of new works that flirt with the stringency of 20th century formalism, but give it a contemporary, 21st century twist. These are often playful works, which are indeed far more intimate and “friendly” than the canonical mid-century work associated with Clement Greenberg: they are colorful, relish their materialism, and resist the hard-edged perfectionism we tend to associate with Piet Mondrian and Le Corbusier’s designs.

“Ps & Qs” was first shown in the Glassell School of Art (Houston) in 2006. The Hyde Park iteration of the show is hardly a repeat of Houston, though; Todd Chilton, Katy Heinlein and Andrea Myers are the only artists carried over from the 2006 exhibition, but they and the four artists joining them here in Chicago (Peter Fagundo, Carrie Gundersdorf, Jessica Labatte and Tessa Windt) all created new work for Hyde Park.

In doing so, each artist tackles the idea of formalism in different ways. Some, like Gundersdorf and Chilton, take a rather traditional approach, using oil paint and colored pencils. Others, like Heinlein and Fagundo, craft evocative sculptures from Spandex and Styrofoam that simultaneously call to mind Robert Morris’ anti-form piles, Robert Smithson’s non-sites, and

Eva Hesse’s work in latex, papier mâché and wood; however, they renounce the monumentality of those earlier works in favor of a humbler, almost pathetic approach.

Lest you think I mean pathetic as a criticism, let me explain: Fagundo’s sculptures take the form of rectangular boxes, positioned below eye-level, packed with cubes and rectangular solids made from muddy-colored Styrofoam. They are placed at knee height so that one has to kneel to look at them. They are charming and mysterious objects that possess more than a little sadness. Nearby, Heinlein’s stretched and wrapped spandex forms suggest other, harder objects hiding beneath, afraid to peek around the curtain.

The peeking, shy nature of these works is emphasized by Stratton and Ward’s exhibition design, which makes smart use of the small Gallery 4 on the second floor of the Art Center. Todd Chilton’s geometric oil paintings, characterized by their complex patterns, bold colors and almost childlike handling of paint, hide from one another on either side of a small wall. The viewer is forced to play a quick game of hide and seek to investigate the relationship between Purply Diamonds and its black-and-white brother, while Heilein and Windt’s wall-hung fabric sculptures billow out into space like improbable sails.

In sum, “Ps & Qs” is a beautiful show, even if it is more of a shy stranger than a friendly acquaintance.



Todd Chilton, *Purply Diamonds*, 2009, Oil on linen, 30 x 27 1/2 inches. Image courtesy of the Hyde Park Art Center.



Notes to Nonself video projection, Installation view from street. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.



Diane Christiansen and Shoshanna Utchenik, *Notes to Nonself*, Installation view. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.

Notes to Nonself: A Voyage of the Mind

Also at the Hyde Park Art Center, “Notes to Nonself” is a whimsical environment created by Diane Christiansen and Shoshanna Utchenik. The exhibition is like a stage set: the viewer enters the large, ground-floor Gallery 1 through red curtains, finding a room that is filled with a forest of plywood trees, swirling papier mâché clouds suspended from the ceiling, and various other objects reminiscent of the fantasies and nightmares of childhood.

The artists ask the viewer to embark on a meditative journey through different areas of the gallery, which are titled with evocative names like Ego Forest, Relationship Bardo, Temporary Refuge and Teacher Garden, and the Meditation Clubhouse. Presiding over this dream-like landscape is an animated film by Diane Christensen (with Shelly Dodson and Matt Marsden as additional collaborators) projected on the second floor catwalk gallery.

Christiansen and Utchenik’s world is quaint and pleasant. The trees are hung heavily with handmade prayer flags, while a giant papier mâché octopus holds court halfway through the exhibition. Next, a flat pup tent that suggests but ultimately denies refuge coyly awaits the viewer; and a human-scale clubhouse filled with meditation pillows dominates the far corner of the room, providing an elevated vantage point from which to watch other viewers wander through this allegorical fantasy.

Upon closer inspection of the prayer flags, one discovers that they are made up of notes between the artists, and euphemistic declarations like: “make something new every day.” These meditative, therapeutic messages speak to the artists’ interpretation of the eight Dharmas of Tibetan Buddhism: the path through the space is intended to be a movement from a cluttered mind to a clear one.

However, while traversing “Notes to the Nonself” is indeed calm and rewarding, the experience is not one of clearing the mind. There is too much to investigate here to find oneself emptied completely.

In the afternoon, Christiansen’s animated video (with a soundtrack composed by Steve Dawson) plays in the catwalk gallery, like an animated vision of a bizarre, celestial world that hovers above the gallery below. The animation illustrates the life-cycle of a tree that moves from an industrial dump, through water, and to a deserted island where it emanates flowers and other miscellaneous items. Like the installation, the video depicts a journey with an uncertain end, a journey where the voyage itself is more important than the destination.

The Hyde Park Art Center
5020 S Cornell Ave
www.hydeparkart.org

Ps & Qs
Gallery 4
Feb 26 – June 6, 2010

Notes to Nonself
Gallery 1 and the Jackman Goldwasser Catwalk Gallery
Feb 11 – May 2, 2010

Return of



Giessler/Sann the real estate #41, 42, 2008-09 Ink jet prints Courtesy of Fiedler Taubert Contemporary, Berlin

REVIEWS BY WHITNEY STOEPEL

This spring, shows at Chicago galleries have been like cries for help, echoing an anxiety that is endemic to this contemporary world of recessions, wars, and catastrophic natural disasters. While shows like “I’m OK You’re OK” at Concertina, “Notes to Nonsell” at the Hyde Park Art Center and “The Gesture Guild” at threewalls proposed, played with and critiqued “therapeutic” ways of handling that anxiety, two new exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Photography explore its root causes.

the real estate

Knowing that the melancholic pictures are documenting the results of foreclosure adds a tragic sense of loss to these spaces — spaces that once acted as shelters and sanctuaries, but which became burdens that betrayed their owners, or symbols of failure.

When artists Beate Geissler and Oliver Sann moved from Germany to Chicago in 2008, their search for a place to live took them on a desolate tour through Chicago’s neglected living spaces. “the real estate,” up now at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, reveals 60 color photographs that document the interior spaces of foreclosed homes visited by the artists in early 2008 and 2009.

The homes Geissler and Sann photograph aren’t particularly run-down or dilapidated. They still bear witness to the faint traces of their former inhabitants. In some images, the walls are painted bold, eccentric colors, or are riddled with wound-like nail holes, like ghostly reminders of the personal objects that used to identify that space as owned and lived in.

Just as often, the reminders of the former occupants are more concrete: the photographs capture the items that were left behind, some as inconsequential as a mattress, some as meaningful as family photos.

In one particularly eerie image, there is a dirty mattress on the ground. A rubber Halloween monster mask lies on the edge of the mattress, as if this home had been ransacked by some masked bandit. And now, like the rest of the home, without a human occupant the mask is hollow and lifeless.

Knowing that the melancholic pictures are documenting the results of foreclosure adds a tragic sense of loss to these spaces — spaces that once served as shelters and sanctuaries, but which became burdens that betrayed

their owners, or symbols of failure.

Geissler and Sann’s photos publicize the aftermath of devastating events that literally occur behind closed doors. By adding “the” before “real estate” in the exhibition title, the artists also question the very appearance of reality itself. Curator Karen Irvine writes that because the huge number of foreclosures was the result of fraud and deception, showcasing the “realness” of the aftermath of that fraud adds an ironic layer to the images.

The housing market might have been built on a fictitious house of cards, but Geissler and Sann’s photographs eloquently reveal the very real nature of the devastation experienced by millions when that house of cards fell.



Giessler/Sann “the real estate” #54, 55, 56, 2008-09 Ink jet prints Courtesy of Fiedler Taubert Contemporary, Berlin

Museum of Contemporary Photography
600 S Michigan
mocp.org

the real estate
April 9 – May 23, 2010
Incident Control
April 9 – June 20, 2010

the Real



Sarah Pickering, Artillery, 2005, Chromogenic development prints, 49 x 49 inches. Courtesy of the Lannan Foundation, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Incident Control

In “Incident Control,” photographer Sarah Pickering also plays with our sense of what is real. In her photos, Pickering documents what appear to be actual events, surprising the viewer with the revelation that in fact, all of the situations were staged. The exhibition is made up of four collections of photos that all document staged scenes meant for training purposes.

“Fire Scene,” for instance, captures film fires set by the British Fire Service College. Elaborate indoor set designs are constructed to convey a specific chain of events: the first sparks of the fire (due to a malfunctioning space heater, or some teenagers huffing glue), followed by the arrival of the forensic scientists, who enter the scene after the fire has been extinguished

and determine its origins.

Pickering captures the fires just as they start, so the rooms are not yet heavily damaged. The sets are constructed with details meant to convey clues as to how the incident occurred. In the room in which imaginary teenagers huff glue, for instance, there are action figures on the floor and clothes thrown sloppily over a desk chair, all slightly obscured by blazing flames. In another scene, a lamp teeters atop a television on a dresser littered with beer cans. The carpet even had smudged footprints on it. Each narrative is so highly calculated, it is hard to believe the images are not of authentic disasters.

“Public Order,” in the back room on the first floor, is the most intriguing collection of Pickering’s

photos. Instead of the one home of “Fire Scene,” however, “Public Order” depicts an entire city.

The photos document the small-scale cities (including bars with signs, graffiti, nightclubs and even a train station) that were constructed to train the British Police Service in preventing terrorism, riots and protests.

The buildings all have cinder block façades that look strikingly real, but oddly fake at the same time. There is no evidence of human life, as if the entire town had been abandoned. Curator Karen Irvine writes that minute details like the names written on bars help to “humanize the trauma, to make sense of it [and] might promote more empathy on the part of the police and forensic trainees, or it might distance them from victims perceived as existing in the realm of the other.”

Either way, the amount of effort that goes into creating a perceived sense of authenticity in these situations is impressive, even as it lends a sense of futility.

Taken as a whole, “Incident Control” is like a conceptual reversal of “the real estate”: instead of documenting the real results of deceptive, legal fictions, Pickering presents staged, artful fictions as concrete reality. Taken together, both exhibitions reveal volumes about contemporary anxieties regarding real, perceived, and imagined traumas.



Sarah Pickering, River Way (Roadblock), 2004, Chromogenic development print, 40 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



Sarah Pickering, Glue Sniffing Kids, 2007, 48 x 39 inches, Chromogenic development print, Courtesy of Meessen De Clercq, Brussels, Belgium.

“Incident Control” is like a conceptual reversal of “the real estate”: instead of documenting the real results of deceptive, legal fictions, Pickering presents staged, artful fictions as concrete reality.

Portraits of CHICAGO



*Work samples from the inaugural
“Arts in Chicago” Art History/
Visual and Critical Studies
undergraduate class*

Chicago 2010

BY EBONY MARIE COWARD
FILM, VIDEO AND NEW MEDIA
BFA 2010

My lifelong city
The city that works,
has ground
to a halt.
With it's overpriced augmentations —
the prettiest picture
ever.

A life lived in this city
is like a life
lived
in a house
where you grew up with
an old man
that smacked you around a little.

To be here now
needy
and dreaming that my work
will one day
end
the neediness;
I tell the other
restless natives
when they ask
of my intentions —
and their faces change —
in doubt of me? In sympathy?
And they recite the familiar refrain
that must explain
why
I would attempt a thing
so unwise
as Art —
“... you know somebody?”

I feel
I'm fasting
in this city where
you feast.
I watch people on TV
dining and recommending
and I write down
the recommendations
and I say
we've got
to try
that spot.
And months later
I find the names
of restaurants
magnetized to our refrigerator
where I go for
potatoes
that we're having — a different way —
but, again.

The museums were
my adolescent standbys
if we couldn't see the movie
or split a pizza.
If it was too cold
for the lake —
we visited history and the stars —
science and the seas —
we took in
indecipherable pictures
in antique buildings
where no one hovered at the entrance
with an outstretched hand
because donations were really
only
suggested
and any amount would do
and still no entry fee
could get you
a smile
from the guards.
And the nice old lady
at the information desk
thought I
was so precious
giving my dollar
because I heard my mom when she said
they need to know that
we can give too.

And now the adolescents
living where I grew up
live in a city
of inaccessible
masterpieces.
And my own adolescent
who has a right
to more
than I can give
would have had
to settle
for learning in the nearby
lacking school
were it not for
an apologetic
ex-boyfriend
saying sorry
by saying
we lived
in his house.

Parents are
lucky
when they know people
socially conscious enough
to lie
for the good
of a child;
allowing us
to share
the lease
or have our
cell phone bill
sent there
so our kids
can go
to the good school too.

I've spoken to
company reps
on the phone —
they ask
“Where are you from?”
and I tell them.
And they tell me
“I knew it ... you can tell by the accent”
Do I bleat my short a's?
Turn my t-h's into d's?
I know that in familiar company
I forget the King's —
and I go
BEV
which
here
is really just a faster
Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana.
And when I'm angry —
which I am more often now —
my second language rages from my mouth
informing
“all ya'll mutha fuckas betta leave my ass da' fuck alone”
because I'm still here —
because I've always been here
and I still
don't know
anybody.

Northbound Red Line

BY COLIN GRIMM
PAINTING AND DRAWING
EXCHANGE STUDENT,
SCHOOL OF THE MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON
BFA 2010

There was four of us. All strangers. All united in our quest to avoid the half-drinkin 40 oz. tumbling across the train car floor. There was eye contact, but no dialogue. It was Old English without a cap. It was like spin the bottle from hell. One sudden jerk of the train and the hobo-germ infused, stale flat liquid would come roaring out.

The man next to me stepped on the train from the Wilson platform. He wore paint splattered tan steel toes. He pretended not to be fazed by the possibility of falling victim to the back alley backwash, but I saw the concerned glance from the corner of his eye.

The women across from us had already been seated when I stepped on the train at Jackson. I immediately wondered how long she had been engaged in this painstaking activity. She wore black K-Swisses, which looked as though they had been through similar battles. And lost.

Next to her sat the young lady who I knew would never last in this twisted form of Old English Roulette. She got on at Belmont or Fullerton, I can't remember which one. She wore gray suede boots that stopped just before her knees. If they weren't new, she kept em looking that way. It's not that I was rooting against her, it's just that her reaction to getting soaked by the suds was the one I was most eager to see.

I was wearing Jordans. But they were bootleg XI's that I got offline from China. I was concerned but didn't allow my body language to show an ounce of it.

The bottle was rotating in full circles like a protractor. Small amounts of infectious liquid splashing out with every jolting stop of the outbound Red Line train. I expected at any moment one of us would break the seal and spring up from our seats to sprint to safety on the other side of the overcrowded, infrequent train.

We passed the Jarvis stop where an extremely obese man wearing flip-flops stepped on board. He looked at our section of the train, and with a crooked eye chose to stand uncomfortably instead of resting his legs in the only remaining seat.

It was at that point that it dawned on me ... all four of us might make it! We passed the MENTAL 312 burner just south of Howard, where the talented young writer forgot the T in his name. It happens. The fill was clean. I smirked. Not because of the writer's drunken mistake, but because we made it! Steel toes, K-Swiss, Belmont and myself had endured the rigorous journey to Howard teetering on the brink of destruction. Together, we played the twisted game of Old English Roulette and we won!

A Memoir of Unknowing

BY HANNAH RODRIGUEZ
PRINTMAKING
1ST YEAR UNDERGRAD

I didn't know from ages four to nine that my summer day trips to the "big city" — or as my mother always said "The place where her girls could see a working city work" — would be the same place I left to — my mother's "baby girl" — to work in the working city that worked. I didn't know for the three hours spent in the car, back and forth from my Grandpa Cook's house to Cook County, that some day that trip's time would be cut in half but frequented twice as often in order to fly my life between two worlds. I didn't know I'd trade my tender Tennessee sunrises for hard high rises that ride skies and winds like my back porch back home's chimes would cry apocalypse if mated with. I didn't know when walking up and down Michigan with my commissioned hand grabbing at store door handles like last chances, afraid to miss a thing, that someday I'd walk the same strip like it was a shortcut to nowhere.

I didn't know in that biggest, bestest store of all when I got the American girl doll to look like me, the one that probably broke my mother's checkbook like water, that I would someday fast for weeks at a time, just so I could save up dimes, hoping to make up for maybe a quarter of the cost of that baby doll that I never had sense enough

to play with, and would wear words like "fuck American consumerism," like my doll wore that cardboard crown I bought her. I didn't know that what I'd found then would be lost now. And I didn't know that I'd find that I felt lost, more often than found, in the town where one can never hide but yet is never seen. And that the city scenery would morph into foregrounds — like bleed prints to page edges — so that I would always be walking with the framing behind my neck, and at my heels to feel what I should be facing, but never to heed to the pacing. To walk in the picture, without ever getting it — and being framed, for the crime of appreciation, which I have yet to commit.

I didn't know in May of my third grade year when my father was framed for a crime he did not commit, but was still perceived guilty by the government and thus deemed unfit — though not yet under arrest. Did not know that when they tried to take us away, because my mother was away, and the state was to hold us custody that the place my mother was — instead of placing her arms around me — was Cabrini Green, doing service projects for the people who needed her more than I did. That this place would be the same place I fled to. Except

that Cabrini Green would no longer exist, and maybe it's because my mother cut her trip short, maybe it did need her more. Or maybe. I needed this place more than this place needed Cabrini. Or maybe. It's survival of the fittest and I came to this city, like I needed it more than my own mother. So, I must have been stronger than Cabrini, which needed her enough to keep her from me. Although.

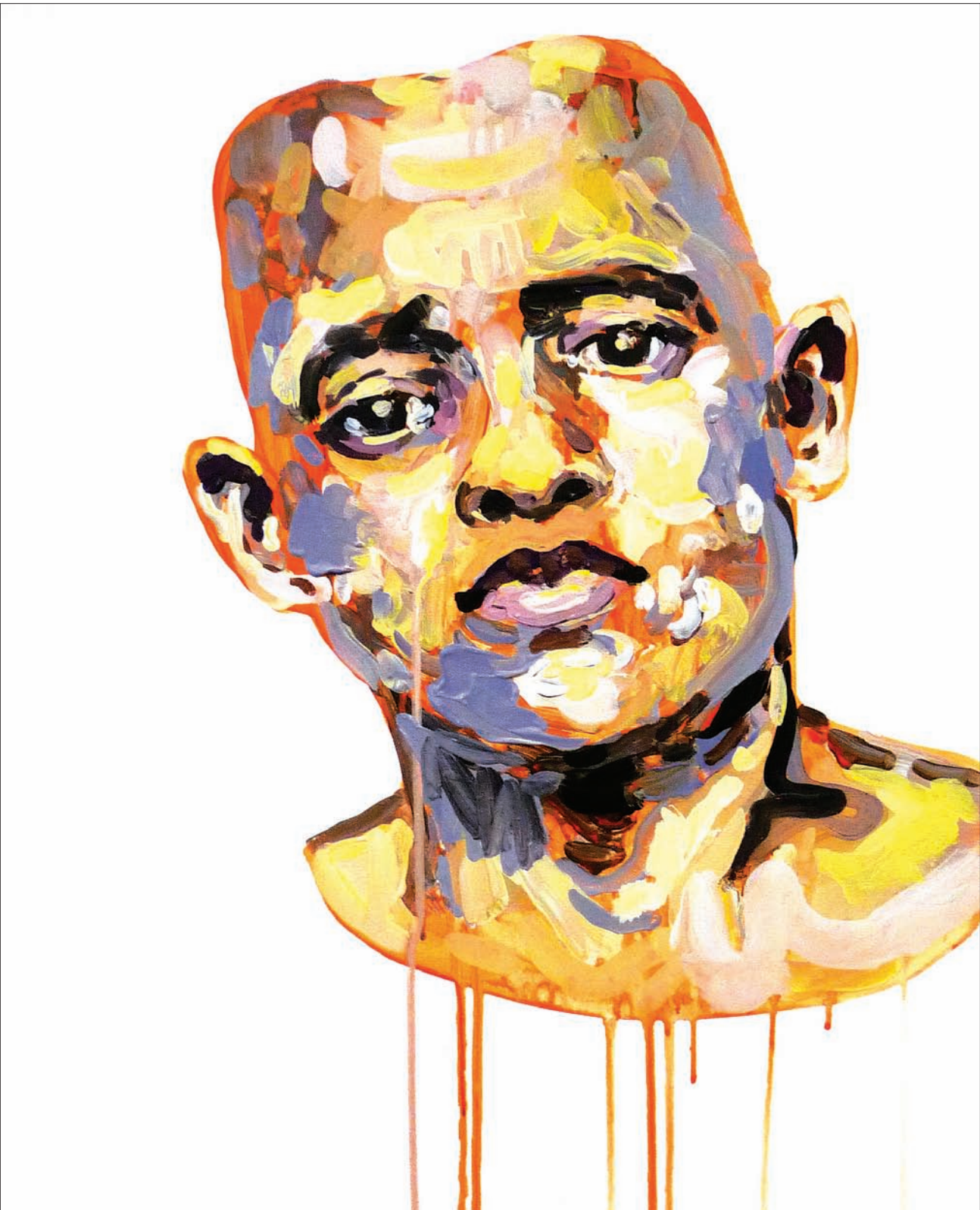
I didn't hear Cabrini crying when I was hiding out in a basement for a week, hoping DCS didn't have no tracking device on my tears. I didn't see Cabrini's father get carted off to jail the same year we stopped going to the city because planes flew into buildings then, and there is where the buildings were, and my mother thought it best that we would just stay put. I didn't see Cabrini try to run as fast as the neighborhood kids rode bikes cause Daddy moved away, and then was locked away, and never got bike or taught Cabrini how to ride. Naw...

I didn't see, hear, or feel Cabrini. And I don't really see, hear, or feel Cabrini now. But I'm pretty sure Cabrini felt me. Felt what I was going through before I even existed. Or. Felt what I was going through before it didn't exist and I did. And.

I didn't know shit. Until. I did.

HOG BUTCHER

BY EMILY ANNE EVANS
VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS;
PHOTOGRAPHY
4TH YEAR UNDERGRAD
(opposite page)



Homeless

BY CORALINE DE CHIARA
PAINTING AND DRAWING
EXCHANGE STUDENT,
BEAUX-ARTS DE PARIS

coffee in the hand, cellphone stuck to ears,
oblivious passersby
walking, marching
to yet another meeting

Tattered pants, stained jacket
constant witness
standing defeated
everlasting
enduring

busy, blend, regulated
walkers, crawlers,
prowlers,
worker bees
in the windy hive

obscured
rejected
like the filthy trash
no movement
no change
no progress
jobless
vagrant
transient
invisible

homeless

City Dreaming

BY YUNSUN PARK
INTERDISCIPLINARY
2ND YEAR UNDERGRAD

dazzling lights at night,
colorful flowers filling the city,
amazing! fascinating!
passion fueled with the dreaming of the city.
the mega-city took a young solo tourist's breath away.

square windows,
grid-like streets,
everything has to be right angled
just like a shape of money.

highly decorated Magnificent Mile,
seasonal renovations for every corner of streets,
every matter has to be perfect
just like men's customized black blazer.

where can I find some tolerance?

wheels on the cars go round and round —
the only roundness in this OCD city.

the city once was the young tourist's dream place
should only be remained as a sweet dream.

Mugshot

BY CORALINE DE CHIARA
Acrylic on Canvas
(above)

Lincoln Park Zoo Lights

BY ABIGAIL TARUN
INTERDISCIPLINARY
2ND YEAR UNDERGRAD
Pencil on Paper
(right)



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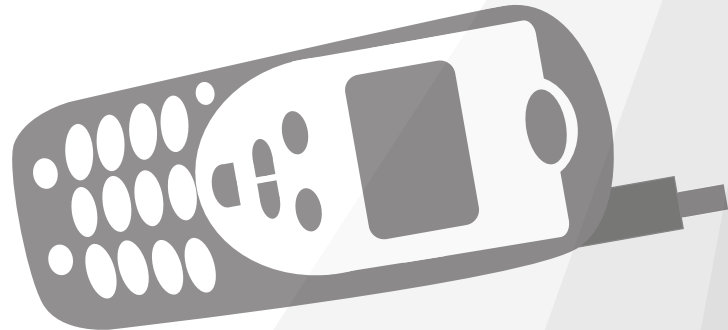


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CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Chicago writers duke it out over the direction of art criticism

BY WHITNEY STOEPEL

"One Very Big Thumbs Down: Balcony closed, idiot floodgates open," declared Clarence Page in the Chicago Tribune on April 15. "Good critics are an endangered species ... Blame the usual suspect, the Internet. Just as it has put book, record, and video stores out of business, the Web also is grinding away at the very notion that critics should be respected for credentials and experience that show they actually know what they're talking about."

This proclamation comes close to the one-year anniversary of the Tribune firing Alan Artner, the paper's only staff art critic, who was let go in April of 2008.

This example alone sums up the ire, resentment and self-righteousness that has colored heated debates around the state of art criticism over the past several months. It's a debate that has been particularly virulent here in Chicago; local writers are fired up over the increasing shift to web-based art writing.

So does this shift in media spell out doom for the industry, as Page would have it?

Those who have had a long and established career in criticism tend to see grass-roots, new media art critics as a threat to their livelihood. In an interview with F, Chicago artist and critic Erik Wenzel spoke to this frustration, stating, "No one has a background in art ... as an artist [or] as an art historian. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but there seems to be this assumption that anyone can just write about it."

But is the older generation of culture commentators digging its own grave? In March, Newcity ran a series of articles that discussed the egalitarian shift in art and cultural criticism.

"With Web 2.0, the public field has been torn open, perhaps inelegantly. But that's how revolutions go. As things settle, taste levels thin out or flatten."

—Jason Fomberg

New City Art Editor

In the article "What (Editorial) Obesity Hath Wrought," Michael Nagrant defends the new generation of critics, joking, "Newspaper columnists and editorial pages deriding the rise of citizen or social media-based criticism sound like a grandfather telling his grandson he walked uphill both ways to and from school every day ducking gunfire and a blinding rainstorm."

Nagrant believes that old media (i.e., newspapers, or art magazines) are at fault for the proliferation of criticism in the blogosphere, because they didn't place enough importance on the writers when they implemented "top-heavy editorial hierarchies."

For Nagrant, these complaints are symptoms of a self-induced victimization. At the height of this "crisis of criticism," many have made themselves appear bitter and outdated because they played by a certain set of rules that the newer, successful writers proudly flout.

On the other hand, Newcity art editor Jason Fomberg's package of articles published online in March, "The State of the (Visual) Art," muses on how the metamorphosis of criticism is perhaps sacrificing quality. The Internet has catapulted art criticism into hyper speed, meaning less editing and less in-depth, critical analysis.

He quotes Chicago Art Magazine publisher

Kathryn Born, who says trying to find the time and money for editors is "like organizing the kitchen cupboards while some dude bleeds to death in the living room ... We publish two unedited articles each day. It would be nice to have someone look them over, but we just don't have the money."

Fomberg's comment set off a ripple effect throughout the Chicago art scene. Former Dogmatic Gallery owner and blogger Michael S. Thomas posted a diatribe against Born on his blog, Stagnant Vowels: "At her site I should expect to see something different and substantive, something bereft of the flabbiness that she decries," he writes. "Instead, it's riddled with descriptive adjective-laden snot, too fearful of pronouncing meaning to extract either profundity or quality." The argument continued with Claudine Ise at Bad at Sports, whose blog post on March 26 was titled, "Hot (Okay Maybe Lukewarm at the Moment) Topic Alert: The Crisis in Art Criticism."

The personal, even spiteful tone of these squabbles only goes to support traditional complaints that new media criticism is hotheaded and amateurish. But these tensions aren't just the stuff of squabbles in the blogosphere; they are also playing out institutionally.

The conception of SAIC's M.A. in New Arts Journalism (NAJ) program is a perfect example. The need for such a program is described in the SAIC catalog: "In a rapidly changing media environment, there's a pressing need for skilled individuals who can think and write about art and design with insight and versatility. The journalistic forums in which art is discussed are changing as the very audience for this content is expanding and diversifying."

Although the department is emphasizing new media, the program is still caught in between the new and the traditional. Most NAJ professors are veterans of old media, experts who have been published in highly regarded publications such as ArtForum, Art in America, and the Chicago Tribune. But the program also requires students to take courses on blogging, a requirement that feels oxymoronic as it forces students to pay roughly \$5,000 to learn how to use free programs.

In the battle over the future of criticism, maybe the emphasis is too much on the medium. Perhaps it would be more constructive for everyone involved if we put our focus back on the art of the writing.

Marshall McLuhan quotes General David Sarnoff in his landmark "The Medium is the Message": "We are too prone to making technological instruments the scapegoats for the sins of those who wield them. The products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value."

Given the state of the publishing industry in general, the shift to publishing more and more art criticism on the web is inevitable. The one thing all involved in the argument can agree on is that criticism itself is essential to our experience of contemporary art, and that won't change whether we read the criticism on a page or on a screen.

The so-called democratization of criticism won't put highly skilled and qualified critics out of business, but will add to the dialogue. Once the dust from the debate starts to settle, the strong and qualified writers will stand out from the mass of voices.

As Fomberg declared, "The need for expertise, and good writing, will resurface. The public should demand it."



Illustration by Megan Isaacs

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Noteworthy in May

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

GROUP SHOW

Rubles at Ben Russell
April 24 – May 22, 2010
1716 S Morgan #2F

The press release for this upcoming group show at Ben Russell is so perfect as to bear lengthy quoting: “Timed to open one week prior to Art Chicago and the NEXT Fair and supported in part by the rubles-for-clunkers program, BEN RUSSELL: RUBLES shines a busted-up coal miner’s headlamp on the economic realities of art marketeering, stands outside your half-empty skyscraper with posters and pamphlets and silkscreens decrying the false accumulation of value, teaches you to increase your meager earnings through il/ legal means, and concocts a video poultice for the fractured, traumatized, and weary-at-heart. ... At BEN RUSSELL you do not sell art, art sells you!” The show features Bryce Dwyer and Matthew Joynt of InCUBATE, the newly Hamza Walker-anointed Anna Shteynshleyger, Tony Tasset and Mike Taylor. I am so excited for this. Gambling! Sarcastic jokes about communist Obama, czars and rubles! It cannot NOT be fantastic.

FILM

Chicago Anarchist Film Festival
May 5 - 16, 2010
Various locations
home.comcast.net/~more_about_it

For the “anarchists, anti-authoritarians, the anarcho-friendly and the anarcho-curious” amongst us, celebrate your release from the shackles of the academic institution this summer by checking out some emancipation-themed films. Some of the movie descriptions look so bad as to be potentially hilarious (“Kamp,” for instance, is “a stop motion animation piece about overcoming your chains”), while others are actually meant to be funny, so you’ll laugh either way. The theme of this year’s festival (which is in its 10th year apparently, though they’ve done a good job of keeping it quiet) is “Crossing Borders,” so there’s an international mix of films that’s in keeping with the international smorgasbord being offered by cinemas around the city this spring.

MUSIC, INSTALLATION

Steve Krakow at MCA
May 8 – 30, 2010
Performances on May 11, 15, 25, at 7 p.m.
220 E Chicago Ave

This month’s 12 x 12 artist is a bit of a head-scratcher for me, but Steve Krakow’s interdisciplinary project is certainly worth checking out. Krakow, alias Plastic Crimewave, is a “curator” of music festivals (the appropriateness of that label is a discussion for another day) and the author/illustrator of “The Secret History of Chicago Music,” which features little - known local musicians. Dozens of these hand - drawn columns will be on display, presented in conjunction with a musical program featuring some of Krakow’s favorite musical acts. There’s something dangerously trendy about this kind of drawing practice (it reminds me of work by artists like Fernando Bryce, without the politics), and the project is certain to provoke questions about whether or not it belongs in a contemporary art museum. Check it out to decide for yourself.



LECTURE

Pérez-Oramas, Alain Bois at AIC
May 20, May 27, 6 – 7:00 p.m.
111 S Michigan

If you’re still in Chicago after graduation, then here’s your last homework assignment for the school year: check out the last of the art history heavyweights in the Art Institute’s year-long lineup of lectures on modernism. The whippersnapper of the bunch, Luis Pérez-Oramas of MoMA, will hold forth on the eternally lovely Lygia Clark, while the surprisingly dashing Yve-Alain Bois (Institute for Advanced Study) will discuss the comparatively less interesting Ellsworth Kelly. I know, I know, no one wants to be stuck in Fullerton Hall when it’s nice and sunny out, but it’s worth the sacrifice.

CLEARANCE SALE

Closet Clearance Sale at Intuit
May 22, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
756 N Milwaukee

Considering the kind of stuff featured in Intuit’s gift shop, there’s a good chance that all the items at this clearance sale will just be weird. But isn’t that a risk you always take at these kinds of sales? The important thing to keep in mind is that Intuit is struggling, so just show up with a couple bucks, buy some token that grabs your fancy and you’ll have done your part to help keep this Chicago institution’s doors open.

NEWS TICKER

art

University of California San Diego Professor **Ricardo Dominguez** is facing a revocation of his tenure and **potential criminal charges** after staging a “virtual sit in” on the UCSD president’s website, an act that Dominguez describes as an art work, but which university administrators see differently. Dominguez has long endured the ire of California politicians for his Transborder Immigration Tool Project, which helps illegal immigrants find water and other necessities in the desert as they cross the border into the southern United States. ... First Duke, now Rosa: the Art Institute just can’t keep ’em happy. After five years as chief curator of Architecture and Design, **Joseph Rosa is leaving the Art Institute of Chicago** to head up the University of Michigan’s Museum of Art, the museum announced on April 13. ... Citing financial distress, **Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art** announced that it will start charging non-members \$5 entry in June. ... The **Ford Foundation** is launching a new initiative to help develop art spaces across the country, reports ArtForum. **The Supporting Diverse Art Spaces** Initiative has earmarked **\$100 million** for the plan,

which will be dedicated to helping arts organizations build new spaces or purchase and renovate their current ones, as well as building housing for artists and other community development projects. The project is the brainchild of the Ford Foundation’s new president, **Luis A. Ubiñas**, who took the reins in 2008. ... The Independent reports that **five Iraqi artists were denied visas to the U.K.** on the occasion of “the first comprehensive exhibition of contemporary art from Iraq since the first Gulf War” at the Cornerhouse Art Gallery in Manchester, on the forehead-slapping grounds that the artists couldn’t provide valid bank statements from war-torn Iraq. ... **Polaroid is not dead!** Austrian entrepreneur **Florian Kaps** and 10 employees from a former Polaroid factory that closed in 2008 in Enschede, the Netherlands, have launched **The Impossible Project**, a web-based endeavor that sells recreated Polaroid film. Kaps and company purchased old equipment from the shutdown factory and invented a new process for making the film, since some components are now obsolete. The film will soon sell in stores in New York.