

a student journal of arts, culture and politics

*f*news magazine

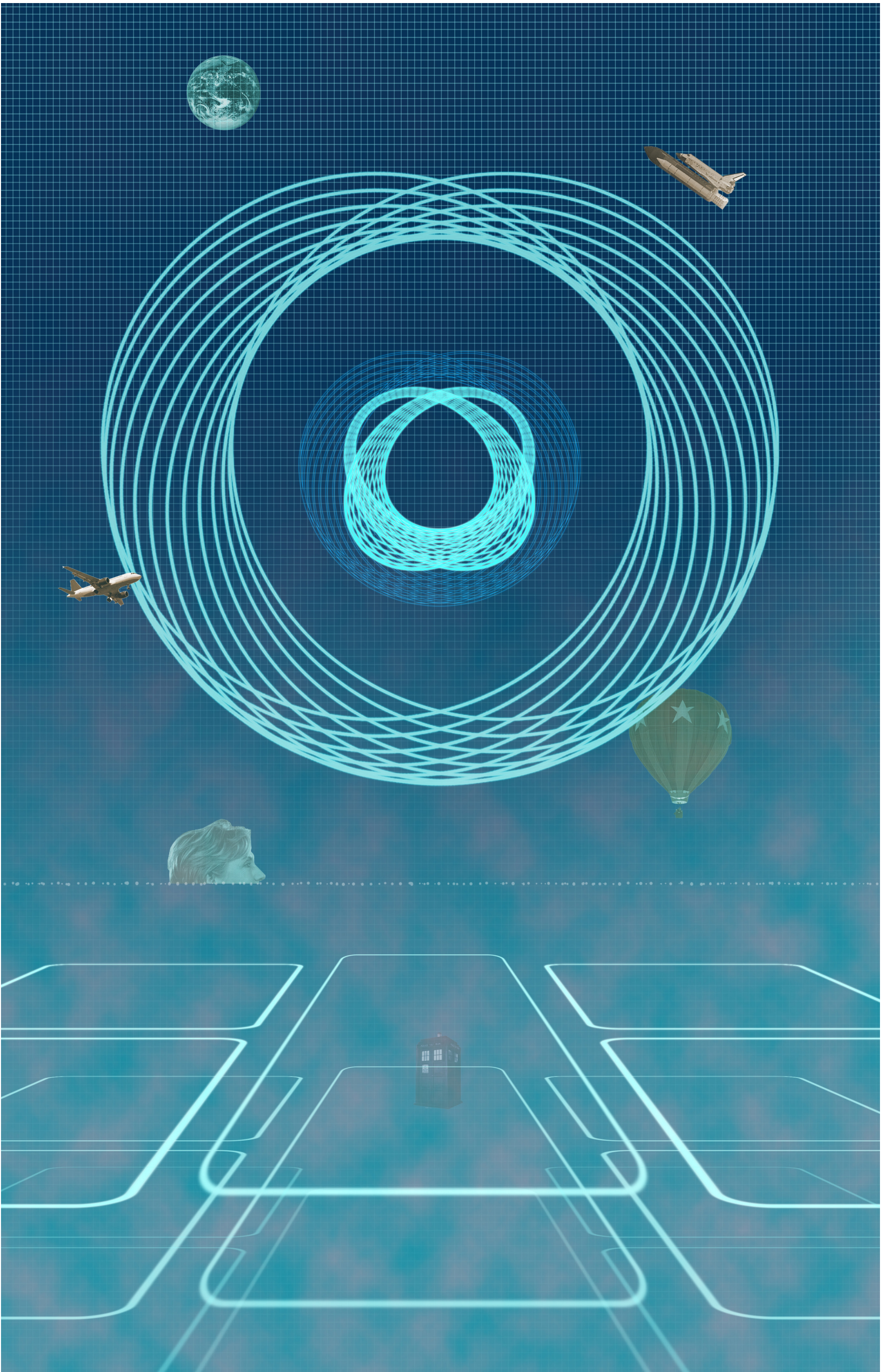
12/
2013

The School
of the Art
Institute of
Chicago

» No Art at Art School

» Consumed by Coffee

» Inside a Particle Accelerator





A coin specific action
of the two pence piece
turned anti-clockwise
and now slightly
darker and lesser
vivid than the red.

Sifted brick under nails.



Two points turn the
world in bringing that
leather eared
umbrella to lean
against wooden trunk.

Elemental
Protected

in this issue

Paper Installation

For our final issue of the fall semester F Newsmagazine welcomes a new site-specific artwork by Angharad Davies, *Untitled (for F Newsmagazine insert)*, on our inside covers. As part of her series of photographed posters, this work takes the form of a newspaper insert and reveals moments of repeatable action that indicate the threshold of a change of state. The first image shows a hole made by turning a two pence piece against a brick gate post in London, where boys would wait after school to be collected by their parents. The second image is an external wall of a log cabin adapted to an internal surface, indicated by a light switch and plug socket. Both expose the passage of time through physical and/or functional transformation. The accompanying text reflects the concept of an insertion through the processed memory of the images.

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fnewsmagazine since 1984

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Hot Air

The theme of our December issue is couched in the idea of the time warp in all its physical and psychological connotations: perceptions of time, structures of time, wasting time, passing time, and making time. To that end we have also included listings of time travel movies and local, national, and international exhibitions to check out if you are resting in Chicago or traveling out of the city during the winter break. We cover legacies of art-making in a review of *Einstein on the Beach (Wind for the Sailboat)* and brief historical accounts of *Chicago’s WPA Legacy*, as well as *20 Years of SUGS*. We look at the possibilities of time to make art within a particle accelerator (*Uncertain Collisions*) and take a critical stance on the creative issues facing SAIC’s MA students (*Who Can’t Make Art at SAIC?*).

—Alyssa Moxley, Managing Editor

cover: **So Space!**
by Meghan Ryan Morris

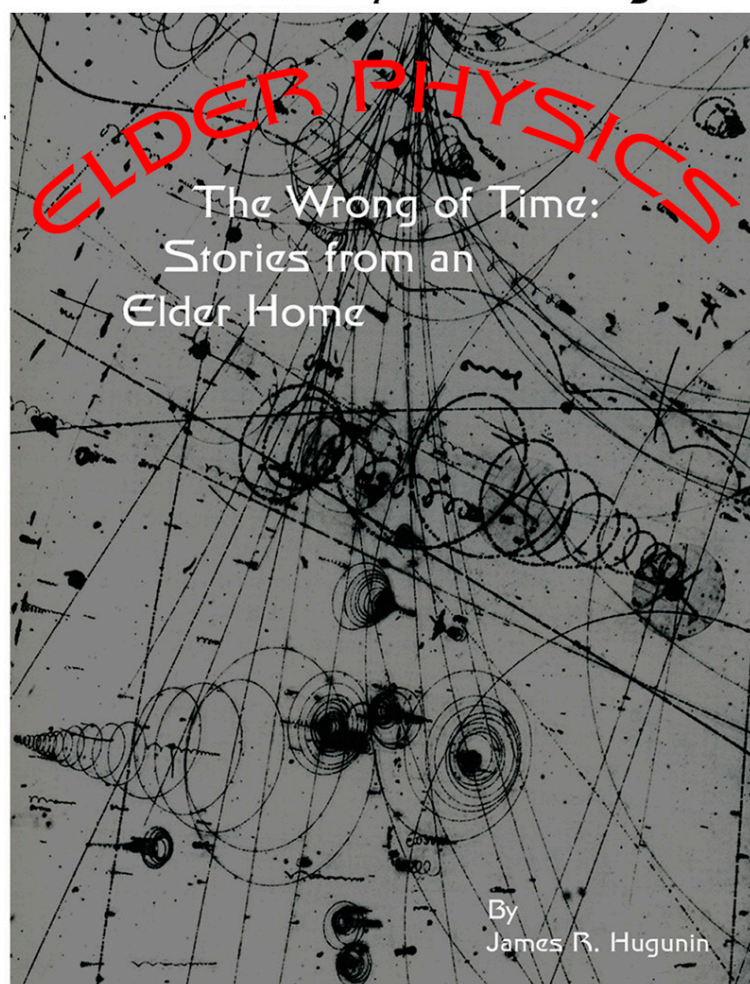
With the new year coming up, time and space are on the brain. Classical but with a modern edge, our headline type this month, Didot, comfortably represents any time period, the distant past, the contemporary moment and prospective futures. Time-lines, grids and Didot’s thin strokes serve well to represent the finite and quantifiable attempts at measuring the unmeasurable.

F is also proud to announce that we received the Pacemaker Award from the Associated Collegiate Press for 2012-2013. Special mention was given to our March 2013 issue with the late F photographer Chris Johnson’s *Happiness is a Cold Gun* cover. The March issue, as well as all of our back issues, are available at fnewsmagazine.com.

—Christopher Givens, Art Director

A **Second Novel**

by James Hugunin



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WHAT'S ON THE WEB THIS MONTH

Presenting: "The F Show" at Free Radio SAIC

Thanks to managers Lauren Taylor and Hanna Elliot, F Newsmagazine is pleased to announce the debut of "The F Show," a mix of music, interviews, discussions and more which will air every Friday between 2-3 p.m. beginning on December 6. Listen while you read! Free Radio SAIC is now streaming content on our homepage.

Fall Undergraduate Exhibition and Graduate Open Studio Night Coverage

Maggie Carrigan reviews a selection of the multidisciplinary works from this semester's BFA show while video from Fen Chen highlights opening night. Meanwhile, students from the MA in New Arts Journalism Program present collaborative write-ups on the work of a selection of MFA students after visiting their studios.

JR: Inside Out

What's the line between a printer and an artist? Arts Editor Alexia Casanova examines French street artist JR's globally participatory "Inside Out Project," questioning if the 2011 TED Prize Winner has put his funds to good use.

Shaken Up and Scrawled Out

Michael D. Moore reviews "Paint Paste Sticker: Chicago Street Art" at the Chicago Cultural Center, including crowd reactions from opening night and the bevy of the city's projects promoting new avenues for artists.

Writer of the People: George Saunders

Surabhi Kanga reports on the writer's lecture as part of SAIC's Visiting Artists Program, highlighting his new collection "Tenth of December" and his advice for young writers to take the time to find and accept their true selves.

Tête-à-Tête: "Blue Is the Warmest Color"

Multimedia Editor Patrick Reynolds and Arts Editor Alexia Casanova present side-by-side reviews of the award-winning French romantic drama.

Tea, Yerba Mate, Liquor

Nadine Mostafa shares how three popular beverages have become associated with the major factions of Syrian society, reflecting on how drinking habits have changed along with Damascus.

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School of the Art Institute
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The diagram illustrates the hierarchy of data sources. It consists of three main components connected by a horizontal line with circular nodes at the junctions. On the left is a map of Illinois with the text "//Local" in orange. In the center is a map of the United States with the text "//National" in dark blue. On the right is a world map with the text "//International" in orange. Vertical dashed lines extend downwards from the nodes between the local and national maps, and between the national and international maps.

A retrospective of the Swiss-German artist.





Sifting through the Subconscious

Artist Elbe Ciña creates a space for freeing the mind.

» zara yost

Despite her classic art school look of thick glasses and bohemian attire, Elbe Ciña is well beyond cliché and fearlessly exists in her own category. Ciña has sass. She dances around to her own neurotic beat. Deeply astute, she talks intensely about race, sexuality, art, and psychoanalysis. Born Lindsey Coulter, and raised outside of Chicago in the suburb of Northbrook, Ciña graduated with a degree in Psychology and Fine Art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2008, and is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Art Therapy from The School of the Art Institute Chicago (SAIC).

Her latest project is called *Sandbox: An Exploration of the Unconscious Through Symbolic Play*. *Sandbox* consists of a tray, filled halfway with white sand that sits firmly on top of dresser-like-drawers. It's about waist high, equipped with wheels and brimming with donated toys. "*Sandbox* is a mobile, interactive installation," says Ciña. From army men, hand-painted porcelain dolls, plastic palm trees to matchbox cars and the Great Pyramid of Giza, *Sandbox's* compartments are a treasure trove of knickknacks and trinkets.

People are invited to choose from an array of baubles to arrange a scene in the sand. The sand acts as a backdrop for the subconscious, and allows the mind to safely venture out in the form of an action figure or miniature bathtub. Reflections on the items chosen can prompt emotions lingering under the surface. The absorption in the moment can help trigger important connections and provide an overall healthy, mental release.

Ciña collaborated with Catherine McCullough, the wood shop manager at SAIC's Columbus Drive building, on the design of *Sandbox* after receiving \$2,500 from the Garret Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant. Joe Behen, the Wellness Center Director, is partly responsible for Ciña's success, having sent out a campus-wide email with a call for proposals. Ciña considers his passion for her project as above and beyond supportive.

Sandbox is a space for relaxation and expression initially created for the public access room used for meetings, light therapy and stress relief in the Wellness Center. "You know, sometimes I would come in there and there would be a little scene with some of the objects in the tray," recounts Ciña. *Sandbox* is now in Ciña's

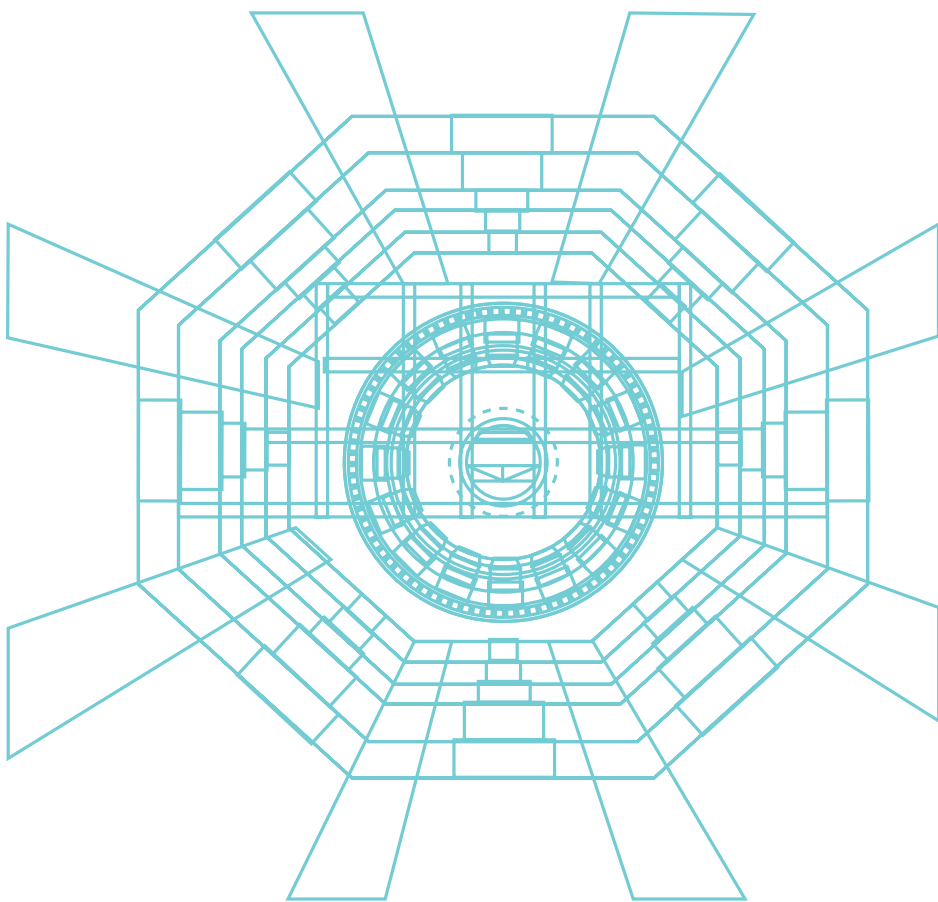
studio in the Sullivan building and available for sessions. The public still has access every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., when she rolls it to the Neiman Center on Wabash. Students, professors and visitors alike are encouraged to stop and have a session.

Equipped with a weekly prompt such as "What is happiness to you?" and "Depict a scene that tells about your feminine self," Ciña usually gets three to four people to step up and play. With no time limit, individuals are invited to dig their fingers into the sand to get deep in their subconscious. "There is always this shift in consciousness. Suddenly people get in a trance where they're just playing. They forget about me. They forget talking to me, and then they'll get into this space where they are just silent," explains Ciña. She claims she is "there to hold the space for something magical to happen."

Sandbox for Ciña is not solely about getting to the root of deep and personal issues. It's about the idea of play. When there is one patient coming in for multiple sessions over a series of weeks, sand tray therapy is about processing why certain objects were chosen, and what the scene itself represents. However, Ciña isn't looking for people to process with her. She wants people to have an experience that is playful and fun. "I try not to get too personal. I don't ask a lot of questions, or try to get to know who they are. I try to make room for them to tell me what they want to, if anything," states Ciña.

Sandbox is something in-between art, science, psychology and education. It's an opportunity to re-visit one's inner-child. It's an aesthetic and reflective romp through the narrative delights of the subconscious.

The sand acts as a backdrop for the subconscious, and allows the mind to safely venture out in the form of an action figure or miniature bathtub.



UNCERTAIN COLLISIONS

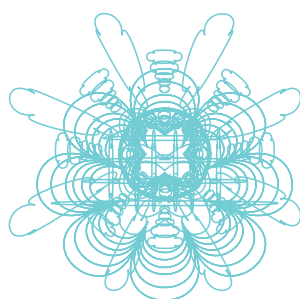
The Artist Residency at the World's Largest Particle Accelerator

» alyssa moxley

Artists and theoretical physicists both create “the conditions for the unexpected to happen,” according to Ariane Koek. She came to Chicago to speak as part of the *Conversations on Art and Science Events Series* at the invitation of School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) President Walter Massey. The two met at The Salzberg Global Forum, an international independent think tank for cultural policy-makers based in Austria. Koek was co-presenting on “imagination” with Charles Lacking, director of the jet propulsion lab at NASA. She has a history of working with imaginative thinkers across disciplines.

At SAIC, Koek discussed her work on establishing an artist residency at The European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) in 2011. The science institute, founded in 1954, involves thousands of scientists around the world in fundamental research on the structure of the universe. They invented the World Wide Web, a component of the Internet, to handle its vast flow of information. Koek's qualifications for this role stems from years with the BBC producing programs on science in collaboration with artists and directing the creative writing based residency, Arvon Foundation. In 2009, with the help of the Clore Fellowship, she began researching the possibilities of a peer-reviewed artist residency within the world's largest scientific research network. CERN has been a draw to amateur and established artists alike for decades, with visitors like Björk and Cerith Wyn Evans making visits to inspire new works; but there had never been an official program for collaboration between artists and scientists. In addition to curating individual visits, Koek also founded a residency with an open call.

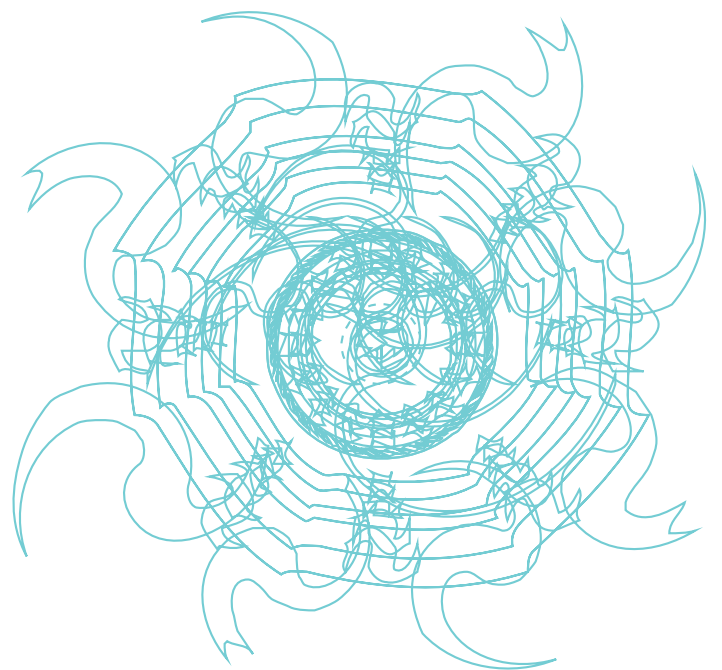
Collide@CERN, in partnership with the Prix Ars Electronica, sets up artists with “inspiration partners,” research scientists based in CERN's Geneva Headquarters. The artists are given an office similar to the scientists and two months to research amongst the physicists without pressure to produce anything. The residency is built on the precept “that particle physics and the arts are inextricably linked: both are ways to explore our existence — what it is to be human and our place in the universe,” says Koek. Without the obligation to produce, artists, like the scientists who develop pure



*Particle physics...is so
imaginative and abstract and so
engaged with the questions you
ask yourself everyday, like who
am I, what am I, and what is my
place in the universe.*

knowledge-based experiments at CERN, are free to explore possibilities outside of applied research. Koek asserts Collide@CERN aims to provide “a period of research and development, food for the soul, two to three months for you to regrow.” After their research, artists are given studio space and access to digital arts specialists at Ars Electronica's Linz-based Futurelab.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN sends 11,000 protons per second rushing around a 25-kilometer track at 99.9999991% the speed of light. Last year the protons collided in front of the ATLAS, the largest camera in the world that captures images of the nearly invisible. The photos proved the existence of the elusive Higgs Boson particle by recording its decay. It is posited as creating symmetries and asymmetries in electromagnetic fields. Essentially they are the causal roots of all mass in matter.



Some artists have responded to their experiences at CERN by creating new technologies themselves. Wolfgang Tillmans developed a new camera inspired by the ATLAS. Inaugural Collide@CERN resident Julius von Bismarck claims he has ideas for the “next thirty years.” During his residency he created an installation with four swinging lamps rotating in randomized disharmony except for one idiosyncratic turn when the lamps synchronize their orbits. Composer Mark Bowden and librettist Owen Sheers reinterpreted Hayden's *The Creation*, taking direct inspiration from CERN's Alice experiment, which investigates the quark-gluon plasma that emerged just as the universe was forming. This summer sound artist Bill Fontana, who came to SAIC in 2011 as a visiting professor, turned the entire collider into a resonator, as it has been shut down for renovation. He played the sounds of the sea through exciters attached to the sides of the tunnel. The sounds completed the 25km circuit 12.2 seconds later, filtered by their journey through the LHC's materials.

Koek warned that one of the dangers for visiting artists is “they become so close to particle physics, because it's so imaginative and abstract and it's so engaged with the questions you ask yourself everyday, like who am I, what am I, and what is my place in the universe. ... Once you get too close to the actual language of physics, you can lose your soul, just because it's so fascinating, and you want to prove yourself. And yet, it will take you 15 years to be a particle physicist, just as it's taken you 15 years to be an artist.”

Choreographer Gilles Jobin, the first Geneva-based Collide@CERN artist, created a number of improbable interventions. In one work, the dancers side on their bellies along the ledge of the library windows. Documentation shows concentrated physicists, buried in reading, oblivious to the movement of physical bodies.

In quantum physics, demonstrated in Young's double-slit experiment, one's own perception of an event is recognized as fundamentally changing it. As much as the artists are interacting with the research of the scientists, “anecdotally, all of the scientists have said that ‘it has changed the way we look at our science,’” says Koek, “It has changed the way we practice our science, but I can't tell you how. ... its going to change the way I do my science, but I can't tell you how. I just know it's changed me fundamentally.”

the natural world of master shen-long



A Zen Master Visits SAIC

» **kioto aoki**

It's not every day that one meets a Zen master. On October 28, Zen Buddhist master and multidisciplinary artist Master Shen-Long gave a lecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's campus. He approaches life through a self-reflective and open-minded philosophy, but unlike other Zen artists, Shen-Long extends his practice to the mediums of oil paint, ink, watercolor, sculptural dimensions, and even photography.

Nothing is everything, and illusion is everything

Jacqueline Chao, who teaches in the Art History, Theory and Criticism department at SAIC, presented work by Shen-Long including an ink drawing on rice paper called *The Nightingale's Discussion on the Past and Present*. "Master Shen-Long was the first to put the nude female figure into a traditional Chinese landscape painting, a celebration of the close relationship between mankind and the natural world," Chao said, pointing to the image of a nude woman reclining among rocks. The blending of classic brushwork and painting techniques from the 11th century with nontraditional imagery defines Shen-Long's style of "embracing the past and creating the new."

Master Shen-Long's understanding of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism also strongly influences his work. For him, art is made when you connect with what he called "enlightenment power," or the inherent nature of things and their relationship to the universe. In *Incredible Awakening*, a monkey is drawn in meditation signifying the opportunity for any being to become Buddha. *Dharmakaya* shows the faint outline of a body, representing one's "inherent self-Buddha nature."

The painting *Pureland Within Our Soul* shows Shen-Long's recognizable abstract style of a marbled background with the hint of a figure in the image. One can roughly discern the outlines of a face. There are no fronts or backs to Shen-Long's paintings. Large canvases can easily be viewed from either side, which is the sculptural nature of his painting works.

Shen-Long is a master of Chinese Literati Art, a traditional practice that includes poetry, painting and calligraphy. He incorporates all these mediums in pieces like *Spirit Transformation of Nine Dragons*, in which a dragon symbolizes transformation over the surface of a 200-foot scroll. Using only his hands and fingers to draw, Shen-Long illustrates the grandeur of transformation. Near the end of the scroll, the dragon becomes formless and abstracted. Shen-Long also incorporates a unique calligraphic style of fluid and energetic strokes that dance along the scroll in poetic verse.

Wearing a plain black T-shirt and slacks, Shen-Long points to the screen where *Spirit Transformation* is projected and says, "Well, how about this?" The audience laughs. "Where is the pure land?" he asks the audience after expressing his desire to go back to this place at this point in his life. When no one answers, he continues, "So let's talk about the Zen."

He shares advice and insights about the philosophies and beliefs of Zen practice. Key is knowing and accepting the illusory nature of this world. He tells the story of his motorcycle falling off a cliff. Miraculously, he was saved from falling by a single branch on which he was caught. He remembered one of his Zen masters telling him that "everything is [an] illusion," and the next thing he realized, he was back above the cliff, a phenomenon he credits to mind power.

When Shen-Long closes his eyes and meditates, he says, "I am the universe. Only spirit is forever. Otherwise nothing is there." During those few seconds hanging from the branch, Shen-Long saw everything from the mountain, to the grass, to the river, and understood that this was the truth of the universe.

Shen-Long relates that theories of quantum mechanics, "already have reports say[ing] that all kinds of material is really from people's mind." He queries the common dependence on physical materiality.

"We are lost in the phenomenon," he says. "You have to think beyond the physical. There is a language, an inherent understanding of the philosophy that one must grasp. Ghost is not ghost is ghost, or Shen-Long is not Shen-Long is Shen-Long," he explains. "If you don't understand that, you never understand what is the Zen." In order for the statement "Ghost is not ghost" to work, we need to know what the true form of ghost is. But what is the truth of ghost? In order to understand what that form is, one has to concentrate, meditate or even have a special ability transcended from one's previous life.

"Nothing is everything, and illusion is everything," the Zen master says. They are both correct according to him. He talks about a painting he made of a Buddha's face. "I used the brushwork, ink. And put my mind power. Mixed together." For Shen-Long, "Art is life is Zen." And in order to be a true Zen practitioner, "one must meditate and forget everything in order to see everything," he says. When people become themselves, they are free to practice and "make good art." Master Shen-Long is not so much an artist looking to create work that is a visual representation of a certain lifestyle, but a Zen practitioner who makes art as a direct extension of his philosophy of life.



In Pursuit of the Topos

Unpacking Media Archeology

» **henry harris**

In the past decade, media archaeologies have become an increasingly prevalent topic of discussion for artists and scholars interested in media studies and the evolution of the ways information is disseminated. Many have thought of media archaeology as a way of understanding history. It operates on a timeline comprised of fragmentary epochs dictated by different media formats and protocols. Though various media formats may have utopic aspirations placed upon them, each becomes quickly outmoded as time progresses. It is for this reason that media archaeologies have become a far-reaching and intricate site of study.

Artist and theorist Erkki Huhtamo, often regarded as one of the earliest writers on the subject, was brought to SAIC to present for the Media Archaeologies Institute lecture series, spearheaded by Professor Eric Fleischauer and sponsored by the Film, Video, and New Media department. Huhtamo's recent book, *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (2013) looks to early forms of visual culture in search of a mirror to reflect the present. The Institute, originally proposed as a course last spring, has now evolved, in its inaugural semester, into a series of lectures by those who use re-discovered and outdated media through writing and studio practice. In his SAIC presentation, Huhtamo linked the U.S. painter John Banvard's famous Mississippi River panoramas to the contemporary meme and image macro through a concept known as topos (singular) or topoi (plural).

For Huhtamo and his contemporaries, topos refers to particular types of images that have recurring themes throughout history. These are not to be confused with icons, or more static images that do not change with time. They are far more complex and protean forms of imagery. In pursuing topoi, media archeologists attend to moments where one image is destroyed in favor of a newer one that replaces it. These moments are interpreted as the forbearers of enduring cultural content that seems to transcend different generations. Topoi are images we continuously return to, as we seek new forms that can satisfy the particular demands of the cultural moment. What is of particular interest for Huhtamo is the inevitable reinterpretation of these themes and visual motifs in instances of new cultural production.

Huhtamo enters the field through semantic and semiotic principles, often tying visual phenomena to the key theorists of semiotics, like Roland Barthes and Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Huhtamo, the study of signs is comprised of their signifiers and signified objects, functioning as a useful template for recognizing and theorizing topoi. In this regard, certain signs have particular types of staying power, while their variables often change from one period to the next. While attending to previous eras and their own isolated characteristics, the dance between signifiers and the signified reveals the cultural currency of some signs to be more complex than others. In addition to studying semiotics, Huhtamo looks to the early texts of Abi Warburg and André Malraux as they conceptualized what would later be understood as visual culture.

*As media formats evolve,
the field of Media Archeology
examines repetitive motifs
and outmoded technology as a
rich area of study*

Huhtamo sees repetitive motifs, traditions, and the constant area of play between old and new media as a rich area of study for media archeologists. He is interested in looking at the media archaeological possibilities of cloud computing, as well as the topos of the "hand of God motif." For example, one can compare the detached hand on a Dirt Devil vacuum logo to the hand that assembles the set in Roberto Rossellini's film *La Macchina Ammazzacattivi* (*The Machine that Kills Bad People*).

Fleischauer has particular sensitivity to the notion of topoi as he worked through the transition between analog and digital video formats in the 1990s. He cites this as an interesting learning curve in adapting to new media forms, as well as on overall paradigm shift in how content is created and stored. He sees this as a prevalent issue not only in film and video but within other media as well.

Like Huhtamo, Fleischauer is interested in the cultural unpacking of topoi and meaning that can be

gleaned from repetitive gestures of image making through time. In addition to Huhtamo, Fleischauer recommends other writers in media archaeologies such as Jussi Parikka, Siegfried Zielinsky, and Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and artists such as Paul DeMarinis, Gregory Barsamian, and Daniel Rehn. Considering the SAIC faculty, Fleischauer recommends the work of James Connolly and Kyle Evans, who created the project *Cracked Ray Tube*, which alters analog technology like televisions to produce distorted noises and images.

For Media Archeologists like Huhtamo and Fleischauer, media history consists of forms rather than specific events. As systems and media formats evolve, components or sets of data (like images, texts, and codes) are left behind. While data may be lost, these shifts beg the question of what data can be transferred to the new platform of dissemination and production. Constant attempts have been made to mitigate these challenges, such as "migrating" media to new formats. Information inevitably falls victim to the evolution of these platforms. In the contemporary moment, stacks of media containing mass amounts of unused data sit, housed in a multitude of outdated formats.

Both media and platform exist in an interlocking relationship of dependency. For example, a paper computer punch card would lose its significance without a mainframe computer that interprets its data. Conversely, the mainframe would be irrelevant without its stack of program cards to run through its apparatus. A 5.25" floppy disk of the computer game *Oregon Trail* formatted for the Apple II platform would need not only specific computer hardware, but also particular firmware and a compatible operating system as well.

The practice of media archaeologies involves digging through layers of existing technology to discover the content of existing but otherwise unused systems. The efforts of media archeologists like Huhtamo and Fleischauer uncover flows of data from yesteryear that serve not only as historic moments in their own right, but reveal a consistency in the kind of information we like to store for later remembrance. The formats of the past, as media archaeologists, theorists and practitioners continue to reveal, influence future iterations of media. Media Archaeology indicates that no format is final. The glitches of the past can become the aesthetic pleasures of the future.

BLACK HOLES

BLACK COFFEE

Wasting Time in Chicago Cafés

» **jessica barrett sattell**

While all spaces are marked by the passage of time, most successful cafés encourage visitors to linger and fall into the lull of passing moments. As the days get colder and shorter it might be tempting to stick to one's own well-loved neighborhood hangouts, but in the spirit of time travel (and not to mention the blessed lull of winter break), here are a handful of suggestions for exploring some of Chicago's chill-out spots that are perfect for escaping into new worlds of experiential and experimental consumption.

Bad Wolf Coffee (Lakeview)

"Death to false grind!" proclaims this "alternative to alternative coffee shops" that features a wall-painting replica of *Doctor Who*'s Tardis, a nod to the space's name-sake. With no chairs and no wi-fi, tucked right under the Brown Line tracks, this spot encourages visitors to strike up conversations with the owner and other coffee compatriots around a narrow communal table. Rather than emphasizing "getting work done" in the go-go sense of being connected to a laptop or absorbed in paperwork, a visit to Bad Wolf encourages getting back to basic unplugged interactions. There isn't a parade of fancy drinks here, just varying strengths of strong coffee that beg to be paired with the owner's daily limited run of incredible from-scratch pastries.

3422 N. Lincoln Ave // Open Wens - Mon 7 am - 6 pm

The Wormhole Coffee (Wicker Park)

This '80s sci-fi-themed hangout is a microcosm of the hustle and bustle of Milwaukee Avenue and a favorite refueling stop for visitors and locals alike. Deep slate blue walls and minimalist furniture evoke a hyper-hip nerd's lair, a cave more akin to a gamer's basement peppered with beloved fraying movie posters, video game ephemera and carefully chosen tchotchkes. A real DeLorean and a battered Han Solo cardboard cutout loom over the rows of laptop-linked patrons arranged around low couches and sleek study tables. "Legend of Zelda" fan art and a tile mosaic of classic video game characters help keep the space thematic and cohesive, if not kitschy overload. But this sanctuary of pop cultural comfort translates into a selection of thematic treats such as homemade pop tarts and 80s celebrity inspired seasonal drink concoctions such as the *Cosby* Classic (a banana pudding latte).

1462 N. Milwaukee Ave // Open daily 7 am - 11 pm

Cafe Mustache (Logan Square)

Earthy, textural and cozy, this hotspot of local music and emerging art is a collection of decorative vignettes where everything clashes but nothing is out of place. Books of cartography and Daniel Clowes comics, a bevy of records for sale and mismatched furniture playfully mesh with an array of facial hair-themed accoutrements (including the espresso machine's very own wooden mustache). Wi-fi promptly shuts off at 8 pm on most nights in order to shift the focus away from the fog of personalized projects onto music acts. The menu features a hearty selection of drinks, cocktails, sandwiches and small plates, but the highlights are their vegetarian chili, Americanos, and the "Laura Palmer," a mix of sparkling blood orange juice and vodka.

2313 N. Milwaukee Ave // Mon - Tues: 7 am - 8 pm,
Wed - Fri: 7 am - 12 am, Sat: 8 am - 12 am,
Sun: 8 am - 8 pm

Cafe Jumping Bean (Pilsen)

This neighborhood standby has flourished as a haven for creatives of all kinds for nearly twenty years. Vividly painted tabletops play up beautiful stained glass window accents and punchy walls, reflecting the street's saturated murals and signage. Rather than entertaining the idea of being a blinders-on, office away from home, the space is definitely a neighborhood gathering space complete with a small flatscreen broadcasting sports and news and a well-loved assortment of board games. The sandwiches, salads and other light fare come as large portions for little cost. There's nothing more satisfying than coming here, ordering a Mexican hot chocolate and a cheese melt, listening to the ever-changing soundtrack of world music and watching the outside world fly by.

1439 W. 18th St // Mon - Fri: 6 am - 10 pm,
Sat - Sun: 7 am - 7 pm

The Coffee Studio (Andersonville)

Nestled between antique shops at the northern tip of Andersonville is a sleek embodiment of how a modernist design firm might translate into a café. Light wood paneling and brushed aluminum play up the mod simplicity of Eames chairs and cheery space-age globe lighting, giving this sunny, airy den a polished finish. Despite the industrial-chic clean lines, there's a warmth and craftiness to the menu. The "studio" nomenclature betrays the fact that the baristas hand pull each cup. It's easy to get lost in a sea of glowing Macbooks and nod off to music ranging from lo-fi ambient noise to hyper Japanese pop, but the steady flow of patrons weaving in between the narrow spaces between tables on any given day ensures that you're never alone in doing so.

5628 N. Clark St // Open daily 6:30 am - 9 pm

Intelligentsia Coffee (Loop)

Chicago is dotted with Intelligentsia outposts and the company's wholesale business alone keeps half the town jacked up on caffeine. But the Millennium Park shop is worth stopping by for a prime example of the chain's effortless, machine-like efficiency paired with the warmth of ritualistic coffee making. Post-industrial decor emphasizes a wide-reaching layout of high top tables and wall seats dotted with eager tourists and office workers escaping from work, only to do more work. The experience of watching dapper baristas line up along the bar to craft orders is akin to something in-between witnessing an assembly line and a parlor trick, a hypnotic testament to the art of the pour over. Be prepared to wait for up to 15 minutes for the best cup anywhere near SAIC during the morning and lunch rushes.

53 E. Randolph St // Mon - Fri: 6:30 am - 8 pm,
Sat: 7 am - 8 pm, Sun: 7 am - 7 pm





curating by coffee cup

Exploring Consumption Through the Prosthetics of Eating

» gabrielle burrage

We are constant consumers, existing in a culture where coffee and daily consumption rituals are integral to the way we live. During a semester-long analysis, students in the Arts Administration and Policy Department's Curatorial Practice class set out to examine the local and global intricacies surrounding coffee production, culture, and consumption.

In order to provide a space for a dialogue around these subjects, they collaborated with Brandon Alvendia, an artist and curator who runs a small, alternative art space in Logan Square, The Storefront. The class transformed the space into a pop-up coffee shop where they hosted a one-day gathering, *The Storefront's Blend: Discourse by the Cup*, discussing, consuming, and understanding coffee.

The event screened two coffee-centric documentaries, one a sobering revelation, one an inspiring portrayal of humanity. The 2006 documentary *Black Gold* highlights coffee's cost both to the consumer and to the grower, by following the manager of the Ethiopian Coffee Union as he travels the world in search of a fair market value. In the short 2012 documentary *Yoshi's Blend*, coffee becomes the rich and idiosyncratic vehicle for healing in tsunami-ravaged Japan. *Discourse by the Cup* also hosted an anonymous local coffee shop tasting in which visitors chose their drink based on the verbal descriptions of the brews by local baristas. Visitors and artists were invited to engage in discussions about the documentaries, as well as their own interactions with coffee.

The conversations throughout the semester and the event, which are documented on the blog, rootin-gourfood.wordpress.com, became a basis to curate an exhibition. *Constant Consumer*, opening November 18 at the Neiman Center SUGS gallery, investigates and calls into conversation the complexities of daily coffee consumption habits.

Ashley Szczesiak's (MFA Art Education 2014) installation of hanging embroidered cups, *LATTE dada*, exemplifies how modern coffee-drinking practices can impart what she calls "carefulness and thoughtfulness in regard to consumerism." She affirms how the form of

a coffee cup "lends itself to be a metaphorical container for many things: physical objects, as well as intangible thoughts and feelings, even ineffable sensations." She relates how she elevates mundane coffee-drinking vessels "by taking a used coffee cup stained with coffee and lipstick and lovingly embroidering it ... my hand literally meets the hand of the maker of my cup of coffee calling into question, 'What does a handmade cup of coffee look like?'"

SAIC undergraduate student Stephanie Chu's animated feature *Coffee* satirizes the consumption of coffee as habit forming and at its addictive extreme. Chu's chalkboard drawing, a growing pile of cups, will represent a small percentage of SAIC's coffee consumption. The artist will extend the pile each week to mirror the coffee consumption by students at the Neiman Center Café.



The final installation of the exhibition includes artists selected from an SAIC open call for works that highlight the use of eating prosthetics as a part of daily consumption.

The final installation of the exhibition includes artists currently at SAIC, alumnus, and artists outside the SAIC community. The works reflect a variety of interpretations that artists have on daily consumption. Similar to the takeaway for the exhibition, each work analyzes the use of eating prosthetics and the role it has in daily life. How do the items that aid our consumption alter our perception of what we are eating? How do they influence our ideas on the production of consumables? An additional publication produced in parallel with this part of the exhibition delves further into that question through historical research regarding the physical prosthetics of eating in a number of cultures: cups, bowls, forks, chopsticks, etc.

The exhibition aims to inspire dialogue among viewers to consider the impact of seemingly banal acts, such as drinking coffee from cups. Ultimately, the works in *Constant Consumer* provoke reflection on personal and social ramifications of our daily habits.



Chicago's WPA Art Legacy

50 Years Later, a Community Art Center and Murals in Schools Remain

» troy pieper

At the height of the Great Depression, the U.S. government created the largest publicly-funded arts program in its history. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in an effort to alleviate the country's 25 percent unemployment rate, created the Works Progress Administration (WPA), employing hundreds of thousands of Americans to build roads and government buildings. He also created a sub-agency, the Federal Art Project (FAP), employing painters, sculptors, printmakers, writers and actors to create more than 200,000 works of art between 1935 and 1943, according to The Art Story, a nonprofit arts education organization.

Artists like Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Joseph Stella were employed by the Project, according to *Artists at Work*, a 1991 video produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Artists were finally able to make a living, thanks to public support. "It moved us to tell the story of the American people in our work," says artist Joseph Delaney. "Artists have a tendency to live in an ivory tower," said sculptor Alice Neel, but WPA funding "took us out of our studio and made us more aware of the world around us."

The Project also established teaching programs in community centers and schools across the country, including in rural areas and held exhibitions of professional artists' and citizens' work. It founded 100 community art centers around the U.S. At his 1941 dedication of the National Gallery of Art, Roosevelt said Americans have been "taught to believe art was something foreign to America and to themselves. They have discovered in the last few years that art is something in which they have a part. They have discovered their own towns in pictures painted by their sons, their neighbors." One community art center still stands, and it is in Chicago. The South Side Community Art Center, now a nonprofit, has been a venue for African-American art for more than 70 years.

According to *Art for the Millions*, a 1973 collection of essays, Chicago's "Poster Division" experienced such high demand that it created a dedicated "Silkscreen Department." The posters were advertisements from the "City of Chicago, State of Illinois, the Federal Health Department, The U.S. Post Office, Chicago Park District, Department of Agriculture, the Chicago Zoological Park, Libraries, the Art Institute of Chicago, and many others," as well as various agencies within the WPA. The posters were placed on "the 'L,' art museums, schools, libraries, community centers and in traveling exhibits," and were given to local merchants for their shop windows.

There were children's art galleries, community art centers where anyone could take classes, and FAP galleries established to show the work. Writer Mary Morsell says the Project's exhibition program was like a "slow journey from New York to San Francisco. They give a vivid sense of all that may be ours, if cultural riches be given one half the encouragement that has brought triumph in the mechanical and industrial world." In her travels she saw "a painting of a Negro graveyard in New Orleans, Middle Western farmyards drawn in the mood of poetic fantasy and a piece of mystical folk sculpture."

For the first time in American history, she says, the general public was as responsive to contemporary visual art as it had been to new books, plays or music, because citizens had been given the opportunity to participate in the arts in their own communities. Professional artists, however, were not ubiquitous in their acceptance.

Artist Robert Jay Wolff wrote an essay claiming the idea of the artist as Bohemian was still strong among artists in America. For the first time, artists were offered regular employment, but it was not accepted with "wonder and enthusiasm by the whole community," Wolff says. American society still considered the artist to be a talented misfit, and artists still clung to the legend that gave them, through poverty and isolation, precious freedom from the humbling process of identifying one's efforts with those of others. "It is safe to say that not a few of them at the beginning of the Project were prepared to be ashamed of their employment," Wolff says.

Over time, he says, that changed. New York artist James Brooks said in *Artists at Work* that the FAP "took competition between artists out of the art world, so we started to see ourselves as part of a whole." But that solidarity came to work against them in the end when some Project artists began including representations of workers' rights and symbols of communism in their work. In 1939, the Project began laying artists off and experiencing budget cuts. Chicago artists had already formed the first ever labor union for members of their profession, the Artists' Union. Although it took courage to join amid accusations of being "red" artists, Wolff writes, members were turning out work that was creating a "nationwide impression that Chicago was an increasingly important center of American art."

Neel said that Republican Party members she knew were starting to say that FAP artists were "just boondoggling." According to The Art Story, Mark Rothko was dropped from the Project 1939, and Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock were let go a few years later. As Americans were increasingly employed as part of the

country's WWII effort, the Works Progress Administration became obsolete in the eyes of the public and the government, and in December 1943 the WPA and all of its programs was disbanded.

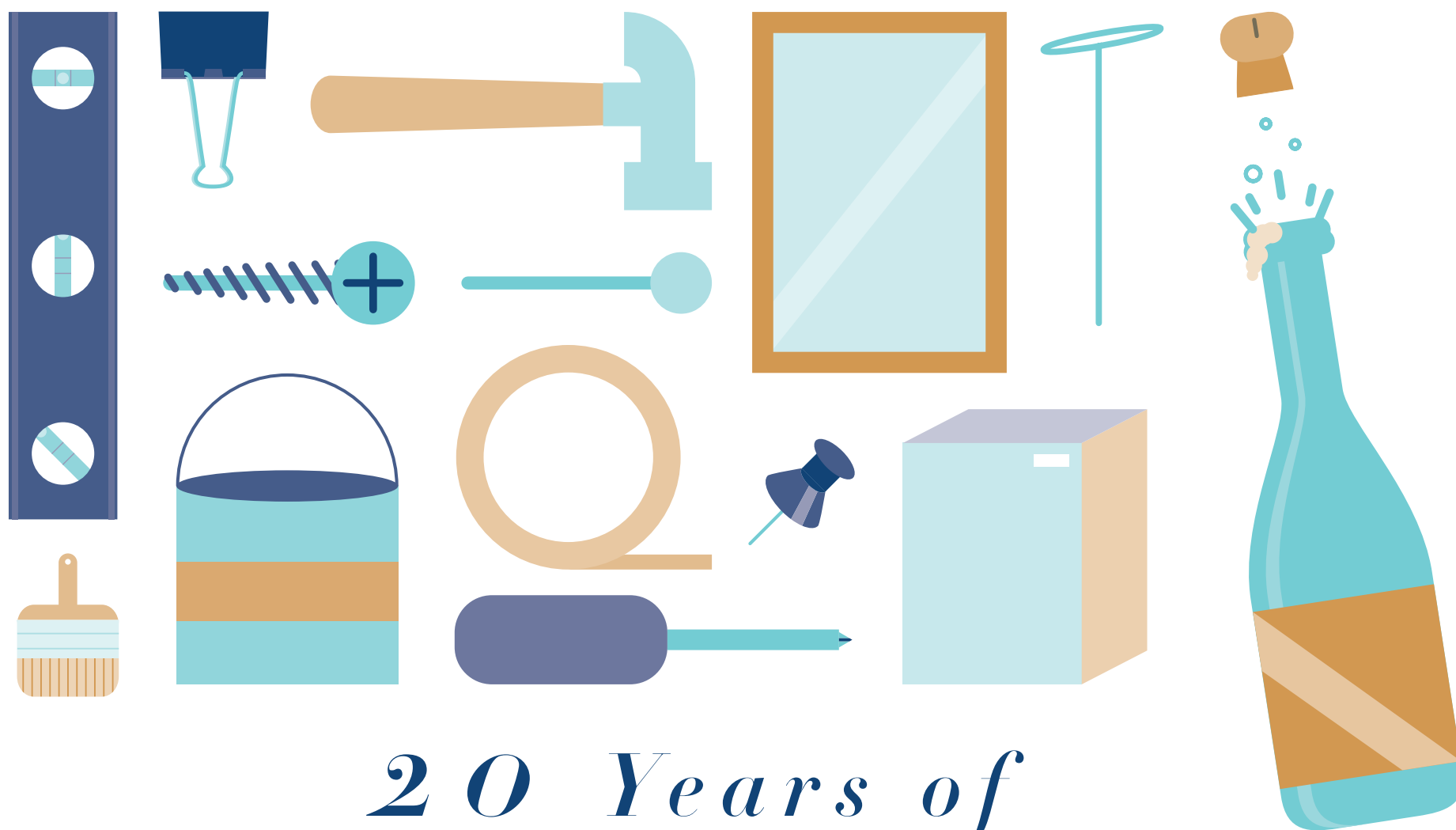
The federal government began auctioning off thousands of WPA-funded paintings by the pound, according to *Artists at Work*. One plumber paid \$300 for several thousand oil paintings to use as pipe insulation. Public murals across the country were removed or painted over. "The Red Scare made people afraid that there may be symbolism in them," said Brooks. Not five years prior, Chicago's reputation as a serious art center had been

"Americans have been taught to believe art was something foreign to America and to themselves."

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt

growing thanks to the very artists who were later "denounced and vilified," by the public, according to Wolff. Imagining a legacy greater than a handful of murals around the city, he wrote his essay in 1939, when the Artists' Union was "finally becoming the collective voice of this new and fruitful patronage."

Beginning in 1994, the Chicago Conservation Center uncovered and restored many of the hundreds of WPA-funded murals in Chicago Public Schools. Ours is an age in which public funding for the arts and arts education is continually under attack from the right. Cities tear down works of architectural beauty to make room for functional structures, and museums favor fashion and celebrity-related exhibitions to attract visitors. The Federal Art Project could never happen now, but it is a bit of hope to see that in this one instance, Chicago did not throw away what it already had.



20 Years of Student-run Galleries

You Can Almost Buy SUGs a Drink

» emily margosian

The student-run art galleries at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago are turning twenty. With three professional-grade exhibition spaces on campus, Student Union Galleries exclusively shows student work. They have become an integral part of the school's culture, offering student artists professional exhibition experiences. But 20 years ago, art students at SAIC had no officially designated space at the school to show their art.

"When I was asked to interview for the SUGs advisor position, nothing existed," says Michael Ryan, an arts administration professor at the school who served as the faculty advisor to the group during its first 19 years. He recalls that students wanted the proposed "Gallery X" to be just as respectable as Betty Rymer Gallery, an exhibition space on campus controlled by the administration.

At the time, the school's administration was still responding to the *Mirth and Girth* and "Flag on the Floor" controversies of a few years prior. In the former, SAIC student David K. Nelson, Jr. painted the recently deceased Harold Washington, a popular African-American mayor of Chicago, wearing only a bra, G-string, garter belt and stockings. A year later, in 1989, student Dread Scott Tyler made *What is the Proper Way to Display a U.S. Flag?*, consisting of a podium with a notebook for visitors to write their feelings on his work of art. To reach the podium, visitors had to stand on an American flag draped on the floor before the podium. Both works, exhibited at the school, caused tremendous public and national controversy and raised issues around censorship within the school and at large.

Students felt that their ability to showcase their work on campus was being limited. "What we developed in terms of SUGs was an answer to that," says Ryan. "After I met with the students and knew what they wanted, I told them the only way to do this would be to run it as a professional business." The fledgling group was given a ten thousand-dollar start-up grant by the school. Knowing that it would not be enough to jump start the

kind of operation the students were proposing, Ryan had Student Union President Brian Petroff petition the school for an additional ten thousand dollars. "It immediately made me realize how supportive the school is of its students," says Ryan, "because he got it pretty easily."

Using *F* Newsmagazine as a preexisting model of a student group with professional standards, they made their vision a reality in 1994. "We had the money. We just had to start figuring out what the hell we were going

The street visibility of the Leroy Neiman Center has allowed SUGs to develop an "edgier" personality, according to the staff, as opposed to Gallery X. With sidewalk traffic, the Neiman Center has allowed the visibility of student work to expand beyond the student population. This has involved conversations incorporating new factors such as Chicago City Code policies, security, and additional levels of responsibility regarding public viewing.

They will continue to display art that reflects student voice, but challenges the public.

to do," says Ryan. With no proposals, no office, and lots of construction to be done on Gallery X, getting funding was proving to be the easy part. Getting the gallery up to professional standards would require lockable doors, gallery attendants and accountability from student staff. SUGs did not have an office or a phone for its first month, instead relying on a shopping bag with folders in it that Ryan carried to each meeting. "In the beginning, I was paid to be there one day a week, and I was there every day," he says. Slowly walls were built, phones were installed and the vision began to take shape.

Today that vision has grown, and SUGs has expanded with it. As of 2012 it includes the Leroy Neiman Center gallery located on the first floor of the Sharp Building, in addition to Gallery X. Over the course of the last 20 years, SUGs has continued its mission to reflect the ever-evolving student voice of the school, showcasing graduate and undergraduate student work. Some of the builders of SUGs' legacy include SAIC staff member Nancy Gildart, who was a student director, as was Ellen Alderman, a notable Chicago gallerist. Sterling Ruby had a SUGs exhibition as an undergraduate at SAIC and will be part of the 2014 Whitney Biennial.

Ross Jordan, curatorial fellow for SUGs, notes that this increased visibility "bumps everything up a level," challenging SUGs staff to carefully consider how viewers outside the context of an art school may interpret potentially confusing or controversial displays. In this way, working for the student-run organization is an even more useful and interesting experience. Staff members say they make a habit of anticipating public scrutiny as part of the job of professional gallerists.

Meanwhile, they will continue, as part of their mission, to display art that reflects "student voice, but challenges the public," says Jordan. Despite its growth, SUGs has always been about students, their work and how best to leverage the organization as a learning tool. "After you complete a SUGs proposal, you're basically set for any other proposal in the art world," says Ariel Fang, SUGs' Administrative Director.

SUGs will hold a party to celebrate its 20th anniversary in February that will include alumni artists Claire Ashley, Alberto Aguilar and John Phillips. For more information, visit blogs.saic.edu/sugs.

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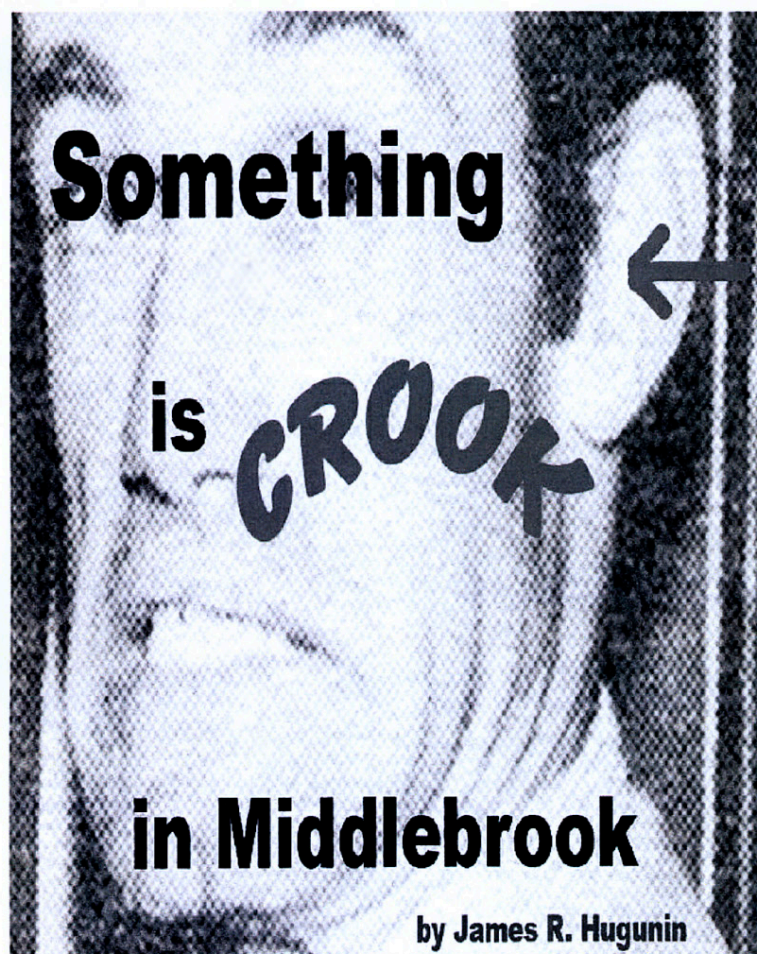
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Who Can't Make Art at SAIC?

MA Students Lack Interdisciplinary Access

» alexia casanova

SAIC prides itself on offering an “interdisciplinary curriculum and the necessary freedom to develop as artists, designers, and scholars.” However, the reality seems somewhat different. SAIC is a reputable art institution, named “the most influential art school” by the National Arts Journalism Program. The quality of its Master of Arts (MA) programs’ teaching is outstanding. Enrolled students learn from the best in the field, and benefit from an almost absolutely comprehensive learning experience. However, despite the prestige of SAIC’s MA programs, an essential feature of what an art school should offer seems to be lacking — the opportunity to make art.

The majority of MA programs (Art History, Arts Administration, Art Education, New Arts Journalism) have no studio classes. There are virtually no opportunities to engage in the making of art within or outside of the curriculum for the graduate students enrolled in these programs. It is both ironic and highly problematic that this is happening within an art school. Shouldn't an art school have student groups and department-led workshops for its students to attempt art forms not included in their course, and grant them access to studios and equipment when needed?

F News magazine asked the administrative directors and assistants of the following departments if they offered activities for SAIC students from outside their program: Painting and Drawing, Photography, Ceramics, Fashion, Fiber and Material Studies, Sculpture, and Printmedia. While some did not reply, most admitted that they had no non-credit classes to allow MA students to discover new art forms. The only department offering a free extra-curricular activity is the Painting and Drawing department, with free figure drawing sessions on Thursdays. Although the Photography department does not have free instructional activities, it does offer the opportunity to anyone who is familiar with black and white photography to use their photo lab. Some of the departmental administrators we contacted were kind enough to provide tips and alternatives on how to get involved in art making around Chicago. Fiber and Material Studies gave information about the Committed Knitters at University of Chicago, Wednesdays, 12 p.m. - 3 p.m., Arts Incubator. The Fashion department suggested classes at Hancock Fabrics stores.

The irony is that other universities in Chicago seem to offer more options for extra-curricular art-making. In other words, MA students at non-art-specific schools have more opportunities to make art. At the University of Chicago for instance, there are plenty of artistic activities available: the 64th Street Print Shop group runs a "communal printmaking studio" for students; there is a club for Chinese Calligraphy; the Music Production Organization provides students opportunities for "music production and networking"; and Outside the Lines, a fine arts club, offers weekly figure drawing sessions and workshops in partnership with arts organizations on campus. Columbia College also has two student groups offering workshops: VivaDoc focuses on non-fiction film and video, and C5 Comic helps students create comics. Finally, the Illinois Institute of Art has a Fine Arts club, a Fashion Focused club and even a Baking and Pastry club.

The activities listed above are all student groups, which leads us to question SAIC students' commitment as much as that of the school's officials. However, if such groups at SAIC were to offer weekly workshops in everything from sculpture to typography, would the school provide the necessary funding for these classes to be free to students? Would departments let the groups use their facilities and supplies?

At SAIC there are student groups for showing and sharing work, such as For Bigger Drawing, the Field Recording Group, and the Art and Technology group LatarX. In terms of actual art making, all that is left is Knitty Knotty, a group where students learn knitting skills. Thus, it is fair to say that there is a general lack of extra-curricular art activities at SAIC.

"If SAIC prides itself on being interdisciplinary, why do I keep hitting walls when I want to explore things that aren't just lectures?"

MA students who wish to take part in artistic creation are usually advised to look into the Continuing Studies programs. A Continuing Studies course costs \$560 for an average of 30 hours of teaching spread over one, five or ten weeks. Current SAIC students do not get a discount, although alumni and Art Institute members do. There are many art classes in Pilsen or at Lillstreet Art Center that are much cheaper. Many MA students are baffled at the idea that they will have to search outside of SAIC for opportunities to learn about art techniques. Some of the MA students we talked to were so desperate to get an art-making opportunity, they decided to apply for an Oxbow residency, despite their worries about the supplementary spending it entails.

F News magazine sent an informal survey to MA graduate students from several department (Arts Administration and Policy, Art History, Art Education, Visual and Critical Studies, New Arts Journalism), asking them how much access to art-making they have at SAIC. Students could choose to send their thoughts in free form or answer a set of guideline questions. Of the twenty-one students who answered the survey, 96% said that they didn't think they had enough opportunities to engage in art-making at SAIC.

Generally, MA students felt that there are plenty of lectures and studio visits on campus, yet almost no workshops or creative opportunities. While lectures and artist talks are a great way to complement MFA and BFA practices that focus on studio work, most of the MA classes already consist of lectures and talks. A more diverse complement to the MA curriculums would be to offer workshops in addition to lectures, balancing the heavy theoretical teaching with more hands-on creative experiences.

"At a school where the proliferation of lectures and screenings is overwhelming, I think it would be logical and fruitful to have events of similar time length and informality for art-making as well," wrote one of the students. "We do nothing but talk and read about art already, making the lectures a bit of more-of-the-same by the end of the day."

The students who took part in the survey also challenged SAIC's claim to be "interdisciplinary." Most of them felt like they had little opportunity to cross between departments. Those who have studio backgrounds expressed a strong disappointment regarding their chances of pursuing their artistic practice. Many MA students who hold a BFA or have extensive experience in an artistic practice have tried to take a studio class. However, they were strongly advised against this by their advisor. Not only is interdisciplinary not readily available in the curriculum, but those who try to reach out are kindly placed back into their program's "box."

"A big part of the reason I chose to go to SAIC was to have access to a studio practice," wrote one student, "but I've been really discouraged at the lack of opportunities. If SAIC prides itself on being interdisciplinary, why do I keep hitting walls when I want to explore things that aren't just lectures?"

Ninety-six percent of the students who took the survey said that they were hoping that enrolling in an art school would allow them to either pursue their existing artistic practice or engage in a new art form. Now enrolled, they feel like this is close to impossible. This is due to two factors: the absence of non-credit open classes or workshops, and the obligation to fulfill degree requirements. Having no experience in painting, a graduate student willing to start would have to take an intro class (level 1000-2000), but this is not permitted, as graduate students can only enroll in 5000-6000

courses. Some students also expressed what they see as an imbalance and almost injustice at SAIC: if MFA students are required to take an Art History class, why would Art History, Arts Admin and Arts Education not be required to take a studio class?

Students in MA programs could benefit from the opportunity to try an art practice, to think creatively and apply a different skill set to their theoretical thinking. MA students are encouraged by faculty members to think creatively and pragmatically, yet are offered very limited opportunities to do so.

The remaining four percent who did not particularly see enrolling in an art school as an opportunity to engage in art-making are no less disappointed. Their priority was rather to engage with working artists, though this seems to be difficult as well. Some students clearly expressed that they did not see the connection between art and their major in their courses. They criticized the fact that they had almost no opportunity to have conversations with BFA and MFA students. While some argue that an MA is not an "art-making" degree, the lack of access to art and artists for MA students at SAIC is still problematic. If SAIC MA students have no opportunity to make art, or have a dialogue with those who make it, then why study in an art school? All those MA students might have been better off going to the arts administration, art history, journalism, or education department of a liberal arts university.

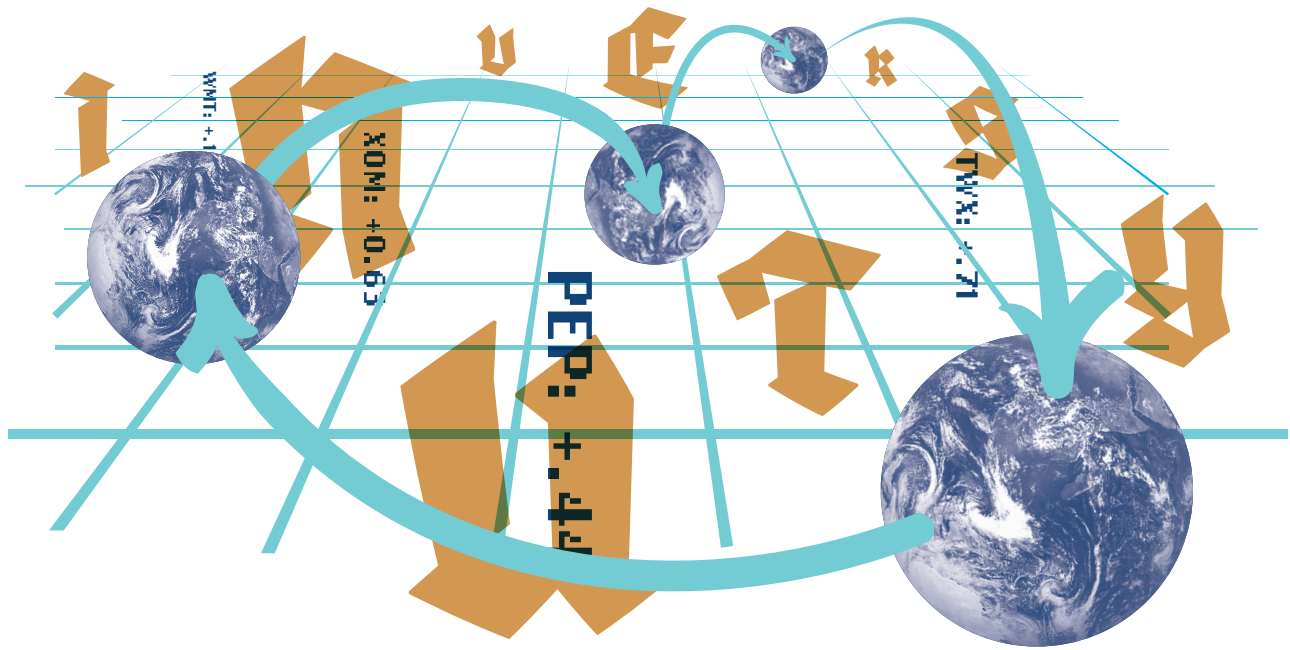
Another recurring theme in the survey responses is the restricted access to space. All studios, classrooms, and student lounges are closed and require authorization. These restrictions make many students feel alienated in their own school. All buildings, and certain floors within these buildings, already require SAIC identification cards. Some of the students taking the survey

showed exasperation and frustration: "Often, we've had to have meetings in the hallway or wait for the professor to give us access to the classroom." When asked if they had tried to gain more access to restricted spaces at SAIC, the majority of students said that the long process and bureaucracy simply discouraged them.

Access to material and supplies is also tricky, and some departments are very protective of their resources. Many students complained that on the grounds of not being a Sound or FVNMA or Photography student, they only had access to very basic equipment despite familiarity with more complex tools. Even if they did not know how to use certain equipment, students were frustrated that the school would not provide training so that they can truly make the most of their learning experience.

The adequate solution to this critical issue would ideally come from a partnership between MA, MFA and BFA students, the student government and student programming board, the Deans and Division Chairs and the Department and Program Heads. Forming a student group through which MFA students, BFA students and faculty members would have the possibility to impart free workshops or evening classes to other students would only be successful if it could benefit from the necessary financial support and generosity of departments regarding facilities and resources.

At the end of the survey, students were asked how interested they would be in participating in free workshops on the same model of already existing free lectures, or in weekly evening classes. They could chose between "not at all," "a little," "interested," "very interested," and "extremely interested." 4.8 percent said they are interested, 9.5 percent are very interested and 85.7 percent are extremely interested.



University, Inc.

U.S. Educational Institutions Export Their Product to the Global Marketplace

» alex wolff

Amid a sea of controversy, 2013 saw Yale University open its doors for the first time in the sovereign city-state of Singapore. As a joint venture between the Connecticut-based Ivy-League school and the National University of Singapore (NUS), “Yale-NUS” received full funding from the Singaporean government and opened with an inaugural class of 157 students from 26 countries. Though Yale billed it as “Singapore’s first liberal arts college,” NUS spoke of it as providing a “global and multi-disciplinary education,” and Yale president Richard Levin described its ultimate goal as advancing “both the development of liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy encouraging critical inquiry” in Asia, these sentiments were not enough to placate concerned faculty, students, and humanitarian organizations. Some worried about Singapore’s restrictions on free speech and homosexuality and how it would affect civil rights on campus. Others, like Yale Political Science professor Seyla Benhabib, criticized the “naïve missionary sentiment” of these educational motivations in Asia. But at an even more fundamental level, some were mystified by the seemingly hazy imperatives for opening this campus in the first place.

The creation of this university is not an isolated incident—it is part of a larger phenomenon in U.S. higher education. In the past decade, countless prestigious U.S. universities like Duke, NYU (New York University), the University of Chicago, and even Parsons School of Design, have worked with various state and national governments to begin the construction of full-time, degree-granting campuses in global cities like Singapore, Dubai and Shanghai across Southeast Asia, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Though the explanations vary between the administrations of these colleges, some commentators have explained this shift as yet another development in the ongoing relationship between internationalization and higher education. Other prominent voices, such as NYU president John Sexton, describe the development of these schools as “harbingers of a new way of structuring the university.” He has explained these new campuses as “global network universities,” with the potential to fully integrate campuses into the global economy and connect people and programs on an international scale. Though these sentiments may seem anodyne, they form a façade over the real market logic driving the creation of the “global” university. As these developments have been understood as the future of higher education, what are the social and economic ramifications of these new configurations of knowledge and education?

While these narratives appear to adequately rationalize the creation of these global universities, it is undeniable that there are larger ideological forces governing these projects. To be sure, the structure of higher education in the U.S. has been largely dominated

by corporations over the last few decades. For example, the current CEOs of Pepsico, Time Warner Inc. and Chanel serve as members of the “Yale Corporation,” (the governing body of Yale university) and the school hosts undergraduate internship programs with these and other multi-national corporations. In a gesture that has now become standard protocol for universities, 2009 - 10 saw the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business accept from \$50,000 - \$99,999 in donations from corporations like Walmart, Cargill and the oil and gas giants Exxon-Mobil and Chevron-Texaco. Ultimately, the effects of higher education’s increasingly corporate character are adverse. As the historian Gerda Lerner has observed, this increased privatization and corporatization decreases state and federal funding to universities, which creates rises in tuition that place financial burden on individual families. Additionally, privatization reduces the amount of professors receiving tenure while increasing the hiring of underpaid adjunct faculty.

The decision for countless U.S. universities to open campuses in global cities abroad has realized the full integration of higher education with the market-logic of global capitalism.

These new global universities embody what cultural anthropologist Tom Looser has described as “the instrumental logic of corporate profit seeking,” and some of the discourse surrounding the creation of these universities underscores the real rationale directing their creation. The acuteness of John Sexton’s language becomes revelatory enough when he refers to these new “genuinely global” universities’ abilities to “accommodate seamlessly” flows of the “human capital of faculty, students, and staff” between different national contexts. Likewise, on the website for the recently opened Mumbai campus of Parsons School of Design (one of the only art and design schools with a campus abroad), a large graphic with pictures of smiling undergraduates literally states that students will experience a “transformative and marketable” education with an “academic ideology that moulds designers to cater to a diverse range of industries and employers.”

Regardless of their self-stated motives, every institution involved in these processes intends to realize the full-fledged globalization of higher education. But just as globalization has entailed what the social theorist David Harvey has described as the “financialization of everything,” this shift fully amalgamates higher education with the market-logic of global capitalism. Perfectly captured by the language of Parson’s School of Design, the explicit logic of these universities is to take the

creative capacities, autonomy, and subjectivities of prospective students and reduce them to fungible forms of service and interchangeable human capital. Education is described in terms of molding, as this human labor potential can be disciplined and shaped by universities to better function for the corporations that sponsor universities, and as a form of capital that can flow to the economic centers that desire it – namely, the service industries of global cities.

The ideological rhetoric surrounding global capitalism and its neoliberal social and economic characteristics has dovetailed with the way the global university and its student and faculty populations are imagined. This is especially so in the new ways in which staff and student human capital, or the collective economic value of a laborer’s skills, expertise, and knowledge, are envisioned under the globalization of higher education. Just as neoliberal economic policies imagine the free flow of trade and capital across international borders, the global university is imagined to facilitate the free flow of the human capital (in this case students, faculty and programs), which can be fed back into the service sectors of the largely post-industrial global cities they are created in. They intend to convert these increasingly sovereign cities to what Sexton has described as “idea capitals,” that will “attract a disproportionate percentage of the world’s intellectual capacity.” In what Looser has described as “a merging of the university and the service sector,” global universities intend to create “a service-defined social life.”

While this extreme reduction of education to the production and molding of human potential for business outcomes may seem like the exact process that happens stateside, or in any other industrialized social context, the importance here is that these developments are imagined at a global scale. Regardless of whether universities realize their stated neoliberal goals of making human capital flow internationally, the global university will play a fundamental role in the new organization of global cities and the ways they reconfigure social life and state power. But as power, sovereignty, and perhaps a large portion of the world’s intellectuals are drawn to these cities, it is important to remember the price of doing so. As these global configurations of U.S. universities exist for the maximization of profit at the expense of the identity and the human capacities of individuals, these developments do nothing to amend the imbalances of social and economic power they create. It is for this reason that as global universities continue to grow and develop in tandem with global cities, each of the social actors involved in their production must be examined with a renewed and continuous amount of scholarly discourse and criticism. Without this, there may never be a way to imagine forms of possibility that could equally distribute power, wealth, and agency within higher education.



3rd Industrial Revolution

Digital Manufacturing is Moving to Main Street

» **jen mosier**

An eight-year-old boy stood deep in thought, mesmerized by the robotic actions of a laser cutter as it etched his name into a yellow acrylic sheet the size of a smart phone.

This scene was impossible just two years ago, but as digital manufacturing gains momentum, major companies are investing in small public maker labs.

General Electric created GE Garages, a temporary maker space that functions like a creative laboratory, giving anyone free access to 3D printers and other machines of the third industrial revolution in which digital technology puts manufacturing back in the hands of the public.

GE Garages set up just north of the Chicago River on Michigan Avenue from late September to mid-October. Well-informed employees from TechShop, a growing national chain of public access workshops, helped the public interact with modern manufacturing tools: a laser cutter, a CNC (computer numerical control) mill, a vinyl printer, an injection molder, and 3D printers. These machines are the legacy of mass-production factories — think of the Chicago Stockyards or Detroit auto industry — but as vocations increasingly leave the production line, machines have scaled down in size and price. Industrial tools are becoming personal appliances. 10 years ago 3D printers cost five or six figures. A basic model in 2013 costs \$900.

“Makers,” as users of this kind of technology often call themselves, are emerging with the technology. They are often self-reliant, curious tinkerers of sorts who are using these machines to design and reinvent our relationship with objects. In a video on Wired magazine’s website, editor-in-chief Chris Anderson says, “The moment here of desktop manufacturing is not just the tools, it’s what people will do with them.” Designs are created in free 3D modeling software like Autodesk 123D and then printed out in any imaginable form from cell phone covers, to personalized mugs, to wearable jewelry. This revolution has changed the way we interact with technology. Makers can now be the designer, the manufacturer and the entrepreneur all rolled into one.

GE Garages was a partnership between GE and Chicago Ideas Week. Beyond the laboratory, there were hands-on workshops and lectures from key players of the maker movement. Among the speakers was Zach Kaplan, CEO of Inventables — a company that aims to give entrepreneurs access to affordable materials in smaller quantities. “The rules of who can have a factory have changed,” says Kaplan.

Inventables is collaborating with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Data Science for Social Good, a fellowship program that brings together aspiring data scientists at the University of Chicago. The project is

These machines are the legacy of mass-production factories — think of the Chicago Stockyards or Detroit auto industry.

Light Up Chicago, which aims to teach 22,000 Chicago public high school students about digital manufacturing and computer science. They’re using a desktop-sized light fixture from Chicago-based design studio MINIMAL and hacking, or breaking into, it. This is where industrial design meets digital manufacturing.

The fixture is constructed from acrylic sheets, LED lights and light diffuser film rolls in an oval rectangle, echoing the shape of Chicago’s rail system in the loop. As part of the project, Andrew Kaye (MFA Art & Technology, 2014) is working with Miguel Perez (BFA, 2014) and Brannon Dorsey (BFA, 2014) to develop software that will run on a Raspberry Pi microcomputer and be embedded in the lamp. “The lamp will have certain features that allow the students to interact with the light output — tweeting #lightupchicago to trigger a behavior, and so on,” says Kaye, who is also *F News* magazine’s Webmaster.

“If someone wanted to know if a Divvy bike station, [for example], was full or empty, the lamp would light up green if there were bikes, and red if there were none,” says Kaplan. “The cool part is that not only can you pick a channel that has city-centered data, but you can also write your own channel and share the file with people.”

Artists, innovators, creators and designers have more control over their designs than they used to, all the way from the idea’s inception to its creation, and many share their digital files via Thingiverse, an online community of free 3D printable object designers. This is the era of digital craftsmanship, where web generation meets physical creation. At the heart of this revolution is authenticity and customization by, and for, whoever is curious enough to try it.

GE Garages closed its doors in October, but interested members of the public can still print objects on public machines in central Chicago. The Harold Washington Library now has a free open access maker lab, which includes 3D printers, laser cutters, a milling machine and a vinyl cutter. “The innovation lab has scheduled classes for library patrons with zero experience but are curious about the technology,” says Chicago Public Library Branch Manager Yvette Leigh. During open studio hours hobbyists and 3D modelers with more knowledge work on their own projects, “but also give back to the space by teaching librarians about the software,” added Leigh, who hopes the introduction of these machines to the library will impact future societies as much as computers did.

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Emancipation Through Improvisation



e m b o d y i n g

» amelia charter

Speer is hopeful as heck. Energetic, vivacious, and bubbling over. She is clearly committed to dance as a social practice, as activism, as momentum and movement for change. Yet after her presentation is complete, and she's finished her water bottle, out-of-breath and spent, she seems distant. Exhausted. Spaced out. Pale even. Her comments during discussion continue to be to the point: this is activism, this is change-in the making; this is no-doubt spiritual.

Kate Speer's presentation took place as part of a weekend conference on Performance Studies at Northwestern University on the panel, "Mobilizing Affect." In her thesis, *Transcendence, Testifying & Funkitivity: The Spiritual and Political Dimensions of Charisma in David Dorfman's Prophets of Funk*, Speer dons a '70's inspired purple dress and sunglasses and intersperses her reading with dance numbers specifically devised with iconic, funky choreography.

What I found particularly compelling was not Speer's presentation, nor her research, but what panel discussant Barnor Hesse had to say about it. Hesse's task was to specifically articulate the "mobilization of affect" in relation to the presented theses. Hesse acknowledged Speer's main kicking argument — that the prophets of funk are like Pentecostal priests, inspiring spiritual possession that renders social results due to the charismatic skill of the prophet/priest/artist/singer/musician/performer. He acknowledged that the space between performer and audience member fosters certain chemistry. However, Hesse challenged that there is more to these charismatic characters than meets the eye or hits the ear, pointing out that this charismatic performativity is composed of a complex entanglement of being. In describing a concept of black performativity, Hesse referred to poet and philosopher Fred Moten. He explained that to Moten, "enslavement and the resistance to enslavement is the performative essence of blackness. And that through the act of resistance, improvisation takes place."

Hesse asked Speer, "So are there charismatic moments in participatory events of black music, like funk, which are unsettling and compelling reminders of that double bind of enslavement and resistance to slavery?"

During Speer's presentation, she briefly went into the etymology of Funk, its semantic roots being in the Kikongo word *lu-fuki*, or a strong body odor. The word "funk" functions as a conglomerate of "smell" and "fuck," an example of dual-embodiment wherein language has transformed to include two inflections, the oppressor and the resistor. Funk pins exoticized racism to the very table it leapt from with an enduring voice of resistance and re-appropriation, much in the way that words like "queer" and "bitch" are reasserted.



These reassertions are playing with language in order to present simultaneity of meaning, marking both the pain and the pleasure of the word. In some circumstances we see the word, we hear the word, and also understand the word for being adversely comprised of what it is, and what it isn't (or what it's resisting). In this reconfiguration, the senses are not apart from our understanding, but the experience deliberately places cognition in communion with the senses, evidencing an innovated pathway of empathy. But how does this circumstance occur? How can we invite this hybridity of cognitions and sensations?

Thom Donovan's essay, *A Grave in Exchange for the Commons, Fred Moten and the Resistance of the Object*, posits Marxist theory with Moten's poem *where the blues began* and artist Adam Pendleton's auditory installation to explain how language and improvisation cultivate a commons that reasserts the limits of production, thereby fostering freedom. He points out that in "Private Property and Communism," Karl Marx argues that the object, as private property, functions in correlation with human perception — and suggests that the senses themselves are in a contemplative relationship with objects. Furthermore, that the senses are not merely just senses, but human senses, painted over with a societal and cultural aptitude for perceiving. Marx says that the transcendence from private property is the result of "complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities." So, how do we emancipate ourselves?

Donovan describes a tradition of blues "in which talking voice and talking instruments become interchangeable, where communicability and expression

are thus uniquely coextensive." He proposes that this interchangeability is when the senses, or the organs of a being, "infuse one another." Where the seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, observing, experiencing, wanting, acting, and loving are made available to one another, there is an opening — a commons. Donovan calls this "making common cause against the alienation of their common property." The commons allows us to move beyond commodity. For the body, which has become the object/commodity, the commons is a place to give the body back to itself. In the commons, we are released from the human-sensorial hijacking through a hybridity of vibrations, where language and sound come together to reassert an embodied form of expression.

The embodied practice of improvisation cultivates the commons also by eliding commodity in its participation with ephemerality. Donovan articulates that in Moten's book, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, Moten "suggests how the collective labor of the ensemble and the improvisatory nature of blues performance can both lead to models of collective organization and production that oppose expropriation, the reproduction of private property, enclosure, and other forms of subjection. In the improvisational techniques—scoring becomes unforeclosed — it resists being authored — by the fact that it is written and performed, live and recorded." Improvisation is a performative agency that reconfigures corporeal and cognitive experiences. In this reconfiguration of the sensorial and intellectual body and mind, an emancipated practice emerges. Improvisation emerges frequently during solos in funk, as is celebrated with artists such as Herbie Hancock and Bootsy Collins. However, improvisation is not just wide open, but involves a set of self-imposed limitations — and in pushing against these limitations, we embody our diversely unique freedoms.

That day at Northwestern University, when Speer made the decision to leave the podium and turn up the music, it would have been nice to see, to hear, and to feel her contemplate improvising, participating and embodying funk. She performed choreographed movements, virtuously executed but nonetheless a form of representation. Representation in a sense that it lacked the very power of *REpresentation*, as in, differentiated repetition. Is this why she seemed the way she did after her presentation? Wrung and empty in an unsettling way? I want her to perform her funk. The dangerous thing that she may have done is to slip into making funk a commodity — a consumable formula for social change. And she, herself, is made into a commodity, objectified in action. To her, I say, let that go! Let go of what you know! Give in to yourself, give yourself back to yourself, and in doing so, you give others back to themselves.

LEE WEN'S
REVOLUTIONARY
DAYDREAMS

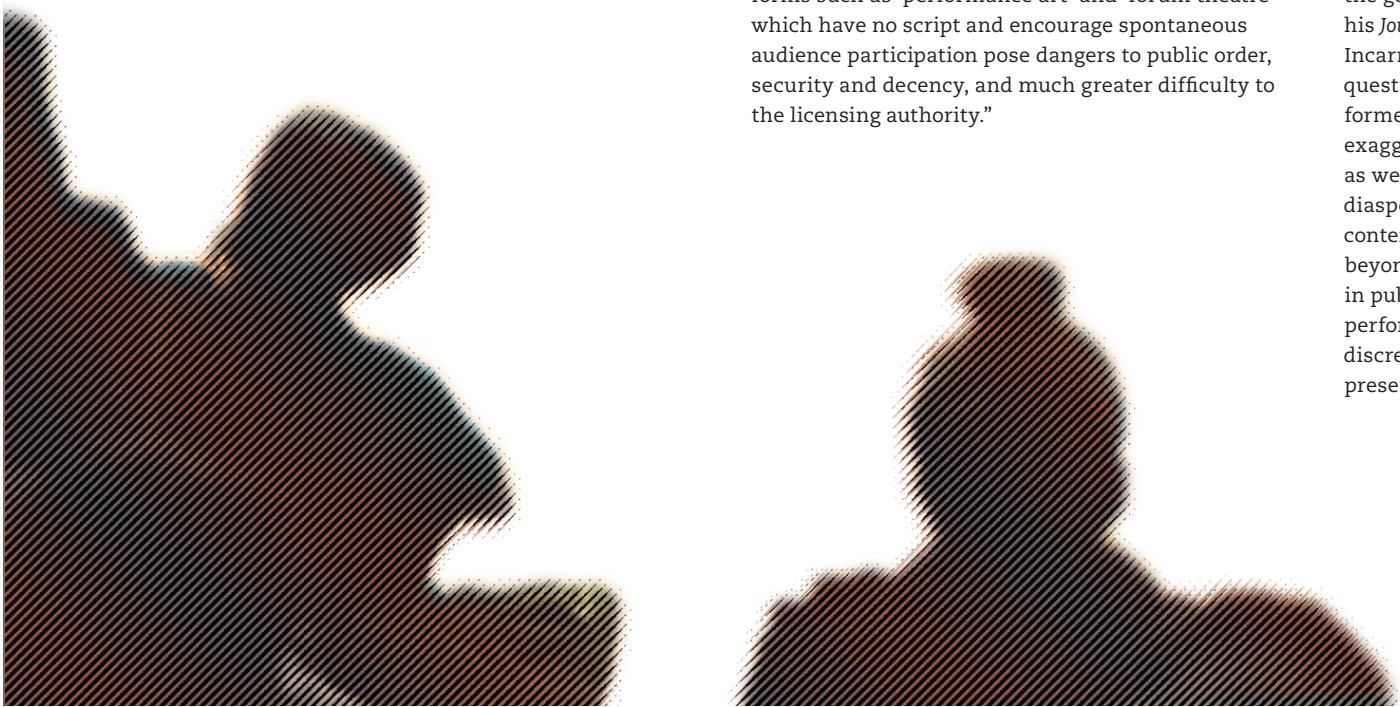
*The Singaporean performance
artist shares his art and process with Chicago*

» mitsu salmon

On the night of December 31, 1993 to January 1, 1994, at a weeklong artist-organized festival in Singapore, performance artist Joseph Ng performed *Brother Cane*. The artist smacked twelve bags of red dye placed on top of twelve blocks of tofu with a cane, burned a cigarette into his arm, cut his pubic hair and recited words from the newspaper. The work decried the Singaporean authorities for the caning of twelve men accused of allegedly committing homosexual solicitations. Following governmental and media outrage, Joseph Ng was arrested and charged with committing an obscene act in public: cutting his pubic hair.

Afterwards, performance art was denied government funding and de-facto banned for the next ten years. Singapore's Ministries of Home Affairs and the Arts released a statement explaining the government's position: "[The Government] is concerned that new art forms such as 'performance art' and 'forum theatre' which have no script and encourage spontaneous audience participation pose dangers to public order, security and decency, and much greater difficulty to the licensing authority."

Lee Wen, former president of The Artist Village, an independent artists' collective, was a main organizer of the event where Joseph Ng performed. In 1994, he protested Ng's arrest publicly and continued to make work as a performance artist despite the government injunction. He is most known for his *Journey of Yellow Man* public performance series. Incarnating himself in full yellow body paint, he questions various social political issues. He has performed this in locations all over the world, exploring exaggerated and subverted notions of Asian identity as well as addressing experiences of migration and diaspora. His site-specific work responds to locations, contexts, and stereotyped identity, sometimes going beyond the gallery walls to interact with people in public places. As a member of the international performance collective Black Market, he performed discretely in Singapore and received invitations to present work internationally. Numerous times he





approached the National Arts Council in Singapore for funding and was told that he could apply in dance or theater but not “performance art.” Vehemently against the government prohibition, he never applied under another category.

Two years after the ban was lifted in 2005, Lee Wen received the Cultural Medallion, Singapore’s most prestigious award for arts and culture. He came to SAIC this fall at the invitation of the Art History, Theory and Criticism dept. and the Performance dept., thanks in part to a grant from the National Art Council of Singapore. Sitting in a café in Wicker Park, I asked Lee about his reaction to Singapore’s current support for his work after the previous prohibition.

“I have been knocking on their door for years and now that it is open, of course I will enter, but I feel it is very uncomfortable. But it is necessary that I do enter,” says Lee. Wary of the country’s recent development of new infrastructures for contemporary art, he stated, “Singapore’s art fairs are a big black shiny funeral.” Rather than critically thinking about art, Lee claims that mainstream Singaporeans tend to see sponsorship of the arts as an utilitarian investment for the sake of capital gains, if not that of showing off the political power of the state.

Nora Taylor, SAIC Art History professor and advocate of Asian performance art, introduced Lee Wen at the Columbus Performance Space. She spoke highly of him, contextualizing and praising his works, such as his *Chewing Gum* series of paintings. In this work, the audience was invited to take part in a transgressive act by placing their pieces of chewing gum on a canvas, as in Singapore gum is banned. His work consistently deals with the repressive laws in Singapore, where although performance art is now legal, male homosexuality is not.

Taylor offers him a glowing introduction as well as a birthday wish. Lee Wen whispers into the microphone, “You will regret this.” From his seat he leans in, “It is a lot of people’s birthdays. It is also a lot of people’s death days. You cannot have birth without death.” He stands up, explaining that it is hard for his body to sit at times and tells the audience about his

nickname, “Stagger Lee,” referring to his walking impediment. He created a series of works based on his Parkinson’s disease and ever since has been calling his work “performing the sick body.” His wild delivery and honesty about his condition, life and governmental defiance is striking.

While in Chicago, Lee Wen also shared a performance evening at Design Cloud with Myanmar per-

“It is a lot of people’s birthdays. It is also a lot of people’s death days. You cannot have birth without death.”



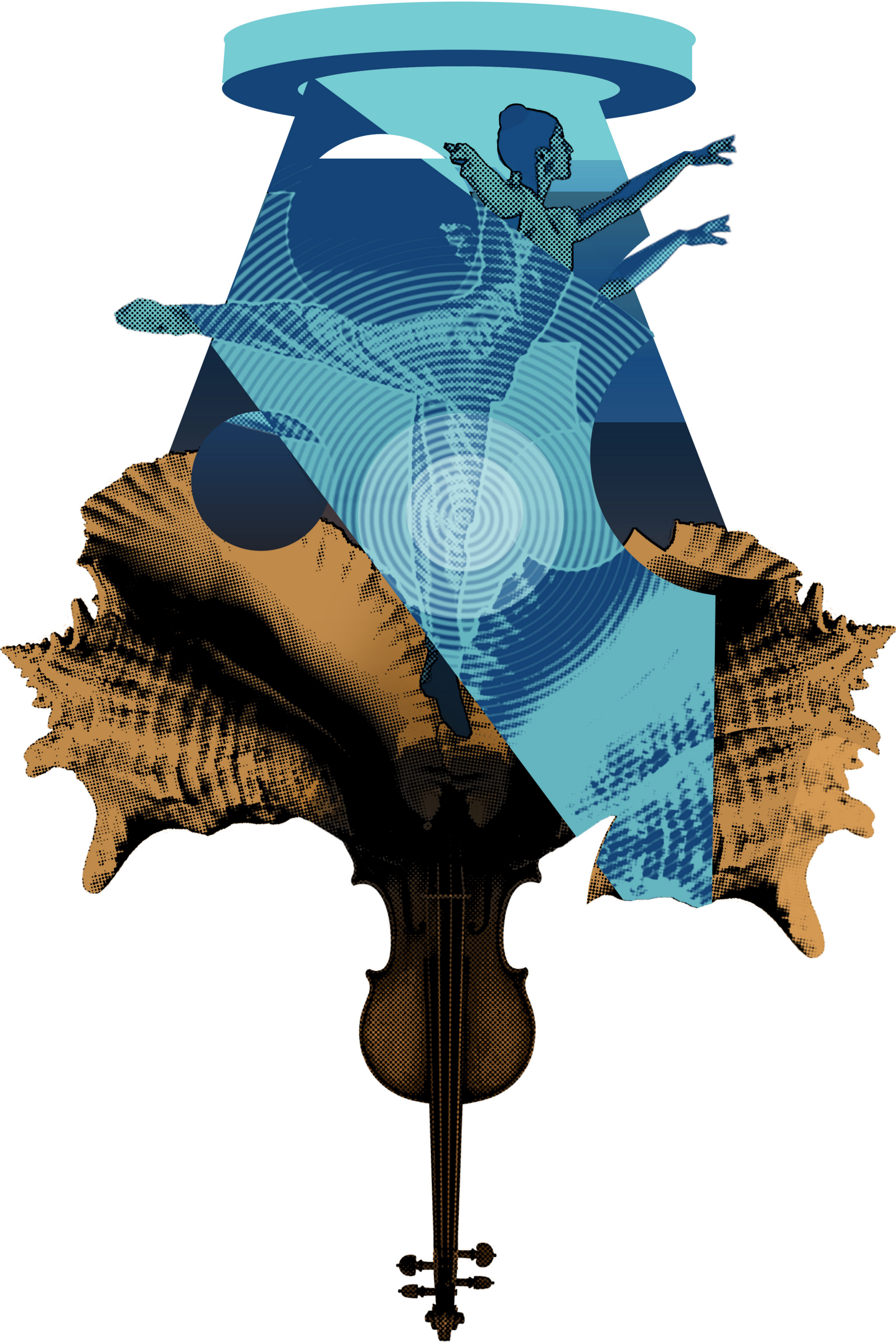
formance artist Chaw Ei Thein. As an exiled person, she too understands government suppression. In her performance, she casually talks to the audience about the constant imprisonment of free thinkers in her country, as she unwraps objects, dresses and paints her face and finally presents a traditional Burmese dance. The gallery is packed, people are gathered on the floor and standing on the edges. Lee Wen is dressed in black jeans and a top. A blue yoga mat and red dress lie on the floor. He picks up a guitar, and, holding it at an unusual angle, he plays and sings of

being a woman whose husband has left her. He then removes the black shirt and changes into the red dress, slowly, as a dance.

When I asked Lee about this enigmatic and personal piece, he told me that it is the beginning of a series called *The Call of the Red*. The work takes on various images to be found in a continuation of his book entitled *The Republic of Daydreams*, a surrealist tale of the world in art and other moments in history. The central image is that of the red dress. One day, men and women will be gathered in a red square, all wearing a red dress. But, one man will put his red dress in a block of ice as a witness to the event. The next iteration of the piece will be that of a red dress in a block of ice.

“The song came out of thinking about my mother,” he says. It is a response to *tanabata*, a day that commemorates the meeting of two separated lovers, a cowherd and a maiden. They meet on a rainbow bridge, only once a year. Another aspect of this legendary day is the figure of a widow, who upon seeing her husband leaving her for the other world, fears that when she finally rejoins him, he may not love her anymore, as she will age in earth time while he remains youthful.

The work, Lee says, “also relates to our ideals in society. The red you are asking me about is representing those core values, the ideals in our societies that we symbolically put on our state insignia, such as our national flags and coat of arms. Have we not forgotten them, and in doing so allow them to die? We have died as has art. Death is not only in what we see, it is also happening in us. Hence there is a constant need for change, a constant revolution in our hearts. The root word for revolution is to revolve. The world is always revolving. If we don’t keep up with it we die. And we must die as we must get born again.”



Some Wind for the Sailboat

Reflections on *Einstein on the Beach*

» arthur kolat

Einstein on the Beach, by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass with choreography by Lucinda Childs, tends to be classified as an opera — it is, after all, an epic work of high musical theater. Yet it is fundamentally different from opera on many levels: from the collaboration at its inception, to its fundamental structure and content, straight through to questions of its future life, or after-life, once its creators are gone.

In October of this year, in the fourth revival since its 1976 premiere, *Einstein on the Beach* came for the first time to Los Angeles, California. It has been regularly described as a groundbreaking masterpiece, and Robert Wilson hailed as the world’s foremost visionary theater artist. Susan Sontag once said, “I think I’ve seen *Einstein* forty times or something like that. It’s one of the great theater works of the 20th century.” This piece has the ability to deliver a profound aesthetic and intellectual impact precisely because, as an artistic meditation on the universe itself, it occasions absorptive contemplation while remaining impossible to fully grasp.

The piece is made up of five knee plays — called knee plays because they connect the limbs of the opera together — two train scenes, two trial scenes, a building scene, a bed scene, and a spaceship scene. They form what Wilson has called the opera’s “visual book,” like the libretto of a traditional opera, but in the language of the visual arts rather than in the language of the written word. According to Wilson, the visual book is a staged translation of the notions of space found in portraits, still lifes, and landscapes.

Having a visual book is an important point of difference from traditional opera for multiple reasons. Since Glass composed the music around Wilson’s visual book drawings, it is impossible to decouple the music from the scenic design. Therefore, listening to an audio recording of the music is less representative of the full experience than, say, listening to a recording of *Madama Butterfly* is. Listening to the music of *Einstein* with no visual component is perhaps like listening to *Butterfly* without the words being sung.

Respecting the visual book is essential to maintaining the integrity of the piece not just because the music was composed for it, but also because the actual sung words of the opera — what is traditionally the libretto — are not narrative words. Instead, they are comprised of numbers: one, two, three, and solfège syllables: do, re, mi, fa, sol.

The four-and-a-half hour opera starts with “Knee Play 1.” To the background of a three-note cadence, two seated characters in distinctively Einsteinian garb make tapping and sliding motions with their hands. Bathed in beautiful hues of whites and blues, one of the characters recites a random string of numbers, the other a text that begins as follows:

Would it get some wind for the sailboat. And it
could get for it is.
It could get the railroad for these workers. And it
could be were it is.
It could Franky it could be Franky it could be very
fresh and clean
It could be a balloon
All these are the days my friends and these are the
days my friends.

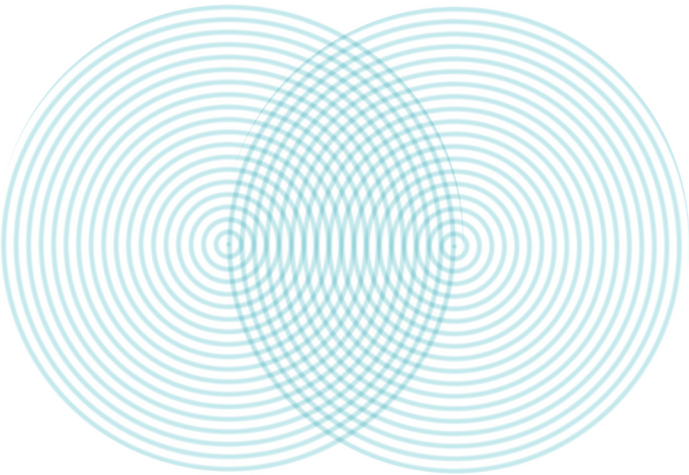
This text was written by an autistic teenager named Christopher Knowles, who was living with Robert Wilson at the time. Wilson had become fascinated by Knowles’s strange and mathematical use of language and had taken the boy under his wing to encourage his creativity. This repetitive and enigmatic poetry is a symbol for the piece as a whole — it evokes certain concrete imagery, yet is abstract and non-narrative. *Einstein* is not immediately comprehensible yet somehow it is beautiful and moving. Knowles’ texts aren’t evident in the music itself, but they add a layer that makes the piece a collage of sorts.

The curtain then goes up on the first train scene, in which a woman dances along a diagonal line, a child with a lighted box stands on a bridge that is missing one of its sides. As a man writes on an imaginary chalk board, a train slowly appears in the background. For about twenty minutes, the players enact an abstract choreography of highly stylized formal gestures, which evoke train conductors and passengers. The boy throws paper airplanes from the bridge and at one point three men pick up a string from the ground, which forms a triangle between them. A beam of light descends vertically from the sky as a woman runs out and listens to a conch shell. Everyone is dressed like Einstein, performing in a mélange of lights and smoke set to Glass’s trance-like score.

At a talk at UCLA, which formed part of LA’s programming around the city’s first *Einstein on the Beach* performance, Robert Wilson commented on the piece’s meaning stating that “it’s a non-narrative piece but there are references throughout — poetical references — to Einstein and ideas he had [...]”

Grand themes are explored throughout *Einstein on the Beach*, with the spectator’s mind constantly touching on concepts like space, time, love, science, technology, pop culture, God, insanity, and so on. Each of these themes are tied together through the figure of Einstein, the 20th century’s most recognizable scientific genius. But herein lies the continuing beauty of the piece. As Wilson has noted, “It doesn’t form any one line of logic, but it’s a piece you can get lost in. To me what’s still interesting about theater and opera is that it’s okay to get lost ... like in a good novel or something.”

Robert Wilson, Philip Glass, and Lucinda Childs are all in their 70s now, and each have developed significant bodies of work since *Einstein on the Beach* launched their careers almost 40 years ago. They have said that this is the last time they will revive the production. The next revival, if it happens, will almost certainly depend on the young performers and technicians behind the show right now. For the time being, *Einstein on the Beach*’s next stop on the tour is the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, January 8-12, 2014.



As an artistic meditation on the universe itself, it occasions absorptive contemplation while remaining impossible to fully grasp.

No Honor Among Yakuza ヤクザ

*Takeshi Kitano's
Sonatine and
A Brief History of
Japanese Gangster Films*

» maria mori

Explorations of honor, betrayal and family are common to cinematic contributions from around the world, but there's nothing quite like Japan's rich yakuza stories. This past semester, The Gene Siskel Film Center presented a succession of fourteen films in a series entitled *Public Enemies: The Gangster/Crime Film*. Running in conjunction with SAIC's Department of Art History, Theory and Criticism with a viewing and discussion-based class led by Lawrence Knapp and Jill Marie Stone, the series has been a rich exploration about the variety of themes that emerge from the many genres of criminal films, ranging from gender roles to capitalist modes, and range across country and history. On a Tuesday in late October, Professor Knapp delivered a lecture on Japan's contributions to gangster films as part of a viewing and discussion of Takeshi Kitano's 1993 yakuza film *Sonatine*, which provoked my own interest into diving further into the rich vein of Japanese film history.

Let's start with the definition of "yakuza": a Japanese gangster, or, by extension, the Japanese mafia. These are not just your everyday crime bosses; yakuza work as parts of highly organized "families" that abide by rigid codes of conduct. In this sense, the yakuza could be seen as descendants of samurai, Japan's historical warrior class that abided by hierarchical loyalty. Early yakuza films grew out of wildly popular early samurai films, and were in fact first called *ninkyō eiga*, or "chivalry films." These films featured honorable heroes that reluctantly resorted to violence in order to uphold the notion of *jingi*, the moral and social code of the yakuza, against backstabbers and modernizers. These films first appeared from the 1950s and remained popular until the early 1970s, with Hideo Gosha's *The Wolves* (1971) being one of the last notable examples. It's no coincidence that these "Chivalrous Yakuza" came around towards the start of the American Occupation of Japan (1945-1952) either; in this time, samurai films were not allowed because of concerns that they were too nationalistic.

From the mid-1960s and 1970s onwards, the yakuza film genre began to change its focus to different themes. Gone were the "chivalrous yakuza" reminiscent of traditional samurai flicks, and in their place were hard-knocks who represented both the harsh reality of capitalism and the extreme speed at which Japan leaped towards modernity in the latter half of the twentieth century. One film that especially shows this extreme thematic shift is Kinji Fukasaku's *Battles Without Honor and Humanity* (1973), in which the film's main characters are introduced throughout the opening credits and early

scenes as just having emerged from the trauma of World War II and attempting to live through the proceeding postwar chaos by any means necessary; they abandon any type of social code just to survive. From here on, the yakuza character is no longer heroic or chivalrous but instead abandons once-strict values and codes.

In this sense, this film reflects this time's larger anxiety concerning a fear of new capitalistic values eroding traditional Japanese ways of life.

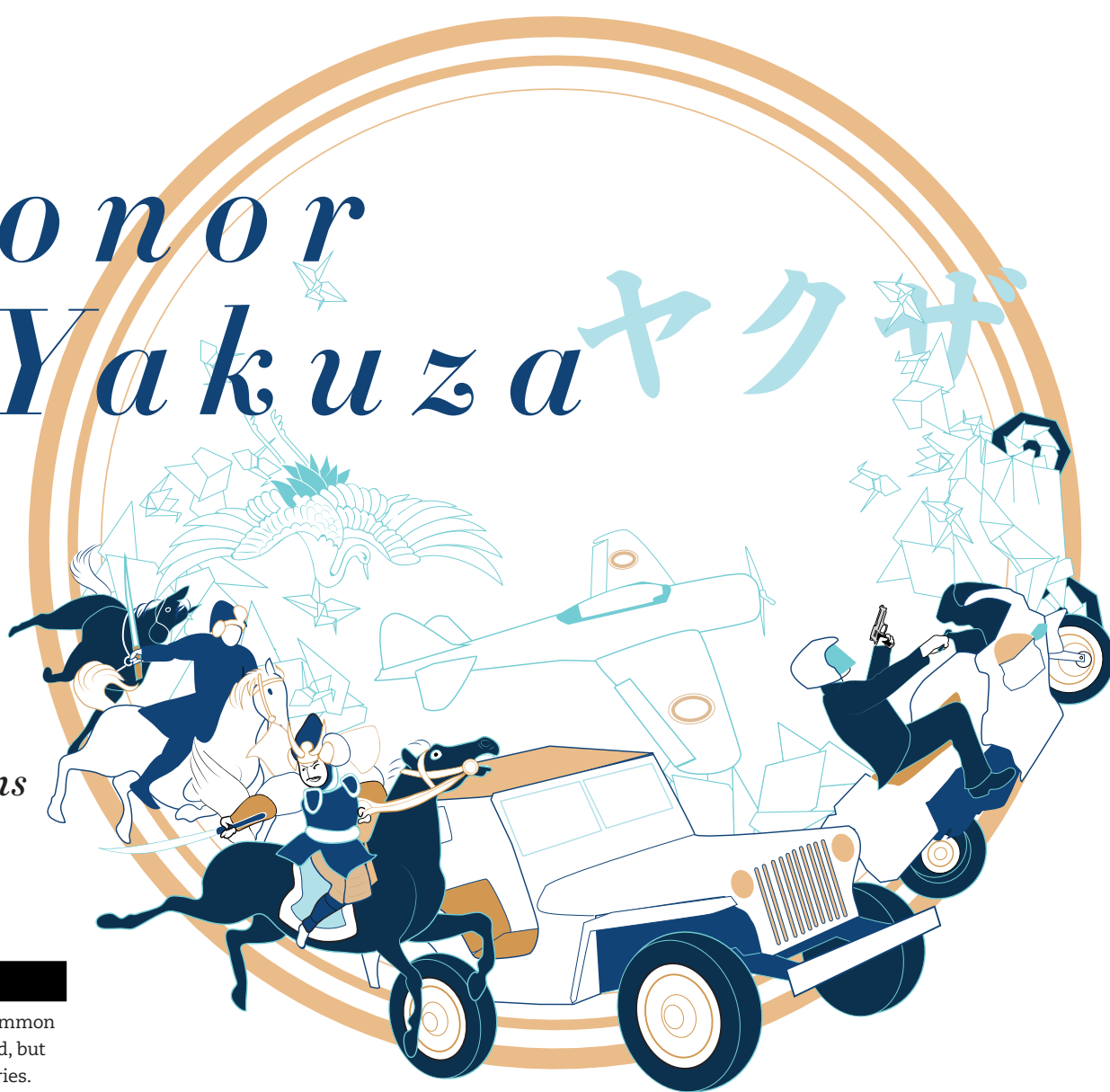
Skip ahead to 1993, and the newer yakuza film that's the seminal example of the genre today: Takeshi Kitano's *Sonatine*. Kitano himself plays Aniki Murakawa, a tired and aging yakuza considering retirement until he and several other members from his "family" are sent from Tokyo to Okinawa to settle a turf war between two rival groups. Murakawa is reluctant and slightly suspicious of his boss' intention in sending him in the first place, and things quickly turn for the worse when several of his men are murdered within a couple of days of arriving in the unknown turf. Murakawa and his remaining men, including his right-hand man Ken (Susumu Terajima), hide out in a house owned by one of the Okinawan yakuza, Ryoji (Masanobu Katsumura), until they can figure out just exactly what is going on. From this point forward, Murakawa's exhaustion and desperation for a break from this crime world, and perhaps even modernity as a whole, is palpable. One scene that especially emphasizes his retreat involves him and his comrades playing a game of *kamizumou* (paper sumo), where players "fight" by tapping their fingers on a paper sumo ring until one of a pair of paper sumo wrestlers fall over. Being an old (and these days rare) childhood game, their match evokes their nostalgia for "old Japan." The yakuza then continue their semi-vacation from their own realities by creating a fake sumo ring on the Okinawan beach out of sand, even going so far as to perform a fake salt-purifying ceremony and then sumo wrestle with each other. Later, they playfully light fireworks at each other on the beach, try to shoot down Frisbees with their guns, and dig pitfalls for people to fall into. As it becomes apparent that Murakawa's boss has betrayed him and his yakuza brothers slowly start to dwindle, he sees that loyalty, that old standby, is no longer a value of the present. Just as he tries to retreat

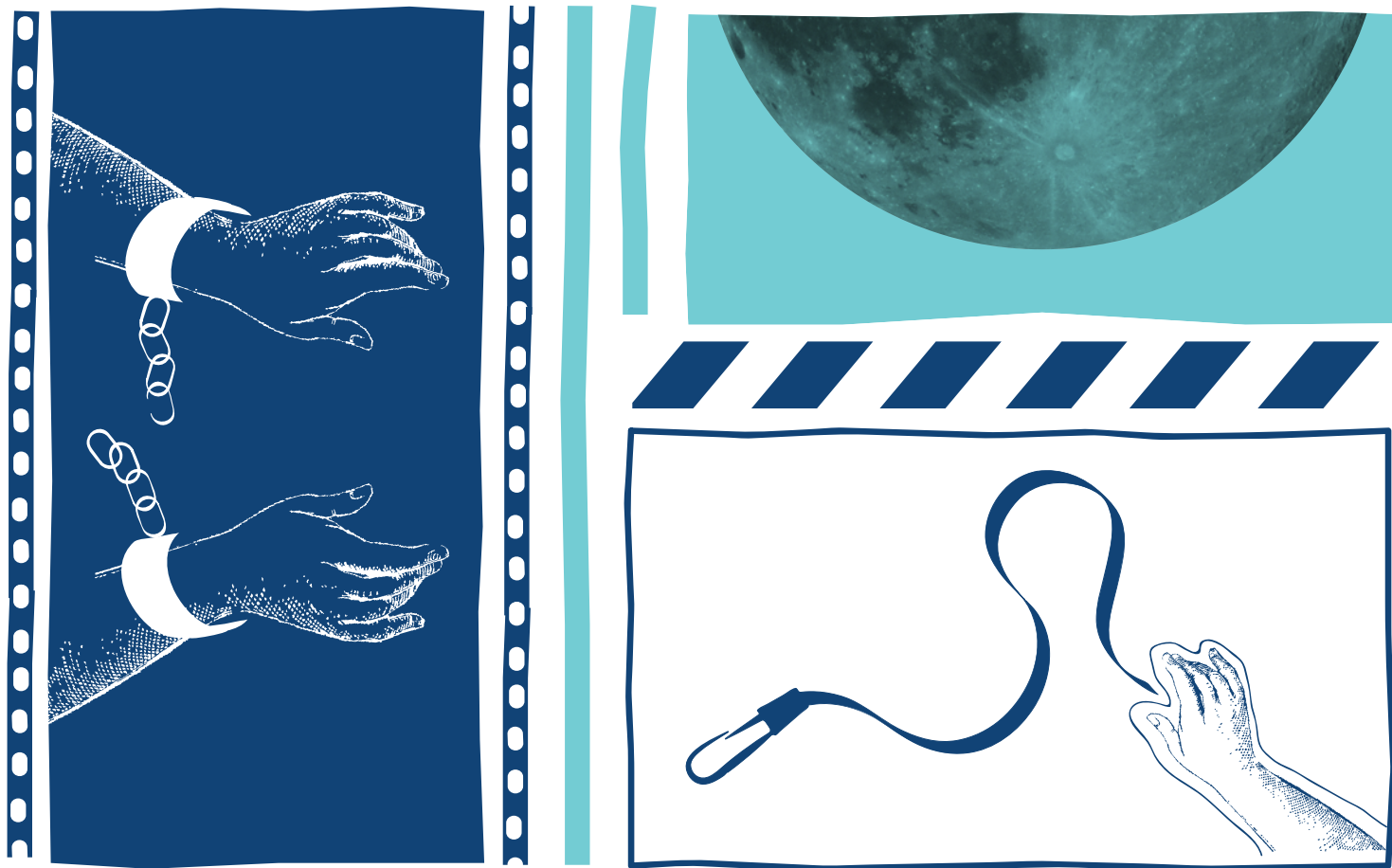
These movies don't exist to create a heroic story, but to confront the realities of extreme anxiety and social chaos brought on by Japan's quick jump into modernity.

to the good old days of earlier times, he can't hide from the pressures of the now. After facing head-on all of the things that tire and frustrate him, there is no happy ending.

In this sense, *Sonatine* perfectly captures the resigned frustration of living in a society where perceived values changed so rapidly in such a short period of time. For Murakawa, who built his whole life on traditional codes and values, saw it all turned against him; there is no question that this film ends on an explosively bittersweet note, but that is precisely the point of post-1960s yakuza films. These movies don't exist to create a heroic story, but to confront the realities of extreme anxiety and social chaos brought on by Japan's quick jump into modernity. *Sonatine* sympathizes with Murakawa's longing for forgotten morals while acknowledging that living in the realm of nostalgia is neither feasible nor productive.

See further viewing recommendations online at fnewsmagazine.com





Projecting Misery

Manifestations of Pain in *Gravity* and *12 Years a Slave*

» **patrick reynolds**

With December looming, film critics and enthusiasts have commenced their annual speculations for the upcoming awards season. At the moment, a handful of films have been part of the conversation, but undoubtedly Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* and Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* have been at the forefront of the discussion. While *12 Years* and *Gravity* tackle vastly different subject matter using entirely different filmmaking techniques, the films are markedly related in their means of soliciting emotional responses from their audiences.

The majority of the acclaim for *Gravity* has been directed at the film's technical achievements. Its depiction of space is incredibly immersive, especially through the film's use of 3D techniques. It features long stretches of time in which the camera seamlessly switches between the first-person perspective of its protagonist (played by Hollywood favorite Sandra Bullock) and drifting shots that follow the characters as they navigate chaotic situations of exploding spacecrafts and deadly flying debris caught in orbit. *12 Years a Slave*, based on the 1853 memoir of the same title, depicts the kidnapping and subsequent sale into slavery of Solomon Northup (played by Chiwetel Ejiofor), a free black man from Saratoga, New York. The film's narrative unfolds entirely around Solomon's personal experiences, and it employs a relentless depiction of the brutality and cruelty that transpired over the course of his odyssey. Several critics have applauded the film's direct approach to the slave narrative, as many Hollywood films tend either to depict slavery in the context of a story about white people, or they skirt over many of the most harrowing details of the slave experience.

Gravity begins with a brief introductory scene in which Bullock's character, Ryan Stone, attempts to repair a malfunctioning piece of equipment on the exterior of the Hubble Space Telescope. Within first few minutes, viewers are clued into essential character traits that will be explored throughout the remainder of the film: she is on her first space mission, she is inexperienced as an astronaut, and while she is knowledgeable and intuitive, she is ultimately susceptible to anxiety and frustration. Similarly, *12*

Years opens with a concise exploration of Northup's free life in New York: he is a happily married father with two children, he is well-dressed and well-liked, and he is a celebrated violinist. Each of these sequences is essential to its film's overall narrative structure, as both films' subsequent dramatic scenes are contingent upon audience identification with the protagonists' humanity.

As soon as the viewer has developed his or her empathetic relationship with the main character, both *Gravity* and *12 Years a Slave* abruptly toss their

Each film relies upon a provocation of compassion within the viewer, and the physically exhausting scenes that occur throughout serve to solidify and amplify these emotional connections.

heroes into cyclones of hardship and tribulation that ceaselessly play out over the course of the films. In each case, one specific event sets off the chain of further catastrophe. With *Gravity*, this moment occurs after pieces of high-speed orbiting debris crash into Stone and the rest of her crew. She is sent spinning into space; the camera lingers steadily on her panicking face as the universe turbulently rotates around her in a reflection on her helmet. The effect is physical and immersive—many reviewers have warned those prone to motion sickness to tread carefully. Stone eventually regains her composure, but this tense scene ultimately sets the tone for the rest of the film.

In *12 Years a Slave*, Northup's descent into suffering commences when he wakes up alone and chained in a cell after a night of drinking with men whom he thought to be colleagues. Confused and disoriented, he is confronted by a man who begins referring to him as a slave. When Northup attempts to defend himself and his freedom, the man viciously whips Solomon while screaming, "You're a slave!" The scene lingers closely on Ejiofor's face as the cruelty unfolds,

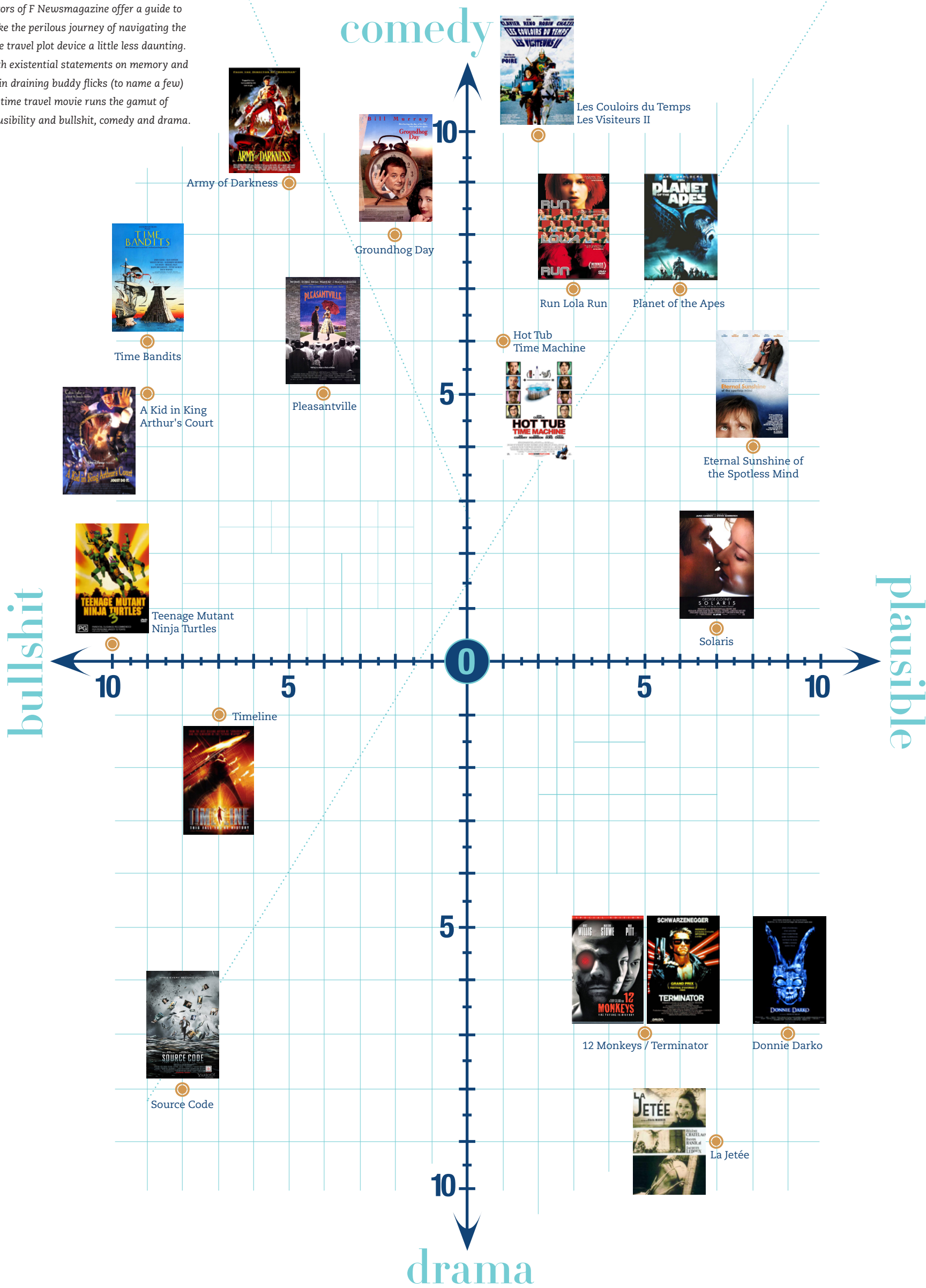
which is visually similar to *Gravity*'s focus on Stone's face as she descends into perpetual misery. Just as the reality of Stone's terrifying situation is abstracted through its depiction on her helmet's reflection, so too is the barbarism in *12 Years a Slave* obscured: Northup's tormentor is presented out of focus and hidden in the background.

With their stages set early, both *Gravity* and *12 Years a Slave* proceed to plunge directly into depictions of their protagonists' physical trials as they attempt to survive their forced predicaments. For Stone, this manifests itself in the form of incessant turns of bad luck: every time she progresses toward the possibility of finding safety, something new manages to push her back. Oxygen levels run low, equipment malfunctions, fireballs erupt, and the orbiting space refuse is constantly on the verge of returning. Stone questions herself throughout the entirety of the film with each new hardship that threatens to derail her progress and determination. In *12 Years a Slave*, Northup moves from one plantation to the next in a series of increasingly violent and heart-wrenching situations. He is tortured both physically and mentally, and he is constantly fighting the urge to give up his last shreds of humanity. His few attempts to identify with his white captors almost always result in further pain, and by the film's final act he has barely managed to avoid submitting to his new role as a slave.

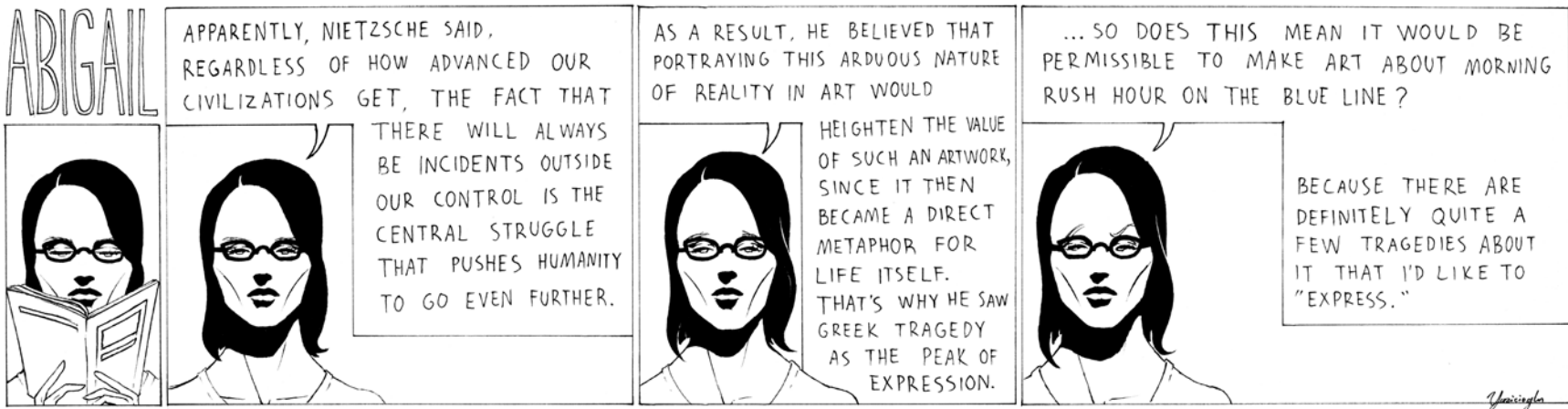
While *Gravity* and *12 Years a Slave* initially seem to be covering vastly different territory, their shared narrative structures and the roles of their protagonists link the films through the emotional responses that they generate. Each film relies upon a provocation of compassion within the viewer, and the physically exhausting scenes that occur throughout serve to solidify and amplify these emotional connections. Without betraying the endings of the films, the conclusions of both *Gravity* and *12 Years a Slave* manage to strike similar chords for their abruptness. Each film carries on with its constant abuse of its protagonist up until the final scene. As the credits begin to roll, viewers finally have a moment to catch their breath.

WINTER RAVEL MOVIE MAP

For the blessed lull of winter break, the editors of F Newsmagazine offer a guide to make the perilous journey of navigating the time travel plot device a little less daunting. With existential statements on memory and brain draining buddy flicks (to name a few) the time travel movie runs the gamut of plausibility and bullshit, comedy and drama.



» berke yazicioglu



Drawn Out Thoughts, Drowned Out Drawings

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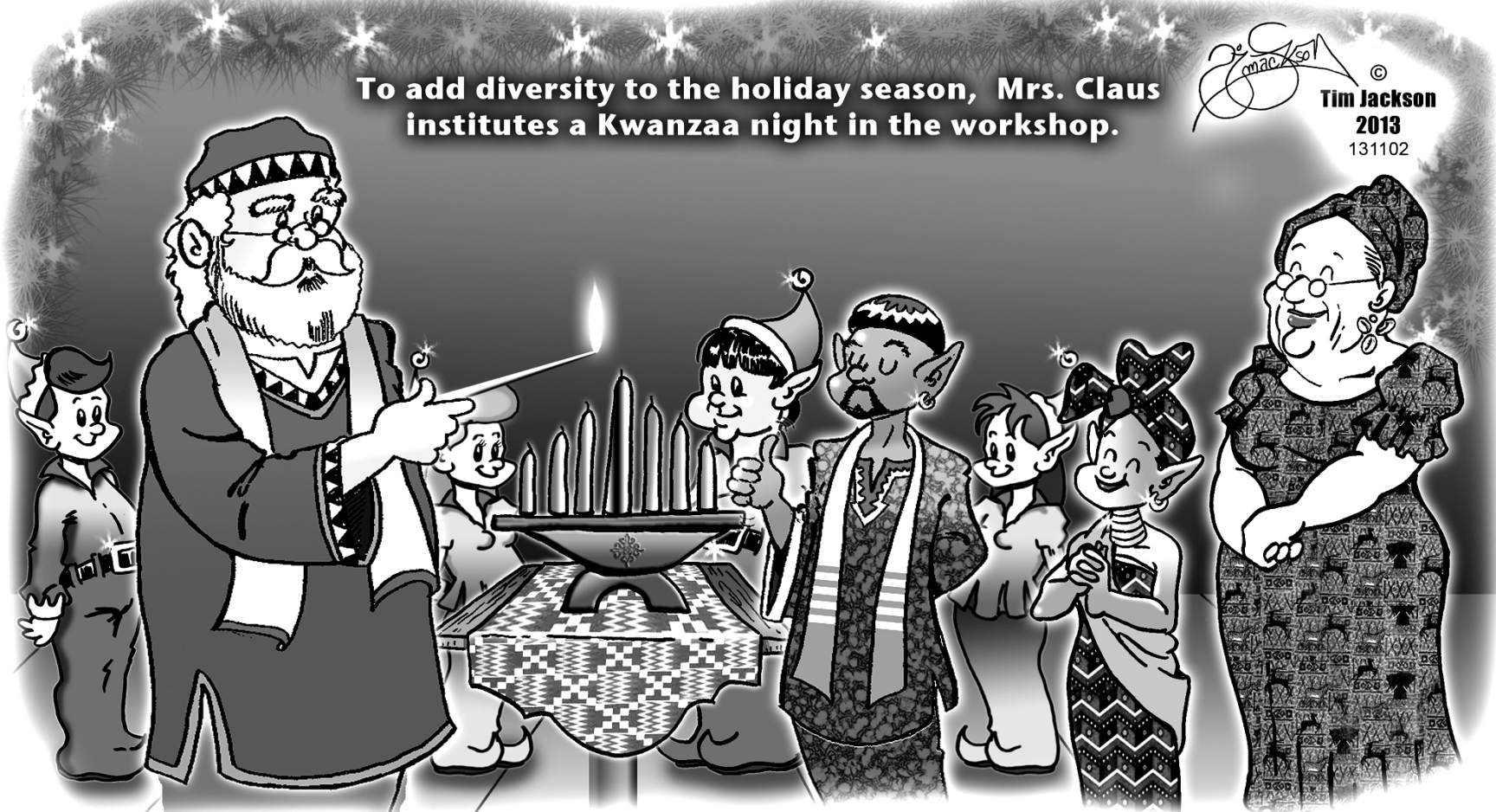
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To add diversity to the holiday season, Mrs. Claus institutes a Kwanzaa night in the workshop.





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**MCA DNA:
Warhol and Marisol**
Through Jun 15, 2014

Paul Sietsema, *Blue square I* and *Blue square II*, 2012. Ink on paper. © Paul Sietsema. Courtesy of the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Paul Sietsema was organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University. Major support for the Chicago presentation of the exhibition is provided by Liz and Eric Lefkowsky. Additional generous support is provided by Matthew Marks Gallery and Phillips.

Marisol and Andy Warhol at an opening of John Willenbecher's work at Feigen and Herbert Gallery, New York, 1963. © 2013 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo © Adelaide de Menil, courtesy of Acquavella Galleries, New York

Master



**MCA DNA:
Alexander Calder**
Through Aug 17, 2014

Alexander Calder, *Chat-mobile (Cat Mobile)*, 1966. Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Leonard and Ruth Horwich Family Loan. © 2013 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago

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