A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART, CULTURE AND POLITICS

MAY 2009

fNEWSMAGAZINE

SAIC's town hall meeting

Faith Wilding discusses cyberfeminism

Olafur Eliasson at the MCA

CYBORGS
AND OTHER NON-HUMANS

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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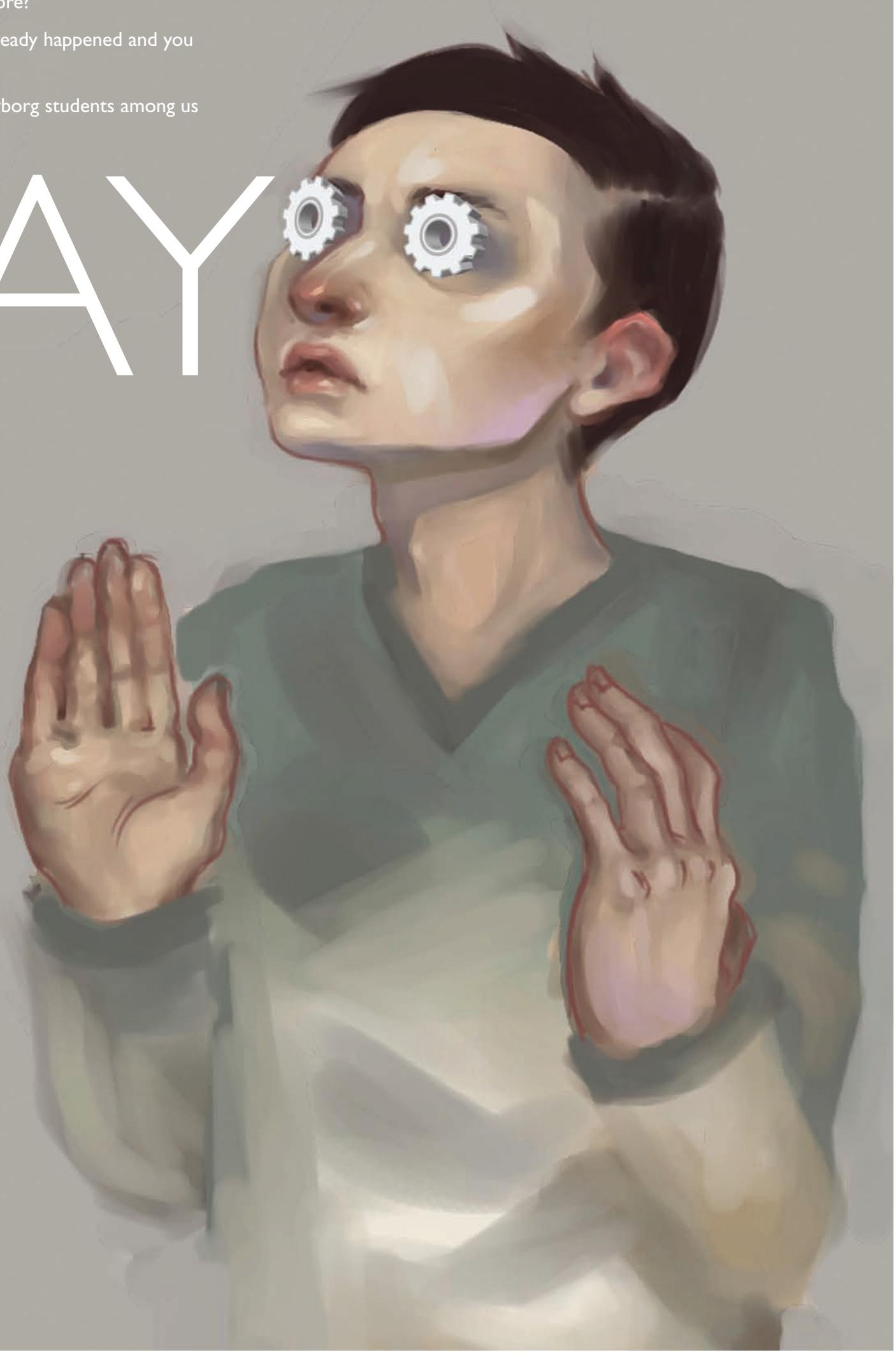
MAY



EDITORS | Emily Bauman, Aurélie Beatley, Beth Capper

ART CRITICISM EDITOR | Emily Bauman

ART DIRECTOR | Aaron Hoffman

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR | Elliott Beazley

DESIGN T.A. | Olivia Liendo

ADVERTISING MANAGER | Allison Green

EDITORIAL ADVISER | Paul Elitzik

DESIGN ADVISER | Michael Miner

PHOTOGRAPHERS | Christian Branch, Jen Mosier, Ilwon Yoon

ILLUSTRATORS | Alicia Gaines, Matt Lane, Kira Mardikes, Alexandra Westrich

DESIGNERS | Bora Ham, Amy Luo, Kirsten Makela, Afton McCann, Reneé Rondinone

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WEBMASTER | Matt Griffin

MULTIMEDIA ARTIST | Ya-ting Hsu

COVER | Alexandra Westrich

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Cyborgs are now

BY EMILY BAUMAN

When discussing the theme of this issue, I found that I received two opposite responses. From SAIC faculty, I believe one of the comments—which sums it up—was "cyborgs? They are so yesterday." Whereas, from many students, it was a look of confusion—either not knowing what one was or wondering why we might be interested in such an outlandish sci-fi topic. It seems that one generation has overindulged in the fantasy of a cyborgian future and then left the cyborg in the dust without passing much of its knowledge on to the generation that now lives in a world where cyborgs and robots have become a reality.

When new technology and scientific advances (especially with the market for stem cell research beginning to reopen) are happening at lightning speed, changing the way we live our lives and improving the quality with which our bodies can be taken care of—or compensated for—as we age, it seems naive to me to say that cyborgs are passé. The reality is that cyborgs are so today. Not the theory about the cyborg: how it can transcend gender, race, etc. to create some post-feminist, post-postcolonial, post-multicultural utopia, but the cyborg as a reality—extensions of our bodies, replacements of our organs, tools for exploring things previously inaccessible to us.

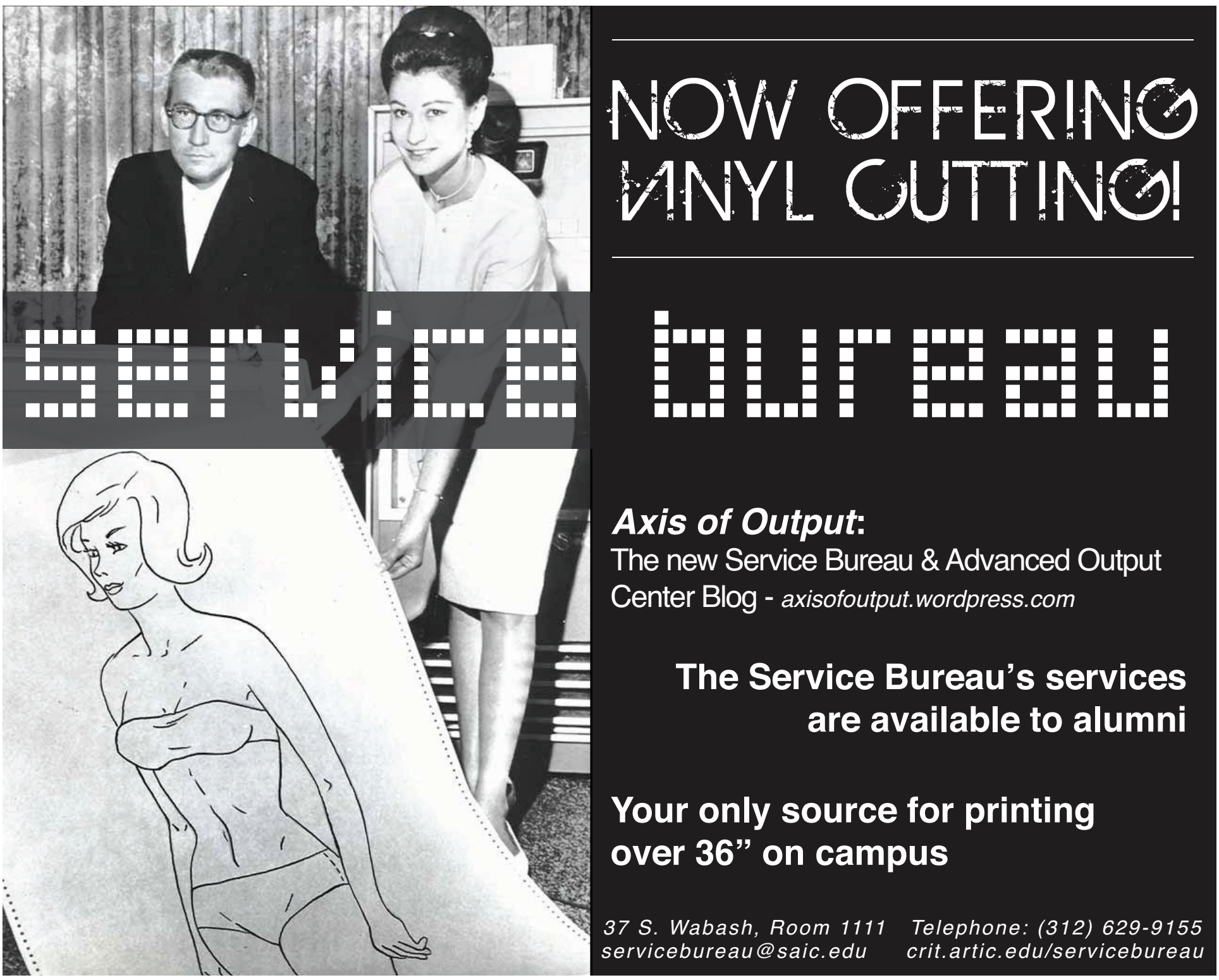
It can be argued that as we walk around with our contact lenses, hearing aids, iPods and Blackberries—with the possibilities of benefiting from the options offered by plastic and reconstructive surgeries, machines that can regulate our bodily functions (should they malfunction) and brain-altering medications that can regulate our hormone imbalances—we are all already cyborgs. Your life probably exists in almost equal parts in real space and on the Internet, through your email and social networks. But, disregarding the computer as (one of) your bodily extensions, the possibilities that have been opening up are seemingly endless. The reality is that we now live in the science-fiction, but we seem painfully unaware of it (or in denial of it).

Perhaps this is because some of it is scary. Most technology is first developed for warfare (including plastic surgery) or discovered due to the travesties of war (experiments on POWs), and we are in the midst of seemingly endless war (or series of wars). We can't even possibly know what we are capable of now, because most of it is probably classified (not to sound like a conspiracy theorist or anything). However, even what we do know about is quite shocking, such as robotic eye implants and suits that increase human strength. Even the options for female fertility and the way we create children has completely revolutionized, and the test-tube baby has been completely normalized in the last twenty years. Even cloning is old news, and DNA is not only a common term, but is being dissected to its individual controllable components.

New ways to cure diseases or aid those with disabilities are the realities of the near future. These are things that we need to embrace and reflect upon, because they are the things of our lifetimes, they are our present-future tense, not our imagination's flights into false worlds. Is putting an electronic chip in our heads to increase our brain functions so far away from putting one in our chest to regulate our heart? Is creating a baby from two women's eggs so far away from creating one from extracted eggs and sperm? Is creating an electronic prosthetic arm that responds to brain waves so far from creating robotic creatures with fully functional appendages? How far away are these technologies? (Actually, some of these things have already been developed!)

While we can't exactly answer all of these questions in this issue, we do hope to offer some insight into what we do know is happening so far. These things, from our social imagination of the cyborg to the possibilities that are being revealed to the media, show that perhaps what we imagine our future to be is already happening now, and that we need to reimagine what our future might actually be, and when it is going to come.

Staff illustration by Olivia Liendo



ART NEWS | SCHOOL NEWS

BY AURÉLIE BEATLEY

New School Action

The recent lay off of 12 faculty members at the Parsons New School for Design has the academic world in uproar. The firings, which were communicated to the concerned teachers via email, come after the New School's embattled president, Bob Kerrey, received an overwhelming vote of no-confidence from senior faculty for his seeming inability to work with a provost. Students at the school have been protesting Kerrey's unilateral approach to leadership since December 18 by staging occupations of certain New School buildings and by organizing protests and creating blogs, most notably the "New School in Exile," which gives a voice to the dissenters. The ire between administration and the student body and faculty members has been gradually increasing even as students are suspended and/or arrested for their participation in the protests and occupations. When asked about the atmosphere at Parsons these days, Kristina Monllos, one of the editors of the *NS Freepress*, the New School's news publication, said, "When you have an art school and you cut twelve professors, you should be prepared for an uproar." She continued by praising the student involvement: "For a college campus–most are pretty apathetic–the atmosphere has been tumultuous. I've seen people at protests who have never been involved in anything before." It remains to be seen if the student involvement will actually have any positive impact on the New School's direction, but the pugnacious nature of the student leaders as they face down their truculent administration is fast becoming an inspiration to other universities similarly concerned with the futures of part-time faculty affected by the economic crisis.

For student reporting on the New School conflict, check out the NS Freepress' website at: http://www.thenewcampus.org/nsfp/index.php.

For the protest blog, "New School in Exile," go to: http://www.newschoolinexile.com/

SFAI Layoffs

In similar news, the San Fransisco Art Institute's February 6 layoff of nine tenured faculty members, some of whom had been with the school for over 25 years, has been billed as "outrageous" by student organizers and leaders. SFAI's administration legitimated the measure by citing the dread words "financial exigency," a claim that has incensed protesters in the wake of the school's plans to launch a new "School of Design" for Fall 2010. Students have rallied around the fired faculty members out of concern for what the school's curriculum will look like now that 25 % of the staff has been cut, as well as the manner in which the layoffs were conducted, with no effort made towards discussion or transparency. The fact that the decision to cut the tenured faculty members was made in closed meetings and without consulting the bodies responsible for teacher organization have left a bitter taste in the mouths of much of SFAI's population, many of whom are left wondering about the future of the school and the real nature of the possible discourse between the school and its administration.

ART NEWS TICKER

Hi. Are you a UK resident over the age of 18? You aren't? Oh, then you won't have the opportunity to win a painting by **Damien Hirst**, or one of 20 litho prints by the artist. *The Observer* and Hirst and the band **The Hours** have combined power to give away the goods. The painting was used to create The Hours album cover, and the give-away created to incite hysteria... **Bugs Bunny** and pals have taken over da Vinci's *Last Supper* in a San Diego gallery owned by the Loony Toons creator's daughter. Christians get mad when you do shit like that, so they barraged the gallery with obscene phonecalls decrying the desecration of Christian values... Artists **Scott Kildall** and **Nathaniel Stern** attempted to create a performance piece by creating a Wikipedia page for "Wikipedia Art." The point: it can be freely transformed by anyone choosing to do so. The page lasted 15 hours before it was deleted by Wikipedia Administrators. Wikipedia has launched a trademark infringement lawsuit against the duo for the pair's archive and continuing discussion of the project. Will the lawsuit be more interesting than the actual art project?... Are Dubai's elite *over* artworks that my mom would call "weird?" **Christie's** is holding a sale featuring Middle Eastern artists and only two Western artists–**Rober Silva**'s glass thing, and **Mark Quinn**'s paintings of flowers. Auction houses are giving up on the idea that buyers in the Middle East will gobble up anything made by Warhol or Hirst. The expected income of the sale is estimated at $4.1m-$5.9m, a far cry from similar auctions last year, when the same session made $20m... —*Natalie Edwards*

BY ANNABEL CLARKE

COOL STUFF SAIC STUDENTS ARE UP TO

VCS ZINE

Students in the VCS grad department have grouped together, DIY style, to create a zine called *Canon*. The zine features contributions by *F Newsmagazine* writers Joel Kuennen, Benjamin Pearson and Brian Wallace. The zine includes short stories, theoretical texts, photography, collages, poetry and a temporary tattoo. The zine is distributed around the school and may be found in the *F* stacks.

REFRACTED LENS

F Newsmagazine Editor Beth Capper and Art History/Arts Administration student Kelly Shindler received a 2009 Student Association's Project Grant back in March for their film screening series *Refracted Lens*. The grant will go towards paying film-and video-makers who participated in a screening on March 21 at Roots and Culture Gallery in Chicago, which includes SAIC alum Buki Bodurin. Capper and Shindler are currently working on a website to accompany the project featuring interviews with the filmmakers who participate in their screenings and critical articles about the works. Look out this Summer for the next *Refracted Lens* screening.

MOTHERWELL

Art History/Arts Administration student Paige Johnson is currently working on the first issue of a new essay-based journal called *Motherwell* to be released in May 2009. The Journal features contributions by a number of SAIC grad students, including Bryce Dwyer of Chicago collective InCUBATE. Read about it at www.thisismotherwell.wordpress.com.

ARTS ADMIN JOURNAL

The Arts Administration Dept. has created a departmental journal called *E-merge*, edited by Dorota Biczel Nelson and Ania Szremski. The journal seeks to engage with and problematize issues related to arts administration as a professional practice. The pilot issue of the journal is released in conjunction with Art Chicago, presenting a series of interviews with the fair's key players and curators involved in special exhibitions accompanying the event. The journal is available online: www.saic.edu/emerge

If you know of any cool things SAIC students are up to, please email: editors@fnewsmagazine.com

SCHOOL NEWS TICKER

Faith Wilding, SAIC Performance Poobah, has received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Photography powerhouse faculty **Brian Ulrich** and **Anna Shteynshleyger** also received Guggenheims. Maybe they can team up and document Wilding's performances... VISCOM seniors and graduate students will be showing off their portfolios and celebrating the department's fancy, renovated instructional space May 14 on the 11th floor of the Sharp Building. Refreshments will be served and fonts will be discussed... **SAIC's Student Association**, (formerly known as student government, which was then disbanded because nobody wanted to run for office), has started a downloadable (from the portal) newsletter that explains who they are, what they do, and how you can get involved. It's full of surprises, plus there are pictures of **Stan Chisolm**... **Aaron Hoffman** has won the very prestigious SSND Designer of the Year award. He's the "stormy" art director of this very paper, and if you're smart, you'll get involved in *F* too so you can get a job when you graduate. Congratulations Aaron!.. *F* won Best Overall Design too, so I guess Aaron's not the only hot shit designer on staff... On May 14 at 6 pm in the Ballroom, graduates of the **MFA writing program** will read from the work that will propel them into the future. Make sure to attend, if you want some brilliance dropped on your ears... The *New York Times* did a little ditty about SAIC's Fashion Design Professor **Nick Cave**'s "Meet Me at the Center of the Earth" exhibition at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Fancy pants! SAIC FVNM alum **Nicholas O'Brien** recently got props for his video "The Natural" from Ceci Moss on Rhizome. Hit up *www.Rhizome.org* to check it out! And last, but certainly not least, SAIC MFA writing student and *F Newsmagazine* associate web editor **Natalie Edwards** has had one of her short stories published in swanky literary journal McSweeney's, which once again proves that if you write for *F*, you'll go far… —*Annabel Clarke*

Photo courtesy of Nic Collins

DIY Music
(*with an old school edge*)
Nic Collins talks about *Handmade Electronic Music*

BY MATT GRIFFIN

Nic Collins has had a long and influential career working on the fringes of the electronic music world, but this month's release of the second edition of his book *Handmade Electronic Music* marks yet another step down the academic rabbit hole. In anticipation of its release, Collins sat down to talk to *F Newsmagazine* about techno-nostalgia, the popularity of programming and the technological niche in music that his book fills.

Handmade Electronic Music is an invaluable resource for aspiring hardware hackers, detailing in a straightforward, step-by-step manner, how to build from scratch the most essential tools for creating physical electronic music. The book teaches the reader to crack open toys, the basics of soldering and how to build and bend circuits. It also serves as a history lesson, outlining the major figures in this particular strain of avant-garde music.

So why, only three years after its original publication, is a second version being released? Collins isn't completely sure. He assumes it has a lot to do with the popular reception of the work: "What happened with the first edition kind of surprised the publisher, I think. A lot of people started buying it, and a lot of people started using it. There were universities that started designing courses around it, which is kind of frightening. Now it's being used in colleges almost all over the world."

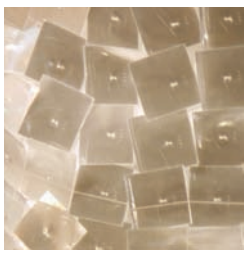
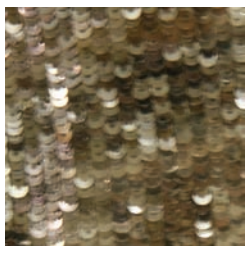
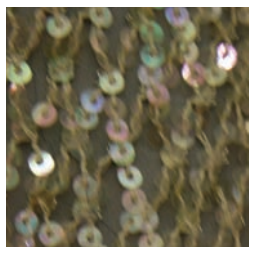
Collins also credits the last decade's increasing nostalgia for old technology as a context for the popularity of his book. "You've always had music reviving older forms, like punk and hardcore reviving early rock and roll, but house was a very technically oriented music, that went back to very specific pieces of technology. House was very much about certain midi sequencers and drum machines, and subsequent genres, like techno, referenced back to things like analog synthesizers."

But what makes the book unique, according to Collins, is that he goes beyond the DIY circuit bending instructions that can be found on the Internet, which depend on hacking toys. Instead, he instructs readers how to build from scratch, using a "Lego approach to circuitry, where you just have something like four different bricks, and then you'd have to put everything together yourself." These components can be switched around to create oscillators or a fuzzbox. "It was very goofy. The technology is extremely nonstandard, but very cheap, and indestructible, and it runs forever on a nine volt battery."

This distinction is important, since many toys that are now being made are harder to hack. Meaning, that toys from the late '80s and early '90s have to be found and purchased in order to create circuit benders the traditional way. At the time the first edition was released, "no one had any experience doing it unless there were a geeky, I-made-a-synthesizer-out-of-a-kit sort of guy. Now it seems as though it has become a much more fluid part of a lot of people's art practice. In other words, just like there was a little break between people who used a synthesizer and those who programmed, now everybody's programming." f■

Collins will be at Quimby's Book Store (1854 W North Ave) on May 2 to promote the release. The new edition includes a DVD with 87 videos. Including the audio components from the first edition as well, the book covers over 100 artists.

For the full text of the interview with Nic Collins, please visit fnewsmagazine.com

Superstar in a budding market

Maria Pinto honored with SAIC's Legend of Fashion Award

BY QUINTIN XAVIER ROPER

Mayor Daley initiated his Fashion Advisory Council in 2006. Before this venture, Chicago's fashion scene was a struggling harbor of fancy boats with little wind to cast them to bay. To be a fashion designer in Chicago required advanced business knowledge and skill, because the city did not offer any resources to nurture design professionals. A few years later, the city's rubbery exterior has been infiltrated by the likes of major fashion shows, an overwhelming number of networking opportunities for Chicago's fashion community and common knowledge (or, at least buzz) about the happenings with designers in the city. When you mix these ingredients with a personality, talent, and a deep understanding of the female form, you get Maria Pinto.

Pinto graduated from SAIC in 1990 and has been sending shock-waves through the country with her impeccable clothing, which has graced the bodies of women of all varieties—but most notably, Michelle Obama. Pinto's work has become famous for her ingenious use of texture treatments, experimentation with color and her undeniably keen eye for luxury. Women who wear Pinto's unleash the goddess within, in part thanks to the effect her genius for fabric–who could help but feel divine in her beatifully crafted clothes?

Staff Photo by Aaron Hoffman

"Beauty calms me down. I have a board of inspiration in my office here and another board with photographs from the 1930s and 40s. I like to keep pictures of artwork, dancers, and things that I find intriguing. One of my favorite pictures is this Olympic athlete suspended in the air."

Pinto recently donated a sheer pink dress from her archives to SAIC's Fashion Resource Center. I saw it and immediately needed to be next it. Her talent is an enigma; her creations are perfect in their balance of pure art and wearability. It is approachable high fashion, which makes the Maria Pinto brand successful. Typically, big shiny things, odd shapes and non-traditional patterns intimidate Americans. But not even the dullest Judd could deny the gorgeous complexity of a Maria Pinto garment.

Because of her genius and her recent accomplishments, Pinto was honored as this year's SAIC Legend of Fashion Award recipient. This followed the launch of her Spring 2009 collection, which is sexy, feisty, and unlike anything you have seen before. The shapes alone are enough to make your jaw drop.

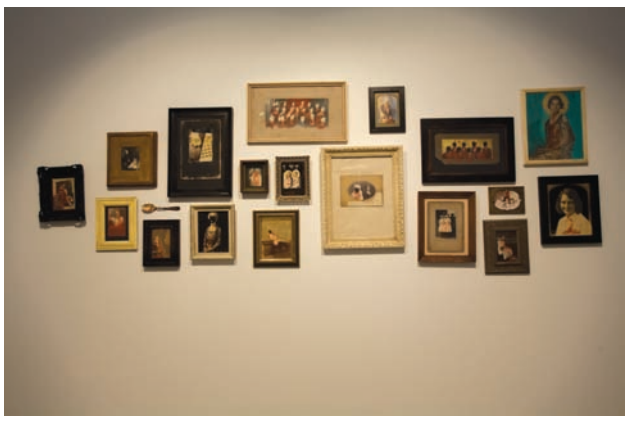
While interviewing Maria, I noticed that she is not only one of the most inspiring figures in Chicago but she is also genuinely nice, charismatic and still retains the street smarts of a strong woman in a cold city. A business woman, an innovator, an artist, a revolutionary in Chicago fashion, Maria Pinto is a trailblazer whose fashions everyone should indulge in.

QXR: *What was your first big break?*
MP: During the early '80s and '90s, Joan Weinstein included some of my pieces in her boutique, which was a very big deal at the time. If she bought your collection, it was a testimony. It opened up many, many doors for me. After that I started selling at Barney's, Sacks Fifth and Neimans.

QXR: *What is your day like?*
MP: It is so crazy. And I try to schedule in time for myself regularly. I love what I do. I want to get in the office and work. In the morning I try to have time for myself and I go to the gym to do yoga. And I have to designate design time within my work day. Some designers will design at home or after work. I put it into my work day so that I can use my free time to recover and relax.

QXR: *Everybody seems to agree that Michelle Obama is gorgeous, but why? What exactly is it that makes Michelle Obama gorgeous?*
MP: Well, with any woman, it is self-confidence and that comes through in anything. It's about movement and physical expression. It doesn't matter if you spend 200 dollars on a pair of jeans. It's about how comfortable you are with yourself. There was an article a while back that asked one of my clients why she enjoyed wearing my clothing, and she said "Maria's clothing makes me a better version of myself." But she was already a fabulous person to start with, and my clothing just helped to bring that out. Beauty first comes through you. That's why it's good to be in good health. What's most important is that you still have that foundation. Knowing yourself and knowing who you are. And what you have to remember is to find that beautiful part of you.

QXR: *Could you offer any words of wisdom to college students who aspire to be like you in a few years?*
MP: Be patient. And be committed to your studies. A lot of the time we think, "Ah, I just want to get through this!" But it's not much different when you get out of school. School is the one time where you get to experiment. And when you do finish you have to think twice about what you are doing. You should use this time in school to embrace the opportunities. The reason I am so grateful about my experience at SAIC is that it taught me to work as an artist first. f



Ariane Nelson, *every prophet his house*

Donghwa Kim, *DE▲▼ NUDE*

Katrina Chamberlin, *Cold Hands, Warm Heart*

MFA Show 2009

BY AURÉLIE BEATLEY

In the interest of full disclosure, we'd like to inform you that the opening for the MFA show has yet to occur. *F Newmagazine* actually traveled into the future, via a cool bit of cyborg magic, in order to review the show before its public unveiling.

The mix of work in the show is, unsurprisingly, very interesting. It offers a pulse-taking moment for the emerging generation of creators, highlighting the effort of artists that have, to a certain degree, come into their own. Many of the trends demonstrated by the graduate work are similar to the ones put forth by their undergraduate counterparts (which points to an overall cohesion within the school), but their execution is more researched and refined.

The Graduate Exhibition is very installation-heavy, and the content alternates between representational illustration work and utterly abstract assemblage, reflecting artists that are functioning at a high level of intellectual rigor. While the BFA show concerned itself mostly with an uneasy commentary, the MFA show is on the whole much more comfortable with its enunciations of the creators' unique perspectives. The work is therefore more obscure, but also more substantial.

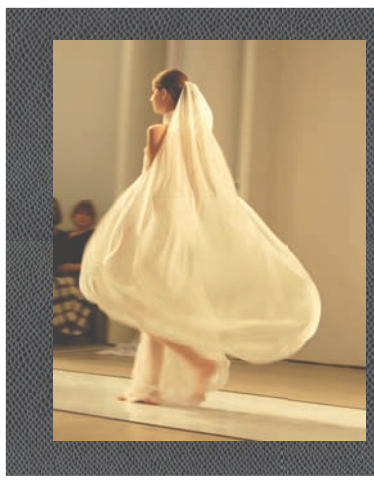
The exhibition is, on the whole, a great showcase for a group of artists shedding the "emerging" label and rising to meet the challenge of the contemporary art world.

The Graduate Exhibition is open to the public May 2–15 at the Sullivan Galleries, 33 S. State Street, 7th Floor. Opening Reception: May 1, 8-11pm. Hours: Tues–Sat 11am-6pm. Admission is free.

Brianna Schweizer, *Famous Last Words: Charles Darwin*

Kyoyoung Park, *Stage 5*
Staff Photos by Ilwon Yoon

Frederick Elms, *Untitled*



BY AURÉLIE BEATLEY

The SAIC fashion show? Was super awesome. That's not a particularly scholarly dissection of the event, but it is the most apt description I could think of as I tottered out of the building in supremely uncomfortable shoes.

Every rung of the fashion hierarchy met their challenge admirably. For those of you who have never gone to one, the annual SAIC fashion show showcases the entire fashion department—from sophomores at entry-level to seniors already selling their collections to retailers. The various collections are therefore very different from class to class.

The sophomores have a pre-determined color-scheme and a limited range of fabrics, which forces them to perform designing gymnastics in order to construct a collection that matches their vision. The colors this year were bright white, baby pink and fuchsia—which was a pleasant contrast to the "real" fashion world's gloomy palette for Fall 2009.

The upperclassmen are left with relatively free-reign over their materials, so the garments sent down the runway ran the gamut from felt-clad yetis to futuristic mod dresses. And, surprisingly, large portions of the clothes were actually wearable! Several beautifully crafted pleated skirts caught my eye, as well as a bunch of admirably tailored jackets as they made their way down the runway in bright colors or lovely muted pastels, gauzy fabrics or more substantial jerseys. The more intense body-sculpture was also supremely pleasing, with a few nods to folk-art and a lot of impressive architecture.

SAIC's fashion department has long been a birthing ground for new and innovative fashion designers, with many alumni of the program going on to work for important design houses. This year's showing, with its cheerful and highly intellectual deconstruction of the historical context of clothing and its re-imagining of the future of fashion, falls right into step.

For more fashion show coverage, including a live-blogging extravaganza, way more pictures, and a few interviews, go to www.fnewsmagazine.com.

Staff photos by Rachel Sima Harris and Ilwon Yoon
LEFT TO RIGHT; Monika Hadioetomo, Jessica Rodriguez, Bree Williams, Alexis Mondragon

Pyromania pays off

SAIC students are three-time champions in cupola furnace competition

Staff photos by Jen Mosier

BY JEN MOSIER

While you've been barbecuing wieners all semester in your cute little charcoal grill, SAIC pyromaniacs have been building a giant furnace that melts iron into smoldering liquid metal in preparation for the 2009 National Conference on Cast Iron Art.

In the beginning of April, nine SAIC students prepared their furnace, known as a cupola, alongside teams of other pyromaniac artists from around the country, on the grounds of the historic Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham, Alabama. All semester the students had been designing and building a five-foot tall cylindrical furnace to melt iron competitively on the national level. With instruction and guidance from Dan Matheson, sculpture professor, and one of three faculty representatives, the students successfully achieved a third straight victory for producing the hottest and most fluid metal.

"I'm very impressed by everyone learning to work together to make this possible," Matheson said. "It speaks highly of the crew as individuals and the positive work ethic the foundry program instills in students." The evening of the competition, SAIC went up against fourteen schools and universities from around the country, who all blasted their constructed furnaces on simultaneously and put them to the test. SAIC students continued to add pounds of iron into the top of their furnace, periodically releasing molten iron, which was poured into sand molds.

The class met for three hours a week during the semester, with everyone contributing a great deal of added hours in order to complete the furnace for the conference. They started with nothing, but they learned how to be resourceful, recycle parts and gather donations. The conference is mainly designed for student learning, participation and the practical application of skills learned in the classroom. "The conference is very beneficial for networking and provides supervised conditions for students to jump in on iron pours, as opposed to learning on their own," Matheson said.

Nicholas Van der Maaten, captain of the victorious team, attended his second cast iron conference this year. He was new to the cast iron community two years ago but was immediately sold on the idea of pouring iron and working with metal after SAIC alumn Sarah Von Harling invited him along to be on her team. "She got me into being an iron head and I've never looked back." Van der Maaten's furnace was the only one at the competition which hadn't been run before, but his confidence in it prevailed. Titled "FeFe der Van der Phoenix," the furnace was painted in a sleek black and adorned with a handmade bronze phoenix perched on the front. The use of the phoenix connects the mythological rebirth of the bird through flames and ashes to the iron pouring process in which scrap metal is melted down to be reborn into new works of art.

Sloss Furnaces has been preserved as a national historic landmark in Birmingham since 1981. Enormous smokestacks and pipes tower above it. The 32-acre blast furnace plant produced iron for almost 90 years and put Birmingham on the map during the Industrial Revolution. Today, it exists as a museum and active casting center for artists. Iron pours occur daily and a community of people help each other to produce their art works. Panels, workshops and gallery exhibitions of metal art are organized in order to enhance the educational experience. The final evening of the event had a festival atmosphere, with everyone enjoying southern barbecue and viewing performances that brought wonder and amazement to pouring iron.

Traveling all the way to Birmingham from Chicago exposed SAIC students to the cast iron community, which continues to adopt more iron enthusiasts every year. For many of the conference attendees, the craving to return to Sloss Furnaces is partly equated to a reconnection with old friends who share the same passion for iron. Since the number of iron pours in Chicago is few, students soaked up the experience in Alabama. The national conference on cast iron art is one of those captivating environments where groups of people from many different backgrounds unite together with one passion, to pour iron. If you weren't an "iron head" before the conference, there's a good chance you will be afterwords.

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The State of the SAIC

Recapping the major points of the Town Hall meeting

BY MORGAN GLIEDMAN

Town Hall Meeting

On April 13, during a rainy Monday afternoon, the Columbus Auditorium was half-filled with curious SAIC students, and a handful of faculty, attending a Town Hall meeting organized by the Student Association. The meeting included presentations by President Wellington "Duke" Reiter, VP of Finance and Administration Brian Esker and VP of Enrollment Management Rose Milkowski.

Duke presented ideas from his "Fast Forwarding Project," which he had shared with the faculty in early fall 2008. In terms of the Student Experience, he recognized that SAIC is a tuition-driven school that has nearly doubled its undergraduate population in the past decade, and needs to create a stronger sense of community.

There is a big push for development right now, but in this dreary economic landscape precise fundraising strategies need to be employed aimed at specific projects. Some of these highly speculative plans include sharing the MacLean Ballroom space with a library, and building a ground-level or second-floor student center, possibly in the Sullivan Center or on the corner of Wabash Ave.

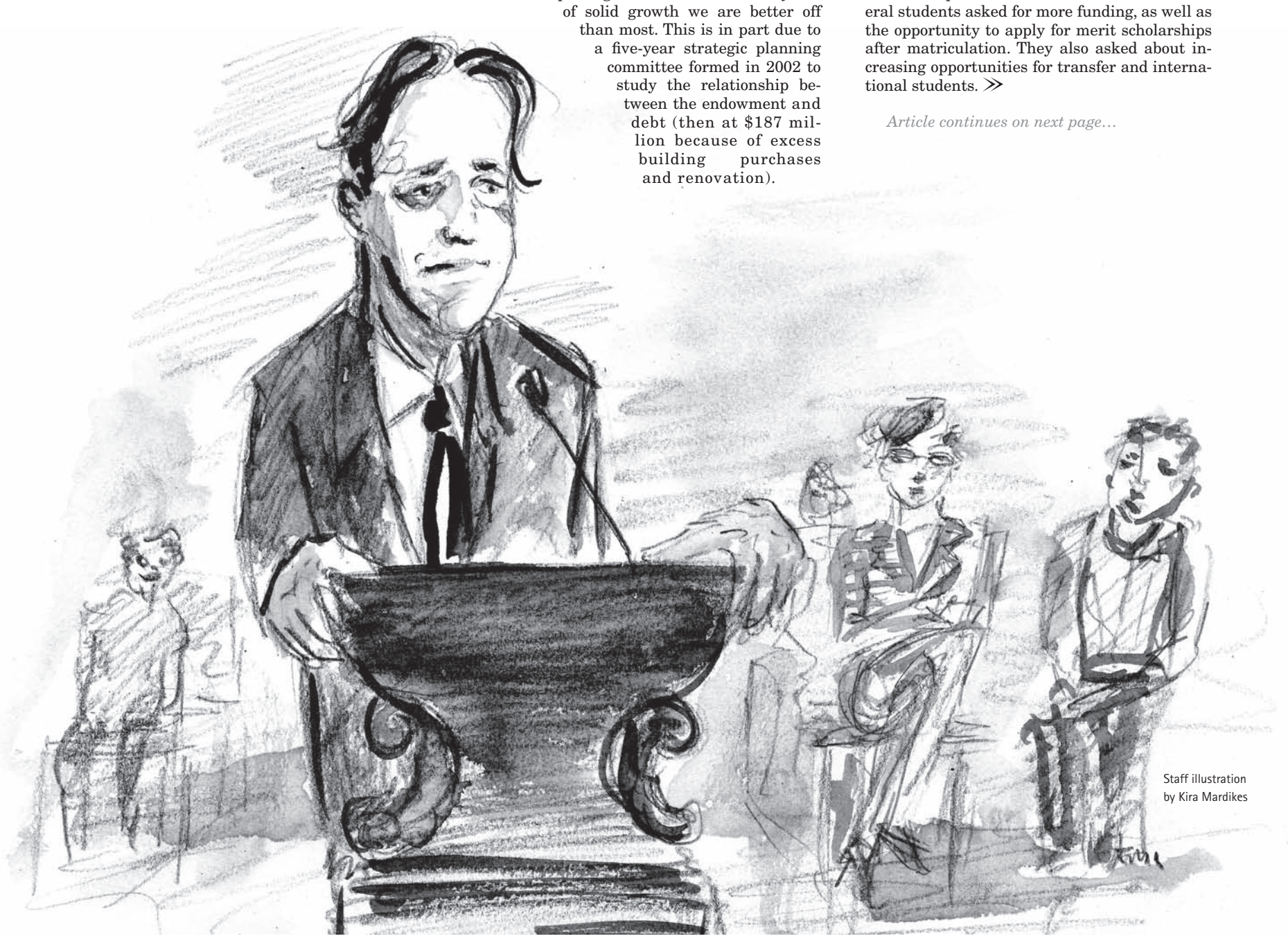
Hopefully, any new construction will be more than just another place to drink iced tea, and will include plenty of space for students to work on projects and exchange ideas. Paul Coffey, Associate Dean of Academic Administration, is encouraging students to make their own proposals for what they think a student center should include. Coffey told *F Newsmagazine* that his door is always open and that he hopes to make the deans' offices in the Sharp Building more accessible to students.

As he did in the faculty-only meeting on March 19, Esker was called on to deconstruct how the current economic recession is impacting the School. After four years of solid growth we are better off than most. This is in part due to a five-year strategic planning committee formed in 2002 to study the relationship between the endowment and debt (then at $187 million because of excess building purchases and renovation).

The School's debt is currently at $131 million. However, while SAIC's endowment fell by 24%—from an all-time high of $192 million in 2007 to $141 million—other universities, like Harvard, saw their endowments drop by as much as 30%. Esker explained what could seem like an esoteric endowment formula to non-CFOs: a financial equation which involves spending approximately 5% of the endowment's assets each year while reinvesting the remaining funds to gain interest for the future. An endowment is built on gifts the school receives, and this system ensures that the principal investment continues to grow over the years.

Rose Milkowski, who oversees enrollment and financial aid, reminded all students to file the fafsa and to speak with their financial aid advisor regarding earning changes or other extenuating circumstances for possible adjustment to their 2009-10 financial aid package, as well as the most up-to-date information on loans. Several students asked for more funding, as well as the opportunity to apply for merit scholarships after matriculation. They also asked about increasing opportunities for transfer and international students. ≫

Article continues on next page…



Staff illustration by Kira Mardikes

Town Hall Audience Response A case for accountability

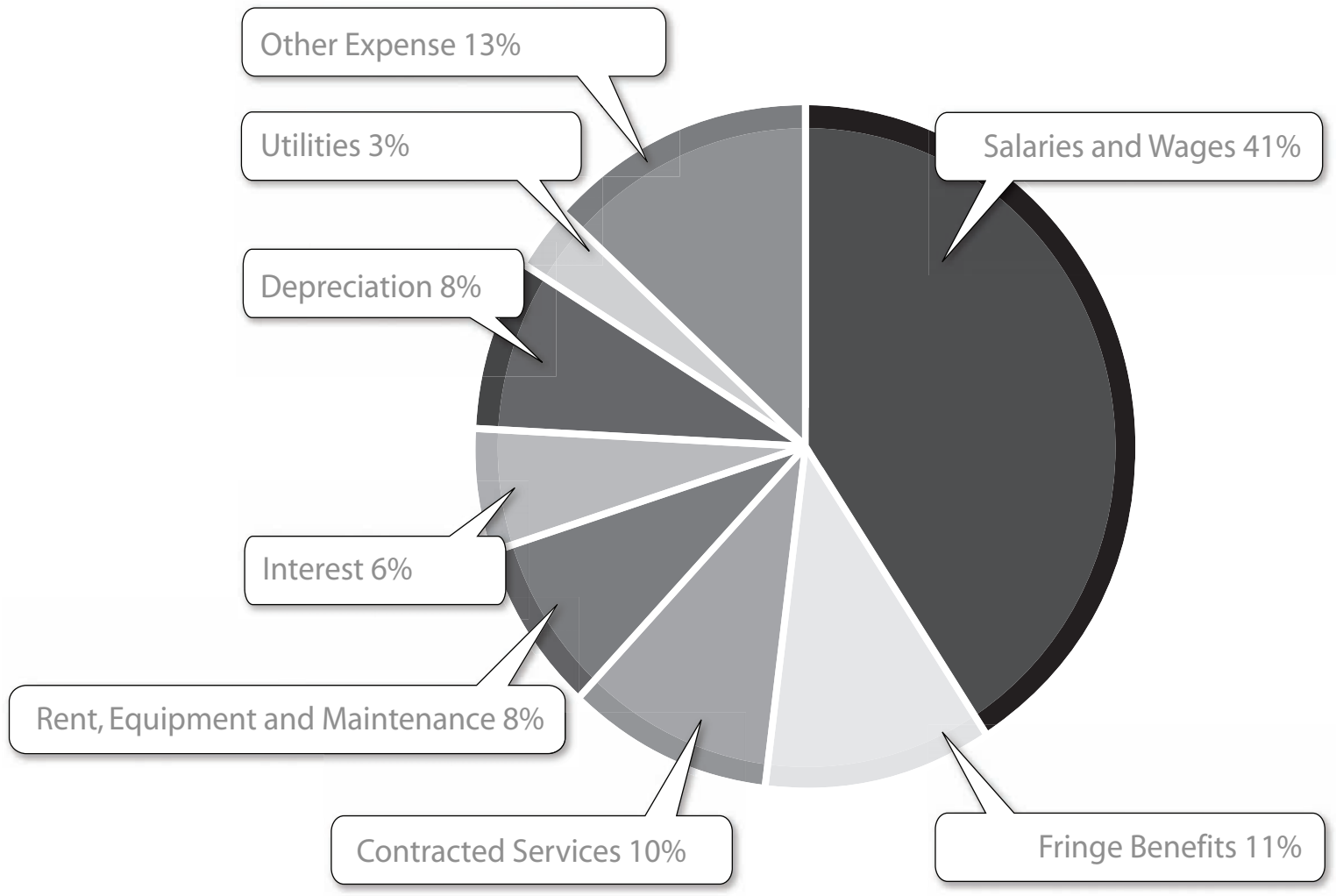
BY JULIE RODRIGUEZ

Amid recent coverage in local media of proposed policy changes and reduced course offerings, students have been demanding greater transparency into administrative decisions. The Town Hall meeting on April 13 was organized in response to this demand.

Students raised a number of concerns during the course of the two hour meeting. They asked which courses had been cut from the fall schedule and why, asking for a list to be made available online. There were also questions about the cost of hiring models for the fashion show and the new video monitors in the entrance to the Sharp building, at a time when the school is bringing in fewer tuition dollars and the economy in general is lagging. Several students were also interested in instituting a more effective school recycling program. Reiter dispelled the rumor that there are plans to build a gym and clarified some of the confusion about the future of the holography and neon labs.

The feedback from the audience was mixed. Many in the crowd expressed a desire for more studio space rather than the student center Reiter has proposed. Some were concerned that Reiter's decisions did not reflect the actual desires and needs of the SAIC community, and wondered what input students were actually having in the decision-making process.

Reiter and the student association have raised the possibility of future town hall meetings, and promised more communication with students through the online portal. Whether the administration will live up to these promises remains to be seen, and some audience members seemed skeptical. Still, signs are promising. From disclosing the school's budget and assets to explaining changes in financial aid and available courses, it seems that a sincere effort was made to address and work with students' concerns.



Total FY2008 Expenses - $90.7M

Staff illustration by Olivia Liendo using data courtesy Brian Esker

The State of the SAIC (cont.)

COURSE CUTS

At the Town Hall meeting, Interim Dean of Faculty Lisa Wainwright assured students that the academic deans and department chairs maintain their commitment to small classes and a pluralistic, progressive education. She said that typically about fifty classes are cut each semester due to low-enrollment, but that 140 will be cut preemptively for the 2009-10 school year from the usual 2,100-course offering. Wainwright and Coffey have been working closely with department chairs to isolate each area's core curriculum, attempting to cut redundant sections of a class or offer a particular class fewer times a year rather than lopping off whole programs.

Of the cancelled classes, the breakdown is intended to be roughly proportional to department size: AIADO (4); Arts Administration (4); Art History (9); Art and Tech (5); Ceramics (1); Fashion (2); FVNM (5); Historic Preservation (1); Liberal Arts (8); Painting and Drawing (12); Performance (1); Photography (4); Sculpture (3); Visual Communication (8); VCS (1); Writing (1). It is unclear whether student evaluations were taken into account during this process.

Additionally, 531 seats are gained by increasing caps by two students in 50% of classes, and by as many as six in others. Additional curricular changes in the future may include a decrease in credits required for the BFA degree from 132 to 120-126 credits, in order to relieve the strenuousness of a six-class semester. However, there will be no changes to the requirements in the next academic year.

PART-TIME FACULTY

Wainwright shared that the School has "in fact hired a few more faculty," but, while she acknowledged "some discontent" among instructor-level and adjunct part-time faculty who lost classes, she has received only two emails on the subject from the School's 300-plus instructors, 60 adjunct assistant professors, 68 adjunct associate professors, 32 adjunct professors and 150 full-time faculty. The administration has also said that efforts were made to reduce teachers' classes rather than to put anyone completely out of work.

After three years as an instructor (which pays about $31.50/hour for studio class contact hours), an instructor may apply for a position as an adjunct assistant professor. This promotion comes with an eight-percent raise and access to benefits, and is the first wrung on the competitive, crowded climb to adjunct professor status (which entitles the faculty member to a minimum per course rate of $7000). Opportunities to move from instructor to adjunct are, however, extremely limited, with the promotion process being painfully competitive.

Wainwright—who is referred to as "the Lioness" for protecting part-timers' rights—acknowledged the difficulty with this multi-tiered labor force. The current picture of the school is at odds with section 1A of the Faculty Handbook, which states: "It shall be school policy to see that at least two-thirds of the full-time equivalent faculty positions in its college level studio programs are held by full-time faculty members."

As the School has grown dramatically in the past ten years and several new departments and graduate programs have been incorporated, the full- to part-time ratio has been thrown off. Wainwright, as well as other administrators, has said that SAIC should be built on more full-timers with a small, flexible pool of spots for instructors to teach temporary, "one-off" classes.

The course cuts are hitting new hires and instructors hardest, many of whom are already struggling with the base wage of $3400/class (last year the part-time concerns committee succeeded in getting the base instructor wage raised to this sum). And, as one instructor told *F Newsmagazine*, the increased caps and course sizes amount to a pay-cut for faculty across the board.

If it takes forty-five minutes to grade each student's essay, an increase of five students means nearly four more hours of work per assignment that the teacher is not getting paid for. The difference between a twenty-five and thirty-student class is also huge when considering the needs of the shyer, quieter students and the syllabus concessions needed to adjust for the extra students.

Current goals of the newly formed SAIC chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) include framing the dialogue of the ongoing debate, setting standards for part- and full-time faculty course load and making SAIC a fair-wage institution.

NEON & HOLOGRAPHY UPDATE

Representatives from the student protest group the Neon Underpanties and the Facebook group Save The Holography & Neon Labs attended the Town Hall meeting. Wainwright confirmed suspicions that in the wake of the January flood in the basement of the Michigan Building, the Neon and Holography labs will remain closed for the fall 2009 semester, but that the faculty is "in discussions about how to integrate these areas into the larger Art and Tech plan and possibly a Light department."

The computer-based Neon Animation class will be offered in the fall (and is filled to capacity), while the more hands-on Neon Techniques has been cancelled. Both Beginning and Advanced Holography have been removed from the course catalogue, though both areas remain on the Art and Tech department's website.

Possible alternatives being discussed are rebuilding smaller Neon and Holography labs that would open onto a larger, shared Art and Tech lab, getting a glass shop on retainer to do the glass-bending work for the Neon students, or perhaps holding the classes off-campus in a faculty-affiliated studio. The latter is by far the most popular option with the students I spoke to, since this could be arranged relatively easily with departmental and administrative approval.

Second-year students Adriene Lilly, Emily Boksenbaum and Alex Simes founded the Facebook group last month to address rumors and organize student efforts to save these areas of the curriculum. Save The Holography & Neon Labs, which has upwards of 189 members, is working to find out the exact cost of rebuilding the slightly damaged labs in order to raise money from alums working in the field if necessary, and to keep the labs alive by demanding progress reports and substantive answers from the administration such as where, when and how the labs will reopen.

Concerned parents have started writing letters to the administration in an effort to save these beloved areas of their kid's costly educations. At 10pm on April 16 many members of the group took action by emailing President Reiter with individual arguments for saving the curriculum and rebuilding the labs.

STUDENT ACTIVISM

There is an air of activism floating around "campus" this spring, and a handful of students at the Town Hall meeting expressed their desires for a more active student government. The Student Association (formerly known as the Student Government) is comprised of a third-year student and three graduating seniors, toiling away in room 1302A of the MacLean Center. They are responsible mainly for funding and, according to their recently implemented monthly newsletter (it can be found under the Campus Activities section of the Portal), for co-sponsoring events such as the Welcome Back to School Party, All-School Barbecues, Holiday and Spring Art Sales, the First Thursdays events and the implementation of the School's ExTV station.

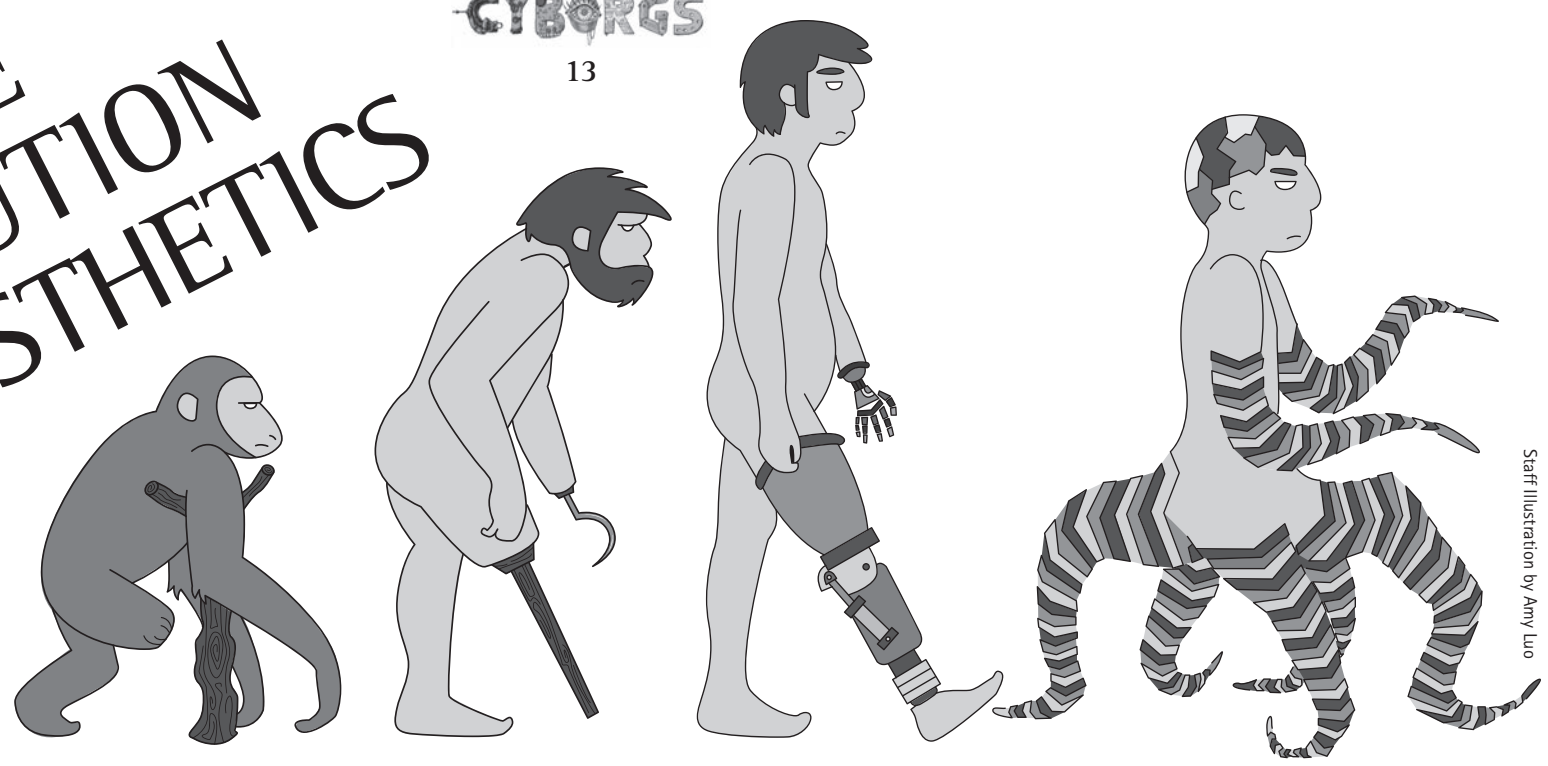
Following several years of apathy and low voter turnout, these paid positions are now appointed based on previous accomplishments in the school (eliminating underclassmen from the running). The Student Association 2009-10 applications and April 10 deadline were not widely publicized, though their mission on the School website states that the Student Association "represents all students enrolled at the School, providing students with a voice in School decisions."

During this tumultuous time, there are currently several informal student groups looking at communication at SAIC and exploring how to form a student government responsible for substantive issues and held accountable to their electorate. ■

Correction Appended: The "High Noon?" article from the April 2009 issue stated that 52% of the 2008 budget was used for faculty salaries. The number should have represented total salaries.

To weigh in on Neon & Holography, visit www.fnewsmagazine.com

THE EVOLUTION OF PROSTHETICS



Staff Illustration by Amy Luo

BY JULIE RODRIGUEZ

Though science fiction began toying with cyborg characters during the 20th century, the idea of a human enhanced by artificial parts is nothing new. The first known prostheses date back to Ancient Egypt, when limbs made of leather and wood were created to enable those with missing legs, feet, or toes to walk. Later, Spartan soldiers who often lost chunks of their faces to enemy warriors would fit themselves with iron noses. The first written reference to an artificial limb was made in 500 B.C.E. by Herodotus, recounting the tale of a condemned criminal who escaped from his chains by cutting off his own foot, and hobbled 30 miles to the next town on a replacement fashioned out of wood. This image would be made famous by the stereotypical pirate with a peg-leg and a hook for a hand.

Over the centuries, prosthetics have been created to replace missing eyes, teeth and limbs lost due to injury or disease. More modern technological advances allow doctors to replace broken joints with titanium, to augment a weak heart with a pacemaker and even to create implants allowing blind and deaf individuals to gain some use of their missing senses.

The challenge has always been in creating artificial limbs that actually work as well as the real thing. Until recent technological improvements, that simply has not been possible; most prostheses throughout history have served only limited, mostly aesthetic functions, generally worn only to hide a congenital deformity or a limb lost in battle.

In the middle ages, armorers created heavy iron limbs which were only useful for show, or perhaps for holding a shield, but which were too unwieldy to offer the wearer any real control. Amputation as a modern medical procedure did not really exist until 1529, when it was pioneered by Ambroise Paré, who also created the first prostheses with articulated joints. The first artificial limb that could be moved by muscle contractions was created in 1898, signaling a breakthrough in prosthetic usability and function. During World War II, lighter materials such as aluminum and plastic premiered in the manufacture of prostheses, making them easier to wear and use.

Now, robotic limbs which use sensors to detect nervous signals or muscle movements, and react accordingly, have become available. These limbs may include wires which use electrical activity on the skin, electrodes implanted within muscle tissue, or that connect with actual nerve tissue. Another type of robotic prosthetic involves implanting a microchip in the wearer's brain which translates nervous impulses into an electric signal, so that the wearer can move the limb using the nervous impulses from the brain centers that control actual organic movement–enabling the user to control the appendage with a simple thought. Modern prostheses can also mimic a full range of normal human motion, and can be custom-made to look practically indistinguishable from a natural limb.

Prostheses, far from being a handicap, may actually improve human performance. In 2008, South African double amputee Oscar Pistorius was temporarily ruled out of competing in the summer Olympics due to concerns that his prosthetic legs gave him a slight advantage over runners with ankles. (That decision has been overturned and he is free to compete in future games.) One researcher found that Pistorius used 25% less energy than an able-bodied runner moving at the same speed, and also ascribed a slight advantage to the fact that his lower limbs would not suffer muscle fatigue.

Prosthetic eyes and ears are also in the works. Cochlear implants are electronic devices which, unlike a hearing aid which simply amplifies volume, convert sound into an electronic field and directly stimulate auditory nerves, allowing the deaf to approximate hearing. For the blind, there are devices under development taking video recorded from a camera placed on the wearer and, bypassing the eye entirely, send the information directly to the optical nerve. They work by placing a tiny computer chip in the back of the eye, which is wirelessly connected to a camera embedded in a pair of special glasses.

Technology has actually progressed so far in some areas that there are concerns prosthetics may function better than mere flesh and blood. However, the models susceptible to making us into supermen come with a hefty price tag and are not affordable for most of the general public. At least, not yet. f

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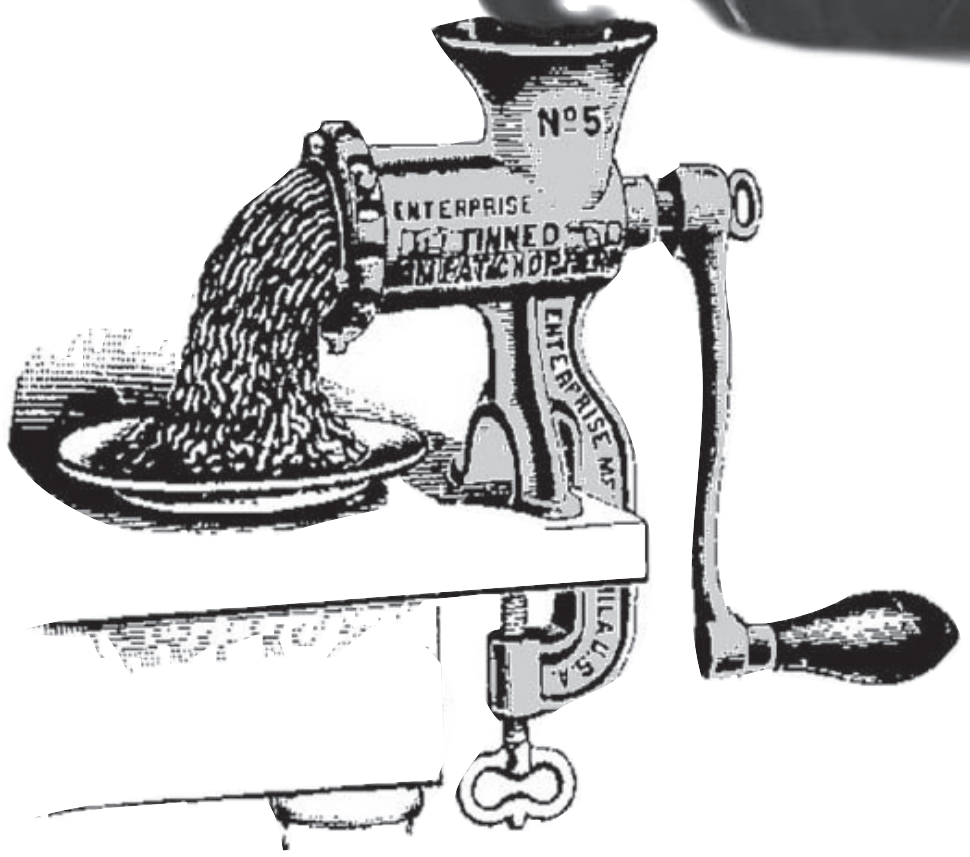
OBSOLESCENT FEMINISMS?

Image Courtesy Faith Wilding



The technological divide between generations

BY BETH CAPPER

"Where are all the young feminists?" This question is posed regularly by an older generation of women who perceive an absence of young women critically engaged with feminism. Such a perception is symptomatic of a deep divide between generations, in which the prevalence of new technologies plays a major part.

Political activism now takes place more on the Internet than in the streets, and those who are not already technologically adept are being rendered obsolete. The figure of the cyborg, particularly via Donna Haraway, looms large in this context, presenting the endless possibilities of a potentially liberating and egalitarian post-gender society. Women can now modify their bodies so they can live longer, give birth later, work more, sleep less and, if their given bodies become unappealing, they can reinvent them in cyberspace.

People can change genders, add or take away body parts and reduce the visible signs of aging. This moves us away from a restrictive definition of the human (that was never for us anyway), a version determined by the restrictive tropes of a repressive patriarchy.

However, biotechnologies and the Internet are not without their own power structures. The possibilities, for example, of bodily modification play a central role in the context of transsexual and intersex individuals, and can operate simultaneously as liberation and oppression. The spread of information made available through the Internet, and the possibilities of self-invention can be revolutionary—but not always.

The extensive online Feminist Art Database, made available by the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, web archives of women's histories and the rapid speed with which information can be proliferated and disseminated via the web allow for greater and wider possibilities for the mobilization of political action. But one only needs to look at the answers to Facebook quiz's such as "What Kind of Girl Are You?" (in which I was defined as a "Slut") to see that the Internet is not nearly a neutral space.

Feminist artist Faith Wilding, who teaches in SAIC's Performance department, has been grappling with these issues in her artistic practice for many years. "More and more I am wanting to reject this glorification of the cyborg as the figure for where we are now," she says. "That's not to deny that we are all acting as cyborgs a lot of the time, nor is it an anti-machine or anti-technology stance. It's about the kind of ontology that somehow this is a figure to be accepted without criticality—without really looking at what it's costing us."

Writing for *Domain Errors*, Wilding says, "Cyber-colonialism is rearing its ugly head everywhere under the sign of a new global culture." In this essay, provocatively titled "Rant of a Menopausal Cyborg," Wilding assesses the ways in which older people, especially older women, are viewed in society. In our technologically advanced age, she assesses, productivity is key. This falls hand in hand with a capitalist system that cannot abide uselessness. Older women and men are being compelled to adapt or die by the very technologies that were assumed to be liberating.

This does not just affect older people, but affects everyone living in societies where wired culture is less of a given. "There's such a big discrepancy between how so many young people in the United States live, and the kind of life experiences of people in other countries. The Internet doesn't level the world out at all," says Wilding.

Access to and treatment of technologies (including medical and bio-technologies) are really varied in different parts of the world. "We have to start thinking of these technologies not as something that is being promoted by certain political and economic imperatives. There is a coercive nature to the idea that everybody has to be wired to be in any way competitive in today's technological and capitalist world. It's a compulsion towards becoming machine-like. It's about rationality, productivity and efficiency."

This brings us back to the question of a generational divide in feminism. The view that young people are less engaged in these issues is indicative of a skewed perception on behalf of an older generation that see themselves outmoded by the very women they fought to get rights for. There is a network of young men and women across the world engaged with feminism and art, who are trying to figure out how to effectively articulate the kind of resistance they feel is still necessary without utilizing models they feel are outdated.

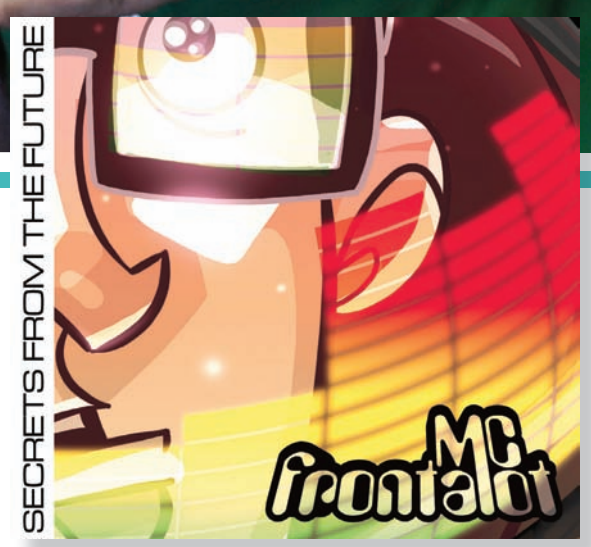
The question is not whether the current generation desires to act, but rather whether the right expression for this action is being articulated. In the '60s and '70s, people took to the streets, occupied universities and offices, chanted, protested and rioted. Tired of not getting exhibitions in major art galleries and museums, they built their own. This history is important and should be known, but we should also be able to acknowledge the past without having to replicate it. Feminism is alive, albeit in different and constantly shifting forms.

New technologies can and do play a major role in this, but they must also be critically interrogated. The point of feminism is—and always should be—skepticism about the ways in which power works and the models we assume liberate us. Technology is here to stay, there is no doubt about it—but we can embrace it without relinquishing the need to criticize it. This is precisely Wilding's message: that in order to really understand the entire picture, what is important is complexity, and this is perhaps often what is lost in a wired world. "I need to know more about the past in order to really experience and understand the present. I need layers. I don't want everything to be instant. I don't want to touch something and have it instantly happen. I want to struggle, I want to have difficulty, I want to be challenged."

The inter-generational problem exists because we are scared of one another; each representing knowledge that is anathema to the ways in which we find ourselves in the world. If we start listening to one another, perhaps we can embrace technology and criticality simultaneously and (in the process) realize endless possibilities. f

Nerdcore

Where Sci-Fi meets Hip Hop



BY DANA BOUTIN

Though rap (Rhythm And Poetry) is one of the most pervasive forms of poetry in recent time, many people forget its origins. In the anthology *From Totems to Hip-Hop,* for example, Tupac Shakur's poem about women and Dead Prez's political poem juxtapose canonical poets like Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams. In this vein, a new form of rap, with more "artistic" or playful lyrics and music has been gaining a following among younger crowds, even in academia. These artists are positioning their work in dialogue with the literary canon.

For example, self-proclaimed creator of "post-punk laptop rap," MC Lars, updates Edgar Allan Poe with the song "Mr. Raven"—not missing a beat as he rhymes "Milton" with "Paris Hilton." His refrain comically questions, "Who's that rapping at my chamber door? / Mr. Raven! / All up in my grill like, 'Nevermore.'"

Underground hip hop artists pride themselves on circumventing and even mocking the mainstream. In the 1990s, a subgroup of underground hip hop called Nerdcore emerged. Nerdcore Hip Hop is about politics and "science—not violence," according to Jeff Miranda of the *Boston Globe*. These geekstas rap about subjects like Sci Fi, Star Wars, chemistry and blogging. Most aim to add positivity to the hip hop and rap scene. Many of the more computer-oriented rappers, including YTCracker, offer free downloads of their songs and have a Do-It-Yourself attitude.

"Music was a product, now it is a service," says MCLars in his song "Download this Song." Rapper Kool Keith Thornton, on the other hand, deplores Bit Torrent (a free open source file-sharing program), as he uses shopping rather than drugs as motivation to make albums. In "Charity Case," MC Frontalot—who coined the term "Nerdcore" in 2000—grumbles "Frontalot's destitute / I need you / to buy my CD so I could buy food."

Diverse personal histories mean that some Nerdcore artists rap about their PhD theses, while others write about dropping out of high school. But whether they get geeked on comic book heroes or html, Nerdcore artists create cyborg personas to express their unconventional iconographies. In his song "View Source," YTCracker brags, "My code is mental / to the exponential / cyborg the quintessential." The strength of YTCracker's lyrics lie in his techie double entendres: "My bytes a lot worse than my bark"; "With every gig I secure a gig." Other artists create less technical versions of themselves based on medicine or drugs. In his song "Wild," mc chris writes: "I'm the sativa cyborg." This blurring of imaginary, virtual and techno realities is a mode of agency for those who seek an alternative identity.

Some may find MC Hawking, American web developer Ken Leavitt-Lawrence's imitation of the astrophysicist Stephen W. Hawking, who suffers from a neuromuscular dystrophy, offensive—his limp performance in a wheelchair is a bit much—but I laud his playfulness in creating an alter ego who generates excitement about science by making it approachable and even silly. Even Stephen Hawking indulgently told Susan Carpenter of the *Los Angeles Times* that he is "flattered, as it's a modern day equivalent to [the satirical British Television show] 'Spitting Image.'" MC Hawking's explanation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to the beat of Naughty by Nature's "O.P.P." made me down with Entropy.

Above and Top: Courtesy of MC Chris. Left: Cover art for *Nerdcore Rising.* Illustration by Tony Moore. **Right:** Cover art for *Secrets From The Future*, Illustration by Mike Krahulik

As with most (especially literary) art forms, a tension exists between the artist's "personal" experience, adding to the impetus of the piece, versus the limitations of grafting biographical information onto something constructed. "People tend to coincide my music with my mind," complained the rapper "Kool" Keith Thornton, in an interview with David Downs of the *A.V. Club.* But Thornton resists the singularity of selfhood by birthing aliases; many of his sixty personas have their own ages, birthplaces, pastimes and quotations. "It's your persona, your trademark, your brand," explained KutMasta Kurt, Thornton's beatmaker, in an interview with Downs. "It's almost as if you're making yourself a superhero... A majority of these hip hop guys have been and are still into comic books.... Basically Keith's solo career was his hidden self. He's a caricature of himself. He amplifies his different personality facets."

Thornton's most popular alter ego, Dr. Octagon, is an extraterrestrial gynecologist who sleeps with his nurses and patients. (My mother doesn't like Dr. Octagon: he plays into rap stereotypes of sex and violence.) But Dr. Octagon's morbid, clinical narrative about reproduction and STDs deviates from sexy radio rap. After all, Dr. Octagon "will take Medicaid." In light of the album's Hamlet-esque cover, on which the skeletal doctor contemplates the skull he holds before him, the English major in me wants to relate the STD references to Shakespeare's syphilis jokes. But, as Dr. Octagon randomly intones, "Shakespeare's gone, don't even think about it." The conviction in his voice makes his brutality believable—until you laugh at his threats to flush your money and pet frog down the toilet.

The futuristic, alien, yet sensual, mood of Dr. Octagon's world appealed to audiences, so much so that Thornton lamented: "I think people got stuck on something, but I have a total dimensional lifestyle besides Doc Oc." Thornton jealously murdered his alter ego via Dr. Dooom, an alias he created based on a Marvel Comics supervillain. Due to Dr. Octagon's success, Thornton's label shadily revived the doctor, remixing songs without Thornton's consent, on the album *The Return Of Dr. Octagon*. Thornton retorted with the gory dirge "R.I.P. Dr. Octagon," in which Dr. Dooom "put[s] the finishing touches on the glowingly green-eyed alien," including eating his remains in the video.

Overall, I lean towards separating the rapper from the persona created, and not confusing representation and straight perpetuation. I agreed with my high school English teacher when she said that Eminem's early songs (pre-puppet humping) are an apt expression or release of male rage. But I have my limits, and not all Nerdcore lives up to its potential: whilst ambling through cyber space, I sunk into the abyss that is the Futuristic Sex Robotz. They disappoint with their lame sexing-up of Star Trek. "Hey, Ladies," with its lewd references to bodily fluids, prostrated positions, and passé gender stereotypes, struck me as juvenile and boring, lacking anything futuristic or robotic.

I surprised myself with my conservative repulsion as I thought, "They should be locked back in the computer lab basement out of which they crawled." In short, I understand that people have different thresholds of what they will find offensive, so if you want to be gruesome and carnal about what you produce, I'd prefer it sufficiently stylized.

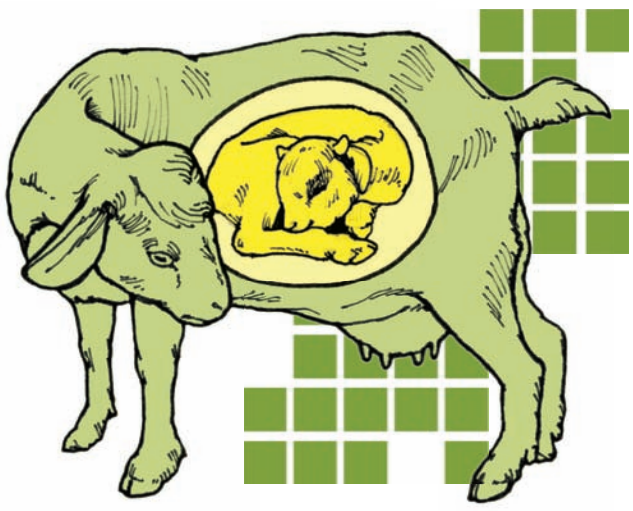
FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW SCIENCE HAS ALREADY DONE

(and might still wish you didn't)

BY KRISTEN RAY

1

An animal has been resurrected from extinction through cloning. The Ibex, a species of wild mountain goat found in Spain was declared extinct in 2000. Before it died out completely, scientists had the foresight to save samples of its skin. This advance has brought about hope for those interested in the fading biodiversity of the planet. The baby Ibex only lived for a day, but the important thing is that—for that day—**humanity was able to revel in its own greatness.** High fives all around!



2

For enough money, and the disdain of many of your fellow citizens, you too can bring a beloved, departed pet back from the dead... sort of. Earlier this year, a couple from Boca Raton, Florida, paid $155,000 to get a clone of their former Labrador, Sir Lancelot. It should be noted that while New Lancey and Old Lancey are genetically identical, they are individuals, as all dogs are. They are subject to the influences and demands of their environments. The couple has claimed that even if New Lancey is different, they will not love him any less. Yes… I also have spent $155k to get a dog that looks like another dog. It should be noted, though, that my dog was made of solid gold. And diamonds. **MOST EXPENSIVE POUND EVER.**

3

Emerging research suggests it is possible for blind people to learn how to echolocate. That means that, like dolphins, whales and bats, people can learn how to use sound to envision the environment around them. Researchers like Daniel Kish, a blind psychologist who **"sees"** with echolocation, are in the process of developing systematic ways of teaching this revolutionary technique. Researchers believe this will aid the blind in locating small insects and schools of plankton for sustenance.

Staff Illustrations by Alexandra Westrich

4

Stem cells can undo serious birth defects. Injecting stem cells into the brains of mice whose mothers had been given heroin during pregnancy **REVERSED** the brain damage that the baby mice suffered. These studies are significant because many of the conditions being treated mirror those that happen to human infants in utero. In related news: you would not believe how hard it is to make a joke about this.

5

Mice can be genetically engineered from two female ("mother") cells without the introduction of sperm into the reproductive process. These mice were first created in Japan by scientists at Tokyo University of Agriculture in 2004. This brings us one step closer to **making men entirely superfluous.** Kidding! (Nope, I'm not really kidding.)

Smokin' Cyborgs

There certainly are some odd folks wandering around the halls of SAIC. You may have thought you smelled something funny in the elevator, or saw a crazy tattoo through your classmate's tattered t-shirt, but *F Newsmagazine* is here to tell you that there is so much more to see...
There are cyborgs among us!

So stop hiding your tentacles. Reveal your inner titanium core. There is no longer any need to keep your antennae internal. We all already know that your Hello Kitty sidebag is really your evil T-1000 eye behind your back!

SAIC is a breeding ground for artistic and technological innovation, so maybe it's about time that we also acknowledge that we are the testing site for Cyberdyne Technologies. Where else would they find such a large population of youths who are willing to experiment and self-mutilate for greater artistic good? f

PHOTOS
BY JEN MOSIER

AMAZON FAIL

What it means about the relationship between humans and technology

BY AURÉLIE BEATLEY

I'm going to sound like a conspiracy theorist for a moment. For millennia, people have been obsessed with the idea of a dystopian near-future where humans can fly and re-grow limbs; one in which they have tamed nature to the point where it's been subverted to their will. After the industrial revolution, these fantasies became intricately linked with the development of machines. Today, machines are omnipresent, and the forces that control our lives—capital, data, the Internet—are unseen, incomprehensible and all-powerful. One should question the astuteness of leaving so much power over the running of our societies to machines and quantities that we can barely understand.

Starting on April 12, 2009, Amazon.com was hit by an unfortunate "system failure" that took books written by and about homosexuals, along with other "obscene" materials, off their commercial listings and removed their sales rankings. Whether this was a "glitch," as the company claims, or a more sinister third party hack is hardly the important question: the fact that Amazon has the power to single-handedly slash and burn a whole sub-section of literature with the flick of a metaphorical switch is horrifying. That's a tremendous amount of power—not just over books, but over human knowledge. It should make us realize that Amazon.com and its rivals, like Google, are not benign media giants stationed for our convenience about the green cyber-pastures of the Internet. They are ubiquitous data-powers that we have invested with an enormous amount of control over culture—control that no governing body has *ever* had over the commerce of ideas.

When the meta-apocalypse occurs and civilization comes crashing down in a mess of twisted computer chips, don't blame the robots. My computer can't even handle parallel downloads (I'm sure the sleek little bastard will be crying in a corner). Blame the fact that we have given away power over our combined knowledge to a host of nameless, faceless collectives for the sake of convenience, instead of guarding our intellectual patrimony from abuse.

So, am I telling you to go out there and form a small band of plucky cyber-terrorists to waylay the media powerhouses on the informational highways of the Internet and demand that we institute a series of checks and balances to protect our culture from their craven cybernetic ways? Well, that's really up to you. f

Editorial inspired by Miracle Jones' awesome paranoia. For more, check out http://fictioncircus.com/

Staff Illustration by Aurélie Beatley

Becoming Post-Human

Transhumanism in Chicago

BY JENNIFER SWANN

Forget that Chicago is a candidate city for the 2016 Olympics—Chicago was chosen to host the Ninth Annual TransVision Conference, a much more impressive feat for a growing group of people that identify themselves as "transhumanists." Held at the Field Museum in the summer of 2007, the conference attracted speakers such as actor Ed Begley Jr., inventor Ray Kurzweil and William Shatner, who presented a Star Trek-centric lecture called "How William Shatner Changed the World." The eccentric mix of radical future enthusiasts convened to discuss supposed solutions to death, planetary extinction and aging.

What exactly is transhumanism and why are so many people attracted to it? The theory obviously warrants extravagant conferences, such as the 2007 Northern California symposium at which Yahoo, Google and Apple execs debated mind uploading and brain reengineering. The basis of the theory has also been adopted as curriculum for academic institutions like The University of Houston-Clear Lake (Masters in Studies of the Future), University of Hawaii at Manoa (Bachelor's in Future Studies), Oxford University (Future of Humanity Institute) and Tamkang University (Graduate Institute of Future Studies).

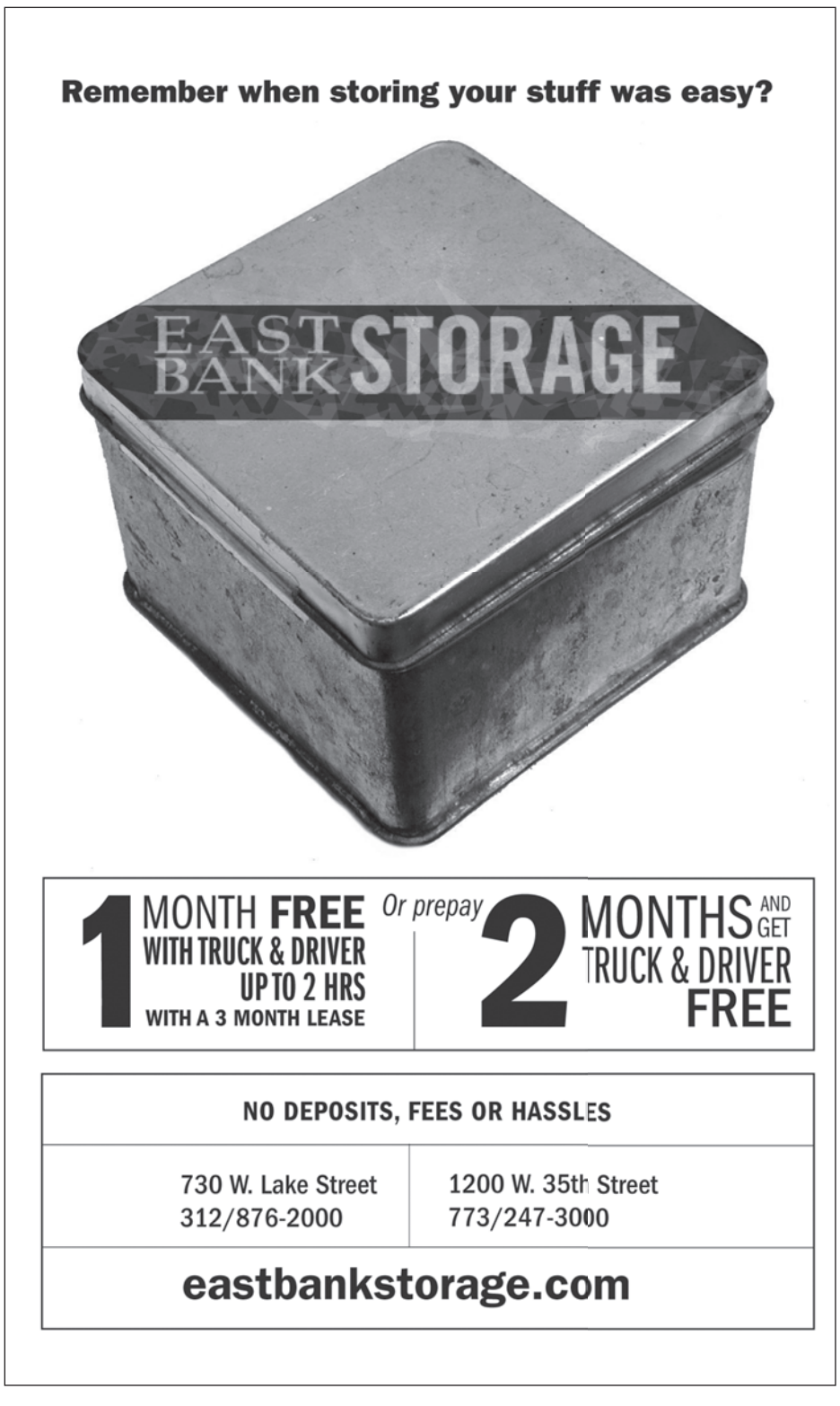
Whether it is discussed in University classrooms or local coffee shops, referred to by any number of its names, the philosophy describes how technological advancements in neuroscience, nanotechnology and artificial intelligence will affect and possibly expand or enhance the human condition. Most transhumanists believe that humans are advancing towards, or have reached, a post-human state in which human interactions are limited or replaced by technologies such as the Internet.

To help me understand the growing appeal of transhumanism, I spoke with Elias, a Chicagoan who attends transhumanist discussion groups every first Saturday of the month at Mercury Café. "I think that for most people I've talked to at least who are interested in the idea—or some people would call it a movement—the thing that turns them on to transhumanism most is Moore's Law," Elias said. Moore's Law is "basically a statistic that can and has been represented in various graphical forms to show the progression of technology and how it is exponentially increasing in various forms, be it the ability to store information in large quantities or the quality of information or speed of processing." Most transhumanists use Moore's Law to predict that technology will soon improve or eventually collide with humanity.

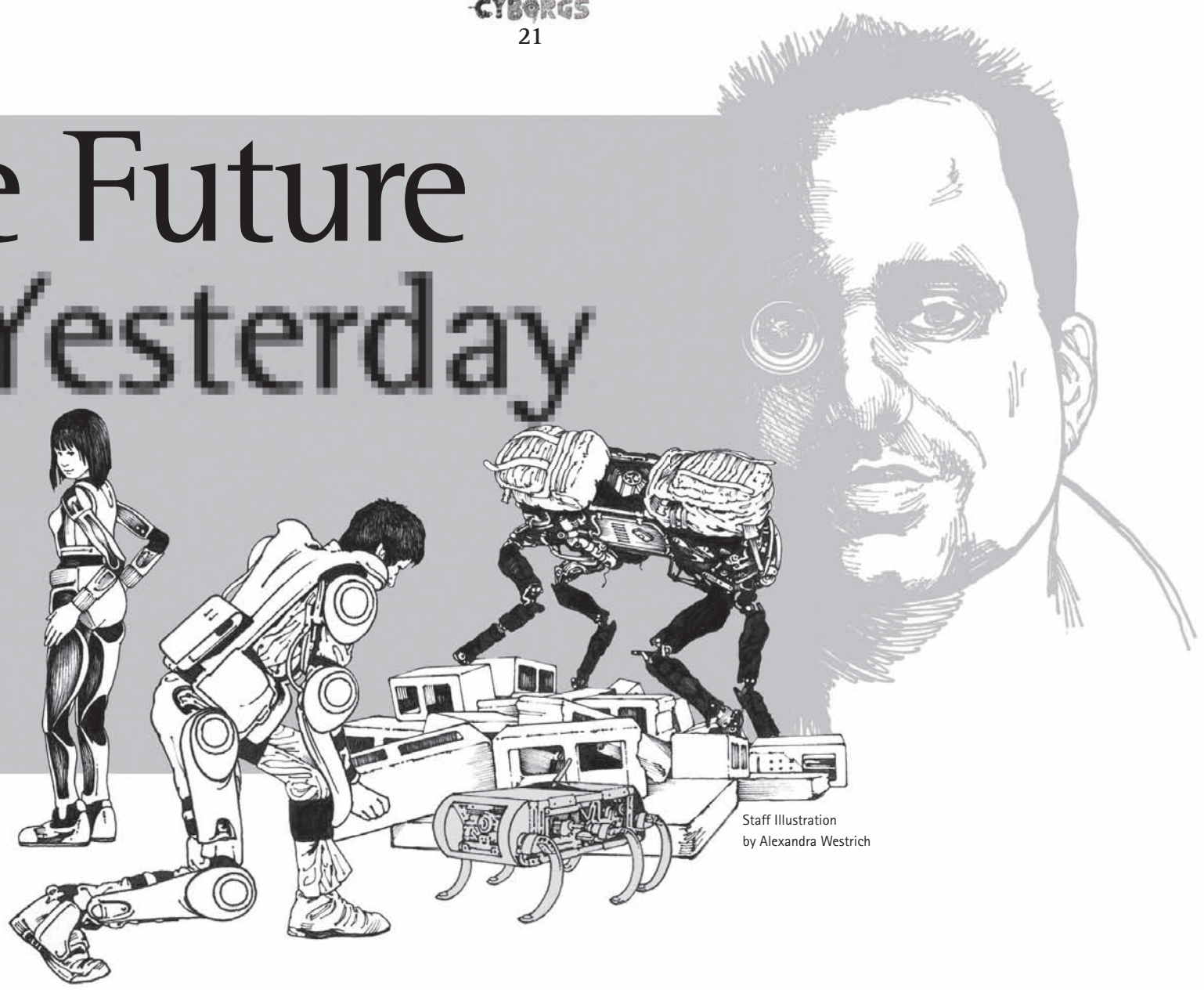
Is transhumanism a movement, and if so, how recent? "The theories have been around for a long time," said Elias, who believes the earliest transhumanist theories originated in the 1950s with science fiction writers whose novels were interpreted as speculative fiction. "I can't think that any of these ideas are entirely new," he said. "It's just now that I think a lot of people are trying to grapple with the realities of these speculations."

As he interprets it, "Transhumanism is basically just a realization of the reality of Moore's law." Transhumanists don't necessarily act on or have specific goals pertinent to their beliefs; they simply accept that rapidly increasing technological trends will irreversibly affect humanity. The idea that humanity is transitioning into post-humanism is supported by trends and patterns such as the emergence of the Internet, which requires less and less of a direct human interaction in order to obtain data.

The worldwide population of self-identified transhumanists may be small at present, but the ideals of transhumanism can be found in similar theories such as singularitarianism and futurology, all of which theorize about ways to extend and improve the human condition.



The Future is Yesterday



Staff Illustration
by Alexandra Westrich

Four terrifying advances in robotics (and the like) that have already happened

BY AARON HOFFMAN

The life of most people in developed nations probably seems a lot like the science fiction of yore: computers can tell us where we are and how to get wherever we want, we can talk with people across the world without so much as a cord, and we can fly through the air faster than sound. But where are the robot suits, androids and cyborgs? Well, if you've been following robotics (it may be best not to divulge an enthusiastic 'yes' answer), you know that they are already here. Yes, the future is now—except that it already happened... so the future is the past... which must mean you are way behind on things. For some unholy reason, I still do not have a flying car, but read on to find four examples (in order of how much they frighten me) of how some of our other dorky dreams have already come true.

Hybrid Assisted Limb (HAL-5)

A Japanese firm called Cyberdyne can sell you a super-strength suit for about $4,200. (Strap a jetpack on there and you are halfway to fulfilling your lifelong dream of being Iron Man.)

The Hybrid Assisted Limb (or, if you prefer movie-related terrifying acronyms, HAL) enhances the wearer's strength by up to ten times, or lifts about 330 pounds (reports seem to vary). It weighs roughly 30 pounds and can operate continuously for just under 3 hours. The suit is battery powered and not as obtrusive as one might imagine. According to creator and Cyberdyne founder Yoshiyuki Sankai, HAL straps onto the wearer's body and uses sensors that pick up the electrical signals from the brain to interpret and precede movements of the arms and legs. Allow me to rephrase that: HAL reads nerve signals to predict movements as they happen and increase strength tenfold. Also, this thing has already been around for about four years.

So why haven't we seen tons of these suits around, helping countless manual laborers and the disabled? (For all I know, they might be all over the place in Japan. Maybe over there, people are just lifting cars off of accident victims and hurling elephants for fun while we Americans don't want to fork over a few grand to be magical action heroes.) Cyberdyne's website claims that the company is dedicated to developing technology that helps mankind, but maybe they have just been selling them off to dictators in the market for armies of super-soldiers...

Rob Spence (the Human Camera?)

Ever feel like you are being watched? Well, chances are pretty good that it's true. (Yeah, I know: if you want to be a real Semantics Nazi about it, people are watching you all the time. You know, with their eyes.) But what if one of your friends could record that vision? Well, such a strange and futuristic idea has already come into fruition. Welcome, once again, to the future.

Filmmaker Rob Spence lost an eye to a childhood shooting accident (boy, if that doesn't need elaboration…) and is replacing it with a prosthetic eye that contains a mini-camera that can be operated using his eye socket muscles. The project was greatly assisted by Steve Mann of MIT, who, along with Spence, fitted the eye with a battery, a wireless transmitter, and a camera usually used by hospitals to look up your rectum. This was all done so that Spence could use the eye-camera to shoot a forthcoming documentary about surveillance cameras. (Ironic much?)

Spence claims that he will always show the subjects any footage he has taken, and get their permission to use it on film—but what if someone follows suit and isn't so scrupulous? Or, what about the fact that Spence could very well be taping anyone he comes in contact with whenever he likes? Perhaps Spence should set up an interview with the CIA if this whole film thing doesn't work out...

Big Dog

Imagine a small, black, headless deer tromping through a forest, and you'll have a fairly accurate mental image of Big Dog, a fully capable, rough-terrain quadruped robot. Oh, and imagine it with a luggage: Big Dog can walk across rubble, beaches, mud and even ice, all while carrying 340 pounds. Now this may not sound that scary, but the popular video released by Boston Dynamics, the MIT spin-off who created Big Dog, reveals how frightening it is to see a robot so menacing and capable.

Walking robots have appeared jerky and unstable in the past, often unable to cope with steep grades or uneven surfaces, so try not to be shocked when you watch Big Dog right itself after being shoved or catch its weight when slipping on ice. Boston Dynamics, who completed Big Dog about a year ago, claims it was created in the hopes of developing a robot that could go anywhere people or animals could go. Their website shows illustrations of mass-produced versions carrying gear for soldiers on foot and innocently carrying bags over mountainous ridges. My first thought, though, was "340 pounds is a lot of artillery."

The versatility of the beast, coupled with the fact that it can traverse 12.8 miles without stopping or refueling, means this could easily be a very expensive, remote-controlled bomb delivery service.

More research in Boston Dynamics shows some other impressive/creepy robots, as well. They have constructed a robot that uses "micro-claws" to scale walls and trees, and are developing a fully robotic humanoid (its name is Petman... seriously), that can balance itself, walk, crawl and perform "suit-stressing calisthenics" for… testing protective clothing. (A fully functioning robot to test out new uniforms? Yeah right.)

But let's not forget RHex, a small, six-limbed robot who can run across any terrain with all the stealth and grace of a hyperactive Chihuahua. Its semi-circular arms slap wildly at the ground until forward movement is achieved, though it is worth noting that this sucker can swim at the surface of or under water. Though RHex may be destined for a Tyco R/C buyout, the rest of Boston Dynamics' portfolio has Terminator-esque military nightmare written all over it.

HRP-4C

Answering a question that nobody asked, Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology has revealed HRP-4C, a robot designed to look like the average Japanese woman. HRP stands at about 5 feet and, through a complex system of 30 motors, can walk around, bow and gesture. The proto-android is covered in grey and black paneling, save for its hands and head; the latter of which contains 8 more motors for blinking, speaking and awkwardly emoting.

There is no doubt that HRP-4C is an extraordinary example of today's most impressive robotic projects, but the robot itself is pretty creepy. The movements of the body and especially the face are complex by robot standards, but awkward—if not frightening—when compared to humans. The robot rests safely in the valley between something that looks and acts robotic and a fully convincing simulated person, so it seems harmless... for now. But one must conclude that this is really just the beginning for fake person technology.

HRP kicked off Japan's Fashion Week last week, garnering headlines like "Japan's Latest Supermodel—A Robot." But the fashion industry probably wouldn't like how short "she" is (on the other hand, it weighs in at only 95 pounds), and HRP's creators insist that it is not advanced enough for a full catwalk strut. Similarly, those who want a new office assistant or something to do their household chores likely have many more years to wait. Associated Press says that HRP-4C's components will sell at about $200,000 without a face, and that its technology will be made public so people can create new movements for the robot. HRP's current fate is likely more akin to amusement park guide or exercise instructor. But one has to wonder how long it will be until the sex toy industry gets their hands on one to program some, er, moves of their own.

EDITING BODIES

BY BENJAMIN PEARSON WITH EMILY BAUMAN AND BETH CAPPER

How do I negotiate the space between me and my avatar—is it a hyperreal one where the avatar mimics me? Is it a mutation of me? How does it come back to me?

Roughly constituted, the avatar is the immaterial (or at least partially immaterial) offspring of the cyborg body—which in this wired age implicates all of us—and is defined by Donna Haraway in her groundbreaking "A Cyborg Manifesto" as "hybrid(s) of machine and organism." N. Katherine Hayles elaborates on this definition to articulate it as "The construction of the body as part of an integrated information/material circuit that includes human and nonhuman components, silicon chips as well as organic tissue, bits of information as well as bits of flesh and bone."

The avatar, then, could be thought of as the software answer to the hardware-based cyborg. The flexibility of the avatar's constitution enables it to disrupt societal constructions of gender as the body transitions from materiality (the body in the "real" world) into that of informational code (the online avatar). The cyborg and cybernetic body have already served (in theory and practice) to expose certain essentialist constructions of the body, while the avatar has provided an outlet through which gender performativity can be fluidly operated.

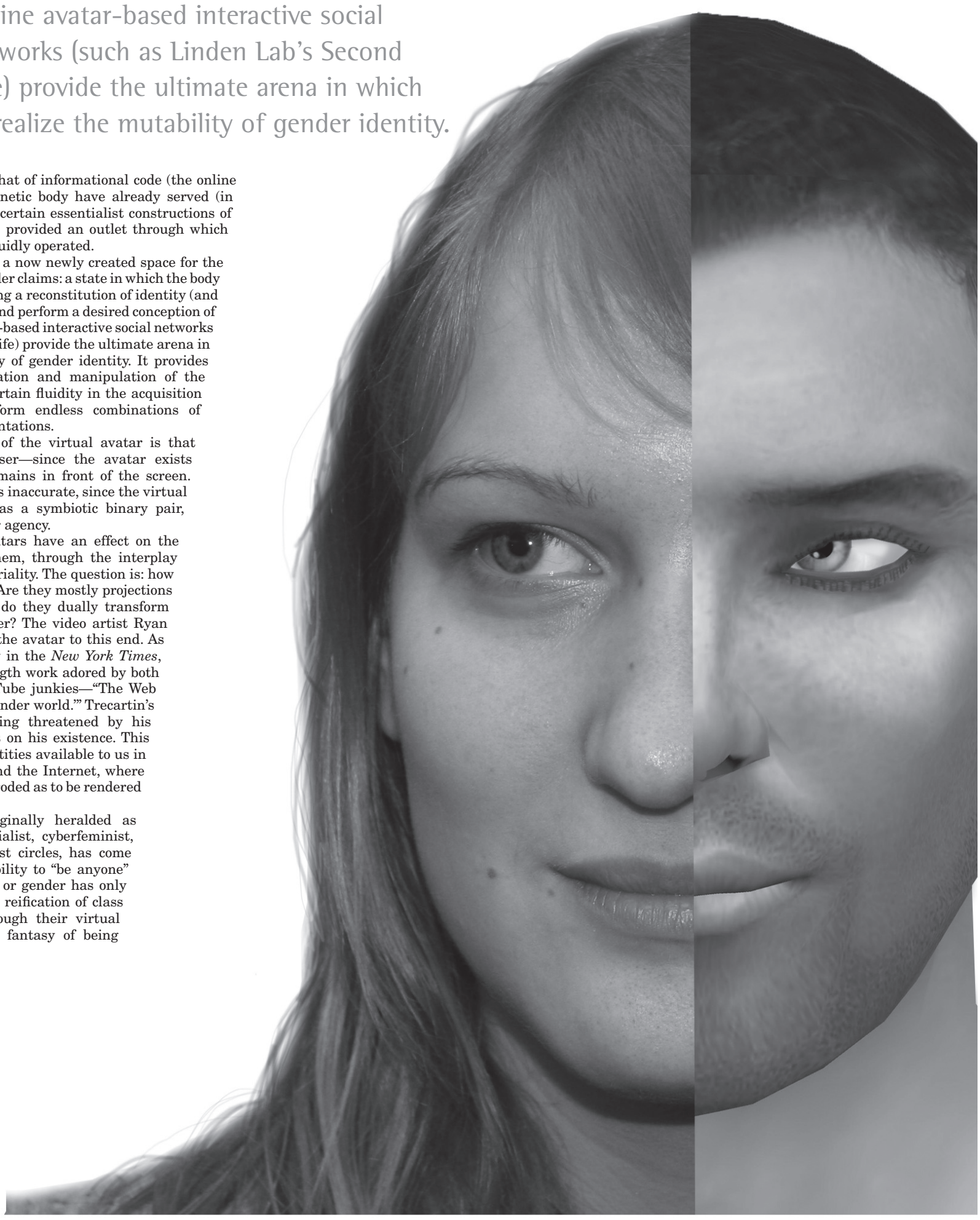
Online avatar-based interactive social networks (such as Linden Lab's Second Life) provide the ultimate arena in which to realize the mutability of gender identity.

Here it is important to note a now newly created space for the possibility of decentralized gender claims: a state in which the body merges with the machine, forcing a reconstitution of identity (and by default, the ability to claim and perform a desired conception of gender and race). Online avatar-based interactive social networks (such as Linden Lab's Second Life) provide the ultimate arena in which to realize the mutability of gender identity. It provides detailed, on the fly, appropriation and manipulation of the avatar's signifiers, affording certain fluidity in the acquisition of identity—as one can perform endless combinations of representations and re-representations.

A popular (mis)conception of the virtual avatar is that it is disembodied from its user—since the avatar exists in cyberspace and its user remains in front of the screen. However, such an assumption is inaccurate, since the virtual and the material body exist as a symbiotic binary pair, codependent on one another for agency.

Hayles points out that avatars have an effect on the material users who control them, through the interplay between information and materiality. The question is: how bilateral are these interplays? Are they mostly projections by beings onto the screen, or do they dually transform the avatar and the subject user? The video artist Ryan Trecartin employs the idea of the avatar to this end. As Trecartin told Randy Kennedy in the *New York Times*, in *I-BE AREA*—his feature-length work adored by both the art world critics and YouTube junkies—"The Web becomes a catalyst for a 'postgender world.'" Trecartin's central character, I-Be, is being threatened by his online avatar who has designs on his existence. This suggests that the mutable identities available to us in cyberspace might extend beyond the Internet, where the sign of gender becomes so eroded as to be rendered redundant.

However, this fluidity, originally heralded as a site of agency in postcolonialist, cyberfeminist, cyberqueer and multiculturalist circles, has come under pressure of late. The ability to "be anyone" online and to "transcend" race or gender has only resulted in the emergence of a reification of class and symbolic constraints through their virtual proliferation (to play out the fantasy of being othered, for example). In "Poscolonial Media Theory," María Fernández points out that while severing the construction of identity from history and from bodily experience allows for multiple/open-ended identities, it simultaneously threatens to dismiss the "real" histories of subjugated peoples. And, that Haraway's focus on the *mestizaje* cyborg body still inadvertently implies the existence of a non-hybrid/pure state (the "original unity" that she is trying to avoid). Afterall—leaving the hierarchical structure of access to technology aside—because of its global distribution, the Internet allows for the breakdown of hierarchies as a result of proliferating hybrid images, but their negotiations in cyberspace do not necessarily homogenize. f



Staff photo illustration by Elliott Beazley

Atmosphere is in the Air

"Olafur Eliasson: Take Your Time" at the Museum of Contemporary Art

BY EMILY BAUMAN

Last June, while visiting my family in New York City, I took the opportunity to see the massive exhibition of Olafur Eliasson's work, spread out between MoMA and its Queens corollary, the P.S.1 Center for Contemporary Art. While strolling through the galleries in Long Island City, I happened upon a friendly Chicago face: the MCA's curator Tricia Van Eck. The two of us excitedly talked about the impressiveness of the artist's work and how fantastic it was that this exhibition was going to be coming to Chicago.

Well, that time has come. After a stop in Dallas and another in San Francisco, the exhibition has finally come to land in Chicago. From May 1 through September 13, "Olafur Eliasson: Take Your Time" will be on display at the MCA. This breathtaking installation work by the Danish-Icelandic artist, of eerily beautiful environments reminiscent of his Scandinavian homeland, will bring a breath of fresh air to the stifling heat of this coming summer in the city.

A master at recreating phenomenological experience, Eliasson's art makes the gallery space into a natural terrain filled with light, color, atmosphere and wonder. Viewers of his work surrender their role as spectators for an immersive one, in a world where water and hosing create rainbows in dark rooms, moss grows wild upon whitewashed plaster walls and a whirring fan face swings teasingly and threateningly from a string hooked to a high ceiling, propelled only by its own centripetal force. The mechanics of his practice are always straightforwardly presented—honestly displaying their own instruments as they dishonestly recreate the aura of the natural world. Spotlights, motors, screens, monitors and armatures lie exposed within the glowing spaces one enters to become encased in phantasms of climate and ambiance, as in *360° room for all colours* (2002), where you see the constructed round pavilion of white screens with matte backing, held up by metal brackets, but experience the temporal flow from glowing yellows and oranges to penetrating amethysts, emeralds and azures of the aurora borealis that emanate from the fluorescent lights and projection foil within the walls.

Olafur Eliasson, *Beauty*, 1993.

I was able to pick up my conversation with Van Eck again recently, concerning the contrasts and parallels between the work of Eliasson and of Buckminster Fuller—simultaneously on display in the upstairs galleries. Both trippy, eco-interested and brilliant, Eliasson and Fuller use geometry, nature and industrial materials to create spaces and forms that are outside of our societal expectations, yet intrinsically familiar to the natural world that we sometimes feel so separated from. "I think they share a similar appreciation in desiring to understand and depict, in both simple and grandly complex ways, the inherent operating principles of the natural world," said Van Eck. "Each of their model rooms illustrate this because they help them to understand and engage with these systems and principles. However Fuller's models delve more into the principles of engineering, while Eliasson's seem to delve more into phenomenology and subjective perception to discover how one perceives, sees, and comprehends light and space."

While Eliasson's work can sometimes be more disturbing than awe-inspiring—walking through a hall lit in a blinding yellow that makes everyone around you look like they came from beyond the grave, is neither pleasant nor particularly enlightening—they all make you aware of how you encounter space and the materials of your everyday. Even when broken down to their most functional and undignified forms, Eliasson makes the basic appliances we rely on reveal their mystical potentials.

While I don't know how the work will be installed in the odd first floor galleries of the MCA—since they rely on the space they inhabit as much as they transform that space—and I have seen his projects fail (the waterfalls in New York City's rivers this past summer were humorously disappointing), I feel pretty confident that the MCA's version of "Take Your Time" will be an exhibition worth seeing. Eliasson's world has the chance to change your world, so why not try?

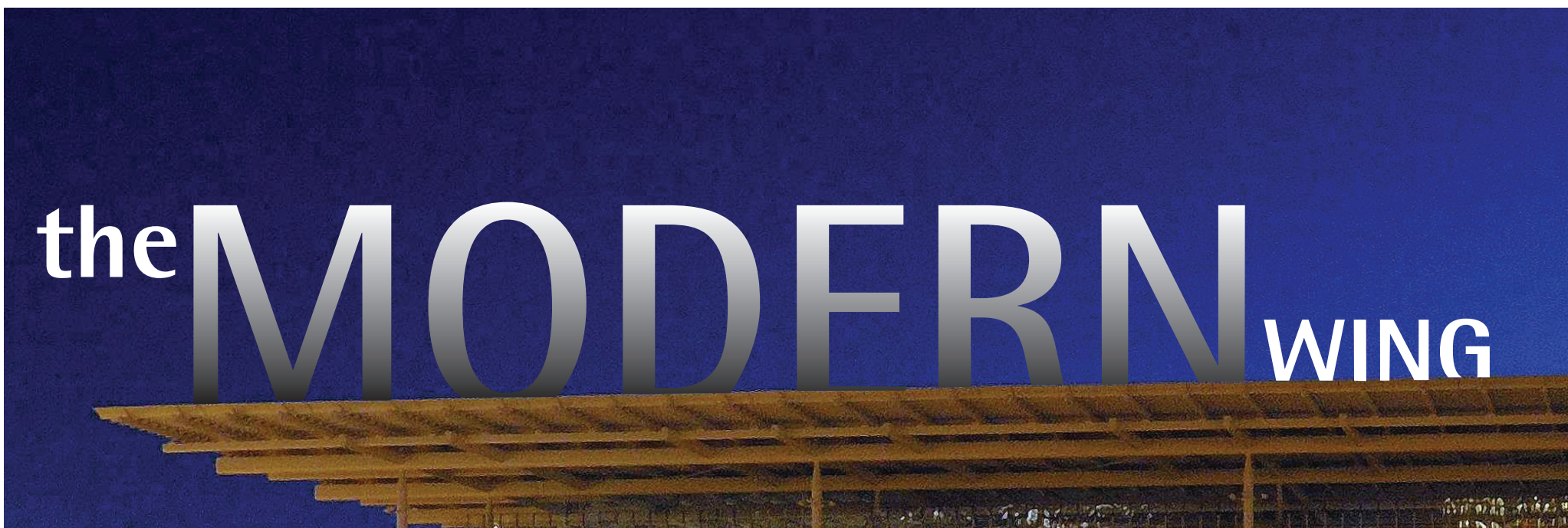
On view through September 13 at the MCA, 220 E. Chicago Ave, 312-280-2660. Hours: Tues 10am–8pm, Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. Admission free on Tuesdays and for SAIC students.

Olafur Eliasson, *360° room for all colours*, 2002.

All photos courtesy of the MCA

the MODERN WING

BY EMILY BAUMAN
AND ELLIOTT BEAZLEY



1 To visit

The Modern Wing opens May 16, 2009.

Admission is free during the first week. Beginning May 23, admission will be $18 for adults, $12 for students and seniors (no charge for SAIC students).

2 Second floor of Modern Wing's East Pavilion: Contemporary art

A comprehensive collection representing significant art movements from 1945 on includes the work of the following artists: Eva Hesse, David Hockney, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Willem de Kooning, Bruce Nauman, Jackson Pollock, and Gerhard Richter. The Art Institute's latest acquisitions by arists including Mel Bochner, Robert Gober, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Kerry James Marshall, Charles Ray, Andy Warhol and Christopher Wool will also be presented.

3 Third-floor galleries: Modern European Art

Works such as "Bathers by a River" by Henri Matisse will be accompanied by Constantin Brâncusi sculptures, Picasso works, and Surrealist objects by Man Ray, Claude Cahun, René Magritte, Salvador Dali, and Pablo Picasso.

4 Construction Facts

Designed by architect Renzo Piano, the addition is 264,000 square feet (increasing the overall size of AIC by one third). The building, constructed in glass, steel and limestone, includes 65,000 square feet of gallery space (25% of the new addition is gallery space). The total cost of the wing is approximately $300 million. The design includes the 625-foot Nichols Bridgeway, which will lead pedestrians from Millennium Park over Monroe Avenue to the museum, onto the Bluhm Sculpture Terrace, which will feature contemporary sculpture.

5 The Main Corridor

The main corridor is called "Griffin Court" after Anne and Kenneth Griffin, lead donors to the Modern Wing. While the hallway is marked off on the design plans as a gallery space, our sources were told that Renzo Piano does not want any sculpture to be hung in this area, in order to preserve the integrity of the space—possibly to highlight the effect of the slatted roof upon the interior. This space will offer a respite (or just plain interruption) between the Modern Wing galleries and the rest of the museum.

6 Environmental Facts

The garden serves as a green roof over the museum's utilities below. The "flying carpet" design of the roof filters natural light to protect galleries from strong Southern light, while allowing light in from the North side. Galleries in the top floor have lights connected to photo cells to allow artificial lighting to be raised or dimmed based on the natural light coming in. The addition of landscaped areas around the Modern Wing's and its green roof increased the museum's green space by 21%. The building will be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified.

Opening Exhibition

Cy Twombly:

The Natural World
Selected Works 2000–2007
May 16–September 13, 2009

Images courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

Some questions about curation

The curation of a major space always works as a taste maker and influences perception of particular art works' and artists' importance. So, the way that the Modern Wing will be installed is an important question—the answer to which AIC has worked pretty hard to keep under wraps. This has led us at F Newsmagazine to wonder about the impact that the new space will have on the presentation of modern and contemporary art at the museum.

Many modern and contemporary works demand their own viewing spaces (or the modification of the gallery space in order to accommodate their forms). So, while it is fantastic to have a building by such a prestigious architect as Renzo Piano, the question of how greatly his stubborn insistence on the sanctity of his architectural forms will direct and influence the curatorial presentations (possibly limiting them to a great degree), is another important one.

Another emerging question regards the solo presentation of particular pieces. The demands of certain large, loud or overwhelming installations can create biases in presentation. If the new galleries are installed at all like the re-installation of the old galleries—where entire walls and/or galleries have been devoted to a single artist (so that there is an entire side of one gallery with only Monets, facing a wall of all Pissarros, for example)—the grouped and highlighted presentation of certain artists may give greater insight into their oeuvres, while excluding important works by lesser known artists.

Thirdly, there is the question of ghettoizing modern and contemporary art. If the museum begins to move away from including more contemporary works within its traditional spaces (although this seems impossible in places such as the photography and works on paper galleries) and its special exhibitions spaces, these art forms may come to be treated as a separate sphere all together, disconnected or excommunicated from the history of art.

The Modern Wing offers a plethora of viewing opportunities for works that can often get short-shrifted, now that there is a huge space allocated to them. However, much of this substantial building is reserved for cafes, restaurants, office space and stores. We'll just have to see how the art fits into this massive structure.

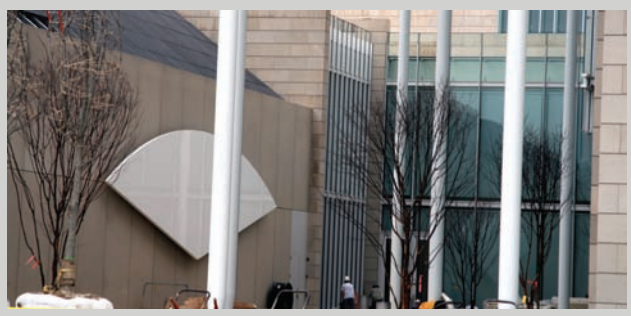
Opening Installations from the Permanent Collection

Charles Ray
Hinoki, 2007
Hinoki cypress

To install this massive work, the curator and artist managed to talk Piano into removing a wall, expanding the gallery space. Actually composed of three separate sections, carved to reproduce a tree that Ray saw in California, the false fallen tree immitates and confounds conceptions of "nature."

Bruce Nauman
Clown Torture, 1987
Four channel video (two projections, four monitors, sound); 60 min loop

This full room installation inundates the viewer with sound and imagery in an overwhelming manner. It becomes unclear within this space whether the clown is being tortured, or whether he is torturing us. The room created for the piece ("the black box") will display Nauman's famous Human Nature/Life Death *neon on the outside wall.*



Ellsworth Kelly
White Curve, 2009
Painted aluminum

This humongous installation (54x14 ft) is the only site-specfic work commissioned for the Modern Wing. Viewable from Columbus Drive, within one of AIC's landscaped courtyards, the sculpture joins the approximately thirty works by the artist in the museum's permanent collection.

May Theory

"Our Literal Speed" symposium in Chicago

BY JOEL KUENNEN

Theory geeks, rejoice! "Our Literal Speed," a traveling art and theory exhibition and conference, put together by Midway Studios at the University of Chicago, is making its way to our city this month. Situated between last year's symposium in Karlsruhe Germany and next year's in Los Angeles, OLS seeks to, in their own words, "manifest the imperatives that materialize the theoretical and the pedagogical." In other words, they seek to lay bare the causation behind the edifice of the abstract, the taught and shit like that.

Taking the form of a "media pop opera" (again, their words), this conference hopes to find new angles and methods of discursive discourse. Accompanying the conference will be an exhibit at Gallery 400 at UIC that runs from May 1 through July 4, a "May Day march," exhibitions at the Renaissance Society and Smart Museum, and a performance by Jackson Pollock Bar. JPB is an interesting phenomenon: put on by actors, it attempts to show the performative aspects of theory through reenactments of skits/lectures produced by groups such as Art & Language (who will also be participating in OLS), as well as performances of their own work.

So, wondering what you are in for? I asked an anonymous organizer (the organizers like to remain anonymous, since there are no original organizers and the project supposedly "just happens") about the hybrid nature of performative theory that this conference seems to spotlight, and what we should expect from this specific constellation. Response: "Walid Raad's presentations are great—and one of the sources of OLS—they are incredibly hard to track: they seem totally 'straight,' but then they veer off into these hard to define zones. Sharon Hayes employs a kind of directed hyper sincerity. Tony Cokes and Andrew Perchuk present a mix of things: music, lecture, powerpoint, silence. If you go to our website, and look under commentary, you will find Tony Cokes comments on OLS in ZKM in 2008 (it says something like Reflections of a Participant—it's a good rundown of OLS's ideal atmosphere."

Sounds good to me... After all, with the semester coming to an end, I could use a good mind-copulation!

April 30–May 2 at the University of Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, Merchandise Mart and University of Illinois in Chicago. For a full schedule please go to: http://www.ourliteralspeed.com/chicago-schedule.shtml

Photo courtesy of Gallery 400

SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS INCLUDE:

Art & Language, Bill Ayers, Gregg Bordowitz, Tania Bruguera, Thomas Crow, Darby English, Hal Foster, Andrea Fraser, Theaster Gates, David Joselits, Alison Knowles, WJT Mitchell, Andrew Perchuk, Jackson Pollock Bar, The Project for the New American Century, Joel Snyder, South Shore Drill Team, Anne M. Wagner, and more...

Non-Required Reading

The Scholl Center Seminars at the Newberry Library

BY KATIE LENNARD

Photo courtesy of Newberry Library

Chicago's Newberry library is most likely the city's most interesting cultural institution that you have never visited. The Newberry is a research, rather than lending library, and the use of their resources is contingent upon membership; while becoming a member of the library is relatively simple, the added requirements do deter some casual visitors. Yet, those who persevere will be rewarded with an impressive array of original manuscripts, maps, first edition books—even medieval illuminated texts. After exploring the Newberry's vast and, often rare, holdings, it is obvious why their collection does not leave the building. Despite their fixed location, the texts contained in the Newberry offer a wealth of primary source information for scholars, academics and researchers in a wide range of fields.

A natural extension of the Newberry's mission is the work of the Dr. William M. Scholl Center for American History and Culture, one of several scholarly centers in residence at the library. The Scholl center is focused on research and education in the humanities, devoting resources to the creation of curriculum materials and other educational tools for a range of age groups. A pivotal component of this mission is an ongoing conversation between academics and scholars whose points of intersection may take place outside the bounds of traditional disciplines. The Scholl's seminar in the History of Labor has provided lively discussion for over thirty years, while other seminars deal with Early American History, Women and Gender, Rural History and Sports and Culture, just to name a few. The operating principles are fairly simple: calls for papers are announced yearly, with an emphasis placed on works in progress; the papers are disseminated a week prior to the seminar and interested participants—retired and current professors, graduate students, independent scholars—meet for several hours to discuss these papers and help the author to further develop their work. Unlike the library, these seminars require no membership or particular credentials, simply an interest in the topic at hand.

The most recent addition to this battery of workshops is the newly appointed Seminar in American Art and Visual Culture, a joint project of Sarah Burns, an art historian who teaches at Indiana University; Greg Foster-Rice, a photo theorist and art historian who teaches at Columbia College ;and Diane Dillon of the Newberry. The inaugural meeting offered a glimpse of the productive and exciting nature of such projects, bringing together a broad range of interested parties—a cartographer, current Phd and Masters students, and several curators from the Art Institute, for example—to discuss several recently developed websites, and their pedagogical and research potential. Most noteably, the website Lincoln at 200 (www.lincolnat200.org), a joint project of the Newberry Library and the Chicago History Museum, provided access to a discussion about the archival and pedagogical presence of websites, particularly in regards to their use by major cultural institutions. Questions were raised about the benefits of extensive linking, taking readers away from the site, and the possibilities of user-generated content within a site with scholarly intent. The relatively short format of the seminars (two hours, in this case) allows for a discussion that generatively seeks questions, rather than attempts to find easy answers. One leaves this seminar with the sense that the true work is not only in the discussion within the room, but with the connections made, both between ideas and scholars.

For students of Art History, Visual Culture or those simply interested in the shape of academic discourse outside of a school setting, this seminar holds a great deal of promise as a site of conversation, connection and a space in which traditional disciplinary boundaries are tested and perhaps bridged.

Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street. Reading room hours: Tues–Sat 9am–5pm. For further information on the Scholl Center Seminars, including a full listing of programs, schedules and calls for papers can be found at: http://www.newberry.org/scholl/schollhome.html

The Short List

Public Sculptures

BY CAITLIN SCHRINER

Chicago thrives in the sun soaked days of its too-short summer. The neighborhoods radiate with energy and Michigan Avenue is swarmed with hundreds of camera-happy visitors. Arguably the best—and paradoxically the worst—of the Chicago seasons, summer finally invites us out to the lakefront beaches, down south to Rainbow Cone and up north to Green City Market. The temperature is finally just right for biking the Lakeshore path and walking through Grant Park. In other words, the longer days and fine weather make summer the ideal time for actually stopping to look at the public art that is all over the city. And there is a lot more to see, beyond the famous Picasso, Chagall, Kapoor and Calder. So, grab your sketchbook and/or a camera and check out some of these current and classic sculptures in the downtown area!

AMERICA'S COURTYARD
Denise Milan and Ary Perez, 1998
Museum Campus

Also located in Museum Campus along Lakeshore Drive is Milan and Perez's America's Courtyard. Located next to Adler Planetarium, America's Courtyard is an interactive calendar. With the center stones forming a compass and the four open avenues depicting where the sun rises and sets at the solstices, visitors can chart change of the seasons by seeing where the sun is rising or setting in relation to the four avenues.

The stones that comprise the sculpture were moved from their original location near the Art Institute to the Adler Planetarium. The variety of these stones are also supposed to represent the ethnic diversity that composes the American population.

On view year-round

A CONVERSATION WITH CHICAGO: ▸
CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURES FROM CHINA
Chen Wenling, Sui Jianguo, Shen Shaomin, and Zhan Wang
Millenium Park

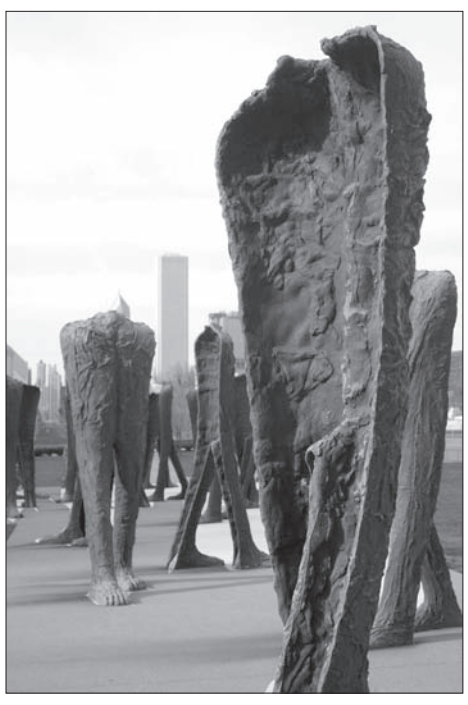
Millennium Park welcomes prominent Chinese artists to the streets of Chicago with the installation of four major sculptures prominently displayed above Jaume Plensa's Crown Fountain on the east end of the park, and in the symmetrical space on the west side. The sculptural installation includes work from artists from different educational backgrounds and home environments.

Contemporary Chinese social issues are apparent in all four sculptures, from the looming energy crisis to globalization. Wenling, Jianguo, Shaomin and Wang present sculptures ranging from a nearly life size T-Rex, to a collection of several camo-covered oil derricks. The large, politically charged, socially active and aesthetically thrilling sculptures are at home in Chicago's largest public gallery—Millennium Park.

▲ GOD BLESS AMERICA
J. Seward Johnson Jr., 2005
401 N. Michigan Ave

Just north of the Chicago River just south of *Tribune* building stands the epic sculptural tribute to Grant Wood's *American Gothic*. An heir to Johnson & Johnson (an American icon in itself), Seward Johnson Jr.'s *God Bless America* is a 25 foot tall ode to one of the Art Institute's most famous Regionalist paintings. Part of his *Icons Revisited* series, the work is on loan from The Sculpture Foundation, which has been responsible for the rotating sculptural projects on the spot, including the King Lear piece (also by Seward Johnson) that *God Bless America* has replaced.

On view through October 2010.



▲ AGORA
Magdalena Abakanowicz, 2006
Grant Park

At the south end of Grant Park, Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Agora* has been a Chicago notable since the winter of 2006. The 106 hand-made headless and armless torsos whose surfaces are reminiscent of tree bark, reflect the artist's interest in the interpersonal dimensions of crowds. They refer back to artist's experience in Warsaw both during the second World War, and the following forty-five year Soviet domination. Abakanowicz describes the work as being like "one body that represents so many different meanings.... It's the self against the whole world."

On view year-round.

BUCKINGHAM FOUNTAIN
Edward H. Bennett, 1927
Central Grant Park

One of the oldest and most recognizable of Chicago's monuments is the historic Buckingham Fountain, recently unwrapped from a long winter of deconstruction and repair. Renovated and rejuvenated, Bennett's fountain is running and looking as good as it did in 1927. Plus it plays Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* for every water show, which is epically awesome.

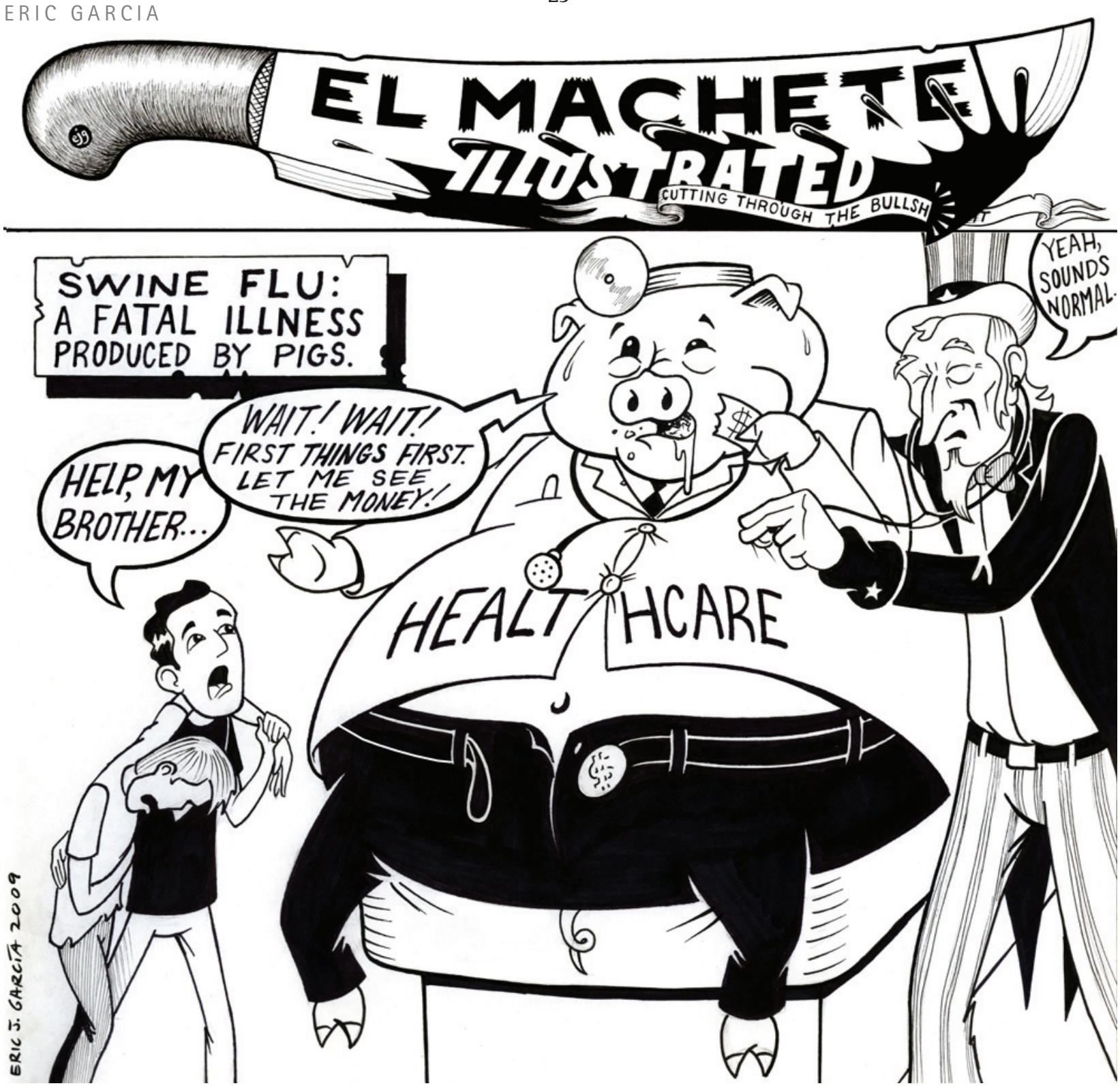
On view April through mid-October. Water shows on the hour every hour for twenty minutes.

▲ THREE FORMS FOR CHICAGO
David Nash, 2000
Museum Campus

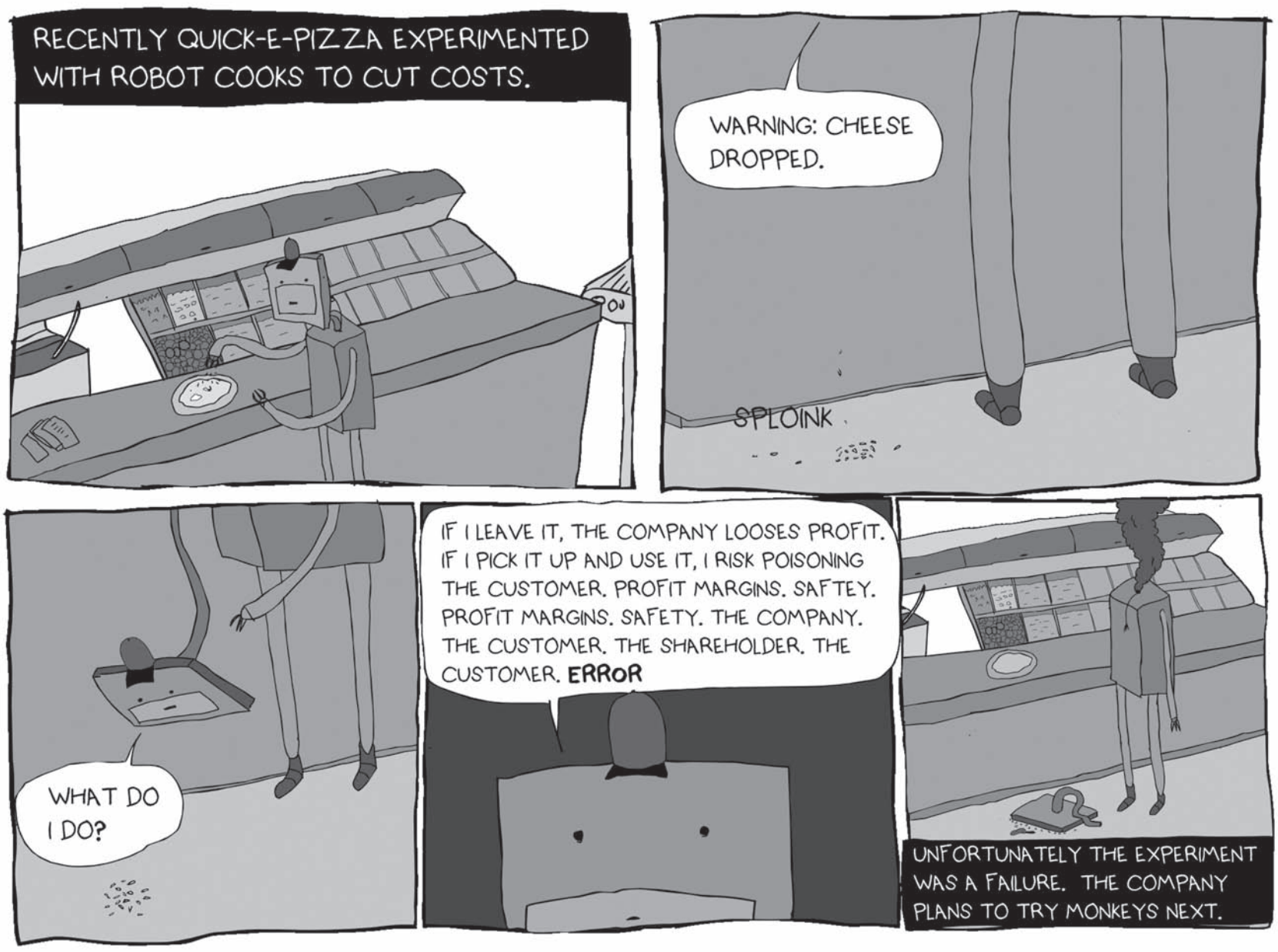
Located on the northwest side of Museum Campus, near Lakeshore Drive, Nash's *Three Forms for Chicago* is a short ride south on the 146 Bus. Installed in 2000, the tri-form recycled Midwest-native wood sculpture depicts a sphere, a pyramid and a cube. Nash's interest in the interaction of man and nature is reflected in the charred finish of the pieces. Burnt after their installation, *Three Forms* is a reflection of human impact on nature and a structural manifestation of his concern for this relationship.

On view year-round.

ERIC GARCIA



DAVID ESSMAN



INTRO TO CYBER-TEACHERS

BY AURÉLIE BEATLEY

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure you've all sat in class at least once in your time here at SAIC and thought to yourself that your professor may in fact be an evil cyber-human bent on world domination and the extermination of all humanity. Well, *F Newsmagazine*, in our interminable quest to bring you truth, justice and serious news has uncovered unquestionable proof that some of our esteemed faculty may be leading double (mechanical) lives. The pointed silence of the administration (which refused to comment) on this subject leads us to believe that there may be many, many more of these cyborg infiltrates, even in the highest posts of responsibility. Read the shocking testimonials communicated to us by two of these organisms implanted in the midst of our school.

Your name: **0x 42 65 6e 43 68 6e 67**
(also known as Art & Technology's Ben Chang)

FEATURES/ORIGIN
What sorts of artificial parts have you had installed?
Vision augmentation.

Which feature would you like installed that hasn't been invented yet?
Antigravity.

How many invisible tentacles do you have?
I don't know, I can't see them.

Are you solar-powered or do you run on coal?
Caffeine.

At what temperature do your components melt?
1,400 degrees F

How many rounds per second can you fire from your shoulder-mounted Gatlin gun?
I sold it to buy a Wii.

Does your programming have a manual override?
No, it's completely out of control.

Do you have MP3 capability?
No, Ogg Vorbis.

Are you Windows compatible?
F*** No. Linux.

Can you calculate pi to the 1,0000th digit?
Mmmmm …. Pie ….

How regularly must your gears be greased? Choose one: *(daily) (1-3 times per week) (weekly) (I am self-lubricating)*
Hey, I thought this was supposed to be a family newspaper!

Who is your maker? *(Lockheed Martin) (MIT) (Volkswagen) (Mattel)*
Other: Make Magazine

Your interface was designed by: *(designers) (engineers) (evil overlords)*
JODI.ORG

LIFE AS A CYBERNETIC ORGANISM
What measures do you take to conceal your man-made origins?
I wear a moustache.

Do you find the Svedka robot and/or Bjork sexy and why?
I'm not supposed to comment on that, what with the restraining order and everything.

Are you a sexy robot?
1

Have you ever found yourself inexplicably attracted to the bold look of Kohler?
It haunts my dreams.

PROCESSOR ENDURANCE TEST
Calculate the probability that art school is a waste of time.
1/x

Finish this sentence: "Humans are the ideal battery because…"
You can rub two of them together and create sparks. Particularly if they're teenagers.

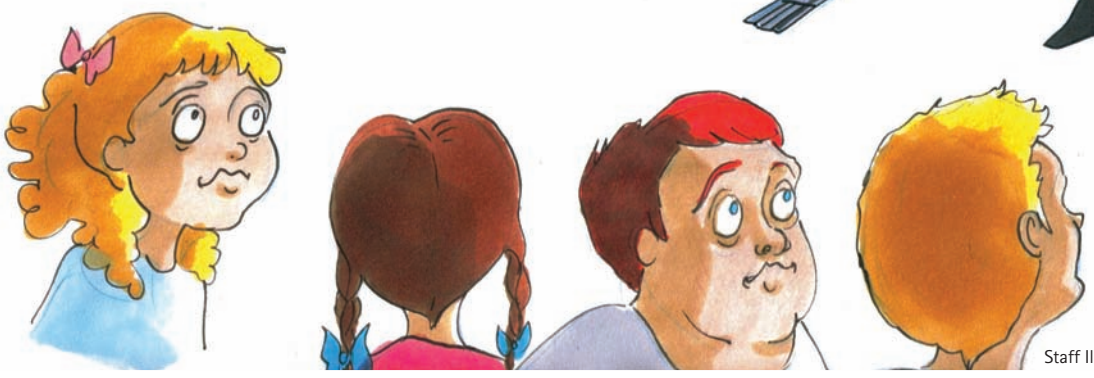
Given the opportunity to end the human race, how would do it and why?
Gigantic party in outer space. Everyone will come to it. Daft Punk will play at it. It will be the greatest party that could ever happen. And then the entire population of earth will implode under the depressurized conditions of outer space, and fall into the sun.

Do you wish DEATH TO THE HUMANS?
No, I wish all the humans to each send me $1 c/o *F News*.

One of these cyber-profs took our insinuations very personally—or as personally as his metal synapses would let him (we're still hazy on robot emotion)—and chose to put gear to paper to make his outrage public:

Hello F Newsmagazine,
I find your questionnaire both leading and insensitive. Do you think that one who has been replaced by a machine takes such a cavalier tone when considering their new identity?
Do you think that I would discuss the personal maintenance of my body in relation to fluids used, maintenance schedules, etc.? Would you list as well your medical appointments? Would you classify yourself as a sexy human, as I am prodded to announce my self image of an egotistical sexy robot?
Several students and colleagues have noticed my mechanical replacement masquerading as myself. My recent utterings of scrambled English, my sudden shaved head and wearing of odd woolen vests to create an academic nerd persona, have not fooled the cleverest amongst us (who will have to be dealt with).
And finally: No, I do not wish the death of mankind; I find them an amusement.

Kris Sullivan
Film, Video and New Media



Staff Illustration by Matt Lane