

a student journal of arts, culture and politics

fnewsmagazine

04/
2014

The School
of the Art
Institute of
Chicago

» Thurston Moore on Film

» US Secret Government

» Guggenheim Labor Disputes

"TOWERED CITIES
PLEASE US THEN,
AND THE BUSY
HUM OF MEN"
- JOHN MILTON





**14th ANNUAL
SPRING ART SALE**

**SAIC Ballroom
112 S. Michigan Ave.**

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

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Visual and Critical Studies & Liberal Arts
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS TRANSPOSIUM
Saturday, April 19, 2014

12:00-1:00 Symptoms of Self: Exhuming a Body of Work
Allyson Anusinha
Octavia Carney
Miriam Zora Engel
Suzanne Lois Reed

1:15-2:15 Nationality, Subjectivity and Precarious Identity
Neta Levinson
Anna Gene Jonassen
Marina Miliou-Theocharakis
Alexander Wolff

2:30-3:30 Transcending Tradition: Finding Subjectivity in a Seemingly Objective World
Connor Camburn
Carolina Fernandez-Miranda
Nick Gregory
Jean Hui Ng

3:45-4:45 Liminality Human
Kayla Anderson
Dania Calandrino
Gabriella Hileman
Anthony Ladson

In the Nichols Board of Trustees Suite in the Art Institute of Chicago
Entrance on Monroe at the Modern Wing



FRED A. HILLBRUNER

2014

**ARTISTS' BOOK
FELLOWSHIP
COMPETITION**

This Fellowship recognizes students who create outstanding work in the field of artists' publications. It has been established in honor of the late Fred Hillbruner, longtime librarian at Flaxman Library who was greatly invested in the development of the Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection. The Fellowship competition and exhibition is open to any student who will graduate from SAIC by Summer 2014. *Two awards of \$750 will be given, one to a graduate student and one to an undergraduate student.*

The Flaxman Library Special Collections may seek to purchase the award-winning publications, as well as other entries of merit, to add to the Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection, a world-renowned collection of artists' publications in all media forms.

To download an application visit: <http://libraryguides.saic.edu/hillbrunerfellowship>

IMPORTANT DATES	
Drop-Off	Wednesday, April 16th from 10am – 7pm
Exhibition	April 21st – May 2nd Flaxman Special Collections Sharp 5th Floor Hallway
Pick-Up	Tuesday, May 6th & Wednesday, May 7th from 9am -7pm

WEB EXCLUSIVES: APRIL 2014

VIDEO EXCLUSIVE: THE 2014 BFA SHOW

F Newsmagazine hits opening night to discover the innovative work from this year's graduating class.

ROSE RAFT:

THE ALTERNATIVE ARTIST RESIDENCY

Justus Harris profiles a new alum-run "no bull-shit" space that aims to offer affordable art and music residencies.

THE WHIMSICAL, THE WEIRD AND THE WONDERFUL: EDWARD GOREY AT LUMA

Maggie Carrigan reviews the double retrospective of the Chicago native and master of the humorously creepy.

LILLI CARRÉ AT THE MCA

Zara Yost explores the SAIC alum's breakout show of artifacts from a quietly surreal and chimerical world.

COMPAGNIE KÁFIG'S AGWA AND CORRERIA AT COLUMBIA COLLEGE DANCE CENTER

Arts Editor Alexia Casanova profiles the double bill from the French choreographer, a mix of capoeira, hip-hop and modern dance created in partnership with Brazilian performers.

OLD ORGANS, NEW SOUNDS

Managing Editor Alyssa Moxley reviews Charlemagne Palestine's recent performance at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel.

THE STREETS

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fnewsmagazine since 1984

Managing Editor Alyssa Moxley

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Hot Air

A little over half the world's population now lives in cities. In the United States, 83% of people live in urbanized centers. However, some geographic locations — world cities — have more influence in connecting the homegrown with the foreign as well as the status quo of the world market. Chicago may now be only an Alpha City (as opposed to Alpha++ — a status reserved only for NYC and London, or even an Alpha+), according to the Globalization and World Cities Research Network, but it ranks high on the Global Economic Power Index. The array of indices for judging influence and power attests to the range of values that people around the world consider most essential. This month's F Newsmagazine critiques the influence of the concept of "Metropolis," the mother city, the web of connections that link distant peoples and economies. The roots of Chicago's world city status are pondered in *The World's Un-Fair*. A small village inspires global recognition of injustice in *Camera as Testimony*. *Sushi Couture* complicates the desire for internationally fashionable local food products. Labor exploitation in one global city sparks protests in another in *Fight at the Museum*, while *Urban Relationships* assesses contemporary architecture's use or abuse of the monumental form.

—Alyssa Moxley, Managing Editor

Correction: The article *Curating Chicago* in F Newsmagazine's March issue incorrectly identified Marc Fischer from Public Collectors as the cofounder of SKIN GRAFT Records. SKIN GRAFT's cofounder is Mark Fischer; the two have no relation.

cover: *métropolís*

by Meghan Ryan Morris

This month, in looking at the theme "Metropolis," I was reminded of a recent SAIC and F Newsmagazine alumn's work. Quinn Keaveny was our web designer while he worked with us, but he also spends much of his time creating typefaces. This month we chose his typeface Finkl for our headlines. Finkl was named for and inspired by the A. Finkl & Sons Steel Company here in Chicago. It is a typeface that is quintessentially Chicago in nature. Finkl's sturdy heft combined with its intricate, beveled, ornamental line work do justice to Chicago's working class heritage and their ascension to artful craftsmen. No other typeface captures our city's history and personality quite so well, I think. So what better face for our "Metropolis" issue? Finkl is available for purchase from tendollarfonts.com and avondaletypeco.com.

—Christopher Givesen, Art Director

WEIRD CHICAGO

Tell Us Your Oddest City Stories

I was on the Blue Line. This guy walked past me and my friends and said, "If that was Mexico, I would shoot all of you Motherfuckers." —Forest



I met Jesus on the Blue Line once. He told me I had a pretty smile. —Jordan

This woman on the train reached in her bag, and pulled out a can of Vienna sausages. She cracked it open, and poured down the liquid from the can inside the air vent. As the train filled with an horrendous smell, she cracked the can all the way and ate the vienna sausages with her hands. —Chris

I was on a crowded bus in late August, when out of nowhere it became evident that a man with a walker sitting in the handicapped seats was getting a little too frisky with himself. Eventually the other passengers got fed up and slammed his walker into him to make him stop. —Matt

About a decade ago, I was driving down Sheridan Road to see a Rolls Royce with its hood up... on fire. —Michael

I was on the Red Line near Granville and the train was delayed. After sitting in the station for quite a bit of time, the other passengers and myself started wondering what was going on when our collective attention was suddenly drawn to the next car. I could see a naked lady going crazy, smacking and screaming at people. After a while the cops came and took her away as she was screaming that she was the queen of the CTA. —Annette

I watched people do key-bumps of cocaine in the bathroom during a lavish fundraiser for Breast Cancer Awareness at Block 37 in the Loop. —Georges

On the river taxi to Chinatown, a man pulled me aside and asked if I would put my foot in a bowl of pho so he could lick it off. He had the bowl of pho. It was in a really nice bowl. —Anjule

I was riding the bus back to my apartment one evening and noticed that a man was trying to cover up one of the poles with a plastic bag. Upon closer inspection, it was obvious that it was smeared with blood. —Emily

I was on the train when a woman stepped in with a horse head mask on, and started screaming, "I am a horse!" She then turned to me and said, "Cat, my fellowfriend!" I had cats printed on my skirt. —Alison

Riding the #65 bus east on Grand Street west toward Humboldt Park last summer, I sat behind a matronly woman in her late sixties. She was reading, and karma struck when I spied over her shoulder to see what it was. The passage in her book that my eye fell on went something like "... utterly without restraint, tearing her panties. His cock was slippery in her hand." Not what I was expecting. —Troy

I walked into a staff party at Wormhole Coffee and they let me stay. I helped judge a latte art contest, got drunk off PBR and danced with baristas. Oh, and I stole a Storm Trooper coffee mug. —Zara

IN BRIEF

Lyric Opera of Chicago's 5-Year-Long Show

Richard Wagner's legendary mega-opera, *Der Ring Des Nibelungen*, or *The Ring of the Nibelung*, will be staged over several years in Chicago, beginning in 2016. The Lyric Opera of Chicago will stage the four-opera saga, about a magic ring that grants power to rule the world, over a total of five years. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that the opera house "snared the world's most-talked about future Brünnhilde, American soprano Christine Goerke, for role of the sky-riding valkyrie who has inspired 135 years of serious and satirized tough women in breastplates and heads topped by horned helmets." To finance the cycle, Lyric will need to sell 11,000 tickets to fill 43,000 seats for the 12 performances.

SAIC Alum Paul Chan's at the Schaulager Museum

Former F News magazine editor, Paul Chan graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1996. His career trajectory since then has not been unimpressive, characterized uniquely by writing and publishing as much as by visual art-making. Last year, his publishing house Badlands Unlimited published a series of interviews with Marcel Duchamp, and next month will see the most extensive exhibition of the 40-year-old Chan's career. The Schaulager, part of the Laurenz Foundation in Basel, Switzerland, will show work from the Hong Kong native's entire oeuvre, including video, sculpture, painting and drawing. The Schaulager states in exhibition materials that "If you embark on this journey of discovery, you will experience and understand things differently, things initially perceived as beautiful and yet disturbing, deeply moving yet alien or even shocking."

Chicago Gets Its Own TV Show

First airing on March 6, the CNN television show *Chicagoland* is, according to the New York Times, "an artfully cinematic real-life look at gang violence and the public school crisis in that city" with compelling characters. Almost in real time, the show explores real-life Chicago issues, to what end remains to be seen. Los Angeles Times critic Robert Lloyd said, "The tone is often boosterish and inspirational, almost at times a travelogue, with brief nods to Chicago as the home of the blues, several sports teams, improv comedy and poetry slams, before returning to the high murder rate and the mayor's proposed school closings." A press release from CNN poses the question on many a Chicagoan's mind: "Can the city's leaders, communities and residents come together in ways that expand opportunities and allow aspirations to be realized?"

NSA Whistleblower Addresses SXSW From Hidden Moscow Location

Edward Snowden issued a video statement from Moscow last month through seven online proxies to mask his whereabouts in Moscow. The former contractor for the U.S. National Security Agency leaked thousands of documents to media outlets last year. The documents revealed details of global surveillance programs, and Snowden is now in exile in Russia. His motive, according to an article in the Guardian, was "to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them." His statement at the South By Southwest Interactive, a technology conference held annually in Austin, Texas, urged technology innovators to "enforce our rights through technical standards even when Congress hasn't yet gotten to the point of creating legislation that protects our rights in the same manner ... there's a policy response that needs to occur, but there's also a technical response that needs to occur. And it's the makers, the thinkers, the developing community that can really craft those solutions to make sure we're safe."

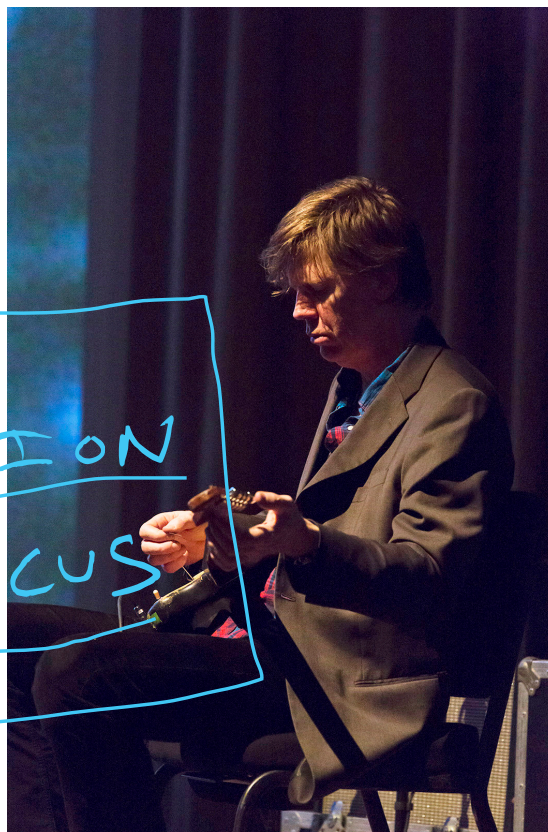
White Males Maintain Dominance In the Arts

Despite marked advances in decades past, both women and ethnicities other than Caucasian seem less represented in the arts today. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, whose members' votes decide the Oscars, does not publish its membership list of 5,765, and according to a recent LA Times article, "intense speculation surrounds its composition." The newspaper did a study finding academy voters to be significantly less diverse than the patrons of America's movie theaters. 94% are Caucasian, and 77 percent are male. The Times found 2 percent to be black and less than that Latino. Surprisingly, the Academy's median age is 62, with people under 50 constituting just 14 percent of the membership. The article's fascinating breakdown of the Academy's membership includes a nun and a bookstore owner as well as the likes of George Clooney and Erik Estrada.

Elsewhere in the arts, white males continue to run the show, according to a study published last month by the Association of Art Museum Directors. The organization examined its 217 members and found that at large institutions with budgets over \$15 million, only 24 percent are led by women. They also earn 29 percent less than male art museum directors. Out of the 33 most prominent art museums in the U.S., five are helmed by women. A New York Times article quoted Lisa Phillips, who directs New York City's New Museum and who initiated the idea for the study, asking "Is it that women are not being offered those jobs, or they're choosing not to take those jobs?" She also said, "We all have biases. There are many subtle forms of discrimination and self-censorship that are culturally ingrained." Executive recruiter Sarah James said that in interviews women often focused in interviews on how they were great managers, according to the Times, while "male candidates tended to lead with their ideas and," said James, "are very comfortable saying this is what we could do together."

SLOW MOTION SHARP FOCUS

A Conversation with Thurston Moore



» troy pieper

Street, a video by artist James Nares, is 61 minutes of slow-motion movement among New York City's street life — from one end of the boroughs to the other. Through his narrative, Nares captures the curious beauty of everyday moments. On March 13, the Art Institute of Chicago screened the film with the accompaniment of a musical score played live by Thurston Moore on a 12-string guitar. Though the street life in a mega-city can at times be out of the ordinary, the film's series of pan shots (reminiscent of *Koyaanisqatsi*'s slow-mo footage of cities across the U.S. with a score by Phillip Glass) somehow strikes a deep emotional chord. Moore's composition marries sound with images for a work that is pregnant alternately with vague anxiety and self-reflexive esprit de corps. Before the show Moore took a moment to answer a few questions.

TP: What's the origin story of your collaboration with James Nares?

TM: I knew of James' work since I first moved to NYC in 1976. We met around 2006 when I was working on publishing a book on the No Wave music movement of NYC with co-author Byron Coley. We interviewed James at length, and both he and I remained friends with shared ideas in expression — in music and art. While James was editing and reviewing his footage for *Street* he asked if I'd be interested in scoring. Of course I was. I had been an enthusiast of his film work and painting (and his guitar playing in *The Contortions* in the 1970s), so to be involved with collaboration with this man was extremely exciting. I lent him some recordings I had recently been involved with, and one of them was a series of 12-string acoustic guitar improvisations, which resonated with him the most.

TP: How did you go about interpreting *Street* through a musical score? Do you reinterpret it at each screening, or have you composed a score that you stick to?

TM: I sat down in front of my laptop and while watching his footage created a new 12-string piece in real time, more or less, to the film and sent it to him to reference. This turned out to be the actual soundtrack, which was challenging, as it is only recorded by a tiny laptop microphone but James employed a sound engineer who did great work "sweetening" the recording.

TP: Would you ever cross into filmmaking? If you could make a film, about anything what would it be?

TM: Filmmaking seems to be daunting only because of the expense involved, but I do realize great film work can be made, as artistic expression, with inexpensive digital media and perfectly alone. I prefer the sensuality of analogue tape when it comes to recorded documentation, so working in digital leaves me cold. I have made a few films on super-8 with other directors such as David Markey and Raymond Pettibon and have shot some footage of my own, also on Super 8, which I hoped to utilize in some forum. I'd love to make a film about the jazz musician Art Pepper, based on his book *Straight Life*, with James Chance in the lead role.

TP: What are your thoughts on the effects of the last ten years' rapid technological advances on art and society in general?

TM: I find there is a veil between "real life" and "online life," where the voices of the Internet are muted on the street. This creates a social psychology that

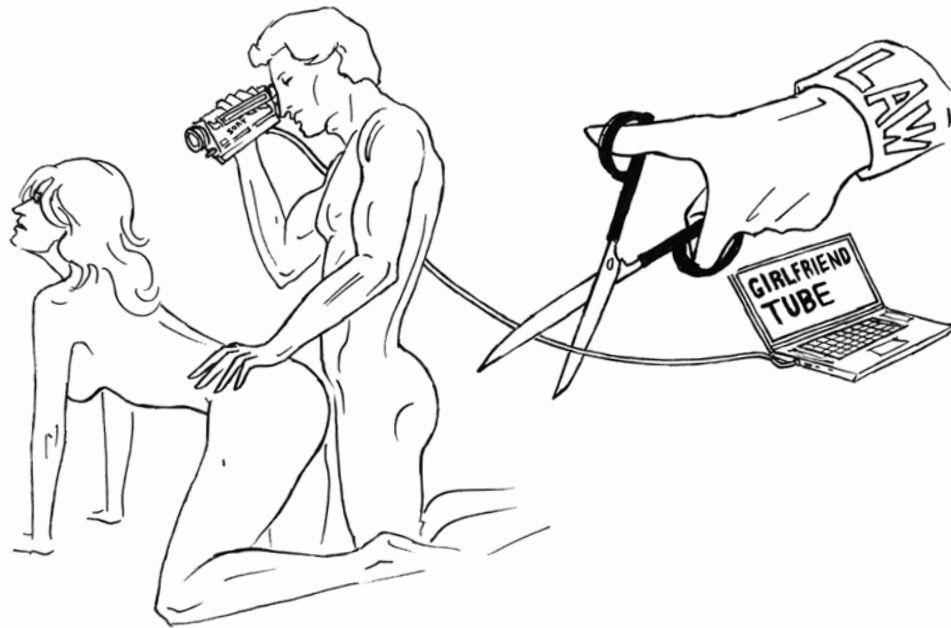
is somewhat manifest in schizophrenic behavior, which I believe is inherent in everyone to some degree — the dualities of creation we all are attended by. In that sense I see the desire for rampant interactive technology as a reflection of presenting the human mind and condition. I do think it's important to shut the lid on weekends — enjoy life, read books on paper, touch yourself and/or your lover/friend, share food and physical energy and art, deliver happiness.

TP: Can you talk about upcoming projects and your practice as an artist?

TM: I am in the process of recording a new record, due out in September, and I hope to be touring the USA with a band of musicians who will play under my name. I am also working on a few books of poetry, which is a vocation I've always been involved with along with music-making. I will teach, for the fourth year now, at Naropa University in their poetry summer writing workshop in Boulder, Colorado. Naropa is a school founded by Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman to further studies in literature with a mind informed by the beauty and experience of Buddhist philosophy.

TP: Oakland or Detroit? Caracas or Beijing?

TM: Oakland I love and can totally see living there — Bay area is nice. Detroit is hardcore and is definitely a great new frontier of post-apocalyptic romance, but I'd choose Oakland. I don't even know where Caracas is, and Beijing is in China, and I LOVE China. But there are too many culture police with weapons.



» kara jefts

The Internet is an unregulated public space where lewd, sexist and racist language is pervasive. In the eyes of some it is similar to the American Wild West where abuses might be avenged or go punished in a place with little enforced regulation. The danger of a forum that allows for such anonymity is that it becomes a perfect tool for attackers, whose victims are often women, people of color and members of the LGBTQ community.

A particular area of such targeted online abuse, known as “revenge porn,” is currently gaining media attention and is at the center of legislative reform in more than a dozen states, including Illinois, that define revenge porn as the unauthorized and non-consensual distribution of nude or sexually explicit material, often the result of an ex-lover’s attempt at revenge. California and New Jersey were the first states to pass laws to protect victims, followed recently by Texas and Alaska.

Revenge porn can be distributed in a number of ways. Currently, the most recognized form of harassment involves websites that host photographs and the identifying information of victims. [IsAnybodyUp.com](#) and copycat website [IsAnybodyDown.com](#) are well-known examples. In both cases, where the founders of the sites extorted victims for the removal of their images and information, law can more easily define legal protection in favor of victims based on extortion regulations.

But other forms of revenge porn highlight gaps in current law. In some cases, victims are targeted without using a host Internet site, and harassers spread content directly to family, friends and employers. On social media sites and Internet forums private images and identifying information can be shared among potentially millions of viewers.

Whether such harassment comes through host websites or direct channels, mounting research and testimony has documented revenge porn’s side effects on the lives of victims, including severe emotional distress, loss of employment, changing of one’s name and even suicide.

A current student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, who wishes to remain anonymous, shared her frustration about the pervasiveness of revenge porn: “I am very careful about where I share my identity online. I am constantly concerned that wherever my name appears, it creates a new opportunity for my ex to humiliate me by sharing photographs.” The victim had a long-distance relationship with a partner where she shared intimate photographs under the assumption of privacy.

REIGNING IN REVENGE

The Fight for Cyber Civil Rights

Since the relationship ended more than two years ago, those photographs have been shared publicly on social media sites and sent directly to family, friends, employers and even to her landlord. After trying to find help for years, she has learned that her only course of “retribution” is a civil suit, which she cannot pay for. “It has been devastating to be threatened over and over, knowing that I have no legal protection against this type of sexual abuse, simply because the abuse only exists online,” she says.

Currently, neither federal or state legal systems are prepared to defend victims of this reprehensible behavior. Illinois Representative Scott Drury was quoted in the Chicago Tribune as saying, “Legislation is needed in Illinois. It’s needed everywhere and on a federal level. I think it is a big problem. It ruins people’s lives. So we need to do something to help.”

Legislative reform is gaining traction nationally in large part due to the efforts of nonprofit advocacy groups such as End Revenge Porn and the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative. In February, a bill sponsored by Illinois

Legislation is needed in Illinois. It’s needed everywhere and on a federal level. It ruins people’s lives.

Sen. Michael Hastings passed in the Senate 52-0 to make the posting of nude or sexually explicit photographs on Internet host sites such as [IsAnybodyDown.com](#) a Class 4 felony punishable by up to three years in prison and a \$25,000 fine.

At press time, an expanded bill sponsored by Rep. Drury written with the help of Mary Anne Franks, Cyber Civil Rights advocate and Associate Professor of Law at the University of Miami in the Illinois Judicial Committee for review. Similar to the bill already passed in the Senate, Rep. Drury’s version covers victims more broadly, protecting images shared through targeted harassment in addition to images on host sites as protected under Sen. Hastings’ legislation.

There are, however, some opponents to this legislation. Lee Rowland, a Staff Attorney with the American Civil Liberty Union’s (ACLU) Speech, Privacy and Technology Project (SPT), was quoted recently on National Public Radio warning that anti-revenge porn legislation is “spreading like wildfire.” Rowland cautioned that if legislation is created to restrict the sharing of what are lawfully owned images, it comes dangerously close to an infringement on the right to free speech.

The definition of the SPT project on the ACLU website states its dedicated goal as “expanding the right to privacy and increasing the control that individuals have over their personal information; and ensuring that civil liberties are enhanced rather than compromised by new advances in science and technology.” It would be difficult for Rowland to argue that legislation to protect victims of revenge porn, where the sole aim of expression is to threaten and humiliate victims by exposing the most private segment of their lives – their intimate sexual relationships – conflicts in any way with privacy goals underlined by the SPT.

In forums that debate the need for revenge porn legislation, a common argument is that if a victim chose to share photographs, that person knowingly exposed themselves to risk. Given the statistics for revenge porn gathered by the University of Maryland, which reveal 80 percent of victims are women, this opinion perpetuates dangerous paradigms in which women are limited in the ways they can express themselves sexually. As addressed by advocacy groups like End Revenge Porn, this reflects a form of derogatory victim blaming, similar to the perception that if a woman dresses in a provocative manner she is asking to be sexually assaulted.

Issues surrounding revenge porn legislation may become more important in the future. The strength of laws pending nationwide will be a critical reflection of where we as a culture stand on positions of basic civil rights, Internet privacy, sexual violence and gender rights.

If you are a victim seeking help or would like to support legislation by signing a petition or donating to support advocacy, visit endrevengeporn.org.



EVIL PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENT

Chicago Wages Could Suffer

» **bonnie coyle**

In his latest State of the Union Address, President Barack Obama made clear his determination to combat wage inequality while simultaneously pushing a new free trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), through Congress without amendment or filibuster. According to Michael Froman, the current United States Trade Representative, "The TPP is the most significant trade negotiation in a generation, and promises significant economic benefits for American business, workers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers." However, the TPP has come under bi-partisan attack in Congress and many workers, farmers, activists and others. They are all too familiar with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the previous major international free trade agreement, and believe the president's goals to fight income inequality and fast track the TPP make a conflict of interest. These critics point to NAFTA's legacy in which income inequality was only exacerbated.

The TPP currently includes 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Chile and Japan, but it has the potential to include more countries in the region. The agreement will economically bind participating countries and provide them with the power to regulate a wide variety of matters beyond international trade, such as Internet freedom, food safety, healthcare costs, workers' rights and environmental standards. If successful, the TPP will impact the economic future of the United States and much of the world.

Only when members of Congress in both parties objected to the lack of transparency surrounding the new agreement did the TPP gain notoriety. According to Oregon Democratic Senator Ron Wyden in a statement to President Obama, "The majority of Congress is being kept in the dark as to the substance of the TPP negotiations, while representatives of U.S. corporations — like Halliburton, Chevron, PhRMA, Comcast and the Motion Picture Association of America — are being consulted and made privy to the details of the agreement." Likewise, 22 House Republicans signed a letter to President Obama that objected to the executive branch circumventing Congress, stating that "Fast Track allows the president to send these executive branch-authored bills directly to the floor for a vote under rules forbidding all floor amendments and limiting debate ... It takes the floor schedule out of the hands of the House majority and gives it to the President."

The TPP bears many similarities to NAFTA and is known amongst its opponents as "NAFTA on steroids." According to Carson Starkey of the Illinois Fair Trade

Coalition, the fundamental difference between the TPP and NAFTA is "the fact that [the TPP] is so much larger. It encompasses a larger portion of the world's economy." Starkey argues that, like NAFTA, the TPP will generate an even wider income gap. "The TPP forces workers to compete globally for low wages. Factory workers in Chicago will be competing with low-paid factory workers in Vietnam."

"We may not hear the 'giant sucking sound' this time around," he continues, referencing 1992 presidential candidate Ross Perot's well-known criticism of NAFTA, "but we will hear a dripping sound as wages continue to fall and environmental standards go unenforced. The TPP allows corporations to override labor, environmental and food standards."

The TPP will result in the outsourcing of even more jobs to developing countries where labor is cheaper. The jobs that are being outsourced are moving up the wage ladder. Even jobs that were once thought unable to be outsourced, like those in insurance and accounting, are

allowing corporations to control and limit the websites Internet users can access. According to the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), an organization focused on promoting open access to the Internet and protecting the first Amendment rights of Internet users, the TPP "puts at risk some of the most fundamental rights that enable access to knowledge for the world's citizens."

The TPP also proposes even tighter copyright laws and more strict regulations on the distribution of intellectual property. The EFF states, "The US Trade Rep is pursuing a TPP agreement that will require signatory countries to adopt heightened copyright protection that advances the agenda of the U.S. entertainment and pharmaceutical industries, but omits the flexibilities and exceptions that protect Internet users and technology innovators."

However, the heightened copyright protection will have repercussions beyond Internet freedom. Intellectual property, like U.S. jobs, will be outsourced to the countries participating in the partnership. Corporations like Monsanto or big pharmaceutical companies will

**THE TPP WILL IMPACT THE ECONOMIC
FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES – OUTSOURCING JOBS,
AND ALLOWING CORPORATIONS TO OVERRIDE LABOR,
ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOOD STANDARDS.**

now sent overseas to be done by workers with lower wages. This ensures that even a four-year college degree will not guarantee Americans a place in the workforce. "Free trade has benefitted companies, not workers," says Starkey. "Minimum wage has fallen in the United States over the last 30 years. In the 1970s, you'd be making more at minimum wage than you are now in 2014. The only people who have benefitted are overwhelmingly the top 1%."

Indeed, according to Lori Wallach of the watchdog group Public Citizen in an article for the Huffington Post, since NAFTA was implemented, the income of the wealthiest 10 percent has increased by 24 percent, while the income of the top 1 percent increased by 58 percent. The TPP, as an expanded version of NAFTA, is likely to provide the nation's wealthiest with another generous income hike at the expense of the rest of the populace.

Another major concern for members of Congress and activists alike is the role the Trans-Pacific Partnership will play in the future of the Internet. Earlier this year, the Supreme Court struck down net neutrality,

have even tighter control over the distribution of their intellectual property, namely seeds and medicine, which are used by people worldwide. "The TPP will further limit the ability of farmers in developing countries to keep their seeds," says Carson Starkey. "Countries around the world will have less access to generic drugs. The TPP will limit the ability of average people to have access to drugs, seeds, and food. The average person will have to pay three times more for the things they need to live."

Obama traveled to Mexico on February 19 to meet Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to discuss the partnership. His trade representative Michael B. Froman described the TPP the previous day as simply "upgrading our trading relationships not only with Mexico and Canada but with nine other countries as well." The Trans-Pacific Partnership is gaining even more momentum, and he response both within and outside of Congress remains to be seen.

BACK TO THE BLOCK

Chicago Graffiti's Climb to Legitimacy

» michael moore

Paint Paste Sticker: Chicago Street Art at the Chicago Cultural Center was bomb. Or, rather, it was a bombed-out showing of artworks featuring some of Chicago's notable graffiti writers. With an estimated 33,500 in attendance, it served as a proverbial check on the discipline's climb to legitimization. Whether or not this is a good thing is up for debate. For, regardless of the form's increased popularity, there still runs a complex undercurrent of diverging legal matters regarding the regulation of graffiti and street art. The differing viewpoints, the conflicting and all but free-form policies, however, are in dire need of tweaking. The exhibit, which ran from October 2013 to January 2014, was the collective result of the hard work put forth by its artists and organizers to represent a sector of art that has seen its share of turbulence.

Public art is both a place and a space that is perpetually negotiating the divisions between democratic ideals and heavy restrictions. This makes it an ideal and authentic site for expression and protest. An exhibition such as *Paint Paste Sticker* provides a moment for reflection, discourse and growth. Especially so in Chicago, given its complicated relationship with graffiti, a relationship which saw the souring of its sweets when former Mayor Richard Daley dropped the hammer back in 1992 by way of public policy and the Graffiti Blasters program.

Things ain't been the same since, for by the time the ink had dried, its steamrolling effect had taxed

businesses heavily. If liable, many would end up paying \$100 daily simply for having cans of spray paint on their shelves.

As of May 1992, in an effort to combat gang activity, the City Council of the City of Chicago passed a total of four ordinances under Municipal Code sec. 4-132-150 which effectively pushed the sales of products such as spray paint and large markers out of the city limits. Large corporations attempted to counter this action in court under claims it violated the Commerce Clause, all to no avail. Some small business owners, on the other hand, were caught unaware and just bit the bullet, ingested the powder.

Graffiti writers and street artists, along with public art coordinators, the police, and aldermen must negotiate a complex path in effort to give the art form a voice. But, like the comp screen in *The Matrix*, many questions cascade across the landscape in regards to matters of jurisdiction, terminology, and criminal offenses. For now, "It's like the Wild Wild West out there," says Miguel Aguilar, who was a participant in the recent exhibition and is an instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). For Aguilar, and others aware of this sticky web of legalities, *Paint Paste Sticker*, he says, "speaks to a larger conversation" with respect to "public space and city directive." As gathered from Aguilar, the unstable legal model put into place some time ago has since ossified. This model appears all too inclusive to begin with, and not rigorous enough when it comes to its own lines of succession. It fails to make evident what should otherwise be a clear and cohesive agenda.

Unfortunately, this lack of clarity relating to legal matters allows room for extraneous prosecution. As it is, "There's a [somewhat] decentralized army of enforcers" that more or less have the discretion to file charges, says Aguilar. These charges are further muddled in the courts depending on the district, the accused person's age and other variables such as having a history with the judicial system. For instance, in speaking with an officer at a local district, the severity of incrimination in Wicker Park versus that in Edgewater varies widely.

The lack of clarity between policy makers and enforcers, and its effect on practitioners of the form, was a topic of conversation for Aguilar and Nathan Mason, the curator of the *Paint Paste Sticker* exhibition. According to Aguilar, because of the "cultural shift with public art and public space" currently gaining momentum in Chicago, the time has never been as ripe for discussion. Clearly, Mason, who is the Curator of Exhibits and Public Art at Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, would be a welcome ally in the cause having held various positions for the city more or less related to such matters.

As it stands, any law-abiding citizen of Chicago is supposed to report instances of graffiti within 30 days. What if the property owner doesn't mind the artwork? Or, say, what if it wasn't sanctioned, or approved by the alderman, who then must confer with the city for consent? That also depends on questions of whether it is private or commercial property. Where the police may be able to differentiate between what is gang-related graffiti and what is not, the average citizen may not.

which muddies the waters of complexity.

These issues are not exclusive to Chicago. There is what is known as the "Graffiti Tunnel" on the Camperdown campus of the University of Sydney, Australia. That, within the grounds of an inner city suburb of New South Wales, is a festooned passageway; a more or less underground site where people are invited to meet and express themselves creatively. Elsewhere, the notable Brazilian street artists and brothers Otavio and Gustavo Pandolfo, most commonly known as Os Gêmeos, provide examples of what can be done when artists and city councils work together to try to dissolve the stigma of graffiti.

Zebadiah Arrington, an undergraduate SAIC student who recently wrapped up an artists in residence program in Gwangju, South Korea, states that graffiti, or street art, is "less bogged down" by negative viewpoints and authoritative pressures there than it is in Chicago. This is not to say that there are shouts of approval as much as to say there are few, if any, shouts of vandalism. The reasons for this are manifold, and speak of a culture in which the relationship between artistic expression and tolerance has yet to reach a breaking point.

In one way, Arrington seems to suggest that there's no clear line between the artists and the public that could serve as a means to activate governmental intervention. In another, the blurring or absence of such a line implies that graffiti writers are not considered criminals. Thus, graffiti is able to exist, or beat, with the autonomy and zest of a young heart. In matters relating to his project and the work performed, Arrington sees

it all as a "matter of logistics." "It's like any other art process," he says, referring to the legal red tape that wraps around most artistic endeavors. In other words, it's inherent in the medium.

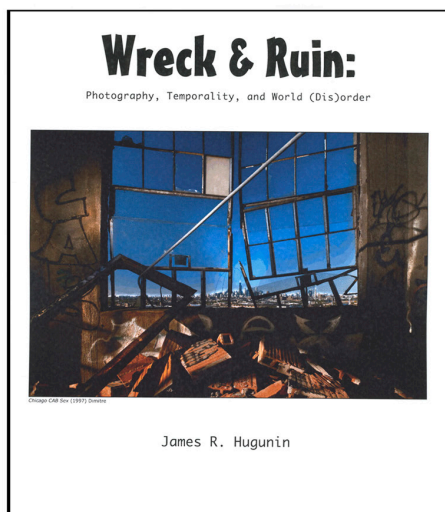
GRAFFITI BEATS WITH THE AUTONOMY AND ZEST OF A YOUNG HEART

In Chicago, as in other places, the methods and processes, the opportunities and lack thereof continue to subsist and operate deep within the complexities of such logistics. Yet, street artists and graffiti writers have come to work in and around these blocks by way of determined resourcefulness. These artists are able to exist in and traverse multiple cultures by engaging the same obstacles that were set up against them. Terminology, associations and affiliations, which could serve as forces to exclude a group, have been circumvented by utilizing true motives along with what can be gathered

with respect to knowledge of a system. This was something reiterated on opening night of *Paint Paste Sticker* by Brooks Golden, another participant and SAIC alumnus; sometimes it's also about enduring the system rather than being stifled by it.

Fortunately, there are other factors to consider. With the growing support of nonprofits such as Chicago Urban Art Society and aldermen's initiatives such as Danny Solis' Art In Public Places, these artists are learning about the technicalities of the system as well as adapting to it. This system is still in need of revamping, however, because, as Aguilar informs, "I, we... these are professionals... [these are] loving partners and fathers, businessmen and activists." Therefore, if anything is relevant and serves the potential of urban development, it is the decoding and dismantling of stumbling blocks that incidentally hinder the growth of a portion of its members.

Twenty-two years after the Chicago law passed banning materials and establishing an edifice of restrictions, things are in a slow process of change, some of it perhaps unwilling. Tim Novak of the Chicago Sun-Times revealed that, as of 2012, budget cuts have hit the Blaster's program hard. Their patchwork enforcement of the city's brown color scheme thus crippled, cutting both their workforce and response time, to the frustration of some business owners. Meanwhile, proposals have come in to increase fines and charges while at the same time sanctioned artwork has increased. Progress is a big rock, and any and all parties endeavoring to move it must commit to it long term.



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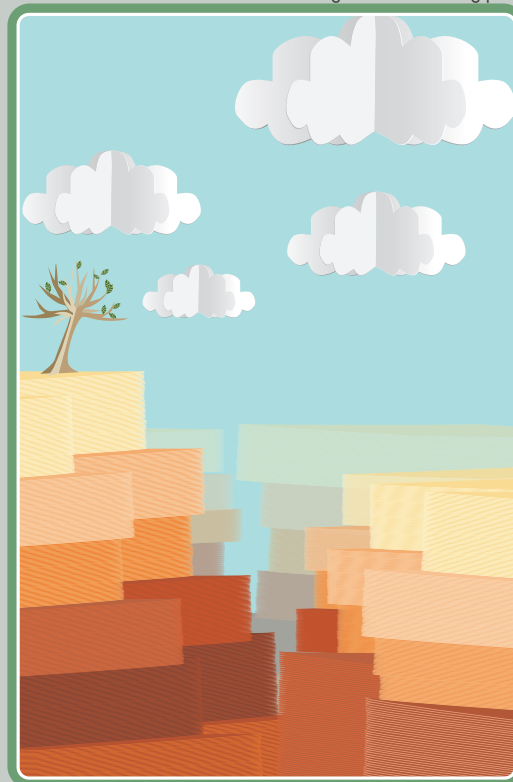
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A FIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Tensions Flare at the Guggenheim

» patrick reynolds

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York was rocked in February when a typically innocuous Thursday night became the site of an impassioned protest. Bearing signs reading "Wage Theft" and "1% Museum," protesters lined the spiraling halls of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed icon of modernism and chanted an extended text accusing the museum of committing human rights violations.

The protest, organized by Gulf Labor, Occupy Museums, and NYU students, was the latest (and most direct) of a years-long series of criticisms condemning the Guggenheim's complacent participation in the development of Saadiyat Island, a man-made cultural destination in Abu Dhabi. The island's development began in 2004, when plans were announced by the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority. The proposed construction projects on Saadiyat, which are slated for a 2020 completion, include a luxury golf course, hotels, resorts, and multiple museums. In addition to the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (a 450,000-square-foot facility designed by Frank Gehry), the island will be home to the Louvre Abu Dhabi (designed by Jean Nouvel), a New York University campus, and a massive performing arts center by architect Zaha Hadid.

In their description of the planned Abu Dhabi facility, the Guggenheim Foundation explains, "The museum, the largest Guggenheim in the world, will have global art, exhibitions, and education programs with particular focus on Middle Eastern contemporary art. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi joins other leading international cultural institutions in the unprecedented creation of a vibrant cultural destination for visitors from around the world." While few would dispute the truth of the Guggenheim's claim, it is the human cost of creating such an unprecedented cultural destination that has been fueling outrage against the institution.

The controversy surrounding the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and other Saadiyat projects stems from a series of Human Rights Watch reports that have documented unsafe and unfair working and living conditions among the construction workers erecting the island's various luxury buildings. The vast majority of manual laborers employed for the various construction projects are migrant workers from Southeast Asia and other nations. Prior to being offered their jobs in Abu Dhabi, many of the workers are required to pay recruitment fees to companies that staff the construction sites on Saadiyat Island. The fees establish an extensive level of debt that must be paid off using wages acquired through the construction jobs, but the workers are considerably underpaid. This effectively makes the workers indentured servants, and they are forced to work for extended periods of time before they even receive any form of payment from their employers. Workers' passports are often confiscated upon their arrival, so they lose the ability to freely leave their work sites. Boarding conditions are cramped, and days of work stretch well beyond twelve hours despite the region's blistering heat.

In response to the labor situation on Saadiyat Island, groups of artists and concerned citizens have come together to formalize and combine their collective activism and promote awareness of the potential human rights violations occurring in Abu Dhabi. The earliest major demonstrations occurred in 2010, first with a group of NYU students organizing a campaign entitled, "Who's NYU Abu Dhabi?" through which the working conditions at the new facility's construction site were called into question. A few months later, a group of 43 artists operating under the name GulfLabor signed a letter urging the Guggenheim to monitor and maintain the working conditions of its new location and vowing to boycott the museum if it failed to address their concerns. In each case, the activists were met with reassuring responses from their respective subjects of criticism: NYU's administration announced plans to ensure the wellbeing of any workers for its project, and Guggenheim Director Richard Armstrong and Chief Curator Nancy Spector each met with GulfLabor to assure that they were keeping a close watch over their foreign labor conditions.

In both of these cases, the protesters were dissatisfied by the responses, as neither group was convinced that any conditions would see improvement without a dedicated third-party monitor with the ability to randomly audit the site's conditions. The next several years saw similar developments: with the Guggenheim's announcement of Frank Gehry as their new museum's architect and their subsequent unveiling of his extravagant plan for the museum, activists became increasingly frustrated with the institution's failure to create solidified plans of action to protect laborers. The Guggenheim eventually announced a partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to audit working conditions, but GulfLabor was skeptical of the move, stating, "Although we are encouraged by the promise that PwC will conduct 'surprise site visits' as well as release comprehensive reports to the public on its audits, we await to hear more details of the monitoring programs that PwC will put in place."

HUMAN RIGHTS
WATCH REPORTS
HAVE DOCUMENTED
UNSAFE AND UNFAIR
WORKING AND LIVING
CONDITIONS AMONG
THE CONSTRUCTION
WORKERS ERECTING
THE ISLAND'S VARIOUS
LUXURY BUILDINGS.

In the years since these early incidents, the labor conditions on Saadiyat Island have seemingly failed to improve. Workers from ArabTec, the company responsible for supplying the Louvre's labor force, went on strike in May 2013, and a few months later, violence broke out on the island resulting in the hospitalization of 40 workers.

In response to the recent demonstration at the Guggenheim's New York location, Richard Armstrong released a statement explaining, "As global citizens, we share the concerns about human rights and fair labor practices and continue to be committed to making progress on these issues. At the same time, it is important to clarify that the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is not yet under construction." Regardless of whether or not the Guggenheim has been complicit in any of the labor woes that have plagued Saadiyat Island to date, its commitment to identifying and remedying the existing problems remains unproven. The museum is expected to open in 2017.



ARCHITECTURE & IDENTITY

Damascus and New York

» leen rifai

There is no such thing as a great city. BuzzFeed articles proclaiming “The World’s Most Beautiful Cities” do not take into account the pure subjectivity that makes the world an infinite canvas of wonders. Urban spaces entice different people for different reasons, and while we may not always be able to clearly explain an infatuation we have with a particular place, certain factors play a large part in either attracting or repelling. The most important is the interplay between the built and natural environments.

During my first trip to New York City, I made it a point to visit Ground Zero to pray for the victims of 9/11 and try to grasp the urban setting that had embraced the Twin Towers for nearly three decades. At the time of my initial visit, the site was nothing more than a fenced-off construction site surrounded by hundreds of tourists on their tiptoes, everyone trying to peek through and grasp what the future of Ground Zero would look like. Having already seen the photorealistic renderings of the Memorial Pavilion, I was already starting to sense a connection to the site. This site that carries layers of emotion among Americans and Muslims worldwide and memories of terrorism, destruction, tragedy, isolation, racism, and Islamophobia had finally connected me, the foreigner, to New York City.

I say “foreigner” because I have mixed feelings about identity. I grew up in a secular society in a Muslim country and went to school with kids who looked like they had escaped from the United Nations General

Assembly, am a practicing Muslim and have dual citizenship. I felt the need to return to Lower Manhattan and track the progress of the Pavilion, then actually experience the space. The proposed Pavilion gives breathing space for Lower Manhattan, simultaneously provides room for reflection and optimism. As intimidating as the site might be to me in all of my different identities, just visualizing the transparency of the building and the openness of the site broke all the boundaries that were set as a result of the attack.

The architects on the 9/11 Memorial project clearly collaborated with a determination to counter the devastation of the attacks. The ground-hugging structure by Snøhetta Architects displays two of the original steel tridents that were left from the fallen buildings. These, situated between the two large “Reflecting Absence” pools by Handel Architects, symbolize the physical and emotional voids that the attacks created. The water and the newly planted green spaces both bring this site back to life and encourage room to foster hope and tranquility.

When architecture fails to cater to the communities' needs, spaces become seriously alienating.

Before I visited New York City, almost every Chicagoan had told me that it is an overrated place. Recognizing that their opinions are almost entirely built on subjectivity, I could understand where they were coming from; Manhattan is dirty and overcrowded, especially with tourists such as myself. I did feel somewhat overwhelmed in some areas such as Times Square, but that does not negate the fact that New York City, like many industrialized cities, offers exceptional spaces and has always been at the forefront of innovation. Le Corbusier dreamt of automobile-friendly cities in the 1920s, and contemporary cities are fertile grounds for experimentation with new spatial relationships, sustainability and building materials.

Meanwhile, back in Damascus, Syria, the city I call "home," long before the bloody civil war that officially broke out about two years ago that destroyed some of the country's most important landmarks and heritage sites, Assad's regime brought with it some of the most destructive eyesores. In his novel *No Knives in this City's Kitchens*, Khaled Khalifa draws direct associations between the Ba'athists' rise to power and the decline of one family's living standards in the city of Aleppo (the second largest city in Syria), driving many of the members to immigrate to either Canada or America. What makes such rich, ancient cities so unlivable that even the tightly knit Arab family is willing to separate in order to escape?

Today in Damascus, the work of Michel Ecochard, master planner of Damascus under French rule, holds the city intact, keeping it easy and comfortable to navigate. However, the historic masterpieces that still stand from the city's long history of different dynasties and rulers are quickly fading into the darkness of the overpowering city smog or the large, bulky building blocks.

The remains from a superficially ambitious construction mess lie right at Damascus' core. The Massar Children's Discovery Centre by Henning Larsen Architects won the first prize in an international design competition, and, according to the firm's website, aims to "empower young Syrians to contribute actively in building their future." The client of this youth-empowering project is the Syrian Trust For Development, an NGO chaired by Syria's first lady, Asma al-Assad. In spite of the rich site that construction cranes and the uncompleted project stand on, the design's Orientalist take on Syrian culture that Mrs. Assad aims to promote through her NGO is one that is saddening and disconnecting. What used to be the city's breathing space is now one of the many sources of pollution, dust and debris.

Massar mimics the form of a Damask rose — believed to have been originally cultivated in Syria — and creates an enclosed space for children to come in, play, and explore imported things on a site that carries thousands of years of unexplored history. Aside from the sad fact that the "rose" shape can only be fathomed

from an aerial view, the site was excavated for at least three years until the actual construction commenced. The prospective completion date has been pushed back at least three times, and nobody sees completion to this project anytime soon.

Land in Syria is rich in history, and often, untreated groundwater, to both of which municipalities are oblivious. The Massar building site lies right on the banks of the Barada River, flanked by the Ottoman Tekkiye Suleimaniye Mosque and the Damascus Opera House on one side and the Four Seasons Hotel on the other, with Mount Qasyoun in the backdrop. Yet, for some reason, the proposed design is of an egocentric, introverted building that folds up on itself. It builds no bridges between its surroundings and the futuristic vision that the Syrian Trust For Development supposedly offers, neither does it establish a dialogue with the rich cultural strip that it sits on.

In Damascus, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, lie many unfinished projects. Driving through the city inevitably means risking one's life at the Ummayyad Square roundabout, which took over six years to complete, passing the unfinished, awkward reflective glass cover of the National Radio and Television building, and perhaps even the Yalbugha Complex, the scrawny eight-story structure that has been left to rot on the highway since the late 1970s. The few successful examples of modern architecture in Damascus can be attributed to either funding from international organizations or the fact that they were built prior to the rise of Ba'athism, the Public Library being one of the few exceptions.

Back in New York, as I stood watching the hundreds of people flocking to view Ground Zero with warm hearts and compassion, I couldn't help but think of the captivating experience that different sites in cities like New York construct by reaching out to the public, consciously designing and building for communities. When architecture fails to cater to the communities' needs, spaces become seriously alienating.

What remains of Damascus' core but the silenced cranes and the piles of sand?

Aside from the current war tearing the city apart, Damascus is slowly losing grip on the once resilient connections with its people it held onto for centuries. In an op-ed written for *The New York Times* that the paper declined to print this past fall, British graffiti artist Banksy described the new Freedom Tower as the "biggest eyesore." Whether it is the clusters of satellite dishes, the bare brick shantytowns, or the never-ending rows of ten-story communist structures baring years of accumulated pollution, the Damascene skyline is littered with eyesores that are definitely worse, making it more and more difficult to even imagine what the city must have been like before.

Land in Syria is rich in history, and often, untreated groundwater, to both of which municipalities are oblivious.

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SILVER RESIDUE



A Review of Beijing Silvermine, Part of the Museum of Contemporary Photography's Archive State Exhibition



» violet callis

A woman in a mint green dress leans against a shark enwrapped by a sea monster's tentacles. A young man perches on a crescent moon while a dusky city glows behind him. Neon splashes and acid marks that hover around the images' edges signal not only time's wear on the physical objects, but also the breakdown of normal everyday life at the time of the pictures' capture. Since 2009, French photography collector and editor Thomas Sauvin has purchased negatives of images from a Beijing recycling center, where they were being melted down for the silver nitrate within them.

Sauvin's *Beijing Silvermine* presents moments from China's capital in the period of change following the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. The archivist had been living in China for nearly ten years when an online search for old negatives led him to the recycling center's wealth of images. The collected photographs now appear as part of the Museum of Contemporary Photography's *Archive State*, which showcases the work of several artists who make use of found material, raising questions around how we define authorship.

The photographs in *Beijing Silvermine* are often playfully absurd, frequently creating a dreamlike effect. Their subjects interact with both outlandish props and commonplace objects, engaging the physical world in unexpected ways. Gif-like animations of photographs, created in collaboration with artist Cari Vander Yacht, emphasize the comedic aspect of several pieces. The pictures are openly posed, and the people in them make no attempt to hide their awareness of the camera: the photos' subjects appear as if they wish to be presented, within moments that they have chosen to record. Maybe it's this honest quality of the photos that limits any feeling of voyeurism in the exhibit. Sauvin has said of his work, "Basically, I don't see myself as an artist, but

I see myself as a photographic collector. So, what I do is I find images that would have been lost and I show them. In a sense, I don't change or modify the pictures. I just show them as they are and then what is important for me is the stories that emerge organically from the archive and what they say about people." The photographs are presented with respect to the personal moments they contain, and focus on historical content.

One section of the exhibit consists of smiling women standing beside televisions, refrigerators, and other domestic appliances. Beside this area, there are several photos of people posing with food from McDonald's. The turn toward consumerism caused by China's economic opening to the world is a major theme in the show. One

The archivist had been living in China for nearly ten years when an online search for old negatives led him to the recycling center's wealth of images.

photo displaying a young boy's nonplussed expression as he stands next to a grinning Ronald McDonald captures the moment of colliding cultures. The fact that so many of these photographs were discarded signifies that the events recorded have lost importance; however, their vast number reveals their former significance.

Other photographs in *Beijing Silvermine* reveal a society in which values are shifting. The trips to Tiananmen Square captured in many photos are signs of greater economic prosperity. Documents of trips abroad to Paris's Louvre feature camera flashes reflecting off of masterpieces. The moments captured in these photographs are those of leisure and the status that comes with it. Their repetitiveness reveals the shared ideal of success being strived for, despite the frequent sense of looseness and play. The amateur photography in this

exhibit highlights the medium as a collective method for cataloguing one's successes during a pivotal cultural moment. This instinct is not unique to China, and almost seems natural in today's landscape of social media.

A sculptural piece made in collaboration with Chinese artist Lei Lei, *Recycled*, references how Sauvin encountered the filmstrips. In the work, a pile of singed plastic photographs is interspersed with screens that flash similar images in quick succession. The piece echoes the modern move toward digital photography, and the impermanence of the moments recorded in that format. Because of the sheer amount of images produced, they end up lost. Though analog pictures may end up on the junk pile, they still take up physical space, a presence emphasized by the sculptural shift in materials from film to volumetric form. The ultimate disposability of digital photographs and difficulty in archiving them is illustrated by the rapidity with which they flash across the screens; they disappear before the viewer has the chance to contemplate their content.

Outside forces have caused some of the faces in the photos of *Beijing Silvermine* to fade. The discarded photographs in this archive contain moments of both pleasure and anxiety. With this collection, Thomas Sauvin exhibits awareness that many images of the past will be lost, regardless of attempts to preserve them through archiving. The remembered joy taken in ephemeral moments, however, may remain long after the photo is snapped. With *Beijing Silvermine*, Sauvin suggests that those histories, rich with both joy and abandonment, are worth salvaging.

Archive State is showing at the Museum of Contemporary Photography from Jan 21-Apr 6, 2014.

THE CAMERA AS TESTIMONY

A Closer Look at an Award-Winning Documentary on Anti-Wall Protests in the West Bank

"Those who have engaged with photography know very well that this moment of the photographic act, which is said to reach its end when incarnated in a final product ... is in fact a new beginning that lacks any predictable end."

—*Ariella Azoulay*

» oriana weich

The last one I participated in a weekly demonstration in Biltmore was in 2011. We walked, as always, down from the village towards the wall. Something was different that day. The court ruling that required the wall to be pushed back had finally, after many long years of persistent struggle, been accepted. Now the wall was being pulled back. I was walking with a group of people, mostly young, mostly from the village. The "first" hand was scuffed black leather and littered with dusty pennials and leather castles. I wondered whether anything could ever grow again on this soil. But when struck the soil was more than the stench of rancid and the "stink" was wrapped in a warm blanket of life. The "second" hand was more than the stench of rancid and the "stink" was wrapped in a sleeked by the IMF (first defense force) for the purpose of dispersal of protesters. The small, ringed, knobby fingers were covered in a warm blanket of life. The "third" hand was more than the stench of rancid and the "stink" was wrapped in a sleeked by the IMF (first defense force) for the purpose of dispersal of protesters. The small, ringed, knobby fingers were covered in a warm blanket of life. The "third" hand was more than the stench of rancid and the "stink" was wrapped in a sleeked by the IMF (first defense force) for the purpose of dispersal of protesters. The small, ringed, knobby fingers were covered in a warm blanket of life.

In 2005 Israel began building the separation wall in Bil'in, a small village in the West Bank, which would append a significant part of the land to the neighboring, expanding settlement of Modin Ilit. The Popular Struggle Committee in Bil'in organized weekly demonstrations against the construction of the wall, which continue to this day. The people of Bil'in also took their struggle to the Israeli court. In 2007, the court ruled in their favor and in 2011 Israel began the reconstruction of the wall according to its new route.

The documentary film, *5 Broken Cameras*, depicts the lives and struggles of five Palestinian farmers, the members of the Committee to Protect the Villages of Bil'in, from the point of view of Ramat Ramat, a Palestinian farmer living in the village. The film is co-directed with Ory David, an Israeli filmmaker who joined Ramat as a cameraman in the shooting of the film and the two ended up getting the same film in the cinema in 2005, when Ramat received his first cinema as a document of the life of his hometown, Gilvad. At the same time, Israel began building the separation wall. The new cinema is put to an unexpected use, as Ramat began to document the people's struggle against the construction of the wall and the Israeli occupation. This is the starting point for the film. The film is a march from the village to the Israeli military base, which became an international symbol of the popular resistance.

Ramat's calm, reasonable, voice helped to unfold his tale – a family life shattered by the destructive nature of the occupation – to a soundtrack of dramatic forces as well as whistling birds. The destructive violence against the villagers by soldiers ordered to protect

the wall becomes apparent over the course of the film. The first camera is shattered by a flying grenade, and the device shields Burnat from a severe injury. The fate of four more cameras will be determined similarly in the course of the next four years. Burnat will not always be so lucky. He might meet a fate similar to one of his friends who was hit in the chest by a teargas canister and died on the spot.

As spectators we are often called to accompany bread and beer witnesses as we watch him face the development of the harsh reality around him, the pain cannot be overstressed; this film is not made by a journalist but by a family man who finds himself almost by accident drawn into the circle of violence, carrying his new camera, originally intended to produce home videos. When Bassem Abu Rahma is killed, a beloved friend to the filmmaker and his son, one has to wonder if Ahmad is struck by grief or the sheer regret of having accepted the role of the documentaryman in the first

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Nevertheless, Burnat says, "I have to believe that capturing these images will have some meaning." Becoming a witness is not passive; it is a political act. Everything observed in this case transforms into testimony. The scorched fields demonstrate an incessant struggle. The shattered cars physically attest to their traumatic impact, in which even social upheaval was not only in the images within them, but in this film the images produced on the camera's exterior.

This begs the question, what becomes of the spectator? What capacity do they have if they are not merely observers?

The five broken cameras laid out on the table at the beginning of the film resemble a set of excavated bones arranged in the form of an archaic organism. Or perhaps they mimic the image of firearms the military has managed to confiscate and now proudly displays as trophies, as objects, they serve as bare proof of a struggle, a dangerous attempt at reclaiming a life. The cameras

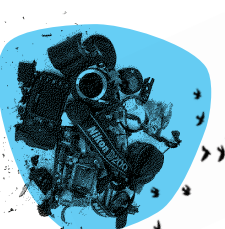
themselves, their functionally destroyed, are just as much a testimony as the images they captured. But this is hardly the only transformation by way of inversion that the film calls forth. A fresh father's attempts at collecting family footage are suddenly deposed as he finds himself turned a documentarian by chance, in the middle of a battle whose end seems to grow ever more distant.

The cameras break each scene, whether at the hands of a soldier or a fleeing grenade, yet burst immediately picks up a new camera and continues on. Daily life in a Palestinian village: a community feeding its routine while extreme realities constantly disrupt it and while in the dead of night, olive trees are burned down by settlers and children are snatched from their homes to be put under custody.

More than anything else, *5 Broken Cameras* is about rhythm — the slow, repetitive, ritualistic rhythm of resistance to institutionalized violence and injustice.

**WHETHER AT THE HANDS OF
A BOMBING GRENADE, YET BURNAT
MEMA AND CONTINUES TO FILM.**

5 Broken Cameras plays at the Gene Siskel Film Center on April 26, 27 & 28.



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photo by oriana weich

illustrations by meghan ryan morris

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Laurie Palmer Speaks to F Newsmagazine About Her Excavations of U.S. Mining

» alyssa moxley

In 2003, at the beginning of the Iraq War, Laurie Palmer, longtime Professor of Sculpture at SAIC, began a research project to understand, through her own partiality and subjectivity, the processes that people carry out to transform the freely given materials of the earth into private commodities. She spent that year under the auspices of a grant at The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, reading materialist philosophies about mineral extraction sites and theories of land. "That was an unbounded research year that was really wonderful and kind of confusing," she says. "I had hoped that the book would just happen in that year, but it didn't and that was ten years ago."

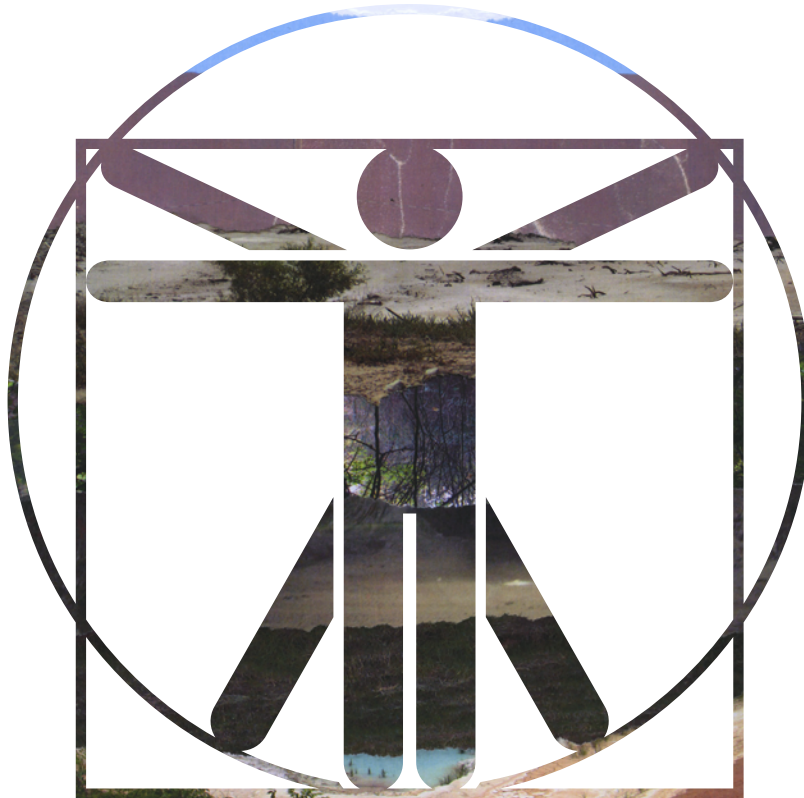
In the Aura of a Hole, published this spring by Black Dog, is the result of a decade of Palmer pursuing access and personal knowledge of mining operations through a series of visits or attempted visits to mines. She says that the process of writing the book was about "wanting to go to these sites, rather than going online and getting some more information and then digesting that information and spitting it back out."

For almost every visit, she needed a guide. "Those relationships became really intimate really quickly, because if you go underground, you're totally dependent on this person. Even getting in someone's truck and driving somewhere, basically, you are really close for a period of time. I enjoy what that sort of access via a personal connection provides," she explains. "Some of these guys (and they were mostly guys) were definitely schooled to give me company lines, but with others I felt a more of an excess of their own engagement with their work and the materials they were working with. They have to be extremely knowledgeable to be working with these materials in pretty dangerous ways. There's something wonderful about that artistry, and their enjoyment of their, if not mastery, engagement with the material."

Driven by curiosity around the interactions between raw elements and microphysics, exchange value and labor, environment and privatization, the book is peppered with references to ancient and contemporary philosophies and descriptions of chemical processes that serve as seedlings for inquiries and ruminations. The way these dense subjects are approached is both informative and personal. Palmer avers, "There is a kind of non-constrained approach that I think you can take as an artist that I think is boundary crossing — where the 'I' and the world become permissively blurred. Some of these processes might become more digestible, more interesting even, once they're considered through a subjectivity that is trying to make sense of them herself."

Each chapter is written with a commonly commoditized element: Carbon, Silicon, Aluminum, Lead, Sodium, Calcium, Sulfur, Phosphorus, Chlorine, Potassium, Uranium, Helium, Iron, Copper, Iodine, Silver, Gold, and Mercury. "Altogether," she says, "I have had the idea in the back of my mind that if I had the right balance of elements and the right range of kinds of processes and places across the U.S., that it would create a whole with an internal structure that, although partial, provides a foundation to understand these processes." The ties that bind the chapters and the elements are complex, relating to labor, mundane chemistry and physics. However, Palmer is not trying to elaborate an encyclopedic knowledge, rather each chapter elaborates a slightly different concern. She hopes that the "reader might be able to put some ideas together from reading these different chapters about the interdependencies of different industries on each other as well as our dependencies on the earth."

Palmer journeys to sites within the U.S. where these elements are mined, to the land and the extraction centers. Access to the mines was not always possible. Her curiosity often met the "wall between industry and those of us who use and depend on these things. Part of my desire was to try to open that wall,



for myself even." Sometimes there were no impediments to access. "When I went to visit the lead mines in Missouri, which is where most of U.S. lead has come from for almost the last hundred years, one arm of the operation was, interestingly, generous. They made a spread of lunch for me, with these rolled up ham and cream cheese things, and presented a Powerpoint with my name on it. It was really wild! I felt really confused, because lead mining is one of the dirtiest industries and

then you go down a red clay road through the trees and there would be a blinding white hole with this beautiful blue turquoise water in it." Once the mining of the Kaolin is finished, the holes fill with water. "It's really wild, this landscape, full of all these holes. All those people who just had to leave."

Throughout *In the Aura of a Hole*, Palmer conjectures about the co-creative relationship of life and inorganic matter in forming and occupying the world.

Part of my desire was to try to open the wall between industry and those of us who use and depend on these things.

my guide here was virulently anti-environmentalist. There's a lot of ideological rhetoric that can come out in these encounters. But I didn't have to sign anything that said I had to show them anything I wrote. Some places would ask me for that and I wouldn't go because I didn't feel like I could do that."

Other times corporate headquarters would respond defensively, offering information by phone only but denying entry to the mines. "One place in Georgia I really did get the door slammed, not literally, but on the phone, several times. It's not that surprising, but it's part of what interests me." In Georgia, Palmer was investigating the industry of Kaolin, a white clay thick with aluminum, that is legendary for its displacement of people from their homes. Kaolin is "one of these things that goes into many different products, but we never really see it. You might know it as a face mask, ceramicists know it for sure, but it's also in milkshakes and rubber plugs in the bathroom. A lot of these things, if they don't get sold directly to the public, they don't really have any public face. They didn't want me anywhere near. In that part of Georgia, there's the stereotypical red clay, and

In the chapter on sulfur, she writes, "When the earth was considered a body, mineral resources grew like plants in her hidden womb, and that womb was sacred enough to inspire both prayer and apology. [...] Even solidified 'earth juices,' so called by Georgius Agricola, including saltpeter, 'nitrum' and sulfur, even these less precious but still important materials might replenish, minerals like plants having an active living dimension. [...] Enlightenment science brought a new understanding of the earth as machine, and in this mechanistic paradigm, matter is passive, dead, inert." Through her researching of these materials, Palmer has considered the shifts in understanding our relationship to materiality through what we do. People co-create the world as they rearrange and rethink it, but it has never been a one-way system.

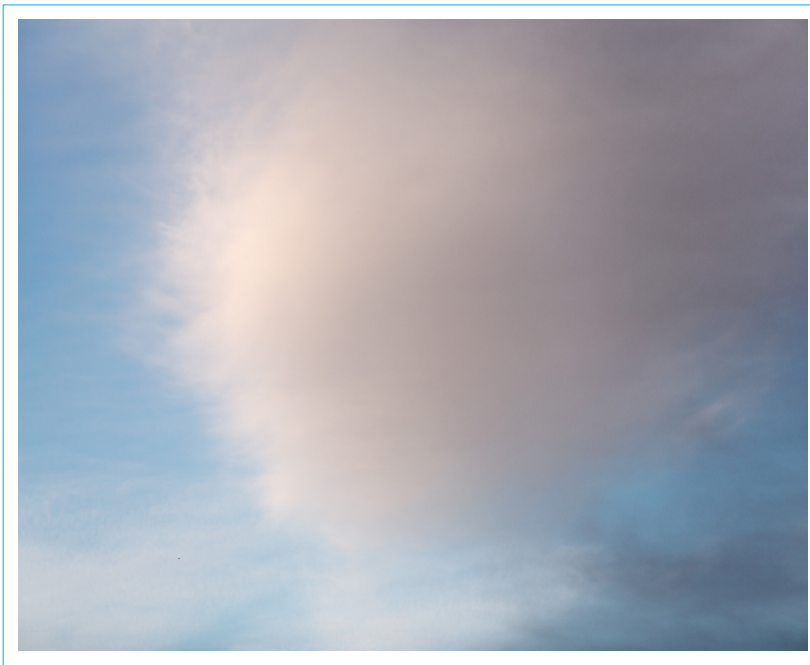
"Geology and bacteria created the earth together," she says. "They're not separable. Part of what I was thinking about was how matter moves between our bodies and certain elements move the earth and back and forth. I was thinking of that relation as central to the book. Part of what happens with these extraction

processes is a massive re-arrangement of things that took a long time to find equilibrium. Not that everything should stay the way we found it, but it's a huge disruption to separate this one little element from hundreds of thousands of tons of other stuff. In order to do this, it's really quite violent. I do outline that I basically understand our bodies and the earth as continuous. That's completely in line with how I see. I see us as limbs of the earth, and our illnesses as symptoms. When we enact such violent rearrangements of the earth, we liberate toxins that had been kept in check in equilibrium."

That these rearrangements have repercussions environmentally on our physical health through pollutants is evident. The fact that many of the sites of extraction are on indigenous land is a horrendous trespass, but also suggests "some kind of hope" for Palmer who notes some of the Western Shoshone and the Iroquois continue to claim parts of New York State as land that they want returned in part in order to heal it. In that, "it seems that there is a possibility for different relationships with these sites," she says.

The holistic approach to her topic weaves moments of her personal history with the history of consumer relationships with the elements and the specificities of her encounters with industrial complexes. Though the accounts of mining and chemical processes are accurate, her entry points to the subject bring the reader closer to experiencing chemistry in its more emotional connotations.

"I don't have any pretensions to imagine a massive rethinking of our relationship to materiality, although I would like to," she laughs. "But I do think that some understanding, and this is something that I'm interested in theoretically and in bringing to students in classes to try and understand it better, is that idea of continuity with material and collaboration with matter, rather than mastery or dominance over it. That shift in relations is critical."



SECRETS — AND — TELESCOPES

Trevor Paglen's blurry vision of the USA secret state

» alyssa moxley

Dark Matter makes up around eighty percent of the universe, yet we cannot view it directly, we can only detect it through the effect that it has on objects that reflect light. Trevor Paglen employs this metaphor to reflect the way he approaches the framing of the visual aspects of the secret world of global covert operations. Paglen, who graduated from SAIC with an MFA from the Art and Technology department in 2000, returned to Chicago for the first time in early March to speak in the Rubloff Auditorium as part of the Visiting Artist Program's Distinguished Alumni Lecture series.

After SAIC, Paglen went on to a PhD in Geography at U.C.-Berkeley where he developed a thesis that later turned into an art exhibit and book published in 2009, *Blank Spots on the Map: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Hidden World*. Growing up on U.S. military bases himself in the USA and Germany perhaps influenced his particular understanding of these sequestered social realms. Focusing on secret military bases in the U.S., he developed a technique of using telescopes to photograph distant hidden sites. He frequently uses a 600mm Orion refractor telescope connected to his camera to capture images across landscapes; as the light is travelling through our atmosphere rather than the vacuum of space, several frequencies become blurred, such as in *Chemical and Biological Weapons Proving Ground* (2006) in Dugway, Utah, shot from 42 miles away. The stretched and distorted wavelengths also serve as an aesthetic reference to the confusion and interference of what he terms the "bureaucratic sublime," the infrastructures of secrecy. He likens this stretched imagery to that of Turner paintings processing the light and speed of modern travel at the turn of the 19th century.

The secret machinations of our world where more than 850,000 people have top-secret clearances is clearly a contradiction. In fact, Paglen defines secrecy not just as what you are not allowed to know, but rather "infrastructures and institutions, things like

the CIA, or the NSA, economic institutions like the so-called black budget in the United States. It also is composed of social engineering institutions, such as the security classification system, legal institutions such as the FISA court in the state secret precedent to the United States." Paglen exposes the cracks of what it is possible to observe. For example, by recognizing the differences in international regulations regarding businesses, individuals and states, he was able to pinpoint the office locations and flight operations of front companies used by the CIA. Because civilian companies need to have clearances to land at military air bases, he was able to follow the (publicly accessible, by request) aviation paper-trail and use the account of CIA abductee Khaled el-Masri to locate and photograph a secret CIA prison located just outside of Kabul, Afghanistan.

What I personally want out of art is to help us see the historical condition we are living in.

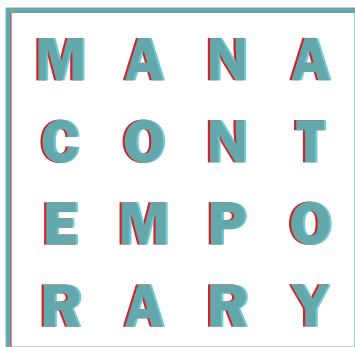
An assortment of patches that represent covert military units make up his 2007 book *I Could Tell You, but Then You Would Have to Be Destroyed by Me*. He compares the patches to the Mytraic Mysteries system of elaborate symbolic languages recognizable only to insiders. For example, a common badge with the letters NKAUWG stands for "no one kicks ass without tanker gas." One badge for a special unit nighttime surveillance unit incorporated the literal orbital path of a satellite in yellow stitch. Paglen was able to use it to track, locate and photograph the satellite. He revealed in the talk that he actually saw a recent government memo that suggested to secret operations units to longer incorporate references to real information within the badges, due to this instance. One recent patch he showed in the lecture spelled out "Don't Ask! NOYFB" (none of your fucking business).

Now that there is a lot more assassination via drone — e.g., the drone wars in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia — most of the pilots that operate these missions are based in Nevada. Assassinations are controlled using satellites in orbit. The drone that was shot down in Iran in 2011 is direct evidence that the U.S. military infrastructure has moved into space. For several years Paglen has been photographing the sky within the Nevada Test and Training Range. With a similar aesthetic to Steiglitz's *Equivalents* series of dramatic clouds, Paglen's colorful sky-scapes are marked with a single fleck. The dark, not-at-first noticeable pockmark is a drone, and the clouds present in the images are often streaked with the drone's contrails.

Paglen's research into secret operations led him to photograph the secret satellites that the U.S. has placed around the world. By referencing Space-Track, an online databank of bulk data of all the satellites the military monitors and comparing that to his own empirical observations and those of amateur astronomers, he located and photographed secret satellites, such as the geostationary U.S.A. 202 satellite which sits just behind the Thorai 2, the satellite that runs most communications for the Middle East.

Last year he took his project into outer space as well. He etched a series of images into a silicon chip, placed it within a gold-plated aluminum canister that was attached to a communications satellite, the Echostar XVI, and launched into space. In a kind of echo of Carl Sagan's *Golden Record*, Paglen's *The Last Pictures* shows humanity not only at its best. The capsule is designed to last for a billion years, joining the raft of materials orbiting the earth, and serving as a sort of communication to whatever intelligence may happen upon.

"What I personally want out of art is to help us see the historical condition we are living in," he told the auditorium. The condition that Paglen reveals is fractious and paranoid, out of focus, and romantically obsessed with the symbolic.



A New Community and Complex of Arts Activity in Pilsen

» **alyssa moxley**

Mana Contemporary opened up its Chicago branch in September 2013, converting an empty auto-parts factory into a hub of activity for a community of emerging and established artists and the wider arts community. Designed by architect George Nimmons in 1926, the imposingly large 14-story landmark building originally served as a warehouse and garage for Commonwealth Edison's Fisk Generating station, incorporating a 198-foot-high radio tower as the communication system to dispatch emergency equipment. Now the building at 2233 Throop Street is set to become part of a national network of spaces that incorporate artist studios, climate controlled storage, art handling, exhibitions, shared equipment spaces, and areas for performance and programming.

A space that is welcoming to artists, collectors and gallery owners

The arts enterprise has its roots as a moving and storage company owned by Moishe Mana. Artist and former Moishe's Self Storage employee, Eugene Lemay was a co-founder of Mana Fine Arts, and now acts as the company's curatorial advisor. Micha Lang, the visionary and co-founder of Mana Chicago has also been involved with the business from its early days. For a time Moishe's was a go-to job market for Israeli artist immigrants to the US and New York City.

The company's auspicious innovation in the mid-1980s was the development of a barcode method to quickly retrieve medical and legal papers from their document storage units. Locations close to the centers of cities meant that they could act within a couple of hours instead of days. With the advent of digital archiving, access to original documents became less pressing and they were able to store materials at more distant locations. Now these nationally distributed, centrally located urban warehouses are being converted to use for art. The company's flagship art center is a 1.5-million-sq. ft. Jersey City complex, 15 minutes from the center of New York City via PATH train.

In Chicago, the venture is fairly central to the Pilsen neighborhood, only four blocks away from the main drag of 18th Street. Nick Wylie, artistic director and Pilsen resident for seven years pointed out that despite being ten minutes from the center of town, there is a veil of inaccessibility which may have aided in protecting the

area from the rapid gentrification seen in places like Logan Square. That said, he admits that the building can be difficult to find and he provides a paragraph of directions to new visitors that are journeying to the studios, located at the unlikely dead-end of Throop, where it meets the south branch of the Chicago River.

"The Chicago location is just starting out. We're going to have a lot more activity and keep getting better and better. We're opening up the second floor next month," says Chicago manager Micha Lang. A year and a half ago he began scouting Chicago for the next Mana outpost. After meeting Lisa Lee and Matt Siber, he was introduced to even more artists. Nick Wylie, co-director of ACRE (Artist Co-operative Residency & Exhibitions), and Ciara Ruffino, also an administrator of ACRE, are now part of the team at Mana that reaches out to people

a glassed off performance area and spaces to host 12 annually supported artists. A classroom space from the University of Illinois Chicago soon to be dedicated to 3D printing, a classroom and screening space, and a library donated by Donald Young are located on the 5th floor. The Propeller Fund, a funding body in turn supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to facilitate Chicago artists, is also planning to host two of their former grantees per year in dedicated studio spaces on the fourth floor.

The venue is in conversation with independents to establish digital printing and framing services within one 2,000-sq. ft. area. Two weeks ago the company merged with Terry Dowd, an art handling company that will be establishing major facilities in the building, offering knowledge and professionalism for climate controlled storage and transportation of art and collections, contributing to studio residents' access to safe international shipping.

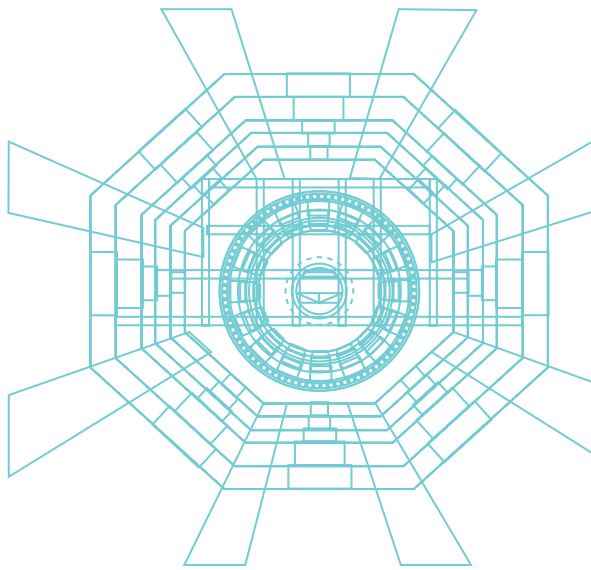
Lang's excitement about the venture was palpable, as he described the creation of a space that is welcoming to artists, collectors, and gallery owners. He said that the Chicago location was even easier to deal with than in Jersey City, perhaps due to Midwestern friendliness. Wylie mentioned that much of Chicago's art scene circulates around educational establishments, while New York City's major influence holders are the galleries, which is reflected in the institutional partnering of the respective complexes.

The venue is not only for artists that have studios within the building. Wylie said that the organization plans to establish a wing dedicated to artist services open to all in the Chicago wide community. He hopes that "it can encourage cross-pollination as a multi-institutional meeting point." The 4,000-sq. ft. area on the ground floor already hosts performances organized by in-house residents, by HCL, and by other interested parties. Wylie said there have been events almost every weekend. SAIC's 2nd year performance grads ran an event on Friday 28th February. In mid-February HCL hosted a Valentine's Day dance. HCL is also a helpful mailing list to join to find out about upcoming programming. The University of Wisconsin-Madison curated a show of graduate work in the space as well. Some events, such as the Fluxfest 2014 and Ron Athey's recent performance, are donated to the space, while fundraisers and universities rent the space. Hospitable, open, and professional, Mana Contemporary is set to be an exciting venue for Chicago's artists and art-interested folk to participate.

they think would contribute to the community and invites them to consider a studio.

Artist duo and SAIC alumni Industry of the Ordinary as well as SAIC teachers Jan Tichy, Claire Pentecost, Jason Lazarus all have studios in the building. Pentecost and Lazarus are planning for some of their classes to exhibit work in their studios. Dance company Lucky Plush, who operate under the administrative umbrella of Creative Partners alongside 8th Blackbird sextet and Blair Thomas Puppetry, are planning on opening facilities on the 6th floor. The fifth floor hosts 19 artists and the soon to be opened fourth floor will host an additional 27. Artists can also contact Mana Contemporary to inquire about spaces, and though reviewed by committee, there are many young artists and recent graduates in the building. "The average age on the fourth floor space is about 24 or 25," says Lang. At \$1.20/sq. ft. and running at 300-2,000 sq. ft., there are spaces for a variety of budgets.

Mana Contemporary currently operates in 300,000 sq. ft. of the building, and has plans to expand throughout an additional nine floors. The rest of the space is occupied by storage, "which is helpful to artists in the building," Wylie points out, and small creative businesses. ACRE currently runs a maker space in the building and helps build inexpensive computers for artists. The offices and programming of High Concept Laboratories (HCL) are based there and also facilitate wider programming within the space; next year HCL plans on opening



UNCERTAIN COLLISIONS

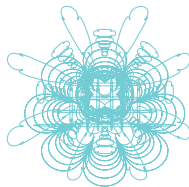
The Artist Residency at the World's Largest Particle Accelerator

» **alysa moxley**

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

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

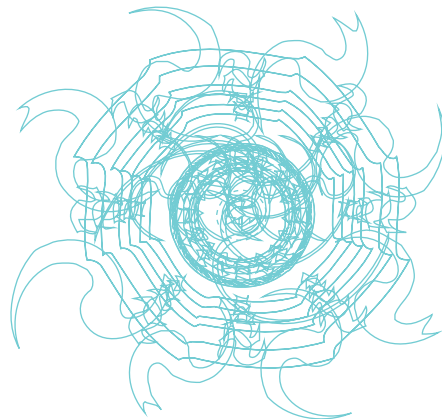
Collide@CERN, in partnership with the Prix Ars Electronica, sets up artists with "inspiration partners," research scientists based in CERN's Geneva Headquarters. The artists are given an office similar to the scientists and two months to research amongst the physicists without pressure to produce anything.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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



PLANTING AN AGRICULTURAL URBANISM

Artists in Chicago and India Consider the Possibilities of Urban Agriculture

» alyssa moxley

Diners sit at wooden tables amongst vermiculture beds inside the old truck depot where the Iron Street Farm keeps its mushrooms and fish. Inside the surrounding crates, worms create new nutritious soil from waste collected from farming sites across South Chicago. Before the meal begins, the group steps outside to a plot of land behind the hoop houses to participate in a Native American ritual which recognizes the moment of our shared meal by throwing tobacco leaves into a fire. The ashes are composed of previous fires held around the country at meals that celebrate the diversity of knowledge that many cultures around the world employ to create sustainable food cultures.

This is the headquarters of the Chicago branch of Growing Power, a network of farms that support community education, nutrition and enterprise through the cultivation of local produce in a program of urban agriculture. The farm borders the banks of the South Fork of the Chicago River, commonly known as Bubbly Creek. This nickname describes the gasses released from the riverbed due to the decomposition of animal parts thrown into the water during Chicago's early 20th century boom in the meatpacking industry. On this Saturday evening, artists, chefs and farmers are dining together as part of the Rooting: Regional Networks, Global Concerns Symposium, a program which brings together sustainable food communities and artists to consider the agricultural issues facing dense urban populations and imagine new legacies.

Rooting, which also exhibited works by 12 artists in the Sullivan Galleries, is organized by the Rhizome Alliance, a group of artists and activists from Chicago and Delhi. This group is funded by the Shapiro foundation's Eager Grant, and seeks to forge bonds between the two cities, specifically around the issues of changing agricultural practices. The idea for the project blossomed when SAIC faculty member Deborah Boardman met artist Akshay Raj Singh Rathore while on a residency at Sanskriti in Delhi.

Rathore, who comes from a family of farmers, is currently pursuing a project which would reintroduce heritage seeds — strains of plants handed down by gen-

erations of farmers not grown by large-scale commercial agriculture — within India. He emphasized that in India, "food is not just food; it becomes a huge cultural reference. It involves issues from eating, cooking, to growing, to what to do after the waste."

While the use of advanced technologies in food production and the industrial distribution of seeds may seem obscure to uninformed people, they affect almost every aspect of everyday food consumption. Rathore says that artists can forge bonds beyond cultural boundaries which can reclaim ground for traditional farming methods in the face of the assumption that modern techniques are always best. Through the public works at the heart of Rooting, Rathore hopes to bring insight and clarity to such questions as "What are we eating and what are the conditions of the people who are growing these foods? Do we need development? What is development?"

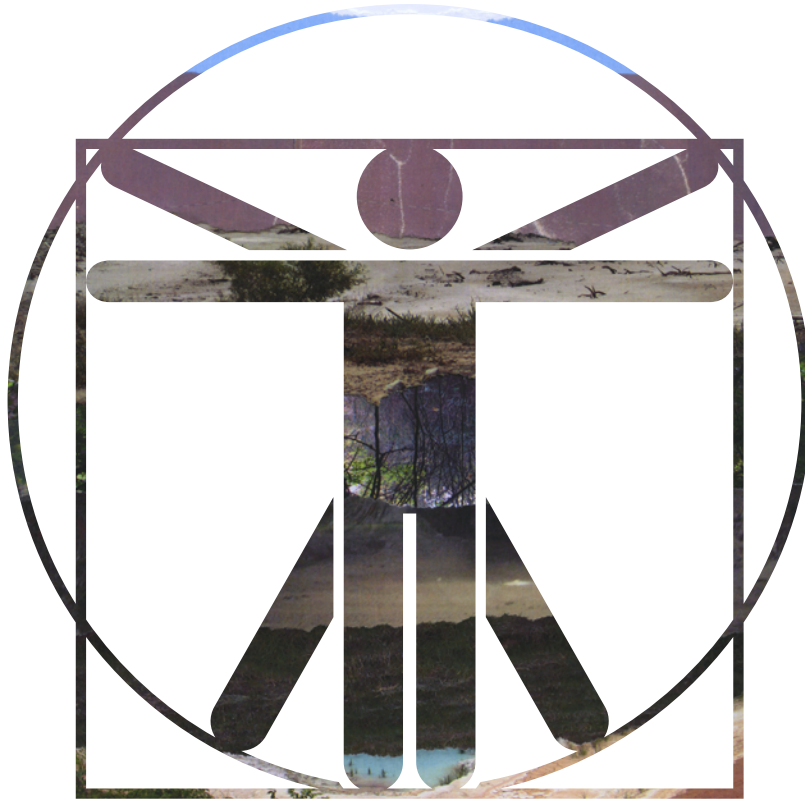
The symposium is creating pockets where those conversations can happen. Tour buses, where artists, chefs and farmers interact, visited different farms and cultural centers on Chicago's South Side to collaboratively prepare food and collectively consume it. In describing the roles that she strives to create through the alliances at the symposium Boardman affirmed, "Artists can provide the space to imagine other possibilities to feel some hope and optimism that alternatives have begun to exist and have existed in the past." For her it was crucial to acknowledge "that there are things from tradition that can help us move forward and that there are some exciting activists and entrepreneurs that can move us forward."

On the foraging tour that took place as part of the symposium weekend, writer and seed grower Michael Swierz discussed the facets of wild and cultivated foods. He taught attendees about recognizing the characteristics of plants, such as the neurotoxicity of nightshades and the digestive assistance of mints and how to recognize plant families by leaf and flower shape. Participants learnt how to start to discern safe wild plants to eat, like the apple family haw berries of the Hawthorne tree and the Burdock tuber. He told the group that puffball

mushrooms were safe when young, but recounted a conversation with a mycologist who told him about unfortunate teenagers who decided to snort the dry black spores, which promptly ate their brains. Plants often have distinct phases of conserving and energy and releasing that energy into seed in a natural cycle. Swierz runs gardens in Chicago that are not to grow food, but instead allow plants to begin seeding in order to create a local seedbank.

Rathore comments that "What we [in India] are trying to lose, people here are trying to achieve and what we are trying to achieve people here are trying to lose ... In India, a lot of farmers want bigger tractors, bigger fertilizers and pesticides, whereas in the city of Chicago, people don't want that ... I am here to understand the urban engagements here and share the knowledge, share the understanding ... and compare it to our very different urban situations."

Where the post-industrial flatlands offer the space for a high number of urban farming initiatives in Chicago, Delhi's rapidly growing population, which is fueled by rural to urban immigration, faces a host of different challenges in developing urban farming practices. The next phase of Rooting will take place as an exchange between the two cities. Khoj, a space in Delhi dedicated to artwork centered on ecology and food since its foundation in 1997, will host a residency program. Rathore is also working with Chicago artists Lia Rousset and Amber Ginsburg to exchange cloves of garlic between the cities, while keeping records of this transmission on a shared blog. The artists decided to use garlic as the representative seed of exchange because of the plant's global popularity and the etymology of the word "Chicago" which is derived from the Miami-Illinois Native American word for wild onion or garlic. The Delhi bulb will be planted on the roof of Chicago's 6018 North, and the Chicago bulb will find a home on multiple rooftops in Delhi. Rathore stated, "We are giving people a garlic bulb and asking them to grow it and monitor it for ten months, as long as the plants' growth and seed cycle takes."



for myself even." Sometimes there were no impediments to access. "When I went to visit the lead mines in Missouri, which is where most of U.S. lead has come from for almost the last hundred years, one arm of the operation was, interestingly, generous. They made a spread of lunch for me, with these rolled up ham and cream cheese things, and presented a Powerpoint with my name on it. It was really wild! I felt really confused, because lead mining is one of the dirtiest industries and

then you go down a red clay road through the trees and there would be a blinding white hole with this beautiful blue turquoise water in it." Once the mining of the Kaolin is finished, the holes fill with water. "It's really wild, this landscape, full of all these holes. All those people who just had to leave."

Throughout *In the Aura of a Hole*, Palmer conjectures about the co-creative relationship of life and inorganic matter in forming and occupying the world.

Part of my desire was to try to open the wall between industry and those of us who use and depend on these things.

my guide here was virulently anti-environmentalist. There's a lot of ideological rhetoric that can come out in these encounters. But I didn't have to sign anything that said I had to show them anything I wrote. Some places would ask me for that and I wouldn't go because I didn't feel like I could do that."

Other times corporate headquarters would respond defensively, offering information by phone only but denying entry to the mines. "One place in Georgia I really did get the door slammed, not literally, but on the phone, several times. It's not that surprising, but it's part of what interests me." In Georgia, Palmer was investigating the industry of kaolin, a white clay thick with aluminum, that is legendary for its displacement of people from their homes. Kaolin is "one of these things that goes into many different products, but we never really see it. You might know it as a face mask, ceramicists know it for sure, but it's also in milkshakes and rubber plugs in the bathroom. A lot of these things, if they don't get sold directly to the public, they don't really have any public face. They didn't want me anywhere near. In that part of Georgia, there's the stereotypical red clay, and

In the chapter on sulfur, she writes, "When the earth was considered a body, mineral resources grew like plants in her hidden womb, and that womb was sacred enough to inspire both prayer and apology. [...] Even solidified 'earth juices,' so called by Georgius Agricola, including saltpeter, 'nitrum' and sulfur, even these less precious but still important materials might replenish, minerals like plants having an active living dimension. [...] Enlightenment science brought a new understanding of the earth as machine, and in this mechanistic paradigm, matter is passive, dead, inert." Through her researching of these materials, Palmer has considered the shifts in understanding our relationship to materiality through what we do. People co-create the world as they rearrange and rethink it, but it has never been a one-way system.

"Geology and bacteria created the earth together," she says. "They're not separable. Part of what I was thinking about was how matter moves between our bodies and certain elements move the earth and back and forth. I was thinking of that relation as central to the book. Part of what happens with these extraction

processes is a massive re-arrangement of things that took a long time to find equilibrium. Not that everything should stay the way we found it, but it's a huge disruption to separate this one little element from hundreds of thousands of tons of other stuff. In order to do this, it's really quite violent. I do outline that I basically understand our bodies and the earth as continuous. That's completely in line with how I see. I see us as limbs of the earth, and our illnesses as symptoms. When we enact such violent rearrangements of the earth, we liberate toxins that had been kept in check in equilibrium."

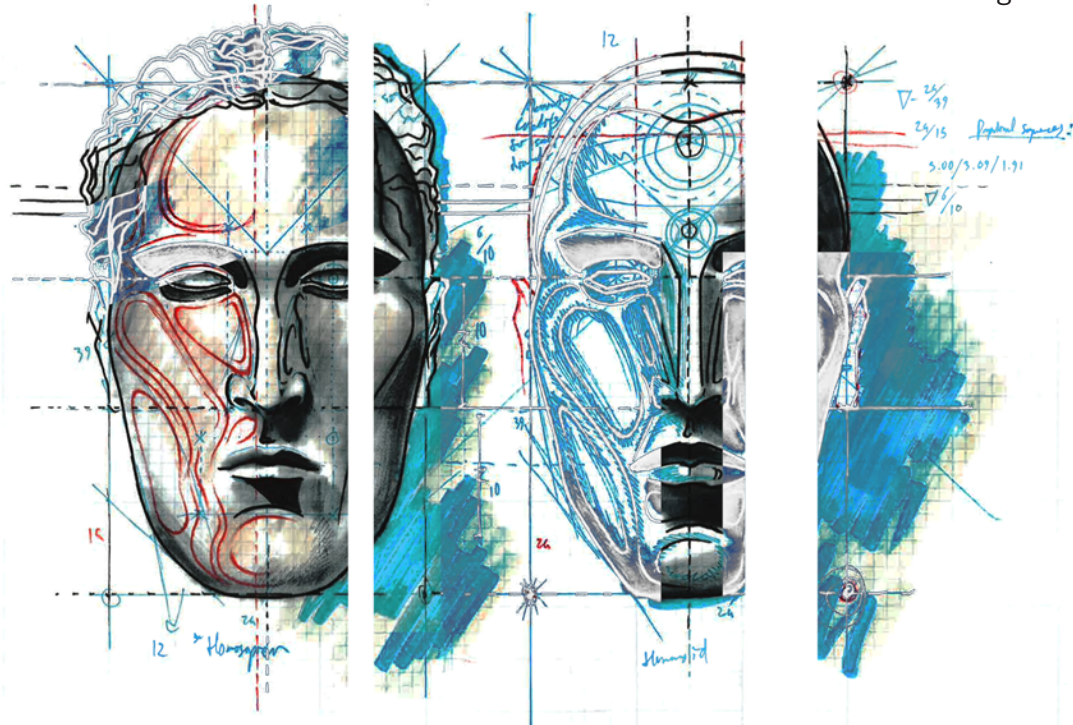
That these rearrangements have repercussions environmentally on our physical health through pollutants is evident. The fact that many of the sites of extraction are on indigenous land is a horrendous trespass, but also suggests "some kind of hope" for Palmer who notes some of the Western Shoshone and the Iroquois continue to claim parts of New York State as land that they want returned in part in order to heal it. In that, "it seems that there is a possibility for different relationships with these sites," she says.

The holistic approach to her topic weaves moments of her personal history with the history of consumer relationships with the elements and the specificities of her encounters with industrial complexes. Though the accounts of mining and chemical processes are accurate, her entry points to the subject bring the reader closer to experiencing chemistry in its more emotional connotations.

"I don't have any pretensions to imagine a massive rethinking of our relationship to materiality, although I would like to," she laughs. "But I do think that some understanding, and this is something that I'm interested in theoretically and in bringing to students in classes to try and understand it better, is that idea of continuity with material and collaboration with matter, rather than mastery or dominance over it. That shift in relations is critical."

SYNTHESIZING SENTIMENT

The Art of Artificial Intelligence



» jen mosier

Me: (pressing the iPhone home button) Who is ELIZA?

Siri: She was my first teacher!

Me: Who is ELIZA?

Siri: I learned a lot from ELIZA but she was being a big negative.

Me: Siri, who is ELIZA?

Siri: She is my good friend. She was a brilliant psychiatrist, but she's retired now.

Siri speaks respectfully. How else would she talk about her ancestors? ELIZA, an early example of natural language processing, predates Siri by 40 years. Similar to Siri, ELIZA is a chatbot program designed to emulate intelligent conversation. One main difference is ELIZA acts like a psychotherapist, answering questions with questions, while Siri is a personal assistant, more like our slave.

SAIC's first Scientist-In-Residence, David Gondek demonstrated how Siri's intelligence, like ELIZA, still has limitations, but with more sass.

Gondek: Siri, I am happy.

Siri: That makes Siri happy.

Gondek: I am not happy.

Siri: Excellent!

Siri has no empathy because as a simple rule-based system, Siri isn't programmed to understand the negotiation between "happy" and "not happy."

Gondek is a computer scientist trained in natural language processing and machine learning, a research branch of artificial intelligence (AI). He says it's a simple fix to write another algorithm to revise Siri's compassion. However, there's too much emotional content in the English language for machines to translate it into emotional intelligence. Siri can do specialized things, but handling human emotions is not one of them. "With computer learning, it's like learning another language from a completely different universe," says Gondek.

What's very simple and natural for us is very hard for a machine.

He was a leading researcher on the IBM team that developed Watson — the smart AI supercomputer that won the game show *Jeopardy!* in 2011. Now he is working with SAIC artists in his course, *Algorithms, Information, and AI*. Students are examining information retrieval, data collection, sentiment detection (using words to tell if someone is being positive, negative or neutral) and the challenges of machine translation in translating from one human language to another (i.e., Google Translate). AI is a hot topic in mainstream culture—consider the recent Spike Jonze sci-fi film *Her*. Joaquin Phoenix's character falls in love with the artificially intelligent operating system in his smart phone. The female voice, Scarlett Johansson, works like Siri, but develops more human consciousness, allowing us to wonder about the future of AI in our society.

"Very early on when computer science began, scientists focused on problems that were really hard for people to solve," says Gondek. The 1956 AI Conference at Dartmouth College was a seminal event in the history of AI research. Scientists were interested in how machines learned, used language and recognized patterns. At the time, AI also focused on the game of chess for its association with human problem-solving.

Instead of focusing on what's hard for humans, research is shifting towards improving the computer's ability to emulate what is easy for humans. "Now we talk about recognizing images of cats versus dogs and detecting sentiment, whether someone is happy or sad. The focus of algorithms has changed, which recognizes how computers work very differently with humans. What's very simple and natural for us is very hard for a machine." But do we want machines to have feelings? Do we want them to completely imitate us?

To begin examining sentiment detection in computers, Gondek's students began with a basic test for machine intelligence, similar to the original 1950s Turing Test developed by Alan Turing, who posed the question: "Can machines think?" Gondek and his students are asking their own questions. How does sentiment work in machines? If we say something positive, does it guarantee a positive response?

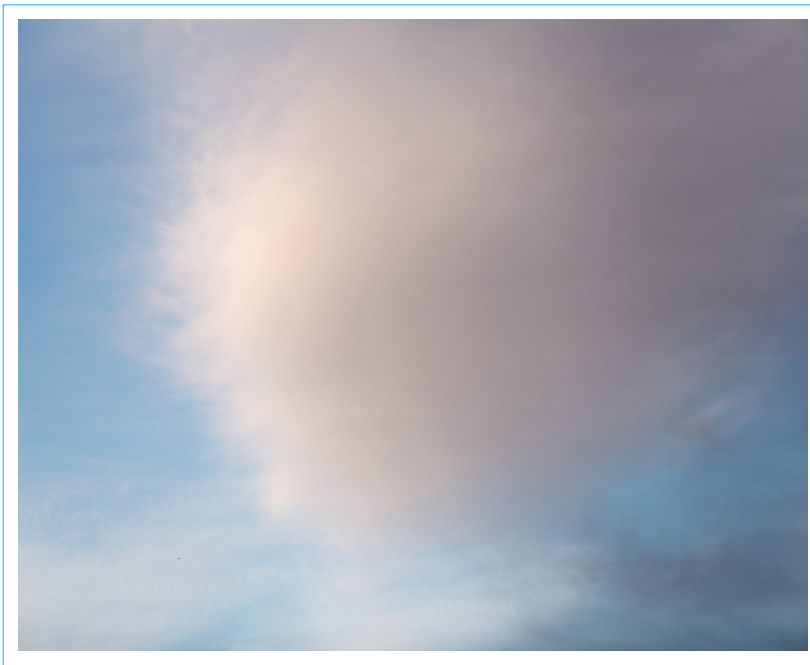
They began their experiment by looking at a photo of a crying woman. If a computer studied the image, it would recognize sadness. Its programmed algorithm equates tears with unhappiness. But there's an added curveball. The crying woman wore a bridal gown, so maybe these were tears of happiness. Without common sense, the computer can't comprehend the added contextual information, further separating humans and machines.

Understanding the primitive building blocks of AI — computational linguistics, linguistic processing and sentiment detection — gives students the freedom to use AI as a medium for their own projects. Anthony Ladson, BA senior in Visual and Critical Studies, is developing a program to translate between English and Yoda. Gill Park, BFA senior, is analyzing the sentiment of tweets based on their location in Chicago, detecting the moods of neighborhoods, positive or negative, and outputting this information as a weather map. His big question is: how can we map our happiness?

AI researchers are not trying to replicate the complete human experience. Even though we can train a computer to analyze tweets to recognize if people are saying good things or bad things (sentiment detection), computer comprehension is not equivalent to human comprehension.

Advertisers can use sentiment detection to gather proprietary information. Thankfully, advertisers cannot read our minds, but by analyzing our social media opinions on Facebook or Twitter, advertisers can find ways to better endorse a product by tugging at our heartstrings to coax us to click on an ad. Google knows what we are searching for, the same way Amazon remembers our purchases, and Facebook knows who our friends are and how to market ads at us.

"These are excellent examples of a machine learning our thought patterns. It can't immediately read our minds, but it's trying to," Gondek says, though, we shouldn't fear robots overpowering humans, because machines have no agency. What we should fear is our own trust in the computers. "As the algorithms get better, they can become good enough where you trust the output."



SECRETS — AND — TELESCOPES

Trevor Paglen's blurry vision of the USA secret state

» alyssa moxley

Dark Matter makes up around eighty percent of the universe, yet we cannot view it directly, we can only detect it through the effect that it has on objects that reflect light. Trevor Paglen employs this metaphor to reflect the way he approaches the framing of the visual aspects of the secret world of global covert operations. Paglen, who graduated from SAIC with an MFA from the Art and Technology department in 2000, returned to Chicago for the first time in early March to speak in the Rubloff Auditorium as part of the Visiting Artist Program's Distinguished Alumni Lecture series.

After SAIC, Paglen went on to a PhD in Geography at U.C.-Berkeley where he developed a thesis that later turned into an art exhibit and book published in 2009, *Blank Spots on the Map: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Hidden World*. Growing up on U.S. military bases himself in the USA and Germany perhaps influenced his particular understanding of these sequestered social realms. Focusing on secret military bases in the U.S., he developed a technique of using telescopes to photograph distant hidden sites. He frequently uses a 600mm Orion refractor telescope connected to his camera to capture images across landscapes; as the light is travelling through our atmosphere rather than the vacuum of space, several frequencies become blurred, such as in *Chemical and Biological Weapons Proving Ground* (2006) in Dugway, Utah, shot from 42 miles away. The stretched and distorted wavelengths also serve as an aesthetic reference to the confusion and interference of what he terms the "bureaucratic sublime," the infrastructures of secrecy. He likens this stretched imagery to that of Turner paintings processing the light and speed of modern travel at the turn of the 19th century.

The secret machinations of our world where more than 850,000 people have top-secret clearances is clearly a contradiction. In fact, Paglen defines secrecy not just as what you are not allowed to know, but rather "infrastructures and institutions, things like

the CIA, or the NSA, economic institutions like the so-called black budget in the United States. It also is composed of social engineering institutions, such as the security classification system, legal institutions such as the FISA court in the state secret precedent to the United States." Paglen exposes the cracks of what it is possible to observe. For example, by recognizing the differences in international regulations regarding businesses, individuals and states, he was able to pinpoint the office locations and flight operations of front companies used by the CIA. Because civilian companies need to have clearances to land at military air bases, he was able to follow the (publicly accessible, by request) aviation paper-trail and use the account of CIA abductee Khaled el-Masri to locate and photograph a secret CIA prison located just outside of Kabul, Afghanistan.

What I personally want out of art is to help us see the historical condition we are living in.

An assortment of patches that represent covert military units make up his 2007 book *I Could Tell You, but Then You Would Have to Be Destroyed by Me*. He compares the patches to the Mytraic Mysteries system of elaborate symbolic languages recognizable only to insiders. For example, a common badge with the letters NKAUWG stands for "no one kicks ass without tanker gas." One badge for a special unit nighttime surveillance unit incorporated the literal orbital path of a satellite in yellow stitch. Paglen was able to use it to track, locate and photograph the satellite. He revealed in the talk that he actually saw a recent government memo that suggested to secret operations units to longer incorporate references to real information within the badges, due to this instance. One recent patch he showed in the lecture spelled out "Don't Ask! NOYFB" (none of your fucking business).

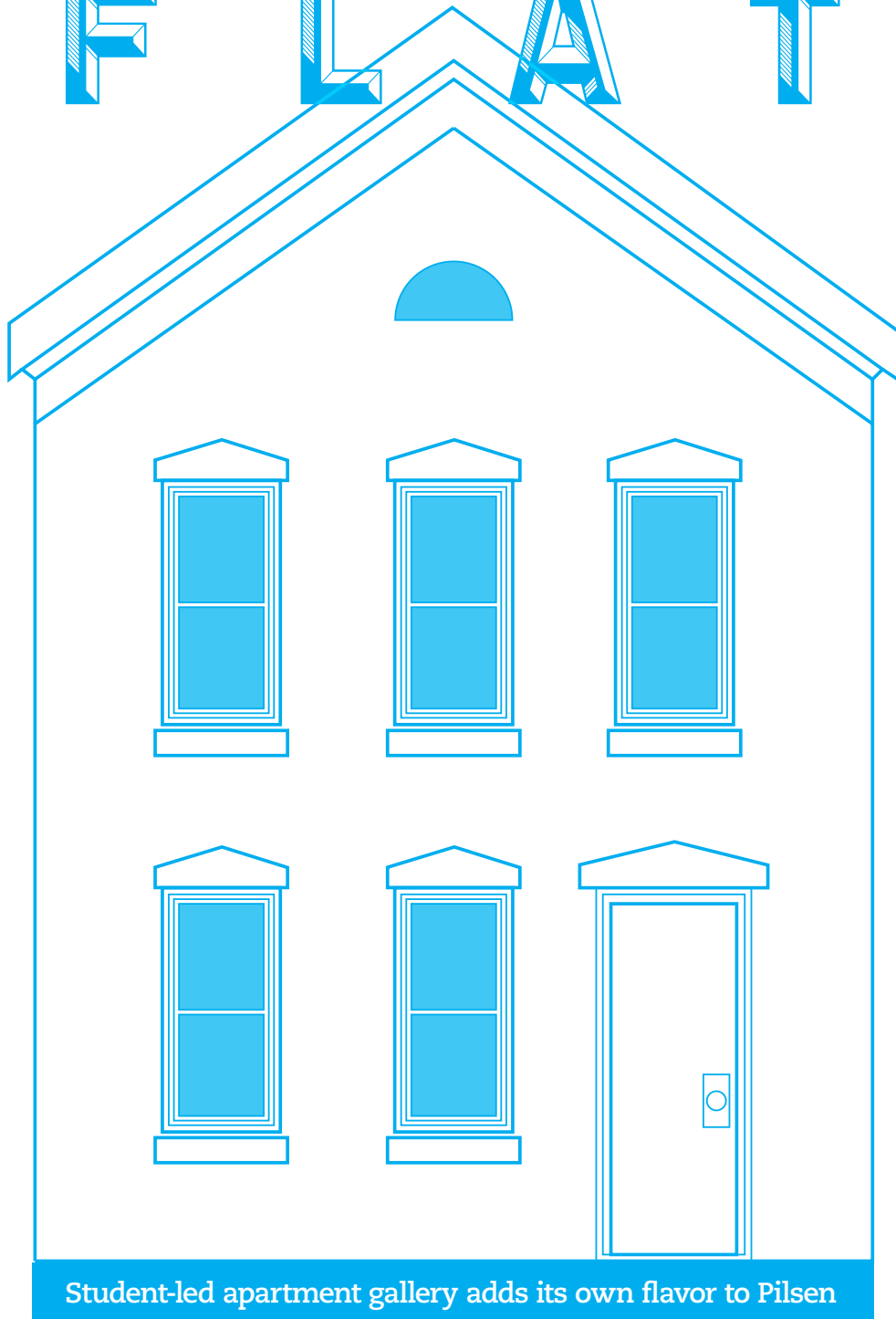
Now that there is a lot more assassination via drone — e.g., the drone wars in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia — most of the pilots that operate these missions are based in Nevada. Assassinations are controlled using satellites in orbit. The drone that was shot down in Iran in 2011 is direct evidence that the U.S. military infrastructure has moved into space. For several years Paglen has been photographing the sky within the Nevada Test and Training Range. With a similar aesthetic to Steiglitz's *Equivalents* series of dramatic clouds, Paglen's colorful sky-scapes are marked with a single fleck. The dark, not-at-first noticeable pockmark is a drone, and the clouds present in the images are often streaked with the drone's contrails.

Paglen's research into secret operations led him to photograph the secret satellites that the U.S. has placed around the world. By referencing Space-Track, an online databank of bulk data of all the satellites the military monitors and comparing that to his own empirical observations and those of amateur astronomers, he located and photographed secret satellites, such as the geostationary U.S.A. 202 satellite which sits just behind the Thorai 2, the satellite that runs most communications for the Middle East.

Last year he took his project into outer space as well. He etched a series of images into a silicon chip, placed it within a gold-plated aluminum canister that was attached to a communications satellite, the Echostar XVI, and launched into space. In a kind of echo of Carl Sagan's *Golden Record*, Paglen's *The Last Pictures* shows humanity not only at its best. The capsule is designed to last for a billion years, joining the raft of materials orbiting the earth, and serving as a sort of communication to whatever intelligence may happen upon.

"What I personally want out of art is to help us see the historical condition we are living in," he told the auditorium. The condition that Paglen reveals is fractious and paranoid, out of focus, and romantically obsessed with the symbolic.

F L A T



» alexia casanova

The lower west side is frothing with new artistic endeavours bearing the stamp of the SAIC student community. A recent addition is the student-led apartment gallery FLAT, created by SAIC graduate students Natalia de Orellana, George William Price, Olivia McManus, and Beatrice Schmider. Its opening night on February 28 was a sheer success, as the turnout exceeded the organizers' expectations. Despite — or maybe thanks to — another two openings in the area that same night, the space was filled with both SAIC and non-SAIC art enthusiasts.

The initial idea for FLAT emerged several months ago, during a visit to Pilsen's "2nd Fridays" open studio night. "It didn't appear to us as a great example of what actually happens in Pilsen and the potential of the space," explains Price. "Then we thought, what is stopping us from creating our own space? And we realized nothing was," said de Orellana and McManus. "The project also emerged from several conversations we had had about the fact that we weren't working with MFA students," explains Schmider.

FLAT's first exhibition, titled *VISUAL ENDS: The Edge of Perception*, focuses on notions of ephemerality and intangibility. It includes work from three SAIC students and a collaboration between SAIC first-year graduate student in the Arts Administration program George William Price and Viennese artist and biomedical science PhD candidate Nicole Prutsch.

First-year graduate student in the sound department Austen Brown presented *Untitled*, an installation made of minuscule glasses mounted on a flat wooden square on thin stilts. The ensemble, organized in time and space by use of a self-generating algorithm created by the artist, looks like a small pasture of strange mushrooms of varying sizes. Each "mushroom" produces a synthesized "click," a very pleasing sound that resembles two clinking shingles. The wires connecting them to the power source look like roots.

Gradually, the sound intensifies and transforms into some sort of rain. What started as an almost imperceptible sound soon becomes impossible to ignore. "I was interested in how individual points can come together and retain some sense of autonomy in different states," explains Brown. "Whether they have room to be identified singularly, or when everything becomes squeezed so tightly together that the perception of these independent systems becomes one collective mass."

After some time, the rain of pebbles is so loud that visitors are forced to turn around and satisfy the installation's desire for their full attention. By the end of the night the audience started going in and sitting with Brown's piece. "I found it fascinating that such an interaction happened," says Price. "This could have never happened in a white cube gallery."

Tobias Zehntner's piece *Skyline* isn't immediately noticeable in the space. As they sipped on their wine, several attendants would exclaim in the middle of the conversation, "Oh look, I didn't even notice that was here!" This vertical light structure, like Brown's piece, alternates between making itself almost invisible to completely unavoidable. *Skyline* is a 24-minute loop representing the way light changes throughout the day. The tube of light alternates from pastel colours to deep blues. Zehntner's other work, *Untitled (Two Bulbs)*, is a dialogue between two sources of lights, between two bulbs, placed at two opposing corners of the apartment. The piece opens up the space, gives perspective, and forces the audience to sweep the entire room back and forth with their eyes.

Before opening the space, Price, McManus, de Orellana and Schmider did some research about similar spaces. They mention *Queer Thoughts* and the *Slow Gallery* as inspirations. "Chicago has this fabulous history of DIY and apartment gallery spaces," says Price. "So we are not doing anything new, just developing and building on that legacy in order to create a platform," he adds. Initially intended for SAIC students, FLAT is hoping to



The main drive is to showcase artists in dialogue with each other rather than heavily applying a curatorial thematic onto the show.

branch out to emerging artists, as well as to other art students at UIC or Columbia.

VISUAL ENDS also incorporated a medium that most curators struggle to present in an exhibition: the written word. *This feeling will last forever* by Lauren Pirritano was printed in a limited edition and distributed to visitors at the opening. The four curators expressed their interest in experimenting with different art forms, and giving as many emerging artists as possible opportunities to take risks. "We are also thinking of developing a side publication," they told *F News* magazine. "We would like to provide a platform that extends beyond the gallery space yet remains in conversation with it."

On the opening night, SAIC graduate student George William Price presented a performance piece in collaboration with Vienna-based artist Nicole Prutsch. *Aktions Übertragung: Dust from Perinetkeller, Wien to Rubble Street, Chicago* is a transcontinental performance enabled through a live video feed projected on the apartment gallery wall.

At 8:30 p.m. George William Price steps "on stage," and the attention in the room is at its height. He stands in front of a wall where the image of what looks like an empty cave has been projected since the beginning of the night. This cave is one of the Viennese Actionist Otto Muehl's studios in Vienna. As Price steps into the

performance space, Prutsch, some 4,700 miles away, does the same, and she appears on the gallery wall. The two performers stand there, naked, facing each other, or rather, Prutsch is facing her web camera and Price is facing the wall onto which she is being projected.

A minute into the performance, the image freezes, a message appears on the wall: "There was a communication error during your chat." Someone whispers in the audience, "This was live? I thought this was a recorded video." The technological error had the benefit of revealing the live nature of the piece. Price resets the video conference, and the performance starts again to remain uninterrupted until the end.

Following their own interpretation of a score by Muehl, the two performers empty buckets of paint (red-orange for Price and deep blue for Prutsch) on their respective bodies, beginning with their front sides. They perform a set of simple movements; sticking their tongue out, opening their mouth, sitting down, standing up and facing different directions. The performers empty their second bucket on the back of their bodies. Price walks up to the wall to face Prutsch. The video feed, projected from behind Price onto the wall ends up projected onto his backside, and Prutsch's blue naked body appears on Price's orange naked body. The floor is slippery because of the paint. Price grabs his last bucket, empties it completely in a quick movement over his head, and the audience gets splashed with copious amounts of paint.

The final part of the performance involves a pile of dust, shipped from Otto Muehl's studio all the way to FLAT in Chicago. As Price slowly grabs the pile of dust to gradually pour it on his head, he is accompanied — without his knowledge — by the silent choreography of the crowd passing around napkins and tissues to blot the paint off their clothes. The video conference stays once the performance ends, projecting the explosion of blue paint from Vienna above the orange splatter covering the floor here at FLAT.

The four founders of FLAT are already thinking about the next exhibition, considering how they can keep on building from this first project and how they may attract more local, national, and international artists. According to the group, the main drive behind this new apartment gallery is to showcase "artists in dialogue with each other rather than heavily applying a curatorial thematic onto the show."

Learn more at flatspacechicago.wordpress.com or contact flatspacechicago@gmail.com

THE WORLD'S UN-FAIR

The Field Museum shows its origins, warts and all, in the 1893 World's Fair

» troy pieper

"A view offensive by today's standards." This is the take on the World Columbian Exhibition that Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History seems to have in its exhibition, *Opening the Vaults: Wonders of the 1893 World's Fair*, on view at the museum until Autumn of next year.

To promote his latest film, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, director Wes Anderson paused for a post-screening Q & A with an audience at Chicago's Music Box Theater. Though he declined *F* News magazine's invitation for an interview, Anderson later agreed to astral project to the Field Museum to join this reporter in offering thoughts on the exhibition.

Wes Anderson: Where am I?

Troy Pieper: Wes, it's okay. You're inside that natural history museum in Chicago. Remember, we thought it might be disorienting at first. Now, I can't see you, of course. We're communicating telepathically, but I'm going to record. Are you cool with that?

WA: Let's go, c'mon.

TP: Look at this: so the fair was meant to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus coming to America, and Congress "awarded" it to Chicago in 1890, because the city raised more money than New York City, St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

WA: St. Louis?

Have you seen *Meet Me In St. Louis* from the '50s or maybe the 40's? I don't really like Judy Garland, but that's just one of those films, you know?

TP: I have seen it. Those fake snowmen that won't quite break when the little sister tries to knock them down!

WA: I know!

TP: Okay, we're getting some background here. These timelines are great. I didn't realize this was the same year the worst economic crisis up to then, and Chicago still spent \$46 million on the fair, which is...\$1.2 billion in today's dollars.

WA: But it says here it turned a profit. Wait, wouldn't the anniversary of Columbus' arrival be 1890-twoooo?

TP: Oh yeah, 1492, 1892 not 3.

Passer-by: This says there were construction delays and stuff. Are you... who are you talking to.

TP: (looking around) Hmm.

WA: Are there still world's fairs? I mean, this huge six-month-long thing clearly brought everything, every technological innovation — electricity — to this one place. I guess that's what the Internet does now.

TP: Apparently Edison and Westinghouse battled for the right to electrify the fairgrounds, and Westinghouse won thanks to Nicola Tesla's safer alternating current and the pressure insurance companies were putting on the fair's organizers. Makes sense considering this was only a couple of decades after the Great Chicago Fire. Do you know about that?

WA: Yes.

I want to make a joke about Tesla the band and AC/DC.

TP: So do I. The year after the fair two different fires destroyed most of its structures. But that's not funny. "World's fairs" finally came up on my Android. They do still have them. The next one is in Milan in 2015.

WA: This is a lot of background. PBR was unveiled at the fair, I didn't know it was that old. Can we just skip to the artifacts?

TP: Sure, Wes. Do you drink PBR?

WA: We're talking about this show. It's not an interview.

TP: Respect.

WA: Wait: after the fair ended somebody thought it would be good to have somewhere to put all of the stuff from the fair, and now that's the museum we're in right now!

TP: Technically you're not here right now.

WA: Look: The Columbian Museum of Chicago. It bought everything Ward's Natural Science Establishment had, this company that supplied universities and museums with stuff to study, and they mounted one of the fair's biggest exhibits. Taxidermy, meteorites.

TP: Maybe I've seen this stuff then in the permanent collection parts. I like that the museum drew from its own collection to mount a special exhibition. Normally only art museums do that, and even they don't do it very often, I think.

Where are you?

WA: I'm looking at this walrus.

TP: Wes, what do you think of some of the language they're using on this accompanying text?

WA: "The fair was intended to be educational, but nearly everything was for sale." That's interesting.

TP: Of all the stuff the museum got after the fair (they paid Ward's \$95,000 for everything it had), this exhibit is pretty tiny. Most of it is made up of the pieces that show I think two basic themes of the fair.

Here are some fossils of the plants that were thought to form oil, and across from them is an installation about the "Magic Wonder in Fur." Look at the text accompanying these, "It's clear that the Western World was finding a balance between admiring, studying and preserving creatures."

WA: I'm not sure about a "balance," but the museum seems to be really willing to acknowledge how problematic a lot of what was on display at this fair was.

Like this photo of three white ladies looking on as some Samoans do a traditional dance, and they comment on how the ladies are snickering. The caption says, "The Fair probably didn't facilitate much understanding."

TP: And they're talking about the science of anthropology coming of age in the 1800s as a direct result of colonialism. That makes sense. People were looking for ways to understand the cultures they had been encountering.

WA: Understanding through what?

TP: And the museum is not ignoring that question: "Since the Fair, anthropologists have rejected the idea that cultures can be ranked from 'primitive' to 'advanced.'"

WA: They're saying exhibits like the one about Javanese culture were "oversimplified views," but it almost seems like the museum is overcompensating for guilt about the fact that its own origins are in this fair where people were talking basically about exploiting natural resources and stereotyping other cultures.

TP: Overcompensating?

(We leave the exhibition.)

WA: One of the last installations in there said something about objects alone not being enough to communicate the complexity of a culture and that today's anthropologists are trying instead to "co-curate collections," presumably with members of the culture that's on display.

TP: Like the exhibition right next door that you're telepathically pointing to.

WA: The work of a Native American political artist named Bunky Echo-Hawk.

TP: Bunky, that could be a character in a film about a political artist. Have you ever considered making a film like that, Wes?

WA: Exactly.

TP: The curator, Alaka Wali, is quoted, "... anthropology ... holds the potential for social change...and so does art."

WA: Did you see this painting of Yoda wearing a headdress?



The Grand Budapest Hotel Is Just Another Step in

WES ANDERSON'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

» **patrick reynolds**

With the Oscars fading quickly into distant memory, the filmgoing public is once again ready to fully invest itself in accepting and receiving 2014's most anticipated new releases. Wes Anderson's latest film, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, became the first of 2014 to satiate the collective hunger for fresh films at its release last week. For Anderson fans, the film is likely to set a high benchmark for 2014.

Hotel's several interlacing narratives take place inside its eponymous hotel amid the misadventures of its most prolific concierge, Monsieur Gustave (Ralph Fiennes). Gustave unwittingly becomes mentor to the film's protagonist, bellboy Zero (Tony Revolori, in his debut role for Anderson). The two form a kinship when Gustave is framed for the murder of one of the hotel's longtime wealthy patrons, an aging aristocrat portrayed by a heavily made-up Tilda Swinton. Together the pair must solve the murder mystery and clear Gustave's name. Set in an alternate universe to pre-war Europe, the film is interwoven with a narrative about the military of a fascist regime gradually encroaching on Zubrowka, the Grand Budapest's fictitious location.

As in past films, Anderson employs a star-studded ensemble cast whose characters simultaneously occupy spaces of satire, farce and drama. Recognizable faces include past Anderson players such as Adrien Brody, Bill Murray, Jason Schwartzmann and Willem Dafoe, and the film also includes performances from some fresh faces, including F. Murray Abraham, Mathieu Amalric, Léa Seydoux and Saoirse Ronan.

Throughout the evolution of his filmography, Anderson's art direction and casting choices have, for better or worse, come to define the public's perception of his work. A 2013 *Saturday Night Live* parody of his directorial efforts (starring recent Anderson favorite Edward Norton) aptly illustrates the various stylistic tropes view-



ers have come to expect of a new Anderson film, among them irreverent dialogue, bold fonts, wide camera lenses, myriad nostalgic tchotchkes, handwritten letters, lo-fi special effects and snap zooms.

While Anderson's easily identifiable visual tendencies make him a convenient target for criticism and caricature, his devotion to the development of his aesthetic is undeniable. His career leading up to *Hotel* has

been one of continuous refinement and experimentation; even going back as far as the visually understated *Bottle Rocket*, his sense of humor and comedic timing has remained consistent throughout his body of work. *Rushmore* is arguably Anderson's first foray into the types of visual flair that have come to define his work, and each film released subsequently has added additional layers of complexity to his now iconic visuals.

In this sense, *The Grand Budapest Hotel* is potentially Anderson's best film, insofar as it exhibits the greatest degree of control and intentionality that he has ever employed. *Grand Budapest* features a variety of lush environments, nuanced set decoration, endearing tongue-in-cheek special effects and fine-tuned deadpan camerawork. As artistic trajectories are wont to go, his past films may have served as a succession of stepping stones toward new techniques and stylistic experiments. Hotel cherry-picks the most successful techniques from his past work and blends them with a cool and confident and new precision. Anderson, in some cases, even uses entirely new narrative techniques. The film's aspect ratio, for instance, changes depending on the timeline of the plotline being presented.

This is the height of Anderson's visual mastery, but the film's one possible flaw is in its writing. Both its script and performances are tightly knit and exceptionally executed, and yet despite its occasional melancholy and drama, *Hotel* feels like just another Wes Anderson film. Viewers who enjoyed his past films are almost guaranteed to be delighted, but it lacks the dark emotional impact of *Rushmore* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Whether Anderson will ever pull his films out of the fantastical universes that cap the dramatic implications of his recent characters and storylines is unknown. But, one hopes his mastery of visual technique will provide him with the time and energy necessary to continue expanding his filmmaking lexicon toward a greater and longer lasting emotional impact.



Global Costs of Made-to-Measure Taste

» **jessica barrett sattell**

Aromas of iron, salt and plastic fill the air of Tokyo's Tsukiji Market as hundreds gather for the main event: the tuna auction. This famous site is a hybrid between the formality of a Christie's art sale and the free-for-all of an open air market. A range of bells clamor into a quivering layer of sound as auctioneers shout in guttural tones. This is a sushi battleground, where globalized tastes for fresh fish converge with the market trends that bring seafood to an ever-expanding network of cities.

In early January 2013, Japanese sushi chain Kiyomura K.K. shocked market veterans with a winning bid of nearly \$1.76 million dollars for a single 489-pound bluefin tuna, hinting that the ongoing wars for the "Porsche of the Ocean," as the fish is known in wholesaler circles, reflects a climbing worldwide demand for the archetypal sushi cut, *maguro*, the fatty flesh of the tuna belly. According to a June 2013 report from *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, the most recent study of sushi consumption in the U.S. that covered the years 2000 to 2005, shows an increase of 40%. The growing demand for sushi in markets spanning China, Russia, India, Brazil, and other locales with rapidly growing upper-middle class populations reaffirms that sushi continues to be a mark of urbanizing social capital. The world has acquired, and continues to develop, an insatiable taste for fish.

Sushi's roots are within the city. As a "fast food" of the mid-nineteenth century Edo period, catches from Tokyo Bay were freshly cut and sold raw as sashimi street snacks. The choice of coating the fish with wasabi, chefs applied a paste of the tangy root to naturally kill bacteria. The food gradually found its way to other coastal cities across Japan, solidifying it as a form of national cuisine by the Meiji era westernization. It

later spread to America and beyond with the rise of international air travel in the 1960s and, eventually, the perfection of mass cargo refrigerated air freight in the early 1970s.

Miles away from the clamoring crowds of Tsukiji, Chicago's love affair with sushi emerged, as was the case for other major American transportation hubs, from a hybrid development of the tastes of Asian business travelers searching for the cuisine and the growing

THE FORM OF SUSHI IS
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health food and alternative dining scenes of the 1970s. Especially with the rise of an urban-dwelling upper class of the late 1980s and 1990s, sushi skyrocketed into the popular imagination of chic city living, transforming a food once seen as a niche delicacy into a fetishistic status symbol. Sushi can now be found nearly anywhere in any kind of metropolis, from the skyscrapers of State Street to the strip malls of Skokie. The fluorescent all-you-can-eat buffets hocking imitation crab meat, the Walgreens \$5 dollar to-go packs, the exclusive a-la-carte *nigiri* prepared by classically-trained "artisans" and the multiplicity of the custom fusion roll all speak to the prevalence of the food as a mark of mass taste.

The form of sushi is a cut-and-paste food, an easily multipliable standard that can be adapted to locales and preconceived tastes. Bite-sized concoctions of rice, vinegar, soy sauce, wasabi and fish act as the building

blocks for endless incarnations, constructing variations of made-to-measure products. Ultimately, it has become a blank pattern of a global consumer commodity that adapts to localized whims, from the classic California Roll (now marketed across Japan as "American Sushi") to the appearances of Longhorn Sushi (a Texas treat substituting steak for fish) or the Bagel Roll (a novelty nomenclature of the "Philly Roll" cream cheese with salmon).

In *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* (2011), the dreamy urban landscape of downtown Tokyo sets the scene for sushi as a mark of class, taste, and years of refinement. Subtle, like the taste of a drop of soy sauce on raw fish flesh, the narrative meanders towards a final warning on the fragility of the seas and Master Jiro's lament that several types of fish that he once relied upon are now disappearing. Hinting at his thoughts, *Sushi: The Global Catch* (2012) takes the argument for sustainable seafood beyond the confines of Japan. It outlines the stakes of sushi's tangled networks of relationships and the consequences that begin at the wholesale floor, ending with the destruction of ocean ecosystems and a growing reliance on farmed seafood. Both films suggest that the aggregating factor for overfishing is the international market's perpetuation of cheap, mass-produced sushi that utilizes an overconsumption satiated by wasteful amounts of fish.

The move toward sourcing fish for a sustainable sushi roll is a simple concept: "to use, but not use up," in the words of Michael Sutton, President of the California Fish and Game Commission. This involves a breakdown of current consumer preferences and desires, such as an acquired taste for the fatty sweetness of *maguro*. The localizing format of the single sushi roll can build a couture dining experience without the impact of unsustainable fishing practices, a consumer-tailored cuisine that utilizes alternatives to plunging nets back into exhausted oceans.

GROSS, NATIONAL, COOL

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu and
Japan's Cultural Odor



» alexander wolff

On March 5, I watched a performer in an electric blue, Chuck E. Cheese-esque rabbit costume prance around an oversized play room. A giant fuchsia-colored monitor resembling a deformed Game Boy displayed CGI images of llamas, skulls, and candles while an expressionless girl wearing a dress made out of deconstructed stuffed animals sang off-key songs about ninjas, chewy candy, and shooting laser beams out of her eyes. I wasn't staring at my basement wall after doing peyote. I was at Chicago's House of Blues, watching J-pop phenomenon and viral video idol Kyary Pamyu Pamyu.

Affectionately known to fans as "KPP," Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is the stage name of recording artist Kiriko Takemura. Though lauded worldwide for her grotesque take on the *kawaii* (roughly translating to "cute" or "adorable") aesthetic and Harajuku fashion, her image is an innovation on a proven formula for success, just like most idols before her.

Although one of the only unique things about Kyary may be her unprecedentedly scatological and infantile aesthetic, her appeal is not about originality, talent, or passion. Her affect, shallowness, and abject cuteness are half of her commercial draw. Regardless of how much autonomy she wields in crafting herself, she is the result of a concerted attempt to construct a highly consumable product that both parodies and affirms the commodity aesthetic of "cuteness," while creating powerful social imaginaries about Japan.

Kyary's Chicago show was one stop on her second world tour (sixteen performances in eleven countries across Asia, Europe, and the U.S.) promoting her new album "Nanda Collection." Her shows are consistently sold out from Seattle to Singapore. Online, she has 1.6 million followers on Twitter, and her over-the-top YouTube music videos usually garner around ten million views, or 52 million in the case of her hit single "PonPonPon." Watching the ravenous sea of twenty-somethings, tweens in pastel-tinted Lolita outfits, seven- to eight-year-old girls with bleach blonde bob wigs (and their parents) packed into the venue brought home the fact that Kyary is arguably the now the biggest icon of J-pop and *kawaii* in the U.S.

The crowd roared as Kyary addressed the audience in Japanese and broken English, though most couldn't understand what she was saying. As she attempted to show the audience how to do "ninja moves" for her song "Nijari Bang Bang," I noticed a spindly 15-year old boy wearing wireframe glasses at the bar table next to me sitting in front of a pile of KPP merchandise. While his dad was idly checking his phone, the boy turned around and said, "We're having fun. This is fun, right?" and asked his dad to snap a picture. As the camera phone flashed and the boy flashed a peace sign while cocking his head, it hit me how strongly culturally "fragrant" Kyary's performances are. Koichi Iwabuchi argues that in the transnational consumption of cultural products,



With an unprecedentedly scatological and infantile aesthetic, Kyary's image is a lucrative commodity that creates powerful social imaginaries about Japan.

there are distinct "cultural odors" emanating from commodities that produce representations (often stereotypes) about the culture and lifestyles of the country from which they originated. Kyary sang songs about things like ninjas and *furisode* (kimonos for unmarried women) and spoke almost entirely in Japanese, which, for many, was a major part of her commercial appeal. While all culture is constructed, Kyary's image functions by selling essentialized images of zany "Japaneseness" to her audiences.

In Japan, her visage promotes travel campaigns for airlines and adorns millions of billboards for KFC, pudding, and cell phone commercials. Recently, the mayor of Shibuya officially dubbed Kyary the "Kawaii Ambassador of Harajuku" with the "duty" of spreading Harajuku culture worldwide, and she became associated with "Cool Japan," the government-run campaign that intends to capitalize on the transnational popularity of products like J-pop, anime, manga, and cute-cool characters. In the wake of journalist Douglas McGray's 2002 article "Japan's Gross National Cool" emphasizing the nation's power as cultural producer in the past decades, the Japanese government formed the million-dollar initiative that intends to stimulate Japan's GDP by creat-

ing markets for Japanese products across the globe and fostering a youth-centric familiarity and identification with Japan.

While the actual success of this program is hotly debated, the social effects of Kyary's cultural fragrance can't be overlooked. Kyary explained in an interview with Jeff Yang of *The Wall Street Journal* that she wanted to "spread the word of *kawaii* to the rest of the world" with the desire to "see it embraced by everybody." The buzzword *kawaii*, and the overwhelming "cuteness" it implies, has largely become accepted as a facet of Japan's domestic and transnational image.

As Sianne Ngai argues, "cuteness is a commodity aesthetic with close ties to the pleasures of domesticity

and easy consumption." It is in this way that it becomes "a way of aestheticizing powerlessness ... which is why cute objects — formally simple or noncomplex, and deeply associated with the infantile, the feminine, and the unthreatening — get even cuter when perceived as injured or disabled," and illustrates a "sadistic side to this tender emotion." Kyary's image seems to fully embody this "grotesque" commodity cuteness. The cover for Kyary's autobiography *Oh! My God!! Harajuku Girl* (2011) features her as both girlish and injured; she wears strawberry cake on her head and a frilly pink dress but has a bloody-looking drip of strawberry jam falling from her nose.

While Iwabuchi reductively claims that the immense profusion of Japan's cultural exports in the past few decades have become "odorless" through localizations in different contexts, Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is proof that a constructed idea of "Japaneseness," whether it be through *kawaii*-ness or Harajuku-ness, can become a crucial selling point. Her image uncritically realizes the gross, and the grotesque, commercial power of nation branding and all things cute, revealing the messy ways in which relations of capital and national identity underpin the appeal of some products.



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PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSTELLATIONS



Christopher Williams at the Art Institute of Chicago

» *vasia rigou*

Christopher Williams approaches his work from a director's perspective. To bring his vision to life, he commissions large teams of creative artists from concept to execution. Inspired by nature, industry and the products of everyday life, he researches commercial imagery and its socio-political contexts, treating his images as installations that are redeployed in site-specific ways, as objects to be consumed. The Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) hosted his first museum showing ever in 1982. In a return to the scene of his initial public recognition, Williams' work from throughout his 35-year career now spans three sets of galleries in the AIC. Photographs of corn, fruit and chocolate, a woman with shampooed hair wrapped in a towel, cars, old-school German cameras, and jellyfish sit beside photographs capturing imagery of popular culture and politics in the Cold War era and beyond.

Born in Los Angeles in 1956 and currently a professor of photography at the Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf, Williams is notoriously averse to explaining his work. However, in this first retrospective, he invites the audience to experience the full range of his artworks. In galleries wrapped in supermassive vinyl graphics of black letters on a bright, Kodak-yellow background, Williams masterfully weaves blatant simplicity with intellectual complexity by exploring themes such as colonialism and the Cold War's impact on today's society, and the Americanization of European culture. Behind shoots that feature commercial products in their glossy perfection and long, super-descriptive labels that highlight their commercial nature, such as stacks of Ritter Sport chocolate bars cleanly sliced to reveal their fillings in *Ritter Sport* ... 2008, or a bunch of fiery-red apples in *Bergische Bauernscheune* ... 2010 hides a camera strategy game — the "program."

Williams adds a level of complication to work that at first glance resembles advertising photography. He challenges the idea of the camera as we know it by

embracing the notion of "program" that Vilem Flusser first introduced in his 1983 book, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. "A camera is programmed to produce photographs — no matter the aspirations of its operator, he or she can only use it to produce what it is programmed to do," argues Flusser, who later writes, "Photography is programmed by the photographic industry; the photographic industry is programmed by 'the industrial complex,' which is programmed by capitalism, et cetera." The focus in Williams' work shifts between these levels of programming. The camera has the power to either

Williams adds a level of complication to work that at first glance resembles advertising photography.

construct an ideal of beauty, glorifying its total syncretism and unstoppable polytheism, as Umberto Eco puts it in the *History of Beauty*, which considers Williams in depth. Or in the case of Williams' *Mustafa Kinte* ... 2008, the camera becomes a weapon. Kinte is an African man wearing the same type of Van Laack German-manufactured shirt in which artist Marcel Broodthaers posed for the company's advertisement in *Der Spiegel* in 1971. Kinte, holding a camera, is smiling. It is another one of Williams' mysteries, loaded with a deep political backstory, whether Kinte is posing ironically or smiling for a bright future of post-colonial independence and political liberation. Appearing "as an alter ego of a Conceptual Art fashion plate," as Williams states, Kinte would have absolutely no reason to play dress up with the enemy and playfully smile at a camera that treats him as a marginalized subject recruited to the European version of the American Dream. Again, with Williams, there is no one right answer — viewers have to come up with many of their own.

Arranging his photographs in circular pattern groupings like constellations, the artist manages to disrupt any attempt to interpret the work along thematic

lines. As soon as the viewer begins to think about the connections between certain images — those of sliced cameras for instance — a photograph that is completely disconnected intrudes to interrupt one's chain of thought. "Bring an open mind and open senses," said exhibition curator Matthew Witkovsky, who alerted viewers to think about the space of the museum in its entirety, with attention to details such as how other viewers move along the walls. He suggests, "Question everything. Question what you're told. Question yourself." By providing the necessary distance, Williams not only allows his work to occupy the space but also allows his audience to think, grow and interact with his ideas by critically considering the difference among photographic strategies.

The Production Line of Happiness features Williams' major projects from the 1980s to the early 1990s and photographs from his subsequent magnum series *For Example: Die Welt ist schön* (*The world is beautiful*), 1993–2001 and *For Example: Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* (*Eighteen lessons on industrial society*) 2003–present. For the title of this exhibition, the artist used a line from a documentary by French director Jean-Luc Godard, in which an amateur filmmaker compares his daily job as a factory worker with his hobby of editing films of the Swiss countryside as "the production line of happiness." Attention to the slightest detail, reading between the lines and interpretation of the hidden meaning are implicit throughout Williams' work, leaving the audience in a state of an extraordinary but very perplexed awakening and challenging the ways in which we consume photography.

Christopher Williams' exhibition *The Production Line of Happiness* is co-organised by The Art Institute of Chicago, running Jan 25th-May 18th 2014 and at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Aug 2nd-Nov 2nd 2014.



THE RHETORICAL RUN

Discourse as a spectator sport

» **maggie carrigan**

Since arriving at SAIC, I've become aware of "discourse" as a very corporeal entity that I seem to haphazardly bump into every day, like that stranger that you just happen to see daily on the train, at Target or in the gym but never say "hello" to. Sometimes I even feel as if I get smooshed up against discourse in the elevator and then things just get awkward. Let's call it Discourse with a capital "D"; I think it warrants the denotation of a proper noun if I'm going to imbue it with a sense of physical volume.

In seeking to understand the known stranger of Discourse, it helps to familiarize oneself with its Latin root, *discursus*, which means "to run back and forth." This makes much sense, for just as it is difficult to shoot a moving target, so too is it to pin down a word that has rapid motion at the heart of its meaning. How, then, does one engage with Discourse when it's always on the move? You just have to start running with it.

Just a few short weeks ago in late February, there was a Discourse track meet that went by the name of the College Art Association Annual Conference (CAA). If ever the act of running to and fro could be epitomized by something other than a person physically running to and fro, I believe that CAA did it. There was such a flurry of activity that it was hard not to start moving faster. The sheer number of people, breadth of ideas and volume of talking at any given event was enough to leave you as breathless as if you actually had gone for an uphill jog.

I attended a session entitled "The Present Prospects of Social Art History," in which SAIC's own Margaret MacNamidhe, professor of art history, presented her recent paper on Picasso's *Boy Leading a Horse*. Four other art historians presented along with her; I'd like to say I was familiar with the others' scholarship, but of course I was lucky to have just heard the names of one or two of them. This was simply because I haven't been running this Discourse race for long, which brings me to my first point: Discourse is a marathon ran individually but completed collectively. As a graduate student in art history, I'm fresh off the starting block and possibly running too eagerly. I'm probably going to cramp up and vomit off to the side at some point while more seasoned runners breeze on by. But training with veteran marathoners is the surest way to improve and find one's own stride, which is why I'm in graduate school in the first place.

The more seasoned racers are, of course, those who have been working in the field longer and have ample practice under their belts. But sometimes even practice can't make perfect. UCLA professor Hector Reyes presented a fascinating study of the historical trajectory of medieval funerary effigies and their relation to David's *Death of Marat*. However, that's about as much as I can tell you — he read at such warp speed that I'm happy I gleaned that much from his presentation. As the first up to the podium, was it anxiety that made him speak so quickly? Or the bullish idea that he shouldn't have to cut any research from his conference paper in order to fit it into the predetermined 15-minute time limit? Regardless of the cause, Reyes hurried presentation makes clear my second point: when it comes to Discourse, even experienced runners have off races.

The following presenter, Elizabeth Mansfield of the National Humanities Center, ran a great race. She offered a historiography of Social Art history that was spot on, explaining that it has had three distinct

How does one engage with Discourse when it's always on the move? You just have to start running with it.

phases: positivist, critical and existential. The positivist model was prevalent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was tied into imperialistic modes of identification. The critical phase arose with Marx and featured a relocation of identity to class/gender/race, etc. As of the mid-twentieth century, Mansfield suggested that we had entered an existential phase of Social Art history, which focuses on where the social intersects with individual consciousness.

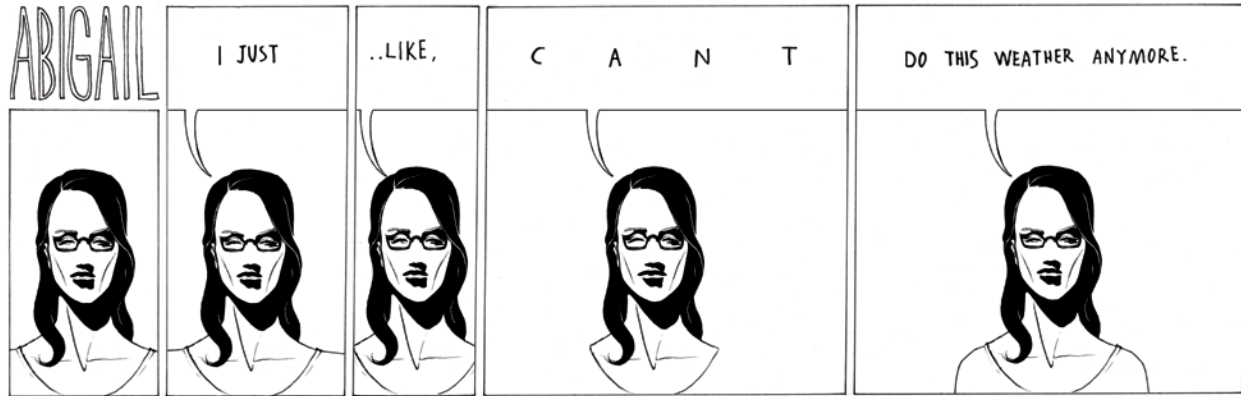
While I'm sure many may agree or disagree with Mansfield's classification system to varying degrees, I do believe that she did something great in Discourse — she conveyed her thoughts in a succinct and relatable manner. In fact, all subsequent presenters in the session linked their work back to at least one of her "phases." MacNamidhe very aptly identified her argument that Picasso's depiction of a boy's rein-less guiding of a steed in *Boy Leading a Horse* was a phenomenological study of gesture, and thus a manifestation of existential Social Art history. Alan Wallach of the College William and Mary (and undoubtedly the Bruce Jenner of this particular race), was happy to announce himself as a stalwart member of the critical phase.

Of course, this brings me to my third point: Discourse is as much of a relay as it is a marathon. Whatever our level of experience as racers, it's necessary to keep the baton moving if any of us want to reach the finish line. With her easily definable phraseology, reductive as it may be in some ways, Mansfield offered a baton that MacNamidhe and Wallach had the wherewithal to run with both meaningfully and gracefully.

The final presentation of the session on the importance of form in social art history was given by Joshua Shannon of the University of Maryland. While his argument that Social Art historians should not shun formal analysis was provocative, his behavior was more so. Shannon unabashedly enjoyed his breakfast sandwich through the first two presentations, regardless of the chewiness of the bagel or the timbre of the crumpling paper wrapping. He also declined to present his paper at the podium as his forerunners did, and instead remained seated to make it more "conversational," according to him. I can't say that Shannon's presentation wasn't engaging, although I'd wager he thinks he's a little more radical than he truly is. I simply found him a bit bizarre.

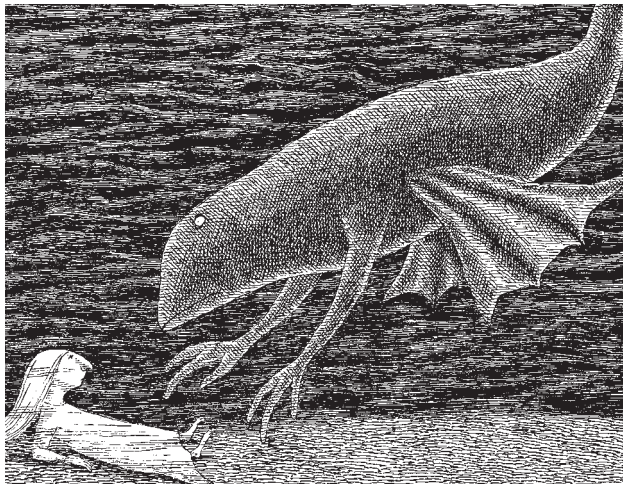
Which brings me to my fourth and final point about Discourse: sometimes you just have to run your own race.

» berke yazicioglu



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» eric garcia

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