fnewsmagazine

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

arts, culture, and politics

STRANGER STREAMING

SKINTONE DEAF

[ILLEGIBLE] APPROVED

YOU CHOOSE YOUR PATH. WE'LL HELP YOU FIND IT.

CAPX

Your true north for jobs and internships, programs and events, career advisors, and more

A ProfPrac 3900 course where your classroom and internship intersect

Direction, insight, and advice from creative and industry professionals

Partner with a career advisor to explore your creative future

Access on-campus employment listings

CAPX

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

fnewsmagazine

F Newsmagazine is a journal of arts, culture, and politics edited and designed by students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The print edition is published eight times a year and the web edition is published year-round.

VISIT FNEWSMAGAZINE.COM FOR MORE

All-Day Breakfast
Engagement Editor Brian Fabry Dorsam
Webmaster Daniel Brookman

Fries All Over The Goddamn Carpet
Ad Manager Ana Maria Gonzalez Sierra
Design Advisor Michael Miner
Editorial Advisor Paul Elitzik
Managing Editor Sophie Lucido Johnson

Is 20 Chicken Nuggets Too Many?
Art Director Sevy Perez
Assistant Art Director Zach Cooper
Cartoonist Sacha Lusk
Comics Editor Amber Huff
Staff Designers Zach Cooper, Yen-Kai Huang, Amber Huff, Priyoshi Kapur, Alex Kostiw, Sevy Perez
Staff Photographer Steven Ford
Comics Contributors Rosie Accola, Ryan Blocker, Nicole Del Rio, Amber Huff

Two All-Beef Patties, Special Sauce, Lettuce, Cheese, Pickles, Onions on a Sesame-Seed Bun
Arts Editor Irena Frumkin
Associate Editor Mary Fons
Contributing News Editor Samuel Schwindt
Entertainment Editor Rosie Accola
News Editor J. Howard Rosier
Staff Writers Jose Nateras, Natasha Mijares, Ally Pockrass
Article Contributors Steven Ford, Alex Kostiw, Annie Leue, William Callery Wiebe

LETTER FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR AND ART DIRECTOR

Sophie Johnson and Sevy Perez

It's a new school year, and a fresh start for F Newsmagazine. We hope you enjoyed your summer — we certainly did! We ate donuts, we watched "Stranger Things," and we saw a ton of live lit. It wasn't all fun and games, either: We discussed racism in the theater world, talked to #BlackLivesMatter activists, and wagged a finger at the national media. All that and more awaits you in this issue.

What? You're wondering why we weren't joining the rest of the world and watching the Olympics? Because this is art school and art school students don't do sports. If we did, though, here are some events we'd be into:

Gender Neutral Volleysport
The concept of volleyball is inherently anti-feminist, since it involves the violent action of striking, the politicization of the body, and its connection to the Military Industrial Complex. All physical movements here are entirely consensual, so a player may decide not to move at all if he/she/they wish(es).

Post-Post-Ball
Whereas Post-Ball is concerned primarily with the sincerity of Ball, Post-Post-Ball is most readily marked by temporal oscillation between what is Ball and how is Ball. Each meta-match is divided spherically into five semi-quarters; the winner is determined by Ball frequency vibrations.

Performative Robbery
In this triathlon, athletes will first buttchug a whole thing of Miller Light before power-urinating just goddamn wherever. Winners will be determined by the believability of their lies; losers will pay a fine of $11,000.

ON THE COVER

"The Sun Speaker," Amber Huff, Alex Kostiw, Sevy Perez

Summer is sacred. Summer is the time to take some risks, to do a whirlwind art-camp romance thing, to gather around a crackly bonfire and give your cool new friends stick-and-poke tattoos. Because this time is a special time. There's no other time like it. Sure, maybe you'll regret it later. Maybe you and Paul weren't truly meant for each other after all (despite his proclamations otherwise). Or maybe you just shouldn't have said, "Fuck sunscreen!" that day you ran out of sunscreen. But that was still a good day. If experience is just the name we give to our mistakes, then let this summer live forever.

CONTENTS

NOTE SAIC lost a bright member of its community on August 16 when BFA student Lisa Kuivinen was killed by a truck while riding their bicycle. As SAIC President Elissa Tenney said in an email to the student body, this is a deeply tragic loss. We are working on an extensive memorial article, which will be published online.

illustration by Yen-Kai Huang

The Changing of the Guard

A talk with incoming SAIC President Elissa Tenny and Provost Craig Barton

Sophie Lucido Johnson

School of the Art Institute (SAIC) President Elissa Tenny has some advice for incoming SAIC Provost Craig Barton: "Ride the L. A lot." Tenny, who acted as SAIC's provost for the past six years, said that being a part of the Art Institute of Chicago means making it your business to really get to know Chicago. SAIC has programmatic initiatives all over the city, and Tenny — who moved here after serving as the dean and provost at Bennington College in Vermont — recommends getting to know the school's urban community. "My favorite train lines are the green and the pink. They go through a lot of different neighborhoods," she said.

Barton would do well to heed Tenny's advice: She's had an epically successful tenure at SAIC so far. Tenny, who has served as provost since 2010, was selected in April of 2015 to take over the school's presidency — she's the school's first female in that role.

Tenny is taking over for Dr. Walter Massey, who served as president for six years. He took up the job in 2010 on an interim basis intended to last one year. The Board of Trustees requested Massey extend his contract.

"In terms of the transition to the presidency, we're lucky that we had an entire year to prepare for it," Tenny said.

Massey became chancellor of the school on July 1, 2016 — a job which will allow him to "focus on major fundraising initiatives and other outreach efforts on behalf of the school," according to a press release.

To fill Tenny's provost-sized shoes, SAIC brought Barton aboard after a thorough selection process. His appointment was officially announced last April.

If you're wondering what it is a provost does, exactly, you're not alone. Tenny laughed and said that was a big question six years ago, when the provost position was resurrected at SAIC. The school had run for 20 years without one.

"The provost is the keeper of the academic vision," Tenny said. Pragmatically, that means bringing together disparate groups within the school — academics, student affairs, admissions, facilities, etc. "When I came, conversations among people were not as coherent. I think that now we are all moving more in the same direction."

Tenny's advice to Barton didn't end with the L. She also recommended that he exhaustively get to know faculty, students, and staff. "One of the things I have done every year is visit classes. That's been enormously helpful in helping me understand the teaching and learning environments here," she said.

Barton has a background in architecture, and he recently left a job directing the design school at Arizona State University to come to SAIC. As a connector, Barton is well-posed to pick up where Tenny left off. He's proud of his work in architecture and design, but he's most excited about working with a diverse group of artists across all disciplines.

"As artists, we speak different dialects in the same language. They are distinct. What makes us unique are our differences, because in fact, collaborations are built on strong differences," Barton said.

In terms of working collaboratively, Barton has an impressive resume. Before getting into academia (he was on the faculty at the University of Virginia for more that 20 years), he worked on architectural projects that aimed to assist African American communities in preserving cultural histories.

> ***"As artists, we speak different dialects in the same language. What makes us unique are our differences, because collaborations are built on strong differences."***

"It's interesting; as an architect, I've worked on lots of big projects with big budgets and fancy materials, which is kind of fun. But these were the ones that I'm really proud of," Barton said, referring to community-based projects in places like Selma, Alabama, and Scrabble, Virginia.

Barton and Tenny are both committed to making the school more accessible to low-income and minority students. Tenny mentioned initiatives like Beautiful/Work, which aims to support SAIC's faculty while providing scholarships for incoming students.

Barton added that providing widespread opportunity is one of the main goals of higher education in general. "The game is to make sure that as many people as want to get a college education have an opportunity to do so. We are going to work hard through our fundraising campaigns to make sure students who want to come here can do so," he said.

Tenny said SAIC wants to help high school students in underserved communities gain access to the preparation necessary for attending an art school. "For many of them, they are the first in their families to go to college," she said. There's a personal tinge beneath that sentiment: Tenny is herself a first-generation college graduate.

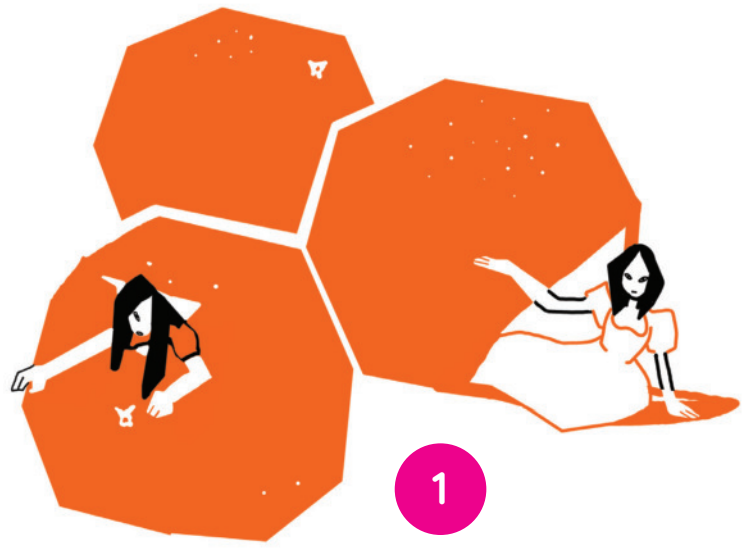
"Recently, someone asked me why I wanted to be a college president," Tenny said. "I decided, you know, I don't necessarily want to be a college president; I want to be the president of SAIC. This is a wonderful, creative, fantastic institution, so to become president of this institution is a bit of a dream come true."

photography courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Fresh-Squeezed at Flaxman

Each month, our library offers a themed list of new materials

Flaxman Staff



1 THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES

A bummed-out prince, a cranky witch, and a love curse. Funny, if slapstick is your thing. Think "Once Upon a Mattress," but classy.

FUN FACT The opera premiered at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago on December 30, 1921.

Dir. Laurent Pelly. Prod. Hans Petri. Opus Arte, 2006. Music Online: Opera in Video. Web. 2 hours 25 mins.

2 ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK: SEASON THREE

Power struggles and parental problems at Litchfield women's prison — the newest stories from the hit series "Orange is the New Black." A must-see if you binge-watched "Weeds."

FUN FACT The actress who plays Yoga Jones was the voice of Patty Mayonnaise on "Doug."

Kohan, Jenji, Andrew McCarthy, Stephen Falk, Jim D. Gray, Neri K. Tannenbaum, Tara Herrmann, Taylor Schilling, Michael J. Harney, Kate Mulgrew, Danielle Brooks, and Uzo Aduba, 2016.

3 APERTURE MAGAZINE: VISION & JUSTICE #223

Interested in Barack Obama's speech on race in Philadelphia from 2008 (when he was still a senator)? Then check this special issue, guest edited by the author and art historian Sarah Lewis. It addresses photography as it applies to the African American experience. Inspired by Frederick Douglass' speech "Picture and Progress," the publishers say this issue is "a call to consider the transformative power of pictures in affecting change in the United States."

FUN FACT Aperture Magazine was edited by Minor White, until his death in 1976.

New York, NY. Famighetti, Michael, and Sarah Lewis, eds., Aperture Foundation Inc., 2016. Print.

4 FAIRY TALE REVIEW: THE OCHRE ISSUE

If you need a break from reality, check out these stories and tales that all have some relationship to the color ochre (burnt orange).

FUN FACT Here's the ochre color code: Hex triplet #CC7722, RGB (204, 119, 34), CMYK (0, 42, 83, 20)

Tuscaloosa, AL : Kate Bernheimer. 2016. Print.

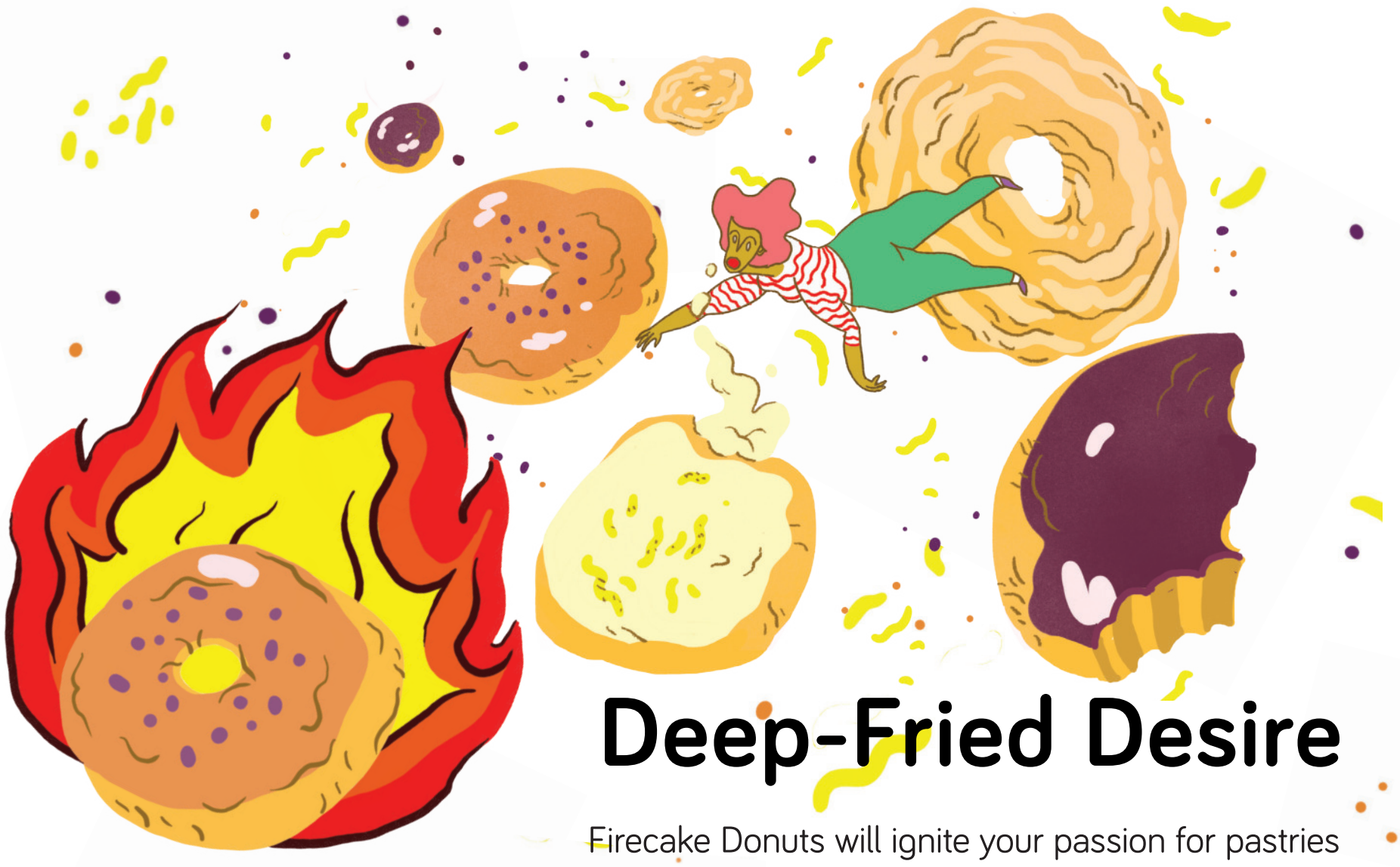
5 SPLENDID RIVER: A TEXT AND DRAWING BOOK

Published on the occasion of the exhibition held at the Secession in Vienna from July 2 to August 30, 2015. This book shows where the worlds of of text, photo, sketch, and typography meet.

FUN FACT This book is part of SAIC's Visiting Artist Lectures. Meet the artist Thursday, September 1 at 6 p.m. in the Rubloff Building.

Cao, Fei. Vienna: Secession, 2015. Print.

illustration by Amber Huff



Deep-Fried Desire

Firecake Donuts will ignite your passion for pastries

I was legally declared dead for 30 seconds upon seeing their donut ice cream sandwich which is exactly what you think it is.

***Annie Leue** is a first-year MFA student in Visual Communication Design. You can find her listening to "Africa" by Toto on repeat anywhere at any time.*

Annie Leue

Eh, donuts. I could talk about donuts for days; weeks, even. No other food, aside from Ice Cream (capitalized for importance) and maybe noodles, is available in as wide a variety of colors, flavors, and sexiness. On second thought, donuts actually operate at one constant level of sexiness at all times and that is 100 percent, full-steam sex.

A testament to their allure, I rarely think about or eat anything else. According to my doctor, this is "definitely [fine] for my health" and I will "definitely [not] die as a result of my [superb] eating habits."* (*Edited for assumed typos.) Joke's on him though, because what I lack in any semblance of self control I make up for in voluptuous hips and frequent bouts of temporary joy. (Read: blood sugar spikes.)

Because I'm a dreamer and a doer, I recently decided to take a trip to Firecakes Donuts at 68 W. Hubbard Street in River North. If you're familiar with it on Instagram, which is where I was introduced, then I extend a sincere RIP to you and whomever you've tagged in its pictures because I'm sure you've died on multiple occasions. I was legally declared dead for 30 seconds upon seeing their donut ice cream sandwich which is exactly what you think it is. Its pictures are worth a thousand words, all of which are "fuck." But like pretty much everything else in the world ever, the pictures are nowhere near as good as the real thing.

My mother, the patient desert Sphynx that she is, agreed to join me on my adventure to the River North location. We were only in town for the weekend so I could attend a new grad student event at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), so time was of the essence. But I was ready. I had a pocketful of sunshine (my debit card) and a stomach full of desirous rumblings for sweet carbs. I was prepared to buy an entire dozen — one donut each for myself and my mom — and ten for the friends back in Buffalo who took my promise to return home with Chicago donuts with a generous handful of salt.

The location itself is small, only fitting about three people comfortably, or six people very uncomfortably as was the case the day I went. There is no seating and no bathroom, despite what I blindly promised my full-bladdered mom on the way there. But the staff was friendly and we were immediately overwhelmed by smells and options the minute we walked in.

"Hi! Could I have a dozen donuts?"

"We only sell them individually, and the prices range from [definitely still worth it] to about [the price of a gallon of gas in 2012]."

"Ok, eight it is!"

Eight donuts brought me to just over $22, so they are a bit on the pricey side. We packed the box with two old-fashioned buttermilk, two lemon-filled, two peanut butter cup, and two chocolate iced donuts. The filled donuts are somewhat small (three bites and back to your boring life), but they are so worth it. We decided to keep the lemon ones for ourselves and ate them about 30 seconds after stepping foot out the door. The lemon curd inside was perfectly sweet with just a touch of tartness, and the surrounding donut was as light and fluffy as any proper filled donut should be. It was the most spectacular minute of my entire week.

On our journey back to our Airbnb, it invariably began to rain because what else is the weather going to do when I'm carrying a thin cardboard box filled with the most precious discs known to man? Don't worry, the donuts survived the trek. I had to taste-test a few of them to make sure, but they did, indeed, make it. The old fashioned buttermilk donuts were determined to be both safe from the rain and also insanely delicious and worthy of many more trips through the rain (or snow or plague of locusts or what have you).

Later in the evening, some of the other survivors started to get a little stale (determined through another taste test), so we decided it would be best to put a few more out of their misery (may they rest in pieces). Long story short, I made it back to Buffalo with two of the original eight donuts, and my friends loved them and I didn't tell them there were more at one point because that would be cruel and donuts are meant to inspire happiness.

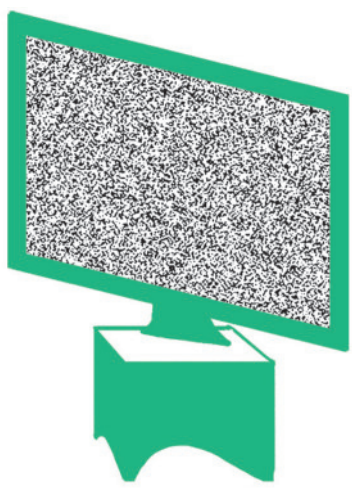
The Final Verdict

Price: As far as donuts go, they're about $$ out of $$$ arbitrary dollar signs.
Location: Perfect if you live in River North, imperfect if you live anywhere else, they should have locations everywhere, why don't donut places deliver?
Quality: Yes.
Taste: Very yes. Like what I imagine Seal's voice would taste like.
Worth it? Most definitely. You work hard, you deserve to treat yourself every once in awhile. And these are definitely a treat.

illustration by Alex Kostiw and Yen-Kai Huang

Reality Bites

Six reality television shows we wish were real



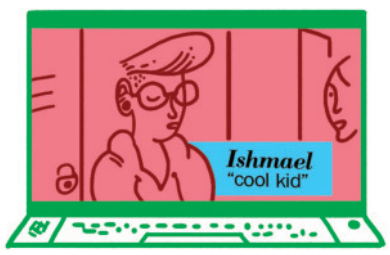
Alex Kostiw

Reality TV is a genre that has come into its own in my lifetime. While I am not usually a fan of televised voluntary misery, I have watched my fair share of it, especially during the long period of unemployment I faced after college and when spending quality time with family. Runways, bakeries, mansions, very big stages — I can see (for the most part — I mean, bakeries?) the escapist appeal. In spite of the plethora of shows available, however, there are still quite a few gaps to fill. Here are six pitches I wish someone would take to a network. The money would roll right in.

"Virtual Reality Reality: Apocalypse"

The future always seems to be near. In "Virtual Reality Reality," it finally arrives. The show follows a group of random people dropped into a post-apocalyptic world via immersive VR gameplay. There, they fight for their lives for four straight weeks, eating, sleeping, running, screaming, and so on, with VR headsets in a carefully controlled environment.

To simulate the desperation of living in such a world, surviving players receive monetary awards based on their stats, and real electric shocks when they are injured. Food, sleep, and other supplies are only for those who find them in the game. And, because this is a reality TV show, not a *virtual* reality TV show, viewers only watch the players in the real world. No VR scenes, at all.



"Extreme: Teenagers"

Teenagers are extremely people. In them, personality and emotions are tremendous, not yet disparaged by time. Starring a changing cast of suburban high school students who are by turns sarcastic, adoring, awkward, privileged, and mistaken, "Extreme: Teenagers" has all the ingredients of a documentary-style hit. The characters will even brand themselves — after all, there is little a teenager loves more than a label.

I imagine "Extreme: White Collar" (like "The Office" and "Parks and Recreation," only *real*), "Extreme: Home Composters" (an untapped, but dogmatic, demographic), and "Extreme: Publishers" (who wouldn't want to watch a show about the employees of a perpetually dying industry?) will be follow-up successes.

"All for One: All for Love"

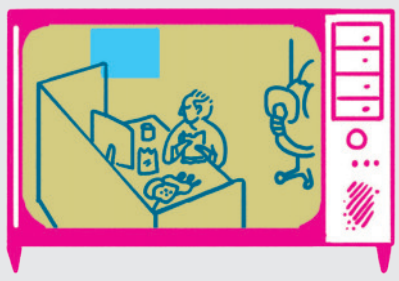
"All for One" combines the fundamental search for love with the hilarity of hoaxes and hidden cameras. Each season opens with a person who is decent and looks okay, but is unloved. This contestant believes the show will introduce them to potential mates. What they actually get is a barrage of hired actors, paid to flirt and to woo. Unbeknownst to the actors, however, they were selected for their potential compatibility with the contestant.

At what point will pretending become real? Will anyone find love? Will Sting, Bryan Adams, or Rod Stewart agree to guest spots? These burning questions are just waiting to be answered on "All for One."

"Tea Time"

My favorite reality television is British. Something about the accents lends sophistication to shows about antiques and houses. "Tea Time" is a close look at the drama of afternoon tea. Taking place in a quaint country village, the show captures residents' untoward — at times, even unseemly — opinions of Mrs. Cooper's finger sandwiches, Mr. Thatcher's visits to the widow Greener, and Ms. Porter's flirtation with the vicar.

Inevitably, "Tea Time" will need an American-friendly version — a hole that "Cheesecake Factory Hour" is ready-made to fill.



"Lunch at the Desk"

For all the perils of fishing, the beliefs that one can dance, and the poignant revelations that people in America have talent, nothing will quite stun or move viewers like "Lunch at the Desk." Three amateur contestants are paired with three friendless individuals who eat lunch by themselves at their desk at work, every day. After in-depth consultations, contestants must drastically improve the individuals' lonesome meals.

Expert judges choose who moves on to the next round. The show culminates in the greatest challenge yet: Each finalist must improve the lunchtimes of an entire office of pitiful at-the-desk eaters.

"Metalife"

No repertoire of reality TV show pitches would be complete without one that features kind-of celebrities. In "Metalife," the cameras are turned as the show exposes normal people doing everyday things, while a panel of reality television icons judge their every move.

A third of the way into each episode, the judges reveal to these normals that they've been watching all along and point out everything they've been doing wrong. For the rest of the episode, the judges step in at crucial life moments to offer their advice. No arena is safe — from the workplace, to the funeral, to the bedroom.

Alex Kostiw *needed her bio to fit on this one line.*

illustration by Alex Kostiw

Too Quiet on the Southern Front

National media failed to adequately report protests in Baton Rouge

Sophie Lucido Johnson

On July 11, I woke up to a barrage of texts and emails from friends and family in Louisiana with variations on the same message: I'm OK, but it's worse here than we ever imagined.

Normally when I wake up at 3:30 in the morning I eat some tortilla chips and go back to sleep, but this time I felt uneasy. I opened Facebook and started to scroll down my news feed. My friends are a mix of art school students, cat-lovers, and activist-types in New Orleans. At 3:30 a.m., the art students and cat people were all asleep; the activists dominated 100 percent of my digital space.

Dozens of my friends had just traveled to Baton Rouge to protest the fatal police shooting of Alton Sterling — a 37-year-old black man — that took place July 5. Coverage of Sterling's death was immediately eclipsed in the media by the news the next day of an African American man killing five police officers and injuring nine more in Dallas. The national discussion shifted. Suddenly, the media was declaring that the country was in the midst of a "civil war."

My friends in New Orleans mourned the violence all around, both physically and digitally. They solemnly, peacefully filled the streets around Lee Circle — a traffic circle encasing an enormous monument to Confederate General Robert E. Lee, which activists successfully demanded be destroyed earlier this year. I know all about the vigil because they tweeted it and Instagrammed it and posted the pictures to their Facebook walls. My friends commented that the vigil had been a beautiful testament and a powerful public space.

But that wasn't how things looked in Baton Rouge. My feed at 3:30 communicated a world of terror. One of my friends posted a live video, which showed a thick mass of police in riot gear marching toward peaceful protestors and looking a lot like an army marching toward field combat.

Other friends circulated that video — it looped on my wall repeatedly all morning.

Max Geller, a friend and vocal political activist, posted a live feed of the streets of Baton Rouge after the chaos had started. He kept it going until he was arrested for standing on someone's private property. (After the police ordered protesters to get out of the streets, they moved onto the sidewalks; as the sidewalks overflowed, a local woman gave them permission to stand in her yard, where they were arrested.) Another friend, Bob Weisz, posted a picture of Geller being arrested to his Instagram. One cop holds him down while another smashes a gloved hand over Geller's face.

And remember, while this photo became very relevant to our friends last night, it's *been* relevant to almost every black and brown person alive in America, for their whole lives. That's exactly what our friends were speaking out against. The pain you feel seeing this photo is a fraction of the pain felt by black and brown families across the nation for decades, for centuries.

It was difficult — as it is always difficult — to see people being brutalized by police officers. But I have to admit it was even harder to read the first-person accounts of my own friends, and to watch footage of their experiences. I couldn't go back to sleep. I donated $150 to the Baton Rouge Bail Fund and waited.

I was waiting to read the official reports in the national news. I was waiting for the world to see what I had watched on my Facebook newsfeed.

This continued failure to accurately report what is happening will become increasingly dangerous in a country that is becoming increasingly divided.

But the report I was looking for never came. What came instead was an article titled "Dozens Arrested at Baton Rouge Protest, Police Say Protesters Threw Concrete."

I watched a lot of videos of the police interactions with protesters. There were plenty of accounts available online from people who were there. Of the hundreds of people filming everything they could with their personal phones, not a single one caught footage of anyone throwing anything at a policeman.

While the article quotes police officers (one says, "The bottom line was this group was certainly not about a peaceful protest"), it doesn't quote anyone else. There are no interviews with people who were arrested. There are no interviews with people who saw other people get arrested. There are no interviews with organizers, or with local citizens, or even with prominent members of Black Lives Matter. (Even the New York Times, which has also done a terrible job of reporting on protests across the country, did better in that regard.)

No one has so far come forward with any evidence that concrete was actually thrown — outside the statement given by police officers. (We all know that police officers are great at telling the truth.)

At the end of the day, my Facebook newsfeed was more journalistic, telling, and thorough than anything the national media gave up. (Clickbait sites nationwide did adopt this photo saying it "symbolizes last week's protests," but this photo is just a fraction of what went on yesterday in Baton Rouge.)

While it's an enormous cliché to say that the mainstream media is unreliable, this continued failure to accurately report what is happening will become increasingly dangerous in a country that is becoming increasingly divided. Take, for example, a Facebook post by a local Baton Rouge resident later that day. It was long, but in part it said, "It's time for the silent majority to take a stand. … We all heard about plans to pull dollars from the white establishment, let's turn the tables and not support the African community at all."

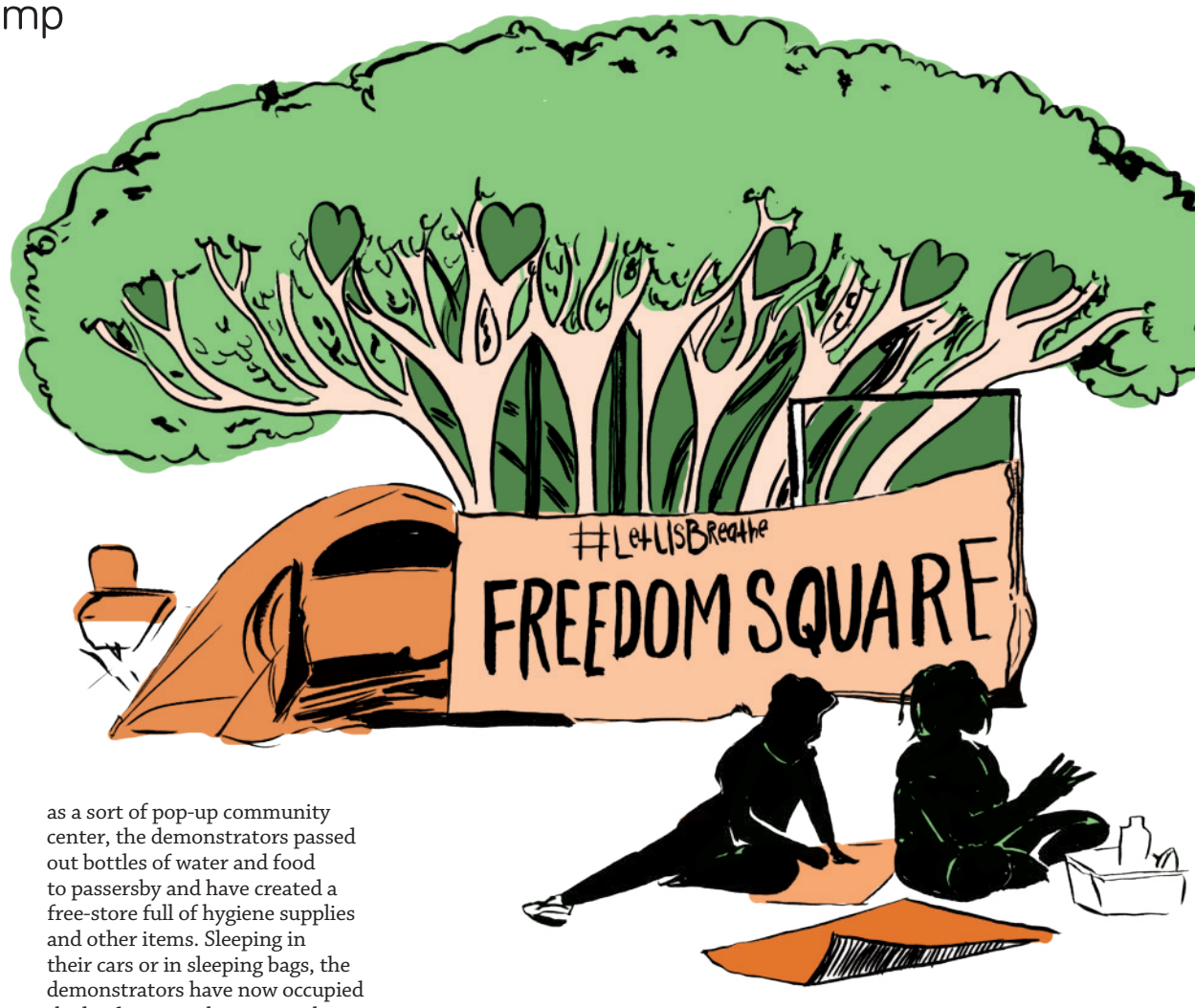
The complete failure of the national media — who, my friends report, were indeed in Baton Rouge, and had the capacity to capture a more complex narrative of what happened there yesterday — to report on this story is terrifying to me, and it should be to you, too. I can't begin to imagine what else we're not seeing or hearing that might change everything.

Sophie Lucido Johnson *is the managing editor for F, and has written for The Guardian, VICE, Jezebel, The Nation, and others. She makes a ton of pie.*

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson

Occupy: The Next Generation

Protesters set up camp at police 'black site' Homan Square



Samuel Schwindt

Seeking respite from the blistering heat, demonstrators stand or sit under canopy tents and other make-shift shelters at the corner of Fillmore and Homan Streets. They have been staked out there since July 22, enduring rising temperatures and turbulent storms.

Their camp is across the street from the Homan Square police facility, called a "black site" for its secret jailings and arrests of detainees without charges or access to lawyers. They are protesting not only the misconduct at the facility, but the proposed Blue Lives Matter ordinance before the Chicago City Council.

The ordinance is sponsored by Alderman Edward Burke, who represents the 14th district, proposes to elevate assaults on first responders to a hate crime, with critics saying it will silence protests to police misconduct. Any assault (threats or physical altercations) on an officer would now become a felony with up to six months in prison. The fine for offenses against officers would be raised from $500 to $2,500 as well.

Forming the Let Us Breathe Collective, local community members and activists from across Chicago gathered in the empty lot they have christened "Freedom Square."

"It's going great; it's beautiful," said Bella Bahhs, the co-director of the Let Us Breathe Collective, in an interview on July 27 at the demonstration. "This is day six of our occupation, and we have engaged hundreds of members of this community. We have fed hundreds of people, and it's necessary — it's being proven necessary every single day."

"Freedom Square" grew out of a protest march the week of July 17 in response to the acquittal of police officer Dante Servin, who fatally shot Rekia Boyd in 2012. Several dozen marched from Servin's house in Douglas Park to the corner of Fillmore and Homan, where the protesters chained themselves together and blocked the intersection of Fillmore and Homan for several hours. Police arrested 10 of the protesters on site.

Once the march and blockade was finished, protesters gathered at the empty lot at Fillmore and Homan Streets to discuss their next move. At first unprepared for a long-term sit-in, members of the newly formed Let Us Breathe Collective and Black Youth Project 100 returned on July 22 with tents, coolers, and a grill. Acting as a sort of pop-up community center, the demonstrators passed out bottles of water and food to passersby and have created a free-store full of hygiene supplies and other items. Sleeping in their cars or in sleeping bags, the demonstrators have now occupied the lot for more than a month.

The occupiers of Freedom Square were quick to point out the overarching political goals of the demonstration.

"One of our immediate goals is to stop the Blue Lives Matter ordinance, which would make protesting police violence a ... felony — a hate crime," said Bahhs.

Burke, however, argued last month that the ordinance was a necessary protection for the police officers of Chicago.

"Each day police officers and firefighters put their lives on the line to ensure our well-being and security. It is the goal of this ordinance to give prosecutors and judges every tool to punish those who interfere with, or threaten or physically assault, our public safety personnel," said Burke in a statement reported by the Chicago Tribune.

Repeated attempts by F Newsmagazine to reach the alderman's press secretary for this article were unsuccessful.

The Homan Square facility does not maintain public booking records, concealing the whereabouts of detainees from lawyers and family members checking their closest police stations for information. Thanks to a transparency lawsuit by the Guardian in 2015, we know now that of Homan Square's released 7,000 detainees over the past decade, 82 percent were black; 75 percent of the arrests were for drug-related charges for minor possessions or dealings of marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamines.

Charles Jones, who was detained at Homan Square on March 17, 2015, gave an interview to the Guardian detailing his stay at the facility. Handcuffed to "a ring around the wall," he said he was held for six to eight hours without access to a lawyer or phone while police tried to extract information from him. "The only reason you're brought to Homan and Fillmore is to extract information," said Jones.

"Freedom Square" is near the Nichols Tower, where in May SAIC received a National Endowment for the Arts grant of $75,000 to support new programs with the Homan Square Arts Initiative. The site now offers free community art courses, an artist in residence program, and civic-minded design projects.

When asked about possible ways SAIC could become involved in the demonstration, Bahhs and others mentioned the need for art supplies for the children of the neighborhood to use. Another way, she added, was simply to distribute their message to as many people as possible.

"They've been disappearing black folk [at Homan Square] for at least a decade. We want to make blackness visible on this side of the street and point out the problem and provide a solution. And that solution is 'Freedom Square,'" said Bahhs.

Samuel Schwindt *is a freelance writer at F Newsmagazine and a sculptor studying at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. More of his work can be seen at www.schwindt.xyz.*

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson

Modernism for the Masses | Treasure Buddies

fnewsmagazine.com/2016/06/modernism-for-the-masses/

All the World's a Classroom

By Mary Fons ○ September 2016 □ SAIC

SAIC offers online art history course for any inquisitive internet-user

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) sound like something you might see on an MRI, but in fact a MOOC is a class, offered online, for free, to anyone and everyone, at any time, anywhere there's a will and an internet connection. This spring, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) launched its first-ever MOOC, and that's big news.

"Touring Modernism: From the French Avant-Garde to American Pop and Beyond," led by Faculty Dean and Art History Professor Lisa Wainwright, is a 12-session art history course surveying hundreds of years in Western art through the lens of modernism. This debut SAIC MOOC — with its real-life syllabus, more than 20 hours of video lectures, plus quizzes and assignments — puts SAIC on a list of top schools that now offer university-level educational opportunities to the masses.

Some might say SAIC is late to the party: MOOC mega-sites have been offering classes from Princeton and Harvard free to the public for years. What took us so long? And, if I can take "Touring Modernism" for free, why am I paying for it this fall? (Because it's different; keep reading.)

From Ho-Hum to Heck-Yeah

Lisa Wainwright said that Provost (and Soon-to-be-President) Elissa Tenny had a vision for online classes at SAIC when she got here six years ago.

"Elissa was keen on capitalizing on the advances in online learning technology," Wainwright said. "She's been passionate for a long time about figuring out versions that could work for an art and design school."

That was no small task. There weren't any MOOC-making companies who were good at making art curriculum until recently; and furthermore, not all SAIC staff and faculty were equally as fired-up as Tenny was about anonymous, online learning. Wainwright admitted that she was one of the dubious.

"I'm a product of the traditional classroom environment," she said. "I prize private education — small classrooms, dynamic discussions, energetic teachers who blow your mind. You can see and feel that kind of energy; you can't get that online."

But after a while, an actual classroom experience began to tug at Wainwright's brain. "I thought, 'Well, I taught the big freshman survey for years. I loved teaching it. It was in an auditorium. About 150 students, two days in a row. That's 300 people. That's a lot.'" Wainwright began to see how a MOOC could allow her to more broadly distribute her accumulated knowledge.

Kadenze: For Such a Time as This

In 2013, a group of California Institute for the Arts (CalArts) students saw that lack of decent online courses for art and design — pursuits that arguably more than any other depend on quality of design — and in partnership with CalArts created Kadenze, a digital platform specifically created to support an online arts-based curriculum. This is the platform SAIC teamed up with to produce "Touring Modernism."

"What sets us apart the most is that we are all artists in addition to working at Kadenze," said Amanda Eno, senior production manager and lead producer. "Some of [our editors] make films on their own, some of them work in the audio and music industry."

A click onto the Kadenze site provides users with lush animation, navigation clarity, and course description videos that play like movie trailers. This is the work of people who care a whole lot about flow, aesthetics, and creating a user-friendly format. SAIC had been waiting for the right MOOC platform; Kadenze was it. The production values they offered, their mission, and their relationships with universities like Stanford ("Online Jamming and Concert Technology") and the Otis College of Art and Design ("Fashion Style Icons and Designing from Historical Elements") made them a match. In June of 2015, Wainwright flew to Los Angeles to begin work on "Touring Modernism."

Make Me a MOOC

The project has been an enormous undertaking. There are 12 video lessons called "Sessions," and each is two hours long.

"That's 24 hours of film," Wainwright said, with a weariness in her voice. "We filmed all fall. I went out to LA a few times and we filmed here in the museum as well. Then comes editing. I see every new lesson a week before it goes live and make corrections, make sure the images are there and the color's right."

Grueling as it might have been, Wainwright is good at this. The energetic teachers she holds in high regard would be proud; apart from possessing an encyclopedic understanding of her topic, she's wholly engaging and often laugh-out-loud funny. If she's pulling it off, she told me, she probably owes it to being president of her high school drama club.

"The way Lisa tells the story of art history is like a television mini-series," said Eno. "There's action, adventure, intrigue, romance. She weaves together the movements and contemporary examples so you really get the bigger picture and contexts. And she's really academically grounded and challenges students in the coursework to think more deeply. This isn't your typical names-and-dates course."

There are currently two sessions available for viewing, and so far, student feedback has been positive. Ida Brandao, a student auditing the course from Portugal, is pretty happy with how the SAIC's MOOC presents the images and information.

"I'm not participating in MOOCs to get traditional teaching methods," she said. She added that other MOOCs she's taken have had more discussion threads and spinoff student conversations. This may change as more people know about the course and enroll.

On Credit, and Why it's Still Better to go to School Here

Which brings us to the "Why buy the course if you can get the MOOC for free?" question — one that any number of alarmed parents may have been asking since they got the email announcing the course last month.

The course is available for credit (three hours) if you are not currently enrolled in school at the SAIC and willing to pay $900. If you are a student here, you are welcome to audit the course for free like anyone else.

"This class is continuing education," Wainwright says. "This is for students around the country who weren't admitted to the SAIC or those in community colleges who are looking to transfer into art school later. It doesn't replace freshman survey for art history, which is a very robust course that uses TAs, discussion, visiting artists, museum visits." In other words, the online course is great — perhaps really great — but if you've been admitted to the school, you needn't worry your education is being devalued by it.

"I still believe in the classroom education for those who attend these online classes," Wainwright said. "But you can have much larger reach with online. It's a socialist proposition."

illustration by Zach Cooper

A SYMPOSIUM ON ART WORDS RAISES QUESTIONS OF ASSESSMENT AT SAIC

Kate Morris

On April 18 and 19, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) hosted a small symposium titled "Art Words: These are the words you will be assessed by." The words set to be discussed were "Eloquence," "Articulate," "Clarity," and the phrase "Defend Your Work." It is the second symposium SAIC has hosted on assessment, or grading, parameters in art education.

It may not seem clear to some at first, but the subject matter of this symposium crucially matters to all students attending SAIC. Many students understood this importance: The student discussions held on the first day was heavily attended, with most of the seats taken.

The second panel was hardly attended at all. It consisted of Art History Professors James Elkins and Delinda Collier, who coordinated the symposium as a whole, as well as Felice Dublon, dean of Student Affairs, and Frank Piatek from the Painting and Drawing department.

Two art scholars not currently affiliated with the school were also on the panel: Saul Ostrow, well-known art curator, critic, and art editor of BOMB magazine; and Laurie Fendrich, a prolific artist and scholar who has written many articles criticizing current assessment tools in art education.

This panel should have been just as crucial to the students at SAIC because it offered a chance to hear experts responsible for implementing assessments in art programs address their own discomfort and disagreements with the current system.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is one of the groups of people who decide whether SAIC is accredited or not. They base that decision partially on student performance, which is decided by assessments, which are decided (in part) by certain words.

Without accreditation, SAIC can't offer federal financial aid to its students. Students who use federal loans and grants to offset the steep tuition of the school would not be able to attend without that federal money, and the federal money depends upon the use of assessment parameters that comply with the HLC.

Such assessment parameters at our school require that students understand and demonstrate these particular words — "eloquence," "clarity," and "articulation" — when defending or discussing their art.

It was surprising to hear how unhappy and concerned artists, professors, and school administrators were with the rubrics and the specificity of these words.The main focus of the discussion was on how far removed and limiting these rubrics and methods of assessment seem to be from the core issues of making art.

Much of the problem occurs because students are asked to use specific language when discussing the motives and personal practices of art-making without learning the theories or history of that language. This can hit close to home for student artists: Art is often personal, and includes many complicated associations, concepts, and emotions.

One of the problems might be that the language we've adopted to discuss art-making is perhaps more appropriate to another discipline.

Fendrich presented this conundrum bluntly, saying, "I don't see that we are helping students to express themselves when we drive them into this language, the language students are now using when they talk about their art. [It is] a language that they are picking up in a vague way … the language of, basically, critical theory."

She went on to state that since artists, scholars, and critics alike really don't know what art is in any comprehensively definable sense, the language asked for sounds specific when applied to the humanities, but in an art context, it can't be. The endless parsing of such words is probably irrelevant to the making of the art.

As discussion continued, another issue common in contemporary art schools came up. It seems that by imposing a rubric with specific language requirements taken from humanities disciplines (such as

literary or cultural criticism), academic institutions are asking student artists to also serve as their own art critics when presenting their work.

Professor Elkins pointed out that this type of artistic self-awareness on the part of the artist has rarely been present, much less required, in art history. Rarely has an artist needed to defend their work with eloquence and clarity. The art has spoken for itself.

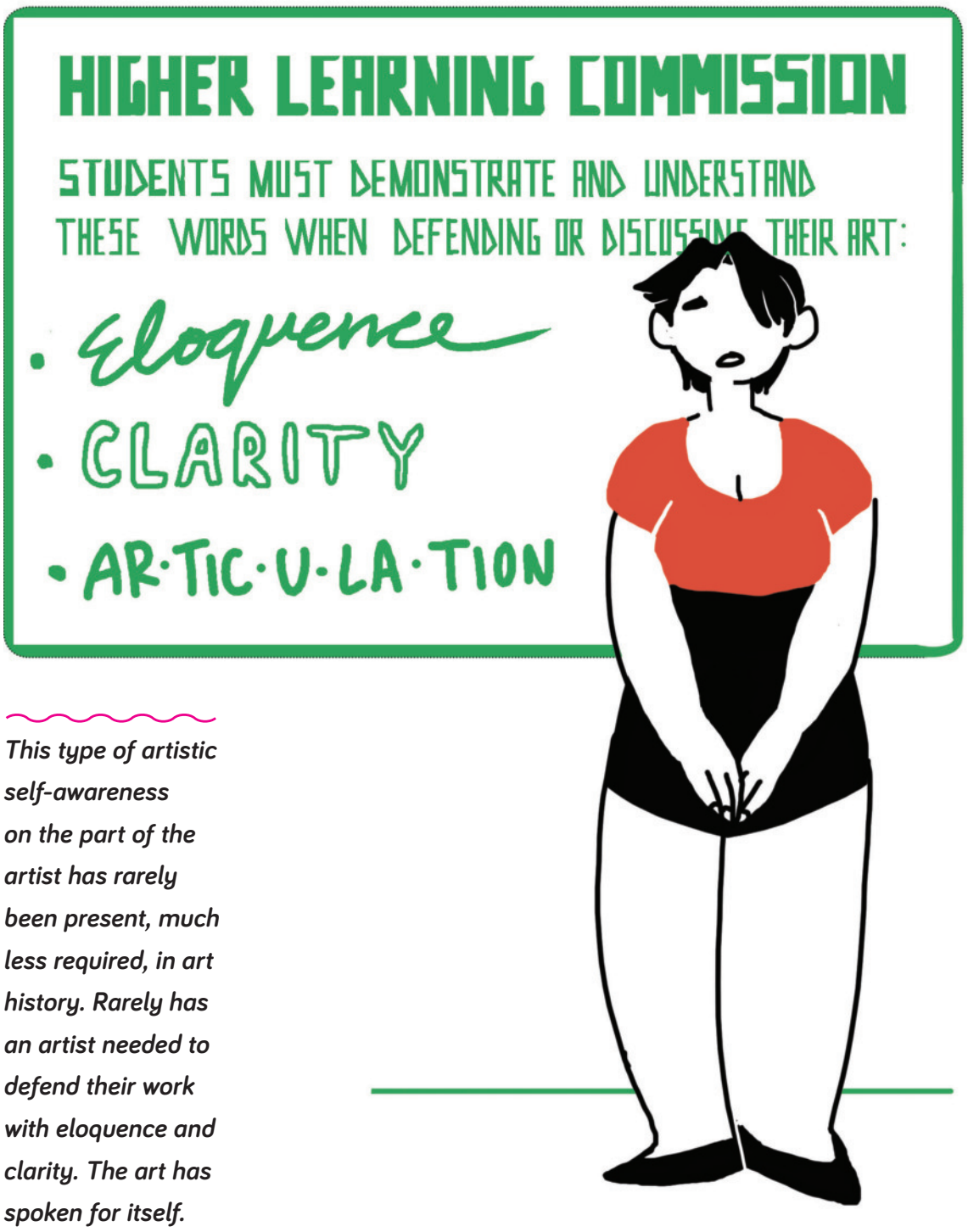
Such institutional requirements might also ask that the artist solve many of the mysteries of their process in order to properly and thoroughly articulate their work so they can pass a class. This poses a problem for professors. If the student sets the criteria, the professor no longer has a responsibility to judge the work from a point of expertise; they can only agree or disagree with how the student has described it.

This moves the art critique discussion from process (the making) to theory (the meaning), and students come away from classes preoccupied with how to position their art in culture, instead of how they are creating it.

The second panel discussion ran less than the two-hour time allotted due to the brief audience discussion at the end. There were not enough people to field and carry a large discussion of the issues brought to light during the panel.

"Art Words" happened so close to the end of the academic year that many students missed it. Considering that it raised more concerns than it answered, it will be interesting to see how this conversation develops going forward, and how it might affect student work.

Elkins and Collier are including the transcripts of all their symposia discussions in books from each year discussing and examining art assessment requirements. The books will be short (100 pages) and offer administrators, instructors, and students insight into how rubrics function in art institutions.



This type of artistic self-awareness on the part of the artist has rarely been present, much less required, in art history. Rarely has an artist needed to defend their work with eloquence and clarity. The art has spoken for itself.

illustration by Amber Huff

Tracing Dirty Energy

Petcoke infiltrates Museum of Contemporary Photography

Steven Ford

Environmental problems are often represented as being located somewhere removed — far away from regular life. The uncomfortable reality is that toxic pollution is closer to home than many Chicagoans know. KCBX, a Koch brothers company, stores "petcoke," also known as petroleum coke, in two massive piles on Chicago's Southeast Side.

Both piles, each four or five stories tall, are so huge that either one could easily cover an area as large as Humboldt Park. The fine black dust is a carcinogenic byproduct of oil refining, made to be burned as a fuel for power plants.

On windy days, powdery clouds of black petcoke dust drift off the piles and into the adjacent neighborhood of East Side. The dust coats homes and finds its way inside through even the smallest of cracks. When inhaled, it settles in the lungs and stays there, causing respiratory and circulatory problems.

"Petcoke: Tracing Dirty Energy," on display at the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MOCP) through October, does not attempt to be objective about the impact of petcoke. The exhibition takes a position firmly against the storage of petcoke in Chicago, showing pieces that raise awareness about this very real and devastating problem.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) Professor Claire Pentecost's installation "A Library of Tears" is striking in its thoughtful and strategic display. The piece's teardrops are populated with materials that remind the viewer of a litany of crimes and sufferings: plastic, dirty oil, dead plants, bone, metal debris, uncooked ash-covered beans, and petcoke itself. Beautifully dirty and precariously suspended by wires, each teardrop is a fragile egg, pregnant with the potential to sicken and kill.

Behind the tears is an expanse of mustard-yellow wallpaper, upon which the viewer is able to see the image of an ancient Greek person, lazily reclining and reading a book. Near him, drops of moisture fall from plants and vegetables into grim craters below. It's an indictment of the average museum-goer: educated and compassionate, but idle.

Terry Evans has two separate sets of photographs up, dramatically different from one another. Upstairs, Evans' close-up portraits of local activists who continue to fight against petcoke in Chicago are masterfully done, powerful, and unsparing. They do not flatter the subjects, but instead reveal a burning determination and endurance.

However, in the same small place, there's an audio track of activists speaking, and a great deal of text next to each photograph. Rather than working together harmoniously, the three elements compete with one another, and the result is distracting.

Far more powerful are Evans' aerial photographs: The strikingly beautiful pictures of faceless industrial terror; the transport mechanisms of modern desire and commerce; the unbelievable hugeness of the petcoke piles.

Victoria Sambunaris' grid of 45 deadpan photographs of oil tankers is an exercise in the power of simple repetition. Each tanker was photographed along the Houston Ship Channel, a natural waterway that has been dredged and enlarged to accommodate more and more tanker traffic.

Steven Rowell's film, "Midstream at Twilight," follows the unseen footprint of the Enbridge Pipeline, which runs across Canada, through the United States, and into Illinois. Largely shot on drones, the film is quietly foreboding.

The reality is that toxic pollution is closer to home than many Chicagoans know. KCBX stores petroleum coke, in two massive piles on Chicago's Southeast Side.

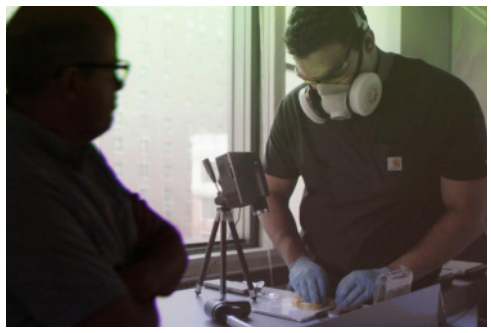
Marissa Lee Benedict and David Rueter's film, "I Can Only See Shadows," feels like a silent episode of "The X-Files," and that's a good thing. In the film, anonymous figures stalk about at night collecting particles of pollution, using strange technology to extract information from the particles, discovering the hidden patterns in an effort to reveal how the black dust communicates with the body as it's being poisoned.

The Geisler/Sann installation is probably the most unsettling and vaguely threatening piece in the exhibition, making it a highlight. A pedestal holds a lighted plexiglass cube containing 102 grams of petcoke that, if released, would send people racing for the exit.

The size of the cube reduces the larger social issue to geometric measurements, while simultaneously provoking unsettling questions: How much of this stuff does it take to give an adult cancer? To give a child asthma? To make a family so exhausted from fighting that they finally give up and abandon their home?

As I stood staring at the cube, one of the activists I had seen pictured upstairs walked into the room. She gazed at the cube and shrugged, visibly unimpressed. "Hmm. It's what we live with every day," she said. She moved upstairs, where other activist guests congregated around the portraits and text. Downstairs, the usual art crowd sipped wine and chatted animatedly.

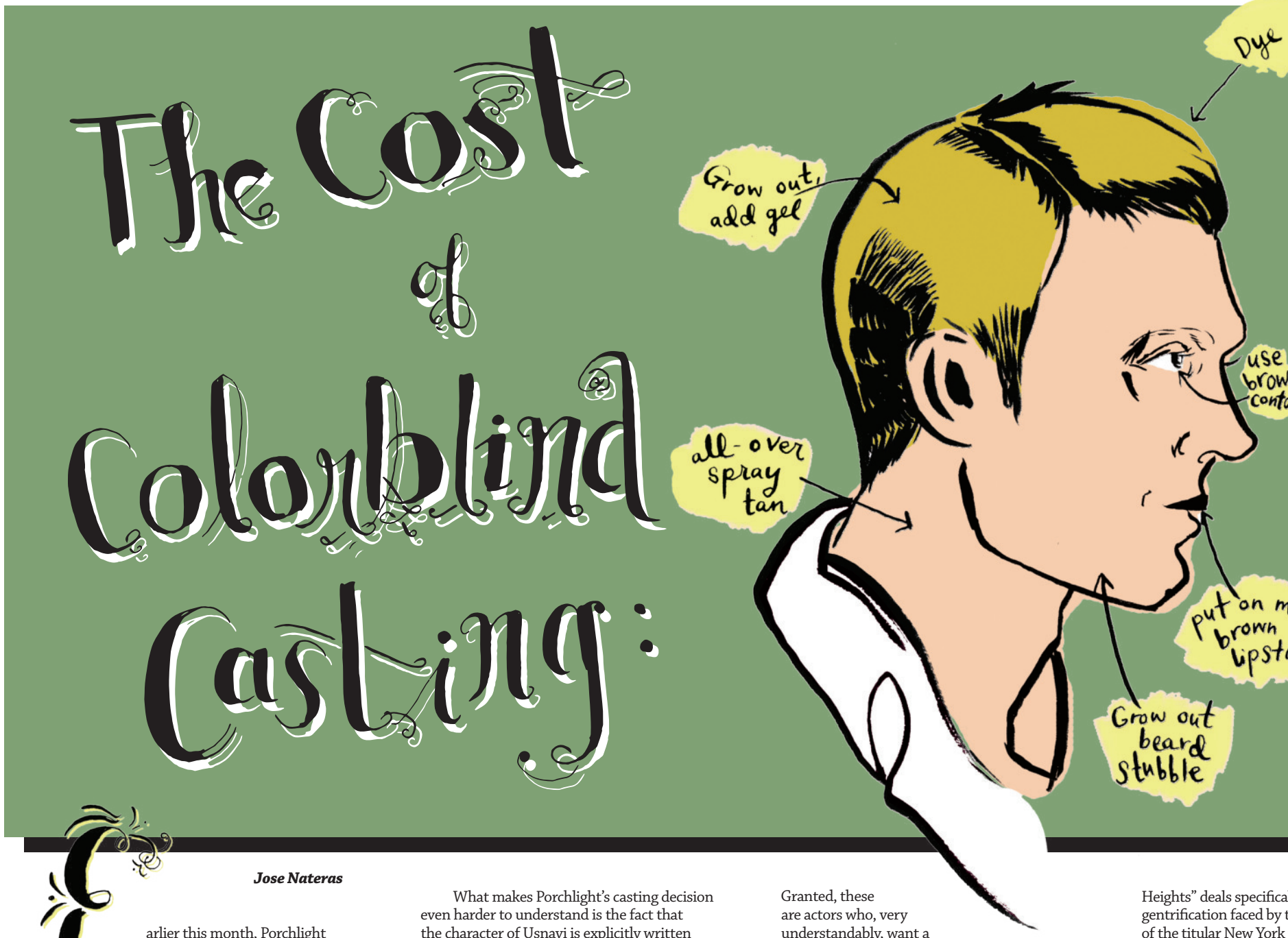
The Museum of Contemporary Photography can be hard to find. There is very little signage pointing to the museum's entrance, and looking beyond the double glass doors, a museum is not immediately evident within. One wonders how educational "PetCoke: Tracing Dirty Energy" can truly be, sequestered on Michigan Avenue in this manner. The show seems removed, but only 13 miles away from what and whom it purports to represent.



Steven Ford *is a former middle-school English and ESL teacher currently studying photography.*

photography by Steven Ford

The Cost of Colorblind Casting:



Jose Nateras

Earlier this month, Porchlight Music Theatre, a mainstay in the Chicago theater community, announced the casting for their much anticipated production of Lin Manuel-Miranda's "In the Heights." Aside from the problematic handling of this announcement by The Chicago Sun-Times — Hedy Weiss described the cast as "unusually 'authentic'" — the casting statement was bound to cause an uproar. Porchlight cast a white actor in the central role of Usnavi — a Bodega owner who received his name from the first words his family saw coming to New York from the Dominican Republic (US Navy). As expected, the roaring has begun.

It's an interesting time to be a person of color in the United States. On the one hand, actors of color won Tony Awards last year in all four Best Performance in a Musical categories, and Manuel-Miranda's musical-turned-cultural juggernaut "Hamilton" has seen unprecedented and epic success.

On the other hand, 2016 has had the "Oscars-so-white" controversy; a Congressman saying on national television that, in comparison to white people, "Where did any other subgroup of people contribute more to civilization?"; and then, this casting announcement. It is just the latest example of the repeated and unceasing practice of "whitewashing" — the casting of white actors in roles for characters of color — a depressingly common trend in both theater and film.

To add insult to injury, this casting announcement comes just a few short months following the community outrage surrounding Marriott Theatre's production of "Evita" — a play that is literally set in and is entirely about a Latin American country — which had only one cast member of Latinx or Hispanic heritage.

What makes Porchlight's casting decision even harder to understand is the fact that the character of Usnavi is explicitly written as being from the Dominican Republic. The role was originated by the creator of the show, who in an interview with Howard Sherman made the following statement with regards to race in casting:

> Authorial intent wins. Period. … As a Dramatists Guild Council member, I will tell you this. As an artist and as a human I will tell you this. Authorial intent wins … In every case, the intent of the author always wins. If the author has specified the ethnicity of the part, that wins.

In a city like Chicago, with a huge Latinx population and a vibrant Latinx theater community, the decision to cast this particular role with a non-Latinx actor is supremely out of touch. But this sort of discussion isn't without its subtleties — after all,the process of casting is highly subjective.

When faced with complaints regarding issues of whitewashing in casting, theaters often respond with arguments that they've "cast from the pool of actors who auditioned" or that they've "made an effort to cast the best actor for the role." There's also the notion that the job of an actor is to portray characters who are different than they are. The question might be raised: How is playing a character of a different race anything different?

The truth of the matter is, often, actors of color aren't able to get an audition in the first place. Porchlight, for instance, makes audition appointments available through a website that has only so many audition slots open on a first-come-first serve basis. These slots fill up fast, and whether or not the roles looking to be filled are for actors of color, a large portion of audition slots go to white actors.

Granted, these are actors who, very understandably, want a chance to audition for one of the more respected musical theater companies in Chicago. An actor's agent can submit them for auditions, or they can self-submit, but it is ultimately up to the casting department of a theater to call actors in from the many submissions they receive. So, yes, casting is indeed a result of the pool of actors who audition, but when you have control over who is in that pool, that's not an excuse.

When talking about who might be best for a role, things can also get complicated, subjective considerations of talent aside. Standards of what "best" means vary depending on who you're talking to. For some, what makes an actor the best for a role has a lot to do with experience, the strength of a résumé, industry connections, name recognition — things that come from having opportunities some actors of color don't have the same access to.

Often, directors say that an actor is best for the role because they are "the right fit." This may have to do with superficial or demographic factors that the actor shares with the character as written. In that case, what could qualify an actor more to play a role than sharing the same cultural demographic as the character in question?

Chicago's Latinx actors are justifiably upset at Porchlight's decision to deem a white actor better equipped to portray a Latinx character than an actual Latinx person. Many individuals in the Latinx theater community — not just actors, but also directors, writers, and others — were quick to release public statements via Facebook and social media, commenting on their disappointment with the casting decision. Some articulated the notion that Porchlight's choices were tantamount to artistic gentrification; ironic since "In the Heights" deals specifica
gentrification faced by t
of the titular New York

One such theater
Rivera-Vega, wrote a p
open letter addressed
An established and we
in Chicago, Rivera-Veg
the likes of Steppenwo
and Aurora's Paramou
Paramount he unders
2013 production of "In
since played the role f
Theatre in Milwaukee.

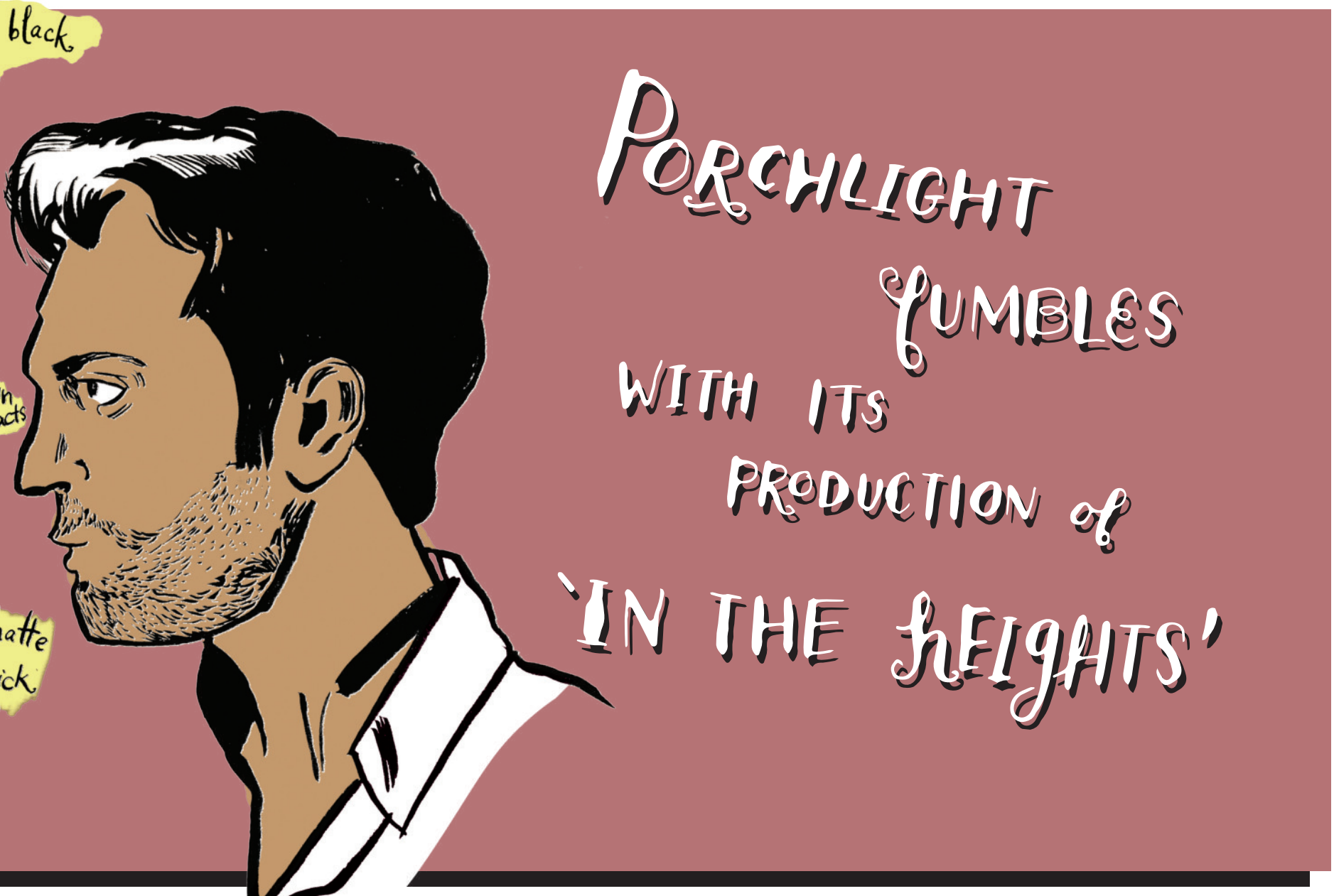
In his address to P
his Facebook page, Rive
the hope instilled by Po
announcement of "In th
subsequent disappointr
announcement caused,
the importance of the s
Heights" tells. With his
excerpt of that stateme

> I understand that
> in the show (peopl
> with before, respe
> But when the pers
> narrating the story
> creating an atmosp
> a perfectly created
> where the white fo
> feel safe telling ou

"'In The Heights' ca
growing as an artist," R
Manuel was the first La
who was so similar to n

For Rivera-Vega a
community at large, M
more than just write a
"He beautifully describe
as I lived it. Full of love
struggle, respect, integ
Rivera-Vega said.

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson



lly with the threat of
the Latinx community
neighborhood.
r artist, actor Tommy
particularly eloquent
directly to Porchlight.
ell-respected actor
ga has worked with
olf, Drury Lane,
nt Theatre. (At
tudied Usnavi in a
the Heights." He's
or Skylight Music
.)
Porchlight, shared on
era-Vega articulated
rchlight's initial
he Heights" and the
ment the casting
all while noting
ort of story "In the
permission, here is an
nt:

you cast some Latinxs
le that I have worked
ct their work, and love).
son [Usnavi] actually
y is not Latinx, you are
phere, an ecosystem,
barrio around him,
olks behind it can now
r story.

me out when I was
ivera-Vega told F. "Lin
tinx actor I noticed
ne!"
nd the Latinx
Miranda did something
successful musical.
ed my culture just
e, life, pride, hope,
grity and dignity,"

For any underrepresented community, issues of representation in media and culture, specifically on the stage, are of vital importance. As Rivera-Vega put it, "Before 'In the Heights,' I [only] saw Latinxs on stage in gangs, or following some sort of dark path. … He [Miranda] understood the importance of breaking stereotypes."

As far as what Porchlight's casting decision illustrates about the state of things in the Chicago theater community, Rivera-Vega said, "It says that progress has been very slow for the Latino community. Marriott claimed that Latinxs did not show up to their auditions. So, the Latinx community made sure to show up and represent for Porchlight's 'In the Heights' audition."

At one point in his Facebook post Rivera-Vega wrote:

> I remember when I saw that audition room full of people like us and thought: WOW! They can really do this. Maybe they'll have a couple non-Latinxs in the background, but the story will be told right! Then I saw the cast list.

It's relevant to note that, aside from one or two individuals — the assistant director, for instance (Adrian Abel Azevedo) — the production staff at Porchlight generally consists of white theater artists. While not inherently problematic, Rivera-Vega feels that "if they are going to have a non-Latinx production team, they need to represent the show appropriately, by hiring at the very least, Latinx actors to lead that story." Coming from the perspective of a Latinx actor, Rivera-Vega argued that casting actors of Latinx heritage, especially in such a key role as Usnavi, "is all it takes to respectfully tell the story. It is not about creating what they [the production staff] believe the Latinx experience looks like, but about what it [that experience] actually is."

The problem isn't that a white actor is part of the cast — and Rivera-Vega has taken note of that. No one is claiming that the cast should consist entirely of Latinx actors. The problem is that this production chose to cast the role of Usnavi in particular with a white actor. This is a character who, in a lot of ways, is the avatar of the show's creator. A character like that bears the responsibility of authorial intent; he functions as the narrator of the story within the play, and as such, articulates the themes the author, arguably, hopes to convey. That this role was originally portrayed by the playwright only furthers that interpretation.

Some people would say that this train of thought raises serious questions about the nature of art and the theatre; specifically, Who has the right to tell which stories? Aren't we all human? Might one say that, as a white director, Brenda Didier shouldn't be the one telling this story?

That is absolutely not the argument being made by the Latinx theater community. The job of an artist is to create work that illuminates elements of the human experience in a way that conveys truth. It is through art that we as people are able to synthesize and contextualize the world around us — our experiences individual and shared — into a work or story that resonates with an audience.

Regardless of the race of the director, if she isn't cognizant enough of the current cultural and political climate, or is unable to recognize how problematic the casting of a white actor in such a significantly Latinx role is , that director shouldn't be telling this story. More than just whitewashing, it's an erasure of a brown body on stage. It's the taking away of a desperately-needed and yearned-for opportunity to see what people of color contribute to our cultural landscape. It is, at its heart, an incident of colonization.

By casting a white actor in this role, Porchlight has planted a flag in ground that isn't theirs. After all, it is Usnavi who, at the end of the play says:

> Yeah, I'm a streetlight!
> Chillin' in the heat!
> I illuminate the stories of the people in the street
> Some have happy endings
> Some are bittersweet
> But I know them all and that's what makes my life complete
>
> […]
> And if not me, who keeps our legacies?
> Who's gonna keep the coffee sweet with secret recipes?
> Abuela, rest in peace, you live in my memories
> But Sonny's gotta eat, and this corner is my destiny
> […]
> I ain't goin' back because I'm telling your story

Putting those words in a white mouth has serious subtext. Anyone with basic reading comprehension skills, let alone a sense of cultural awareness, can see that Usnavi's journey loses something vital when the cultural identity of the person going on that journey isn't authentic.

Jose Nateras *is a Chicago based actor/writer/nerd. A graduate of Loyola University Chicago, he is pursuing his MFA in Writing at SAIC and has written for Rock 'n' Roll Ghost, El Hatauque (formerly Chipster Life), Windy City Book Reviews, and others.*

Trumped Intentions

The consequences of satirical art

Irena Frumkin

Trump is like this malformed Muse we didn't need but is there anyway, partially draped in a sheer cloth and interrupting our artists' picnic.

The phrase, "Donald Trump is a toupee'd pile of poop," may be something you and I feel in the metaphorical sense, but it's not every day that our deepest sentiments come to physical fruition. This past summer the street artist Hansky — whose art can seen peppered around Philadelphia and New York — debuted a mural in New York City of the presidential hopeful depicted as a pile of poop. In June of this year, Hansky ran a pop-up shop where he sold his "Dump Trump" portraits made with 100 percent "authentic dog poop," taking his original artistic narrative to literal levels.

Since announcing what is probably the worst reality show ever (his presidential campaign), Donald Trump has been the subject of some delightful or downright terrifying works of political art. A number of artists aside from Hansky have taken it upon themselves to create a specific visual culture surrounding the businessman-turned-"politician."

In April, the Chicago-based Degenerate Art Gallery showcased a series of Trump-related works by the illustrator Jacob Thomas in his solo exhibition "We're Fired!" (The show closed at the end of April.) It featured pieces representing Trump as characters such as Richie Rich and Batman and reminded viewers how closely intertwined popular culture is with current political affairs. In an interview with Al Jazeera in March, Thomas said that despite the humorous and absurd qualities of Trump's presidential campaign, we should definitely be taking him seriously.

Chicago is an appropriate place for anti-Trump art to thrive. The Trump International Hotel and Tower looms over a main branch of the Chicago River and serves as a constant reminder of the Republican hopeful's place in the skyline of the city. This is likely why in April, faux traffic signs proclaiming "No Trump Anytime" by Los Angeles-based artist Plastic Jesus began appearing in various visible areas downtown. Plastic Jesus is also behind the tiny wall that was built around Trump's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

From satirical street signs to Spencer Tunick's visually-stunning protest of nude women outside the Republican National Convention, the very bad campaign — which for some of us can only be described as a fever dream from which we cannot wake — has inspired a whole lot of very good art. Trump is like this malformed Muse we didn't need but is there anyway, partially draped in a sheer cloth and interrupting our artists' picnic.

The dramatic increase of, and attention to, political art can perhaps be described as one of the few positive elements to this hellscape of an electoral season. But is the borderline obsessive increase in the images of Trump, no matter how grotesquely critical and no matter how artistically relevant, actually better for him than it is for us?

Though 99 percent of the political art out there using Trump's image is meant to be insulting and satirical, the primary issue is that Donald Trump's *Personenkult* is highly paradoxical: The worse he acts, the larger than life he becomes. Trump doesn't need to 'Trump' up his own socially chaotic agenda because we seem to be doing it for him. I wouldn't be able to pick Tim Kaine out of lineup of white dudes, but Trump's caricature-like appearance is ingrained in my brain. Maybe forever, but only time will tell.

It's a troubling time in the United States. Whatever your political leaning, there is a fairly universal understanding that the 2016 election has been irregular. We can't blame planetary activity on ever-unfolding recent events; we can't even blame memes. (Memes, as an aside, are their own separate category of anti-art. Marcel Duchamp made the first meme. Look it up.)

Political art is often, of course, a temporary bandage to long-term wounds. More often than not, a political piece of art offers a scenario and poses no solutions. The narrative of Illma Gore's nude portrait of Trump with a micro penis would be hilarious if its context wasn't so terrifying to so many.

There are no right answers, and everything is open to interpretation; that is what makes art such a critical part of understanding the world around us. Are these artists, who hope to dismantle Trump's self-proclaimed legacy, really only making sure he gets exactly what he wants: To see himself freakin' everywhere?

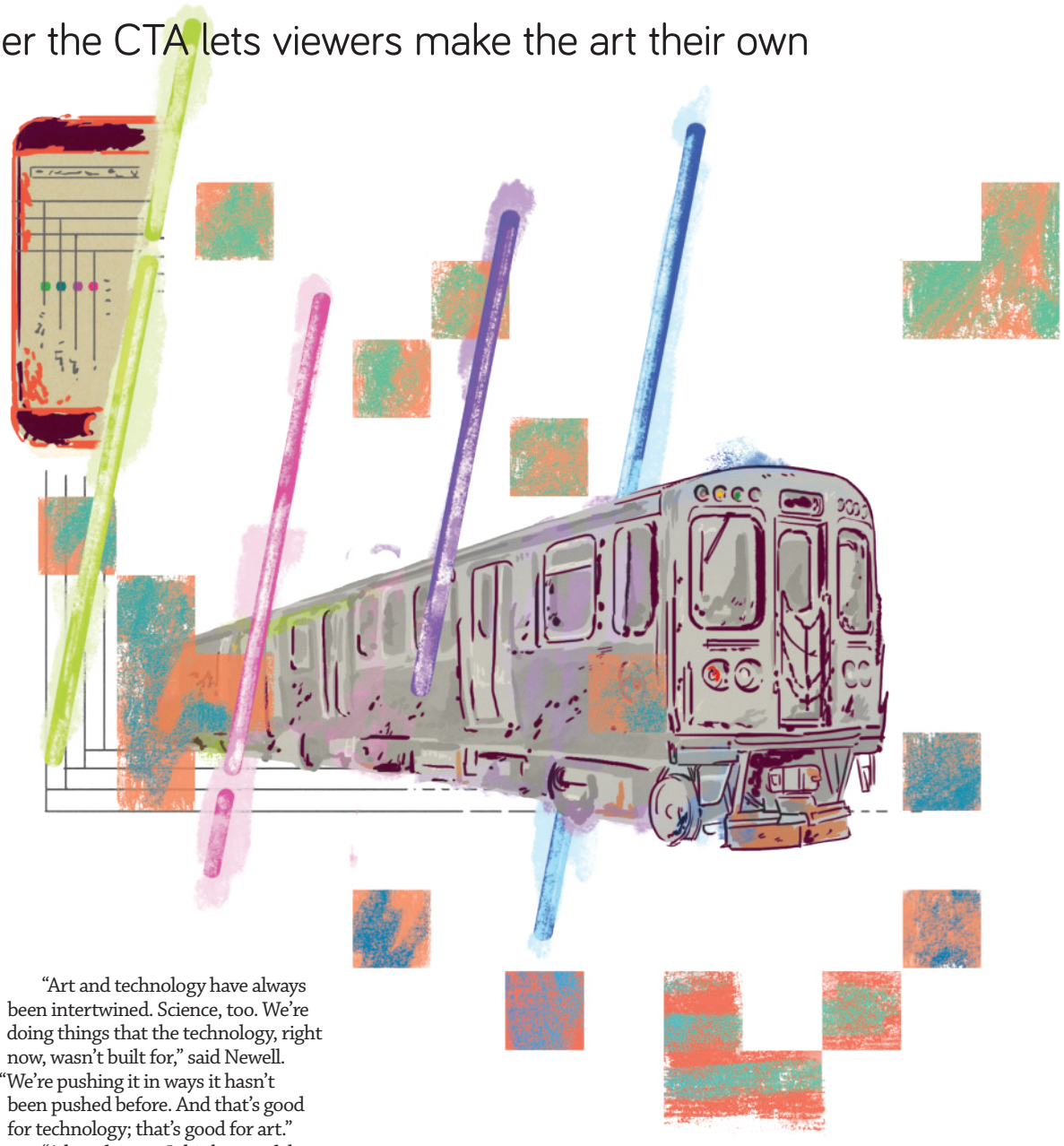
Irena Frumkin *is a master's student in SAIC's Modern and Contemporary Art History program. She's a Philadelphia native who only listens to Kate Bush.*

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson

Wabash Lights Merge Tech, Infrastructure, Art

An LED installation under the CTA lets viewers make the art their own

Kate Morris



The 21st century offers humans the ability to be present in two realms at once: the physical and the digital. The Wabash Lights, a new public art installation set on the underside of the CTA tracks on Wabash Avenue, aims to bring those spaces closer together.

Creators Jack Newell and Seth Unger started the project over a year ago. Unger, a designer, and Newell, a filmmaker, both hail from Chicago. When discussing the project, a major point of their inspiration was to make an installation that engages part of Chicago's identity.

"When we were conceptualizing this project [we asked], 'What are the iconic parts of Chicago that celebrate this idea of pride in the city?' The thing we kept landing on is the elevated L tracks; we're not the only city in the world who has them, but for some reason they are iconic to Chicago," Unger told F Newsmagazine.

Walking across Wabash between Monroe and Adams, you can look up at the tracks and see the glow of four tube lights three feet long. These lights are the "beta test" for the larger installation.

"What we funded with the Kickstarter was essentially a 'proof of concept,'" said Newell, who was programming lights on Wabash just last week. "What we're testing now is boring but important stuff. Like, how does the vibration of the L affect the lights? How does weather? What programming plays best?"

Materials and labor are the biggest allocations of the Wabash Lights project's budget resources. Large-scale public art installations accrue costs in everything from city road closures to continually testing tech durability.

"That's kinda the whole point of the beta. The Lights are LED lights in plastic diffuser tube casings that are fairly robust," Newell said. "But sections of lights have gone out, so we had to send them to Phillips and find out what happened with them."

"We know going forward that a part of the project will be maintenance. The beta is giving us an idea of what that [maintenance] is going to look like down the road," added Unger.

The Wabash Lights are an LED installation similar to the Bay Lights in San Francisco. Both projects merge art and infrastructure in a way that complicates the difference between the two.

Newell and Unger come at the Wabash Lights from an artistic perspective, but the more they speak with collaborators about the scope of the project, the more the art blends with other facets of human living, such as design, architecture, infrastructure, and public engagement.

"Art and technology have always been intertwined. Science, too. We're doing things that the technology, right now, wasn't built for," said Newell. "We're pushing it in ways it hasn't been pushed before. And that's good for technology; that's good for art."

"A lot of times, I think one of the reasons this project resonates with people is that we're taking something very simple and making it into art. There's nothing special about these lights. We're just taking things that are readily available and using them in new combinations," he added.

Unger said this simplicity is the key to both the physical and digital design of the Wabash Lights.

"Sometimes the simplest solution is the best and the most beautiful. I think the number one thing this test was about was turning the lights on for the first time and being like: 'Is this impactful? Does this look like it did in our imaginations?'"

"The answer was yes,'" added Newell.

What remains to be explored is how digital engagement accesses and manipulates art the public sees every day.

A digital app accompanies the installation, providing a tool for the public to make the physical installation their own.

"The app is where people can create, upload, and share with each other. The lights are their canvas," said Unger.

The full LED installation will make space along the Lights for three modes of expression through the app. First, there will be space for real-time public programming where people can stand under the lights and manipulate them. Second, people will be able to schedule light displays for certain times. Finally, there will be space for curated shows.

"The curated displays might involve bringing in artists, whether they be already established or students, to curate a show. They could think of [the installation] as an extra gallery space," said Newell.

"Every time I'm down on Wabash messing with the lights, a number of people come up and talk to me. The thing that's crazy about it is they're not shy. The art thing lowers barriers," he added.

"This is the first permanent artistic thing that we've planted anywhere in the world. And hopefully not the last," said Unger.

"Hopefully, not the last," Newell agreed.

Kate Morris is the current arts editor at F. She writes about humanity, the mind, and the natural world. She loves bees.

illustration by Alex Kostiw

VISITING ARTISTS PROGRAM

VISITING MINDS
LASTING INFLUENCE

FALL 2016
saic.edu/vap

All lectures begin at 6 p.m.
FREE and open to the public

The Art Institute of Chicago
Rubloff Auditorium
230 S. Columbus Dr.

SEP 1
CAO FEI
Presented in partnership with the Art Institute of Chicago's Department of Museum Education.

SEP 21
FISCHERSPOONER
Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series
Presented in partnership with SAIC's Office of Alumni Relations.

SEP 27
CLAUDIA RANKINE
President's Inaugural Distinguished Lecturer
Presented in partnership with SAIC's Office of the President and Diversity Advisory Group.

OCT 04
TAL R
Presented in partnership with SAIC's Department of Painting and Drawing.

OCT 11
JULIANA HUXTABLE

OCT 17
JOSH KLINE

NOV 02
ANN CVETKOVICH

NOV 15
CAROLINE BERGVALL

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Court Papers

‘TBH’ is more than just a zine

Natasha Mijares

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) alumnus Patrick Reynolds is raising money for the Chicago Legal Clinic the punkest way he can: with a zine called “TBH.” The Chicago Legal Clinic provides legal services for marginalized communities in Chicago. Reynolds has, as he put it, “always aspired to be able to use my art practice as a tool to serve greater social causes; the donation of the sales from this project is simply a gesture towards that goal.”

The Chicago Legal Clinic provides resources for debt elimination, employment, immigration, and even environmental issues. Reynolds chose to support this organization for a number of reasons. “People should be taught their rights while growing up, and specific forms of legal counseling might be well-integrated into our education system in a community-specific basis. But I think that a larger issue is simply a lack of access and advocacy for some of the country’s most impoverished and persecuted citizens,” he said.

The legal empowerment of the poor is something that has been discussed for years as a solution to many inequality issues. As many activists are discussing ways to avoid violent social control, legal suffering is something that should not go unnoticed.

“I recognize that the criminal justice system is imperfect and is itself infected with institutionalized forms of racism and prejudice,” Reynolds said. “But reform issues are not mutually exclusive from the fact that the same system is a necessary tool in protecting people from exploitation, abuse, foreclosure, and jail-time for low-level offenses.”

Zines have historically paved a political pathway to awareness and conversation. Reynolds chose a grayscale format to display photos of everyday objects; the low-contrast look this style of printing creates. This project toes the line between book and zine with its inclusion of a handwritten abbreviation, “TBH,” on the last page. Reynolds is also “subverting a format typically used for text-based books” by using a perfect binding.

Using the capital of art spaces and institutions to benefit a group of people in need is happening more and more. It has begun to transform the way we discuss socially-conscious art. Many groups are still unable to access education; is it possible that artists are beginning to leverage that reality to the point of exploitation?

What becomes more important for the art: the content or the context? This ongoing battle is something that Reynolds is willing to face with the “TBH” project because it’s that relationship that keeps us looking at the work more deeply.

photography courtesy of Pat Reynolds.

JOIN US FOR
CAMPUS EVENTS
FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

GRADUATE SAIC DAY
October 2, 2016

RSVP at: **saic.edu/grevents/graduatesaicdays**

You will have the opportunity to discuss your work one-on-one with key faculty members from our graduate departments during individual appointments, learn about our curricula and facilities, and inquire about admissions and financial aid. While not required, you may wish to bring your portfolio for review.

GRADUATE PORTFOLIO DAY
November 5, 2016

RSVP at: **saic.edu/grevents/graduateportfoliodays**

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers portfolio reviews and individual meetings with faculty for graduate candidates interested in the following programs:

- Master of Fine Arts in Studio
- Master of Architecture
- Master of Architecture with an Emphasis in Interior Architecture
- Master of Design in Designed Objects
- Master of Design in Fashion, Body and Garment
- Low-Residency Master of Fine Arts

Graduate Portfolio Days provide the opportunity for prospective students to receive immediate feedback on their portfolios, as well as have the opportunity to learn more about the curricula, faculty, and application procedures from a number of colleges.

CAMPUS TOURS
Monday and Friday at 1:30 p.m.

Tours highlight our facilities, resources, state-of-the-art residence halls, and our museum, the Art Institute of Chicago.

Before or after our tours, you may schedule time to meet with one of our admission counselors and show your portfolio. While on campus, you may also speak to our Financial Aid counselors.

For more details, and to RSVP, visit **saic.edu/tour**

ONLINE INFORMATION SESSIONS
saic.edu/grevents/onlineinformationsessions

Throughout the course of the year, we host several online information sessions on topics related to the application process, portfolio preparation, and financial aid.

saic.edu/grevents

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago

ADMISSIONS OFFICE
36 S. Wabash Ave., suite 1201
Chicago, IL 60603

welcome! explore the
FASHION RESOURCE CENTER
in Sullivan 735

photo: James Prinz
garment: Comme des Garçons 2005

students: visit
saic.edu/frc +
facebook.com/FRC.SAIC/
for news + hours
join our
FRC Committee
to be involved

faculty: schedule a class appointment
frc@saic.edu

books
bodies
garments
identities
journalism
connections
fabrics
touch
research
discover
history
innovation

The Other Golden Girls

Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin shine in Netflix's 'Grace and Frankie'

Sarah Wheat

The Netflix series "Grace and Frankie" centers around two women, played by Jane Fonda (Grace) and Lily Tomlin (Frankie), whose spouses of 40 years — Robert and Sol, respectively — leave their wives for each other. The first season was critically acclaimed; it was radical not only in that it focused on characters all over the age of 70, also because it told the story of a gay couple (played by Sam Waterston and Martin Sheen) figuring out how to come out to their friends and family late in life. The first season focused on conflict. Grace, Frankie, and their four children were upset at Robert and Sol, and the show's tense hilarity stemmed from the families' inherent incompatibility.

The second season, in contrast, puts Grace and Frankie's friendship (and with it, Fonda and Tomlin's awesome collective girl power) front and center. Halfway through the season I started to ask, "Where are the children?" I felt like I was seeing way too much of the old folks. Where was Brianna? What happened with her boyfriend? What happened with the budding-if-awkward romance between Coyote and Mallory? It took me until the end of the season to realize that I was completely missing the point.

This season skips the fluff and goes straight to the big issues. It boldly tackles gay marriage, growing old, ageism in the workplace, the right to die, and sex among the elderly. Most importantly, though, this season is concerned with the fact that older women are constantly, unapologetically, and rampantly dismissed.

There are light parts, too. A particularly hilarious storyline features Frankie and Brianna developing a business partnership that ultimately results in a product dreamed up by Frankie called "yam lube." (It is what you think it is.) But ultimately, the viewer starts to get the bleaker overarching picture: No one — not their ex-husbands, not their children, not their lovers — will ever really prioritize Grace or Frankie. Even I took the bait: Without even noticing it, I was initially disinterested in a show focusing only on Grace and Frankie. I felt like I needed something more, but I was wrong. By the end of the second season Grace and Frankie realize that they are going to look out for one another, and that's enough.

Season two ends with a "coup" at Bud's birthday party. (It is a missed opportunity that Bud, the show's only real black character in the role of adopted son, is unfortunately boring and nonpresent in general.) In this last scene, Grace and Frankie finally lose it.

"What did we even do?" asks Frankie's son, Coyote.

"You turned me into a little old lady," answers Frankie, referring to the way her children never ask their "too-busy" fathers for favors; meanwhile, they perceive Grace and Frankie to always be sitting at home doing nothing.

Grace joins in. "And I'm just a dupe who couldn't have any good advice to give," she tells her daughters, who seem to be constantly going to their fathers for advice; they just can't take their mothers' perceived overly emotional nonsense seriously.

Then Grace and Frankie spontaneously decide to go into business together. They hatch a plan to develop vibrators for people with arthritis because "older women masturbate too!" Everyone in the room seems grossed out at the prospect, but Grace and Frankie are having none of it. "And we have vaginas!" adds Frankie.

I don't want to give too much away, but I'll say this: This is potentially one of the most enjoyable scenes in any Netflix show. Grace and Frankie speak not only to older women, but also wives and women everywhere who are sick of being dismissed. Why aren't women allowed to talk about masturbation? Why do Grace and Frankie's own family refuse to think about their mothers' needs? Why is it so often assumed that women will always be selfless caregivers? In a total "Fuck You" move, Grace and Frankie leave their families to fend for themselves because, for the first time, they realize that their lives and ambitions are important too. They are not only mothers and wives, but also successful and creative individuals.

"Grace and Frankie" has definitely matured since its inception. The introduction of the character Babe (Estelle Parsons) — a woman dying of cancer who ultimately decides to end her own life after one last wild house party — brings up complex ideas about life, death, and living with sickness. What is good for one character is often not as positive for everyone else. Life is full of these kinds of complications, and the writers of "Grace and Frankie" are unafraid to explore them. While the show is funny — and at times downright silly — it also manages to be extremely profound.

Sarah Wheat *is the former Engagement Editor for F Newsmagazine and received an MA in Modern and Contemporary Art History at SAIC.*

illustration by Priyoshi Kapur

WONDERSTRUCK AND SYNTH-LADEN

Winona Ryder dazzles in Netflix original 'Stranger Things'

Rosie Accola

Winona Ryder has been a proprietor of the "strange and unusual" since she showed off her penchant for the macabre as micro-bangs-wearing Lydia Deetz in Tim Burton's "Beetlejuice."

Now, 30 years into her accomplished (if uneven) career, Ryder's making her streaming service debut in the Netflix original series "Stranger Things." Billed as a tribute to '80s sci-fi, the show examines the oddities and possibilities of extraterrestrial life.

Everything seems relatively normal, until 11-year-old Will vanishes without a trace while riding his bike home from a Dungeons and Dragons tournament. He's an archetypal nerd: a shy middle-schooler with a bowl cut and a small group of loyal friends.

Filled with ghostly woods and an unspecified "Government Area," Hawkins, Indiana, seems off-kilter, but in a way that could pass as charming. The local sheriff department is helmed by a careless chain-smoking sheriff who is ill-equipped to handle any serious crimes like missing children. He believes that mornings are for "coffee and contemplation" rather than actual work. Will's mom, Joyce (Ryder), acts as his foil.

She arrives at the sheriff's office the morning after her son's disappearance, desperate for answers. The sheriff placates her by saying, "Ninety-nine times out of 100, these kids are either with a parent or a relative."

Ryder prods further asking, "What about the other time?" This question drives the entire show.

There are moments of this show that are genuinely creepy, but they are softened by the exuberant technicolor '80s aesthetics. Will's friends ride off on their bikes to search for him with only their hoodies and bike lights, drawing forth immediate visual comparisons to "E.T."

Much as in "Beetlejuice," the most fascinating aspects of the show emerge when the characters forge genuine human connections with otherworldly beings. During their first nightly sweep of the forest, Will's friends stumble upon a seemingly mute young girl with a shaved head. She has no form of identification other than the number 11 tattooed on her wrist.

She's obviously frightened, so Will's friend Mike takes her back to his house. He sets up a blanket fort and sneaks her toaster waffles at breakfast, slowly building trust. The girl — dubbed "Eleven" — says "bad people" are after her, and Mike has a hunch that these "bad people" snatched Will, too.

The moments of lightness brought by Eleven's burgeoning friendships are obliterated by encounters with darker forces — Eleven is telekinetic and she's not afraid to lock doors and break stuff to prove a point.

At the center of this telekinetic whirlwind is Ryder's Joyce. Will tries to contact her sometimes, causing the lights to go berserk and the wood-paneled walls in her house to stretch as though they were made of rubber.

When I say that the terror in this show is softened by the popped collars and the Clash on the stereo, I don't mean to imply that it's not horrific. Part of why this show is so compelling and creepy is that the terror it provokes feels familiar, and that familiarity lulls the viewer into a sense of complacency.

Part of why the show is so compelling and creepy is that the terror it provokes feels familiar.

"Stranger Things" levels the playing field for horror buffs and newbies alike; you might think you know the tropes of the genre (small town, corrupt government agency with a secret, creepy forest), but the show-runners know how to make it sneak up on you.

Ryder's performance is nuanced; it's exhausted; the nerves are frayed; and best of all, it's consistent. Ryder never tires. She embodies fear, the second the scene calls for it.

Horror lends itself to camp; it's the orgasmic thrill of a jump-scare and the novelty of faux Linda Blair's head spinning around. Often, horror's love affair with camp manifests itself in plot holes and poorly-written slasher scenes.

However, "Stranger Things" allows its need for camp to be sated using sly and loving references to the '80s sprinkled throughout the show. The boys share a "Goonies"-esque camaraderie and thirst for reckless adventure. The soundtrack is delightfully kitschy, full of synths and '80s classics like Toto's "Africa."

By using these cultural touchstones, the Duffer brothers create a world where the so-called "impossible" is allowed to take shape.

"Stranger Things" is currently available to stream on Netflix.

Rosie Accola *is a junior in the writing department. Zines, snacks, and dogs make her world go 'round.*

illustration by Alex Kostiw

SAIC School of the Art Institute of Chicago | Office of Student Affairs

From all staff and faculty in the Office of Student Affairs—
WELCOME!

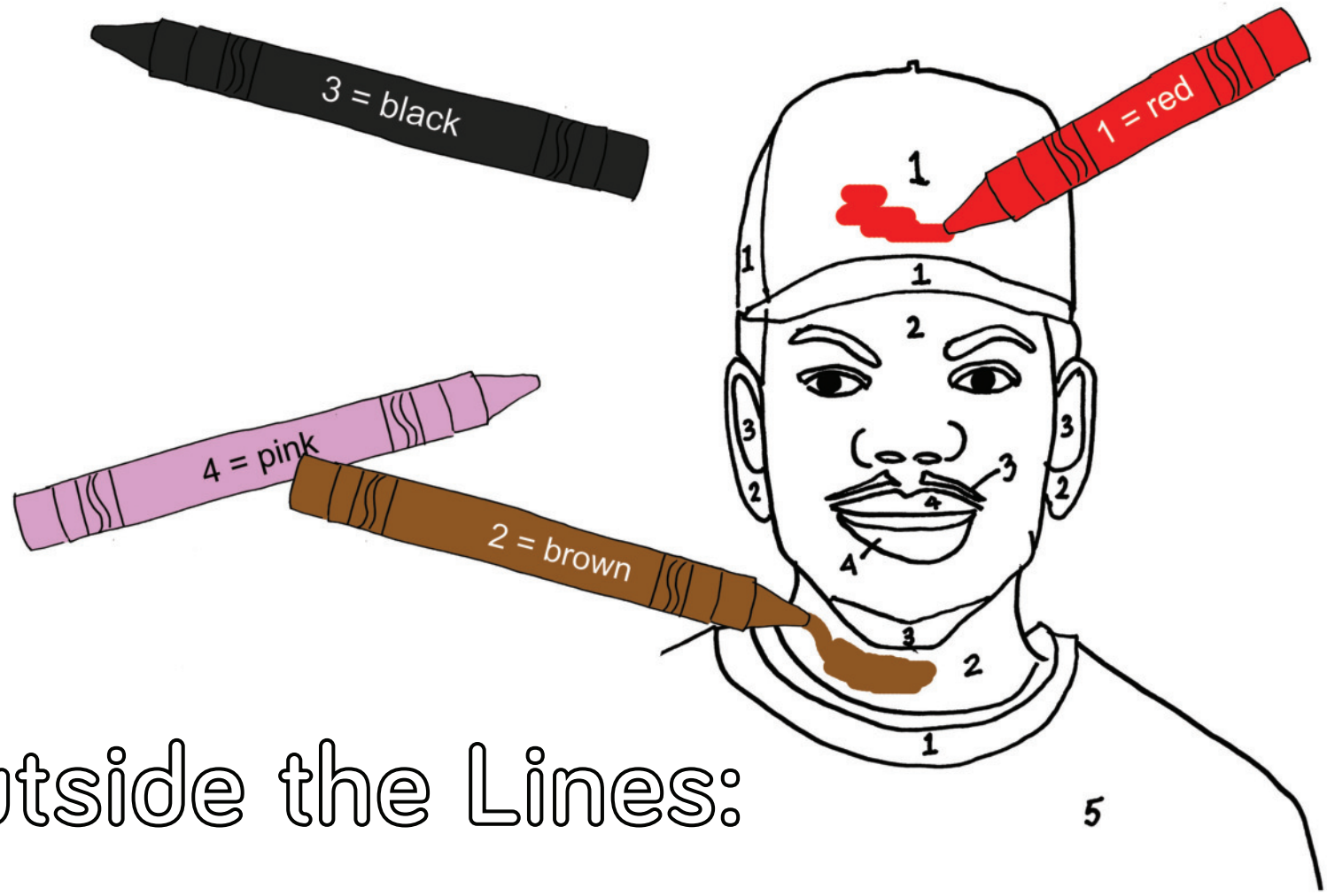
Join us at the Neiman Center and around campus for fun back-to-school events!
For details and other info about Campus Life events, check out: **saic.edu/lifeatsaic/**
To contact **your** Student Programming Board (SPB), email **spb@saic.edu**

September Events:
September 1: All-School Barbecue Celebration
September 8: Student Group Fair & Ice Cream Social
September 22: Korean Cultural Festival

WELCOME TO THE FALL SEMESTER!

Coming Soon:
October 28: Halloween Ball
November 10: International Trivia Night
November 17-19: Holiday Art Sale
December 1: SAIC Internship Fair

Questions about anything SAIC? Get answers from studenthelp@saic.edu



Outside the Lines:

Chicago's indie rap legend makes waves with 'Coloring Book'

William Wiebe

Chance the Rapper's third album, "Coloring Book," has met with widespread acclaim since its release last month, earning praise for its lyrical dexterity and formal complexity. Blending elements of gospel and rap, organs and synths, old-school Chicago house and contemporary Atlanta trap, Chance quotes an abundance of musical inspirations to create something altogether his own. It is an Internet-age assemblage, a patchwork of source material that becomes an eclectic record of transformation, revealing the wide scope of Chance's talent.

When music critic Jessica Hopper spoke with Chance after the release of "Acid Rap" in the summer of 2013, he diverted their planned Chatham trip to the Harold Washington Library downtown, demurring that his story began in the community studio there. The library offered Chance free recording sessions and workshops, opportunities that proved crucial to the then-college dropout's development.

That investment in the young artist has more than been repaid. Chance has channeled the spirit of generosity that helped give him his start into his personality as an artist, releasing his work for free (much to the chagrin of the major labels, as he notes numerous times in "Coloring Book") and staking a claim in his hometown. Chance sells out listening parties, designs White Sox caps, and participates in multiple high profile music collectives, such as The Social Experiment and SaveMoney, all at the young age of 23. "LA for four months end up leaving right back/I'm in love with my city bitch I sleep in my hat," he intones on "Finish Line / Drown." Now, it's his city — and he's wearing a hat of his own creation.

Musically, Chance stands apart from the colloquialisms of his drill rap contemporaries — artists like Chief Keef and King Louie, who chronicle the violence of gang life in Chicago — although he finds ways to elaborate both their subject matter ("Summer Friends") and their rhythmic signatures ("Mixtape"). Primarily, he weaves stories beholden to the geography of the South Side but transcendent from the frame of his individual experience. His work sketches an outline of Chicago that leaves ample space for the listener to fill with their own story. The nostalgias, loves, and neighborhoods he recounts are his own, but the patterns of his memory, his intentions, and his path into adulthood are familiar to us all.

The calls to join in Chance's reflection and maturation multiply, in a variety of hues. Amidst the down-tempo lyrics of loss and acceptance that accompany "Summer Friends" and "Juke Jam," there is also validation. The jubilant "How Great" carries the promise that growth brings its own joys. Like D.R.A.M.'s meandering "You are very special/ You're special too," "How Great" asserts the power of change through a cover track, manifesting music's own ability to expand and adapt. More than anything, though, it is the full choral sounds that draw in Chance's listeners, offering communion in shared struggle.

These choral arrangements are among the greatest innovations of "Coloring Book." They spring, chiefly, from a collaboration between Chance and musician Francis and the Lights, who introduced the use of a "prismizer" to the album. That effect, a digital manipulation, builds out a chord progression around a single vocal track. The prismizer facilitates the dense pseudo-choral arrangements that appear throughout the album, leveling a counterweight to the pared-down rap.

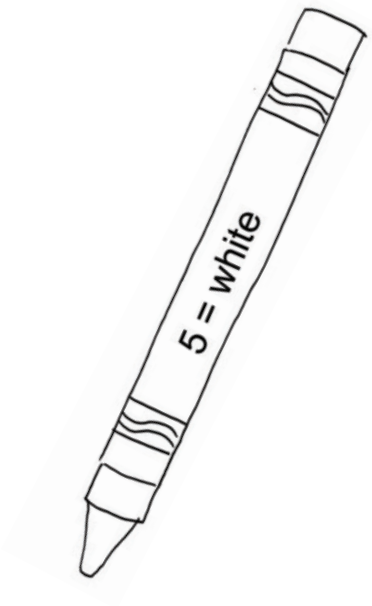
There is a certain formal beauty to the prismizer, a tool that creates a chorus from the individual. It contains the potential for the evangelizer to join a crowd of converts, while also revealing that the evangelizer is never alone: that he is always in the company of his faith. If Kanye West's distortions of Auto-Tune speak to the frailty of digital perfection, drawing our attention to the cracking wails of life that underlie a song's adulterated surface, Chance's prismizer is an invitation to come together in the mutuality of experience.

Even in his brashest moments, Chance is more likely to crack a joke and level with his listener than to flex his fame. Against the dark nights of the soul that drive Kanye's recent project, "The Life of Pablo," Chance approaches his life with a sense of play — this is, after all, a rapper who dispenses with a Xanax addiction over two couplets (on "Angels" and "Finish Line / Drown"); who comes up again and gets us to "start dancing." Whereas Kanye ends "Real Friends" celebrated and alone, Chance will stick around for the party, even if he doesn't wind up taking us home.

More than anything, "Coloring Book" charts an assumption of responsibility, a willingness to step into the roles we are handed. Though our lives are in flux and our relationships will change, the phone numbers and churches that locate our identities and ethics are ours — if we choose to stay true to them. We can only make it on our own terms: Chance can tell us when to go, but not whether we'll do better in an Uber or a Lyft.

We may not, "do the same drugs no more," but in the coloring books of our lives, we can "stay in the line" of our authentic selves.

Chance sells out listening parties, designs White Sox caps, and participates in multiple high profile music collectives, such as The Social Experiment and SaveMoney, all at the young age of 23.



William Wiebe *sometimes wonders about his past lives. He is pursuing an MFA in the photography department.*

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson

Chick Lit: LIVE

‘Miss Spoken’ is just one of Chicago’s greatest Live Lit events

Mary Fons

Good things happen when two smart women share margaritas and fresh chips and salsa. It happened at Garcia’s two years ago, when writer-performers Rosamund Lannin and Carly Oishi met for the first time and founded “Miss Spoken,” a live lit (“lit” as in “literature”) show that reserves the stage and the mic exclusively for “non-dudes.” On the last Wednesday of the month, at the scruffy-but-lovable Gallery Cabaret, audiences are presented an evening of fresh, original, “lady live lit” based on a theme.

“I love hearing women talk and I think women’s stories are telling,” said Lannin, a project manager and editor of Story Club magazine. “I love comic books and fiction and movies, and a lot of that is pretty male-dominated [...] both in terms of who makes it and who’s the main focus. That gets really old and sad. You get sick of girls never being the main event, or being represented one-dimensionally.” Active in the live lit scene herself, Lannin saw room for a series that would feature female writers specifically.

The same thought had occurred to Oishi, a blogger, three-time “Write Club” champ, and co-creator and former co-producer of “Solo in the 2nd City,” a reading series that gave Chicago singles a chance to publicly bemoan their love lives (or lack thereof.)

“I was living with my amazing friend, activist, teacher, and all-around badass feminist, Alicia ‘Swiz’ Sowisdral,” Oishi said. Sowisdral is founder of “Slut Talk,” a comedy and storytelling series featuring women’s personal tales of slutdom; the comedy showcase/open mic, “Feminist Happy Hour,” at The Whistler is another Sowisdral project.

“She was a really big influence in my life,” said Oishi, “someone who helped me discover my feminism.” Oishi knew her next project had to be one where women were the centerpiece. When she met like-minded Lannin at Garcia’s, everything fell into place.

What’s Live Lit Got To Do With It?

Some may argue that live lit is just a rebranding of the public reading, by no means a new idea. But the liberal blending of standup, storytelling, and an open-mic is what makes live lit different than the staid reading. Live lit is way more popular, too, judging from the proliferation of shows that have popped up in just the last five years, and the huge audiences that attend them.

“Live lit brings in a lot of great elements from stand-up and improv,” said Lannin. “I feel like performing adds depth and feeling to to the personal essay format, makes it more engaging and immediate and fun. I love reading personal essays, but there’s something that grabs you about seeing one performed by the author.”

“Selfishly, live lit is everything I’d been looking for,” said Oishi. “I have a theater, music, and writing background – it’s the perfect fit.”

Ladies’ Night

She’s not alone. In Chicago, there are something like 30 live lit shows a month. In this environment, a specialty show like “Miss Spoken” can find its talent and those who will support it.

Audience numbers are the most visible example of this support; the hat passed during “Miss Spoken” is another (performers split the pot). But it’s the audience’s respect for women writing on the theme of consent, for example, that makes the difference.

“I think part of the acceptance [of our show] is having an awesome, supportive crowd,” said Lannin. “I get concerned sometimes we’re performing in an echo chamber. Let’s be real: who comes out to a lady live lit show in a liberal neighborhood in an urban area? But then a guy will come up afterward and be like, ‘I had no idea it was like that’ and his female friend is like ‘Oh, any woman could tell a story like that,’ and you can see the gears shifting. That’s amazing.”

Lannin says that hearing many women tell variations of the same story shows “we’re not making it up.” The “it” might be multiple orgasms or the experience of rape. While a woman broaching such topics at other live lit events in Chicago is unlikely to be treated with open hostility, when she says “rape” or “gun” at “Miss Spoken,” nobody flinches.

Writer Tori Szekeres has performed at “Miss Spoken” twice: once at the “BFF” show in 2015, and once at the “Mix Tapes” show earlier this year.

“The stories at ‘Miss Spoken’ are universal to women of different incomes, education levels, ethnicities and stages of life,” said Szekeres. “Women need to know that we’re all in this together,” she added. By participating in a show that celebrates women’s writing, Szekeres feels she’s legitimizing women’s stories in a landscape that doesn’t always.

Get In Formation

“Miss Spoken” is curated, meaning Oishi and Lannin plan the lineup ahead of time and there’s no open mic. This shouldn’t discourage new folks; the hosts say around half of the people who have been in the show approached them first. For female writers interested in reading (trans and queer writers who identify as “non-dude” are welcome, too), the first step is to check out the show — with a bunch of your friends, of course.

Headed into its third year, “Miss Spoken” has taken its place at Chicago’s literary table. Their Facebook page shows more than 600 likes and is a good way to stay up-to-date on events and performers.

“Being successful in live lit is sort of elusive,” said Oishi. “I feel like as long as people keep showing up and saying good things about their experience, then we’ve done our job and we’ve done it well.”

Mary Fons *(MFAW 2018) is associate editor at F Newsmagazine. She writes and makes quilts.*

illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson

LIVE LIT EVENTS IN CHICAGO

A Month Of
Themed storytelling show and potluck.

2nd Story
“Hybrid performance event combining storytelling, wine, and music since 2002.” There are classes and coaching, too.

The Blackout Diaries
Stand-ups and “regular people” tell true drinking stories. Comedy-focused.

Do Not Submit
Storytelling open mic series with multiple locations.

Essay Fiesta
First-person, non-fiction essays; proceeds donated to charity. Since 2009.

Fictlicious
Writers read original (short) fiction and musicians perform original music and creative covers all based on a theme.

Funny Ha-Ha
Humor-focused curated reading series.

Grown Folks Stories
Monthly open mic (five-minute limit) storytelling series.

Here’s the Story
Storytelling show. Five featured performers, five slots on an open mic.

The Marrow
Reading series organized by Curbside Splendor Publishing.

The Moth
Lottery-drawn competition. Extemporaneous storytelling. National profile show with podcast and workshop offerings.

The Paper Machete
Weekly curated “live magazine.”

Tuesday Funk
Fiction, poetry, and essays.

That’s All She Wrote
Non-competitive live lit for “all stripes.” Featured guest. Free, BYOB.

The First Time
Pairs a reader’s personal story about a specific “first time” with a song performance. Curated by CHIRP Radio.

This Much is True
Curated storytelling. Always free, since 2009.

Slut Talk
Storytellers and comedians perform about their experiences being a slut.

Story Lab
Six featured storytellers.

Story Club
Featured readers with three open mic slots (eight minutes each).

Story Sessions
Six storytellers get 10 scripted minutes. Themed and curated.

Sunday Salon
Curated readings from local and international literary voices.

New Picture, Same Problem

Sexism repeats itself in Bruce Timm's 'Batman: The Killing Joke'

illustration by Bryan Fabry Dorsam

Brian Fabry Dorsam

Twenty-eight years ago, the Joker shot Barbara Gordon in the pelvis, photographed her undressed and bleeding, and raped her. Now infamous for exploiting female trauma to catalyze male character development, Alan Moore's legendary comic, "Batman: The Killing Joke," is a bleak tale of abuse. Barbara Gordon, who suits up nightly as Batgirl, is often seen as a preeminent example of a "woman in a refrigerator," and the book has rightly endured decades of criticism for her mistreatment.

When producer Bruce Timm began work on an extended animated adaptation, he decided to "actually use that extra story length to address one of the issues that [he] kind of always had with the comic in the first place," by adding a half-hour prologue that is "all about Barbara."

The new adaptation, which premiered at this year's San Diego Comic Con, had the opportunity to rewrite Barbara's brutal fate and reestablish her as one of comics' most complex and important female heroes. It doesn't.

The film begins with Barbara's narration. "First of all, I realize this is probably not how you thought the story would start," she says, seemingly aware of her treatment in the original telling.

Given her near-absence in Moore's book, Barbara's leading role in the opening gambit is reassuring — until she sets the scene "before the horror began." In its opening seconds, the film alludes twice to the sexual violence to come, as though simply inevitable.

The prologue follows Barbara's pursuit of a group of small-time thieves. Their ringleader, Paris Franz (yup), takes an immediate romantic interest in her. When his boss complains that "the Bat and his bitch" are all over the news, Franz replies, "What can I tell you? Batgirl's hot!" Routinely calling her "baby," "my love," and "my special girl," Franz commits further crimes in order to lure Barbara to him. When he drugs her to take advantage of her, Batman comes to her rescue.

Barbara and Batman argue heatedly and often about whether she should continue on the case, given Franz's blatant harassment. She acknowledges that his relentlessness is "a trick," but says it's still "a little flattering," at which point Batman actually mansplains sexual objectification.

Though some stories have explored a romantic link, Batman's role in Barbara's life is typically that of father figure. "Batman: The Killing Joke" firmly establishes him as her love interest. The heroes consummate their connection after brawling on a rooftop. Barbara gratuitously mounts Batman, who gropes her before she undresses on camera and descends out of frame. Batman then promptly plays the role of the aloof boyfriend. When Barbara eventually connects with him over the phone, she shouts, "It was just sex, for god's sake! It doesn't have to mean anything!"

Batman replies, "Later," and hangs up.

Barbara takes revenge on Franz, beating him nearly unconscious before noticing Batman looming disapprovingly. Barbara looks at what she has done and hangs her head, disappointed in herself.

After Franz is arrested, Barbara gives up the cowl and returns her suit to Batman, saying, "I thought I'd save you the trouble of ending this."

In the face of criticism, the film's writer Brian Azzarello said that Barbara is "stronger than the men in her life" and that she "controls" them. Yet Barbara is constantly the object of male attention, and consistently compromises her own interests to accommodate men. By dropping her suit at Batman's feet, she relinquishes the most important part of her identity to him.

All of this precedes one of the most infamous scenes in comic history.

Barbara's narration ends, and the film picks up where Moore's book begins. The Joker has escaped from Arkham Asylum and bought an amusement park, with plans to lure Batman to his death. On the way, he stops by Barbara's apartment, shoots a bullet through her spine, rapes her, and takes photographs to commemorate the evening.

During an argument in the prologue, Batman tells Barbara that they are "partners," but "not equals." He explains, "You haven't been to the edge … [of] the abyss. The place where you don't care anymore. Where all hope dies." The line implies that Barbara cannot measure up to her male counterpart until she endures the abuse and trauma to come.

What makes this film even more troubling is that the core creative team (comprised solely of men) seems oblivious. When asked to what extent they were trying to make a statement about misogyny through the character of Franz, Timm said, "It wasn't that we were necessarily trying to make a statement about the uglier side of some males' attitudes towards women. … It just seemed appropriate for the story."

What makes all of this even more troubling is that the core creative team (comprised solely of men) seems oblivious.

Remarking on Barbara's final moment as Batgirl, director Sam Liu said that Barbara is "the one who decides, 'I have to stop. There's a problem here, and I need to step away from this.' I think that comes from an emotional strength." However, her retirement only reads as submission when she's been manipulated and condescended to throughout the film.

At the post-premiere discussion, one journalist suggested that all of Barbara's power seemed to come from sex, to which Azzarello replied, "Wanna say that again, pussy?"

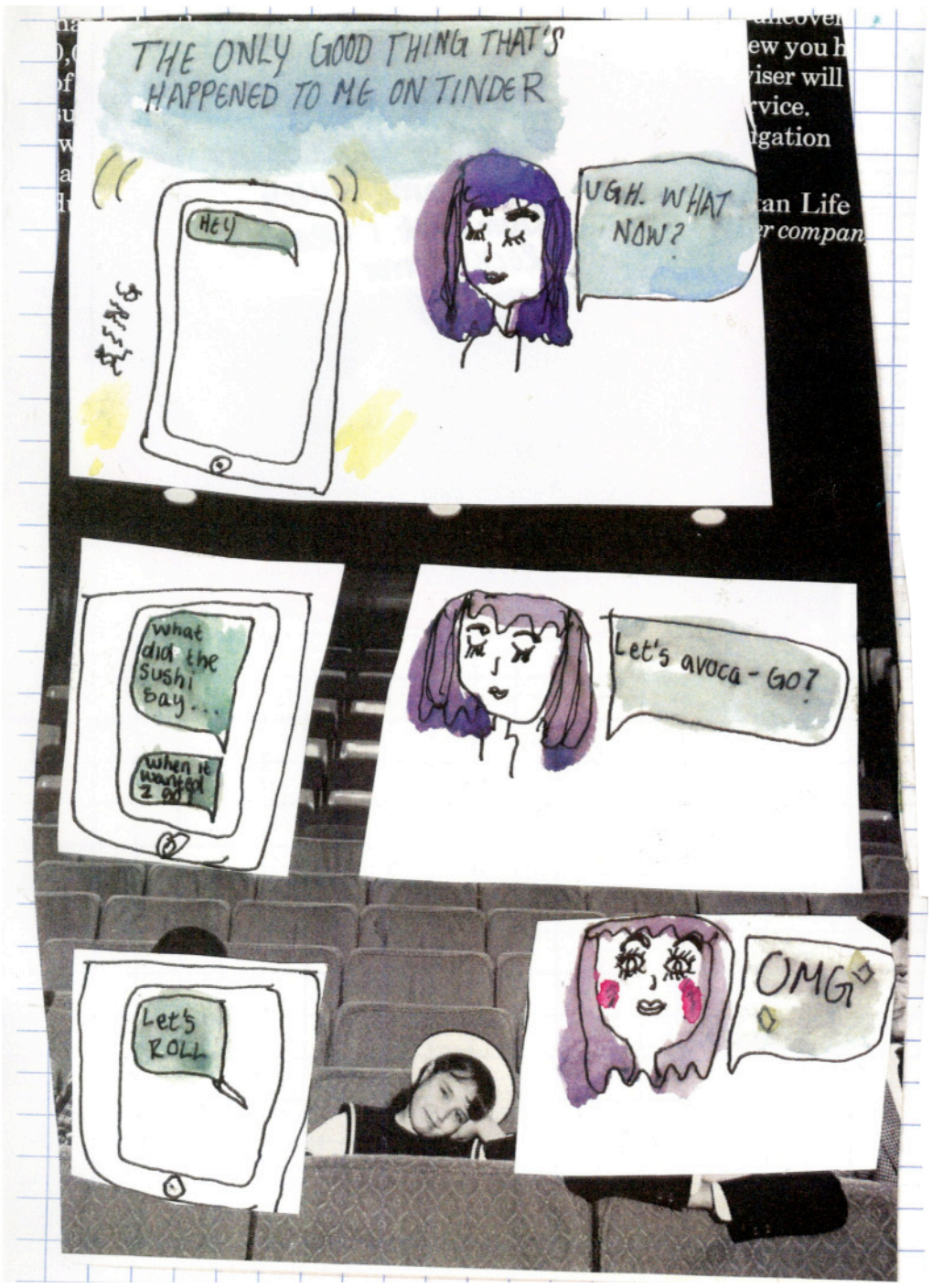
The filmmakers must be held accountable for their choice of source material. It is not enough to say, as Timm did, "Warts and all, the story is what it is. It's kind of a classic. … I'm just the guy who's putting it on the screen."

"Batman: The Killing Joke" is a sexist story. To choose to resurrect it, "warts and all," is an artistic decision that warrants critique, as well as an implicit validation of the book's problematic content.

Successfully altered, the new adaptation could have demonstrated the growth of feminist storytelling in the 28 years since the comic's release. Instead, in trying to remedy the legacy of sexism and violence in Moore's work, Timm, Azzarello, and Liu managed to make things vastly, dangerously worse.

Brian Fabry Dorsam *writes and makes theater. He draws at brianfabrydorsam.tumblr.com.*

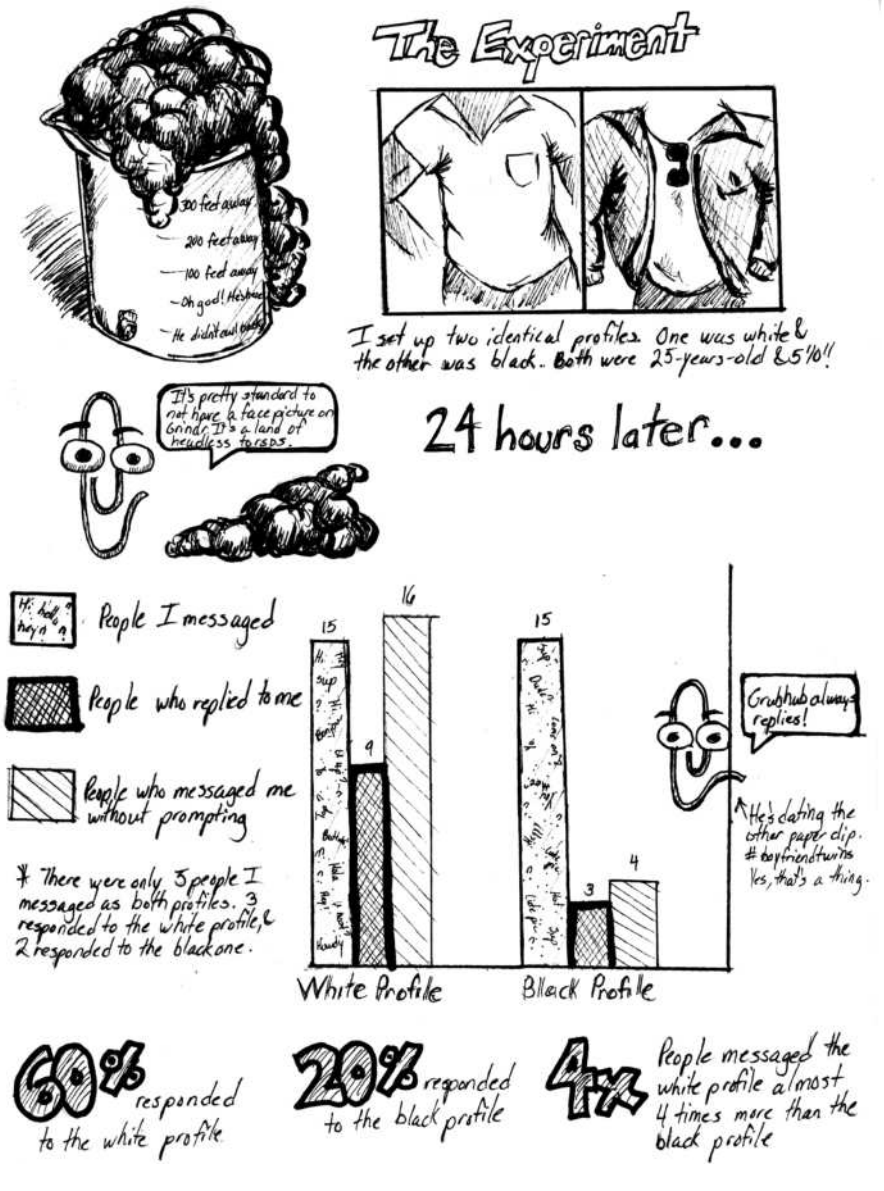
Meanwhile, IN COMICS...



Rosie Accola

Nicole Del Rio

Amber Huff



Ryan Blocker

WHERE

KERRY JAMES
MARSHALL: MASTRY

CLOSING
SEPTEMBER 25

BURNT SUGAR
THE ARKESTRA
CHAMBER
Sat, Sep 17

STUDENT
TICKETS $10

VALID ID REQUIRED
QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED

Kerry James Marshall, *Cub Scout*, 1995. Acrylic and mixed media on canvas mounted on board. Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of the Susan and Lewis Manilow Collection of Chicago Artists, 2003.31.
© 1995 Kerry James Marshall. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago

Burnt Sugar the Arkestra Chamber. Photo: Ken Weiss.

FREE ADMISSION FOR
SAIC STUDENTS WITH VALID ID

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

MCACHICAGO.ORG
WHERE ART IS NOW

IS NOW