

# fnewsmagazine

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago arts, culture, and politics

March


Party

14 SAIC Resists

26 Representation On Stage

This March, thousands of people in costumes (Sharks! Evil politicians! Sexy snowmen!) will take part in a time-honored Chicago tradition: They'll dip their bodies in the icy waters of Lake Michigan to raise money for the Special Olympics. The Chicago Polar Plunge is in its 17th year, and celebrities like Lady Gaga, Vince Vaughn, and Jimmy Fallon have participated in the past. It's the kind of thing I've always had one word for: slacktivism.

continued on page 16



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<div>04   F+</div> <div>I MET MY DESTINY WHERE LAND MEETS SEA</div> <div>~</div> <div>Annie Leue</div>	<div>05   F+</div> <div>NO FROSTBITE IN THE SUNSHINE STATE</div> <div>~</div> <div>Emily Rich</div>	<div>06   F+</div> <div>THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE XYLOPHONE</div> <div>~</div> <div>Mary Fons</div>
<div>08   SAIC</div> <div>FULL HOUSE</div> <div>~</div> <div>Gabrielle Welsh</div>	<div>10   SAIC</div> <div>PRINTED MATTER</div> <div>~</div> <div>J. Howard Rosier</div>	<div>13   SAIC</div> <div>RESIST AND PERSIST</div> <div>~</div> <div>Inbal Palombo</div>
<div>14   NEWS</div> <div>#NOT MY PRESIDENT</div> <div>~</div> <div>J. Howard Rosier</div>	<div>16   NEWS</div> <div>ACTIVISM ON ICE</div> <div>~</div> <div>Sophie Lucido Johnson</div>	<div>19   ENT.</div> <div>PLAY ANYTHING: HERSTORY PLAYLIST</div> <div>~</div> <div>Rosie Accola</div>
<div>21   ENT.</div> <div>'MS. MARVEL' V. THE MUSLIM BAN</div> <div>~</div> <div>Brian Fabry Dorsam</div>	<div>22   ENT.</div> <div>'DEGRASSI' FOR PRESIDENT</div> <div>~</div> <div>Sophie Lucido Johnson</div>	<div>24   ARTS</div> <div>TICKLING HEAVEN</div> <div>~</div> <div>Kioto Aoki</div>
<div>25   ARTS</div> <div>UNFAIR TRADE</div> <div>~</div> <div>Mary Fons</div>	<div>26   ARTS</div> <div>TRANSMISSIONS ON HUMANISM</div> <div>~</div> <div>Emily Rich</div>	<div>29   COMICS</div> <div>'STRANGE FRUIT' &amp; OTHER COMICS</div> <div>~</div> <div>Comics Contributors</div>

fnewsmagazine

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ILLUSTRATION BY SACHA LUSK



# I Met My Destiny Where Land Meets Sea



We are all trying to find meaning in our lives. It rests at the core of the human experience, right alongside finding your non-canine soul-mate and seeing the DVD screensaver icon bounce perfectly into the corner of the TV screen. But like most things that matter, the path is neither clear nor consistent. Some may find fulfillment in simple earthly pleasures such as figuring out what kohlrabi even is and immersing oneself in Disney Pixar conspiracy theories. Others (cough: me) find their life's purpose in stress-eating fried foods like the world is ending and ranting about politics on the internet until every single person I love has become physically exhausted by my presence. To each her own.

One thing I hope we can all agree on, however, is the power of one voice (and one sandwich) to guide us through this change towards a better tomorrow. We want a voice / sandwich that says, "Yes we can; and also please put me in your mouth." That proclaims, "Together we can create a world that welcomes everyone, and also I can't promise that your initial reaction to me won't be both embarrassing and involuntary." That shouts, "Hope!" and, "Pickles!"

Well, that voice and that power are within all of us, and that sandwich can be also — for a nominal fee. I'm referring to the Fried Chicken Sandwich at Parson's Chicken & Fish, located at 2952 W. Armitage Avenue. For only \$11, you too can once again be filled with unabashed optimism for the future. Within minutes of walking out the door, I found myself mentally drafting an ambitious five-year plan, taking special care to factor in the needs of my food baby, Elsa.

The first time I tried this sandwich was your average day: woke up at 11 a.m., forgot to participate in any sort of self care until 3, validated my existence by going grocery shopping, and then proceeded to spend additional money on food that I didn't cook. Pretty typical. Likewise, this fateful evening out started as they all do — zealously, with a round of drinks and a hearty appetizer that had the exciting potential to ruin our appetites.

In this case, that appetizer was chili cheese fries — a choice that immediately caused every gland in my body to panic and simultaneously secrete enough stomach acid to gnaw through the chassis of a Ford F150. I preemptively felt heartburn in places I'm almost positive have nothing to do with my digestive tract. But regardless of the desperate message my autonomic nervous system was trying to deliver to my idiot brain,

the fries were worth the pain. I think we made our satisfaction clear to the waiter when he offered to take away our not-yet-finished plate and was met with a pair of stony glares one might only find appropriate when directed at the daily national news or your Monday morning email inbox.

Before I was able to celebrate / regret my appetizer decision, my dining date and I received our matching fried chicken sandwiches (twinsies!). To get the full picture of the caliber of the experience we're discussing here, I'll throw out a few buzzwords:

Flaky. Crunchy. Tangy. Smooth. Pickles. Spicy. Cheese. Metamorphosis. Symphony. Moonlit veranda. Appalachian sunrise. A really comfortable chair.

Needless to say, this sandwich caused me to find myself not only spiritually, but ideologically, aesthetically, and celestially as well; and if you haven't yet found yourself celestially, you don't know what you're missing.

I know what you're thinking. I'm placing too much existential importance on a piece of meat crammed between two pieces of bread. To that I say — and please don't take this the wrong way — "AWAY WITH YE, NAYSAYERS!HISSSSS!" There's so much more to this sandwich than just meat and bread. There's coleslaw in there too. And might I point out that there is only one letter separating the word "fried" and "friend." If you don't think that's the sign of something happening that's larger than all of us, then I think our time here is done.

**Prepare to die  
happy — unless you're  
a chicken or a fish**

## OVERALL

**Price:** Decent, seeing as you get a lot of food for your money and a lot of unbridled happiness for your food. We both left spending about \$28 each, including tip.

**Location:** Cheap via Uber from my apartment, but simultaneously expensive considering Uber's complicity in the degradation of human lives. Next time I'm using Lyft instead. Or just, like, any other form of transportation.

**Flavor:** \*One long, exaggerated, contented sigh.\*

**Overall Experience:** I have been delivered over the precipice of my own personal awakening and shall approach every dawn with a renewed zeal for life. Dog bless.

Flaky.  
Crunchy. Tangy.  
Smooth. Pickles.  
Spicy. Cheese.  
Metamorphosis.  
Symphony.



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.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANNIE LEUE

### FRIED CHICKEN FACT!

According to Purdue University, over 8 billion chickens are consumed in the U.S. each year. Okay, maybe not all of them are fried but ... that's a lot of chickens.

### FRIED CHICKEN FACT!

The Scots get the credit for inventing fried chicken. Scottish immigrants brought their traditional recipes with them when they landed in the American South and the rest is history.

### FRIED CHICKEN FACT!

The #friedchicken hashtag on Instagram is actually pretty exciting.



*Advice on how to survive  
Chicago winters*

# NO FROSTBITE in the SUNSHINE STATE from a Floridian.

## FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRY PEOPLE, LEND ME YOUR EARMUFFS.

Where I'm from, in Orlando, Florida, we definitely know how to stay warm: We go outside. When I tell Midwestern people this, they tell me literally everything they think I might need to know to withstand my first Chicago winter. Allow me to pass on some unsolicited tips. Well, unsolicited by you; my editors are, in fact, soliciting.

## LET'S GET PRACTICAL: ON PUFFY COATS, THE CHALLENGE OF SCARVES, AND DANGERS IN DISGUISE

The most stylish thing to have during a Chicago winter is knowledge. Learn from others who actually know what they are talking about, like where to find the ugliest — but warmest — coats. Believe me, you want the ugliest one.

For instance, my warmest coat has a built-in belt. Who knew a cinched waist could go so poorly? However, almost immediately upon my arrival in Chicago, I was given permission by a fellow citizen to look as unseemly as necessary in order to ensure my delicate Florida bones would not freeze. Learn from your winter-worn neighbors!

I was worried when I acquired said coat that, upon entering buildings in it, I would not know where to put the hefty item. In Florida, we don't have coat hooks because we don't have coats; on our one day of winter, we keep all of our layers on so that we can bake in the heat of whatever room we occupy. Then I learned about coat hooks, which are installed in many of our classrooms. Then I got to use the coat hooks! Finding joy in small things is extremely stylish. Enjoy the coat hooks.

Another thing to learn about: scarves. Did you know there are about a million ways to wrap a scarf? And another fun fact: I didn't know a single one of them when I got here. YouTube is a great resource in this department, as are roommates who watch you struggle to toss the ends of your scarf around your neck, using a huge amount of effort. I don't recommend the tossing method. I do recommend scarves.

I also recommend you learn to wear static electricity with grace. There are ways to avoid being shocked, but all of them involve also avoiding rubber-soled shoes or wool. Tip: To stay warm and safe while walking on ice, just succumb to the fact that you are going to get shocked, and wear your rubber-soled boots and wool. I also recommend boots that have some kind of warm lining to keep your feet extra toasty, and high tops for when the snow is deep.



ILLUSTRATION BY YEN-KAI HUANG

## MAKING A SHOPPING LIST, CHECKING IT TWICE (GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S WARM AND WHO DIES)

I've already mentioned that you need an ugly coat, scarves, and rubber-soled boots to round out your winter look. Another essential? Long underwear. There is nothing sexier than wearing an entire form-fitting outfit underneath your outfit. It's like you have a secret that no one knows. Or like you're Catwoman. I like pretending I'm the Flash because then I could minimize my time in the Chicago tundra if I wanted to. But then again, I don't have to, because I'm wearing long underwear, which is secretly keeping me warm.

Because your street fashion is limited to warm and ugly, I also suggest an enamel pin that lets everyone know what you're about, even when you look like a marshmallow that's been microwaved, but colder. My pin is a rainbow because I'm hoping for an end to suffering — both with regard to Trump's America and to this, my first Chicago winter. It also adds color to my outfit and lets everyone know I'm gay. It's a win-win pin.

Once I'm completely bundled in my full winter outfit, the only thing uncovered on my body are my eyes. I suggest you wear a pair of sunglasses to keep your eyes warm. So far this has only marginally worked for me, but I feel hip.

## THE MOM-FRIEND SECTION

I have a few more tips for you to remain comfortable while everything else turns to ice. First, don't trust your roommate when she tells you leggings will be enough to wear outside. They aren't. They won't be until probably April. (I am basing this estimate on intuition alone.)

Remember that snow is water, too. I can feel the look you are giving me right now like, "Of course snow is frozen water." But if you go out in a non-waterproof jacket or coat or sweater, you will get wet and uncomfortable to a degree I had not guessed based on my basic knowledge of what snow is. I share my mistakes with you so you don't repeat them.

Make sure to give yourself extra time to prepare for the out-of-doors so you can put on all the things and make it to wherever you're going on time. I feel that saying, "Sorry I'm late; I had to put on four layers and my boots and my pants over my long underwear" is not a valid excuse for being late to something. Being late is never in style. Plus, once you arrive at your destination you have to shed your layers, too — so you can use the coat hooks — and this is embarrassing and distracting if you're already late.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't offer some guidance for those of you who might visit my home state.

If you're in Florida and it's "winter," I think it looks cool when you get to wear jeans with your t-shirts. I'm just saying that it's not every day you get to wear long pants with your tees and tanks in the Sunshine State. Take advantage of the 75-degree weather! As a child, I particularly enjoyed rolling around in the grass in my long corduroys during cooler days. I highly recommend this activity. You could also go to the beach. And in all seriousness: Make sure you always wear sunscreen in Florida any time of the year. Sunburn is worse than windburn and about as bad as frostbite. (From what I hear.)

**Emily Rich** is a first-year Writing MFA student. She's a playwright, photographer, and teaching artist by day, and preferably asleep at night.



# The ~ The Man, The ~ Myth, ~ The ~ Xylophone\*

When students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) aren't listening to music on their headphones, another soundtrack attends their comings and goings on campus: that of jazzy, cascading vibraphone music, provided by a street musician many refer to simply as "Xylophone Guy."

Positioned in front of the Citibank on Monroe Street and Michigan Avenue from mid-morning until roughly 5 p.m. nearly every day of the week, accomplished vibraphonist and composer Preyas Roy treats the citizens of the Loop to a catalog of pop and jazz standards with plenty of improvisational flair. Though they may enjoy Roy's music, few students or workers realize just how accomplished a musician "Xylophone Guy" really is — and that he might be the happiest guy in all of downtown.

## Preyas Roy (also known as 'Xylophone Guy') in his own words

### MALLETS AND MENTORSHIP

Roy, who was born in Syracuse, New York, started playing the mallets when he was about 11. Though he has been playing ever since, he has not always been what he is today: a full-time, professional musician.

"I came to Chicago to study math at the University of Chicago," Roy said, "and I started playing music around town maybe eight or nine years ago. Eventually, I left school — because I wanted to be a musician."

Roy found his people on the jazz circuit and connected with a mentor: celebrated Chicago jazz violinist Sam "Savoirfaire" Williams. But Roy quickly felt the harsh realities of trying to make a living as a musician, even in a big city like Chicago.

"I was gigging and working, going to jam sessions, doing stuff that musicians do, but I wasn't making any money doing it and no one I was talking to was making any money doing it, either," he said.

"There's just not a lot of work and what work there is doesn't pay what it needs to. Gigs generally pay a hundred bucks. If you work for a hundred bucks every night, you're still struggling. So that kind of pushed me to try playing on the street."

It was Williams who gave Roy the scoop on street performance — also known as "busking." Much of Williams' income comes from the hours he spends busking at O'Hare Airport; if Roy is "Xylophone Guy," Williams is "O'Hare Violin Guy" for many travelers coming in and out of Chicago.

"Sam taught me how to play out [on the streets], how to set up, how to be safe," Roy said. "And that was about three years ago."

### PUNCHING THE CLOCK AT MICHIGAN AND MONROE

Before coming to his current corner back in August, Roy — who has played in jazz combos all over the world — played for two years near Millennium Station at Randolph Street. It was only after some residents in the area expressed the desire for a quieter neighborhood that Roy needed to seek a new home base.

When the jazz combo that had been playing at Michigan Avenue and Monroe Street all summer moved to a spot on State Street, Roy set up shop. It wasn't a difficult transition; he already had his street performer's license (a requirement for those who play music in Chicago's public spaces and one currently under scrutiny for those who wish to play on CTA property) and his prior experience meant he had all his gear ready to go: instrument, personal effects, tip bucket, clothes appropriate for the weather — Roy wears many layers under his fashionable, multicolored poncho — and his metronome. Passersby may have noticed a wire running from under Roy's hat and under his chin; that's the cord to his headphones, which plug into the phone in his pocket.

"I tried playing without a metronome for a while," he said. "My timing was getting really bad, so I started using a metronome app."

**\*Vibraphone**

To be sure, there are challenges of busking on one of the busiest corners of the city.

"I do get harassed," Roy said. "Definitely not every day, but definitely every week. Most of the time, it's harmless — mostly junkies and drunks who don't understand that they're not supposed to be here. Kids generally don't mess with me except the ones who try to rob me. That's happened twice."

Roy said that both times kids tried to grab his bucket, it "didn't go well" for the thieves. The bucket is tied to his instrument stand and he's not one to relinquish his paycheck, as it were, without a fight. "Both times," he said, "I chased them down."

### "PLAY WHAT YOU LOVE"

But the little annoyances of playing outside — rowdy kids, subzero temperatures — are nothing compared to the joy "Xylophone Guy" gets from doing his favorite thing: playing music in a place with vibrancy that can't be found in a concert hall.

"I play all day. I literally play, then I eat a sandwich and I smoke a cigarette — and then I play some more. That's what I do all day. I do what I love. It's awesome. And I really love the intensity of it. All the noise and chaos of being downtown sort of forces you to dig really hard and find the zone. It's a challenge you wouldn't have normally onstage if people came to listen to you; you're sort of automatically focused and everyone is sort of focused for you."

As for his repertoire, SAIC students hurrying between Pret A Manger and the Sullivan Building may hear jazz standards or pop songs, but they can be sure they're hearing music that has passed the Preyas Test. We have Roy's mentor to thank for that.

"[Sam told me], 'Don't pick music you don't really love, because you're not going to be able to deliver,'" Roy said. "You have to play music that's instantly recognizable and that you can play really hard. And that's kind of a cool challenge, to find that stuff. It makes me dig back from before I started studying music, like, what was I listening to? Billy Joel and Motown and Beatles. And it's kind of hilarious because I spent 15 years studying nothing but bebop and free jazz! It's funny how things happen."

Mary Fons, an MFA student in Writing, is the associate editor at F Newsmagazine. Read her blog, PaperGirl, at [maryfons.com](http://maryfons.com).

### 3 MUSICIANS WHO STARTED OFF AS BUSKERS

Tracy Chapman obtained a highly sought-after permit to perform in Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Ed Sheeran was performing on London's streets and couch surfing before finding success

Jewel traveled the country as a young street performer

B. B. King's musical journey began as a kid playing guitar on the streets of Mississippi

Janis Joplin was a street performer living a beatnik lifestyle while at the University of Texas



**BUSKING OUT**

Preyas Roy posts up shop on Michigan Avenue, playing vibraphone renditions of everything from pop tunes to jazz standards. (Photography by Jayleen Marie Perez)





# Full House

## Roger Brown's sometimes problematic collection is an untapped resource

“Artists collect and choose to live with things for very different reasons than your normal person. Artists choose to live with things that are disturbing, that cause curiosity, or that are confusing,” said head curator Lisa Stone of the Roger Brown Study Collection (RBSC).

Roger Brown, an alumnus of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), left his art collection (and the house that contains it) to the school as a resource when he died in 1997.

The RBSC is a treasure-trove of artistic objects that often incite amazement and wonder, although some pieces Brown collected leave a lingering feeling of discomfort. The house, an important resource for students at SAIC, isn't entirely known. Neither is the life of the artist behind the collection, who donated both his four homes and his entire estate to the school. Brown's name is commonly thrown around alongside other SAIC alumni and elites (like Barry and Mary Ann Maclean, and LeRoy Neiman). With him, as with them, it's easy to get lost in the resources that a namesake can provide.

After a stint at the American Academy of Art, Brown came to SAIC in 1965, and completed both his undergraduate and graduate degrees there. He finished in 1970, and saw seemingly instant success.

Brown was first exhibited by art dealer Phyllis Kind in 1971 — beginning his association with the Chicago Imagists. By 1974, only four years after achieving his master's degree, Brown purchased his studio and home on Halsted Street and began renovating it with his partner George Veronda.

### SURREALIST ART

Painting created by Chicago native artist Paul LaMantia at the Roger Brown Study Collection (RBSC) in Lincoln Park. LaMantia's painting hangs on the second floor hallway accompanied by a diverse collection works. (Photography by Jayleen Marie Perez)



Throughout Brown's life, his artistic career prospered, and he came to own three home studios. In the two years leading up to his death, Brown willed his homes and estates to SAIC. His residences — in New Buffalo, Michigan; La Conchita, California; and Chicago — were all under the ownership of SAIC until the school sold the La Conchita home to establish a scholarship in Brown's name. SAIC faculty and full time staff members can apply for two-week residencies at the Roger Brown, New Buffalo, Michigan home and studio, while students can explore his collection in the city.

The collection is essentially Brown's home preserved as it was when he gave it to the school. Scattered around his clean and kept house are many depictions of biblical figures, works from his fellow Chicago Imagists, personal works, and pieces by unknown and self-trained artists. As he traveled often (he even won a travel grant upon his graduation from SAIC), many objects are foreign or indigenous. While the home is cluttered, it is well organized, thanks in large part to the curatorial staff.

Many students are unaware that this collection exists. Not only is it off the main campus in Lincoln Park, the collection isn't really discussed outside the curatorial or Contemporary Practice (CP) classrooms. Unless a professor brings up the collection in class, it can be difficult for students to know about this resource.

“The RBSC was never discussed in any of my CP classes. Although I had resourceful professors during the experience, none of them ever mentioned the RBSC,” said sophomore Hannah Cusimano. “I would consider myself to be mildly involved with the SAIC community. I am part of a couple of focus groups through the Wellness Center, and I attend quite a few school events each semester. I also work for the Media Center, so I feel like I would know about the collection, but I never did.”

Students who do interact with the collection often feel it's worth the trip to Lincoln Park.

“I think his collection inspired me as far as a form of research, which was the motive for my class viewing the house,” said freshman Vivian Brockman. “At the time of my visit, I focused primarily on the possible psychological motivations and understanding the relationships of the genres of objects. I also was interested in the ideas of the value assigned to objects in the form of a collection or museum.” Brockman's CP research course visited the collection last semester.

“A lot of other classes come here, but it's certainly not school-wide,” said Stone. “A ceramics class comes every fall; it's called the Curious Intimate Object. They install their collection throughout the collection for critique. A performance class meets here throughout the semester and eventually performs in the space around their research gathered here.”



He definitely had some pieces that depicted people of color in an extremely offensive manner. Not that I think they should remove them from his collection.

entryway that advertises a Chicago “freak show” where an audience could come gawk at the armless foreigners. These sensitive and often appropriative works scattered around can certainly bring discomfort to the students and visitors who use the collection.

“He definitely had some pieces that depicted people of color in an extremely offensive manner. Not that I think they should be removed from his collection; that would only attempt to ignore and erase the racism communities of color had and still have to endure,” said junior Zoe Kaplan, who remembers visiting the RBSC with her CP research course.

Popular opinion seems to reflect that the RBSC is a place with troubled objects.

“There are many museums and institutions dedicated to the preservation of stereotypical imagery of Blacks in America, and the ability to study these items first-hand allows us to have access to the troubling history of our nation,” said Director of Student Affairs for Diversity and Inclusion Rashayla Brown. “Destroying them or pretending that they never happened wouldn’t do much to educate on these issues.”

Many students don’t know who Brown actually was or whether his collection represents his life, work, and time at SAIC. It’s worth noting that there are some questionable pieces that Brown collected and displayed in his home. Pieces of negrobilia are scattered around the home, as well as some indigenous objects. A tapestry hangs in the



PAINTINGS SALON STYLE

The central image is by artist Drossos Skyllas. The collection is preserved as it was when Brown died. (Photography by Jayleen Marie Perez)

Stone, stood with Brown on the importance of preserving pieces even if they evoked discomfort. “There’s often the idea that these are things we should get rid of; we should bury; just annihilate. But that doesn’t make that history go away, but dealing with it leads to understanding,” she said.

Many wonder why Brown would collect these objects in the first place. When asked whether or not she thought Brown

shared the beliefs of the creators or collectors of any of the racially charged works, Stone said, “No, not at all! But they are [racially insensitive] and we still have to deal with them. How and why he had them. So we have to be able to talk about what they mean in this place. ... Brown as a southerner, from Alabama, grew up with all these objects that people just had around.” She added that “the fact that he has the object doesn’t mean he condones the message, but because [the objects] are really interesting on a number of gut levels.”

At his core, Brown, both during his life and in his legacy, represents a facet of the artistic past that many of us wish for. The average four-year SAIC student (if they graduate) will leave with almost \$40,000 in student debt. As much as we wish to travel the world and study art history on our own travel fellowships, many of us won’t have the chance to collect relics in Egypt and Europe as Brown did.

He may not represent the average SAIC student in 2017, but Brown’s home and collection can inspire young students. Harnessing the problematic aspects of his artistic collection is part of that.

Gabrielle Welsh is a student in the Visual and Critical Studies program, where she focuses on photography and writing. She likes “Chopped” and conspiracy theories.



SPARE BEDROOM

This room is filled with work created by Joseph Elmer Yoakum at the Roger Brown Study Collection (RBSC) in Lincoln Park. Yoakum was a self-taught artist. (Photography by Jayleen Perez)



# Printed Matter

## *A guide to the school newsstand near you*

Students and faculty at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) are hopefully well aware of the F Newsmagazine newsstands scattered around campus. But what about the stacks of papers and magazines that are piled up next to it? Or the journals floating around your departments? You might even have several subscriptions to contend with — digital or otherwise. It can be hard to discern what's worth the time.

So, as an aid in navigating the intimidating stacks of saddle-stitched publications, here's a short list of a few you might've seen around campus. Happy reading, but tread lightly. There's some great stuff in the mix, but things aren't always what they appear to be.

### SAIC-AFFILIATED

This category is for publications SAIC pays for or staffs, like the SAIC's own biannual magazine; or Dahm-So, by the Korean Student Association. The Office of Institutional Advancement and Student Affairs, respectfully, publish these magazines. The SAIC magazine is thoroughly an advertisement for the institution — its students, its alumni, and most certainly its professors and administrators. Yet with pieces that include an examination of artist Michelle Grabner's studio and an SAIC student talking to David Raskin about Cy Twombly, a student may gain a clarity of insight that leaps beyond the promotional. "Oh," thinks the probably bespectacled erudite, "so *this* is why I'm going to school here."

Dahm-So, despite its Korean student focus, offers things potentially useful for any student, like games and recipes. The leading article in the most recent issue is an interview with Dana L. Johnson of the Computer Resources and Information Technologies (CRIT) department, who, among other things, helps students troubleshoot technological problems. There's also a handy infographic spread of identity-focused student organizations at SAIC, and the latest issue features a lush student portfolio display and an article examining great art supplies from Korea.

Also tucked in the stacks is the Ox-Bow Course Catalog. Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency is an institution affiliated with SAIC that an alumna of the school founded in 1910.

Then there's us, of course: F Newsmagazine, an independent, student-run publication.

And then there's the Platypus Review.

Platypus is in nearly every building — sometimes on multiple floors. The pamphlet's statement of purpose is lengthy, but it includes a desire to "create and sustain a space for interrogating and clarifying positions and orientations currently represented on the Left."

SAIC's student government — the University of Chicago Student Government, Dalhousie Student Union, Loyola University of Chicago, The New School, New York University, and The Platypus Affiliated Society — partially funds Platypus. The review often name-drops Karl Marx and György Lukács and more contemporary incarnations of leftist thought like Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. Even if the Frankfurt School does nothing for you, a major selling point of Platypus is its willingness to publish lengthy articles. Introductions to works published elsewhere online are featured, and a seemingly compact design folds out into a broadsheet with two, maybe three articles maximum — doubtlessly due to a desired word count of 750 to 4,500 words.



### WE'VE GOT ISSUES

Counterclockwise from top left: Newcity, the Redeye, SAIC Magazine, Dahm-So, the Chicago Reader, the Platypus Review, the Ox-Bow catalog, and the South Side Weekly. (Photography by Juan Carlos Herrera)

### DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS

Departmental Publications are annual journals and catalogs that showcase the work of graduating students. Unless a student is a member of the publication's department, these can be difficult to locate. They're great for checking out fellow students' work, or for peeking at what's getting produced on campus. The Writing department has two: Mouth for BFA students, and Collected for MFA students. In the studio-focused departments, such as photography and print media, exhaustive catalogs of student work are released.

### NON-SAIC AFFILIATED

There are a number of publications on campus that have absolutely nothing to do with SAIC, and are often present in school buildings. They inevitably boil down to events and nightlife round-ups, which, aside from more critically-minded journalism pieces, are frequently the whole reason why people read free papers in the first place.

Before the company restructured, one might've seen a copy of the Red Eye — especially in the MacLean Center. That paper is owned by Tribune Company. The Chicago Reader (founded at the Neiman Center or the Columbus Drive building and published by the Sun-Times Group) and Newcity (an independent founded at the Neiman Center and the Lakeview Building) are two other common non-SAIC papers that you might consider flipping through.

One unexpected publication we found was The Seen, a paper put out by EXPO — the contemporary and modern arts exposition held every year at Navy Pier. Like most free papers, it's ad-heavy, but there are some informative interviews and articles, and some good-sized art prints that art-lovers can rip out and tack up on their walls.

J. Howard Rosier is the news editor at F Newsmagazine and is pursuing his MFA in the Writing department. He is also probably wearing a blazer. and cradling a stack of papers.

If the Frankfurt School does nothing for you, a major selling point of Platypus is its willingness to publish lengthy articles.



### STACKS ON STACKS

Publications in a hall of the Lakeview Building in February, 2017. (Photography by Keniu Rivera)



# SPRING

# 2017

# END-OF-

# YEAR

# EVENTS

3.11-3.31  
BFA Show

3.31-4.1  
How to Get Read:  
MA in Visual and  
Critical Studies  
Symposium and  
Exhibition

4.7-4.21  
ARTBASH 2017:  
Contemporary  
Practices  
Exhibition

4.8  
ARTBASH 48.24.12  
Screening

4.8  
Undergraduate  
Performance Festival

4.20  
Historic Preservation Symposium

4.29-5.17  
MFA Show

4.29  
BA in Visual and Critical  
Studies Symposium

5.5  
Fashion 2017

5.6-5.7  
IMPACT Graduate  
Performance Festival

5.8, 5.10, 5.11 & 5.12  
Film, Video, New Media,  
Animation, and Sound  
Festival

5.9 & 5.11  
SAIC Apprentice Teacher  
Presentations

5.10  
Department of Art Education  
George Roeder Master's  
Symposium

5.13  
MA in Art Therapy Exhibition  
and Thesis Presentations

5.13  
BFA Writing Program  
Reading

5.13-5.15  
Post-Baccalaureate  
Studio Salon

5.13-5.30  
Design Show 2017

5.14  
MA in Administration  
and Policy Symposium

5.16  
MFA Writing  
Program Reading

7.16-7.30  
Low-Residency  
MFA Show



# Resist and Persist



Ruba, a 22-year-old student, talked to attendees about her experience as a refugee from Syria at the Academics United - No to Visa and Immigration Ban event held at The LeRoy Neiman Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC's) Sharp Building on February 9, 2017. Ruba left Syria in 2013 for Egypt where she remained for four years before coming to the U.S.

"It's true, I am Syrian and Muslim but I only came here to look for a better future and to look for a community. I hope you are all with us and beside us as allies when we need you."



Columbia College MFA in photography student Anahid Ghorbani said: "I'm from Iran. I'm affected. I'm not Muslim but I'm from a Muslim country. The visa ban has affected my life. I cannot go home. My family can't come to my graduation. I was filling out an application for my parents to come but now I can't."



SAIC MFA in performance student Maryam Taghavi introduces speakers and reads the Academics United - No to Visa and Immigration Ban statement.

***How the SAIC community is responding to Donald Trump's Muslim immigration ban***



SAIC's president Elissa Tenny offered words of solidarity with students impacted by the travel and visa ban.



A third-year SAIC graduate student from the Masters in Art and Art History program holds a publication in support of immigrants. The student, who preferred to remain anonymous, said, "It's our responsibility to dismantle white supremacy. I'm here for the end of borders, prisons, police and bans. We've got to become ungovernable."

Inbal Palombo is a BFA student with a concentration in film / video. She might run away with her camera, girlfriend, dog and a stash of Nutella someday.





**FROM THE TWEET TO THE STREET**  
A protester holds a sign with a social media hashtag in downtown Chicago during a rally on November 9, 2016. Thousands of protesters have taken to the street since inauguration day. (Photography by Cassandra Davis)

**#** On Inauguration Day 2017, I joined a small group from the Writing department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) to participate with thousands of Chicagoans in protests near and around Trump Tower.

The event was organized by James Stewart, 32, a student in SAIC's MFA - Writing program, who mailed the department to urge participation. (Full disclosure: Stewart asked me to proofread the memo before he sent it out.) Much of the popular Democratic mood following the election focused on the idea that the election had been stolen; there was a distinct mood of victimization. But Stewart felt guilt.

As in every presidential election since he turned 18, Stewart voted. On the local level, he attended several marches protesting police brutality. But given the outcome, he felt he fell short. He didn't feel as though he did enough to advocate for liberal democracy during the Obama years.

"I'm still not sure I've completely come to terms with [a Donald Trump presidency]," he said, reflecting later. "But the protests did have a cathartic effect."

On Inauguration Day, we met at 4:30 p.m. in front of the school's Lakeview Building. Fewer than 10 students attended, making the group particularly small. There may have been several reasons for this: Some students might have been working on Friday; or maybe people just hadn't returned from winter vacation yet. But even in our small group, a single faculty member was present: Sally Alatalo. I asked her how her break was.

"Good," she said. "But sad. I got some advice from someone, who said, 'Eventually, you just have to turn the radio off.'"

The weather was veering towards the mid-40s — more in-tune with early fall than mid-winter. A woman had a "NOT MY PRESIDENT" sign on the 35 bus, so I sat next to her. A lone "Make America Great Again" hat showed up on the Red Line, so I sat on the other side of the train.

The rally itself, though, was uproarious. The racial and gender demographics were diverse, and there were plenty of political groups present. Black Lives Matter, the Chicago Student Union, Justice for Palestine; people petitioning for immigration rights, LGBTQ rights, women's rights, reproductive rights; socialists; full-blown communists — all of them were united around a cause. The sheer number of people our new president has managed to offend with his public comments and private behavior is startling.

Writing student Ian Wojcikiewicz, 27, was also aggrieved, and in many ways shared the feelings of guilt that Stewart expressed. He has three younger sisters, two of whom are lesbians. He was protesting "mostly to show support as a Chicagoan, and as a white person, and as a man."

Wojcikiewicz majored in anti-colonial studies as an undergraduate. "Everything on my shelf is telling me that I'm responsible for destroying the world," he said.

**RALLY ATTENDANCE**

~  
150,000  
People

**GROUPS PRESENT**

~  
Black Lives Matter  
The Chicago Student Union  
Justice for Palestine

**DEMANDS**

~  
Immigration rights  
LGBTQ rights  
Women's rights  
Reproductive rights

**A member of the resistance considers last month's Inauguration Day march and rally**

Wojcikiewicz expressed concern about some of the sentiments spelled out on protest signs. He said some issues being fixated on might predate Trump. For starters, he referenced voter turnout. People are upset now, because it's fresh. "Will they be here in two years, for the midterm elections? Will they even know who the candidates are?" Wojcikiewicz said.

A similarly short memory might apply to executive orders. We've already seen several from the Trump administration concerning health care, reproductive rights, national security, and the environment. But President Barack Obama, utilizing the power of a pen and a phone, signed the most executive orders since Harry Truman.

The crowd at the rally was so big that the police department felt compelled to cancel the scheduled march. This resulted in protesters being boxed in on Wabash Avenue and Upper Wacker Drive, directly in sight of Trump Tower. (Remember when the biggest complaints were about that tower being an eyesore?) The crowd circled around the block; the tower served as a constant reminder about why we were all there in the first place.

There was a brief breakthrough on Michigan Avenue. Alex Shapiro, another student in the MFAW program, noted that many of the drivers who were stuck due to the march seemed supportive of protesters. "Traffic really pisses people off," he said, "so for folks to look past that and join the demonstration was cool."

Shapiro, like Stewart and Wojcikiewicz, is very politically active. He's been protesting since the Iraq War.

"Unfortunately, I've been compelled to march frequently in the years that have followed [that war]," Shapiro said.

Writing student Taylor Croteau, 22, also mentioned the support of the stopped drivers as a highlight. She went to both the inauguration protest and the Women's March in Chicago the next day, which drew an estimated 250,000 people. Though she was compelled to attend both, she had a favorite.

"The [inauguration protest] seemed the most intersectional; I oppose more than one thing," she said.

Among our group was a near-unanimous feeling of the stakes being raised (with regards to making art.)

"Historically, artists and writers have been an important contingent in fighting authoritarians," Stewart said, adding that the purpose of art is to increase empathy, and that it's within our interest to push back against a president who seemingly has none — or, at the very least, a selective empathy.

"We're certainly going to have a harder time making a living," Shapiro said. "But I suppose that isn't particularly unique under this administration." He feels artists and writers will show more urgency in questioning the goals and capability of their work.

"I don't make 'political art,'" Wojcikiewicz said. Still, after Trump's electoral victory, he expressed wanting to tear up all the work he'd done prior to that for fear that it might not be big enough to match events.

What might be required is a simple reversion, with fresh eyes, back to the story, and the singularity of the moment. Both Croteau and Wojcikiewicz cited a group of eighth grade girls interviewing them for a podcast as a highlight.

"They seemed really interested in what it meant to be there," Wojcikiewicz said. "And in what leadership means."

**J. Howard Rosier** is the news editor at F Newsmagazine and is pursuing his MFA in the Writing department. He is probably wearing a blazer and cradling a stack of papers.





continued from cover

Before I get into the Polar Plunge, though, let's talk about that other legendary frosty fundraising phenomenon: the once ubiquitous Ice Bucket Challenge.

In case you were living under a rock in 2014, the gist of the Ice Bucket campaign — to raise money for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (A.L.S.) research — went like this: You donated funds to the A.L.S. Foundation, or you filmed yourself dumping a bucket of ice over your head. Either way, you tagged a bunch of your friends, calling on them to do the same.

I thought this was absurd. I am a person who diligently sets aside 20 percent of her income to give to the charities I have also diligently selected based on hours of research and conversation. (I love bragging about this, by the way.) That a person's capacity for do-gooding could be so easily bent by a social media stunt troubled me. We are living in a world where young people have come to equate philanthropy with likes and retweets. You shouldn't need to post something on YouTube to raise a little money for a good cause.

But here's the thing: That seemingly toothless and needlessly splashy internet stunt didn't just raise a little money. It raised money to the tune of over \$115 million. Last year, the A.L.S. Foundation announced that with those funds, they have already made significant strides in A.L.S. research. In July, scientists actually discovered a new gene — NEK1 — that affects 3 percent of people with A.L.S. The discovery was openly credited to donations generated from the Ice Bucket Challenge.

This is a big deal for those who openly mocked the Ice Bucket Challenge — myself included. I spent a lot of time in 2014 berating the challenge to anyone who would listen. And this was how I felt about the Polar Plunge, too.

People have been jumping into ice-cold water en masse and calling it a Polar Plunge (or a Polar Bear Plunge) since at least 1904, when a group of people began an annual jump in Boston. In Canada, Polar Plunges are a New Year's Day tradition all over the country. There are also plunges in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom. In the U.S. today, most Polar Plunges benefit some charitable organization. In Chicago, it's the Special Olympics.

The Special Olympics are particularly relevant in Chicago; the first International Special Olympics Summer Games were held in July 1968 at Soldier Field. That first summer, roughly 1,500 athletes

participated. Today, more than 5.3 million athletes in more than 170 countries train and compete.

Susan Nicholl has been the executive director of the Special Olympics Chicago for 12 years, and she's a big fan of the Polar Plunge. Her own sister has participated as an athlete in the Special Olympics for several years.

"Our overall mission is to build a community of acceptance and inclusion for all," Nicholl said. "We are advocates. We speak to the needs of the people who are often forgotten by society."

In order to participate in the Polar Plunge, a plunger must raise at least \$200. Nicholl emphasized that there is no registration fee aside from the fundraising requirement, which, she said, is different from other charitable events — marathons and the like — in the city.

That money really adds up. Last year alone, the Chicago Polar Plunge generated about \$1.5 million.

Because the event is sponsored by basically every corporation imaginable, all the individual fundraising dollars go directly to the Special Olympics.

Rebecca Fons participated in the Polar Plunge three years in a row, as a part of a group effort by the Windy City Rollers women's roller derby league.

"I did raise money for each of my jumps," Fons said. "If there wasn't a charity associated with it, there wouldn't be much of a reason to do it. When I found out it was for the Special Olympics, I thought, 'Sure, yeah, I'm more than happy to support something like that.'"

Fons said that the event itself, though, was kind of a nightmare. She recalled running down a huge chute to spend just a few seconds in the water, before having to run back out again so the next batch of divers could go in.

"It's fun before you do it, and then suddenly you're very cold and you want to get out of it. Everyone is screaming. I get the impression that there were people who had pre-gamed, like they thought it would make it warmer," Fons said.

This is a huge part of what makes events like the Polar Plunge work, actually. You're not out there solitarily doing something a little crazy; you're out with your friends and your family. You get to take pictures of yourself and post them on your Facebook wall. There's a shared experience — a physical challenge that makes you feel like you are a part of a group.

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The Polar Plunge is particularly well suited for fundraising because it takes place on a public beach, so overhead costs for the event are pretty low. Nicholl said that social media has had a huge impact on the swelling popularity of the plunge — participants post about their experience, and when they return the next year, they bring friends. Because of the prominence of social media, the Polar Plunge doesn't have to spend much money raising awareness for the event at all.

"It's just truly a dream event," Nicholl said. "We joke that all the cool kids are doing it."

But actually, flashy charity events aren't really all that cool among the woke set. Bloggers have been quick to wag fingers at big fundraising efforts like this one. In an article for Quartz, William MacAskill writes about a psychological phenomenon called moral licensing: the idea that doing one good thing (say, donating to the Special Olympics for the Polar Plunge) makes it less likely that you'll do other good things later.

"People are often more concerned about looking good or feeling good rather than doing good. If you 'do your bit' by buying an energy-efficient light bulb, then your status as a good human being is less likely to be called into question if you subsequently steal," MacAskill writes.

Euree Kim, a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) who advocates for the rights of disenfranchised groups (including people with mental illnesses), said that they didn't care about the Polar Plunge.

"Donations from corporations have been invested for Special Olympics, while other social issues such as education, housing, and medical insurance, are under-funded," Kim said.

Kim also takes issue with the Special Olympics as an organization in general. The affiliation with the Olympic Games — which, Kim said, have historical and modern ties to racism, sexism, ableism, colonialism and more — is troubling. The word "special" is also problematic, in Kim's opinion.

"It marginalizes people with disabilities as different or separate from mainstream culture," Kim said. "The Special Olympics is kind of feel-good activism. It might benefit some people, but I'm not interested in it."

Kim gives their time to other organizations that support people with disabilities, like the Shriver Center, which "provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty," according to their website. Kim talked about a program designed to help police interact appropriately with people who are mentally ill.

I agree with Kim, in theory. But I am also increasingly aware of the tiny progressive bubble that I live and breathe inside, and we've now all seen how dangerous it can be when we ignore the influence of people we might not agree with. (Hello, 45th President.)

For the near-decade I spent teaching Special Education in the public school system, I volunteered almost every year at the Special Olympics. It was one of the happiest days of the year. It's full of encouragement and joy, and it brings visibility to a lot of people — my students included — who often feel invisible. That kind of thing does matter.

But I'm not going to jump in Lake Michigan wearing a costume in early March. It's just not the way I want to be an activist. However, I am making a pledge to quit turning up my nose at people who want a big event or a social media opportunity in order to participate in change-making. We are living in a time when we need all the energy we can get.

As Kim put it, "There are so many different activists and organizers who are working really hard to make social changes."

---

**Sophie Lucido Johnson** is the managing editor of F Newsmagazine. She has published work in *The Guardian*, *VICE*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere.



# Play Any- thing: Herstory Playlist

***Songs by  
all kinds of  
women for  
all kinds of  
women***

## **X-RAY SPEX, "GERM FREE ADOLESCENTS"**

The British punk scene of the late '70s was undeniably white and male. Enter: Poly Styrene. The daughter of a displaced Somali noble and a Scottish secretary, Styrene was a master of the irreverence and ska-inspired riffs that the Clash and Sex Pistols would kill to pull off.

The X-Ray Spex's first and only full-length album, "Germfree Adolescents," is a triumph of synths and saxophone solos; it careens between confrontational musical phrases, jagged guitar riffs, and dreamy arias. In "Highly Inflammable," Styrene croons, "You thought I was a woman / I thought you were a man / but I was Tinkerbell / and you were Peter Pan." Her voice is clear and powerful — a primordial sing-taunt that would reappear in early '90s Riot Grrrl music.

Styrene was a powerhouse. She was unafraid to reference Tinkerbell and bondage in the same breath. With her bright lipstick and toothy smile, Styrene was the jubilant femme force that the early days of punk needed.

## **TANKINI, "DO U SUK"**

Tankini's "Do U Suk" is both furious and fun-loving — a record that exists somewhere between a breakup and a bildungsroman. The combined lyrics of Erica and Sadie Switchblade present a painful but ultimately rewarding process of self-care and self-assertion. The opening track, "We Sat on the Porch," is perfect for late '90s Liz Phair-inspired breakup fury. Lyrics like, "You broke up with me in a text message / I broke up with the shape of your mouth," are just angsty enough to force you to peel yourself off the floor and wash your hair after a breakup text.

Former G.L.O.S.S. frontwoman Switchblade shines in "Showering with the Lights Off." It's a track that is similar to her summer solo release, "Up Against the Wall." Once again, Switchblade's lyrics present a laser-sharp depiction of trans womanhood. The honesty of lyrics like, "But what the fuck did he know / about how a secret girl finds relief / giving head to her best friend / like it was something to believe in," present a raw and unflinching depiction of girlhood — one that makes Switchblade one of the most profound and necessary voices in punk today. Between Switchblade's lyricism and her drumming, which provides a rage-fueled optimism throughout the record, I am unable to comprehend how so much talent can exist in one person.

The bond between femme friends is a central force within the record. This is most evident in the backing vocals. Erica and Sadie trade off singing backup for each other; they sing with as much conviction as though they were each the lead vocalist. You can hear that they believe in and support what the other is saying; it's wonderful. The third track, "Chewing the Fat," also explores the emotional labor that friendship necessitates, juxtaposing it with the inevitable depression that accompanies winter.

If you need a record to remind you that happiness is possible, even on the dreariest of days, blast Tankini and dream of better days ahead — you won't regret it.

## **SINCERE ENGINEER, "SINCERE ENGINEER"**

Recently, at a house show, I reverted to my default state of constant annoyance with hardcore bros. But I basically instantly perked up at the beginning of Sincere Engineer's set. The minute Deeana Belos (aka Sincere Engineer) sat down and started shredding while yelling about feeling weird and eating corn dogs, my soul was restored. Junk food? Discomfort with existing? This is the sort of content that my life is made of. Belos sang songs about feeling bad while working with lab rats at her job. She sang about jumping into Lake Michigan; she laughed between songs and looked up her set list on her phone; she was real — completely devoid of the performative ego of a so-called "rock star."

The growl in Belos' voice is undeniably unique; her voice is saturated with life. It's the sonic embodiment of Woody Guthrie's plea to "wake up and fight." I've never heard anything so gruff and honest in my life; to me, that's punk. Punk isn't some dude yelling about his ex; it's being honest about all the weird and gross parts in life, running as fast as you can, and enjoying existence even if it's gnarly.

---

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





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# 'Ms. Marvel' v. The Muslim Ban

## A comic book prescription for the policy that ails you

**D**o you hate President Drumpf's Muslim ban? Then read "Ms. Marvel" by writer G. Willow Wilson, artist Adrian Alphonam, and editors Sana Amanat and Stephen Wacker.

The mantle of Ms. Marvel was formerly held by blonde-haired, blue-eyed Carol Danvers, but Wilson reimagines the character as a Pakistani Muslim teenager from Jersey City named Kamala Khan. Starting from your basic toxic-gas-gives-our-hero-strange-powers premise, "Ms. Marvel" is about more than watching Kamala "embiggen" her fists to sock ne'er-do-wells; it quickly becomes a deep, poignant exploration of faith and humanity.

Kamala is Marvel's first leading Muslim super-lady, so it was important to Wilson, a Muslim woman herself, to do things right.

Wilson said, "There is a real danger for it slipping into tokenism, sort of slapping a new face on the cover and saying 'Look ... Diversity! Hooray!' That's not what I wanted to do at all."

Wilson counters this, in part, by creating Kamala as a young woman struggling to find herself within her faith: "She's very conflicted in some ways about her faith, like a majority of American Muslim women. She does not cover her hair, and does not wear a headscarf."

At times, Kamala's responsibilities to her faith and her family are directly in conflict with her responsibilities as a hero. While Wilson always wanted to "portray Kamala as someone who is struggling with her faith," we never feel as though her faith is in jeopardy. Kamala is struggling precisely because her faith is so strong. This is what makes "Ms. Marvel" so complex: Kamala's challenge is to find her truest self amidst an ever-growing bombardment of external and internal pressures.

Wilson isn't afraid to get political. Careful not to make Jersey City "the backdrop of the series," Wilson will let it set the stage. "Jersey is her turf, it's where she grew up and she's not an apologist about it," Wilson said in an interview with Newsarama.

When Kamala's hometown starts to see an influx of hip, young, white kids taking over local property from people of color, she takes on the developer who plans to "Clean Up Jersey City." But there's more to this gentrification than meets the eye. What follows is a complex examination of the roots of cultural and geographical taste-making, as Kamala starts to see images of Ms. Marvel adorning real-estate billboards, making her a symbol of the very repopulation she's fighting to stave off.

In a political climate rife with Islamophobia, sexism, and xenophobia, it is impossible to overstate the importance of seeing a Muslim woman of color, with immigrant parents, acting globally by fighting locally. Sure, now that Kamala is a full-on Avenger we can see her face-punching galactic enemies (alongside a black man, a Latino teen, and a cancer-stricken woman – Marvel Cinematic Universe be damned), but it's most powerful to see her on her own and on her own turf.

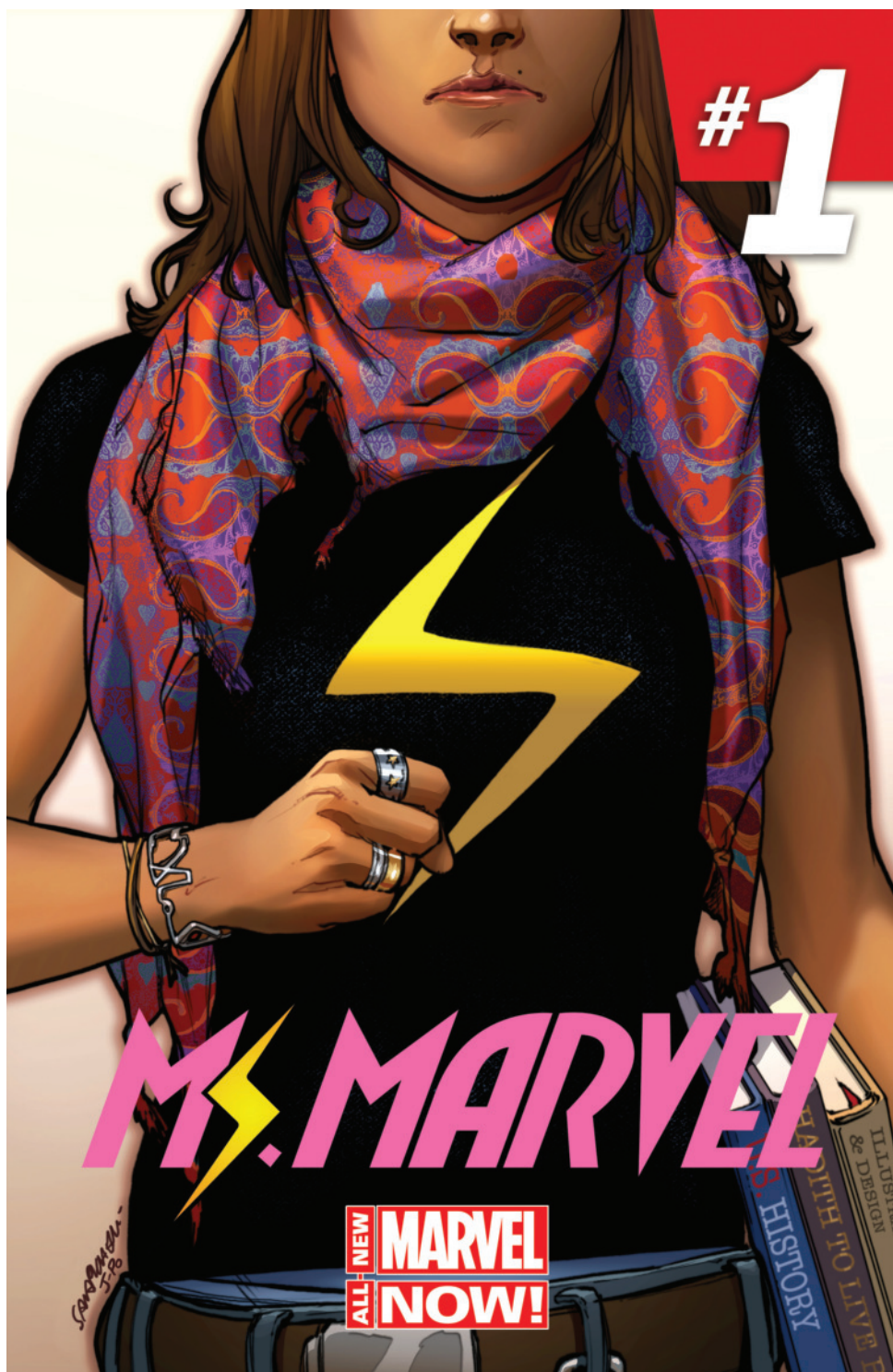
Wilson says, "A huge aspect of 'Ms. Marvel' is a 'second string hero' in the 'second string city' and having to struggle out of the pathos and emotion that can give a person." Kamala constantly struggles with her place as a bumbling, inexperienced teenager in a world of Iron Men, Hulked-

up supergeniuses, and adamantium-boned mutants. Many of us face this daily. How do we affect meaningful change against such a towering enemy? Kamala becomes a proxy for all of us struggling to find a way forward in an increasingly discouraging political climate. When called to challenge massive and unrestrained evil, are we ready? Are we able? When it comes to it, are we willing?

Pick up "Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal" from pretty much any comic book shop in the free world and help the campaign to make "Ms. Marvel" the best-selling comic in America — and beyond.

To be honest, [Brian Fabry Dorsam](#) is probably on a couch somewhere eating cheese right now. If not, he's drawing at [brianfabrydorsam.tumblr.com](#).

**MS. MARVEL**  
Marvel's first Muslim lead in a comic book.





# 'Degrassi' for President

*'Next Class' schools another generation of viewers*

**Esme Song, Grade 12**

She's confident and manipulative; she isn't afraid to fool around to get what she wants.

**Baaz Nahir, Grade 11**

He's a hardcore gamer who is interested in entrepreneurship and business.

**Yael Baron, Grade 11**

She hangs out with the gaming club, and she is a strong and dominant leader.

**Vijay Maraj, Grade 11**

He is a hopeless romantic who is looking for one perfect boy to sweep him off his feet.

**Goldi Nahir, Grade 12**

An outspoken activist and feminist, she once competed to win the student council presidency.



**DEGRASSI 'NEXT CLASS' STUDENTS**  
A few high schoolers at Degrassi Community School who have had to deal with slut-shaming, abortion, Islamophobia, and suicide threats — all in one semester. (Illustration by Sophie Lucido Johnson)

**D**uring a seemingly ordinary day at Degrassi Community School (although, let's face it, there's no such thing as an ordinary day at Degrassi), a kid in the front row of a social studies class raises his hand to ask the kind of question every social studies teacher dreads.

"Do suicide bombers think they're honorable? Like modern samurai?" He isn't asking the teacher, though; he's asking the girl in the third row wearing a hijab.

The girl, Goldi, looks up. "Why would I have the inside scoop on suicide bombers?" she asks. The boy reminds her that suicide bombers, as far as he knows, are mostly Muslim. "Islam does not condone killing," Goldi says. She's annoyed; her eyes seem to be saying, *This again?*

"I don't see any G.I. Joe's with bombs strapped to their chests," the boy in the front row says. The rest of the class seems to be on his side, smiling and nodding along. And then another girl in the back, a Syrian refugee named Rasha, also wearing a hijab, pipes up.

"Instead they drop them from drones," Rasha says. "And calling suicide bombers Muslim is an insult to Muslims everywhere."

This is a small moment in a very complicated episode of "Degrassi: Next Class" — a spinoff of the long-running Canadian teen soap opera that was picked up by Netflix last year. When I say "long-running," I mean *long-running*: The "Degrassi" franchise began in 1979 with an after-school special called "The Kids of Degrassi Street." It was created by Linda Schuyler for CBC Television, and even then it dealt with the big teen issues of the time: divorce, death, and bad luck chain letters.

Believe it or not, almost four decades later, Schuyler is still writing and executive producing the show. (Now she does it alongside her husband, as she has for the past 15 years.) "Degrassi" has a reputation for bringing to light teen issues that other television shows won't touch — in the late 2000s, the show (now in its fourth iteration) adopted the tagline "It Goes There."

I grew up on "Degrassi." (This was back when Drake was on it, before he was Drake.) I watched every episode and followed every plot line with total diligence. I watched the characters age, and I watched as the show increasingly "went there" — while I was in high school and college, episodes dealt with issues like cutting, date rape, school shootings, suicide, and even abortion. (The 2004 abortion episode, "Accidents Will Happen," wasn't aired in the United States for several years.)

For me, it was an important television show. It was the first place on television where I saw a teenager come out as gay. A few years later, it would become one of the first shows to feature a teen character who was transgender. In 2017, all this may seem a little dated, but at the time, it was groundbreaking. It's easy to forget how far we've come when our country is facing the most oppressive and bigoted forces it has seen in generations.

Actually, the president is the reason I decided I wanted to watch "Degrassi: Next Class." I know I'm a lot older than the intended audience. A few of the lead actors on the show weren't even born yet when I was at the height of my own "Degrassi"-watching frenzy. But I remembered how it felt to watch the show when I was in high school. There were kids in my school who vandalized the lockers of the students who were gay and out; abortion was a major don't-talk-about-it subject, too — and I had had one. Watching "Degrassi" made me feel less alone in the world.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that the show-runners are continuing to build a safe haven for all kinds of people in a magical world (Canada) where, ultimately, everyone is accepted for who they are. And as our collective boundaries around what's off-limits

to cover on teen TV have stretched with the years, so has the subject matter on "Degrassi." Now there's Snapchat drama, internet trolls, feminism, racist posters, and PTSD.

The abortion episode in 2016 is markedly different from the abortion episode in 2004. This time, the girl who has the abortion (Lola), researches her decision, and goes to get the procedure done with a friend during lunch. She's distressed to find that she doesn't feel regret or loss — she mostly feels relief. She wants to know if something is wrong with her; is she a monster? At the encouragement of a progressive friend, Lola makes a YouTube video telling the world about her abortion experience, and why abortion was the right choice for her.

Still pretty fucking groundbreaking.

Most important right now, though, are the story lines about anti-Muslim sentiment and the resulting bigotry and fear that last year's presidential election has highlighted. Degrassi Community School takes in quite a few Syrian refugees — the student government raises money to make sure that there are adequate resources for all the new students.

The issues, however, are more nuanced than I expected. In the episode where the predictably racist kid asks Goldi about suicide bombers, Goldi and Rasha have some differences. Later in the episode, Rasha decides to stop wearing her hijab, which Goldi takes religious issue with. Goldi sheepishly declares that she thinks lesbianism is a sin, which is a problem, because Rasha is a lesbian.

In the end, they work it out, but not without a lot of initial confusion and hurt. This is how life is: There aren't simple solutions to problems, and no one fits neatly into the boxes

we want them to. Among the saddest things about President Trump's recent executive orders is the implicit and reductive statement that human beings simply can't solve complicated problems together. President Trump doesn't seem to realize that real change takes time because people are so wonderfully multifaceted.

There are no good guys or bad guys in the world of "Degrassi." In an interview, Schuyler noted that "all of our characters, whether you love them or hate them, are flawed in some way, and they're beautiful in some ways." Even the shooter in the school shooting episode is sympathetic. This is how people really are. We are not caricatures. There is nothing reductive about us.

**Sophie Lucido Johnson** is the managing editor of **F** News magazine. She has published work in **The Guardian**, **VICE**, **The Nation**, and elsewhere.

Watching 'Degrassi' made me feel less alone in the world.





**Basim Magdy's  
first exhibition  
at the MCA**

**E**gyptian-born artist Basim Magdy's first U.S. survey exhibition, "The Stars Were Aligned For a Century of New Beginnings," at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), explores Magdy's diverse body of work.

In the main gallery, viewers are greeted with a stack of take-home posters and rubber bands for easy transportation. One of the gallery's large walls is painted in bright pink, the other light purple, while a white wall is covered in a grid of photos exuding the palette of saturated color film. Across one corner there is a large mirror perfectly positioned for an ideal gallery selfie.

This warm, Technicolor atmosphere is exactly what the MCA's Manilow senior curator Omar Kholeif wanted. During the exhibition's press tour, Kholeif explained how he hoped for the space to be emotionally and intellectually accessible to all viewers, which mirrors Magdy's own conceptualization of his work. Upon closer examination, we find that the actual content of Magdy's art is not entirely as bright as it first appears. Printed on both sides of the take-home posters is the image of a man standing on a car trying to "tickle heaven." The man is holding a metal rod towards the sky — inevitably setting up his own demise via electrocution. Magdy plays with the idea of having the freedom to choose which side to hang, for there is no true resolution; in the end, death is inescapable.

In "An Apology to a Love Story that Crashed into a Whale," a series of color photographs positioned on the white wall, a series of texts telling a collapsing love story between a man and a woman adorn some of the images. The photographs themselves have undergone a process Magdy calls "pickling," during which negatives are dunked in household chemicals to produce saturated colors and residual textures.

These narratives are tinged with dark seriousness. One image reads, "Sometimes I wish the sky above us was a mirror," he said. 'Instead, all the fascism, oppression and lost lives evaporate into clouds that are only

capable of reflecting massive fires.'" Another: "She told him a story about the ghost of a goat that lived in a grain silo. One day the ghost vanished, but its shadow stayed. 'Nowhere compares to home,' said the shadow, 'even if it's a country ridden with civil war and torture.'"

The exhibition also includes separate screening rooms for three of Magdy's films. The films represent three different stages and approaches in Magdy's career. These films often touch on social and political interactions with dark humor, resulting in poetic, surreal narratives on human nature. None of the characters or settings are specific. This nondescript approach provides a space for viewers to insert themselves into the narrative.

Magdy makes all of his films available online; as a result, a still photo of his film "13 Essential Rules for Understanding the World" went viral on Tumblr, which Magdy found to be a positive thing. He embraces social media and believes that online platforms are a practical space to foster a communal appreciation for art outside the museum. He is open to new interpretations and iterations of his work. All viewers are invited to participate in Magdy's narrative.

This open participation emphasizes Kholeif's statement that Magdy's show has a "glimmer of optimism." Despite the sometimes bleak reality of Magdy's artworks, his wider, overarching narrative seems to imply we're moving towards a brighter future. Revealing the darker tendencies of human nature can help foster change; we can work together to build something new, both with and for community.

**"Basim Magdy: The Stars Were Aligned For a Century of New Beginnings" is on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago until March 19, 2017.**

**Kioto Aoki** is an analogue photographer and filmmaker, currently finishing her Masters in the Low Residency MFA program at SAIC.



**GEOMETRY AND COLOR**  
Basim Magdy, "Every Decade Memory Poses as a Container Heavier than Its Carrier," 2013. Deutsche Bank Collection. (Image courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago)



# Unfair Trade



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Those who have ever purchased clothing from shops like H&M, Uniqlo, Old Navy, or Forever 21, have purchased fast fashion. It can be hard to resist: Who doesn't like a \$10 logo tee, a \$40 pleather jacket, or a pair of \$35 jeans at half-price?

The answer? The millions of people — women, mostly — who live in various states of servitude in order to provide this clothing to consumers in wealthy countries like the United States.

Award-winning journalist and cultural critic Anne Elizabeth Moore's essential comics report, "Threadbare: Clothes, Sex, and Trafficking" (Microcosm Publishing, 2016), is a thorough and alarming investigation into the various ways fast fashion keeps women worldwide in vicious cycles of destitution and oppression. If you've got questions about what fast fashion is and what it's got to do with you, the narratives in "Threadbare" will provide a sobering education.

Fast fashion, according to Moore's definition, "is named for and based on the concept of fast food ... [and] has sought to make stylish but affordable clothing available to the consumer." Moore and her collaborators — Moore's journalism is rendered in illustration by six different members of the comics collective Lady-drawers — use "Threadbare" as a way to explore the ethical cost of this "affordability." Their view is global: Each chapter of the book focuses on a different part of the world as it relates to the fast fashion market and, as the title suggests, the sex trafficking trade.

As we learn in "Threadbare," the two markets are inextricably linked — if you're on the production end of the \$1.2 trillion dollar global fast fashion spectrum, that is. Many women in developing countries feel forced to work in sweatshops, for example, to avoid prostitution in order to feed their families; however, when there are no vacancies, when factories literally collapse, or when a woman's health cannot tolerate the conditions of the shops, she may turn to sex trafficking as a viable, often highly preferable alternative. When missionaries and NGOs muscle their way into these parts of our globalized world to "help" women out of the sex trade, they often "help" them right back into the slave wages and illness in the fast fashion production line.

If you've got questions about what fast fashion is and what it's got to do with you, the narratives in "Threadbare" will provide a sobering education.

The comics in "Threadbare" are rendered with care and the artists must be commended for clear, concise handling of such an extraordinary amount of information. Each chapter has its own, pages-long endnotes section where Moore dutifully cites her sources.

But, as other reviewers have pointed out, much of the book suffers from what feels like a formatting (or printing) blunder: Some of the comics' text, such as Chapter 3's "It's The Money, Honey," illustrated by Ellen Linder, is so incredibly small, this reader suffered strained eyes and an actual headache while trying to make out the words. The recommendation of reading "Threadbare" with a magnifying glass nearby is not made ironically.

Moore — who recently moved to Detroit as part of the Write House program but continues to advise students in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Low-Residency program — is a tireless investigator but approaches her subject with great compassion for the individuals under her lens.

"Threadbare" is a grueling journey of facts and figures; were it not for the personal stories offered in each chapter, the book would be far too easy to skim. Whether we're in the United States, meeting retail workers or sex work advocates; or Austria, where textile producers and tailors have practically vanished into thin air, it's the people profiled by Moore and drawn by the artists that make the book uncomfortably unforgettable.

Mary Fons, an MFA student in Writing, is the associate editor of F Newsmagazine. Read her blog, PaperGirl, at maryfons.com.

**Who pays the highest price to keep your clothing cheap?**

March '17



# Transmissions of Humanism

In November, About Face Theatre opened a reimagined production of Doug Wright's "I Am My Own Wife." In this conceptualization, the true story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, a transgender woman who lived openly through both the Nazi and Communist regimes in East Berlin, is written as a one-woman show. Under the direction of Andrew Volkoff, About Face's production split the monologue into four roles, three for men and one for Charlotte.

Volkoff gives full credit to actress Delia Kropp for approaching him about taking the role of Charlotte. "That's rare that an actor will approach you and say, 'Hey, let's do this,'" Volkoff said. "It was simply a question of getting the playwright on board. And Doug was completely on board."

The production marked the first time the transgender role was filled by a transgender actress. Typically, productions of "I Am My Own Wife" privilege the playwright's voice over Charlotte's. The result is one cisgender man playing every role — not unlike the pattern of casting cisgender actors to play transgender roles that has been recently visible in Hollywood.

"Yeah, [Hollywood is] telling the story with so much empathy it drips off the screen," said Kropp, "but that's not the same as accurately representing us as human beings."

That accurate representation became all the more important when days before "I Am My Own Wife" opened in November 2016, Donald Trump became the president-elect. Suddenly, the story of survival under threatening regimes became frighteningly relevant.

"I do think there must have been something subliminal in pulling this season together knowing an election was coming up," said Volkoff when asked about About Face's current season. The season continues through February 18 with "The Temperamentals," a play about the formation of the Mattachine Society in the 1950s. "Whether you're gay or straight, I think right now there are a lot of people out there who feel impotent, who feel like their voice won't be heard no matter what happens. I think we're back in a time when we need to be hyper-vigilant about the choices that we make politically, socially — all of it — so we can make a better world; a freer world."

For About Face Theatre, a better, freer world is made through more accurate representations of people from across the gender and sexuality spectrums. It's baked into their mission statement, and their efforts in this area have affected the way representation is handled by many local theaters, including the Goodman Theatre.

Last summer, Kropp noticed that many local theaters were planning trans-themed plays for their upcoming seasons. She was alarmed by not having heard about any of these productions or how to audition or become involved in any way. Upon seeing them, she noted that there were problems deriving from the lack of actual trans involvement in the productions.

Kropp spoke out. "I'm in a very unique position," she said. "I lived for 47 years as somebody who just existed as a cisgender male — a very unhappy, confused cisgender male — so I get the perspective that people have of us; that we're strange, or, 'Is this for real?', or the many, many questions they have about our veracity."

"But I'm also listening to [these plays] as someone who has lived transgender," Kropp added, "and this is real, folks!"

With the help of some friends and the Goodman, Kropp organized a discussion panel, and for 90 minutes, over 100 theater artists came together to talk about trans representation. Kropp described the feeling as a "huge exhalation" — the realization that so many in the theater community facing similar challenges were all in the same room ready to address them.

"[Theater is] so three-dimensional — it's bodies in space, it's people talking to you, living out scenes in front of you — there's a visceral quality to it.

This was just the first of what Kropp hopes will be many panels to come. "We don't just need representation," she said. "We need humanization. We need stories that express us in full 3D. We are not magical beings; we are not prostitutes; we are not doomed to die. We can actually just be people."

This goal of humanization is shared by Volkoff, who is also the director of "The Temperamentals." The Mattachine Society, a group Volkoff refers to as "the gay Justice League," came together, as Volkoff put it, "to fight for their visibility and their rights in a time when even having different ideas of what the government should be was a dangerous thing."

Volkoff hopes the audience leaves the production inspired to make changes to their own lives in our post-election world, to come together to find ways to survive, resist, and "understand us the way we need to be understood."

Theater is a unique and powerful vehicle for Volkoff's mission, and with artists like Kropp willing to fight for ownership of their own stories and trying times ahead for all people, theater's role cannot be overstated.

"[Theater is] so three-dimensional — it's bodies in space, it's people talking to you, living out scenes in front of you — there's a visceral quality to it. So consequently I think theater in the next four years is going to be the place that we look for people to be pushing the envelope in terms of how we either survive through this or how we push against it," Volkoff said.

If such a prediction is to come true, one thing is certain: Volkoff, Kropp, and the Chicago theater community are already taking the first steps. Volkoff recognizes his responsibility as the artistic director of About Face Theatre to choose productions that include and inspire universally. Theater doesn't exist to provide hope, but the moves being made toward a more inclusive theater here in Chicago generate hope nonetheless.

Emily Rich is a first-year Writing MFA student. She's a playwright, photographer, and teaching artist by day, and preferably asleep at night.



ILLUSTRATION BY SACHA LUSK

A better, freer world is made through more accurate representations of people from across the gender and sexuality spectrums.



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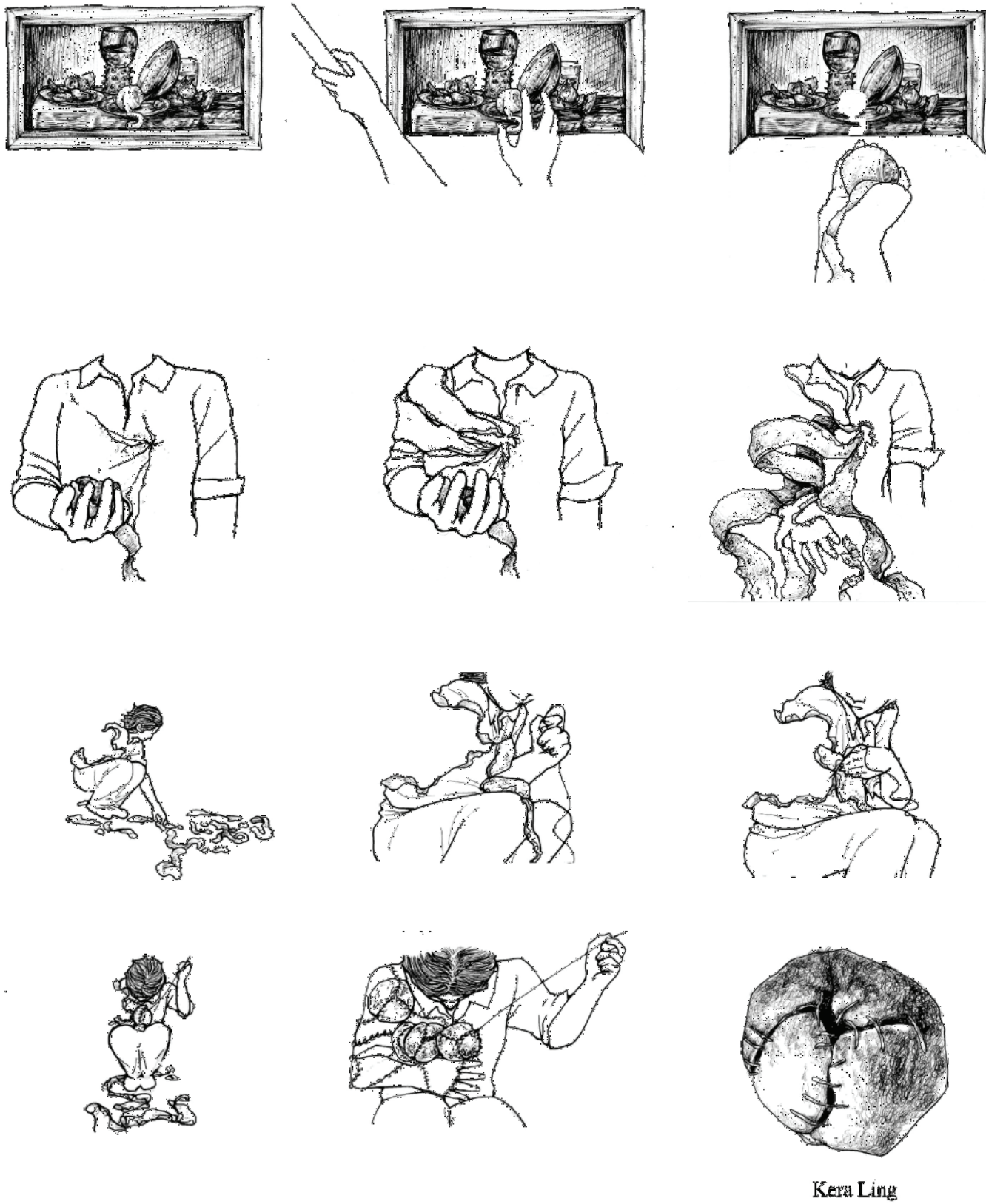


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STUDY ABROAD



Zoe Leonard's *Strange Fruit*: A Comic Investigation of *Vanitas*, Political Art, and Mending One's Self



March '17



Stories from Chicago  
(Adams and Wabash: 1 of 2)

It's all finite.

Even the most beautiful experiences only have a chance at lasting a lifetime.

Sometimes, they last less time; years, months, weeks, days, or minutes.

... Sometimes, they only last the duration of a kiss.

And that's all ok. Because they are worth experiencing, even and especially in their brevity.

Isabel Servantez





edamame



by Carolina Velez

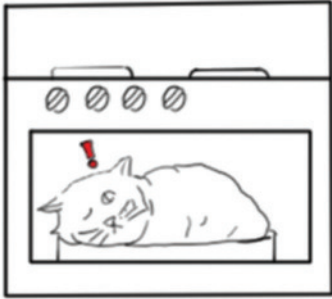
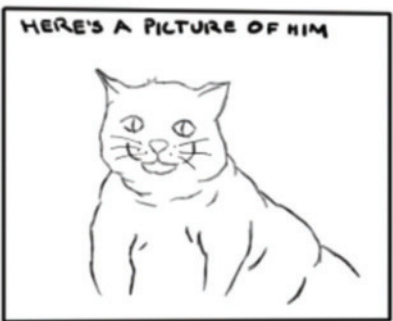
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send us ur shit  
email submissions 2  
ahuff3@saic.edu

we will give you money  
(money can be exchanged  
for goods and services)



DENTURES IN THE SINK



SOHA DIAZ

COMMUTER COWS



I MEAN, WHAT ARE OUR TRUE NATURES, BECAUSE UPON SUPERFICIAL INSPECTION WE ARE OBVIOUSLY COWS.

ARE WE COWS DEEP DOWN IN OUR CELLS? ARE WE COWS FOREVER IN OUR SOULS?

SOMETIMES, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK WHAT WE'RE DOING IS SO UNNATURAL, THAT WE WERE NOT MEANT FOR THE HUMDRUM OF THE 9 TO 5 GRIND.

ARE WE ALL JUST BEING LED AROUND LIKE COMPLACENT LIVESTOCK- AND TO WHOSE END, FOR WHOSE CONSUMPTION?

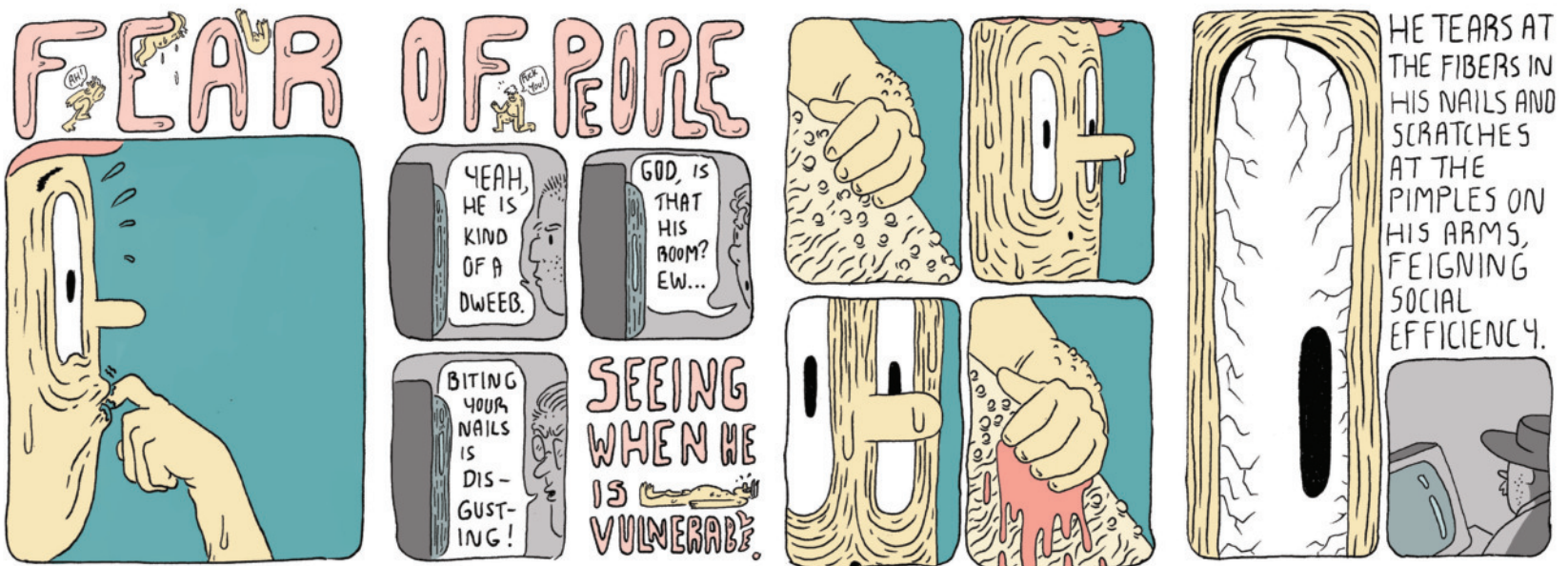


AND YET, ONCE I AM CAUGHT IN THE HERD, I CAN IMAGINE NO OTHER WAY.

Ambrin Ling



Kevin



Rohan McDonald

### Small Stories



(Based on the miniature rooms at the AIC)

Madeleine Hettich





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Clockwise from left: Merce Cunningham and Carolyn Brown performing *Summerspace* (1958), Sogetsu Art Center, 1964. Melanie Schiff, *Spit Rainbow*, 2006. Chromogenic development print. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, restricted gift of Kay and Malcolm Kamin and Kay Torshen in honor of the MCA's 40th anniversary, 2007.34. © 2006 Melanie Schiff. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago. Joyce Pensato, *Silver Batman II*, 2012. Enamel on linen. PG2012.3. © 2012 Joyce Pensato. Photo: Nathan Keay, © MCA Chicago. Nam June Paik, 66-76-89, 1990. Television cabinet 32 video monitors, 4 laserdisc players, and steel. Collection Walker Art Center, T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1990.

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