

STUFF THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SXSW

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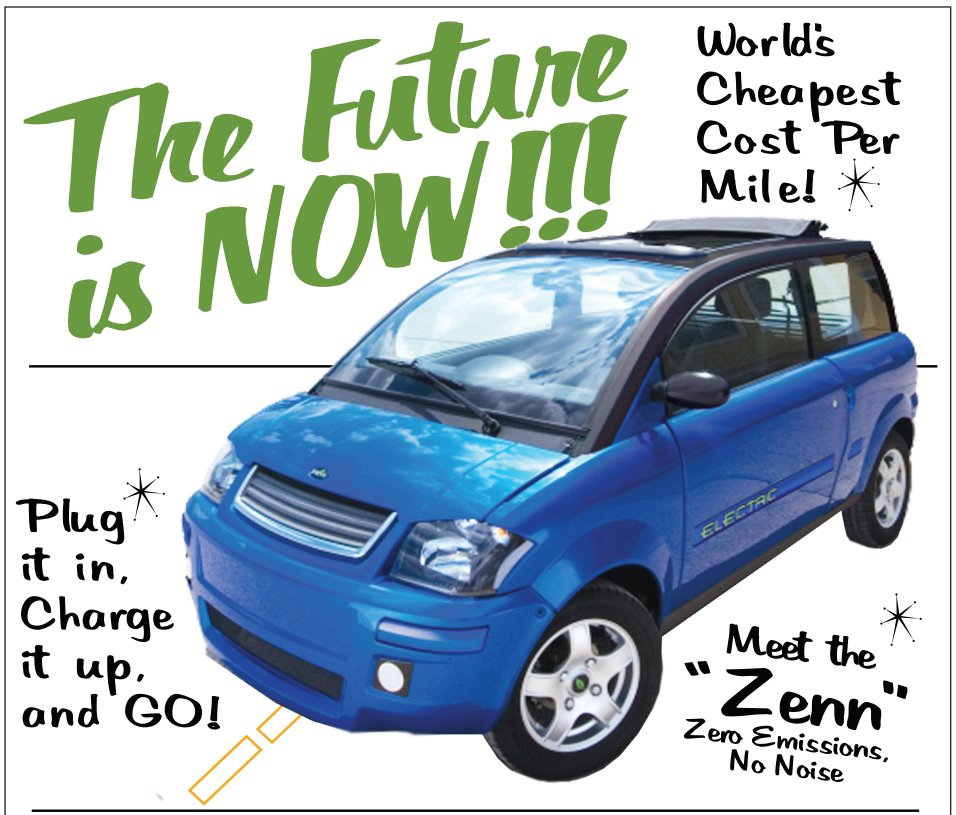
Come to these Houston restaurants during World Water Week, March 21 - 27, and help us save lives. When you pay $1 for your water at any of the participating restaurants, we'll donate it to UNICEF's Tap Project. And that $1 will buy 40 liters of clean drinking water for the children of the world. That's 40 children who will live tomorrow simply because you decided to share a glass of water.

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Byrd's Market & Cafe · Don Camillo · Firkin & Phoenix A Firkin Freehouse · Bistro Provence · Café Rabelais Fay ce que vouldras

unicef TAP PROJECT





MARCH





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Styling & Profiling

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SUPER SXSW OVERFLOW FEST MARCH 11-24TH 2010

SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND

March 11th:
The Mint 9:00pm
XPPR5-9 (North Carolina) 9:45pm
A Better Hope Foundation (CA) 10:30pm
Jungle Noise (San Antonio) 11:15pm
Jody Seabody and the Whirls 12am

March 12th:
Houston Organizational Rally for
World Naked Bike Ride Day 8pm
Joe Firstman (Los Angeles) 8:45pm
Midtown Dickens (North Carolina) 9:30pm
Beloved Binge (North Carolina) 10:15pm
Bike Porn 3: Cycle Bound - Film 11pm
Blowfly (Miami) 12am

March 13th:
Parallax (Minnesota) 7:45pm
Bamboo Shoots (Brooklyn) 8:30pm
Dinosaur Feathers (Brooklyn)9:15pm
Grey Market (Florida) 10pm
Icarus Himself (Wisconsin) 10:45pm
My Milky Way Arms (Austin) 11:30pm
Evolucid (Louisiana) 12:15am

March 14th:
Cavashawn (Chicago) 6:15pm
The Heyday (Denver) 7:00pm
State and Madison (Chicago) 7:45pm
Floating Action (North Carolina) 8:30pm
Girls At Dawn (Brooklyn) 9:15pm
Predator (Atlanta) 10pm
Wizzard Sleeve (Alabama) 10:45pm
Spells (Austin) 11:30pm
Gift Horse (Athens) 12:15am

March 15th:
Bird by Bird(California) 7:45pm
Las Charades (Spain) 8:30pm
Street Eaters (California) 9:15pm
Melodramatic Popular Song
Shellshag (Brooklyn) 10pm
Light Pollution (Chicago) 10:45pm
Abominable Futuro (Spain) 11:30pm
BEWARE! the Other Head of Science 12:15am
Guystorm (Minneapolis) 1am

March 16th:
Venus Flytrap (The Netherlands) 4:30pm
Anamieke Quinn (Phoenix) 5:15pm
Cristian Subirà -
Summer Recreation Camp (Spain) 6pm
Busman's Holiday (Indiana) 6:15pm
Alanna Fugate (Kentucky) 7pm
Robbie Hazen & The Riot (Florida) 7:45pm
Ryat (Philadelphia) 8:30pm
The Extraordinaires (Philadelphia) 9:15pm
The Octagon (New York) 10 pm
East Of The Wall (New Jersey) 10:45pm
Rezarekt (Philadelphia) 11:30
Goes Cube (Brooklyn) 12:15am
Shining Path (Alabama) 1am

March 17th:
SCREENS 6:15pm (Brooklyn)
Aa 7pm (Brooklyn)
Liz Isenberg (Providence) 7:45pm
Vio/Miré (Providence) 8:30pm
Holy Liars (Athens) 9:15pm
At Versaris (Spain) 10pm
Blissed Out (NYC) 10:45pm
Born Empty (Nashville) 11:30pm
The Zut Alors (Nashville) 12:15am
Maud in Cahoots (New York/Ireland) 1am

March 18th:
Revolt Revolt (Idaho) 6:15pm
Suns (Chicago) 7pm
Boy Eats Drum Machine (OR) 7:45pm
Finn Riggins (Idaho) 8:30pm
Jared Mees & The Grown Children (OR) 9:15p
Dangerous Ponies (Philadelphia) 10pm
The Constellation Branch (Phx) 10:45pm
Felix Culpa (Illinois) 11:30pm
Candy Claws (CO 12:15am
Mehko & Ocean Birds (CO) 1am

March 19th:
True Womanhood (DC) 7:45pm
The New Familiars (NC) 8:30pm
Mouse Fire (Florida) 9:15pm
Pharmacy (New Orleans) 10pm
Damn Bullets (Little Rock) 10:45pm
Beach Party Slaughter (Ark) 11:30pm

March 20th:
Crown Point (Portland) 9:15pm
The Slants (Portland) 10pm
Ayurveda (New York) 10:45pm
Bucket Flush (Philadelphia) 11:30pm

March 21st:
Pablo Trucker (Seattle) 7:45pm
Cameron Hull (Brooklyn) 8:30pm
Quilt (BO) 9:15pm
Many Mansions (BO) 10pm
Hot Seats (Virginia) 10:45pm
The Big Big Bucks (BO) 11:30pm
Coleen Green (Los Angeles) 12:15am
Bad Credit No Credit (Brooklyn) 1am

March 22nd:
Funk Dose 8pm
MC Router 8:30pm
Laser Zeppelin (Washington) 9pm
William Sides Atari Party (CH) 9:30pm
Bit Mummy (Pittsburg) 10:00pm
Battlefields (North Dakota) 10:30pm
Junius (Boston) 11:15pm
Giant Battle Monster 12am
Yatagarasu 12:30am

March 23rd:
Kiernan McMullan (Ireland) 9pm
Peasant (Pennsylvania) 10pm
The Seedy Seeds (Cincinnati) 11pm
Mondo Drag (Iowa) 12am

March 24th:
R.Sigma (Brazil)
Jennifer Kay

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Mar 4
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Mar 5
Dawes, Cory Chisel & The Wondering Sons, Jason Boesel

Mar 6
Fired For Walking, The Jonx, The Bottom Four (FREE SHOW)

Mar 12
I-45, Automorrow, Vocal Polluter

Mar 13
Poor Dumb Bastards (CD Release), Donkey Punch, Shit City High

Mar 15
Pierced Arrows, Lullabye Arkestra

Mar 17
Wild Moccasins, James Husband, Unwed Sailor, Common Loon

Mar 19
Pat Todd & The Rank Outsiders, Born Liars

Mar 20
Miles Kurosky (of Beulah), Pancho-san, Bright Men of Learning

Mar 21
Broken Water, Sick Weapons, Muhammidali, Electric Courage Machine

Mar 23
Bootown Presents: Grown Up Storytime

Mar 25
Chase Hamblin, The Gills

Mar 26
Dollyrockers

Mar 30
El Ten Eleven

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WEDNESDAYS:
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UPCOMING SHOWS ALL AGES

3/4
Chelsea Hotel, The Bad Ones, Dead Roses

3/5
Limb, Eat Grapes, CJ Boyd

3/6
Sweat Free Houston

3/12
HCK Record Release

3/13
Best Fwends, Fat Tony, Balls Deep, Zombie Sentinal, DJ Damon Allen, Celebrity DJ Jacob Mthrfkn Calle

3/14
Joe Pug, Horse Feathers, Davie Graves

3/15
The Oh Sees, Golden Triangle, The Baths, The Energy

3/16
Cymbals Eat Guitars, Bear in Heaven

3/17
Black Congress, This Moment in Black History, Sun God, SexyCrimes

3/20
Ryan Scroggins

3/21
News on the March (tour kickoff), Sgt Dunbar and the Hobo Banned (Albany, NY), Buxton, The Candeliers (Milwaukee, WI) & Smoky Mountain

3/25 Via Audio, The Spring Standards

3/27 Cavernous CD Release
4/1 Screaming Females

4/2 The Manichean

4/3 Sad Gorilla, Cory Derden, Possessed by Paul James (ATX)

4/9 Warpaint

4/10
Holly Golightly & The Broke-Offs

4/11 Wye Oak

4/16 Murder by Death

4/17 Sings CD Release

4/24 Local Natives + 2 TBA

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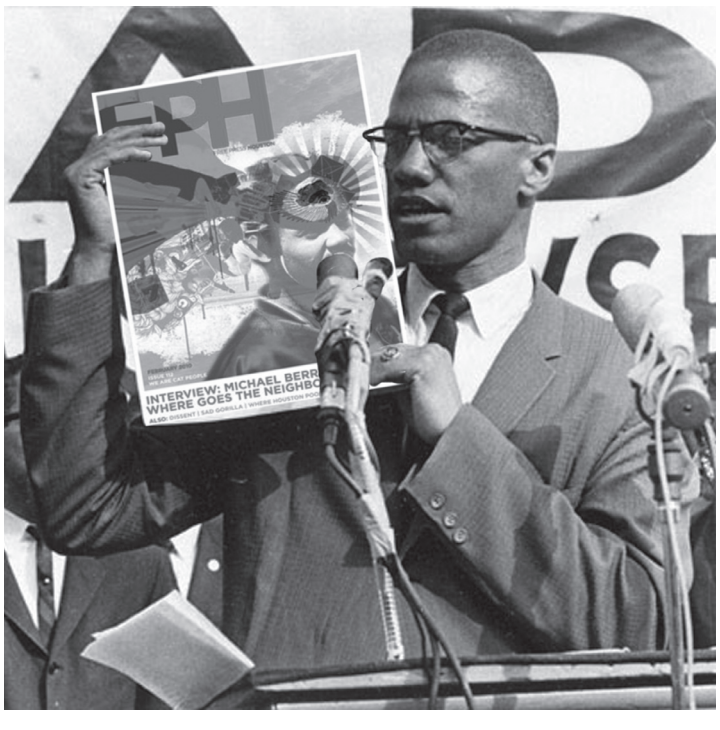
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

MORE MALCOLM, LESS MARTIN

I have touched on this before but I have to revisit the recent concept of 'DIY'; the hip new abbreviation of 'Do it yourself'. It baffles my mind that people keep giving themselves gold stars for being 'DIY'. But who else can do something for you other than yourself? Mom? Did she do that diorama for your 2nd grade science class? Understand, 'DIY' is a concept that only exists with artists and musicians that are Anglo-Americans who are probably dressing down to hide their affluence. Never do you hear artists in the hip-hop community touting their DIY adventures. They have been 'doing it themselves' from the get go. So please, stop getting on your soapbox and telling people how you deserve some honorable distinction by actually being self reliant. Speaking of self reliance, our buddy Malcolm X is on the cover of this issue courtesy of Houston poster art progenitor Jermaine Rogers. Jermaine has done several covers for us over the years yet not in quite some time. We are honored to have his work gracing our cover again. This punk rock depiction of Malcolm X is sort-of our 'better late than never' tribute to Black History Month. Malcolm X's writings on self-reliance and defiance of tyranny were some very important stepping stones on my ideological journey. Yet, my post-adolescent fervor for firebrands like Malcolm has ebbed and flowed. In recent year's I have ascribed to more pacifist teachings attributed to MLK or Gandhi. But fact of the matter is, neither of those men scared my white in-laws. So today we salute you Malcolm X. Keep on scaring them white devils.

OMAR AFRA

PS- Sorry to Pam Cantu for the mean ad.



ART SHOWS THIS MONTH

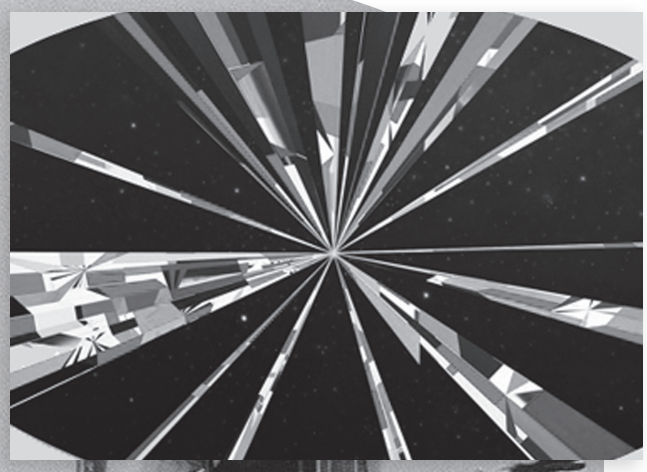
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THROUGH MARCH 20. (713) 520-9988



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THROUGH MARCH 6. (512) 496-0687





DEBRIS:
DEFINITELY D'CURATOR
EXPLOSION

There are a lot of new curators in Houston. They may have been here before, but there is a new wind blowing. While d'Oughts have gone d'way of history, Damien Hirst still sells ridiculous things for ridiculous amounts of money. Museums are still built at a record pace, the Sotheby's auctions have rebounded admirably, "new media" is still all anyone cares to do and I still have my hair.

BUT WAIT! There is something new under the sun, something to keep creativity sustained through the bleak winter of soulless art markets and hollow attempts at esoteric phenomenology, something to make sure that I will lose my hair and change will inevitably be upon us. Someone opened a window, or a door.

Zoya Tommy's new project, PG Contemporary, pulls in a big fish with Santiago Cucullu's show *Picasso's Kitchen* at Optical Project (11th Street and Studewood) through April 3rd. PG Contemporary's second show bodes well for the new organization, Tommy has worked with some of the best gallerists in Houston and her penchant for emotive yet academic work is evident in this great show featuring painting, video, banana peels in bronze and latex and a site-specific wall drawing, Cucullu's recollection of a famous painting mourning the death of Apollinaire.

Lane Hagood has had a string of recent hits at Rudolph/Artscan Gallery (Richmond at Driscoll) including Cody Ledvina's foray out of the Joanna Gallery that blew Austinite Michael Rodriguez's concurrently shown work out of the water. Ledvina's tender rendering of the former Mary's sign was a testament to the lament felt these days (after the loss of that Montrose gay bar institution) which should be expressed like nationalist pride. His self-portrait wall drawings transformed the space, and the body of his work consisted of fanciful, mournful figures lost in existential hazes-recalling James Ensor if he grew up in the '80s. The more Hagood gains the confidence of the gallery's patrons expect to see more explorations of the best of young artists in Houston today presented with a deft hand.

Aisen Chacin, young doyenne of 2005 Vermont and the exploding idea of holding tiny exhibits in your freezer (everyone should do it) continues to make shit out of stuff and harness the nascent creativity of the everyday that results in things like Al Eckstue's meat and potato pie mixed in with a counter-full "collage" of sweet cakes covered in gobs of pastel frosting under a blacklight installation (that fucked with the party by flipping the lights on and off all night) at their February "It's My Birthday" opening. Each participant changed their facebook birthday to February 20, garnering hundreds of well-wishing messages and a few coy remarks from relatives. **Ayalla McCloud** has steered *labotanica* (corner of Dowling and Elgin) to a vivid exploration of her short and sweet mission statement: labotanica *key words: reciprocity, exploration, freedom, latitudes, open-ended, flexibility, de-center, soulfulness, processes*. Look for better ways to have art engage life from this non-profit curator with a proclivity for post-art art from artists who just might free art from money. Then again, they may subjugate every moment of our day to monetization where even the interstitial spaces of our lives become cheap, hollow horrors. Tweet about that.

Are the museum curators in Houston capable of such flexibility, capriciousness and awesomeness as these guys? No, but they can try. In the meantime, while galleries and museums figure out their 2013 schedule, go see some new stuff. For once there is a break in the usual suspects who have dominated Houston's scene for the past decade, emerging from the backyards and garages is a hopeful barrage of energetic artists serious about breaking up the usual order and exploring the artistic questions of today without deference to any other city, practice or convention. FPH

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Weekly Shows unless otherwise posted

Monday
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Tuesday
John Hogan, Jambolism

Wednesday
Moonshine Summit, Potroast, Drum Circle

Thursday
Leslie Newman, The Hightailers

Sunday
Acoustic Jam Session 12-5:30, Fahl & Folk/ Jimmy Deen

UPCOMING SHOWS

Mar 5 - Opie Hendrix
Mar 6 - Spoonfed Tribe with Subroutine
Mar 7 - Opie Hendrix
Mar 12 -Crossing Toigo
Mar 13 -Pepper Lane with Pot Belly
Mar 19 -Private Event
Mar 20 - 2:00P Praia Urbana
Mar 26 - Plump
Mar 27 - Carolyn Wonderland
Apr 2 - Funkotron
Apr 10 - The Cold Front, Reverend Butter Ice Sculpting Rock Show
Apr 16 - Champagne with Friends

PARANOIA STRIKES DEEP

by MICHAEL BERGERON

THE GHOST WRITER

The irony in The Ghost Writer is thicker than molasses in Vermont in February. It's revealed at one point that former Prime Minister Alan Lang (Pierce Brosnan totally acquitting himself after that Mama Mia debacle) is being indicting for crimes against humanity by the ICC (International Criminal Court) and he considers traveling. His lawyers warn him to stay put in his United States East Coast island retreat.

If you fly to London you can be arrested, he's advised. The countries that don't have an extradition treaty with the World Court include China, Iran, India, Russia, North Korea and the United States. Any attempt at subliminal humor at this point in the film is compounded by the fact that the director is Roman Polanski. The Ghost Writer stands among the best films Polanski has ever done, but the effect travels further. There hasn't been an exciting political thriller like this since the 1970s. At the end of The Three Days of the Condor Robert Redford can just carry his manuscript over to the New York Times. But we live in such different times. At the end of The Ghost Writer there's no place for Ewan McGregor, as The Ghost the titular ghostwriter, to relay his manuscript. The message of The Ghost Writer extends to the internet, because nobody will possibly believe the truth there.

McGregor stars with able assistance from Brosnan and Olivia Williams as Brosnan's wife Ruth Lang. Kim Catrell (it's so good to see her actually acting and not performing like in SATC) and Tom Wilkerson provide alert support.

All throughout the movie the darkened skies play a part in the composition; it's always stormy or about to rain. In reality Polanski has only done three films in the last ten years, The Pianist, Oliver Twist (totally under-seen and underrated) and now The Ghost Writer. For those that can put the reputation of the artist aside from the creation this is one of the best films you will see this year.

THE WHITE RIBBON

Cinematographer Christian Berger asks me with true inquisitiveness whether it's a good thing to be nominated by the American Society of Cinematographers as one of the five best photographed films of the last year. He's speaking to Free Press Houston by phone from New York City where the night before he won a best cinematography award from the New York Film Critics Circle for The White Ribbon (Das weisse Band).

As directed by Michael Haneke and like many of Haneke's films The White Ribbon immerses the viewer in a world of mysterious goings-on and ambiguity. The action takes place in a small village in the North of Germany ("Two hours north of Berlin.") just before the outbreak of WWI. The images captured by Berger in black and white are as sumptuous as anything you've seen in a movie. It's little surprise when a few weeks after the interview Berger is also nominated for an Oscar for Best Cinematography.

"Shooting in black and white lends itself to the remember voice of the narrator," explains Berger. "You get this rich scale of gray, great contrast. Color is pastel but black and white is gray. You have more latitude, more shadows."

Haneke provides a series of uncanny incidents: the town doctor is injured when his horse topples due to a trip wire; secret love affairs come to light; the town's richest citizen has his male child kidnapped and later found alive but bound, hanging upside down where he was brutally whipped; a field of cabbage has been vandalized. It's almost like an Agatha Christie mystery in the sense that you feel that by the end everyone in the village is responsible.

If you're familiar with other Haneke films, like The Piano Teacher or Cache, both of which Berger also shot, you know the mood. Perhaps not curiously Berger doesn't like Funny Games another film that Haneke made in both French and English versions ten years apart.

To prepare for production Berger watched some recent films that were released n black and white, but like The White Ribbon shot on color stock. Black and white stock in 35 mm just isn't as available nowadays as it was in the past. Berger notes that he lit the film for black and white then tweaked the image in post-production. Some of those films he referenced were Good Night and Good Luck, and The Man Who Wasn't There. Another film was Unforgiven due to its use of candles and oil lamps as a natural source of light. "Look at a black and white Bergman film," advises Berger. "He never kept the shot wide because then the screen shows too many shadows."

DVD SLIGHT RETURN

One of the most exciting rock concerts from the early 1960s has only been seen in bootleg versions and has never been released on video. Even when it had a theatrical engagement the original film had been excised of the four Beach Boys songs that have now been reinstated. The T.A.M.I. Show will widen your musical horizons and place you smack dab in the middle of the emergence of rock and roll. See one of the Rolling Stones' first (with Brian Jones) American television perfs, see James Brown in his 1964 prime and realize that every performer since then (hello Michael Jackson) stole their moves from him. Gerry and the Pacemakers, performing songs intercut with Chuck Berry rockers, were the biggest group of the time other than The Beatles. The headliner is Leslie Gore and she sings with phrasing that will shake you up, she's so good. The entire event was filmed lived over three days at Santa Monica Civic Center as part of Teenage Awards Music International (and thus the acronym T.A.M.I.).

Make no mistake, this is a vital document of the endlessly rocking era that defined pop music. The Supremes. Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, all hosted by Jan and Dean, all in their prime. The extras include promos, and commentary that dishes a lot of behind the scenes dope. The DVD comes out in late March.

THE UNIVERSE SEASON FOUR from the Discovery Channel epitomizes everything cool about cable downtime. You're glued to the screen and you're smarter afterwards. Of the twelve eps on four discs one features the top 10 ways to kill Earth. Another ep muses on science fiction versus science fact and references recent films like Star Trek and District 9. It takes how much electricity to beam aboard? **FPH**



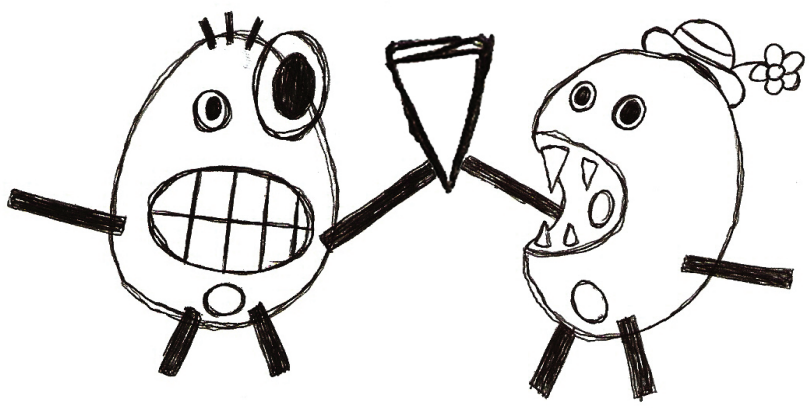


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MARCH ONWARD

STUFF OTHER THAN SXSW

by SPENCER SCHYMA

HOUSTON SYMPHONY PLAYING "MOZART'S REQUIEM IN DM"

03/06 & 07 | JONES HALL

"I know from what I feel that the hour is striking; I am on the point of death." Engaged in a race with his impending doom, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart writes, "I thus must finish my funeral song, which I must not leave incomplete." The "funeral song," as Mozart called it, is the legendary "Requiem in D minor." Disputes over whether he finished the piece before he died continue to be unresolved even into the early 21st century, but one thing remains without dispute or question: this is an other worldly composition. Out of all the music from the gigantic catalog of Mozart I dare one to find a piece that matches the amount of melancholy and sublimity that "Requiem in Dm" encompasses. Considering the context in which it was written, the cryptic choirs and weeping violins are enough to stand the hairs on your neck. It's clearly the soundtrack of a life getting caught in the frosty footsteps of death. On December 4th, 1791 with no family and few friends in attendance one of the greatest composers to ever live was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave. A year after the 3rd class burial, his wife reportedly couldn't even find his grave. Isn't that just typical? The Houston Symphony Orchestra will take on Mozart's funeral song March 6th and 7th. This isn't one to be missed.

TOWER OF POWER

03/12 | HOUSE OF BLUES

Have you ever had an urge to sink your knees deep down in the funk? If you're like me you have; however you've had no choice but to hear 60's funk relics like Sly Stone, Curtis Mayfield, and the Ohio Players through headphones. On March 12th, you'll be able to toss off those oppressive headphones for some funk in the flesh. Tower of Power have been tearing it up since the late 60's and visits to You Tube will show you they're nowhere near slowing down either. Maybe their clothes have changed and they look a lot grayer but they're as sharp as ever and they're STILL diggin' on James Brown. The horn-driven outfit has been touring the world steadily ever since their breakthrough in the early 70's, electrifying audiences with their soulful grooves and improvisational musicianship built around highly syncopated polyrhythms. Forget an H1N1 shot. Come out March 12th to the House of Blues to get a soul vaccination.

DICK DALE

03/14 | HOUSE OF BLUES

"ANY OF YOU FUCKING PRICKS MOVE - AND I'LL EXECUTE EVERY MOTHERFUCKING LAST ONE OF YOU!" Those are the last words you hear right before a furious stream of guitar notes erupt into your ears like wild fire and you're left watching one of the coolest opening credits for a movie in the history of cinema. Unfortunately, Pulp Fiction may be the only time most of us have heard anything from the "King of Surf Guitar." By blending Middle Eastern and Eastern European melodies with the boogie of western rock n'roll, and utilizing a single-note staccato speed picking technique, Dick Dale single handily gave birth to a new style dubbed - "surf." The style invokes the surging sounds and feelings of riding a wave in the heat of summertime California. Although, there were many who tried to imitate, none of them could match the fiery intensity and technical tenacity that Dick Dale bestowed on his listeners. Even at 73, after nearly 50 years of performing, Dale is still going strong. He'll make his way into the House of Blues on March 14th. It'll be enough to make you wanna grab a surfboard and drive all the way to Galveston. Happy floating!



MEGADETH

03/21 | VERIZON WIRELESS THEATER

In 1990, while I was busy being born, Megadeth was putting out its thrash metal masterwork, Rust in Peace. Two decades later, in an effort to boost concert sales, Dave Mustaine (AKA: ginger-ass motherfucker) thought it was a wise idea to utilize their best album's 20th year anniversary to play in its entirety for every show on their nationwide 2010 tour. It's hard to believe the band will execute such a feat without the virtuosic talent of Marty Freidman, the man who's guitar on RIP is perhaps one of the main reasons why the album is as strong as it is. He'll be absent and in replacement, some unknown wanker from Nevermore will pick up the slack. Nevertheless, on March 21st at Verizon Wireless Theater, Megadeth will be throwing down rhythmically complex thrash suites, cheesy lyrics, violent riffs, and enough shredtastic wankery to induce a seizure. Metal heads delight as Testament will also be there displaying their own head banging inflected thrash as-well.

GIL GILBERTO

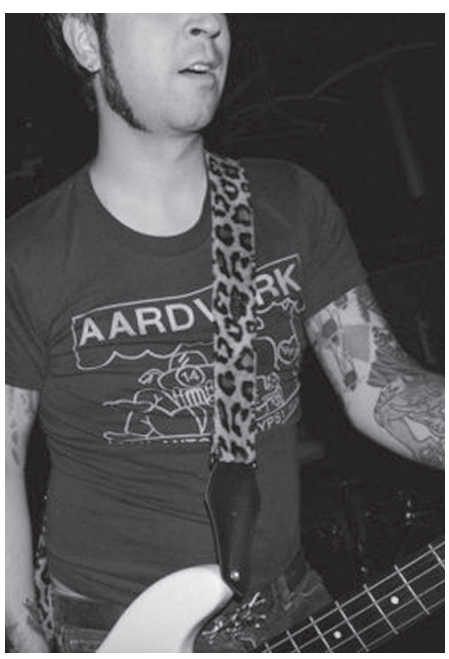
03/26 | JONES HALL

Hailing all the way from Brazil, internationally acclaimed guitarist/singer Gil Gilberto will spend an evening in Jones Hall on March 26th to play his eclectic mix of reggae, samba, rock, and African music. Gil Gilberto was a leader in the late 60's Tropicalia movement alongside of Caetano Veloso, who's blend of genres were both so revolutionary it frightened Brazil's military fueled dictatorship into arresting them. Ironically, in 2003 the president would choose Gil to be the Minister of Culture, the second black person to be apart of the countries cabinet. Tropicalia, the music Gilberto is most associated with, was largely created as a Brazilian response to the Beatles' Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band. By combining Brazilian Jazz/Folk elements and the psychedelic sounds of British Rock alongside socially aware lyrics, Gil was able to produce something Brazil had never heard before. Over the span of a few decades Gil would produce 30 albums and have an illustrious political career as well. In 2008 he resigned from the country's cabinet to pursue being an artist again saying, "I'm going back to giving priority to what's important to me." I can't say I blame him. FPH

BLOWFLY
03/12 | SUPER HAPPY FUN LAND



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03/19 | RUDYARD'S



XIU XIU
03/12 | WAREHOUSE LIVE



THE OH SEES
03/15 | MANGO'S



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+ 3/13 - Performance TBA @ 3:00pm
+ 3/13 - Guitar Shorty @ 5:00pm
+ 3/15 - Hugo @ 5:30pm
+ 3/21 - Sgt. Dunbar & The Hobo Banned @ 2:00pm
+ 3/23 - Via Audio,, Spring Standards, Dill Dotson & The Chupacabra Kings @ 5:00pm
+ 3/27 - Young Mammals @ 1:00pm
+ 3/27 -Golden Cities @ TBA

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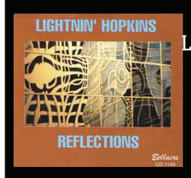
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INTERVIEW

NOSAPRISE

by OMAR AFRA

Nosaprise has been consistently pounding the pavement with his music and live shows in Houston for the last 6 years. Adept at delivering au naturel in studio and serving up energetic live shows, Nosaprise is a Houston Hip-Hop staple.

WHILE NOT LEANING TOO HEAVILY on the archetypical H-Town sound, he melds well into any sliver of the genre he needs to. But the question remains: Who is this Nosaprise guy and why does he so smile so big? I mean really, this guy has a textbook smile.

YOU HAVE BEEN CHUGGIN' AWAY FOR A FEW YEARS NOW ON THE LOCAL SCENE. TELL US THE CRITICAL LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED. ¶ I've learned not to give a fuck. To do the shit that makes me happy and fuck haters.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST LOCAL SHOW YOU ATTENDED? ¶ I was first exposed to local music through the original West Fest in middle school. I saw 30-Foot Fall, I-45, and The Hates, and old guys with iguanas on their shoulder. Shit was great. Hopefully ya'll get them streets shut down. First local show though was Geoffrey's (Muller, of Sideshow Tramps) old old old band Lower and Terminally Ill at the Abyss.

WHAT IS THE NEXT BIG CURVEBALL NOSAPRISE IS GOING TO THROW OUR WAY? ¶ I got my EP Horse Shoes and Hand Grenades coming out April Fool's Day. That's gonna be fire. Not so much a curveball though. I'm playing guitar in a band, Screwtape, that's going to be recording through March and I'm playing drums in this thrash punk three piece called the Terrible Lizards...which is awesome. The band stuff is not so much Nosaprise shit but it's equally as nice.

NAME ONE LOCAL MUSICIAN WHO MAKES YOU, FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD, JEALOUS? ¶ I'm pretty jealous of Golden Axe individually and as a band. Some serious shredding going on there. Warren and James are both amazing musicians so prolly one of them.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: HOUSTON IS THE CENTER OF THE MUSICAL UNIVERSE BECAUSE __ _____. ¶ We got DJ Screw and Pharmaceuticals. FPH



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THE GARY

by KWAME ANDERSON

THERE IS THIS IDEA ABOUT LIFE; THAT IT IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT, WHICH IS POSSIBLY TRUE. BUT MANY TIMES, IT IS WHAT IT BECOMES, AND THEN THE IDEA IS NOT TO PINE FOR WHAT YOU WISH IT WAS, BUT THE MORE YOU ACCEPT (AND TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF) WHAT IT IS. AUSTIN'S THE GARY MAKE MUSIC THAT EVOKES, AND IS IN SOME WAYS CULLED, FROM THIS PLACE.



THERE ARE STORIES of lost nights, wandering days, and wasted days at jobs or in bars. The music is about real life, the failures, confusion, the acceptance and rejection of consequences.

"(Many of the songs ideas arise from) a halfway point between decisions, between two different points in one's life… a time in my life when I was dealt the last card and it wasn't good and I knew it, and I knew I was due for another dealing, that's what it was, and a lot of my songs, or a lot of my lyrics sort of deal with that, transition, I'm kind of thinking back on times in my life where things seem hopeless, and in a way I'm trying to find worth in those moments."

The band released an EP, Chub, at the beginning of last year, six months after forming and another at the end of the year, Logan. One would believe in hearing their material that this is a seasoned band. Consisting of band members Dave Norwood (bass and vocals), Trey Pool (guitar), and Paul Warner (drums), the band mixes Norwood's stories and almost Johnny Cash like baritone with the Warner's precision drumming and Pool's guitar work from the school of Silkorm, Pavement, and that brief period of great 90's indie rock. It's almost as if Pool plays it as a style, much like one plays a blues standard. However, the music is not a revival. It's reminiscent of when people played instruments more than machines, and when lyrics were something more than mumbled utterances under walls of sampled sound and white noise.

Music today is very stylized. It's very slick and it's almost more fashion, more decoration than anything. However, stripped of its wardrobe and accoutrements, there is nothing. In reading the lyrics to The Gary's songs this is most certainly not the case. The words set the scene. Take "Damn Machines" for instance: "The long commute, the worry and reluctance. The morning sun, a nuisance from above, it exists for a higher thing, not to facilitate the grind of damn machines."

"That song really came out of working a job I didn't like to live a live I didn't care for, and I think a lot of people are in that situation, there's so much more around us than 'go to work, come home', that haunts a lot of us, and I know that a lot of us know that, but it's part of what we gotta get passed, I guess, to see what's outside of our tunnel vision of going to work and coming home. I used to work a job like that and thought the machines are not my tools, I'm the tool of the machine."

All of the members of The Gary have a back catalog of bands that they have been in, which may account for the tightness and skill of the band. Each member being near or around 40, the days of playing to or for a scene or fame have passed. In talking with the band, primarily Norwood and Pool, there is a sense that the band plays as sort of a lifeblood, there is no choice, it is what they must do for their own sanity. Both Norwood and Pool have young daughters, and both admit to not doing music for a while to raise their children, work, and be family men, but life without music became droll and it called them like the crack called Pookie.

"We are just following ourselves, we're playing music, we're not going for a certain sound, we're not worrying about what we were influenced by, it's just playing how we know how to play, and sometimes it's good to be who you are and not try to innovate all the time, just simply do what you're capable of doing, and do what you're capable of doing, that's where we are right now."

Norwood commented that "music is to me what religion was to my mother," and much like religion helps us to make sense of our existence, it helps one to wade through difficult times, and renews and restores faith. The Gary's music acts as sort of gospel in that respect. However, the band does not hope to convert you, although they would like you to donate to the cause and attend the service when it comes to town. **FPH**

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March 12 - 3 Peace
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March 7 - Sunset Stripperz

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March 13 - Straight Shooter
(Bad Company Tribute)
with Chlorine
March 20 - Black Dog
(Led Zeppelin Tribute)
March 27 - Alcoholica
(Metallica Tribute)
April 3 - Abbey Rode
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with Already Gone
and Nightbird

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10 MUST SEE BANDS

COMING TO HOUSTON IN THE NEXT 2 MONTHS

Houston music lovers have a lot to be excited about this year due to all the spring tour announcements. It seems with each passing year Houston is treated to more live shows from the hottest new bands on the national and international music scene.

NOT BIG, radio ready, Billboard Top 100 acts but the critic's picks, the up-and-comers, the heavily blogged and buzzed next big things — precisely the kind of bands that make die-hard music fans dizzy with anticipation. It is attributable to business-minded, music loving promoters and venue owners who host these hot bands and the increasingly savvy audiences that are coming out for shows and filling the venues. This spring there is a white hot line-up of "buzz bands," "critical darlings" and "bands-to-watch" at all your favorite Houston venues. The bands coming to town ARE the ones everyone is talking about at CMJ, SXSW and in all the music blogs. Don't miss the sick sounds and hot shows going on here in the Bayou City.

Here are ten bands that are playing in March and April. Check out their mp3's in the companion piece on the music blog at www.freepresshouston.com if you aren't already familiar with them, and we will take a closer look at all of these bands and more as some of these destined-to-be-epic shows approach. The days are getting longer. The weather is getting nicer. Get out there and see some live music!



BEAR IN HEAVEN
03/16 | MANGO'S

BROOKLYN-BASED Bear In Heaven first came to my attention last fall on Spin Magazine's "25 Must Hear Artists from the CMJ Music Festival. These guys meld post punk synthesizers with a modern psychedelic sound. Their 2009 album "Beast Rest Forth Mouth" secured a much coveted spot on Pitchfork's Best New Music list.

CYMBALS EAT GUITARS
03/16 | MANGO'S

THESE NEW YORKERS also enjoyed the "Best New Music" laurels from Pitchfork for their 2009 self-released album "Why There Are Mountains." The warbling, sing-song-y vocals and loose jangly arrangements remind me of early period Modest Mouse.



THE BIG PINK
04/07 | WAREHOUSE LIVE

THIS BRITISH DUO burst onto the music scene last year with their debut "A Brief History of Love." Their big stadium ready indie rock anthems made just about everyone's year end list.



YEASAYER
04/09 | HOUSE OF BLUES

THESE PSYCHEDELIC POP ROCKERS are back with their new release "Odd Blood" out last month. I missed them at ACL two years ago, but won't make that mistake again when they hit the House of Blues in April.



HERE WE GO MAGIC
04/13 | WALTER'S ON WASHINGTON

WHEN I FIRST HEARD Here We Go Magic's self-titled debut last March, I was so moved by their music that I spontaneously took off work the next day and drove to SXSW for the afternoon to hear them at the Gorilla vs. Bear party. They brought their new songs to life and peaked my interest. By the time I saw them six or so months later on the Dell stage at ACL, they were a much more muscular band with the ability to command a much larger stage.

WASHED OUT
04/23 | WAREHOUSE LIVE

I DISCOVERED Washed Out's last year among the crop of lo-fi artists on the Mexican Summer Label. The sun-drenched pop gems found on debut album, "Life of Leisure" quickly became my anthems for sitting on the beach eating chicken or drinking beer poolside. Last fall Ernest Greene played his first live shows ever at CMJ. I am really looking forward to seeing this material come to life in a live setting.



BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

03/20 | HOUSE OF BLUES

LIVE SHOW TITANS, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, will bring their driving psychedelic swirl back to Houston in March. The last time they played Houston for a Jack Daniels Promotional Show at Warehouse Live, they had just lost their long-time drummer, Nick Jago, and perhaps a little of their swagger. It was still a great show, but I am excited to how former-Raveonettes-touring-drummer, Leah Shapiro, has settled into her new job two years on.

HOCKEY

04/01 | WAREHOUSE LIVE

MY WIFE LOVES these Portland indie rockers whose sound takes a page from The Strokes' playbook but with a shot of LCD Soundsystem's dancefloor-readiness. They touring in support of their very satisfying new album, "Mind Chaos." Wear your skinny jeans.

BEACH HOUSE

04/23 | WAREHOUSE LIVE

WITH THE RELEASE of their stunning new album, "Teen Dream," Beach House is poised to bring their bedroom pop to the masses. The last time I heard Victoria Legrand's Stevie Nicks inflected swoon, she was sitting in with tour mates Grizzly Bear at Emo's at an Austin City Limits Festival after show to great effect. I am thrilled to get the opportunity to hear them bring all the new material to the Warehouse.

PHOENIX

04/30 | VERIZON WIRELESS THEATER

GRAMMY WINNERS PHOENIX are hardly any big secret these days, but the French quartet who got their start working with members of Daft Punk and serving as Air's backing band for television appearances has come a long way. Last year's "Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix" was universally acclaimed. When I saw them at ACL last fall, they blew my doors off. I can't wait to see them in a slightly smaller setting. FPH

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Good Magazine

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THQ PUBLISHING ITS WAY INTO GAMERS' HEARTS



DARKSIDERS
developed by vigil games.
playstation 3, xbox 360

METRO 2033
developed by 4a games.
pc, xbox 360

by TYLER BARBER

WHEN I WRITE ABOUT VIDEOGAMES, I HAVE A HIDDEN AGENDA – TO TURN THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON TO WHAT WE "GAMERS" ARE GETTING EXCITED ABOUT. FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES WE HAVE FAWNED OVER CERTAIN GAMES THAT, FOR WHATEVER REASON, GO UNNOTICED BY JOE AND JANE PUBLIC.



VIDEOGAMES ARE NOW UBIQUITOUS within pop entertainment, but the public-at-large is still unaware of basic gaming knowledge – for example, the difference between publisher and developer. A perfect explanation analogy: think of publishers as record labels and developers as the bands. The developers make the game; the publishers sell them. Sometimes the publisher owns the developer, sometimes they don't.

Why is this relevant? Well, this month I'll be focusing on publisher THQ, and how they've been courting the best new developers (Volition, Vigil and 4A Games). Another music-industry analogy: imagine you're back in 1986, and I'm telling you to pay attention to the Sub-Pop record label. Pay attention, THQ has game critics abuzz.

AUSTIN'S VIGIL

Rookie developer Vigil Games released their very first title in Janurary. Darksiders, met with overwhelming critical acclaim, is basically an adult take on the 3D Zelda games. While the game was in development, Vigil would preview the game to the media as a God of War-type game. As a result, the gaming press wasn't excited for Darksiders at all. In fact, while attending E3 last year, I noticed the Darksiders demo area was always vacant. But when the game released, everyone was surprised by an excellent variation on an old standard: the Zelda-like dungeons and puzzles combined with God of War-like combat. Those who bought Darksiders new recieved a mysterious "code" in their game-box that was later revealed to give players a free copy of 2009's Red Faction Guerrilla (also published by THQ).

THEIR OWN VOLITION

"Blow-Shit-Up: The Game." That's basically what Volition created in 2009's Red Faction Guerrilla. I'm currently playing through this game, and never before have I experienced that boyish tear-shit-up thirst quenched in a videogame. Everything in the game is destructable. Giant structures, buildings, bridges... all good-to-go, and the whole game is set to the backdrop of a blue-collar rebellion on the now-inhabited Mars. It's devilishly fun (which is pretty much Volition's modus operandi: make deviousness fun). In 2008 I had the fortune of reviewing Volition's Saints Row 2 for 1UP.com and EGM. Grand Theft Auto IV had come out a few months earlier, featuring a more "mature" design direction. But while GTA IV went a more high-brow route, Saints Row 2 just let you go ape-shit. Where Rockstar carefully crafted protagonist Nico Belic in GTA IV, Volition let the player construct their main character, allowing them to choose sex, race, and even a wide range of voices (I loved the English accent!). To top if off, Saints Row 2 even allowed players to play through the entire campaign with a friend co-cooperatively. Volition announced last month that they'll be showing off Saints Row 3 and Red Faction Guerrilla 2 at this year's E3 Expo.

4A HARDCORE

Another new-kid-on-the-block, developer 4A Games comes from Kiev, Ukraine. Games from different regions in the world tend to have a different "flavor." Most current games are influenced by either Japanese or Western (i.e., UK and the US) developed games, and specific regional influences definitely add to that flavor. Games from Eastern Europe, however, are very much their own breed. A perfect example of this is the PC first-person-shooter S.T.A.L.K.E.R. In it, you're surviving a hostile irradiated landscape. The game's much more penalizing and realistic, as Eastern European gamers favor simulation over cartoon-ish action (Mario, Crackdown etc.). This is all just a long-winded way of introducing Metro 2033, 4A's first game coming out this month. My fellow co-host on the Rebel FM podcast has had some extended time with this game, and while it's not a perfect game, his analysis is that it shows the making of a top-rate developer. If fiction can pull you into a game, Metro 2033 may be for you, as it's the official videogame of a novel of the same title. Metro 2033, the novel, is basically Eastern Europe's Harry Potter, set underground in a nuclear bombed-out Moscow.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG

Another big win for THQ last year was UFC 2009. For several years gamers were without a new mixed-martial-arts game, and it was refreshing when a new one came along. The game sold and reviewed tremendously well. UFC 2010 is already set for release this year. What's wrong with that? When you continue to annualize game sequels, you start dilluting the magical "it-factor" that made the debut so great. Think of Tomb Raider. Does anyone care about that series anymore? Yes, I'm excited for a new Saints Row and Red Faction, but really what I loved about those games was that they were a breath of fresh air when they came out. Even Darksiders' developer has announced they're making a sequel. From a business standpoint it makes sense; sequels generally sell well. But I think what made all of THQ's published games great was their pioneering spirit. I'd hate to see this deflate while moving forward, so let's hope the inevitable sequels will truly innovate and continue to surprise us. FPH

You can catch me and two other idiots discussing videogames on our weekly podcast, Rebel FM. Subscribe to us via iTunes, or get the show from our website, www.eat-sleep-game.com.

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Voidmate

March 2nd:
Krunkquistadors
Kemo for Emo
Footpie
DJ Lizard

March 3rd-5th closed

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Pisces Party
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March 7th:
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March 10th:
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March 11th-24th! SXSW OVERFLOW FEST
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March 26th:
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Voluptuous Tusk
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Cocker Spaniels

March 27th:
SHFL Day!

March 29th:
High in One Eye

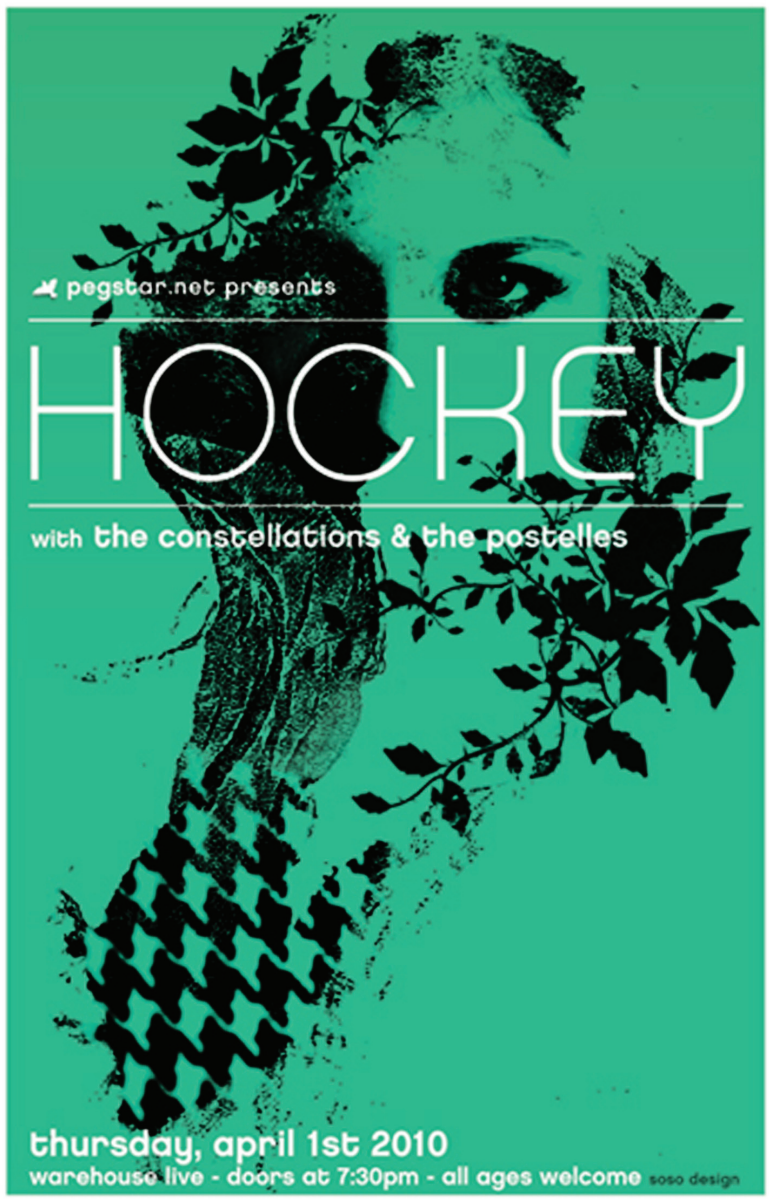
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SPACE JAM

OCCUPANCY LAWS IN HOUSTON ARE BAD FOR BUSINESS & THE ENVIRONMENT

THE FIRST IN A 3 PART SERIES

by OMAR AFRA | ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL

THERE IS A GLARING CONTRADICTION IN THE CITY OF HOUSTON'S ORDINANCES REGARDING OCCUPANCY FOR BUILDINGS. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW, EVERY PUBLIC BUILDING WHICH HOUSES A BUSINESS IS ISSUED A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY WHICH STATES THE MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS ALLOWED TO BE IN THE BUILDING AT ANY GIVEN TIME.



NOW, OF COURSE WE WANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT to ensure that buildings only hold the amount of people that can safely fit. You don't want 65 overweight people crammed in a 10-person elevator, naturally. But there are some critical flaws in the way our city determines the occupancy of each building and it is unfortunately based more on business and transit than it is safety. Most importantly, capacity is determined by the city first and foremost based upon the available parking. The ordinance requires that a restaurant must have eight parking spaces per 1,000 square feet and bars are required to have ten spaces per square foot. Keep in mind this does not include public parking on streets. For example, a retail store or a restaurant, which has the actual capacity of 100 people, could be given occupancy of only 12 people if it has only 3 parking spots. So what about bike riders and walkers? People who ride the bus or even the light rail? You got it: the city makes no such allowances. You could have bike racks to facilitate 100 riders yet not get any additional occupancy. Even businesses on Main St. where the light rail runs are faced with this dilemma. Surprisingly enough, the Montrose area was recognized by Walk Score as the '2nd Most Walkable' neighborhood in all of the United States. Then why are local businesses forced to use an antiquated method to create transit through their place of business? Calls made to the City's Occupancy office were at first passed around once we inquired about making allowances for bicycles, mass transit, and foot traffic. Questions were met with an anonymous chorus of «I don't know why bike riders and mass transit does not equal more occupancy.» I also got this nugget of wisdom, "We don't care one way or the other if someone walks or rides a bike, we still need parking spots cause you can't guarantee bike riders."

This is a battle fought long and hard by local business people and entrepreneurs who don't necessarily rely on automobiles for the lion's share of the customers. Ziggy's Healthy Grill on Taft at Fairview is in danger of being shut down by the city for their lack or parking as they were previously leasing an adjacent lot but the lease has since expired. But Ziggy's lies smack dab in the middle of a dense neighborhood and could rely exclusively on foot traffic to sustain their business. Even businesses on the infamous light rail line on Main St. are immune to this inconsistency in the law. Remember Main Street Improv? It was a grassroots run comedy club and event space. They hosted many upstart comedians in Houston as well as he famed Bill Hicks Resurrection Society. After a long fight with the city, they were forced to close doors as they had too little parking. Solutions for Hair on Westheimer near Woodhead has fought a protracted battle with the city as they have been required to provide multiple parking spots per salon chair. Why someone getting a trim and color correction needs to arrive with 3 cars is beyond me but I am sure the city has an explanation. Or maybe not. When quizzed about this strange requirement, anonymous city officials said, "Houston is a driver's city. People need to park. If you don't like it, call the mayor's office." Well, calls to the mayor's office about this subject have yet to be returned. Giving the new and obviously busy Parker administration the benefit of the doubt, I imagine she has much to tackle this soon into her stay in the Mayor's Office. But the problem remains and it is in complete contradiction with the vision she so deftly laid out for the city. The meta-narrative is that federal government is the one setting up obstacles for small business owners. But this is a great opportunity for our new mayor to help get the city out of the way of entrepreneurs while stimulating green practices.

The inconsistencies in the laws fly in the face of efforts to make Houston a less car reliant city. The last several mayors have made relieving traffic congestion a priority and made them cornerstones of their election platforms. Why not encourage bike riders, walkers, and mass transit through our city's business practices? Cafes, shops, and bars often shape neighborhoods and if there is a place within walking distance people will walk. Additionally, many businesses rely on bikers and walkers now as opposed to some distant hope for the future. Luckily enough, Café Brasil on Dunlavy has a building old enough that it falls under a Grandfather Clause, which allows it to operate without private parking. They rely heavily on neighborhood walkers, bike riders, and public street parking. After Houston getting such poor Green ratings from several national sources on recycling, transit, and air quality, it makes sense to move in this direction.

Ultimately, a change in the ordinances has the potential to take cars off the roads, encourage a few people to talk a brisk walk, and maybe, just maybe, allow the city occupancy office to spend more of its precious time on other pressing matters. FPH

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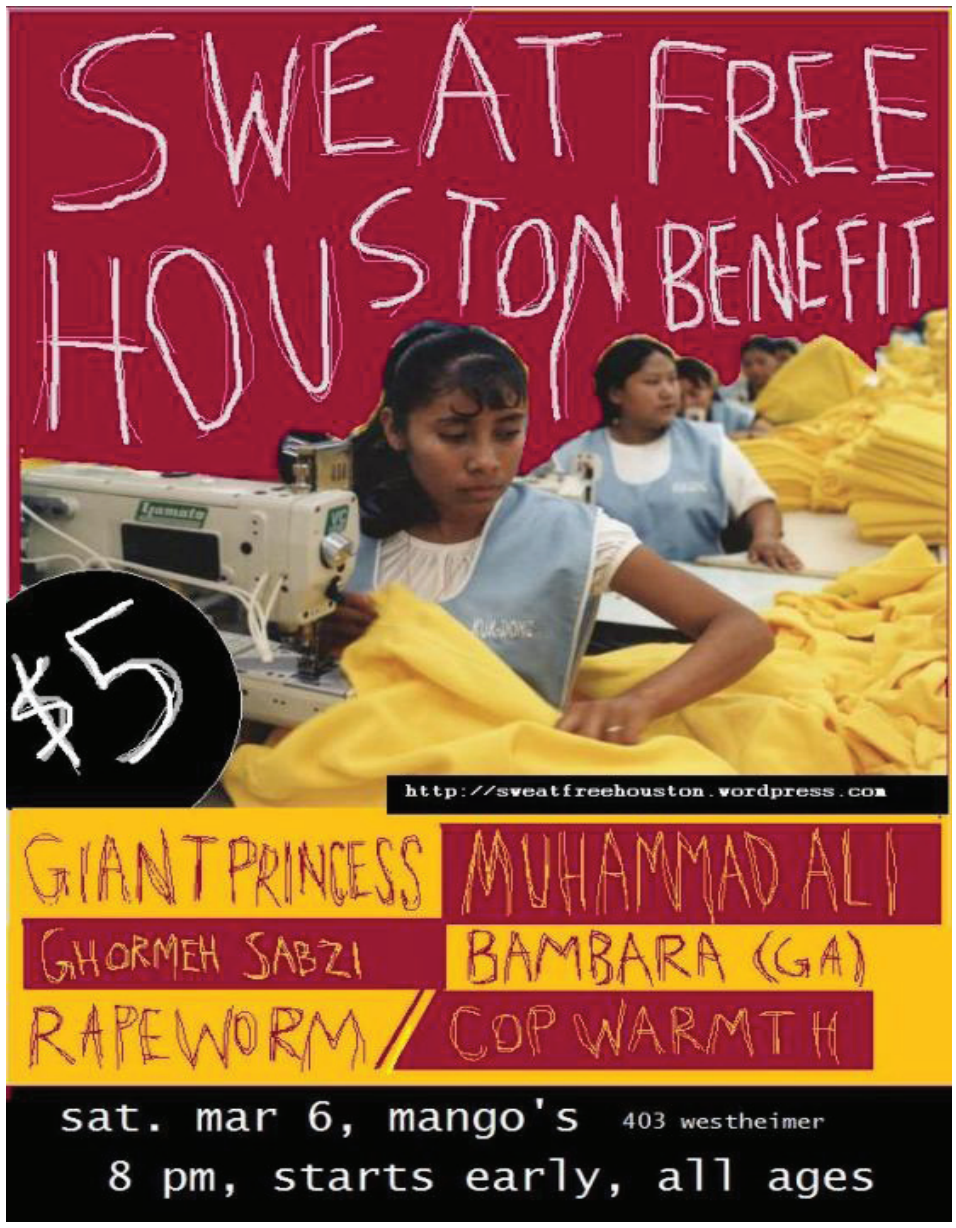
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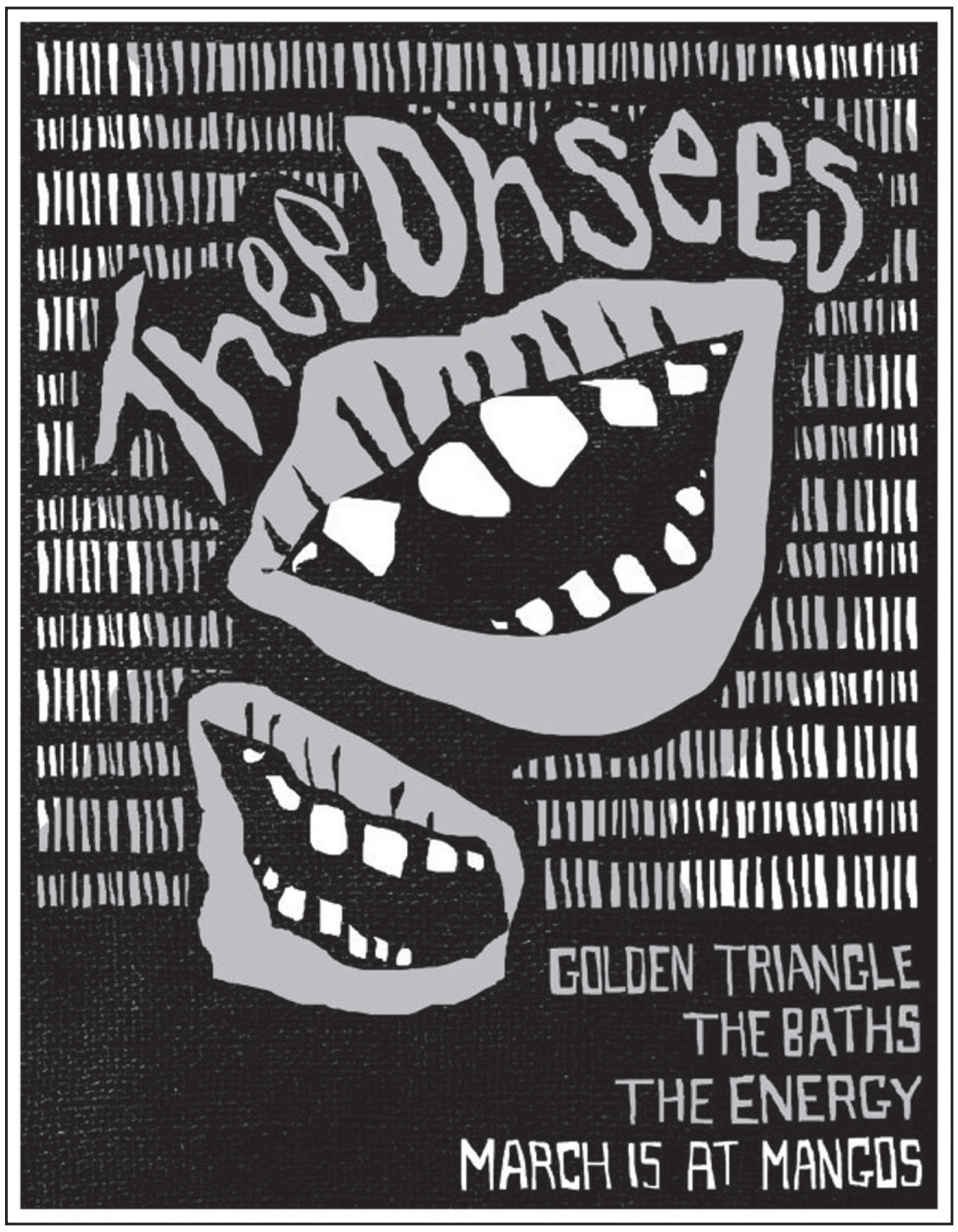
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INTERVIEW:

DHARMA PUNX

MATTHEW BROWNLIE

by OMAR AFRA

BUDDHISM IS NOT A RELIGION OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH PUNK ROCK. FRANKLY, PUNK HAS ARGUABLY HAD A HISTORIC ANIMOSITY TOWARDS RELIGION. PERFECTLY ENOUGH, FOLLOWERS OF BUDDHISM OFTEN CLAIM THEIR FAITH IS NOT A RELIGION. HOWEVER, INSPIRED GROUPS OF YOUNG BUDDHISTS HAVE MANAGED TO RECONCILE THESE SEEMINGLY DISPARATE IDEOLOGIES AND HAVE HOSTED MEDITATION WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES CALLED DHARMA PUNX.



HOUSTON HAS HAD THE PLEASURE of being a city to have such a group and Matthew Brownlie of local band Bring Back the Guns has had a hefty hand in organizing it. The group describes its purpose as "a peer-led Buddhist meditation and discussion group for those who seek to strengthen their capacities for compassion, understanding and wisdom. " But what are these scary Buddhists *really* up to? Matthew Brownlie sheds some light:

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS ARE DISCUSSED AT DHARMA PUNX OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF BUDDHISM? ¶ Here's how the meetings are structured: short meditation, often guided, at the beginning, a brief reading, a discussion of the reading, some longer silent meditation at the end. So we don't have much time to talk about non-Buddhist stuff inside the meeting itself.

But the conversation tends to veer towards the application of Buddhist ideas our regular lives. So I guess we talk about our regular lives.

TELL US ABOUT THE 'TOOLS', FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD, THAT BUDDHISM GIVES YOU TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD? ¶ Meditation is a big part of Buddhism, and the meditation most of us practice is just sitting down and shutting up and watching thoughts, feelings, ideas, sensations, sounds, itches, whatever as they happen inside our perception. They show up, you notice them, and they go away. Speaking for myself, doing that helps me remember in day-to-day life that that's the nature of everything, so there's not much reason to take any of it personally.

Oh, and it also reminds me that everyone wants to be happy and to not suffer. I find it really interesting that that's one of the few (seemingly) absolute truths I've experienced so far.

IS IT HARD TO RECONCILE THE BUDDHIST NON-VIOLENT CONCEPTS OF AHISMA VERSUS THE PUNK TENDENCIES TOWARDS NEAR VIOLENT SELF-RELIANCE? ¶ Ahisma hasn't been something we've talked about in Punx yet. In fact, I had to Google it just now. I'm really not sure if I understand the question. Why would one have to be violent in order to be self-reliant? Violence is always the result of deluded thinking and

Obviously doesn't solve shit and tends to bring about more violence and make the violent person feel like more and more of an asshole. Trying to be entirely self-reliant is probably not a great idea because we could all use all the help we can get from each other, I think. Just my opinion, though.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE CONCEPT OF IMPERMANENCE IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS. DOES THIS 'IMPERMANENCE' APPLY TO THE 133,000 RAPTURED SOULS THAT CHRIST WILL MANIFEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WHERE THEY SHALL LIVE FOREVER AND EVER AND EVER AS TOLD IN REVELATIONS? ¶ I'm not convinced that we have an everlasting soul that maintains itself after we die, so...yes?

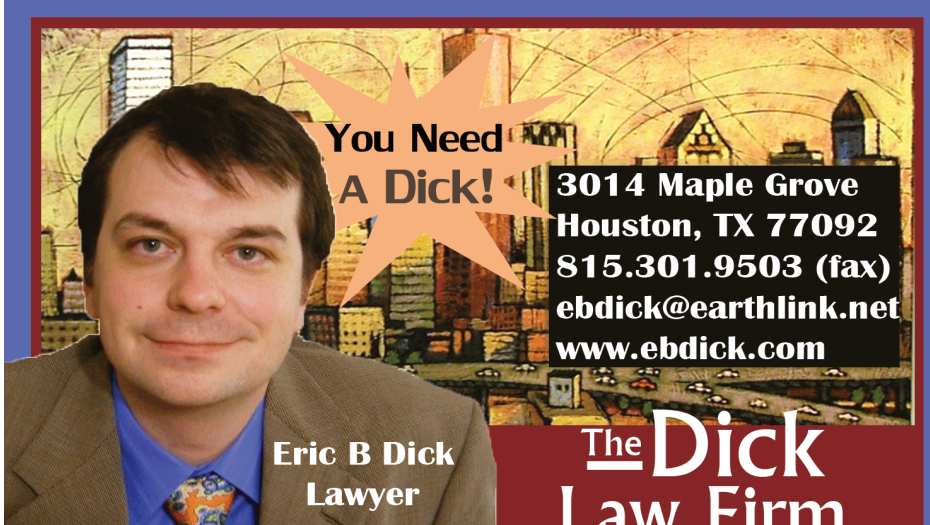
WHY ARE THERE NO BUDDHIST HOLY WARRIORS WHO WAGE WAR ON BEHALF OF THEIR FAITH AND VOW TO DESTROY UNBELIEVERS LIKE ALL THE OTHER GOOD RELIGIONS? ¶ I think that there have been, right? I think I've read stuff about that but I can't remember right now. Anyway, one reason would probably be that Buddhism doesn't really ask for any faith, so we don't have anything to defend. *(Eds note: Under the reign of Ashoka the Great, Buddhism endured a stage of imperialism and militancy.)*

BUT SERIOUSLY, HOW FAR DO YOUR OWN IDEALS OF NON-VIOLENCE END AND PRAGMATISM BEGINS? THINK AUSCHWITZ. ¶ Dude, I am a novice at this stuff. I cannot possibly answer that question right now. I freaked out when you sent me these questions because I don't want to give glib answers, and that's a huge question. Let me get a few more years of practice under my belt and ask me again.

IF THE BUDDHA FRONTED A LATE SEVENTIES NEW YORK PUNK BAND, WHO WOULD IT BE? ¶ Buddha would be Tom Verlaine's solo from the second 2/3rds of Television's Marquee Moon, duh. **FPH**

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BRINGING THE WAR HOME

by BOB SOMMER

THE WARS IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ REMAIN UNDER THE RADAR FOR MOST AMERICANS. DURING THE EIGHT-YEAR BUSH NIGHTMARE, KEEPING AMERICANS PREOCCUPIED AND AFRAID WAS THE ENABLING STRATEGY FOR CONDUCTING WAR. GOING SHOPPING WAS HOW WE'D CONTRIBUTE TO THE WAR EFFORT. IT WAS OUR SACRIFICE, OUR DUTY. QUIT SHOPPING AND "THE TERRORISTS" WIN.

NOW, WITH AN ECONOMIC CRISIS that measures 8.0-plus on the Richter scale of economic crises, Obama hasn't had to resort to such underhanded (though bizarrely convincing) tactics. In fact, he's been forthright about escalating the war in Afghanistan, and escalate he has.

As military parents during the Bush years, my wife and I were especially sensitive to how little attention most people paid to these wars. America seemed not only to be shopping itself into oblivion, but also entertaining itself on a scale that you could only describe as stunning. Whatever pabulum corporate media giants served up, from American Idol through the recent Avatar-event, which tries to convince us that we're all good environmentalists for watching a 3-D movie that turns out to be a spectacle of technological and war-machine porn (is it really a movie?), the public ponied up. Gazillions of dollars changed hands. Everyone knows who survived on Survivor, while just a fraction knows how many have died in our wars (and of course, only American dead count).



Entertainment is the Victory Gin of George Orwell's 1984. We numb ourselves with it; we lurch from one sports season to another, from one pseudo-scandal, one salacious murder, one shocking (we're more easily shocked than Claude Rains in Casablanca) idiocy that sputters through the lips of a shock jock or pundit (it's hard to tell the difference) to another. David Foster Wallace's brilliant novel Infinite Jest satirizes our quest for the holy (and deadly) grail of ultimate entertainment pleasure, and Chris Hedges has written eloquently on the topic in his recent book, Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle.

Appropriately enough, a Hedges quotation serves as the epigraph for the movie The Hurt Locker, which may be the first movie about our current wars to shun the stock characters and predictable plots that we expect from war movies.

"The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug," Hedges writes in his 2002 book, War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning. The sentence melts away on the screen; leaving only the words war is a drug.

My wife and I found our way to The Hurt Locker through our son, who'd done tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He brought the DVD home and asked us to view it. It's rare that he does such a thing, and he's been very understated about his experiences overseas, but nothing he'd seen until now represented his experiences as well as this movie. In truth, we approached it with reluctance and a sense of obligation, yet we found ourselves in a compelling and meaningful story about a demolition team in Iraq at the height of the conflict.

The movie is not political in the sense that it takes the Bush administration out for one more whipping (deserving as it may be); it doesn't. Nor is it polemical in the browbeating manner of Avatar. But it powerfully represents the theme set by Hedges – war is a drug – not only in the character of SSG Will James, the demo expert who nervelessly confronts one deadly IED after another, but in the manner that he epitomizes the nation's obsession with war. War is the ultimate high, the steroid of experience, and an adrenaline jolt like no other – the ultimate entertainment. Don't we love the flyovers at big football games? The color guards? All the cool guns Gunny shows us on his "militiamen" show Mail Call? The soldier in BDUs in an airport? And our war video games?

In one scene, James disarms an unusually large bomb – a "daisy chain" – while recklessly exposing his team to needless danger, yet later he finds himself confronted by a nearly speechless colonel, so amped by James's exploits that he sputters mindlessly in admiration, while James's team members stand by and watch, dumbfounded.

My wife and I packed countless boxes of food and snacks to send to our son and his squad while they were deployed, but nothing brought home the meaning of that effort like seeing the soldiers drink from the same juice pouches we'd packed while they were pinned down in a firefight in brutal heat, in a nameless and meaningless place, and uncertain even of whom they were fighting. Heat and fear and fatigue blistered through the screen.

The sound and motion of improvised bombs exploding, the momentary lag between the pop of a sniper rifle and blood spurting from a human body as seen through a spotting scope, the danger of an Iraqi street, of ordinary citizens approaching a soldier, the randomness of guerilla warfare, the banality of fear and injury and death, and the countdown to redeployment home – watching this, we felt like we were experiencing what we'd lived through from a distance during the years our son was deployed and we searched for whatever news we could find buried deep within the noise machine of infotainment.

By asking us to see this movie, our son was communicating something to us about himself – and about what we, that is, all of us, are doing in these wars, and how different the reality is from what we imagine it to be.

The Hurt Locker has picked up a bevy of Oscar nominations, and this past weekend, it won six awards at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards (BAFTA), including Best Picture and Best Director. An added bonus: In an irony you couldn't sell to a literary agent in a novel, the movie's director, Kathryn Bigelow beat out her ex-husband, Avatar-director James Cameron, for these honors.

The Hurt Locker sets a standard for writers and directors to engage these wars in a mature way, and for all of us to consider why we're at war at all. **FPH**



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STYLING & PROFILING

DON COLLINS' UNFORTUNATE RUN-IN WITH HPD

by ISAAC T. RICE | ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL

HOUSTON, TEXAS - DON COLLINS AWOKE THE MORNING OF TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9TH AS HE ALWAYS DOES. HE SHOOK HIMSELF FROM HIS SLEEPY STATE AND GOT READY FOR THE DAY. AFTER HIS NORMAL MORNING RITUAL HE STARTED OUT FOR HIS FAVORITE COFFEE SHOP.

DON DOES NOT DRIVE; he walks. Don arrived at Taft St Coffee, the coffee shop that serves as both his studio and muse, and began to converse with his friends and those he does not know. Don draws people, places and things as they appear to him. After Don had finished at Taft St. he headed out for his next destination, a destination he would not reach.

As Don was crossing the road he heard the sound of an oncoming car so he instinctively sped up his pace to cross the street before becoming the next Houstonian to be the victim of a vehicular accident. After reaching the opposite curb Don heard the same car slam on its brakes and as he turned he saw that it was a Houston Police Department cruiser. By the time Don had turned around the passenger side officer was already out of the car walking toward him. Don is not a stranger to the H.P.D. and he knew what was coming. What followed was a horrible display of profiling by the HPD officers.

The first officer asked Don why he was walking so fast and requested to see his identification. The officer proceeded to ask Don who he was and tell him that he had never seen him in "their" neighborhood before. The next question was a forceful request to search Don's backpack for his "crack pipe"; Don does not smoke crack. Upon searching his pack, much to the chagrin of Don's personal rights, they discovered a bag of Crayola colored pencils (let me remind you Don is an Artist) and the officers proceeded to ask Don if he was a "pedophile". The fact that the possession of colored pencils is enough for the police to think that someone is a pedophile is absurd, but also that they would ask such an audacious question to Don based off of the contents of his bag is overwhelmingly upsetting. Also during this absurd police investigation a mid-twenties African American man happened to be walking by and he received a harsh greeting and rude questioning as to his destination and reason for being where he was.

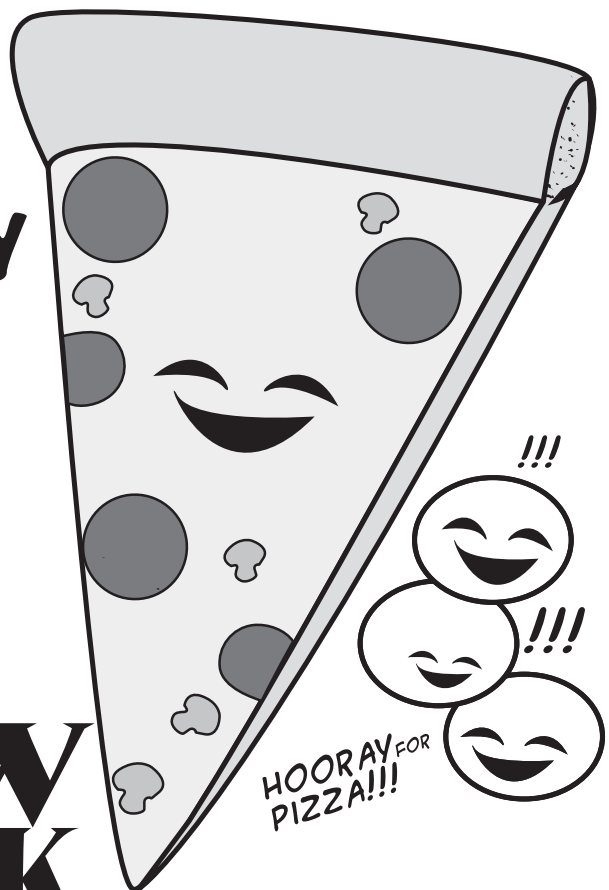
Upon searching through their records they found that Don had a few outstanding tickets and decided to take him in to process him through the system. The first holding cell that Don was placed in was a twenty-man cell that had about forty or fifty men in it. After several hours Don was moved to a smaller cell with three other men, one of whom was suffering from some mental ailments and had been in the cell for longer then he should have been in that situation. Don continually requested to talk with a superior officer (which is something that one of his cell-mates had for the previous two days) and was repeatedly told to talk to the next shift-captain, of which he saw about three come and go. Don finally went before a judge to deal with his delinquent tickets and copped a plea so that the frustrating madness would come to a more concise end. His tickets were written off after he spent some more time in his cell and was subsequently released.

As previously stated, Don is not a stranger to the HPD. In fact, they harass Don quite often. On top of being a wonderful artist, very friendly conversationalist and traveling philosopher, Don is also homeless. It is an upsetting fact that just because Don has the appearance of a homeless man and was walking faster than some police officer decided that he should have been, he was the subject of situational profiling and the harassment that comes with it. No man, whether he goes home to a multi-million dollar house or a pad made from cardboard and thrift-store blankets, should be subjected to such inhumane treatment. Don had not done anyone direct or even indirect harm in that situation and aside from his appearance and supposed unfamiliar presence in the neighborhood the officers had no feasible reason to "pull him over."

This situation was upsetting to Don, but even more upsetting to those who care about him. Don is a kind and generous man to everyone both friend and stranger alike. Over the Christmas season Don sold cards based off of his paintings at Taft St Coffee and donated all the proceeds to the church that he has been attending so that they could dig fresh water wells over-seas. He is an accomplished artist, and a brilliant intellectual, nothing about him says dangerous, harmful, or even scary. This situation brings into questioning the methods by which our HPD officers are deciding who is and is not criminal. I can only hope that this situation will bring an inquiry into the police department and their practices of profiling. **FPH**



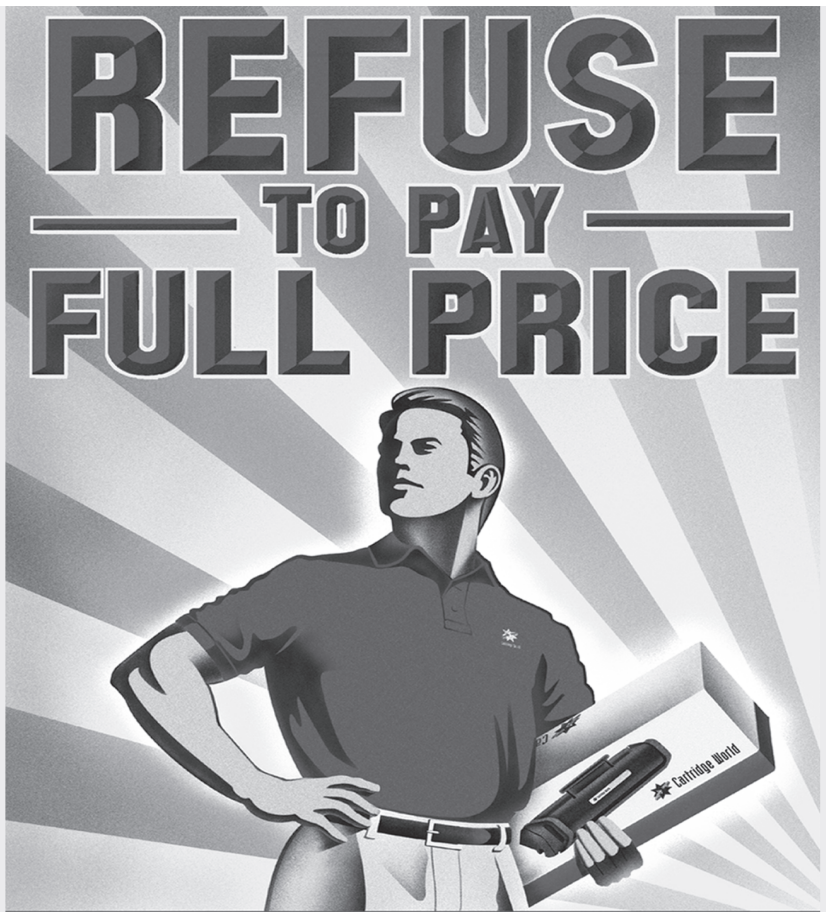
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by THOMAS MICHAEL POWER

A HARD-HEADED LOOK AT BIOMASS

JUST BECAUSE AN ENERGY SOURCE IS "BIOLOGICAL" DOESN'T MAKE IT "GREEN"

ONE WAY TO AVOID UNPLEASANT OR DANGEROUS SURPRISES IS TO TAKE A HARD-HEADED LOOK AT APPARENT "GOOD DEALS" BEFORE COMMITTING TO THEM, DESPITE THE ENTHUSIASM THAT ANY ALLEGED "GOOD DEAL" IS BOUND TO GENERATE. OF COURSE SUCH A RATIONAL APPROACH RISKS BEING LABELED NAYSAYING OR OBSTRUCTIONIST BY THOSE CAUGHT UP IN THE ENTHUSIASM.

WHEN IT COMES TO SOLUTIONS to our energy problems, both global warming and reliance on foreign sources, we have already made some serious mistakes in our rush to develop what had been labeled "green energy resources." I have in mind the extensive conversion of food and feed crops like corn and soybeans to ethanol to fuel our automobiles. The net energy production and net carbon emissions of that approach to bio-fuels has been challenged by energy experts. In addition, the diversion of food corps to energy production helped drive up food prices around the world. As good as those high food prices may have been for our farmers, high food costs have not been good for the poorer countries of the world. The economic rationality, energy balance, carbon impact, and equity of the federal subsidies to convert food to fuel for our cars are all questionable. Well intended effort to move away from reliance on foreign fossil fuels got hijacked by special interests into something that turns out to be quite wasteful and destructive.

That should provide a warning to us to move more carefully on the latest bio-fuel energy rush, namely the current enthusiasm for burning wood to generate electricity, also subsidized by the federal government and pushed by state mandates. Let's hope we do not again make a huge economic and environmental mistake.

Let me emphasize that my concern is not simply with the harvest of trees. In Montana and across the West and the nation, there is a significant part of our forested landscapes that is already "human-dominated" in the sense that we have already put in relatively dense road systems, are already managing those lands for timber, and have increasingly built our homes adjacent to or within those forests. Given that significant human presence and activity on those forested landscapes, those lands will always be mix of human and natural systems. I suspect that if our timber management efforts had stayed focused on these already human-dominated lands instead of constantly pushing into higher and more isolated wildlands where timber management got more and more expensive both in dollar and environmental terms, we now would be harvesting a lot more trees than we have for the last two decades.

But, if we are going to avoid another corn-to-ethanol fiasco, we have to make some careful distinctions about scale, technology, and forest ecosystems.

First of all, there is a huge difference between heating a local school building with wood or wood waste and providing fuel to a large wood-fired electric generator. The latter is likely to take tens to hundreds of times more wood and have equally disproportionate impacts. Both types of projects may be classified as "biomass conversion" or the use of "green fuels," but their very scale changes their character and their environmental impacts.

Some of the nation's largest electric utilities are proposing building large wood-fired electric generators or re-fueling coal-fired electric generators with wood. In Oregon, Portland General Electric is exploring the possibly of fueling its 585 mw Boardman plant with wood. That is 30 to 100 times the size of most of the forest product mill biomass plants that have been discussed in Montana. Across the southern states and in New England as well as across Britain, large new wood-fired electric generators have been proposed. These plants require so much fuel that the wood has to be shipped hundreds or thousands of miles. To make that economic, the wood has to be heat treated to increase its fuel density. The combination of heat treatment and long distance hauling raises serious questions about the energy and carbon balance associated with it.

Second, proposals for wood-fired electric generation at forest product mill sites seek to make use of both the heat and electricity the plants can produce. They are "combined heat and power" or "cogeneration" facilities. This boosts their economic rationality, their energy efficiency, and their impact on carbon emissions. Stand-alone wood-fired electric generators have to incur considerable expense and use considerable water resources simply to dissipate the waste heat produced. The combined heat and power operations at forest products mills put that heat to use in producing their building materials or paper.

Third, biomass conversion can be a substantially greater threat to our forests than conventional timber management. Since almost all of the biomass found in the forest can be seen as potential fuel, the forest can be stripped bare of all vegetation, sterilized of biological material. This turns the forest into the equivalent of an industrial farm. The multiple-uses that forest management has claimed to focus on for a century or more are abandoned for a simple mining of all of the combustible biological material available. That may be acceptable for tree farms planted on abandoned farmland, but it is unlikely to be acceptable in the public forest lands that in the West are the natural landscapes in which we live, work, and play.

Just because an energy source is biological in origin does not make it "green," "low carbon," or safe. We have to look very carefully at each and every proposal, or there is a good chance that we will make another large energy policy mistake that renders us worse off in terms of climate change, environmental damage, and economic well being. There are ways of using biological systems to ease our transition to a lower carbon, locally produced, energy future. But we have to be vigilant if we are going to avoid another bio-fuel boondoggle. **FPH**







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houston.indymedia.org

Houston hosts Ali Abunimah and Ashanti Alston

From the Students for a Democratic Society Blog: Students for a Democratic Society at UH would really like to thank everyone who came out this Friday to catch the dynamite speakers we hosted at the University. Dozens of Coogs and folks from the community came to hear both Ali Abunimah speak about the Situation in Palestine and the prospects for a one state solution, and to hear Ashanti Alston talk about the legacy of the Black Panther Party and Black liberation struggle as part of a struggle that continues against the systems of oppression that impact our communities.

2/17 Skinner Execution Delayed Until March 24

by Rachel Clarke,

Hank Skinner has been on death row for the last 15 years after being convicted of killing his life partner and her two adult disabled children. As the execution date quickly approaches, a number of questions still remain. Questions that could be easily cleared up with DNA testing that the state so far has refused to grant. Dr. Protess, a professor at Northwest University, shares more about the doubts and unanswered questions that linger and makes a direct plea to Governor Perry to save Skinner's life.

from Medill Innocence Project: Now the clock is ticking on another Texas death row inmate who has steadfastly maintained his innocence – with credible evidence to support his claim. The condemned man is Henry Watkins “Hank” Skinner, and much of that evidence was unearthed by the Medill Innocence Project and reported in the January 28 and 29 editions of the Texas Tribune, "Case Open" and "Case Open: The Investigation". Yet, Skinner faces death by lethal injection on February 24, less than two weeks from now.

Texas continues to lead the nation in executions. But will the state earn the dubious distinction of executing five innocents in two decades? Hank Skinner’s fate lies in the hands of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, Gov. Perry and the U.S. Supreme Court.

2/14 Olympics come to Stolen Native Land - Protesters go to Canadian Consulate

By Houston Solidarity Network

The demo began at 11 am outside of the Chase building at the Canadian embassy on 5847 San Felipe, with two banners, and tons of energy. Protesters enter the consulate building, and requested audience with the consular, and after twenty minutes with inside the office, security was called, and protesters were ejected from the building and banned from returning. The protest then moved to the Chinese embassy, where banners were held and dialogue was carried on.

From no2010.com: The 2010 Winter Olympics, to be held in Vancouver-Whistler from February 12-27, 2010, is today a very real threat to Native peoples, the urban poor (many of whom are also Native), and the environment. While cutting social services, healthcare, education, etc., the BC Liberal government is at the same time providing billions of dollars to construction companies & other Olympic-related industries. The capitalists are making millions, while the poor are literally dying in the urban & reservation ghettos.

2/7 Houston Immigration Convention: Uniting For A Common Goal

By Hector A. Chavana, Jr. - OurNewAnahuac The Coalition In Defense Of the Community hosted a well-received event at Iglesisa Hispana Nueva Vida on Telephone Road. Tarsha Jackson made an emphatic opening call for black-brown unity and reminded us that in addition to a moral call for unity, our communities have several interests in common. Both of our communities have been victimized by a strong, strong profit motive surrounding the prison business. Pacho Arguelles co-opened with her, and did an excellent job in facilitating discussion.

Maria Jimenez shared a great review of the history of immigration reform, reminding the crowd that even though major immigration reform was signed into law during the Reagan administration, it only occured as a result of the people’s efforts.

The participants were right on point, with some people wondering why they should continue to support Obama, and Democrats in general, if the issue of immigration reform continued to be pushed to the side. Henry Cooper even warned politicians that if they didn’t watch it, they could expect many more Massachusetts, referring to the loss of a senatorial seat in what was taken for granted as a Democratic stronghold.

2/2 EPA Hearing in Houston on stricter smog pollution rules to protect public health

Texas Speakers included members of the Sierra Club, American Lung Association, Health Professionals for Clean Air, Youth impacted by asthma, and community activists fighting new coal plants in Texas.

the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is leading the way by proposing new ozone standards for the state that would make sure we have clean air to breathe. Right now the EPA is accepting public comments, and we need you at this hearing to show public support!

The Coal and Oil industries are going to come out with a vengeance. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Governor Perry have threatened to sue the EPA over this proposed ruling on ozone standards. We know Texans deserve standards that protect our families. For too long TCEQ has been issuing illegal air permits which got us into this air quality mess in the first place. There are TWELVE NEW coal plants proposed in Texas, and we already have 17 coal plants up and running (some of the dirtiest in the country). We deserve better.

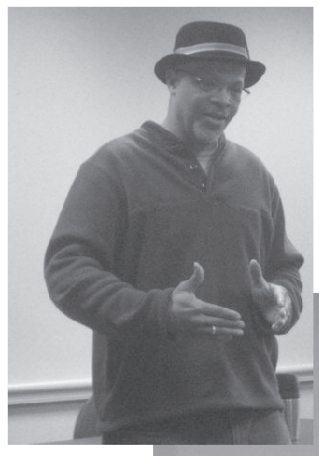
1/27 Houston’s New Mayor Police Chief Search Will Set Tone for City’s Immigration Policy

Flying below the radar during Houston’s low-key mayoral race was an undercurrent of anger toward immigrants. Right now the loudest voices are winning, and they are not voices of understanding or mercy, but of anger and division.

Leading the charge in linking immigrants as a scourge on Houston is Gary Blankinship (pictured), president of the Houston Police Officers Union. Following the shooting of Houston police officer Rick Salter in March 2009, Blankinship openly criticized Chief Hurtt and then Mayor Bill White for defending the City of Houston “sanctuary city” policy, a policy that does not allow officers to question the citizenship status of any person (General Order No. 500-5).

Blankinship’s sentiments reflect the general outrage that began prior to Officer Salter’s shooting. In September 2006 Houston police officer Rodney Johnson was shot to death by an undocumented immigrant the officer had just arrested following a routine traffic stop. Both shootings of law enforcement officers triggered intense criticism by Blankinship, which he expressed in an op-ed published in the Houston Chronicle and American Police Beat.

With a strong Mayor-Council form of government, Mayor Parker’s choice of Houston’s new police chief will set the tone for the Houston’s immigrant policy. If Mayor Parker and the new police chief were to listen to HPD Union President Gary Blankinship, immigrants would not be the only one living in fear, but whole Latino community.



Ashanti Alston Speaks in Houston

Ali Abunimah Speaks at University of Houston





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VIDEOLIFE

by JOHNNY DIBLASI

IN A NON-DESCRIPT RED BRICK HOUSE NESTLED IN THE MAZE OF HOUSTON'S BOHEMIA, MICHAEL BRIMS' "A VIDEO-CENTRIC EXHIBIT" FLICKERED THROUGH A MAZE OF STARK WHITE WALLS, CASTING OMINOUS. THE PIECES COMMANDED SPACE, TALKING TO EACH OTHER — THE KIND OF SCENE DEPICTED IN FAHRENHEIT 451 WHERE FAMILY AND FRIENDS HAVE A CONVERSATION FROM GIANT SCREENS IN GUY'S MOTHER'S HOUSE.

SURPRISINGLY, the show consisted entirely of video works — something I rarely see at art functions here in Houston. I hope that Michael Brims show is a sign that we will continue to see more events that fully utilize video and digital media without regards to outdated and tired (and yet prevalent) traditions of art. Video works may supplement photography one day, but for now I am happy to see digital media employ experimental uses for HD monitors and projectors. Using different shapes, sizes and orientations, some screens in "A Video-Centric Exhibit" were hung like paintings with a frame while others were placed on pedestals.

Like fellow German artist Joseph Beuys, Brims' own body is central to his videos. *Stubbles*, *Nipple* and *Vertical Ear* focus and zoom in on body parts in HD, creating pink and orange hairy landscapes. Here the body was a formal focus, a coarse substrate. I wonder how much more time and effort is going to go into masking and covering up the body's imperfections in television and film shot in HD, all for the sake of keeping up with an unrealistic standard of beauty.

Relatively quiet, the audio added little to the bodily landscapes in most pieces. Two *Untitled* works gazed at each other from across the room, focused on close-ups of the artist's face, lying down, and thinking. The silence, slow movements, blinking eyes and shifts in posture gave the work a meditative quality. Suddenly the calm was broken with *Laughter* from the other room; a close up of Brims laughing in an exaggerated tone stood gigantic on the wall.

I appreciated Brims' ability to narrow in on a single function of the moving image. With degrees from the University of Munich and Houston, his influences have produced a vision that is straightforward and gothic, simple but mysterious. "A Video-Centric Exhibit" isolated and addressed what Deleuze dubbed the *Movement Image*, while completely disregarding the *Time Image*. The works functioned almost as photographs. With no narrative, Brims stripped his videos of a key function of the moving image and subverted normal viewing habits — so often produced and packaged for us. Experimental video questions these systems of media and force viewers to think about what one is tuning into throughout the day. What are *you* tuning into today? FPH



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