

# THE ORGAN

No. 12 FALL 2004

LETTERS

FREE!



**pushdot**  
STUDIO

archival printing  
large format printing  
high resolution scanning  
image composition  
retouching  
prepress color

digital resource for artists

www.pushdotstudio.com  
503.224.5925

**GAMBLIN**  
ARTIST'S OIL COLORS  
*Robert Gamblin*

www.gamblincolors.com

**HALF & HALF**

coffee  
donuts  
lunch  
&  
daytime necessities

923 SW Oak Street Portland • 503 222 4495

ORIGINAL PORTLAND FRENCHY STYLE

**LE HAPPY**  
a crêperie restaurant and bar

1011 NW 16TH AVENUE USA • 503.226.1258  
MON-THUR 5PM-1AM • FRI/SAT 6PM-2.30AM • QUEER NIGHT MONDAYS 9PM-1AM

www.pulliamdeffenbaugh.com  
PULLIAM DEFFENBAUGH GALLERY

**STUMPTOWN**  
coffee Roasters  
128 S.W. Third  
34th and S.E. Belmont  
45th and S.E. Division



**CCA** CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

# INFORMATION EVENT

Meet with representatives from the West Coast's leading school of art, architecture, and design.

**IN PORTLAND**  
**NOVEMBER 6, 1-3 PM**  
For location: www.cca.edu / 800.447.1ART

**OFFERING 19 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN:**

- Architecture
- Ceramics
- Community Arts
- Creative Writing
- Fashion Design
- Glass
- Graphic Design
- Illustration
- Industrial Design
- Interior Design
- Jewelry/Metal Arts
- Media Arts
- Painting/Drawing
- Photography
- Printmaking
- Sculpture
- Textiles
- Visual Studies
- Wood/Furniture

**AND 6 GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN:**

- Architecture
- Curatorial Practice
- Design
- Fine Arts
- Visual Criticism
- Writing

California College of the Arts  
San Francisco/Oakland  
**800.447.1ART**  
cca.edu

# Encounters

## Contemporary Native American Art

Seven artists respond to the encounters between First Peoples and European American cultures that began with the Lewis and Clark Expedition 200 years ago.

**Artists include:**

- Corwin "Corky" Clairmont
- Joe Feddersen
- Nadia Myre
- Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
- Jeff Thomas
- Gail Tremblay
- Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie

**September 2 to October 24, 2004**  
Opening Reception, 5 to 7 p.m.  
Thursday, September 2

**Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie**  
Artist Lecture, 7 p.m.  
Tuesday, October 12  
Smith Hall, Lewis & Clark College

Reception, lecture, and exhibition are free.



*Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (Diné/Seminole/Muskogee)*  
*An Aboriginal World View with Aboriginal Dreams*  
2002  
Video installation still, 4 minutes 21 seconds

**Gallery hours:** Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Parking on campus is free on weekends.  
For information call 503-768-7687.

Ronna and Eric Hoffman  
Gallery of Contemporary Art  
Lewis & Clark College

# THE ORGAN Contents

425 SE 3rd Ave., Suite 302  
Portland, OR 97214  
Tel 503-236-2345  
www.organarts.org

## Contributors

Sean Aaberg, Kassten Alonso, Josh Berger, Charles D'Ambrosio, Litsa Dremousis, Allison Dubinsky, P. Genesis Durica, Eric Fredericksen, Tom Grace, Heather Larimer, Patrick Long, Cielo Lutino, Corey Lunn, Robert Mittenthal, mARK oWens, Jonathan Raymond, Sarah Ryan, Jay Sanders, Khris Soden, Matthew Stadler, Nico Vassilakis, Suzy Vitello, Heather Watkins, Stiv Wilson

## Issue 12 staff

EDITOR/PUBLISHER Camela Raymond  
COPY EDITOR Meg Storey  
ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR Allison Dubinsky  
FICTION EDITOR Heather Larimer  
POETRY EDITOR Alicia Cohen  
CALENDAR EDITOR Michael Nicoloff  
LAYOUT DESIGNER Sasha Swetschinski  
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Brad Adkins  
AD DESIGNER Steve Connell  
AD SALES Lisa Gorlin  
WEBMASTER Jason Loeffler  
DISTRIBUTION MANAGER Kaja Katamay  
ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN Ann Amato-Buttitta

## Nonfiction submissions and press releases

Contact the editor by mail at the above address, by phone at 503-236-2345, or by e-mail at editor@organarts.org

## Letters to the editor

Letters should be sent with the author's name and address via e-mail to editor@organarts.org or by mail to the above address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

## Fiction and poetry submissions

Submit fiction (1,500 or less, generally) by e-mail to lit@organarts.org or by regular mail to Literary Editor, c/o The Organ. Submit poetry by e-mail to poetry@organarts.org or by regular mail to Poetry Editor, c/o The Organ. See mailing address above. Visit www.organarts.org for full submission guidelines.

## Advertising

For rates and guidelines, visit www.organarts.org, write to ads@organarts.org, or call 503-236-2345.

## Subscriptions and contributions

One-year subscriptions (4 issues) are available for \$15. Please make your check or money order payable to The Organ Publishing Co. and mail it to the above address. See our Web site for information on purchasing patron subscription packages and back issues.

## Distribution

The *Organ* is available for free at hundreds of sites in Portland, Seattle, and nearby communities. For a current list, visit www.organarts.org.

## Cover art

Nico Vassilakis, detail from *un*, 1996  
mARK oWens, *up*, 2004

A Little Bird Said .....	4
<b>"The Northwest" Is Our Slave Name</b>	
BY MATTHEW STADLER AND JONATHAN RAYMOND. ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICK LONG .....	5
<b>Garbage</b> BY CHARLES D'AMBROSIO .....	7
<b>Poems</b> BY NICO VASSILAKIS .....	8
<b>Doing Laundry with Stacey Levine</b> BY LITSA DREMOUSIS .....	9
<b>Typography Lesson</b> BY HEATHER WATKINS .....	11
<b>Gold Standard: An Interview with Jerome Gold, Founder of Seattle's Black Heron Press</b>	
BY CAMELA RAYMOND .....	13
<b>Interview with Hawthorne Books</b> BY HEATHER LARIMER .....	15
<b>Vote, A*t L*ver</b> Portland's mayoral and council hopefuls seek your support, and livers! (And art lovers, too.)	
BY CIELO LUTINO .....	16
<b>Fiction: The Endpoint of Adaptive Behavior</b> BY SUZY VITELLO .....	19
<b>Why OMA's SCL is DOA</b> BY ERIC FREDERICKSEN .....	21
<b>Reviews</b> .....	22
<b>Treats</b> .....	26

## Dear Readers,

This is our second, sort-of-annual literature issue and it begins the *Organ's* third year. You may notice that new things are afoot. By which I mean not only that our cover has suddenly shrunk to the dimensions of a respectable magazine, that we now *have* a cover, that our typeface has changed from Times Europa to Minion, and that our layouts look better than ever, all thanks to a beautiful redesign by Sasha Swetschinski. I'm also talking about what you'll read on the pages that follow, and those that will follow those that follow.

But before I get to that, I'd like to thank a few people. Josh Berger, who designed our first issue and returns as the creator of *Broadside #4*, the poster in the middle of this issue. Meg Storey, who has spent countless hours donating her skills as the copy editor of our last five issues so your reading experience is seamless. Steve Connell, who laid out issues six through eleven, and continues to design our ads while operating his and his partner Katherine's longtime publishing venture, Verse Chorus Press. Michael Nicoloff, crack editorial intern of great fortitude. Lisa Gorlin, the bicycling ad rep. Jason Loeffler, Webmaster, now telecommuting from Gotham City. Ann Amato-Buttitta, invoicing queen. Brad Adkins, who's been giving his two cents since day one. Other volunteers and advisers, past and present, including Allison Dubinsky, Alisa Welch, Steve MacDougall, Ashley Edwards, Sophie Ragsdale, Kaja Katamay, and Paul Susi. Our advertisers and subscribers. The scores of writers and artists who have contributed their work. And my friends and family, who have given financial support, time, and encouragement throughout.

This is the "Letters" issue and with it we honor the power of the written word. Like money, words are a brilliant technology for exchange. Both are called currency, for their powers lie in their ability to circulate freely, willing to consort with anything: terrific, terrible, from

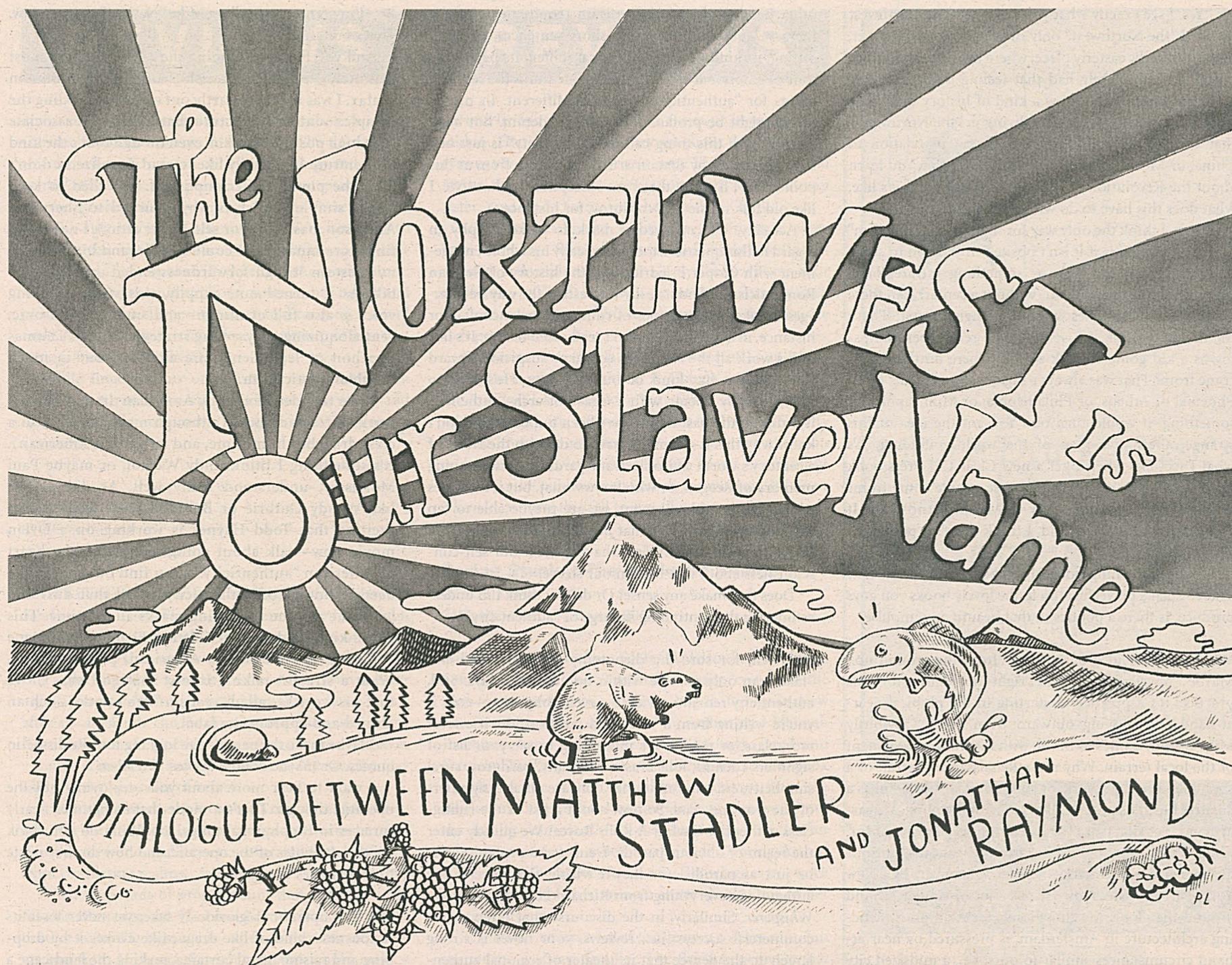
the Latin "terr-," to frighten. Being physically slight, a few lines touching in a plane, words can sneak anywhere. Freedom from terror. Freedom of expression. Heavily freighted or empty, plain or sinister in intent, they remain constant in shape and mass. Old school sluts, they'll be had and used if you can figure out what to do with them; if not, they'll shack up with someone else. Just don't trust them for a minute. As my eighty-year-old dad says to his business students on the first day of class, "Remember, everything I tell you is a lie." So listen carefully, we've got plenty of them for you.

As Heather Watkins points out in her fascinating, brief history of typography, your experience reading printed matter would be much harder without the letterforms that typesetters and designers have refined over hundreds of years. Enjoy it while you can, for if Eric Fredericksen is correct in his critique of the new Seattle Central Library, the print form already has one foot in the tomb. Not that we must say goodbye to it just yet. Three interviews with Pacific Northwest writers and publishers and seven reviews of recent books by local authors indicate the printed word is alive and well in these parts. For proof, look no further than Charles D'Ambrosio's pithy essay about documenting the Guatemala City dump and Suzy Vitello's short story that one of our copy editors averred "improves the cause of second-person narration." Of course, we don't want to label anyone—see our e-mail exchange on writing and regionalism between Matthew Stadler and Jonathan Raymond.

In these and coming pages you'll see the *Organ* continue to develop new things to lie about (more politics, history, etc.) and other new things, as well. New features ("belly," Stiv Wilson's food column, and next issue, a secret new project from Brad Adkins), new businesses renting space for their messages (you call them

Continued on page 25





Matthew Stadler is the editor for Astoria-based Clear Cut Press and *Nest* magazine (sadly to publish its final issue this fall), as well as the author of four novels, most recently *Allan Stein*, which has been described as a “gay *Lolita*” set in Paris. Since releasing its first title in 2003, Clear Cut has already proven a sure source for fresh, deep literary voices from the Pacific Northwest, along with some from elsewhere. With its book-release parties in Amsterdam and New York and sly taglines like “where blackberries grow from clear cuts,” Clear Cut seems to be showing the world that we’re all Cascadians, and vice versa. Stadler is a frequent contributor to the *Organ*; his occasional column is called “Letter from Astoria.”

In our August 2003 Literature Issue, New York-Portland author Jonathan Raymond (*Organ* editor Camela Raymond’s brother and another frequent contributor) wrote “Everywhere is Home: Some Notes on Literary Regionalism.” It could have been interpreted as an argument in defense of his then recently completed first novel, *The Half-Life*, the story of two Oregon friendships separated by 150 years. In it he argued that regionalist writing remains a potent form of socially engaged literature over a century after it sprang up in response to industrialization’s homogenizing blade. “The regional

novel,” he wrote, “perhaps paradoxically, makes the world seem larger and more diverse.” Raymond is the editor for *Plazm Magazine* and an associate editor for *Tin House Magazine*.

The *Organ* thought these two would have an interesting conversation about Northwest regionalism. They did.

**MS:** Why is “regionalism” our problem? Why aren’t Parisians preoccupied by it?

**JR:** I think Parisians don’t worry about regionalism because they’ve established themselves in the world’s imagination as an idea. You know? Paris means something—romance, sexual license, intellectual sophistication—apart from its brick and mortar locale. The Northwest is kind of lacking in these imaginative attributes. What is the fantasy of the Northwest? “Liveability”? Model urban planning? That’s kind of pathetic. Maybe when the Northwest gets so far-out that people all over the world start wishing they were here—the way they wish they were in Paris or New York or Bangkok—we’ll be able to stop worrying about regionalism so much. We just have to be more awesome.

**MS:** My hunch is that the question of regional identity never comes up in Paris, or in New York. Worrying about regional identity is a burden reserved for the peripheral. It only emerges as a question when some distant center of power defines you as a margin. To paraphrase Jerry Garcia (the Seattle architect, not the dead rock star), “the Northwest” is our slave name. The name helps power, centralized elsewhere, define and limit its peripheries. It’s the name we take to be legible. Proust didn’t need to define Paris, he just wrote about the days. What would he care about “Parisianness”? And who in Portland or Seattle needs to know what “the Northwest” is? No one. It’s nothing—it is just the days. But power, centralized elsewhere, beckons us to articulate our own marginalization by writing “the Northwest.”

Rather than presenting this identity to the world, I wonder if we could use our locale and its history, its physicality, to articulate the world to ourselves. What would that be called? Localism? Close-at-handism? Physicalism? Whatever, I think it’s sort of the opposite of regionalism. You do it in your novel, *The Half-Life*. The book is anchored in a local physicality and yet the world moves through it.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

**JR:** Yes. I see exactly what you're saying. The Northwest is called "the Northwest" only in relation to some other, more southerly, easterly place, where the names of things originate. I absolutely had that feeling going into *The Half-Life*. I wanted to show a kind of history that came from the ground up. It's clear, living in "the Northwest," that we have so much more going on in relation to China, or Mexico, than we do to, say, Boston. You learn about the Revolutionary War as a kid here, and it's like, what does this have to do with me? Nothing.

To me, I think the only way for the term "regionalism" to work, though, is if it isn't posited in relation to some defining center, but only as something intraregional. Can there be a "regionalism" without a center? Can there be multiple peripheries without a single capital? That's the dream, I think. It's something I remember glimpsing as a kid going to rock shows. Where do these guys come from? That was always a big question for me. From Phoenix, or Athens, or Philadelphia, or Minneapolis, or something, it would turn out. You got the idea of this strange, alternative map of the world unfolding. It's what I feel like when I get a new Clear Cut Press book in the mail, too. Where do all these people come from? How did they find their way to Matthew and Rich? It reenchant the whole world. I think there's a politics of imagination to that.

Is that something you think about with Clear Cut? There's such a powerful aura to the lovely books you guys produce. Is there a politics to that beautifying impulse?

**MS:** I like your idea of working "from the ground up." Maybe "physicalism" is the right neologism for this practice. It's a practice of starting in the physical near-at-hand and moving outward from there. Obviously Mike Brophy comes to mind, with his frank engagement of the local terrain. Why not a Renaissance portrait of a slash pile? Brophy's work, or your novel, or Clear Cut as a creative business project all begin with the physical near-at-hand, yet don't draw borders the way "regionalism" does. Clear Cut is publishing from hereabouts, but our authors live everywhere—Seattle, Vancouver, BC, New York, Paris, Amsterdam. There's a lot of similar ground around the globe. Matthijs Bouw, for example, practicing architecture in Amsterdam, is pressured by near-at-hand circumstances similar to ours, i.e., a midsized city in a territory that is both fractured by political borders and blurred by global mobility. It brings your list of rock bands back to mind. You say they're from "Phoenix or Athens or Philadelphia or Minneapolis." Interesting that you don't say LA or New York, although great bands came out of those cities. Your list is of peripheries—and some of the excitement is this equivalence of peripheries. The possibility of "multiple peripheries without a center" emerges only if centers manage to recede into parity with "peripheries." That's up to us. New York has made real economies around cultural production; now we've got to get up to speed by attending to our own, hereabouts. That means both making viable infrastructures (like, we hope, Clear Cut) and writing "from the ground up," refusing the limits of "regionalism," with its burden of defined identity and "authenticity." So what do you make of reviews of your book that praise its regional "authenticity"? Doesn't that feel like a big smiling pat on the back from your ignorant, whip-toting masters?

**JR:** Yes, "authenticity." It's funny, with *The Half-Life*, what one might consider its "authenticity" is really just paper thin, a bunch of smoke and mirrors. The book is so full of bad history and made-up scenarios and distorted geography it's almost embarrassing. But on the

other hand, it does satisfy certain requirements of the literary "authentic"—e.g., its short sentences, its rural setting, its kind of gauzy historical milieu, its pervading tone of emotional sorrow. In other mediums the requirements for "authenticity" might be different. In music, say, it might be profanity. In fashion, denim. But basically, I think this thing called "authenticity" is just one style among many that an artist can choose from at this point. And I'll admit that I am susceptible to that style. I like old folk music and corduroy, for instance.

Actually, we could come back to Mike Brophy in regard to this question, too, specifically his whole engagement with Casper Friedrich and the history of German Romanticism. I find it really interesting the way he manages to take on the tropes of ruin, and melancholia, for instance, in a way that I haven't really seen before. It's like in his work all the twentieth century's suspicion toward Romanticism has kind of burned away. He's able to interact really openly with a legacy of arch-"authenticity" that in the past might have been impossible. I don't know why this is—it might have to do with the effect of a century's worth of ironic avant-gardists, or the waning memory of Reagan, or who knows what, but it indicates to me that, at this moment, we are maybe able to tap the "authentic" in a way that people couldn't before. We know it is fake, and we don't have to wear our self-consciousness about that fact on our sleeve.

Does that make any sense? Or do you think I'm underestimating the continuing scourge of "authenticity"?

**MS:** Well, for sure the dichotomy of "authentic" and "fake" can only survive within quotes these days. Still, authenticity remains a viable—even obligatory—coin if you're writing from a "marginal position," be it one of race, class, or region. It's interesting to see your list of signifiers (denim, folk music, profanity, corduroy, rural simplicity, etc.) and note that they are all also signifiers of the working class. So how about a list of the ruling-class authentic? Caviar? A Rolls Royce? We quickly enter the realm of obvious parody. Denim and profanity may be just as parodic, yet they're viable signifiers of the authentic in everything from Richard Ford to *The Horse Whisperer*. Similarly, in the discourse that often drives commercial success, i.e., reviews, your novel is strong largely to the degree that its theater of regional authenticity is convincing and not obviously fake.

But I'll join you in leaving that prison behind. So how can we "tap the authentic," or regional identity, while also knowing their flimsiness, their corrupt histories? Brophy invokes the region and the Romantic without condemning viewers to the usual ocean of elevated feelings partly by being funny. I mean, these are stumps and slash piles. Anyone around here knows how common and degraded these landscapes are, yet Brophy dresses them up in the finery of a Caspar David Friedrich or the tropes of Renaissance portraiture. It's the same weird balance of dead-on earnestness and humor as you get with drag, and really it's the same operation. A few weeks back I heard a curator in Vancouver call Mike "one of our native treasures." It sounded like Mike's drag name. "Native Treasure." Poised on a cusp where you can't NOT know that authenticity or regional identity are all pretty corrupt and degraded, playing with their tropes becomes a very pitched, hilarious kind of vertigo. Not many wear it lightly. I agree that Mike gets close. In my novels, I tend to make an overtly operatic sort of drag theater out of it. My sense is that your novel mostly elides the question. Its "fake authenticity" is less a sort of drag act and more of a pragmatic move.

**JR:** I'm gonna start calling Mike "Native Treasure" now. That's fantastic.

And yes. For me, "tapping the authentic" was most definitely a pragmatic decision, one largely rooted in syntax. I was led there partly out of fear of tackling the complex sentence structure that I generally associate with high postmodernism, even though that's the kind of literature I normally like to read. I realized I didn't have the power to accomplish it. I needed to keep things simple. Which is why I turned to Sherwood Anderson, basically. For self-preservation. I needed to find a grammar that I could handle, and his pastoral, midwestern straightforwardness ended up fitting the bill. As it turned out, happily, this straight-talking voice is also full of mirrors and smoke. The ironic, ventriloquizing, play-acting strategies of, say, Thomas Pynchon or Jean Genet, are all there, but in much humbler, rustic form.

I like the idea of a really American drag. A drag of work shirts and boots (although maybe that's also a class drag, but humor me, and let's call it American). It's something I think Andy Warhol, or maybe Paul Morrissey, understood really well. As did people like Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan. (I think it's so exciting that Todd Haynes is working on a Dylan movie now—talk about going straight to the heart of American "authenticity.") You find out that in the deepest bowels of authenticity, in all that dust and leather, everyone is wearing masks all the time. This is the kind of drag that Gustave Flaubert (someone I think of as an honorary American) pulled off, too. What a straight-talking ironist that guy was. I love that his work is called "realism." It's at once such an absurd and appropriate label.

Maybe that's the name we're looking for. "Realism," in quotes. Or maybe double quotes: "'realism'"

I want to hear more about your deployment of the operatic, though. That's a mode that sometimes nearly surfaces in Brophy's paintings, too. What do you think are the attributes of the operatic, and how do they relate to these issues of regionalia?

**MS:** The operatic is gloriously fake, yet never loses its seriousness, kind of like drag. Mike evokes it by dropping and raising literal curtains, making the landscape a stage for his posed beauties. I do nearly the same thing, staging "the city" in my books, complete with scrim and screens, because I feel the city of Seattle (or Portland) is kind of grandly, absurdly staged. They're drag cities. It seems to me nearly impossible to construct the meaning of this place without feeling the theatrical drama of it. The script we're sleepwalking through came from someone else's history. The City! The Countryside! The Wilderness! These ideas were imported wholesale from Europe, then grafted onto a terrain that was essentially an open-air factory, a vast resource-extraction site. We threw together the emblems of a city (the tall buildings, the opera house, the downtown, etc.), then legislated the preservation of emblems of countryside (Greenbelt Laws, etc.), and suspended our disbelief. Drag is the only "'realism'" in such a place as this.

**JR:** Drag is the only "'realism'" in life. Like my mom likes to say, "Fake it 'til you make it." Maybe that should be the Northwest's new motto. Actually, I guess it practically already is. "Oregon is for dreamers" just passed, right? What a death knell. They may as well just say, "Oregon: Keep Dreaming."

**MS:** "Oregon: Dream On." ■

# Garbage

ESSAY AND PHOTOS BY CHARLES D'AMBROSIO

Sweepstakes, lotteries, cakewalks, and raffles, generally I avoid them because I don't imagine chance has anything good in mind for me. Even charity events give me low-level feelings of doom and often I'll make a contribution but won't take the ticket or drop my stub in the fishbowl for the drawing later. I'm not quite sure what this is about. But I recently applied for a grant and won. I won! Along with the photographer Misty Keasler, I'm this year's recipient of the Lange-Taylor Prize, given by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. Our proposal was to go to Guatemala City and document the lives of people living in a garbage dump. I'd write about it, she'd photograph it. The curious thing to me now, at the tail end of the grant year, is that the first casualty of the whole process is the

drink, I said, the kids sniff inhalants—anything from gasoline to gold or silver paint to cobbler's glue. These kids huff toluene and cyclohexane—cheap solvents—because it's inexpensive and suppresses hunger and, I also said, it gives the children the courage to steal and prostitute themselves. I said glue is explicitly peddled as a drug and sold in hardware stores, often repackaged in plastic bags and baby-food jars. I talked about irreversible brain damage and neuropathy and sudden death and I said these addicted children were frequently beaten and occasionally executed by the police when they wandered out beyond the walls of the dump.

What did I know? At that point, I'd never been to Guatemala, and I got most of my information from hokey Web pages run by Christian missionaries. I just

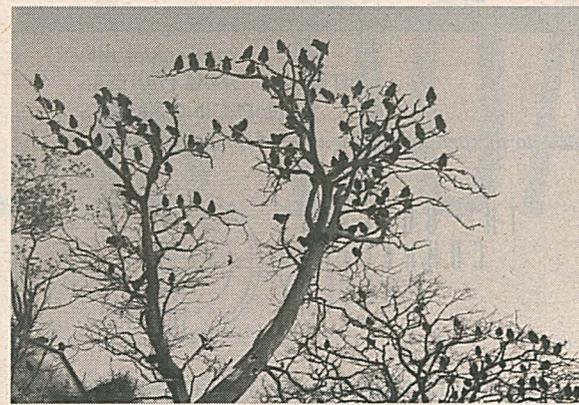
**Our proposal was to go to Guatemala City and document the lives of people living in a garbage dump. I'd write about it, she'd photograph it. The curious thing to me now, at the tail end of the grant year, is that the first casualty of the whole process is the truth.**

truth. You pull together a scrubbed-up self, and it's he, that character, who fills out the application, so that the project sets off, wobbling under the weight of a probity it can't really support. Right from the get-go you taint the subject in order to score the grant. I believe, for instance, that it's much easier to feel pity for a mangy dog than an impoverished human being, that something in the complex intractability of human suffering doesn't let us indulge or lavish our sensitivities on a man the way we do with a sickly mutt, but that isn't the kind of material that makes it into a winning grant proposal. As it turned out, the dump was full of dogs, hairless and hideous with lesions, and the lowest I felt my whole time down in Guatemala was one afternoon when I watched a buzzard pull a soft wet eye from the socket of a dead puppy. But of course, my official sympathies were elsewhere.

The grant proposal I wrote engaged a strange optimism, a manipulated hope that played on the inherent worthiness of the poor and oppressed as a subject while at the same time elevating my stature as witness. The whole thing was rather imperial. I somehow decided that the people in the dump were Mayan Indians and that they'd been displaced from the rural mountains and their traditional lifestyles by murderous right-wing dictators and forty years of civil war. I said trucks roll into the dump from all over the city, 24/7, and that these "Indians" wake at 4 a.m. to begin scavenging, earning just pennies for a day's work that ends long after dark. I said the "Indians" find a lot of their food in the dump, particularly by following trucks that have a McDonald's on their route, and I even described a vulture fighting a kid over a scrap of bread. I said the dump catches fire and, fueled by methane gas, blazes for days. I said the landfill was unstable and that avalanches regularly bury children. And I talked about drugs. While the adults

threw out a lot of shit, and some of it stuck—some of it, to my surprise, was actually sort of true. It was pretty common to find little boys in the open markets of Guatemala City with a display rack of superglue and quiver of Q-tips, peddling cheap highs, but I never saw any of this in the *colonias* around the dump or in the dump itself. And outside the dump, just once, I saw a dazed kid carrying a plastic sack, his face glistening with silver paint. There were huge ugly black buzzards everywhere, but they mostly fought each other—I saw a scum of four or five battle over the severed head of another buzzard—and were otherwise ignored. Walking on the landfill was like standing on a sponge, the ground was so soft, but I was told by everyone that landslides were largely a thing of the past. I saw no fires. I saw no prostitutes, not around the dump anyway, and hardly anybody blamed their lot on politics, and most of the *guajeros*—the people who work in the dump—earned a good deal more than minimum wage and could afford, now and then, to buy a decent dinner at McDonald's.

One of the givens of documentary work is that all life has dignity, that there's an inherent but overlooked worthiness in the subject, and yet the very existence of the kinds of things that receive funding—people living in garbage—suggests that we really don't believe that. In other words, we're more than willing to consider people worthless. Perhaps documentary is merely a way to register rage against the facts, which, apropos of nothing, would account for some of the impotence and self-loathing in James Agee. George Orwell could be amazingly clear-sighted, but he was often cranky, too, and I now wonder if his down moods came from the same smothered anger, the same despair. Doubt about the documentary enterprise should be there from the outset, and in fact, I don't think you can do good work without radically questioning the whole project, begin-



ning with yourself. It's kind of like E. M. Cioran said in *The Temptation to Exist*, that if you can't imagine committing murder then you'll never think in anything but clichés. As a statement, it's a little high-toned and Euro-aphoristic for my taste, but I get what he's after, and it certainly draws a distinction between what I'm talking about and its weaker, sentimental form—guilt. One day I was bored—poverty is boring—and added up the cost of everything I brought to Guatemala—a camera, computer, watch, tape recorder, clothes—and figured that, at retail, it would support a *guajero* for four years. But I didn't feel guilty. However, a few days into our stay in the dump, the photographer, Misty, turned from trying to frame a shot and looked at me and asked, "Why are we doing this?" And of course I didn't know, and said so, and from then on I felt a whole lot better about the project. ■

*Charles D'Ambrosio's stories and essays have appeared in the New Yorker, Harper's, The Best American Short Stories, and the story collection The Point. His collected essays will be published by Clear Cut Press this fall.*

collaborating with  
INTERNATIONAL MASTERS  
+ EMERGING ARTISTS  
to sharpen the leading edge of contemporary glass

THE BULLSEYE  
CONNECTION  
GALLERY 

300 NW THIRTEENTH • PORTLAND, OR 97209  
TEL 503-227-0222 FAX 503-227-0008

gallery@bullseyeglass.com  
www.bullseyeconnectiongallery.com

Zoe Beloff 11 + 12 Sept  
JANIE GEISER 18 SEPT  
Lewis Klahr 19 Sept  
Tsuchimoto Noriaki 4—6 Oct  
Paul Chan 21 & 22 Oct  
YOKO ONO 2 + 3 NOV  
Landscape Portraits 16 + 17 Nov  
[Pierce, Gotheim & Murphy] 1 & 2 Dec  
Black Audio Film Collective/Sankofa Film Collective

cinema project fall 2004 www.cinemaproject.org



Sculpture and Jewelry  
by  
Oregon Metalsmiths

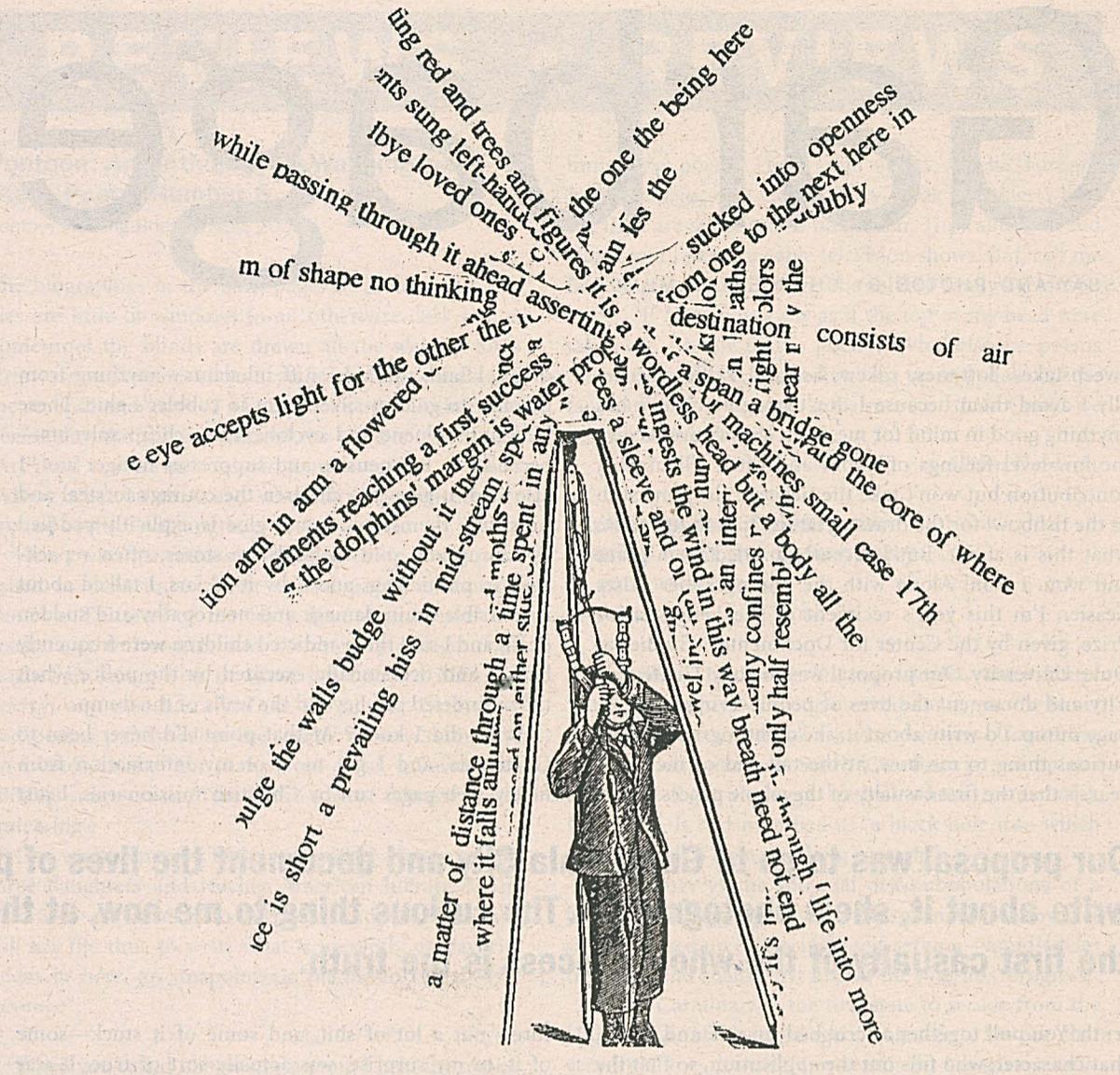
October 7-30

DIAMOND TANITA GALLERY  
1022 nw johnson street  
www.diamondtanita.com  
971.544.1566

VODVIL THEATER PRESENTS



HER PHANTOM LIMB  
THE DARK AMERICAN MELODY  
OF ACCIDENT & DESIRE  
A MAGIC BALLET LIVE ON STAGE  
NW FILM FORUM SEATTLE  
OCT XXVII TO NOV VII  
NWFILMFORUM.ORG/PHANTOM



STAR DATA, above, and AIRMAILBOOKS, below, are poems by Nico Vassilakis. Vassilakis is a member of Seattle's Subtext group (www.speakeasy.org/subtext). His work has appeared in Talisman, Chain, 3rd Bed, Xerography, Ubuweb, Diagram, and elsewhere. Recently his concrete films have been shown at Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin 2003, 6° Encuentro Internacional de Poesía Visual, Sonora y Experimental (Argentina), A.V. Text-fest, and other venues. He is publisher of Sub Rosa Press.

A I R M A I L B O O K S

FLOATING AIRMAILBOOKS and as we stepped suddenly the evening arrived the awaited conversions  
HOVERING AIRMAILBOOKS into the evening we were at hand and nothing external mattered all focus  
UNRELATED AIRMAILBOOKS began recognizing these was concentrated and trained on the event at hand though  
AND THESE AIRMAILBOOKS wisps of information the lights were small and darkness filled our senses we faced  
CONTORTIONS AIRMAILBOOKS we could do nothing each other neither needing nor hungry for the things that light  
FASCINATING AIRMAILBOOKS about it except untangle gives so we knew then the importance of silence and how inactive  
UPON OUR AIRMAILBOOKS and straighten to particles can decide completely randomly their destinies as to  
FOREHEADS AIRMAILBOOKS further examine in where they might land and seeing as how the wall will hold  
THE LIGHT AIRMAILBOOKS our own silence how our heat in place the only conclusion to be reached was  
THAT SPEAKS AIRMAILBOOKS we had been rushing that we had bodies and they were somehow in the way of primary  
IN PARTS AIRMAILBOOKS headlong into sky modes of communication so we were dealt the blow of having to  
WHILE SHOWING AIRMAILBOOKS furthestmost and further live with a sadness we could not contain except through an  
ITS WHOLE AIRMAILBOOKS yet without distin unconscious streak of exuberant living the kind we've talked  
BURNING ITS WAY AIRMAILBOOKS guishing location about and the kind we've been in the middle of winking  
ONTO OUR LIPS AIRMAILBOOKS only the simplest vows at one another down the road ascending and depressing in  
AND EARS SO AIRMAILBOOKS which were to float sequential order but here we are this evening uncovering  
AS TO FIND AIRMAILBOOKS and we did so flawlessly the air as it carries what we know and how we knew it

# Doing Laundry with Stacey Levine

BY LITSA DREMOUSIS

Author Stacey Levine and I meet at a red-walled café on a balmy night in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. Levine's upcoming novel, *Frances Johnson*, will be released early next year, but, initially, I seem more excited about it than she does. It's not that she's not proud of her third book—she is—but she admits to regarding publicity as a necessary—well, not *evil*, but chore. Like laundry.

Levine's work, however, is akin to pure light: it can cauterize or it can kill. Her surreal images—a dog with arms and a cape, a woman quenching her thirst with gritty saltwater from a metal cup—are so detailed they become more real than what's outside your window. Levine's short story collection, *My Horse*, won the PEN-West award for fiction, her novel, *Dra--*, earned comparisons to Kafka, and her essays for Seattle's alternative paper, the *Stranger*, have mesmerized for a decade, but if I didn't tell you, she never would. Still, Levine is game: amiable, droll, and electrifyingly articulate. We stir our citrus iced teas and begin.

**LD:** I know you were born in St. Louis. When did you first move to Seattle?

**SL:** I traveled after finishing my journalism undergraduate and I sort of cast around. I came out to Eugene and then moved to Seattle on my own in 1984. It just kind of happened. It was a lot different then. It was easy to live here then.

**LD:** Are you saying it's not easy to live here now?

**SL:** It's trickier to live here now. Very tricky. Artists sticking together is the only reason I'm able to live here. For instance, a friend who's a lighting designer gave me his car. But I live a "spartan-ish" life anyway. "Spartan-ish"? I just made that up. [Laughs.]

**LD:** When did you first start writing for the *Stranger*?

**SL:** The *Stranger* called me when Emily White came onboard [as editor-in-chief]. They called Matthew Stadler and Rebecca Brown and things took off professionally and in terms of friendship. I introduced Matthew to Charles Mudede and Charles came onboard. It was a nice, dense mixing bowl.

**LD:** Let's talk about your upcoming book, *Frances Johnson*.

**SL:** Clear Cut Press is putting it out. The blurb they wrote says it's about "a woman who can't decide whether or not to go to the town dance." It's funny. I like that. It touches upon a lot of philosophical identity stuff. It's more accessible than some of my other work. The characters here have jobs, ride bikes, go outside. It's not a labyrinth like *Dra--* and it's not *as* claustrophobic, but it's still somewhat claustrophobic.

**LD:** The part about the town dance—there's more, right? [Laughs.]

**SL:** It's about a woman who leaves her hometown, about striking out to see the world. It's not realistic at all.

Everything's tweaked out of reality. It's not about literary reality, but experiential reality.

**LD:** I've noticed that reviewers consistently compare your work and your style to Kafka's. Obviously, that's flattering, but do you think it's become a catchall, an easy way to look at your work?

**SL:** It doesn't bother me. The Kafka comparison is over-used, though. Kafka was such a genius—he described and forecast our reality. I think he was the best, along with Beckett. When people review your books, you're so worried about the negative, so the Kafka thing isn't so bad. No one's ever brought it up in conversation, like at a party. If they did, I'd think, "What's up your butt?" [Laughs.] There is a sense of victimhood I recognize in

anyway. I'm ambivalent and uncomfortable. It's in the work. Poor Stacey. [Laughs.] My mom was an actor and a singer. She performed in Equity shows and she sang in *Carmina Burana* and she thirsted for the limelight. It's appealing to me to a degree, but on a different level. It's a thought-provoking question. I guess I'm not making a distinction between me and my work.

**LD:** Did you go on book tours for *My Horse* and *Dra--*?

**SL:** I didn't go on big tours, but I did clusters of readings in San Francisco, the Northwest area, New York, Washington DC, St. Louis, and Chicago. I read at a literary festival in Copenhagen where I met Grace Paley. She called me "bubbalah" and all I could say was, "Oy vey!" [Laughs.] I did some guest teaching stuff for a while. I



Photo by Daniel Morris/Fat Yeti Photography

Kafka's work, a complex victimhood that is perpetrated on the subject in question both from without and from within. Kafka was a culture-changing writer, so at that level, it's not apt. [Laughs.] People have also said I remind them of Jane Bowles.

**LD:** She gets mentioned a lot in your reviews, too.

**SL:** That's deliberate. When I was reading *Two Serious Ladies* I modeled my style after hers. But it's not deliberate with Kafka. We're already living in his world, ingesting him already. But I modeled my work after Jane Bowles when I was younger.

**LD:** Does your reaction to your past work shift over time? Are there parts you loved then but dislike now or vice versa?

**SL:** My earlier work sounds younger to me now. It's generally uncomfortable for me to sit down and read it. I'm sort of self-conscious about being in the limelight

had a stint at Notre Dame and I did a reading at Syracuse University, too.

**LD:** What's the most memorable response you've gotten from a reader?

**SL:** When I was at Notre Dame an English professor told me *My Horse* was his favorite book ever.

**LD:** Can't beat that.

**SL:** Another one that stands out for me is when Sun and Moon [publisher of *My Horse* and *Dra--*] had me come to LA and read "Made" [from *My Horse*]. This sweet old lady came up to me afterward, took my hand in hers, and said she was glad she went out that night. That meant so much.

**LD:** That had to feel really gratifying.

**SL:** Oh, sure. That's why, after readings, I like to open it up to other topics, discuss other things.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

**LD:** So it's more of a dialogue.**SL:** Exactly. Sometimes I'll even gossip, like about other writers and who's doing what. [Laughs.] I like that.**LD:** So some of it's enjoyable for you.**SL:** Sure. You know, when I was in Chicago a few years ago, I filled in for David Foster Wallace at Illinois State University while he was on sabbatical. He's got a complex relationship with fame. He has said that when he was at Yaddo, he spent half his time in the kitchen, talking to the woman who worked there. He looks like a demented Boy Scout with his knee socks, but he's really good at basketball. He's a good guy.**LD:** I don't think of him out on the court shooting hoops.**LD:** In both *My Horse* and *Dra--*, animals become sort of grotesque specters. Cats and dogs have arms and round, flat heads, and horses are small and sickly. In contemporary fiction, animals are usually signs of comfort. What gives?**SL:** There's a lot of that in the new one, *Frances Johnson*, sort of peeking out of the periphery of her vision. I find animals kind of comic in a way. Like the word "lemur," it's just a comical-sounding word. So some of it's that.**LD:** Do you actually have a pet?**SL:** I've got a cat, Lilly. I'm extremely cat friendly. I'm on good terms with crows, too. I feed them Cheetos. I'm friendly with other species.**LD:** I asked because in your books, your take on animals seems kind of creepy.**SL:** But in real life I'll read those cheesy animal-rescue books and I'm weeping a few pages in. It's a different part of me. Also, I've read a lot of Donna Haraway. She's a biologist and philosopher who's written a lot about animals. I try to slough through her books.**LD:** Illness is a backdrop or central part to a lot of your stories, too, and you work at the University of Washington Medical Center [assisting in epilepsy

research]. Are you drawing on personal experience when you write about illness?

**SL:** No, I'm not ill. I use illness as a metaphor. It's in the culture.**LD:** How so?**SL:** The dreaded diseases, you know, cancer, heart diseases. I'm exploring the hyperbole that's in the culture.**LD:** In *My Horse*, but particularly in *Dra--*, the workplace is malevolent. Have you had some crappy jobs?**SL:** Yeah. I tap into the frustration of those kinds of jobs. I parody them, the kind of people who take the minutiae so seriously. I temped at Microsoft for a while, and the lingo that goes with it, it's ripe for parody.**LD:** I once had a supervisor go nuts because she said I used the bright Post-Its and that she liked the pastels. I just looked at her and thought, "What the fuck is wrong with you?"**SL:** I've told my friends, "It's all going to end up in the books." [Laughs.]**LD:** Exactly.**SL:** I juxtapose the infantile with the adult of the working world. I work with both of those, and rage and bodily functions, and I thought it was funny to set those in the working world.**LD:** What are you working on now?**SL:** I'm working on a film script someone asked me to write. I'm approaching it somewhat like theater, in that I know it will be changed when it's filmed.**LD:** Outstanding. Thanks for your time, Stacey. ■

*Litsa Dremousis wrote, directed, and produced the plays If I Wake Before I Die and 9:00 in the Afternoon. Her work has appeared in McSweeney's, Bookmarks, MovieMaker, Seattle Magazine, Bookslut, and BlackBook. She lives in Seattle.*

From Stacey Levine's *Frances Johnson*, forthcoming from Clear Cut Press in early 2005.

*Frances had a suitor, Ray Garn. Ray was fine, though sometimes his enthusiasms were hard to understand. The two had been together for quite some time, making vague, halfhearted plans for the future.*

*Ray was mild-tempered, and things generally went well. Once, though, they traveled a few miles south to search for the sea—just that once—and Ray hid behind a wall for hours, causing Frances to feel a kind of fury.*

*It was a long, tall wall that rose up to hide the ocean shore from the road. Ray squatted next to it, smoking, smiling, and looking up at Frances when she found him, as if it were all a game, as if he had made her worry on purpose by hiding. She got so angry that she smacked him, hard, on the jaw.*

*He laughed. "Frances, it was just a joke! You know—hide-and-peek? Well, now you can hide, if you like."*

*Frances did not want to. She preferred to go into the cabin and play a quiet game by herself with a bowl of salty water, a religious-type game in which she imagined punishing and bathing herself and others. Sitting alone, in any case, brought such relief that Frances locked Ray out for most of the trip, feeling deliciously private while he stood by the sea with its freezing waves.*

*After some time, she saw through the cabin window that Ray had resorted to taking a walk. The wall along the beach prevented him from looking at the sea—assuming he liked the sea—and clamorous, gusty winds ripped at his sleeves and hair.*

*Frances left the cabin to join him at the far end of the wall. They said nothing at first, but soon were sharing some hard crackers and butter, sitting in the wild grass near the fence, chatting amicably and joking, shouting into the wind.*

*That evening she allowed Ray into the cabin bedroom, which smelled cheerlessly of mothballs and skin. He lay next to her on the bed for a while, then, levering upon bent arms, rolled atop her. She heard a tiny click: Ray's eyes shifting. After moments, he rolled away.*

*"It doesn't make sense to me," she exhaled toward the window, which framed a dark, gelatinous sky. "Two adults, in the middle of the night . . . one lying on top of the other...?" Frances felt out of sorts.*

*"Yes, it's awfully strange," Ray agreed.*

*They fell asleep.*

## AFFAIR @ the Jupiter Hotel

1-3 OCTOBER 2004  
800 EAST BURNSIDE  
www.affair-jupiterhotel.com

Organized by Stuart Horodner



### Galleries:

1R Gallery, Chicago  
Augen Gallery, Portland  
Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery, Portland  
Alysia Duckler Gallery, Portland  
Fresh Up Club, Austin  
Froelick Gallery, Portland  
Gallery 500, Portland  
Caren Golden Fine Art, New York  
Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco  
James Harris Gallery, Seattle  
Inman Gallery, Houston  
Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland  
Mahaffey Fine Art, Portland  
Modern Culture, New York  
PDX Contemporary Art, Portland  
Platform Gallery, Seattle  
Laura Russo Gallery, Portland  
Savage Art Resources, Portland  
Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque  
Marcel Sitcoske Gallery, Los Angeles  
Mark Woolley Gallery, Portland

### Special Projects:

Transient Decor (On the Road Again)  
A Tribute to Michele Russo  
David Eckard: Podium  
Independent Publishing Resource Center

With support from Gamblin Artists Colors Inc and The Organ

# Typography Lesson

BY HEATHER WATKINS



Letterforms are the unsung handmaidens of writers and of writing. Like many skilled workers, they often prove their worth by escaping notice altogether. Yet despite their undeniably functional role, our alphabetic characters—the product of millennia of refinement and standardization—have been unable to resist becoming objects in themselves. Showy or shy, refined or rustic, the letters we use today in the West have struggled through a storied history (indeed, history itself) to assert their particular shapes.

A typeface conveys prevailing sensibilities and personal taste, from its overall “look”—formal, delicate, loud, busy, clean, etc.—to particular historical references. When you choose to set your term paper in Courier, you may only be trying to make it seem longer than it is (as a monospaced font, each character, whether a skinny *i* or the thrice-as-wide *m*, is given the same amount of space), but you also may be calling upon the antiquated aesthetics of the typewriter to suggest you’ve labored over this piece of writing in an old-school kind of way.

In the graphic design courses I teach at Lewis and Clark College, I try to introduce students to type history as more than a catalogue of dates and details by making it a direct physical experience. Most people work with type on a screen via a keyboard nowadays, so I start by removing the work from that environment. For the hand-drawn letter project, students work in charcoal on newsprint, breaking the charcoal into pieces that approximate the slanted tip of a pen’s nib. They draw each letter of the alphabet in three roman-type styles, working to find a proportional stroke width for the height, a suitable angle for the drawing media, and adequate pressure. By the end of this project, they have chosen one letter to focus on in the three typefaces, and their ability to discern the subtlest details has sharpened.

**WHY ROMAN?** Even when you’re not in Rome, you are likely doing as the Romans did. The words that most people in the Western hemisphere read throughout the day have been shaped by a sequence of technological advances that began with the chisels and quill pens of antiquity. To describe a typeface as roman refers both to a particular set of characters (the A–Z

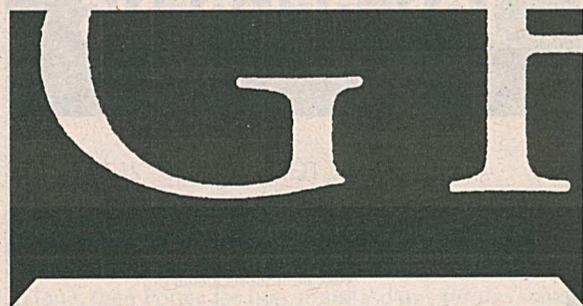
alphabet, which, from antiquity to the Renaissance grew from twenty-one to twenty-six letters) and to a specific style of rounded, humanistic lettering that originated at the hand of medieval scribes. The capital letters used by Romans for public communications gradually developed into the more legible uncials and Carolingian minuscules, precursors to our lowercase letters. In the late Middle Ages, a northern European script style known as Gothic emerged, recognizable for its angular vaults that resembled a Gothic cathedral. Although Johann Gutenberg’s first moveable metal types were Gothic, the more reader-friendly roman styling soon supplanted them as the predominant text type for books.

ATVSP  
AESAR  
ANQAY  
Capitals

UETA U  
ut. Dix  
innua  
Carolingian  
minuscules

acc fec  
xiffma  
Gothic

**THE LETTERPRESS** The Italian Renaissance’s renewed interest in the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome inspired scholars, craftsmen, and their wealthy patrons to seek a means to reproduce classical texts more efficiently. With the contributions of Gutenberg and subsequent craftsmen, letterpress printing revolutionized the formerly time-consuming, clergy-driven practice of copying manuscripts. A complete printing house would have on hand a punchcutter (who carved the types in steel); a typesetter or compositor (who set the individual letters in lines of type and locked them into a chase); a printer (often the same person who set the type); and a binder.

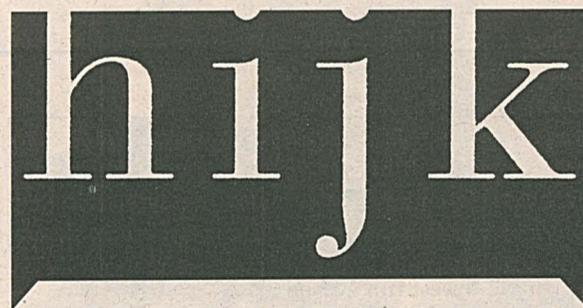


**OLD STYLE** The earliest category of printed types closely resembled the script styles of the hand-copyists, distinguished by thick strokes, slightly curved brackets (the transition where the main stroke meets the serif), larger *x*-height (literally, the height of a lowercase *x*, which establishes the height of the lowercase letters), and shorter ascenders and descenders (the elements that extend below the baseline—as in *p* and *q*—and above the *x*-height—as in *b* and *d*). The overall look of

an old style type is heavy, rustic, and definitely roman as opposed to Gothic in style—recalling both the width and the weight of the Roman stone-carved letters that preceded penned manuscripts. (My students notice quickly that this is much easier to reproduce than the other two typefaces.) Garamond, shown here and named for its creator, Claude Garamond, was commissioned by Parisian publisher Robert Estienne circa 1530.



**TRANSITIONAL** In this intermediary period, the hand-inspired qualities of the old style type shifted to anticipate values of the Enlightenment era to come: scientific rationalism, quantification and classification, exactitude. Baroque ideas of proportion and ornamentation characterize transitional types, notable for their elaborate yet elegant details (such as Baskerville’s capital *Q* shown here). Technical refinements enabled punchcutters to create letters with increasingly fine hairlines, resulting in greater contrast between thick and thin strokes. John Baskerville’s eponymous typeface was first used in 1757 in Virgil’s *Georgics*.



**MODERN** Giambattista Bodoni’s types embodied an era obsessed with defining new, secular systems for measuring and categorizing the stuff of the world, particularly the stuff of cultural production (Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* was published in 1755; Denis Diderot’s *Encyclopedia* was completed in 1772). Similarly, Bodoni’s *Manuale Tipografico* (1818, posthumous printing) catalogued his notably prolific output of type designs: over one hundred fonts in roman, italic, and Gothic styles, as well as examples for Greek, Russian, and Asian character sets. Types of this period feature extreme contrasts between thick and thin strokes, narrower/elongated bodies of the letters, symmetrical construction, strict vertical axes of rounded letters, and tidy details such as the curlicued ball terminals (at the top of the *f*). Chisel-pointed engraving tools, compasses, and rulers ensured that the letterforms in Bodoni’s types were drawn with precision.

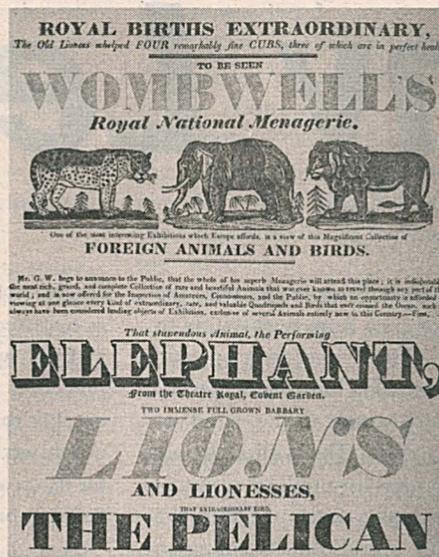
Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

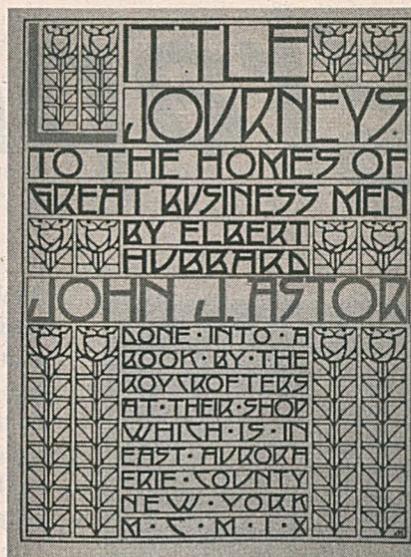
**INDUSTRIAL AGE AND BEYOND** The rapid growth in industrial production through the nineteenth century drove type styles and sizes to extremes as they were deployed to promote new businesses and products: the bigger, the bolder, the more “seen,” the more successful. Increasingly expressive lettering styles began to appear not only on storefront signs but also in new sites of wide-reaching public communication: magazine and newspaper advertisements.

Busy, noisy, energetic—commercial type styles of this period responded to the activity of the city. The ornamental letter of medieval manuscripts reemerged, not as an accent, but cast in entire headlines, commanding attention through exaggeration. The Victorian-era handbill epitomized this trend—a visual circus of novelty types sporting thick slab serifs, drop shadows, outlined figures, patriotic stripes, and calligraphic flourishes. Though more harmonious in their designs, typographic specimens from subsequent Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts periods continued in this “more is more” vein, characterized by intricate patterning and orgiastic organic motifs.

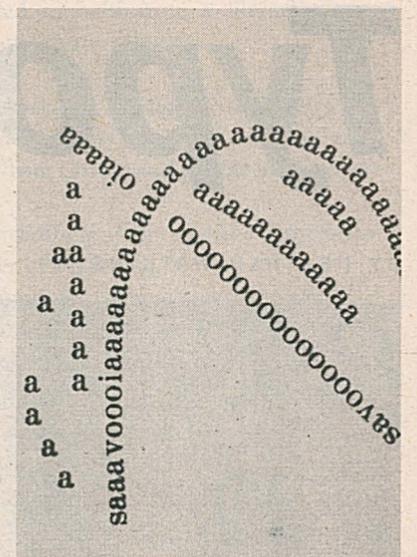
By the early twentieth century, such excessive typographic tastes gave way to a minimalist dressing-down as experimental type design was enlisted to represent the varying ideological, political, and aesthetic dispositions across Europe. Russian Constructivists arranged their bold blocky messages and geometric shapes into symbolic narratives expressive of the unadorned clarity of their revolution. Italian Futurist Filippo Marinetti’s *Parole in Liberta* sought to free words from all conventions of syntax and grammar, letting type more closely represent sound. In one of the more feverish arguments of the era, Bauhaus designer Herbert Bayer advocated the elimination of capital letters, a move bordering on heresy in light of the German convention of capitalizing the first letter of all proper nouns. Commercial type trends generally shadowed these and other developments from the



1



2



3

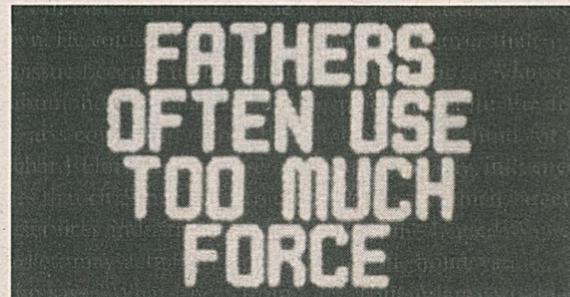
avant-garde art movements, if only to draw from their ideas formally. By midcentury, an inclination to communicate on a global scale inspired the International Style, a definitively late modern look exemplified by Adrian Frutiger’s aptly named Univers font system.

In the decades since, letter styles have kept evolving apace with culture and technology, mutating into new species from the hand-drawn swirling psychedelic posters of the 1960s to the blinking pixels that interrupted your e-mail-reading this morning. Meantime, the old classics have survived, and book publishers are still printing in digital remakes of the types created hundreds of years ago.

The magazine you are reading now combines a woodcut-inspired masthead with a turn of the century sans serif headline font and these very words are set in Minion, a typeface designed in 1991 by Robert J. Slimbach, which incorporates numerous old style influences, especially Garamond faces from as early as the fourteenth century.

As you move through the world, a world that we’re told is increasingly built upon information, consider paying closer attention to this constant and indispensable companion, the lowly letterform. Its history continues to unfold, making the lives of readers and writers like you and me easier, more pleasurable—and ever more surprising. ■

Heather Watkins is a visiting assistant professor of art at Lewis and Clark College, a freelance book designer, and a visual artist.



4

1. Wombwell’s broadsheet c. 1865 from Steven Heller and Louise Fili, *Typology: Type Design from the Victorian Era to the Digital Age* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999), p. 20.
2. *Little Journeys* booklet cover, 1904, type designed by Dard Hunter, from *Typology*, p. 37.
3. Savooiaaaaa, poetry postcard, 1917, F. T. Marinetti, from *Typology*, p. 71.
4. Times Square installation, 1982, from Jenny Holzer: *Signs* (Des Moines: Plain Talk Publishing, 1986), p. 17.

LIGHTHOUSE CINEMA PRESENTS

**JON BEHRENS**  
A 25-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE: 1979-2004

OCTOBER 25+26, 2004  
7:30PM | Admission \$7

425 SE 3rd, no. 400  
www.lighthousecinema.org

Many new exhibits and programs for 2004

**MARYHILL MUSEUM OF ART**  
Take I-84 east to Exit 104. Daily 9-5  
(509) 773-3733 maryhillmuseum.org

SHOO  
TFIRS TAS KQ  
UESTION  
SLATER blakeandrewsphoto.com

**Atelier Z**  
an architecture and industrial design studio  
advocating dialogue in the fine applied arts  
www.fhzal.com 503.236.4855

# Gold Standard

An Interview with Jerome Gold, Founder of Seattle's Black Heron Press

BY CAMELA RAYMOND

In the early 1980s Jerome Gold, then pursuing a doctorate in social anthropology at the University of Washington, traveled from Seattle to Samoa to do fieldwork. A Vietnam veteran and developing writer, Gold had recently exchanged manuscripts with Les Galloway, an acquaintance in San Francisco. Galloway was nearing seventy and had not been published. But Gold was deeply impressed by his novella, *The Forty Fathom Bank*, a tale of greed and mistrust between two men on a fishing expedition for nurse sharks off the California coast, a *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* of the sea.

Arriving in Pago Pago, Gold happened to meet John Enright, a poet and coeditor of the small press Tinker's Dam—co-headquartered in Pago Pago and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Gold recalls today with a laugh. Enright liked the book and sent it to his Milwaukee partner with his recommendation, but the partner's reply was disappointing: he would not support the proposal, he wrote, because Galloway was too old. "That pissed me off," Gold says, adding that the publisher had ulterior motives that later came to light. "It pissed off John, too. It didn't make sense. To us, a book is a book."

It wasn't a total loss, though. When Gold returned to the States he won Galloway's consent to publish *The Forty Fathom Bank*. With Galloway's help, he founded Black Heron Press, which this year in Seattle marks its twentieth anniversary. Today, if you leaf through Black Heron Press's catalogue, you'll find that taste and stout-heartedness are still its guiding principles, whether with respect to *The Crazy Dervish and the Pomegranate Tree* (2004), Iranian American writer Farnoosh Moshiri's haunting collection of short stories that won Black Heron's Award for Social Fiction; or *Time for Robo* (1999), art critic-folklorist Peter Plagens's (widely panned) first try at a novel; or either of two books by James Sallis, the experimental African American detective novelist and essayist whom one reviewer called "the poster boy for inconclusiveness."

Gold, a graceful and substantive writer in his own right, has published numerous books under the Black Heron imprint, including *Negligence of Death*, an autobiographical work of fiction set in the Vietnam War (later republished by Soho Press as *Sergeant Dickinson*, of which the *New York Times* wrote, "[it] belongs on the high, narrow shelf of first-rate fiction about battlefield experience"); the love's labor *Publishing Lives: Interviews with Independent Book Publishers in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia* (1996); and his most recent book, the 2003 collection of memoirs *How I Learned That I Could Push the Button*.

After twenty years of publishing books he likes, Gold says the experience is "always the same." Starting out with "something that's intangible, an idea in somebody's mind" and ending up with a physical object is "almost like a miracle," he says with a short laugh. In early August Gold, whose friends call him Jerry, talked with me about his writing, the rewards and travails of independent publishing, the attractions of war, his experiences working with incarcerated kids, and other

matters. Following is an excerpt of our conversation, edited for brevity.

Postscript: In 1987 Black Heron Press published a collection of Gold's and Galloway's short stories called *Of Great Spaces*. Chronicle Books later reprinted Galloway's stories and *The Forty Fathom Bank* in a new volume, marking the third and final chapter of his literary career; he died in 1990. Earlier this year, Chronicle published a new edition with an afterword by Gold.

**CR:** You describe your most recent book, *How I Learned That I Could Push the Button*, as a "compact though incomplete history of the effect of the American War in Viet Nam on a particular life—mine." In the first story, the main character, Paul, returns from Vietnam and has a recurring nightmare about being strangled. He finally interprets it as being about his desire to kill himself. The last piece takes place where you actually work, in a juvenile prison on September 11. You're having a conversation with a kid who has been in a gang, and you write that "listening to him was like listening to a war veteran confess his remorse for having been unable to save his friends, his dread of having to live the rest of his life without connection." And then you put him on suicide watch.

The second piece is about this war game. It's in the first person, I don't know if that really means...

**JG:** They're all my experience, it's just that in order to write them I sometimes had to use third person.

**CR:** The soldiers are playing these bizarre, scripted war games [between the US and the Soviet Union] using cardboard chits, which for the soldiers become an almost real experience of nuclear catastrophe.

I thought it was interesting to depict war and the import of war not by talking about political ideologies, or oil, or religious differences, but speaking more about personal things like the emotions of revenge and guilt and the institutions we create to keep these cycles moving, whether it's gangs or the military.

**JG:** Yeah, I hope you do a review of the book. [Laughs.] You actually brought out some stuff that I hadn't even thought about.

**CR:** It's interesting to me that you work with these kids, and I guess I'm curious about what you see are the relationships between these different kinds of trauma and their aftereffects.

**JG:** That's a question I've been struggling with for ten years. More than that. I've been doing this work for thirteen years. People keep asking me, I keep asking myself, "Why have I done this?" My answer keeps changing. So I don't trust the answers. [Laughs.]—I think I don't know myself well enough to come out with a definitive explanation. I know myself pretty well, but I don't think I know myself that well.

Trauma is trauma, to try to approach your question from the point of view of trauma. I was at graduate

school with a woman who was interested in my war experience because she thought the trauma I had experienced was the same trauma she had experienced as the victim of incestual rape. At that time—this was around 1980—I thought that was not so. I think only because I was jealous of my own experience. But since then I've learned to think that she was right. I've dealt with many girls who, when they talk about what has happened to them, it keys to things that relate to my own experience. And boys, it isn't just the gang violence, many boys are victims of rape.

Trauma is trauma. I think trauma is one of the roots of anger. I deal with angry kids. And then I was angry for so many years that I was afraid of myself. This was after I came back from the war. I work with a man whose son is in Iraq now. About a week ago there was an explosion that killed about sixty people in Mosul, I think, including children. My friend's son was one of the soldiers cleaning up the mess and he found a child's foot. This really had an impact on him psychologically. His father tells me his e-mails just aren't giving any information now. You ask him how he's doing, he says fine. So you know he's not doing fine, but he's not gonna talk about it either.

When we talk about war as kind of a global game or regional game, whatever scale it's gonna be conducted on, that to me doesn't say anything at all about the experience of it. We may get some idea of what is going to happen or not. Or in the long haul we might get some idea of what its course may be. But it says nothing at all about the experience of it. And I think the experience of it from war to war does not change a great deal. If you read Shakespeare, I can't remember which play it is where they're talking about the Band of Brothers, I think it's *Henry IV, Part II*, where Henry is trying to put together a coalition of feudal lords to make war against the French. His pep talk, the talk he gives to convince them to fight—this is the way you talk to soldiers now, to make them want to kill. And it works.

**CR:** Farnoosh Moshiri's short stories involve a character who is a political prisoner in Iran during the fundamentalist revolution and the psychological aftermath for him and his family. Her writing style is so spare and unflinching—

**JG:** In that book it is. She doesn't always write that way.

**CR:** It made me think of Jose Saramago's *Blindness*. But as we talked about earlier, unless you win the Nobel Prize as Saramago did, big publishing houses aren't going to be interested in work like this. I wonder if you think that is a peculiarly American problem. Do you think it is a problem?

**JG:** I do. It is. It's not *peculiarly* American because Germany is having a similar problem. I mention Germany because they have such a big market for translation rights and they have developed a taste, just as the American public has, for mass-market fiction. But their problem is not nearly as severe as ours.

I think most American readers, those who still read books, cannot tell a good book from a not-good book. They haven't been exposed to enough good books. When my kids were in high school in the '80s, I used to get notes from teachers or would talk to them and I realized they really were not very literate. Not that they couldn't write a sentence, but they didn't know literature. There are exceptions, though. Also in the '80s I began meeting writers who hadn't read literature. They regarded themselves as serious writers and were very, very ambitious, but they were not well read. And this includes people who went to the University of Iowa Writers Workshop.

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

They probably would recognize great literature, but they didn't want to spend the effort reading it.

**CR:** Do you see anything that would change this situation?

**JG:** No. It's getting worse and it will continue to get worse. All the things that might help are going out of existence. There are fewer reviewers, fewer newspapers that do reviews, and those that do aren't doing as many as they used to. There is a movement, even by the *New York Times*, to take space away from literary fiction and give it to mass-market fiction. *Publishers Weekly* has gone over to that almost entirely, so it is no longer considered a bellwether of "what's what" in literature. Other papers in the country will follow the *New York Times*.

Then there's education. Some people just have an innate sense of what's good, and other people have to be taught. I remember attending a panel and talking afterward with Barbara Hoffert, an editor at *Library Journal*. She was talking about how libraries used to buy fiction that was good for people, and now they've been taught in graduate school that they should buy fiction that people *want*. That has hurt the library market for me.

**CR:** In our public library in Portland, the ordering system has become mostly automated. So libraries buy what vendors tell them to buy.

**JG:** Some libraries have done that for decades. There was a big lawsuit brought by a library system in Hawaii, I believe it was the University of Hawaii, who sued Baker and Taylor, the wholesaler, because they trusted them

to send appropriate stuff and they were allegedly just using them as dumping ground for things they couldn't get rid of.

**CR:** So, besides reviews and education, are there other things that you'd add to the list?

**JG:** There's the chains, of course. Barnes and Noble doesn't buy literary fiction anymore, not to any extent. When I first started selling to Barnes and Noble, I would sell them 400 to 700 copies of a book, back in the mid-'90s. The last book, they took fifty copies. Sometimes they don't take any. Costco is essentially taking it one step further, selling mass-appeal books at tremendous discounts. But it's even worse for literature.

You know, Europeans are really contemptuous of American literature. One of my agents in Europe is in Rome, and I meet her every year at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The founder of her agency, which goes back to the late '40s, is still alive. I met him last year or the year before last. He was not familiar with my press. He asked if I was bringing European literature to America, and I said, "No, I'm bringing American literature to Europe." He just got this look of utter distaste on his face. [Laughs.] And he knows the literature. He started off as a translator and interpreter and has been doing this most of his life. I think he's in his late eighties now.

**CR:** Who do the Europeans like these days as far as living American writers?

**JG:** I think they think Philip Roth is important. The French still like Norman Mailer. We're talking about novelists now. There are a number of nonfiction writ-

ers—Noam Chomsky and Susan Sontag currently.

**CR:** Is the thrill of discovering new writers something that motivates you to keep doing this?

**JG:** No. [Laughs.] That's something that a lot of writers don't understand or like about me. I care about the book. It's the book that's important. There are a number of writers I deal with that I like very much personally, but it's the book that's important. ■

*Camela Raymond is the editor and publisher of the Organ.*

From "Days with the Thugs" in Jerome Gold's *How I Learned That I Could Push the Button*:

*I knew she would want revenge on the people who took down the World Trade Center; she was a gang kid, after all. She did want revenge, she said, even if innocent people had to suffer. She thought we would go to war, though she didn't know against whom. But she was confident that the United States would prevail because it was so powerful and so wealthy.*

*I asked her how many innocent people would have to suffer before she would no longer want revenge. This was the kind of question I often asked her. She always took it seriously, even when I asked it tongue-in-cheek, and she didn't try to evade the question. This time she said she didn't know, but she knew they would suffer because the innocent always suffer in war, and since we were going to war they would have to suffer. "So that's that," she said. She was not being flippant; she was telling me that she accepted the injustice inherent in the way the world works.* ■

09:10:04-09:19:04 Portland, Oregon  
**TIME-BASED ART IS HAPPENING.**

What to see?  
Where to be?

PICA.ORG  
503.242.1419

**T : B A : 04**  
TIME - BASED ART FESTIVAL

# Hawthorne

Flowering tree. Portland thoroughfare. American literary icon. Publishing house on the rise.

BY HEATHER LARIMER

The first book out from Hawthorne Press, founded by Kate Sage and Rhonda Hughes in 2001, was an anthology of essays by heavy-hitting West Coast writers responding to the September 11 attacks. When asked how they managed to involve such stars as Ken Kesey, T. C. Boyle, and Alice Walker with an unknown press, Rhonda smiled and told me, "One writer at a time."

Three years ago, Rhonda and Kate founded the Portland-based Hawthorne Books with a clear mission: to publish books they love. Both had a background in publishing—Rhonda had co-owned a small press and still runs a print-brokering business; Kate had worked at Harper Paperbacks and as a literary agent in New York. When the two met in graduate school at Portland State University, they recognized their shared interest and decided to do something about it. Starting out modestly, they installed their office in the basement of Rhonda's house just off Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard. Recently, the press has hit its stride, upgrading its digs, acquiring a new distributor, Chronicle Books, and getting the attention of the publishing industry at large. This past spring, Hawthorne Books produced three new titles: Poe Ballantine's *God Clobbers Us All*, D'Arcy Fallon's *So Late, So Soon*, and Scott Nadelson's *Saving Stanley*, which David Shields calls "a substantial, serious, and intelligent contribution to contemporary Jewish American writing" (see our review on page 23). Fall 2004 will bring debut novels from two Portland writers, Kassten Alonso (who reviews Mary Potter Engel's short story collection in this issue) and Michael Strelow, and the press's first international title, *Dastgah: Diary of a Headtrip*, already a bestseller in Australia.

The *Organ* sat down with Hawthorne Books' founders to discuss their simple, old-fashioned plan to revolutionize the landscape of literature, one brilliant discovery at a time.

**HL: Do you have a unifying principle?**

**KS:** For emerging writers to have their work seen. Really, writers of any locale—although we're publishing three writers from the Portland area by next year.

**HL: It's not meant to be a Portland-centered thing; it just ended up that way?**

**KS:** I really believe that you need to be looking for talent everywhere. You're always going to get regional talent where you are. We wanted to reach much wider. We have an international title coming out too, from Australia. We want to last a long time, so we need to be open to lots of different things. We don't want to be so "niche," but be mainstream literary fiction and nonfiction. It doesn't seem like anyone's really doing that right now.

**HL: Do the books you've published so far have anything in common?**

**KS:** Their literary merit. And most of them are first-time published writers, in book form at least.

**RH:** We're not looking for [first-time writers] necessarily, that's just kind of happened.

**HL: Do you ever have to sell yourself to an emerging writer, tell them why they would go with you?**

**KS:** We have writers who ask, "What are you gonna do? Why should I go with you?" Although in short order they see what we're about.

**RH:** We offer a higher royalty—10 percent of retail. Houghton Mifflin, for instance, gives only a percentage of profit, not retail ... It's harder out there to get a contract. I know a lot of authors who are looking for other publishers; the independents are getting more respect.

**KS:** With an independent you get a lot more individual attention. We're a lot more personally invested, and writers sense that.

**RH:** And the editing they get. Tom Spanbauer [author of *The Man Who Fell in Love With the Moon*] was saying, "People don't edit like this anymore."

**HL: I like that you guys use Stumptown for your readings and parties.**

**RH:** We had a great party for Poe there. All our parties are going to be there.

**HL: How would you characterize the publishing landscape at large? Did the idea of a press arise out of some need you saw, a gap in the market?**

**KS:** It's sort of polarized, but in some ways it never changes. Even ten years ago it had broken in two. You're either with a big house or off on your own.

**RH:** And the big houses are owned by five conglomerates. On a purely selfish level, I got into this because I love reading books. I love editing, I love writers. That's the bottom line. It's not really that I saw a huge hole. This is what I want to spend my time doing: making books.

**KS:** And I knew I wanted to do something in the literary community and not try to get one of the few publishing or literary jobs in Portland. I like being in charge of my own desires and I could tell immediately that Rhonda felt the same.

**HL: Not the "I could make a widget and everyone will buy it" approach?**

**RH:** On the contrary. Everyone said, "You're crazy, you're going to lose money, you'll be lucky to get 3,000 copies out there." My feeling is, "Great. I got 3,000 copies out there." We still have to do other things to pay the bills. Getting enough media is rough. That's our biggest challenge. Our books are everywhere, but if the public doesn't know about our books, how do they know to go get them? The top book reviewers get 400 books a week. How do they know to look at our book?

**KS:** Why should they trust our literary sensibilities? Who are we? But they're starting to. *Publishers Weekly* is taking notice of us. The industry magazines are taking notice.

**RH:** I can see some light at the end of the tunnel with this season. It's our first real season. After next year, we'll be in a better position.

**HL: Portland's Black Sparrow Press!**

**RH:** I love Black Sparrow.

**HL: I love the *objet* aspect of their books.**

**RH:** The uncoated paper! They got started with Bukowski. [The publisher] John Martin supported Bukowski and then all the other writers came to him. He paid Bukowski \$100 a month just to write.

**HL: Like patronage. We need that. Not just financially, but the vote of confidence. Saying, "I believe in you. You're worth my time."**

**RH:** That's what we do.

**HL: Makes you wonder what great writers we're missing by not doing that anymore.**

**KS:** People who we consider to be classics, when you see the amount of effort they and their editors put into getting their work where it was ... it's a very new idea that an author has to get a book 95 percent done and then a publisher buys in.

**RH:** Strelow sent a manuscript to us. Kate took it on two to three years ago and has been working with him ever since, and it's just now coming out. With another editor it might never have seen the light of day. He's a wonderful writer—the fact that he's trusted Kate enough to let her do that. And everyone might have missed it. He's going to be like Kesey.

**KS:** And now we have a relationship and he's become a different writer because he has a sounding board.

**HL: You wonder, what is the longevity of the writers we're creating now? Writers who have lasted didn't necessarily come up in this "give us your book when you're done" climate.**

**KS:** The climate where your book has to "take off," when in reality, the slow building of a career used to be different. Faulkner tried to write mainstream fiction and he totally flopped. He worked a lot with his editor.

**RH:** The most satisfying is when you get a manuscript and say, "This could be something." And then it is something and there's another one! Poe's book took five edits. He has said our relationship was dental at a certain point, pulling teeth. Working with him and seeing it out there and then hearing a reviewer say, "It's impossible not to fall in love with the narrator of *God Clobbers Us All*." I'm like, "Yeah!" And we're doing a series.

**HL: You're deciding how to shape work. You must have to trust yourselves.**

**RH:** That's why we choose which projects we work on carefully.

**KS:** I had a lot of positive reinforcement with the literary agent I worked with before. It's helped me now. When I'm into a project, I can't see outside of it. I'm obsessive. Then I come up for air and think, "Wow, we can sell this book."

**RH:** My ass is out there. It's my opinion. But that's all any editor is doing.

**HL: Like Bill Buford reigned somewhat dictatorially over the *New Yorker* with his vision.**

**KS:** That's why you have different publications. They're each a reflection on who is in charge. And we're different enough from each other that we have a wide range. We have distinct literary histories of our own.

**HL: Do you worry that if you grow you won't be able to sustain the level of attention that you're currently able to give?**

*Continued on page 18*

# Vote, A\*t L\*ver

Portland's mayoral and council hopefuls seek your support, art lovers! (And art lovers, too.)

BY CIELO LUTINO: ILLUSTRATIONS BY COREY LUNN

## GIVING YOU MORE ATTITUDE, LESS PLATITUDE

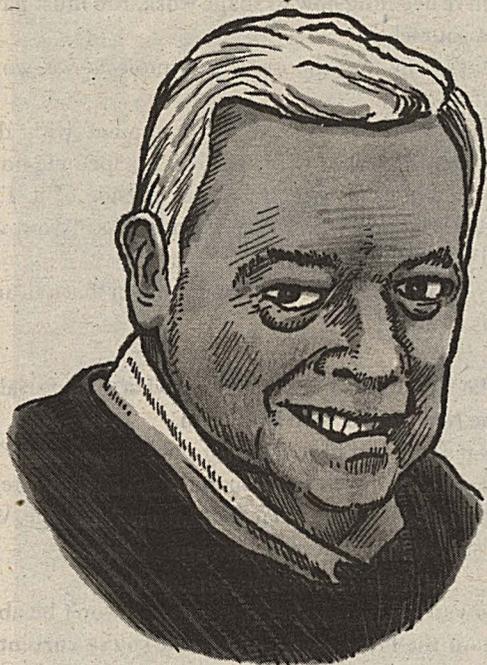
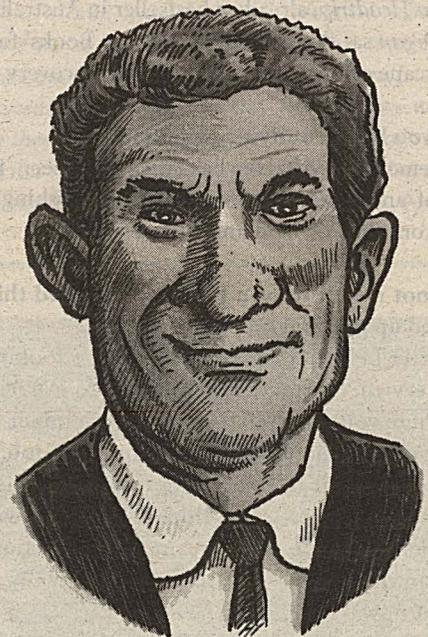
If you're an artist, expect a phat check in the mail from the City of Portland. Feel free to blow it on expensive art supplies or beachfront property since rent's free until the vacancies on city council are filled. It's not surprising that council candidates have conjured a Shangri-la-la Land in recent conversations about the arts. Mayoral hopeful Tom Potter has suggested waiving expensive system-development charges for nonprofit groups, including arts organizations, while Sam Adams has claimed he'd like to "make celebrities out of" artists. Reflecting on the arts forum sponsored by the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) and Northwest Business for Culture and the Arts on July 21, Potter admitted, "You weren't going to hear anyone say, 'The hell with arts.'" The candidates expressed essentially the same sentiments at a similar forum organized by the *Portland Mercury*, Oregon Bus Project, and Pacific Northwest College of Art on August 19, where all but Francesconi were applauded for supporting the most popular idea of the day: investigating the possible conversion of the former granary Centennial Mills to an arts center (see Potter, below). Politicians are experts at blowing smoke up the right blowhole, which is why it's important to clear the air and find the attitudes behind the platitudes. Recent chats between the candidates and the *Organ* unplugged the smoke machine and revealed who might really champion the arts cause at City Hall and beyond.

## WHO IT AIN'T

Sounding like a grumpy Italian grandfather at the July forum, Jim Francesconi complained, "We have too many visions. Everybody's got a vision." That is, everybody but Jim. Yes, during his seven years at City Hall, Francesconi called for audits of the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation and Portland Public Schools, and yes, he cofounded an after-school program, but the achievements don't go much further. No surprise, then, that his platform on the arts and government displays little substance or excitement. He supports increasing the Percent for Art Program from 1.33 to 2 percent—but so do the other candidates. He supports strengthening the arts in public education—but so do the other candidates. He supports marketing the local arts and culture scene as a tourist attraction—but so do the other candidates. Lest he sound like an echo, Francesconi has attempted to differentiate himself by offering minor improvements to the other candidates' ideas. For example, after belit-

ting Adams's suggestion that the City claim a fraction of business fees collected from films shot in Portland, he recommended rent-free use of City facilities for those same films. In other words, let's give the film and video industry our tax dollars because they'll more than repay it when their techs and roadies go out drinking at local bars. Good one, Jim.

Other than a striking lack of smarts, Francesconi distinguishes himself from Potter in his belief that City funds would be better used to build a new performance hall at PSU than to subsidize the costly renovation of Centennial Mills, as well as his emphasis on employment. According to him, a stable job market will invigorate the local economy and thereby benefit artists—but it will benefit everyone else, too, which makes it a pretty safe stand. In the end, there's nothing in sight, no real—ahem—vision for the arts if Francesconi takes the helm.



## THE EX-COP ON TOP

In the parlance of the street, Tom Potter used to be a pig, but now he'd like to be Da Man. And he should be. Unlike Francesconi, Potter has plenty of ideas about how local government might support the arts. Citing Abraham Maslow, Potter believes each person has a hierarchy of needs that must be met in order to fully realize her or his potential. Applying this principle to the arts community, he observes, "It seems a lot of the lower-level stuff has been left out. We need infrastructure that helps meet artists' needs so they can have the time to self-actualize."

Potter recognizes that that infrastructure may need, well, a structure. He isn't shy about his support of the conversion of Centennial Mills, a former granary near the Pearl District, into an arts center for Portland like Dia:Beacon in upstate New York, or MASS MoCA, Massachusetts's contemporary art museum in North Adams.

And he's quick to demand that businesses receiving governmental assistance, such as tax exemptions or loans, are held accountable to the larger community.

By signing Community Benefits Agreements requiring them to give back to the public, "They could provide support to the arts, social programs, or schools," he says. "Give them a choice but make sure art is part of that choice."

He enthuses about another possibility: a yearly festival, like Bumbershoot, combining music and art and food, that would "celebrate what Oregon has to offer" and "put Portland on the map." Its revenues, he says, could help fund RACC, PICA, and other arts groups, and while the first year may be a loss, the effort "could be terribly exciting."

Potter's ideas tend to be fuzzy on the financial details, and you have to wonder how many of them can be realized. But his willingness to consider different options to boost Portland's arts community is more impressive than Francesconi's glum reminders of the city's existing deficits. At a time when public and private resources are growing leaner and leaner, Portland needs a leader open to creative ways of reversing the trend.



### IN HOT WATER

Nick Fish is in trouble. His competitor is pretty good, but Fish is equal to the challenge. In fact, the runoff between Fish and Sam Adams really makes you wish one of them had run against Randy Leonard, who upbraids his employees in public and has earned the wrath of neighborhood groups for, in their view, pandering to business interests. Yet he still received the *Willamette Week's* endorsement.

The choice between the two is particularly tough on arts issues. Fish has a long history of supporting the arts and has been an avid consumer of arts and culture since he moved here from New York City in 1996, haunting Jimmy Mak's and the now defunct Jazz de Opus. He supports Chamber Music Northwest, donated to PICA last year via the new Oregon Cultural Trust, and plunked down 250 bones to be a guest DJ on KMHD, Portland's jazz station. Back East, he chaired the St. Mark's Historic Landmark Fund, which preserved an underused historic church by enabling a consortium of arts groups, including Danspace, Poetry Project, and the Ontological Hysteric Theater, to use the space in exchange for sliding-scale rent. Fish's experience with that model of community and economic development would benefit Portland, where religious institutions such as the Beth Israel Synagogue and the First Unitarian Church face

financial woes that might bring about the demolition of some of the city's most interesting historic buildings.

Fish's background with St. Mark's, as well as his involvement with the Housing Authority of Portland's effort to create a privately funded public art program for North Portland's Columbia Villa housing project, illustrates his savvy fund-raising skills in the private sector. "In a time of diminishing resources, we have to look to creative ways of financing things we care about," he says. "With the arts, it means tapping the wealth in our private sector."

While Fish would aim for including Portland in the top ten US cities for funding of the arts, he also seeks parity in the distribution of public dollars. "If a handful of developers and arts advocates have preferential access to City Hall, then they're going to get more than their fair share," he says. "Portland Center Stage is an important arts organization, but we just put \$28 million in public subsidy into one organization. My commitment as the next city commissioner is to level the playing field, and my particular interest is nurturing community-based organizations." If he fails to land a spot on city council this fall, the arts community should enlist Fish for his expertise and encourage him to go after Leonard in the next election or Eric Sten's seat when he steps down.

### HE'S BETTER THAN THE BEER

While Sam Adams may share a disturbing love of regulatory reform with Leonard, he can take him on the issue of arts and culture, hands down. He could probably take all of the candidates on that issue because he has such refreshingly concrete ideas about how to shake it up. All the lip service paid to the arts community since the publication of economist Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which argues that cities need to attract a workforce for the creative services industry in order to compete in the global market, may actually amount to something with Adams, who says, "What I hear from artists is they want tangible financial support." He talks about earmarking a portion of the business license fees and business income taxes from movies filmed in Portland for local arts and culture but honestly warns of the shortcomings of doing so: "It's feast or famine but capture it while it's here. Then invest it in the foundation of the local arts community so that it isn't used for one-time projects."

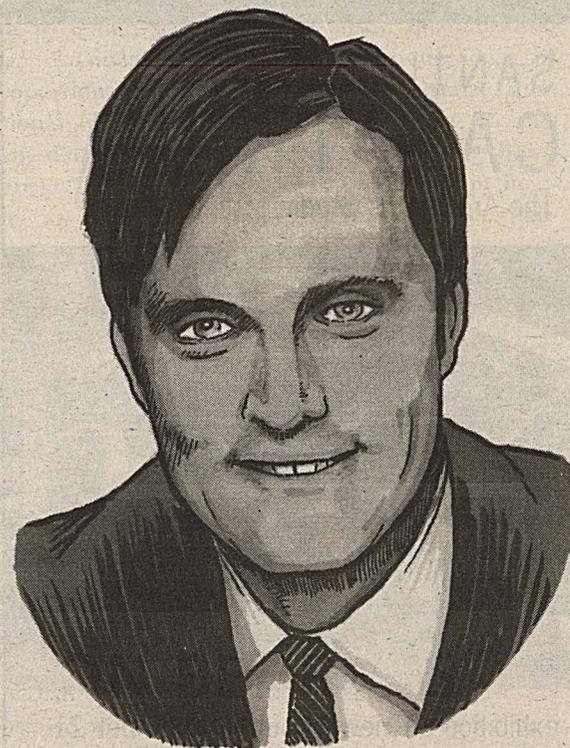
He's similarly forthcoming about the much-lauded elevation of the Percent for Art Program—"Maintenance of what already has been invested in would use up a lot of the increase, I'm afraid," he says—but he's still positive about the good that can come from it: "I'll try

to close all the loopholes to make sure the 2 percent applies where it should apply, and RACC has some oversight over that."

Like Potter, Adams is interested in stimulating workplace giving for the arts, maybe by marketing a kind of United Way fund for the arts. Both Potter and Adams are probably influenced by their time at the City of Portland, which targets an aggressive—and highly successful—United Way campaign at their employees during the holidays.

But Adams would like to do more than the much-needed financial fix-its. "The RACC board has great people on it," he says, "but I think its structure is underpowered." Drawing on his experience as a board member of the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, Adams prescribes specific changes: "Make sure it's got enough artists and elected officials who will serve as advocates back in their institutions during budget time and serve as sources of information with their public."

"There's no one thing that's going to solve the funding problem for the arts," Adams concludes, arguing that a variety of small sources must be mined. Adams's dose of realism may be just the antidote for a community sick of hearing abstract strategies for the arts.



### VOTE F\*CKER

If you were electing candidates based on their arts platform alone, then Potter for mayor and Adams for the empty council seat would be your ticket. But that's not the only issue at stake in these races. So go find out more about the candidates, like why Francesconi voted against the city's antiwar resolution, why Leonard is such a big fan of Adams, or why developer Bob Gerding supports Fish, despite Fish's public criticisms of Gerding's projects. What you learn may have you erasing your ballot a few times before settling on a solid choice.

And no discussion of local politics is complete without an understanding of the larger political picture. As Fish observes, "We have an administration in Washington that is not friendly to cities, so cities are being starved. Cities don't have adequate resources to run their police and fire and basic services, so we know what gets cut." He's talking about so-called "amenities" like the arts, so before you whine about what's going on in your backyard, think about who we've got in the White House and who we could have instead. The *Organ* shouldn't have to say more. ■

Cielo Lutino is a writer who lives in Portland, Oregon.

Continued from page 15

**KS:** We do want to grow. We'd need people who are passionate. We'd hire with the idea that our people would have the same love of the process that we do.

**RH:** We'd like to be a nice little group. Like *Tin House*, but us. More local.

**HL:** Do you think the literary landscape here is unique? You've both worked in publishing elsewhere.

**KS:** Well, I worked in the New York publishing scene. In lots of ways that community is more tight-knit. What makes it thrive is that everyone knows what's going on and is keyed in to each other. New York is also more competitive. But here, bubbling just underneath the surface, is the potential for a real literary scene. It's going to take some tipping point to help it connect and flourish. I'd love to think we're helping to do that in some way.

**HL:** Do you think that tipping point can be internal or that it will take more external validation? Does someone from New York need to notice that Portland

has great writers?

**RH:** Unfortunately, I think it's a little of both. I don't think it can all come from here or else it would have already. I don't get it.

**KS:** Portland has been a place where people come after they've lived somewhere else with more vivacity. I moved here from New York. But now it's more established, a place you would want to come to.

**RH:** We want to try to get it going. Look at some of the writers we have—Strelow, Nadelson, Alonso. These three writers alone are just amazing. Kate and I think they're worthy of notice.

**KS:** There is some publishing going on here, but it's pretty niche. We want to be more mainstream. And then the magazines here that are publishing stories—*Northwest Literary Review*, *Tin House*—they're not there to follow a literary career, to push the work out there consistently.

**RH:** That's exactly what we want to do. We hope that [our writers] will be with us forever.

**KS:** We're interested in cultivating a literary career. We're interested in the relationship.

**HL:** That's terrific because writing is so lonely. The world is indifferent. At least a painter can buy some bottles of Casarsa from Costco and people might come to his opening.

**RH:** Yeah, and at a reading you don't get the entire piece. It's like a tiny corner of a painting.

**KS:** That's why Stumptown is going to work so well. The writer can feel validated, talk to people afterward.

**RH:** With Poë Ballantine's reading, lots of other writers—Tom Spanbauer and Stevan Allred—came out and we were touched to see them supporting us and Poë.

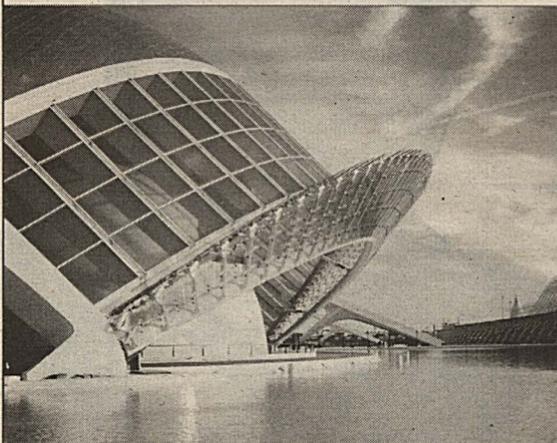
**HL:** You guys are doing it—making a scene!

**KS:** The energy is there. ■

*Heather Larimer is a writer of fiction and nonfiction and a musician in the rock band Eux Autres.*

"I believe, that architecture and engineering design are organic and related to the form of the human body."  
— SANTIAGO CALATRAVA

**SANTIAGO CALATRAVA**  
The Architect's Studio



exhibition on view through November 21

**Henry Art Gallery**  
Faye G. Allen Center for the Visual Arts  
University of Washington / 15th Ave NE and NE 41st St [www.henryart.org](http://www.henryart.org)

FELDMAN GALLERY + PROJECT SPACE  
PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART



THE SOWER, 2002, ROBERT & SHANA PARKEHARRISON

• **PASSAGE** •  
**ROBERT & SHANA PARKEHARRISON**  
OCTOBER 7 THROUGH NOVEMBER 24  
1ST THURSDAY OPENING: OCTOBER 7, 6-9 PM  
IN COLLABORATION WITH OREGON COLLEGE OF ART & CRAFT, PNCA'S FELDMAN GALLERY + PROJECT SPACE EXHIBITS PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MIXED MEDIA WORK CREATED BY THE PARKEHARRISONS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS.  
**PUBLIC SLIDE LECTURE: OCTOBER 8, 7 PM**

**PNCA** pearl 1241 nw johnson . 503 226 4391  
online [www.pnca.edu](http://www.pnca.edu)

**ELIZABETH LEACH GALLERY**

SEPTEMBER 2 - OCTOBER 2  
**Sean Healy**  
**Christo**  
**Red Shoe Delivery Service**

OCTOBER 7 - 30  
**Stephen Hayes**  
**Robert & Shana ParkeHarrison**  
**Deborah Horrell**

NOVEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 31  
**Celebrating 50+ on 9th**  
Invitational Group Exhibition  
**New location: 417 NW 9th Avenue**  
(between Glisan and Flanders)

207 SW Pine Street, Portland, Oregon 97204  
503.224.0521  
[www.elizabethleach.com](http://www.elizabethleach.com)

**Vana O'Brien, L.C.S.W.**

**Marriage and Family Therapist**

3282 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.  
Portland, OR 97214  
(503) 222-3308  
Fax: (503) 232-8494

**DRAGON'S HEAD BOOKS & GIFTS**

6016 NE Glisan Street  
Portland, Oregon 97213

**1st Year Anniversary Celebration**  
October 1, 2 and 3  
**Local Authors Attending**  
**Refreshments, Live Entertainment**  
New, Used and Collectible Books



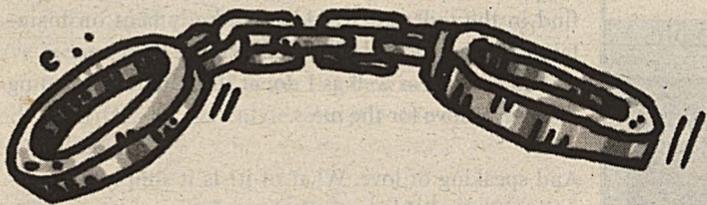
**McClain's**  
DEDICATED TO THE ART  
AND ARTISTS  
OF RELIEF PRINTMAKING

Free Printmaking Supply Catalog  
503-641-3555 800-832-4264  
[www.imcclains.com](http://www.imcclains.com)

# The Endpoint of Adaptive Behavior

FICTION BY SUZY VITELLO; ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEAN AABERG

BOUNDARIES. You don't have any. You don't own your pain as much as you do other people's pain, said the psychiatrist assigned to your latest incarceration, which began with bare feet on a freezing metal grate over the river. Parallel bridges stretched out for miles on either side of you. Or so it appeared. This time it was a female cop, and she was rougher than any of the guys in her frisk, in the snap of handcuffs. Everything could be summed up with the look she gave your polished toenails. The pedicure was a Christmas present from



your sister. You want to explain that you're not a dilettante. This is not the act of a selfish housewife or spoiled daughter. The policewoman shoves you onto the cold, vinyl bench of the squad car. Cuffed hands behind your back, no seat belt, if this car ever wrecked—turned over, let's say—your neck would snap like the birch branches littering the frozen road you now cruise down on the way to the hospital.

All the minerals missing from your blood. The bone and sinew visible through your skin. The scarring on your esophagus. That's old, you tell your one-on-one person. It's been years since the bulimia. Still, they make you sing the alphabet when you're in the bathroom, behind the closed, but unlockable, door. The night nurse prefers Christmas tunes. "Frosty the Snowman," you sing. "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," as you sit on the toilet.

The psychiatrist isn't interested in your assessment of the other patients, she again reminds you. But I have three semesters of clinical social work, you argue. I want to be on the other side of this fence. I don't have a dissociative personality, you tell her. Check out my Rorschach; look at my WAIS! She is careful, this psychiatrist, not to show you her frustration. If you, like me, were cursed with an overactive *anterior cingulate gyrus* and an underachieving prefrontal cortex, you would worry, too, about this shrink getting up to speed in the time allowed. The trouble with this place, I'm sure you'll agree, is its generic default. Its reliance on usual and customary. The psychiatrist is a sweet woman who probably belongs to an active book group where they recently read *The Corrections* or *The Lovely Bones*. She'd have put in her professional two cents and the other ladies—doctor's wives, lawyers, real estate agents—would have nodded at her carefully constructed anecdotes that dovetail discussion of grief's stages. The

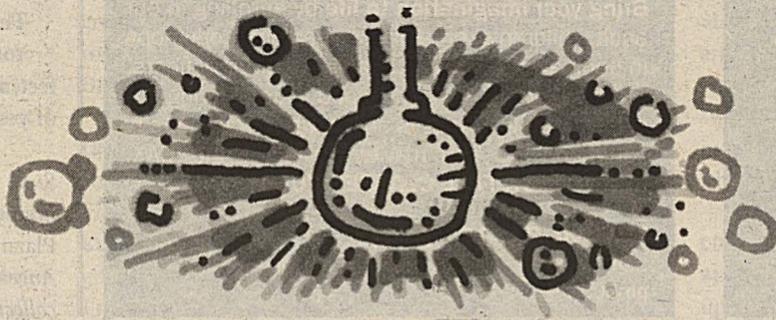
psychiatrist could use a shoulder massage. She could use a warm bath for her feet.

SEX. You knew it was coming. Lack of boundaries almost always leads to dysfunction in this area. Strangely, aside from your sister's husband, you have not had many inappropriate sexual relations. The sadists steer clear of you, for some reason. Who you attract are the passive fellows. On PBS once, you watched a show featuring the deep-sea anglerfish. Genus *Gigantactis*. The female of the species swims along with an illuminated lure projecting from her head. Bioluminescence, it's called, and here's the thing: only the females have it. A male anglerfish (much smaller, and with no digestive capabilities), spends his youth seeking a female in whom to sink his teeth. And never let go. From the moment of contact, the male begins to degenerate. His eyes grow tiny and then disappear. His skin

becomes spiny; his jaws fuse into the female's skin. His blood vessels join with his girlfriend's, and from then on he is fed on her blood. He grows and develops testes, and then—here is the weird part—then, his internal organs disappear. Gestation in reverse.

Anyone who treats her boyfriends like sons would love this setup. Perhaps you, like me, did just that: dove down below the depths in search of someone hungry? You know the type: solicitous, needy, grateful males whom you can't shake loose with a crowbar? Syd, for instance. Surely you remember Syd: widow's peak, lover of V-neck sweaters worn over flannel, cross-country ski aficionado? Syd, barely 140 pounds, all angles, all wounded slump? Maybe you've driven through the fast-food place just to watch him inhale number four biggie-sized fare. You watched him lick ketchup from the cuticle of his index finger. Witnessed his final plunge into the bag for French fry salt. As much as his need disgusts you, it builds you. It's as if you're being nourished through him.

Syd sunk his teeth in deep. He had your children named; their schools picked out. Once, he told you the combination of your DNAs might produce the next Abraham Lincoln. What the hell did he mean by that? It



was then that you, like me, sought comfort in the arms of your sister's husband. The surgeon. (You needed surgical intervention, after all, to have Syd removed from your bloodstream.)

Your sister's husband (a bit of an anglerfish himself), navigated the contours of your spine, your shoulders, the soles of your feet, as a blind man feels his way around foreign country. There! You might tell him. No, yes, there!

You asked him once if he closed his eyes like that when he made love to your sister. All contact abruptly ceased. We cannot go there, said your sister's assiduous, muscular husband through clenched teeth.

FATHERS. Yours was lovely. Like mine, he was fair and given to moles. Your most sensual memories from young childhood involve tracing the moles on your father's arm as the two of you lay in the backyard hammock, sipping lemonade and lemonade and gin from Tupperware tumblers.

Your sister away at cheerleading camp, your mother having a lie down in her air-conditioned bedroom, just you and Daddy in that hammock, and the pattern of dark, raised spots, like flattened raisins strewn from a sleeve-



less undershirt. Garden dots, you called them, because other than hot summer days in the backyard, you never saw them.

Maybe it was the gin, maybe the garden dots, but by the time you were old enough for cheerleading camp, tumors had grown inside your father. Eventually the tumors exploded, as did your family: grief's shrapnel hurled out in all directions. There is an entire year you don't remember. None of it. Not the Christmas, not your birthday, not the first day of school.

The role you took on was the role vacated by your father. Of course. You learned that with the first shrink. Like the male *Gigantactis*, the remains of your father clung to you, became you. The charming fuck-up. The drunk. But you don't really drink, and you're not very charming.

FOOD. Let's get to it. Bulimia: more about craving than purging. At your sister's wedding reception, you desired the whole cake. Every rosette. Dressed in the lavender tulle of the bridesmaid ensemble, you coveted your sister's empire-waist gown, the scalloped lace

Continued on page 20

- 100 Portland artists
- Color photographs
- DVD included
- 416 pp. • \$15.95
- edited by Randy Gragg and Matthew Stadler



“.. a kind of delayed, tantric ejaculation...”

—Willamette Week

Core Sample: Portland Art Now

In October 2003, over 100 Portland artists participated in Core Sample, an artist-initiated, citywide exhibition of contemporary art. This catalog documents Core Sample's methods and results, and serves as both a practical guide to the mobilization of noninstitutional cultures and a reflection on the worth of such projects.

clear cut press ::  
Order online at [www.clearcutpress.com](http://www.clearcutpress.com) ::

**BLACKFISH GALLERY**  
420 NW NINTH AVENUE, PORTLAND, OR 97209  
Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 12 – 5 503.224.2634  
[www.blackfish.com](http://www.blackfish.com)

**The Locals:**  
Installation, Music, Performance,  
Video and Zines  
by Portland Artists

Tuesday, August 31-Friday, October 1

First Thursday Reception, Sept. 2 6-9pm  
Andrew Ox of "House of Cunt" performance

Friday, Sept. 10 and Saturday, Sept. 11 8-9 pm  
Readers Theatre Repertory performances. \$8

Friday, Sept. 17 7-11pm  
Performances by  
Hayley Barker and Zac Margolis, \$3

Friday, Sept. 24 7-11pm  
Poetry by the Subterranean Beat Revival  
Music by Lee Baby Simms. \$3

Closing Party-Friday, Oct. 1 7-11 pm  
performance by Annie Brissenden  
music and video by John Larsen, Philip Cooper  
and Phoplex

funded in part by grants from:



**BURDOCK/  
BURN**  
Art Resource

**SAVAGE  
ART RESOURCES**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2004 • 8 pm  
an evening of video, sound and  
performance curated by chris johanson

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 23, 2004  
• haptic loop, an installation by  
michelle ross  
• the bambi effect, a group show curated  
by laurel gitlen

OCTOBER 1-3, 2004  
AFFAIR @ the jupiter hotel

NOVEMBER 3-30, 2004  
• tad savinar



COME SEE US ON FIRST FRIDAYS, 6-9 pm

1430 SE THIRD AVENUE • PORTLAND, OREGON 97214

T: 503.230.0265 • F: 503.230.0267  
[www.savageartresources.com](http://www.savageartresources.com)

**OREGON COLLEGE OF ART & CRAFT**



**EXPLORE**  
your possibilities

Bring your imagination to life by enrolling in our adult, children's, or family classes and workshops in book arts, ceramics, drawing/painting, fibers, metals, photography and wood. Our inspiring 11-acre wooded campus is an easy trip from the city center on the #20 Tri-Met bus or on the MAX. **ENROLL FOR FALL CLASSES TODAY.**

[www.ocac.edu](http://www.ocac.edu)  
8245 SW Barnes Road, Portland, Oregon 97225  
ph 503.297.5544

Continued from page 19

against her clavicle. Her new husband, your future lover, attended so carefully to his bride. You remember, back when he couldn't take his eyes off of her?

The first time, nobody saw you slide a finger through the icing, severing confectioned bud from leaf. And you could not stop. Not once you tasted lemon, buttercream, the almondy paste of a marzipan pear. Two fingers, three, and a whole swipe of a hand. Your sister's mother-in-law nearly broke your arm when she grabbed it.



Of course, you had to let it go. The cedar-planked salmon, the orzo, the champagne: they chunked up the icing on their way out. There is this theory, perhaps you've heard it? Bulimics aren't after controlling chaos the way anorexics are (e.g., your sister); bulimics are more about denying the chaos they seek. Chaos rules in the life of a bulimic. Just look at the combinations you find in the toilet after puking! Nobody bent on maintaining order could deal with that more than once.

You know it as well as I do; at the core of this eating disorder is love for the mess.

And speaking of love. What of it? Is it simply the endpoint of adaptive behavior?

Look again at the *Gigantactis*. Mated for life. Two bodies, merged. Didn't we rip the idea off of nature for use in our nuptial vows? How happy are we, after ever? Instead of spiny skin and shrinking eyes and combined blood at a depth of three thousand feet, in the ultimate pledge, we sign our names to paper. You've done that, too. I've seen you. In front of a judge, in front of a crowd, in front of the über being called God.

But what really holds us together, me and you?  
Where are the teeth in our love?

Your sister and her husband, strange as it sounds, love each other very much. You know this. Somehow, you do. It's in the way she tolerates the pile of change he discharges from his pocket every night to set upon his nightstand. The thoroughness with which he wipes the blobs of toothpaste off the sink basin.

And sometimes you believe yourself to be the sanest person on the planet. In the drive-thru line at the fast-food establishment? When your mind is on everyone else? It's not only other people's pain you feel. You covet the joy of discovering just the right toy in a Kiddie meal. The perfect calibration of soda water to syrup. You're not immune from those pleasures, even if you arrive at them circuitously.

The truth is, you wouldn't really change places with anyone.

The truth is, you would never jump off a bridge.

You would never plunge down, say, three thousand feet, where the only light there is, is the one coming out of your head. ■

Suzu Vitello's short stories have appeared nationwide in literary journals including Tarpaulin Sky, Kalliope and Plazm. She holds an MFA from Antioch University, Los Angeles and won a 2003 Oregon Literary Fellowship for her collection, The Graceful Plumber and Other Love Stories.

# Why OMA's SCL is DOA

BY ERIC FREDERICKSEN

**"They sealed each tradition beneath a monument."**

**Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris***

The new Seattle Central Library is wonderful. It produces wonder. It changes you when you enter, and when you leave it changes the city you pass through on your way home. The Office for Metropolitan Architecture's jewel is the best building Seattle has built—and I can't even think of an example to hedge that claim against.

The close of the last century was a bad stretch not only for Seattle architecture, but for architecture in general. No longer really architecture, it more closely resembled the lesser arts of scenography (viz, Venturi Scott Brown's Seattle Art Museum and Michael Graves's Portland Building) and sculpture (Frank Gehry's Experience Music Project, Steven Holl's Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University, and Holl's Bellevue Art Museum). Each supposed architectural triumph has quickly faded, hanging around as embarrassing evidence of our frustrated ambition. In some cases, we hired fashionable architects and were disappointed when they fell out of fashion. But in several cases, the buildings, and sometimes the institutions they housed, have sunk due to forces extrinsic to architecture. The Bellevue Art Museum moved to its new building in January of 2001. Steven Holl's novel design received both praise and censure. A composition in red-stained concrete, with generous light-wells and very little in the way of usable gallery space, its main elevation appears to literally spell out the architect's surname.

But when the museum ran out of money and closed in September of 2003, the building's critics assigned it far too large a share of the blame. The institution was crippled by an unrealistic business plan, a capital campaign that made no provision for operating funds or an endowment, bad accounting, a lack of leadership, and possibly a lack of interest in contemporary art among its Eastside suburban audience. New buildings create new obligations; capital campaigns rarely provide for them. If revenue projections are not met, even venerable institutions, suddenly overextended, can prove strikingly fragile. The new library faced two possible disasters: that, as with its predecessor and many central libraries, none but the homeless would go there; or, that the city (which was running a \$25 million deficit on the eve of the library's opening—before adding its operating expenses to the budget) would be unable to afford its operation. The building itself, in this case, is its only defense against either disaster. Good thing it's so good.

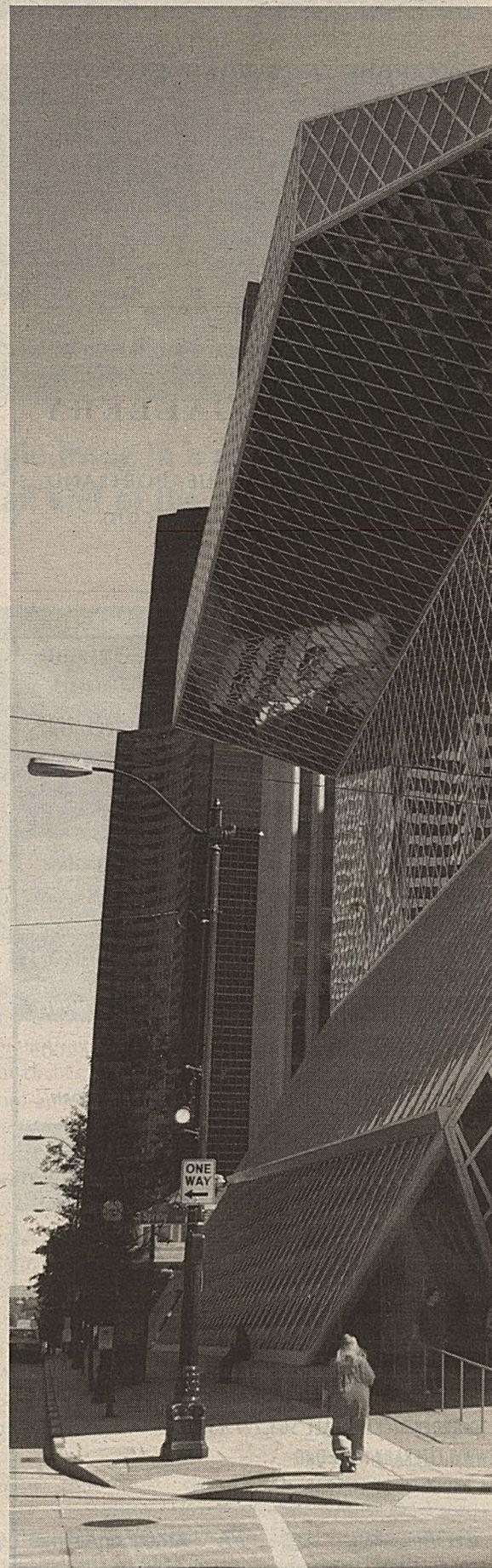
Good how? Briefly: Rem Koolhaas and OMA have redeemed the credo "Form follows function," coined by Louis Sullivan, rewardingly misunderstood by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and successors, mocked by Venturi (who changed the Miesian truism "Less is more" to "Less is a bore"), and ignored by Gehry et al. Modernist architects understood a building's function to be its structure. Their buildings described or poeticized the forces that held them up. Koolhaas does structure, and well, but he understands function as program (the building's uses) and movement (how you get through the space). In a famous diagram, he shows the raw space requirements of the library as a bar chart, turns the chart on its side, and discovers the form of his library.

**"This will kill that," says the archdeacon in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* as he looks from his cathedral to a book in his visitor's hand ... But we can now see, some 170 years after Hugo, that the book itself did not prove less mortal than the building.**

Function, a defense against artistic whim, is used to generate new forms. The "book spiral," wherein books are shelved in a continuous ascending sequence according to the Dewey decimal system, from 000 to 999, is so smart that it is in retrospect obvious. Any future designers of public libraries should have to explain why they are *not* employing the device.

As lovely as the library is, it still closes at 6 p.m. or earlier most days. It's open only fifty-eight hours a week. (This is two hours less than the central libraries of Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco and is only seven hours more than the New York Public Library's glorious Forty-second Street Humanities and Social Sciences Library.) This means it has only five major categories of patrons: freelance writers and researchers, young children and their daytime guardians, night workers, the unemployed, and the homeless. That gives it something in common with another important local institution: my favorite Seattle coffee shop, Victrola, on Fifteenth Avenue East. The library, fortunately, is well designed for these patrons, lacking only the outdoor seating Victrola provides for smokers. Other than that, it has everything a good coffeehouse does: good chairs, coffee, and tolerance for extended visits (though the parking fees start to get scary once you're there for more than two hours). And its magazine selection is better. On these

*Continued on page 25*





**newspace**  
gallery  
darkroom  
rental studio  
darkroom & studio workshops  
newspacephoto.com

**MARGHITTA FELDMAN GALLERY**  
1102 NW Marshall Street  
Portland Oregon 97209  
Tel 503.228.0089 Fax 503.241.4728  
marghittafeldmangallery.com

## FROELICK GALLERY

817 SW SECOND AVENUE, PORTLAND  
www.froelickgallery.com

**GARD & GERBER, OREGON COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES,  
POWELL'S BOOKS and WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY present**

### PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES 2004/2005

**T.C. Boyle** Wednesday, October 6, 2004  
ACCLAIMED NOVELIST & SHORT STORY WRITER  
DROP CITY, THE ROAD TO WELLVILLE, THE INNER CIRCLE

**Shelley Berman** Wednesday, December 8, 2004  
GRAMMY-WINNING ACTOR AND COMEDIAN  
THE EDGE OF SHELLEY BERMAN

**Terrence McNally** Wednesday, January 19, 2005  
TONY AWARD-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT  
MASTER CLASS, KISS OF THE SPIDERWOMAN, THE FULL MONTY

**Tracy Chevalier** Thursday, February 10, 2005  
BEST-SELLING HISTORICAL NOVELIST  
GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING, THE LADY AND THE UNICORN

**Jane Smiley** Tuesday, March 15, 2005  
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVELIST  
A THOUSAND ACRES, MOO, HORSE HEAVEN

**Edward P. Jones** Thursday, April 21, 2005  
WINNER OF THE 2004 PULITZER PRIZE FOR FICTION  
THE KNOWN WORLD, LOST IN THE CITY

FULL SERIES: \$215 PATRON \$155 RESERVED \$112 GENERAL \$90 STUDENT/SENIOR  
PARTIAL SERIES: 5, 4, 3 LECTURES AT \$95, \$82 & \$66  
SINGLE TICKETS: \$25 GENERAL \$18 COLLEGE/SENIOR \$15 UPPER BALCONY  
ALL EVENTS 7:30 P.M. ARIENE SCHNITZER CONCERT HALL

TO ORDER TICKETS CALL 503.227.2583  
WWW.LITERARY-ARTS.ORG  
A PROGRAM OF LITERARY ARTS

The Oregonian  AA American Airlines

# REVIEWS • REVIEWS

## Pontoon: An Anthology of Washington State Poets, Number 6

Seattle: Floating Bridge Press, 2003

The biographies in the back pages of literary anthologies are little lit windows in an otherwise dark house. Sometimes the blinds are drawn all the way up for a striptease; sometimes all you can see are blank walls and the secondhand glow of a computer screen. Either way, personality is displayed without the weighty pretense of "Art" and readers get an intriguing overview of who's writing what: in this case, who's writing poems in or around Seattle, Washington.

Here's who the editors of Floating Bridge Press published in their most recent annual poetry anthology, *Pontoon*: Thirteen of the forty-three contributors are teachers at universities and community colleges; one teaches in Japan. Five of them have earned MFAs in poetry; one even has a PhD in the subject. Eight have had poems published in the *Seattle Review*. Some live on islands in the San Juans. One owns a Volvo with 400,000 miles on it. (This is the sort of honesty I find endearing.)

One woman named Bethany Reid has a husband and three daughters and teaches American literature. She admits to a tendency "to over-tip." And thankfully she still has the time to write what is presently my favorite poem in here, an unapologetic manifesto called "Her Revenge":

When you called to break things off, I held the phone upside down by its cord like a rat by its tail.

Reid isn't overwhelmingly concerned with being "poetic." She wrangles raw metaphor and image like a cocksure rodeo rider, erring on the side of overconfidence rather than caution.

But most of the writers in *Pontoon* are playing by the standard rules of narrative poetry: a certain degree of earnestness, a formality that keeps the writer safe from the messy heart of things. Also, there's a fondness for poems about poetry ("Utopia" by Lorraine Healy, "Groove in Two Parts" by Iris Gribble-Neal), which I'm guessing only other poets would care much about.

Others head off into self-consciously strange territory, like poet/violinist/novelist Rebecca Loudon's paean to pill-popping, "Apothecary":

Percodan, the deepest swim through sheet, mattress, box springs that cut her body like sugar cookies.

Or Eli Richardson's excerpt from "Manslaughter," possibly inspired by *The Sound and the Fury*:

O Deareader made light.  
To see Himself big.  
But lonely.  
So Dr. made us come.  
To know Him many  
angled mangle mud.

While this is indeed breaking the rules, my head hurts when I try to figure out why.

All the poets in *Pontoon* can construct a solid poem, although not necessarily an exciting or enticing or

unnerving poem. They write about Amelia Earhart, Jorie Graham, root canals. They break the lines where the lines are supposed to be broken. They alliterate and allude and reference cable television shows. But, call me hard to please, I want to get the shivers. Emily Dickinson wrote, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." What else are poems for but to surprise, to shock, to stir up and shake off the familiar? Could we read some more of that? Could we pull up all the shades?

—Allison Dubinsky

## Strangers and Sojourners: Stories from the Lowcountry

BY MARY POTTER ENGEL

New York: Counterpoint, 2004

Like William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, Mary Potter Engel creates her own shipwrecked county in the short story collection, *Strangers and Sojourners*. Coosawaw, in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, is swampland and sand flats, a muggy spitball whose county seat, Pinesboro, is bad-mouthed as "a black hole into which everyone fell if he stayed long enough."

Engel surveys the spiritual discombobulations of a booboisie struggling with its grasp on God—however slight, messed up or blaringly self-serving—amidst relationships and snafus that hinder the pilgrims' progress.

South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union and, observing Engel's characters, we see that very little love-thy-neighbor sentiment has survived the Confederacy's whupping. "Isms" muck the Coosawaw landscape: racism, sexism, classism, sizeism, ethno- and geocentrism, homophobia, even antipathy toward one's own "kind." Meanest of all are the kids corrupted by their parents' bigotry.

Engel surprises by exposing the reader's own prejudices. In "A Soldier's Disease" and "A Better Man," we may at first scorn the deadbeats attempting to defraud the system, only to realize these folks have no choice; if your only chance for survival is to get on disability, you get on disability.

Religion and medicine fail to remedy mortal decay, and Engel's stories prod this futility like an abscessed tooth, augmenting the discomfort through a confessional tone. Her favored mode of confession is a first-person narrator addressing a second-person audience: in "Epiphany," a self-deluding housewife, whose husband tried to kill her using his attack dogs, brags to her telephone companion, "Southern women know how to keep their men. Feed, flatter, and fuck—that's what my mother taught me." Most often the confessors address Jake Reuben, a compassionate Jewish doctor new to Pinesboro and the familiar face that engenders the stories' sense of unity.

Despite the downpour of self-revelation, Engel's characters often lack self-awareness. Tension mounts whenever an opportunity for growth emerges: can these people recognize and benefit from the opportunity?

Sometimes, they can. In "What We Ought to Be," a jaded nurse grudgingly accepts a job with that "Northerner," Doctor Reuben, and, despite her backwoods worldview, eventually "adopts" and cares for one of Reuben's terminally ill AIDS patients:

While chockful of God talk, Engel's sophisticated

# REVIEWS • REVIEWS

approach to language elevates these tales above ho-hum Christian fiction, at turns colloquial ("The Spirit put a way to he brains to catch on to these things and he was comin' up wise"), metaphoric ("I'm no stepsister, I tell Doctor Reuben, I'm Cinderella; I know there's a shoe that fits only me"), and humorous ("We're not goin' to do what you say just because we don't know any better"). Engel is as nimble with details as she is with voice: "She unfastens the pink rubber curler in her bangs and places it beside a clump of dust-coated roses on the end table. Methodically she rubs down the bump of hair that springs from her forehead."

While Engel's focus on spirituality and destitution could be a turnoff, her sure-footedness with words and insight into character make *Strangers and Sojourners* a knockout read.

—Kassten Alonso

## Island of Lost Souls

BY KEVIN KILLIAN  
Vancouver: Nomados, 2003

Kevin Killian's play, *Island of Lost Souls*, performed by the San Francisco Poets Theater in the mid-'90s, throws high and low against each other into an amalgam of poetry and titillation that works remarkably well on the page. It is a gleeful riot of associations, written within and for a particular community, which looms large here. This is after all an island. The localization resonates with a certain moment in SF poetic lore—when one was viewed as a traitor if one dared publish outside it. At heart the play explores the pleasures of incest.

The script absorbs us. It contains references for everyone, but also for itself. It's part camp soap opera, but also ghostly and wonderfully poetic, saturated with pop icons from conflicting realms.

There's a parade of proper nouns that could virtually fill this allotted space. It's Long Island circa 1964. Jack's mother Gabrielle Kerouac is out to protect her degenerate son from Hollywood producers who would make a musical of *On the Road*. Julie Andrews arrives hoping to meet Jack. Julie's entourage includes her voice for hire, Yma Sumac, and her agent, Tad, from William Morris.

There's Joey Buttafuoco on his paper route delivering the news. The Von Bulows: Claus, Sunny, and Claus's sister, Clarice. Anais Nin with her Nintendo stock. And at the center there's Gabrielle trying to negotiate a sunny ending to their lost lives. She ghostwrites Jack's books, as well as those of William Burroughs, who gives Claus incomprehensible advice on women—something about apples and arrows. Gabrielle loves Sunny as she loved Burroughs's wife, Joan. Both Sunny and Clarice love Claus. But Claus and Anais love only themselves, and the idea of Nintendo stock. Desperate, Gabrielle consults the high-flying Sister Bertrille regarding the identity of her lost child Amy (aka Yma), who was raised by the Fisher family.

*Island of Lost Souls* is billed as a "memory play," but memory here is not the heavy thing that holds us back. Here, memory has free rein, not controlled by reason. It's both a foil against and the material within which Killian can revolt, reject, invent, and make us spin.

The narrative forms a force field of resonating words and contexts. It is very affecting, an entertainment that requires no suspension of disbelief. As if to disprove that

no one listens to poetry, Killian tunes us in to the alien within. There's something very apt about the poetry that arrives via Jack's and Clarice's lines. They're both bound in the most incestuous of relations, Jack with his twin sister, Yma, and Clarice with her brother, Claus.

*Island* is a celebration of improper intimacy at every level—literary, familial, communal. Social feeling is opened and explored imaginatively from within. Your inhibitors will not survive, or at least mine didn't. I'm certainly not capable of suppressing the pleasure that permeates.

Postscript: The still famous denizens of Long Island return to haunt the culture. A Google search informs me that just last week, Joey Buttafuoco is out of prison and sparring with a female wrestler on Fox's "Celebrity Boxing." And his ex-lover Amy, also now out of prison and living in an undisclosed Long Island community, returns to the public eye to launch her memoir, *If I Knew Then...*, coming this fall to a mall near you.

—Robert Mitterthal

## Saving Stanley: The Brickman Stories

BY SCOTT NADELSON  
Portland: Hawthorne Books, 2004

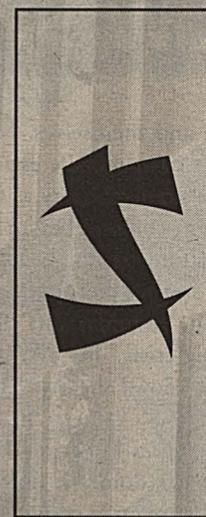
Portland-based author Scott Nadelson's first book, *Saving Stanley: The Brickman Stories*, concerns the past forty years of the life of a Jewish family in New Jersey. Somewhere off Route 46, Arthur and Hannah Brickman keep house and raise two boys, Jared and Daniel. Shuffling decades and narrators as the book progresses, the author assembles a montage from the Brickmans' lives: schoolteacher Hannah obsesses about the family's terminally ill cat; Jared moves out after a breakup with his college girlfriend; a young Arthur struggles with career decisions; Daniel goes to work for a senior citizen running a sham charity out of her spare bedroom.

The reader covers a lot of territory in a short stint, but the setting is always familiar. The Brickmans live in that most failed of American places: the suburbs. Greatness resides elsewhere. So does motive. Nadelson's stories turn on the self-absorption and indecision of his characters. Hannah is so busy tracking the cat's bowel movements that she fails to notice teenaged Daniel's desperate scheme to throw a party. Jared responds to the breakup by plucking a phrase from a talk show: "No magic. We lacked passion." The Brickmans put off making decisions until events overtake them. Yet, for the most part, the consequences are as mild-mannered as the Brickmans themselves. No one loses a limb in these stories. They lose sleep.

Throughout the book, the past interrupts the present. It visits via phone calls from grandparents, recollected school-yard traumas, and honeymoon tales shared over the kitchen table. When he uses memory and anecdote to enlarge a story, Nadelson hits his stride. In "Young Radicals," Daniel recalls romanticizing the stories of his grandfather's youth in Leningrad. "Hannah of Troy" pairs the tale of the elder Brickmans' newlywed days with that of Daniel falling in and out of love with his fiancée.

For the Brickmans, the past may inform the present, but it does not illuminate it—they are from the burbs after all. Parents are disappointed in children; children

Continued on page 24



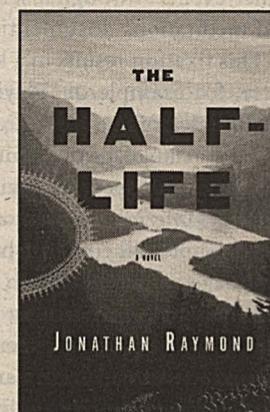
• Eat • Drink • Kiss •

## Sapphire Hotel

5008 SE Hawthorne Boulevard  
Portland Oregon 97215  
503.232.6333  
www.thesapphirehotel.com

Open Seven Nights A Week

"A TRULY JOYOUS READ —  
INVENTIVE, UNAFFECTED,  
HONEST AND DAZZLING."  
—PORTLAND MERCURY



"[A] subtle portrait of friendship and loss...[We] look forward to more from such an astute, patient observer."—*Entertainment Weekly*

"*The Half Life* gazes upon those fierce but ephemeral attachments that evade the history books. Multiple plots elegantly veer across the sprawling terrain. [A] subtle tale..."—*Village Voice*

 BLOOMSBURY

AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD  
WWW.BLOOMSBURYUSA.COM

# REVIEWS • REVIEWS • REVIEWS

Continued from page 23

are disappointed with childhood and themselves. Fear and insecurity figure large in life's calculus. Life expectancies are up and tedium has replaced mortality as the monkey on everyone's backs. Getting cold feet before his wedding, Daniel wants to hear that everything is going to be okay. Hannah tells him the story of her first fight with Arthur, and Daniel breaks in, "What was it?" She replies, "What was what?" "The big crisis," he says, "the thing you had to answer." "I don't know," she says, "I'm still waiting. Every day."

Your reaction to *The Brickman Stories* will depend on whether or not you are a fan of bleak domestic noir in which the reader learns the suburbs are not a good place to raise kids after all. Written over a period of six years, the collection showcases Nadelson's progress as a storyteller. But while the portraits of these fence-sitters grow more technically ambitious in the latter half of the book, the surprises are few. The Brickmans are never false to type. All roads lead to a cul-de-sac.

—Tom Grace

## Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture

BY LISA ROBERTSON

Astoria: Clear Cut Press, 2003

A friend once said he tends to dip into the writing of Sir Thomas Browne, the seventeenth-century physician and essayist, rather than read it straight through. What he meant, I believe, is that Browne's *Religio Medici* and *The Garden of Cyprus*—works that blend scholarship, lyricism, and allusion—register stronger in short doses than in prolonged consideration. A similar problem (and delight) characterized my recent reading of *Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture*. The Office for Soft Architecture (the ongoing project of Vancouver poet Lisa Robertson) describes its work as "mak[ing] new descriptions on the warp of former events" through a series of loosely linked essays and meditations documenting the mutability of surface. This fixation results in a kind of lyrical scholarship, where, for example in "Playing House: A Brief Account of the Idea of the Shack," an analysis of the shack as the "natural language of architecture" manages to tie together the writings of Vitruvius, Rousseau, and Thoreau with *An American in Paris* and an installation by artist Liz Magor—all enriched by Robertson's sensibility for language and image. Each essay follows an equally interesting but intricate path, which proves pleasurable for a reader like me who enjoys starting one place but, after several digressions, arriving somewhere entirely unexpected. Unfortunately, the intellectual eclecticism that is the great strength of the essays, which originally appeared in magazines such as *Nest*, *Cabinet*, and *Mix*, works against the book as a whole. To fully appreciate an essay such as "Playing House" requires a degree of attentiveness and diligence on the part of the reader that is difficult to sustain over the length of a book. The writing mirrors this larger problem. Consider the hidden meaning the Office uncovers amid the racks at Value Village: "We finger the bad judgements in mass-market branding; we fraternize with frayed and gaudy trousers as if we remembered them; we mimic the seaminess of markets. We choose among lurid failures." Such sentences sparkle in isola-

tion but appear bloated when surrounded by equally vigorous writing. *Occasional Work* divides into two sections, essays and "walks," and includes a lively index by poet Stacy Doris. Other topics of interest to the Office include city fountains, riverside parks, suburban strawberries, temporary scaffolding, staged interiors, Ruskin, Morris, Benjamin, and *Rubus armeniacus* (the Himalayan blackberry). Astoria-based Clear Cut Press provides the perfect packaging for the text. Printed in Japan, soft-covered and compact, the book easily fits into a back pocket or a bag and is perhaps best enjoyed when waiting for the bus or sitting in the park—that is, when out in the world and engaging the very surfaces the Office wishes to document.

—P. Genesis Durica

## Core Sample Exhibition Catalog

Astoria: Clear Cut Press, 2004

Tidy and compact, whereas the show was rambling and pervasive, Core Sample's just-published catalogue bolsters the show's directive of broad exposure for the over one hundred working artists it presented. Not a permanent institution flexing its curatorial prowess, nor a commercial gallery promoting artists in a profit-sharing arrangement, Core Sample was a collaborative "capture and release" endeavor—to borrow from one of its exhibition titles—and its catalogue is a sort of annotated yearbook (and a very well-designed one) that's inevitably shaped by the motivations of the writers and artist-curators who willed it into being.

Numerous color reproductions and one-paragraph artist descriptions (taken together, the catalogue's most useful writing) exemplify how the show's simple, elegant organizing principle, a casual catch-all, more-is-more pileup, generated kaleidoscopic variety. Its inclusiveness was rare in comparison to most major survey exhibitions, which typically provoke endless arguments about why certain artists weren't included, etc. Not that there aren't omissions, but there aren't many. The catalogue triumphs by translating the show's jumbled form into an orderly sourcebook, and it is generous and informative toward all its participating artists.

In the introduction, Clear Cut editor Matthew Stadler primes readers on the complex economics of the institutional art world (he prefers the pejorative "high-art economy," repeating the phrase ad nauseam) and eagerly unveils Core Sample as an alternative model. While overstated as "an experiment in institutional destabilization," Core Sample did operate magnificently along independent lines, manifesting incredible homespun ingenuity, cooperation, and effort—a feat that doesn't go unnoticed by the catalogue's other contributing writers. But to prominently advertise the catalogue as "a guide to the construction of noninstitutional infrastructure" (on Clear Cut's Web site) is misrepresentative. This is far from *The Anarchist's Cookbook*, and Stadler's exclusive focus on mild institutional critique begins to seem somewhat ungenerous to the artists, framing the endeavor on shaky polemic grounds not entirely appropriate to a general introduction.

Instead, the catalogue reads as a poignant document of both widespread talent and sustained frustration. While many would argue that the contemporary art market is more open, pervasive, and inclusive than in

recent memory, Core Sample was symptomatic of a gap in both access to the larger art economy and a dearth of local support. It's a thorny and complex situation without clear remedy, something the catalogue's best writers acknowledge. Lynne Tillman (a notable NY critic and novelist) offers a witty and cerebral travelogue navigating both her time in Portland and many of the fundamental questions circling the Core Sample endeavor. Her ruminations on locality and the meaning of artistic impulses open ground for dialogue around the exhibition's specifics. Larry Rinder (a curator, formerly at NY's Whitney Museum) focuses more on specific artworks, keeping close to their surfaces. But he does step back to consider the conditions that activate support for the arts in such other cities as Houston, San Francisco, and Providence. Such conditions are clearly ephemeral, and remedies are elusive, but Core Sample stands as a culmination of eccentric resources, a self-acknowledgement and an enactment that could not happen anywhere else.

—Jay Sanders

## 2 Gyrz Quarterly, Issue 1

The first print zine issue of *2 Gyrz Quarterly* (aka *2GQ*) comes across as simple, humble, and handmade, but really it is sophisticated, noir, and alternative. Contributor Jonathan Raymond may have done a mainstream national book tour for his recent first novel, but his story in this issue is about a silly acid trip, just right for *2GQ*'s mission to surprise and contradict.

The journal emphasizes handmade qualities with its cardboard cover and two-pronged metal clasp, and it continues with pieces of fiction about cardboard and duct tape. Romanian author Ovidiu Bufuila writes a whimsical piece in which a woman charges others to float, dive, and swim in her fabricated cardboard sea, since the real sea is polluted. Bufuila writes, "A mermaid appeared in front of me, trying to lure me to the bottom of the sea. She was a cardboard mermaid, painted in pale hues of red, yellow and blue."

In Claudia Baskind's "Chance Meeting," the narrator is bound up in duct tape with a flashlight up his butt when he sees the love of his life walk by. This is the kind of story written by someone who has a "Keep Portland Weird" bumper sticker on her car. Perhaps MFA teachers call this kind of writing daring or original. Not me.

Turkeys are also a theme. Clare Carpenter interviews artists Pete Kuzov and Edie Tsong, who performed at the 2003 Enteractive Language Festival, organized by the performance arm of *2 Gyrz*. In *Chicken Dinner*, the duo ate from an enormous turkey and threw meat and wine around the stage as a metaphor for American excess, which they described with relish.

Robert Bumstead closes out the journal with four poems, including "Tank," which also mentions turkeys. He writes, "take a propane tank crack the valve a little and wait. The turkey vultures will network in their search for rotting flesh one by one." The work is dark and subtly ecopolitical, similar to editor Tiffany Lee Brown's words to her readers: "Smashingly sunny days catch butterflies in long gauzy nets while wars and rumors of war cast a fuzzy filter of transparent heat waves over everything visible."

—Sarah Ryan

Continued from page 3

advertisers, and we hope you support them), and more content by and for the people of Seattle (home of fifty *Organ* drop sites and counting).

You'll also see less of some things. We've pared down our calendar because it's way more work than our spindly volunteer staff can handle, especially when weekly newspapers can provide more up-to-date listings. Nonetheless, we promise to stay in touch with what's going on and alert you to what we hear. (Sign up at [www.organarts.org](http://www.organarts.org) for occasional e-mail newsletters.) You may also notice fewer art reviews. Having started life promising to be "a broadsheet by and for artists and art fans," this may seem like an admission of failure, and it sort of is. In the last two years I've learned that a publication with our resources (none, financially speaking) and our writing standards (high) can't cover beats. We can't hire an art writer to provide consistent, authoritative coverage and commentary, and we can't accomplish this with unpaid freelancers. I think we can brag that in a few cases our arts coverage has surpassed the local competition's—among them our writing on the (non)impact on artists of the City of Portland's "Creative Economy Initiative," the demise of PICA's visual art program, and—in this issue—the arts agendas of Portland's mayoral and city council candidates. But these small triumphs have been few and hard to come by. We empathize with the plight of artists, gallerists, and curators who complain that the situation is dire, especially in Portland (Seattle may have lost Emily Hall, but at least they had her recently; and would that Portland could trade one of its critics for the *PI*'s Regina Hackett). The best news I can offer: as our financial and staffing resources grow, which they will, better art coverage will be a top priority, and that will include working to cultivate new art-writing talent.

What do all these changes add up to? If you want a quick tagline, the *Organ* is an art and culture magazine for the Pacific Northwest. Even more prosaically, we're an all-volunteer, not-for-profit business that pays for its printing costs with advertising fees. This fall we will pursue nonprofit tax status in order to raise grant funds but will also continue to exploit advertising as our best and most honest means of survival. Probably a better description has to do with what we care about doing, and how we think we can best get it done. It's a few simple things: publishing extraordinary writing, rewarding creative and honest thinking, and fostering good public conversation. If the *Organ* can get at these things by talking about art, love, or duck hunting (as we have), we will. And as long as we think Portland and Seattle together make a good cocktail party, or duck blind, we'll crash it.

Looking back at the twelve issues we've published, I think we've done incredible things with our rather weak arsenal. Readers can count on us for material that can't be found anywhere else. Where else would Charles D'Ambrosio review the Grandma Moses exhibition at the Portland Art Museum? William T. Vollmann write about the Patriot Act vis-à-vis an art installation in Reed College's library? Regina Hackett reassess her heretofore chilly relationships with other art critics? Where else can you always turn to learn about the heroes (and liars) around you? Today, and especially in the coming months, help us celebrate letters and literacy by paying attention, asking questions, demanding evidence, and acting up when necessary. By all means, please educate yourself on the upcoming elections and for everyone's sake, vote. Thank you, dear readers, for reading.

CAMELA RAYMOND, EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Continued from page 21

terms—which seem the real terms by which to judge its success—the library is doing very well. It is loved. Its collection is not awe inspiring, but its computers and reading chairs are in constant use. If that love can be converted to money—in a city with precious little taxing power—the library will thrive.

The library has one other major problem, a metaphysical one that has not been widely commented on: it's difficult to defend its existence. "This will kill that," says the archdeacon in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* as he looks from his cathedral to a book in his visitor's hand. The following chapter, which explores the implications of the archdeacon's terse sentence, is well known to architectural theorists. A cathedral does not contain history, knowledge, theology, and power so much as it incarnates them, from its cruciform plan to its carvings and glass. The printed book, cheaply reproducible, circulating freely, beyond the control of governments and church hierarchies, was to Hugo "more solid and still more durable" than what he calls "the book of stone." In killing architecture, the book, for Hugo, served a central role in the transition from theocracy to democracy. No wonder books are venerated. But we can now see, some 170 years after Hugo, that the book itself did not prove less mortal than the building.

What killed the book? Basically, everything faster, brighter, cheaper, more colorful, or lighter. Any form of information that does not take up physical space. The book and the building persist, of course, even as literature and architecture have declined in influence. They survive as fetish objects, retaining their august image in our era of diet and self-help books and pulp genres packaged as hardcover literature. What's happened to books is a lot like what happened to God. Once held in awe, feared as well as respected and loved, each is now, at best, a treasured friend that you don't necessarily want to see every day (he's a bit boring!). It's hard to imagine floods and plagues of locusts issuing from the one, or revolutions and reformations from the other. They persist, they're still popular, but feeble compared to their earlier incarnations.

The first public libraries were, in their way, revolutions. The great libraries of today are treasure chests. This library is neither. It is a sort of monument. It fetishizes books and reading, but those are available anywhere. What it has can be had for not much money on Amazon and Alibris (which are the libraries consulted most often by the people I know.) The computer killed the card catalog (spurring a moving elegy by Nicholson Baker), but that was a way station. It went on to kill the central library. Why need books be stored in one place, other than a warehouse? The Seattle library system is well set up to deliver any requested book to any branch library, where easier parking and proximity makes for better service to patrons. OMA's design embraces new technology, from the automated conveyer belts at each book return to the vast fields of Internet-linked computer terminals that dominate the reference area. But there's something absurd about building a vast centerpiece for the forces of decentralization.

So what does it mean to make a library now, to use one dead art to make a monument to another? The question presumes the answer. We have a living monument to our own bookishness. It looks good, it contains life, it gives pleasure. It glitters, and deceives, and its deception is benign. Call it the town square Seattle never had.

Eric Fredericksen is the director of Western Bridge in Seattle.

## THE ORGAN IS SEEKING

### BROADSIDE CURATOR

Free-thinking, imaginative, shrewd, sharp-eyed individual to develop content for the *Organ*'s art posters. Rotating post, small stipend provided. Required: proof of organizational ability, visual acumen, and smart ideas. Send cover, resume, references, work samples to address below, Attn: Broadside Curator.

### ADVERTISING SALES REPS

Paid on commission. Positions available in Seattle, Portland, and environs. Must be self-motivated and detail-oriented, enjoy meeting new people and finding synergies. Graphic design knowledge a plus. Send cover and resume to address below, Attn: Ad Rep Position.

### INTERN POSITIONS

Three-month to one-year positions starting fall 04. Small stipends may be available; work study and other creative funding solutions may be applied. Send cover, resume, references, work samples to address below, Attn: Intern Position.

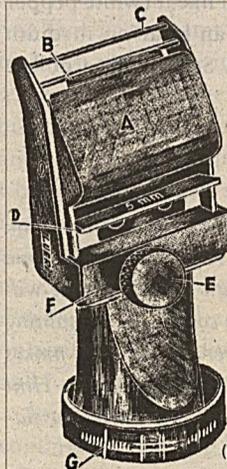
**DESIGN INTERNS:** to assist with marketing, advertiser materials, editorial content. Great opportunity to impact look/identity of 20,000-circulation magazine. Mentoring by experienced designer provided. Access to own hardware/software required.

**EDITORIAL INTERNS:** to assist with research, fact-checking, copy editing, administrative tasks. Excellent writing abilities, good verbal communication, and attention to detail required.

**MARKETING INTERNS:** to assist with advertiser communications and managing advertiser database. Creativity, writing ability, and attention to detail required.

### ORGAN MAILING ADDRESS

425 SE Third Ave., #302 Portland, OR 97214



TEXTURA  
is  
letterpress printing  
& custom bookbinding

(printing from hand-set metal type & digital files)

HEAVY MACHINERY IN THE SERVICE OF ART  
[www.texturaprinting.com](http://www.texturaprinting.com) 503/234-8129

# belly

BY STIV WILSON

Welcome to "belly," the *Organ's* new food column, prepared for you dirt-poor artist types. Being a "starving artist" is passé and, quite frankly, melodramatic. Consider "belly" your inside guide to artful, soulful, inexpensive food to cook, eat, and use to wow your friends at potlucks. This issue, I offer a fall recipe that came from a piss-broke and randy sculptor I once knew in Oxford. A pot of this stuff will keep you alive for a week on five bucks and astonish you with its simple, savory fragrance and wicked, electric green color.

## LEEK AND POTATO SOUP WITH ROSEMARY, OR "SOUP OF THE POET"

- 2 bunches of leeks (about six), roots discarded, thoroughly washed, roughly chopped (include the green parts)
- 3 pounds red potatoes, skins on, washed, roughly chopped
- 2 sprigs rosemary, stems removed, minced (Don't buy rosemary or any herb, find it on the street. Herbs grow wildly in cities throughout the Pacific Northwest. For rosemary in Portland, I recommend the parking lot at Grand Central Bakery on Southeast Hawthorne.)
- 2 dollops of plain yogurt (optional, but highly recommended)
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

Sauté leeks in a soup pot on medium/medium-low heat in a liberal amount of butter or olive oil until translucent. The longer you cook the leeks, the sweeter they will get. (A physics lesson: as you sauté, the fat combines with the leeks' natural sugars, essentially creating a leek-flavored caramel, which adds body and an ineffable yumminess to your soup.) Add garlic if you can't live without it (I think it screws with the soup's elegance), add rosemary, and continue to sauté for about a minute until the garlic has browned, but be careful not to burn it. Dump in your taters. Fill pot with cold water (especially if you live in an old industrial building as hot water picks lead and rust up from old pipes) just about two inches over potatoes and leeks. Add salt and pepper like you like it (white pepper is good, too). Simmer for about an hour on medium heat or until potatoes are tender. Serve with a dollop or two of yogurt.

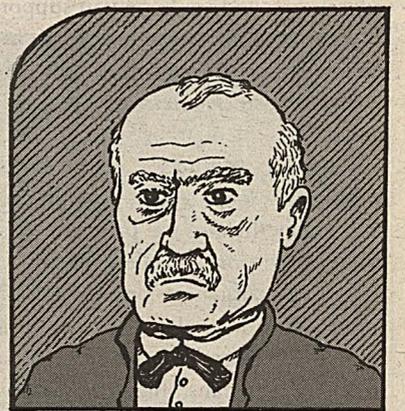
*Gourmand Hints ... shhh!*

*Hint One: Organic = flavor, end of story. Hint Two: Soup, universally, is better the second day. Hint Three: Each time you heat it, heat the whole pot until it boils and it will never go bad. Hint Four: When you cook foods containing chlorophyll, such as leeks, don't cover the pot as it makes the green color go brown and turns the taste bitter. Hint Five: Using fats (olive oil or butter) in soup makes the flavor stick to the inside of your mouth.*

In the coming months, look for reviews of Pacific Northwest eateries, more recipes, and more fabulous cooking tips. ■



Abigail Scott Duniway 1834-1915



Harvey Scott 1838-1910

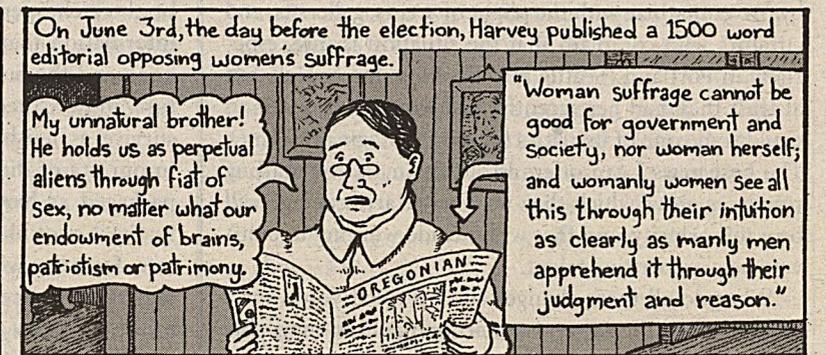
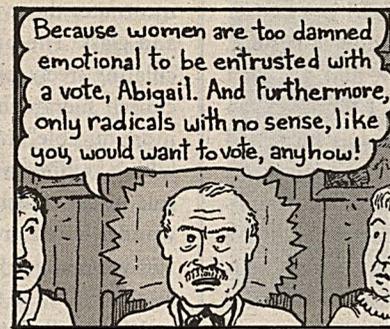
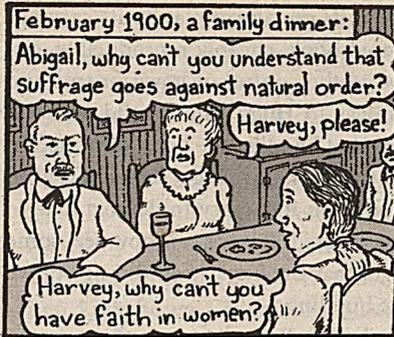
In the year 1900, Oregon men were asked to vote whether or not women should possess the right to vote.

On one side of the issue was Abigail Scott Duniway, president of the Oregon Equal Suffrage Association, and on the opposing side was her brother, Harvey Scott, the fiery editor of the region's largest paper, the *Oregonian*.

## SIBLING RIVALRY

A "City of Roses" Comic

Written and Drawn by Khrris Soden



"I have been overwhelmed with hard work, and the humiliation and shame of my brother's nefarious conduct. But I am rising above it and shall go right on. We would have won triumphantly if the *Oregonian* had not stirred up the slum and slime of the city's purlieus, causing them to throw his bilge water on his own family from the ballot boxes of White Chapel district. No, his fight was not reputable. It made every real friend he had ashamed of him and his paper. But we are not whipped. We are stronger than ever. We got over 487 of the vote. 21 counties gave us a majority. One lost by a tie and only one vote. Last Sunday, I had it out with him, but not till after he said he would whip us harder than ever next time. The sweetest thing I said was "You have stood up naked before the world and you are not ashamed." I talked for half an hour. It seemed that I was inspired. . . . Defeated but not beaten. Will win next time!"



Oregon's women finally received the right to vote in 1912. Abigail became Multnomah County's first registered woman voter at the age of 78.

This comic is based upon information from the essay "Abigail versus Harvey: Sibling Rivalry in the Oregon Campaign for Woman Suffrage" by Lee Nash, which can be found in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 98, no. 2. Oregonian women gained the right to vote eight years before the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. For any questions or comments regarding this comic or Portland's history in general, please e-mail [khrrisoden@comcast.net](mailto:khrrisoden@comcast.net).

Call for submissions: Winter 04: RESIST: [editor@organarts.org](mailto:editor@organarts.org)

Subscribe to the Organ!

# 4 issues/\$15

patron packages also available. [www.organarts.org](http://www.organarts.org)

## Ken Aptekar

*A Personal Public*

August 20–November 18, 2004

Artist talk: Monday, September 27, 7 p.m.

Reed psychology auditorium, room 105

Reception following at the Cooley Gallery

Stephen E. Ostrow Distinguished Visitors in the Arts Program

## Hans Haacke

A PUBLIC LECTURE

Wednesday, September 29, 7 p.m.

Vollum lecture hall, Reed College campus

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

## Cynthia Lahti

A SECRET HISTORY

August 20–November 18, 2004

Case Works 4: Hauser Memorial Library

Reception: concurrent with Ken Aptekar opening

DOUGLAS F. COOLEY MEMORIAL ART GALLERY

Noon–5 p.m. Tuesday–Sunday, in Reed's library

3203 SE Woodstock Blvd.

Free and open to the public

web.reed.edu/gallery/

For info call: 503 777-7790

**reedcollege**

## Carlee Fernandez Keith Yurdana

Platform Gallery  
Inaugural Exhibition  
September 2 to October 9

114 Third Avenue South, Seattle, Washington 98104

Hours beginning Sept. 2: Thur.–Sat., 11 AM to 5:30 PM

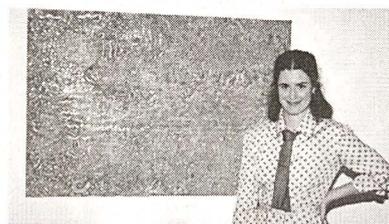
www.platformgallery.com

Upcoming Exhibitions

Oct. 14–Nov. 20: Brian Murphy

Nov. 24–Dec. 31: "Paperwork"

**platform**



SARAH WOOLLEY WITH A TOM CRAMER, 2003

### One Floor Up . . . Worlds Apart

September: **Stuart Cornell, Lauren Mantecán**

October: **Michael T. Hensley, Ann Marie Nafziger**

November: **Tim Diggles, Karen Ester**

MARK WOOLLEY GALLERY

120 NW 9th • Ste. 210 • Portland, Or 97209

phone (503) 224-5475 • fax (503) 224-9972

markwoolley.com



Eric Stotik, *Untitled*, 2003, Ink on paper

### FALL EXHIBITIONS

September: **LISA LOCKHART**

October: **MARIE WATT**

November: **JOE MACCA**

### PDX Contemporary Art

604 NW 12TH AVE PORTLAND OREGON 97209

pdxcontemporaryart.com ☎ 503.222.0063

Tuesday - Saturday 11 - 6 and by appointment

"I didn't spot the body until I was about to dive in. He was floating face down. He looked like William Holden in that film, except this fellow was big, and he wasn't talking about how he got there . . ."

### Get Rich Quick

great noir fiction by Peter Doyle

www.versechorus.com



## LORCA IN A GREEN DRESS

by the Pulitzer Prize winning playwright **Nilo Cruz**  
directed by **Olga Sanchez**

Sept 24 - Oct 16, 2004 ~ Tickets \$14 - \$17

*English Language Production*

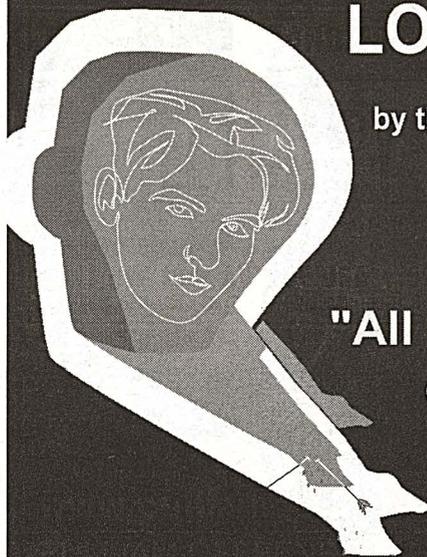
"All reality dies in love as in a dream."

**Cruz Craze:** *Intense Interest in the Work of Nilo Cruz*

at Miracle Theatre and Portland Center Stage, Sept 24 - Nov 28.

Call 503-236-7253 or 503-274-6588 for information about ticket discounts, performance dates and free public discussions.

www.milagro.org and www.pcs.org



## El Día de los Muertos Festival

(Day of the Dead)

directed by **Rebecca Martinez**

**A Joyous Romp with Death**

Oct 29 - Nov 14, 2004 ~ Tickets \$12 - \$15

*Bilingual Production*



525 SE Stark  
Portland, Oregon  
503-236-7253  
www.milagro.org



## VELOSHOP

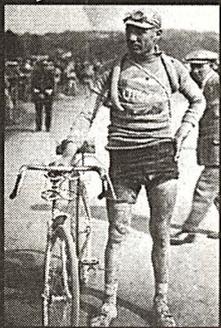
The best little bicycle shop downtown.

hot mechanics.

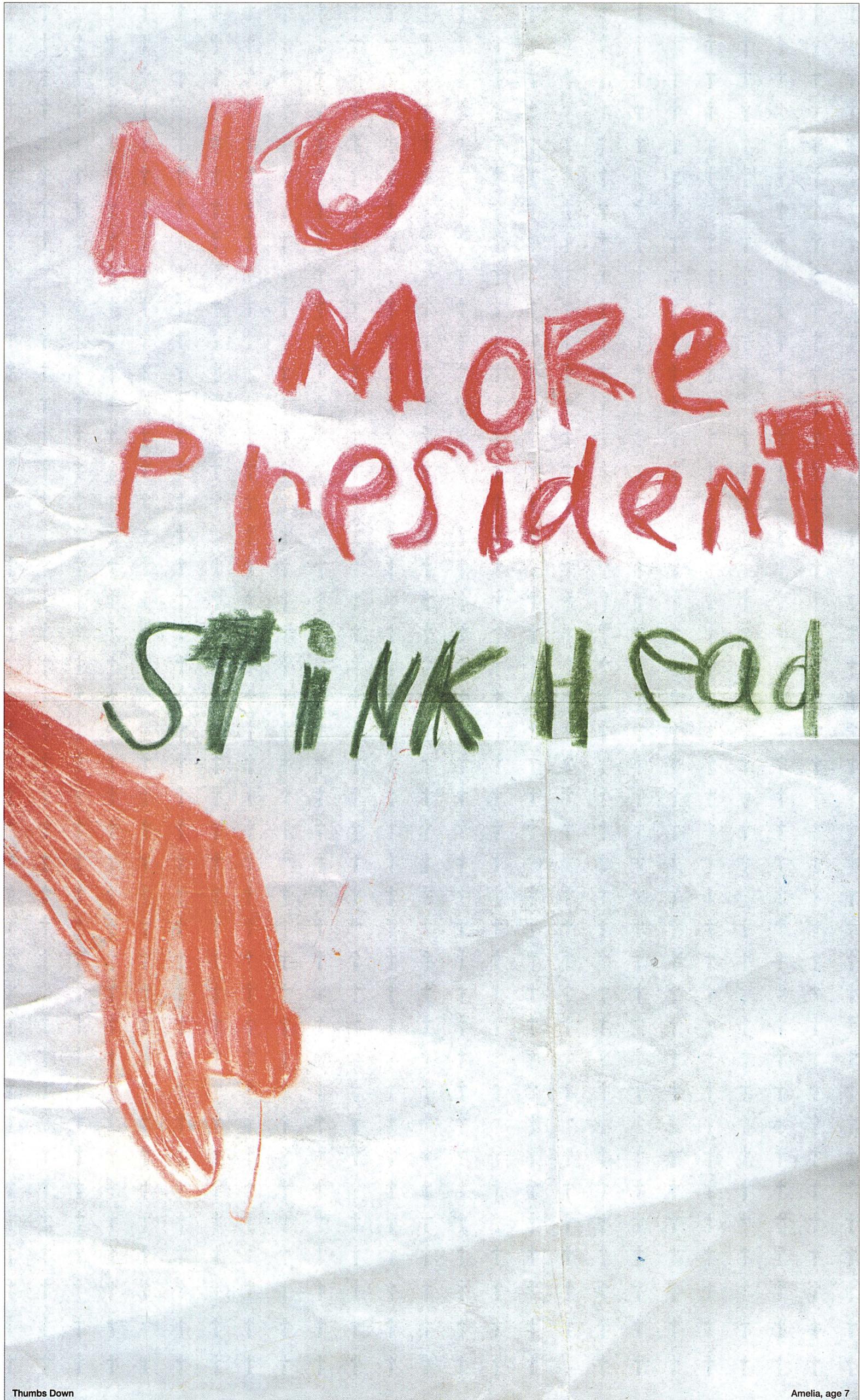
single speeds.

espresso.

211 SW 9th ave. Portland  
WWW.VELOSHOP.ORG

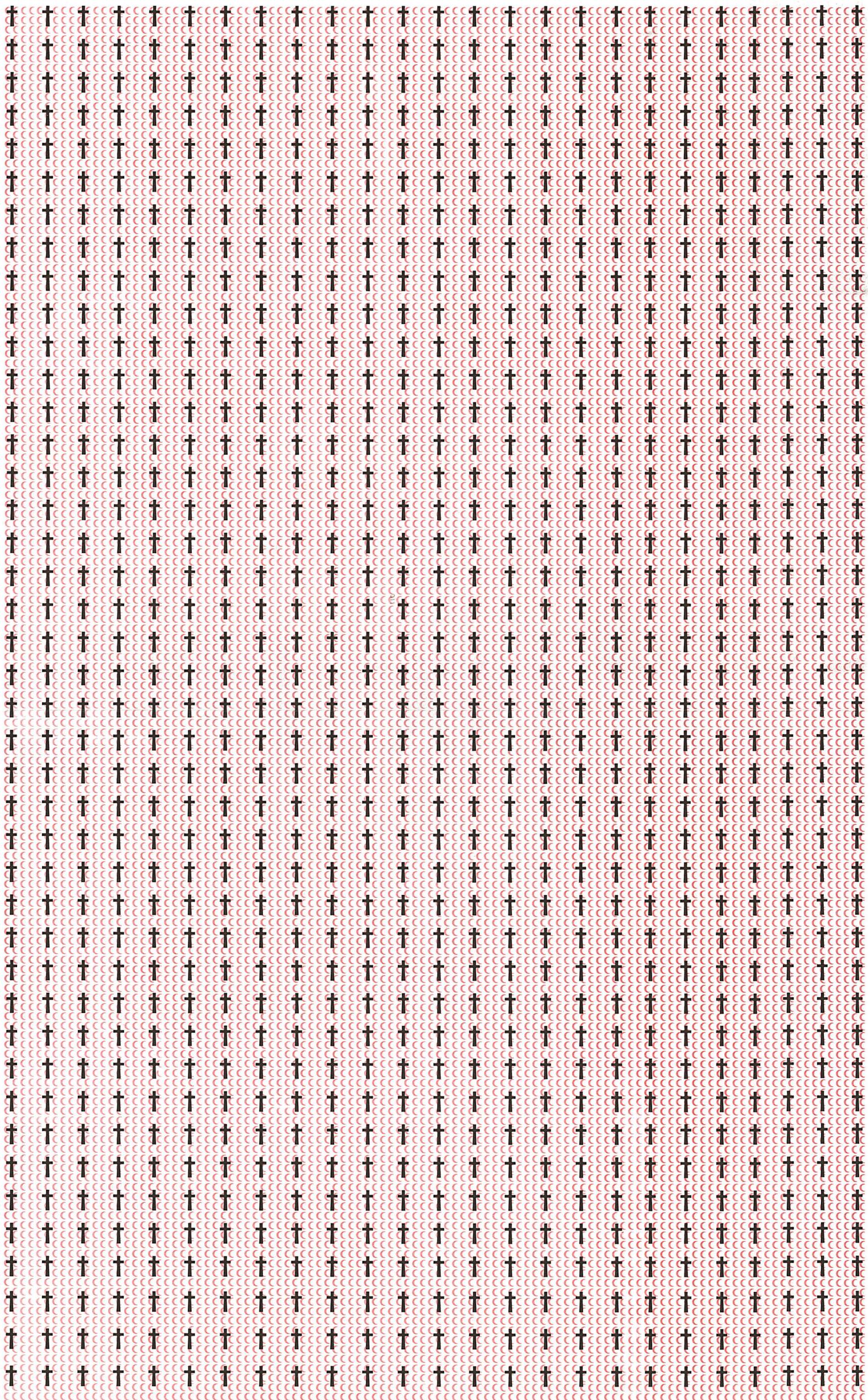


dm



Thumbs Down

Amelia, age 7



Holy war

Each crescent represents an Iraqi life lost during the invasion and occupation of Iraq as of September 2004. Each cross represents an American life lost.

Joshua Berger 2004