

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the first issue of *WWW...* a publication with no predetermined direction, but a decided mission to extend lived critical experiences through the printed word and image.

The title of the broadsheet is a pictogram made from an indefinite repetition of two letters that could convey, among many things, a sense of place (mountains), transmission (waveform), the malleable potential of the written language (scribbles), and the challenge of converting it into speech (we know, it's hard to say out loud). It's difficult to translate meaning between mediums—be it a discussion that becomes an essay; transforming a lecture into a comic; a studio visit into a review; or even as basic as a group of people simply trying to express their views to each other. These are among the challenges we aim to engage. We hope that embracing the inherent tension between experience and communication opens new possibilities for both.

In content *WWW...* will provide a platform for critical and imaginative thought. Issue #1 is an extension of the dialog that occurred during the DIY Art School symposium (a.k.a. *DIY-MFA*, a name we can no longer legally use) hosted in Denver between January 11-15, 2017 by the nonprofits we respectively direct, Black Cube and ArtPlant. The program focused on self-generated alternative arts education and how these approaches might be relevant to both local and larger economic and pedagogical questions. The events spanned a panel discussion, Office Hours at a local bar, studio visits, and culminated in a roundtable with the question at hand of "What next?"

Naturally, the question arises, why lead with alternative arts education when there are so many worthy subjects we could have tackled. This is a publication based in Denver, a city both geographically central and isolated in the US. Possibly in response to, or in spite of this fact, it has developed a very supportive creative community. Yet with an encouraging atmosphere comes the inherent risk of living in an echo chamber where ideas, experiences, and art, go under-examined. As people in this city working in curatorial roles, we've felt the desire for more informed, energetic, and diverse engagement amongst our peers, the broader arts community and ourselves.

Through our individual experiences abroad, we've found this expectation for intentional discourse (even if it's not always fulfilled) in areas with multiple graduate-level academic art institutions. At the same time, we both recognize the lack of institutional opportunities in our community, as well as the larger issue of economic burden pursuing a traditional Master of Arts or Master of Fine Arts degree can place on budding artists, art historians, and curators. We're also curious about the kind of learning experiences permitted within a system in which privilege is an increasing factor determining participation.

For these reasons we decided to bring representatives from influential low-cost to free artist-run schools around North America—The Bruce High Quality Foundation University (NYC), The Mountain School (LA), and SOMA (MX)—to Denver for a four day series of interactions. While "alternative" as a word came under fire during the symposium, it serves as a placeholder encompassing a variety of approaches

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AT SOMA

A FEW AMUSE - GUELES
Carla Herrera Prats

In 2008, in the context of important transformations following the recommendations encompassed by the European Union Bologna Process, Ralph Rogoff described an exponential rise in reflexion and awareness on art education. Rogoff coined the expression the "educational turn in art" to refer to a critique of both the transformation of pedagogical settings into commercial industries and the instrumentalization of knowledge transmission and production. The backdrop for this critique began a few years prior, with exhibitions such as Manifesta 6 (2006)—though canceled, as well as Documenta 12 (2007), and expanded to biennials as well as art fairs, including the 29th Sao Paulo Biennial and the 6th Biennial do Mercosul (both in 2010). Joining this discussion, an increasing number of artists and art collectives began forming academic quasi-institutions from a critical pedagogy perspective. This impulse continues to this day.

Undoubtedly, the establishment of SOMA in 2009 sprang from this global movement, which was also realized by a group of Mexican artists who wanted to initiate a pedagogical project based on the understanding of their local context. To make a long story short: Beginning around 1994, the contemporary Mexican art scene reached unprecedented international visibility, with artists such as Gabriel Orozco, Francis Alÿs, Santiago Sierra, and Melanie Smith, among others. This surge made clear to a younger generation of artists that being born abroad, or at least studying abroad, had become a requirement for professionalization. Yet, curiously, no school in Mexico offered a competitive masters degree program. This led to artists such as myself emigrating, and eventually establishing themselves elsewhere. SOMA is, in part, a response to this educational vacuum.

SOMA's structure aligns with basic notions of critical pedagogy, where education is understood as a crucial tool for changing society. Moreover, the transmission of any form of knowledge necessarily entails the active participation of students in an educative exchange. SOMA is run by an artists council that emphasizes a horizontal structure, in contrast to the hierarchy of traditional education. Though these fundamentals comprise the core of SOMA, in reality daily contradictions regarding these principles, and the difficulties in bringing them into practice, is what truly keep the organizer's interests alive. Here are a few *amuse-gueles*:

1) Pedagogical methods

What does critical pedagogy mean to us? Reformers from Dewey to Ferrer, Freire to Giroux, have proposed an array of models that can be adopted as radical teaching

to higher education, which compellingly respond to many of the challenges of traditional institutional models, and create new problems in turn. While stylistically, geographically, and theoretically differentiated from each other, all of the three schools represented share in a spirit of seeking to balance the desire for both individual artistic achievement and a sense of community—motives we can certainly relate to here.

What you will see in this first issue are texts by the DIY institutional panelists as well as contributions from writers, thinkers, and artists who attended the symposium. While sharing a spark generated by overlapping experiences over the same four-days, the content and tone of the writing ranges greatly, resulting in striking alignments and juxtapositions. Lanny Devuono's insider critique of the American university system finds both a logical continuation and regional counterpoint in Carla Herrera Prats' brief deconstruction of the genesis and tenants of the artist-run school SOMA in Mexico City. Seth Cameron's gnawing conundrum about the potentially inherent antagonism between artistic freedom and pedagogical imperatives, rubs against Matthew Hasting's look at school through a largely individualistic lens. Towards a conversational bent, gadabout and gadfly Michael Bibo's reportage on back-to-back DIY forums on space and education finds an upbeat companion in the jovial Socratic interview between artist and comedian Sean J. Patrick Carney and philosopher Michael Brent about the merits of critical theory. Also included are re-printed texts relevant to the issue's theme. The Camel Collective's 2010 scripted address at their staged Second World Congress of Free Artists and Andrew Berardini's incisive 2015 call to action in *How To Start an Art School*, have only aged with poignancy as tension within art education continues to exert pressure on all players. And what would an art rag be without a review of art? Andrew Berardini also brings his prodigious lyrical abilities to bare as he plies at the hidden and revelatory qualities of Laura Shill's artwork following a studio visit during symposium. And finally, something to look at. Artist Molly Bounds debuts her serial comic *Jones of Art* with a moment of formal art school stifling and the small, yet triumphant gesture of personal rebellion. Ultimately, our hope is that this crop of individually identifiable and not always congruent voices spurs subsequent conversations, debates, gatherings, and additional issues of this publication.

Lastly in form Issue #1 adheres to a traditional grid structure. However, we hope that the shape, size, and unbound quality of the physical publication lend to unconventional modes of its consumption, perhaps in more deliberate moments. And when you're done reading, the issue includes a full page artist edition and a calendar of intriguing events across Colorado, perfect for your refrigerator door or studio wall. In addition to publishing this broadsheet, we will also continue to host monthly informal Office Hours (see pg. 6) as we search for the next topic of discussion, because chewing on ideas and sharing experiences with other people in real-time is important. We hope you enjoy unrolling what amounts to a good, not entirely expected read. And, if you have something to say about it, (*we hope you do*) let's chat at the bar soon.

<B
Adam Gildar & Cortney Stell
Editors / WWWWWW

methodologies. While SOMA doesn't want to adhere to any specific school, this approach might stem from practical considerations more than choice. Most of SOMA's facilitators and guests lead seminars, critiques and presentations as artists, or at least as folks trained and interested in the visual arts, and not as certified pedagogues. Though they all are open to experimentation beyond traditional class dynamics, only a few have a clear idea about where their strategies actually sit. How can criticality be pushed in all forms of exchange? How to avoid making critical pedagogy a subject of study itself?

2) Experimentation/continuity

Critical pedagogy aims to link education with the political frames that cultural institutions (e.g., SOMA) produce and maintain. Students—participants—have a voice in the topics they are taught, as well as the ways in which they are taught. They are actively invited to contribute in the way SOMA is run. But how can continuity be maintained when change is constantly suggested? When does constant experimentation diminish the possibility to actually learn from past experiences?

3) Theory/Practice

At SOMA, critical thinking is understood as a transformative operation that has the potential to radically change what we see, what we make and who we constitute ourselves. Perhaps forced by SOMA's architectural setting and budget, critical discourse is undeniably prioritized over honing artists craft or technique. We maintain that participants will have the opportunity to learn how to make what they need somewhere else. What is paramount is that they come to understand what they really want to make, and why. Yet we want to be careful with the false binary between theory and practice. There is no artistic thinking without artistic doing, nor a truly formless idea.

4) Local/International

Critical pedagogy aims to ask questions about the periphery and the centers of power. It proposes tools for re-reading history, in order to recover lost power and identity as defined by race, gender, and class. Critical pedagogy rejects the distinction between high and low culture. This dynamic produces a constant push and pull: how to strengthen local perspectives (including prioritizing readings from Latin-American authors, and closely considering the work from some specific artists), and at the same time, provide an awareness of an international context? What is considered fundamental for a contemporary emerging artists to actually know today?

B

RAISING QUESTIONS

Lanny Devuono

The university and the artist have a recent, if uneasy, history in the United States-- beginning in the progressive era with its links to early education, up through the 1980s' proliferation of MFAs as sign of professionalism. In a 1999 book, *Art Subjects, Making Artists in the American University*, Howard Singerman details this history as if it were a trajectory. Yet now, well into the 21st century, the course may be changing.

It's anodyne to complain that higher education in this country simply means too much debt for too many people. Yet, no matter the high cost, statistics still demonstrate that overall, acquiring a bachelor's degree is a "good investment" in terms of life-time earnings. So, in a society where the vast majority of us are dependent on wages, it is easy to support the pursuit of BFA, BA or BS degrees. BFA degrees, with their quotient of required humanities and language courses, operate as liberal arts degrees should. Some graduates go on to make art; others go into arts administration, teaching, law, and more. A certain percentage of those end up working as independent designers.

When I began teaching undergraduates studio art in public universities over twenty-five years ago, studio practice was usually described as part of a liberal arts education. Sending the best students to "good" MFA programs was an extension of that—specialization for those most committed. But over the past ten years the business terminology has become fashionable; art making is described as an entrepreneurial activity. Couched that way, forces us to look at markets. And with its progressively higher cost and shrinking options for full time art faculty employment, acquiring an MFA does raise questions of risk. As a recent graduate student facing high loans and few jobs put it, "If my education is such an asset, why can't I sell it?"

It may be time to responsibly separate the ways artists support themselves from the practice of making art in a meaningful way --and, perhaps, to question the continual perpetuation of art education itself.

There is no question that if one wants to teach at the college or university level, a MFA is the minimum degree required (with the growing preponderance of studio PhD programs, that will shift). If that is the course one wants to follow, Coco Fusco's 2013 essay "The Art School Game," in the December issue of *Modern Painters* is still relevant. Its coolly analytical style reflects the consumer climate of the country. Fusco writes about geographical locations, mentorship networks. She lists the hidden aspects of loans and warns, "It's up to you to find out what your money will buy." The BFAMFAPhD collective has created a website that is another great resource, listing MFA programs with a high degree of funding. But overall, BFAMFAPhD is less sanguine on the subject of advanced degrees for artists. Its 2014 report is loaded with data on art education but raises troubling questions about economic and racial divisions in art. Again it raises the question of cost.

NINE YEARS

Seth Cameron

Assume man is fundamentally good, and you abandon satire in favor of education.

The above quote has been bothering me for nine years.

It was nine years ago, in 2008, that The Bruce High Quality Foundation entered the art market. We had formed in 2001 as a loose association of art school friends periodically coming together to satirize the art world with oversized puppets and seaworthy public interventions and singing cats. But 2008 made it real: Bruce incorporated, started showing and selling our wares through galleries and fairs, and promoting our brand in biennials and museum shows. 2008 was the year Bruce started paying rent.

We could see the writing on the wall. Would our mockery lose its bite if it also kept the lights on? Or would resources mean more teeth? Maybe we should have just said no thanks. But none of us were exactly purists. Bruce was a polemical project, not an ideological one. Worshipping at the empty hovel of Diogenes, granddaddy of the Cyincs, Bruce was about *criticism*. And we believed that criticism, with all its delicious forms (dialectic, satire, irony, etc.), could resist anything—even money.

Then this quote happened. Actually it happened in 1992, nine years before Bruce formed, in a book titled *The Enlightenment Against the Baroque: Economics and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth Century*. Nonetheless, it made its way to me nine years ago. Those thirteen words were delivered to me aloud and a little slurred in my dark apartment by my mentor, the artist Niki Logis. She was drunk. And she was diabolical. I looked at her, she smirked at me, and I knew that she knew she'd nailed me.

Forget who Remy G. Saisselin is. I don't know. But his quote is a problem I couldn't solve. Whoever he is and whatever I might have wanted for Bruce or for myself, I think Remy is probably right. If we abandon satire for education, there must be a good reason. The most likely good reason is optimism: we think humanity is worth a damn. If it's worth it, we should give it. But if I were really to give a damn and start educating instead of satirizing—well, it made me start thinking that as goes satire, so goes pretty much all art making that isn't educating.

But I don't want to get too far ahead of myself. I'm actually unconvinced of the merits of "man" or "humanity." First of all, humanity for its own sake is not a serious proposition. Humanity's goodness and worth only make sense—and only get us all worked up—when they're lashed to the mast of some other ship: *Work, Love, Liberty, Joy* or other important pilgrim ships like that. I have no desire to work, don't tie me to that stake. Love is a many splendored thing, but not only does it "take work," but it's inherently tyrannical—which takes out liberty. And for joy, we have pets and drugs and sunsets to do the job far more efficiently than *other people* ever will. Quod eram fucking demonstrandum.

C

It's important to remember that MFA programs never promised to do what law, medical or dental hygiene programs do: i.e.: offer an entrée into a particular profession. What they do promise is a high level of "professional competency in the visual arts and contemporary practices." Traditionally they offer a community of like minds, critical discourse and best of all, the luxury of devoting a two to three-year period of concentrated time to develop one's art. If art is valued as a social good, and I don't pretend to address this to anyone who thinks otherwise, we need options for artists who are not interested in teaching, who cannot afford the cost of tuition plus living expenses but who want the time, the camaraderie with other artists and the theoretical skills that a graduate school offers.

Last January, RedLine Denver hosted a Symposium on Alternatives in Higher Education with a panel of representatives from three non-degree granting graduate programs: Bruce High Quality Foundation University (BHQFU) in New York City, the Mountain School of the Arts (MSA) in Los Angeles and SOMA in Mexico DF. The panel was loosely referred to as "DIY MFAs" and the three schools differ as much as the Hans Hofmann school in NY differed from Black Mountain College. BHQFU is completely free, with classes ranging from mold-making workshops, to public lectures, to seminars. Including their lecture series, they had over 773 students last year. MSA is also free but has a far more selective admissions policy and seems to operate akin to an artist residency. SOMA has a tuition that currently is 33,000 MXN (US\$1617) for two years and attracts students from Mexico and elsewhere. That each of these schools is located in a major urban art center is key. Taking away the cost of high tuition, but affording young artists an area rich in cultural information, access to art institutions and mentors, gives them much of what is gained within an MFA program. It's not a new idea; just an idea whose time has come again. Artists have always formed beneficial alliances, from the Art Students League, to the Women's Building in LA, to Colab in the 1980s and too many others to list. The organic development of art neighborhoods such as Williamsburg in the late 1990s, or even Denver today with its close-knit studios and residencies like Platteforum and RedLine, demonstrate that young artists are developing intellectual and art alternatives to professionalized and costly graduate programs.

In lieu of substantial changes to this country's funding of higher education and in the way it values art as a critical social voice, there is no choice but for artists to make substitute networks. And these should be welcomed for reasons other than cost saving. Just as those involved in the burgeoning craft and urban-farm movements discovered, DIY activities do something far more than merely lower clothing or grocery bills. They slow us down; they create communities; they reconnect us to something other than consumer habits. Who knows what will happen to art if it continues to seep outside the business of art education?

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E

Nonetheless.

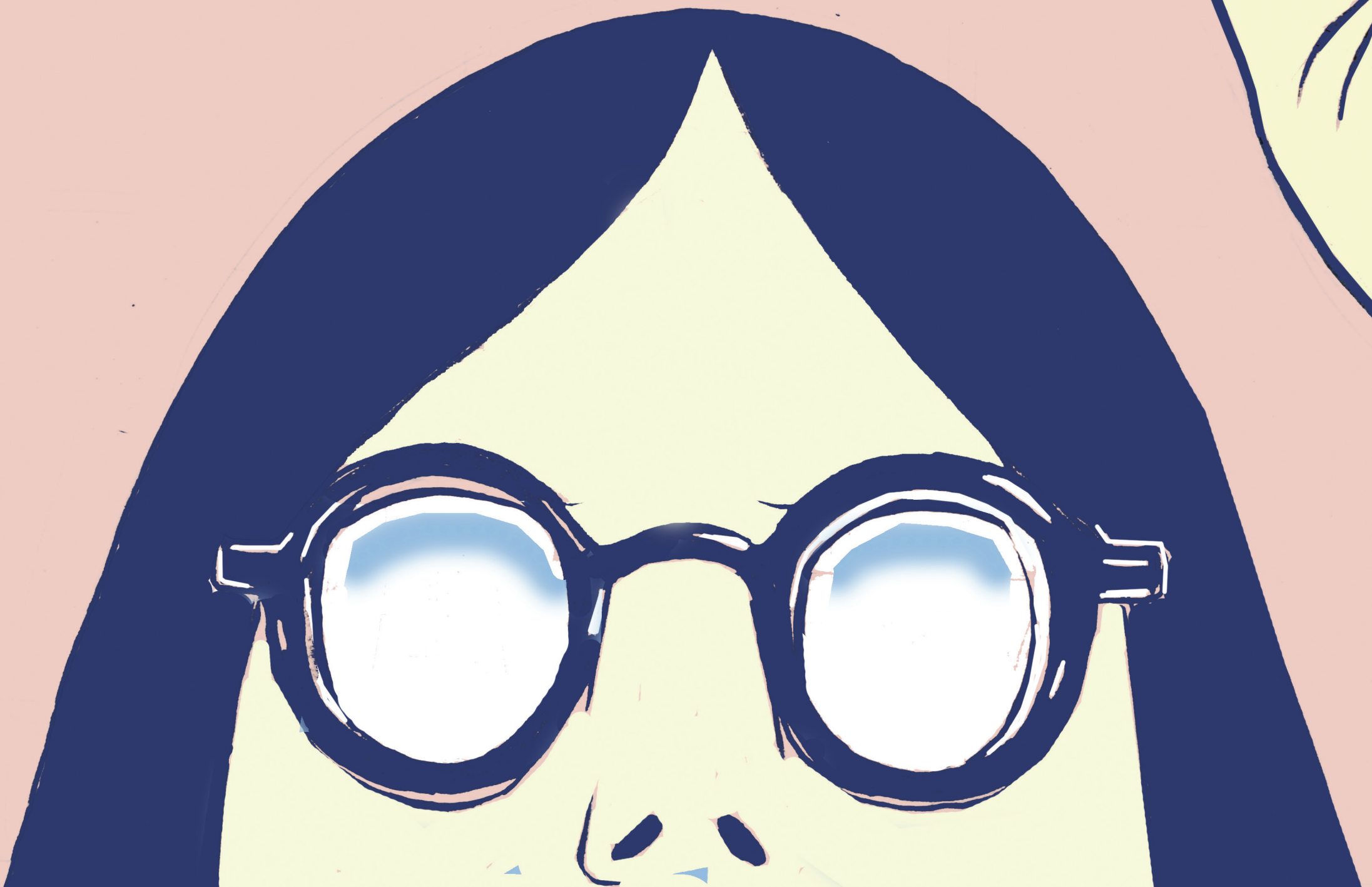
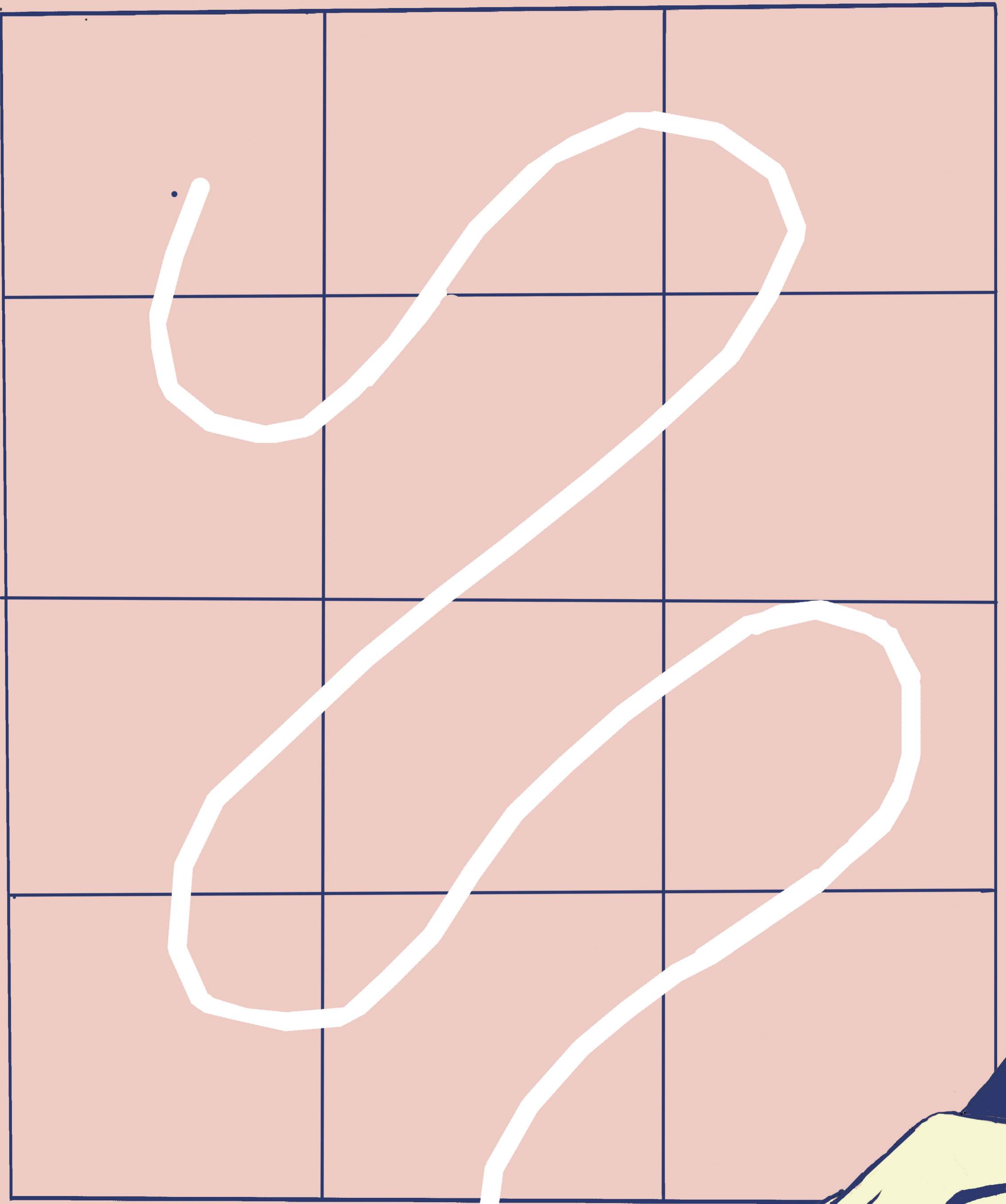
A year after Remy came calling with my drunken mentor, Bruce added more of the alphabet to our ambitions and opened BHQFU. And contrary to some popular assumptions, we didn't create our university as a joke. We assumed that humans are fundamentally good. Therefore, we believed we should go forth and educate. But, as could be expected, these nine years have nine years of rift—a rift that has grown in our "practice," between the work of criticizing, satirizing, lamenting, poking fun, and prodding the pitiful bear of the art world—and this other thing: this attempt at art education.

The dilemma has Remy holding fast to one end—and Mr. Oscar Wilde with us wrapped around his finger at the other. Mr. Wilde, who's work I knew far better than Remy's, said: "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught." And if he's right, which he always is, then what is art education for? Does it make art better? Does it make people better? Let me keep my metaphors and my questions out at sea: where should education cast its nets or toss its harpoons? Freedom? Joy? Maybe for a few A-habs. But there's usually a mutiny against radical individuality by the communities that form around schools and take their ships out to sail into the sunset of romanticism.

Back to high and dry land: Nine years after Remy Saisselin's thirteen words got under my skin, I'm sitting on a red couch in Denver about to participate in a panel on "alternative" art education. My flight west had put me in a philosophical mood. Before we began, I asked one of my copanelists, the insightful Carla Herrera-Pratz of Mexico City's SOMA school, if she thought we do what we do for the benefit of art or for the benefit of people. She thought a moment, taking my ludicrously reductive question seriously, and said "people."

I've spent the last few weeks bothered by her answer. Not because I'm bothered by "people," though I am, but because I think, like Remy and Oscar before her, Carla is right. Art education is for people, for humanity, the greater good and all that crap that doesn't have anything to do with Fine, Free Art. Teaching art inevitably suffers the same fate as anything else we do to it or with it—appreciating it, collecting it, directing it, making history out of it, therapizing with it—humanist gerunds ad nauseum.

If I'm honest, though, what I'm bothered by most of all is this damn number nine. I'm at the nine year mark once again. Time to draw a conclusion and proceed without caution. So here are thirteen words to lash me to the mast of wherever I'm going for the one-short-of-a-decade years ahead: Art exists only for itself. Meaning: it's fundamentally good. Meaning: abandon all hope.



EDUCATION: ALWAYS ALREADY DIY

Matthew Hastings

F

The challenge of education, both for the teacher and the student, is having to proceed in the face of ignorance. This isn't to say that the teacher and student don't know many things. They do. The ignorance of education is about what to do and about what will happen. A teacher can never say for sure what their students actually take away from their lessons, and a student can't predict exactly what they will need to know to prepare for their future.

One attempt to address this ignorance is to build educational institutions that are organized around predictable procedures. The curriculum is set, teachers are trained, and students are evaluated by standardized methods. Everyone knows what they need to do and what will happen. This answer allows for the performance of achievement, but misses out on what is really going on, because doing assignments, listening to lectures, and making the grade are only superficially related to education.

An alternative approach to living with the ignorance involved with education is to recognize that the real engine of education is inherently DIY. Education is the constant work each of us has to do exercising our autonomy and judgment. This is work that cannot be done by anyone else but the "yourself" in DIY. Intellectual historian, Robbie McClintock has developed this line of thinking, through an emphasis on study as the central method of education.^[1] A student who is studying learns through trial and error, correcting their efforts as they try to match outcomes to their idealized visions of success. The student's study is guided by their questions. Its path isn't knowable beforehand, because it is driven by the student's decisions as they practice using their judgment in assessing what knowledge is relevant and what practices are helpful in their pursuits. Further, study begins with dissatisfaction, with the student's recognition that there is room for improvement.

This isn't to say that the student is the ultimate authority, reinventing the world as they see fit. This emphasis on study and recognition of the student's exercise of autonomy and judgment just reflects a different relationship between the student, teacher, and the world. The teacher's role, in turn, might be understood as having to study the student. Paying careful attention to the particular questions, struggles, and hopes the student has. The teacher then makes their own attempts at instruction, correcting their efforts as they work with the student to help them develop. Education philosopher, Paulo Freire likewise recognizes the need for the teacher and the student to reject a "banking" model, in which the teacher attempts to transmit and fill up the student's mind with a prescribed curriculum.^[2] Instead, the teacher and student engage in dialogue, making each other's voices necessary in the identification of questions and the advancement of solutions. Philosopher Jacques Ranciere, as well, begins his thinking on education with an assumption of equality of intelligence between the teacher and student. The relationship that results rejects the idea that the teacher stands between the student and knowledge or their goal, acting as a needed mediator. The teacher does not offer some kind of pedagogical cure to the student's questions or desire to improve. Instead, the teacher's role is to help the student maintain their efforts and remind the student of their ability to see their study through.^[3] Considerate attention, resulting in appropriate guidance, is the gift teachers give their students. The teacher must engage in the study of their own craft of teaching, exercising their autonomy and judgment, making corrections, working in constant reflection and improvement, given their ever changing students.

This understanding of education is as realistic as it is demanding, and what this understanding of education requires is time, because it cannot be fit into a predictable schedule. We cannot say beforehand how long it will take for a student to complete their studies. The student will not be advanced along on scheduled development of clearly promised outcomes.

The recognition of the need for time in order to develop one's abilities is buried within the history of the word "school". The Greek root "skhole" means free time, leisure, time away from the pressing and immediate demands of work, politics, family life. What free time allows for is the opening up of possibilities by not having to do anything in particular at all. Free time removes the demands of production, efficiency, usefulness, which arise when we are busy or obligated and which narrow possibility down to attempted divinations of market demands. These demands encourage shortcuts and predictable applications of "what sells." By removing these demands, free time allows a person to explore, following questions and perspectives without needed direction or

HOW TO START AN ART SCHOOL

Andrew Berardini

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H

Why would you even want to?

We want to be makers, not bureaucrats or lecturers. But after a dozen years of making, maybe you care about the continuity of knowledge and experience; you want to give of yourself, and maybe make space for others to find their voices, as you did. Artists founded art schools for these same reasons.

There are plenty of examples out there, from fly-by-night, for-profit scoundrels, to august, ivy-draped centuries-old institutions. Why not just join one of them rather than go through the trouble of starting something new?

Unfortunately, the current model for art school sucks.

Let us count the ways, easily summed in dollars.

In Southern California, the cost of an MFA ranges from \$31,000 at UCLA, a public university, to just under \$79,000 at Art Center, a private school. This does not include accommodation, food, materials, books, etc. It only includes tuition.

I owe around \$50,000 for my MFA degree in writing from CalArts. This is an albatross around my neck. I tell everyone who asks not to do it, not to go into debt, but I didn't really have an alternative to take, myself, and too few to give others now. It's time we had more.

For many decades, our entire community in Southern California was formed and sustained through art schools. The costs of education in the last forty years went from free at public schools to extortionary across the board. CalArts, a vanguard model for many years, now has its faculty unionizing to fight against the creeping corporatization of the school, though one does not expect this to lower the tuition and fees of over \$90,000 for a two-year MFA. The University of Southern California, which had one of the best art programs in the country, appointed a dean to dismantle it and move the institution towards a feeder school for "creative industries" under a rubric set by Dr. Dre and Jimmy Iovine. USC tenured professor Frances Stark, with an upcoming retrospective at the Hammer Museum, quit in protest from the changes. The destruction of the USC graduate art program is devastating, even more tragic as for some years it offered full-tuition for most of its students. The era of art schools in Los Angeles is fading. I talk about where I live specifically but this is happening all over.

Maybe the whole university-industrial complex in the US is busted. When I read that Elizabeth Holmes, the 30-year-old female billionaire who revolutionized blood-testing, decided to drop out of Stanford and take her school money to successfully develop her idea, it gave me pause. Or that billionaire entrepreneur and libertarian objectivist Peter Thiel is encouraging brilliant students to drop out and take his grants instead; I think deeply about the system we've wrought.

Our current system, a medieval guild-cum-unitary corporation accompanied by debt culture, needs to end for artists. My government in California built one of the best university systems in the world only to have its funding chipped away, along with the promise of free universal higher-education. Barring a dramatic shift in government policy, it's time to change this ourselves.

For the past six years, I've been teaching at the Mountain School of Arts, an artist-run school based in Los Angeles. All the faculty, staff, and lecturers, including myself, work for free, and none of the students pay to attend. Sometimes we are even able to find *gratis* accommodations for the students. Everyone participating – speakers, teachers, and students – does so as an act of openness and generosity. Perhaps I am lucky enough

results, leading to new possibilities, which are then brought back to the community and shared as art. Time is the gift the school gives its students.

But what does this look like?. The Logan School is a private grade school on the east side of Denver committed to free time and community. At this school, each student chooses what they will learn about during the school year, be it eagles, bridges, fracking, neuroscience, or whatever.

The school's unofficial motto is "it depends". The teachers and students are aware that engaging with the world in a purposeful and sustained way does not allow for predefined curriculum or pedagogy. It requires that students learn to identify meaningful questions, figure out what resources they need to answer these questions, make decisions about how to best use their time, prioritize competing demands, find answers, create meaning through whatever media and form they find appropriate, and decide how to best share their findings with the community, along the way learning from conversation with peers and teachers. They are learning what we have to do every day of our lives, which looks a lot more like a DIY project than a predefined production.

At The Logan School, the teacher's authority comes from modeling excellence. They exemplify serious, thoughtful, engagement with their lives. They attend to the particular realities present to them. Without fixed curriculum, they must constantly exercise their autonomy and judgment, in their efforts to help their students learn to exercise their own autonomy and judgment. They do not apply easy shortcuts, but instead are sensitive to the unique response that all new situations and new people demand from us. They study their students, as their students study their world. What this reveals is that teaching is fundamentally relational. It is dependent on a teacher's ability to build a relationship of mutual trust and respect with their students. It requires the teacher takes time to get to know their students, observing them, talking with them, learning with them, offering suggestions, and being open to new pursuits and methods.

Importantly, this learning is not done alone. It is done in a community of students and teachers who model for each other this kind of sustained engagement, hold each other accountable, and share with each other their own particular knowledge and knowhow. All of this works because the teachers and students have time. There isn't a strict schedule. There isn't a timetable of performance expectations. Students are expected to learn how to use their time well, but it is their time to use as they see fit. They may negotiate assignments, curriculum, readings, critiques, or other requirements with their teachers and with their community, as these are appropriate for their learning. In a learning community, there isn't a need for a strict hierarchy of teachers and students or predetermined timetable. Each member brings their own expertise, questions, and pacing. What their education requires and looks like will depend.

Often student centered learning is associated with children, and adult learning is understood as disciplinary training. To work within a discipline is to work procedurally through a more or less established body of knowledge and skills. However, to work *with* discipline, a student develops procedures as they go, identifying what knowledge and skills they find necessary to answer the questions or solve the problems they have.

The intuitive recognition that the engine of learning resides within each student and that this engine should be the driving force of education led to the creation of The Logan School. There is nothing about these insights that couldn't be applied to adult learners seeking to dedicate themselves to studying their craft. A DIY MFA could look like a place that gives students time to dedicate to their questions, that sustains a community of teachers and students ready to attend to each other's learning carefully and responsively, and that embraces the inherent uncertainty of what will come from students' study. There have been and are art schools similar to what I am loosely sketching here, such as Black Mountain College (1933–1957) and its descendants, which are also exemplary. However, what is gained by considering a childhood model of education is perhaps a needed further distancing from the demands, constraints, and preconceptions of what it means to be an artist, to study art, and what an art school and art education should look like. It is to take a point of view on education from the beginning of life, where we find possibilities open and perspectives fresh.

to afford this generosity, though not everyone can. And while this experience has allowed me to give back, its attendant sense of precarity is getting to me. I long for a third option that is stable and sustainable.

We need to pass on knowledge and give space to create, without hobbling graduates with massive debt.

So let's stop that and do something else.

Though there have been many attempts by artists to deal with the current debacle in education – most of them admirable, from New York Arts Practicum and The Public School in the US to SOMA in Mexico or Islington Mill Art Academy in Britain – the most serious and sustainable alternative model in the US is the Whitney Independent Study Program (ISP). Founded by Ron Clark in 1965, the Whitney ISP offers inexpensive education from some of our brightest artists, scholars, critics, and curators. Its full price is \$1,800 a year, an amount even I could have pulled together working a part-time job (though even this can also be subsidized based on need). They also do something that we at Mountain School can't do, help organize for student visas. Sustained by modest tuition and the usual fundraising, the Whitney ISP falls in between the purely volunteer-run school and the excruciating debt machines.

There is one functional long-lasting alternative now, but there should be many, each defined by the spirit of the artists that teach there, and the needs of its community. Though I'm suspicious of how museums fit into power in the US (through their sticky relationships to the wealthy, mainly), museums are educational institutions and would only be fulfilling their missions to harbor other ISPs.

One can love or hate the specific philosophical program at the Whitney ISP with its emphasis on conceptual rigor, but it offers a sustainable alternative to the current hot mess of bankrupting and bankrupted graduate education. There is one and there should be many, each different but committed and in the spirit of generosity that should inform all education. I propose that we as a community accept the ISP model as equal to an MFA degree and move as quickly as possible from using a system that no longer serves us.

There are a million ways to do this. The simplest is to find a space and start giving classes. The more complex way that the Whitney ISP pioneered was to find a sponsoring institution, a group of serious artists, and start organizing. The solution needs to be tailored to and by both teachers and students.

We need to stop giving time, money, and credibility to institutions that no longer serve us. We can do this.

And while abandoning the MFA entirely looks attractive, at times, I've seen how much a concerted two years of making and thinking can have on a young artist's work. I'm not yet ready to entirely give up on the experiment. But I'm close.

I hope we can find a new debtless way to educate artists in the US, in my city most of all, and I'll do all a disorganized poet can do to create a sustainable alternative to the current system. It's up to us that the next generation not be indentured servants to bankers, revenue to education-corporations, and products to feed to the culture industry.

How to start an art school?

We make space to dream, create, and later move on to give the same opportunity, freely, to others. Starting an art school begins here.

So let's get to it.

A PRIMER ON CRITICAL THEORY

Sean J Patrick Carney & Michael Brent

G

In January, the free art school where I work in New York, BHQFU, was invited out to Denver for DIY Art School. Along with artist-run alternative education models the Mountain School (Los Angeles) and SOMA (Mexico City), we had the opportunity to speak with Denver-based artists for several days in studio visits, roundtables, local bars, and a panel discussion that kicked off the week. During that panel discussion at Red Line, the talk was streamed on Instagram Live and some folks participating digitally were sending in questions, many of which had to do with the inclusion of critical theory in art school syllabi. They asked questions that I'm sure many of us have had: Is it important? Is it exclusive? Is it really relevant to an artist's work? Lucky for us, philosopher and faculty member at the University of Denver, Michael Brent, was in the audience that night, and as an added bonus, he used to teach at BHQFU way back when it first started years ago. Now, I've taught critical theory at art school multiple times, but I'm often curious whether it's actually helping my students. So, I hit up Michael and he agreed to a short Q&A about the merits, history, and application of critical theory for artists. Below is our conversation, along with some recommendations from Michael on where—and why—to start engaging it.

SJPC: What is "critical theory"? I mean, there's the old joke about pornography; I know it when I see it. But is there a simple, clear definition? And how old is it?

MB: There is no clear or uncontroversial definition of "Critical Theory", but let me take a stab at it. What I say here is very largely indebted to the Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on "Critical Theory", which goes into much more detail and is well worth your time. For starters, Critical Theory can be understood narrowly and broadly.

SJPC: Tell me about it narrowly. That's a good place, for me, to start.

MB: In the narrow sense, Critical Theory refers to several German philosophers and social theorists collectively known as the Frankfurt School, which began in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt in 1923 and came under the direction of Max Horkheimer in 1930, around whom Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and other theorists gathered. After the rise of Hitler and the National Socialists, the Institute left Germany and eventually moved to New York City in 1935, and much of the important work of Frankfurt School theorists began to emerge at that time. The Institute returned to Frankfurt in 1951 where it remains to this day.

SJPC: Okay, now gimme the broad version. I want it all, Michael!

MB: In a broader sense, Critical Theory encompasses many things. A theory that is "critical" seeks to free humanity from every circumstance that enslaves us, including (but not limited to!) those that are historical, political, economic, and aesthetic. In this broader sense, many "critical theories" have emerged in connection with numerous social movements that identify the multitude of ways that contemporary society oppresses and restricts human freedom, and so any philosophical approach that seeks human emancipation from all forms of domination and oppression could be called a "critical theory," including, for example, feminism and critical race theory.

SJPC: Let's say I'm a painter. Clearly, I'm not. But let's say that I am. I spend most of my day mixing up colors on a really big palette in the studio, and then I just kind of play jazz with those colors on a canvas. It's about intuition and I try to keep it that way. I don't think that my work is political, but I definitely don't like Trump and I think that capitalism is probably pretty bad. Is there something that I could get out of reading critical theory?

BEING THERE: DIY SPACES | DIY ART SCHOOL

TWO FORUMS AT REDLINE JANUARY 10 – 11, 2017

Michael Bibo

I



Image from DIY ART SCHOOL Panel Discussion: Courtesy of Black Cube and Marco Cousins



I visited Redline recently for two forums back-to-back. The first night, hosted by Amplify Art Denver, was a town-hall-style forum about how artists can flee or fight back against Denver's eviction strategy of sweeping up DIY spaces. The second night, hosted by ArtPlant and Black Cube, invited the architects of a handful of different experimental art schools across the country and abroad as a Q & A panel. These educators, admittedly flying by the seat of their pants, are throwing paint at the wall in order to create the community scaffolding that artists need to sharpen their horns on each other.

Night one—DIY Spaces

The night opened with an ominous statement about the "pre- and post- Ghost Ship" mentality that local arts communities are discussing. Ghost Ship, an artist collective in Oakland, burned down Dec. 2, 2016. Thirty-five people died in the fire, making it the deadliest in Oakland's history. The warehouse was not zoned for residential use or use as a venue but operated underground as both. If utopia is cheap rent and freedom, this was it; and if the road to dystopia is paved with good intentions, then this was also it. Denver, realizing the potential danger of the situation, evicted community members from its own Ghost Ship analogs, Rhinocerospolis and Glob. "About a dozen people," were evicted from Rhinocerospolis on Dec 8, 2016. That night, the low was 10°F.

While the general consciousness at the meeting formerly seemed to believe that these spaces could form organically, many were begging for more organized ideation. "How do we communicate with the city?" they asked. How can artists have time and space to work outside of derelict places? Is the law prohibitive of imagined live-work collectives and what does it take to change them? If the underground scene can't survive, can these venues function as a proper non-profits? The answers at the forum ranged from shoulda-woulda-coulda vagueries of younger artists to specific ideas about law and architecture from professionals looking to contribute. What most guests agreed on was that something about Denver has to change if it wants to retain its artists.

Some of America's most successful cities are so because of the quality of life the arts provide. It's a familiar story: an area becomes "cool" because people settle low rent areas, they flourish, more people move there, rent increases, blah blah. Soon the artsyness of a community is replaced with an empty brand. Imagine your favorite expensive dive bar! Its called colonization. If the River North ARTS District is going to build condos with fake graffiti on them on top of the homes of its native artists, it is no longer an arts district—it's a simulation. Sure, hypocrisy in politics is not uncommon, but cynical complacency with politics is just another form of obedience. The city of Denver touts its commitment to "The Arts" out of one side of its mouth, while commanding a task force to evict artists out of the other.

Night Two—DIY MFA

The following night was about alternatives to a Masters in Fine Arts. "Why bother?" the guest panel asked. People get checks daily for writing about how the college degree is becoming less useful. An MFA, is low-hanging fruit for debt collectors. Art is unique in the academy because it's completely rhizomatic. It starts and ends wherever it wants; wherever it can exist. Contrary to popular belief and the hundreds of thousands of dollars people spend on their degrees, art doesn't

MB: Whether or not you want to acknowledge it, *everything* is political.

SJPC: Nice!

MB: Every aspect of human social life is permeated by relations of power and privilege, relations that exist within, and result from, systems of oppression that have been around for a very long time. The arts, humanities, religions, sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, architecture, law, education, medicine, the entire global economic system in which everyone lives—your name it—every such human endeavour is structured by relations of power that privilege some groups people while oppressing others.

SJPC: This is getting very Herzog...

There is no escaping this brutal reality, not even from within the walls of your studio. So, the first thing you might gain from reading Critical Theory is an acute awareness of this fact, and the implication that being able to consider your work as somehow *outside* the political is, in fact, to already occupy a privileged vantage point from which you can ignore, intentionally or otherwise, issues of power and privilege.

SJPC: I'm picking up what you're putting down. In studio visits, the vast majority of people that have told me that their art isn't political just happen to be men, who also just happen to be white. Does that sound about right?

Sadly, it does. In my experience as a teacher, researcher, and white man born and raised somewhere in between the middle- and working-classes, I find that, whether deliberately or not, white men (including my former self!) tend to be utterly blind to the existence of enduring systems of oppression and domination, and to issues of power and privilege. My hunch is that because white men have possessed all the power afforded by society—within the home, the workplace, in higher-education, government, police, the legal system, the military, art, medicine, architecture, media, film, journalism, etc.—because each of these crucially important social practices and institutions has been, and largely continues to be, dominated by white men, it has proven very difficult for the forest to see itself for the trees. With any luck, as an increasing number of white men realize their place of power and privilege in society, their eyes might open to the reality lived by everybody else in the world, especially by members of social groups who have been historically disenfranchised.

SJPC: So, if an artist were to request a couple of recommendations of where to start with critical theory, something that would be at least a little welcoming, what would you suggest? It seems pretty germane—a responsibility, actually—to be thinking critically about power and oppression right now.

MB: An excellent place to start would be Stephen Eric Bronner's "Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction", (2011) which is part of a series of short introductory texts written by eminent scholars. Also of interest would be Adorno and Horkheimer's classic "Dialectic of Enlightenment" (1947), Herbert Marcuse's "One Dimensional Man" (1964), and Walter Benjamin's essays "Illuminations" (1968), which was edited by Hannah Arendt. And, for broader historical context, it wouldn't hurt to read work that has not only shaped Critical Theory, but has profoundly influenced the development of democratic societies throughout the history of the English-speaking world, like Plato's "Apology" or "Republic", Kant's "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals", Hegel's "Introduction to the Philosophy of History", or Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Morals", among many, many others. The list is endless!

SJPC: Thanks, Michael. This is super helpful!

necessarily require the foundations that other disciplines in humanities and sciences might. The best artists smash ideas, express themselves, and are willing and able to use their time and resources for their craft. Theoretically, art is non-hierarchical. In reality, it's difficult to escape art's who-you-know relationship to academies of prestige.

The format of the evening was a Q&A panel with four guests from different experimental art schools: Andrew Berardini of The Mountain School in Los Angeles, Sean Carney and Seth Cameron of The Bruce High Quality Foundation University in New York, and Carla Herrera-Pratt of SOMA Summer in Mexico City. The guests were friendly and charming, and the atmosphere was more playful and less cynical than the night before. A fun part of the night was listening to the speakers talk about what their alternative to the MFA actually is. The panelists could say where their programs happen and when. Further than that, explanations varied from laughing their way through explanations, relying on anecdotes, or requiring the audience to use their imagination. Does this mean they're bullshit? Of course not, they are experiments. The lack of clear form and explicit ideology lets the chips fall where they may. While some of the "classes" may have certain prompts or themes, it seems the real goal is to dedicate time and space to creative practice for its inherent rewards: community and productivity.

If the previous night's buzzword was "space", DIY MFA was about "community." This time, the link between theory and practice is obvious but still blurry. In theory, these pioneers want an alternative to dominant arts education and in practice they are experimenting. Aside from instruction and access to materials, an arts education affords students an invaluable resource; a peer group with which to live and work. The Internet is a great place to communicate, and imagine these places outside of arts education, but it's another caliber of radicalism to actualize this concept IRL. The panelists want to create intentional spaces that are more horizontal and inclusive without slouching into a party.

If these DIY MFA programs seem unrealistic compared to the empire of arts education looming over them, remember these experimenters are not asking how high but how far. With whom can they connect? Already, you can see these relationships forming. Seth Cameron mentioned that if in his pool of applicants he were to see a former student of Andrew Berardini's, he would probably jump that person to the top of the stack. This is the beginning of an alumni network. As artists emerge from these incubators, they have a host of former peers around the country with which to collaborate. Isn't this the same way all powerful constituencies form?

Dialogue like that of the two nights at Redline is necessary if we are going to get past lazy critique-of-capitalism banter and truly explore options. The artist community in Denver and that of the DIY art schools want solutions, but on what terms? The starving struggling artist exists for a reason: in a capitalist society it is rebellious to ignore the demands of the market and prioritize creative practice—in Denver or elsewhere. Most people want an affordable place to live and a decent education. These issues expand far outside of the artist community. How about affordable housing for the rest of Denver's homeless? How about DIY education for other disciplines? The critical answer is that the participants in the forums at Redline found a something in common to rally around. The next step after Redline is to find even more in common, more solidarity, in order to increase the collective volume of these questions.

OPENING ADDRESS

THE SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF FREE ARTISTS

Camel Collective

This text was originally written in 2010 as an introduction to *The Second World Congress of Free Artists*; a loose collection of scripts/performances representing a number of ventures on the topics of artistic pedagogy, alternative forms of education, and teaching art under the new conditions presented by neoliberal universities and colleges.¹

A podium to the left on which are a microphone and a bottle of water. A folding chair stands slightly behind. MELISSA enters. She wears a gray blouse with a black jacket, dress pants, and black flats. She is carrying notes. Her hair is tied away from her face. She wears heavy-framed glasses. Her bearing is that of a Ph.D. student at an important conference—confident, youthful, and nervous. She reads from her notes in an even voice. MELISSA has prepared for this and it is obvious she knows the text by heart; she is inaugurating a colloquium on the subject of art and pedagogy. (She is aware that there are professionals in the audience as well as on the stage.) Things have not gotten under way yet, and she is attempting to set the tone for what is to come.

MELISSA. Good morning. Can you all hear me? Yes?

Good morning. My name is Melissa, and I'm a representative of the Camel Collective. I'd like to thank you for coming to this, the Second World Congress of Free Artists. And thanks for coming out tonight in this terrible weather. I know it wasn't easy. I would also like to thank each of the participants, who have in some cases traveled very far to be with us tonight. Thailand ... Copenhagen ... Atlantic City ... [trailing off]

We have a lot to cover, and so, although we would like to leave ample time for questions and discussion, I ask that you reserve your questions and comments until after the presentations. Camel Collective would also like to thank the museum. Thank you, Fabiola. This is really a wonderful opportunity and as appropriate a place for this congress on the current state of art and pedagogy as I can imagine. There will be wine, coffee, and pastries afterward, and I hope to see you all then. Before we begin, I'd like to make a few preliminary remarks.

Uncaps her water and takes a few sips. Lights dim slightly.

[clearing her throat] On our way to the panel discussion, we wander through exhibitions that appear to us like empty classrooms. We are living in the midst of an "educational turn" in art, which congeals democratic processes into the semblance of classrooms—in our experience, among the most undemocratic of situations—and into line items on an artist's teaching résumé.

It's been some time since we last convened: fifty-eight years, ten months, and three days, to be exact. What took us so long? In our first meeting, Asger Jorn levied his opening address against the academic formalism of the Bauhaus and its training of artists into the artisans and engineers of capitalism's dreamworld.

[pause, another sip of water] We are no doubt in a different world today.

In Europe, the Bologna Process, combined with the alibi of an ongoing financial crisis, is leading to the privatization of universities and academies.² The current protests and occupations at universities in the United Kingdom, and those that have taken place in Germany, in Austria, in France ... and in Chile attest to a general refusal by students to accept this situation.

In the United States, students of the arts are asked to pay

extortionate tuitions, ensuring their future status as indentured workers, while artist-teachers host panel discussions on pedagogical methodologies. These colloquiums invariably end in the enervating consensus that art is an unteachable subject. But students are hungry for a more social and equitable world. We have seen moments where that world forms in universities and in art schools, but only in brief flashes and often in spite of the institutional structures that claim to guarantee it. We make students pay dearly for this.

Of course, we are not opposed to an examination of art in its turn toward pedagogy. On the contrary, we applaud those who work with and without educational institutions to reorient the training of the "good artist" from an adequate performer in a world she did not create or ask for to a transformative agent in a social process.

Turning, she removes her jacket, which she folds over the chair.

Here, you know, I would just like to interject that art is not a disciplinary subject outside of its application in the world.

Back at the podium, she continues.

Right. [with vigor] What is the "good artist" today if not a traveling salesman? An artist today is expected to be as much a globe-trotting lecturer as a committed pedagogue, as much an administrator as a creator, as much a public relations department as a critical intellect.

[as she takes a note] Can one exist as a critical intellect in a public relations department?

[to the audience] Is the "good artist" today just an effect of institutional cutbacks?

[quoting] "We have organized a Congress here. Why? What reason can there be for artists, the freest, most independent people in society—people who live like the lilies of the field—to come together, organize themselves, and undertake theoretical discussions?"

Perhaps this quote from Asger Jorn had a pertinence in its time, but today the description of artists living like "the lilies of the field" must be tempered by that of artists who now live like canaries in a coal mine.

The most independent are also the most vulnerable. But the most vulnerable are not always the most independent.

We take it for granted that we begin as free artists at our own peril. And yet to avoid nihilism, and the various fundamentalisms of the present, is to take this world as if it were the best of all possible worlds.

She pauses and looks out over the audience, letting it sink in.

The teaching of art must entail the transformation of the "good artist" into the free artist, which is to say, a free agent. Which is to say, a vanishing point. the second world congress of free artists

[gathering herself] So, why have we convened here today, we the most free of individuals?

Why are we here, if not to exert for a moment a certain degree of autonomy, to learn from ourselves, and to bring together a few bodies in tentative proximity if not solidarity?

Thank you and welcome.

Lights. Curtain.

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VEILED AND UNFURLED

LAURA SHILL REVEALS AND CONCEALS

Andrew Berardini

K



Image: Laura Shill | *Trophies #2* | fabric, balls, wood | 2016

The fabric folds and drapes, cinched it flows in straight lines and cascades into loose soft puddles. The curtain closes the stage, protects the magic of the ritual until the ceremony begins. The sumptuousness of the cloth, heavy or thin, natural or synthetic draws an eye like fingers down its slim length. In the exhaust and glare of the textile district, the old shopkeepers and young designers argue over yards in storefronts and arcades stuffed with bolts and bolts of exotic textures and colors, tight weaves and varied thread-counts, each clipped edge rubbed firmly between fingers, again and again, to truly feel a price through its sensuality on their tips.

Behind velvety and crowned little lords in certain old paintings, it's easy to forget the official subject, the spoilt princeling of a forgotten aristocrat, long moldered under a weathered tombstone, and lose yourself in the curtains that silkily ripple over their shoulder. Your stare holds a beat, then two, then time dissolves into the unreality of this cloth, more real than if it was pressed against your face, a skirt singing against your bare legs, and everything hazes out except those smooth folds, centuries away on a faraway continent from a disappeared civilization, if they ever existed truly outside the mind of the painter and the illusions of this canvas in its gilded frame hanging in front of you.

What curtains, conceals. Brides-to-be veil their faces, an old modesty tradition or some say the moment when hubby gets to claim his property, the privilege of a woman's face only for him to see. Many a blushing girl has been murdered for the crime of pulling away the veil, simply showing the brazen beauty of her face. In the Dance of the Seven Veils or really any midnight bellydancer's erotic shimmy, a female body rolls and flounces with and through the silks and organdies, taffetas and polyesters that veil her athletic allure, her movements summoning lechery in even the most sober amongst us. A slow reveal of feminine mysteries to an audience usually (but not always) composed of lusty dudes. The veils are beautiful because they are unveiled, a present unwrapped, but yet still just out of reach like the fruit that tortures Tantalus in Hades, always just in front of his lips but never to be mouthed. Anyone who really understands eroticism will tell you that the heat is

in the reveal, the blossoming of a body, a being, and finally a soul, each protective veil pulling away to uncover deeper and richer mysteries than the blunt stupidity of hardlight on simple anatomy or the brute consummation of an animal desire (though with consent, these too can have their place).

Standing in the studio of Laura Shill, the veils, metallic synthetics invented last week here perfectly fold like carved marble over hidden protuberances, maybe basketballs hung just so or pregnant bellies. Their maker calls them "trophies" and that doesn't foreclose either interpretation. A couple of these hang from the wall, unresolved and unresolvable. Unresolved as their maker was working her way through and how they worked, still in composition, ideas and feelings in process of being handled, arranged, decided through materials. Unresolvable because like most good art, it holds at least two, and many more meanings likely yet to be revealed. The more possible ways of seeing that any work can tease out of your eyes, the better. When there are those meanings just beyond our grasp, we call those works "haunting." They follow us like ghosts, Hamlet's dad pleading for justice, begging us to resolve their trauma, free them by seeing them as more than mist.

Close by in Laura's studio, the hundreds of arms of a pink fabric creature dangle with soft menace and weird enticement, giant pussies like doorways grin with teeth and pendulous breasts bloom in profusion. A fertility goddess to be worshipped, a monster for the patriarchy, the set of a particular vaginal Saturday morning children's tv show. Fabric gets gendered all the time, mostly because for centuries in many quarters, women were restricted from expressing creativity in little else. Louise Bourgeois's bulbous bodies, female in their curves, the sisters of the Venus of Willendorf woven and stitched, they celebrated the soft curve. The sensuous allure here has not disappeared in these wildly, tentacular vaginadentatas that Laura's stitched together, but their color and form, material and abundance make them both fearfully powerful and physically playful. Visceral subject combines with the fanciful in these soft things and any initial shock dissolves. And like most soft things, you can imagine them against your body, pillows and sofas, a place to let go of weight, too cushiony for anything too angular or driven like work. Something altogether theatrical, but much too corporeal to slump into the pejorative of that term, closer to ritual without feeling leaden with dead tradition.

In a series from a few years back called "Absent Lovers", Laura took the classic embrace embossed on the covers of romance novels and subtracted everything but a single figure, the man's arms wrapping around the empty space where his female lover once stood, a woman gripped in some desirous repose, sometimes either their hands or arms remained disembodied behind. The dudes look sweaty and a bit menacing (though sometimes yielding). The ladies often seem bent in some play-action of submission, though one or two seems caught up with the fire of her own desire. The trick is not the seen but the unseen, the invisible body pressed against their leftover lover, what shape did body possessed. When the hands remained, there was a kind of metaphor for desire, those fingers reaching out hungrily letting a body know how exactly attractive it is. A body disappeared in these cut outs is not too different than a body veiled, and both seem elegant allusions to the fierce and corporeal presence of real bodies, the kind playfully engorged into Laura's fabricky vaginal environments. And though the word "body" has appeared about fifty times above, I wouldn't even say that bodies are truly the subject even if often the medium. These works seem to explore those forces around bodies, desire and power, mystery and yearning, the geometry and gravity of physical being. As much as veils create a hankering for an unveiling, Laura's "Trophies" and other veiled objects and bodies don't ask for that, but hang in most classical repose telling me that the mystery is in its form, it's power in a curve never meant to be handled at all. Bodies here are not meant as objects of desire, but subjects of their own shapely force.

ENDNOTES

A

JONES OF ART

By Molly Bounds

B

- 1 DIY MFA is trademarked by a 9-week online writing course that offers a value of \$1200 for only \$397 and will help you "stop dreaming and start writing."
- 2 The closest metropolitan areas to Denver (*US Census estimated 2016 Population - 2,853,077*) with comparable populations : Albuquerque (*est. pop. 909,906*) : 420 miles South; Salt Lake City (*est. pop. 1,186,187*) : 522 miles West, Kansas City *est. 2016 population - 2,104,509*) : 605 miles East.
- 3 Thoughts / Feelings? Contact us at info@wwwvvvvv.co

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- 1 "Artists Report Back 2014," BFAMFAPhD, accessed February 17, 2017 <http://bfamfaphd.com/> - topic-reports See also <http://bfamfaphd.com/>
- 2 "Standards and Guidelines," CAA, accessed 02/17/2017 <http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/mfa.>
- 3 An online search described 2016-2017 annual tuition costs at the following MFA programs: Columbia University, \$57,296, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, -\$43,960, San Francisco Art Institute, \$40,096 University of Illinois Champaign (out-of-state), \$27,652 University of Colorado Boulder (out-of-state), \$32,230.
- 4 Comparing these three programs together pointed out that alternative post-graduate art education does not *only* rest on cost. While SOMA's tuition may seem like a pittance to us, Mexico, like many countries, subsidizes higher education. Note that SOMA is located in the same city as the tuition-free Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México (UNAM). According to an earlier conversation with Carla Herrera Prats, one of SOMA's founders, the desire to create SOMA stemmed from a need to offer a more theoretical and contemporary option than was available at UNAM.

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- 1 Robbie McClintock, "Toward a Place a Study in a World of Instruction," <http://www.educationalthought.org/files/rom2cu/1971-Place-for-Study-McClintock.pdf>
- 2 Paulo Freire, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition," trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014)
- 3 Jacques Ranciere, "The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation," trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991)

J

- 1 A series of adopted recommendations for the standardization of education in the European community forming the European Higher Education Area. Since its inception in 1999 the Bologna Process now includes 48 countries and the European Commission. <http://www.ehea.info>
- 2 In 1956, the artists Asger Jorn and Guiseppe Pinot Gallizio, members of the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, organized the First World Congress of Free Artists in Alba, Italy. Over the course of a week, six speakers addressed the concepts of free art and industrial activity, seeking to reflect on the legacy of the pedagogical models that, under constructivist principles, were implemented by the Bauhaus. By the 1950s, the results of this exercise indicated that the Bauhaus models had become barriers to critical thought and creativity within the arts. Inspired by this international association of artists, Camel Collective has organized a reaction to the hegemonic roles currently played by universities and academies in the establishment of discourses and the professionalization of artists. The first manifestation of this second congress took place in 2010 in the Aarhus Kunstbygning contemporary art center in Denmark.
- 3 Asger Jorn, "Opening Speech To The First Congress of Free Artists," (September, 1956) trans. Thomas Y. Levin <http://www.cdcc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/opening.html>



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medium.com/#mbibo

Molly Bounds

Molly Bounds is an illustrator, painter, and muralist local to Denver. Her work meditates on the correlation between self worth and otherness. Mostly through portraiture, gestural murals, and a lexicon of personal symbols she explores how power, authority, and the structural training of doubt can undermine those lacking agency in determining their futures. Bounds has exhibited at multiple Denver locations such as Dateline Gallery, Leisure Gallery, Redline Contemporary Art Center, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. She has shown her work in other cities such as Los Angeles, Portland, and Oakland. In her spare time, she enjoys reading comics, watching stand-up, and looking at commercial building listings on craigslist. Currently, Bounds is a resident artist at Redline Gallery and is working on creating a book-making artist residency in Denver.

mollybounds.com

Michael Brent

Michael Brent is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Denver. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2012, and before that he studied at the University of Toronto. He's among the founding members of the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research and the Bruce High Quality Foundation University. His most recent work has been published in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy, and he is currently organizing a conference on the topic of mental action and the metaphysics of mind. He has lived in Denver since 2014.

michaelbrent.org

Camel

Anthony Graves and Carla Herrera-Prats have worked together as Camel Collective since 2010. Graves & Herrera-Prats' artworks are motivated by research into marginal histories and critical pedagogies. Their works in performance, video, sculpture, and photography think through the contradictions of contemporary labor and the myths of cultural production, bringing together collaborators from a variety of professions. Camel Collective has exhibited and performed works at museums and exhibitions including REDCAT Gallery, Los Angeles (2015); Trienal de Artes Frestas, Sesc, Sorocaba, Brazil (2015); the Bard Hessel Museum, Annendale-on-Hudson, New York (2014); Casa del Lago, Mexico City (2013); Trienal Poli/Gráfica de San Juan, Puerto Rico (2012); Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2011); and Aarhus Kunsthalle, Denmark (2010). Camel has also exhibited works at Artist's Space, Art in General, Exit Art, and the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City.

From 2005–2010 Camel Collective was a group of artists, filmmakers, and curators that met to conduct research on labor and artist collectives.

camelcollective.org

Seth Cameron

Seth Cameron is an artist and educator based in New York City. As President of BHQFU (The Bruce High Quality Foundation University), a position he has held since the school's founding in 2009, he has overseen the program's growth from a kitchen table conversation to a year-round studio and teaching residency program that creates and offers free public courses to over five hundred students a semester. He has led numerous courses within the school on curriculum development, theories of value in art, creative writing and painting. Cameron is also an adjunct professor at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science & Art in New York City. Cameron's artistic practice is split between the collaborative, satirical, social sculpture of The Bruce High Quality Foundation and his own individual absolutely matter-of-fact abstract paintings. An exhibition by the collaborative opens at Leila Heller in Dubai in April. An exhibition of Cameron's paintings opens in June, 2017 at Nathalie Karg in New York.

Sean J Patrick Carney

Sean J Patrick Carney (b. 1982, Michigan) is an artist, comedian, and writer living and working in Brooklyn, NY. He is a member of Bruce High Quality Foundation University. In 2009, Carney founded Social Malpractice Publishing, an independent artist book label that has published more over 50 different artist books and editions. He is a regular contributor to Art in America and VICE. His works and performances have been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including Marlborough Gallery, New York; The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, Los Angeles; Showroom MAMA, Rotterdam, Netherlands; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Printed Matter, Inc, New York City; the Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada; and the 2009 Amsterdam Biennale. Carney's practice has received attention in print and online from Art:21; Artribune Italy; Gawker.com; Bad at Sports; the Oregonian; Higher Arc; Oyster Magazine, and more. He has taught courses at Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, OR; Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA; New York University's Department of Art and Art Professions; and the Bruce High Quality Foundation University.

seanjosephpatrickcarney.com

Lanny DeVuono

Lanny F DeVuono is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Colorado Denver and has taught at Eastern Washington University, New York University, William Paterson, Rangsit University in Thailand and Trivandrum College of Fine Art in India. She received a Fulbright Fellowship, a Washington State Artist Trust Fellowship, a GAP Grant, and artist residency awards at Yaddo, Centrum, Jentel and RedLine. In addition to her long standing interest in art and art education, she was a former art writer (Frances DeVuono) for Art News, New Art Examiner, Arts and Artweek, among other publications.

lannydevuono.com

Adam Gildar

Adam Gildar is the co-editor and designer of *WWW...* He is also the director of the conternporary art organization ArtPlant and owner of the eponymous Gildar Gallery. He has no formal training in art or art history and questions the use of 3rd person perspective to describe himself, while still succumbing to its professional necessity. Recent projects include co-curating the Biennial Ambassadors artist exchange and exhibition for the Biennial of the Americas 2015 and contributing to the catalog for the Walker Art Center's traveling exhibition *Hippie Modernism: The Search for Utopia*. Most recently he has collaborated with the artist Derrick Velazquez and a roster of itinerant contributors to create the unhinged sports/art zine *STATS* available for free right now at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver's open shelf library.

Matt Hastings

Matt Hastings is a doctoral student at The University of Colorado Boulder in the Education Foundations, Policy, and Practice department in the School of Education. Matt studies philosophy of education, weaving together research on neoliberalism, philosophy of science, democratic theory, and critical theory. He views art, education, and philosophy as fundamentally similar kinds of work. Before coming to CU Boulder, he created a graphic novel for his master's degree in Philosophy and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, worked in a public school near Chicago, taught English in Shenzhen, China, and majored in philosophy at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Carla Herrera-Prats

Carla Herrera-Prats is a practicing artist, exhibiting her work internationally both individually and as a member of Camel Collective, which she co-founded in 2005. She is also currently the director of SOMA summer in Mexico City. She was previously the co-director of the gallery Acceso A in Mexico City. Herrera-Prats has recently taught at the Cooper Union, the California Institute of the Arts, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University. She received her BFA at "La Esmeralda," in Mexico City, and her MFA in Photography at CalArts, Los Angeles. She has been a participant at the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.

carlaherreraprats.com

Cortney Lane Stell

Cortney Lane Stell is the co-editor of *WWW...* the Executive Director and Chief Curator of Black Cube, a nomadic contemporary art museum based in Denver, Colorado. She has held independent curatorial practice since 2006, which has included curating numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally for museums, university galleries, biennials and unconventional spaces. Stemming from a philosophical interest in art as communication, Stell has organized exhibitions that focus on artworks experimental in both conceptual and material nature, including exhibitions with artists such as Liam Gillick, Cyprien Gaillard, Daniel Arsham, and Shirley Tse. Stell is a PhD candidate in Media Communications at the European Graduate School in Switzerland.

cortneylanestell.com

Thomas Van De Pas

Thomas Van de Pas (b. 1995, Sheboygan, WI) contributed calendar event descriptions for *WWW...* He is an artist primarily working in the medium of memes. His work is included in the collections of Facebook Incorporated, @fuckjerry, Soulless Meme Harvesters Dot Com, and the National Security Agency. Follow him on twitter

[@sensitivepapi](https://twitter.com/sensitivepapi)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following people and venues for their selfless donation of time, space, resources and physical effort that allowed the DIY Art School Symposium and *WWW* to happen:

The People:

Stephanie McDaniel
Katie Lunde
Lauren Wright

The Places:

Dateline Gallery
The Dive-Inn
RedLine
Sputnik
Tank Studios

This publication would not have been possible without the generous support of the following organizations:



COURSE SCHEDULE

SPRING / SUMMER 2017

April 20 - 21.

Performance Art Weekend at Emmanuel Gallery

Emmanuel Gallery (1205 10th St, Denver)

10am - 7pm | Free
emmanuelgallery.org/events-1
(303) 315-7431

For the eighth iteration of performance art week, Auraria's Emmanuel Gallery is reaching out to professional artists for a variety of performance works. The week will include a BYOB (bring your own beamer) projection night on the 20th.

April 21.

Opening: Lanny DeVuono, *Terraforming*

Goodwin Fine Art (1255 Delaware St, Denver)

6pm - 9pm | Free
exhibition runs through June 3
goodwinfineart.com
(303) 573-1255

Painter, writer and educator Lanny DeVuono, known for her spectral landscape paintings and drawings, debuts a new series of works. Her landscapes often act as metaphor for the social and psychological environments we occupy.

April 25.

Talk: Gentrification

The Temple (2400 Curtis Street, Denver)

6:30pm - 8pm | Free
platteforum.org/event/artistactivist-lecture-series
(303) 893-0791

Itself located within an epicenter of new development, Platteforum hosts a lecture from Richard Farley, who served as architect and deputy director of Denver's urban design for a decade. Farley is at once familiar with the power players in Denver urban planning and, as a local since the 70s, personally invested in the city's trajectory. This event inaugurates a series of artist-activist lectures focused on building a just community.

April 26.

Office Hours:
w/ Adam Gildar and Cortney Lane Stell

Sputnik (3 S. Broadway, Denver)
4pm - 6pm | Free
wwwwww.co/officehours

Office Hours are an open invitation to informal and intentional dialog with VVWV contributors. For this session join Editors Cortney Stell and Adam Gildar to chat all things related to Issue 1 and alternative arts education.

Suggested reading

a) WWW Issue 1

Happy Hour specials - \$2 PBR and \$2 cans of Lost Lake, \$3 well drinks, \$5 wine

May 2.

Talk: Sensory Advantage

PlatteForum (2400 Curtis Street, Denver)

6:30pm - 8pm | Free
platteforum.org/event/temple-lecture-sensory-advantage
(303) 893-0791

Visual art privileges those with jet pilot vision. Katie Caron, Ann Cunningham, and Nathan Abels will explain their process behind a recent show of tactile art and explore possibilities of aesthetic experience for blind people.

May 3.

Talk: Anna Teresa Fernandez

Denver Art Museum (100 W 14th Ave Parkway, Denver)

6pm - 7pm | \$12 artists, \$15 DAM members, \$18 nonmembers
denverartmuseum.org/calendar/logan-lecture-ana-teresa-fernandez
More info: (720) 913-0130

As part of the DAM's Mi Tierra exhibition, exploring latino art and identity in the Southwest, artist Ana Teresa Fernández will be lecturing on her piece *Erasure*, a meditation on the disappearance of forty-three students in Mexico.

May 5.

Opening: Finishing School: *CYBERCY: Exploring Human Experience in the Post Internet Matrix*

GOCA 121 (121 S Tejon St. Suite 100, Colorado Springs)

5pm - 9pm | Free
exhibition runs through June 24th
uccs.edu/goca
(719) 255-3504

Personally targeted news feeds, advertising slipped into social media feeds, and subjective experience presented as news increasingly encroach on our lives, leaving us slathered in hyperreal goo. Los Angeles art collective Finishing School jams our algorithmically comfortable expectations in Cybercy. Watch Adam Curtis' Hypernormalization before you go.

May 13.

A Movable Feast!

Blair Caldwell African American Research Library
(2401 Welton St, Denver)
5:30pm - 7:00pm | Free
redlineart.org/upcomingevents/2017/5/13/a-moveable-feast
(303) 296-4448

Hosted by community-minded arts organization RedLine, artists Stephanie Kantor and George Perez pair up with community host Hadiya Evans to create a sculptural table at the Blair Caldwell African American Research Library. Community members are invited to gather at the site of the sculpture for a feast of local food, performance and conversation about the historic 5 Points neighborhood.

May 15 - 21.

Festival: Media Live: Void

Various Times and Venues in Boulder, CO | Free

Hub Location: BMOCA (1750 13th St, Boulder)
www.bmoa.org/medialive
(303) 443-2122

Wide-ranging and progressive festival focused on the intersection between art and technology. Medialive mixes performances, lectures, interactive artworks, tours, and site-specific installations, among other programming. Artists include Luke DuBois, Labeouf, Rönkkö & Turner, and Amalia Ulman.

May 19.

Opening: Lauren Pakradooni: Dither Dogs

Leisure (555 Santa Fe Dr., Denver)

7pm - 11pm
exhibition open one night only
leisure.studio

Artist Lauren Pakradooni works in sculptural forms based on depictions of sheets of paper in genre paintings & capriccio ruins in prints. The connection between these subjects is a fantasy driven depiction, one being of the everyday / "real" and the other imaginative reality of histories projected onto decaying architecture.

May 24.

Office Hours: w/ Michael Brent

4pm - 6pm | Free
Sputnik (3 S. Broadway, Denver)
wwwwww.co/officehours

Office Hours are an open invitation to intentional and informal dialog with VVWV contributors during a local happy hour. For this session join philosopher Michael Brent to gab about Critical Theory.

Suggested reading

a) Stephan Bronner's Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction
* book available on global.oup.com

b) The chapter on Traditional and Critical Theory from Max Horkheimer's Critical Theory
*download a free copy wwwwww.co/officehours

Happy Hour specials - \$2 PBR and \$2 cans of Lost Lake, \$3 well drinks, \$5 wine

May 26.

Opening: Jenny Morgan and Derrick Velasquez

MCA Denver (1485 Delgany, Denver)

6pm - 9pm | Free
exhibition runs through August
mca-denver.org
303-298-7554

MCA always throws heaters for opening celebrations, and the revelry will turn up another level for the dawn of summer. Jenny Morgan's portraits resonate with psychic energy, catacombs of the unconscious writ formal. Derrick Velasquez isolates and juxtaposes prefabricated materials ever-present but unseen in the urban experience, conjuring aesthetic power out of the banal.

May 30.

Talk: Mark Bradford

Denver Art Museum (100 W 14th Ave Parkway, Denver)

6pm - 7pm | \$12 artists, \$15 DAM members, \$18 general
denverartmuseum.org/calendar/logan-lecture-mark-bradford
(720) 913-0130

Mark Bradford, widely acknowledged as a contemporary master of abstraction who's paintings are charged with the high key history of African American experience will lecture on his process and the ways it intersects with the abstract expressionist luminary Clyfford Still with whom he currently shares the exhibition *Shade* at the Denver Art Museum.

June 2.

Opening: Now More Than Always
(Gimme Gimme The Money Please Please I Want The Money Please)
Curated by Taylor Balkissoon

Featuring:
Rashawn Griffin, Jibade-Khali Huffman, Tiona Nekkia McClodden, Shaina McCoy, Patrice Washington, Kahlil Cezanne Zawade

Gildar Gallery (82 S. Broadway, Denver)

6pm - 9pm
exhibition runs through July 1, 2017
gildargallery.com/exhibitions
(303) 993-4474

In this group exhibition artist and curator Taylor Balkissoon, navigates a hornet's nest of tensions around representation and commodification of black identity in the art world. Featuring national and international artists, Balkissoon will attempt to bite the hand that feeds while still getting fed.

June 7.

Talk: Laura Shill and Joel Swanson
Reflections on Venice
Moderated by Cortney Lane Stell

David B. Smith Gallery

7pm - 8pm | Free
1543 Wazee St, Denver, CO 80202
blackcubeart.org

Denver artists Laura Shill and Joel Swanson share incites surrounding their recent joint opening in Venice during the 57th Bienalle - *Personal Structures*.

June 9.

Opening: Dasha Shishkin: *Tram Pam Pam & Walk the Distance and Slow Down*: Selections from the Collection of JoAnn Gonzalez Hickey

BMOCA (1750 13th Street, Boulder)

6:30pm - 9pm | Free
bmoa.org/exhibitions/2017
(303) 443-2122

Major works on paper show at the BMOCA. Fragile yells, leaps into the imagination, lush yet rigorous, from Dasha Shishkin are paired with drawings from JoAnn Gonzalez Hickey's finely tailored collection like cabernet sauvignon and your ex-boyfriend's shirt.

June 16.

Opening: Adam Mliner: *Desirable Objects*

David B. Smith Gallery (1543 Wazee St, Denver)

7pm - 8pm | Free
Exhibitions runs through July 15, 2017
davidsmithgallery.com/exhibitions
(303) 893-4234

Organization is a sort of homecoming for Denver-raised, Pittsburgh-based artist Adam Milner. Milner's practice, focused on objects and history, wrings resonance out of minutiae. Expect formal precision and photo-ready aesthetics.

June 17.

Denver Zine Fest

Cervantes' (2635 Welton St, Denver)

10am - 5pm | Free
denverzinelibrary.org/2017-denver-zine-fest

A locus of local talent, presented in zine form. Break your twenties into small denomination bills and feel ink stains on low-GSM paper.

June 21.

Opening: Wade Guyton, Peter Fichli, David Weiss

637 E Hyman Ave, Aspen, CO 81611

Contact Museum for opening information | Free
Aspen Art Museum
aspenartmuseum.org
970-925-8050

Techno conceptual artist Wade Guyton collaborates with and pioneering conceptualists Fischli and Weiss. Interestingly one half of the Swiss duo is no longer alive, but perhaps this is only a minor hurdle for this trio who have established themselves through deadpan absurdity.

June 22.

Talk: Ritual Making and Spirituality in Art
w/ Tom Sachs and Tom Healy

Anderson Ranch Arts Center (Schermer Meeting Hall)

5263 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village
12:30PM | Call to Reserve Free Seats starting in May
andersonranch.org/event/critical-dialogue-ritual-making-spirituality-art
(970) 923-3181

Artist Tom Sachs best known for his obsessive recreations and faithful homages to NASA equipment using everyday sculptural materials and longtime collaborator writer and curator Tom Healy lead a two hour discussion that plumbs the depths of ritual, ceremony, and the impulse to make art and produce physical objects.

June 24.

Opening: Phil Bender: Christmas in July

Dateline (3004 Larimer St, Denver)

6pm - 11pm | Free
ddaateellinee.com

Veteran of the pop readymade, Phil Bender dives into his favorite subject: American consumer culture with a summer show of Christmas multiples. Get ready for grids and rows of religious paraphernalia transformed by the selective eye of this wry artist.

June 28.

Office Hours: w/ Matthew Hastings

Sputnik (3 S. Broadway, Denver)

4pm - 6pm | Free
wwwwww.co/officehours

Office Hours are an open invitation to intentional and informal dialog with VVWV contributors during a local happy hour. For this session join educational philosopher Matthew Hastings to talk educational theory and practice.

Suggested Reading

a) Robbie McClintock essay "Universal Voluntary Study"
link on wwwwww.co/officehours

Happy Hour specials - \$2 PBR and \$2 cans of Lost Lake, \$3 well drinks, \$5 wine