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ARTS+CULTURE MAGAZINE
HOUSTON

DECEMBER+JANUARY 2012 ARTSANDCULTURETX.COM

Love Goes to Press

By Martha Gellhorn
and Virginia Cowles
Regional Premiere



**November 23 -
December 23, 2012**

**Previews November 17,
18 & 21, 2012**

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**By Kathleen Tolan
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**January 17 -
February 10, 2013**

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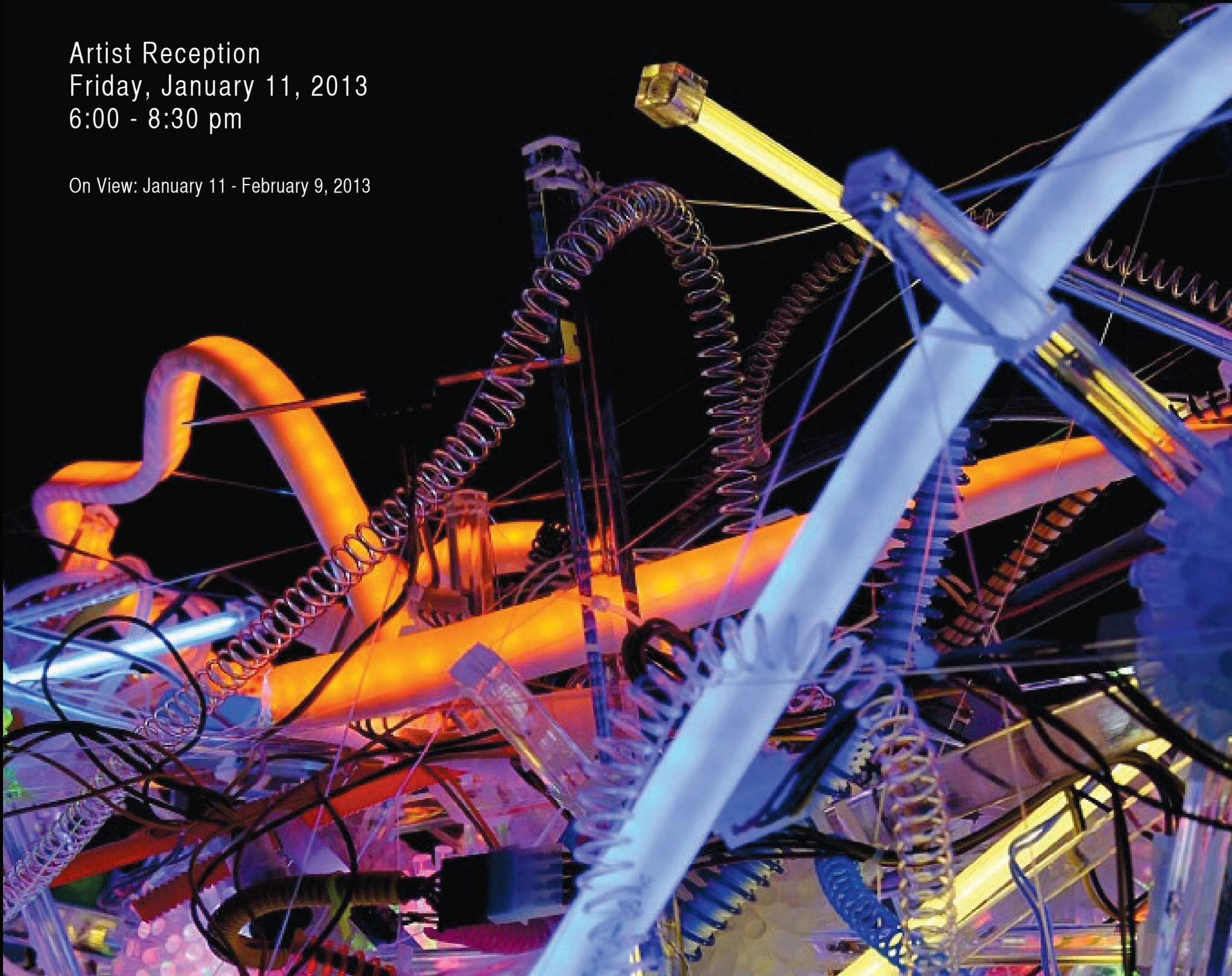
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EDITOR'S REMARKS



"There's a whole new energy going on at Art League," a fellow writer said to me. "We're on to it," I replied.

When I moved here over two decades ago, it took me about a year to find my art cohorts, and another year to find Diverse-Works. I will never forget meeting Michael Peranteau, the then DW chief. He welcomed me to the city, not just as a citizen, but as an artist. We chatted about my dance-making career. When I returned home, I told my husband, "OK, I'll unpack."

Peranteau has had an extraordinary history of arts activity and activism in Houston. So it follows that we should end our year of honoring those who toil in the trenches with Peranteau, now leading Arts League Houston, in the final Culture Warrior spot.

Word that the Dallas Museum of Art will offer free general admission prompted Devon Britt-Darby to ask, why not the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston? Read director Gary Tinterow's thoughts on the subject here, and stay tuned for more from Britt-Darby's interview with Tinterow in the February issue.

John DeMers looks back and ahead in his two theater features: TUTS's take on two vintage musicals and his profile of Black Lab Theatre, a small troupe with big plans.

There's more bubbling to the top in Nicole Zaza's story on David Tomas Martinez, her first installment on Houston's up and coming writers. Misha Penton also focuses on the lives of artists in her feature on three singers making their marks on the classical music scene.

Also on the move, quite literally, is Rice University's Chris Sperandio with *Cargo Space*, and Annie Strader of The Bridge Club performance collective with *The Trailer*. Nancy Zastudil gives us a ride on these mobile art projects, along with her insights on The Progress of Love at The Menil Collection.

More serious motion can be found in all the dance events coming down the 2013 pike, from Stephen Petronio's relentless epic *Underland* set to Nick Cave's songs, through Society for the Performing Arts to Dance Month at the The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston.

Our final Art/Ad Bomb of the year is by Houston artist Coy Hunger. You can reach him at chiselmark@gmail.com.

This is one feature-packed issue designed to take you through to the new year. As we cross over to 2013, we wish you all the good things, artful and otherwise.

– NANCY
nancy@artsandculturetx.com



ARTS+CULTURE MAGAZINE

THE STATE OF THE ARTS IN TEXAS

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NORTH TEXAS

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Dallas, Texas 75218
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COVER IMAGE

Art League Executive Director Michael Peranteau
Photo by Eric Hester



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Singer Dennis Arrowsmith
Photo by Thomas Campbell

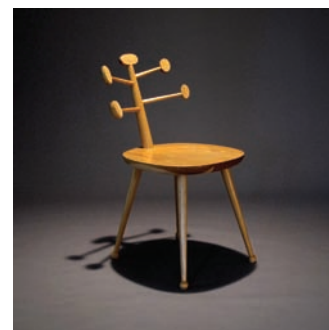
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ARTIFACTS

DANCERS BOOKED

Several Houston dancers appeared in the book *Dancers Among Us*, including Houston Ballet's Connor Walsh, Charles Charles-Louis Yoshiyama, Melody Mennite and Noble Motion Dance Company members Jesus Acosta, Tristin Ferguson, Jared Doster and Shohei Iwahama. www.dancersamongus.com

NEA BACKS WOZZECK

The Houston Symphony will receive \$35,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in support of its March 2013 production of a semi-staged version of Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck*. www.houstonsymphony.org

NEW ISLAMIC ART COMES TO MFAH

The MFAH announced a historic agreement to bring objects from one of the greatest collections of Islamic art in the world to the MFAH on long-term loan. Beginning January 26, 2013, some 60 of these objects will go on public display in the new Arts of the Islamic World Gallery in the museum's Caroline Weiss Law Building. www.mfah.org

2013 GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Idea Fund, a re-granting program funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and administered through DiverseWorks, Aurora Picture Show, and Project Row Houses announced the 2013 grantees, including The Bridge Club - Art and Performance Collaborative, Erin Curtis, Bill Davenport, Esteban Delgado, Everything Records / Robert Hodge and Philip Pyle, Madsen Minax, Ryan O'Malley, Joe Peña, Dr. Amber Scoon, and Jack Gron, Stephanie Saint Sanchez, Ethel Shipton and Nate Cassie and Walley Films - Mark Walley and Angela Walley. www.theideafund.org

B OF A GRANTS PRH

On behalf of Row House Community Development Corporation (RHDC), Project Row Houses (PRH) announced the receipt of a \$20,000 housing grant from Bank of America. www.projectrowhouses.org

MENNITE JOINS 30

Young Texans Against Cancer and Black-Finn American Grille honored Houston Ballet Principal Melody Mennite as one of Houston's Top 30 Under 30. Director of production Tom Boyd will leave the company to pursue his career as a freelance scenic designer in January 2013. He will be working on a new production of Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella* in the spring of 2013 for the Queensland Ballet in Australia, under the direction of former Houston Ballet Principal Dancer Li Cunxin. www.houstonballet.org

DENNIS IS DWDT DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Ashley Dennis is the new director of development at Dominic Walsh Dance Theater. www.dwdt.org

CURATOR CHOSEN

Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, announced that independent curator Cuauhtémoc Medina has been chosen as the sixth recipient of the biennial Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. www.menil.org



PHOTO BY JORDAN MATTERS



PHOTO BY JORDAN MATTERS

Top: Noble Motion Dance Company members Jesus Acosta, Tristin Ferguson, Jared Doster and Shohei Iwahama in Jordan Matters' *Dancers Among Us*
Below: Houston Ballet's Connor Walsh flying across the Gun Show as part of *Dancers Among Us*

STARK NAKED CARNAGE

Stark Naked Theatre has changed their second play to Yasmina Reza's *God of Carnage*, which will run from February 21st - March 9th, 2013. It will be the first time this play has been performed by Houston talent. www.starknakedtheatre.com



PHOTO: RON MCKINNEY

Houston Ballet Principal Melody Mennite

TRANSATLANTIC LOVE TRIANGLE

Triple-venue Exhibition Puts Amore Through Its Paces

“Love is a many-splendored thing,” says the novel, the film, the song, *and* the soap opera. You may have read in the Bible that love is patient and kind; however, if you ask Def Leppard, love bites. American culture presents us with numerous (and often conflicting) portrayals of love. Many of us think we know what love is but, when challenged, are hard-pressed to define it. Exploring a range of possible definitions is *The Progress of Love*, a triple-venue transatlantic exhibition that tells the story of love, but probably not the one you expect.

Beginning with the idea (or ideal), progressing through the experience, and ending with its loss, viewers have the opportunity to consider personal notions of love through historical and contemporary means – and to compare their experiences to those in Africa. On view concurrently at the Menil Collection; the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis; and the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria: *The Progress of Love* proposes that, for centuries, ideas of lived love in the West and in Africa have been, and continue to be, inseparable.

Pulitzer director and exhibition co-organizer Kristina Van Dyke says the show was motivated by her questioning and pursuit of what in love is timeless and universal, and what is culturally and historically specific. (The former curator for collections and research at the Menil, Van Dyke co-organized the show with Bisi Silva, an independent curator and director of the Lagos museum.)

While doing her PhD fieldwork in Africa, Van Dyke found herself frequently getting into conversations about love and relationships.

“For the first time, I was confronting arranged marriage in a very serious way, and I found myself asking if this was love,” she says. “African friends and colleagues had similar questions for me about how we ‘live out’ love in the US.”

The exhibition title is taken from a series of 18th-century paintings by artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard — works that were among the first in Europe to portray romantic love through contemporary modes, with people and fashion of the times as opposed to the conventions of allegorical or fictional representations. Painting, at that time in history, played a major role in advancing specific cultural understandings and depictions of love.

As the exhibition texts help explain, Fragonard’s contemporary though idealized depictions of romantic love were spreading through Western Europe concurrent with a substantial increase in wealth and leisure made possible primarily by colonialism and the African slave trade. Additionally, mass media was on the rise through the use and popularity of the printing press. A love triangle was forming.

“There are some things that are profoundly universal in love and loss — for example, heartbreak,” Van Dyke says. “The mechanisms by which we choose to understand and



Top: Kelechi Amadi-Obi, *Queen Amina* (1 of 2), © 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

Below: Yinka Shonibare, *The Swing* (after Fragonard). © 2012 Yinka Shonibare. Courtesy of the artist and Tate Collection, London.

exemplify these things are becoming increasingly homogenous as we share technologies and other progressive modes of communication and representation.”

The Progress of Love is not a conventional traveling survey exhibition. Instead, it is comprised of distinct reciprocal exhibitions that provide various facets of love, installed simultaneously in three different venues. At the Menil, love begins with and grows through aspirations and imagination; in the Lagos presentation, love is performed as a lived experience; and at the Pulitzer, there is no such thing as love without mourning its loss. Instead of representing the same works in different locations, the curators tailored each exhibit to its host institution, presenting culturally familiar notions of love alongside less familiar ones — another jump forward, this time for institutional collaboration.

The Menil presents 56 works by more than 20 artists from Africa, Europe, and America to examine what helps create our expectations and understandings of love, especially as they relate to the global systems that move love through its various stages (and from continent to continent). Language, mass media, digital technologies, and cultural traditions are major themes, questioning “whether our ideas about love are now coming into closer alignment across the Atlantic.” How does cross-cultural sharing of communication technologies (cellphones, email, the Internet, etc.) affect our translations of this universal experience in culturally specific terms?

Zoulikha Bouabdellah’s *Chéri* is an installation of an overwhelming 300 sheets of paper, each containing individual words for love written in red-lacquered Arabic. Saro-Wiwa’s commissioned Web project and video installation *They Love Each Other More Than We Do* asks the deceptively simple question, “Do Africans kiss?” (you might be surprised and educated by the answer). *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)* by Felix Gonzales-Torres presents two side-by-side battery-operated clocks that are initially set to the same time but eventually fall out of sync with one another. Yinka Shonibare’s sculptural installation *The Swing* (after Fragonard) seeks to overthrow

the historical visual narrative by recreating Fragonard’s iconic white European figures as headless mannequins clothed in pseudo-African fabrics.

Love may be blind, as the saying goes. But considering *The Progress of Love*’s numerous impressive artworks and international partners, it certainly isn’t idle.

— NANCY ZASTUDIL

Nancy Zastudil is an itinerant curator who can’t seem to stay away from Houston.

The Progress of Love
December 2, 2012 — March 17, 2013
The Menil Collection
www.menil.org

CULTURAL WARRIOR

Art League Houston's Michael Peranteau



Michael Peranteau in front of Daniel Anguilu's mural at Art League Houston

It's hard to think about the arts in this city without Michael Peranteau's name coming up. From *DiverseWorks* to *Project Row Houses* (PRH), Peranteau has been a steady presence on Houston's artscape for decades. He spoke with *A + C* editor, Nancy Wozny, about the next chapter in his arts life as executive director of Arts League Houston (ALH).

A + C: To what do you owe your astonishing longevity in the Houston arts world?

Michael Peranteau: I have been very lucky. Throughout my career I have been drawn to projects and organizations that challenged me and gave me vitality. Looking back, I notice that some of the most rewarding work happened in the leanest of times. Since I opened my first gallery, the Center for Art & Performance (CAP) in 1981, I knew that I was in a part of the world where I belonged: working with artists. From there, I went to *DiverseWorks*, and it was an incredibly fun and critical period in the art world. I was able to travel throughout the country for the NEA and arts conferences and to see art internationally.

It was also a very political time and artists were very

involved in politics and change. They were in D.C. fighting for their First Amendment rights and at the same time fighting for equitable pay for visual artists. I was lucky enough to have found my passion and I have been able to follow that passion for all these years. I'm grateful for the privilege and the honor of getting to know these artists, many of whom are now my friends and support system.

I did a happy dance when I found out you were the new Arts League chief. It made so much sense. For you, too?

When the executive director position opened at the Art League, it just felt like I might be the right person for the job. I had been a development director at SPA and *Project Row Houses* for a total of four and a half years and that was the longest period in my career I had gone without being directly involved with artists and in programming. I missed that. I also felt that my skill set was a good match for what I felt the Art League needed at this point in its history.

I'm working with a dedicated, creative team and we are all continuing to learn. The Board is engaged and working to secure our future and the staff is talented and committed. But most of all, it's a joyful place, and at this point in my life that may be the most important ingredient to a happy life for me.

How do you balance respecting the organization's early mission with forging forward?

Our mission is to cultivate awareness, appreciation, and accessibility of contemporary visual art within the community. That mission still fits perfectly with the programs of the Art League today. And it's a broad mission that gives us the ability to work in many arenas.

We run an art school for adults, we provide art programs for five Title 1 elementary schools and we also have a serious visual arts program. ALH will celebrate its 65th anniversary in the coming year. We are as vital as ever and continually work to further realize our mission in new and interesting ways.

Give us a flash overview of what's happening in the Art League space now and in the near future.

We are revamping our visual arts program by adding a small Artist Advisory Board and clarifying our exhibition selection process so that it is completely transparent. At the same time, we are starting a serious Public Art Program starting with a 180 foot sculpture by Patrick Renner on the esplanade in front of the Art League's headquarters.

Running through the first week of January are two exhibits, *STACKS* and *Flying Solo*. Curated by artist Robert Pruitt, *STACKS* looks at the relationship between cultural tropes and the notion of an authentic black experience. As a cathartic act, six artists utilized

the exhibition's opening to publicly deconstruct, destroy, and de-power materials that impede the construction and reception of Black imaginative power. These materials were literally deconstructed by a wood chipper and an ax on opening night and as the exhibition proceeds the artists will re-contextualize and revamp the ideas and products to create a multi dimensional view of black creativity.

Flying Solo, curated by ALH's Visual Arts Director Jennie Ash, looks at the work of seven artists who are not

“Throughout my career I have been drawn to projects and organizations that challenged me and gave me vitality”

– Michael Peranteau

represented by galleries. During the course of this exhibition there will be panel discussions with represented and unrepresented artists and dealers looking at all of the issues around gallery representation and *flying solo* and the implications and pros and cons of both.

In January, we have invited *El Rincon Social* (ERS), a collaborative artist organization in the East End, to take over one of ALH's gallery spaces. At ALH we will continue to connect with Houston's diverse communities in partnerships that will benefit the community at large.

Talk about art and politics.

I have been very political my entire life, and have always been drawn to political and community-based art. At *DiverseWorks*, we presented artists like Mel Chin, Sue Coe, Robbie Conal, *Gran Fury*, *Group Material*, *Guerilla Girls*, *Pomo Afro Homos*, *The Fourth Ward Exhibit*, among many others. The work at *Project Row Houses*, an organization I helped start, was groundbreaking, and to this day PRH remains a global model. Where the arts and social justice intersect has always been a place of inspiration for me. It's not the only one; however, it has paralleled our culture's and my personal journey.

How did you know that the arts would be central in your life?

I was always been attracted to the arts and even before I opened CAP with artist Max Pruneda in 1980, I had been working in a restaurant, 120 Portland, and we would clear out all of the tables and chairs at closing time on Saturday night and hang art all night and have Sunday afternoon openings. These exhibits were a success and hundreds of people would come. There was something very rewarding in connecting people to art, artists and community.

Stacks and Flying Solo
through January 4, 2013
www.artleaguehouston.org

Mr. Tinterow, Tear Down That Wall!

MFAH Director Should Let His “Love” of Free Admission Trump Fear

Maxwell Anderson, the talented, charismatic new director of the Dallas Museum of Art, made a splash recently by announcing that the DMA will return to free general admission and offer free memberships to anyone who wants one starting Jan. 23.

It's a move Gary Tinterow, the talented, charismatic new director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, applauds— indeed, he says, “I'd love for us to be free” — but he doubts that the larger, richer MFAH can afford to emulate the DMA's example. Going free, he warns, would lead to cuts in programming and the museum's 600-employee staff.

Still: the museum's own numbers show that special ticketed exhibitions — as distinct from general admission to the MFAH's collections and smaller temporary exhibits— will generate more than 90 percent of its projected \$2.4 million in admission revenue this year. (Tinterow said the museum will also realize \$2.6 million in memberships.) The MFAH expects to raise just \$225,000 in general admission revenue this year — just 0.4 percent of its \$54 million budget. A museum with a billion-dollar endowment in a city with more than a few philanthropic billionaires can find that kind of money under the couch — or, say, at a “Keep the MFAH Free” gala or luncheon.

Currently, general admission to the MFAH is \$10, with discounts for seniors, students and military. To its credit,

Saturdays and Sundays.

But the goal behind making general admission free all the time — improving public access to the MFAH's impressive collections, which often get overlooked in the hoopla accompanying ticketed temporary shows — should trump the surprisingly small amount of money at stake. Anderson told Dallas Morning News reporter Michael Granberry he hopes “that people will come more frequently and that the same people will come. Multiple visits will happen. We want them to make the collection a part of their lives.”

Tinterow did not respond to an email asking whether the MFAH should move to free general admission in light of the \$225,000 figure, but both before and after the DMA announcement he discussed admission charges in a wide-ranging interview and several subsequent emails, in which he outlined his aspirations for the museum's planned expansion and its collections and exhibitions

program, demonstrated an impressive command of both the MFAH's and the city's history, and robustly backed his current curatorial team while acknowledging he hopes to expand it. (Those topics will be covered in a second feature on Tinterow in the February A+C.)

He said the DMA's return to free membership “makes sense for them” and that nothing would make him happier than for “every single person in Houston to come several times a year to my museum,” but questioned to what extent Houstonians would respond to free admission, allowing that as he settles back into his hometown after decades away “I don't really know Houston well enough, and I don't have a strong enough sense of our audience here and what their motivation is and why they come.”

However, he pointed to a visitor survey of Houston-area residents who had not been to the MFAH in the year prior to the survey. Price ranked low on a list of factors behind such considerations as whether they thought they'd have fun or learn something, what the new exhi-



PHOTO: F. CARTER SMITH

bitions were, the safety of the neighborhood, and parking.

But judging from the experience of the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia, whose website urges visitors not to “feel like you have to scramble around and try to see everything in just one visit,” admission policies do impact visitor behavior.

“Since we've gone to our free general admission policy, we find our average time per visit is down, but the number of people who come back more often is way up,” says the *Planning Your Visit* page on chrysler.org.

Tinterow also pointed out that most free art museums — even those with extraordinary collections such as the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, the Saint Louis Museum of Art, and Houston's own Menil Collection, “do not run the ambitious exhibition schedule that we do.”

Neither does the DMA, suggests Tinterow, the former head curator of 19th-century, modern and contemporary art at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. He points out that when the DMA and the Met joined forces, in 2008, with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. to mount an ambitious J.M.W. Turner survey, “They said at the (Dallas) opening that they had never before done a big, expensive international loan show of that size. Houston mounts shows of that scale yearly.”

I don't want to be the Grinch who stole Goya — one of the masters to be featured in the MFAH's upcoming, specially ticketed exhibition *Portrait of Spain: Masterpieces from the Prado* (on view Dec. 16-March 31) — by advocating that the MFAH slash programming to finance free admission. But most museums that don't charge general admission still, like the MFAH, sell tickets to expensive, popular traveling shows, which generate the lion's share of the MFAH's admission revenue anyway. (The DMA will continue to sell tickets for special exhibitions.)

Still, MFAH spokesperson Mary Haus said in an email



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Shell already underwrites free general admission to the MFAH on Thursdays, and Target Free First Sundays welcomes visitors each month with family programs accompanying free general admission. Public library card-holders aged 6 to 18 get free general admission on

TINTEROW, CONTINUED

that “it’s not just the \$225K; there would inevitably be a drop in membership revenue — even at say a modest 10 percent that would mean a loss of another quarter-million— and decisions to make about how to offset those losses with cuts.”

Set aside, for now, the fact that many memberships are sold as ways to get discounts on tickets to blockbuster shows— a strategy that, whatever you think of its merits, wouldn’t be impeded by free general admission. Or that, as Anderson tells Granberry, low-level memberships — the kind most likely to be motivated by free membership — lose money anyway, which squares with what the late MFAH director Peter C. Marzio once told me when I complained about limitations on members’ repeat visits to ticketed shows.

Even set aside the problems with the MFAH’s growing tendency to charge extra for seemingly any show it can— even to present work from its own collection, as in last year’s only nominally curated Helmut Newton show, or when the need to sell tickets sits uneasily alongside curators’ intentions for their exhibitions. (*WAR/PHOTOGRAPHY* co-curator Anne Wilkes Tucker says the sprawling show is meant for repeat visits, but while Haus says MFAH guest services will honor ticketholders’ request to come back and finish seeing the show, which closes February 3, for free, it’s up to visitors to ask. Most will likely assume they have to rush through it to get their money’s worth. How can that help but cloud their impression of the MFAH?)

Pessimism about feared revenue losses fails to take into account the goodwill free admission generates. I’ve never heard anyone, even non-museum goers, react with anything but warmth and admiration when they hear a museum is free. And as Modern Art Notes blog editor Tyler Green and Los Angeles Times art critic Christopher Knight, both tireless free-admission champions, have noted, that goodwill can be harnessed to the advantage of museums’ fiscal health as well as their missions.

In August, voters in three Michigan counties that include and surround Detroit agreed to a property tax earmarked for \$23 million to keep the prestigious but financially strapped Detroit Institute of the Arts afloat in exchange for free admission for residents of those counties. And according to Knight, the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts’ attendance and membership both doubled after it switched to free general admission thanks in part to a campaign for donations to keep the museum free.

And if added attendance comes with added foot traffic to museum gift shops and restaurants, that’s another revenue opportunity generated by a generous gesture.

Anderson gives Granberry another reason for going free, one that hits on the message museums inadvertently send with transaction-based admission and membership models: “When somebody from South Dallas walks up to the front desk, and the person behind the counter says, ‘Welcome to the DMA — are you members?’ What are they hearing? It’s like walking into a country club. It freaks you out. It’s exclusionary. I want everybody to feel they belong here, so I want everybody to be a member.”

Whether to model its membership program after the DMA’s — and if so, to what degree — is a decision the museum needn’t and shouldn’t rush into. But the MFAH could move to free admission almost immediately if Tinterow is willing to sell the idea to the museum’s most generous backers.

The amount of revenue Tinterow would have to replace is miniscule in light of the MFAH’s budget and resources. And the outpouring of community support that could be unleashed by going free — a bold, yet surprisingly easy legacy move that would build on Marzio’s drive to make the MFAH “a place for all people” — could help Tinterow realize his dreams for Houston sooner than he thinks.

— DEVON BRITT-DARBY

Opposite Page

Left: Gary Tinterow

Below: Francisco de Goya, *The Infante Don Francisco de Paula Antonio*, 1800, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

EVELYN RUBENSTEIN JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER PRESENTS

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PHOTOS: Andis Applewhite, Kim Espinosa, Lori Garcia, Simon Gentry, Rick McCullough, Melissa Sweezy, Paul Gordon Emerson

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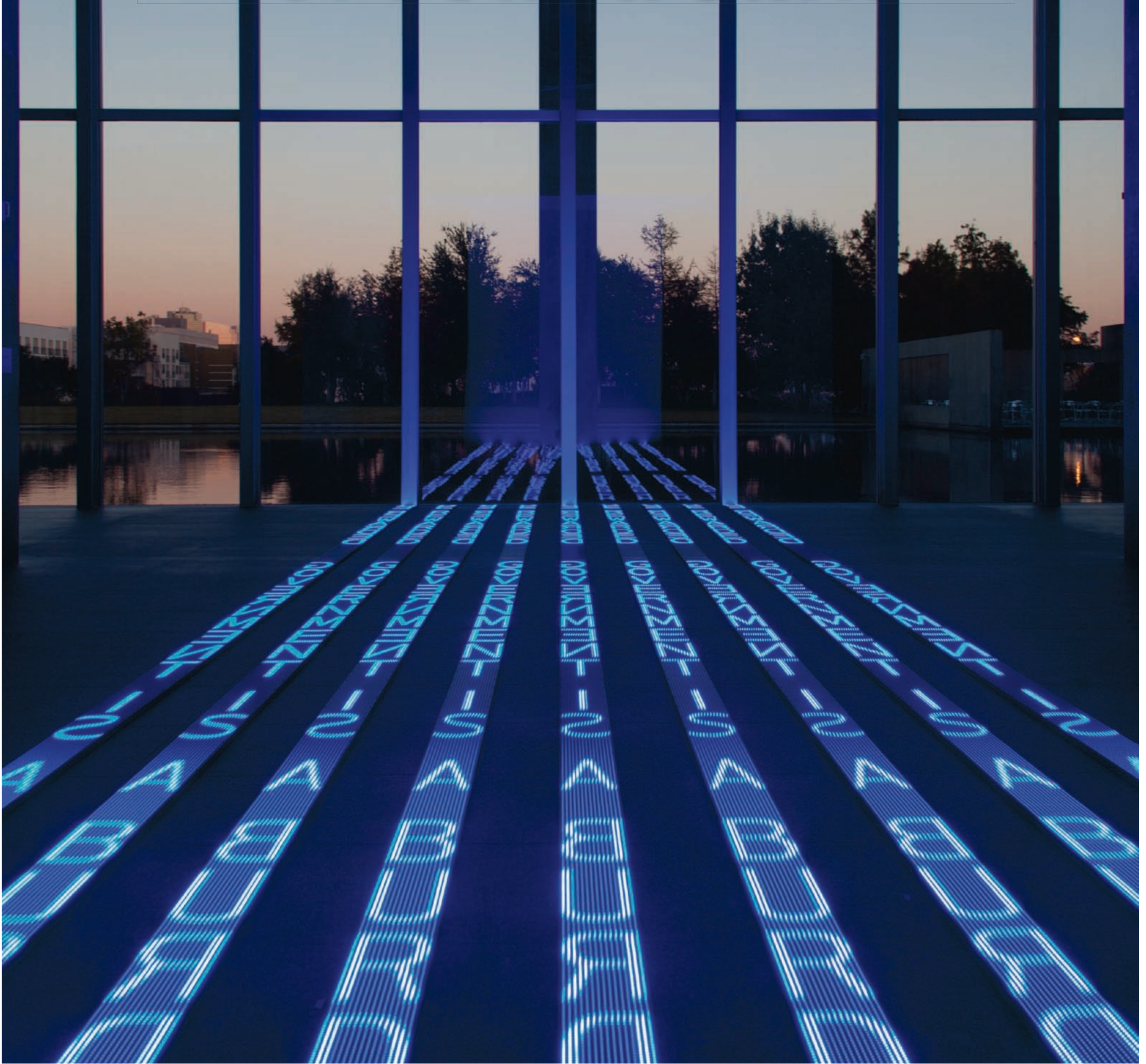
Dance Month at the Kaplan Theatre is funded in part by the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center Patrons of the Arts, a grant from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance and Houston Endowment.



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Jenny Holzer, *Kind of Blue*, 2012. 9 LED signs with blue diodes. 0.85 x 120 x 576 inches.
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EXPANDING THE CANON, COMBATING 'MYOPIA'

Radical Presence curator decries view that CAMH shows too many black, gay artists.

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston senior curator **Valerie Cassel Oliver**'s latest exhibition, *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, explores how black visual artists have used performance since the 1960s. She talked with *A+C* visual arts editor **Devon Britt-Darby** about the show and CAMH's role in presenting artists who often get overlooked or pigeonholed by standard art histories.



PHOTO: JACEK SIELSKI

PHOTO: LYDIA GREY

A+C Houston: Reading about Radical Presence, it sounds like the show addresses a misconception – that people associate black performance entirely with theater.

Valerie Cassel Oliver: Well, not so much a misconception of it, but rather where the scholarship is. The scholarship seems to be more solidly about black performance coming specifically out of theater, so while there have been some publications that have addressed it piecemeal or one artist out of a plentitude, this show creates a real examination of those artists working primarily in the visual arena who are doing performance work.

One bridge to that is Benjamin Patterson, who comes out of a classical music background, but then goes into creating visual objects and scores for actions and performances. I'm looking at that particular era – the 1960s – and the practices that are mostly aligned with Fluxus and the constellation of artists and that have that have come out of that period. So Patterson reemerges as sort of a foundational figure in really looking at artists working visually who are engaged in performance.

Are other artists from that period following his lead, or are other things happening simultaneously?

There are other things happening simultaneously: Los Angeles in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which is the other foundational stream in this, is where artists like Senga Nengudi, Maren Hassinger and Ulysses S. Jenkins come into play. And David Hammons went from Los Angeles to New York then.

David Hammons's early work is more ritualistic, so there's sort of a tableau or assemblage of objects, and then there's this action that happens with it. There are films where artists are creating these actions and filming themselves, very much like early Michael Snow.

So there's a carryover that isn't so specifically black; but my interest is in tracing the lineage and that whole arc, because they're not studied in the same numbers as other artists. If you pick up performance books, you may see something on Adrian Piper or David Hammons, but it's neglecting other artists who were active during that period of time. So this is just to insert that action and that history into the canon.

It starts with the 60s and 70s, but it continues all the way to the present day. How are you organizing the show?

The show itself is not necessarily organized chronologically, and I think what's always great is what the connective tissues are visually. I don't really try to bring chronological divisions into the space; I try to have it become a revelation: "Oh my God, that was done in 1973, or that was done in – oh, 2010!"

A few artists are debuting pieces here. William Pope.L, or Pope.L, he likes to be called now, is doing not only *Eating the Wall Street Journal* (2000) – we'll have the framework of it; he won't perform it – but he's also debuting a new piece called *Costuming the Body with Nothing*.

I noticed that Trenton Doyle Hancock has a "performance machine."

It's an interesting piece called *Off-Colored*. He had (his gallerist) feed him Jell-O of different colors, and then someone was in the machine with him, and they would throw out colored balloons of the Jell-O that he was eating, so it looked like he was consuming and expelling. He'll do a version of that here on January 31.

Throughout the run of the exhibit, we're having roughly 10 performances, and then there's a recurring performance, which is the Pope.L piece that happens in the space every week. Whenever there's a critical mass in the space, the performance will take place. It's supposed to be the encounter of seeing this thing happening, so we don't want to tell people when it's happening. But the oth-

ers are scheduled performance events.

We're collaborating with Project Row Houses and Musiq4 for the December 8 piece, which is Shaun El C. Leonardo. We'll show the film *El Conquistador vs. The Invisible Man* in the space, but then at Project Row Houses we have organized a performance where he's going to be wrestling another person, and Musiq4's going to be the musical accompaniment for it, so it's going to be wild. He said it's sort of like Victorian wrestling meets *Fight Club*.

One beef I hear some people in the art scene voice about CAMH, which I don't like hearing, is that CAMH only shows black artists or gay artists these days. What do you think of that?

It's tremendously myopic. No doubt about it, I'm interested in how black artists have moved through the world, but it does not define the museum's programming, nor does it define the museum. One can't say that when we've just had Jane Alexander on view, or look at the history – *Hand + Made* (2010) or *Splat Boom Pow!* (2003), Donald Moffett (2011) – any of number of exhibitions.

The bottom line is that it's not about black artists – though I would never deny that that's an interest of mine – but it's about how to broaden the discussion of things that really define contemporary art practice. *Cinema Remixed & Reloaded* (2008) was not just talking about black women. It was talking about video, and it was talking about the history of video and the ways and the methods that video has been presented in the white box.

Even though *Radical Presence* is about black artists working in performance, the subtext is that it is about performance art coming from the visual spectrum and the fact that you can pick up any book on performance and not see these artists in that book. To present someone like Donald Moffett was not just about presenting a gay artist; it was about presenting a painter who is really redefining how we understand painting today.

The art world, I'm sad to say, for the great openness that it considers itself to have, is generally a very narrow, very myopically minded subset of our community. I'm always a little surprised by it, but that's the way it is. That's why I'm here.

**Radical Presence:
Black Performance in Contemporary Art
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
November 17-February 15
www.camh.org**

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[THEATER]

Noble Knights and Windmills

TUTS Takes on a Pair of Classics

During the 1960s — like our own, a time of hope and, if possible, even more traumatic change — Broadway composers, lyricists and playwrights sought inspiration from two dazzling blasts from the past: a pre-English king who dreamed big dreams about noble knights and fair ladies, and a Spanish novelist who wrote one very big book. In the end, both musicals struck audiences as larger than their specific time and place. Both featured heroes that impressed audiences as idealistic in defiance of all available evidence. And both are coming to Houston's Hobby Center in the new year, courtesy of Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS).

Looking back, our nation's love affair with Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* probably has as much to do with its association with the tragically short presidency of John F. Kennedy as it does with the enduring power of Great Britain's King Arthur myth. And our love affair with Dale Wasserman's *Man of La Mancha* surely has as much to do with our appreciation of the ever-quirky "knight errant" named Don Quixote as with the Inquisition cruelties visited upon his creator, aging writer Miguel de Cervantes. Yet that multi-layered ambiguity is surely what sets these musicals apart, the way that in the end the idealism they celebrate and demand resides not primarily in the characters but in ourselves.

In discussing the lasting appeal of *Camelot* (which opens Jan. 22), director Richard Stafford draws on the basic premises of Arthurian legend — as even Walt Disney animators felt they had to in *The Sword and the Stone*. But he certainly and unashamedly sees the show's ancient tale as one resonating with Americans by way of the JFK era.

"A young boy pulls a mighty sword from a stone and becomes king of England," offers Stafford. "Such is the beginning of the legend of Camelot. In 1960, a new president is inspired by the musicalization of the legend, and uses the metaphor for greatness and destiny as he guides the country in the direction of change. Every generation since has remembered those beginnings and yearned for them again — never giving up the search. We are all inspired by the final lines of the play: 'Don't let it be forgot that once there was a spot for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.' We continue the search."

As for *Man of La Mancha* (opening Feb. 26), TUTS artistic director Bruce Lumpkin picks up on similar themes within the dual story of a writer finding the strength to face the cruelties of the Inquisition in the words and deeds of the character he has created, as performed with prisoners sharing his cell. Yet even more than in *Camelot*, Lumpkin is called to wrestle with the power of a single musical moment.

"If you ask an assortment of people from various countries and cultures if they know *Man of La Mancha*," says Lumpkin, "most know the show through the song 'The



PHOTO: CLAIRE MCADAMS

From top: *Camelot*, *Man of La Mancha*
Photos Courtesy of Theatre Under the Stars.

Impossible Dream' and can usually sing it — or parts of it anyway. I believe that this song, this story rather, is memorable and appealing cross generationally due to what it represents: hope. The compelling story inspires us to hope and to dream despite our circumstances. And in our current world and cultural climate, hope is something truly beautiful and desirable."

Camelot just barely made it into the '60s, being conceived in 1959 by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe (the Broadway team most famous for squeezing romantic *My Fair Lady* out of George Bernard Shaw's typically acerbic *Pygmalion*) as a way of squeezing a musical out of T. H. White's novel about Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot, *The Once and Future King*.

As directed by the legendary Moss Hart, who spent much of the show's prep time in the hospital, and who died shortly after the 1960 Broadway opening, the original production ran for an impressive 873 performances, placed a cast album at the top of U.S. charts for 60 weeks and a spun off a lavish film version in 1967. Then again, the show had what showbiz types call "good bones" — not to mention a cast led by Richard Burton as Arthur, a pre-*Mary Poppins* Julie Andrews as Guinevere and a handsome baritone named Robert Goulet making his Broadway debut as Sir Lancelot.

In addition to the innovative book by Wasserman (based on his non-musical teleplay *I, Don Quixote*), *Man of La Mancha* marched onto stages in 1965 on the strength of its stirring music by Mitch Leigh, and perhaps even more stirring lyrics by Joe Darion. (Intriguingly, the poet W.H. Auden took an initial swing at penning the lyrics, but his were rejected as being too sarcastic and political.)

As it worked out, all the show's strengths came together during the "play within a play" about Don Quixote, in that moment the aging knight explains to his idealized love Dulcinea what it means to be, well, *him*. "The Impossible Dream" became a standard for singers everywhere, from lounges to opera houses, though the song is also profoundly associated with Broadway's original Cervantes/Quixote, Richard Kiley.

The original production ran for 2,328 performances and picked up five of that year's Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Like *Camelot*, *Man of La Mancha* inspired a big-budget movie, with a lip-synching Peter O'Toole taking on the "quixotic" lead role and no less than Sophia Loren as his love Dulcinea, who is "really" a strumpet named Aldonza anyway.

And also like *Camelot*, *La Mancha* has been revived on Broadway and elsewhere many times, most recently with Brian Stokes Mitchell winning delirious praise for his acting and especially for his singing.

It will be fascinating on at least two levels to consider *Camelot* and *Man of La Mancha* side-by-side in a single TUTS season: as more traditional Broadway relics of the same 1960s that gave us loud rock musicals full of salty language and onstage nudity exemplified by *Hair*, yet also as iconic examples of 20th century musical theater's best efforts to use the art form to inspire us all.

In teaching us to expect something more from our days and nights on earth than mere existence, these two musicals (like their subjects, however real they were in history) may indeed be giving history a nudge in the right direction.

— JOHN DEMERS

John DeMers' 48th published book, *Peaches: A Celebration of America's Sweetest Season*, is due out this spring. His latest Chef Brett mystery novel, *Marfa Blues*, is now available as an ebook from Bright Sky Press.

Camelot
January 22-February 3, 2013
Man of La Mancha
February 26-March 10, 2013
Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
www.tuts.com

Dancing at the Edge of the World

SPA brings Stephen Petronio's *Underland* to Houston

“We conjure worlds out of nothing,”

wrote Stephen Petronio in his essay “Why I Dance” in *Dance Magazine*. And what a world the New York choreographer has conjured in *Underland*, making its Houston premiere on January 11, 2013 through the Society for the Performing Arts.

Petronio originally set *Underland* on the Sydney Dance Company in 2003. They didn't give him much time to set the piece. When asked what would get him there on short notice, he responded, “Get me Nick Cave.”

And they did. *Underland* is set to the Aussie Gothic rocker's most iconic songs. Together, with Petronio's highly visceral choreography, they create a kinetic landscape of a world in disaster. “It's definitely a world below the surface of the rational and outside of the rules,” says Petronio about his post-apocalyptic piece. “Nick's music is about darkness and light, good and evil. These are outlaw songs. And the dance came from the music, which is unusual for me.”

Stephen Petronio Company is in its 28th season. The company has performed in 25 countries with commissions from San Francisco Performances, The Joyce Theater, UCSB Arts & Lectures, Wexner Center for the Arts, Walker Art Center, and White Bird, along with numerous commissions in Europe. Among the upper echelon of mid-career artists, Petronio is on the upswing. He is the first participant in a new artist-in-residence program designed to help choreographers at the Joyce Theater. The choreographer is completely committed to the company model. “I am totally adamant that a company can function in the right circumstances,” he insists. “No one said it was going to be easy.”

Nor was it easy selecting the songs for *Underland* when Cave gave him full access to his entire canon. “I asked everyone for their favorite songs,” he says. “I listened a lot, and eventually came up with an arc that would work for the piece.”

Petronio is known for his high profile collaborators, which have included such legends as Rufus Wainwright, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Anderson and others. Ken Tabachnick created the visual design, and Mike Daly the video component, to build a physical world based on the four elements. Scenes of destruction, from fire and explosions, match the ferocity of the dancing.

In Petronio's world, the dancing is fierce. Even the word “athletic” doesn't suffice when describing his style. “Force, strength and power,” says the choreographer when talking about the visceral potency of his work. “I want my dancers' technique to be invisible, so we have an intelligent body acting intuitively in disorienting situations.” Petronio agrees that his work asks a lot of his dancers. The sheer velocity of *Underland's* movement vocabulary is a sight to behold. Dancers propel themselves through the air as if from an outside force. So it goes on planet Petronio.



Stephen Petronio Company in *Underland*

PHOTO: JULIE LEMBERGER

Underland has quickly assumed the role of one of Petronio's favorite works. “I love that I get to introduce a new generation to Nick Cave's work,” says Petronio. “Nick did not use temporal themes. The world is still at war, and issues of mortality are still with us.”

Underland actually ends on a hopeful note with the dancers dressed in white, while Cave bellows “Death is not the end.”

—NANCY WOZNY

Stephen Petronio Company
January 11, 2013
Society for the Performing Arts
Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
www.spahouston.org

Every year Houston dance maven Maxine Silberstein scours the nation to find the right company to headline Dance Month, which takes over Kaplan Theatre at The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston, January 10 - February 9, 2013. This year, the Washington, D. C. based Company E earned this treasured spot. Silberstein was new to the company, but not the choreographers on the bill: Andrea Miller and Roni Koresh have both held the center spot in previous Dance Months.

With a program featuring choreography by Israeli and Spanish choreographers, Company E is destined to dazzle. "Company E is all about strong dancers who can meet the challenge of the cutting edge choreographers," says Silberstein, JCC's dance director.

Over the years Houston Choreographers X6 has proved a steady indicator of rising talent. Silberstein and her team have put together a program that includes both veteran and younger dance-makers, including Kristen Frankiewicz, Laura Gutierrez, Lydia Hance, Erin Reck, Sandra Organ Solis, John R. Stronks and Erin Reck, who premieres *What Makes Us*. "This is a mash up of new ideas that we have been working on in the studio," says Reck. "We investigate the things that make us who we are, the things that happen directly to us, but also the things that happen in our world. The wars, politics, loves, losses, and how this then plays into our collective sensibility."

Motion Captured, an evening of dance on film, features one of Houston's leading dance filmmakers, Ashley Horn, in addition to nationally known artists. There's more community based fun with Israeli folk dancing at Tirkedu Houston and Mixed Bag, a celebration of Houston pre-professional dance troupes.

Dance Month
January 10 - February 9, 2013
Jewish Community Center
www.erjcchouston.org

Washington D. C. based Company E to perform
NEXT: An Evening of Choreography of Israel and Spain

PHOTO: PAUL EMERSON GORDON

COMPANY E & MORE

JCC's Annual Feast of Dance





Photo: Ben Doyle



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PHOTO: RICHARD JAFFE

Jordan Jaffe was your typical highly motivated, successful college student, son of two highly motivated, successful parents, pursuing a degree in Asian studies at Rice that had already inspired him to study Japanese and add Mandarin Chinese to his academic calendar.

Until he fell in with a bad crowd at the theater. Within less than five years Jaffe had accepted jobs as a male model (“boring,” he declares), quit all his programs at Rice, moved to Los Angeles for two years to seek film and TV work, moved to New York to polish his stage skills, then returned to Houston and Rice to finish his degree, this time in theater. And oh yes, he launched his own theater company to produce the sort of innovative plays that fill stages, and hopefully seats, in New York, Chicago and other major U.S. cities. Jaffe named the company in honor of his dog Brandy – Black Lab.

“My idea of the perfect play? – Hmm...” he muses, a tall, lanky leading-man-looking guy sitting at his desk amid the hive of artistic activity that is Spring Street Studios. “It’s the play you can’t look away from, and you have to know every single moment what happens next.”

By the end of the new Black Lab season that launches in January, all Houston theatergoers will have a better idea of what Jaffe considers the perfect play. First up is an off-Broadway success called *The Submission* by Jeff Talbott, a play about a play submitted to a distinguished American theater festival. The good news is that the play is about African-Americans living in



PHOTO: TRICIA YURCAK

the ghetto. The bad news is that the author (allegedly one Shaleeha G’ntamobi) isn’t really a woman or African-American and barely knows where or what a ghetto is. So he hires someone who looks the part to play her at the festival, and no doubt lots of thought-provoking hilarity ensues. Black Lab does not have a stage of its own, so *The Submission* – with a cast of four, directed by Jaffe himself – will be performed at Frenetic Theatre.

An even bigger deal comes from Jaffe’s company in May, in the form of the surprise Broadway hit *Chinglish* by David Henry Wong, to be performed (appropriately enough) in the beautiful theater inside Asia Society Texas in Houston’s Museum District. This play, about the culture shock experienced by an American businessman trying to land a lucrative sign-making contract in China, presents interesting casting challenges: not least the fact that much of the script is in Mandarin with English subtitles, thus requiring five Asian actors fluent in the language. One role is even a British expat who’s lived in China for twenty years. “We actually found someone who could handle that right here in Houston,” Jaffe beams, obviously proud of his town.

inevitable or not, there was theater.

“I guess, with my studies plus learning to speak the languages, I figured I’d be some kind of analyst for the government,” he recalls. “But then one day, before my second semester at Rice, I was walking through the Galleria and got approached by a model scout. I shot a portfolio, but I hated it. The next day at Rice I went to the theater department and said, ‘Sign me up.’”

As happens often in a college theater setting, life on, off and around the stage quickly drove away interest in all other academic disciplines. Jaffe remembers working as assistant stage manager for a department production by *True West* by Sam Shepard and starting the grueling process of auditioning for roles on campus and around town. It was this experience that inspired the trek to Los Angeles; he did appear in an episode of *Gossip Girl*, making out with somebody in a party montage, but as he simply summarizes: “LA is a very tough town.”

Switching coasts, Jaffe started classes at the Atlantic Acting School, the teaching wing of the Atlantic Theater Company. Here he

[THEATER]

YOUNG MAN AT PLAY

The New Adventure of Black Lab Theatre Company

was exposed to some of the best of contemporary theater – David Mamet even stopped by to talk to students one day – and became more than a little obsessed with reading new plays, pondering what they might mean and how they might be staged. Finally, growing homesick for Houston, he bundled up the mystery and meaning of all these experiences and headed south. He earned his theater degree from Rice in May 2011.

Black Lab grew out of meetings he had with one of his instructors, local actor Justin Dorn, who suggested a bit of basement space at Rice that might work as a black-box type theater. *Dying City* was the first show Black Lab put on, followed by *Farragut North*, the latter directed by Dorn. “I wasn’t even finished with the first play before I was looking for the second,” Jaffe recalls.

As the new Black Lab season gets ready to open, there are many challenges ahead, from matching productions to the taste of Houston audiences to finding funding large and small, since ticket revenues are almost never enough to pay the bills of a decently done show. Jaffe seems

confident he knows where the bridges are and that his life to date has prepared him to cross each one. Most of all, for him and now for Black Lab, there’s the magic of what you can do with those words on paper.

“There’s a special type of work that I enjoy,” he says. “When I first set out, I found myself auditioning for plays I didn’t even want to do, while a lot of the plays I liked weren’t being done.” Jaffe ponders a moment, then states what by now is obvious: “I really like being able to pick the plays.”

–JOHN DEMERS

The Submission
January 11-27
Frenetic Theatre
www.blacklabtheatre.com

Above: R to L Jordan Jaffe, Celeste Roberts, Lindsay Ehrhardt in the Black Lab Theatre production of *Boom*

Center: R to L Andy Ingalls, Jordan Jaffe, Séan Patrick Judge, Danica Johnston in the Black Lab Theatre production of *Farragut North*.

ART PALACE



BARRY STONE. *THE GALLANT GARNISHES OF 1760 YEARS (REMNANTS)*, 2011. ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT. 34" x 50".

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Rising Writers in Houston

Word Pusher: David Thomas Martinez

M Meeting David Tomas Martinez makes me wonder how many gang members are really frustrated poets.

“Growing up in the inner city, in southeast San Diego,” acknowledges Martinez, “You have to have a certain bravado, a toughness about you, if you don’t want to be messed with.”

constant rejection. “Writing is like a no game,” he says; “It’s just like the way some people date: They say, ‘I am going to ask 20 girls out and eventually someone will say yes.’” Martinez chuckles. “Somebody, somewhere is going to go out on a date with me.”

And it appears that someone does want to go on a date with Martinez. His first collection of poetry, *Hustle*, is set to be released in 2014 by Sarabande Books.

Martinez came to poetry the long way. A teenage father who barely graduated high school, he joined the navy and then on to Job Corps. When he decided to go to college, he got a scholarship to play basketball. Though Martinez never actually got off the bench, he did eventually get his degree. With some encouragement from his teacher, his application to graduate school was a lark. The poet now admits that his obliviousness to failure may have helped him along the way.

“I had to blindly believe, almost religiously, that this was going to work out if I worked hard – which, in the back of my head, I knew was bullshit!” He laughs again. Martinez’s easy laugh is punctuated by a wheeze that makes him sound exposed, vulnerable.

A kind of *bildungsroman*, the poems of *Hustle* follow Martinez through his gang years, when he was stealing cars; they explore his relationships, family, and end with his return to San Diego after finishing graduate school. This kind of eclecticism clearly attracts Martinez, who is

went to say that he is friends with “professors and pimps.” The tattoos that serve as armor for his chest, back and arm convey his desire to avoid being mistaken for anything concealable.

“I never want to let go completely of the kid from Southeast San Diego, who was a gang member and who did what he had to do to survive. That was in my head, that I needed to do these things. It wasn’t true. But that kind of perspective that I had – it’s important to me that that person is never too far from who I am. I don’t ever want to bleach who I am, to make myself academic... I want to be educated but I don’t want the kind of austerity that can come with that. The hospital cleanliness. The washing-away of personality.”

Despite his firm roots in California, Martinez is inspired by Houston: “I have never been around so many different types of people. The plurality of people is my favorite things about Houston. In Houston you can find an apartment building and a factory right next to each other. There is no way that won’t find its way into your work.”

Martinez now sees his writing as a chart of who he is, following the narratives that build inroads to identity. In the poem “Calaveras,” Martinez recounts a night trying to steal a car, offering, “This is mine. Where is the window to break in your life?” As he openly examines his own shadows, he surreptitiously implicates the reader. The path he makes in exploring “the liminal spaces of gender, ethnicity, social, economics, class, education, the educated, the uneducated,” pulls the rest of us in through his lens, “... what you have been through helps define who you are.”

Currently, the poet is working to pull together a roundtable featuring prominent Latino/a writers for a feature in the Spring 2013 issue of Gulf Coast Magazine, where he serves as Reviews and Interviews Editor. The process of constructing the panel has made him painfully aware of the dearth of Latina writers in our area.

This fuels Martinez’s attempts to transfer his own inspiration and resolve into his students at the University of Houston, “Everyone has witnessed some one who is physically gifted where you are like that person runs faster, bigger and naturally stronger ... Writing is no different. It’s not just the most athletic people that make it to be professional athletes. It’s the people who put in the most effort, the people that work, the people that have enough things going right for them that they can make it work.”

David Tomas Martinez is published or forthcoming in *San Diego Writer’s Ink* Volume 2 and 3, *Charlotte Journal*, *Poetry International*, and been featured in *Border Voices*, among others.

—NICOLE ZAZA

Nicole Zaza has worked as editor for Gulf Coast and Envy Magazine. A Houston native, she graduated with an MFA from the UH Creative Writing Program. She works as an adjunct professor at San Jacinto Community College and teaches writing classes at Inprint.



PHOTO: KARYNA MCGLYNN

The thirty-six-year-old credits the street with stealing him for the poetry world. “Part of what makes people want to write is ego and pride,” he explains. But he finds it difficult to withstand the constant criticism, the

Roam If You Want To

Houston Mobile Art Hits the Road

These days, being mobile is where it's at. And "it" is art.

Two Houston-bred transit-based art projects are getting ready to roll. Cargo Space and The Trailer both depend on renovated, re-purposed vehicles to take their art to diverse yet specific places, aiming to balance spontaneity with predictability and harness the momentum that comes with hitting the ground running.

But just how does this kind of art get moving?

As 50% of the internationally-recognized collaborative art duo Kartoon Kings and 100% assistant professor of painting and drawing at Rice University, artist Chris Sperandio's immeasurable creativity needed some breathing room. From that need, Cargo Space emerged – a Rice University transit bus turned arts-related land research vessel. The bus functions as a flexible tool for use; where it goes and what it does is entirely up to the people on board.

"There is so much distance between us and rest of the world. There simply aren't enough artists visiting this part of the country," says Sperandio, referencing Houston specifically.

A large portion of the project's geographical and conceptual mission is to conquer that dis-



PHOTOS: MATT WEEDMAN & JEFF FITLOW (BELOW)

Above, 1-4: The Bridge Club Performance Art Collaborative, *The Trailer*: mobile performance project, interior view with taxidermy cat and exterior view at Sam Houston State Park
Bottom, L to R: Ryan Perry, Kelly King, Ali Naghdali, Gabi Hulet, Fabian Vargan, Christopher Sperandio.

tance through travel and teamwork. Sitting at Houston's Black Hole cafe, fueled by coffee with a side of bacon jam, Sperandio showed me the plans for Cargo Space – art and research collaborations in Houston, and across the U.S, citing inspirational points of reference such as Jacques Cousteau and Calypso, retiree RV owners, and alternative shelter. After a brief aside about our mutual fascination with houseboats, he posed the question: "What can other arts organizations do knowing that a bus full of artists and researchers are headed their way?"

In anticipation of the possibilities, Sperandio and a group of volunteers are busy transforming the Rice bus into the Cargo Space: gutting and outfitting the bus with room to sleep six, a top and rear deck, fresh water supply, silent generator, workspace, wi-fi, along with other basic necessities, the progress and customizations of which can be tracked on the project website.

Eventually, Sperandio wants to give Cargo Space a 21st century Knight Rider-style brain so that it can "talk" about its systems, adventures, and people on board through ID tagging, Twitter, Facebook, and more.

Though Cargo Space is funded in part by the Humanities Research Center, Rice Office of Parking and Transportation, and the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts, Sperandio is master of this domain. He explains that much of the inspiration for the project came from, "...not asking permission and not having to wait in line; the other people have to catch up. Cargo Space helps us do that."

Not only will people have to catch up, but they will literally have to get on board. Houstonians have the chance to do just that, witnessing Cargo Space in all its mid-renovation gutted glory during the January open house-type event, *Are we there yet?* at Rice Gallery.

Equally itinerant is The Bridge Club, a group of four women, living in four different places, working together for seven years, who have recently renovated one 10' x 7' 1969 trailer to resemble a Victorian domestic interior. With that many numbers, the odds for success must be in their favor. A sparkling crystal vintage chandelier can't hurt either.

Annie Strader, Christine Owen, Emily Bivens, and Julie Wills each consider themselves object makers whose shared interests in activating objects, married

with ideas of experimental performance, gave birth to *The Trailer*. The project has recently received an Idea Fund Award. They are currently steering the project toward audiences that don't normally experience contemporary art, facilitating interactions with numerous people, places, and things, through one essential quality – mobility.

"We think it's interesting that someone from a small town could encounter us at a state park or truck stop and track us on our website, while someone in a major city who might encounter us at a contemporary arts venue could do the same," explains Strader, Assistant Professor of Art at Sam Houston State University.

At each site, people have the opportunity to provide responses to a series of intimate object-focused topics such as, "Tell us about something you inherited" or "Tell us about a trip you took and something you brought back home." (I should mention that *The Bridge Club* performances do not typically involve dialogue, which makes these interactions all the more curious.) People can also respond and participate in other ways on the website, as well as keep track of *The Trailer* as it travels from place to place.

Audience responses contribute to how *The Bridge Club* collects objects for *The Trailer* installations and performance activities. Instead of reproducing someone's memory, the result is an exquisite corps-style sequence of events wherein any alterations to the project are dependent on objects and information gathered previously.

"We want to highlight intersecting personal and cultural histories, as well as regional or local peculiarities and ideals," she says.

The Bridge Club is planning a mini-tour for *The Trailer*, March 21-23, and is currently scouting art and non-art locations in Houston and beyond (they are also open to invitations). Over the next few months, *The Trailer* will be around town doing pop-up performances, so keep an eye on their website and Facebook page. They may even send you a postcard.

–NANCY ZASTUDIL

Cargo Space unveiling
Sewall Hall/Rice Gallery
Thursday, January 31
8:00pm to 10:00pm
www.thecargospace.com
www.bridgeclubtrailer.com

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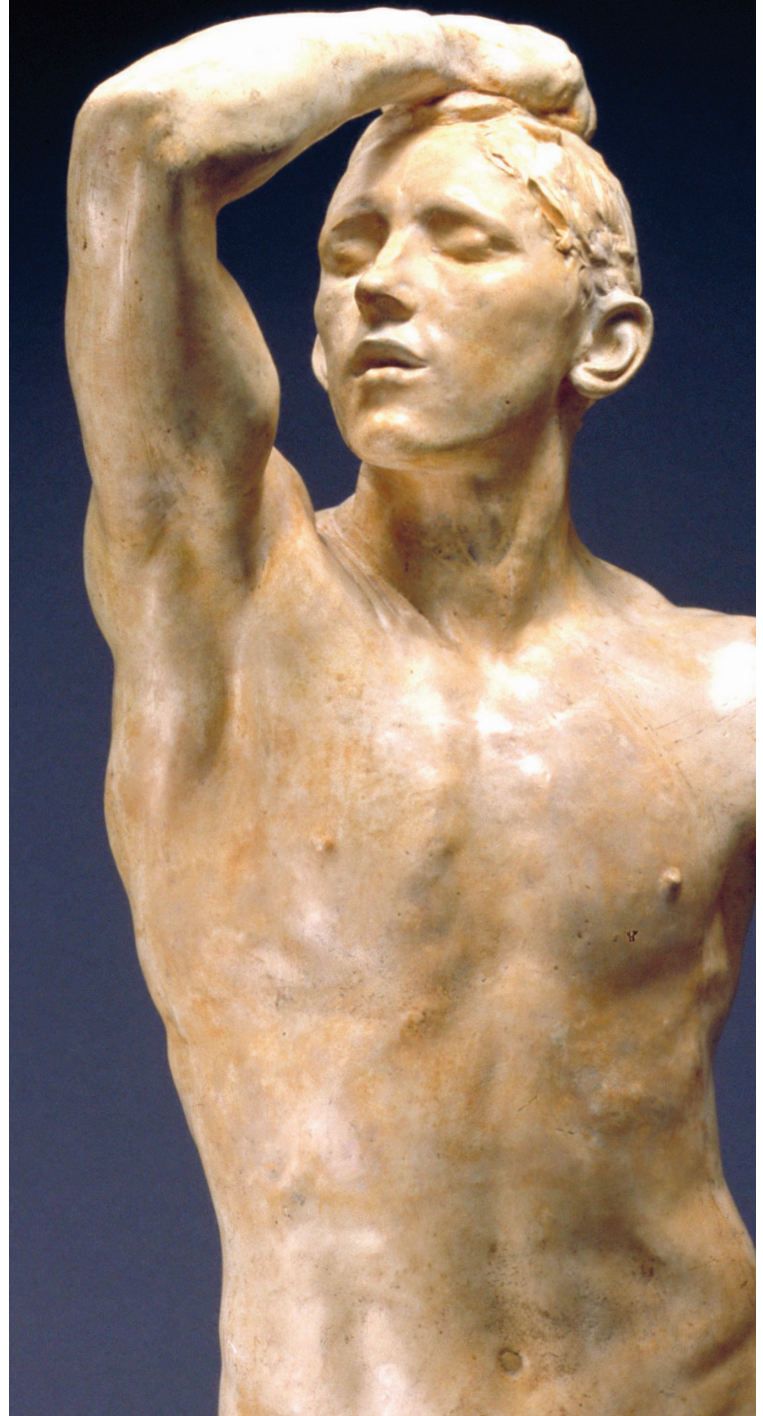
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“I invent nothing; I rediscover.”

- Auguste Rodin



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Auguste Rodin, *The Age of Bronze*, ca. 1876, Plaster, 71 1/2 x 25 1/2 x 21 1/4 in. (181.6 x 64.8 x 54 cm)
Photo: David Heald. Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas

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[MUSIC]

OUTSTANDING VOICES

Three Singers Make a Home in Houston



PHOTO: ERIC MELEAR

Left: Divergence Vocal Theater, *The 10th Muse*. L-R: Cody Parrott, Michael Walsh, Kade Smith, Dennis Arrowsmith
Below: Michael Walsh singing with Houston Chamber Choir



PHOTO: JEFF GRASS

The edges of my chiffon gown tickle the red carpet and my lofty, leopard print shoes lift me onto the escalators at the Wortham Theater Center. Surrounded by the soaring whimsy of Albert Paley's ribbon-like sculptures, I imagine the ensuing mayhem, should my dress catch in the escalator's powerful electronic teeth, ripping the delicate purple fabric from my untanned flesh. Perish the thought.

Inside the theater, the velvet seats cozy up around me. The familiar murmur of polite chat pitter-pats under the endearing cacophony of musicians in the pit, as they glide over sundry musical passages. The lights dim and patrons hush; the orchestra tunes, and applause erupts as the conductor appears. It is opening night, and some of the finest singers from the far reaches of the planet will grace the stage. Oh, no! I've forgotten my opera glasses. Drat.

While the soprano's high notes soar through the opera house, concurrently, all across Houston, there are other music makers making music, and other singers singing songs — and many of them live right under our noses, perhaps no farther than the neighbor next door.

Michael Walsh is a singer who has made Houston his personal and professional home, and enjoys a solo, ensemble, and teaching career. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, Michael has sung with Houston Grand Opera's *Opera to Go!*, *Opera in the Heights*, Divergence Vocal Theater, Amarillo Opera, Central City Opera, and Utah Opera. Now, his focus is on music education and singing with Houston Chamber Choir, a classical music gem, founded and directed by Robert Simpson. Michael recalls hearing the choir for the first time, performing Bach's Mass in B minor at Christ Church Cathedral.

"It was standing room only, and I remember standing in the last possible space for two and half hours, and I was riveted," says Walsh. "I was spellbound. The next day I called Bob [Simpson] and said, 'I have to be in this group.'"

Walsh has been singing with the choir for the past five seasons, and he thrives on the group's camaraderie, professionalism, and commitment to engaging audiences through music.

"Each season it gets better. We love coming together to make world class music," says Walsh. "We sing the great masterpieces, and really everyone in the choir has to be a virtuoso of their instrument or it just doesn't happen; it's being in a rare group of people where everyone is on their A game."

Walsh is equally passionate when he talks about passing on the art of singing to his students at Lone Star College Montgomery and Sam Houston State University.

"When I was in college, it never occurred to me that, one day, the great love of my life would be teaching. In retrospect, everything was preparing me to become a more informed teacher. It became something I loved, especially when I started seeing my

students succeed. I love giving back; it sounds cliché, but I do. Teaching is my favorite thing."

Dennis Arrowsmith is another singer hailing from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Like Michael, Dennis has carved out a singing career here in the Bayou City. He can be heard with Houston Grand Opera's renowned chorus, or as a soloist with HGO's *Opera to Go!*, and — perhaps at his finest when touched by comedic genius — in leading roles with The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston. Arrowsmith sees Houston as a boon for singers of all stripes.

"Houston is as diverse artistically as it is ethnically. One can sing with long established organizations or blaze new paths, and there's a hungry audience for both," says Arrowsmith. "In a city that's ever growing, there is room for performances of all sizes — limited only by imagination and gumption."

Shannon Langman Smith has imagination and gumption in spades, creating a niche for herself as a singer, music educator, and photographer. A graduate of University of Houston's Moores School of Music, she is a frequent concert soloist with Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church under the baton of Houston Symphony Chorus director, Charles Hausmann. As a music educator, Smith produces recitals with professional singers and students, and she uses her photographic skills in service to young

singers at the start of their careers.

"I have felt fulfilled and accepted in the Houston arts community like no other place, giving me freedom to stretch the possibilities of the artist I want to become, and open myself to mentor others," says Smith.

Houston's singers grace our grand opera, recital halls, churches, alternative venues, universities and schools. They likely live two doors down, just around the corner, or if you're lucky, even upstairs — doing what artists do best: enriching our lives with music and enhancing the cultural landscape of our city.

Houston Chamber Choir
"For Unto Us"

Saturday, December 8, 2012 at 7:30 pm
The Church of St. John the Divine,
2450 River Oaks Blvd., Houston

Christmas at the Villa
With Cynthia Clawson
Saturday, December 15, 2012
at 3:30 and 7:30 pm
Sunday, December 16, 2012
at 3:30 and 7:30 pm
Chapel of the Villa de Matel
6510 Lawndale Street, Houston

— MISHA PENTON
Misha Penton is a classical singer, new opera-music performer, poet, theater-media artist, and general shaker-upper.
www.mishapenton.com



RECENT + CURRENT WORKS OF NOTE

Houston Cinema Arts Festival

November 8-12, 2012

www.cinemartsociety.org

Film festivals are overwhelming. I always think I'm going to pick the good ones, but doesn't always work out that way. This year, for the Houston Cinema Arts Festival (HCAF), I took a few chances. Here are the highlights.

In an effort dubbed "Project Shirley," Milestone Films — headed by husband and wife team Dennis Doros and Amy Heller — has set out to restore and distribute Shirley Clarke's feature films and shorts. Clarke was an experimental, incredibly original filmmaker who influenced a generation of filmmakers, but somehow didn't find her way into fame in the male-dominated avant garde canon.

Shirley Clarke's *The Connection*, adapted from Jack Gelber's controversial 1959 stage play, is a funny, tragic, and strange film. A group of heroin addicts wait anxiously in a cramped loft for their dealer to show up and deliver their fix. To pass the time they play jazz, sleep, moan, philosophize, and play more jazz. A fictional director nudges and prods the dope-sick anti-heroes, cajoling them into telling us what being a dope fiend is all about. The self-awareness never ventures into the territory of trickery or annoyance, while still poking fun at the occasionally exploitative nature of documentary investigations.

While the characters may be tragically hip, the film never becomes too hip for itself. The pace and distance is carefully controlled. Nothing feels accidental. Arthur Ornitz's camera work is dynamic, sharp, and deliberate.

One of my issues with so-called "beat" narratives is that they try to imitate bebop as a naïve, relentless high without acknowledging the low that follows; hence the critique of typing without writing. In *The Connection*, Clarke slows down, allowing moments of tragedy to break through the cool, affected airs, revealing the sorrow and loneliness of addiction.

Clarke's *Ornette Coleman: Made in America* is a touching portrait of one of the most influential and prolific jazz musicians of all time. Coleman is up there when it comes to eccentrics, and Clarke's portrait of him does his strange genius justice. Clarke combines archival interviews, concert footage, fictional reenactments, and 1980s FX into a unique journey into the life and mind of her subject. I thought I knew a lot about Ornette Coleman, but watching the movie, I realized how little I knew.

Clarke's documents the intimate relationship Ornette and his son, Denardo, as Ornette encourages Denardo's growth as a musician, human being and later, as his manager. Coleman seems so completely at home in the camera's gaze, always grinning, speaking from his heart as he describes his successes, his failures, his hopes for himself, his family, and the human race. He really can't help but be so completely himself, it's a joy to watch.



PHOTO: © MILESTONE FILMS

Shirley Clarke and the actors the set of *The Connection*

Caesar Must Die, directed by Paolo Taviani and Vittorio Taviani, chronicles a production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* set in an Italian prison. During the auditions and casting decisions, the film feels like a documentary about the prisoners, but it quickly transforms into a filmed version of the play. As they start to learn their lines, dramatic music is cued in the background and the camera takes on a dramatic flair. Fragments of the play go on in the hallways, in their cell-blocks, with and without direction from the play's director, and with scripted or not-so-scripted squabbles between the actors.

The prison, with its empty concrete rooms bordered by wire and iron, looks like a better set than you could find on any professional theater stage. Some of the documentary interaction struck me as forced or scripted, but it's easily forgiven: It's about their experience as actors, and the lines between prisoner and actor should be blurry. Between the auditions and the final performance of the show, some of the prisoners undergo surprising transformations as actors, finding meaning through their art and a profound joy in the bleak landscape of incarceration.

-JOSEPH WOZNY

Joseph Wozny is a writer and musician living in Houston.

RECENT + CURRENT WORKS OF NOTE



Shimomura Crossing the Delaware by Roger Shimomura, acrylic on canvas, 2010. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; acquired through the generosity of Raymond L. Ocampo Jr., Sandra Oleksy Ocampo, and Robert P. Ocampo

Portraiture Now:
Asian American Portraits of Encounter
Asia Society Texas Center
November 9, 2012 - April 14, 2013
www.asiasociety.org/texas/exhibitions/portraiturennow

The latest exhibition to grace the Louisa Stude Sarofim Gallery at Asia Society Texas Center introduces an ensemble of Asian and Asian-American artists exploring such themes as personal growth, home, and broader social complexities of Asian and American cultural confluence. Organized by the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery, *Portraiture Now: Asian American Portraits of Encounter* examines identity from a range of cultural perspectives.

The featured artists are either Americans of Asian ancestry, direct transplants from Asia, or active in both continents. About half were born and raised outside of the United States but immigrated or have had meaningful contact with American culture.

Chinese-born Zhang Chun Hong, who is known as Hong Zhang in the U.S., creates large scale drawings of straight, black hair: both a defining characteristic of Zhang and a desirable feature in Chinese culture. Her diptych portrait *Twin Spirits #1* includes the locks of both Zhang and her sister, showing similarities and subtle differences. Zhang's use of chiaroscuro to render her subjects reflects on the philosophy of yin and yang. The contrasting values are not only inseparable, but requisite for defining its counterpart.

Korean video artist Hye Yeon Nam chooses to comment on broader societal pressures and the struggles of adaptation. Her videos in *Portraiture Now* focus on everyday activities made awkward or nearly futile. In

her *Self-Portrait: Drinking*, Nam perpetually fills and drinks from a cup with a large hole in the bottom. While nearly impossible, Nam faces the challenge with diligence and poise.

The show also includes artists of Asian ancestry who were raised in America either from birth or early age, often exploring identity within an American construct. Born to parents of Japanese and Mexican descent, Shizu Saldamando faithfully renders her figures — revelers at house parties in California — but surrounds them with gold leaf. By removing her subjects from their original context, Saldamando elevates them to a level often reserved for religious icons.

Korean-born, American-raised artist CYJO frames her work around the *Kyopo*, ethnic Koreans living in other countries. Now based primarily in Beijing, CYJO photographs full-length portraits of other *Kyopo* and accompanies each portrait with a blurb from the subject on the topic of immigration and identity their individual relationship with Korean and other cultures.

Nobody addresses cultural friction with the graphic immediacy delivered by Roger Shimomura, who spent part of his child-

hood during World War II in an Idaho internment camp for Japanese Americans. Often snarky, Shimomura superimposes his face onto Japanese pop icons like Hello Kitty or literally battles racist stereotypes from jingoist American propaganda of the World War II era.

Perhaps his most apt self-portrait is *Shimomura Crossing the Delaware*. In this riff on the iconic Emanuel Leutze painting, Shimomura retains the familiar composition but uses the visual vocabulary of Ukiyo-e prints to merge Shimomura's Japanese and American cultures into a whole. The treatment of the Delaware River harkens back to Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, and the boat is crewed by samurai straight from prints out of the floating world. The artist assumes the role of Washington, costumed in the traditional uniform.

Deliberately absurd, the image reconciles Shimomura's American and Asian backgrounds on his own terms. Of all the distinct practices featured in *Portraiture Now*, it's the show's oldest artist whose work packs the biggest punch.

— GEOFF SMITH

Geoff Smith is a twenty-something arts enthusiast, printmaker, and occasional curator.

RECENT + CURRENT WORKS OF NOTE

Love Goes To Press
Main Street Theater
November 23-December
23, 2012
www.mainstreettheater.com

This just in: the battle of the sexes meets the front in Main Street Theater's rediscovered mid-40's wartime romance *Love Goes To Press*. Despite the welcome presence of pre-feminist leading women (for once at the center of a love-struck farce) still-dated playwriting needs expert handling from experienced cast to claim victory over hearts and funny-bones.

Leading the charge: a completely period-and-picture perfect Crystal O'Brien, charmingly embodying her all too human war correspondent with a natural, empathetic charisma. Her ally, brashly emotional Elissa Levitt, is the love-'em-and-leave-'em dame all can salute. Their various love interests include the dashing yet dastardly Joe Kirkendall (as the Hemingway *man-qué* whose actual wartime divorce from journalist/playwright Martha Gellhorn is said to have inspired the piece), the initially gruff Joel Sandel (with a Yorkshire accent that to this ear sounded more Scot), and the briefly seen but welcome John Strickland as an understandably lovesick flyboy.

Stellar comic support is enlisted from David Wald, Philip Hays, Bobby Haworth, and two-scene gunner Brian Heaton. Less successful, arguably: relative newcomer Dain Geist (yet it's challenging to share comic relief with the seasoned Wald) and the comely Jacqui Grady, who relies on her natural bubble when a bit more variety might have entered the fray.

Pioneering journalists and playwrights Gellhorn and Virginia Cowles (as the prototypes of the O'Brien and Levitt leads) certainly knew their skirmishes, for between them they covered nearly every major global conflict during sixty year-plus careers. Seeming to come less organically is their marriage of contrived romantic farce (mismatched lovers, intercepted letters, mistaken identities, and fortuitous final coincidence) to the realistic setting of a press camp near a very active Italian battle line.



PHOTO: KAITLYN WALKER



Above, L-R: Jane Mason (Crystal O'Brien) and Major Philip Brooke-Jervaux (Joel Sandel)
Below, L-R: Daphne Rutherford (Jacqui Grady) and Joe Rogers (Joe Kirkendall)



PHOTO: KAITLYN WALKER

Despite the production team's clever effects of sound design and room-shaking physical detonation, we are left at a loss to fully commit to either genre. These shifts in the play's tone are given the best ammunition possible by director Mark Adams' hard-charging squad of actors, showing considerable *esprit de corps*, but we are left wanting to see how such talented salvos might be deployed on more even terrain.

Never shirking in their mission to bring us interesting texts, Main Street has once again pushed the envelope and introduced us to writers well worth further exploration. With a target-scope eye and ear, our playwrights hit many bulls-eyes about gender differences, as well as the universal struggle to balance personal lives and careers; at the very least, it makes us want to read more by them and about them. For that, we can thank this theater's roll-call of heroes.

— ROY HAMLIN

Roy Hamlin is a radical thespian of too many decades and too little common sense, with dramatic degrees of refinement despite inveterate clowning.

RECENT + CURRENT WORKS OF NOTE



PHOTO: AMITAVA SARKAR



PHOTO: AMITAVA SARKAR

Above, Right: Amy Fote and Simon Ball in Houston Ballet's production of Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*

Houston Ballet

Jubilee of Dance: A Tribute to Amy Fote

November 30, 2012

Wortham Center

www.houstonballet.org

What a bittersweet night at Houston Ballet's Jubilee: a Tribute to Amy Fote. Although we could have watched her dance all night, there were other treats in store. As usual, the *Jubilee* provided a smashing sampler of what's to come and greatest hits, including Melissa Hough and Connor Walsh's powerhouse pas de deux from Nicolo Fonte's *See(k)*. Strong, sexy and sensual, Fonte's off-kilter shapes fit perfectly on this dynamic couple. Christopher Gray had a great night in Stanton Welch's *Clear*, assisted by Ilya Kozadayev, Lauren Strongin and Derek Dunn, a newcomer to watch. Karina Gonzalez and Christopher Coomer emphasized the more exotic tones of Welch's signature *Indigo*. Pure elegance oozed from the company's performance of Twyla Tharp's *Brahms-Haydn Variations*, which offered to soothe our sorrow over the departing Fote.

Fote danced excerpts of her favorite roles in *Manon*, *Marie* and *Merry Widow*, reminding us all of why she was a ballerina like none other. It was her breathtaking interpretation of *Manon* that had the audiences gasping, "I will never see Amy Fote dance this again." Fote imbues every character in her grasp with such depth. A master of proportion, she knows when to use her generosity and when to hold back, letting us lean forward. Fote leaves a legacy of excellence. During her eight years at Houston Ballet she set a shining example of artistic discipline, commitment and extraordinary abilities.

A video tribute, written by David L. Groover and narrated by Louise Lester, took us on a journey through her extraordinary career from The Milwaukee Ballet to Houston Ballet, where she ends her career. During the rose-filled farewell, Welch dropped to his knees as if to say, thank you and don't leave. We were right there with him. We already miss her, but remember, you can catch her as Sugar Plum on December 29 in *The Nutcracker*.

Our last glimpse of Fote was one of her waltzing with joy, out of the ballet world and into the next chapter of her life. I wish her well and have been honored to be one of many in her spell.

— Nancy Wozny

RECENT + CURRENT WORKS OF NOTE

Gilad Efrat: Negev
Inman Gallery
November 3-January 5
www.inmangallery.com

In his latest exhibition at Inman Gallery, Israeli artist Gilad Efrat ruminates on the desert landscape of his childhood: the Negev which stretches along the southern triangular tip of Israel and is in many ways the proverbial no-man's land. Working from photographic material, including images he shot on his own travels, Efrat captures the static timelessness of the desert.

Following a complex process, Efrat suffuses the composition with a silent, hazy quality. Beginning with lighter colors, Efrat builds up the canvas with thin layers of paint, adding darker layers over time. Efrat uses a rag to remove the outer layers and reveal the strata of brighter colors beneath, subtracting and rubbing the layers together to create a blurred field. The closely cropped tamarisk studies reveal the sensual complexity of Efrat's process of application and removal—the stalks themselves deep incisions in the paint layers.

Efrat's landscapes are far from pastoral. They are uncer-

tain and eerily quiet. Irreducibly flat and lacking perspectival structure—indeed, Efrat has abandoned the traditional anchor of the landscape genre, the horizon line. There is a paradoxical quality to these landscapes. They are emptied out, devoid of discernible details to situate oneself in time or place, at the same time that they present a sense of perceptual overload.

His desert landscapes, populated by bands of salt cedars or remnants of Bedouin settlements, stretch on indefinitely and offer the viewer no clear position. Within certain canvases, the vantage point shifts from the ichnographic desert to moments of scenographic description.

This is not a unified space of order but an accumulation of unresolved moments and varied points of view. This optical vacillation is smartly taken up in the exhibition's installation where Efrat has paired desert panoramas with detailed tamarisk studies, the viewer moving from canvas to canvas literalizing visual flux.

— ELLIOTT ZOOEY MARTIN
 Elliott Zoey Martin is a writer and curator living in Houston.

**Right: Gilad Efrat – *Tamarisk (Negev)*, © 2012
 oil on linen 43-1/2 x 43-1/2 inches**

Below: Shane Tolbert's *Tuna Steak*, left, and *Copa Cola*, both © 2012



PHOTO: DEVON BRITT-DARBY



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND INMAN GALLERY

BRIEFLY NOTED

Shane Tolbert: Talk of Montauk

The Houston painter returns from an Edward Albee Foundation residency with suitcase-sized canvases, some of which nevertheless project a deceptive sense of bigness. The modest scale of these analytical yet dreamy abstractions – along with their experimental quality that references while departing from the subtractive process Tolbert used in previous work with dyed fabrics – suit the space well. So well, in fact, that *Tuna Steak*, a runny-nosed post-punk riff on Hans Hofmann, and *Copa Cola*, a sweet pink-and-green gem of a painting in which an orb hovers over shifting swatches of cross-hatched color fields, go beautifully not only with each other but with the aged, battered floor at Bill's Junk, where the show continues through December 22.

www.billdavenport.com/junkstore/junkstore.html

Joseph Havel: Hope and Desire

Pushing gallerist Hiram Butler's love of simplicity and empty space nearly to its logical conclusion, sculptor Joseph Havel removed most of his own show's pieces – ghostly resin casts of stacked books or fleshier, folksier ceramic variations of the same – from the main gallery, exiling them to secondary spaces that they inhabit with a aplomb, giving the exhibition the feeling of a rewarding scavenger hunt. The title work is a mural-sized, 10-panel grid of some 40,000 shirt labels – some bearing the word “hope,” others “desire,” concepts that sometimes coincide, often overlap and are still more often confused. All are arranged yet don't quite fall lockstep into patterns reminiscent of early Frank Stella *Black Paintings*, the labels' luxuriant French blue notwithstanding. It shares the room with *Architecture*, a resin tower cast from Sigmund Freud's collected works that tops out at five-feet-seven-inches, Freud's height. Through Jan. 26 at Hiram Butler Gallery.

www.hirambutler.com

Sharon Engelstein: I like that very much a lot

Individually evoking cartoonish fragments of bodies, Engelstein's 10 ceramic sculptures exude a creepy-and-kooky Addams Family-like charm. But it's the inspired way she's installed them – huddled together on Styrofoam pedestals, which bring out both their playful and melancholic qualities, they muster a tragicomic grandeur – that gives the ensemble an impact worthy of the best installations in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's recent *Shifting Paradigms in Contemporary Ceramics: The Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio Collection*. A knockout. Through December 22 at Devin Borden Gallery.

www.devinborden.com.

– DEVON BRITT-DARBY

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Terri Golas with the cast of Classical Theatre Company's *Miss Julie*/ Medley, Inc.

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Houston Arts Alliance's Business Volunteers for the Arts (BVA) program provides pro-bono consulting services to arts organizations by matching professional skills with organizational needs. Terri Golas has created nationally recognized, award-winning marketing campaigns for MD Anderson Cancer Center, and is a Business Volunteer for the Arts. She helped Classical Theatre Company (CTC) achieve its goal for a more dynamic website to communicate its bold vision to Houston and beyond. Thanks to Terri, CTC knows when arts and businesses partner, everyone profits.

Join BVA and donate a few hours every month to impact the arts community in a long-lasting and significant way. Volunteers should have at least three years of field experience to apply. To donate your time, contact Nyala Wright at Nyala@haatx.com or 713.581.6129. Pledge your support to BVA with your tax-deductible donation at houstonartsalliance.com.

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