History and Mission

*Artfusion News* serves as an open forum to learn about, discuss, advocate, and enjoy cultural activities in and around New York. Founded in Spring 2008, the magazine serves as a public voice for students of all majors who are interested in exploring and sharing their ideas on various forms of cultural expression, including art, music, dance, theatre, and film. *Artfusion News* contains works by practicing visual and performing artists, and interviews with Marymount students, alumni, and professors who are working in art-related fields. We also count on students to keep us posted on cultural activities abroad. As an interdisciplinary organization, we invite students to write articles and editorials on intersections among the arts, sciences, humanities, business, and social sciences. We hope, ultimately, to enrich the cultural awareness of all Marymount students by investigating and celebrating the limitless and unparalleled artistic and educational resources available to us through our distinct location—the heart of a great cultural capital—and beyond.

Policies and Procedures

All students are invited to submit work for publication in *Artfusion News*. Calls for submissions are made in “What’s Happening” announcements throughout the academic year. There is no minimum length for articles, though they may be edited for spatial considerations. Please email submissions of essays, interviews, and artwork to Prof. Adrienne Bell, Faculty Adviser of *Artfusion News*, at abell@mmm.edu. When submitting images (high resolution jpeg files are preferred), please include full caption information: artist, title of work, medium, date, and location. If possible, please credit the photographer or photo source. Finally, please include a brief autobiographical statement for the “About Our Contributors” page. If you would like to help with the editing, design, or production of future editions, please contact Prof. Bell.

*Artfusion News* is funded through donations and sales of advertisements. Approximately 500 copies are printed and distributed free of charge to the Marymount community at the end of each semester. Copies are also distributed to prospective students. *Artfusion News* is permanently available online through its own website. If you wish to place an advertisement in future editions, please contact Prof. Bell. If you would like to make a tax-deductable contribution to *Artfusion News*, please contact Carolyn Bolt, Director of Development, College Relations and Advancement, at (212) 517-0454 / cbolt@mmm.edu.

Dedication

This edition of *Artfusion News* is dedicated to the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. The LMCC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, represents the arts and culture throughout New York City, especially downtown Manhattan. It provides workspaces for artist residencies, information on grants, and support through information sessions and networking. It also sponsors a rich variety of public programs on the arts. For more information on the LMCC, check out this website: http://www.lmcc.net.
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARTFUSION NEWS 62
This is the eighth edition of Artfusion News, Marymount Manhattan College’s cultural-affairs magazine. I have had the opportunity to help this issue grow from seedling ideas into a final publication.

We have the pleasure of bringing to our readers accounts on fine and performing art from Marymount Manhattan, from New York, and from the world at large. In this edition, we are pleased to highlight the stories of two Dance majors, the career of Graphic Design Professor Jim Holl, the creative work of fine and performing artist Val Humphrey, ’13, and the innovative photographs of Charles Sainty, ’12. Lindsey Sullivan, ’13, offers a characteristically detailed and enthusiastic review of MMC’s Spring 2011 production of “Sweet Charity.”

We’re also up-to-date on the latest in cinema, museums, and theatre in New York City. Jamie Allen writes on “The Evolution of Wassily Kandinsky’s Style” and Seth Becker offers an excellent review of a recent Marcel Dzama exhibition. Kayla Burgett assesses “Private Lives” on Broadway; Katie Hennessy explores the art of caricature in “Infinite Jest,” a compelling Fall 2011 exhibition at the Met; and Kayley Fullerton describes what it’s like to have been an intern at the Rubin Museum, which features Himalayan art. I review the film version of Stieg Larsson’s best-selling novel “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” and Charles Sainty critiques photographs in a recent exhibition at the Armory.

Marymount Manhattan students have the opportunity to expand their education across the globe. We have received reports on the arts in Tuscania, Venice, Paris, and Shanghai from students who have taken advantage of exciting study-abroad programs. They write about censorship in China, archaeology in Italy, making glass and graffiti in Venice, and a Diane Arbus exhibition in Paris.

I would like to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to everyone involved in this issue; to all of our contributors; to our designer Lacey Budd; and to Professor Bell, whose initiative started and continues to propel Artfusion News through many semesters of publication.

Veronique Hoebeke, ’14
Assistant Editor

I would like enthusiastically to second Veronique’s thanks to all of the contributors for their excellent articles. Thanks, also, to Prof. Hallie Cohen for providing us with photographs of the Art Therapy artwork and Kayley Fullerton’s tour of the Rubin Museum. We are grateful to David Flores for his wonderful photographs of the “Dancers at Work” rehearsal and to Prof. Nancy Lushington for bringing David’s work to our attention. Special thanks to Jim Rogers, Dean of Admission, who regularly purchases copies of Artfusion News for prospective students and to the vendors who supplied us with advertisements. It’s been a great pleasure to work with the creative and dependable Lacey Budd, ’12, our ace designer. Quite simply, we would not have an edition without help from all of you.

Prof. Adrienne Bell
Faculty Adviser / Editor
In my work, I emphasize the things that photographers usually work to conceal—improper exposures, inkjet errors, pixelation, dust, etc.—so that the subjects are partially destroyed as they go through the process of being created. I want to draw a parallel between the fundamental, physical forces responsible for the creation and destruction of the photographs and those responsible for the life and death of its subjects. In that sense, I use distortion in photography to address this shared vulnerability, to account for those aspects of life beyond our knowledge and control. What is most important is that despite this process of degeneration, something of the subject’s essential humanity survives.
As Marymount Manhattan’s resident “King of Pop,” Leonardo da Vinci, “Sweet Transvestite,” and just about every other artist, icon, or character you could possibly think of, junior Val Humphrey shares her experiences and mantra as a Ben-and-Jerry-eating artist for now and a committed diva for life.

Michael Jackson is going blue. Nose pressed against the computer screen, the iconic music man is surfing the Ricky’s NYC website on a quest for the cheapest body paint. Instantly, the posthumous ‘80s king is replaced; Dr. Frank-N-Furter is now flashing me a devilish smile and mumbling not-so-sweet nothings in the signature British accent of Tim Curry. Curry’s accent changes to the rasp of Joan Rivers in a New-Yawk minute, and from Rivers comes the chart-topping anthems of Lady Gaga. Suddenly, Gaga bursts into giggles, kicking her legs up in her signature chunky, black, rhinestone flip-flops.

Hidden beneath this pile of red-carpet worthy characters, a slender young woman of twenty smooths out her “Rocky Horror Picture Show” t-shirt. Valerie Humphrey is eagerly waiting for my next question. I’m still recovering from the plethora of celebrity sightings that would put Us Weekly out of business.

“Honestly, my story is the same as most interviewees,” she starts with a surprisingly sincere modesty. “I’m your typical oddball. I just found out at an early age that I love attention.”

For a minute, her lack of makeup and hair pulled back into a quick ponytail almost fool me into believing her. But then, Humphrey starts belting the chorus of some P!nk song in a British accent, absent-mindedly clicking through Facebook pictures of herself dressed as Cher. Quicker than a Broadway costume change, she opens up the Deviant art web page. A mummified self-portrait, numerous just-can’t-sit-still life paintings, and dozens of caricatures starring Dr. Frank-N-Furter fill the screen. Original costumes marinated in glitter and a cake resembling a gargantuan hamburger greet the eye with a click of the word “Next.”
Humphrey is currently a junior Studio Art and Psychology major; she is also completing an Art Therapy minor. As a double major, she simultaneously studies the fascinating ways in which the human mind is able to transform incredible ideas into tangible results. A favorite subject is the life of the legendary Renaissance artist and scientist Leonardo da Vinci. Outside of the classroom, Humphrey lives these teachings. She turns newspapers into prom dresses (Fig. 1), a children’s cartoon character into a symbol of feminism.

At a glance, Humphrey’s plethora of creations, including paintings, impersonations, costumes, doodles, sketches, and set pieces, easily characterize her as a modern-day Leonardo. Nevertheless, Humphrey is a character all her own. “I first met the inimitable Valerie Humphrey her freshman year at MMC,” said Professor and Art Department Chair Hallie Cohen. “She was a Studio Art major, and I, her Adviser. Initially she struck me as a very polite, well-spoken, perhaps a bit shy young woman from the South. I was soon to discover an energetic, high-kicking, veritable bundle of creative energy, talent, wit, and intelligence!”

Though her roots lie in Lumberton, North Carolina, Humphrey is by no means a typical Southern Belle. She can certainly put the accent on, throw in some stereotypical mannerisms, and Bam! – it’s as if Sally Field walked straight out of “Forrest Gump.” But Humphrey is the antithesis of “typical.” She’s been impersonating celebrities since junior high school, obsessing over Michael Jackson since age twelve, and has had asymmetrical eyes since the day she was born.

“My right eye is blind,” she explains, gesturing to her smaller eyeball. She has strategically hidden it behind her hair, which is (at least for today) brown and blond. “The optic nerve never finished developing.” Humphrey remembers being shoved from the right side by kids in elementary school “because they knew I wouldn’t be able to see them.” However, Humphrey is not one to “get strung out” by the way she looks. “Some people have to go through way worse. You get one life. Might as well live it the way you want to. And, anyway, I want to be seen,” says Humphrey.

Humphrey has turned that blind eye to anything and anyone trying to threaten her star power, which she has had since she was only eight. “I was in a play with all these other kids. But I put sparkles all over my paper mâché star costume. And a feather boa. I was the diva,” she recalls, matter-of-factly. “Still am.”

Since her “star” debut, Humphrey has performed in numerous productions, including a variety show, which she produced, cast, directed, and designed in Lumberton during the summer of 2010. Called “The V-Train,” Humphrey starred as Gaga, Cher, Cindy Lauper, Cruella de Vil, and her specialty, Michael Jackson (Fig. 2).

Humphrey’s obsession with Jackson started when she saw his mug shot in the newspaper at age twelve—a strange way to
become infatuated with a celebrity, no doubt. Typically untypical, Humphrey went on to research MJ further, and to say she was inspired by what she discovered would be an understatement. “The costumes, the dancing, the attitude—he has this…explosionism!” recalls Humphrey. “I know that’s not a word. I’m gonna make it one for him.” After purchasing a black wig and a sequined glove, and memorizing every hip thrust, gesture, and voice inflection, she impersonated MJ for the first time at a school-wide Black History month presentation. Like an overnight celebrity, Humphrey became “Michael.” The same would happen when she moved to New York to attend MMC. “The best was when I ran into Janet [Jackson] in Dylan’s Candy Bar freshman year [dressed up as Michael]. It was right after he had died, and I was worried she would be offended, but she was like ‘He would love this. Thank you,’” she recalls, or rather, recites, sounding exactly like the Prince of Pop’s sister.

The role has had her stopped and photographed on the city streets, won her talent shows, and even gotten her free dinner at the Hard Rock Café. “For me, this was the ultimate theatrical transformation in my life,” says Humphrey. “Michael is the reason why I am a performer, and impersonating him enabled me to bust out of my shell.”

Though impersonating MJ is her signature, Humphrey is constantly creating new characters, costumes, and performance concepts. One has to wonder: what role has Humphrey not yet played? “I’ve never actually performed as myself,” says Humphrey. “I want to be Val, not Valerie. Valerie is a Southern Belle munching on a Big Mac and then stopping by Walmart in Lumberton. And that’s it. That’s her character. Val is blunt, vibrant, versatile, gender neutral, unexpected. That’s who I am. That’s who I want to be.”

Despite her MMC-renowned, chick-power performances as Lady Gaga and Smurfette, Humphrey prefers playing male roles, calling them “a badass combination of dominating and fabulous.” Jafar from “Aladdin” and Captain Jack

Fig. 2: Val Humphrey as Michael Jackson. Photo courtesy of Robin Humphrey.
Val Humphrey

Sparrow are some of her favorites. “She doesn’t break the rules. She bends them,” said MMC senior Cecilia Pérez-Homar, a close friend of Humphrey’s. “She makes them into a pretzel, and you can’t stop watching. Your neck gets bent into its own pretzel.”

Call a chiropractor, because Humphrey will be playing the role of Dr. Frank-N-Furter at Chelsea Cinemas’ weekly showing of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” beginning in February 2012 (Fig. 3). This wacky film adaptation of the British rock musical “The Rocky Horror Show” provided Tim Curry with his breakout role as the frightening and fabulous Sweet Transvestite Dr. Frank-N-Furter. The terribly reviewed film sparked a surprising cult following that is alive and well today; dedicated midnight-showing audience members wear lingerie, throw toast, and dance the “Time Warp” in front of movie projectors all over the world, reciting the movie’s lines like Scripture.

Humphrey has been a loud, proud, and loyal member of this audience every weekend at Chelsea Cinemas since her freshman year at MMC. As with Michael Jackson, Humphrey felt so inspired by the film’s “fabulosity” (she’s seen the movie over 200 times) that she started dressing up as Dr. Frank. Within her first few weeks of attending the Chelsea showings as Frank on Saturday nights this past semester, Humphrey was being complimented by the RHPS cast and mistaken by numerous audience members as the actual lead of the production. “This role has been the ultimate gender-defying challenge, the ultimate makeup challenge, the ultimate costuming challenge, the ultimate performance challenge,” says Humphrey. “Never before has my personality made such a transformation as it does when that wig goes on my head and those heels are on my feet. When that all happens, this woman is a new man!”

Bisexual transvestite Dr. Frank is as bawdy and bedazzled as he is complex; he attempts to have sexual relations with nearly every character in the film. However, the vulgar doctor is unable
to love: “You chew people up and spit them out again. You’re like a sponge. You take, take, take and drain others of their love and emotion,” says one of Dr. Frank’s past sexual conquests. Humphrey has truly committed to creating this role. She has been bedazzling corsets to make her own costumes and inventing back stories for each and every characteristic of Dr. Frank to make her own mark at Chelsea Cinemas. “When I impersonate someone, I don’t just act like them. That’s no fun. I become them,” explains Humphrey. “In my mind, Frank had a tragic past experience with love; his childhood flame (I named him Anthony) died, and he ‘copes’ with that by treating sex like some lusty, gaudy performance.”

As with many quick makeup and wardrobe fixes in her career as an impersonator, Humphrey creates these in-depth character qualities instantaneously, almost nonchalantly. The same goes for the majority of her drawings and doodles, like Fashionable Iron (Fig. 4). “This piece was the result of a quiet evening in a restaurant with Liza Minnelli singing in the background,” recalls Humphrey. “The diva in me wanted to jump out and sing with her, but there were irons, a.k.a. morals, holding me back, and so that is what got put on the paper. The irons have an invisible me inside, longing to be seen and heard, yet trapped.” Humphrey let out her ensnared ambitions out as soon as she returned home from the restaurant; the product was an insightful self-portrait. Humphrey’s doodle includes thick black strokes, emphasizing the idea of heavy metal, suffocating the artist’s desires. Nevertheless, the strokes are also looped, making a sort of swirly, whimsical figure; the lightheartedness, the fact that some of the lines look like musical notes, and the high heels to match are characteristic of Humphrey’s diva facet of her personality.

![Fashionable Iron](image)

Fig. 4: Val Humphrey, Fashionable Iron, September 2010, sketched with ink pen, approximately 6 1/2 by 9 in.

In addition to her swift and spontaneous creations, Humphrey also has the patience, skill, and sunburn to prove her diligence and dedication to more time-consuming products, like her sand creation. “To this day, every family vacation to the coast is an artful experience for me,” explains Humphrey. “I have been using the same rusty metal shovel for over ten years to draw images like these...
all over the North Carolina coastline. “The image of the beautiful woman would be breathtaking on paper; the fact that Humphrey utilized sand as a medium to merge the flowing strokes into one figure makes it a masterpiece not to be placed too close to the waves.

Very little comforts teachers and inspires onlookers more than a student’s passion and talent for what they are pursuing academically. To be sure, Humphrey has created a plethora of masterpieces at her leisure. Nevertheless, Humphrey has also submitted a number of paintings, sketches, and representations to her Studio Art classes, all of which are “quite distinctive,” according to Humphrey’s advisor, Professor Hallie Cohen. “Her work relies of a strong graphic style, using often high-toned prismatic colors,” explains Cohen. “She draws upon her exposure to popular culture, and her admiration for Tim Burton’s quirky themes. Often figurative and quite often, her creations are surprising, direct, and visually succinct.” Cohen’s watercolor course has been Humphrey’s favorite. One of her submissions to the class absolutely exemplifies the characteristic artistic qualities mentor Cohen has mentioned.

“One of my favorite pieces created in Professor Cohen’s class is Love is Parasitic. Of the few larger paintings I have ever done, this piece truly captures the emotional attachment I have with the concept of love and relationships,” explains Humphrey. “As an aspiring art therapist, I feel as if I have learned a lot about myself through analyzing this work alone. Originally, the roaches were not there; it was all hearts. Why did something in me suddenly ask for roaches? It’s fascinating.” The psychedelic colors adorning the hearts are appealing to the eye and directly contrast with the dark little parasites. The hearts overlap, almost melting together into one vibrant yet nearly intoxicatingly blurry mass. Love is Parasitic exemplifies the paradox of love as a joyous pleasure and obsessive, painful sickness.

Like many artists, Humphrey draws inspiration from her past experiences and personal mantras. Living fabulously and loving vibrantly despite pain are just a few; however, generosity is another one of Humphrey’s life values. To be sure, the Grape of Mine Eye (Fig. 5), sketch does not immediately strike the viewer with the theme of benevolence; the image itself is a bit gruesome, playing off of the cliché “the apple of my eye” with a dark humor.

Fig. 5: Val Humphrey, Grape of Mine Eye, April 2010, ink.
However, the picture’s location tells another story entirely. “The great thing about this piece is that I no longer own it. Tim Burton owns the original,” says Humphrey proudly. “I gave it to him as a gift at a book signing I attended my freshman year at the Museum of Modern Art. Once the signing was over, Mr. Burton asked that he be allowed to view my other sketches. It was an amazing encounter, and truly supports the phrase ‘It is far better to give than to receive.’” Burton’s mentality and creations have inspired Humphrey in her own artistic endeavors. She submitted Scissorhand (Fig. 6) to one of Cohen’s classes. Inspired by Burton’s character from the 1990 fantasy film Edward Scissorhands, this creation exemplifies the use of negative space.

“It’s the space around and between what is actually being depicted in the image,” clarifies Humphrey. “It’s sometimes used to create optical illusions like Rubin’s vase. Mine is a reverse shadow. I guess Burton’s Edward Scissorhands is an illusion in himself. The characters in the movie saw him as a deformed threat when he was actually an extraordinarily sweet individual. But he, just, you know, had razor sharp blades for hands.”

Embracing the out-of-the-ordinary is not only how Humphrey finds the inspiration to create, but this outlook is also how she approaches life. Clearly, the results prove fruitful. “Life is too short not to have fun, and you can’t have fun without taking risks and being a freak,” says Humphrey. “I’m still learning a lot. I’m not perfect. But I’m here. Might as well make something friggin’ fantastic. Oh, and with lots of glitter!” She may be learning a lot, but Humphrey and her creations can certainly teach aspiring artists and those in the strife to be more spontaneous.

“I’ve learned an abundance from this young woman. I have learned that if you have a passion and a goal and you set your mind to it, nothing can stop you,” says Cohen. “Stretch yourself, believe in yourself, work hard, engage with others, and you will be rewarded. Val exemplifies this.”
Searching for Success: 
An Interview with Professor Jim Holl 
by: Elizabeth Rosetty

There’s more than one way to solve this stuff, you know.

Ask any student who has ever had a Graphic Design class at Marymount Manhattan and they will tell you that resonating phrases like the ones printed throughout this article belong to none other than Professor Jim Holl, MFA, Associate Professor of Art. Holl’s success as a graphic designer, digital illustrator, and fine artist who has been practicing in New York City for over 25 years did not happen overnight, nor did it occur without the presence of hard work and, more important, creativity.

“The only significant artwork I saw growing up [in a small town in Washington State] was Gilbert Stuart’s painting of George Washington—and that was a print hanging on the wall behind my school teacher,” Holl says with a smile. He reflects on the outdated ideas in the area he grew up in, commenting that in the 1960s, Bremerton was still stuck in the 1950s. “I remember as a grade-schooler, there was a town contest to make a picture about fire safety. I drew a family standing in silhouette, hand in hand in front of a burnt down home with the headline ‘Home Sweet Home?’ I suppose this was my first graphic design project.”

Holl’s early efforts matured over time into the clean, deliberate approach he uses today. His method is primarily one of reductive analysis, with
roots in the Bauhaus and International Styles. “I advise my students to gather as much information as possible, then eliminate the extraneous to get to the most elemental core of the idea.” His students are all too aware of Holl’s preference for the simplistic; many may even claim they’ve been reprimanded for their artistic embellishments. However, Holl maintains that decorative elements are distracting and often cliché.

After winning the contest and having his picture taken with the mayor for the local newspaper, a young Jim Holl continued using his artistic talents by replicating home furniture store paintings that his mother brought home. “I suppose this was the beginning of my painting career.” Holl, who is multi-talented, currently prefers to create intuitive, emotional artwork that, contrary to his designs, bares no distinction to a predetermined approach. “I’m not afraid to destroy. The content is always latent. When the artwork stops talking to me, it is finished.”

During the course of our conversation, I was surprised to learn that Professor Holl earned his Bachelor’s degree in English Literature, rather than in the arts. However, not so surprisingly (as I had previously heard anecdotes of his somewhat “free-spirited” lifestyle), Holl worked as a suit salesman, declined an offer for a managerial position at J.C. Penney selling furniture store paintings, and, instead, hopped on a Greyhound bus headed for New York City.

His spontaneous decision paid off, but opportunity did not immediately present itself. After graduating with an MFA in Painting from Columbia University, he began a part-time job selling audio-tours at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He then learned of a job opening as a production assistant in the Design Department. He took on the challenge and won. “The abundance of art I pondered while wandering the galleries compensated for the scarcity of art I experienced growing up,” he explained. He was fearless and young, and eventually left the Met in pursuit of the Assistant Designer position at Fairchild Publishing. A career in advertising, corporate identity, and digital illustration soon followed. “I heard about a software program recently invented that would enable montages to be made digitally. A year later, I had mastered Photoshop and my skills were in high demand.”

In 1996, when he was hired to create a digital imaging class here at Marymount Manhattan, he returned to embrace what he calls his “youthful estimation of the pinnacle of success,” which was inspired by one of his professors, a figure painter whom he deeply admired. In 1999, he was hired full-time to create a Graphic Design program. This marked the beginning of Jim Holl’s career as one of our most poignant and inspiring instructors.

When Professor Holl asks his students, “Do you like that?” in reference to our design work, he sincerely means it. He wants a clear and honest answer because, in reality, that’s really all that matters. He notes, “A friend of mine once said during a moment of my despair that ‘It is only you who decides if you are an artist—the world doesn’t care.’” As a fourth-year design student
about to enter the “real world,” I can attest to the fact that these words carry an immense weight and an uncanny truth that I have undoubtedly come to realize thanks to Professor Holl’s distinctive teaching strategies.

One of the most important lessons that Professor Holl teaches his students is that of self-assurance and self-advocacy. Many early design students (myself included) quickly became aware of his seemingly brash opinions and particular design preferences (trust me, they are hard to miss). We were always focused on creating projects that “Jim would like”—projects for which we would receive an “A”—and spent far too much time searching for the “correct answer.” In my last few months as a student, I can finally say that I have learned that this tactic is, in any case, NOT the answer at all. I can also say that in hindsight, Professor Holl’s fervent opinions were not just meant to push us to be better designers, but to challenge and encourage our own sense of self-assurance in our own work. In theory, if we truly believed we had reached our full potential and we truly believed our work to be as effective as possible in terms of design, then we would naturally want nothing more than to defend it—and by my second or third course with Jim, I finally did.

Though I was still hesitant to disagree or argue with a professor’s more experienced, professional opinion, I challenged him. I immediately noticed a new spark of intrigue and excitement in my professor. This is not to say that I was always right; but if I wasn’t, I quickly realized that I could not clearly defend my case and that my design had not yet reached its full potential. Eventually, I learned to engage in an educated debate and intelligently defend the methods I used and the specific choices I made in my designs. I became more aware of these choices, understanding that design was not just about creating “pretty things.” It was about invention, originality, progression, clarity, and strategy. Professor Holl had successfully taught us that self-assurance, confidence in our work, and a convincing, supportive reasoning were more

“Silence means yes, folks.”
Searching for Success: An Interview with Professor Jim Holl

important (and, ultimately, more effective) than receiving an automatic seal of approval.

Jim Holl forces his students to think through and within the material. For myself and many others, this attitude is an invaluable life lesson. In a world where our own success so often feels like it is defined by others—in the form of awards, job titles, public approval, levels of education, income, and so on—this passionate push to take pride in our creativity and individuality is, to say the least, refreshing. This teaching strategy is exactly what makes Professor Holl unique and inspiring. The arts teach us that there are often multiple solutions to any one problem. Jim Holl had a clear understanding of this principle, which is what led to his diverse successes, including his effectiveness as a highly respected professor here at Marymount Manhattan.

The best part of teaching according to Jim Holl?

** Note: Jim Holl has written a book for students of art that elaborates on his own thoughts and experiences as a developing artist. It is called The Landscape Painter: An Autobiography 1974 through 1994 and was published by Charta Art Book Publishers. Jim Holl’s artwork and designs may be viewed at www.jimholl.com.
Searching for Success: Q & A Fast Facts with Jim Holl

Rosetty: Your influences?
Holl: Among those at my dinner parties there is a running discussion of who the five most important modern artists of the twentieth century are. On my list are Duchamp (the most important of all), Giacometti, Diebenkorn, Guston, Rothko—all painters—and the conceptualist Joseph Beuys.

Rosetty: Where do you think the art world is headed today?
Holl: My niece, who recently graduated from art school, says installation and digital media. I think the idea of art has broken from the notion of western modernist “isms,” to a plethora of global fragments. This is apparent in artwork seen in galleries, museums, and media that lean toward the literal—stressing ideas and individuals over objects and aesthetics. Personally, I prefer objects and aesthetics. I was once a radical; now, I am a traditionalist. There is nothing more to be said with regard to idea of the avant-garde in traditional media and film. In our time, the radical artist is an Internet coder.

Rosetty: Something funny that has happened to you recently?
Holl: This interview.

Rosetty: What changes have you seen in Marymount’s Graphic Design program?
Holl: I have seen it from its inception. It is gratifying to see the program grow and to watch students graduate and succeed in advancing their careers. Yet, it continues to be a challenge to garner institutional support.

Rosetty: Describe yourself in five words.
Holl: Fervent, aspiring, jocular, simpatico, alive.

Rosetty: Words of advice for aspiring artists/designers?
Holl: Being an artist or designer is a calling; it may or may not also be a career. If you follow your vision during life’s journey, each experience, no matter how off-track it seems, will contribute to your bloom.
Dance Department
12-14 April: “Dancers at Work,” the Student Choreography Showcase. Talented MMC dancers received a wonderful opportunity to display their choreographing skills, which they have acquired over the past school year. “Dancers at Work” is run and performed by students. Also, the B.A. Dance majors present a new work choreographed by a faculty member of the Dance department. See below and the back cover for photographs of the DAW dress rehearsal. See also Kaiminawaua Kaholokula’s essay “A Dancer’s Life at Marymount Manhattan” for a close-up view of the lives of two Dance majors at MMC.

Theatre Arts Department
On 7-11 March: a production of “Rags,” with book by Joseph Stein, lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, and music by Charles Strouse. “Rags” highlights the struggles of immigrant families traveling to America at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its riveting tale follows Rebecca, who searches for her husband through much toil and strife. Barbara Siman directs and choreographs students in the Theatre Arts Department. Musical direction is by Christine Riley, scenic design is by Ray Recht, lighting design is by Adam Steinbauer, and projection design is by Ido Levran.

On 18-22 April: a production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” one of Shakespeare’s classics. The students of the Theatre Art Department take on this whimsical play under the direction of John Basil. Original music is provided by Bruce Lazarus, scenic design is by Arianna Knox, lighting is by Liz Wilkerson, and costume design is by Samantha Jacobson.

At the College
A Review of “Sweet Charity”
by: Lindsey Sullivan

In April 2011, Marymount Manhattan’s Theatre Production Workshop presented “Sweet Charity,” Neil Simon’s ‘60s set-musical centered on a quirky dance-hall hostess constantly looking to be loved. With music by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Dorothy Fields, and choreography by the great Bob Fosse, “Sweet Charity” was brought to life by a lucky handful of talented students.

Almost a semester’s worth of nailing the “Rich Man’s Frug,” getting trapped in elevators, and “dreaming their dreams” paid off for MMC’s “Charity” cast, which was directed and choreographed by Jeff Shade, with musical direction by Christine Riley. Shade’s Director’s Note mentions his own time on Broadway in “Charity,” working under the tutelage of director and choreographer Bob Fosse. “Mr. Fosse taught me a lot about focus, attention to detail, the inner-monologue, listening, loyalty, and the JOY of THE DANCE!” wrote Shade. Shade’s experience as a “Charity” veteran certainly showed in this creation—and rubbed off on the cast.

The wonderfully versatile set, designed by Ray Recht, served its many purposes; the cast members fluidly changed it throughout the production. Also, colorful lighting, designed by Gretchen Engle, contributed to the “bright lights, big city” theme of “Charity,” a lively musical set in New York City.

A sensual saxophone paired with a boisterous “brass band” created the overture and ambience of the production. We are quickly introduced to Charity Hope Valentine, played by junior Courtney Kattengell. Kattengell immediately took the stage, danced about, and confidently pouted to the jazzy instrumental number “Charity’s Theme.” The choreography radiated Fosse; every part of the body was used and emphasized in Kattengell’s detailed dance, from a flirty swivel of the hips to an accentuated, goofy-head tilt.

From her signature “Charlie” tattoo to her short hair and even shorter lime-green skirt, Kattengell certainly looked the part; she also had a winning combination of Charity Hope Valentine’s sassy, silly attitude and incurable (nearly irritating) optimism.

What was by no means irritating was Kattengell’s singing. Charity begins the show with a flirtatious string of compliments (“You Should See Yourself”) that she gives to (and yearns to receive from) her boyfriend, Charlie, portrayed by ensemble member Kyle Schliefer (a freshman), telling him, “You’re so strong you got muscles you don’t need!”

Charlie responds to her compliments by giving the audience a taste of Charity’s track record (or lack thereof) in finding true love. He steals her handbag, pushes her into a lake, and runs off. Not so sweet for Charity.

The ensemble made its first appearance here as a collective clump of exclaiming (but unhelpful) onlookers. Composed of freshmen John Dwyer, Kyle Schliefer, Liane Zielinski; sophomore Steven Kane; juniors Jacob Bressers, Austen Boone, Drew Fountain, Johnny
Napolitano, Emily Swan, Katie Moyer; seniors Cedric Todd, Lane Halperin, Kayla Marie Shanahan, Lauren Marangiello, Melody Waters, Lindsay Sconiers, Claire Scholes, and Cait Murphy, the members of this ensemble immediately stole the show with their comedic facial expressions and solid formation.

The women of the ensemble certainly ruled the spotlight in the sexy number “Big Spender.” Back at the Fandango Ballroom, Charity tries to convince her friends (and herself) that Charlie tried to save her from the fall. Fellow dancers Nickie and Helene, brilliantly performed by seniors Becky Geggatt and Morgan Smith, try to comfort Charity about Charlie’s absence; however, Nickie also chides her, saying, “You run your heart like a hotel—you’ve always got people checking in and checking out!”

Flamboyant manager Herman, played by junior Greg Uliasz, interrupts to tell the girls (and hysterically fabulous tranny Carmen, played by junior Jacob Bressers) that it’s time to work, and by “work,” he means proposition the audience. Scantily clad in black fishnets and dolled up with smoky eyes and red lips, MMC’s ladies gave us the reason why the show was never called “Sweet Chastity.” Bold dance moves and rock star cries of “Hey, Big Spender!” conveyed the message that this was not a cautious school play; this was a professional production going on in New York City.

Charity then reappeared to sing her soliloquy, refusing to let another man like Charlie (and many men before him) take advantage of her heart, declaring “This big fat heart ain’t gonna be joined apart ever, ever, ever again!”

This resolution is short lived, for hunky film star Vittorio Vidal, portrayed by senior Mike Longo, crosses her path, chasing his own mistress, Ursula (played by senior Lindsay Sconiers), who leaves him at the chic Pompeii Club in a jealous rage. Vittorio is left dateless, and Charity, steadfast to her hotel heart, clings to him at the club, where the ensemble is dancing the “Rich Man’s Frug,” another show-stopping number.

This highly energetic dance showcases Fosse’s detailed choreography, particularly through the use of goofy poses. Very typical of Charity, the gestures of the dance are a hybrid of kookiness and sensuality. Unusual facial expressions, leg and arm movements, and prancing around on tiptoes ideally paralleled tight group formations and sexy stances. The “frug” had hardly just begun before applause ensued from the audience, lasting until the very end of the dance number.

As Charity calls it, the “fickle finger of fate” steps in, and she ends up joining Vittorio at his apartment. Charity is caught between being innocently star struck and trying to appear suggestive towards Vittorio, who, in turn, is caught between his feelings for Ursula and his gratitude for Charity’s attention.

Kattengell’s gestures and line delivery, combined with Longo’s thick accent and “arrogant movie star” persona, made for an hysterical scene. Charity asks Vittorio for proof
of their “romantic” night to show her friends from the Fandango Ballroom, and after receiving an autographed picture and props from his old movies, Charity launches into “If My Friends Could See Me Now,” gushing about her good fortune. Nevertheless, Ursula, who pops by Vittorio’s apartment to apologize for her jealousy, cuts Charity’s star-studded night short. Charity is forced to hide in a cramped closet while Vittorio (ironically) convinces Ursula that he has nothing to hide. Longo’s rendition of “Too Many Tomorrows” was spectacular both vocally and emotionally. He sings, “There can’t ever be too many tomorrows if you stay with me... So come fill my arms, and we’ll forget the meaningless sorrows.” Charity has been excitedly listening in on the conversation, exploring the closet, and taking the liberty of trying on all of Vittorio’s ensembles. Nevertheless, she is left there for the night, forgotten. The “fickle finger of fate” denies her the love she craves once again.

What better way to forget her troubles than to fantasize and sing about the “good life” with her friends Nickie and Helene. In “There’s Gotta Be Something Better Than This,” seniors Smith and Geggatt flaunted their dancing and acting skills. Up until this point, they were noticed for their comedic relief and gorgeously controlled vocals. There’s certainly a reason why senior Morgan Smith was chosen to be Kattengell’s understudy.

Inspired by Nickie and Helene’s desires to break out of the dance hall life, Charity decides to involve herself with the 92nd Street YMHA, where she meets nervous Oscar Lindquist, played by senior Jason Gotay. The pair gets trapped in an elevator, and it becomes apparent that Oscar and Charity are polar opposites. Oscar panics as a result of his claustrophobia, and incurable optimist Charity helps him surpass his fear, calling him the “Bravest Individual.” The song ends with the two in much better spirits—that is, until the lights go out.

Act II begins with the elevator lights unexpectedly coming back on, much to Charity and Oscar’s delight. Far more unexpectedly, Oscar asks Charity to attend church with him. She hesitantly agrees, and the lights of the stage become dim, fog coming from the sides. The ensemble, dressed in tie-dye t-shirts, crawls around on hands and knees, worshipping a figure called “Daddy” (played by senior Alissa Todd) and chanting “The Rhythm of Life.” Charity (not to mention the audience) finds their behavior ridiculous and even frightening. Nevertheless, the actual words they are chanting are quite uplifting, despite the cult-like manner in which the lyrics are delivered: “The Rhythm of Life is a powerful beat!” The gathering loses its power when broken up by police, and during their departure, Oscar asks Charity for another date, deeming her “Sweet Charity.” The two may be complete opposites; however, their struggle to find true love is the same.

Meanwhile, Geggatt and Smith offered a compelling rendition of “Baby, Dream Your Dream,” still fantasizing about the possible life...
outside of the dance hall. Charity is living her dream, floored by Oscar’s affection. As a result, Charity fails to mention that she is a dance hall hostess to wholesome Oscar. After dating for a couple weeks, Charity and Oscar are trapped (yet again) on a ride at Coney Island. This time, Charity is the one who is afraid. She is afraid to tell Oscar about her true lifestyle, and, disgusted by the Fandango Ballroom business, she quits (“Where Am I Going?”).

Kattengell’s quirky Charity finally faced reality head on; this number brought the character of Charity full circle. Up until now, the heroine had been an impulsive goofball – an entertaining character, no doubt. However, Kattengell’s acknowledgement of her character’s frustration and uncertainty made the title character far more realistic and relatable.

Charity resolves to tell Oscar the truth about her “career”; to her delight, he not only accepts her as she is, he even asks her to marry him. “Somebody loves me at last!” Charity rejoices, launching into “I’m a Brass Band.” This was Kattengell’s most brilliant moment; there is truly nothing like the sound of a skilled performer’s voice backed by genuine passion for what they are doing and saying.

In one of Charity’s most celebrated numbers, the energy provided by the marching-band, uniform-clad ensemble in “Brass Band” made Kattengell’s already wonderful moment in the spotlight truly spectacular. The ensemble pantomimed playing instruments, both playing off of the song’s title and including Fosse’s signature element of demonstrating through gesture. The excitement mounts with “I Love to Cry at Weddings,” as her friends at the Fandango Ballroom bid Charity a bittersweet farewell.

What happens next makes the story of “Sweet Charity” stand out as a musical comedy. Oscar approaches Charity, explaining that he is intimidated by her past involvement with numerous other men, and he cannot go through with the wedding. The musical ends with love slipping through Charity’s fingers yet again. The ending appears unsatisfying for Charity—and for the audience. Nevertheless, what saves a potentially devastatingly anticlimactic ending are three bright neon lights, another Charity signature, that read “And so she lived hopefully ever after.”

“Sweet Charity” is a jazzy lesson about perseverance and optimism brought to life through catchy show-tune favorites and kooky, yet complex characters. Marymount Manhattan’s display of this two-hour long “lesson” was nothing short of spectacular. Making the great Bob Fosse’s work one’s own is quite an undertaking. However, the direction of Jeff Shade and the diligence, enthusiasm, and authentic passion that is characteristic of MMC’s performers and students made this production one that truly lived happily ever after.
At the College
The Art Therapy Minor

ART THERAPY: 18 Credits
The Art Therapy minor introduces students to the basic principles and practices in the field of art therapy. By linking the disciplines of art and psychology, it offers new opportunities for personal growth in both clinical and educational settings, through theoretical and applied coursework, and in internships. This minor helps prepare students for admission into art graduate programs.

The minor was developed by Profs. Roy Tietze from Psychology and Millie Falcaro and Hallie Cohen from the Art Department. For questions about the minor, contact any of these professors.

Courses to take:
Two of the following (3 credits each, or 6 credits total):
• ART 111 Drawing I or ART 125 Introduction to Drawing
  [Art Majors substitute: ART 339 Drawing II (3)]
• ART 114 Painting I
  [Art Majors substitute: ART 315 Painting II (3)]
• ART 115 Ceramics or ART 121 Photography I

Two of the following (3 credits each, or 6 credits total):
• PSYCH 201: Developmental Psychology I (3)
• PSYCH 231: Personality Psychology (3)
• PSYCH 285: Introduction to Counseling (3)
• PSYCH 363: Abnormal Psychology (3)

Required Courses:
• ART/PSYCH 370: Art Therapy: Principles and Practices (3)
• ART/PSYCH 499: Internship (3)

Samples of Art Therapy puppets made by MMC students. Puppets at right by Val Humphrey and Livvie Zurlini.
At the College
The Art Department

In the Hewitt Art Gallery
23 January-22 February: “Naturally,” an exhibition of works in a variety of mediums that speak to artificial environments dominating the natural one, symbolic realities, and the overlay of human activity on nature.

12 March-24 May: Senior Art in Four Exhibitions. The Art Department showcases the work of the Junior and Seniors in the Graphic Design, Studio Art, and Photography majors in four exhibitions that feature a wide variety of mediums and styles. Students have worked with their faculty mentors since the previous Fall semester to hone their individual visions and approaches.

Marymount at the Museums
The Art Department sponsored its third annual “Marymount at the Museums” event on Friday, 2 March 2012. While the first two events (Spring 2010 and Spring 2011) were held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, this one took place at the Rubin Museum, the greatest repository of Himalayan art in New York. Art History major/Studio Art minor Kayley Fullerton, ’12, led the tour for MMC alumni. Kayley was an Intern in the Social Media/Education department at the Rubin during the Fall 2011 semester. (See her article on this experience, “Strange Bedfellows: Himalayan Art and Social Media Networking at the Rubin Museum,” in this edition of Artfusion News.) The tour was arranged by Shelli Luchs, Assistant Director of College Relations and Advancement, and supervised by Prof. Bell. Alumni and friends met for dinner at the museum’s K2 lounge after the tour.

Kayley Fullerton, ’12, introduces MMC alumni to the art of the Himalayas at the start of her tour. Photo by Prof. Hallie Cohen.

Kayley Fullerton, ’12, discusses the figure of Drenpa Namka in a fifteenth-century sculpture from Tibet at the Rubin Museum. Photo by Prof. Hallie Cohen.
At the College
Professor Jason Rosenfeld

As Distinguished Chair from 2009-2012, Professor of Art History Jason Rosenfeld has been working on many exciting projects related to his scholarship on nineteenth-century British painting and contemporary art. Three major projects will come to fruition in 2012-13. Here is a brief preview:

Born in Albany, New York, in 1951, Stephen Hannock is one of the most important contemporary artists. “Recent Paintings: Vistas with Text” is Hannock’s first comprehensive exhibition in New York in seven years and showcases four new paintings of polished mixed media on canvas. The exhibition also features a Process Room that contains Hannock’s notebooks and studies. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, with essays and entries on the paintings by Rosenfeld.

As the author of John Everett Millais (Phaidon Press, 2012), a new monograph on the Pre-Raphaelite artist, Rosenfeld treats all of Millais’s career. He shows how the development of Millais’s art was at the forefront of contemporary painting throughout his life; in the author’s words, it is a “consistently relevant and inventive Millais” that emerges in this book. Rosenfeld also co-curated an exhibition on Millais for Tate Britain, London (September 2007-January 2008), which traveled to Amsterdam, Fukuoka, and Tokyo.

“Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde”: co-curated by Jason Rosenfeld; Tim Barringer, Paul Mellon Professor of Art, Yale University; and Alison Smith, Senior Curator and Head of Acquisitions, Tate, London.

At the Tate: 12 September 2012–13 January 2013; traveling to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Pushkin Museum, Moscow; and the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.

Through an exhibition of more than 150 works in different mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, and the applied arts, the curators present a view of the Pre-Raphaelites as Britain’s first modern art movement.

Throughout his life, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) created many beautiful paintings. Whether they were realistic or nonobjective works, he consistently made art that gave viewers a chance to interpret the work in their own way. In the beginning, Kandinsky’s paintings tended to appear realistic, though with a flair of expressionism; in his later years, his paintings were based primarily around abstract geometric shapes. We tend to think that an artist’s work is affected only by his earlier work; however, many factors influenced the increasing move to abstraction in Kandinsky’s style, specifically from around 1910 to 1914. His constant change of scenery, his interest in synesthesia, the impact of World War I, the influence of the Bauhaus, and inspiration from Matisse together contributed to Kandinsky’s invention of a new, highly original style of art.

From the beginning, Kandinsky’s life involved a lot of moving. He was born in Moscow but spent most of his childhood in Odessa. He attended the University of Moscow to study law and economics, and was quite successful in his studies. However, at the age of thirty, he began to develop his love for art through life drawings and by sketching various objects or scenes. He settled in Munich but was quickly forced to return to Moscow after the outbreak of World War I. After his return in 1921 and his years teaching at the Bauhaus school of art and architecture, the Nazi party forced him into exile for a second time in 1933. He referred to Munich as his “second home,” so the departure was quite saddening for him. Kandinsky debated the prospect of moving to America to escape the political mess of Europe. In 1939, he decided, ultimately, to become a French citizen and to remain in France for the rest of his life. It is likely that Kandinsky’s constant exposure to new scenery allowed him to become even more open to new ideas.

The great French painter Henri Matisse (1869-1954) also influenced the shaping of Kandinsky’s painting style. Matisse began his career as a Fauve but was also influenced by African and Moorish art. He distinguished himself as a painter and a sculptor. He was known especially for his bold use of color. In paintings such as Luxe, Calme et Volupté (1904) (Fig. 1), and The Open Window (Fig. 2), color became a driving force in his art.  

Fig. 1: Henri Matisse, Luxe, Calme et Volupté, 1904, oil on canvas, 37 x 46”, Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris. Image in the public domain.

Fig. 2: Henri Matisse, The Open Window, Collioure, 1905, oil on canvas, 21¾ x 18-1/8”, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Image in the public domain.
And yet the styles were quite different: inspired by the work of Paul Signac, Matisse used short dashes of paint to create the former but used bolder streaks of color for the latter. Kandinsky saw that Matisse could paint two fairly different compositions in the same year. He respected Matisse and became inspired by his daring experimentation.

The three different countries in which Kandinsky lived may have had an effect on the overall creation of his work. As he moved, his style changed. According to Tracy Bashkoff, the year 1908 marked the beginning of the development of a “new, vividly colored, expressive painting style, which eventually leads to Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), the epochal breakthrough to modernism, and in Kandinsky’s case, abstract painting.”³ During this period, Kandinsky met with many other colleagues and slowly formed a style that would signal the beginning of his development of abstract art. This movement was based around the belief in connections between art and music. It held that colors, shapes, and forms had equivalence with sounds and music to create color harmonies that would be satisfying to the soul. Inspired by the individuality of the Impressionists, these artists broke free from existing artistic restraints and forged their own style.

The idea that Kandinsky was considering is termed synesthesia. Synesthesia is a neurologically based condition in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway. In other words, Kandinsky associated colors with sounds. Synesthesia complemented the Expressionist period, which was just beginning in the late nineteenth century. Immersed in the ideas of Expressionism and synesthesia, Kandinsky did not feel compelled to represent recognizable subject matter in his paintings. In Sketch for Composition II (1909-10) (Fig. 3), he had the idea of synesthesia very much in mind. He formulated the title because he was beginning to associate his paintings with music. According to the historians Amason and Mansfield, “Because of his wish to associate his work with an image-free art form that spoke directly to the senses in modernist fashion, Kandinsky began using titles derived from music, such as ‘Composition’, ‘Improvisation’, or ‘Impression.”⁴ In this way, Kandinsky could create paintings that were based primarily around colors and shapes. His paintings had meaning but that meaning could be conveyed through music, almost in a spiritual way.
The Der Blaue Reiter movement encouraged the idea of Expressionism, though it espoused no single style. According to scholar Tracy Bashkoff, Der Blaue Reiter was “a movement that depicted motifs that symbolize [Kandinsky’s] unconventional aesthetic values and mission to bring about a new, more spiritual era through art.” Most of the Blaue Reiter paintings represented scenes in nature and related to the idea of retreating from the city, from modern life, into a simpler lifestyle. Then, Kandinsky slowly began to detach his scenes even from nature. For Bashkoff, he “stripped the procession of riders and figures of any truly identifiable shapes, and the colors were intended to trigger emotional responses. The gradual dematerialization of forms and vivid colors play against each other as independent sensorial patterns that speak to his search for artistic freedom and his aim to present a new spiritual reality.”

The Bauhaus also exerted a tremendous influence on Kandinsky’s work and life. It was a school of art and design, founded in 1919, that “brought together artists, architects, and designers in an extraordinary conversation about the nature of modern art.” Kandinsky taught a basic design class for beginners and a course of advanced theory; he also conducted some painting classes and a workshop in which he taught color theory from the point of view of psychology. From the beginning, nearly all the school’s masters were involved in the search for a “grammar of color.” Kandinsky helped to steer this discussion. As he taught his students, he formulated ideas that would help him to develop his new artistic style, one based primarily around color and geometric shapes.

A third major influence on Kandinsky was World War I. It forced him to move in and out of Germany, and it affected him emotionally. Scholars have described the works Kandinsky created during this time as “revolving around themes of cosmic conflict and renewal, specifically the Deluge from the biblical Book of Genesis and the Apocalypse from the Book of Revelation. From such cataclysm would emerge, he believes, a rebirth, a new, spiritually cleansed world.” Despite their many biblical references, Kandinsky did not intend for the paintings to be interpreted only according to the Bible. One painting in particular can be related back to the chaos that Europe was involved in during the war. For example, *Composition VII* (1913) (Fig. 4) expresses the feeling of chaos that many people, including Kandinsky, surely felt during the war. All of his paintings at this time seem to be a way for him to express the complex emotions he was dealing with during the war.

Fig. 4: Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VII*, 1913, oil on canvas, 6' 6¾" x 9' 11-1/8", Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Image in the public domain. Photo: WebMuseum, Paris.
The Evolution of Wassily Kandinsky’s Style

All of his ten major paintings entitled “Composition” at the time were considered to be “his most complete artistic statements, expressive of what he called ‘inner necessity’ or the artist’s intuitive, emotional response to the world.” These paintings were a direct response to the chaos in Kandinsky’s life and served as ways for him to express his emotions.

A closer examination of Kandinsky’s life sheds light on how the artist’s circumstances influenced the shaping of his style. Many assume that artists base their work only on what they have previously done and how they can improve from their last work. While that may be the case for some artists, it is not for Kandinsky. Many important historical events, movements, and individuals—including Matisse, World War I, teaching at the Bauhaus, and the growing interest in synesthesia—shaped the transition between Kandinsky’s earlier works and his later ones. Kandinsky used his paintings to give voice to the impact that these forces exerted on him. These issues provide us with deeper insight not only into Kandinsky’s life but also into the way in which many artists work. We should not assume that because they are creative, they live sheltered lives. The world shapes works of art, including those of Wassily Kandinsky.

2 The title of the first work is translated as “Luxury, Calm, and Pleasure.”
3 Bashkoff et. al., Kandinsky, p.289.
4 Ibid., p.145.
5 Ibid., p.144.
6 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Walking into “Behind Every Curtain,” Winnipeg-born artist Marcel Dzama’s new show at David Zwirner, is like walking into a Marcel Dzama show. All the elements are there: dainty drawings of pretty, hooded girls fluttering about with rifles; the familiar, intimate scale of his tiny figures. Root-beer brown narratives that pop and fizzle out like so many carbonated bubbles. Comedy. Sex. Violence. The works. It is the narrative aspect, however, that Dzama seems to be pushing, although his strength as an artist lies elsewhere. He is, first and foremost, a draftsmen—and a good one at that. That being said, his work requires intimacy and loses its impact in his effort to span the gamut of media that somehow became necessary to put on a good show.

The exhibition revolves around a film Dzama created in Mexico entitled “A Game of Chess.” Shot in beautifully crisp black and white, it tells the story of a chess game, carried out in a lucid, surrealist mode that errs on the loser side of linear storytelling (Fig. 1). Its players are dancers, the protagonist a ballerina. She plays the part of a pawn, transformed upon reaching the other end of the board—fulfilling the wish of every pawn on every chessboard everywhere. She is
Marcel Dzama: Straying from the Intimate

surrounded by other pieces, which are represented by dancers dressed in some combination of Oskar Schlemmer, the Ballets Rousses, and the cantina from “Star Wars.” The film ends in violence. A parallel narrative, in which two men play chess in a war-torn cityscape, is cut short by a bullet from a sniper played by the pawn.

Chess is used as an allegory of war, or something close to it. Heavy stuff, but it doesn’t deliver. The film is sleek, the militaristic score is great, but the meat of the thing lies in the galleries prior. The first holds a plethora of signature drawings of costumed figures carrying out all sorts of ambiguous and mostly devious acts. Hooded, polka-dotted dancers mingle effortlessly with sinuous ballerinas dressed in red. They point. They play, chat, and cavort, sometimes naked. Two such examples show a push in the right direction. Hung on opposite ends of the gallery, they stretch to fill panoramic roles of player-piano paper. The effect is spectacular. The dialogue between the rhythm of holes punched into the scroll and the mischievous procession playing out around it is a testament to Dzama’a mastery of his craft. The buttermilk surface of the ancient paper creates a new atmosphere, one that holds the weight of time. The drawing Winnipeg is Won, Winnipeg is Won begins with a small scene drawn directly on the original cover to one of the player piano rolls. Its surface—mute-gray book cloth—
is an effective material testament to time passed. It is an elegant step forward—one that doesn't dirty the clarity of vision that the film does in its inherent over-the-topness.

The first gallery also introduces the viewer to Dzama's most recent foray into sculpture—the transformation of costumes used in his film into static figures. It is fun, as it always seems to be for our generation, to examine the figures with postmodern scrutiny—to pick out all their references to Robby the Robot and Hugo Ball. Dzama is a hoarder of referential sources that flow through his work uninterrupted. There is no scrutiny between low and highbrow. They are campy. Dzama constructed the gun-toting ballerina that plays such a prominent role in the drawings out of what looks like a mannequin, dressed her, and set her up so she spins forever on one leg—rifle raised with both hands to the sky. It has a humble, affected charm—funny in the way Edgar Degas’s *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer* (modeled 1879-1880, cast in 1922, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) is not. She owns her lofty title, “Polytropos of Many Turns,” with humorous dignity (Fig. 2).

The next gallery holds both the worst and one of the best moments the show has to offer. Dzama has explored the art of the diorama before. Unfortunately, I have only seen the past work in reproduction, but those works exhibited now fall short. They are crowded things, full of all the figures the drawings have to offer with the added mess of a scissor and paste. Convoluted, they are blown off the wall by works that explore the narrative of the film, skirting the line between concept illustration and a singular visual narrative. Their odd and endearing use of text (nonsensically translated in various European languages) lends them a charm absent from the visual swarm of the dioramas.

Occupying the middle of the space is a carousel entitled *Turning Into Puppets*. Doll-sized tin figures similar in design to the stranger lot in the film spin slowly, goofily suspended by wire close to the ground. They are colored by the graphics that came with whatever tins were used. This lends the figures an intensity quickly curbed by their slow, motorized rotation. Their feet, or anatomical equivalent, drag on bumps placed equidistantly around their circular track. Watching their movement, one can’t help but chuckle. Its primitive function pales in comparison to the lofty art of film, with its elegant speed and fluidity, but relates harmoniously in its humor to Dzama’s drawings.

The play of intricacy and its inherent relationship to intimacy are keys to Dzama’s work, informing their scale like medieval manuscripts. This beauty is lost in the film. Looking at the drawings while mechanized tin feet drag ominously—begrudgingly—over wood stops is an experience—rife with the cute/crude approach that pervades our aesthetic zeitgeist and, unfortunately, the film. It is always something to admired when an artist pushes themselves, but Marcel Dzama needs a push in the right direction.

Marcel Dzama: Straying from the Intimate
The Music Box Theater is located at 239 West 45th Street, New York, NY 10036.


The Music Box Theater is located at 239 West 45th Street, New York, NY 10036.
Once again, Broadway has recreated another Noël Coward classic. “Private Lives” tells the story of Amanda and Elyot, who divorced five years ago and are now honeymooning in the same hotel in France with their new spouses. Comedic mayhem ensues as they fall back in love—and quickly remember why they fell out of love. With excellent casting, set design, and costume design, this revival shines on Broadway.

Kim Cattrall returns to the stage as the fiery yet elegant Amanda. It was clear from the second Cattrall walked onto the stage to a boisterous applause that many were expecting Samantha Jones from the TV show “Sex and the City.” However, Cattrall defied those easy expectations. Amanda is a character that is sophisticated but short tempered, and Cattrall captured this combination perfectly. Cattrall has an engaging stage presence that illuminates the whole theater. The audience seemed very pleased with her portrayal.

Cattrall’s performance was highlighted by leading man Paul Gross, who played Amanda’s ex-husband Elyot. Gross captures Elyot’s dark sense of humor with his rapid comedic timing. Gross had the audience laughing the minute he stepped onto the stage. Given his brutal honesty and harsh words, Elyot is a leading man that the audience loves to hate.

Anna Madeley perfectly played Sybil, Elyot’s wife, a character that is impossible to like. With her shrill voice and persistent questioning, she engenders very little sympathy after Elyot leaves her on the first night of their honeymoon.

By contrast, Simon Paisley Day plays Victor, Amanda’s debonair and tense husband. We quickly felt compassion for him, as he is viewed as a casualty of Amanda and Elyot’s betrayal. His rigid demeanor makes his love for Amanda seem stronger. He clearly loves her but does not know how to handle her outbursts and temper.

The one character that didn’t seem to work well in the show is Louise, the Maid, played by Caroline Lena Olsson. This character didn’t blend well with the rest of the cast and seemed useless. This is not at the fault of Olsson; the character just seems out of place.

All of these incredible actors would be useless without Director Richard Eyre and Scenic and Costume Designer Rob Howell. Eyre led the incredible cast and has filled this production of “Private Lives” with more lighthearted moments.

The costume and set designs for “Private Lives” enhance the audience’s understanding of Noël Coward’s play. Amanda’s bright robes and Sybil’s perfectly pressed outfits make the audience aware of each character’s personality before they have said anything. The best-crafted set design would have to go to Amanda’s apartment. The apartment has fish tanks and walls covered with ducks and oddly shaped lamps, all of which make the fight scene at the end of Act II even more hilarious.

“Private Lives” is a must-see show that is sure to be loved by Noël Coward fans and those who have never seen his work. Be sure to stop by The Music Box Theater and see this great show!
Strange Bedfellows: Himalayan Art and Social Media Networking at the Rubin Museum

by: Kayley Fullerton

During the Fall 2011 semester, I had the good fortune of serving as Social Media and Research Intern in the Education Department at the Rubin Museum of Art in Chelsea. The Rubin Museum is not as well-known as the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Whitney Museum of American Art or the Guggenheim Museum, but it includes a rich collection of art that should not be missed. Perhaps because it is only seven years old or perhaps because it is a museum dedicated to art of the Himalayas, many people overlook this gem. Even I had not heard of the Rubin prior to interviewing for the internship!

The Museum is housed inside the old Barney’s women’s department store at 150 West 17th Street. It was extended to the east with the addition of what had been adjacent tenement housing. The designers and architects of the new museum, together with Sally and Donald Rubin (the museum’s founders), chose to incorporate much of the earlier architecture into a new, more modern-looking building. For example, columns that divided apartments in the tenements now separate the gift shop from the dining area. In this way, the spaces in the museum remain open but visitors can still envision living in the cramped, narrow apartments. A huge, winding staircase that once defined the opulence and grandeur of Barney’s now takes on a more demure, spiritual quality in the midst of the mostly Hindu and Buddhist art. Now comprising six spacious floors of art galleries, a theatre, a café, a gift shop, a newly renovated Education Center, and even a recreation of a Tibetan shrine room, the Rubin Museum is a veritable treasure trove of beauty.

I served as a Social Media and Research Intern, which is both a real job and a rapidly growing field of study. It comprises museum outreach, education, and visitor experience. Until very recently, the technology for the internship did not even exist. Now, however, the college-student generation is quickly developing both the technology and its uses in daily life. The Rubin Museum, too, has adopted these new technologies—Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter, BlipTV, Flickr, blogs, and podcasts, among others—for specific purposes.

My job as Intern was to keep the public updated on events sponsored by the Education Department. Even if I could not attend the events, I would receive and edit photos from them, and then create photo stories about them for the museum’s website. Occasionally, I received a schedule of activities for the event and then created a blog post on it. Before uploading my work, I sent it to my supervisors, Marcos Stafne and Andrew Buttermilch, who would add supplementary, first-hand anecdotes or additions before posting it. I also was involved with augmenting the online, media-sharing library called “Issuu,” for which I uploaded the Museum’s Teen Zines, as well as the teen Facebook and Tumblr pages.

In addition to working on social media, I was also involved in research and documentation for the department. I acquired some of this information by using social networking sites
or surveys. The technology is so new that it is still being analyzed! I was taught to use internal databases, such as Online Guide Resources and AIMS, to create foundational lists of museum resources, which will become invaluable in the coming years.

The purpose of using social media and of developing new methods of research and analysis in this type of setting is to reach wider audiences. Thus far, it has been extremely successful. Nowadays, it is incredibly easy to find all kinds of information online, in whatever form you wish to see it. For example, the Education Department’s website provides a broad overview of its activities. Its setup was designed by the same person who created the Rubin Museum’s website. It is streamlined and chronological, with one story fitting neatly on top of the previous one. However, the teen programs have a Tumblr that is almost entirely self-run and that has a very different look to respond to the same events. It is a bright amalgamation of photos, videos, quotes, and drawings by the teens themselves. It may seem like overkill to use so many different sites, but each one has a very specific demographic and target audience.

Museums and nearly every other major company or corporation today all use these different sites to their advantage to publicize and brand their product. The Rubin Museum, too, has seen the benefit of reaching a public that is so easily distracted by the big names of the field—MoMA, the Gugg, the Met. It’s moving up the ranks toward stardom.

An important feature of the Education Department is its university programs, which is lead by Laura Lombard. The Rubin Museum partnered with colleges and grade schools around the city, such as Baruch, Queens, Queensborough Community College, and Borough of Manhattan Community College, to engineer curricula promoting, or even mandating, collaboration between the college and the museum. Some programs are even co-taught by a university faculty member and a member of the museum’s staff.

This type of outreach would have been unheard of ten years ago. Our generation benefits from having grown up with this new technology and from having witnessed its many transformations. Why not use the technology to your advantage? Many of us use Facebook, Twitter, and a blog; these programs are the basis for work as a social media intern! Many companies are unable to keep up with the process of recording the events they produce. My advice: offer your services in social media or research. You are sure to have an exciting job that will be an asset to your résumé.
Roaming through Times Square you might notice them. They sit on tiny artists’ stools surrounded by celebrity portraits. They cajole tourists to sit for a quick sketch, a parody. They are caricaturists, pure and simple. They create bodies—squashed, simplified, bloated, or attenuated—with wildly exaggerated facial expressions in memorable tokens for each sitter. While we may think of them as inconsequential works, these cartoons in fact possess a long and storied history, one that was brilliantly revealed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s “Infinite Jest: A New Exhibition about an Old Tradition.”

Caricatures are thought to have been invented by Leonardo da Vinci (1485-1530), who used them as a means of exploring human emotions (Fig. 1). He also used caricatures to compare idealized youth with the haggard elderly. Copies of some of his sketches are on view in the exhibition. Later artists followed his lead; they would observe reality and exaggerate it to understand facial and bodily characteristics. They soon applied these lessons in caricature to ruthless political and social commentary.

After a brief section on Leonardo, the exhibit takes the viewer around the world and through the centuries. Some satires are politically charged; others lambast social status. Some are magnificently colored while others convey their message in black and white. For example, we see what may have been the first caricature of a person—no less eminent than the Pope—by the great Baroque sculptor and architect Gianlorenzo Bernini.

Another standout in the exhibition is Thomas Rowlandson’s boldly colored Dinner Drest in the Neatest Manner (1811). This parody makes fun of the age-old question about what really happens behind the closed doors of restaurant kitchens. Here, the one-eyed cook stands over a meat pie. Mucus drips liberally from his nose and mouth. In the background, a woman with a breast exposed reaches to a top shelf for supplies. A rat scurries out of a nearby bowl. The figures are grotesque, difficult to look at, and yet utterly amusing. The viewer feels a shock of horror—this is what actually takes place in restaurant kitchens!—while recognizing, at the same time, that the artist is exaggerating the scene.

Another key work in the exhibition was the hand-colored British etching Top and Tail (1777) (Fig. 2). It shows a monumental wig atop a bare derriere. This type of image was part of a series that poked fun at the enormous hair-dos popular in eighteenth-century England and France. By revealing the bare behind, the satirist acknowledges the sex appeal of the style; however, by making the hair so large, he also conveys the idea that the women who followed it were essentially brainless. Other works in the exhibition represent more serious subjects in a playful way, such as the tension between King George the III and Napoleon during the Napoleonic Wars, and the treatment of the lower class in eighteenth-century England.

All in all, the works of art in “Infinite Jest” inspire conversations about relevant social and political issues; they do so, however, with geniality.
and humor. They use comic relief to engage their audiences. A glance at the reactions of other viewers at the exhibition—the quiet chuckles that broke the traditional silence of the museum exhibition space—made it clear that, often centuries later, they were still successful. The moral of the story: when you’re elbowing your way through crowded tourist hot spots in this great metropolis and you pass a caricaturist on the street, stop for moment or two. Look at their work. Know that it has a long, distinguished, and highly entertaining history.

“Infinite Jest” was organized by Constance C. McPhee, Associate Curator, and Nadine M. Orenstein, Curator, in the Metropolitan Museum’s Department of Drawings and Prints. It was on view from 13 September 2011 – 4 March 2012.

Fig. 1: Leonardo da Vinci (Italian, 1452-1519), *Head of a Man in Profile, Facing to the Left*, 1490-94, Pen and brown ink over black chalk, 11.7 x 5.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1909 (10.45.1). Photo: http://arttattler.com/archiveinfinitejest.html.

I was sick of waiting. It had been months since I first saw the extended trailer of “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” (2011) in theaters and now, by chance, I stumbled into getting tickets to a showing the day before it premiered to the rest of the world. I had read the novel of the same name by Stieg Larsson and was anxious to see the characters come to life in the American film adaptation. In a darkened move theater, I stared dumbfounded at the spectacle before me. The opening credits roll over a chilling, abstract scene made of black liquid, which pours and molds its shape into a collage of hornets, flowers, grasping hands, and computer wires. Eventually, it makes up the bodies of the two main characters, Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist. In the background, we hear a loud, new version of Led Zeppelin’s “The Immigrant Song.”

The audience first sees Lisbeth as she arrives on her jet-black motorcycle. She has been called into the office by her boss at Milton Security. She promptly pulls off her helmet to reveal a black, spiky mohawk, black make-up, and several piercings. She walks awkwardly through the offices of colleagues and sits down at a conference table with her boss and a client. She is rude, uncouth, and snarky. We learn that she has a criminal record. Fundamentally anti-social, she is an internet hacker and investigator. She is unlike anyone else. This fact becomes even clearer when she is sexually assaulted by a state-appointed guardian. She takes matters into her own hands and seeks revenge by destabilizing him with a taser and then writing the words “I am a Rapist Pig” on his chest with a tattoo gun.

It seems as though Lisbeth lives in dark terror and does not have a friend in the world until she is hired by a middle-age journalist, Blomkvist, to investigate the cold case of the disappearance of Harriet, a sixteen-year-old heiress. While working on the case, Lisbeth develops feelings for Blomkvist and comes to his aid more than once. Upon discovering that Harriet’s brother is a serial killer, Mikael wanders onto his property to look around for evidence. The serial killer finds him and is about to kill him when Lisbeth sneaks in for the rescue. After various mysteries are solved, Lisbeth hopes to get closer to Blomkvist. When she buys him a Christmas present and writes out a card, we witness a new element of vulnerably and sweetness in Lisbeth. The audience is relieved that she has found some happiness in her rough life. She pulls up in her motorcycle to give the gift to Blomkvist only to see him walk off with his past lover. Lisbeth quickly flings the gift in a dumpster and speeds away, thereby leaving the audience feeling the betrayal and the burden of Lisbeth’s life.

At the end of the film, I felt angry and didn’t want to talk to anyone. I must have absorbed the intensity of the film. The director, David Fincher, has called his work “the feel-bad movie of the holiday season”... and for good reason. Yet, strangely enough, this “bad” feeling wasn’t entirely unpleasant. The film did its job of conveying the raw emotions that Larsson originally crafted.

The rather ordinary-looking actress
Rooney Mara was charged with the responsibility of capturing the damaged and twisted Lisbeth Salander on screen. Mara reported that taking on the role was no easy task. She had competed against big-name actresses. After a long audition process, she was relocated to Sweden, where she began computer training, kickboxing, and motorcycle lessons. Mara said that playing Lisbeth was mentally taxing and that it fundamentally changed her.

I admire Stieg Larsson. He crafted a dark yet powerful female character that has captivated millions of readers. As a writer, I dream of accomplishing the same. I’m happy to report that the next two books in the trilogy, The Girl Who Played with Fire and The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest, will be adapted to screen with Rooney Mara as Lisbeth. Move over “Twilight,” it’s time for me to obsess over a new series.

Works Cited:

On any given day at Marymount Manhattan College, you will come across a sea of bodies in leotards stretching and warming up in the Black and White Gallery. Sophomore Leann Sebald and junior Alanna Newkirk share this space, just as they share the same passion for dancing. They join a multitude of other students who come to Marymount Manhattan for focused training. Sebald and Newkirk, specifically, have benefited tremendously from the Dance program. Having danced for about 12 and 17 years, respectively, they were each inspired by a friend to apply to the College’s Dance program, where they are now majors.

Sebald incorporates modern and ballet into her practice, which last up to three hours each day. As a non-performance major, she believes that although practice-based assignments are worth only 10% of her grade, she wants to continue “just growing as a dancer.” Sebald finds it difficult to juggle academic assignments with her dance classes. She often stays up late finishing school work and feels “physically exhausted” in early-morning dance classes. She is happiest when she can finish her academics and focus squarely on dance. She particularly enjoys doing cross-floor combinations using the Horton Technique and Graham Technique. She is storing these experiences for the day when she can become a Dance teacher herself.

Newkirk, who is focusing on ballet and choreography, also has to make sure she has time to sleep. On Wednesdays, she finds herself at school for 12 hours straight! Her favorite day is what she calls “Pure Dancing Fridays,” a day without academic classes that lies on the edge of the weekend. Newkirk choreographed her first piece, “Periculum” (Latin for risk), for a “Dancers at Work” program. She notes that she “loves watching [her] pieces as much as [she] loves dancing.” She augments her MMC Dance education by taking classes at local studios, such as Steps on Broadway. She also enjoys doing yoga.

Marymount Manhattan makes sure that Dance students follow a well-rounded academic program in the liberal arts and a rigorous technical program. Balancing these responsibilities is a daily challenge for Sebald and Newkirk. They are learning to manage their time and responsibilities and, simultaneously, to pursue their passion for dance.
A Dancer’s Life at Marymount Manhattan

Alanna Newkirk rehearsing a work by Sarah Chin.
Photo by Danielle Rutherford.


MMC DANCE DEPARTMENT SPRING REPERTOIRE AND GALA

May 3-5 at 8:00 pm; May 5 at 2:00 pm
May 10 at 8:00 pm
May 11 at 7:30 pm – Gala Performance and Reception
May 12 at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm
Theresa Lang Theatre
General admission: $12; senior citizens and students
with ID from other schools: $8;
Admission is free for MMC students,
faculty, and staff with valid MMC ID card.
One of the largest and most prominent events of its kind, the Armory Show offers a stunning panorama of the contemporary art market to 60,000 curious visitors every year. Beginning in the eponymous Park Avenue Armory just before the millennium, the event has grown into a sprawling labyrinth built over several football fields’ worth of steel and concrete jutting into the Hudson River. Over a hundred galleries are packed into Pier 94, an ex-shipping terminal once home to companies such as Colonial Sand and Gravel, and Knickerbocker Ice.

Walking into Pier 94, visitors are greeted by a steady rumble of chatter and a dizzying array of bright lights and white walls, the kind of spectacle one might expect from what is essentially a world-wide gallery opening, with $30 tickets. While the visitors have at least bought a pleasant few hours, the participating galleries have purchased their few feet of exhibition space at significant cost with no guarantee of return. The relatively few pieces of art they can fit into their booths will be selected with great care, as they will come to represent the gallery and the strength of its artists for the duration of the fair, as well as attract attention and, ultimately, make money. Walking around Pier 94 with that in mind means that any pervading trends or style perceived in that room could be roughly indicative of the current state of art, or at least the art market.

Of course, the art world is as diverse as it has ever been in its post-post modern mélange of hybrid media and style. Since the time Pier 94 was built in the late nineteenth-century, that which constitutes “fine art” has grown to include a seemingly infinite spectrum of concepts and practices. At this point, designating a trend in contemporary art is like looking for patterns in the sand. That being said, if one searches for concepts or aesthetics more present than others, there are sometimes patterns to be found.

This year seemed to trend towards the smooth, slick surfaces of the digital and industrial, the glossy nostalgia of the 1980’s glam aesthetic, as well as the artists of California who rose to prominence during mid-to-late twentieth century, and their quiet sense of cool. Overall, there seemed to be a pervading appreciation for the reassuringly clean, alien nature of manufactured objects. A good deal of the photography on display felt similarly concerned, photography being a medium naturally conducive to that kind of glossy, mechanical aesthetic.

One example of this approach is the work of Garry Fabian Miller, whose photographs were on display at Inglebury Gallery in Pier 94 and Hacklebury Fine Art on Pier 92. Miller uses creative darkroom interventions to render simple, abstract images composed of geometric shapes and highly saturated colors. One piece, proudly positioned on the booth’s exterior wall, depicted a blue square, bleeding at the edges, smoothly transitioning to a deep canary yellow. It provides the viewer with a distinctly calming presence, possessed of an almost minimalist sense of the spiritual. Miller’s work uses the uncanny
cleanliness and high finish of photography to create that sense of bare, ethereal facticity shared by the minimalists and color field artists.

The Iranian artist Shirana Shahbazi’s work was notably effective in grabbing the attention of passersby, given the simple palette and composition of much of her work. She divides her attention between geometric, monochromatic c-prints and wholly different photographic still lives executed in the style of the Old Masters, replete with lavish arrangements of skulls and fruit. Her more abstract work, with its simple washes of color, subtle transitions between shades, and sophisticated formal constructions pressed beneath a gleaming sheet of glass, is slick enough to sate most diehard Finish Fetishists, but substantial enough to draw the viewer beyond the surface. It’s the kind of photography that uses the medium’s strengths: its clean surfaces and mechanical perfection.

Another particularly eye-catching piece was *Swedish Red #40* by Joakim Eneroth of Christian Larsen. The image depicts a salmon-red house and its cyan fence in the midst of a vast plane of snow, shot directly from the side to render the objects into flat, geometric shapes. The work is first experienced as an abstract composition, and only after inspection reveals itself to be a document of a real place in time. This slow disclosure, this combination of representation and abstraction, is used here quite powerfully for such a simple gesture. Even within the series of work from which the piece originated, the choice to shoot the structures in such a way as to eliminate all sense of perspective lends the image a restrained elegance, and a formal double-entendre that makes it memorable.

While looking at these works and others like them at the Armory Show, we might be tempted to conclude that there is a trend towards the simple and slick in contemporary art, but it’s almost impossible to tell. Moreover, this type of an aesthetic is inherently salable, the kind of shiny object that people have been after for millennia, so there’s no mystery to its appeal: they shine and glow, like a jewel, a brand new car, or an unwrapped toy. It will be interesting to see if this trend, if there is one, grows or dissipates over time, and what replaces it. On some level, whether they are perceptible or not, some emergent patterns must exist within this system of taste, as they do within any and all systems. Focusing on these patterns can limit one’s total understanding of culture, but at the same time, analyzing them can reveal a great deal about our contemporary value system. Perhaps there is some significance to this trend, some reason why this aesthetic is favored at this point in time. For whatever its worth, as we walk around the Armory Show, it seemed to strike a chord.
This summer, I had amazing good fortune. The stars aligned, my prayers were answered, and before long, I found myself in Rome, the Eternal City. Every since I was young, I’d had an interest in archaeology; when I was three, I told my Mom that I wanted to be a paleontologist. Eighteen years later, I still have something inside that draws me to discovering things that have been covered, buried, and preserved. I love the thought of being the first one in thousands of years to see an object, even if it is only a spoon. This led me to research archaeology programs. As an Art History major, I knew that the place with the richest, most influential art is the sunny, wine-drenched, laid-back, boot-shaped, pasta-loving Italy. And what part of that doesn’t sound fantastic? I decided that’s where I’d go.

Director of the Study Abroad office Cynthia Sittler helped me find Lorenzo de’Medici’s Archaeology Field School. It had everything I was looking for: mainly archaeology and Italy but also the opportunity to work onsite with professional archaeologists and a rural setting that would give me a more authentic glimpse of Italian culture.

I am somewhat obsessed with other cultures. I love languages and learning different ones—I am nearly fluent in Spanish and am working on my French. In high school, my friends and I would talk to each other in very incorrect British and French accents, or use Southern drawls and words like “catsup” and “honey chile” at McDonald’s. The trip to Italy gave me the opportunity to learn what I believe is the most romantic language in the world. Indeed, Italian is. If you have ever heard a native speaker, you know why Italian men are always viewed as the embodiment of romance. Tuscania, where the Archaeology Field School is located, is probably one of the best options for students who want to immerse themselves in Italian culture. Located one hour north of Rome, on the west coast of Italy, and only a few miles from the Mediterranean, Tuscania is a train and a bus ride away from most cities. Try to find it on a map! The beauty of living for five weeks in a rural, foreign town is that I had the opportunity (or mandate, really) to learn the language. In the months prior to my trip, I used a software program called “Instant Immersion” to learn the basics of travel, food, numbers, phrases, and simple grammar. I highly recommend it. When I arrived, I had more of a working knowledge of Italian than any of my fellow students (there were only eight of us) and ended up being able to communicate most effectively with the locals, which was a wonderful and exciting opportunity.

The archaeology program was fantastic. We studied the Etruscan civilization, which existed in Italy in the last eight centuries BCE. We first learned their history, their distinctive styles of art, and major events; we visited surrounding archaeological museums in Viterbo and Civitavecchia. I have probably been to every burial ground, or necropolis, within fifty miles of Tuscania. All of the field trips and class time complemented our on-site work, which took place daily from 8:30 am-12:30 pm (fortunately, Italians
take a substantial break for lunch) and 2:30-4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. We worked alongside archaeologists and diggers to uncover over 30 tombs at one dig site. We even found one containing teeth and pelvic, arm, and leg bones, as well as a skull! More often, however, we found lots of clay tiles and beautiful vases or bowls. I now feel completely comfortable at an archaeological site. I can draw plans to scale; I can use a stadia (a surveying tool); and I can measure elevation. My favorite picture from the trip shows me holding a 2500-year-old vase.

Living in Italy also allowed me to visit some of the best-known works of art and architecture. I refused to pay 18 Euros to see the real *David* (1500) by Michelangelo, so I admired the reproduction outside of the Uffizi. I couldn’t resist seeing the wonderful Baroque works by Gianlorenzo Bernini, my favorite sculptor. I visited Florence’s Duomo and, in Rome, the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel. I drank mini bottles of wine on the Spanish Steps and at the Trevi Fountain, and took lots of tourist pictures. I could have stayed another three months in Italy. Or three years. Now that I’m back in the States, I often have unexplainable cravings for limoncello (a sweet, lemon-flavored liqueur), homemade pasta, Nutella, unsalted bread with olive oil and pepper, fizzy water, and the urge to say “alorra” (literally, “then” but used to mean “OK,” “so,” “in that case,” and other phrases) when there is nothing to say.

My study-abroad experience was successful, to say the least. I believe that everyone should travel abroad at some point, if only to remember that America is not the only country out there. There is so much else to discover and learn. And Italy is a wonderful place to start. Buon Viaggio!
Venice: a city within a lagoon. It is known throughout the world as a labyrinth of canals and alleyways. When you suddenly emerge, you find yourself beside a cathedral, or in a campo, or being peered down upon by a winged lion. The old-fashioned metropolis, with its Gothic architecture, vaguely hints at its modern identity through advertisements, electric lighting, and well-dressed natives. While Venice must maintain a good grasp on the present day, it still holds fiercely onto its history and traditions. It is most certainly a place filled with antiquity and mystery; above all, it is a city surrounded by inspiration and art.

Italy, it is said, is home to nearly 60 percent of all the art in the world. Venice is one of the primarily reasons for this statistic. It is known around the world for its unique Murano Glass, a spellbinding art of sculpting, blowing, and shaping fine glass into plates, vases, bowls, and lamps, as well as more amusing novelties, such as wrapped candy and miniature animals. Indeed, anything you can think of is made of glass in Venice; what you will find in Murano will undoubtedly outdo in grandeur what you have imagined. Those who have the skilled hand to craft these masterpieces are nothing less than geniuses. They study for years under the guidance of a maestro. In all, the system holds that the art of glassmaking is passed down from generation to generation.

Glassmaking came to Venice from the East. The Venetians were great merchants and traded frequently with Turks, who first cultivated the art. The merchants introduced the glass trade to the city. For hundreds of years, craftsman perfected their work on the island of Murano
(one of the Venetian islands). To this day, the work of Murano glass sets the standard; indeed, it is viewed as incomparable.

But there is more to this story. From the beginning, the art of glass making has been a way of life, a marker of identity, to those who study the art or live on Murano. The residents speak with great pride of living there. The overall feeling they convey is, “I live in a beautiful wonderland, where colored glass exists on the campo grounds and not only in window displays.” They have every right to feel that way! Gorgeous works of glass are scattered throughout Murano—even in flower beds and on restaurant tables. A side trip off of the main streets reveals neighborhoods with dazzling gardens of glass flowers, or a completely unexpected oversized goblet of multicolored glass flames.

In Murano, glass is not left only to the artisans in their workshops; the entire island takes pride in it. It is the identity that separates the Muranese from the rest of Italians, even their fellow Venetians. It is incorporated into everyday life, and what could be better than to live where you are surrounded by gorgeous art every day? It is a tradition that will remain here forever, one to be enjoyed not only by those who purchase the art but also by the craftsmen of the island.

Another art form complements the grandeur and tradition of Murano glass; it represents a new, rough-edge rebellion seen on the great walls of hundred-year-old buildings. In short, street art has emerged in Venice. On these crumbling walls, we can find many different tags displaying many different artistic styles and ideas.

Street art in Venice comes in many forms. There are simple designs—silly doodles and English words and phrases (“cats” and “thief” often show up). Other artists put more effort into their work by creating large cartoon characters of their own invention or homemade stencils. The latter is a common tool, a clean and easy way of making multiple, consistent tags all over town. Political statements abound. One can often find a politician’s face with the words “Venice for Sale” written below it.

It is a little difficult to imagine who is filling these walls with spray paint. Venice has a significant number of elderly, or at least middle-aged, residents. Only occasionally will you see a heavily bundled toddler running through a patch of pigeons; there are few young people outside of the university center, the Campo de Santa Margherita. This “older” atmosphere seems suited to Venice, an ancient city, but it makes the presence of graffiti even more noticeable. Given that the elderly residents are hardly sneaking around in the middle of the night with spray paint and rebellious urges, it is likely that the artists are anonymous young people, dying to be heard. Their work speaks loudly and clearly for them.

We can read the gestures of these works as we would brushstrokes in museum paintings. Indeed, these quickly produced works possess a sense of urgency, unlike the detailed and elaborate works of graffiti found at 5Pointz in Queens. The
Venetian artists have no intention of taking their time or working deliberately; theirs is a spray-and-go mission. And yet there is meaning even in the apparently random tags that litter the streets. They reflect a generation crying to be recognized. Regardless of the specific message, the larger idea is identical: young people are here; they are vivacious; and they are ready to convey their ideas.

In short, Venice has a large and enriching art scene outside of its many well-known museums and cathedrals. In the works of street art, we bear witness to the city’s larger identity: a mix of old and new, traditional and contemporary, magic and message. It has never been truer that the people of a town embody its essence. By looking at both traditional glassmaking and unconventional street art, we begin to understand Venice’s art scene, the people of the city, and the very rich and complex fabric of life in the city. The traditional and the new fill the city with inspiration, making Venice a constant—and unexpected—surprise.
During my first lap around the Diane Arbus retrospective at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, I felt immediately overwhelmed. The exhibition displays two-hundred of Arbus’ photographs with only their original titles. Without galleries divided by movement, inspiration, or time, a sea of photos begging for interpretation is all that remains. The final galleries, which offered a biographical perspective on Arbus, seemed to be the place to go—the photograph galleries appeared merely to lead you into the rooms of art historical lucidity.

After reading the introductory text on the entrance wall of the exhibition, I decided to look again. The text claims that, “rather than a chronological, thematic, or academic approach, this exhibition offers an itinerary along which the works themselves guide the spectator’s gaze. In that sense, we have chosen to present Arbus’ singularly powerful images accompanied only by the artist’s own titles.” With this in mind, I asked myself two questions: How are the works guiding my gaze and what are they telling me? These questions forced me to do a close reading of each gallery, and in the process, really “look” at Arbus’ photographs for their connection to one another and their explanation of Arbus.

In the first gallery, there is a pattern to the photographs on the wall. There is a group portrait, followed by a single portrait, then another group, then another single, and then, randomly, a building. The juxtaposition of portraits in the first room, then the disparate image of the Disneyland castle gave me the impression that Arbus covered a variety of subjects and themes.

I think the curators consciously set-up the galleries to display the variety and continuity in Arbus’ work. Following the art historical rule that we should show the information through the works of art and not simply tell, they decided not to say, “Arbus was interested in a variety of subjects,” but to show, instead, her vast interests, varying the photographs to emphasize her range of subject. Yet, by the time I entered the third galley, I began to recognize a pattern within the photographs, despite the variety of people, places, and spaces Arbus chose to capture. For as you observe the photographs, you begin to realize that there is an underlying deep thematic connection in all of her work—namely, humanity.
In other words, all of Arbus’ photographs, in some way, deal with the representation of the human subject. When she displayed a person in Central Park, she blurred the background so that there is no question that the image has more to do with the individual than the setting itself. Even though there is at least one photo sans people in each gallery, even these few images of spaces tell a story about a human being, because the spaces Arbus chooses to depict are living rooms, movie screens, Disneyland—all places that we associate with people, whether they are present or not. The set-up of the exhibition helps one come to this conclusion, as well, by removing all the typical connections. Instead of setting up the exhibition by period, location, or specific subject, these elements are ignored and the patterns that emerge from what we have been conditioned to view as chaos are not only more original, but also more based on our own interpretation of Arbus’ oeuvre than a placard.

Indeed, it is hard not to recognize that each photo is a portrait, and that Arbus experimented mainly with portraiture throughout her career, especially if we regard her titles. Every photograph’s title has something to do with the human being, as well. Moreover, while reading her titles, we develop a sense of what interested Arbus about her subjects. Some of the titles are quite poetic, due to what they do not mention. For example, Puerto Rican Woman with a beauty mark, N.Y.C., 1965 (Fig. 1) does not mention the botched lipstick on the women’s face or her social class, but instead, Arbus draws attention to her most captivating feature. Most of Arbus’ titles hide the oddities within her photographs, or make the oddities appear less odd, which may have something to do with her philosophy on photography, at large. Even the portraits done at nudist camps refrain from highlighting the nudity of the individuals. For example, with the photograph Husband and Wife with Shoes on in their Cabin at a Nudist Camp, N.J., 1963 (Fig. 2), the title emphasizes the irony of a couple wearing shoes, not only in their home, but in a nudist colony nonetheless! I began to imagine Arbus laughing as she thought about this situation.

Another thing you are aware of through the set-up of the exhibition is that, for the most part, Arbus remained on the East Coast, with the exception of California and Europe. The continuity of location begins to stick out as you constantly read about N.Y.C, Coney Island, and N.J. in the titles of her works. Likewise, as you see photographs from the same locations, repeatedly, with no particular display pattern based on place, you begin to pay more attention to the few photographs taken elsewhere. Even photographs taken in Maryland become fascinating, because although Maryland is on the East Coast, it is about four hours away from New Jersey, and for Arbus to leave the N.Y. tri-state area, you imagine she must have been interested in the subject. Places like California appear even odder. These oddities led me to guess at the art historical information behind the images and wonder if she took the California photographs for a journalism assignment and, if so, for which assignment were the photographs of Mae Weston taken.

The gallery of untitled photographs—
after all of the titles—makes one question whether Arbus left certain photographs untitled to obtain a higher level of objectivity, especially since the people captured in these photographs suffer from disorders like Down syndrome. I felt that perhaps she wanted to show these photos untitled so that the masses would see the people, and not their disorders. Perhaps she felt if she gave them any title, which did not mention their disorders, this would also be dishonest, too. Although these are only my speculations, as previously stated, the way the galleries are set-up brought me to these questions, and, in a way, gave me several research questions that I am not sure I would have developed had the typical information been laid out for me in the beginning. Indeed, this retrospective seems to encourage historical curiosity, but encourages the viewer to look at the work before analyzing the historical aspects, since after all of the wordless photo galleries, there is a section on the artist’s life.

The last section of the exhibition gives a biography of Arbus, along with her inspirations, notebooks, cameras, etc. It discusses what Arbus thought of the photography process, and even shows magazines with some of her photographs in them, therefore discussing the photojournalist aspect of her work. After really looking at all of the photographs, this information seems to merely fill in the small gaps, or allow for further research, but, in some ways, it hardly seems as important as the photographs themselves. This is an interesting philosophical concept: Normally, in a retrospective, the timeline and art historical information come first, whereas, here, they come last. Here, Arbus is first explained through her photographs, which give the typical viewer—and the art historian—a wealth of information already, thus placing the actual photographs as the star of the show, to be viewed as the primary documents.

In the Diane Arbus retrospective, the curators are saying, meet Diane, objectively, and then look for the academic explanation. Without explanations upfront, you must interpret everything for yourself and compare what you thought with the biographical facts. I believe that the curators intentionally set-up the exhibit this way to keep the focus on Arbus’ art and not the artist, since the public can sometime become hung up on the myths and clichés surrounding an artist and miss the art.
“A frog in a well can only see a portion of the sky,” my English tutee explained to me when we were discussing the importance of a worldly view. My knowledge of Contemporary art in China was limited to a Western observation. I have since found just how Western my perceptions were.

Chinese Contemporary art has increased in Shanghai over the past two decades as it follows the business boom. In 1990, Shanghai’s famous business district of Pudong did not exist. Twenty years later, what was a grassy green park has exploded into one of the world’s top financial districts, with buildings soaring from every inch of earth (Figs. 1&2). And yet, I did not expect as heavy of an influences from the West and the popularity of ‘Chinese Contemporary art’ for the foreigner rather than the Chinese.

My first glimpse into the city’s art scene was Art Labor, a gallery located in a trendy retail complex filled with designer stores and chic restaurants in Shanghai’s French concession. A group show by a variety of Chinese and Western artists, such as the quirky ceramics of Li Lihong and the animal hybrids of Koen Vanmechelen, filled the walls. The Canadian gallery owner was quick to inform me about the artwork. Our conversation evolved into the precautions he must take as a gallery owner in communist country. He said, “I have to label everything going in or out of the gallery decoration,” and then explained that the words painting and art can cause unwanted suspicion by government officials. The portrayal of art in the gallery has to follow government guidelines as well. Titles of artwork have to be
simplified while on display in case a government official should see or hear about them. Behind the scenes is where we have freedom, he explained, as we wandered into the back room where paintings scattered the floor. It seemed as if the paintings not hung on the wall were free to release their own ideas, compared to the artwork that had to abide by the rules when in the public eye.

I knew freedom of expression would be suppressed in China. However, the realities of living here, experiencing the restrictions on speech and expression, are far more drastic than I could have imagined. I was given a long list of topics at my orientation meeting that I should avoid discussing while in China. I have noticed that some examples of freedom of expression are more obvious than other. On a leisurely walk, I came across nearly a mile of easily accessible walls and realized the frequency of this scene in Shanghai. As I passed the white walls, I thought of New York City and wondered how long this would stay blank if it were transported to Manhattan (Fig. 3).

Shortly after Art Labor, I visited M50, an art complex in the Putuo District. This former industrial-turned-art complex sounded as if it held promise for getting an authentic Chinese art experience. I quickly learned, however, that this space is a government-organized tourist attraction. The M50 complex provides a comfortable space to view art, with some twenty galleries, a café with a variety of coffee drinks, Western meals, and English-speaking wait staff to cater this gallery complex to foreigners in China (Fig. 4). After a stroll through a variety of Western-owned galleries and a quaint bookstore, I entered the café for a pasta lunch. I finished my experience by watching Europeans order espresso as I flipped through the latest edition of TIME magazine.

One of the galleries caught my attention, as I spoke with the French owner of Island 6 gallery, home of the Lu Dao art collective. He informed me that in his six years of business, his sales have been 99% to westerners, a number that has only recently gone down from 100% this summer when he sold his first work of art to a local Chinese man. He explained that this is a common occurrence in the M50 gallery complex and that around China, sales of Chinese contemporary art are in the majority to foreigners. He said that Chinese businessmen occasionally come into the gallery. They often look around the space intently, but instead of looking at the art on the wall, they look at the side offices and lighting fixtures on the ceiling. He said that trying to explain the type of business being run is a challenge because the idea of an art market is not widely understood.

Regardless of government regulations, it is possible to find an underground scene if you look hard enough. One warm October night, I attended a one-act play in an underground art space. The space was in an obscure location, very difficult to find. Down an extended alley, past rows upon rows of worker housing was a worn, four-story building with an old sign lit up, the only notion of life. I opened a door, which
I thought would be the entrance to the building, only to walk into a family’s home. After exiting the home and pacing around the building, I found an old staircase in the back that led up to a heavy, rusted door on the third floor.

My friend and I entered a space that was comprised of studios, a gallery, a small stage, and a graphic design area. It was a hidden gem only a local Chinese person could navigate. Did we find a space for Chinese to create freely? We made our way through staccato hallways arriving at an audience waiting patiently on mismatched chairs descending on a small amphitheater. I took a seat in the front row and glanced back as the lights slowly went down...over a crowd of western faces.

Fig. 3: Under Humin Highway, Shanghai. Photo: the author.

Fig. 4: Plaque recognizing M50 Galleries as a National Tourist Attraction. Photo: the author.
About our Contributors

Jamie Allen, ‘14, is a double major in Psychology and Studio Art; she is also working on a minor in Art Therapy. She wrote a version of her article on Kandinsky for a section of Writing 102 taught by Prof. Bell.

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Kayley Fullerton, ’12, is majoring in Art History and minoring in Studio Art (although she proudly finished a Studio Art senior project). She works at FAO Schwarz and interns with CITYArts. Though she has absolutely no idea what she wants out of life, she continues to learn Spanish and Italian (just in case) and to make extensive travel plans to every continent. Until she can afford the plane tickets, she is deciding between earning a Master’s degree in Art Education or Museum Education in New York City. She holds out hope that, one day, the economy will be stable enough for her finally to stop going to school. She welcomes donations of puppies, wine, tickets to Josh Groban, and unlimited monthly passes to Bikram. Kayley wishes, specifically, to thank Dr. Bell for guiding her through transferring, multiple majors, Honor’s Day submissions, senior theses, internships, and generally the chaos that is her life.

Erica Griffin, ’14, is a Communication Arts major and an active writer. In Spring 2012, she is studying in Venice.

Katie Hennessy is a Senior with a double major in Communication Arts and Art History. Recently, she has become obsessed with exploring the relationship between social media and art, and has been doing so through internships and academic research. In addition to her passion for art, she loves to go biking and will embrace the challenge of a 45-mile bike tour in Spring 2012.

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**Elizabeth Rosetty** will be graduating in May 2012 with a B.A. in Dance & Media, Graphic Design, and a Psychology minor. She is thrilled to have had the opportunity to utilize her interdisciplinary studies at Marymount Manhattan in various ways. This is her second time contributing to *Artfusion News*; she was featured in our “Spotlight on the Artist” section in Fall 2010. With a strong interest and skill set in many art forms, she hopes one day to continue her artistic studies in graduate school.

**Charles Sainty**, ’12, is majoring in Photography.

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**Front Cover Photo:** Charles Sainty, *Face in the Park*, 2011, photograph.

**Back Cover Photos:** David Flores, stills from the “Dancers at Work” dress rehearsal.

Designed by Lacey Budd, ‘12

Edited by Veronique Hoebeke, ‘14, and Prof. Bell, Faculty Adviser

**Forthcoming in the 2012-13 Edition:** an interview with Professor of Theatre Arts Ray Recht; an article on Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Jill Stevenson and the Theatre Production Workshops.
A Brief History of Artfusion News

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