

# A rtist round the world



**SJSU International House  
Newsletter: Spring 2015**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

WANDERING THROUGH THE HALLS OF INSPIRATION

- ADAM SKERRITT

I-HOUSE ART AROUND THE WORLD

- LEANN CHERKASKY MAKHNI

THE ALTERNATE ROUTE

-MELVIN MCELRATH

TOO GOOD, TOO BAD

- THOMAS SCHELSTRAETE

I-HOUSE ART GALLERY FEATURING

MARTIN MING TANG AND QUAN JIANG

MI AMIGOS, THE SKELETONS DE MEXICO

- KRISTEN PENDLETON

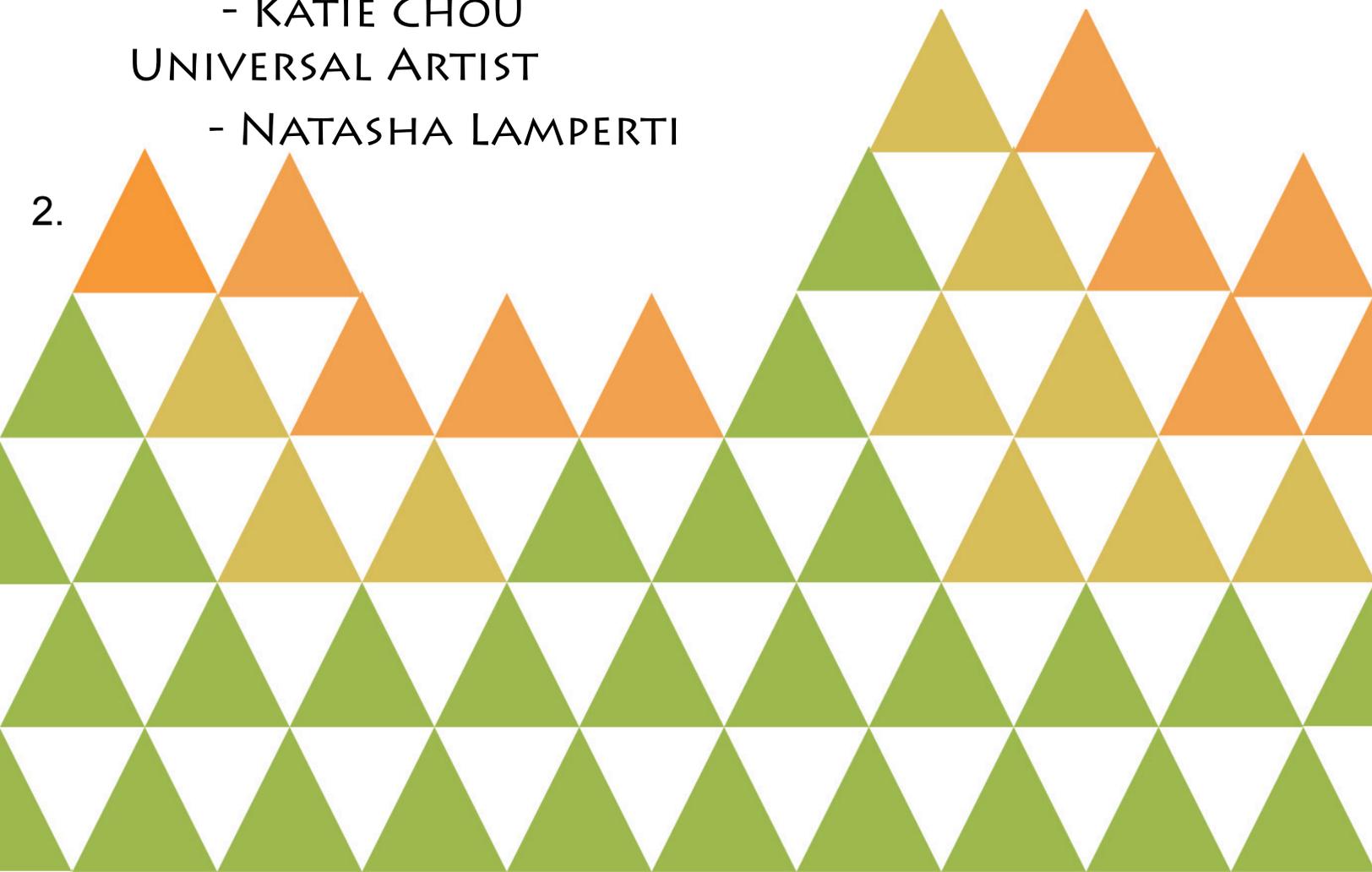
ARTS AROUND THE WORLD: ANIMATION

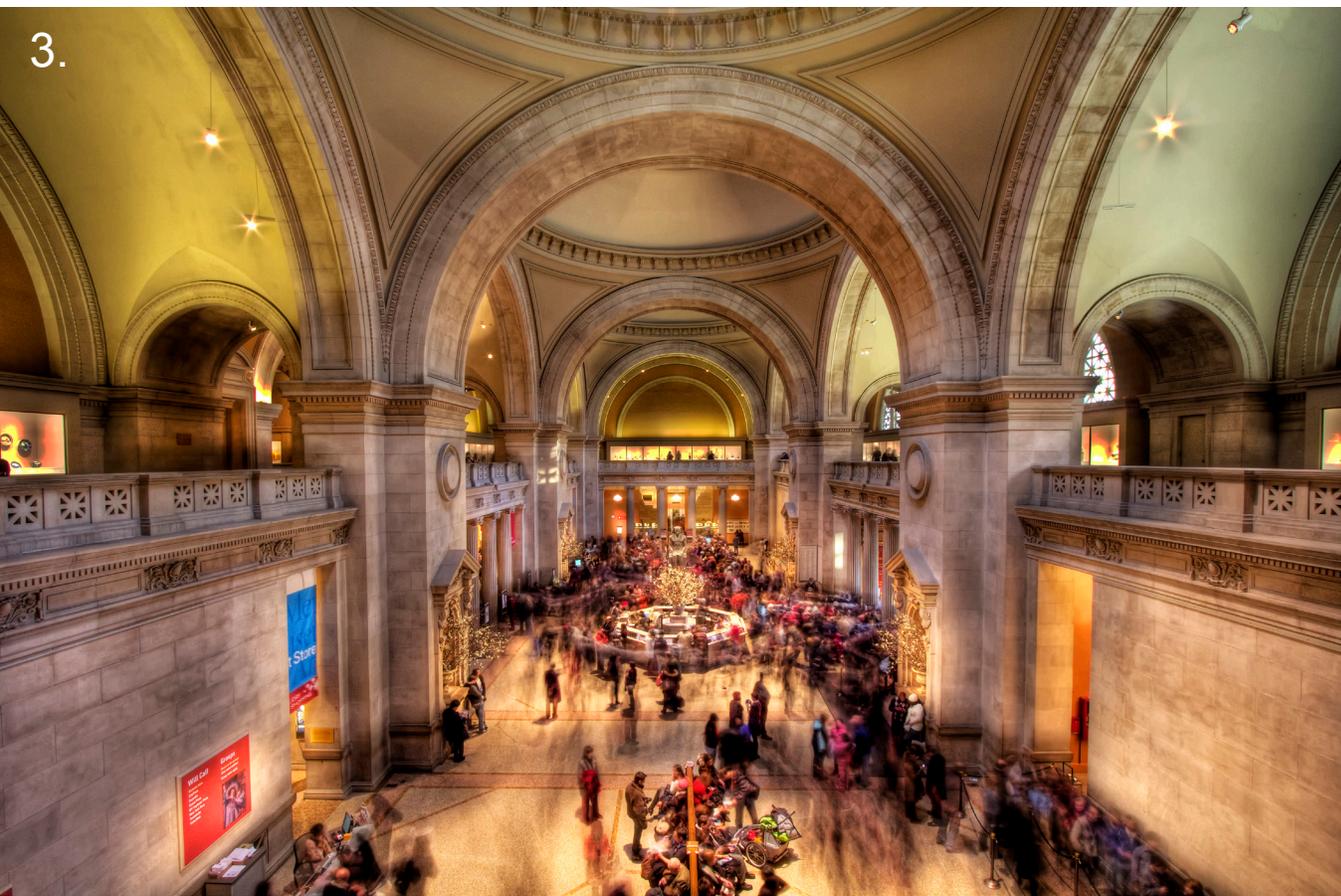
- KATIE CHOU

UNIVERSAL ARTIST

- NATASHA LAMPERTI

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If you could teleport yourself to any singular place in the world right now, where would you go? For me, as for many other people, that could be a fantastically difficult question to answer. I could easily answer with any spot in my hometown, a favorite hall that I have sung in, a gorgeous view that has to be taken in once more. I can safely say, that if I could only choose five spots, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York would be mentioned every time. For anyone who loves art, including myself, it is virtually an all-you-can-see smorgasbord of wonderfulness. Walking through the maze of rooms (and it really is that) you cannot help but be moved by the creative endeavors of man and feel a little better about the world around you. It is simply a magical place.

The particular spots where I would drop myself off at the moment of writing this are Galleries 823 and 826. I could only describe the two rooms as (mostly) French Impressionist heaven. So many of the finest Monet, Renoir and (with particular emphasis) Van Gogh paintings are stocked in those rooms, and the sheer joy of being in there makes me want to show as much delight as my fellow museum-goers and the inevitable security guard can safely tolerate. It should also be noted that this is the stop in the museum that, given its location in the second floor, comes along at the point when one is tired of looking at art and wants to move on to other touristy things. To reach it, therefore, puts me in a Christmas Day-like mood. There is just something about being in the presence of such profound expressiveness.

# Wandering through the Halls of Inspiration

Adam Skerritt

# I-House Art Around the World

Leann Cherkasky Makni

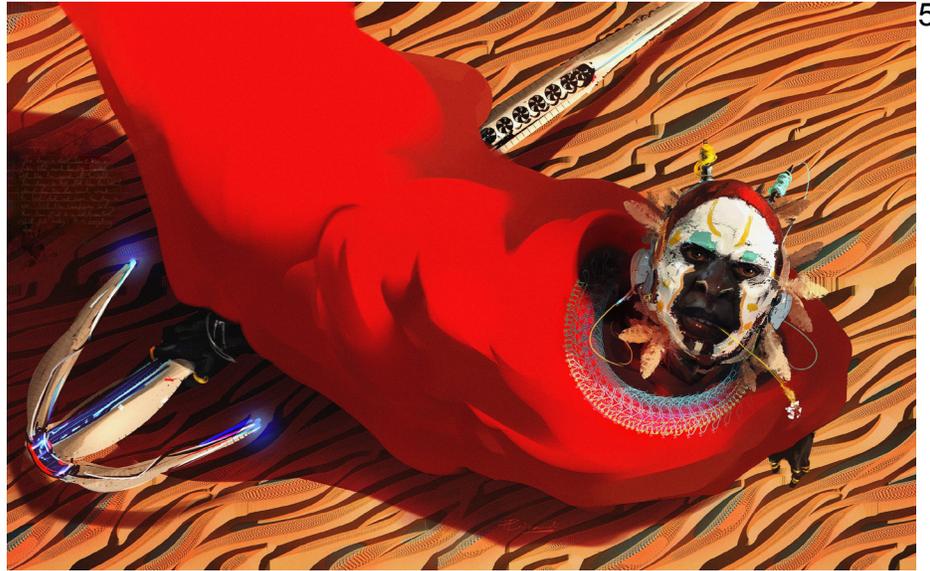
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The basement walls of I-House have been graced by the talents of many of our residents. As I give tours of I-House, I really enjoy relating anecdotes about the students who contributed to the ambience of the rooms that hold so many memories. In the late 90's, Vivian Hwang (Hong Kong) [vivdesignsf.com](http://vivdesignsf.com) painted the Andy Warhol portraits that look as fresh today as they did when painted 20 years ago.

In the mid-00's, Saro Orfali (Israeli Armenian) <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3171478/> + <http://saro-orfali.blogspot.com> & Dino Kouyialis <http://constantinokouyialis.blogspot.com/> (Cyprus) approached me with a request to paint the basement walls. A decade later a few of the Disney characters they so accurately portrayed remain, looking as lively as ever. Most recently, beautiful tree and flower murals have been added to the walls by Marie Hobson (England) and Kai Fung Kevin Tong (Hong Kong). Marie also painted a country bumpkin scene in the first floor kitchen serving area.

Paul Chung and his brother Don own a janitorial business and have been cleaning up after I-House residents for nearly 25 years. Their parents before them held the role. What most people do not know is that Paul has a degree in Fine Arts. His framed art hangs in the Computer Room of I-House. A feature piece created by Paul of John F. Kennedy was flown over the city of Dallas, Texas last year and is now preserved in the Dallas Archives <https://www.behance.net/gallery/18192069/Banner-for-JFK-50th-Anniversary-Commemorative-Event> Paul exhibits in galleries, contracts with textbook companies to produce cover art, & sells his art online. <https://www.etsy.com/people/paulchung>

Peter Gikandi's [<http://petergikandi.com>] (Kenya) had his "office" in the I-House Dining Room and at the drafting table in the Study Room where he worked long hours over his artwork while he also managed to be Resident Advisor. Peter was soon followed by Saro who held his "office" in the Dining Room where he sketched and balanced his role as Head Resident. They have been followed by the creative minds of resident artists including Ace Antazo (USA), Resident Advisor for two years; Michael Wu <http://www.michaelwuportfolio.com> (USA); Jonathan Fernando (USA) who manages the I-House website while he is buried in class assignments; and our current Resident Advisor, and Newsletter editor Melvin McElrath (USA) <https://www.behance.net/Melmiik> and <http://melmiik.tumblr.com/>.



# The Alternate Route

Melvin McElrath

I've always been a artsy person and it has always been a part of my life. But I never thought about making a career out it. My dad was a programming at HP; so I followed in his footsteps and enter SJSU as a computer science major. During that whole time it was difficult, sometimes boring, overall I had fun, but I felt something was missing. So I decided that that wasn't for me and it brought back to art. Since then, I've had a great time. Each new class I'm excited about and I work outside and in class on my own work. Though I have always beat my self up about not doing it sooner and how far behind I am. My mom always tells me, even if it takes more time, it's fine taking the alternate route. You'll get where you want to be eventually and it will all work out in the end. And I beleive that.

My mom, when she finished high school she started working at a hair salon. It wasn't until a year after when she realized she didn't like that life style. After that she went community college, found her passion in law, got her first degree at UC Berkely, got her second degree at Santa Clara University and is now a lawyer. My dad started a security gaurd at HP and self taught himself all the things he knows now and is currently work on the latest cloud projects at HP. Both these stories are truely an inspiraton for me. Which is why Ithat you should do what you enjoy the most, even if its a long path and even if you took a wrong turn at first. It's something that you'll definately be at your best.

# Too Good, Too Bad

Thomas Schelstraete

All the various cultures obviously also bring a lot of different tastes of art to the I-House. What do the students consider as the 'pièce the resistance' of their own country? And what piece of art would they rather see getting thrown into the bin?

16.



Although David Rogers has been to all the famous museums of London, the 22-year old Brit discovered his favorite piece of art just by coincidence. "Me and my brother were just strolling near the center of a British place called Cheltenham. Then all of a sudden we bumped onto this Banksy graffiti." Rogers likes Banksy's combination of modern techniques and heavily loaded subjects occupying society.. "Technically speaking graffiti is illegal, but his style is obviously not just some simple drawings on a wall. This one is called Spy Booth, and it being located near the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) makes it of course a very funny piece of graffiti.

Rogers is very clear when it comes to his least favorite pieces of art, "Unfortunately there are a lot of painters out there who really think they are as good as the Old Masters. Whilst browsing the Internet I found a museum called The Museum of Bad Art, they have a hilarious collection with works of artists who really think they're going to make money with their pieces. I could show you the full collection, but Ronan the Pug painted by Erich Rothgeb is in my opinion the perfect example of a poor trait. Words fail me to be honest."

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Also a classic painting, but less to Laurent's liking is la radeau de la Méduse, painted by Théodore Géricault. "It is very famous and it is shown in the Louvre in Paris, but I still don't like it. It shows a horrible scene of the sinking of a raft, which I don't really feel inspiring. The technique of how it is made is impressive, but I rather don't look at it for too long.

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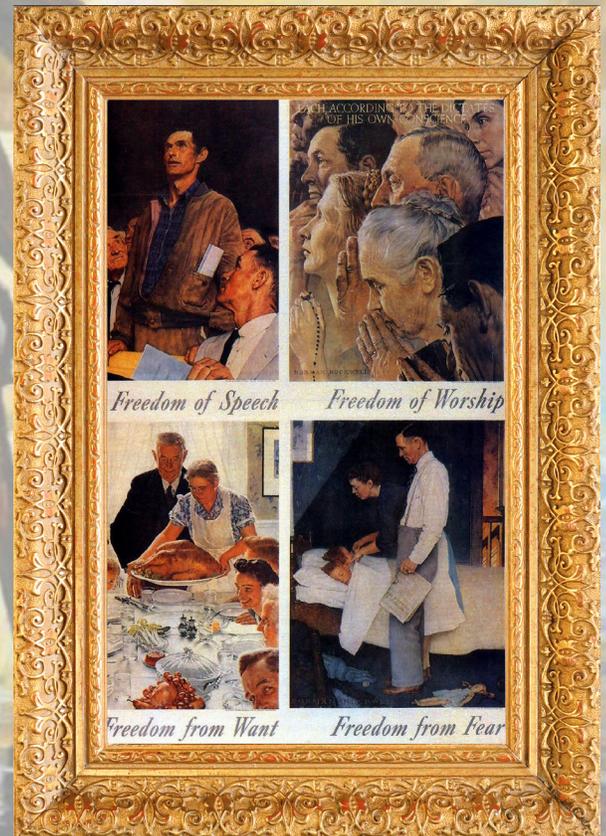


No politically or socially important paintings for the 19-year old Jasmijn Kwaks. Growing up in the Netherlands, she appreciates pieces of art showing the small things in life a lot. “I love the painting called Huishouden which is made by Jan Steen. It shows a typical Dutch household that is a little bit of a mess but in the meantime also very cozy. It reminds me of my parents home, looking at it always makes me smile. Besides that it is not a very formal painting like most of the older art.”

Way less formal, but according to Kwaks totally uninteresting are the pieces of art made by Dutch painters that are very modern and abstract. “Piet Mondriaan’s style of painting for example. I really don’t like his style because to me all of his drawings just consist of a lines and colored squares, something I could have made when I was a little child. Perhaps I don’t see the bigger picture, but even if I would I don’t think I’ll like his style.”

Considering he particularly likes the classic Italian art, the American Jonathan Fernando (20) had a hard time picking a favorite of piece of art that’s made by someone of his own country. “But in terms of social background and quality of painting I really like the Four Freedoms made by Norman Rockwell. It is meaningful but at the same time also very enjoyable to look at. As student in Animation that is obviously important as well.”

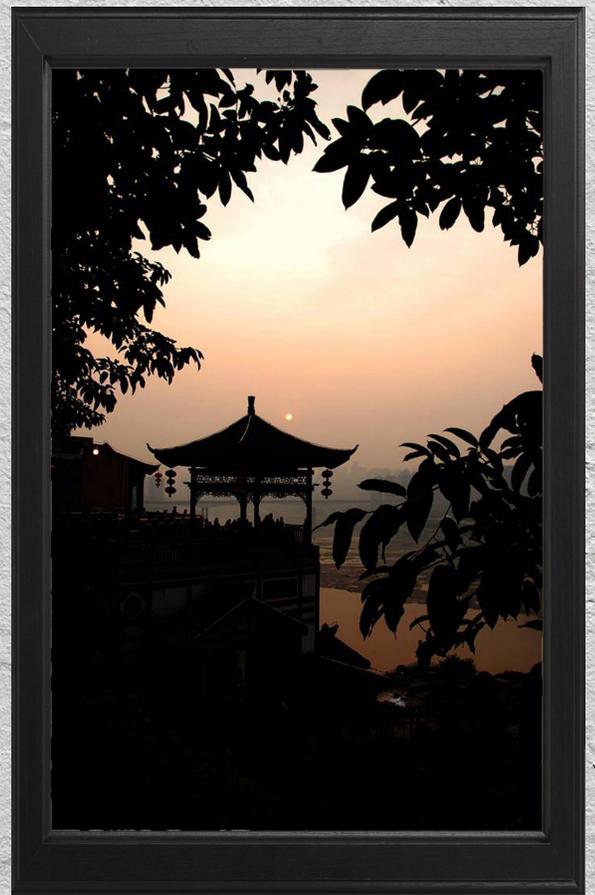
As an adorer of most of the fine Italian art, Fernando very much despises the simple and abstract art based on the mass culture. “In my opinion Andy Warhol’s work is the worst in this category. It is very simplistic, I can’t even say that I consider taking a photograph and changing the colors is real art. He reached many people with his artworks, but not me.”



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# I-House Internati

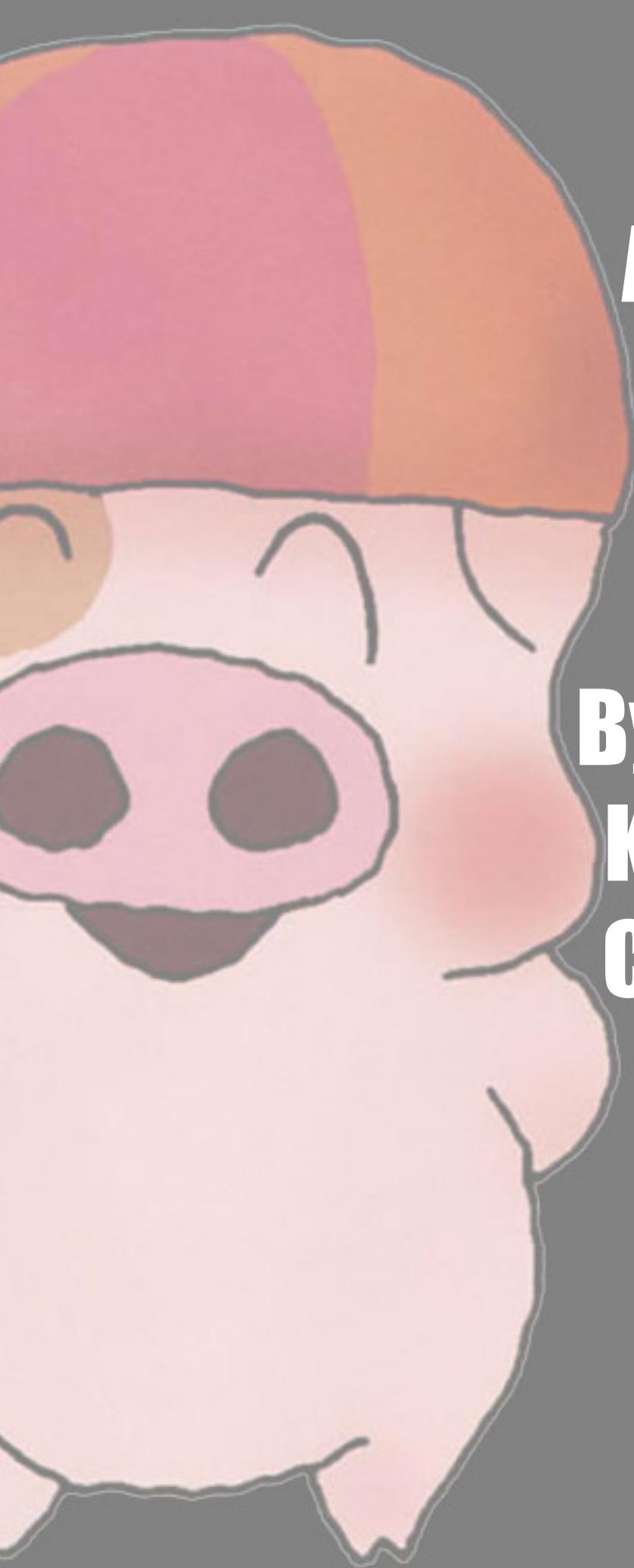
Martin  
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# onal Art Gallery

Shiny  
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# **Arts Around the World: Animation**

**By  
Katie  
Chou Ying Chi**

## The Beloved Hong Kong Piggy — McDull

Hong Kong is renowned for its importance as a highly internationalized financial centre, one of the most optimum city for business. Yet, it is criticized to be “a dessert for cultural development” — Art always seems to be a trivial topic neglected by the government and the general public, as it can never generate as much revenue as the financial industry does. Therefore, only few visual art pieces like animations or comics could eventually spring into fame.

As an internationalized city, the audience is able to enjoy high quality entertainment imported from other countries. Despite the fact that American and Japanese animations being popular among the Hong Kong audience, no other animation could every challenge the status of a little piggy, being the representative cartoon icon of the city. The piggy’s name is McDull.

## The Clumsy Anti-hero

The pink piggy is distinguished by the two birthmarks on his right eye and left forehead. Born less good-looking, wealthy and intelligent as his cousin McMug, he is well-received as a stupid, clumsy but lovable laughingstock. Brought up by his single mother Mrs Mak, McDull faces pressure brought by high academic expectations from his mother, just like any other Hong Kong kids. One of the movie series depicts McDull obtaining an H in exam, yet he misread the letter grade to be A. There is also a time that he failed to perform well as goalkeeper of the kindergarten’s soccer team. To compensate for his mistake, he decorated the goal with beautiful flowers and handmade paper cranes and stars.

## Hong Kong Style Satire& Tribute to Classical Arts

Apart from the childish and naïve characters of McDull, the animation itself is saturated with all kinds of satire, pranks and parodies. All lyrics of background music and theme songs are written in Cantonese. For instance, there is one short clip showing Mrs. Mak, McDull’s workaholic mother trying hard to work and surpass all her colleagues in a competitive environment. She is portrayed as an invincible warrior in an exciting video game. The song’s melody is adapted from Hermann Necke’s “Csikós Post”. Such amusing scene serves as a very accurate simlie of many Hong Kong parents. Same as Mrs. Mak, for the sake of their children’s well-being, they work extremely hard to earn as much as possible.

A remarkable example McDull’s tribute paid to Western Classical Art is the “Exreman” short film, inspired by Raymond Brigg’s world-famous film “The Snowman”. On Christmas Eve, McDull produced a piece of dung in human form, the “Exreman”. The dung came into life and brought him to celebrate Christmas in the drainages with other Exremen. While every Exremen seemed to enjoy the party, they were actually celebrating the last night of their lives before being decomposed and filtered. The disgusting theme of “dung” may appear vulgar; yet it actually resembles the remorseful situation of the grass-root citizens. Scenes of old women picking up trash are shown while Exremen is complaining about his own worthless and short life. Unlike “The Snowman” which portrays a joyful and innocent festive season, “Exreman” reflects a cynical outlook on rich and poor disparity in the city. It might also be interpreted the author’s own complain on the unfavorable environment of Hong Kong’s cultural development.

## What Does McDull Mean to Hong Kong People...

Art is not necessarily classy and sophisticated in terms of theme and format. McDull is a perfect example to show; how cuteness and humor can strike a resonance among the audience. Hong Kong people needs jokes, probably black humor that McDull offers, to take a short break from their rigid and pressurized lives.





## *Dias De Los Muertos Skeleton Art from Mexico by Kristen Pendleton*

In my family room, the skeletons are playing baseball, getting married, jugando futbol, picking flowers, riding bicycles, and showing off their best Sunday clothes. They cavort as clay figurines, gaily painted stamped tin, paintings, grimacing sugar skulls, dioramas created from matchboxes, mouse pads, coasters, needlepoint and papeles picados (elaborately cut tissue paper). The skeletons don't scare me, but sometimes I worry what guests might think.

Each year during the final days of October and first days of November, the Dias de los Muertos, or Days of the Dead, are celebrated throughout Mexico to welcome home the spirits of dead relatives. In each home an altar is set up to welcome the spirits to the annual family reunion. Skeleton figurines or calacas, in addition to candles, orange marigolds, favorite food and drink of the deceased, and incense are created or purchased to decorate graves and home altars. Art depicting skeletons doing every-day activities and sugar skulls show us how Mexicans "mock death, partake of it, join it, because there is no escaping it." (Rosoff Beimler, Rosalind 1991:25 *The Days of the Dead*)

As a high school student, I spent six weeks living with a family in Colima, Mexico. I fell in love with the people, the language, the culture of Mexico. The closeness of my Mexican family, their Catholic faith, and the colorful parties and traditions captivated me. My parents were recently divorced. My Anglo-Saxon, protestant heritage seemed boring in comparison to what I discovered in Colima. I continued to visit various regions of Mexico.

Although I have never been in Mexico during the Dias de los Muertos, I have decorated my home with skeleton figurines, paper cutouts, and brightly painted pieces of tin, which can be purchased in Mexico throughout the year. The Days of the Dead, include the things I love about Mexico: close-knit families, respect, religion, vivid colors, music, and wonderful food.





# *Universal Artists*

*By Natasha Lamperti*

For a long time I believed that my sister was the artist in my family. My family's pretty creative. My mother has the ability to make everything she touches look nice, whether its a table setting, a handmade greeting card, or a school project; my father is a clever writer with a sense of humor to match; and my youngest sister is an actress ( or should I say drama queen) who has the ability to make anything and everything more fun and dramatic. However I called my middle sister the artist. She was the one who won photo competitions, the one who drew on the wall and didn't get yelled at, the one who owned sketchbooks and bought fancy drawing pens, the one who had photoshop on her computer and knew how to use it.

So when my sister started University and decided not to major in art it almost felt like a waste to me. Like somehow it was her duty as the artist in our family to be the eccentric cliché but she chose instead. So it was up to me to redefine what I believed it meant to be an artist.

I fully embrace the idea that everyone is creative, and with that creativity comes the ability to create art. Art is not as simple as a painting on the wall or brilliant cinematography in a film. Art is messy and up to interpretation. Art like anything takes practice, and comes more naturally to some than others but it can be accessed by anyone. My sister is still an artist despite not having majored in art, but so is my mom, and my dad, and my sister, and so am I. Art is adding beauty to a moment, a place, an idea. It can be wordplay or a prank that goes so well it makes everyone laugh out loud.

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# REFERENCES

- Front Cover
  - 1.) Abstract World Map by dreamstime.com
- Table of Contents (Pg.1)
  - 2.) Triangle Uprising by Melvin McElrath
- Wandering Through the Halls of Inspiration (Pg. 2)
  - 3.) From the Far Side by Carmelo Bayarcal
- I-House Art Around the World (Pg. 3)
  - 4.) Bill Gates Digital Drawing by Paul Chung
  - 5.) Digital Matte Painting By Saro Ofali
  - 6.) Day by Peter Gikandi
  - 7.) SJSU Pride by Kevin Tong
  - 8.) My Dearest by Kevin Tong
- The Alternate Route by Melvin McElrath (Pg. 4)
  - 8.) Summer Days by Melvin McElrath
  - 9.) This is the end, isn't it? by Melvin McElrath
  - 10.) Simple Paradise by Melvin McElrath
  - 11.) The Old Days by Melvin McElrath
  - 12.) Tsskk by Melvin McElrath
  - 13.) Blue Punch Buggy by Melvin McElrath
- Too Good, Too Bad (Pg. 5-6)
  - 14.) (Background) Bewitched Park by Leonid Afremov
  - 15.) Spy Booth by Bansky
  - 16.) Ronan the Pug by Erich Rothgeb
  - 17.) A Radeau de la Méduse by Théodore Géricault.
  - 18.) Huishouden by Jan Steen
  - 19.) Four Freedoms by Norman Rockwell
- Back Cover



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