

A<sup>to</sup>Z

The Art and Culture iZine.

Neolance

3.1



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## DEAR READER:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO VIEW OUR FOURTH ISSUE OF A TO Z! I HAVE DECIDED THAT THIS WILL BE 3.1, EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT A NEW YEAR. THE IDEA IS THAT WHEN WE START ANOTHER ISSUE NEXT YEAR IT WILL BE 4.1 IN THE YEAR 2004! COOL IDEA, HUH?

WELL, ANYWAY, IT HAS BEEN HARD WORK BUT VERY REWARDING TO PUT OUT THESE TWO ISSUES AT ONCE. I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. I HOPE THAT PEOPLE KEEP ON SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT SO THAT I CAN CONTINUE TO DO IT FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

LET'S SEE HOW LONG IT WILL LAST!

LIKE ALL PROJECTS, THE MANIFESTATION THAT YOU WILL READ HERE IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN THAT ORIGINAL PLAN. NEW PLACES AND NEW PEOPLE HAVE ADDED TO THE DIVERSITY AND ENERGY THAT THIS ZINE HOPED TO INSPIRE. OUR BULLETIN BOARD SITE, [WWW.THE-CORPS.COM](http://WWW.THE-CORPS.COM), HAS BEEN A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING. IT HAS ONLY BEEN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR SINCE THE FIRST ISSUE AND I AM QUITE SHOCKED AT WHERE WE ARE AT ALREADY.

AS EVER, WE HOPE TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO RESPOND TO THE ZINE TO GIVE US LOTS OF FEEDBACK, INITIATING AN ONGOING DIALOGUE. BEING COMPLETELY AND TOTAL ONLINE MEANS THAT THE COST TO US AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN ALMOST NIL. IT MEANS THAT THE ONLY THING REALLY BEING CONTRIBUTED IS TIME. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FURTHER ISSUES OF A TO Z, WE ASK ONLY THAT YOU CONTRIBUTE SOME TIME INTO FEEDBACK AND/OR SUBMISSIONS.

OF COURSE, YOU MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE BY JUST FORWARDING THIS LINK TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.  
SARRITA

FOR COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, SUBMISSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, OR ANY OTHER NEEDS GO TO  
[WWW.ATOZINE.NET](http://WWW.ATOZINE.NET).

# CONTRIBUTORS



**SARRITA HUNN** is the founder and editor of **A to Z**.

She is a second year MFA student at the California College of Arts and Crafts in San Francisco, California.

"I like Mac Powerbooks and electronic music."

You can contact her at [sarrita@the-corps.com](mailto:sarrita@the-corps.com).



**TAMARA STASER** is currently a Bay Area resident and a graduate student in the creative writing program of the California College of Arts and Crafts. Originally from East Lansing, Michigan, she received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1996 before moving to New York City to study fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in 1998/1999. She aspires to have a style that is a combo of both Audrey Hepburn and Alice in Wonderland, with a little Cher and George Clinton of the P-Funk All Stars mixed in, as well. She likes to ponder the continued existence of human beings on this planet while watching cartoons on cable television and eating sugar cookie tube dough. Turn ons include anything shiny and/or kinetic and smaller than a breadbox. Turn offs include white plastic grocery bags, collect calls and anything brown. She accepts jewelry.

[glamoura22@hotmail.com](mailto:glamoura22@hotmail.com).



**MICHELE THEBERGE** is a painter who likes to write occasionally.

She lives in Oakland, California with her cat and husband.

She still listens to punk rock.

[birdyhop@mindspring.com](mailto:birdyhop@mindspring.com)



**INORI FUKUDA TRANT** came to the United States from Japan in 1993 to explore the wonder of American culture. She's stuck here since then. She used to be in the Fine Arts society in Springfield, MO, but now there's not much sign of that in her. She loves entertainment arts such as movies (more movies than films, if you know what that means), comic books, ... and movies. She is also a founder of the Unofficial San Francisco Jet Li Fan Club. She resides in San Francisco, CA with her husband and a cat.

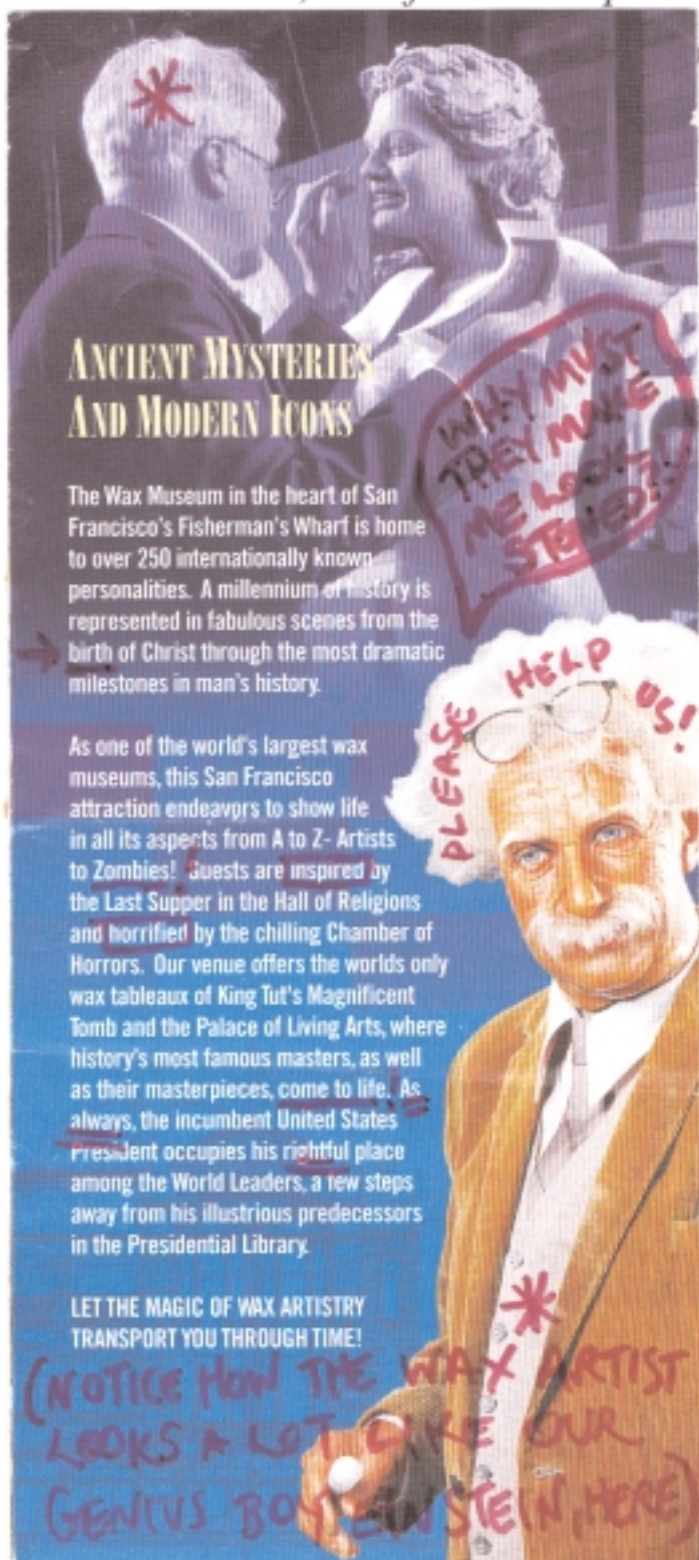
[kalichan88@hotmail.com](mailto:kalichan88@hotmail.com)



by Tamara Staser

## "Walk Through A Millennia Of Human Civilization!"

the museum's brochure reads. This text is planted underneath a profile shot of King Tutankhamen's bust, as he faces an inset map through "Ancient Mysteries And Modern Icons!" One is prodded by a booming audio looped announcer to "See The King of Egypt And The King Of Pop!" from a stereo system set in the lobby. One cannot help but get swept up in the pomp of such a surreal excursion, even while merely standing in the entryway. Crowds of tourists gather to watch a replica of rap artist Eminem spin on a rotational mobile, far above human scale, as though the singer were a piece of pie. \$12.95 seems like a small price to pay when faced with the prospect of missing out on such a wacky, if not disturbing anthropomorphic simulacrum. The Wax Museum in San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf is proffered as good clean family fun. Admitted customers are not expecting rocket science, just a couple of photos opportunities of themselves standing next to their favorite celebrities, and why not? The super-saturation of reality media is daunting; this has to be better than watching another rental from Blockbuster. Therefore, why not get a glimpse of something more quantifiable than spotting someone you knew in college fail to eat an entire plate of worms on the show "Fear Factor 2"? Anyone with full sensory faculties would enjoy the ability to witness J. Lo, 'in the flesh', and barely



dressed, right? The Wax Museum, however, is much more than fodder for those dazzled by fame. There is an underlying political and religious agenda apparent in this permanent exhibition space that reduces one to feeling unsafe in their own skin, let alone while looking at the replication of superstars and infamous historical figures. The odd juxtapositions of individual wax replicants within the exhibits, in addition to sorely lacking 'factual' audio guide, lead viewers down a very direct path. This path leads to an ethnocentric and discombobulated fact/fiction historical paradigm. The viewer of these mocking displays is not only given sub-par representation of subject, but a skewed view of one family's summation of a history that is so far from any truth that the casual observer, attempting to have a light hearted day of sight seeing, cannot help but feel thoroughly ripped off. The Wax Museum's patriarchy have mastered nothing but the ability to mask their sexist, right wing politics in a parade of condescension and poorly realized artifice. The Fong Family, who opened the museum on May 12, 1963, have used their good fortune in securing this prime real estate, to play dolly with the hallmark individuals of human history and rewrite how one views iconic people that have, and will continue to affect many more people than actually take this tour.

While preparing for such an exhibition, one considers the issue of star worship, wondering if a consequently guilty pleasure will have to be kept to themselves. One reminisces on the commercials 1990's television, in which famous film actors danced via hologram to the tune of Coca-cola's advert jingles. Even though the ideological debate raised by using deceased spokespeople was inherent then, no one could escape the kitsch marvel of

seeing the dead brought back to life for our amusement. Perhaps these commercials, as well as the Wax Museum's embodiment of the famous and infamous, have manifested from a spirit of hero worship and loving tribute. If this is the case, one wonders why so little attention is paid to the actual realism of the wax bodies and their costuming, which is not only incorrect, but also overtly offensive. Any fashion buff would love to stand eye to eye with Jackie O. in her pill box hat, or Marilyn in her airborne white pleated halter dress, even if only duplicated from pictures of the originals. The Jackie O. and Marilyn of this exhibit wear nothing of the sort. Jackie O. is clad in a dusty black satin 1980's Chanel knock off suit, while Marilyn appears more like a dowdy cheerleader than the siren that sold record numbers of sultry calendars and dirty magazines. This inattention to detail is nothing more than a slap in the face to those who actually appreciate the qualities of the stars and historical figures depicted. George Bush Sr. appears as if he is on the verge of a manic homicidal rampage, which is not without it's own self-effacing element of underlying humor. Though, it is doubtful that the irony was purposeful. No credence has been given to the public's attitude toward personalities, either. Lady Diana, known as "The People's Princess" is portrayed as docile, dressed in a demure ensemble the Queen would have hoped she'd wear. Lady Diana is shown void of her royal allowance of jewelry while wearing no make-up and bowing her head above folded hands, in the corner reserved for royal display. This does not jive with her well renowned attributes of revolutionary compassion and defiance, as well as her undeniable fashion flair and general gorgeousness. However, the figures



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representational of Adolf Hitler, Jimmy Carter and Donny and Marie Osmond are amazingly life-like. One cannot help but attribute this to laziness on the part of the constructor(s), as these people have all been

classified as somewhat aesthetically wooden, anyhow. In an age where the consumer is spared no amount of scintillating marketing, such as in "Nike Town", the company's flagship housed on the 'Mag Mile' of Chicago, where the uncanny sound of tennis balls hitting the court are piped into the shopping arena in surround sound and a mosaic of screens create a floor of underwater sea life in the swim gear section, how can anything less than total technological mastery and an amazing performative presentation be offered for this price? Within San Francisco's attempt at a Wax Museum, the fantastic is nowhere to be seen and the ticket value is bunk.

What is fantastic, however, is the blatant use of misogynistic placement of most, if not all, females showcased. A "Vixen" arena awaits the viewer, complete with likenesses of Salome, Marie Antoinette, Lucretia Borgia, Jezebel, Mata Hari and Cleopatra. There is no subsequent audio text offered to contextualize these women, their stories, or the social and cultural contexts prevalent within their circumstances. The "Palace Of Living Art" offers the viewer a chance to gaze upon the "Grande Odalisque", though from behind a few metal bars. The subjugation of this model has, therefore, gone from a theoretical debate to an 'exact' reenactment. One cannot help but feel ashamed in the presence of such blatant disregard for women, from both an ideological artistic standpoint and concretely

physical terms. The line between art and artist is completely obliterated, for that matter, as one sees a jittery Van Gogh, perched on a chair, within a life sized depiction of one of his more poignant and better known masterworks.

The political pedagogy the viewer is swept into suggests no line of distinction between the real and the bias of inference that permeates most, if not all The Museum's installations. The most obvious of which can be seen in the sorry attempt at amusement in the "Chamber Of Horrors". Not only are participants prodded to sit in and get a jolt from a 'fake' electrocution chair, but also many fictitious villains are lined adjacent with historically accurate torture devises. Little kids run around shouting "Look mommy, there's Beetlejuice!" while standing in front of a nameless victim that has been skewered by an 'anthropologically accurate' "Algerian Hook". All of this section is presided over by the "Crypt Keeper" and "Phantom Of The Opera", while multiple examples of torture devises, used to cajole confessions from heretics, bleed on without explanation, in the foreground. In addition, a towering President George W. Bush stands back to back with Nikita Khrushchev, who is dwarfed in comparison. The two of them look in opposite directions at multiple flags and are flanked by a hemisphere on the floor, comically reminiscent of an evil lair parody of 007-movie stature. This continues in the odd juxtaposition of conversational parties seen in the "Scientist" instillation. Bill Gates' image is seated in front of a kinetic DNA sculpture while holding the box for his Microsoft product, as Sigmund Freud chats up Charles Darwin, on his left. Surely Freud and Darwin are pondering whether or not the need for projected inclusion of 'unknown' human beings



"WHO ARE THESE THUGS?"



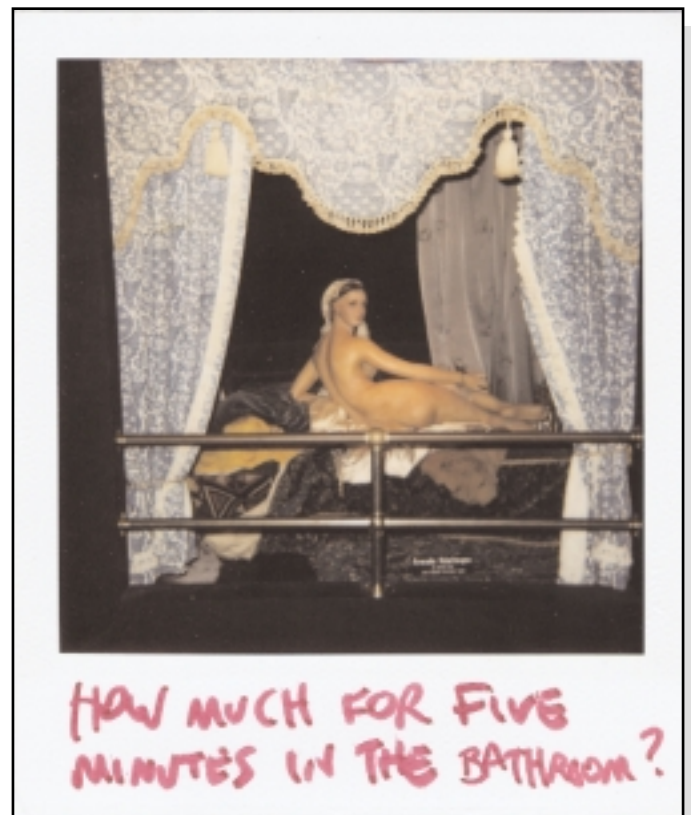
OH RAMBO, YOU SHOULD'VE HAD!

into the lives of the famous, as seen in this distillation of filmic theory, is an innately human trait. Freud and Darwin must be in a heated debate as to whether or not the “Rambo” character display is a product of nature vs. nurture in the modern age, and whether this glorification of Sly Stallone is a necessary element in the alleviance of mass fear, stemming from the impending threat of nuclear violence. Bill Gates, at this point, interjects with an appropriate slide display and stockholder speech to straighten things out.

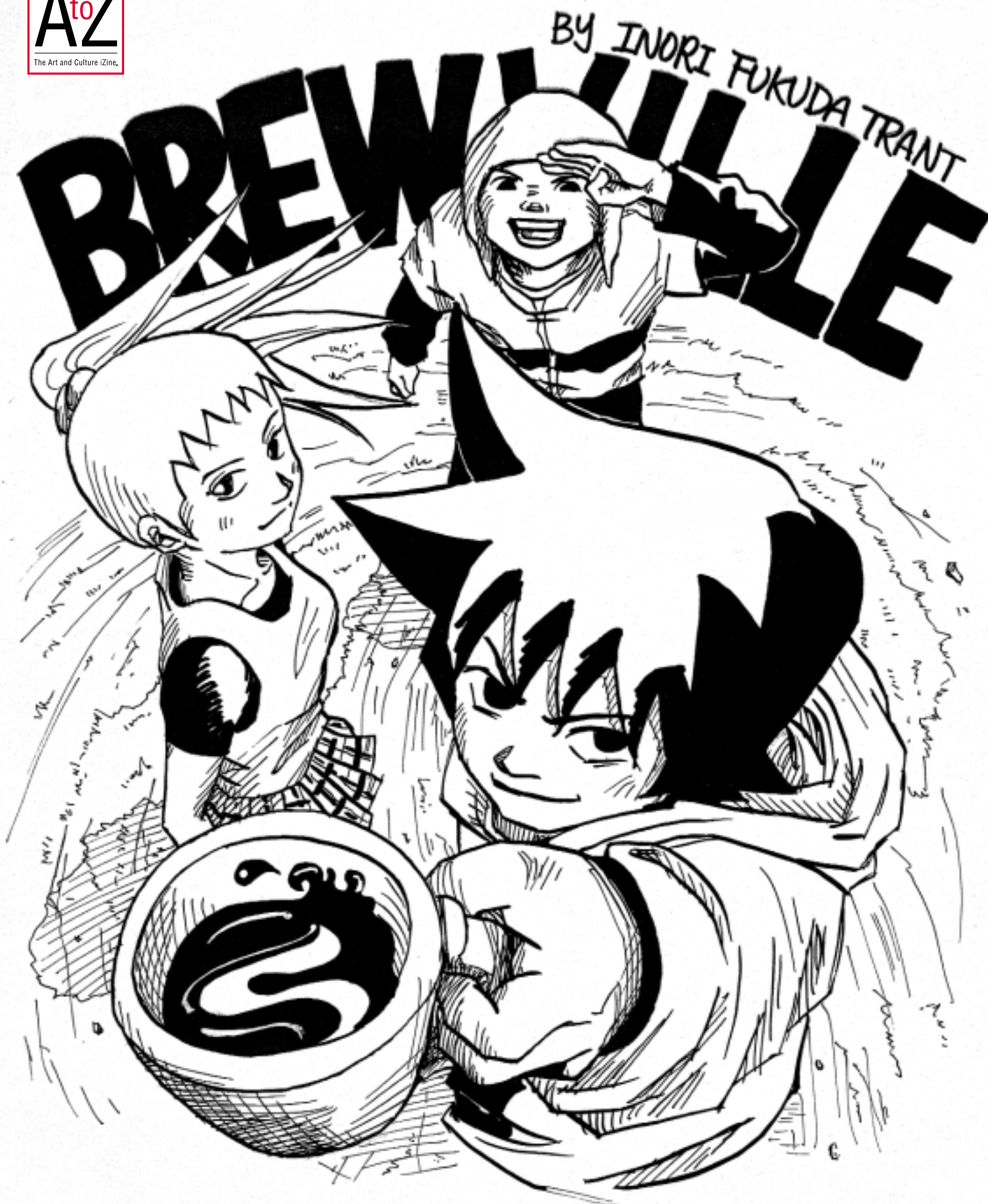
Perhaps the most problematic is the “Hall Of Religions” where a ‘separate but equal’ undertone prevails. Though many religions are spoken for, the facts in the audio display are incorrect. Moses, shown brandishing the Ten Commandments, as if he were a souped-up version of Rodin’s “The Thinker”, is mentioned only as Judaic, though he is important to peoples of Islamic and Christian faiths, as well. The audio track in both the “Sermon On The Mount”, as well as “The Last Supper” pieces, is not only on a continually blaring loop, but present the ‘piece’ as fact. “The Last Supper happened about noon on a Thursday”, it blares, “What you are seeing is a split second after that astounding statement”, in reference to the Bible story of Jesus’ betrayal. Mary, the Mother Of God, is nowhere to be seen. The founders of all of the other religions don’t even get their names into the pamphlet copy, either. One feels sorry for any viewer unfortunate enough to be a practicing Hindu, as the section dedicated to their faith offers nothing but a ghoulish cast of bathers, including two women half submerged in ‘water’. The affect is that of a calculated beheading below the bust, as the women’s eyes gaze helplessly up toward their audience.

This sad expression pervades many of the wax humanoids, mirroring what is left on the faces of their audience. At the end of the exhibit, a spot lit Humphrey Bogart wells up with complex tearfulness. Surely this is because of his miscalculated placement in a ‘ghetto’ style room, while standing next to such modern actors as John Travolta and Eddie Murphy. Bogart has gotten in with the wrong crowd and looks sorely out of his element. I’m sure the concerned look on Denzel Washington’s face is because he is devising how to get away from that talentless dolt Keanu Reeves, too. If only the host, Andy Warhol, would come away from the “Artists” display and shake up the party, things may fare better.

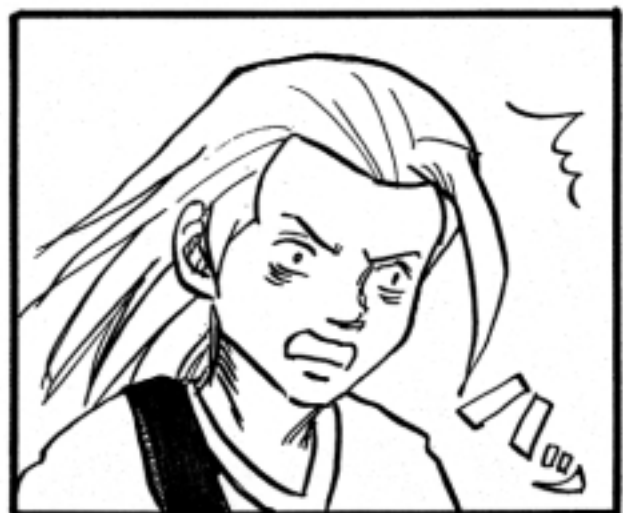
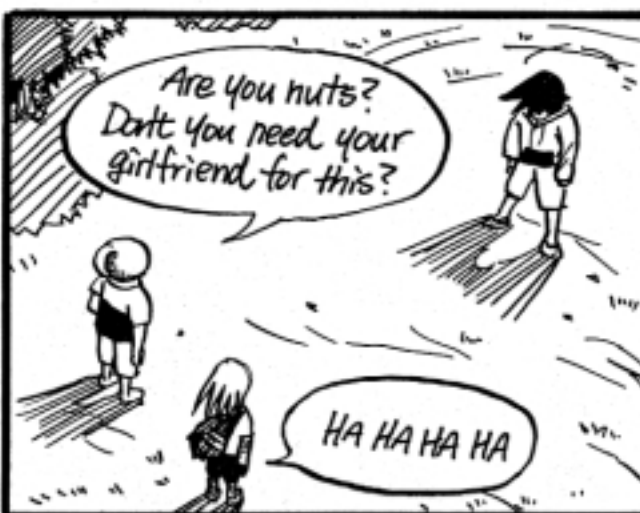
Andy Warhol, however, is hiding behind Whistler’s elbow as Whistler tries to thwack the midget-like Henri de Toulouse-Latrec out of the way, so Whistler can get a better look at what George W. is doing with his other hand. Andy Warhol is also trying to figure out how much tape there is left in the cameras that are behind the multiple mirrors aligned with the designated standing spots for participants. Andy is thinking about Lacan’s mirror theory, at the same time; how children realize their individuation in seeing what they are not, this singularity away from the mother. Andy is calculating how to escape from his own party, this that is making the stars drunk on their own pseudo-reality, but having been puppeteered by the Fong family at this monstrosity of a ‘Museum’, for what is proving itself to be the longest fifteen minutes of Andy Warhol’s now unending life beneath the spotlight.

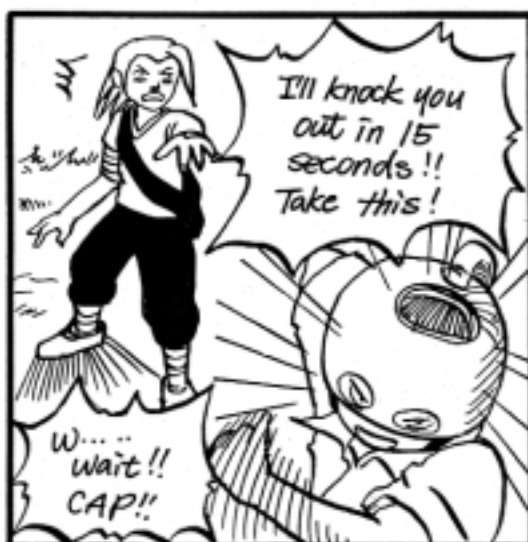




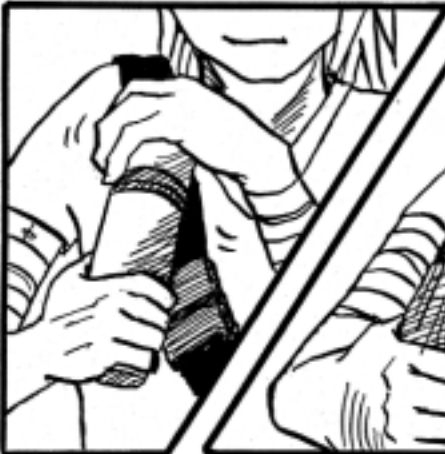


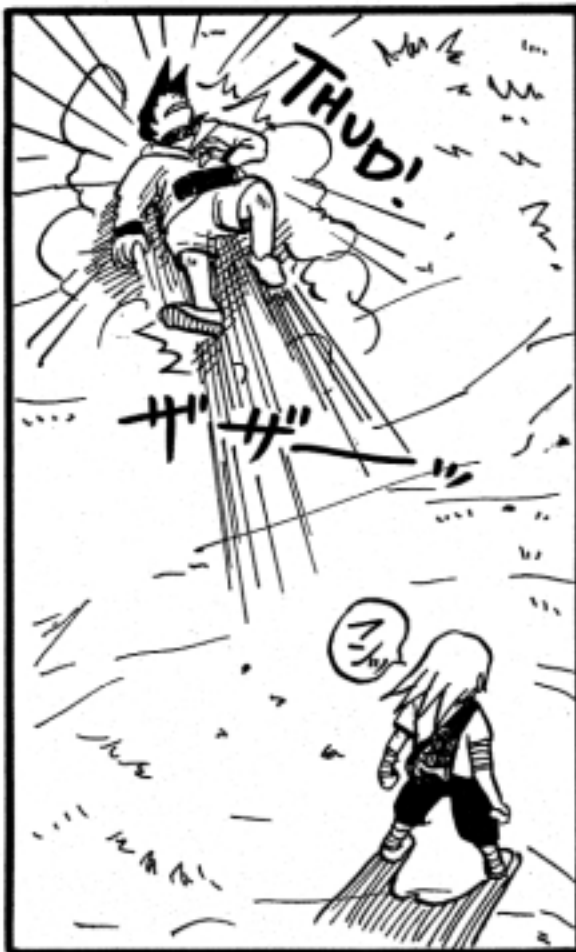










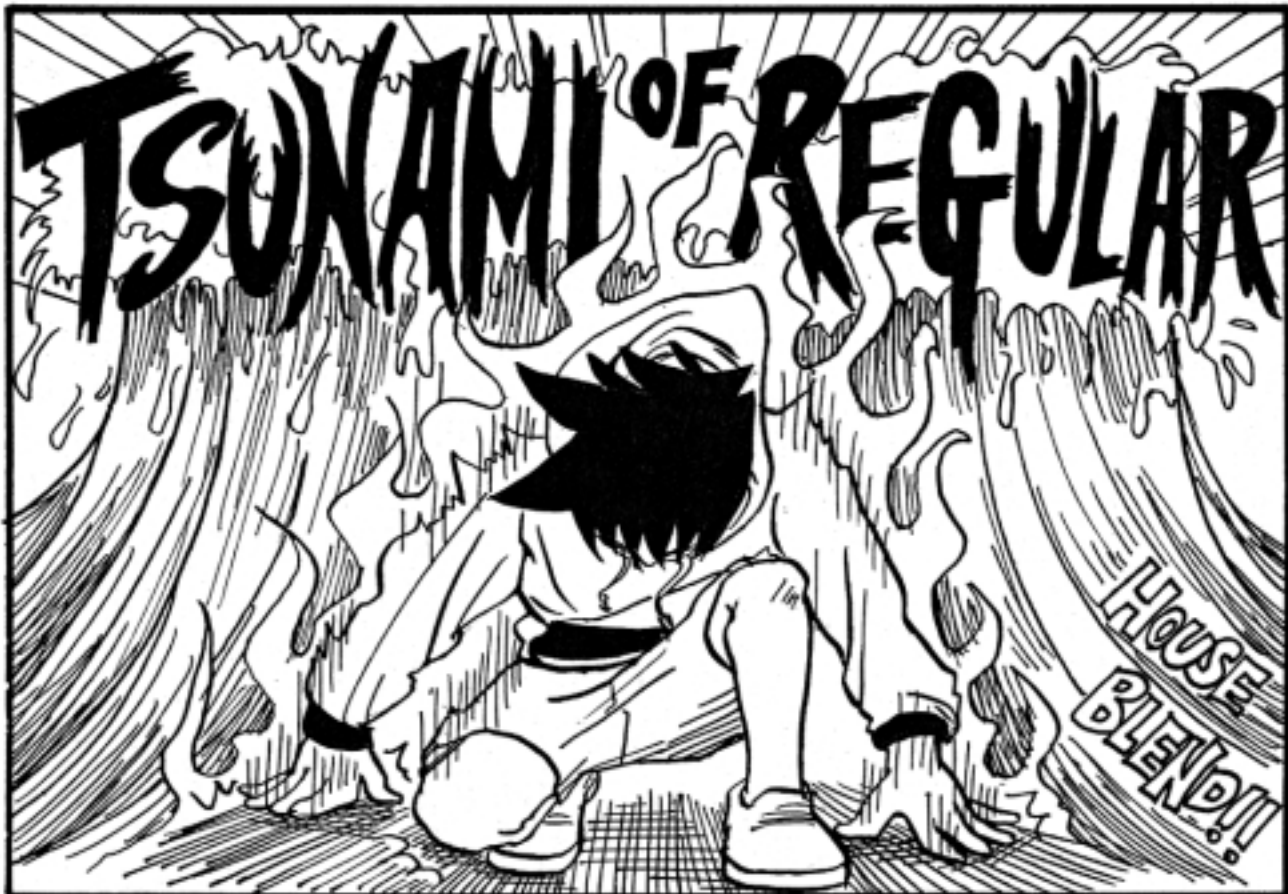


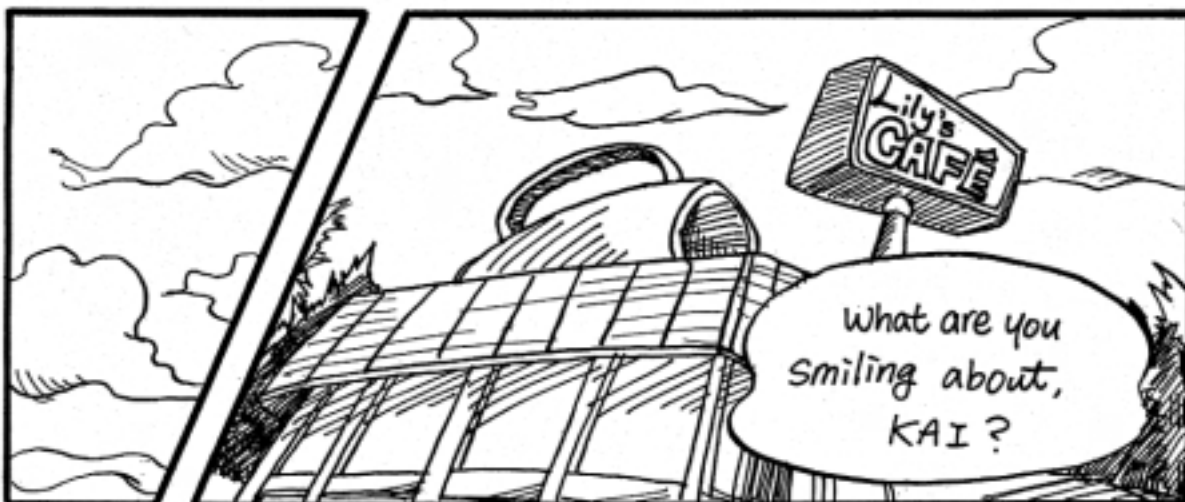


















The 70's brought you Yes, the 80's brought you Ween, the 90's brought you Fischerspooner, and the new millenium has brought you...

## NeoLance

Neil Wright.....**Lance**

Matthew Boyko.....**Neo**

Sarrita Hunn.....**A to Z**, Interviewer

**A to Z:**  
(completely silent)

**Neo/Lance:**  
(still agreeing quietly)

**A to Z:**  
What brought you together as a band?

**Neo:**  
I was looking at art schools in California (of course!) and you (staring straight at Sarrita) were going to (what was formerly) CCAC, anyways you were living straight up. Neil and I met in the dorm you were fronting (little heart things floating up, looks over at Neil and smiles deeply) We got along, it didn't look like there was much more to do than work on projects and get fucked up, so I think our mutual joy in 'fucked up' helped to initiate the band. On my 2nd visit to C-land we even managed to start writing some basic King Missile type shit down. We had a song about Marty McFly.

**Lance:**  
A common interest in making music and...( I don't know if I can do this right now), a common interest in making music and nothing better to do...(I don't know, I don't...)



**Neo:**  
Sarrita, before we start I just wanted to thank you for giving us this completely candid opportunity to speak...w/o the music (looks to Lance, who is nodding in complete agreement)

*A to Z caught up with NeoLance after their Halloween performance. Here is Neo's crotch during that performance.*



*Neo and their photographer, Sean*

**A to Z:**

(stone cold silent)

**A to Z:**

How would you describe NeoLance style?

**Neo:**

Edgy folk, folk that's tired of folk folk, folk's folk. All the while keeping in mind the awesome power of Yes and the possible touring union of "Yes w/ GEORGE MICHAEL!!!, 2005) Ewhh! And we like to think of ourselves as a new S&G, a neo Simon & Garfunkel, but we didn't have names (Matt and Neil) that lent itself to rock shouts, so we adopted NeoLance as a means.

**Lance:**

It's folk pop. Creole! Which is a mix of 50% tongue in cheek, 50% sexual aggression.

**A to Z:**

Can you talk a little about your first developed song, "Ballad of Kid Icarus"?

**Neo:**

We were having troubles initially on how to write a song. We knew we wanted to really really rock the sound out of it(a song) but we couldn't figure out a formula for doing it. Maybe part of the prob was that we were looking for a formula, I know there are some diehards at the Utah that would argue for heart music(music straight from) rather than applying an idea in words to an already existing perfectly legit template, but wha-ev's right Lanceman? So anyway, we both enjoy the ballad. And we started writing songs about things we were more comfortable with, that's where Kid Icarus came into play. It's nice that after the years poured into 8-bit heaven it's always giving back.

**Lance:**

That song's about a myth, the myth of Kid Icarus. I never played the game but I thought, what do you mean, our first "developed" song, Our first actual developed song,

"HEY!HEY!!HEY!!!", counted as a rock band test I think. It was just stupid.



**A to Z:**

What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of "8 Golden Hits"?

**Lance:**

Strengths, hmm, the musical freedom, we ourselves as the musicians could find solace from our days and channel the aggression into productive ends.

**Neo:**

I think I can answer that with two words Sarrita. Shed Sessions, the sound from the 8 Golden Hits album was recorded in the back of our kitchen space in a sheddy type of ecstasy that was Shed Sessions. I think that recording in a shed studio has it's pluses(like the refrigerator being closer than usual, and it gave Lance and I a chance to get our shit together, as art graduates in a Californian Folk Rock and Roll band.

I like the mix because we fuck up a lot and we've had the chance to polish our work.

**A to Z:**

Is there anything you want to say to your fans?

**Neo:**

If we start to get lame or even electiclame then I have faith that our fans/unfans will still make noise, and I think that's all I can really ask people, is to just make as much noise as possible when we are NeoLance. (winking)

**Lance:**

We depend on you and we love you...rock on!

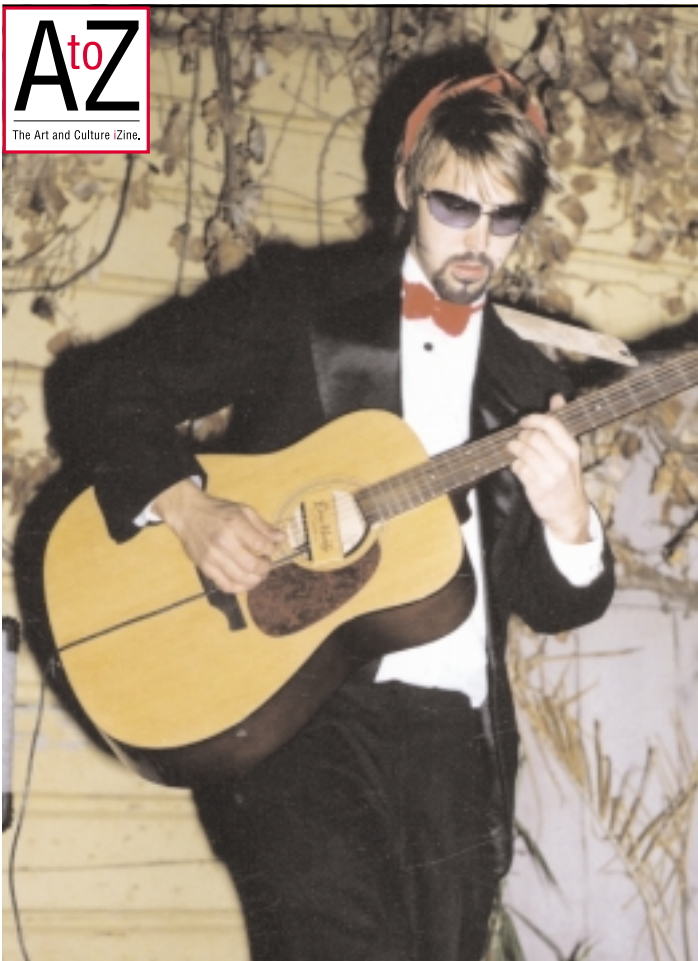
**A to Z:**

What do you see in the future for NeoLance?

*NeoLance and their promoter, Bobby Dazzler*







**Neo:**

In the near future I see an album, stickers, better shirts, some rock posters, a headset mic, and some more dance moves. In the future future, I see a lot more people that would want to act like groupies.

**Lance:**

The future is right before our very eyes for the taking. It's not a matter of what we see it's a matter of taking it.

**A to Z:**

Bonus question time!!! Yay! Ya! Ya! How hot can you get?

**Lance:**

Uhh, how hot can I get, uhhh, pretty hot, pretty darn hot.

**Neo:**

Pretty super hot I think.

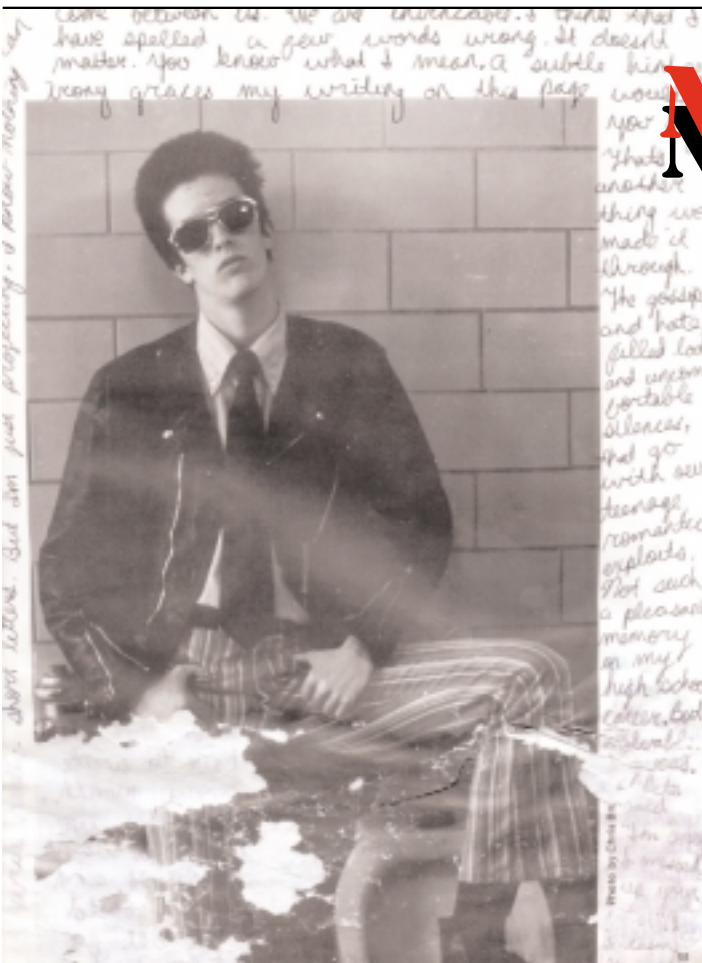
**A to Z:**

(quiet beyond all)

To get more info on NeoLance contact  
[matt@the-corps.com](mailto:matt@the-corps.com).

*Left: some really dedicated NeoLance fans*





# NEW ROSE

by Michele Theberge

backstage area. "Hey, it's OK. You're gonna get your interview." The walls in this dingy basement are all painted black and covered with graffiti and band stickers. A strange odor hangs in the air. Band members and their friends lounge in the ripped up chairs and couches.

**Ian introduces me to Henry Rollins, the lead singer for Black Flag. I am not sure what to expect after just watching this guy scream into a microphone and stalk across the stage like a caged animal.**

I sit with my little notebook and tape recorder across from him and go through my list of prepared questions, trying to hide my nervousness. I am surprised, however, at how nice he is and willing to address all my topics. He rambles on about tours, favorite bands, the difference between the LA and DC scenes, violence towards punks, and who writes the songs in the band. By the end of the night, I feel triumphant about I getting through the interview and impressed with my newfound courage. My friends Bill and Ed who have been waiting patiently outside the club press me for details. It was great! They were so nice to me! They answered all my questions! When I get home, I take my sweater and put it in a plastic bag in the back of my closet. It smells like the club. For weeks, I do not wash it so I can take it out and smell it and re-live the excitement of being back stage and meeting the band. It takes me a long time to figure out that curious smell: stale beer and cigarettes.

Twenty-one years later, I am driving across the bay bridge in San Francisco when I hear on the radio that Joe Strummer, lead singer for British punk band the Clash, has died suddenly of a heart attack at age fifty. I am really surprised when I to find myself crying, a little knot in my heart. What's the big deal? How can I actually be crying over someone I never even knew?

Kneeling on the blue shag carpet in my high school bedroom, I open up my black plastic Emerson record player and put my new favorite record on the turntable. I pore over the lyrics sheet while the music plays. There's something different about these lyrics. What's this about "the corridors of power"? "Spanish Bombs in Andalusia"? I read them over and over and try to imagine the world they

"But, Dad, I can't come home now! I haven't gotten my interview yet! Besides, Ed Dixon gave me a ride and he's not leaving yet."

"I don't care whether you got your interview or not, Michele. You call a cab and you come home right now!" My dad is angry with me for breaking my curfew on school night.

"But I don't have any money for a cab!" I whimper into the pay phone outside the 9:30 club. I am frightened by his anger but I am also trying to think up excuses. When will I get the chance to do something this cool again?

"You call a cab and I will pay the driver when you get here."

"But I can't, Dad! I have to do this interview!"

I am a frustrated with him. Isn't he being hypocritical? Here I am trying to do a good job for my school newspaper. My Dad has always taught me mediocre is not good enough, that I must excel in all I do. How can I show up to school without my assignment? I hang up and wander back into the club, tears streaming down my face. Finally, my friend Bill has found Ian MacKaye just as the club is closing and the impatient bar staff are trying to sweep us out the door. Ian sees my tear streaked face and kindly escorts me down the stairs to the



is my first punk rock record purchase.

It's not too long before my friends and I discover the underground punk scene going on right in our hometown. On Sunday afternoons, we pile into someone's parents' station wagon and head down to the low-rent parts of Washington, D.C.

**In dingy nightclubs like the Chancery and the 9:30 club, we watch marathon all ages shows featuring as many as five or six bands in a row with names like Scream, Iron Cross, Government Issue, Minor Threat, Bad Brains and Youth Brigade.**

Usually we find out about these through word of mouth or sometimes a handmade flyer. Kids my age and a little older from the suburbs of Virginia and Maryland are picking up instruments, forming bands and writing their own songs. Some have started their own record labels scraping together enough money to release little seven inch records with xeroxed covers of their own and their friends' bands.

On Saturday afternoons we head down to the little record stores in Georgetown that sell these records or to pick up a copy of a punk fanzine like Flipside or Maximum Rock'n'Roll. I discover punk scenes as far flung as Columbia and Villeneuve, France. In the days before the internet, fanzines like this provide an interlinking of these scenes around the world. Punks from Gulfport to Milan are able to share observations, concerns and rants with one another.

My first few punk shows make a big impression on me and set the stage for a life-long love affair with live music in small venues. The 9:30 club has a long hallway lit only by a hanging light bulb. I hang close to my friends eyeing the other kids, some with ripped thrift store jackets covered with badges, patches and safety pins. Lots of the girls dye their hair black put on heavy black eyeliner and wear plaid skirts with black tights and combat boots. Some kids bleach their hair blond and spike it while the more flamboyant sport tall mohawks. Lots of the guys shave their heads and follow a "straight edge" a philosophy rejecting drugs and alcohol.

came from. I know there is this punk movement going on in England. I have seen the pictures of spiked hair, mohawks and safety pins in the mouth. All I know is this music give me a sense of exhilaration and energy like nothing I have heard on radio before. It's 1980 and the Clash's London Calling

The doors open and we pay our two dollars and file in. Then begins what seems like an interminable wait for the bands to start. Everyone stands around looking glum with their arms folded across their chests, conversation made almost impossible by loud music blaring over the PA. Finally the band climbs on stage and plugs in their gear. The lanky bass player's guitar is hanging almost to his knees so he has to slump to just barely reach the strings. A couple of guitarists pound out chords with intense concentration bobbing in time to the music. The lead singer grabs the microphone and screams out lyrics at the top of his lungs, so fast and furious that I can hardly make out the lyrics.

Slowly the room begins to rotate. Maybe one kid will start bumping into another. Or some will close their eyes and look downward swinging their arms and kicking their steel-toed boots into the air. They begin to circle, gradually gathering momentum. One of the dancers inadvertently bumps into me stepping on my hightops. I melt further back into the crowd so as not to get hurt. The circle of dancers begins to gain speed, arms flailing, legs kicking until the mosh pit is full of kids bouncing off each other like high speed electrons. Now someone clambers on the stage and leaps off, arms outstretched landing on the circling mass of dancers. The effect is liberating – the energy, the

*April of 1981 Iron Cross at the 9:30 club  
taken by Tiffany Priutt ©*



movement, the strange sense of order in the chaos. I turn my attention back to the band. The singer is drenched in sweat, spitting out his words to a bullet-like rhythm. He bends over the crowd gesturing, arches back and let's out a barrage of words. I stand with my hands in my pockets, head nodding in time to the music.

The music and the live shows gave me a much needed an outlet for my pent up anger and frustration. At home, my parents had a long-standing habit of taking out their wrath on me and my sisters. By the time I get to high school, my dad was in and out of the hospital constantly with a "back problem", which my parents never told us was cancer until right before he died. My mom was working full-time and taking care of us and our dad. Her constant drinking only exacerbated her high strung nature and each day brought more yelling, criticism and abuse. At the Presbyterian church each Sunday, we looked and acted like a happy bunch, but back home there were, slammed doors and screaming matches. I was too big now for my mom to lay a hand on me but I still remember the day my dad got into a rage over something and came hobbling after me in his back brace, brandishing his cane and threatening to hit me. I was on edge most of the time, never knowing when one of my parents was going to snap.

It's wintry Sunday afternoon and I have the rare luxury of having the house all to myself. I take my little collection of Dischord 45s and head down to the library to play them on the family stereo which, though crappy, is still better than my little plastic Emerson. I turn up the volume all the way and sing along to Minor Threat.

Long before I expect my parents back I hide the evidence of my musical interlude. My dad calls rock and roll "savage music". What would he say about something so fast, hard and aggressive as punk rock? But for this delicious little interval, I am able to shatter the brittle formality of my parents' home and carve out a space for myself. Until punk, it had never occurred to me not to do what my parents expected of me. It had no exposure to other worlds and possibilities outside of my suburban life. I had a vague idea of my future but I was so used to doing what was expected of me that I just assumed my life would follow the basic script: Go to college; graduate; get a "good" job; get married in my late 20s; have a family of two or three kids. So far in my life between teachers, parents, ministers, guidance counselors there had been very little emphasis on what I liked, what my taste was, what I felt like doing, what kind of contribution I wanted to make to the world. Little by little, I was becoming aware of people who were carving out a different kind of life.

All the bands I listened to, all the people who participated in that scene, held a doorway open for me. Now, when I am alone painting in my studio and wondering if what I am doing has any importance or can make a difference, I turn on some of my favorite music and think of how I cried when Joe Strummer died. I want to be able to hold the door open for someone else.



**I don't want to hear it  
All you do is talk about you  
I don't want to hear it  
Cause I know none of it's true  
Don't want to hear it  
Sick and tired of all your lies  
I don't want to hear it  
When are you gonna realize...**

**That I don't want to hear it  
Know you're full of shit**



*Minor Threat at 9:30 club  
taken by Tiffany Priutt ©*



# A<sup>to</sup>Z

The Art and Culture iZine.

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