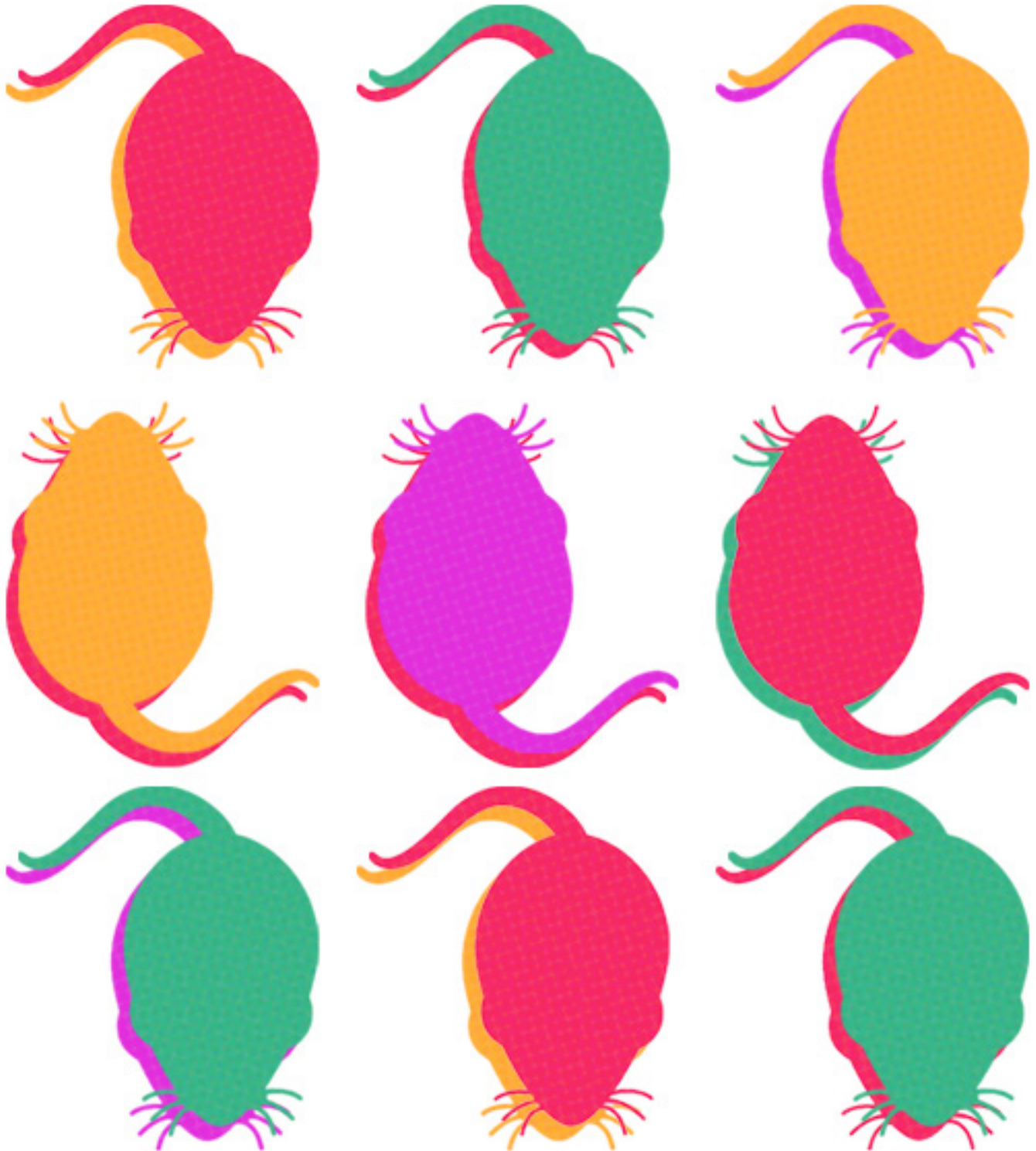
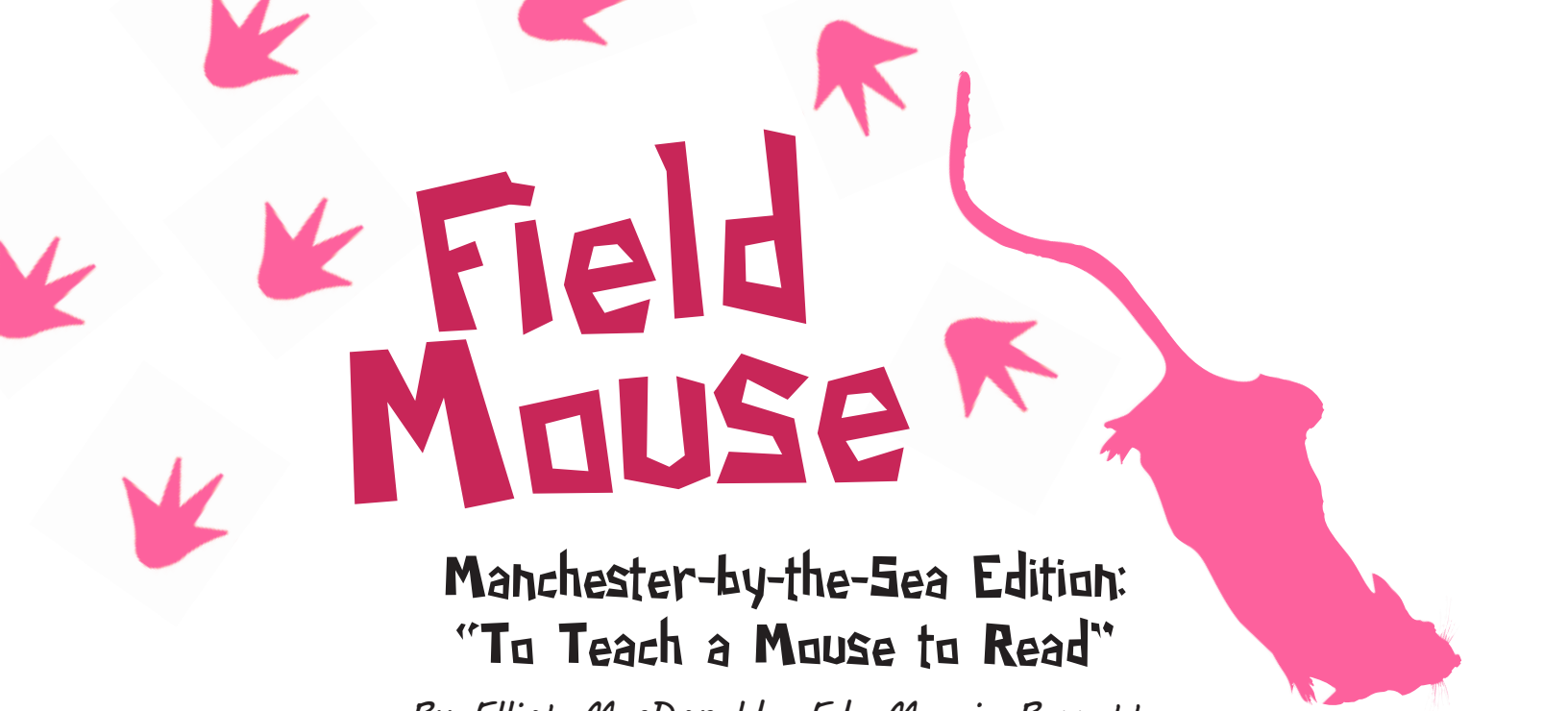


The Monthly Squeak



OPINION COLUMN - INTERVIEW - EVENT REVIEWS - RECIPES!

A pink silhouette of a mouse is positioned on the right side of the page, with its tail extending upwards and to the left. Several pink arrows of varying sizes are scattered around the mouse and the title, pointing in various directions.

Field Mouse

Manchester-by-the-Sea Edition: "To Teach a Mouse to Read"

By Elliot MacDonald *Ed. Maggie Barrett*
Nov. 2024

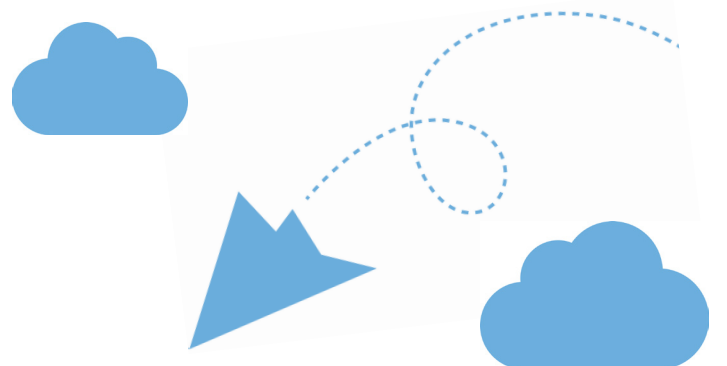
Manchester-by-the-Sea is the third stop Outbound from Beverly on the Rockport line, and contrary to first small-town impressions, there is actually something to do there, other than walking and looking at other people's houses like you might do in most of the pretty towns. I consider Manchester to be a great introduction to the MBTA because if you, as a busy art student, are hesitant to venture out on the train, it comes every two hours and most of the interesting locations are a five minute walk from the station, a point that this series is trying to make.

But my real reason for choosing Manchester is to talk about my favorite bookstore and propagandize for my favorite genre. Manchester By the Book lives on 27 Union Street and is the type of small business that I've only ever seen one man working in and whose instagram page hosts a lot of pictures of his dog (and to my surprise a second, younger man, a historian who I can assume runs said instagram). Manchester By the Book has a wide array of hitherto unheard of books and a few genres of particular interest to art students, such as art catalogs and books on art history from all around the world, books on gardening and natural science, world philosophy, and history, as well as non-fiction of all kinds.

The bookstore also has sections of a new-found favorite genre of mine, a journalistic, first-person style of nonfiction. One of the works that solidified my love for this genre is my current read, "Skyfaring" by Mark Vanhoonacker, which I picked up at the Beverly Public

Library's book fair.. It's a first person account from a pilot, both very technical and deeply personal, describing how thoroughly a person's perspective on space and time changes when you are everywhere and nowhere all the time. Every page has a quote on it that could be considered the best quote in the book, a quality not found in narrative fiction in the same way.

The writing style of this genre is typically that of a professional of some sort telling you about something very cool and/or strange, in the fashion of sitting around the dinner table with a friend of your parents as he tells you interesting life stories. They are very honest, relatively digestible even for people put off by non-fiction, and the best ones are about very specific topics that you've never had a reason to think about. I would like to be a proponent here of slowing down with a nonfiction book, and of venturing into old bookstores with the purpose of finding five dollar books on topics that realistically don't impact you at all. As we near Christmas it's also worth considering if your father, for



example, is into something incredibly specific that you don't particularly care about yourself, and if you could find a book he's never read before so that he can learn about it without having to figure out how to Google.

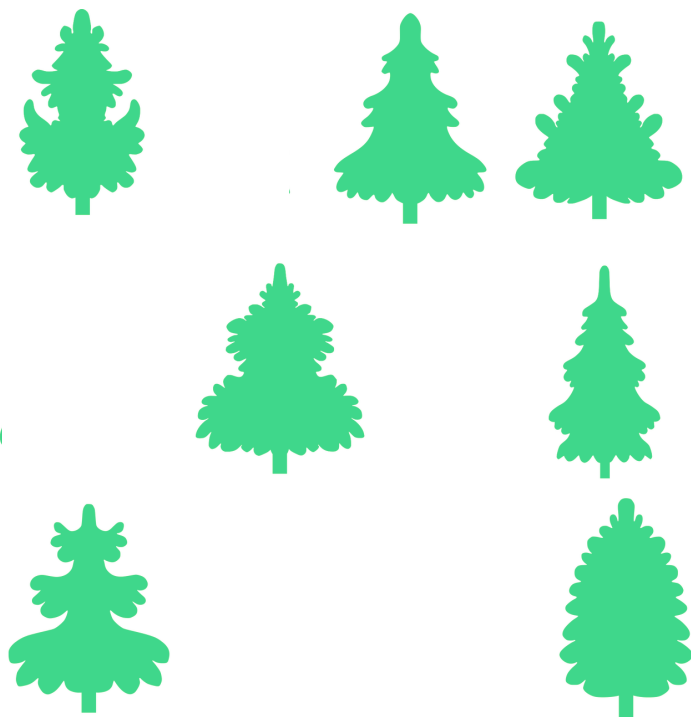
An example of the affordable non-fiction books one can find at Manchester By the Book is a catalogue-esque book called "Folk Sculpture USA" by The Brooklyn Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, featuring doll-like wooden carvings, early kinetic sculptures, African art that influenced the Americas, and interviews with current folk artists. "Oranges" by journalist John McPhee is an account of his travels to Florida farming communities in the 60s, as he discusses both the very narrowed and nation-wide world of harvesting fruit, packaged in a cute cover of orange and blue and the exploratory tone of a man who



thought he was writing an article and ended with a book. "The Hunting Wasp" by John Crompton is a biology book written with the tone of a speculative-fiction quandary or an action-adventure. One line from the book that encapsulates his tone comes from a description of a wasp carrying her prey back to her nest, which he describes as a circus routine of stopping and starting her flight. Crompton writes, "Were she really trying to clown, the average critic would say that she overdid it. One has to keep reminding oneself that this is deadly earnestness, and each fall is a minor tragedy."

My point here with this list is that, sometimes, judging a book by the cover really is the way to go, and if you like specific arbitrary things like the taste of oranges or sky travel, you might as well let your curiosity be piqued.

The other unique thing about Manchester-by-



the-Sea is the walking path at the end of Elm Street, called Powder House Hill. It's a small patch of wilderness, but what I love about it is that it's a way to see the seasons in action, of particular interest to me as an out-of-state student from the South. I'd only ever been there in fall last year, and when I went again after summer, bushes I didn't even know grew there swallowed my field of vision. As naive as it may sound, the sight surprised me, and I like going back there regularly to see what said hill (which is really a forested rock that overlooks the town) has going on at any given time of year. I would like to make it there in winter some time this year and see if it snows through the trees.

Manchester-by-the-Sea is an ideal spot to wander, find odd books with yellowing pages, and eat lunch overlooking the town. People can often be put off by the sentiment that there is nothing to do in a small town, or that it is easier to stay at home. But art making is a very solitary, home-based practice, and sometimes our eyes need to be off of a screen or a canvas and onto something else. I would like to encourage people to take advantage of the incredible gift of public transportation and rejuvenate themselves outside of the Beverly cave.



The Adventurer's Guild

An Interview with Alfie Van Praagh

Elliot MacDonald
Edited by Dino Leslie

Oct. 2024

The Adventurer's Guild is Montserrat's Dungeons and Dragons, or D&D club. Played between a group of people aiming to tell a story together, the game is notorious for seeming daunting to new players and game masters, in addition to being incredibly rewarding and beloved. The Adventurer's Guild doesn't focus on actually playing D&D like other clubs, instead connecting players and setting them up to have the best experience together they can. The club's first major event is the game master pitches, where the members who will run a game pitch their world and story for potential players to choose between. The club raffles new dice sets, like a cottage core themed one for the event day, and they help players build their worlds and games, making an effort to stay involved with the community.

I spoke with the president of the Adventurer's Guild, Alfie Van Praagh, about the game master pitches and their purpose. I asked them why they chose a format for the club that I'd never seen before, and they said they hadn't considered doing anything else. From the perspective of a veteran player, "D&D's at its best when everyone is on the same page, in terms of the story they're trying to tell, because everyone's a part of the same story. Even if the DM's* the one writing the outlines, the players fill it in. You can't have one without the other."

Perhaps people hesitate to get into D&D because they expect a strict rule-following game, and that can seem stifling. But players themselves use the rules as a tool to organize the story of the game, encouraging creative freedom and change. "Some people struggle; Hey, how the hell do I follow the rules as written? This

*Editors Note: A "DM" is a Dungeon Master, who runs a D&D Game.

is confusing, I want to make all my own stuff. I'm very much the second one," Alfie said. "I always want to be there to help people with that, especially because I had people like that for me, some really close friends that made everything so much easier." The good thing about using D&D as a sandbox is that there are people who can help you. It's very rare to have a game where the player can decide how to use the rules and pieces for themselves.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed making a story with people one doesn't know, especially with new rules to learn. My concern when starting a new campaign was always that I'd end up in a story I didn't connect with, and with people I wouldn't feel comfortable creating around. The pitches offer the perfect time to test the waters and find something that clicks. "The kind of story you want to tell, I think that's really, really important when you're getting into a campaign," Alfie said of the pitch format. "I think part of playing D&D is sort of like tweaking your character a little bit to fit the DM's world and the DM tweaking the world a little bit to fit your character."

Another key reason for a more open club structure is so that new people have access to the game. "In college, it can be really hard to find the time to coordinate with people, and to find people, especially if you're trying to play outside your friend group," Alfie said, adding, "I genuinely want people that I don't know."

Because Montserrat's student involvement is so much smaller than larger colleges, clubs can easily become relegated to pre-established friend groups. While there's nothing wrong with that, it certainly stops people from trying out things that they've always wanted to. As Alfie stated, "I also want to make friends playing D&D. I want to meet new people. Just in general, I feel very isolated in the Freshman class right now."

The Freshman class has already gotten much more involved in public campus spaces. More Freshmen have been attending events, using the lounge spaces, and learning from visiting artists. While the upperclassmen are more likely to work, have longer projects, and leave campus during the school week, there's been a concerted effort to increase involvement in the school all around. "I kind of held off on jumping into campaigns just because I do

want more people outside of my Freshman class," Alfie said. "That's going to feel really exclusive and closed off, and I don't want it to be that. I want it to be sort of intergenerational."

In the spirit of having something for anyone, the campaigns they described to me were all very different from each other. A Lovecraftian themed mystery, a mile long cave with a mysterious floor, and a detailed, high fantasy sandbox campaign are all scheduled to be run. When I asked what types of people they wanted to see joining the club, they said that they'd like to see anyone, saying that "background doesn't really matter. Because, in D&D, you make that."

If you're curious about D&D, new characters and worlds, resin crafted dice, club snacks and juice boxes, shark tank style pitching, or presentations on what students have been thinking about recently, take an hour or two out of your evening to attend the pitches. The club meets every-other Tuesday at 7-9pm in B225.



Art by Elliot MacDonald



By . . . **Elliot MacDonald**
Editor . . . **Maggie Barrett**
Nov. 2024

The iCON art festival, which ran on November 16th, 2024, hosted 34 art vendors and various panel talks with the goal of expanding the student body’s artistic connections beyond the school walls. A substantial portion of the student body had booths there, in conjunction with artists outside of the current Montserrat class, giving people a rare opportunity to buy art from the wider artistic community.

Devon George, an illustrator, concept artist, and Montserrat alumni, presented at iCON as a guest. They’ve worked as an illustrator for numerous video game and publishing companies, as well as animated commercials. Devon spoke about the process of developing a concept illustration, and what the reasons might be for a project stagnating. Their design process centers a narrative or intention first, and the rest of the artwork follows. Devon explains, “design is the lens through which narrative is communicated visually. What I needed to do was build a box before I could think out of the box.”

In addition to discussions around the uses of design, Devon gave concrete examples of their processes, including a live demonstration in which audience members suggested a concept to design. Devon showed examples of their concept art and a timeline for the development of a project, describing the phases one series of illustrations can go through. They explained that they start with a list of design ideas that serve their narrative intention, listing

things such as shape, archetype, or a character’s visual mood. They make designs around specific parts of this list and their pool of references, mixing and matching these descriptors instead of trying to tackle every possible angle at once. The designs serve the same general purpose, but they vary enough that the final product has a strong identity of its own.

Also at iCON, the Games, Toys, and Play department showcased and playtested games, while presenters who are close to the Montserrat community, but don’t often get to interact with it, such as Paper Asylum, presented panels. An aforementioned goal of iCON is to bring artists outside of the current Montserrat community to the school. Many alumni had booths here, graduates ranging from finishing last year to fifteen years ago.

Corinne Reed, one of the organizers of iCON, spoke about the event’s ability to aid in networking, and what it means to cultivate an artistic community. The concept of artistic networking can seem nebulous to new artists, but to facilitate an artistic community that helps students learn, there needs to be a diversity of experience to help guide undergraduates. As Corinne says, “There’s grades of people’s experiences and success, and there’s so much room to make connections in that conversation.”

Whether students attend the exhibition hall, the guest speaker panel, or the various talks and presentations, iCON offers students a chance to meet with artists involved in the wider Montserrat community who they likely would not be able to hear from otherwise. It allows students an opportunity to sell at a booth not only with their classmates, but with established artists who have already graduated, an opportunity to gather valuable experience. With talks on game development, illustration, and concept development, students seeking careers in narrative art, in particular, have a learning resource available every iCON festival.

**Visit devongeorgeart.com and
iconartfest.com!**



Nov. 2024

Bursting Out of the Beverly Bubble



Do you feel trapped in Beverly? Assignments weighing you down, and you just want to take a break? The Academic Access Studio and Counseling Center have got you covered. They've recently been collaborating to organize amazing free opportunities outside of campus in a series called "Bursting out of the Beverly Bubble." These opportunities are meant to further our creative practices and expose us to artists who explore ideas concerning "identity, accessibility, mental health, healing, community and other related topics," as stated directly by the two departments.

On the 18th of October, a group of participating students visited the ICA to see Tau Lewis: Spirit Level, the artist's first solo US exhibition. According to the ICA website, Tau Lewis "...forages for materials and artifacts charged with meaning..." and upcycles them into soft sculptures, quilts, masks, and more. Her upcycling relates to diasporic communities who used the process as a way to empower themselves, and her Spirit Level reflects this with their towering stature and elegant nature. Overall, it is quite the exhibit to behold.



The Rose Art Museum trip happened on November 15th from 9:30am to 2pm. The Rose Art Museum is part of Brandeis University and is located in Waltham, MA. The museum is about a ten-minute walk from the Brandeis/ Roberts train station, meaning that it is just a walk and a train ride to get back to Montserrat if you want to go on a different day.

Hugh Hayden, "Hedges", 2019



An inviting reason to visit the Rose Art Museum is Hugh Hayden: Home Work. According to the Rose Art Museum website, the exhibit is Hayden's first solo exhibition in New England, and focuses on the alluring yet out of reach experience of the "American Dream". The exhibition is divided into five different sections, "The Uncanny Home," "Soul Food," "Skeletons in the Closet," "Playing the Field," and "Class Distinction." All of these different sections emulate portions of the African American identity and how stereotypes permeate modern American culture. The sculptural exhibit is certainly a must-see.

If you can't make this upcoming field trip, then don't stress about it too much. There are plans for "Bursting Out of the Beverly Bubble" to return in the spring semester, and thus you may be able to make one of those events instead or as well.

The Monthly Squeak

Credits

- Editor-In-Chief: Elliot MacDonald
- Founder: Winter Berry
- Lead Editor: Maggie Barrett
- Editor: Dino Leslie
- Formatter: Elliot MacDonald

Submission Form



Discord



Notes From the Editors

The Montserrat Newspaper Club is looking to regularly publish students' articles, original work, stories, and other media to the student community. We want to make a newspaper that makes students connect with each other, think critically about media, and feel a bit silly. We want to see work and ideas outside of our concentrations and social circles, in a friendly structure drawing inspiration from both formal literary journals and playful preteen entertainment magazines.

Please join our paper by becoming a contributor! We are open to one-off submissions, as well as regular columns. Submissions can take any form: interviews, opinion pieces, pictures of art in progress and requests for community critique of your work, or even a goofy quiz that you wrote up.

As it's been said over the years, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one" (Liebling), so let's build one to support our voices!

-- Maggie Barrett

I would like to encourage the students to view the school newspaper as a resource. On a more superficial level, I would hope most of you have a projects section in your resume, and putting that you have pieces in any publication is an asset. I worry that students don't always take advantage of the representation others offer them. Additionally, we should all be aiming to hone as many skills outside of our dream field that we possibly can, to teach ourselves to be artists, rather than just an illustrator, or a painter, or whatever else you may be concentrating in. We want to encourage interconnectedness, between club leaders, organizers, and artists in general. Consider getting yourself on paper with us!

-- Elliot MacDonald