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*Issue 11  
November 2009*

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*SPOKE(a)N(e)*

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This issue marks the end of 2009 for SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine. We intend to take December off (at least in publication form) and as such I wanted to wish you a happy holiday season.

N

There's been a lot of talk lately about this Thanksgiving thing coming up next week. That's good. I think, as a creative community in Spokane, we have a lot to be thankful for. We have a pile of interesting and very different venues for all sorts of creative endeavors (art shows, poetry, works in progress, music, etc.). We have an amazing number of top notch artists creating work that wows me every month. And we have an incredibly giving community, looking to help one another along the way to further the creation of our own person masterpieces.

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This is the last issue of the first year of publishing SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine. That means a lot to me. In all honesty, there are very few things that I've stuck with in this regard for over a year. The reason this has remained a passionate thing for me is you: the Spokane creative community that we've only just begun to discover.

I'm excited to get going on the very first 2010 edition of the magazine and I'm excited to learn about all the amazing things you folks are creating. Keep us in the loop so we can keep everyone who reads in the know about how rad you all are.

Thanks for a kick ass year.

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*Photo by Grace Habein*

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I first knew of Michael McMullin as a photographer. It wasn't until we had met a few times at meetings of a photography group of which we're both members that we added each other as friends on Facebook. As seems to happen with social media, you learn things about people outside of the standard common situations you find yourself in.

I saw that Michael had a blog, and I assumed that his blog would be filled with the things that most photographers' blogs are filled with. Talk of gear, shoots he'd gone on. Using different lighting ideals and other things that are very "inside-baseball" for anyone not working in the field.

Then he posted a link to some stick figures. I wasn't sure what this was that he was posting, but I clicked anyway. The comic had me laughing out loud. The simplicity of the stick figure drawings match the simplicity of much of the comedic concepts, but they work. They work because they're accurate and seem to view the world with a wry smile. The world is silly, and Michael's going to play right along.

Then I read the text pieces. They are very short fiction and leave you questioning how much of them are fiction. That same humor is present in the short pieces, but there's a surrealist viewpoint, and a bit of melancholy in some.

Shortly after that first read, I added Michael's blog to my reading list. Right after 20 different photography blogs that start off my day and my wife's writing, there's Michael, making me laugh.

## Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm 26. I was born and raised in Portland. My mom and I moved around quite a bit. We moved to Odessa, WA in 2002. Then, in 2005 I moved to Fruitland, WA and finally to Spokane.

## How long have you been working on the blog?

This blog I've been doing since 2006. I started it doing short stories about random, surreal events. I wanted them to be blog posts of somebody who lived in an alternate reality. I got tired of doing those for a while and thought about deleting the blog. Then I figured I'd start putting my comics up there. Now it's a combination of the two.

## What sort of things inspire you to make posts?

Generally I start with the premise of "if I found myself in this situation, what would I want to do?" as opposed to "what would actually happen?" Sometimes I'll take a real situation and stretch it to its most absurd conclusion. And sometimes I just like to get really conceptual and throw words together until a punchline happens. Those are usually the ones that get me accused of sniffing glue (I don't, by the way).

## Any background doing cartoons prior to this?

I've been drawing these little stick figure cartoons for years. Probably since I got out of high school. I have stacks of paper from when I worked at a call center and all I did between calls was draw cartoons. I have two or three sketch books filled with them. Even when I buy a sketch book and say, "I'm only using this one for serious art," it always turns into a book for comics.

## How personal are the pieces on the blog? They often veer into the territory of the surreal, but seem to have a touch of the personal in them.

I would say that all of my work starts out personal to some degree. I like to observe the world, and myself, and then distort it like a fun house mirror.

## What sort of things going on in the Spokane creative community are inspiring you right now?

I think amazing things are happening in the music and photography scenes. I am continually amazed at the talent I am seeing crop up in both these arenas. I would also say that some of the nicest people I've ever met are within these groups.

## What would you like to see more of from Spokane as a creative community?

I'm relatively new to the community as a whole, and so far I haven't found much lacking. I think I would just encourage all the artists in town to show us what you've got. Show your work somewhere, anywhere. Just get it out of your studio. I think that for a town this size, we are incredibly blessed by the number of artists and art venues we have.





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I had been to the Broken Mic Open Mic Poetry Reading once before. It was a year or two ago, long before the start of *SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine*. I'd been meaning to go back ever since, but something always seemed to get in the way. One obligation or another would lead me to forgo the reading in favor of something else.

Last Wednesday I finally made it back. I talked to two of the regular participants, Danielle Estelle and Morgan Garrat.

**How long has the reading been going on and how long have you guys been involved?**

Estelle: It's been here for about 4 years total. It's changed names, hosts, days, etc. I've been involved about a year.

Garrat: I've been around 3 years.

**How is the turnout on a weekly basis?**

Garrat: Excellent. We've had a cap on the number of people who can read in a night because they wanted to close.

**Who would you like to see coming out?**

Garrat: Just everyone. It's a really diverse group.

Estelle, Garrat, and the other participants jointly agree they'd like to see more adults come out to the readings with an upbeat attitude, as opposed to just college and high school students.

Over the course of the evening, the Broken Mic went through readings from 11 poets. Starting with Kurt Olsen (bassist of Mon Cheri) and ending with Zack Graham, the poets ranged hugely in style of poetry, delivery, and skill level.

Therein lies the interesting thing about Broken Mic for me. This isn't a group of top level collegiate poets patting each other on the back for the poems that are going to one day win them awards. And likewise, it isn't a group of angry high school kids talking about how the parental units just don't get them and they need to be free. This is, if nothing else, an inclusive group.



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It's a small group, but one with a stronger level of support than you will see or feel in most any group elsewhere. This is a family of people coming together over a common love of written and spoken word. They are a group of artists pushing each other and holding each other's hands. Even when someone is not putting forth top quality work, there is a massive amount of support in the room.

Perhaps that support is why the group continues to meet. Like most groups of artists, there are notes of insecurity in the work and in the personalities. There's often a push of inside jokes that seem to secretly want to alienate the audience. These are artists who know the power of words, and maybe subconsciously, want you to expect them to fail, because it relieves the pressure.

But despite each individual's misgivings about their own pieces, the group won't let them fail. When someone says something that the core group enjoys there is snapping, just like in those 1950s beatnik movies. When there is a forgotten line, there is a communal rubbing of hands together, as if to warm them on the fire of their own art. This is a group effort. There's not a person on stage alone, but 1 person at the mic, with 12 others behind them. In the end, I think what I learned in my return to Broken Mic is that if the name came true and the mic truly stopped working, the group would take turns screaming the words to each other's poems so the crowd could hear them.

Broken Mic Open Mic Poetry Readings are at Empyrean Coffee House every Wednesday night at 7:30PM.

*-Text and Photos by Tyson Habein*





*Morgan Garrat*





*Zack Graham*

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**Robert Sevilla Naudon is currently working on a project that will end up as a large hanging chandelier. It is tubing, which is arc welded together to resemble vines. It's impressive work. It is art in progress.**

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**How did the project come to you?**

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This project came to me by way of a very popular Eugene glass artist, Susie Zeitner. She has art in show rooms all over the country. We got together during the summer and this is our first joint venture. As the chandelier looks now, we are very excited to what we can do in the future.

T

**Where is the piece headed?**

The client lives in LA but the home of the lighted sculpture goes in their vacation cabin in Park City, Utah.

**What sort of work is it that you're doing?**

I would be considered a Designer of Architectural Metals. I make commercial and residential custom items. For example, in the month before and after today, the projects range from dinning room table, exterior corporate signage, 11' chandelier, retail displays, and the production of my first chair (I am collaborating with some local artists to paint art on them) Dara Harvey is one who's going to do a mural across a series of chairs.

**Is there any of your work around Spokane that we can see?**

I had a city commission when I first moved to Spokane that is near the Y at Fire Station 18, but I

think I have come a long way since that. It still looks good on its own but not with what I have evolved to. The sign I am making is for Empire Lumber on Main and Division. They have asked me to do some creative stuff outside their building, but I have to check with the city and that will be most likely in the spring. I do have a cool garden piece that you will see in the gallery under Behring-McBride. It's two blocks West of the bottom of the Perry stairs.

**Do you do pieces for yourself outside of commissioned work?**

The only thing I've been doing for myself is figure sculpting, but I haven't been doing that because I've been busy with the architectural metals. Sometimes I'll hold my own classes for figure sculpting.

The Clay connection will sometimes host classes of mine. My commissions are almost personal work. I'm often left to my own devices. The job and hobby and passion are all the same thing. Which is nice.

*-Text and Photos by Tyson Habein*















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First Friday began with the Saranac Art Projects show, with the work of Rajah Bose and Lance Sinnema. This show was typical of the Saranac's shows in that it combined print-based, wall hanging work in Bose's photographs and three dimensional floor-based pieces in the form of Sinnema's stoneware.

I had seen a sampling of Bose's work in this vein before at October's Terrain show. These pieces were no less interesting, exploring the act of movement. Landscapes blur past Bose's lens and are then blown up to rather large prints on foam core that fit well in the space the venue provides. Bose's pieces please with their introduction of motion into what would be traditionally shot as a standard still frame. The colors blur into blobs, creating abstract pieces that still link back to their origins.

This was the first I had seen of Sinnema's work, and while I'm not generally a fan of stoneware, I have to say that the bells and monument pieces that Sinnema is working on are very interesting. His artist statement says that he is "interested in forms derived from small things that mimic familiar landscapes." You can see pores in the surface of some of the pieces and there is something living in them contrary to their glazed nature.

(Above) A Stoneware Bell by Lance Sinnema





I didn't find myself clutching my chest at the Saranac this month, but the work is certainly quality and should be a required stop for fans of something different in Spokane art.

Upstairs from the Saranac Art Projects is the Lands Council, which was showing the photographic work of Jon Jantz. Jantz's landscapes are top notch work, and their nature as unretouched pieces fits in well with the subject matter of the Lands Council. Whether it was for Jantz's work, or for the Lands Council itself, the hallway in which the work was displayed was packed. At times, the sheer number of people in the venue made it difficult to enjoy the work. This is a problem that most artists would dream of. Expect to see more of Jantz's work in the future.

*(Above) A Stoneware Monument by Lance Sinnema and Photographic Prints from Rajah Bose*





*The Photographs of Jon Jantz at the Lands Council*

We moved to Sante after the Lands Council. Sante was showing the work of Rochelle Craig. Her pieces are nice and fit the mood of Sante well. This show was one with a difficult venue. The place was so full of diners that we couldn't move to close to the pieces to view them. Being a restaurant and not an art gallery, there was little to no information on the artist and their work. For those of us who want to dig a little deeper, this caused us to move on rather quickly.

Behind the food court in Riverpark Square sits Kress Gallery. Too few people know about this display space in such an unassuming location. This month, Kress featured the work of Christine Kimball. Her paintings are modern impressionist. The piece "Giverny Untended" is obviously an allusion to Monet, and it looks appropriately like a piece by the impressionist master. The difference being, there seems to be a bit less of a reverence for nature in Kimball's work. The motion in the paintings often seems to turn the glowing nature of a Monet into a bit of a mess. In that regard, it is a perfect modern representation of the style.

Across the street in the lower level of City Hall sits Chase Gallery. This month, Chase chose to show a selection of art from the Artocracy website ([artocracy.org](http://artocracy.org)). Artocracy is dedicated to the democratization of art by making it affordable for most people and was started by Spokane's own Megan Murphy. This ideal is a good one, and one that I support. Artocracy's methods are simple: Provide a piece of art in downloadable form for a small fee (10-60 dollars, set by the artist). The large majority of this money goes to the artist to support them in their continuation of their work, and a small percentage goes to Artocracy for the maintenance on their site.

The problem with the system became apparent with the display put on at the Chase. The print quality is often less than stellar. This is worrisome, since these pieces were chosen to display. Consider the drop in print quality when someone downloads a piece of art and prints it at home to hang on their wall. Most artists hold some concern in how their art is displayed. As a photographer, if a print is of a substandard quality I will not hand it over to a client. With a system like Artocracy, the quality of prints is uncontrollable.

This brings me to my second concern with this system. There is no way to stop an individual from printing off 2 or 200 copies of a piece of artwork. This is troublesome for an artist as it can devalue their prints, and allows a loss of control in regards to their intellectual property. Overall, my lack of enthusiasm for the print quality and subject matter of the show is only a small fraction





*The Paintings of Rochelle Craig at Sante*



of my concern for the methodology of spreading art. If we wish to support artists continuing to make art in the short term, we have to insure that we don't sacrifice the viability of their art in the long term. As a fellow art walk participant said, "This seems like it leans too much in favor of the consumer instead of the artist."

After a brief stop over at the Spokane Transit Center, we moved on to Lorinda Knight. I've recently heard the sad news that the Lorinda Knight Gallery will be closing on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. This will be a terrible loss for Spokane, as the Lorinda Knight Gallery has an aesthetic that is not found anywhere else in the city. It is a high end gallery with a large amount of space that is prepared to put on an variety of shows. I hope that we can find a space to replicate what Lorinda Knight did for the Spokane arts community in the near future. It is a tall order though, and we will be lacking without it.

Lorinda Knight showed the work of Kay O'Rourke. Most fans of art in Spokane are familiar with Kay O'Rourke's paintings and drawings. The work "Still and Listening #2" was particularly impressive. There is great light in this piece, the color of a ripe plum. Some of O'Rourke's pieces are dark, but there is an overlying humor in many of them that makes them accessible. There is a reason O'Rourke has won awards in the area. This was a solid show for the gallery to go out on.

We may stop out for a few First Friday items next month, but it won't be in the capacity of the magazine. December will be *SPOKE(a)N(e)*'s first month off since we started. We encourage everyone to go out and look at the art displayed next month, and tell us what you think.

See you in 2010.

*-Text and Photos by Tyson Habein*

*(Above) Crowd at the Chase Gallery's Showing of Selected Pieces from Artocracy*

*(Right Top) Crowds at Lorinda Knight Gallery's Showing of Kay O'Rourke's Paintings  
(Bottom Right) One of Kay O'Rourke's Paintings.*





