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SPOKE(a)N(e)

Executive Editor: Michael McMullen

michael@blanklinestudios.com

Co-Editors: Julie Taylor, Sam Lux, Dan Williams

We do our best to make sure all items are accurate and complete, if you notice a mistake, let us know at spokenspokane@gmail.com. We will do our best to rectify the error.

Contributions, story ideas, letters to the editor, love, hate, baked beans and cookies to spokenspokane@gmail.com

E

I like writing for this magazine. It gives me the opportunity to meet new people and get exposed to some great artwork. Yet, I'm still in a transitional phase from "fan" to "editor". Some days I think, "Boy, I wonder what will be in it this month?" Then it dawns on me that I have to write the thing and I sit down to write it. That process takes a while because I'm still trying to find my voice.

D

For instance, this letter. I've written it twice. Even now, I'm sitting here wondering if I want to write it or put it off. I've already put it off so long that the deadline for me to have it in PageMaker for the layout has come and gone. The paragraph I just wrote is even filler. I learned how to write creative filler in high school. I could turn in whole essays that were two or three sentences of actual content. It's a habit I'm trying to break for the magazine.

I

So, I apologize for this issue being late. I'm still greasing some wheels and getting ducks in rows. Thank you for your patience.

T

Michael McMullen
Editor
SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine
michael@blanklinestudios.com

O

R



When did the idea to write a book first come to you? And when did you know it would become a multimedia venture?

The Truth Lenders was originally a short story about four people arguing about painting a house. I was writing fiction when I first became unemployed (i.e. had spare time). The project expanded and became a multimedia venture when my friend Kevin Long moved back to Spokane. I'd recorded some of his shows and was so intent on including his music that I scrambled to make him into a character first [and] asked questions later.

Why the decision to self-publish?

The original plan was not to self-publish but to indie-publish with Dreyer Press. One extremely wise day, Chris Dreyer and I decided it would be COMPLETELY INSANE to hand-collate 250+ pages of hundreds of books. We sent the print job to my Mom's friend's friend's friend, who owns a big press but isn't a publisher. This means I paid the costs to print 1,000 volumes and am marketing and distributing via word of mouth, social networking, and by independent bookshop. Self-publishing also means we retain complete creative control, while entrusting the design and production to independent artists/musicians/producers whose talent I trust unconditionally.

With your novel set in the year 2510, how did you decide upon a steam punk aesthetic when it comes to your characters' style and disposition?

It began with the telegraph. I thought it would be silly if everyone had to use the telegraph all the time, so the King declared war on telephones sometime before 2510. Telegraphs give birth to other period-appropriate inventions.

Your book features a lot of characters based on real people. Have you received much feedback from them regarding their futuristic selves?

So far, everyone has enjoyed having fictional alter-egos who are very different from themselves, because it allows them to live vicariously. Other characters exist to preserve our memories of people who are now deceased. Lady McGee is in the book because I didn't want to forget her.

Any plans for another book? Or what other projects do you have in the works?

I still have a day job that I love (I am a linguist who explains things for a living). I'm not giving that up anytime soon, but I would love to release another multimedia novel in the next few years. Got some ideas brewing, and a list of possible musicians, but I know that the ideas we have today will be nothing like their final, developed, evolved selves, so I'll hold off on the details until then.

*Text by Sara Habein
Photo by Tyson Habein*

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***The Truth Lenders* Launch Party**

Military grade eggs, komodo dragon poetry, and a fog machine dance party — Welcome to a twenty-sixth century DIY literary launch. Steam punk attire optional.

April 30, Empyrean Coffeehouse filled with people eager to hear about Thuy-Dzuong Nguyen's multimedia novel, *The Truth Lenders*. Set in the year 2510, the story has characters involved with a not-so-benevolent pharmaceutical news conglomerate, fictional bands, and underground journalists who value free-thinking above all else. It is an entire universe unto itself, one that Thuy has independently published and promoted.

Included with the book is a Footnotes CD that provides readers with songs, news broadcasts and even straight lines of dialogue. Besides pulling character inspiration from people she knows in real life, Thuy enlisted the help of area designers, musicians and producers, most of whom performed the night of the launch.

"I'm not much of a singer-songwriter," producer Joe Varela said, sitting onstage with an acoustic guitar. Varela's Black Lab Recording Studios, now located in San Francisco, handled the mixing and mastering of the Footnote tracks. He performed one well-received song not included on the CD before handing the mic over to the next performer.

Ever the natural MC, writer Isamu Jordan introduced some of the acts, in addition to performing the "Graind Peters Rap," a piece about a newscaster character who one day interrupts his broadcast with thoughts on metaphysics.

Slam poet and Mon Cheri bassist Kurt Olsen let loose with a poem from the CD and two of his own pieces, at Thuy's request. Kevin Long sang melancholy acoustic songs as his "Dr. Willows" alter ego, and Ross Robinette had the crowd dancing to the "post-post-postmodern deconstructionist robo-rock pop" duo Spyn-Speck. Dane Ueland, who is also featured on the Footnotes CD and now lives in Seattle, had to make a last minute cancellation.

Those who purchased the book that evening were able to have it signed by all available performers, and the party atmosphere continued straight into closing time. "Think of the most epic family and friend reunion, then add delicious pizza and profoundly original music," Thuy says. "It felt lovely. Thank you for celebrating it with us."

The Truth Lenders is available at Auntie's Bookstore and TruthLenders.com

Text by Sara Habein

To read Sara's full review of *The Truth Lenders*, please visit glorifiedloveletters.blogspot.com



*Photos by Michael
McMullen*

F

The offerings this month were diverse and pleasing. However, I do have an issue I want to get out of the way before I continue. This will be quick, so bear with me.

I

I am not an elementary school child. I do not have elementary school children. I can stay up past nine o'clock on a Friday night, so I would like the option of going to a gallery or business that understands this. For a city our size, it wouldn't be unheard of to let the sidewalks stay unrolled for a few hours beyond the curfew of your average fifth-grader.

R

Moving right along:

S

I started at the Kress Gallery to see Sheila Evans' *Metamorphosis* series. The location of the Kress Gallery is one of fascination to me. It's right off the food court at Riverpark Square. Of all the things I associate with the food court of a mall, fine art is not one of them. Yet, among the cuisine from around the world and the ever-present gaggle of hormonal teenagers, is one of my favorite galleries here in Spokane. They have never failed to bring something of interest and high-caliber technique to their space.

T

The work of Sheila Evans is no exception. The first thing I noticed about her work was how each painting had an almost iridescent quality to it. While I wouldn't exactly put her paintings in the photorealist category in terms of exact representation, they certainly had a feeling of life to them. I also had the sense of immersion into her work. Like a macro photograph, we are brought in close to the subject. The fluid lines and tones bring us even further into the frame and out of the world around us. It's very contemplative work, and I enjoyed just looking at each painting for several moments.

F

Our next stop was the Chase Gallery. This month, the work of Dirk Parsons caught my attention. I think of his work as somewhere between post-Impressionism and cubism. As both of these happen to be among my favorite styles, I enjoyed Mr. Parsons' work immensely. The bold color and abstraction had a free-flowing quality to it. As the viewer, I was also free to move around the painting. I could move in close or step back and appreciate the work on different levels. It didn't force an angle or perspective on me.

R

Bruce Horman and Nan Drye, also at Chase, were all about the minimalist approach. Bruce Horman used multimedia such as pictures, masonite, glass, and colored paper to create collages. Nan Drye used sticks, string, paper, and plaster masks to create mobile-like installations.

I

Mr. Horman's work was visually arresting and layered, but didn't really hold my attention for long. I wasn't drawn into it. However, one piece, a painted face with the phrase *non je ne fais pas la gueule!* underneath it, was one I found interesting. I couldn't tell if it was the expression on the face or the French that captured my interest. Whichever it was, it worked.

D

Nan Drye's installations had a good sense of space and dimension to them. While they lacked a lot of visual stimuli, they were far more emotionally interesting. I couldn't help but feel nostalgic looking at her work with old pictures, books, and dried flowers. One, *Sailing*, was very tranquil. I was very impressed by them overall.

A

Last, we saw the work of Mary Wheeler. She had a series of multimedia works that took inspiration from fallen leaves on the sidewalk. Using acrylic paints and papier-mâché, she creates three-dimensional works with lots of texture. Since she used more muted tones, the three-dimensional elements gave the contrast needed to keep the work from being too low-key. I appreciated her work primarily for the texture used, as it furthered the dimensional quality of each piece.

Y

My last stop was the Second Space Gallery to see the work of Tiffany Patterson and some of the area's tattoo artists. I've been a fan of Tiffany Patterson's work for a while now. The flowing lines, the color, and, of course, those big eyes, especially the big eyes. They have a certain clarity to them that really brings each work to life. Her work is like reading my favorite fantasy novel or the animated films of my childhood. It is distinct enough to introduce a new world or give a different view of our own.





(Top and left) Sheila Evans, oil



(above) Mary Wheeler, acrylic and multi-media



Dirk Parsons, acrylic



(Left and above) Nan Drye installations and detail



(above) Dirk Parsons, oil



(Right) Bruce Horman



(above and top) Tattoo art, various
(Right) Tiffany Patterson, oil



T

Have you ever wanted to just take a whole workweek listening to music - intentionally? I'm not talking about some random music playing on Pandora in the background while you do the dishes or drive your car to work. I'm talking about hiding-out with headphones, an iPod filled with the complete music collection of the Library of Congress, a bag of Funyuns, and just listen - intentionally.

H

Yes, I realize that the question posed is somewhat unrealistic and may be a bit strange, but sometimes I feel that there is so much music out there to be experienced, it needs to become a full-time job, my full-time job.

E

This urge to plug into music as much as possible came about back when I was about 10 years old and my older sister gave me her bulky old Discman and the DMB *Crash* CD while on a family vacation. The Discman had no "skip protection", so I was forced to sit as still as possible to prevent skipping. After 3000 miles in the car and a whole graveyard of AA batteries, little did I know, my life was changed. I just needed to hear just what else was out there. No more settling for listening to what was on the radio alone.

M

To me, music is a reflection of the endless opportunities and experiences available to all of us. It is so easy to get stuck on the art forms that we are used to and forget that there are always new and different genres being created every day. Why not give some of it a try? Even if it's not necessarily your preferred genre, give it a go. Instead of listening, yet again, to the same Creed CD that has been in your car since 1999, throw in some Mumford and Sons. You can always throw it out the window at the next stop and go back to Scott Stapp taking you "Higher." Or, instead of going to your usual Friday night movie, find out what's playing at the Empyrean or another local venue. You can always leave in time for the 10 PM showing of your flick.

U

If you are interested, but not sure what to check out, where to go or when to go there, I plan on sharing some of those opportunities with you through this little corner of the magazine.

S

Music has been a big part of my life, more than I think I sometimes realize. As for listening to music, yes, I have done that a lot. There is almost always a CD, iPod, or satellite radio playing in, on, or around my ears. I want to listen to as much music as I can, whenever I can (except country, which is something that I will address at a different time). It just needs to happen. As for playing music, I have been in choirs and played in different kinds of bands (rock, acoustic, embarrassing) over the years, all valuable experiences.

I

It is through these past and prospective future experiences, that I plan to share with all of you: interviews of local artists, articles, and opinions.

C

Michael asked me to write about music and the local music scene in place of the *Compulsive Chronicles* portion of the magazine. Being a relatively new reader of SPOKE(a)N(e), I went back and read Sara's past contributions. She is a very talented writer and left big shoes to fill. So, I am going to do my best to fill the gap. It is a very exciting opportunity for me and I hope you enjoy.

Keep on listenin'.

L

TJ List

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