In 1898, Arizona State University (at the time named the Arizona Normal School) built Old Main. For many years, it was the largest building in the Valley. Pen sketch by Mariel Piechowicz.
Mirages of Utopia
Southwestern intentional communities

Photographic Conservation
Photo essay

A Theory of Adaptive Disuse
Emptiness as a future

Arts in a Doughnut City
A brief history on Roosevelt Row

Protesting the Man
The fight to "save" Roosevelt Row

Art + Space = Community
Regulation of space in Tempe

Brother Dean Takes on the Gays
Preaching through protest rhetoric

Islamic Art and the Void
An absence in art

The Space Between Us
Excerpted from the author's thesis

Balcony Views of Marble, Space, and a 404 Error
Art

Supernova
Short story

Dream Cube
Art

Primary Studies 2
Art

DTM 2
Art

Space Bodies
Poem

Space Among the Stars
Horoscopes

Collection of untitled 35mm photographs
Art

Thanks for Liking Me Now
Reflections from an eighth-grade classroom

Cody James Inglis

Dagan Di Sardigna

Will Neibergall
Jan Chen

Chris Barton

Zachariah Kaylar
Angela Lufkin

Peter Northfelt
Dagan Di Sardigna

Noah Briggs

Sarah Syed

Laura Van Slyke

Zach Bootz

Rebecca Loggia

Chris Czaja

Mitchell Keaney

Araña Schulke

Taylin Paige Nelson

Zachariah Kaylar & Shelby Stringer
Mariel Piechowicz

Zachary Puetz

Shelby Stringer

Sarah Syed

Laura Van Slyke
Dear reader,

In this issue, a search for anything with regard to “extraterrestrials” or “exorbitantly expensive flights into space courtesy of Virgin Galactic Airlines” will turn up blank. When we dusted off our lapels and set to work on the Tempe Normal School Review’s Space Issue, our gaze was not aimed up into the cosmos; rather, we turned our magnifying glasses to spaces around us here in sunny Arizona.

In downtown Phoenix—where “adaptive reuse” is hot, hot, hot—rapid development encroaches on the arts scenes of Roosevelt Row and Grand Avenue. Everyone is quick to shout “gentrification sucks, man” and leave it at that, but there’s more to the story. In our own backyard of Tempe, heaps of city regulation and closed mixed-use venues leave artists with “Nowhere Else” to go. Out in the stretches of the Sonoran and Mojave deserts, physical isolation begets social desertion, and our utopian dreams go to die. That’s but a brief tour of the spaces this issue touches upon. You’ll also find other intellectually stimulating delights that range from the doldrums of the eighth-grade classroom to why Leos have a lot in common with the OH Pool at Hotel Valley Ho.

Middle-school blues aside, we do not seek to prescribe answers to any of the problems presented herein, nor are we interested in blowing a lot of rhetorical hot air in your face. We’re just a gaggle of students asking weird questions (by all means, join us).

We will be back in the fall, albeit under a different name (Houston, we had some legal problems). Keep your eyes peeled for more information. Thank you to Barrett, the Honors College at ASU for offering support in this project. Thank you to our faculty advisor, Mina Suk, Ph.D., staff, writers, and artists—without whom none of this would be possible. And above all, thank you, dear reader. Ground Control to Major Tom, put your reading glasses on.

Sincerely,
Zachariah Kaylar, Editor-in-Chief
There's something wonderfully escapist about the intentional community. In creating a community with specific goals of social cohesion, an enclave is formed within prevailing social conditions and power relations. The intentional community provides a critical space where alternative (fringe, radical, reactionary—whatever you'd like) modes of life can exist within a larger social apparatus. Specifically, the goal is autonomy, if not outright separation. But to remove a community from the surrounding social environment, it is necessary to carve out a piece of the natural environment. Thus the conceptual enclave is reflected in the physical enclave. Due to the vast expanses of the West, the desert becomes an ideal location for the reappropriation of physical space. Of the numerous attempts at sustainable intentional community in the desert, two will be examined: the ongoing project of Arcosanti, Arizona, and the failed attempt at Llano del Rio, California.

The Sonoran and Mojave Deserts are perfectly isolating places. Lush on face, but intensely arid and physically alienating. Rough terrain is populated with highly resilient flora and fauna—it would be terribly difficult to spend time in the desert without coming into contact with the spines and stingers of each. The forbidding natural environment reflects the desert as an open, underdeveloped conceptual space where Western contact and use has only recently pockmarked its concrete and abstract landscapes. The desert provided a resting place for the residue of 19th century American expansion and Manifest Destiny. These initial towns eventually turned around themselves, expanding in every direction, without consideration for condensed, “vertical” modes of planning. The larger towns became sprawling, decentralized metropoles, and the space between these metropolitan centers has been scarred by stretches of highway and inundated with small, impoverished outposts.

These locations are the Quartzsites of Arizona and the El Centros of California that dot the desert between Los Angeles and Phoenix. Because these communities are unable to sustain themselves in economic terms, they are forced into fatalist dependency upon urban production. It is a literal, physical dependence rooted deeply in these outposts' conceptual isolation from the source of prevailing socio-economic conditions. In these locations, sustainable economic and ecological practices become excessively expensive, if not simply impossible. The distances between places in the American West—particularly in the desert—warrant expanded, maintained interstate highways to allow goods and services to move from the shipping centers of Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix, to all of the towns and small cities in between. The immediacy of satisfaction that one might find in the city center begins to dissipate as one moves outward from condensed urban areas to sprawling rural spaces. Once outside city limits, one finds a way of life starkly contrasted to the high-speed consumption and liberal-bourgeois social conditions that designate urban life. Palpable geographic alienation from centers of political and economic power, combined with slower socio-economic paces and reactionary politics, mark the sprawling rural frontier.
The relationship of the center-periphery binary is the conceptual location of the enclaves that become experimental cities, intentional communities, or destructured communitas. In reappropriating physical space, these projects gain a literal location where new modes of social cohesion and production may take place. Let us take the case of Arcosanti, Arizona, as a prime example of how physical alienation from centers of political power allows alternative social conditions to emerge.

Arcosanti: the amalgamation of “architecture” and “ecology” coined by artist and architect Paolo Soleri. Taken from book #11 in Soleri’s *What If? Quaderni* series, the project “proposes a highly integrated and compact three-dimensional urban form that pursues the opposite of urban sprawl, with its [urban sprawl’s] inherently wasteful consumption of land, energy, and time, tending to isolate people from each other and community life.” The goal is a radical refusal of the sprawling, horizon-to-horizon urban planning that has been integrated into the actual footprint of cities such as Phoenix and Los Angeles.

At Arcosanti, concrete casings act as massive shade structures, encouraging bearable pedestrian traffic and communal repose. Condensed structures allow for neighborly intimacy, open-format interiors, and a swath of concentrated public space—an inversion of the antiquated practices that place structural isolation and sprawl at the forefront of a city’s physical presence. The condensed form of the community yields a sustainable built environment: “The Cafe is warmed in the winter through the use of warm air, collected by the skylight, blown through a fabric tube into the atrium”—one among a series of ecologically sustainable facets of the facilities noted on the Arcosanti website. Simple sustainable processes are easily integrated into the daily functions of built environments when the structures are planned with ecological preservation as a primary consideration.

When this complementary relationship is preserved within the general plans and intentions of the community, it is easier to create sustainable relationships between individual buildings and the natural space they occupy. Arcosanti is an excellent example of this ideal. Refusing to engage in the culture of the automobile, Soleri envisioned a dense community, wherein small distances and sprawling walkways were the norm. The project designated the transportational primacy of the automobile as wholly normative and therefore resistible. Walkable distances and dense construction functionally disallowed the car from the premises. The absence of the car avoided pollutive reliance and encouraged pedestrian practices: walkable spaces were intended to facilitate interactions—and therefore interdependence—between the inhabitants at Arcosanti. This is the standard that Arcosanti set as an enclave: resistance of ecological irreverence and the dissonance between our natural and built environments. After all, the unity of ecology and architecture is the namesake goal of the community.

Though this unity is an ongoing realization, it is indeterminate whether we can mark Arcosanti as a success. Lack of
funding and population has elbowed Arcosanti into the annals of tourist guides, coupled with long-abandoned ghost towns in compendiums like Weird Arizona and inconsequential online articles with titles like, “Top 10 Experimental Towns and Communes.” The project, though always under development, has no formal ending in sight and simply operates as a living museum rather than a vibrant community.

This strive to accomplish utopia on human grounds isn’t a new idea in the history of intentional communities. Located 400 miles west of Arcosanti and 50 years its predecessor, the Llano del Rio Cooperative Community began as a socialist colony, intending to create a community where the “colonists” could create a microcosmic socialist society within a larger capitalist society. The community was intended to set an example for the rest of the American public, to demonstrate the virtues of “socialist” society and its ways of life. But the idealist façade quickly dissolved once its operational dysfunction was revealed.

The “public” nature of membership became inherently exclusive due to the misguided, rigid ideology of Job Harriman, the founder of Llano del Rio and one-time Vice Presidential candidate alongside Eugene Debs. New colonists were required to become shareholders in the community, meaning that any new colonist had to purchase stock in the cooperative, usually amounting to $2,000 in today’s currency. There was an ideological litmus test to ensure that all entering colonists adhered to the same rigid devoutness toward the vague ideal of Llano del Rio’s “socialism.” Though the economy itself was self-sustaining—two years after its founding, the colony produced 90 percent of all food that the community ate—the colony was so distanced from the rest of the developed centers of the American West that it was unable to expand its economic exports, condemning the colonists to an impoverished autarky.

And the “socialism” that was guaranteed at Llano del Rio was indeed a white, male-dominated socialism. Its economy was founded in part upon a rigidly gendered division of labor, wherein women were requisitioned to perform exclusively “domestic” roles, institutionalizing what was previously an informal, but nonetheless constructed and accepted, socio-economic distinction. In addition, any non-white applicant to the community was rejected—the result of pervasive racist tendencies from which the enclave didn’t particularly care to escape.

In no practical sense was Llano del Rio a utopia. Its members existed within a mirage of utopia, alienated above and beyond what had formerly been the case under capitalist apparatuses. Internal political turmoil, loss of young men to the draft, a water crisis, and Llano del Rio’s geopolitical alienation from the rest of California was disaster for the colony. By 1918, the colony was abandoned and a shade of the original was moved to Louisiana.

Mirages of utopia: the experiments in intentional community that strove to reappropriate the physical space of the West into enclaves of alternative society. These were attempts that ultimately fell quite short of the expectation to create ideal societies. Within the enclave, the communities were idealized as a place to remove oneself from the perceived excesses of traditional architecture, of environmental neglect, and of the moral decay perceptibly caused by the socio-economic norms of capitalist institutions. The desert appeared to be the perfect location for this sort of rejection to take place—vast, isolated landscapes put immense distance between the perceived extents of capitalist hegemony. But, those extents proved to be mirages as well, forcing each community to stagnate in the liminal space between the conditions they intended to leave and the idealized society they could never achieve.

The desert is a fundamentally forbidding place, unfriendly to animals of any ideological badge. Negation is the norm of the Southwest—negation of permanence, of lush ecology, and of excessive idealization.
idealization. The geography lends itself to temperance and conservation and vehemently excludes ecological manipulation. Dammed rivers run out while intense heat and blistering sun necessitates never-ending construction and maintenance of human-made structures that provide a means to escape from the environment through its very consumption. Mirages of utopia arise from the idealism of their colonists and founders, but quickly dissipate in the face of the environmental and social realities that confront them. Though these types of projects attempt to create revolutionary space and a society within, the experiments have been caught between the volatile forces of capitalist self-preservation and its necessary reproduction. The result is stagnation or disintegration.

Are we able to overcome these mirages in order to create an actual oasis of successful intentional community? Overcoming these former mirages requires the same escapist tendencies that problematize the endeavor in the first place. But the problem hinges not on the mere escapism, but rather on what the escapism reflects. When the escapism is sourced from deeply-rooted racist, elitist, or unmanageably idealistic tendencies, we fail. There is no community without diversity and inclusion, nor is there successful intentional community without actual, gritty community in all of its variation and color.

Abstract lessons of social inclusion and sustainability learned from the failures of the Llano del Rio experiment must be coupled with their concrete realization at Arcosanti to provide us with a map of the way forward. The problem is then centered around how we might identify and fortify ourselves against the temptation of utopian mirage as we build the space for successful intentional community.

Cody James Inglis has been dragged back into the desert on two occasions. He is a political science and philosophy junior with the post-grad goal of understanding your esoteric references at cocktail parties.

Illustrations by Inglis.
Photographic Conservation
Dagan Di Sardigna

Cave Creek is a small Arizona town hanging on the horizon north of the Phoenix metropolitan area that has remained loyal to its historical roots despite ongoing change. For nearly 11,000 years, humans have inhabited this region, including the Hohokam (circa 800–1400 CE) and the Tonto Apache (circa 1400–1900 CE). Toward the latter half of the 19th century, Arizona became mining country—the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny came to fruition as America pushed further westward, claiming resources and eradicating opposition.

The Cave from which Cave Creek acquired its name faces east. Across the creek, modern homes stare toward the west. Visible paintings on the walls of this ancient dwelling date back over 2,000 years, to a time when Hohokam agricultural practices were not yet fully developed, and the climate was not quite as arid as it is today. The Cave was permanently occupied until 1873, when the U.S. Cavalry served the Tonto Apache their final eviction notice. The Cave of Cave Creek is currently managed and protected by the Desert Foothills Land Trust (DFLT), a nonprofit organization responsible for the conservation of a total of 680 acres on 22 preserves located in the foothills along the northern border of the Sonoran Desert. Although many of these preserves are open to the public for recreational purposes, please note that The Preserve at the Cave is accessible by guided tours only. The removal of wildlife specimens and tampering with historical artifacts found within the preserves are acts punishable by law.

DFLT has been actively working alongside the communities of Cave Creek and Carefree since 1991 to protect fragile ecological systems found in the Sonoran Desert and to encourage the public to safely and consciously engage with their surrounding environment. Although communities like this one are still a minority, according to a 2010 census performed by the National Land Trust Alliance, approximately 17 million of the 47 million acres of land protected in the United States have been managed and obtained by state and local land trusts such as DFLT. Additionally, the number of active land trust volunteers increased by 70 percent from 2005 to 2010, while paid staff and contractors increased by 19 percent.

I often find myself struggling with memories, particularly knowing when to hold on or let them go. The practice of maintaining balance in this area of my mind is what I regard as an introspective form of conservation. I think that we all struggle to some extent with knowing how to accept or contrive connotations assigned to individual memories, as well as those assigned to grandiose historical events. A partial solution to this problem with many variables is to simply spend time in nature, allowing oneself to be amazed at the eclectic mix of life found on our planet. I have further grown to appreciate and conserve the world around me by capturing moments with an analog film camera—something about film is much more real than what a digital medium can provide. The process of exposing photographic film creates a photochemical record of a physical space. The photons that catalyze reactions of film emulsions are those shining out of the sky onto our environment. As a film shooter, I believe the preservation of the art of film photography not only provides an appropriate medium to share the beauty of our natural world, but reminds us to take our time when capturing and framing the moments that may span our lifetimes. With the recognition of the beauty of our natural environment we have the opportunity to preserve the vestiges of our world for many generations to come.

I am thankful to the community of Cave Creek and the Desert Foothills Land Trust for recognizing the importance of conservation and granting me the opportunity to photograph and discuss a remarkable place. All photographs here were captured on the trails at The Preserve at the Cave and the Jewel of the Creek Preserve. For more information, please visit www.dflt.org and www.landtrustalliance.org.

Dagan Di Sardigna is an engineering and Mandarin junior. He drinks diluted apple cider vinegar to maintain blood sugar and pH balance.
A brief window in natural history—A DFLT volunteer tours The Cave on Cave Creek. Geologically formed nearly five million years ago, the cave bears human traces spanning an ongoing period of 11,000 years.

Next page: The Jewel—Ecological diversity and accessibility make the Jewel of the Creek DFLT’s flagship location for all nature and Arizona history enthusiasts.
Refuge and sustenance—Cavities along the walls of the cave were used to store food during the winter months. On Christmas Eve of 1873, the U.S. Cavalry wiped out the remaining steadfast Tonto Apaches, their 11 wickiup huts and speculated six tons of food left to smolder.

Combined remnants—Smoke stains the walls and ceilings of this dwelling that served many as a place of refuge.

Flora and Fauna—The Jewel of the Creek trail provides a glimpse into the expansive ecological possibilities of the desert. Shown is the Chain Fruit Cholla (opuntia fulgida) casting shade over Desert Marigold (baileya multiradiata).
Preliminary Materials for a Theory of Adaptive Disuse

Article by Will Neibergall
Photography by Jan Chen
The morning used to belong to work. To a degree, it still does, but at least in the city, it has become spectral and silent. In the clichéd image of late capitalism, streets and shared public spaces are full of moving bodies. The morning is, in that particular formation, a time for transit. Slowness is permitted only in service of waiting for coffee or for the train, and waiting is itself an indulgence. In the infinitely recurring timeline of this urban capitalism, there should be no space for emptiness. Why, then, are the streets near campus empty and silent on a Tuesday morning? Cars remained parked outside homes, but the cafés are full. Serious-looking adults hover around the bar at Tempe’s Cartel Coffee Lab before 8 a.m., looking uncomfortable and placeless. What nightmarish permutation of life and labor has made this indulgent silence appropriate? When does capital wake up in the morning these days?

In late 2014, I was sitting at Cartel during that silent non-commute, not talking or overhearing (as would be necessary later in the day) but reading Martha Rosler’s *Culture Class*, a collection of essays about the role of art in gentrifying neighborhoods in New York City and other urban centers. A Cartel barista asked what I was reading, so I explained it to him. He remarked that he had learned the meaning of the word “gentrification” only a couple of months prior, while visiting Portland (recently named by Governing Magazine the “most gentrified city in America”) with a friend. I thought about the quiet malaise of the urban economy I’ve witnessed, shaped by a mostly creative but financially ignorant, dispassionate, and cynical youth culture. To what extent do these young, mostly upper-middle-class, mostly white city-dwellers facilitate the socioeconomic fracture of urban space? A better question might be: to what extent do they deliver that wound unwittingly?

The superficial affective identity of urban theorist Richard Florida is an appropriate access point to his theories. The surname Florida reminds me of the pictures of rich, languishing tourists, celebrities, and retirees slinking around galleries at Art Basel Miami Beach. “Dead capital” redefined as the spiritless, deteriorating bodies of spring breakers and the monied. Run a Google Image search of Florida’s name and admire his powerful jaw, his tailored suits, his unbuttoned collars, his slick hair, a picture of him pretending to play a cherry-red Gibson Vegas, or a picture of him posing in a skintight V-neck in front of Paquitos Auto Repair on the corner of 13th and Grand avenues.
For Florida, the “creative class” is an amorphous group of artists, art entrepreneurs, techies, designers, and engineers – this group is distinguished not by their creative function, but by their material productivity.

For Florida, the “creative class” is an amorphous group of artists, art entrepreneurs, techies, designers, and engineers – this group is distinguished not by their creative function, but by their material productivity, according to which individuals are designated “creatives” or members of a “supercreative core” -- those extremely productive individuals who Florida estimates constitute about 30 percent of creative people. The rest of us are untapped potential.

Florida’s “creative class” has entered into the logic of simulacra, describing an alleged phenomenon and, through its immense social influence, spawning a new generation of arts entrepreneurs and supporting municipal legislation to facilitate the “creative” transformation of cities. Florida’s direct participation in sculpting urban renewal policy in cities like Austin, Texas, has precipitated to similar models in some neighborhoods of larger cities like San Francisco and New York.

Say what you will about Florida, but he has both feet firmly outside of the ivory tower; thanks to him, the governments of many of America’s biggest urban centers are now much more accommodating when called upon to give cheap property to artists for public works, cooperative spaces, and utopian projects.

The new, millennial brand of urban-class friction is being made somewhat visible as Florida’s spectre spoils and lingers over downtown Phoenix like a haze. The smog of sprawl is thinning as corporate interests seize the newly cool properties of Roosevelt Row and, to a lesser degree, Grand Avenue, promising to fill those profitable spaces with luxurious stuff at the expense of some of those who currently live and work in them, like the proprietors of Roosevelt Street’s Bodega 420 and the greenHAUS. Momentarily ignoring their potential complicity in what’s happening, young people are variably outraged. Dated municipal designations of historicity are being used and abused to try and give a new sense of permanence to widely respected creative centers. This is almost certainly in vain; even Florida perceived the existential precarity of creative activity.

The most confounding position is the inclination to compromise taken up by petitioners. A Change.org petition touts the potential of “adaptive reuse,” prominently featuring an image simulating a future in which creative and corporate interests peacefully cohabit the same space. An ambiguously cool “local biz,” complete with a public art piece and garden, sits at the foot of a towering luxury apartment building in this pseudo-utopian, mutedly metropolitan vision of Phoenix. “Adaptive reuse” can be read as a collapsing of art and commerce into the same idiom, effectively realizing Florida’s dream of a distinctly urban transformation of capital. In the Phoenix proposed by petitioners as well as in the metropolis of Richard Florida, capitalism is a fine art and fine art exists chiefly because it is permitted.

To many, Roosevelt Row is fucked. StarkJames, LLC’s “Containers on Grand” project forecasts a similar future for Grand Avenue, home to the Trunk Space, one of the last true DIY spots in Phoenix. Where will everyone go? Cole and Dayna Reed from greenHAUS have an idea: Portland.

Rosler’s Culture Class considers the post-Florida understanding of urban development and the ways in which it has changed the character of creative and urban life alike under capitalism. Citing political scientist J. Eric Oli-
The future home of Containers on Grand, a complex of eight 1-bedroom apartments, on the corner of 12th and Grand avenues. These 740-square-foot apartments will rent for about $900 to $1,000 per month.
ver, she argues for an understanding of gentrification as the collapsing of interpersonal distinctions and the creation of pockets of political homogeneity, a process accessible to both creative and corporate interests, though not always at the same time and to the same extent. Also involved in this process is the appropriation of the purposeful or accidental aesthetics of working-class social space, which are put to work by those corresponding to Florida’s “creative class” in the name of a different notion of utility, characterized by the process of urbanization and rising property value. In New York, for example, even the most ordinary of tenement roofs “were where women went with their washing and their children, in good or just tolerable weather, to hang the damp laundry on the line, thus joining a larger community of women in performing the necessary and normal, good and useful, labor of reproduction and maintenance of family life.”

Now, in those gentrified waterfronts, “green roofs” and community gardens have pacified the “concrete jungle” and (literally) cultivated it as a social space for the privileged and perennially counter-cultural class of hipsters and urban idealists.

Rosler mourns the pluralism of past New York neighborhood scenes in which women of all classes were visible to each other during the ritual washing and parks were communal meeting places marked by great diversity—difference was clearly effected by the cycles of capital, but urban areas were still zones of political potential. Now, things have been fractured, made separate, and often obscured. The separate status of financial interests from a public comprising both the bourgeois and the working-class has turned into the kind of urban world in which “adaptive reuse” is thinkable, in which art and finance are friendly and the working poor have been pushed far enough away to forget.

Unwittingly, artists have facilitated something more insidious, and the
The mode of production, we remember, includes the forces of production but also their relations, and when these two come into conflict, a crisis is born. It is interesting, in this respect, that the battle cry has been ‘Occupy’ (which echoes Florida’s similar injunction to gentrify); that is, to occupy space, to occupy the social and political imagination.... What the occupations have done is to make members of disparate groups—neighborhood advocacy groups, immigrant-rights groups, and working-class labor groups, both organized and not, visible to each other....

To me, the empty spaces, used car lots, and heaps of trash on Grand Avenue are beautiful. I dare call them more beautiful than Roosevelt Street’s murals. Clearly, the utilitarian crowding of space with the intentionally beautiful, the aggressive occupation of places we don’t deserve with the intention of disrupting them, has been a failure. As Grand Avenue’s luxury “Containers” assume form (can you afford a claustrophobic life in the middle of desert sprawl?), the noise pouring nightly out of the Trunk Space might be a calculated annoyance, but the metal and trash next door is utterly incomprehensible. What if the future of art and countercultural life in Phoenix is emptiness? Garbage? Nothing cannot be co-opted; nothing is not profitable. That artists should de-occupy, should create voids of meaning, is a dangerous suggestion for artistic practice in general, but it might be the only promise of a future for creativity in the city. Adaptive disuse will not be discussed at a town hall meeting, will not be petitioned for, will not be modeled in Google Sketchup. Artists must nonetheless come up against the inevitable reality: no future worth realizing can be modeled.

Will Neibergall is a linguistics and religious studies freshman. He writes about music for Tiny Mix Tapes and coaches the high school debate team at Brophy College Preparatory. In his free time, he makes jokes on Twitter, plays chess, and DJs proms.

Jan Chen is a computer science junior with a camera. She is apathetic about most things in life with the exception of breakfast food, caffeine, and animals in hats.

“Adaptive reuse” can be read as a collapsing of art and commerce into the same idiom, effectively realizing Florida’s dream of a distinctly urban transformation of capital.
Roosevelt Row is, to many, the saving grace of a largely soulless city. It has emerged from the vast, homogenous sprawl of the Valley of the Sun as an oasis of culture, art, music, variety, and vibrancy. Artists see it as a sanctuary in which they can work, visitors see it as unique and exciting place to spend time, the city sees it as a vital part of the renaissance of downtown Phoenix, and developers see it as an asset that raises land values. This arts district is popular, supported, and well-loved—but its success was hard won.

Back in the early 1950s, downtown Phoenix could rightly be called such—it was bustling, walkable, relatively dense, and solidly the center of life in Phoenix. The ’60s brought with them a scurrying of those with money up Central Avenue to the newly built suburbs, with business close in tow. Disinvestment from the urban core hit Phoenix as it did most cities in the ’70s, and Phoenix became a stereotypical “doughnut city”—a city where everything of economic substance existed in a ring around the abandoned city center. Phoenix’s attempts to revitalize downtown constituted an expensive parade of unsuccessful “catalyst” projects: whole blocks were razed to build first a basketball arena, then a baseball stadium, then the convention center and symphony hall, then the Arizona Center and various other ill-designed arenas, parks, plazas, and squares. The “tear down everything and build mega-projects” strategy had limited success, and it massively disrupted the lives of those who lived downtown. Eventually, plans to build a football stadium north of the city center came online—and here the city finally ran into some resistance.

Like in other cities across the country, artists in the ’80s sought out the cheap accommodations present downtown. The inexpensive, dilapidated parts of the city that the artists moved into, however, were also the “blighted” areas on which the city had designs. The U.S. Airways Center squashed existing art spaces and forced a number of artists to move a few blocks away—and into the footprint of Chase Field. The new stadiums meant that the warehouse district quickly became too expensive for the artists, and they were forced farther away: up to Grand Avenue and Roosevelt Street, where artists bought land. When the city announced plans to build a football stadium adjacent to the latest arts district, the artists organized again, and this time, remarkably, they were heard. A combination of factors, the artists’ ire among them, forced the stadium to be relocated to Glendale—and for the first time in the history of downtown development, the voices of the downtown occupants had made an impact.

After a moment of shock at having actually been listened to, the area’s initial cohort of artists realized that they had discovered an unexpected might. The fact that rather than renting, they owned many of the buildings they inhabited. Their ownership combined with their experience communicating ideas through art, activism, and outreach, made them a powerful voice in the area. Many of the vanguard artists—Greg Esser, Cindy Dach, and Wayne Rainey among them—had experience with working directly with the city and developers. The artists had spoken out as a cohesive unit, united in their opposition of the Cardinals stadium, and had discovered that the conditions were...
right for them to take an active role in their city. The downtown arts community emerged into the 21st century as a dedicated, if not always effective, political force.

One of the reasons that the artist coalition that formed around Roosevelt Row was important and unique was because Phoenix had nearly always been run top-down. Phoenix 40, the powerful old-boy network, ran the city into the '80s, then faded into the mists of myth. Since then, Phoenix Community Alliance (PCA) and the Downtown Phoenix Partnership (DPP), both of which explicitly promote the interests of corporate real-estate developers, have been powerful political forces in Phoenix. During the attempted revitalization of downtown, the mega-projects supported by these firms were notorious for running over communities and small businesses in favor of corporate business interests. Although PCA and the DPP no longer have run of the city, the city’s leaders of choice remain in favor of large planning and marketing firms, rather than community interests. This changed, to some extent, with the creation of Downtown Voices Coalition (DVC).

This group of dedicated downtown activists is responsible for the creation of the singular “Icehouse Manifesto.” This report, officially titled, “Downtown Voices: Creating a Sustainable Downtown,” arrived in the hands of the city at the same time as a report crafted by Richard Florida’s Catalytix consultancy.
Both reports dealt with the role of the arts and artists in the revitalization of downtown. Both offered suggestions on how to make Phoenix an economically successful and culturally vibrant city. Both, ostensibly, had the same goals. However, while the Catalytix report (like many commissioned reports) was vacuous and trivial, the DVC report offered place-specific, powerful solutions in a remarkably comprehensive and insightful document. This noninstitutional document cost the city nothing, offered better suggestions than the Catalytix report, and thanks to the impressive follow-up by both the city and the community, resulted in far more impact than any top-down report has had thus far.

Downtown Voices Coalition, as well as other community organizations such as the Roosevelt Community Development Corporation, has had an immense impact on shaping their city to their ends. They have worked with the city to achieve things like zoning overlays that support small businesses and the arts, fought successfully against unwelcome development and gentrification, and have worked to improve public facilities in the area, becoming a powerful player in city politics in the process. The end result has been a downtown Phoenix that benefits both the local community of artists and the Phoenix community more generally.

The “agitate, negotiate, and when all else fails, litigate” tactics of DVC have proven both effective and problematic. Downtown Voices Coalition, which was born out of activism and frustration, quickly found itself on the same playing field as PCA and the DPP, despite playing a game with different rules and objectives. Although they remain thorns in each other’s sides, the groups have come to coexist and see somewhat eye to eye, even if they work toward different goals. By playing on the same field as the corporate and municipal players, DVC and others have elevated the perceived rhetoric and ranting of the activist/artist community to the level of accepted civil discourse. At the same time, DVC has brought a concern for the urban form and the human-scale aspects of the city to a forum historically concerned only with development and economic growth. The unique success of Roosevelt Row depends, to a large extent, on the civic activist project undertaken by groups like DVC.

Roosevelt Row continues to grow and expand, always under the vigilant eye of activist locals like those in DVC. Both Roosevelt Row and its sister district, Grand Avenue, have managed to achieve enough economic success and recognition to continue operating, while largely keeping true to their artistic and activist routes.

Although Roosevelt Row is unique to the Valley, it is emblematic of a strategy of community empowerment and development that has arisen across the world. Baltimore is home to Station North Arts District, Denver houses River North, and Hamburg is home to the Gängeviertel. All these places, and more, have combined an activist approach to civic involvement with a dedication to culture and art to create districts with a powerful presence in their city. Some, like Roosevelt Row, are open and welcoming to the city and its inhabitants; others, like Gängeviertel and Station North, are insular and defensive. Some play nice with the city government; others are antagonistic. All, however, share a unique ability to stand on their own and influence their city in new ways. These microcosms of obstinate creativity and dedication to place attract to them the stem cells of the city, the disenfranchised and disappointed people who feel the need to change the way their world works. These people fall into ranks under entities like Roosevelt Row and DVC, and with collective power reach out and touch their city in ways they could never have before.

Chris Barton is graduating in May with degrees in Sustainability, Urban Planning, and Math, and will then proceed to tackle, one by one, all the major problems that the world faces. He likes dancing, being overwhelmed by art, and making STEM majors uncomfortable.
Daniel Mills has a problem with the word “gentrification”—and rightfully so. It’s a buzzword, an umbrella term for a maddeningly complex process. Those five harsh syllables are more than just the proliferation of glass-walled condominiums and upscale brunch spots. “People use this word ‘gentrification’ almost like a New World Order or Illuminati—like there’s this intergalactic plot to push poor people and people of color out of neighborhoods,” says Mills, the 23-year-old founder of the online magazine Sprawlr.

Intergalactic plots aside, something is happening. Phoenix is changing fast. We’re sitting in Lola Coffee on Third Avenue and Roosevelt Street in the Gold Spot building, which was built in 1925 and housed several grocery stores until 1983, when the building fell vacant. Rumor has it there used to be a bowling alley in the cellar and that an underground tunnel once connected it to the Westward Ho. Lola opened its doors here in 2009, a prime example of adaptive reuse.

I’m meeting Mills to talk about the trouble brewing just a few blocks east of here, where out-of-state developers threaten to strangle the creative core of Roosevelt Row with a handful of condominiums. Neighbors, the media, and spectators have been in a tizzy. Is the Row gentrifying? Will the community be killed by the $1,000-a-month apartment? How can we save the character of the area?

“This is a really unique place down here, and it’s worth protecting, and it’s very threatened,” he says. The Row is at a tipping point—where large-scale developments threaten to alter the landscape beyond recognition. Is that necessarily a bad thing? Is this inevitable? My mind is swimming. I’ve had too much coffee, perhaps.

After my interview with Mills ends, I don’t go directly back to the light rail and head home to Tempe; I walk down to 222 E. Roosevelt St., one of the buildings threatened by the new developments. I run my hands along the chain-link fence erected around what used to be greenHAUS gallery. I wish I could say the fate of the building, its pending demolition, buzzes in the air—but it is silent.

It’s the night of Tuesday, February 17, and the street is barren. I am the only one staring through the chain-link fence at the Three Birds mural by Lauren Lee on the building’s eastern wall, wondering how such a small building could represent the future of Roosevelt Row. I didn’t know it then, but the plans to save the building would crumble for the last time the following morning.

To save the building from what? Some might say “gentrification” and others might shout, “bad urban planning.” Either way, people wanted to save that little green brick building from Baron Properties, a Colorado-based real estate development company, and their plans for iLuminate, a 111-unit apartment complex on the corner of Roosevelt and Third streets. Rent starts at a modest and reasonable $1,200 a month.

Baron Properties was the villain—the ostensibly evil development company with plans to destroy the Roosevelt Row arts district—according to a swelling grassroots movement aimed to “save” the Row. It was us vs. them, and when I set out to write this piece in early January, I wanted nothing more than to lambast Baron for both iLuminate and...
Linear, a similar apartment complex of about 140 units planned for the vacant lot on the southwest corner of Roosevelt and Third Street. I wanted to blame Baron for escalating the forces of gentrification, for killing the vibe of Roosevelt Row, for designing the most suburbanized urban developments, for opting out of ground-floor retail in their designs, for building superblocks dead to pedestrians, for charging what I believed to be unreasonably high rent; I wanted to blame them for all of it. Of course, nothing is ever that simple.

**the funeral**

I joined this debacle about a week before the Save Roosevelt Row Symbolic Funeral Procession, a protest planned for the Thursday before the Super Bowl, when a friend pointed out that “some things were happening over on Roosevelt Row.” I started investigating. By that point, a lot had already happened. I was late to the party and so was Save Roosevelt Row, the grassroots organization behind the protest that called on developers “to support adaptive reuse and respect our history,” according to their Facebook page.

Over a month earlier and with minimal fanfare, the City of Phoenix granted preliminary approval for Baron’s iLuminare Apartments and issued a demolition permit for 222 E. Roosevelt St. and the nearby 1002 N. 3rd St. (a long...
vacant office building formerly home to the Church of Scientology). By then, Dayna and Cole Reed, owners of greenHAUS and lessees of the 222 property, had already announced plans to close the gallery and relocate to Portland, Oregon, in February to raise their son in a state with more parentage rights protection. Arizona recognized the Reeds' marriage, but it did not legally recognize both as the mother of their son expected to arrive in March. In a November interview with the Downtown Devil, Cole Reed said, “We are not leaving because we don't like Phoenix. We are not leaving because we don't love our neighbors. We are leaving our close-knit bubble in downtown Phoenix that we love, adore and are rooted in because Arizona doesn't support our family.”

In mid-December, a Change.org petition was launched to save the soon-to-be vacant green building from demolition. The little building, as it turns out, had quite a history. Aside from the two Ted DeGrazia murals adorning the walls (one of which, The History of Alcohol, was rumored to have been painted to pay off a bar tab), the building served as the 307 Lounge in the 1970s, a gay and drag bar, as well as former mayor Phil Gordon's campaign headquarters in 2008. The petition hoped to convince the folks at Baron to work the building into their design for iLuminate so that a local business might one day call the building
home. By the time I signed the petition toward the end of January, it had already garnered more than 1,000 signatures.

Baron was not callous to the fact that the building they planned to raze held two of the oldest surviving murals in the Phoenix. On December 23, Scott Fisher of Baron released a “Statement by Baron Properties Regarding the Preservation of DeGrazia Murals at 3rd Street & Roosevelt” to Lynn Trimble of the Phoenix New Times. In a nifty bulleted list, Fisher confirmed that Baron had been working with the DeGrazia Foundation in Tucson for assistance in preserving the works. “One will certainly be saved and donated to the Foundation or relocated elsewhere in downtown Phoenix,” Fisher said. Preserving the other work, The History of Alcohol, proved troublesome. Not to worry: according to Fisher’s statement, Baron plans to “animate both buildings with major works of art by local artists,” which would result in the “the area having more art, not less.” To boot, Baron even hopes to throw up a plaque commemorating the 307 Lounge. “By continuing to work together,” he said, “there is no doubt we will achieve a win-win.” The jury is out on what a “win-win” actually means.

Downtown Voices Coalition (DVC)—a group begun over a decade ago to foster a development dialogue between the City of Phoenix and its residents—threw in their two cents on this “development crisis” not long after. On January 20, they issued a letter to Mayor Greg Stanton decrying the “demise of the Roosevelt Row Arts District.” “We fully support density and residential in our downtown,” DVC wrote, “but not at the expense of the few remaining character buildings in our neighborhoods and downtown eligible for historic designation.” It’s a logical position; hey, we have a lot of vacant lots downtown already, so why bulldoze a cool building when you could either work around it or build on a dirt lot?

Tim Eigo, Chair of the Steering Committee with DVC, wrote that letter. “We simply feel that a decade or more of neighbors and city staff and elected leaders sitting around tables have been able to craft quite a few great overlays and

The western side of Modified Arts, a gallery on Roosevelt Street that’s also home to Local First AZ.
the space issue     31
plans that explain exactly what we want downtown,” he told me. “The development that’s coming in is undermining that. It is not friendly to the pedestrians and bicyclists—or even a driver. It’s not friendly to the artist. It creates a dead zone.” Unfortunately, there was little DVC could legally do beyond issuing the letter. Baron already owned the land and they had the necessary permits to move forward.

I knew about none of this when I “liked” Save Roosevelt Row on Facebook. I just knew I was going to be at the protest with a few friends, some incisive, witty signs and our “best mourning garb,” as requested by the Facebook event.

As it turned out, the protest was aimed not only at the Baron developments but another development as well—one led by Wood Partners, an Atlanta-based development firm. These guys hoped to bulldoze a large tract of land from Third to Fifth streets along Roosevelt Street. This stretch is home to Canvas Corner, an abandoned residence at 314 E. Roosevelt St., the space used for the A.R.T.S. Market, and 420 E. Roosevelt St. (formerly Bodega 420). In their place, another cookie-cutter apartment complex would go up, potentially touting such amenities as subsidized rent for the community?

As we rounded First Street, my sign completely disintegrated in the rain. I took up carrying the coffin. A convoy of black SUVs rolled by, and Tom Brady of the New England Patriots rolled down his window to stare. Who are these people? I imagined him wondering. What are they protesting against?

By that point in the march, I wasn’t sure. I knew I didn’t want luxury condominiums to become the norm in a city I planned to stay in after graduating college. I didn’t want Roosevelt Row to become a sad holl of its former self. I didn’t want “gentrification”—whatever it was—to happen here. The process seemed inevitable and already underway, though. Roosevelt Row was becoming, in a sense, a victim of its own success. People wanted to move here. I wanted to move here. Was I part of the “problem?” The coffin was too heavy; I felt myself cracking under the strain.

“it ain’t going to freakin’ die.”

John Sagasta, the owner of Jobot Coffee, is surprisingly optimistic about the future of the Row. “It ain’t going to freakin’ die. We’ve been saying this forever. We’ve been saying forever that, ‘Oh, it’s the end, it’s the end.’ It’s never really the end; it just changes,” he says to me on a sunny Tuesday afternoon in February. His perspective leaves me with the feeling that I’ve been the pessimistic doomsayer, clamoring to label the Baron developments as the death of the Arts.

Almost two weeks have passed since the Save Roosevelt Row protest, and my shoulder still hurts from carrying the coffin. I sit outside on the patio drinking my coffee and listening to a fast-talking blonde barista dictate a list of “Essential Phoenix Restaurants” to a vegetarian out-of-towner (Bragg’s Pie Factory is at the top of the list, followed by Green and Barrio Café). “Waiting for My Man” by the Velvet Underground plays. The scene is almost too idyllic. While I wait for Sagasta to arrive, I read Mayor Greg Stanton’s January 31 op-ed, “A new and better Phoenix is emerging,” on AZCentral.com, and I wonder what he means by “Phoenix is creating the kind of walkable downtown that many professionals—especially young ones—demand in a city.” Maybe he missed the memo about Baron’s two developments with zero ground-floor retail space, essentially creating two dead superblocks right at the entrance of Roosevelt Row from the lightrail? Or perhaps he never got DVC’s letter back in January outlining what it was Phoenicians really wanted to see happen downtown? There’s also the lingering question: Where all these hip, young professionals who can afford $1,200 a month in rent coming from? This question goes unanswered as Sagasta bounds up to me wearing bright blue corduroys.

From behind dark aviator sunglasses, he explains, “We’re not scared of sensible development. It’s the knock-it-all-down-
“That’s all anybody ever talks about putting there: another apartment, another apartment, another apartment.”

and-build-a-fucking-McDonald’s-idea that we’re really scared of because it will ruin the vibe of what we’re trying to create here.” He wants ground-floor retail and a higher density of local business—aspects absent in the Baron developments. As long as chains like Starbucks and Chipotle don’t start pouring in alongside a tidal wave of unintelligent development, the scene will continue to thrive.

Motioning to the vacant lots all around us, he says, “That’s all anybody ever talks about putting there: another apartment, another apartment, another apartment.” Surely, we need more housing if Phoenix wants to grow, but repeating the same generic design ad infinitum sans any street-level interaction or retail space is not the route to take if we want to preserve the vibrancy of Roosevelt Row that drew all these developers here in the first place.

Just a few streets west of us, greenHAUS is in its last full day of business. They will close their doors the following day, February 11, and head to Portland. The building itself, though, won’t be bulldozed until March, following the Art Detour weekend.

a touch of poetic justice?

While the Change.org petition calling for adaptive reuse of 222 E. Roosevelt St. seemed doomed from the start (what development company would splurge on a complete redesign of their project just to save an old pile of bricks?), there was one man prepared to move building from the path of the wrecking ball.

Robert Melikian, owner of the Hotel San Carlos, came forward with an offer: he’d shell out $350,000 of his own money to move 222 E. Roosevelt St. to a nearby vacant lot. Initially, Baron seemed on board, and they reportedly agreed to put up $64,000 to help in the relocation costs. A solution, forsooth!

Alas, on Wednesday, February 18, Baron contacted Melikian to say the 60 days needed to move the little green building pushed the project past the company’s deadline by about 15 days, and the plan crumbled. Baron was never really serious about lending a hand, though. In an interview with the Downtown Devil, Chris Murdy of Baron said his company never made even an official promise to move the building or pay for it. “We never committed to anything,” he said. Perhaps it was just a casual idea—thrown around off the record but never meant to be taken seriously.

“We were really ready to go,” Melikian said in an interview with the Downtown Devil. “I had everything lined up, lot owned outright, foundation work ready. It could have been done in weeks. There should be room for negotiation. I don’t think it is any burden on [Baron Properties] to wait a little bit and give us more of a chance.”

With 222 E. Roosevelt St. essentially doomed, the executive director for the DeGrazia Foundation trekked up to Phoenix in early March to see about saving the two DeGrazia murals. While the smaller of the two—a girl twirling in a champagne glass—seemed like a preservation cakewalk, the much larger History of Alcohol would cost around $250,000 to move. So, the DeGrazia Foundation cut its losses and decided to preserve the smaller one.

As reported by the Phoenix New Times, they planned to cut the mural out of the building and ship it back to the DeGrazia Gallery of the Sun in Tucson, where it would be briefly exhibited before joining its brothers and sisters in storage. Unfortunately, on the big moving day in late March, things didn’t go as planned. Once the mural had been removed from the wall and set on the ground, it crumbled into dust, as begrudgingly reported by the New York Times.

Doom and gloom aside, there is a measure of poetic justice to be had. On March 3, Lauren Lee—the artist behind Three Birds—announced on her Facebook that she’d been commissioned by Baron to paint the next stage of her original mural. “Come late 2015, I will be painting three massive birds in flight that will be on the five-story-high new building that will be called ‘iLuminate,’”
Welcome Diner on Roosevelt Street, where you’re welcome to indulge in a fried green tomato sandwich for $8.50 (fries not included), a gin and tonic (with housemade tonic) for a heckuva steal at $6, or poutine for $8.25.

she wrote, “Given their name, the developer suggested that we illuminate the birds from below so they can be seen from far away, which I think will be spectacular.”

Lee sent them a contract, but Baron has yet to sign it. Baron said it’s a “handshake deal” at this point. While I’m jazzed about the optimistic symbolism of this scenario, I’m wary of “handshake deals.”

Three weeks later in the early hours of March 22—after months of protesting, debating, committee meetings, and failed negotiating—222 E. Roosevelt St. came tumbling down along with the former Church of Scientology office to make way for the future of Phoenix: unintelligently designed superblocks for all the hip millennials flocking downtown!

The local Fox News affiliate was on the scene that morning to talk about the new Illuminati Apartments soon to rise from the rubble. You got that right—Illuminati. It seems the reporter confused the devious (and potentially nonexistent) secret international organization with iLuminate, the apartments brought to you by Gentrification, Inc.—err, Baron Properties.

“an empty lot is my canvas.”

While I’d love to imagine the folks at Baron Properties cooing about their sinister plans to gentrify Roosevelt Row beyond recognition from an underwater lair, that’s not how these things work, ladies and gentlemen.

“Nobody is evil,” says Mills, elaborating on his earlier point about intergalactic plots and gentrification. Everybody just demonizes one side or the other; people love their binaries. The developers—they’re just people, says Mills. “They’re doing their job. They’re working in the status quo, which is how we’ve done things for a very long time.”

I came across one developer doing things quite differently than Baron: MetroWest Developments. They’d just...
"I figured I would rather stay in a city where I could actually make something out of it, rather than moving to an established city where I’m a small fish in a big pond.”

broken ground on their latest project, Union @ Roosevelt, on the southwest corner of First Avenue and Roosevelt Street. The renderings posted on their website boasted a lot of red brick and ground-floor retail. My little heart nearly skipped a beat. I would like to note, however, that I am not attempting to pit MetroWest as the “good guys” against the “bad guys” at Baron. They’re just two developers building apartments downtown.

I meet Matt Seaman, Principal and Development Partner of MetroWest, on a Thursday morning in mid-March at Lola Coffee to talk about Union and his company’s other projects in the vicinity of the Row. He immediately informs me that this is his second trip to Lola of the day. “We raise our kids here. We’re ingrained in the neighborhood; this is our local shop,” he says (note: he drinks a large brewed coffee with whipped cream and raw sugar). I plan to just ask him a few questions, but he’s quick to pull me out into the day, saying “it’s easier if you can just see what we’re doing.”

First, he takes me to 816 N. 2nd Ave. and 822 N. 2nd Ave., two MetroWest developments currently underway. These historic homes built in the early 1900s have been vacant since the city condemned the properties in 1989. They’ve already been sold—no doubt for prices beyond any college student majoring in English might dream of affording. Still, I like what I see (and not just because the homes sport some rad lighting in the kitchen).

Seaman points out that they were determined not to sell the homes to investors but to people who would actually live in them. He wants the neighborhood to grow intelligently. “We’re trying to get more bodies down here that will be here past five o’clock,” he says.

From there, we walk one street west to Third Avenue, where I don a hard hat (!) to tour the unfinished Townhomes on 3rd, ten individual residences that start around $300,000. The view of downtown from the third floor is impressive, a view soon to be enjoyed by a wide variety of tenants. “We’re seeing younger millennials, empty nesters, couples, singles—it’s everyone,” he says. They’ve been drawn back into the urban core of our sprawling metropolis, tired of shelling out for money for gas commuting to work from the suburbs.

Onward we go, finally arriving at the dirt lot on the corner of First Avenue and Roosevelt Street, which will one day be home to 80 residential units with 9,200 square feet of retail on the ground floor. “An empty lot is my canvas,” he says. No old buildings were harmed in the making of this project, I note, staring over the hard-packed dirt. “Our focus is really on infill,” says Seaman.

Some of the funding for this project comes through the Sustainable Communities Collaborative, which works to create a vibrant urban core that is transit-oriented. The fund provides financial help to new developments erected within half a mile of a lightrail stop.

Retail-wise, Seaman hopes a restaurant will soon find a home here. “We were very intentional about designing our ground floor space for a full service restaurant, which meant a heavy burden on us cost-wise to increase the electric capacity so you could have a full service restaurant,” he says.

Other developments (cough, cough, Roosevelt Point) often leave such projects for future tenants, calling it quits with a dirt floor and not much else. No wonder every single square foot of retail over at Roosevelt Point is still empty. No retailers or restaurateurs are officially moving in to Union yet, but talks are underway, says Seaman.

Regrettably, it’s too soon to tell if Union @ Roosevelt will boast rents similar to the Baron Developments, but it’s nice to see some developers willing to give the community what they want—a urban, walkable development with ground floor retail that doesn’t entail the destruction of old buildings. Score one for the home team, I suppose?

a fine line

The term “gentrification” popped up
on everyone's radar in the late 1980s following the Tompkins Square Park riot in New York City's East Village. Angry folks tooted “Gentrification is class war” signs. Police showed up and, unsurprisingly, things got ugly—not unlike the rapid increase in the cost of living in New York that pushed all the artists, poor folks, and people of color to live in the fringes of the city. Today, the word is everywhere. With a brief foray into the Internet, you'll find BuzzFeed's “These Eye-Opening Photographs Capture the Rapid Gentrification of NYC” and NPR's ample coverage of the hot-button topic. It's everywhere, and it's a problem.

It's a complex one, and I'm tentative to reduce it to the following, but, alas, here we are. Let's take Roosevelt Row as an example. Following the flight of everyone and their grandmother from downtown into the sprawl, lower-income families crowded in the old homes along Roosevelt Street. Drug use and crime rates rose. In the '90s, artists began moving onto the Row. Over the next two decades, the Row was transformed. Much of the crime and drug use (mostly) vanished, replaced by local galleries, shops, bars, and restaurants. Suddenly, the Row is the place to be. Developers see the need for more housing and start eyeing the vacant lots thinking, “Hmm, I know what would look nice here.” The rest, dear reader, is history.

The process seems both inevitable and depressing. To this, I'll add Daniel Hertz's stance that everyone plays a part in “gentrification.” In his piece for CityLab, a channel of TheAtlantic.com, titled “There's Basically No Way Not to Be a Gentrifier,” he writes, “Your presence in a relatively low-income or blue-collar community will, in fact, make it easier for other college graduates to move in; to open businesses that cater to you; to induce landlords to renovate or redevelop their properties to attract other new, wealthier residents who want access to those businesses.” Fun, no?

Despite the failed attempts to save 222 E. Roosevelt St., despite the inevitability of Baron's bad developments, despite the inescapability of gentrification, despite all of this—I still have hope. Most of the people I interviewed for this piece were optimistic about the future of Roosevelt Row, and for the longest time, it made zero sense to me.

Quinn Whissen, co-founder of the urban awareness group This Could Be PHX, doesn't think one potentially unsavory development will become the defining feature of the Row or that all hope is lost. “We as a community still have a voice, and we can use it, but to an extent of understanding that somethings we're going to lose and sometimes we can keep pushing but we're not always going to be successful and we can try again,” she says.

Over coffee at Lola (yes, nearly everyone met me at Lola), Whissen advocates for finding a middle ground as we move forward. “I think there's a fine line between fighting a development and finding a way you can somehow work together,” she says. “Developers who also understand what they're walking into and being able to design something that will work with the character of the area.” Seems logical enough.

this could be PHX

Whissen and Ryan Tempest started This Could be PHX in September 2013 as a forum for discussion about—no surprise here—what Phoenix could be, a place to visualize how Phoenix might evolve. They post monthly Envision Projects that take an empty lot, vacant or existing building, and reimagine it. Aside from that, they maintain a blog that highlights urban issues and design, walkability, and My Phoenix Stories—which Whissen and Tempest hope will change the narrative of Phoenix to something a little more optimistic.

I include their story (or at least a radical condensation of it) because of something Whissen said that really stuck with me: “I figured I would rather stay in a city where I could actually make something out of it, rather than moving to an established city where I'm a small fish in a big pond.”

In a sense, she answered the question I'd been grappling with for the past few months while I watched Roosevelt Row fail to save itself from Baron Properties: Should I stay in Phoenix or hightail it somewhere else? Why not stick around and fight to help Phoenix become something good?

That's Mills' plan; it's why he moved downtown in the first place. His work with Sprawlr is out to change the way Phoenix conceives of itself. He argues these issues (gentrification, bad urban planning, a lack of a downtown grocery store, etc.) aren't as daunting as they might seem. “Become involved with an open mind and an impartial view,” he says, “Be open to learning, open to changing [your] mind about these things because...all those hard lines I had are pretty much all done away with.”

I nod perhaps a little too aggressively, since my understanding of the situation has shifted about six times since I began to poke my little magnifying glass into the pot three months ago and found that, while, yes, Roosevelt Row may be “gentrifying,” that doesn't mean it's destined lose what made it so damn cool in the first—as long as people are around to make their voices heard.

Aaron Hopkins-Johnson, owner of the bookstore Lawn Gnome Publishing, has faith that the denizens of the Row will protect its artistic integrity, even in the face of all these luxury condos. "Nothing's ever going to stop us from changing and shifting,” he says. No matter what, “there's going to be something bigger and crazier and weirder coming out right around the corner.”

Zachariah Kaylar is a creative writing junior who harbors utopian visions for Phoenix. He has a particular fondness for crushed ice and Shirley Bassey's iconic Goldfinger theme.

Angela Lufoin is an architecture senior who will not be sleeping until summer. She thinks pistachios are great.

Austin Wade Griblin is a marketing freshman and believes you can control minds through well executed graphic design.
Art + Space = Community

Article by Peter Northfelt
Photography by Dagan Di Sardigna

C artesian space*—and its ensuing enforcement measures—turns our potential for unlimited artistic freedom to mush. Without our even knowing it, the system of economic and political regulations influence the ordering of the city we live in. These factors ensure that this great system to keeps us selling, spending, and consuming.

We have no idea it’s working; it orders our social environment (the interactions and connections we make daily) through the space in which we live. Cartesian space seeks to order, at least in this case, cities by a metaphorical and literal grid, with city codes codifying “practical” sensibilities into concrete axioms.

Supermarkets go there, houses go there, and coffee shops go there. If you can name it, you’ve driven to it on the Cartesian plane. Cartesian ordering also leaves zero tolerance for spaces that perform multiple operations. For example, an arts space in an industrial area or a house that hosts community artistic expression must exist on the fringes.

These artistic spaces, unlike more “conservative” spaces such as galleries, concert halls, and venues, disrupt the normal idea of where art should be created and consumed. Disruption of old artistic assumptions via the utilization of space unseats some of the regulations that persist in normative artistic creation. That’s why they are so dangerous to the Cartesian order.

Because of the danger in disorder, regulatory forces seek to silence the alternative artistic sphere. The creation of artistic space runs up against economic and political regulation, hampering artists and community formation. Henri Lefebvre, in *The Creation of Space*, writes that “[the state] weighs down on society…in its full force; it plans and organizes society ‘rationally’ with the help of knowledge and technology…”

These twin regulations are the main chokehold on community spaces, and therefore the community itself. There are many ways that the normative arts community organizes, but the alternative arts community is left for dead. While normative arts organization ultimately hangs on whitewashed gallery walls in million dollar exhibition wings, alternative organization exists for those who cannot participate in these conservatively regulated spaces because of economic forces (the rent is too damn high) or political forces (an artist isn’t accepted by gallery curators unwilling to take a risk). These two cannot co-exist because alternative arts challenge social and economic conservatism that allows normative arts spaces to exist.

Benjamin Genocchio, in “Discourse, Discontinuity, and Difference,” claims that these spaces arise in the crucible of “[a] collective desire to promote new forms of conceiving social space in an attempt to account for an eclectic occupation and engagement with an increasingly segmented, oppressively functionalist and electronically monitored everyday reality.”

Some of this segmenting stems from the economic reality that the spaces in which art is consumed must make money.

Those without specific ways of generating money are kicked out of the spaces in which they need to survive; instead of making the community better, they

---

*Ghosts gather outside the now-defunct Parliament venue in Tempe.*
Tempe uses lighting and an iconic 97-year-old mill to create a space for the arts.

waste time going after commercial viability. Cartel Coffee Lab in Tempe, for example, must make money first, then they are able to open their space for artistic creation—opening walls to local artists and space to conversations among those who create and distribute art.

Some attempt to subvert this, and never purchase a drink from the Lab, instead preferring to orient themselves away from the drive to purchase (à la Walter Benjamin’s *flâneur*). Nevertheless, if you go to a bar or coffee shop, there’s an expectation that you buy. Creating art in the same space that it is consumed can be an activity unmediated by any economic forces. However, this interaction between the artist and their audience is alienated by the eventual economic regulation of these spaces. These regulations orient patrons so that they pay for something that isn’t art (i.e. coffee or beer), and the community suffers when it falls under this spell. Arts communities are redirected towards payment instead of social interaction, effectively alienating them from the creation of art, artists, and the social order that both audiences and artists should co-create.

The bottom line is ever-present and always pushing owners of these spaces to make sure that they maximize their profits. There is an absence of multipurpose arts space in Tempe that is commercially viable—or simply just viable—as an arts space alone.

Leasing or renting space is one attempt to subvert the norm. Downtown Tempe, Mill Avenue specifically, used to be an area in which art could be hosted cheaply. Now, a plethora of bars without the commitment to local art help make Mill Avenue more commercially viable for Tempe and space owners.

Last year, Sail Inn was closed and Sam Fox’s monstrous Culinary Dropout opened just a stone’s throw away. I can almost hear the tinkle of fine glassware as a modern-day version of the Roman Emperor Nero plays cornhole. Sail Inn is the aesthetic (and political) opposite of Culinary Dropout. One was home to Tempe’s beer-driven, seedier, cheaper, DIY past. Sail Inn was more than “local;” it was rooted in, and grown from, the community, seemingly without any kind of plan to be homegrown. Local bands played in a one-of-a-kind venue that was centered on connecting community to artists.

The other is a monument to a postmodern grotesque; the place is a yuppie playground. Culinary Dropout invites everyone from the community to drink and be merry, as long as you’ve got the cash. The restaurant is the perfect embodiment of neoliberalism—good lighting, ostensibly local music, patterned upholstery—but ultimately a repurposed space intent on maximizing profits at the expense of any kind of organic community.

Long story short: it’s obvious what developers and the city want to happen in “Downtown Tempe,” and it’s not community-based artistic expression. It’s more taxes in the coffers and higher rents for developers.

A critical reader might ask, “Why should we mourn the loss of a dive bar?” Well, we might want to consider this as not just a dive bar, but as a place that an alternative community came together in a space where the mission was not to make money on $8 drinks. These spaces were less restricted by the economic regulations that spaces on Mill Avenue now encounter. The spaces also matched the social vibe that the bands drew when they performed.

Before we talk about the trend of community-hosted arts spaces, I want to mention a city-sponsored arts space on Mill Avenue.

Once upon a time, Tempe played host to something called MADCAP Theaters. It was in the current location of AMC Centerpoint on Mill Avenue. Kolby Granville, a Tempe city council member, held this up as an example for city-supported alternative arts spaces.

“Tempe and the HOA for downtown got together and renovated it—badly and cheaply—but with the intention of it being 12 to 15 performance space[s]... It’s pretty soundproof; it could have five, six, [or] seven bands going,” Granville said in an interview.

Unfortunately, the landlord of that theater decided it would have been better (that is, they could charge more) to
rent to AMC. Not even our city government can stand up to the rationalization of community spaces that prioritizes profits over community.

Present-day Tempe either tries to stay out of the way of community arts or to give money to places like the Tempe Center for the Arts, a more conservative place for art.

Speaking on artistic communities, Granville said, “Frankly, it’s hard to create it on purpose. It really has to happen organically. What Tempe does do, and what we encourage, is to at least give people the opportunity for that to happen.”

As for staying out of the way to create that opportunity, Tempe did away with fees for playing in public spaces and asked developers to give performance art some thought during development.

Unfortunately, these actions ignore factors related to social space. The physical space can exist, sure, but the social space that accompanies it must be able to flourish. Some art capitalizes on this dual necessity for successful artistic creation, notably murals, statues, and some types of performance art. People can experience these and bring their own social space with them.

Playing on a side street of Mill Avenue or in a nook carved out by a developer does not make a community. So, with the city harried by neoliberalism, the community creates artistic space.

Parliament, the multipurpose art space in Tempe, hosted artistic expression free from at least most of the economic and some of the political regulation that MADCAP faced as a community hotspot. Local arts organizations such as Rubber Brother Records, a Tempe-based record label, correctly united the physical and social spaces in Parliament’s location.

One way to escape these two regulations is to be off the radar when Tempe codes become too costly. As for the costs, Granville had some choice words.

“There sometimes are costs associated with opening something. Those costs are never meant to be burdens. They’re meant to be things directly related to basically keep people from dying,” he said.

So, conveniently, the city’s regulations push would-be spaces out because of extremely reasonable requests. It all seems so simple—except now there are no places that can be created on the cheap, apart from a house.

House shows, the constant solution to lack of space for most (student-run) arts coalitions, hosts creation and consumption of art by, and within, the community. A community member might volunteer their living room for bands to play in, while allowing people to stand around on their backyard’s Edenic grass. But, hold on just a second—there’s going to be some regulations before you can express your artistic inclinations freely.

To an unacculturated viewer, there might seem to be a little difference in how a party looks and how an alternative arts event looks. The community-driven nature of these gatherings sets them apart from the normal rough and tumble of the typical Tempe “house party.”

Unfortunately, for very reasonable ideals, house shows are again subjected to regulation, noise being the no. 1 reason. The fine that comes with these complaints deters people from having shows in their homes, effectively chilling the entire scene. This, more than any other regulation, upholds that pesky Cartesian ideal of one space doing one thing.

All in all, it’s better to support the community rather than Dan Harkins for your entertainment. Spending $5 to support artists in your community is more worthwhile than spending $8 on the most recent Spiderman, or whatever. Making money’s not the problem—the problem is giving your money to those who want to continue regulating you.

As long as these regulations exist, it’s important that the community constantly evolve and experiment in order to bring the artist, the art, and the community closer together.

Peter Northfelt is an English literature and public policy junior. He recently tweeted, “I like being a double major because I cry at the end of both literature and urban policy textbooks.”

**Cartesian Space: What is it?**

Cartesian space is the idea that there’s a place for everything and that everything should be in its place. Think of it like market stalls at a bazaar. Each stall has one function and sells one type of good. That’s how modern cities are organized. Houses go here, restaurants here, music venues here, and supermarkets here linking all these places are freeways and roads. Also known as: the “sprawl.”

**What’s the problem with that?**

It means that spaces can be more heavily regulated if they are cordoned off and zoned into quarters. With such strict regulation of physical space, the social spaces that inhabit it are left to achieve one goal. Instead of being oriented toward making a stronger social community, these spaces are instead taken up by a rational and functionalist economic approach that orient patrons of space towards purchasing.

**Flâneur: What is it?**

The flâneur was popularized in the 1800s by Walter Benjamin and modeled on some poetry by Charles Baudelaire. Benjamin composed the flâneur as two parts: first, it is the action of walking around a city; second, it is a passing approach to analysis of the modernity inherent in city organization. In this article, I’m using the term more liberally—I’m describing the idea that you might be able to enjoy consumption-oriented spaces without actually consuming anything.

**Why does it matter?**

The action of resisting the most simple of orientations is actually subversive. By simply resisting the demands of the social space co-opted by economic regulation, you can take ownership of the social space and orient it towards any end you please, from using that productivity to create art to forming a social community in the void you’ve left by not consuming anything.
Brother Dean Saxton stood near the Memorial Union at ASU on a bench with four signs, and despite nearly everyone hating him, he drew a larger crowd than the Ferguson Decision vigil this past December. He proudly boasted his virginity, and he antagonistically raised a sign that read: “You Deserve Rape.” Someone seized Saxton’s sign and ripped it in half.

A counter protest formed. One man from a campus interfaith group stood on the opposite bench decrying Saxton’s religiosity. Another woman stood next to him and urged the crowd to leave, as she recognized these dissenting voices only fueled Saxton’s protest. Yet, nobody moved. If anything, the crowd kept getting larger. Some students watched Saxton for hours.

“Protest rhetoric” defines a specific kind of speech that does more than voice opposition. Protest rhetoric is public, targeted speech designed to generate a response and illustrate a point. Argument does not typically factor into protest rhetoric. And while one might not like thinking of Saxton’s actions this way, his speech falls in line with the definition of protest rhetoric.

Arguing a point involves a particular sort of claim-making dependent largely on logic and designed to demonstrate validity, not to persuade. Illustrating a point assumes the claim and aims to demonstrate or reiterate some part of the claim in order to persuade; in other words, the speaker(s) make a claim of persuasiveness. A thesis argues a point; a slogan illustrates a point.

There are three types of protest rhetoric: boundary activation, boundary deactivation, and solidarity speech. These types might not encompass every sort of protest speech, but they are the most common and together encompass enough of the category to be nearly a complete set.

Boundaries refer to the us vs. them political dichotomies in society. These differ in size and salience. Us vs. them boundaries address political identities, and these boundaries can be active or inactive depending on the efforts of political entrepreneurs.

Boundary activation as protest rhetoric involves the targeting of a population based on political identity in the hope of increasing the salience of the target boundary. Most protest rhetoric involves some kind of boundary activation or reactivation.

On January 29, activists from a left-wing NGO, Code Pink: Women for Peace, called for the arrest of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger during a Senate hearing. These women attempted to activate a boundary of the hawks and doves foreign-policy division. Boundary activation does not create a divide—the hawks and doves boundary would be there even if Code Pink were not—but it does call attention to inactive political boundaries.

It can also reactivate a boundary by simply increasing its salience. Gender is an almost perpetually active boundary. However, a topless Femen activist simulating anal sex with a crucifix outside the Vatican ratchets the boundary’s salience up and reactivates an already active boundary. That sort of boundary activation is often so effective that this description probably activated the gender and/or religious identity of the reader, giving the boundary some extra second-hand salience.
Boundary deactivation is less common and harder to quantify. Protest rhetoric that aims to deactivate a boundary targets all sides of the boundary, and either decreases the salience on each side or create ties between all. When a controversial or violent situation arises, this rhetoric may deactivate these boundaries. For example, Rodney King called for unity after the race riots that followed in the wake of his brutal beating by LAPD officers.

Vigils and rallies, where the rhetoric focuses not on conflict but on agreement, exemplifies solidarity rhetoric. The target is meant to feel a sense of commonality with the speaker, and by extension with others listening. Boundaries may play a role, but they are either activated or left inactive during solidarity speech.

Not all protest rhetoric is equal. When speech garners no attention in the public square it’s often the fault of the speaker, not the listeners. If you want anyone to pay attention, you have to choose the right sort of rhetoric.

Q: Can you pick the real protest sign?
A: You may be saddened to know that all of these slogans have been used by protesters.

Editor’s note: the content of these signs is pulled from actual protest signs used at anti-gay rallies across the United States. They do not reflect the opinions of the Tempe Normal School Review—or any logical human being for that matter. They are included only to depict the absurdity of bigoted hate speech.
Noah Briggs is a philosophy and economics major at the Tempe campus. He enjoys reading Kurt Vonnegut and daydreaming about the glorious revolution.

Boundary deactivation can only work if it comes with the activation of a larger boundary, and so it is rarely effective. Exceptions to that rule include weak boundaries or weak activation rhetoric. The appeal of boundary activation is a threat appeal; often either oppression (threat posed by power) or instability (threat posed to power). These appeals provide natural in-group alliances, which deactivation tries to dissolve by creating cross-boundary ties. The claims present must therefore provide a political advantage equivalent to, or stronger than, the in-group alliances that the boundary offers, or replace those alliances. Activating a larger, or stronger, boundary accomplishes both; for example, one might deactivate a race boundary by pointing to a common economic oppression. Strict deactivation rhetoric that activates no new boundaries must rely on the relative weakness of the boundary or the presence of some common external threat.

Solidarity speech can be very effective, but only if either it involves controversial claim-making or is concentrated over one side of an active boundary. A march in solidarity with a non-controversial cause may draw some support, but it fails in its basic goal of generating a reaction. Similarly, solidarity speech that occurs over an inactive, non-salient, or non-reactive boundary likely won’t draw attention in the public square. Vigs often make this mistake; the organizers fail to reactivate the boundary, and the claim-making involved in a vigil often presents itself in a non-controversial way. The most effective solidarity speech, such as that exercised by Dr. King, occurs among one side of a boundary that has either just been activated or is constantly being reactivated. Rallies, for instance, often activate a boundary before engaging in solidarity speech.

Boundary activation is probably the most impactful, especially when targeted to large demographics, or at large boundaries. This rhetoric influences demonstrations, riots, revolutions, and even genocides. Boundaries appeal to our identities and to a clannish us vs. them instinct. The right political divide presented in the right way can snap a state in half. Boundary activation and reactivation increases the salience by promoting or creating conflict across a border.

Conflict between political identities, for instance across gender lines, make boundary activation the most potent form of protest rhetoric. The MRAs (men’s rights activists), for example, portray themselves as a reactionary movement to feminism, playing up a threatened feeling on both sides to gain political advantage.

Saxton’s rhetoric is boundary activation, turning the crowd into an “us” and himself into a “them.” Those are the boundaries from his perspective, while the people he’s preaching to obviously sees him as the “them.” He manages to raise the salience of the religious boundary nearly to violence. Religion, especially as he presents it, represents one of the largest existing boundaries, making it incredibly difficult to effectively de-activate. That is why the woman urging the crowd to move on may hear agreement but see no action. Furthermore, the only way for solidarity speech to be effective in this scenario would be solidarity speech rallying the crowd against Saxton.

Boundary deactivation and solidarity speech have the advantage of being politer and more civil. Civility does not get you very far in terms of potency. Rhetoric that promotes cross-boundary conflict and makes controversial claims on political identity is often far more potent.

Saxton may be Arizona’s most hated preacher, but when he talks, people listen. While his message may be hateful, his rhetoric offers an example for other campus activists seeking to draw a larger crowd.
Islamic Art and the Void

Sarah Syed

Art by definition is exteriorization; it acts as the outward manifestation of the innermost heart of civilization. Most belief systems associate sacred art with iconic symbolism. Images of Christ, Buddha, and Krishna all lend to associations with a major religion. Figurative representation of the Prophet is forbidden in Islam. Generally, the religion has been hostile toward images placing a higher value on the void. Islamic art and architecture gives positive spiritual significance to empty space. These voids are unlike the empty space of modern western art, which use of such space conveys a bleak sense of meaninglessness, isolation, and apathy. The ostensible paradox can be understood with some reflection upon a basic tenet of Islamic civilization: “There is no divinity but the Divinity.”

Before examining this statement’s latent implications in Muslim artwork, it is useful to analyze the full meaning of this declaration. The first part of the phrase begins by affirming the insubstantiality, transience, and utter impermanence of everything. The saying starts with a complete denial of any one thing’s legitimacy or validity. After erasing all psychological idols and clearing the mind, the phrase presents a single Reality.

Islam posits this Reality as the ultimate reality, which is beyond all things that the senses generally conceive as reality in the ordinary use of the term. If we see objects as things in the usual sense, empty space serves as an indication of God, for through its very negation of “things,” it comes closest in the material realm to symbolizing that which is above and beyond all things. Empty space is the best representation for the transcendence of the fundamentally Other.

After establishing empty space, positive attributes like infinity and unity can be observed clearly and distinctly. The Divinity, by definition, must possess independent being. It can only depend on itself for its source of reality and therefore be whole and single, expressive of a singular unity. This unity is not the synthesis of a set of components, but rather all components are deduced from it and it exists independently. This means that in the final sense, only God is absolutely real. If this is the case, then there is an aspect of nothingness in all that exists apart from It (or She or He, certainly transcendent beyond any pronoun). However, if objects were completely unreal, there would be nothing at all which is not the case. All things possess two aspects, the ephemeral, or the temporary outward form, and eternal inward meaning.

Possibly one of the most famous forms of Islamic art is the rhythmic geometrical pattern of the arabesque. This style combines empty space and positive form, giving both equal importance. One interpretation of this is the understanding that overall there is no dichotomy between form and empty space; neither is preferred over the other, and in fact both are better understood with the help of the opposite. Together they make up a harmonious whole and emphasize a single, whole, and infinite unity. The form and empty space can also be interpreted as representing pairs of opposites, body and soul, outward and inward, meaning and form, immanence and transcendence, darkness and light, and so on. Islamic theology makes the claim that all of these opposites are as-
The void itself provides a subtle sense of the ubiquitous divine presence.

pects of one single Being, that unity is the source of multiplicity in the same way that light refracts into myriad colors. Using the same analysis, Rumi says, “…[H]idden things become manifest through their opposites. But since God has no opposite, He remains hidden.”

A second famous aspect of Islamic art is its distinctive architecture, particularly observed in mosques but also in courtyards, gardens, and homes. Possibly the most striking feature of a mosque is its sheer emptiness. Spending too long surrounded by stuff, such as the clutter of furniture, can cause the soul to feel a sense of narrowness, constriction, and heaviness. Stepping into a vacant space can recreate the same sense of sudden relief and joy from staring at an endless sea, gazing at a vast desert, or looking up at a clear sky. The void itself provides a subtle sense of the ubiquitous divine presence. God is everywhere, and the absence of the distracting veil of material paraphernalia is, to the believer, a comforting reminder of this.

A discussion of Islamic art would not be complete without mention of calligraphy. As Divinity cannot be associated with any time, place or thing, and is ultimately unlike anything, this could be mistakenly construed as meaning that the Ultimate Reality is unknowable or featureless. This is not the case. Theology contends that word is the way the divine reveals itself to humanity. Thus, calligraphy is the highest form of art in the tradition, as it honors language that is the appearance itself on this earth of the sacred. Much like the arabesque, in calligraphy, negative forms are almost as important as positive forms; styles such as the Kufic are renowned especially for their negative patterns.

Islamic art is essentially contemplative. On the traditional Sufi mystic’s journey to discover Reality and thus to find happiness, it is actually a goal to seek the oblivion. By erasing the sense of self and seeing through the facade of matter, it is possible to witness the encompassing existence of Divine Unity. For those who can see it, empty space is simply a comforting reminder of the Beloved’s presence.

Detail of mosaic patterns on the ceiling of the Tomb of Hafez in Shiraz, Iran.

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

Sarah Syed is a pre-dental, health sciences junior, largely because Rumi is not given as much attention as Shakespeare in the humanities departments at ASU. She is mildly allergic to relativism, nationalism, and meaninglessness.
THE SPACE BETWEEN US

LAURA VAN SYLKE
Poetry is the asking and answering of a question, and the form which both asking and answering take. This short excerpt from The Space Between Us, my honors thesis creative project, is fascinated with the shape of questions, or rather the act of questioning: its repetitiveness, its circular nature, its seductiveness. The claim of this piece is that death creates space. When a loved one passes away, what we inherit is a gap. What is the role of this gap in the world? How do we interact with it, see it, interpret it, touch it? Can we put our hands on its form? Can we put it into words? And if the exploration of this space does lead us to words, should they be shared?

The circle of the gap as well as the circular nature of the questions we’re left with create a sonnet crown for the Hawking-Bowie relationship and especially Hawking’s admiration of Bowie are a discourse of the complete seductiveness of grieving. Though they are both idolized figures who know the dehumanizing nature of fame, neither can help but prop the other up on a pedestal. For Bowie, Hawking is a brilliant scientist with whom he can have serious conversations about his visions of space. For Hawking, Bowie is a symbol of direct interaction with space through art without limitations, physical or emotional. Their mutual yearning for the other is one of the main impediments to the conversation. This is the obsessive element of grief, in which you pine so potently for a lost loved one that you fail to see clearly.

This yearning, or attraction, ties into the conversation’s crucial role of black holes. Black holes, as Hawking’s research discusses, are places of inconceivable gravity and irresistible gravitational attraction. Extracting this concept of a force so attractive that its boundary is labeled the “point of no return” to the grieving process and to their relationship is the backbone of the piece. All three (this is including myself) characters are seen time and again flirting with a severe seduction and their own point of no return: me, struggling through prose to put words to an impossible investigation, Hawking, wishing he could push past his physical limitations and his scientific-mind to pursue the dazzling world of Bowie, and Bowie, trying to talk to Major Tom, trying to interpret his communication with a starman, to find understanding in space.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to Barrett, the Honors College, Cynthia Hogue, my enduring thesis director, associate English professor Sally Ball, faculty associate Jennifer Irish, Jon Woodmansee, Katherine Richard, and Beatrice Nielsen. If you’re interested in reading the full piece, chapbooks are available online at squareup.com/market/laura-van-slyke.

Laura Van Slyke is an English and French senior. After graduation, she plans to move to Paris, knowing full well that her writing will never reach the metaphysical questions of self achieved in works like Hilary Duff’s groundbreaking 2003 album, Metamorphosis.

Cover art by Beatrice H. Nielsen.
In the months after my brother died, days, friends, and cities smeared. I remember sitting in a street in Cinque Terre watching an Italian woman shuffle groceries home before a row of bright pink houses. *How did I get here?* I thought. *Oh yes, the train. The train.*

*I remember it as*
*swimming in a fast river for I kept moving & it was hard to move*
*while all around me*
*was moving too*
[Anne Carson]

What was held in the movement:
Elly, who hugged me and said the world would never shed its *Alex-shaped hole.*

This is a loyal hole.
So different from the lovers I have read about.

---

2

*How can I give you all that I am?*
It has helped to hold the title of Laura Mullen’s “In The Space Between Words Begin” to my heart as a mantra, mouthing the words to feel them on my lips. Running my tongue along the letters, delighting in its lack of punctuation.

As though speaking someone else’s words would make me less of a mute.

On some days, I grow restless and insert a comma: a saucy sliver of moon to carefully manipulate words.

If we puncture the sentence with a comma after “words,” Mullen lends an imperative:

In the space between words, begin.

In my grief, I have watched myself grow comfortable at the receiving end of a pointed finger. I am relieved by commands. Mullen writes,

I fear that I am no longer that which thinks / or that a certain kind of thinking’s lost

And to this, I see my body sigh, nod.

Take a sentence and pull it apart. Rip out the letters as though they are hairs from your own scalp.

There is something going on here, on the inside.

Give the action a new tense (morphology), organize the verb to its subject (syntax).

How can we get to the core?

We can start with a subject, understood as that which comes before the conjugated verb.

What if the subject of the pain can no longer commit action? Linguistics tells us that a lonely verb receives a “dummy subject:” a word with no meaning other than to fill the empty space, put the sentence in order.

We can’t only say, something missing from my life.

So, there is something missing from my life.

It is raining.

There is a pain in my chest.

In language, we find ways to make sense of misplaced subjects, missing subjects, what they leave behind.
5
What always follows a subject, dummy or real, is a space. This, we have learned, both defines words and isolates them. Without spaces, words run into rivers of code; with an excess of space, abandoned words lose their meaning.

I have lived in this space between words, taking sentences apart, giving the action a new tense, organizing the verb to its pronoun, writing nights, tearing up poems for two years. As if the shreds from a torn poem could speak.

As if, taping them back together, fingers tired with cuts, I could look to the fraying edges and see anything other than grief. The barren color of this space.

6
I feel the hole, but I still don’t know what to do with it. There have been days where I see the hole and stick my finger into it, widen it with a circling, curious motion, like a child finding a moth-bitten sweater.

These are the days when I can write about him.

Other days I think, *maybe this hole isn’t him-shaped, not really.* Or, *maybe it never happened at all.*

These are the days when I give it away. Push it onto another year, another character. A character that might help, a character that *wants* to live in space:

a Hawking character, a Bowie character.

*Take this space,* I tell the characters on my own page.

*Take my life, please God.*
But let me offer another comma.
The comma that both scares me and shakes hope into writing:

In the space between, words begin.

Let’s say the space between us is nothing but a point of insertion.
I will begin by grabbing the space by its shoulders,
   firmly, until I can see in its face how it aims to be filled.

David Bowie gets to thinking about
space, adds four dimensions to his cheekbones,
slips gold and red makeup over a pout,
and calls Stephen Hawking to his home.

Hawking sees how well the lightning bolt
brings out Bowie’s hair, kisses his pinked eyes,
and he finds he couldn’t care less about
space-time or how to make the clocks outside

chirp on the same minute. Bowie stands
in the frame of the bathroom, gaunt and great;
Stephen feels his motor neurons expand.
All black hole entropy loses its weight.

Bowie walks to Stephen’s wheelchair, gently
they go to the park, talk Space Oddity.
I am sixteen, triumphant in the firm resolution that is my youth. I am looking up at the sky, wondering at the ways in which it was formed, a vast space of beauty and chaos, floating above our heads. I also wonder why nobody else is looking at this. It is simply amazing. Isn’t anybody interested in something so beautiful? I look at the crowds before me, rolling between my lips a piece of candy I have all but destroyed. My teeth crackle against the stale sugar that hollows out my teeth and slides down my throat in sharp and painful ways.

A familiar hand is on my shoulder, a smooth touch of metal resting against my legs.

“You wanna have a look, kiddo?” he says.

And we are out there for hours, my father and I, and we are watching as the night sky seems to glow above our heads.

“That’s Jupiter,” he says with a grin.

He telescope surrounds my eyes as I press them against the magnified glass. A planet, large and bright, gleams at me. It is the most amazing thing I have ever seen. I wait an extra minute, though I feel the tug of his hand upon my jacket. I need to take this in, the twinkling of something so far away, untouchable. It was a dazzling stranger, and in this moment it was all mine. He takes me to another planet, and we gaze longer. We look up formations and my father’s favorite constellations, even a star he named after my mother, Esther.

“Maybe one day, we’ll get one for you too, kiddo.” He pats my back, taking the telescope inside.

I stare up at the stars, wishing not to be named after one, but to obtain the beauty that it is. I will learn only later that beauty is a figment of my imagination, because up close, all the twinkling lights I admire are solely chaos consumed and erected by space’s most volatile substances sprinkled with dust. Though, right now, it was all I could ever hope for. But even the most beautiful stars have been destroyed, toxic to themselves and imploding in one grand gesture of relinquishing the will. For years it sat, quiet and beautiful as it slowly died inside.

But I am never named after one, because I simply watch, on a cool Monday morning, as my father’s shining telescope takes up space in a trash bin the week after my mother dies.

I lie quietly against the cool sensation of bedsheets, feeling the way in which a boy’s effortless touch attempts to fill the spaces of my 18-year-old heart. I breathe in, memorizing the way his breath lingers upon my lips, even as I hear the front door close hours later.
I pull my knees close to my chest. This one sole movement has done more to close the hole in my heart than all our time together. My fingers trace the outline of my thin legs, and I close my eyes against the sensation. I can hear the birds cooing outside, and I look up. I watch them against the night sky until I am no longer seeing them, but only the sky and all its inhabitants against its dark form.

The stars that linger above me shine with an emphasis so bright, I can hardly keep my eyes upon them.

I don’t know if they seem to shine brighter because they know she would have been 50 this year, on this day, or if it just my imagination. She’d have gone north by now, captivated by the radiating lights of aurora borealis.

“Magic,” she’d called it one time, though my father disregarded her, shaking his head against such a silly word, exchanging instead his scientific explanation.

But I knew what she’d meant.

I’d watch her hand dance through the air, voice and limb shunning him off in stunning synchronization. She didn’t care. To her, it was magic. It was an emotional drama in which there were no wizards or wands, but a beauty so supernatural, it could have only come from a place so distant as space—a mystery beyond words. To her, it was magic.

But I knew what she’d meant.

I’d watch her hand dance through the air, voice and limb shunning him off in stunning synchronization. She didn’t care. To her, it was magic. It was an emotional drama in which there were no wizards or wands, but a beauty so supernatural, it could have only come from a place so distant as space—a mystery beyond words. To her, it was magic.

I reach for a cigarette, rolling it between my fingers before allowing it to reach my lips. I feel the heat radiate from the smaller lighter before quickly putting it out, feeling the way my hands tingle as they grow cold once more. I hollow out my lungs with this vapor as transparent as I am and watch as it twists in the air before disappearing. I soon begin partaking in an ecstasy from which there is no escape. I can feel the poison stream through my bones and shake my body like a drum, and I enjoy nothing more than feeling my way around this land of familiar terrain. Just another minute here, and I will be gone. I tear the page from the book and tuck it safely away into my coat. I rest the hardcover gently against the headstone, just beneath the shadow of the flowers. Here it will sit, until the gardener finds it and discards it like he will discard the cut grass and every flower that lies above the graves of this vast and bleak landscape.

I turn my head towards the vehicle that will carry me to that beloved spot she’d always wanted to go and acknowledge that I will not be returning to this place. A part of my heart aches at this thought, but I am resolute. I will not stick around to watch the flowers die, just as I had watched her do. I nod my head against the howling wind, knowing there is nothing else for me here.

Like a supernova, I have imploded, become undone, in the spaces of my heart where I am weakest. Those compartments are now flooded, holding their share of painful memories I can no longer express. There is no more space to contain them. I am full. I look back upon the definition that continues to run across my mind like a banner. This one sole definition I will carry with me, finding all the ways in which I can exist in this infinite section of my life, finding all the ways I can make it matter. I hold it close to my heart, taking one last breath before I leave for good, knowing right now only one thing seems to be true.

All matter exists. I exist, but she does not. She’s still all that matters.

---

Space:

The infinite extension of the three-dimensional region in which all matter exists.

Everything that matters exists, I argue.
Dream Cube
Ink on paper
8.5 x 11 inches
Chris Czaja
Primary Studies 2
Collage with acrylic
Mitchell Keaney
DTM 2
Magazine images, coffee bag, tracing paper
7 x 12 inches
Araña Schulke
My tummy wears a wig
and some heels,
and asks each boy to step up
to rub or pat its happy face;
an innie blackhole
that sucks them up and spits them out
among the stars.

—Taylin Paige Nelson
You are a leader, dear Aries—a fiery ball of passion and enthusiasm with the gung-ho to rally folks against seemingly insurmountable odds. In Arizona, the odds are often stacked against local business; homogenous chains and big-box retailers proliferate as far as the eye can see, beckoning us to a life of discounted sameness. Local First Arizona—a nonprofit dedicated to supporting and celebrating locally owned businesses throughout our sunny state—is here to light against that corporatized monotony and empower us to create a better, stronger community.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
The Rock Springs Cafe
Black Canyon City

A wise man once said, “Every day, once a day, give yourself a present. Don’t plan it. Don’t wait for it. Just let it happen.” That man was Agent Dale Cooper of Twin Peaks—a man fond of a damn fine cup of coffee and cherry pie. While Cooper was an Aries—born just one day shy of Taurus country—he understood the mechanisms of the Taurus mind. You enjoy giving yourself little presents and surrounding yourself with earthly comfort. So, it’s no surprise that The Rock Springs Cafe & General Store just might be your idea of paradise. Nestled on the Black Canyon Freeway, this unassuming little storefront is home to some of the best cherry pie in the state (they make a damn fine lemon meringue pie, too).

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Joe & Aggie’s Cafe
Holbrook

Holbrook, Arizona (pop. 4,996) is home to Joe & Aggie’s Cafe, a quaint little joint famous for serving up the “hottest chow” on Route 66 since 1943. In its third generation of familial ownership, this cafe shares a fundamental passion with you, dear Cancer: family. Even when serving hamburgers to absolute strangers, these folks will make you feel like part of their very, very extended family. You enjoy doing the same. Tradition and domestic tranquility are high on your priority list, but you might also add “take a trip to Joe & Aggie’s Cafe.”

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)
Taliesin West
Scottsdale

For Frank Lloyd Wright, no detail was too small. In the 1940s—several years after the construction of Taliesin West, his desert oasis—Wright penned a letter to President Harry S. Truman with regard to a matter of extreme importance. You see, some power lines were polluting his view of the desert from Taliesin West. Wright requested that Truman arrange for them to moved underground. Truman, busy with running the United States, declined Wright’s request. You’d understand Wright’s perspective, fastidious Virgo, as you’ve got an eye for the minutiae of life. You’re an exacting individual who would be right at home among the clean lines and harmonious design of Wright’s Taliesin West.

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22)
OH Pool at Hotel Valley Ho
Phoenix

It’s a fact of life: some hotels have better pools than others. In the Valley of the Sun—where we have more luxury hotels than our water supply can maintain—competition is fierce. Hotel Valley Ho, however, really doesn’t mind the competition; they know their OH Pool takes center stage. The same goes for you, flamboyant Leo. You are a self-assured, ambitious character with an innate magnetism that draws people to you. To boot, you’ve got a knack for turning the lame routine of life into an adventurous pleasure cruise. When not helming the ship, it’s likely you’ll be catching some rays poolside.
Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 22)
London Bridge
Lake Havasu

Libras are known for their inability to say “no.” You are a stereotypical “yes human.” Despite the impracticality and costs of transporting a bridge across continents, the London Bridge arrived in Lake Havasu City. You are romantic like the summer party in 1968, which celebrated the reconstruction of an English bridge in a desolate desert town. Your sign is the scales, so in a direct way, you are a bridge balancing both sides of the river. Copper mines were once popular in Lake Havasu, and copper is your metal. You are generally good with money and able to balance a checkbook, and you almost always have enough copper to buy fancy items (or maybe a $2 million bridge) to match your elegance.

Scorpio (Oct. 23–Nov. 21)
Cathedral Rock
Sedona

Cathedral Rock is one of the most popular hiking spots up north. Five thousand feet high, I have attempted to climb these rocks. However, unlike a Scorpio, I am not determined, ambitious or brave. After crab-walking and butt-scooting barely halfway up, I shared a selection of cheeses. Also lacking the focus of said sign, I went downhill figuratively (in my stomach) and literally (I gave up and headed to the bottom). Scorpios, one of the three i re signs, burn like the red rocks with jealousy. Sedona has many places to steal some private time; you are also secretive. (Note: the author may have a particular disdain for Scorpios, and sincerely apologizes for making this horoscope about herself.)

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19)
Hoover Dam
Boulder City

The Capricorn is cautious and patient. It would take someone of your ambitious, stubborn, and calculating nature to erect a structure taller than the Washington Monument with enough concrete to build a sidewalk around the world. You’re a little self-centered (and may or may not name some building after yourself some day), but isn’t self-love the doctrine of the 21st century? The Hoover Dam was originally named the Boulder Canyon Dam, until Hoover’s Secretary of Interior took a trip on out to Nevada. Of course, this renaming got a lot of peoples’ knickers in a tizzy; because Hoover had a bad rap for running the White House during an economic crisis. (Sound familiar?)

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18)
Reader’s Oasis Books
Quartzsite

The Aquarius hops to the tune of their own xylophone. Always unexpected, you hate repetition. You envision an ideal world, but sometimes you get tied up in your own weirdness. Owning a run-of-the-mill bookstore would not be enough for your extreme personality. Paul, a nudist, wears a sock over his nether regions as he transitions between selling books and playing ragtime music on the piano. Reader’s Oasis is an odd haven in the middle of nowhere. A friendly locale with the right amount of creative strangeness; that’s you, offbeat Aquarius.

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20)
Arcosanti

The Pisces is the dreamer of the zodiac. Paolo Soleri created Arcosanti as an artistic commune, 40 minutes north of Phoenix. He invented the concept of an “arcology,” a place where architecture is built to work alongside the environment. You exude creativity. Like Soleri, your head is sometimes too far into the clouds. Arcosanti remains unfinished, which may sound familiar to many projects in your own life. However, you cannot be blamed for your incredibly idealistic and fantastic imagination.

Horoscopes by Shelby Stringer and Zachariah Kaylar. Illustrations by Mariel Piechowicz.
Untitled
35mm photography
Zachary Puetz
index of creative contributors

Zach Bootz (*Balcony Views of Marble, Space, and a 404 Error*, pg. 51)
Zach Bootz is a 24-year-old printmaking student at ASU. His daydreams are comprised of Dubai, Formula One, trophies, and basketball.

Rebecca Loggia ("Supernova," pg. 51–53)
Rebecca Loggia is a senior studying English and creative writing who is often caught up in her own fictional worlds or in the wonderful world of Netflix. She believes unfailingly in the saving power of coffee and a good book.

Chris Czaja (*Dream Cube*, pg. 54)
Chris Czaja is a studio art senior with a concentration in drawing. You can find him at Casey Moore's telling bad jokes. He has a thing for rattails and Twitter. Follow him @crust_opher.

Mitchell Keaney (*Primary Studies 2*, pg. 55)
As an adult, Mitchell Keaney is interested in how dry he can make his eyes while staring at a computer screen. He enjoys long, drawn-out pieces of music that explore tension and release by the presence of a strong, sexually driven human.

Araña Schulke (*DTM 2*, pg. 56)
Araña Schulke is a printmaking student at ASU. When he's not at home drinking coffee in his underwear, he's probably talking about aliens or trying to make art about something sad for no good reason. He peaked in high school.

Taylin Paige Nelson ("Space Bodies," pg. 57)
Taylin Paige Nelson is a English literature senior who plans on one day teaching your angsty offspring all about John Keats, the ultimate sadboy.

Mariel Piechowicz (illustrations for horoscopes, pg. 58–59)
Mariel Piechowicz is a certified bird nerd with a penchant for illustration. She will be graduating this semester with a degree in psychology and a minor in biology.

Zachary Puetz (untitled photos, pg. 60)
Zachary Puetz is a philosophy major from Kailua, Hawaii.

Shelby Stringer ("Thanks for Liking Me Now," pg. 61–62)
Shelby Stringer goes to college for book club and printing paper objects. She starts cooking every meal with a sautéed onion and a clove of garlic. In her free time, she likes to tell everyone she knows how much she loves Phoenix.