

Negative Space (a portrait in three parts)

One of the interesting things about teendom is the ability of teenagers to focus and fixate on one thing in order to perfect their skills or knowledge. Teens are driven by the desire to maintain constant momentum, obtain, manipulate, explore and otherwise do anything but fall into a state of boredom. There is a restlessness to fill the voids of down time while concurrently juggling the pressures of society, school, jobs, performance, looks, relationships, new responsibilities, family, future careers and impending adulthood. Surviving the teen years is a piece in itself. This period in time is a sort of chrysalis in which many of the activities and products produced within this period are left as distant memories, thrown out, forgotten or considered superfluous in light of adulthood.

I am proposing a piece that will operate as a triptych memorial/portrait of the in-between products of youth:

SPACE 1: Restless Momentum

Video installation using eight televisions stacked as a mountain.

Over the summer of 2009 I started creating videos with different teen and young adult dance groups. I chose groups of seven from each dance crew and documented coordinated routines in differing Chicago public spaces. I filmed each member of the groups individually, with each member performing his/her part of the group routine solo in the same location. The installation is arranged with the entire group routine highlighted on the center television. The center television is then surrounded by televisions looping performance by each of the members dancing the same routine. The video piece then culminates with the two groups battling each other on two different screens.

The impetus for this piece was observing student preparations for a school dance exhibition at the beginning of the school year. After hours, students would constantly be practicing in the hallways of the school I teach at. I found the focus and dedication of students to their craft fascinating and inspiring.

Physical Work/Installation:

8 televisions stacked as a mountain, connected to 8 DVD players. The sound of all tvs set to equal volume levels. DVD players are to be played on as close to the same time as possible. Dimensions variable. *Equipment provided by gallery. This work was completed over the summer of 2009 and will continue through the summer of 2010.*

Collaborators:

Hypnotic dance crew



Adrian Bonifacio, 18

I was born and raised in Chicago, but right now I'm attending Stanford University in California. I'm a prospective Anthropology or International Relations major, and I'm debating a minor in Dance or Physics. I've always loved to dance, and have been doing so ever since I began to do traditional Filipino dance. I started hip-hop my junior year of high school, and I'm currently on two of Stanford's hip-hop dance groups. Besides dancing, I also love playing the cello (even though I haven't picked it up in a year or so) and I love learning about other cultures. I also really like shoes, but I definitely do not have the money to buy shoes I want.

Jenny Kane, 18

I live in Chicago with my two parents, my two older brothers, and my younger sister. I have always been a very active person, and was involved with sports from my early years throughout my high school career. I began Irish dancing at the age of eight with the Mulane Dance Academy, and continued until the age of fourteen. I attended high school at Northside College Prep, where I first began hip-hop dancing my sophomore year with our club, Hypnotik. Currently a freshman at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, my interests still include dance, as well as friends, sports, photography, and movies

Monique Llorens, 16

My name is Monique Llorens and I am a dancer. I'm from Chicago and attend Northside College Prep. My interests include singing, dancing, math (I know, I'm weird like that), and chocolate. I also enjoy not writing bios about myself.

Karla Ortiz, 18

I am a recent graduate from Northside College Prep High School in Chicago, IL (2009). I am a current student at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in the College of Business with a minor in Spanish. I was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, and grew up in both Dallas, Texas and Chicago, Illinois. I used to hate dancing up until high school, I was the geeky shy kid who never tried anything new, but then I decided to actually give dance a chance and it was love at first body roll. During high school I was part of the Varsity Poms squad, a member of the hip hop dance team Hypnotik and captain of the Latin dance team known as Sabor Latino. Along with dancing I also kept busy with doing sports all my four years as well as other educational extracurricular activities. I took Latin Ballroom for a few years and took a recent interest in hip hop and have taken occasional classes. Now I am one of a rare few who is still dancing in college. I am part of Dance 2xs Caliente; a member and choreographer with a future as artistic director.

James Pasalo, 17

I'm from Chicago and is a junior at Northside College Prep. I enjoy listening to music, dancing, and of all things, youtubing whenever I'm bored. I started dancing during my sophomore year at Northside for our dance group, Hypnotik. Soon I grew to become a choreographer for the crew. Along with hip hop dance, I lead a Filipino club that focuses on cultural Filipino folk dances. I'm 17 years old and dancing will always be my outlet, in and out of Hypnotik.

AJ Tran, 15

AJ Tran has been dancing since the age of 9, however, picked up choreography when she was 14 and has kept with it ever since. AJ is now 15. She loves the culture of hip-hop and indulges in as many of its elements as she can. Outside from dancing, AJ is also a rapper and a lyricist, and on top of that, also expresses herself through the art of graffiti

Jean Vendiola, 18

Born in Dumaguete City, Philippines, my family and I moved to Chicago when I was five, believing that an education in America would give more opportunities than if we had stayed. I began dancing for Hypnotik my senior year of Northside College Prep High School; it was my last chance to do something I had never tried or had the courage to do. To me, dancing hip-hop had always been an ability that someone acquired by birth or sheer talent, and I was surprised on tryouts that I could move with any form of rhythm. I love dancing hip-hop, whenever I see myself in the reflection of a window; I have an urge to dance. I was eighteen during the shooting, and I am now in my freshman year of college at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am studying Molecular and Cellular Biology with the goal of doing clinical research in the future

Non Stop dance crew



Chris Castillo, 20

Currently lives and dances in Chicago, IL.

Andy Chae, 18

I currently am a student at Oakton Community College with an undecided major. Outside of school, I work for American Eagle Outfitters and dance with Nonstop Dance Prod. I started dancing my freshmen year of high school with the Korean club. It was nothing big but it led to trying out for the Niles West Orchesis, which led me to where I am today. I was 17 at the time of the video and my full name is Andrew Chae

Lorena Dela Cruz, 19

I am currently a student at DePaul University. I grew up in Evanston and later moved to Skokie which is my current hometown. Since I was 6 years old, I was very involved in figure skating but I quit after high school which was what most skaters did. In the middle of high school I randomly decided to audition for my school's dance company called Orchesis thinking that my figure skating background was sufficient dance experience. To my surprise, I was accepted into the dance company and that is when my love for dancing began. Through Orchesis, I met friends

who happened to be in Nonstop. I started taking classes with Nonstop, and soon I was invited into the group which I still dance with today

Briana Nieves, 16

She is still in high school and is involved in extra curricular activities like cheerleading. She is also the daughter of the founder of Nonstop.

Davina Pasiewicz, 20

I live in Skokie, Illinois and currently goes to school full time at Oakton Community College. She also works full time at a nail salon while managing to squeeze in her passion for dance a couple times a week

Andrew Phan, 21

He is one of the main choreographers of Nonstop. He is a name Chicago crews know and respect and was also formerly in Dance 2XS.

Matt Pumanes, 18

I started dancing at the age of 4 and officially started taking dance classes when I was 7. Since then, dancing has grown to be my greatest passion. I have a background in hip hop, modern, jazz, lyrical, and some ballet. The dance groups that I'm affiliated with is Nonstop Dance Productions, FIA Modern, Vicious, and the Orchesis dance company of Niles West High School. I also instruct dance workshops across the Chicagoland area. Outside of dancing, I'm currently attending UIC for college.

SPACE 2: Talk (a conversational portrait)

Have you ever been in a public place and noticed adults getting nervous around a group of teens? I've always been interested in what drives this nervousness and paranoia. Teens speak in code, act randomly, are spontaneous, overreact and are more willing to act against social norms. This randomness makes adults uneasy, even though we have all come from the same collective experience. This energy, I believe, is all part of the process of organizing who we are and in many ways the "randomness" is not random at all but the process of building a foundation. It is the point of people falling into their societal niche.

This piece will be constructed using months of transcribed phone conversations between teenagers and will function as an enigmatic portrait of youth.

Physical Work/Installation:

One ink jet printer (preferably Epson 1440) hooked up to one 100' roll of paper. At the start of the show the printer will begin printing out the conversations until the end of the show or until the ink runs out. I am able to provide the printer and paper if gallery is unable to obtain the equipment. The printer must also be hooked up to

a computer (hidden) running Adobe Illustrator. Printer dimensions are approximately 24.2" x 31.6" x 16.3" plus room for a 100' roll of paper to unspool onto floor (dimensions variable).

Collaborator:

Nina Coomes, 17

Nina Coomes was born in Nagoya , Japan, during the rainy season. She grew up in a racially ambiguous household and spoke Japanglish for the first seven years of her life, until she moved to the U.S. in the year 2000. There she learned to speak real English complete with grammatical rules, though sometimes, she still doesn't follow them. The first word she ever read out loud was ;"Zoo" it was a very rewarding experience. She moved to Chicago in 2004, and currently attends Northside College Preparatory High School. In her extracurricular time, she can be found running, singing, poet-izing, or all three at once. Otherwise, she spends her time playing the piano, writing letters, watering plants, knitting scarves, taking the train, and reading books. Her favorite words are teaspoon, golden, and saucy. Her favorite time of day is early morning. Her sister, when asked to describe her in one word, said "old." She does not enjoy the noise her phone makes when it is out of battery (because it is constantly out of battery).

SPACE 3: Boredom

I have found the creations and creativity that emerges from pure boredom (often instigated by school) to be unadulterated and inspired. I wanted to utilize this latent skill by creating an environment in which students will be asked to sit at these desks for a period of four hours and have no choice but to create and interact with their desk in order to relieve their boredom. I will be creating desks with different holes, plugs, hinges and other components that can be manipulated. The desks will function as a sort of tabula rasa in which a set of students will be able to reconfigure, add, break, etc. the desk. The final piece will be a video and photographic document of the final pieces created by the set of students.

Physical Work/Installation:

Photographs of final results (13"x19" unframed) provided by artist. Video on single monitor (variable) provided by gallery. Desk size TBD. A desk will be shipped to the gallery.

Collaborators:

Celia Calder, 15

I go to Northside College Prep HS, and I have always loved art. I was very happy to be in art class when I got to high school. I have also taken art and fashion design classes at Lillstreet Art Studio and the Art Institute of Chicago. I am especially interested in painting, book making, and ceramics. I am very excited about continuing my art throughout my life, though I am also interested in languages and travel. I am very influenced by music, including international bands like Manu Chao. My music is a huge influence for my art. When I grow up I am interested in becoming an art therapist.

Ava Carney, 15

I am a freshman at Northside College Prep. Art has been an important influence all throughout my life. My mother teaches large format painting and drawing at the Art Institute and is currently an artist, which has provoked my love of art since an early age. Nature is a main influence in my work, as well as the street culture of Chicago. I want to pursue a career in the arts or writing.

Margaret Darrah, 15

I was born in Chicago in 1994 (makes me 15) to 2 people who both have college degrees in acting. So naturally, I have an interest in acting. I went to Franklin Fine Arts Center from kindergarden to 8th grade. I played piano for a few years, but quit to make more room for art and acting. I can be heard singing on a jazz CD called "The Grandma Project" at the age of 6. Two years ago I started taking karate, and have advanced quickly to adult 6th degree. I've preformed in a number of shows including To Kill A Mockingbird, Oliver, Midsummer Night's Dream, and A Christmas Carol.

Samantha Delacruz, 15

I am a student at Northside College Prep. I have been involved in the arts from an early age, and am currently furthering an interest in fashion design and film. I am influenced by pop art of the 60's, and by vintage couture, specifically Alexander McQueen and Christian Dior. I hope to continue working in art throughout my life.

Izzy Furlan, 15

I am a student at Northside College Prep. The arts have always been some of my many interests, which is why I love the art program at Northside. Though I have always lived in Chicago, I have travelled all over the world with my mother who works as a travel agent. This has inspired me to be more culturally balanced in my art. I hope to keep art as a hobby throughout my life.

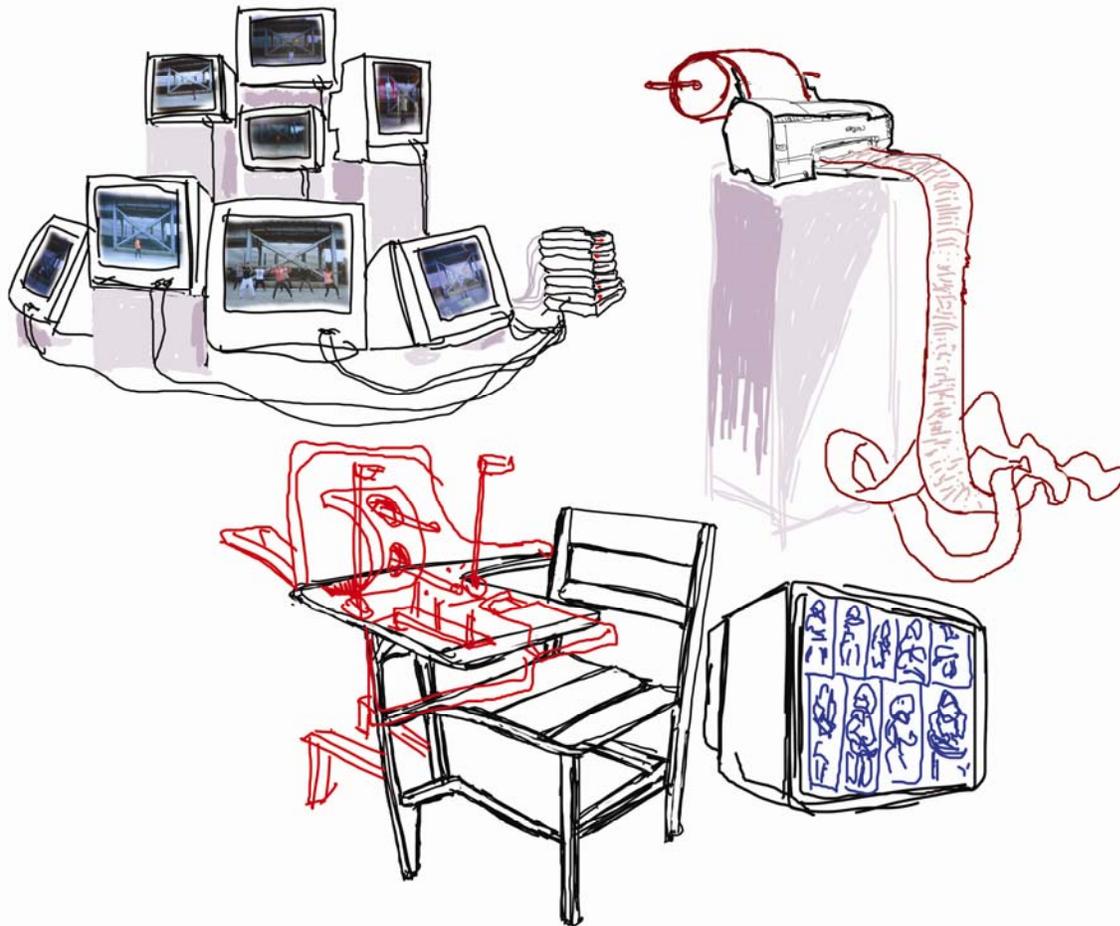
Rory Johnson, 15

I have lived in Chicago my whole life. I am currently a freshman enrolled in Northside College Prep High School. I have many interests, including art and running. I never had a real art class until I entered high school, though I have always been interested. I have always loved drawing and crafting, but I just recently became interested in photography, mainly because that is how my father makes a living. I am really enjoying the art program at Northside, and cannot wait to expand my art experience. I am also on the track and field team. Going to track practice is one of the main highlights of my day because I like to free my mind. I am planning on joining the cross country team in the fall, which I was on this year but had to quit due to an injury. As of now, when I grow up, I want to be a special education teacher.

Luis Mejico, 14

I was born in Peru 14 years ago. I was raised in a very strict Catholic home, though I'm anything but strict and religious. My family came to the U.S when I was 7. One of the first things I did when I came to the US was go to an art museum. The name of it escapes me, but I remember how interested I became in the artwork, even at a young age. I've loved art and have aspired to be an artist ever since.

Sketches of installation components



- 1) Stack of televisions with dvd players
- 2) Printer on pedestal with 100' x 13" roll of paper attached
- 3) Sample desk chair with components (exploded view). Television with split screen documentation of collaborators sitting and working with the desk and materials.

LEAD ARTIST:

Christopher Santiago, 33

Chris Santiago is a photography, comics, experimental drawing, video, digital design, beginning art, teacher at Northside College Prep High School in Chicago, Illinois. He is also an artist who regularly exhibits drawings, paintings, videos and mixed media works in group shows around Chicago. More importantly he is a husband and father of a 4 year old boy and 6 month old girl. Chris is currently working on a series of painted portraits, a video documentary series on Chicago artists and a multimedia piece dealing with an unknown teenager, captured on video, who stole his beloved bicycle.