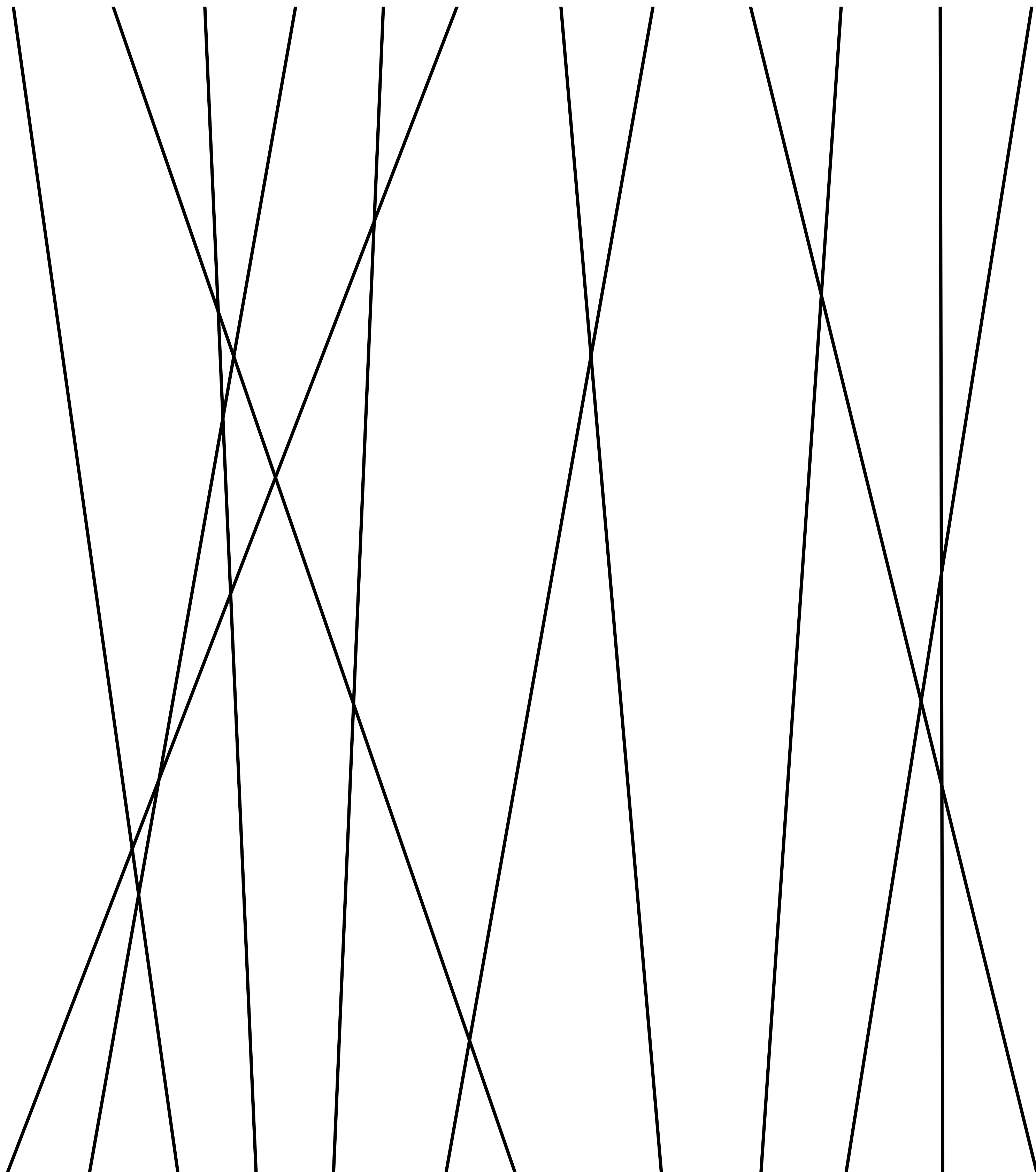


ENTREPRENEUR

PRETEEN RERUN



The Renaissance Society

at The University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637

Museum Hours

Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, Sunday: 12 - 5pm
Closed Mondays
www.renaissancesociety.org

Teen Paranormal Romance

Kathryn Andrews
Ed Atkins
Chris Bradley
Roe Ethridge
Anna Gray/Ryan Wilson Paulsen
Guyton/Walker
Anna K. E.
Jack Lavender

March 9 – April 13, 2014

Opening Reception: Sunday, March 9, 4:00–7:00 pm

Conversation with artists and exhibition curator Hamza Walker
at 5:00pm in Kent Hall Room 120

Spells Like Teen Spirit

Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) was a French Romantic writer, poet, translator and seminal precursor to a generation of symbolist poets including Rimbaud, Verlaine and Mallarmé. Nerval's *Daughters of Fire* (1854) was a compendium of prose works and a group of eight sonnets collectively known as *The Chimeras*. The book's preface was addressed to his friend Alexandre Dumas, who, in his journal *Le Mousquetaire*, caricatured Nerval, portraying his method of writing poetry as that of an obscurantist crackpot. *The Chimeras* were Nerval's defense. Although Nerval had been institutionalized, the highly allusional character of his poetry was not to be mistaken for a delusional state of mind. He admitted his poems were resistant to explanation, for they "would lose their charm" if such "a thing were possible." Nerval sought the transmission of feeling. As a Romantic, turbulent emotions, aroused by love and death, were Nerval's stock-in-trade. His poetry is a surge of Delphic imagery and inner visions. Classical mythology commingles with national lore and biography. In addition, he believed poetry linked the natural to the spiritual and divine worlds, requiring that he draw upon a range of religions and mystical beliefs. What Dumas mistook for spontaneous free association, Nerval described as a "state of supernaturalist reverie."

Not surprisingly, among the many poets Nerval influenced was the founder of Surrealism, André Breton (1896-1966). The word "Surrealism" was chosen as a name for the movement out of homage to the deceased Guillaume Apollinaire who is credited with coining the term. In the *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924), however, Breton stated that "with even more justification" in deference to Nerval, he could have designated the movement "SUPERNATURALISM."

Is Katniss Everdeen a daughter of fire? Nerval would definitely dig the bow and arrow. And given the eclectic nature of his female pantheon, it is safe to say she would rate. *The Hunger Games'* central protagonist, along with the likes of Harry Potter, Sookie Stackhouse, and Isabella Swan, have heated a market demographic to the degree that young-adult-fiction (YA) is now a force driving the publishing industry. Based on their bottom line figures, it is hard to believe teens were once an underserved audience. Furthermore, in going from page to screen, YA has transcended the word to become image, exponentially increasing its market share within popular culture.

Publishers have dubbed this a new golden era in YA literature, the first belonging to the 1970s whose best selling authors included Judy Blume and V.C. Andrews. The market had its ups and downs until around 2000, at which point it increased only to soar. No less pluralist than popular literature in general, YA encompasses a

variety of genres that in addition to romance includes horror, fantasy, and science fiction. With an expanding readership, publishers more than welcomed various permutations of its genres. Paranormal is arguably already latent within the designation Teen Romance, whose characters negotiate libidinal forces as if they were indeed supernatural. Under these circumstances, the hybrid Teen Paranormal Romance practically served itself up.

"Boy meets Vampire," even if written for teens, is nonetheless consumed by a much broader audience. Industry analysts estimate that more than half of YA's readership is over the age of 18. Publicists account for this by citing YA as the place where, regardless of the protagonist's age, the best and most adventuresome storytelling is taking place, which may very well be the case. But as part of a larger popular culture, the intensification of adolescent drives is perfectly suited to serve as a crystalline cypher for the panoply of ideological positions, from revanchist religious, economic, and sexual politics to Libertarian fever-dream apocalypticism. Undergirded by the internet and social media, it has become a highly self-conscious genre that, if anything, revels in our meaning-making machinations.

The surfeit of CGI fantasy functions as an externalized unconscious. Instead of emerging from deep within the psyche, Nerval's "state of supernaturalist reverie" would be more familiar today as something along the lines of *Game of Thrones*. The latter-day migration of Surrealism's psychosexual content to screens big and flat corresponds to its having been purged from an autonomous, i.e. abstract, art. A key strand of modernism, Surrealism nonetheless represents a content of which an autonomous art steadfastly worked to rid itself. Art with a capital "A" abandoned the unconscious.

Given both its externalization in popular culture and its abandonment by the fine arts, the unconscious, as an *internal* psychic space, is a derelict playground where there are no children, only weeds. As for the art surveyed in this exhibition, what sprouts in the wake of a YA-driven media zeitgeist are the tough and wild seeds of incidence, seemingly at home with trash and chainlink. Surrealism may blossom, but rest assured it was not planted, which, as it relates to the unconscious, is as it should be. The unconscious is known in effect rather than intent. Despite its construal at the hands of YA, the unconscious is a natural, not a supernatural force. Given the connotations a term like "supernaturalism" has acquired, Breton can rest easy in his grave, having made the right choice, unless he prefers the scent of today's teen spirit.

Public Programs

All events are free and open to the public.

OPENING RECEPTION & ARTIST TALK

Sunday, March 9, 4:00–7:00 pm

Artist Talk in Kent Hall Room 120
1020 E. 58th St. at 5:00pm

GALLERY WALK-THROUGH

Wednesday, March 12, 6:00 pm

Hamza Walker, Associate Curator and Director of Education, the Renaissance Society

PANEL

Sunday, March 16, 3:00–5:00 pm

Philosophy and Popular Culture

Featuring three editors of and contributors to Blackwell's *Philosophy and Popular Culture Series*

"I think therefore I am." But you also watch TV just like everybody else and you know it! The folks at Blackwell Press aren't ashamed. If it's a hit show or movie, Blackwell has done an anthology featuring today's brightest and most enthused scholars. *The Hunger Games*, *South Park*, *True Blood*, *Twilight*, *House*, *X-Men*, *Batman*, *Mad Men*, *Game of Thrones*, and this list is partial. Their premise: We not only think through popular culture, we think with popular culture. The series tackles issues ranging from race, class, gender and sexuality to ethics, liberalism, the ecology, metaphysics and beyond. Fandom not required.

Panelists: **George A. Dunn**, lecturer at the University of Indianapolis and a writer on pop culture and philosophy, is the editor of *The Hunger Games and Philosophy*, *Sons of Anarchy and Philosophy*, and *True Blood and Philosophy* among others. **Rebecca Housel**, lecturer in Writing and Medical Humanities at Nazareth College, is a freelance writer and well-known lecturer on popular culture. She serves the editorial advisory board for the *Journal of Popular Culture* and the *Journal of American Culture*. She coedited *True Blood and Philosophy*, *Twilight and Philosophy*, and *X-men and Philosophy*. **William Irwin**, Professor of Philosophy at King's College, Pennsylvania, is best known for having originated the philosophy and popular culture genre of books with *Seinfeld and Philosophy* (1999), *The Simpsons and Philosophy* (2001), and *The Matrix and Philosophy* (2002). He is the Series Editor of *The Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series*.

This event is co-sponsored with the Karla Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture.

CONCERT

Monday, March 17, 8:00 pm

Charlemagne Palestine

Rockefeller Chapel
5850 S. Woodlawn Ave.

Palestine (b. 1945) is an avant-garde minimalist composer/performer cut from the same cloth as his contemporaries; Philip Glass, La Monte Young, Tony Conrad, Terry Riley and Steve Reich. His music, while being listened to, is meant to be felt. It is distinguished by its intense phenomenological presence, one built out of layered overtones of ever-shifting sonorities as the ears become the means by which to blow the mind. Palestine will perform a signature drone piece, his legendary organ work *Schlingen-Blangen*, which one critic described as "an excerpt from a continuum that may well ring for eternity, an infinity-extended present that makes past and future dissipate."

GALLERY WALK-THROUGH

Saturday, April 5, Noon

Hamza Walker, Associate Curator and Director of Education, the Renaissance Society

CONCERT

Saturday, April 5, 9:30 pm

Oren Ambarchi

Bond Chapel
1050 E. 59th St. (main quadrangle)

Oren Ambarchi's works are hesitant and tense extended songforms located in the cracks between several schools: modern electronics and processing; laminal improvisation and minimalism; hushed, pensive songwriting; the deceptive simplicity and temporal suspensions of composers such as Morton Feldman and Alvin Lucier; and the physicality of rock music, slowed down and stripped back to its bare bones, abstracted and replaced with pure signal. From the late 90's his experiments in guitar abstraction and extended technique have led to a more personal and unique sound-world incorporating a broader palette of instruments and sensibilities. On recent releases such as *Grapes From The Estate* and *In The Pendulum's Embrace* Ambarchi has employed glass harmonica, strings, bells, piano, drums and percussion, creating fragile textures as light as air which tenuously coexist with the deep, wall-shaking bass tones derived from his guitar. Co-presented with LAMPO.

FOR NEWS ABOUT ARTISTS AND EVENTS

Please sign up to receive our newsletter at www.renaissancesociety.org, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

This exhibition has been made possible through generous support from Alphawood Foundation; the CityArts Program of The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, a municipal agency; Christie's; Etroymsen Family Fund; The Kenneth and Arne Griffin Foundation; John R. Halligan Charitable Fund; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; Robert Lehman Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation; Nuveen Investments; the Provost's Discretionary Fund at The University of Chicago; Pritzker Foundation; The Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation; The Siragusa Foundation; and our membership.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP/Linda Warren and Jeffrey C. Hammes is the lead corporate sponsor of the 2013-2014 Exhibition Season.

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Anna Gray/Ryan Wilson Paulsen
offset edition
from the series
18 x 24, 2013