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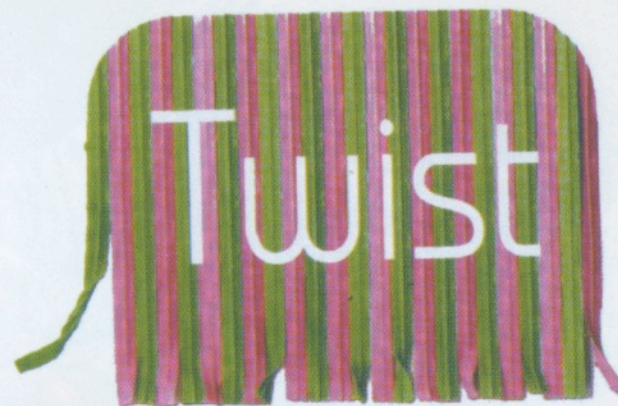
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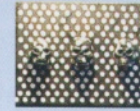
BOBBING FOR

BAD APPLE

Office

One afternoon it hit her: the days are numbered. Suddenly her thoughts turned to absence, violence and voids. Shannon Wages decided to organize her friends to celebrate their impending mortality with an exhibition entitled, *The Big One— Art of Death*. For the evenings of August 7th and 8th, Bad Apple Studios became the home to a few hundred pieces of expression inspired by death and morbidity.

The site of the celebration was Bad Apple Studios, located on the ground floor of 427 Chestnut St. Opened in 1897 as May Hosiery Mill, it was the first hosiery in Tennessee, North and South Carolina. Mr. May, an immigrant, moved to Nashville from New England in order to capitalize on Tennessee's prison labor contracts. May socks went on to be the only 100% cotton socks used by NASA; they made the trip to the moon with Apollo 11.



I met Nico Duque during the second night of the show and we made plans to sit down the following week. Nico has been involved with Bad Apple for about a year and is currently a leaser of the space. A painter for as long as he can remember, his recent focus is screen printing, while painting a few steer skulls on the side.

"Bad Apple is a place where people can come together and make art while being social. I don't want to emphasize the alcohol, but the space helps us fulfill our social needs while being productive, away from the bars."

Shannon and co-founder Johnny Silva came up with the name. "It fits the crew," according to Nico. "We have a different approach, Live Fast...Paint Hard." The name Bad Apple just seems to sum that up.

The night of the show, I found myself sweating of Tennessee humidity. Walking through the dilapidated factory, I heard the

hum of fluorescents bouncing off the worn cement. In the dark stairwell, The Godfather was being projected on a bedsheet, while my associate inspected an old time-clock whose bell still worked. Walking towards the sound of a party, I found myself at Bad Apple Studios.

Once I had tracked down Shannon, she took me around to glance at a few pieces. Ranging from grotesque to cute and riddled with odd slaps of bone, violence or red, I was interested on a few levels. The rear corner featured an installation by Matt Black. A vegetarian, he produced one disgusting dinner table. Meat and milk spoiling in the 90 degree room produced an overwhelming scent.

The biggest piece in the room was largely black and white. Ben Johnson's *El-*

phant Squid Feeding showed just a bit of blood trickling from a cartoon figure adorned with a necktie as the Elephant Squid hanged him with a tentacle.

Perhaps the most ironic pieces were Kellie Ketron's embroidery. They put a maniacal twist on something I would expect to find in my grandmother's garage sale. Her pieces read, "I shall beat you into bloody submission," and "If you've got a throat I've got a knife." They looked like verses from some sacred text I am unfamiliar with.

A few days after the show, once my experience had gelled, I met up with Shannon to shed some light

on this unique exhibition. She was moving quickly about her office at Icon Body Piercing, preparing for an appointment when I stopped by to get some questions answered.

"I handed out these sheets; I wish I had one to show you." She went on to describe what amounted to dossiers filled with crime-scene photos from the thirties and forties, which she had distributed to some forty artists. The contributors were all people that Shannon knew in the local community. Professional and hobbyist alike, they were given an opportunity to share.

"The only requirement was that they had to do something that they enjoyed," said Shannon.

Nico told me that the show was indicative of Bad Apple. "We're a venue for friends, not necessarily professionals; it's a venue for people. Bad Apple Studios is as much about the lifestyle as [it is about] the art." This was only the fifth show the group has put together since they started out in April 2008, a good track record for a fledgling art group.

Nico described to me a place primarily used for creation, not exhibition. At first their meet-up days were Thursdays, but now that

“We have a different approach, Live Fast... Paint Hard.”

things are more established, four or more directly involved artists can be found there three to four days a week. "The environment and the vibe are the visceral part," Nico explained. "The studio is an art sanctuary; we feed off one another's energy."

There is only one rule. "We have a make art rule. You can't just sit in the corner and drink, this place is for us to produce art," Nico stated. No wallflowers allowed.

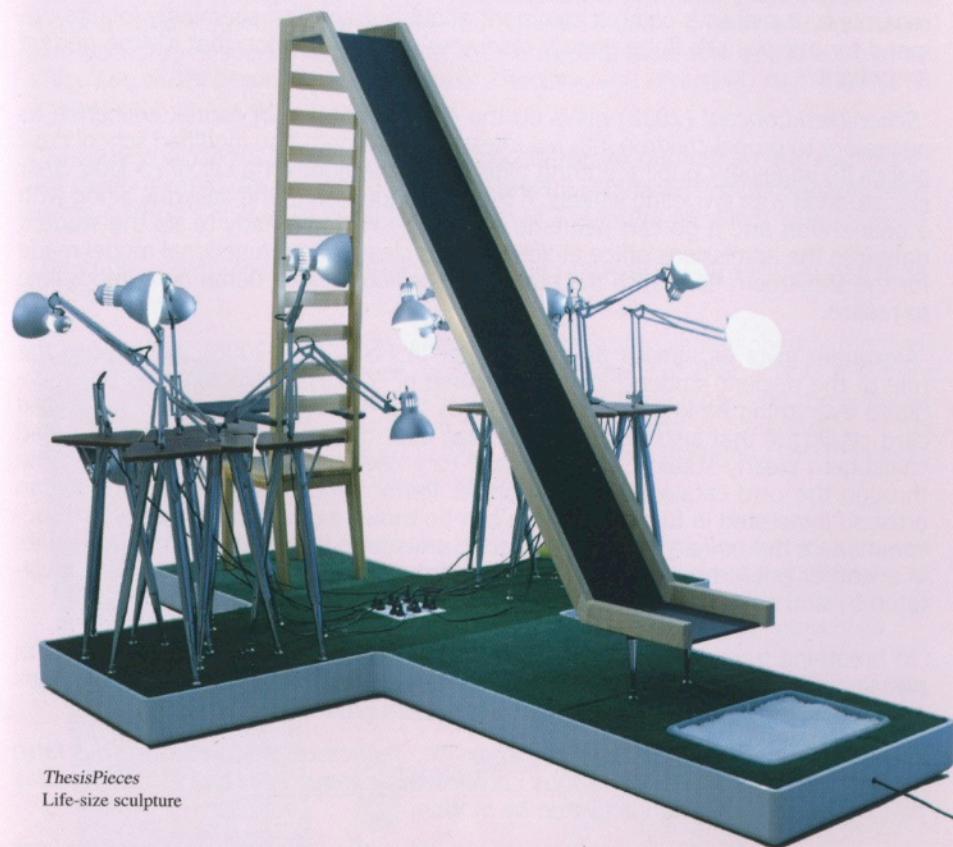
By Patrick T. McCaully
Photos by Jordan Jaquess



Lunchbox Confidential

Matt Alexander reinvents old school

by David Hellams



ThesisPieces
Life-size sculpture

Matt Alexander grew up on a dairy farm near Nashville. His return to our fair city comes after studies at the University of Tennessee and Detroit's Cranbrook Academy of Art, and a stint living in Brooklyn. In addition to being an exhibiting sculptor, Matt and his wife, Melissa, run the furniture design company HollerDesign, LLC. Personal history aside, one look at this artist's work gets the brain churning up more curiosity than you could fit in a dozen 64 oz. travel mugs. As I've gotten to know his work, it has become tempting to view Alexander's move "home" as a research project supporting his artistic practice – he cites his childhood experience as a major influence on his art.