

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Saturday 2/1

Susie & The Pistols. Americana rhythm 'n' blues band dedicated to making music that feels good and sounds great. \$10, 6:30pm. The Batesville Market, 6624 Plank Rd., Batesville. 823-2001.

You're Jovian. Band earns comparisons to various shoegaze-y groups such as Swirlies and Built to Spill. With Alison Blue and Ceterus. \$7, 9pm. Twisted Branch Tea Bazaar, 414 E. Main St., Downtown Mall. 293-9947.

dance

Tango Milonga. Traditional tango music and etiquette, smart dress code recommended. \$5-10, 9pm. Tango on Water, 208 E. Water St. 202-9569.

stage

The Humans. See listing for Friday, January 31. \$22-26, 8pm. Live Arts, 123 E. Water St. 977-4177.

Twelfth Night. See listing for Friday, January 31. \$10-15, 8pm. Gorilla Theater, 1717 Allied Ln., Ste. 2B. 547-7986.

words

Children's Storytime. Featuring recent storybooks as well as the classics kids (and parents) know and love. Free, 11am. New Dominion Bookshop, 404 E. Main St., Downtown Mall. 295-2552.

Full Court Press Book Talk. Amanda Swanson and Bill Haltom, authors of *Full Court Press: How Pat Summitt, a High School Basketball Player, and a Legal Team Changed the Game*, discuss their work. Free, 7pm. New Dominion Bookshop, 404 E. Main St., Downtown Mall. 295-2552.

etc.

Met Live in HD: Porgy and Bess. The Gershwin's modern American masterpiece has its first Met performances in almost three decades, starring bass-baritone Eric Owens and soprano Angel Blue in the title roles. \$18-25, 1pm. The Paramount Theater, 215 E. Main St., Downtown Mall. 979-1333.

Sunday 2/2

music

Adam Larrabee & Friends (of Love Canon). They'll have your toes tapping. No cover, 1pm. Potter's Craft Cider Tasting Room, 1350 Arrowhead Valley Rd. 964-0271.

Berto Sales and Vincent Zorn. Playing gypsy rumba and Latin guitar. No cover, 2pm. Glass House Winery, 5898 Free Union Rd., Free Union. 975-0094.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

Jordan Davis



PUBLICITY PHOTO

January 30, The Jefferson Theater

Dog tales

Mysterious public art series uses frankfurters to make a point

By Erin O'Hare

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They appeared over the summer, three identical wheatpaste posters of anthropomorphic hot dogs in buns, wearing sneakers and pedaling unicycles as they exclaimed in speech bubbles, "Hot dog!"

One, pasted to the side of the raised parking lot between Market and South Streets, was gone after about a week, but the others—on Cherry Avenue and West Main Street, stuck around. And then more started to pop up.

"A hard rain's gonna fall," warns a hot dog holding an umbrella on the Dewberry hotel skeleton. "Lockheed Martin stock increased 3.6% today," its twin hollers from the side of another downtown building. "Rise up," insists one standing atop a pair of stilts. "Shred the gnar," "no war but class war," say two others on skateboards.

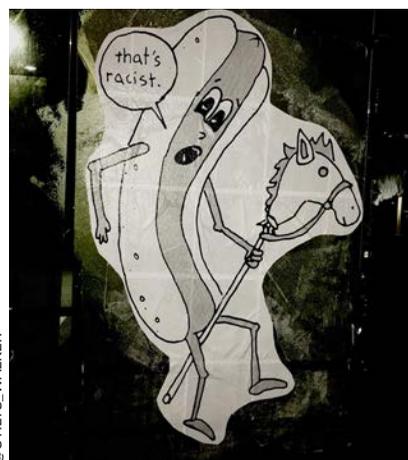
A few weeks ago, the images appeared on Instagram under the handle @stilts_walker, and this reporter saw it as an opportunity to catch up with the artist, Charlottesville's hot dog Banksy, if you will.

I slid into @stilts_walker's DMs, expecting the worst ("no way, you weenie"). But the artist agreed to an interview on three conditions: One, that we link up in the old Chili's parking lot. Two, that I mention the location of our meeting in this story. And three, that their identity remain anonymous.

As we sit in my car on a chilly January day, the artist is frank about how the sausage was made. "People should do the things they wish were happening. I wanted to see this happening, so I did it," the artist says. "I thought a hot dog on a unicycle sounded fun. It's ubiquitous...everyone can inherently understand the humor in an animated hot dog. And it's easy to draw, fast."

"I initially didn't plan on doing more than one," @stilts_walker continues. "I had some supplies and a few free hours, so I threw it together and didn't give much thought to continuing the project or doing new things, new adaptations."

At the same time, the artist understands the influence art and culture can have in shaping movements, particularly progressive movements. Could an anthropomorphic hot dog help shape a movement, even in a small way? The artist believes it can. The character can be adapted into a variety of situations, and more than one dimension (at least conceptually speaking...the posters are 2-D), and it can say just about anything. "The things that are being expressed in these speech bubbles are things that a lot of people are thinking about all the time, so why wouldn't the hot dog also be thinking about them? It seemed like a way to, in a fairly non-aggressive manner, communicate some



@STILTS_WALKER

Sketches of humanlike hot dogs making cultural commentary have been popping up around the City of Charlottesville since last summer. And while many are still in place, this hobby horse wheatpaste poster (bottom) was removed within hours of its appearance.

pretty blunt ideas and ideologies," says the artist, who's incorporated social and political commentary into some of the posters (i.e., "Rise up").

A couple weeks ago, the artist pasted up a hot dog riding a hobby horse in the CAT bus shelter on Market Street directly across from the Robert E. Lee statue in Market Street Park. The illustration humorously mocks the statue, but the speech bubble's no joke: "That's racist," this hot dog said.

That particular poster disappeared only a few hours after it went up, but the artist isn't jumping to conclusions about why it was removed. It may or may not have been a statue supporter who took it down, the artist says. "It could very well just be the reality that

a bus driver sees something and reports it, and perhaps Charlottesville Area Transit has a reputation for quickly addressing graffiti concerns on their property."

The artist (or artists...there may be more than one hot dogger out there) hopes the wheatpaste posters can inspire, or at least pique the curiosity of Charlottesville's citizens. "It's no earth-shattering or groundbreaking act," the artist says of the work. "But I do strongly believe that culture, and having a vibrant, creative underbelly in a city is critical to maintaining [that city's] cultural identity. And I would like that identity to be progressive and welcoming and friendly, and fun."

And by doing this anonymously, @stilts_walker isn't just watching their buns. That anonymity injects a much-needed element of curiosity into the city. People (including some Charlottesville city councilors) regularly post their own pics of the hot dog posters to social media, expressing surprise and delight over the project that began on a playful whim and has evolved into something quite engaging. Some folks have even sent the artist fan art.

Going forward, the series creator plans to play around with the poster illustrations, text, and context in order to keep Charlottesville on its toes and in conversation with whatever these hot dogs have to say.

"In a small-ish town like Charlottesville, where it's easy to feel like you know everything about everything, having a little mysterious whimsy enter your day, enter your life, is exciting," says the artist. The hot dogs give us something to relish. ☺

January 29 – February 4, 2020 c-ville.com



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Pizza my heart

Alan Goffinski sings his love of C'ville slices

By Erin O'Hare
arts@c-ville.com

At any given time, at least 20 percent of Alan Goffinski's headspace is occupied by pizza.

"Pizza's the best," he says. It's his favorite food, and he has no qualms about admitting it: "If anyone tells you [their favorite food is] anything else, they're lying."

"Pizza's there for the best times," Goffinski continues sincerely, not an ounce of cheese in his voice. "That's what makes it so important. It's the meal you eat with your buds. It's a celebration meal."

His reverence and enthusiasm for the pie inspired *Pizzas of Charlottesville*, an album of 12 jingles for local pizza places out this Friday on Bandcamp.com.

Goffinski is perhaps best known as the director of The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative, but he's a musician, too. In the early 2000s, he toured and made a couple records with indie rock band The 1997, and this past December, in collaboration with a few other local musicians, released *Smells Like Music*, an album of 20 goofy-sweet children's songs under the moniker Little Skunks.

So Goffinski's been in "a playful song-writing headspace," and with local pies of all kinds always on his mind, he says the jingles "developed organically."

"The idea was that this would be my love letter to pizza, and to local business,"

says Goffinski, who chose to focus the ditties on area spots (i.e., non-national chains) that serve primarily pizza and that might knead a little boost right now: Vita Nova, Lampo, Christian's, Belmont Pizza, and the like.

Each jingle reflects a restaurant's individual style, says Goffinski, and none "could

easily be swapped out for the others without some rearranging. If your pizza restaurant has a brick oven pizza, I'm mentioning the brick oven. Or if you make a particularly large pizza, I'm going to maybe mention that." (He definitely mentions that.)

Goffinski will donate a portion of *Pizzas of Charlottesville* proceeds to the Charlottesville

Restaurant Community Fund, and he's working with local artist and Burnley-Moran Elementary art teacher Ryan Trott on some merch, too, just in case the jingles catch on with fellow pizza-lovin' locals.

That's the purpose of a good jingle, he says: they're short, simple, slightly repetitive. "They're all deliberately a little obnoxiously catchy, the kind of thing that maybe you wish wasn't stuck in your head, but because it is, you embrace it, smile, and curse my name when you're falling asleep at night."

Goffinski emphasizes that none of these jingles have been officially sanctioned by the restaurants they celebrate, but some seem to be on board with the idea. "I have no expectation that any of these pizza places are going to use these jingles in any way, shape, or form...especially if they're trying to maintain any sort of air of professional-

"If your pizza restaurant has a brick oven pizza, I'm mentioning the brick oven."

ism," he says with a half-self-conscious laugh. "But I would invite them to!"

Goffinski might eat some of these pies more than others, but each has its merits, he says, and he loves them all. "There's no such thing as bad pizza. Even bad pizza is good pizza." ☺



EZE AMOS

Alan Goffinski's *Pizzas of Charlottesville* album—12 lighthearted jingles for a dozen local pizza spots—comes out Friday, June 5.

SMALL BITES

Business not as usual

In recent weeks, many local restaurants that decided to take a pandemic pause have started to phase back into action, including well-loved spots like **Al Carbon**, **Bizou**, **Brazos Tacos**, **Little Star**, **Luce**, **Tavola**, and **Tilman's**. These restaurants are reaching customers through online ordering with delivery, curbside pickup, or no-contact handoff of food and drinks. Some, like **Citizen Burger Bar** and **Red Pump Kitchen**, are also making use of available outdoor space to bring guests back on site, at a distance. The returns are a glimmer of hope for many after months of closure announcements—both temporary and permanent—due to coronavirus. Check out C-VILLE's online restaurant guide or establishments' websites for more info.

Hello, Tonic

Speaking of Tilman's, reopening the wine and gourmet food spot on the Downtown Mall isn't the only thing that owners Derek Mansfield and

Courtney Tyler have been working on. The pair is opening a new restaurant, **Tonic**, in the space formerly occupied by **Tin Whistle Irish Pub** (which closed at the end of last year after a landlord dispute). Tonic promises build-your-own snack boards and small plates with items like pickled shrimp and marinated mushrooms, and a focus on healthy local fare. Keep an eye out for a summer opening.

Drink with a purpose: Dubbel 151

Spirit Lab Distilling and **Champion Brewing** partnered on a collaboration to support Charlottesville-area restaurant workers who were laid off due to the pandemic, and the results are good enough to drink. Released in May and produced from over 8,000 cans of beer, Dubbel 151 is made of Champion Brewing's Brasserie Saison Dubbel and Saison beers distilled to 75.5 percent alcohol or 151 proof. Bottles can be purchased on the Spirit Lab Distilling website with curbside pickup and shipping throughout Virginia and Washington, D.C.



Coffee care

Snowing in Space Coffee Co. released a new whole-bean coffee blend, Frontline Fuel, aimed at caffeinating Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital health care workers. For every bag of Frontline Fuel purchased at snowingin.space.com, the company will donate a bag to the hospital. The medium-roast blend is made of certified Fair Trade organic beans and is available for one-time and subscription purchases, as well as wholesale for retailers and offices.

Wine relief

Blenheim Vineyards recently released a limited-edition red wine blend called On The Line, with proceeds going to Frontline Foods Charlottesville and World Central Kitchen, organizations that are providing meals to people in need. The label, which can also be seen on other merchandise including stickers and posters, is designed by vineyard owner **Dave Matthews**. And there's more to come—a white blend is set to release later this summer.—Meg Irvin

Rising above

New Sahara Clemons mural depicts the strength of black women

By Erin O'Hare
arts@c-ville.com

On the afternoon of the year's hottest day so far, Sahara Clemons stands at a concrete wall about three times her height, a roll of masking tape around her wrist, a brush in the other hand, cans of paint and a cup of melting bubble tea at her feet.

As she puts the finishing touches on her mural for the Charlottesville Mural Project, Clemons, who grew up in the city and recently finished her first year at the Rhode Island School of Design, periodically steps back to consider her work.

A larger-than-life black woman reclines across the full width of the wall, her face illuminated by the warm, intense, orange-pink light radiating from a lightning bolt she holds above her. She has the air of a goddess, powerful and at rest.

Clemons found inspiration for the piece in her mother, Eboni Bugg. Bugg, who currently serves as director of programs for the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, is a licensed clinical social worker, a family reunification advocate, and a yoga instructor who has worked to make mental health resources more available and accessible to women of color in the area. "She has shown me a lot" about what it takes to become a leader in a very racially polarized community such as Charlottesville, says Clemons. "That really affected me."

While the mural isn't an exact likeness, Clemons says it is most certainly a representation of her mother's essence.

She drew inspiration from the lightning bolt tattoo on Bugg's wrist. "She talks about it as empowerment...and empowerment in the ability to rest," says Clemons. "Life is tiring for a black woman, and we don't always get that luxury [of rest], whether or not we are in a leadership position. There's [always] a level at which we are having to uphold some sort of position, some sort of level of expectation that sometimes goes beyond our capability."

To complement the lightning bolt, Clemons incorporated clouds ("they are about contemplation...rising above, heaven, the ethereal") and light. A golden yellow halo circles the woman's head and a sun emanates from the earring on her earlobe. Her dress looks as though it is composed of beams of light.

"I don't usually put [the sun] in all of my work, but it's specific to black women, to black girl magic," says Clemons, and depicting that in this work was important to her. "There is a lot of invisibility that happens

"There is a lot of invisibility that happens with black women, in Charlottesville and in general, that I wanted to combat."

with black women, in Charlottesville and in general, that I wanted to combat," she says.

This mural would be a powerful statement anywhere in the city, but its location—on the border of West Main Street and the historically black and now quickly gentrifying 10th and Page neighborhood—amplifies its message.

Above the mural is the recently built Standard apartment complex, which offers "lavish amenities" for UVA students. To its right, the new Tenth Street Warehouses retail development. Across the parking lot from the mural is the Westhaven public housing community, built in the 1960s to house (mostly black) people whose homes in the Vinegar Hill and Gospel Hill neighborhoods were razed by the city in the name of "urban renewal."

Clemons didn't select the site, but it's significant to her. She and Bugg once lived in the neighborhood, and this afternoon, looking at the landscape around her, she can't help but acknowledge how much it's changed.

She designed the mural a month ago, and says the image has taken on new meaning in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer, and the resulting protests against racial injustice.

"It's different now. It's challenging to think about it in terms of police brutality and what that's doing to the black community," she says. "I hope that what this does is...present something different in terms of what's happening within the black community."

"I'm reminding [people] that there's strength happening as well." ©



Grace Ho's "Solace" is online at StudiolX.com through June 30.

COURTESY OF ARTIST

has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men."

Art for centuries has reflected this; in fact, the whole genre of the reclining nude basically came about so kings could have pictures of their mistresses to show off. Even as a woman artist, avoiding this patriarchal tradition takes real effort. Ho has managed to banish the male gaze from this figurative series. It feels like we are looking in on a private moment, but not voyeuristically.

Another notable element of this series is the sense of space. In "Rest" and "Rise," the figures look mountainous, and the composition almost becomes a landscape. Here the figures are echoing their natural source. The choice to use black and white also affects the perception of depth. In "Curve," a remarkable work composed of only five white marks, the mainly black composition creates a void that gives us a sense of infinite space. In the future, Ho is interested in exploring painting that uses pigments found in nature. Thematically this makes sense, as her work is already tapped into something very organic.

Two other paintings are worth mentioning separately: "Figure," on a black canvas with white paint, is more experimental than the other work, and it is Ho's favorite piece in the show. We can make out a head, a waist, and a woman's bottom, but the rendering is much looser. There is movement in this piece that pushes your eyes around the composition, and it is absorbing, even though there isn't technically much paint on the canvas at all.

"Solace" ends on a personal note with "Ru," a charcoal drawing of a mother and child on acrylic. Ho made it while she was feeling homesick, and thinking of her childhood in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She says she thinks of her mother a lot when she paints. "Ru" is reminiscent of the genre paintings, or scenes of domestic life, that women artists turned to instead of figurative work (from which they were barred for centuries). There is something beautifully poetic about a figurative show ending with a return to this tradition. "Solace" returns us, in many ways, to our roots. ©



EZE AMOS

Sahara Clemons took inspiration from her mother's strength of character and community involvement to design a new mural on 10th Street NW.

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