



**Art Attack**

Text by various contributors

**AN ARTIST'S SURVIVAL GUIDE**

It always seems strange to start the New Year off with a month like January, especially in Seattle. It's cold, wet, dark and dreadful. Mix this with art and you either have sheer brilliance or plain procrastination, which of course leads to downward spirals of depression. The best way to remedy the situation? Get out of your house! I don't care how wet it is, make your way down to First Thursday's Art Walk. Seeing a few artists selling their wares and getting soaked in process will surely inspire the best of us. If you can't bear to get wet, I suggest brief interludes at Roq la Rue, Secluded Alley Works, Bluebottle Art Gallery and SOIL. They all have fabulous shows lined up, and their receptions create a nice kind of camaraderie that all artists should feed off of. Do not, I repeat, do not enter any kind of mall, unless you are doing research. I'm not sure if it's the endless tunnels or the subliminal cues in the muzak, but in my experience, they have a knack for destroying any good idea. If none of this seems to be working, and all you can do is pace back and forth in your studio, I suggest signing up for a funky craft class at a community college or the UW's Experimental College. Hey, learning stained glass will not only give you something colorful to look at, but the process may trigger that next fantastic project. And if worse comes to worst and all you can think about is cutting off an ear or other appendage, just make something – anything with the intention of destroying it. That way you can metaphorically satisfy your suicidal thoughts, and have a safe place to get out all of that pent-up frustration. And who knows, you may just create something you actually like. — Karla Esquivel



**VIDEO VIBRATIONS**

"Seattle's arts scene used to be really vibrant in the '70s and that went away, but it's starting to come back. There's beginning to be a better network of artists looking out for each other and helping each other out."

Recent Cornish graduate Liz Randall grew up with artists – both of her parents are actors. After years of hearing her college instructors talk about the arts scene in Seattle and the way things were, then witnessing the way things have become, she seems understandably skeptical about diving head first into the art world: "I like things and I dislike things about showing my work out. I'm not a big fan of openings. Most artists aren't."

She relishes the opportunity for her work to be seen, but is uncomfortable with the idea of having to sell herself. Her video and photo installation, *Vibrations*, at the relatively new Capitol Hill Arts Center is only her second solo showing, but she has nothing but good things to say about the venue and the people who run it. She says that Amy Baranski and curator Jordan Howland have been particularly encouraging. They are apparently very excited about working with new artists and, Randall says, "They've been really helpful and really supportive."

Randall's installation will consist of a video projection and a series of related photos. The video will be projected onto a semi-opaque window in the lower level of the arts center and will be made up of a series of "animated" clips of alternating moving images and stills of the same objects. When combined and connected to a MIDI processor these images will appear to waver or quiver in reaction to noises around the installation producing a sort of vibrating image. Since her work will reside in an area where music is also typically performed it will be somewhat interactive and should provide an interesting visual complement to other activities in the space.

The Capitol Hill Arts Center is definitely one of the more exciting arts venues to open recently. Different events can be found on their website at [capitolhillarts.com](http://capitolhillarts.com). They are a multi-media space that should provide a healthy dose of vitality for Capitol Hill and the Seattle arts scene as a whole. —*Kristopher Monroe*

Liz Randall's *Vibrations* opens January 8, 2004 from 8-10pm and runs through January 30, 2004. Capitol Hill Arts Center is located at 1621 12th Ave. at the corner of Pine.

#### DIANA FALCHUK'S ARTIFACT

Diana Falchuk presents the rhetorical question "What is great art?" by blending a scripted tongue-in-cheek history, a contradictory floor, and an accessible medium for viewers resulting in a provocative performance piece. Upon entry to the exhibit the participant is given a small ribbon scroll containing the "history" of how the floor came to be. Woven into the history the author articulates the subliminal concept of this powerful exhibit. Falchuk boldly suggests that this floor belongs in one of the most prestigious of art galleries, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Immediately wonder seizes the viewer. What is this artifact? What is this floor? Graciously, Falchuk addresses the viewer's curiosity with her fictional history of the floor.

Falchuk claims to have accidentally been introduced to the floor through a series of serendipitous events, an art fellowship at Vain Hair Salon, a routine sewer repair, and most notably the transfer of the floor from the original discoverer to the owners of Vain. Falchuk continues to explore the question of great art by casually mentioning that a historical consulting firm saw no value in the floor and easily passed custody of it into the hands of the owners of the property in which it was found.

Like the owner of Vain, Falchuk tells us that she was struck by the beauty and fluid strength of the piece and immediately decided that this work by an unknown artist would be the subject of her art fellowship. Research on this mystic artifact replaced work on an original piece. Her deliberately detailed account of the faux history of this artifact allows the viewer to appreciate the contrived nature of the floor. Falchuk, through her performance piece, inspires the viewer to see art as something deriving worth for its socially transcendent aspects rather than a piece whose only redeeming social value is that it pretends to be highbrow enough to be worthy of a space on the white walls of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. —*Kara Dylan*

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