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## Designer's News May 19, 1969

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# Senior in Photography Teaches for Her Thesis

Rosalyn Gerstein, senior in photography, is doing something a little different for her thesis. Her photographs, the finished work, are a bunch of 60-second snapshots from Polaroid "Swinger cameras... and she didn't even take them herself.

What Miss Gerstein

has been doing for the past few months, is teaching a group of eight South Providence boys, 11 to 14 years old, all about photography. Some of the results are on this page and Page 4.

By way of explanation, she said, "I chose a [degree] project in which I could be-

come personally involved and committed."

She has become committed to the point now, that she is planning to teach a follow-up course in photography this summer, and in addition start a course in gardening.

"You need to be spontaneous and honest about the work you are able to produce," Miss Gerstein said. "Communication with people is an important part of my project; it is also very important to know who you're communicating with."

Among her experiences, she had to overcome problems unique to dealing with black ghetto youths. In her project journal, she warned herself to "keep things on a very

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[Keywood Mitchell]

[Teddy Wilcox]



[Ronnie Baxter]



## The DESIGNER'S NEWS

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Distributed free to the RISD community

### CAFE CARR

The Refectory now has some competition: from every table you have a ringside view of the Great Outdoors.

And it is great. Only trouble is, the Cafe is self-service, and the service is at Joe's, two blocks away.

[Kathy Rohde]



## Study to Save Block Island

Block Island--located off the Rhode Island coast, it's scenery is beautiful, it's land is wild and almost uniquely unspoiled.

There is a group of students and faculty in RISD's Landscape Architecture Department who aim to keep it that way and are helping to do it.

Week before last, Carr House gallery contained an exhibit of the work that has been done on the project so far... that's what all those fancy, detailed survey maps were.

"The Block Island program is only into the first stage right now: an exhaustive inventory of people and place," said the head of the department, Alexander Rattray. "The final result should be an overall framework for the development of the island. I say 'framework of development' and not 'master plan' because a framework is meant to be looser, less in detail in some respects but much more flexible in the very long run.

"This way, we allow for human

activities that we haven't even guessed might take place on the island."

Rattray got interested in Block Island when he first came to Rhode Island in 1965. Since then, four years of fourth-year landscape architecture students have added to the growing mass of information about Block Island's ecology, as their assignment for a regional-scale land and environment survey.

After a field trip last Fall, this year's students decided to make a much deeper study. They received financing from a RISD fund for Rhode Island shoreline conservation set up in the 1930s.

"Now," said Rattray, "we are beginning to understand why that land form is what it is today."

As for the "people" side of the survey, the department head said, "We are not working unconsciously, doing our own thing. We're figuring out what activities will take place, so we can allow for them and allow them to

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## STUDENTS DESIGN FESTIVAL

The Rhode Island Arts Festival is coming to town--with the assistance of two RISD students, who designed the entire physical plant for the festival and other students who are just working.

Jeff Blydenberg and Dick Hood, the two designers of the festi-

val, have been working on it since early March.

This year the festival will "be more of a festival and less of a plain gallery," according to Blydenberg.

Among other things, the students have planned or designed:

Freestyle painting

of the equestrian statue of Gen. Ambrose Bursnide, which clutters up Kennedy Plaza. On Friday, May 23rd, show up and bring your own brush. They'll supply tempera paints in the primary colors, and magenta and orange the festival colors.

[continued Page 3]



[Kathy Rohde]

LABOR POOL--Three of the volunteer workers for the festival.



**Editorial**

AS YE SOW. . .

This is going to sound like a small request, which it is, or even a picayune one, which it's not. . .

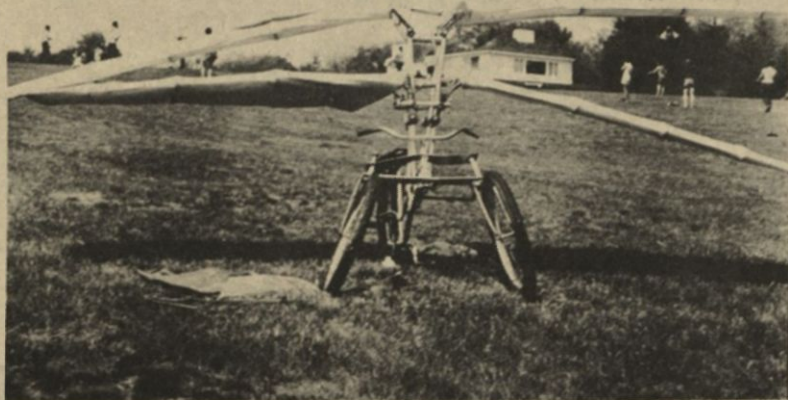
Why don't a couple of you get some seeds (no, not that kind), or a few flowers, growing ones, and transplant them to the Carr House garden before you leave for vacation.

We didn't believe it ourselves until we saw it, but, by damn, the Carr garden really has the potential of becoming a sylvan spot to eat your lunch, draw, read a book, make love, etc. . .

It just needs a little primping. A little TLC.

The garden could be lovely by Fall if it is planted with seeds and flowers this Spring. . .

So, goeth and primpeth.



WE DONE IT!

That whooshing noise you hear is coming from us at DN our first breath in weeks not mortgaged to the Eternal Deadline.

This is the third and final issue of DN for the semester; we'll go cornball a minute to wish everyone, regardless of race, creed, color or national origin--yes, we'll even wish Donald Reutlinger--a sane and serene summer.

A short look at next Fall:

DN will be under new editorship, so we can't guarantee the accuracy of our own soothsaying. However, we hope to see regular features on important school issues and events, of which there are many (already we find ourselves rejecting material for lack of space--but never a letter to the editor).

We hope that news gathering will be highly systematized next Fall, with each department reporting to us regularly along with every other news-making office in the school.

Also, we expect to have a fully staffed newspaper in the Fall, so the work should be spread fairly thin. . . if you'd like to work regularly, F3 is our box number. If you have editorial skills in one area or another, contact us now for a position next Fall.

The last month of school was absolutely the worst time to start a newspaper, admittedly. But--"We Done It." We've shown the way,

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4]

schools that are interested.

S: The Vermont program lasted all summer. RISD's is lasting six weeks. Why?

T: I think it's the lack of understanding on the part of the Rhode Island School of Design.

S: The Vermont program was also less structured than ours will be. How do you feel about this?

T: Well, I'm a sculptor, I know very little about running schools, so I ran it the open way. The Rhode Island School's way may work better than mine. I personally really dug the open system because it gave us an infinite capacity to respond to the beauty of the student. The staff was connected with the student, like when a kid came to me and said, Listen, man, I'm an Indian and I want to do a totem pole, like we went down to the neighborhood lumberyard and got him a 12-foot log. Somebody else said, Listen, I'd like to get a music group together, we went out and rented instruments. A woman came to me one day and said I'd like to teach the kids how to make dashikis using large leaves to dye the dashiki

S: You'll have to tell me what that is.

T: The dashiki is a colorful, large African shirt worn by young men who are trying to think black and be black.

S: Did you get to know most of the young people in the program?

T: 90 percent of them considered me a relative.

S: Is the ratio of disadvantaged to "advantaged" going to be the same at RISD as it was in Vermont?

T: Well, the Vermont program was very different than what's being proposed here. One hundred percent of the students at the Vermont program were disadvantaged in the sense of economic opportunities.

S: There is a deliberate mixture in the RISD program. . .

T: Well, the program has a deliberate mixture because I make a poor racist. I don't believe in black racism, any more than I believe in white racism.

S: Is there anything you would like to add? Is there anything I haven't asked, that you would like to talk about?

T: One of my kids came up--that is, up here to visit RISD--came up complaining to me that in her school they had formed a new Afro-American society and she, a Puerto Rican, wasn't allowed to join this society. I hope one day that the Afro-American society can change into a thing--which might be called CHE: Committee for a Healthy Environment.

T O R R E S

(CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE)

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[Steve Grant]



[Steve Baxter]

## SENIOR TEACHES

[continued from P. 1]

'real' level" with her group--she wanted to prevent their mutual trust from pulling down the young boys' "developed protections and defenses against prejudices, police hate, etc."

The senior photographer had to be adept at handling many situations. One of these was when one of the boys showed shyness at nude photographs. His next assignment was--photograph his younger brother nude.



[Kathy Rohde]

## R.I. ARTS FESTIVAL

[continued from P. 1]

An outdoor performance stage built around the war memorial in the Plaza, "that ugly thing with the globe on it."

A children's play ground using industrial products, such as foam and styrene. (Blydenberg: "We will demonstrate that there are toys other than war toys, which anyone can buy.")

In the playground will be:

A mock-up of a tinker-toy on a huge scale.

Two-foot cubes of foam rubber, in a big pile, for people to jump around in.

Something Blydenberg called "a jiggle structure-- a huge spider web. . . " and that is all he would say about it.

The RISD students are also setting up long stretches of snow fence for "art in the park:" the student or the "Sunday painter" may exhibit his work, for sale if he likes, with no limitations on the use of the fence. Blydenberg emphasized, however, that although the display space is provided by the festival, the responsibility for works hung on the snow fence is the artist's own.

The festival needs workers this week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday especially... \$1.40 per, is the going rate.

## Block Island

[continued from P. 1]

reflect the natural beauty of the island...But we've run into some problem of identifying just who we're planning for."

Rattray will be leaving Providence this year to open a landscape architecture firm in his native Canada. Derek Bradford, who will replace Rattray as head of the department in the Fall, and who has worked with him on the Block Island survey, will continue the project, hopefully "with funds from a national organization."

Bradford is outspoken on the

way Man treats his environment.

"We've got to have much more respect for the land," he declared. "We must build what the land suggests should be built on it. Man will always pay in the end when he ignores the requirements of the environment."

"Look at New Orleans and all the small towns built on the Mississippi flood delta, and at San Francisco, on the San Andreas fault."

About Block Island Bradford said, "We are lucky there--we don't have to deal with 15 backward steps taken over the last 20 years, as in other areas."

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# JOHN TORRES-'TROUBLEMAKER'

by Julie Scherer

John Torres is a sculptor. He was responsible for getting the Art Students League and the Ford Foundation to sponsor a summer program at the Vermont Academy last year. The program enabled 85 economically disadvantaged, and for the most part, non-white, students to study art with opportunities for individual exploration. He is now at RISD helping to coordinate this year's Interdependent Studies program. This interview was held about two weeks ago.



[Michael P. Goode]

S: Could you give me your exact title, what your position is on the program?

T: Troublemaker.

S: Were you involved in dictating curriculum?

T: I've been working more as a consultant.

S: In getting this started, did someone from RISD contact you?

T: The president, Mr. Lay.

S: Was it because he knew of your work in Vermont?

T: That's right.

S: Is there anything you could say about your Vermont experiences relating to what you think is going to happen here this summer?

T: It's difficult for anybody to tell what's going to happen this summer, because the students that you want to work with are very vital and changing and growing. If you're dealing with groups from the general population, this particular group is a powderkeg. They have fantastic levels of energy, and if the program hits them the right way they can do fantastic, beautiful things. But if the program happens to turn them off you're in for a hard ride. Anybody that runs a program like this knows that.

S: Is there a direct relationship between the young black people who were here a month or so ago and the summer program?

T: Most of the people that were here last at the recruitment weekend, Operation Pilgrimage, were in my summer program in Vermont. Some of them have made it through admissions and will be full-time students at RISD in September. The summer program at RISD was set up in a way to encourage that the first choice would be given to local ghetto residents, local disadvantaged students. If they don't find a good group of students to work with locally, then they'll expand it. If they expand it, then students from that weekend could come and be in the summer program.

S: If this is mostly local, who is doing the recruiting?

T: It's being handled through Mr.

Barkley and Charlie Appleton will be doing the recruiting. I'm trying to stay out of it for the simple reason that if RISD can do it, and do it right without blowing it, without me doing it per se, that frees me to go someplace else and start another program. Like in the next ten years--at the end of ten years--I want to see ten places all over the country doing the same thing.

S: With the emphasis on art?

T: Yes.

S: Do you think you would get into recruitment for liberal arts schools, or would you leave that to other people?

T: I think anybody that recruits people that are interested in art, naturally overlaps into the liberal arts area, for a couple of basic reasons. Number one: the liberal arts colleges are now scrambling like mad to become very relevant in art education, especially in studio work. And number two: the art schools aren't going to produce the number of scholarships that are necessary for the art schools to take everybody, you see, so that leaves a prime group going to the art schools, and then everybody else is going where they can get in. You know, the choices between staying on the street, and getting into a liberal arts college... certainly everybody I've ever talked to would rather get into a liberal arts college.

S: In reading about your past program, I noticed that a lot of the people were from [the High Schools of] Music and Art, and Art and Design. How do you go about reaching the other people in non-art schools?

T: Well, I've been to high schools in Boston, Chicago and New York. And that's not just the art high schools, but any high school that responds and some that don't respond. I go in and talk to the grade advisor and tell them who I am and what I'm trying to do and ask them if they've got any students that might fit my particular program. When I recruited last year for Vermont Summer we sent letters to

all the New York high schools. The problem is that high schools don't pay much attention to art. They're verbally oriented, rather than visually oriented. All the high schools all through the country are like that, so that the few schools that do exist, that specialize in art usually can provide enough people to make a program valid, because they themselves are screening processes. Like Art and Design, and Music and Art, take students from all over the city, so it's a pre-screening right there. The other thing that I did was, I went on the street, literally on the street, and walked around neighborhoods and asked people if there was any art program in the neighborhood, like Bedford-Stuyvesant or East Harlem. Believe it or not, there's nothing going on in Spanish Harlem.

S: In Bedford-Stuyvesant, can they take art courses at Pratt?

T: They can take courses at Pratt, if they're lucky enough. They can get courses at the Brooklyn Museum School--if they're lucky enough. But you know the size of Pratt, and you know the size of Bedford-Stuyvesant. It's more pertinent... what happens is that there's a lot of talent that appears somewhere in the schools--in junior high school or high school--and disappears. You know, you could walk up to a cat that was really into draw-

ing and you say, How're you doing and are you still into the drawing thing? And he'll say, No, man, I put that down because there was no way to make that work. That's also the kind of kid that I'm working with--the kid that appeared somewhere and somebody remembered him, but then nobody followed him up. This is the whole point of the city's problems and the country's problems, is that there are a hell of a lot of kids in school and out of school, that nobody ever follows up.

S: Could you tell me something about the book you wrote?

T: I'm working on a book now. It's on growing up black and it's about young people in Harlem, what they go through, why they change and why they are the way they are.

S: Will the Vermont program happen again this year?

T: We hope so. We're raising funds for it now. The Ford Foundation decided not to fund it, so we're trying to replace the Ford fund with money that we hustle up.

S: Would you care to go into why the Ford Foundation decided not to subsidize the program again?

T: Well, major foundations like the Ford Foundation don't like to use their money as maintenance money. They like to try and experiment and if it works, cool; and if it doesn't work, that's cool too. Unless you can get them to commit themselves to a specific number of years and you're into a grant, they're just as likely to cut out on you after the first year.

S: RISD and the Vermont Academy--are they the only two schools you know of involved in this experiment?

T: The Art Students League ran it last year. The Rhode Island School of Design is interested. One of the big girls' schools might take a program in 1970. I can't give you the name of the school until the board of directors of that school votes on it because when things appear in the newspaper before they pass the board, I sometimes get cut off at the pass. But there are

[continued Page 2]



[Norman Baxter]

