Art City

Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design: Sharon McCoy’s “Help with Flying,” a work made of clay and found objects, will be part of the juried student show.

COURTESY MILWAUKEE INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN

TOO MUCH PIZZA. TOO MUCH WORK. TOO MUCH STUDY. TOO MUCH PIZZA.

COURTESY TIMOTHY COBB FINE ART

ALL THE WAY WITH CLAY

Work of potters, sculptors to be shown at multiple sites as massive conference hits town

Sound Check
Inside Local Music

Band's ideas lead to medley of sounds

Animals in Human Attire handle change

By PIET LEVY
plevy@journalsentinel.com

Local rock band Animals in Human Attire never specified exactly what animals the band’s name refers to — but if we had to choose, we’d definitely say squirrels.

The band has a tendency to swiftly zig and zag, seemingly on impulse, through a series of tempo changes and musical curveballs on its forthcoming album “Ourmegadawn” (available beginning April 11 at shows, mamarecords.com and athen.bandcamp.com).

Plus, as you can probably
Work of potters, sculptors to be shown at multiple sites as massive conference hits town

Few artists are as tied to their materials as potters, who work physically with mud, the stuff of the Earth, the stuff of which we're made. Ceramics is a forthright art form in its essence.

This week, one of the largest gatherings of artists anywhere on the planet takes place in Milwaukee, with as many as 5,000 ceramics artists and enthusiasts here for a national conference.

This year, the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts will tackle one of the thorniest questions of art — how does meaning become embodied in a material object?

The response to the group's 48th annual conference, called "Material World" this year, comes in the form of talks, panel discussions, regional tours and demonstrations through Saturday and centered at the Wisconsin Center, 400 W. Wisconsin Ave. The cost of the conference is $300 and $250 for students (with day passes going for less).

But that also comes in the form of more than 80 exhibitions staged mostly in and around Milwaukee but also across the state, including in Madison, Sheboygan, Racine, Mineral Point, Paoli, Platteville and Verona. Most are free and open to the public.

Often as aligned with contemporary art as craft traditions, these mostly small exhibits explore some aspect of the year's theme and gather artists who are aligned stylistically or conceptually in some way.

They are the result of a national call for artists and are organized for the local galleries by the artists themselves. Each artist is free to participate in as many or as few as they please.

MORE ONLINE
- To see a photo gallery of images from several regional shows, go to Art City: www.jsonline.com/artcity.
- For more information about the conference, go to the NCECA site: www.nceca.net.
- The Twitter hashtag for the conference is #nceca2014.

Elaine Erickson
Gallery: Gerit Grimm's "Loofing Leda and Swan" is on view.

Racine Art Museum: A Work from "Magic Mud" including "Run" by Beth Cavener Stitcher, made of stoneware, metal and paint.

Elaine Erickson
Gallery: Gerit Grimm's "Loofing Leda and Swan" is on view.

curveballs on its forthcoming album "Ommegadown" (available beginning April 11 at www.myspace.com and www.facebook.com). Plus, as you can probably guess from the band's exclusive performances at jsontime.com/soundcheck, the guys in the band are kind of nuts. (Wah wah.)

Who's who: Charlie Celenza, 22 (drums, percussion); Myles Coyne, 24 (bass); Alex Klosterman, 24 (guitar); Jack Tell, 24 (vocals, banjo, guitar); Nathan Toth, 23 (keyboards). A sixth member, Justin Miller, 24, was unavailable to perform in the Tap Milwaukee studio taping (he plays pedals and piano). Tell spoke for the band.

Day jobs: Celenza cuts down trees and works at Domino's. Coyne runs 414 Flyers. Klosterman goes to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and works in the campus bookstore. Tell works at Fuel Cafe. Toth is a delivery driver and works at Closet Classics. Miller teaches dance classes, works at Skydive Milwaukee and works the chair lift at Devil's Head Resort.

Early influences: My mom (Liz Norton) actually sings and performs. She's done a couple of things with Skylight Music Theatre. She was always trying to get me and my brothers up on stage, but they never really wanted to. They all got instruments for Christmas, and my brothers never learned how to play, so I'd pick it up because I felt bad. I own 16 instruments now, if you count the recorder.

First concert: Warped Tour in 2006. Alkaline Trio was playing. I liked the overall atmosphere of this bigger festival. The energy was really high on every single stage. That stuck in my head that that's how every show should be.

When formed: In 2010. I started writing songs in 2006 right before I went to college at Madison Media Institute, and I went to open mics in 2009. Me and my friend Mike were hanging out in a basement one day, and a good friend of ours,商务 said we should start a band. My friend Mike said we should start a band.
Radio host explored federalism on Harley

that it was smooth sailing for 2,000 miles.

Sagal, a playwright as well as a radio host, tells stories from his time on the road meeting folks, researching the Constitution and finding examples of it at work.

The U.S. Constitution, for instance, allows states to make their own helmet laws.

"It's federalism made real," said Sagal, who wore a helmet, advocates wearing a helmet and doesn't understand how anyone can go without a helmet or face shield considering all the things that fly in your face while you're on a motorcycle.

He knows because he wasn't allowed to wear a face shield during filming.

As he suspected, many people don't actually know the Constitution. They know parts of it. They interpret sections that appeal or pertain to them.

But as a whole, that preamble we all learned in civics class or from "Schoolhouse Rock" is a passing thought.

Sagal compares the Constitution to Peter Pan's Tinkerbell.

"It's only alive as long as everybody claps." Still, he was pleasantly surprised that it holds up.

From page 1

ART CITY

Artists, galleries in sync

many locally generated shows, planned and curated by the local venues themselves.

These concurrent exhibits represent what is perhaps the largest citywide collaboration among arts venues, from major museums to small galleries, to date and a rare incursion of curatorial know-how into our city.

There are many exhibits at the Wisconsin Center that are free and open to the public, and the conference often attracts a contingent of ceramics tourists, who come mostly to look and buy.

Most venues are holding receptions, with the majority scheduled on Thursday evening, what promises to be a sprawling, Gallery Night-like, ceramics-centric art crawl.

Of the exhibits taking place around town, here are several that I'd recommend.

DelLind Gallery of Fine Art
450 E. Mason St.
Artists whose work has existed outside of the trends and fashions of the ceramics world will have work on view as part of "Off Center: Mavericks, Mists and Heretics." The work of these six artists gives priority to content, including politics and social issues. The artists include Barry Bartlett, Eric Hollender, Patrick Long, Anna Bird, Lisa Wolf and Arnie Zimmerman. A reception will be held Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m.

Elena Erickson Gallery
207 E. Buffalo St., first floor

Troubador Art Center
520 E. Main St.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: Denise Pelletier, "On Coming to Be and Passing Away" (detail), slip-cast vitreous china with glaze.

From page 1

Milwaukee Art Museum
700 N. Art Museum Drive
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surprised by the reach of our Constitution in his travels.

"It is sustained by almost all walks of life from ditch diggers to public radio people to the president," Sagai said.

"Almost all people laugh at the principles of the people. It's their actions and uninformed profound beliefs that keep it going."

The documentary took Sagai to Appleton and a tea party rally that didn't make it to the end. The Oak Park, Ill., resident has visited Milwaukee several times, once joining singer Neko Case for oatmeal after a performance at the Riverside Theater.

He saw "A Christmas Carol" at the Pabst Theater and though he talks a lot about the Lakefront Marathon T-shirt, he's a marathon runner. He hasn't yet run the Milwaukee challenge.

Saturday will be Sagai's first tour of the Harley-Davidson Museum where he'll answer questions about the Constitution, the documentary, his time on a Harley (he rides a Triumph at home) and his popular radio show.

"Until Stories with Peter Sagai: 2000 Miles and 225 Years Finding the U.S. Constitution on a Motorcycle" opens at 5:30 p.m. with a VIP reception followed by a presentation and a question-and-answer session beginning at 5:15 p.m.

• Tickets are $75 for the VIP session ($57 for members) and include a copy of Sagai's "The Book of Voice."
• Program admission is $35 for museum members; $40 for nonmembers.
• Tickets are available at h-dmuseum.com.

From page 1

SOUND

Song on the album you're most proud of: "Sun Machine"

"I started drawing a lot of pictures and writing lyrics based off these pictures to try and bring this story together in my head."

COURTESY GREYMATTER GALLERY

Graymatter Gallery: Shannon Sullivan's work will be on view. This piece is titled: "Nature Excels at This Game."

It is described as a "spirited reflection on the labor integral to creativity." Sullivan is a London-based artist who explores the performative nature of working with clay in installations that combine found objects, sound, video, clay and performance. An opening reception will be held Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m. with a performance featuring Sarah Bacher and Kim Miller at 7:30 p.m.

J. Nikolai Art

201 E. Buffal St., 3rd floor

A family-owned business, the Polli Clay Company is located in Wisconsin. Just south of Verona, is celebrated in "Generations of the Polli Clay Family." From elementary schools to the studios of fine artists, the family-run company provides materials across the state and beyond. A long list of artists associated with the company will have work on view. An opening reception will be held Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m.

Guy Gilchrist

Guy Gilchrist Gallery

201 E. Buffal St., 1st floor

A lightly juried show of alumni from the Rochester Institute of Technology will be featured. A reception will be held Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m.

Lynden Sculpture Garden

2405 W. Brown Deer Road, River Hills

The Mingei tradition celebrates a kind of everyday creativity, the belief that humble but beautiful objects made by ordinary people can exist daily living. "The Mingei Tradition in the Midwest: Warren MacKenzie and Beyond" explores this tradition in the Midwest, through one of its leading practitioners and the work of subsequent generations. A reception will be held Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m.

From page 1

SOUND

Album coming

"You've Come a Long Way Baby" album is set for a September release. It's the first album from the band since 1999's "Pure ".

"It's a really exciting time for us," says the band's lead singer, "It's been a long time coming."

"You've Come a Long Way Baby" is a collection of 12 tracks that showcase the band's musical growth and evolution over the past decade. The album features a mix of upbeat, dance-pop and anthemic rock tracks, with lyrics that touch on themes of love, loss and self-discovery.

Animals in Human Attire have an April 11 album release show at Line

Fibe. Debra Fitts, Arthur Gonzalez, Michael Gross, Beth Lo. Ronnie Meyers, Laura O'Donnell, Heidi Preuss Groes, Kevin Spath, Richard Swenson and Sunkoo Yoo. Antennae, known for re-imagining 18th-century decorative arts, will give a talk on Friday at 3 p.m. A reception will be held Friday from 5 to 9 p.m.

Vanguard Sculpture Services

3730 W. Hopkins St.

While a bit of fun on the way, the two shows at this full-service bronze foundry are among the more anticipated. "A Complicated History" features the work of 10 artists who attempt to re-frame and expand on what the, personal, historic, social or cultural. They work in a variety of media and styles, including sculpture, installation, and performance. The reception and exhibition will be held Friday from 5 to 9 p.m.

Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum

2220 N. Ave. Ave.

The "Species & Specimens" exhibit will showcase the work of 11 artists from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's ceramics program. Curated by students and faculty, the exhibition features a diverse range of works, including sculptures, functional pieces, and ceramic art. The reception will be held Saturday from 5 to 9 p.m.