



RI Hydroponics
"Watch it Grow"

WELCOME NEW GROWERS!
RECEIVE 20% OFF YOUR ENTIRE ORDER!
(JUST MENTION THIS AD)

85 Front Street • Woonsocket, RI 02895
401-356-1899
RI-HYDROPONICS.COM

VALENTINES DAY DINNER
SPECTACULAR VEGAN DELIGHT

SPECIAL 5 COURSE MEAL \$60.00 PER COUPLE

VEGGIE FUN

MONDAY TO THURSDAY PREFIX SPECIAL FOR TWO: THREE COURSE PREFIX MENU FOR \$29.95
Soup or Salad Appetizer Two entrees

And we have a full bar:
Asian style cocktails for only \$6.50

KOSHER VEGAN FOOD
127 Dorrance St. | Providence, RI 02903
T:401.270.4700 | F:401.270.7466
www.veggiefunri.com

comedy CONNECTION RHODE ISLAND 39 Warren Ave | E. Providence 401.438.8383 ricomedyconnection.com

HBO NBC COMEDY TRAINED


AMAZING JOHNATHON
JANUARY 31 • 8PM

DANNY KELLY
FEBRUARY 1 • 8PM
FEBRUARY 2 • 8PM & 10:15PM

LENNY CLARKE
FEBRUARY 14 • 8PM

CRAIG SHOEMAKER
FEBRUARY 15 • 8PM

Let's be friends.
Fan us on Facebook.



Art

ASTONISHING VISIONS

"X-TRA ZEUS!" SHOWCASES PROVIDENCE'S COMICS SUPERHEROES

BY GREG COOK

Providence is so flush with creative talent that it's easy to take it for granted and assume that most towns have it this good. But when it comes to comics and graphics, we have some of the best artists anywhere — no question. So even a seemingly small, quick, pick-up show like "X-TRA ZEUS! New Comics & Drawings" can astonish.

It's a roundup of 20 comics artists with ties to Providence (some have since moved to New York and western Massachusetts). There are certainly some traditional superhero doodlers around town, but this show highlights Providence's comics strength: weirdo, feral, personal, punk, outsider, sci-fi shenanigans.

The show decorates the walls of World's Fair, which opened at the recording studio and music venue Machines With Magnets (400 Main St, Pawtucket, through February 15) last November.

"We're a gallery with a cocktail bar," explains Willa Van Nostrand, an artist and curator. Her background includes studies of theater, writing, printmaking, and slow food. Lately she's been working with Providence's Buonaccorsi + Agniel gallery while also operating her own "cocktail catering company," Little Bitte. Right now the gallery is "open for music shows. We're also open by appointment," Van Nostrand says. She aims to put on new group shows every two months and eventually be open four days a week. "The idea is to be program-driven and have really great events," she says. "We have a performance series coming in March."

"X-TRA ZEUS!" features Katrina Silander Clark's drawings from her 2013 calendar. A woman and her dog stick their heads among the steaks and pop-sicles in their freezer on a scorching summer day; a woman (the ladies seem to be self-portraits) reading up on "Snake Care" as she lounges in bed with her cat and two giant snakes. The drawings are charming and obsessive. Her mix of careful observation and dreaming is convincingly noted in scenes packed with psychologically-charged details.

Brian Chippendale's five-page comic *Hey Hider* is about a scarecrow-like fellow with an invisible face winning a gunfight — unarmed. And then getting threatened with public exposure by a pair of creeps. With Chippendale, you often feel a bit lost — in a good, intriguing way — in a claustrophobic world of rundown factories, overgrown parks, and haunted temples. It's like a paranoid freakout mashup



PARANOID FREAKOUT MASHUP
A detail of Chippendale's *Hey Hider*.



CHARMING AND OBSESSIVE A drawing by Silander Clark.

of, say, superheroes, *Willy Wonka*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. And Chippendale fills all his pages with buzzing marks.

Mickey Zacchilli's visionary drawing shows a cigarette-smoking wolf-headed minotaur-thing with a snake dick. The image emerges from amidst drips and splatters, as if she was drawing on the edge of spinning out of control. Her art is always filled with an amazing, wild, feral crackle. It's past due for someone to put together a solo show of her comics, drawings, and screenprints.

The show also features CF's cosmic surreal adventures, Clayton Schiff's bizarre wanderings of a turtle and worm, Tom Bubul's cartoonish abstracted fever dream of washing dishes, and Cybele Collins's clawed, fire-breathing lady monster. Many of the artists favor the tried and true underground comics mix of funny/creepy animals, gonzo gags, monsters, and raunchy jokes. But the patron saint of this stuff is surely punk visionary Gary Panter, a New Yorker who is perhaps better known for his award-winning set designs for *Peewee's Playhouse*.

Providence comics' bench is so deep that even the kind of shitty comics here have an inspired nutty magnetism, like Bryan Dufresne's goof about Michael Jackson actually being a space alien, by way of Roswell, New Mexico. There's no way you'll be bored. ©



FERAL CRACKLE An untitled work by Zacchilli.

Read Greg Cook's blog at gregcookland.com/journal.