



Charlie Adlard, *The Walking Dead*

The Man Behind the Decapitated Heads: An Interview with Charlie Adlard

Katelyn Cochran

Halloween is looming and zombies are on the minds of fans of the critically acclaimed *The Walking Dead*. Not only will October see the release of the eighth hardcover graphic novel of *The Walking Dead*, but the equally famous television show based on the comic series returns for a third season on the 14th of this macabre month. Charlie Adlard, lead artist for *The Walking Dead*, is the man responsible for the images of ever-advancing zombies, desperate and dismayed survivors, and a katana wielding badass that have been tattooed on the brains of the comic's fans. Mr. Adlard became the lead artist for *The Walking Dead* after taking the reins from original artist Tony Moore for issue #7. In May, Adlard, also known for his work in *Curse of the Wendigo*, *Savage*, *Rock Bottom*, and *Codeflesh*, was kind enough to answer some questions for ARTicles via Skype all the way from the U.K.

What came first for you? Comics, art, illustration...?

I was always drawing when I was really young. When I was about six or seven, my dad brought me home a copy of *The Mighty World of Marvel #1*, which was a British reprint of the American comics. It was the first issue. It was all in black and white and it had *Spiderman*, *Fantastic Four*, and, I think it was *The Incredible Hulk*, and it just sort of combined with my love

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ARTicles is a student-driven publication of the Chaffey College Center for the Arts. It is published twice each semester by a consortium of students with a passion for the arts, entertainment and culture. The content reflects a diverse sample of the cultural life at the college. ARTicles is generously supported by the Chaffey College Marketing Department.



Charlie Adlard, Michonne from *The Walking Dead*

Charlie Adlard, continued from front page

of drawing. All of a sudden I saw a reason to sort of channel that interest and, at such a young age while I was scribbling away on loads and loads of drawing pads, consequently, got into drawing comics. And then, I sort of discovered “art”, with a capital “A”, later on when I did art at school. I went on to a degree in filmmaking, oddly enough, after having done an art foundation course, which is a years worth of doing every sort of discipline in the arts... sculpture, painting. That, at the tender age of eighteen, opened up my eyes to all these sorts of other art forms. I was leaning toward comics up until then. Literally, from the age of six or seven that’s kind of what I wanted to do. It wasn’t until I got to about eighteen that I realized it’s hard, the world out there, and that I could, you know, possibly explore.

Cliff Rathburn does the grayscale for *The Walking Dead*. Can you describe your relationship? Does your artwork dictate what he grayscales? Or, do you guys work together?

Kind of. The grayscaling, not to take anything away from Cliff because he does a really good job, is kind of a slight nod to the commercial aspect of comics. I wasn’t the original artist, but when [Robert Kirkman] created [*The Walking Dead*] he wanted it to be black and white and that has been the modus operandi of the whole thing. It will never go color. There’s the old story of Quentin Tarantino shooting that bit in *Kill Bill Vol. 1*. It’s all in black and white and the actual reason it’s in black and white is because you could get it past the censor, rather than shooting a bloody, red color. So, there’s an element of that and there’s also an element of homage to the original *Night of the Living*

Dead, which was obviously in black and white. The main reason I think it’s grayscaled is to distract the audience a bit from the fact that it is black and white. It was a risky thing to do a black and white comic. Black and white comics notoriously don’t sell. If you produced a stark, literally black and white image, which is how you would see my artwork, you sanitize it a bit by putting it grayscaled. It makes a nice, little, soft blanket for the fans so it’s not so harsh. Originally, I think those three reasons were the reason it was grayscaled.

You are constantly drawing characters performing outlandish functions, such as chopping zombie’s head’s off. Where did you obtain your grasp of the human form?

Constant practice! I did a lot of live drawing. I was lucky, I went to school that had a really good art department. I think from about the age of fifteen or sixteen, you could do live drawing which is quite a rarity at school, especially with a bunch of testosterone filled boys when a female model comes in. So, that taught me a lot, live drawing. I’m a firm believer that whatever form of art that you’re doing you get inspired by literally looking out your window. The best artists always have an eye for everything around them. They’ll notice stuff and sort of lock it in their brains somewhere so they can bring it forth some point later on in their life. So, I just naturally look at stuff and draw everyday so that it has to get better.

Which body part or emotion is most difficult to achieve?

The action is actually easy. All the action stuff is easy. It’s time consuming, but it’s easy. What gets me excited and is more challenging is the emotional stuff. I actually prefer drawing the emotional stuff in *The Walking Dead*. That’s what I really, really enjoy. It’s the sort of personal interactions and the heightened emotions that the situations bring on. Stuff like that is so much more interesting to me than another zombie attack. It’s a challenge doing a book like this. You don’t want to make your art too overpowering because it’s not that sort of book. It’s a very, very dialogue lead book. It’s not like an action book. The majority of *The Walking Dead* moments are dialogue bits, which Robert writes fantastically. The challenge is to sort of hold back enough to make the dialogue shine and then try and keep an element of realism, yet, drawing it in a way that hopefully gets the artwork noticed as well. It’s treading a bit of a fine line. It’s real balanced. I don’t mind over the top comics. If the plot is ridiculous you might as well draw it over the top. But, I’ve never been into the bombastic. I’ve always been a big fan of European comics which are a lot more subtle. I lean towards more illustrative art

Charlie Adlard, continued from page 2

more than the bombastic, in-your-face art. In a lot of ways, *The Walking Dead* is perfect for my art style. Neil Gaiman wrote a famous book called *The Sandman*, and it was incredibly dialogue heavy. I think a lot of artists shied away from drawing *The Sandman* because they knew they couldn't shine through the really nice dialogue. You want to work on a book that is critically acclaimed, yet, you know for a fact that people are not necessarily picking it up for the artwork.

Comics tend to appear flat with very distinct foregrounds and backgrounds. The layering of objects restricts the images from appearing dimensional. You are able to create such depth and a tone of isolation. How do you achieve that despite not having too much detail?

It's just one of those things. I see the obvious stuff and it doesn't exactly float my boat. It's all very stylistic and it strikes me as always having a similar look, which I know is completely wrong because a friend of mine just sent me some stuff that is completely different, so, I stand corrected. It's such a massive minefield. There's a massive amount of comics and it's almost too scary, at my tender age, to even attempt to break in to it and see who I like and who I don't. In answer to your other question, I don't know how many artists can explain how they work. I literally sit down and I do it. I cannot explain it more than that. All I can say is just practice, practice, practice and working literally every day on doing it. What I do find is a lot of artists who do talk about their work a lot and can explain it tend to not be the best ones. Years and years ago, I worked for a while in New York for about a month and a half. I was working in this office doing comics for this comic company and there was an inker who was working behind me. I was just penciling at the time because, generally, I do both, and I could constantly hear him go, "Yes, I am going to use a .2 nib now..." and he had this rock of equipment by him. I use the minimal equipment. Just a couple of pens will do. I looked at his work afterwards and I couldn't tell if that was done by this sort of pen and that was done by this. It wasn't very good either. He wasn't the best inker in the world, but by listening to him it sounded like he was the world's greatest inker because of his complete knowledge of all the equipment he had. A lot of artists, not to blow my own trumpet, just get on with the job and do it and really can't explain it. It's just a natural thing that comes out of your hand. It just kind of happens. There are things I think about, that I am conscious of, especially on *The Walking Dead*. What is actually quite useful is the heavy deadlines

I always tend to go toward the design rather than, "Oh, let's draw somebody getting decapitated on the front cover." -Charlie Adlard

we have. You can't think about it, you just got to get on with it and you got to sit down and start. People ask "How do you do a page? How'd you start it?", I start from the top left hand to the right. It's as simple as that. You don't think about it. You just go in there and just start. When you've got the page and it's finished, you don't pour over it and adjust things. God, believe you me, there are some pages that I've done that make my teeth grind because it took about two hours to draw and I should have perhaps spent four hours drawing it, but I just didn't have the time. The advantage to something like that is you don't over think stuff. It just flows, it's natural. Hopefully, you get a hit rate of more than fifty percent.

One aspect that draws me to your work is the shadows. You use negative space very effectively and have interesting compositions. Is your shadow work preconceived?

The black is a bit more preconceived because you can't just stick those down willy-nilly. When I was really young, the first artist I actually got into was Michael Golden. He was drawing a comic strip called *The Micronauts* at the time, based on the 70's, action figure toys... pretty hokey thing to be doing for a comic strip, but he made it look unique and his artwork was amazing. He used a lot of black which was quite rare for an artist back in the 70's. Most artists were drawing to have it colored, so they were more conscious of it. There was more line work which, when you are looking at black and white comics, it doesn't look as good on the page because there is a lot of space. Whereas Golden's work was this real stark design, black and white, solid black's here and there, dotted around the page to make the whole page look interesting, not just the one panel. That, obviously, sparked something in me. I

can't ever remember making a conscious decision to say, "I'm going to use a lot of blacks too," it's just something I've naturally done. I like the design aspect of blacks. I'm quite interested in design as well and how things look in general and how to put together an image that looks pleasing to the eye, rather than just throwing a bunch of figures on the page. That's always been a bone of contention between me and various people at Image, Skybound, and *The Walking Dead* because I always tend to go toward the design rather than, "Oh, let's draw somebody getting decapitated on the front cover," and I go, "Let's not do that, let's do something a bit more interesting." I try very consciously to try to come up with something a bit more interesting, especially with covers. But, like I said, I always loved black and some of my

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The Woman Behind The Wig

Timothy Haerens

No, not that kind of wig! I'm talking about the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art, located on the Rancho Cucamonga campus of Chaffey College. Those who have visited this splendid facility will tell you that it's a meaningful part of the Chaffey experience. The Wignall offers students, and also the greater community, a place to experience contemporary art in a stimulating environment. Since the Wignall is often the first museum or gallery a Chaffey College student will visit, it seeks to "provide an exciting first encounter with the visual arts; something extraordinary and engaging."

Obviously, this doesn't happen by accident. It requires a tremendous amount of effort and hard work. We are fortunate to have Rebecca Trawick as the director and curator of the Wignall. Who is this woman behind the place we affectionately call "The Wig?" Born in Hudson, Wisconsin, and weighing in at only 2 pounds 10 ounces at birth, Rebecca was adopted when she was about five months old. Along with her three brothers, she was reared by a "pharmacist dad and a stay-at-home mom" in Sparta, WI, a town with a population of 8,648, located on the western side of the state. When Rebecca was born, the doctors feared she had several disabilities, which included the inability to hear and see. She didn't respond to auditory or visual stimuli until she was approximately six to eight months of age. Thankfully, she overcame these challenges.

I asked Rebecca to tell me about the time she noticed she was becoming interested in art. "I was never *not* interested in art, although admittedly I don't think I visited my first museum until I was about 18." She remembers as a child being motivated by her eldest brother, Russ. "Watching him draw and paint always inspired me, and he and my mom were both very encouraging." Rebecca willingly accepted the "moniker" of "The Family Artist" early on, which helped propel her through what "could have been a rough childhood."

Trawick shares that there was an advantage to growing up in a small town. "My grade school art teacher moved up to the high school along with me, and so I was able to have almost-consistent support from an art teacher all through my education. I still keep in touch with my art teacher, Mr. Stuntebeck," whom she says taught her much "about traditional techniques in art." Because she struggled with shyness, Rebecca would spend considerable time by herself. As a result, during her middle and high school years, she would draw obsessively, copying "hundreds of images from magazines."

When it came time for her to go to college, Trawick knew that she wanted to go to art school, and "MCAD

(Minneapolis College of Art & Design) fit the bill." It was there that her "mind was really opened and expanded," as well as her skills. Unfortunately, after attending MCAD for a couple of years, she could no longer afford the tuition and decided to transfer to the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, where she studied art with an emphasis on drawing and painting. She also pursued her interest in Native American art and history. Although initially unhappy about the transfer, she says that it "was a good choice." It was there that Trawick earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Studio Art and American Indian Studies.

Shortly after graduation, Rebecca returned to MCAD where she was hired as the Assistant to the Director of the MCAD Gallery and Continuing Studies. "It was there that I was able to be involved in every aspect of running



Rebecca Trawick at the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art
Photo Timothy Haerens

a gallery and facilitating a number of visual artist fellowships, and it ignited something in me." Because of her work ethic, organizational and researching skills and attention to detail, coupled with her creativity, curiosity, and interest in "big ideas," curating seemed to be the perfect avenue for her energies. In 1999 she curated her first exhibition, which proved to be a life-changing experience. She fell in love with the process and knew

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Seclusion

Ann Tran

The set of four pieces of art are sequenced from left to right. When drawn inward into this collaborative masterpiece, the onlooker is no longer just an observer, he is a traveler. His journey begins through what seems to be a beckoning, never ending hallway. The walls of the hall are black; the hall itself is a soft, cloudy white. From this, a sense of security arises, comfort. Such emotions parallel to the tunnel with a bright light at the end, a commonly reported near death experience, yet there is delight on this journey, trust, trust in that the traveler does not know to where the road may lead, yet is driven forth by the fuel of curiosity, willingly and acceptingly. Engulfed in overwhelming wanderlust, the lone traveler meanders forward.

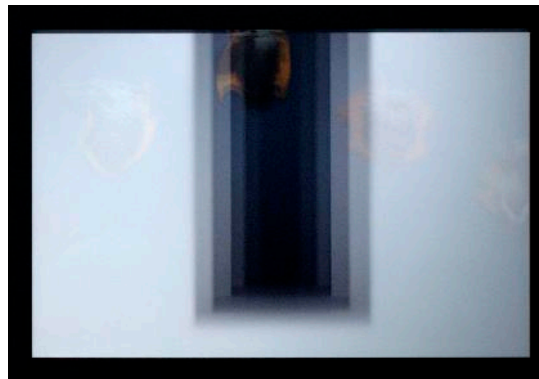
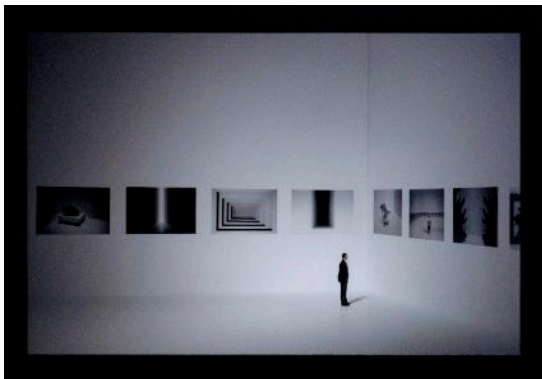
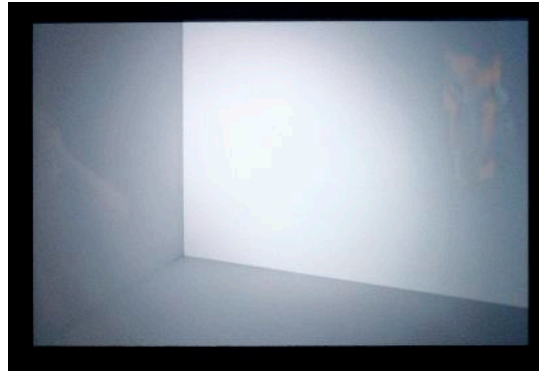
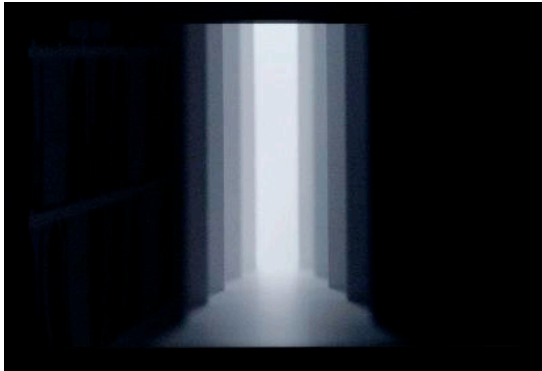
The white pathway leads the traveler into the following image, an empty corner. Silence. In reality, the Wignall Museum itself is filled with several sparse sets of whispers; however, the traveler is drawn into the depths of the corner. There is absolutely nothing here. The traveler then realizes that he himself does not exist within this space. Thus, the

immaterialized individual is now without sensory, but is only left with perception. Without his body, he has no pain. Without any objects there is no analysis. Time, too, is nonexistent. Without time, there is no worry, hesitation, or limit. Nothing here matters. He is happy, for he is free. He is in the highest state of enlightenment: he is in nirvana. All that truly remains within the confines of this corner are the silent echoes of absolute nothingness.

The same silence accompanies the spirited traveler into an image of an art museum. Perfection. No other image can ever be so meticulous. It is not only the impeccable linear adorning of the paintings and of the precise angle of which the room is portrayed that denotes perfection, but also the singular suited man as he silently observes the paintings. Observation and analysis, when done in indefinite isolation, creates perfection. With all the collective thoughts gathered into the man, the traveler becomes the man. Stillness. Like the last nail on the wall of a vacated house, the traveler is left in sheer tranquility, alone, yet in complete harmony. Without the burdens of life, of another being, or

of any other sound, the lone traveler can acknowledge the merit in reclusion and gain its therapeutic value.

Suddenly, the dominating blackness of the final image denotes a hallway with vibes completely opposite of those from the white dominated hallway of the first image. There is no comfort here; there is only anger. As if rudely awoken by an overly high volume alarm clock, the traveler is pushed out of his exploration, and slapped rudely in the face by reality. And he is himself again, in a small art museum comprised of hushed and scattered students. There is no solitude here, nor anywhere. He becomes suddenly aware of life's oppression of personal space. Longingly, he



Mora Douk, *Untitled*, 2012. Archival pigment prints

"Composition and its friends, Ten Seconds and Fifteen Seconds, to name a few, become the subjects. The paper constructions are tools used to shape and manipulate light. These seemingly simple architectural models play on the idea of fleeting dreams and personal space. The very details that pull you into the photographs push you back out only to serve as a reminder that these are low-tech, small-scale constructions made from card-stock, foam board, and cut-out photographs."

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favorite artists in comic books have always used strong black. It's an illustrative thing. I love 60's and 70's, American, classic lifestyle illustration. That something I try to achieve. Trying to make stuff pop. In this industry, or the magazine industry or an industry where you are literally shelved with a hundred other look-a-like type publications, you want yours to pop and not just the title. You want your cover to go BING off the shelf. Especially in the American comic book industry. It's really hard when you're on a shelf with dozens and dozens of superhero characters screaming from the page. I don't want to do that. I don't want to draw somebody doing that. I want to draw something a bit more restrained.

Which comic book artists have excited you recently?

It all sort of goes full circle back to illustrative art, more than in-your-face superhero art. Mostly, I like U.K. and American artists. Two of them are good friends of mine actually; Sean Phillips and Duncan Fegredo are really good British guys. Duncan actually did *Hellboy* for a long time. Sean does a lot of crime, noir stuff. In America, there's guys like Tommy Lee Edwards and John Paul Leon. There's a guy I recently got into called Sean Murphy. The one thing they've all got in common, I sort of discovered, is they have this incredible, more illustrative side to them. They are more conscious of how the page and design look. They also do really good backgrounds which not many American, superhero artists do. That's kind of why I love the European comic industry as well because they have this sense of everything around them, rather than just the characters. With the Europeans, you get not only this great illustrative sense but a great sense of place because of their attention to detail in the background.

Which artists influence you outside of comics? Maybe architects, painters, sculptors, graphic designers?

I do really like modern architecture, oddly enough. Though, I haven't a clue who's who apart from Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and people like that. That's got me going back to my "Art" A level, which is what you did at eighteen in the U.K. That's where all my architectural knowledge stems



Charlie Adlard, *The Curse of the Wendigo*

from. I've also been getting into fashion design artists as well. There is a fashion designer named David Downton. I will buy any illustration he has in books. I think he's fantastic and that's slightly away from the obvious stuff I normally like. Painters... actually, I'm going to see a

Francis Bacon exhibition in London next week with Sean Phillips.

What advice do you have for artists pursuing work in the world of comics?

I'm going to say a horrendously clichéd thing. I know I am going to sound like I am a judge on the *X-Factor* or something like that, but it is so important to be yourself. What I mean, don't get distracted by somebody else's style or something like that, where you think, "He's doing well. Therefore, I should draw like this person." Always pursue your own path. Even myself, there's plenty of people I admire and that I think are better than I am, but one thing I'm mindful of is I sort of take their techniques I never apply them directly to what I am doing. I look at their techniques and sort of lock them in my head and then suddenly I find myself one day doing something slightly like them but in my own style. So, my brain has sort of processed it and it's come out like how I draw anyway. I think it's really important not to get waylaid by seeing artist X and thinking, "Well, that's popular. Therefore, I am going to try and draw like that." If

you draw like yourself, you'll always improve more than if you try and draw like somebody else. I'm just coming up with all the clichés now, but be yourself and keep practicing. If you're confident enough and you know you're good enough, keep going.

immediately that she had found her niche.

So, what exactly does a curator do and what are some of the responsibilities of being Director and Curator? Trawick states, "A curator is defined as 'a person in charge of a museum or gallery, and its collections.' Because my title is Director and Curator, of course, my job description includes much more than the job description of a curator. Both Roman Stollenwerk, Assistant Curator, and I work to research and curate temporary exhibitions including research, studio visits, organizing shipping and deliveries, designing the exhibition, working with graphic artists and our marketing department to create all printed matter and marketing pieces related to an exhibition, and creating public/educational programs. We also work with outside guest curators on occasion. Because we're a small institution, both Roman and I 'do a little of everything,' but my main objectives in addition to exhibition development and execution are providing oversight and the creation of a vision for the Wignall Museum within the college's mission, community outreach, program development and execution, events management, fundraising, marketing, advocacy, and collaborations both on and off-campus are crucial to our ability to be successful."

What is most fulfilling about her job? Trawick reveals, "One of the most fulfilling aspects of the job is working in an educational environment that allows questioning, that encourages big ideas, and that demands creativity and collaboration. I love working closely with students (student visitors, artists and staff) and the community of professionals at the college, and it's fantastic to get to work closely with some of the best artists of the 21st century. Many of the contemporary artists we've worked with represent some of the smartest, most inquisitive people I've met!"

A few years ago, Rebecca decided to put creating art on the backburner so that she could excel in other areas of her life. Fortunately, she feels that the work she does curating and running an art space feeds her creative nature. Career, motherhood and marriage take precedence over the studio work she might be doing. Someday she hopes to make the shift back into her studio work when the timing seems right. "My family is very supportive, indeed. My husband is also in a creative field (he's a tattoo artist); he understands what it means to work in this industry."

I asked Rebecca, "What advice can you offer Chaffey art students?" She replied, "I'd say one of the most important things for me was to look for a way to merge my passions with my skills – so try to be flexible as you move toward a career. Also, know that I've read we're training students today for jobs that don't yet exist. Entrepreneurship, innovation, collaboration – all of those are important in the workplace and will become even more important in the

future. Be a well-rounded person – I'd encourage you to study any/all of the things you're interested in (even if not in the classroom – read!) As an artist or creative thinker, all of it will inform you in one way or the other. Get experience any way you can – volunteer, look for internships, seek out new opportunities. Immerse yourself in the community or the study of your choice, and ask questions!"

Obviously, Rebecca Trawick plays an important role in making the Wignall Museum the showcase it is today. We are fortunate to have her as an active and viable member of the Chaffey community. And, if you can relate to her story about having reached the age of eighteen without having visited a museum, I invite you to put the Wig on! That is, put it on your "to do list" and make it happen. You'll be happy you did.

Center for the Arts Presents Fall 2012

Fall Dance Student Showcase 2012

Friday, October 19, 2012 at 5:00 pm in
CAA-206 (seating on north side of CAA)

Chaffey College's third annual student dance works showcase will feature new student choreography in a variety of dance styles, including modern, contemporary ballet, jazz, hip hop, ballroom, tap, and creative fusions, in an informal evening's performance! Choreography by Chaffey Students, Artistic Director: Michele Jenkins.

Musical Theatre and Acting Showcase

Tuesday, October 23, 2012 at 5:00 pm in the
Chaffey College Theatre

Theatre students will perform a variety of acting and musical scenes selected directly from class projects. Hosted by Christa El-Said and Kelly Ford, Theatre Department.

Art and Perception

Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at 5:00pm in
CAA-211

As soon as you have something defined, you stop looking. As soon as you stop looking, you are cut off from a sort of living knowing, and the nourishment this provides. This talk presented by Art Professor Stan Hunter will be about how art keeps the process of seeing alive, and how artists/architects/musicians spend things to keep us looking and listening.

ARTicles

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ARTicles seeks creative students with writing, photography and graphic design skills to participate in the production of this exciting publication on the visual and performing arts at Chaffey College. This is an excellent opportunity for students with aspirations in the arts, with emphasis on writing, criticism, publishing, photography, graphic design, art history and museum studies.

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becomes envious of the lone man in the third painting. He realizes that life is rushed. Hardly ever does he seek or even appreciate the blissful serenity that blissful solitude emanates. There is always something that needs to be done, somewhere that he needs to be. The only time that he is truly alone and without burden is in his sleep, and even his dreams come close to nothing in comparison to the realm that he just meandered through. Such irony, for these "...low-tech, small-scale constructions made from card-stock, foam board, and cut-out photographs," are all simple mediums and yet, they fabricate such a complex work of art. The traveler walks away, hoping to never forget the true beauty in both solitude and in simplicity.

Ann Tran won the 2011-2012 Art Writing Essay Contest, sponsored by the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art and ARTicles. This article was the winning piece. Congratulations, Ann! – ARTicles editors

YOUNG AT heART FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2012

10AM-2PM THE GROUNDS SURROUNDING THE WIGNALL MUSEUM
OF CONTEMPORARY ART, CHAFFEY COLLEGE

PLEASE JOIN US AT THIS FREE EVENT!

Artists and craftspeople from our communities will share their artwork for sale, Inland Empire Harmony Carousel and the Rancho Cucamonga Ukelele Strummers will provide entertainment. Artwork and food for sale! This event is free and open to the public.

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