

arts & entertainment

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Art zine turns glossy but maintains graffiti ethos

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After six years, Beautiful/Decay, an art magazine founded by Amir H. Fallah as a Kinko's generated after-school activity, is now a profitable business.

Fallah, creative editor of Beautiful/Decay, an artist and former UCLA fine-arts student founded the magazine to create a venue for emerging artist whose work, might not fit the mold of traditionally defined artists.

"Sometimes, I come across art and I feel like I need a dictionary and a thesaurus to find out what it means," Fallah said. "Good art should have layers and depth. But it should also

be visually appealing right off the bat."

The quarterly magazine covers anything from digital illustrations to conceptual art, Fallah said. When it comes to selecting the individual pieces, there is no formula. The magazine will feature anything Fallah gets a sensation from. Like the name of the magazine, a lot of what Fallah loves about art isn't conventional.

In terms of selection, "(Beautiful/Decay) is really all over the place," Fallah said. Only a quarter of the artists that submit to the magazine are accepted, and Fallah finds most artists on the Internet after extensive research.

"I just see it and think it will fit in with an issue we are work-

ing on."

In a recent issue, one finds naked, hairless wax sculptures by artist Richard Stipls, photographs of Los Angeles fire-fighters inside dark burning fire training facilities by Becky Brister and animated colorful images painted on quilts by Ai Kijima.

"A lot of the art we feature is not huge yet," Fallah said. "It is kind of either on the verge or (artists that) no one has ever heard of."

"We do not want to be like every other magazine where we cover everything for an ad or quick buck."

Fallah does not mind exposing his readers to something they are not used to. He says similar art magazines often "dumb down" their contents to keep readers comfy, but (Beautiful/Decay) utilizes emerging artists to throw something entirely new the reader's way.

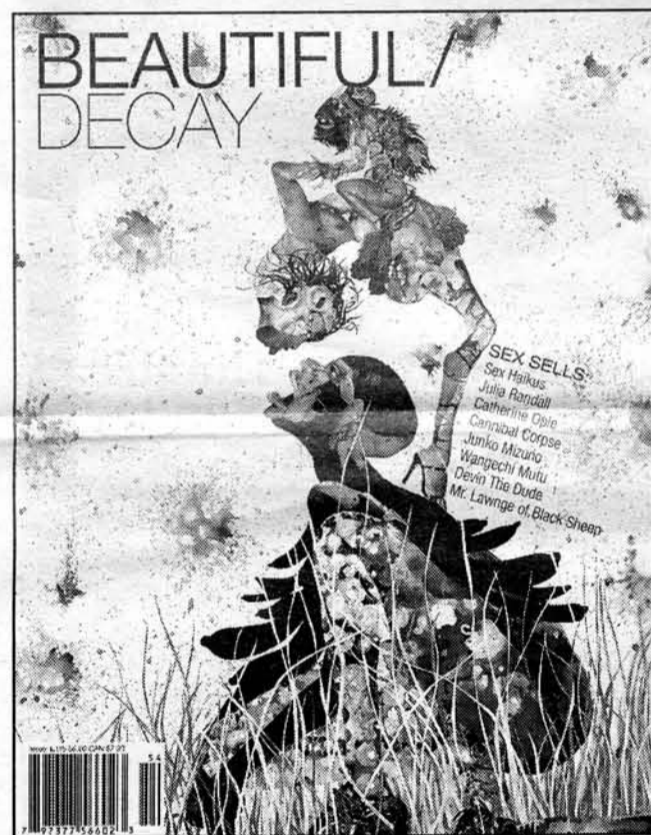
For example, in the May issue entitled "Thy Darkness," artist Banks Violette deals with subject matters like heavy metal and Devil worshipping and has done a series of work on Norwegian church burnings by black metal bands.

Even though Violette's work is not really flashy and in your face like readers are used to, tossing in something like that along with routine articles makes the magazine a much more interesting read, Fallah said.

"I want (the readers) to walk away learning about something they had no idea existed," Fallah said.

When researching new art, Fallah evaluates each work while taking the genre into consideration.

"A mistake a lot of people make is they mistake graffiti art



BEAUTIFUL/DECAY



The May issue of Beautiful/Decay features Banks Violette, who deals with subject matters like Norwegian Devil worshipping.

for fine art and vice versa," said Fallah, who tries to appreciate each genre for what it is. "By the end of the day, they're different practicum."

Fallah received his Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the Maryland Institute College of Art followed by his M.F.A from UCLA. Fallah, 27, exhibits his own paintings internationally. His work is semi-abstract, and

his current collection references Persian miniature paintings.

Fallah started the first color issue of Beautiful/Decay in 2001 with money he earned from selling five paintings in a show in New York. After a couple issues he met with business partners Ben Osher and Fubz, people he says brought business and marketing know-how to the magazine. Osher and Fubz together

established a hip-hop record label and brought a creative marketing energy to the magazine, Fallah said.

Fallah first dabbled in publishing while in high school in Fairfax, Virginia.

Fallah's quest for a creative outlet led him to print the first black and white issues of Beautiful/Decay, then a small noncommercial art zine.

Cuban revolutionary gems finally on U.S. free market

Review

BEJAN SIAVOSHY
DAILY SUNDIAL

Communist-inspired funk music may sound like some musical anomaly that will make for a better joke than a serious release, but "Si, Para Usted: The Funky Sounds of Revolutionary Cuba Vol. One" shatters any sense of skepticism as soon as the bongos hit your ear.

Each of the 17 tracks on the album exhibit the vast range of audible experiments that sprouted up during the heyday of a post-revolution Cuba. Although these records see-sawed between the epicenter and the outskirts of popular music during their time, the musicianship is nothing less than virtuoso level.

With each track having the right combination of solid instrumentalism and artistic bravado, no song is predictable or repetitive and they throw the thought of "boring" out the window.

The artist on the track that kicks off the compilation is legendary trombone player Juan Pablo

Torres and Grupo Algo Nuevo's "Son al Propulsion." Starting off with a simple percussion piece, the drums are electrified by a thick layer of fuzz guitar and the fiery blasts of Torres' trombone.

With no other track matching this sound or level of ferocity, "Son al Propulsion" isn't the archetypal foreshadow of what the following songs on the album are going to sound like. It tells the listener simply to expect the unexpected.

This album is one of the most impressive and interesting compilations of Cuban music to hit the states in a long time. Since the U.S. has washed its hands of dealing with Cuba directly, American music companies and collectors weren't dealing with Cuba's only recording and distribution label at the time, the state-owned EGREM records.

Dan Zacks of Canada's Waxing Deep radio show took the trip down to the island country and dug deep into EGREM records' storehouse for the album, choosing to shine light on the forgotten greats of Cuban music.

You don't need to hate capitalism, have a Che Guevara T-shirt or be obsessed with the Buena Vista Social Club to enjoy "Si, Para Usted." Just check it out if you are into listening to good music.

