



Today In Culture, Friday, September 20, 2024: Artadia Names Directors | Pickle Croissant From Jeff Tweedy x Daisies | R.I.P. Juan Ramirez

BY RAY PRIDE | SEPTEMBER 20, 2024





"1919," from "Chicago Ghost Signs"/Photo: Ray Pride

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ART

Artadia Names Directors

Mary Kemper Wolf, strategist and independent curator, and Brendan Fernandes, artist and recipient of the Artadia Award, have been named to the Artadia Board of Directors. Wolf has served as chair of the board of trustees at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art since 2013 and has been on the boards of Mass MoCA, The American Jazz Museum and Addison Gallery of American Art. Brendan Fernandes is an internationally recognized artist working

at the intersection of dance and visual arts. Based in Chicago, his projects “address issues of race, queer culture, migration, protest and other forms of collective movement. Committed to creating new spaces and new forms of agency, Brendan’s projects take on hybrid forms: part ballet, part queer dance party, part protest to foster collaboration and solidarity through actions of generosity and kindness. Brendan is a 2019 Chicago Artadia Awardee.”

The Fight To Champion Detroit’s Black Artists

In July, curator and scholar Kelli Morgan “launched the Black Artists Archive to honor overlooked histories and affect change in the present,” reports Hyperallergic, “a nonprofit aimed at documenting the long history of Black arts in Detroit and sharing it with a wider audience.”

Michigan State Accused of Censoring Pro-Palestine Artwork

Michigan State University “is accused of censorship after abruptly canceling a large art event at the campus’ Broad Art Museum and altering the display of a Palestinian solidarity artwork in the exhibition ‘Diasporic Collage: Puerto Rico and the Survival of a People,’” reports Hyperallergic. Scheduled for Friday, September 13, “the Broad’s Fall Opening Party was axed on the day of the event without notice. The party was meant to celebrate the opening of several exhibitions at the museum, including ‘Diasporic Collage,’ Esmaa Mohamoud’s ‘Complex Dreams,’ ‘Seeing in 360 Degrees: The Zaha Hadid Design Collection’ and ‘Samia Halaby: Eye Witness.’”

DESIGN

Interest Rate Cuts Should Bolster City Development

“We need to have cranes in the sky,’ said [the] founding principal of Farpoint Development, one of the developers aiming to build a seven million-square-foot innovation hub on the former site of Michael Reese Hospital in Bronzeville. ‘We have a (Fulton Market) multifamily that we want to get in the ground but can’t. The cost of construction is too much,’” reports the Tribune. The first federal interest rate cut since the pandemic could “help kick off the construction of new apartment complexes across downtown Chicago and dot the skyline with cranes. Thousands of residents want to move downtown, especially to amenity-rich neighborhoods in the West Loop such as Fulton Market, and developers have been aching to break ground on new projects.”

Chronicling The Process Of Creating The Salt Shed

“She never intended to become a photographer but that is what Sandra Steinbrecher is and in her new book ‘The Salt Shed: The Transformation of a Chicago Landmark,’ she shows herself to be an extraordinary one,” reports Rick Kogan at the Tribune. “There is not a day, not one day over the last three years that I have not thought about this place, whether I was on site or not,” she says. “From the first photo, it seemed momentous to me. But I never imagined how much work it would be. This is a Chicago story, but I think it could, or should, resonate with other cities, as all communities have to figure out how to manage their empty or abandoned buildings”

Ramova Landmarked; Anti-Gentrification Ordinance Endorsed; No Decision On St. Adalbert

City Council’s Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards “approved final landmarking status for Ramova Theater in Bridgeport and endorsed a sweeping anti-gentrification ordinance on the Northwest Side,” [details Block Club](#). (More on the landmarking [here](#).) “Local Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez pleaded with colleagues to approve the landmark designation for the five-building St. Adalbert church campus,” [adds the Sun-Times](#). “The Archdiocese of Chicago was equally adamant in arguing against the blanket designation on grounds it would create a financial burden and complicate efforts to find a buyer for the campus.”

More Details On Developing United Center Parking Lots

“According to the developers, the United Center is the second-busiest arena in the nation and third in the world. They believe this is crucial in landing loans and funding for the project to supplement their own capital. Design work for the masterplan and phase one is being led by Los Angeles-based design firm RIOS, with Field Operations working on the landscape,” [reports Chicago YIMBY](#). “Efforts for the masterplan are being led by the Reinsdorf and Wirtz families, owners of the Bulls and Blackhawks, respectively.”

Residential Tower Proposed For Downtown Evanston

A “mixed-use redevelopment of the north end of Church Street Plaza at 900 Clark Street in downtown Evanston,” [reports Chicago YIMBY](#), would replace “a portion of the large retail and commercial complex built in 2000” under owner GW Properties, which “has partnered with co-developer Luxury Living and design firm Antunovich Associates for a twenty-seven-story tower set to replace the existing Chili’s, pet shop and five screens of the movie theater.”

DINING & DRINKING

Pickle Croissant–The “Dill-Co”–From Jeff Tweedy And Daisies

Starting today, reports Eater Chicago, “Daisies will sell a limited edition croissant that celebrates the band’s thirtieth anniversary and all things pickles. Jeff Tweedy and Daisies pastry chef-partner Leigh Omilinsky take Wilco fans on a nostalgic journey on social media using song references while Tweedy provides his rationale. ‘Every song I’ve ever written is about pickles,’ Tweedy deadpans in an Instagram video.”

Take-Out Sushi Mainstay Lawrence Fish Market Expanding To South Side

“Albany Park sushi-slinger Lawrence Fish Market is opening a second location after roughly forty years in business–this time, on the South Side,” reports Crain’s. The new location in the Armour Square neighborhood “is set to open in late October. It will be about 3,000 square feet and seat roughly forty people... There are plans to sell alcohol in the future... Lawrence Fish Market imports fish fresh, and can provide lower costs to the customer as a wholesaler.”

New French Resto Coming To Old Town

“Jason Chan wants to fill a void in Old Town, one that’s existed for nine years after Bistrot Margot closed along Wells Street,” reports Eater Chicago. “Chan, one of the most beloved figures in Chicago’s restaurant scene, [is] opening Gavroche, a thirty-two-seat French restaurant in October at a space a few blocks from Bistrot Margot.”

Boka Expanding To Florida

“The group behind the acclaimed *Girl & the Goat* is teaming up with partner and Michelin-starred chef Lee Wolen to bring a new restaurant to Florida, the group’s first in that state,” reports Crain’s. “The restaurant, Elliott Aster, is named for the lovely lavender Florida wildflower and the real estate developer who gave the hotel its name,” reports the Tampa Bay Times. “I am truly honored to be opening a restaurant in St. Pete, a place that holds a special place in my heart,” said Wolen. “Having stayed at the Vinoy with my family and experiencing its rich history and charm, it feels like the perfect setting to create something truly special. I can’t wait to bring our culinary vision to life in such an iconic destination.”

FILM & TELEVISION

Sound Of Music Box Returns

Rodgers & Hammerstein’s “The Sound Of Music’ Sing-A-Long” returns to the Music Box Theatre, for seven shows beginning November 29. Tickets and more details here.

Top Theater Chains Slot Billions For Upgrades

“Exhibitors in the United States and Canada will invest more than \$2.2 billion over the next three years to upgrade and modernize their theaters amid renewed optimism at the box office after a battering by COVID and Hollywood strikes,” reports Deadline.”The chains, representing over 1,600 locations across all fifty states and Canada, include AMC Entertainment, Regal Cinemas, Cinemark USA, Cineplex, Marcus, B&B Theatres, Harkins Theatres and Santikos

Entertainment. Together they handle 21,000 screens and sixty-seven percent of the North American box office.”

LIT

Agate Publishing Academy Announces Advisory Board

Agate’s newest venture, Agate Publishing Academy, has formed an advisory board, “made up of experts from the publishing world whose experience spans almost every aspect of the publishing ecosystem, including distribution, retailing, and wholesaling, as well as traditional small press, academic and children’s publishing. Members include Andrea Fleck-Nisbet, CEO, Independent Book Publishers Association; Parneshia Jones, director, Northwestern University Press; Patricia Stockland, founder and CEO, Kind World Publishing; Phil Ollila, chief commercial and content officer, Ingram Content Group; and Susan Reich, principal, Book Advisors.

“Agate Publishing Academy is an online professional development program for people seeking to forge successful careers in the publishing industry—from novices just venturing into the field to seasoned professionals deepening their expertise. It’s designed to be more focused, affordable, and accessible than existing alternatives, such as summer programs and master’s programs in publishing. APA is the first program produced and delivered entirely by working professionals in the industry.” More Agate [here](#).

STAGE

Chicago Stage Figure Juan Ramirez Passes

“Juan Ramirez is gone,” relays Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company artistic director Richard Cotovsky on Facebook. “This is a man that throughout my theater presence encouraged, facilitated and was philanthropic... I met Juan through many layers of existence... to begin with at Blackbird Theater... Juan was the artistic director of Latino Chicago Theatre and as The Blackbird evolved into Americana and then I evolved into Mary-Arrchie Theatre, he was constantly present... As we were starting Mary-Arrchie, Juan generously provided us storage space and rehearsal space in the Flat Iron Building on North Avenue.”

“When we were applying for our first Illinois Arts Council grant (a \$500 grant to do a children’s program), Juan was on the committee to weigh in on our grant and as others didn’t know who we were Juan spoke up and said ‘I know these people and if we don’t give them this money, they are going to just get it together and do it without us. So we might as well let them have this \$500.’ With that we toured a children’s program through Urban Gateways for nine years.”

Chicago Filipino American Theatre Festival Launched

A three-week celebration of new work “touches on queerness, homecoming, nursing and wrestling,” reports the Reader. “When Ginger Leopoldo, RJ Silva, and Giovanni Ortega of CIRCA Pintig set out to produce a festival of Filipino theater, they had heartfelt hopes and modest expectations. ‘We knew there are Filipinos out there who want to do theater,’ Silva recalls. ‘So we were like, “Let’s do a festival to grow our base—maybe two nights.”’ A call for new work went out in July. The response was immense. Now set to fill

three weekends with over twenty readings, the Chicago Filipino American Theatre Festival is poised for its October debut.”

Booking Broken For Comedy?

“In comparison to the theater, live comedy has recovered from the pandemic in great commercial shape, with the help of podcasting and social media exposure. But with success comes the danger of insularity, and while more new artists are entering the field than ever, the gulf in influence between celebrity comics and gifted young unknowns grows. [Comic Jad] Sleiman’s polemical critique of the current club establishment gives voice to a real and justifiable anxiety that it’s becoming harder for comics with more talent than connections to break through,” writes Jason Zinoman at the New York Times.

ARTS & CULTURE & ETC.

Illinois Supremes: Search No Longer Justified By Weed Reek

“The smell of burnt cannabis alone is insufficient to justify a warrantless police search of an automobile, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled Thursday,” reports the Tribune.

Comparing The VP Candidates On The Arts

“Since being elected to Congress in 2022, J.D. Vance... introduced the Consequences for Climate Vandals Act—a bill that proposes raising penalties against environmental protesters charged with damaging property at the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian museums, the Kennedy Center, and other institutions. The

legislation would increase the maximum prison sentence from five to ten years,” tallies Hyperallergic. “Walz, a Nebraska-born former high school educator and military veteran whose gubernatorial tenure has been supportive of arts and culture projects in Minnesota. The state is notably a national leader in state arts funding in part due to Minnesota’s Legacy Amendment—a constitutional measure passed by voters in 2008 to raise the state’s sales tax to fund clean water, parks and trails, outdoor heritage preservation and public arts initiatives.”

Americans Can Now Renew Passports Online

Another layer of federal paperwork has been pulled away: “Americans can now renew their passports online, bypassing a cumbersome mail-in paper application process that often caused delays,” reports AP. The State Department’s “online renewal system is now fully operational, after testing in pilot programs, and available to adult passport holders whose passport has expired within the past five years or will expire in the coming year. It is not available for the renewal of children’s passports, for first-time passport applicants for renewal applicants who live outside the United States or for expedited applications.”

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