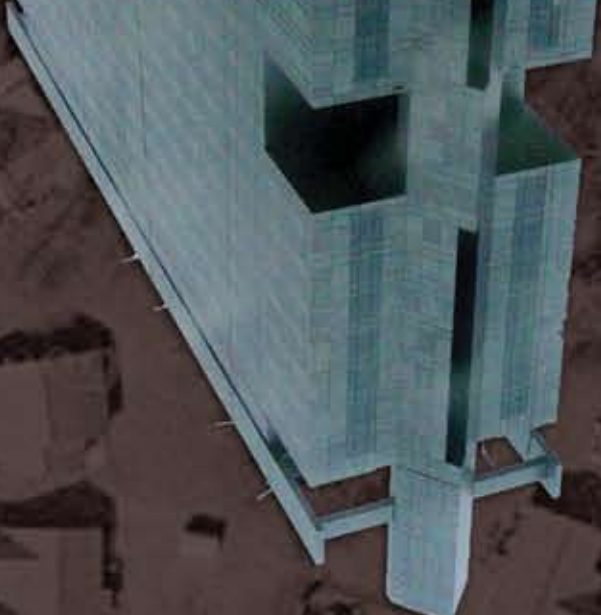


# BanktOWN U\$A



first edition - oOoh bAbY!



**Banktown.** I've seen the name here and there when people, generally from elsewhere, refer to Charlotte.

It's used in online articles and discussion boards, and I've heard it tongue-in-cheek around town. We've gotten the nickname for obvious reasons. When a little southern town mostly known for cotton, tobacco and textiles suddenly becomes the 2nd largest banking center in the US, people notice. I don't take offense, or maybe I just don't care. □

**We are what we are.** □

Even most of the businesses in town that aren't directly related to banking have some ties either directly, through clients, or in support roles. □ The money from Bank of America and Wachovia moves around. The downside is the view many have of us here in Banktown: they think we're all bankers. Stereotypical bankers. It's common to read articles that talk about Charlotte, written here or written about us, and see references to the white-collar, white-bread, blue suit stereotype. We're all about business. I guess if you aren't from Charlotte, haven't lived here for long, or don't get out of your own box, it's easy to see the city in that light.

A lot of Charlotte can be quite generic. If you just look in center city, SouthPark, Ballantyne, or any other burb, you might think business is all we're

about. I think differently. A lot of us do, and we actually get out there and participate in the life that Charlotte has to offer. Banktown U\$A hopes to let the rest of you in on what many of us already know: Charlotte has much more to it than spreadsheets and bottom lines. We don't all think, eat, and breathe banking. There are creative types, artists of all veins, and little sanctuaries of funkiness throughout the city.

Don't worry if you really are a banker: we don't mind. Someone has to bring home the bacon. □ But don't feel like you can't toss the tie for a night or two, leave the factories that produce cheesecake, drop the evening at the wine bar or mall, and venture out for some real-life culture. I hope you enjoy this magazine as much as we enjoy putting it together.

We promise not to take ourselves too seriously if you'll do the same.

*Scott Lindsley, publisher*



I love Charlotte!  
If people were aware  
of the arts scenes we  
do have here, they  
would support the  
people who make it  
happen... the artists"

**Love it? Hate it? Wanna make a paper party dress out of it?**

Tell Scott what you think of this rag: [info@banktownusa.com](mailto:info@banktownusa.com) □  
Send pics of your paper party dress to Little Shiva: [shivita@mac.com](mailto:shivita@mac.com)

So Scott up there says to me one day "Little Shiva, I want to publish this magazine called Banktown U\$A. Will you help make it happen?" I'm like "sure, if I can have complete creative freedom." He says yes, so I call up a bunch of friends and we get started. My first statement was adding the \$ between U and A because you know □ it takes money, honey. □ But we can't do it alone. If you have stuff you think would fit, send it. Yes, we're picky. No, we might not run it and please don't send



original art 'cos you'll never see it again. But I do promise that if you e-mail me, I'll write you back at least once. This is gonna be fun. [shivita@mac.com](mailto:shivita@mac.com)



day

silver mamma  
fire daughter



**Day Hixson-Leazer** used to work in restaurants, but jewelry was always her first love. A class taken at CPCC when she was 17 gave her a taste, but 7 years later after a class at Penland, it finally clicked. "I came home, refinanced my house, built a fence and built my studio out back. Then I started the slow and painful process of amassing tools," she recalls. Decomposition fascinates and inspires -- the wear of life on objects. As far as shapes are concerned, "I have a huge pod fetish. The duality for me is that I have the jewelry thing, but when I was at Penland I took a class on lockets, pendants and wearable vessels. That became a whole different thing for me. It wasn't just about jewelry, but about sacred objects, things you carry with you, like in your pocket." Day's favorite tools are her hydraulic press, rolling mill and anvil, but it's process she loves most. "I'm a very impatient person," she admits. "I didn't intend this, but it's through the process of making these little things that I learn patience."



Day works predominantly in silver as well as brass and copper, crafting rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces and lockets. She'd love to do more commissioned pieces and eventually open a store. For now, you can find an exclusive line of her work at Limjerbou. She also sells at NoFo on Liz, City Supply Co. and through her website, [www.daycreations.com](http://www.daycreations.com).

story gathered and shaped by Little Shiva, word portrait by John W. Love, Jr.



tempered enigma  
metal woman

stitcher

sewer

mender healer

nourisher feeder reacher

teacher

Litina  
EGUNGUN

SWIRLING DERVISH  
WHIRLING SERVANT

**Litina Egungun** is a presence you really need to experience, lingering a while to let it all soak in. He channels cultural wisdom and shares it lovingly with those who connect. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Litina's close-knit family shared an amazing expanding house by the Hope River, adding on according to the ever-changing demands of twelve kids. He moved to New York City in '78, then to Charlotte in 2001. When asked why he left Jamaica for the States, Litina says "my immediate response to that would be that it's just part of the migration process: your family comes, you come. If I were to think of destiny I'd say it was for expansion, to expand into who I've become, who I am." And who is he? "I am the possibility," he says, a mischievous twinkle in his eye and a smile on his lips. "The possibility of unfettered, unabashed creativity and love." The possibility manifests through Litina's clothes, his dance, and his undying love for children and their development. "I really think that should be our focus, the children. We need to share ourselves authentically and hopefully get them to experience their authentic selves through art, help them become the artists they are. It's been proven that kids learn better through the arts, and teaching artists-to-be is the most important thing in my life right now. If I had my way, I wouldn't teach children

abc 123 until about 10, and by then they would have surpassed it, they would have experienced life. Then they would soar." In addition to his work in education, Litina creates art objects in the form of crowns, fans and bags. His clients include Chaka Kahn, Avery Brooks and Roy Ayers. "I'm inspired by my African heritage. I claim the beauty of it, the symbolism of African clothes, the genius of textures and the profound stuff I find in African symbology. And it's festive, celebrative." Presence and art objects aside, it's through performance that Litina comes to life. He takes the name Egungun from the Yoruba masked dancer who dances to invoke spirit. "When I was young and living in Jamaica I used to steal away and go dance. Then, because we were Christian Adventists, I'd get a royal flogging when I came back -- but I kept doing it. I realize now that was my initiation into Egungun. I danced for a year with a modern folk group in Jamaica but realized I didn't want to be on stage. Upon coming to America I took my dance to the disco, where I experienced great moments of euphoria. The dance allowed me to be free, gave me access to being free. I used to get festooned, go to the Paradise Garage or Studio 54, because it was about how you looked. Around that time I got with an art group called The Maroons, but we called ourselves the

ex-slaves. We performed at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and also in SoHo. It was live art: we'd paint on the spot, do installations and performance, poetry, dance and movement." So how can someone who's done all this find fulfillment in Banktown? It comes back to the children, to education. "In Charlotte I got together with the African American Cultural Center, where our focus is on professional training. We go into the schools and teach the regular curriculum through our art form in collaboration with the classroom teacher. I work with Garringer High School and Wilson Middle School through an Arts in Education grant. I also work with the Blumenthal. Kids get to have cross-cultural experiences through these performances. They get to actually make stuff too: costumes, stage sets... they get the historical significance, and it touches the standards CMS sets for the schools. For me, this is very rewarding work." To hear Litina speak, watch a video clip at [www.weirdcharlotte.com/litinaegungun.html](http://www.weirdcharlotte.com/litinaegungun.html). The Magical Kingdom of Litina Egungun is at <http://litina.com>

For information on the impact of the arts on education, visit

[www.artsusa.org](http://www.artsusa.org)

◆ story and opening foto by Little Shiva, word portrait by John W. Love, Jr., foto this page by Piper Warlick





Ross Telford Wilbanks □  
in his own words

# NoDa Microcinema

A few revelations later, friends began to come by one at a time to watch films at my apartment. That led to showings at friends places or inviting a few friends over to watch something. When I was invited to curate short films for an art show, I saw the space the show was in (The Arthouse) and thought it'd be a perfect space to show films. The renters of the space (the Glover brothers) agreed, and that's where it started.

Looking back briefly, I'm proud that 30 people on a Sunday afternoon saw Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls*, 60+ (on a special really-really-free weekend / smash capitalism) for Forugh Farrokhzad's *The House is Black* and that everyone who saw *Winter Solider* still thinks it's the most important document of what the military can do to solidiers' minds.

The Microcinema started simply with my interest in collecting rare and interesting art films of various kinds. Out of what I was being told was great, 50% was terrible, pandering to the audience-as-idiot, 25% was ok-like-that-TV-show-was-ok and the rest was worth thinking about for a few minutes. And this wasn't Hollywood fare, but recommendations from perported movie lovers. I'd studied music and found a similar problem with information being provided by distributors rather than music lovers, □ a major problem in capitalism. □ I knew I was missing something.

There are still showings where only two or three people show up, but at least one loves the film -- the mind is blown. Sometimes my friend Jeff Jackson (I thank you for your support and two cents) is the only one who shows. We have a good time anyway.

Film and video can learn a few things from the music scene. The economics are getting to be similar for someone wanting to make a film and someone wanting to make a record, but where does that person go when the film is done? Rather than beg for festivals to accept you, I invite anyone who has something they're proud of to come to the NoDa Microcinema and show it. I want to build a culture of filmmakers making art, not worrying about who'll accept it.



Academia  
Aprende

# CAPOEIRA

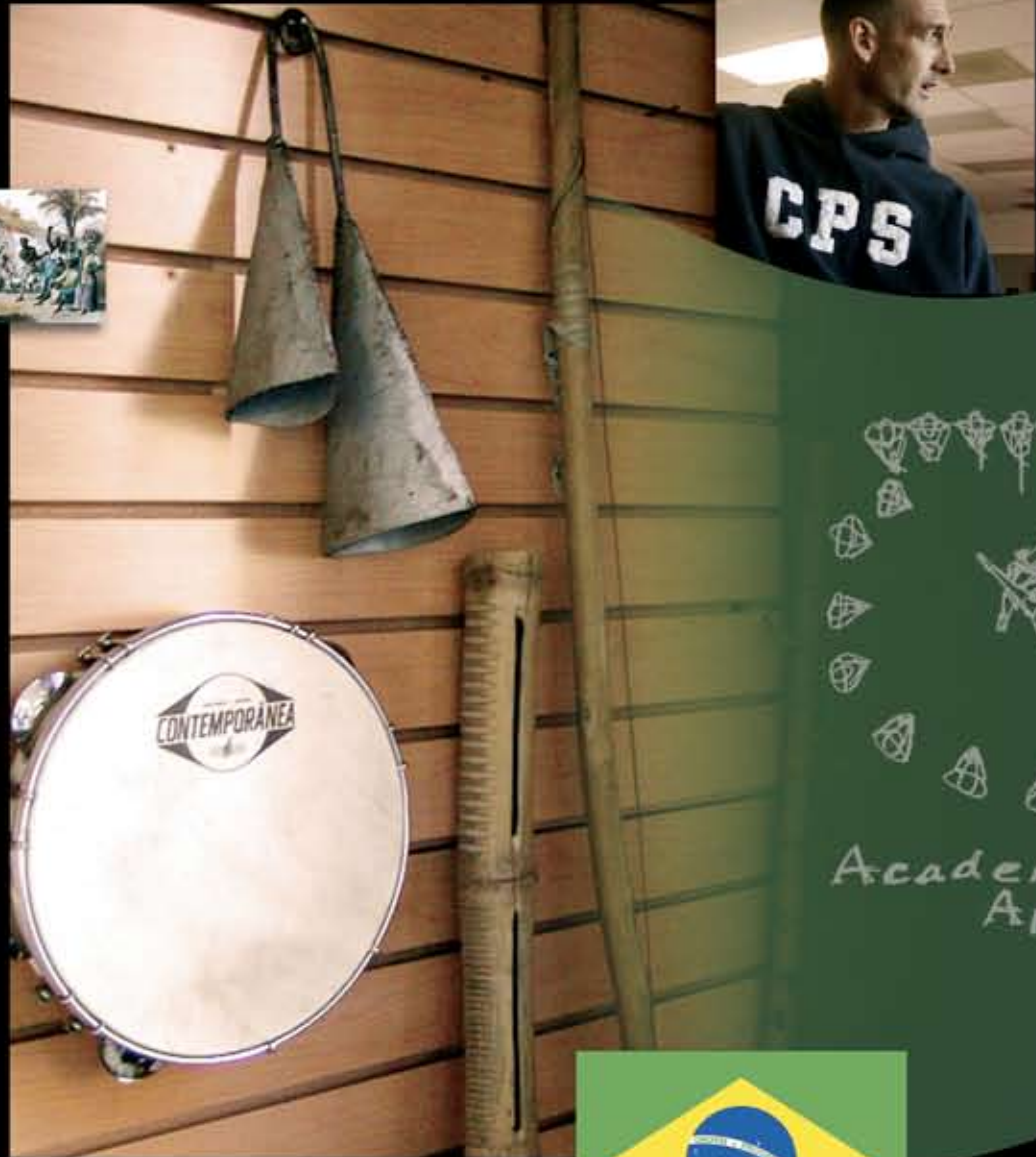
**Gallery Crawl, NoDa.** □  
A drum circle sizzles at the corner of 35th and North Davidson. Across from the fire house halfway up the block, people are gathered, looking at something. Stepping into the crowd, peering over shoulders and through the

spaces between bodies, you see two people dressed in white, crouching, pacing, writhing, leaping, body swirling around body, eye to eye, leg over head yet never touching in their strange slow motion dance. What's going on? And what's that twang

coming from a gourd on a stick? This is capoeira, a Brazilian martial art dating back to the 16th century. The fundamentals of capoeira were originally brought from Africa on the slave ships and further developed by street gangs in Brazil. Patrick Deibel,

or "Patrique" as they call him at Academia Aprende, explains: "Capoeira is all about reading and reacting to situations. You're trying to read the other person's mind. It's about body control and agility, and it's awesome cross-training for U.S. traditional sports."

# capoeira is a tree with lots of branches



Music is essential to capoeira, and it's the berimbau that commands the circle. It consists of a wooden bow stretched with a steel string and a gourd attached to the bottom of the bow to act as a resonator. The berimbau's buzzy twang sets the rhythm of the roda and informs the style of the game.

Patrique's a student of Mestre Sombra of Santos, Brasil. He's also passionate about capoeira and wears the blue belt, or "cordao azul." Interested in classes? Visit [www.academiaaprende.com](http://www.academiaaprende.com)

◆ story gathered and shaped by Little Shiva



# drive-by shooting



❖ Little Shiva has a chat with Hope Nicholls, a Charlotte cultural icon from way back.

**Little Shiva:** What's one of your earliest Charlotte nightlife memories?

**Hope Nicholls:** Well, it wasn't at night, but in 1967 on the Sunday before I started second grade I got to go with my brothers and sisters to this club called Fantasmagoria. I loved the name. It was a happening, an alternative multimedia event, that took place in a giant barn turned club. The place is now a fish camp.

**Little Shiva:** Where is Charlotte nightlife now and where has it been? Give us a bird's-eye view.

**Hope Nicholls:** It's come a long way, but it has a long way to go. There was a time when there were only one or two places to go in Charlotte. For me, the focus was always live music. In the 60's you could go out and hear James Brown, The Tams, The Temptations, Jr. Walker and the All Stars... James Brown went on and had a life, but the rest of them got pigeonholed as beach music.

In 1974, my sister Gail moved back from New York. She and Jim Meyer founded Charlotte's first disco, Jimmy Mack's Hollywood Disco, on Morehead and King's Drive. It was amazing, because you had architects galore running a club. It looked fantastic, but nobody knew how to run a business. The music was great, though.

Then there was Odyssey at the corner of South Tryon and Morehead. It was a big gay club. We had Scorpios too, but Odyssey was more mixed. In 77, once people started getting into punk, Bill Flowers rose to the occasion and started booking local acts like

The Streets and The Happy Eggs into the Milestone, which he'd been running for some time. The local stuff was successful, so he started booking national acts. Jeff Lowery came on the scene much later, like around 86.

**Little Shiva:** What are some of your most memorable good times?

**Hope Nicholls:** The summer of 81 at the Milestone was amazing. That's when they had the GoGo's from L.A. and The Plastics, an incredible band from Japan. They had the Rock Cats and also 999, both from England. If there was somebody touring the U.S., we got 'em. I'm surprised the Sex Pistols didn't come, but they just didn't do enough dates.

Mark Lynch opened the competing club at the time, Viceroy Park. It didn't last very long, but they got Bow Wow Wow and Iggy Pop -- this is all in 81 and 82. And of course at this time R.E.M. was playing all these clubs. Oh yeah, The Fleshtones played at the Milestone too, in 82. That was the day I graduated from college. I got kicked off the stage so many times. I'd jump up to dance with them, they'd kick me off, I'd jump up again... I was so wasted.



I got in a band around 85. R.E.M. had planted the seeds for it to be lucrative for small bands to tour towns that had college radio stations. They were on the forefront of that whole movement, a D.I.Y. renaissance of live music. In the 70's it was in the hands of major radio stations and record companies. Of course the whole punk thing was D.I.Y., and R.E.M. was just iconic because they showed you that you could write your own songs, dress how you wanted, get in a band and go find audiences. That was awesome. It's around this time that you get a continuum of live music in Charlotte.

**Little Shiva:** What about rave and the explosion of the DJ scene?

**Hope Nicholls:** Just like fresh musical ideas in the 60's became corporatized in the 70's, fresh musical ideas of the 80's became Lollapaloza-ized in the 90's. That's when the number of club touring bands begins to fall, with the end point being now. They'll go to Chapel Hill and Asheville but not come to Charlotte, the biggest town between DC and Atlanta.

But this is where rave comes in. To me it's always alternating between live music and DJ type music. So in 1990, raves came on here, and there was never a specific club, it was always just a party. It was in 1990 when we got Park Elevator, where The Foundry is now, over by the football stadium. That was a crystalline moment in Charlotte nightlife.

**Little Shiva:** Why?

**Hope Nicholls:** Andy Kastanas, that's why. He was the DJ at Park Elevator. The music was great and people really threw down on the dance floor. Andy's always been a really adventurous DJ when he plays what he likes, not what somebody thinks is gonna sell alcohol.

**Little Shiva:** Give us a short list of unforgettable Charlotte nightlife names.

**Hope Nicholls:** In no particular order, The Tacky Party, Mother's Milk, The Septic Tank, Purgatory, K.C. and Fat City, Carnevil, Dance Off Pants Off, Freaky Wack, Bucket, Ooh La La, Cherry... and then there's Delmar Williams, who would show up at *everything*. He knew everyone's name, knew a little about their families. There was even a sticker out that said "Honk if you know Delmar."

**Little Shiva:** What's some juicy Charlotte music trivia that people might not know?

**Hope Nicholls:** Maurice Williams (of Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs) is from Shelby -- he wrote "Stay." James Brown recorded "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" at Arthur Smith Studios (now Studio East) right here in Charlotte.

**Little Shiva:** Your parting shot?

**Hope Nicholls:** Anytime people get out and dance like crazy it's a good thing.

Find Hope at Boris + Natasha, 1214 Thomas Ave. or at [www.snagtownusa.com](http://www.snagtownusa.com)

color photo from Purgatory by StEVE nEuRoTiC, b+w foto of Hope Nicholls by ?

# kit Ku**b**e

"I'm constantly training myself to recognize the intrinsic beauty in artifacts. I think of their aesthetic potential, how they'll look in space and consider the different choices of presentation and perspective. □ I build art that's compelling to □ me... otherwise □ why bother?"

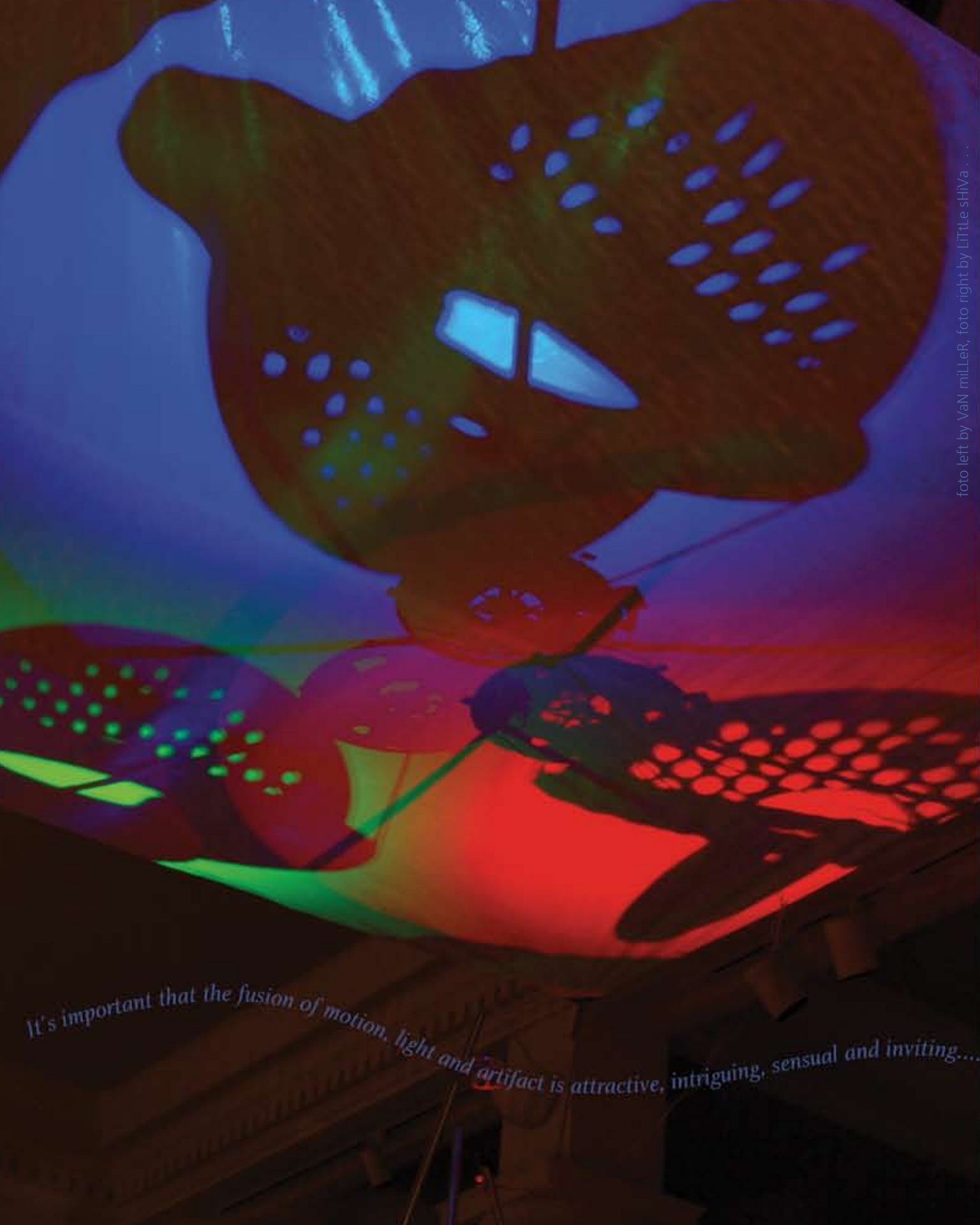


foto left by VaN mILLeR, foto right by LITtle sHIWa . . .

Kit Kube is a nationally recognized talent in the esoteric field of kinetic light sculpture. Locally, he's produced a piece for the Huntersville Northcross park and ride commissioned by CATS and has exhibited at Winthrop University and Hart-Witzen Gallery in NoDa. About doing what he does, Kit says "it's a speculation on my part: monetary, physical, and spiritual, a speculation that's passion-driven. It's the most rewarding experience I can imagine." See more at [kitkube.com](http://kitkube.com)



*It's important that the fusion of motion, light and artifact is attractive, intriguing, sensual and inviting.*

*...with a touch of menace.*



# urban ministry

At the top end of College Street, right past the down ramp that dumps you out onto a raggedy stretch of North Tryon, there's a sign that says "dead end." □ It couldn't be further from the truth. Down around that dead end bend there's a land of new beginnings laying claim to a stately old train station, a piece of contemporary architecture and some open space. More importantly, it's laying claim to hope.

People are everywhere. This is the throbbing heart □ of Urban Ministry and Community Works 945, □ built on the premise that by understanding □ the "other" in society, we begin to understand ourselves. Complementing the services □ offered by Urban Ministry, Community □ Works 945 features a homeless □ soccer team, an art initiative □ and a community garden.□

—LS

Community Works 945: [www.communityworks945.org](http://www.communityworks945.org)

Urban Ministry: [www.urbanministrycenter.org](http://www.urbanministrycenter.org)



# Lite

This is Lite. □  
He makes art bikes. □  
You can go buy one from him or commission  
him to do one just for you. Lite is part of  
**Community Works 945.**



# Hart-Witzen's, eminent domain

## The old Hart Witzen Gallery

on 5th Street had some magic. □ It's where Duy Huynh showed some of his early paintings as backdrops to Jeff Ballero productions. Moving Poets shows were punctuated by trains wailing past the back wall. Upstairs in his studio, Geoff

Lillemon decided to become a minimalist, tossed most of his belongings out the window into a dumpster below, and greeted gallery crawlers in an empty space wearing nothing but his skivvies. That's the night the mayor happened to come by. I'm fond of



the old place 'cos it was my first stomping ground in Charlotte. Now it's a parking lot. 8 years of blood, sweat and tears stolen by the city and reduced to rubble. A cultural center destroyed. Another old building lost forever. Shame on you, Banktown. Shame. It's been a few

years since the wrecking ball, so what's the big deal? The new space is on 36th at the edge of NoDa. Not bad. Swanky even. But go to [www.hartwitzengallery.com](http://www.hartwitzengallery.com) and click on "history." You'll see. □ In a town that changes so fast, some things shouldn't be forgotten.



# ChAOS

## ChAOS theory

with Lobster X

HURRICANES, FLOODS, TORNADOS, WAR AND TERRORISM ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON... CHAOS. THEY ALL LEAVE BEHIND PILES OF DEBRIS AND WRECKAGE THAT WERE ONCE STRUCTURES MADE BY MAN. WHETHER THESE STRUCTURES WERE ONCE USED AS HABITATS OR VEHICLES, THEY ARE NOW NOTHING MORE THAN AN UNORDERED, RANDOM HEAP OF PIECES AND PARTS, NO LONGER USEFUL. THE COMPOSITION OF THESE USELESS MOUNDS IS PREVALENT WITHIN OUR MEDIA. WE GLAZE OVER THE AMOUNT OF DESTRUCTION AND CARNAGE AS RECORDED BY PHOTOGRAPHS FROM HOVERING HELICOPTERS. EVERY PHOTO CONTAINS A HUMAN BEING IN IT TO GIVE SCALE TO THE AMOUNT OF DEVASTATION.

BY DECONSTRUCTING THESE IMAGES AND MANIPULATING THEM, REMOVING THE HUMAN ELEMENT AND PUSHING THEM INTO HIGH CONTRAST, ONE CAN VISUALLY PULL THEM BACK TOGETHER AND BEGIN TO SEE NEW STRUCTURES. THE COMPLEXITY OF LINES, PLANES AND MASSES CAN CREATE NEW FORMS. DETAILS BECOME AS CRITICAL AS AN ALBRECHT DURER PRINT OR A DANIEL LIBESKIND MUSEUM - LOSING ITS SCALE AND TRANSFORMING INTO STRUCTURES MORE ABSTRACT AND INTANGIBLE. THE CHAOS OF MAN AND NATURE ARE NOW REFORMED INTO SOMETHING NEW.



**Piper Warlick**

"Any place can be exotic □ for someone who doesn't live there." Piper did the cover shot of Litina Egungun and the pic of him in his backyard. She also did the moody shot of Kit Kube. See more of her pics at [www.piperwarlickphotography.com](http://www.piperwarlickphotography.com)



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**Carol Marley**

She shot the portrait of □ Day Hixson-Leazer as well as the pics of capoeirista Patrick Deibel and some of the instruments at Academia Aprende. Her passion is finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. You can reach □ her at [alemehbaraka@yahoo.com](mailto:alemehbaraka@yahoo.com)



**Lobster X**

You loved him in QZ, now here he is in living color. Lobster X is a disciple of chaos and like cockroaches, he's indestructible. He's at □ [mcfall@mgallis.com](mailto:mcfall@mgallis.com)



**John W. Love, Jr.**

"When I say 'Don't piss on my shoes and then try to tell my black ass it's raining,' not only is the lie annoying, the shoes are \$350 Bruno Magli boots, bitch! Haag!" John W. Love, Jr. contributed word portraits of Day Hixson-Leazer and Litina Egungun to this issue. Tap him at [Lovedadazu@yahoo.com](mailto:Lovedadazu@yahoo.com)

contribute  
to this magazine

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fotos  
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send to shivita@mac.com



fotomontage by Little SHIVA

Urban Realty would like to remind you "there's no place like home"

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