

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2011 = LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR

ON THE MEDIA

Stories way too good to be true

JAMES RAINY

Several big news organizations fell for a stunning, albeit fake, piece of business news this week — that General Electric would voluntarily pay the government a \$3.2-billion tax “refund.”



Some news-types responded to the hoax with indignation, others bemusement. Both those groups must have been outnumbered, though, by the resolute. This couldn't, wouldn't ... shouldn't happen again.

But, take notice, newshounds: The tricksters and political pranksters have numbers. They have big plans. They embrace a lawless tradition and an outlaw code. They will be back. And they are fairly certain you can be had.

In many cases, they will be right. Fake news may not be inevitable. But it will always find a pathway, particularly in the frantic chase that is journalism in the Digital Age. All harried journalists can do is take a moment, breathe deeply and make that extra confirmation phone call, because the next \$30,000 Donald Trump restaurant tip, campaign to blockade oil spills with human hair or

[See Media, D13]

Russian history

Director Robin Hessman discusses her documentary “My Perestroika,” about Russians who came of age as communism crumbled. D6-7

Horoscope D14
TV grid D16

ART REVIEW



CANDY-COLORED: A portion of “Spray Paint on Wall” by Kenny Scharf is a part of “Art in the Streets” at Geffen Contemporary. DOUG BARTLETT/Los Angeles Times

Yes, we spray can

Graffiti and guerrilla art's outlaw culture is embraced at MOCA exhibition.

By SHARON MIZOTA >>> It's generally not a good idea to censor a mural you commissioned, especially when that mural is part of a show about uncommissioned street art.

When Museum of Contemporary Art director and curator Jeffrey Deitch whitewashed a mural by Italian artist Blu last December, the episode perfectly illustrated how graffiti's unruly, in-your-face attitude, even when sanitized under the banner of “street art,” might not be a good fit for a museum retrospective. The very idea of the exhibition “Art in the Streets” at the Geffen Contemporary asks whether this erstwhile outlaw culture can or should be folded into the grand narrative of art history.

Despite its first, faltering steps, the exhibition answers this question with a resounding “Yes.” Viewers will encounter a bombastic, near-overwhelming cavalcade of eye candy: colorful swirling murals, immersive installations, walls papered with candid and provocative photos, and a custom-designed skate ramp. Immodestly anticipating the response, there's even a big “WOW” painted on the inside of the building's roll down doors. But the exhibition's strong suit is not its impressive array of large-scale work but rather its art historical treatment of an outsider form, complete with a timeline, “period” rooms, and plenty of video and photographic documentation.

Although bright colors, lights and sounds beckon from the galleries on the main floor, it's [See Street art, D8]

LETTERS

These artists are vandals

I think your article on the subject of graffiti was in very poor taste ["Yes, We Spray Can" by Sharon Mizota, April 16]. It is in no way "art" but pure, simple vandalism and a blight on neighborhoods.

These so-called artists need to realize they are disfiguring walls with their "art," causing many people unnecessary financial hardships (especially those like myself, disabled and unable to repaint the wall of my garage that has been the subject of "artistic expression" twice now).

Vandalism and abuse of property deserve severe punishment, not accolades.

JAMES M. VANCE
Long Beach

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I wonder: If a tagger used his spray can on MOCA's walls, would MOCA consider that "art"?

ARCH MILLER
Arcadia

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What a great article, promoting an art form that is illegal and has cost the city millions to clean up over the years. There's nothing like our local paper championing derelicts who deface freeway signs and cause traffic accidents while also doing more than anything to make L.A. look like a slum.

I will surely visit MOCA again but only if someone promises to arrest each of the social miscreants who created this visual crap and keep them in jail 'til they've made full restitution for their vandalism and property destruction.



DON BARTLETTI Los Angeles Times

MOCA SHOW: A portion of Kenny Scharf's "Spray Paint on Wall" at the Geffen Contemporary.

'Real Life' was loud and clear

The article about HBO's "Cinema Verite" ("You Haven't Heard the Last of the Louds" by Melissa Maerz, April 21) omitted mention of "Real Life," Albert Brooks' peerless 1979 parody of "An American Family."

It was equally real but funnier.

ART FEIN
Hollywood

Shrugging off 'Atlas' review

I was amused by the review of "Atlas Shrugged" ["Atlas Shrugged," and So Should You" by Michael Phillips, April 15]. It was like watching history repeating itself, with the comforting knowledge of how it will all turn out. Ayn Rand's work is review-proof, and fortunately the movie is faithful enough to its source that it also will prevail.

If you are relying on the opinions of others to determine if you will enjoy this movie, then you already have missed the message of the book and film.

GARY HATCH
Palmdale

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movie can be made with a small budget. Well-acted and exciting, it also lauds individual American ingenuity over state-enforced egalitarianism. Small wonder it didn't attract big Hollywood bucks or star George Clooney!

ARTHUR HANSL
Santa Barbara

Unending violence

"Game of Thrones," HBO's new series, is reviewed as "celebrating the glories of cable, i.e. bloody violence (beheadings, hacked-off body parts, eviscerated guts steaming in the snow) ... nudity" ["Swords, Sex and Struggles" by Mary McNamara, April 15].

The "Scream 4" movie review claims it "live(s) up to its gory past. The kills ... are bountiful and bloody" ["Scream Survives by Its Wits" by Betsy Sharkey, April 15].

The review of "God of Carnage" says the play features "a zone of mayhem ... raucous display of primitive aggression ... there's something bracing about the sight of adults throwing off their civilized constraints" ["God Makes Neanderthals of Us All" by Charles McNulty, April 15].

Meanwhile, at Dodger Stadium, police presence has been increased due to a

brutally beaten into a brain-damaged stupor by two men wearing Dodger caps.

I assume Hollywood producers are now pursuing the rights to this victim's "bracing" story resulting from a "raucous display of primitive aggression"?

JOHN HOLMSTROM
Hollywood

From Watergate to Bell corruption

We thoroughly enjoyed James Rainey's article, "Their Paths to the Pulitzer" [April 19]. Congratulations to Jeff Gottlieb and Ruben Vives not only for winning the well-deserved Pulitzer Prize but also for exposing corruption and dishonesty as only dedicated investigative reporters with a newspaper can.

We followed the Bell saga in The Times from the beginning, just as we had followed Woodward and Bernstein's Washington Post exposé of the Watergate scandal. It's comforting to know that some 38 years later, we can still count on some newspapers and a few fine journalists in this country to take on issues for the public good when no one else is paying attention.

DIANE AND
GEORGE OHANIAN
San Diego

The many faces of heroism

Re "Surfer Doesn't Qualify as Hero" in April 16 Letters: An individual who faces death and dismemberment with courage and a sense of a greater purpose does indeed qualify as a hero.

Read Joseph Campbell to see how people like Bethany Hamilton and Aron Ralston can inspire humanity to face challenges and rise above. Their experiences add to us all, and I am grateful to the publishers and filmmakers who bring their stories to the screen.