



Project Bridge Newsletter

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

January, 2006

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Felix Gonzalez-Torres was an American artist of Cuban origin who was born in 1957, raised in Puerto Rico, and lived and worked in New York City. His work has a public orientation, but not in the narrow sense of merely being in public — it requires public participation to achieve its full meaning.



Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *Untitled (For Jeff)*, 1992, at the Hishhorn Museum of the Smithsonian Institution

Gonzalez-Torres's public art includes installations that ask viewers to influence the work's composition. Piles of candy or paper are stacked where viewers can take pieces, and where the piles can be replenished by museum curators. Though the piles have ideal weights, this fluidity raises important ques-

tions about the installations' meaning, questions that draw in public issues. In a similar way, Gonzalez-Torres's billboard installations (see picture above), displayed simultaneously in multiple locations, invite viewers to interpret what they see. These interpretations may be influenced by the installation's particular location or the viewer's personal perspective. Viewers are then invited to

discuss their interpretations, such as in the blog provided by the Indianapolis Museum of Art (see article below), and at public discussions.

Gonzalez-Torres's work was rooted in his personal experience. His life was deeply touched by the AIDS epidemic: his partner's and his own life were taken by the disease. As a citizen of New York City during the early days of the epidemic's recognition, his work was infused with the socio-political aspects of this experience. However, he chose to let his work represent itself and its public influence, rather than reflect his own life. Felix Gonzalez-Torres died in 1996.

Teacher Tips:

The following tip comes from the "articles" section of reallygoodstuff.com. For more information on this and other classroom projects, visit the web site!

A Peacemaker's Study. Have children use books and the Internet to research and compare the works of Martin Luther King, Jr. with other former and contemporary peacemakers. Some peacemakers to consider include:

- Jimmy Carter
- Mattie Stephonie
- Mahatma Gandhi

Indianapolis Museum of Art

The Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA), founded in 1883, recently underwent a major renovation that added substantial display space, restaurants and other amenities, educational programs, and a new venue for special events. As one of the largest art museums in the U.S., the IMA houses an impressive permanent collection and hosts numerous guest exhibitions from

around the nation and the world.

Beginning in November, the IMA coordinated the installation of Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *"Untitled" (For Jeff)* at several locations across Indianapolis (see article above). Through January 29, 2006, Gonzalez-Torres's work can be seen at numerous cultural institutions and on billboards primarily on the north and west sides of the city.

Several public discussions are scheduled, and the museum has a blog for those interested in sharing their thoughts and interpretations of the work.

For complete information about the project, a Gonzalez-Torres biography, locations, scheduled discussions and to participate in the blog, go to <http://www.ima-art.org/>.

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January 2006

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Schedule of Events

Happy Near Year!!

- January 1** -- Betsy Ross's birthday, 1752
- January 2** -- Forefather's Day, Haiti
- January 3** -- J.R.R. Tolkien's birthday, 1892
- January 4** -- Perihelion Day (earth is closest to the sun)
- January 5** -- George Washington Carver died, 1943
- January 8** -- Stephen Hawking's birthday, 1942
- January 10** -- League of Nations formed, 1920
- January 11** -- Amelia Earhart was first woman to fly solo from Hawaii to California, 1935
- January 12** -- John Hancock's birthday, 1737
- January 15** -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, 1929
- January 17** -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday; Benjamin Franklin's birthday, 1706
- January 18** -- Robert Scott reaches South Pole, 1912
- January 20** -- Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin's birthday, 1930
- January 21** -- Edwin Jenner's smallpox vaccination introduced, 1799
- January 22** -- British Colonists reach New Zealand, 1840
- January 23** -- National Handwriting Day
- January 25** -- First Winter Olympics, 1924
- January 26** -- Australia Day
- January 27** -- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's birthday, 1756
- January 28** -- Arkansas makes the honeybee its state insect, 1973
- January 29** -- Galileo sighted Neptune, 1613
- January 30** -- Franklin D. Roosevelt's birthday, 1882

IndyPark Events

The IndyParks *Winter Fun Guide 2006* is available at <http://www.indygov.org/home.htm>. The guide includes park and program information, program registration information, and a program registration form. There are many fun, healthy and educational activities available to get the entire family out of the house during the cold weather months. They include adaptive recreation for children and adults with special needs, aquatics, arts, dance, environmental education, health and fitness, activities for seniors, sports, and special interest programs such as financial planning, foreign language, science and hobbies. In addition to these programs, IndyParks offers volunteer opportunities to the community. Call 327-PARK (327-7275) for more information.

IndyParks will sponsor a Christmas tree recycling program from December 26, 2005 — January 31, 2006. See www.indyparks.org or call 327-PARK (327-7275) for more information.



Culture Corner: Japanese New Year

お正月

o-shogatsu

Japanese New Year's Day, which is called "Shogatsu" or "Oshogatsu", falls on January 1, and is the most important holiday celebrated in Japan. Businesses typically close from January 1 to January 3 in observance of the holiday, giving families the opportunity to be together for their celebrations. Preparations start early with writing messages on special New Year's cards known as nengajo, which are sent to family, friends, and business clients. This year's cards may have a caricature of a dog, which is the animal that represents 2006. The Postal Service employs part-time workers to help deliver nengajo on New Year's Day.

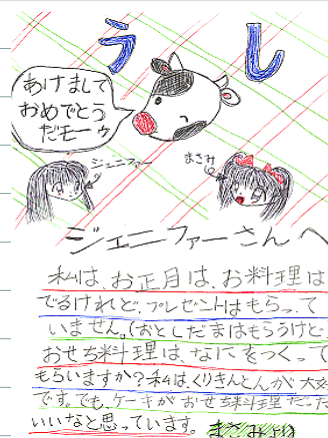
The Japanese focus on making a fresh start in the New Year, so they do their "spring cleaning" in mid-December to prepare for the new year. This cleaning was traditionally done on December 13 as a religious rite in preparation for welcoming the god Toshigami, who the Japanese believe visits their homes on New Year's and brings blessings to them. After the cleaning is all finished, special New Year's decorations called kado-matsu made of pine, bamboo, and straw are hung on houses and gates.

On New Year's Eve, the Japanese eat a special meal of buckwheat noodles known as toshikoshi soba. They also may visit temples where the bells ring out 108 peals at midnight. Visitors at the shrines throw coins and

paper money offerings at the shrines' doorsteps, clap their hands to summon the gods and pray. Some pay a small fee to draw a fortune from a stall. After reading the fortune, they may tie it on a branch of a tree near the shrine. Before returning home, some people purchase a good luck charm for the coming year. Many shrines collect the old charms and burn them after the New Year's celebrations are finished.

To get the New Year off to a good start, many people rise early to view the sunrise on January 1. New Year's Day is supposed to be joyful and relaxed, and it is often a quiet day at home. Money in special envelopes is given to children, and they visit local shops to buy candy and toys. To learn a children's "Counting Song" that is sung on New Year's Day, see <http://cnx.rice.edu/content/m12632/latest/>.

On the second and third days of the celebration, more visiting and shopping is done. Millions of people also visit shrines and temples during the three-day celebration, and pray for good health and fortune during the new year. One of the most



Masami's New Year's Greeting Card
(from: <http://www.globalclassroom.org/>)

Osechi Ryori
(from: <http://www.japan-guide.com>)



popular shrines is the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo. (For more information about this shrine, please see <http://www.costkids.org/JapanWeb/MeijiShrine/Meiji%20Shrine.html>.)

Of course, there are also special foods, or osechi ryori, served for New Year's. The food was traditionally prepared in advance and placed in lacquered boxes so that cooking did not have to be done during the holiday. Examples of osechi ryori include boiled beans; suno-mono, which is sliced vegetables and seafood with sweet vinegar; ozoni, a special New Year's soup that contains mochi (rice cake), steamed fish paste, greens, and carrots; and otoso, a sweetened rice wine.

For more information about Japan, see <http://tanutech.com/japan/newyear.html> (an article about New Year's, which was a source of information for this Culture Corner), <http://www.dom.com/about/education/culture/jan.jsp>, <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/toys.html>, <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/culture.html> (children's activities), <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/house/> (a virtual tour of a Japanese house), <http://www.origami-usa.org/> (instructions for the Japanese art of paper folding), and <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/> (Asia for Educators).

Project Bridge to Achievement

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Readers, this is your newsletter. We welcome any contributions you wish to make. If you have a news item, a suggestion or a correction, please contact Jenny M. Witcher by phone or email. If you are a mentor or student and would like to volunteer to be profiled in subsequent issues, or if you would like to contribute a "Teacher Tip," please contact Jenny, Carmen Polk or Cheryl Hertzler. Thank you for your interest and participation!

Info Sessions for Prospective Students

Do you know anyone who would be a good MAT candidate? Then recommend a Project Bridge Information Session! At each session, application packets will be distributed, the program will be described, and the application and selection process will be explained. Refreshments will be served. Please call Cheryl Hertzler (955-6087) to make a reservation for the following date:

**Wednesday, January 11, 2006 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Allison Mansion

Please see the MAT website for more information:
http://www.marian.edu/education/mat/index.shtml

*All application materials are due on February 1, 2006 to be considered for the 2006-2007 Cohort.

Intern Profile: Christina Duffin

Christina Duffin, a cohort 4 intern, was born in Miami, Florida. Her family moved to Brazil — on her first birthday! — and lived there until Christina was fifteen, when they returned to Miami. Christina attended West Virginia University, where she met her husband. They currently reside in Indianapolis.

Christina's vision of herself as a teacher involves an holistic approach to working with children. She hopes to have an impact on their lives — on "emotional, personal and educational level(s)," and to make their time in the classroom enjoyable: "I want to be a teacher to make a difference in children's lives. I want to do everything I can to make

coming to school fun instead of a 'drag.'"

Christina looked at other transition to teaching programs, but chose Marian's Project Bridge M.A.T. program because, "I was so impressed with the staff and how incredibly organized everything seemed to be." She was also interested in the program's ESL concentration, and the ability to complete the entire process in one year.

When deciding to become a graduate student, Christina saw an opportunity for personal growth. At that time she said, "I am looking forward to just learning and 'coming out of my shell.' I know it won't be easy,

but I have no doubt that once I am done with this program I will be as prepared as I possibly can be to be a teacher."

Christina believes the "best philosophy" when it comes to teaching includes being a good role model, being open-minded, and not judging or jumping to conclusions — a teacher needs to get to know students and their history in order to teach them effectively.

As 2006 begins, cohort 4 moves into the 3rd phase of the program. We wish Christina and all the interns the best as they near the end of their exciting journey at Marian College!