It is our great pleasure to present to you the 12th edition of Einstein's own art and literary magazine, *Ad Libitum*. We hope you will enjoy looking through this year's collection of visual and written works, created by members of your very own Einstein community.

*Ad Libitum* strives to bring together all members within the Einstein community in each publication of our magazine. Our hope is this magazine will serve as a platform for members of our community to share their creativity through a variety of mediums; from prose and poetry, to photographs, paintings, drawings, and sculpture. This magazine serves as a reminder that our scientific environment fosters not just the art of medicine and forward scientific thinking, but creative thinking. We hope that the publication of this magazine will encourage its readers to appreciate and express their own individual creativity.

We would like to thank the Einstein administration for their continued support of our efforts, especially Deans Grayson, Kuperman, Spiegel, Burns, Katz, Baum and Friedman, along with Martin Penn and the Office of Education Affairs, Lorene Tapellini, Peter Dama, Donna Bruno and the Graphic Arts Center, Karen Gardner and the Department of Communications and Public Affairs, the Graduate Office, and the Student Council. We thank our Creative Director Michael Shamoon, for his dedication and commitment to transforming this magazine into a unique piece of art for the past four years. We would also like to thank the Einstein community’s participating artists, without whom this publication would not be possible.

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Far From The Footsteps
by Susan Alongi

Footlights
Footlights pop across the stage and blaze a siren of light. Rotting wood lay beneath my feet. Muffled voices rise and fall. The house lights dim. I am Lady Jensen of Holendale Manor. I am far from the footsteps.

Night’s Footsteps
When I was young I didn’t dream in the darkness. I’d listen to the steady ticking of the clock, water dripping from the sink, the sound of footsteps as they drew near. The footsteps came every night with a wicked smile and bruised my flesh. Daybreak drove the footsteps to slumber as the sunlight streamed across the lot outside my window. The lot, with its wild sticks of green stretched beyond the constraints of my world and became my kingdom. I became a princess imprisoned by an evil queen within the white walls of my castle.

Stranger’s Footsteps
Years later, the footsteps came, as they always did, but on this night they were not alone. The new footsteps dragged me out of my bed. The whites of their eyes glowed in the blackness as the end of a needle pricked my vein. The room spun as the new footsteps carried me into the night. I awoke in a dungeon, the white walls of my castle replaced by gray, the green planes of my kingdom gone.

In the dungeon the footsteps came in the daylight with pasty faces and fake smiles; their voices whispered sweetly as they strapped me down and sent sharp pluses through my brain.

His Footsteps
Outside in the sunlight surrounded by high fences a boy approached, his footsteps softly poetic. His hair silken planks of black, his smile gentle, his eyes vacant, all glistened beneath the yellow glow of the sun. When I looked at him my heart hurt. His name was Sage. He was beauty. His memory will forever be illuminated in light.

Footlights
Footlights pop across the stage and blaze a siren of light. A gust of elation soars through me, the sounds of applause. Bright eyes spark in the distance, their faces magnificent. They are beauty. I am a spark of light. My name is Sage. I am far from the footsteps.
What is Beauty?
by Alana Lewis

Beauty is your hair, no longer deep obsidian, but silver as starlight, loose and stringy.

Beauty is your eyes, no longer shining with innocence, but golden with knowledge, a saccharine honey brown.

Beauty is your skin, no longer supple and tight, but warm as the radiant moonstone, with wrinkles that whisper loving tales.

Beauty is your laughter, no longer loud and hearty, but serenely tinkling like a diamond bell, shy yet still full of life.

Beauty is your smile, which you always have for me, no matter how much I disappoint.
Guard
Jesse Berman
Photograph
Lately, I can’t read the word lilac
without hearing iliac.

Nor can I eat barbecue ribs
and not look for the costal groove.

And the branches of the trees
this winter, (what could they be?)

arteries exploring or bronchial buds growing?
And what anatomy has done to my sex life?

There are no more sins
without embryological sinuses,

no more lovers
without cruses and ducts.

I’m not trying to make any crude allusions,
but when I hold on to your chest

tall I can think of
are pleural effusions.

I am coming to the end
of not knowing

the mystery of all that
keeps our bodies going.

So, before I let out this next sigh,
as exhausted as I am,

do not think of how my diaphragm will rise.
Let us stay silent

for a moment
without asking why.

Anatomy Fatigue
by Benjamin Puliafito
Afternoon Haze
Ruth Howe
Photograph

Passion that Burns
Joseph Gotesman
Photograph
The countdown begins
10-I want to be kinder and more considerate of others.
7-I won’t procrastinate learning how to knit and crochet.
4-I will not pander my views to be something I’m not.
1-I am me!
0

I close my eyes, clasp my hand, and let my aspirations break through to begin the year anew.

New Years
by Alana Lewis

A time for promises, resolutions, wishes, floating in the colorful, breezy.

A time to look back, remember, forgive, others and myself of past mistakes.

December thirty first, A time for quiet contemplation raucous celebrations.

To break through the haze, and envision what we want our future selves to be and become.
The Room
by Camille S. Padlan

I live beneath overgrown skyscrapers, crooked highways and bypasses,
Pale skies and even paler people who pursue for years on end
One misplaced moment.
Your smile stretches out over this cramped metropolis,
And I find myself taking refuge in the confines of my bedroom.
How is it that Lust smells so much
Like the pillowcase on your side of the bed?
I never knew I could miss smelling hair that hasn’t been washed in a day.
Reckless breezes invade open bedroom windows,
And now the cold begins to hug my lonely air as I
Stoke this curveless bed, just barely big enough to love myself in.
I try to shut out the memories of you by closing the windows
But the polyester curtains rub my face.
I shut my eyes.
I nod my head to the movement of wind in the curtain –
Remembering your stubbled chin grazing my throat,
And the irony in your kiss: it was desperate;
Quick like a habit, soft like it was my first.
I begin to tug at the threads where I’ve embroidered memories of you –
Fingering the loose strands as if they were the tiny hairs on the back of your neck.
You began as a metaphor that resonated an unending ebb and flow
Of flattery, double entendres, off-color stories, and stolen glances.
But in the end, you will be the sum of all the choices you did not make.
And in a distant corner of my room, I picture you in a pile,
Sitting with three sets of keys, a pair of black framed glasses,
One pearl earring,
My innocence, and
Everything else I’ve ever lost.
Rendition of Van Gogh’s Cafe Terrace at Night
Lauren Boudewyn
Oil on canvas

Antarctic Continent
William Doran
Photograph
Colorful boats
Leonid Tarassishin
Photograph
Secret
Naama Rotem
Photograph

Birds 2
Adriana Nieto
Cray-Pas & Magic Marker
Dancing Margamser
Jayanta Ray Chowdhury
Photograph

Moving day. Nomads of Mongolia.
Dulguun Amgalan
Photograph
She talks and talks. Steam fills the kitchen. It clings to the wall and moistens her skin. It mists her eyes as Mitchel eats her hot food and listens with an absent smile.

Through the window, resting over the boiling water, she looks at the city of parallelograms in the fading light. The el rattles the pane; steel wheels screech like glass being scratched.

The moon has risen. Confused ascents and descents of concrete and tint end at her window. She meets the bank tower’s insisting stare; high on its metallized blue, a sign for loans tells her to SIGN AND DRIVE! A long trail of zeroes of an odometer of pleased customers lines the ledge like suicides or baby moons.

She thinks of Markus somewhere in that city, with a woman who doesn’t talk and talk about things he can’t stand.

Does he think of her? Does he think of her in her hot box with her dead-eyed man?

She blushes in the steam that moistens her hair.

Mitchel watches her clean.

She thinks of Markus across the Guatemalan grocery stores crowded in the evening dark below the el; across their marimba and tinkling fluorescence and their chill, pork air pouring through aisles of expired anise and fruit, she feels him.

Does he feel her through the furor, through the glowing towers?

Does he feel her body?

Does he see her like she was?

Does he care?

She kisses Mitchel.
Fall colors on Manas River, Bhutan
Namita Roy-Chowdhury
Photograph

Patillas, PR
Marisol Figueroa
Photograph
LEFT

Rose with Note
Michael Prystowsky
Egg tempera and oil glazes on a linen panel

OPPOSITE

Lazy Sunday Afternoon
Sarah Palsen
Photograph
I was not allowed to have nail polish as a child. My sisters and I used to sneak nail polish, hiding bottles in our sock drawers where my mother would inevitably find them and throw them away. She claimed nail polish stained things and made a mess. This explanation never made sense because the house was already a mess. Most surfaces were already blemished, the floors were scuffed and nothing was ever clean or neat. Why single out nail polish when the whole house was coated with stains?

At age 25, I am looking at nails coated in bright and obnoxiously red paint. The kind that normally coats curved plastic, stick-on nails that tap on countertops next to cash registers. But this bright, obnoxiously red paint is on the fingers and toes of a dead woman – brain-dead at least. She is not technically dead; her heart still beats, pumping blood through the vessels to her organs, perfusing them, giving the illusion of life. But yesterday, an aneurysm burst in her brain. Blood coated the brain’s surface. It caked and clogged the outlets, trapping the rivers of fluid that cushion the brain. And with each heartbeat, more blood surged into the expanding lake of fluid in her head. Nothing could leave. Pressure built. The force increased in her skull until it pushed out a vital part of her brain. Now she is brain-dead.

I was excited this morning when I was told to join the transplant surgeon on a flight across the country to harvest a heart. Such an undertaking is rarely asked of a medical student. The heart, I soon discovered, lies in the chest of the woman with bright, obnoxiously red nails. Her bright toes match her obnoxiously red fingers. While her blood still pumps, her skin looks pink and alive. She could be sleeping. Did she suspect, when she picked out that polish, that she would die later that day, week, or month? In bright, obnoxious red?

The surgeons assemble around the body that looks so alive and each one stakes his claim. The liver doctors eye the liver, the kidney surgeons assert rights to the kidneys, the pulmonary specialists want the lungs, and we stand by the heart – the heart that is still beating. A large incision is cut: no need for cosmetics now. All the organs are revealed, young and alive. She is only 32. A pristine abdomen and thoracic cavity. How rare to see no disease or pathology. Then, in seconds, the surgeons swiftly excise all the parts that are to be harvested. The organs are quickly carried off in coolers that look like they hold beer at picnics. These organs are headed for new homes. Most of the new homes are already filleted open on operating tables and waiting for the young, pilfered viscera.

My mother did not rid the house of nail polish because of stains. She hated nail polish. When she was thirteen, her mother died unexpectedly. A brain aneurysm, the doctors supposed, but no autopsy was done. My grandmother had never worn nail polish but after this abrupt death and rushed funeral, the mortician painted her nails bright, obnoxious red. The unnatural color, so far from what she herself would have chosen, was mutilation and the idea that she eternally rests in the ground with bright, obnoxiously red nails tormented my mother. She could never stand to look at bright red nails again.

Nail Polish
by Rebecca Kamil
Riddle #1
by Maxwell Weidmann

She swirls and glides with fluid grace,
Always keeping with your pace.
As a fountain dissects light,
She parses thought to new insight.
As light as a feather but of weighty import,
Even reality can she distort,
And keep the wildest dream alive,
For in creation does she thrive.
She can wound in black and blue,
Damage that no sword can do.

Riddle #2
by Maxwell Weidmann

I’m born of fire, in shadows of sight.
I’m only illusion; a trick of the light.
Yet through me truth may be exposed,
The supernatural within me is enclosed.
More than a mirror of our world,
Tight within me dreams are curled.
I’ve defeated time, defeated space,
But I’m ever trapped on a single face...
Leaving
Marcelo Chacon
Photograph
**The Joy of Riding**
Karen Gardner

Round and round
I watch my wheels go,
spinning smoothly
in a quiet hum.

Time passes to the
clickety click of
gear changes
and the ever-steady hum.

Trees and flowers
merge in a blur
of greens and purples,
oranges and reds.

The sky, clear blue,
offers the backdrop
for a parade of clouds
airbrushed by angels.

Legs that churned like pistons
slow
and then stop,
But not the hum.

Medina of Essaouira
Eduardo Ayala Fuentes
Photograph
Angel Fonseca,
Backside Noseslide
Nollie Flip To Fakie,
Bronx, NY
Brett Wollson-Stofko
Photograph

Walls
Ian Downs
Photograph
Coffee Stirrers
by Connieann Del Vecchio

We have so many things in life to worry about, so many decisions to make that one would think that coffee stirrers would be far down on our list of worries; let me correct that statement, one would think coffee stirrers shouldn’t even be on the “worry” list. However, recently, there has been a lot of controversy over them in my office.

We have red and white striped plastic coffee stirrers/mini straws that we have used for many years. One day, one of our secretaries approached me and asked if I could order the wooden coffee stirrers. Never thinking someone would actually have a preference, I was curious and asked why. My co-worker said she knew that plastic released carcinogenic (cancer causing) chemicals when it melted, and she realized when she dropped the stirrer into her coffee cup it would become soft, therefore, she came to the obvious conclusion that her coffee was being laced with poisonous chemicals with every stir of that little stick. Suffering from the same sort of phobia as my very nice co-worker, I began to think of the irony; my mind became fixated on this. Imagine an innocent cup of coffee, the thing that opens the eyes of millions of people every day, could be the very thing that closes those same eyes permanently. As we drink and mindlessly discuss last night’s television shows each day, we are poisoning ourselves, with that little red stick.

Quickly, I ordered the wooden stirrers. It was with a sense of relief that I began to fill my cup in the break room, rid of those plastic troublemakers. But suddenly I had a thought that sent panic throughout my body. Wood was infamous not only for holding germs and bacteria, but providing them with a proper breeding ground. We were no longer stirring poisonous chemicals into our coffee, but now we were stirring in whatever came off the hands of those people who dipped into the cup to take stirrers. They were, certainly not being careful to avoid touching all the other stirrers, probably brushing against half of them on the way in and the other half on the way out leaving behind unknown bacteria that could lead to what became and endless list of sinister diseases in my mind. I was crippled by this thought, so I added some cream and sugar and sloshed the cup around, avoiding the plastic and the wood at all costs, creating a mess in the process.

As always, things like this never stay private. Another co-worker walked in as I was sloshing my coffee and asked why I didn’t use a stirrer, especially now since we had so many choices. I explained my concern which started a debate that divided our department in two. Half of the staff were wearing T-shirts that said “Wood burns but plastic returns,” and the other half were wearing shirts that said, “Plastic is drastic but wood is misunderstood,” there were fights in the hallway and co-workers not speaking… Nah, just kidding about all that!

The truth is that is started a minor debate between those of us who knew about why there were two kinds of stirrer choices now available. It just goes to show that whatever the issue, there are people willing to choose a side and debate it. I guess that is what makes life interesting. Plastic or wood, what is your choice? As for me I brought my martini shaker to work. Now, I take my java shaken, not stirred.
Morro
Ana Batista
Photograph

Sunny and Cloudy
Moshin Chowdhury
Photograph
AD LIBITUM

OPPOSITE
A Streetcar Named Desire
Kamala Spencer
Drawing

BELOW
Late Summer
Heng R. Wang
Oil on Canvas
The Shipwreck,
Island of Zakynthos,
Greece
Nikolas Zaphiros
Photograph
Broken hearts was her pleasure. Sewing broken hearts together, on she worked through and through mending love as she would do. She had no cares for me and you. Living in her hallowed space, she tended to the lovers, only caring for lost embrace.

Selfless as she was in life, she never became the loving wife of a man she would choose. Now quiet sadness and working madness has surely left the bruise. They say death came for the hearted seamstress alone in her bed... and all the good we thought she did was never what she said...

We found her lying in her bed with the hearts she mended. She was covered in the lovers blood and all hearts bloodied, burnt, and bended. A bitter end for the hearted seamstress who always was alone. Her only pleasure was mending hearts and keeping them for her own.
Like tongues dyed green
by lime candy-flakes,
the backyard lizards
and the backyard snakes
roll from side to side
in the night dipped dark.

Their bodies are as liquid
as snow melt in the spring.
Their bodies are enormous;
so one would think
from the loudness of
the hissing sounds they make.

It’s a reassuring noise,
like the chair of a god
who smacks his double lips,
watching women main the main
on the decks of tiny ships
on the Dead Sea partaking.

Or the damsel’s camera makes
rapid-fire, monotone,
as the cameraman huts
in the trees outside the pad
of a scanty-clad
young girl who lives alone.
PREVIOUS PAGE
Indian gods - Symbol of Divine Love
Paromita Mukherjee
Oil on canvas

BELOW
#NYFW
Damien Jackson
Photograph

Outerbanks,
North Carolina
Loyda Cruz
Photograph
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**OPPOSITE**

Mountains
Melissa Lectura
Watercolor
In keeping with tradition, the 7th Annual Art and Literary Night was held on December 9, 2013 in Lubin Dining Hall. Students, faculty, staff, and their families came out to support the artists of our community while enjoying the Albert Einstein Jazz Band. This year also marked the first a cappella performance by Einstein’s very own a capella group the Lymph Notes at Art Night.

Ad Libitum held an art auction to raise money for our scholarship fund for the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC). This scholarship is used to subsidize the cost of BRAC art classes for promising young art students. This year we raised $625 through the auction as well as through generous donations and contributions. It was also an especially exciting night, since some of the students who benefited from the scholarship fund and their families were in attendance. It was great to see the joy and pride these students take in their work, and we hope to continue this tradition in the coming years.

The Ad Libitum team would like to thank all the artists, writers, and poets who submitted their work – without you none of this would be possible. We would also like to thank Dr. Kuperman, Dr. Martha Grayson, Dr. Stephen Baum, Martin Penn, Karen Gardner, the Graduate Office, Peter Dama, Donna Bruno, and the Graphic Arts Department, Jim Cohen from Lubin Dining Hall, the Student Council, the Engineering Department, the Housekeeping Staff, and Gail Nathans from BRAC. Thank you all for making this year’s Art and Literary Night a huge success! We are already eagerly looking forward to the next one.