

RAINBOW ROWELL

Bein' green ain't easy at UNL

All right, I'll get this out of the way right now — I'm not very artsy.

I like art. I don't object to art. I've even been seen hanging around a museum or two with my eyes glazed over, clutching my chin and sinking deep into thought.

And sometimes, I'm not even thinking. "What the heck ..."

As much as I adore art, modern art flies over my head like Wonder Woman's invisible jet. I know it's up there; I can see the whole Justice League hanging out and I can see the dotted lines, but I can't figure it out. I can't quite reach it.

I'm not proud. I'd like to appreciate modern art. I try really hard. It's disheartening to think that such lauded and talked-about stuff should completely baffle me.

I try to hide my modern art illiteracy. When in the presence of my highfalutin', away-at-prestigious-art-school friends, I try to look affected by Picasso and Mondrian.

I follow their lead and "ooh" and "ahh" in all the right places, like someone who laughs at a dirty joke she doesn't get, just so no one thinks she's a prude.

So last year when the campus was caught in the uproar surrounding "Greenpoint" — the infamous hunk o' metal between Andrews and Burnett halls — I was quiet.

I listened to the natives roar. "It's hideous." "It's a waste of money." "What moron picked that out?"

But I didn't say anything. I didn't want people to think I had less culture than stale yogurt.

I kept my mouth shut until I was finally alone with Greenpoint. And then, when all of its defenders and critics were far away, I looked it square in its rusty side and said, "Blech. You are ugly."

Later, "Greenpoint" became a safety issue for me. It seemed an ideal place for would-be criminals to hang out. There exists no way to see if someone is lurking within the sculpture. I knew that one day, I'd be walking by and some ne'er-do-well



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would jump out and victimize me before you could say "aesthetically displeasing."

I haven't thought much about "Greenpoint" this year.

Maybe the controversy that was "Greenpoint" last year has mutated into the green-space scandal that engulfs us now. Something about the word green really pushes buttons on this campus. Maybe if they called it puce space, everybody would say, "Wow. Great idea."

I like green space, in theory. I've said it once and I'll say it again — nothing beats a park, especially if it has a swingset. But I also sympathize with all those whiners and complainers who don't want to walk far from their parking space.

I had a parking space once. It was very far away and I didn't enjoy the long walk. I was so afraid I'd lose my spot and never find another one that I left my car there and walked home.

That was a few weeks ago. Maybe I should go check on Lady V, make sure she still has all her hubcaps and check her tire pressure.

Maybe we could make everyone happy by only allowing green cars to park in the lot.

I suppose walking from a remote parking space could be dangerous, too. But frankly, walking ANY distance alone at night is far less than safe, and complaining about the parking lot just distracts us from the real campus safety issue — which, for me, will always be "Greenpoint."

Ah, back to "Greenpoint."

Yesterday my friend Dan almost made me change my mind about "Greenpoint." Oh, I still think it's

darn ugly and all that, but maybe it isn't completely useless.

Dan has discovered that "Greenpoint" is an excellent place to play the didgeridoo — his musical instrument of choice.

Like so many other young men bogged down by puberty, Dan took up the guitar in high school. Apparently he now thinks there's just too much competition for a guitar player, so he's shifted his attention to the aforementioned aboriginal instrument.

Dan tells me that the didgeridoo, a long hollow tube, originated in Australia and has pretty hefty phallic associations.

Yesterday at high noon, Dan played his didgeridoo in the middle of "Greenpoint" to a crowd of me, a few passers-by and his girlfriend.

He's impressed with the acoustics of "Greenpoint." The didgeridoo, in my experience, sounds a lot like a psychedelic moose. "Greenpoint" enhances its sound and makes it sound like a much bigger, much spacier moose.

I think Dan's hit on something here. I like the idea of interactive art. People like audience participation. Look at the success of the "Hokey Pokey" and that "Hip Hop Hooray" song.

When choosing art or sculpture in the future, the folks in charge should give us art we can actively partake in. Maybe a giant "Where's Waldo" mural on the side of Hamilton Hall or even a great big swingset.

A really artsy swingset.

Rowell is a news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

KATE PEISTRUP

Squirrels just wanna have fun

"P hrrggmph," I mumbled to myself, "so this is grass."

I sat up, partially disentangling myself from my bicycle. Then I spied the squirrel and counted myself lucky. I scrambled over to its motionless little body. I seized it in my hands and quickly performed the Heimlich maneuver. I heard a faint, yet distinctive crunching.

"Oops," I said. I put the furry casualty in my pocket and pedaled stiffly home. That made six for this week.

The next morning, after chasing six squirrels from my bathtub, I began to feel a bit troubled. Where were they all coming from? There is no Pharaoh in Lincoln, so I ruled out a heaven-induced plague. I decided to put my \$174 "student fee" dollars to work and ask a certified University of Nebraska smartypants.

Dr. Lynch is a professor of biology. He was surprisingly receptive to my squirrel concerns. He informed me that it was a lack of predation that was causing the squirrel population boom. A housecat would find a squirrel to be easy pickins, but many cats are kept indoors for their entire lives.

When I asked if soon my neighborhood rodents would grow larger than their only serious predator, the mighty Buick, he did not laugh at my antiquated Lamarckian ideas.

Apparently it is not the burliness of the squirrel that ensures survival, but the hastiness. It would be darn near impossible for a species of automobile-immune squirrels to come into existence. Their diet would have to differ drastically from that of the squirrels currently on the market, and the population would be far more sparse.

Artificial selection is entirely another matter. It would be possible for



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human scientists to engineer genetically the giant squirrel, in the spirit of such atrocities as the Pekinese and the seedless tomato.

I, for one, would hardly be surprised if the brewers of America, the same fiends responsible for the criminalization of marijuana, decided to let loose the giant squirrel on the unsuspecting citizens of our fair city. Or Exxon could be responsible. Exxon, a place where the diabolical and inexplicable are company policy.

Thus, deeply engaged in thought, I barreled home from Dr. Lynch's office.

The next thing I knew, I was once again face down in the grass. A guy was yelling, seemingly angry that I had nailed him with my bicycle. I rolled over and gasped.

"Stop, drop, and roll!" I yelled. He was all pink and doughy. In a fit of dementia he, or someone else, had dressed him in a dark, neatly pressed suit. He obviously needed some help. He only glared scornfully at me and wiped off his polyester/wool blend trousers. I watched him walk off and realized in horror that he was joining an entire landscape of Brooks Brothers cellulite. More than half of the casual downtown strollers were ... BUSINESSMEN.

Where were they all coming from? I thought back to what Dr. Lynch had told me of Darwin's theories. If there is some feature that certain members of a population possess that makes them more attractive to the opposing gender, that trait will become more common as these members get more action. An example would be colorful plumage or an enlarged wallet. I shuddered as I thought of earth in the 24th century, swarming with chubby golf players talking on cellular phones. We'll be sitting ducks when the Klingons invade.

Gosh, maybe Exxon is right. If businessmen had to battle fierce giant squirrels on their ways to work, perhaps it would make them stronger. Perhaps men would once again become fighters and hunters, animal blood spurting onto their bare, hairy chests. Someday I could have a mate who drags me by my head into our suburban four-bedroom house to do his bidding. This time the conspirators were one step ahead of us. Men's survival instinct has been reduced to applying for college and wearing cologne. This was truly a coup de Perrier, I marveled.

Peistrup is a sophomore English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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