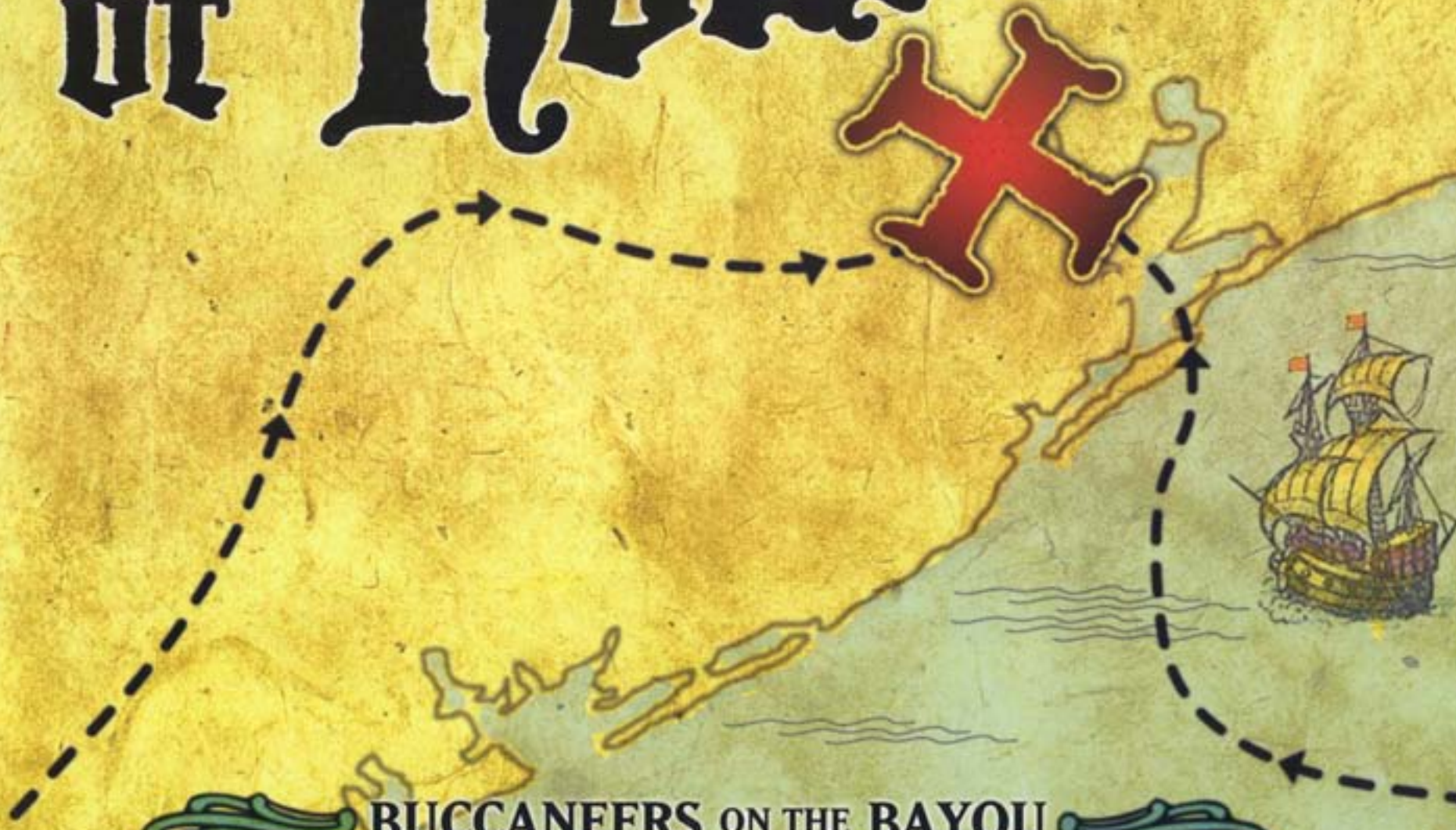


Houston Press

September 27-October 3, 2007 | FREE
Volume 19, Number 39 | houstonpress.com

Best ²⁰⁰⁷ of Houston[®]



BUCCANEERS ON THE BAYOU



GRIFF'S Café & Bar

*Over 40 Years of serving Houston
and still the Best...*

BEST BLOODY MARY

HoustonPress 2005

BEST SPORTS BAR

HoustonPress 2003

Number 8 Sports Bar in America

Sports Illustrated - February 2005

Number 6 Sports Bar in America

ESPN Cold Pizza - March 2005

**WATCH EVERY
NFL GAME!**

**4 BIG
SCREENS
27 TV'S**

**MLB PACKAGE
ESPN GAMEPLAN
NFL SUNDAY TICKET
TEXANS IN HD**

Tues: Steak Night

**SNOWMAN
POKER LEAGUE
ON WEDNESDAY**

Wed: Pork Chop Night

3416 Roseland • 713-528-9912

www.griffshouston.com



Best of Houston

Roger's Jollies



the big time, but they're not letting it go to their heads. OJ&A — aka Dawolu Jabari Anderson, Jamal Cyrus, Kenya Evans and Robert A. Pruitt — first met in a freshman art class at Texas Southern University. The collective's inclusion in the 2006 Whitney Biennial put OJ&A on the radar of all kinds of people. They've had a New York gallery exhibition, and they have a show at the Menil Collection. They even received a celebrity-style mention in *Vanity Fair*, which they thought was "weird." They remain nice, down-to-earth guys — with some pretty freakin' great art. Unless somebody goes and marries Yoko, this fab four should be around for a long time.

Best Artistic Renovation

Isabella Court Building
1009 Isabella St.
Houston

Isabella Court opened in 1929, the year the Great Depression began, but the lovely Spanish-style building is a survivor that made it onto the National Register of Historic Places. Purchased in 1991 by Trudy Hutchings, Isabella Court has been lovingly preserved and restored. The building's stunning courtyard is legendary, and its original murals, faded with time, lend the building a romantic elegance. The apartments may have central air now, but each still has its own milk box out front. Originally designed as a mixed-use building with commercial space on the bottom and apartments on top, the residential space has always drawn artsy tenants, but now the downstairs commercial space is pretty darn artsy as well. Commercial tenants fled during light rail construction, but now the downstairs is fully leased — three galleries, an art consultant and an architecture firm call the building home. Isabella Court has become an art destination.

Best Curator

Kim Davenport
Rice Gallery, Rice University
Houston
713-348-6069
www.ricegallery.org

Kim Davenport has made Rice Gallery a treasure trove of installation art in the middle of the Rice University campus, an institution far better known for engineering than for visual art. This past year, Davenport brought in two particularly outstanding installations. The first, "Rip Curl Canyon" by the young collaborative team of Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues, completely transformed the space into a rolling landscape made of cardboard. Davenport is always on the lookout for new artists, and Ball-Nogues were two young architects whose work had just come on the scene. But she isn't just spotting and bagging young talent — she's showcasing legends like Judy Pfaff. Pfaff, the doyenne of installation art, took over the gallery and created "...all of the above." The phenom-

enal installation looked like a three-dimensional drawing made with assistance from Dr. Seuss and provided a rare opportunity for Houstonians to see Pfaff's work.

Best Installation

"Rip Curl Canyon"
Rice Gallery, Rice University
Houston
713-348-6069
www.ricegallery.org

Two architects took eight tons of cardboard and three tons of wood and created a surreal landscape that consumed all of Rice Gallery. Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues of the collaborative team Ball-Nogues previously worked with architect Frank Gehry, the don of cardboard furniture. But Ball-



Best Installation: "Rip Curl Canyon"

Nogues did Gehry one better — instead of using cardboard to make chairs, they used it to craft a terrain of their own design. They die-cut cardboard into curves and sandwiched it together to create a sturdy but undulating surface. Visitors traversed it and slid down the cardboard slopes of what was truly an interactive installation and a spectacular blend of architecture and sculpture. "Rip Curl Canyon" is one of the coolest things we've seen in a long time.

Best Ensemble Production

The Clean House at the Alley Theatre
615 Texas
Houston
713-220-5700
www.alleytheatre.org

Artful, surprising and truly fine in so many ways, the Alley Theatre's Spring production of Sarah Ruhl's Pulitzer Prize-nominated *The Clean House* was thrilling. Houston's inventive cast turned each and every character into a creative joy. Josie de Guzman's Matilde, the Brazilian maid who didn't like to clean, was a gift of sweet sadness who found a perfect foil in Elizabeth Heflin's obsessively tidy Lane, the boss from hell for any maid. Add Annalee Jeffries's amazing performance as Lane's goofy sister, Virginia, and Paul Hope and Karmin Murcelo's supporting roles as two different couples in love,