



Advance Program Notes

Radiolab's Jad Abumrad

Gut Churn

Saturday, September 26, 2015, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Radiolab's Jad Abumrad *Gut Churn*



Photo by Marco Antonio

This lecture thread begins with a simple question: what does it mean to “innovate?” How does it feel to make something new in the world? (These are questions Jad Abumrad was frequently asked after being awarded a MacArthur fellowship in 2011.) This lecture, on one level, is the personal story of how Abumrad invented a new aesthetic. On another, it is a clinic in the art of storytelling. On a third and more profound level, the lecture is the result of a three-year investigation into the science, philosophy, and art of uncertainty, which all began with the two words that are the title of this talk. *Gut churn*. What use do negative feelings have during the creative process? Do those feelings get in the way, or do they propel us forward?

Biography

Jad Abumrad is the host and creator of *Radiolab* (www.radiolab.org), a public radio program broadcast on 524 stations across the nation and downloaded more than 9 million times a month as a podcast. Most days, *Radiolab* is the second most popular podcast, just behind *This American Life*.

Jad Abumrad did most of his growing up in Tennessee, before studying creative writing and music composition at Oberlin College in Ohio. Following graduation, Abumrad wrote music for films and reported and produced documentaries for a variety of local and national public radio programs.

In 2002, Abumrad began tinkering with an idea for a new kind of radio program, an open-ended radio "laboratory." *Radiolab* has since evolved into one of public radio's most popular programs. Abumrad hosts the program with Robert Krulwich and also serves as its lead producer, composer, and managing editor.

Abumrad employs his dual backgrounds as composer and journalist to create what's been called "a new aesthetic" in broadcast journalism. He orchestrates dialogue, music, interviews, and sound effects into compelling documentaries that draw listeners into investigations of otherwise intimidating topics, such as the nature of numbers, the evolution of altruism, or the legal foundation for the war on terror.

In 2010, *Radiolab* was awarded the prestigious George Foster Peabody Award, and in 2011 Abumrad was honored as a MacArthur Fellow (also known as the Genius Grant). The MacArthur Foundation website says, "Abumrad is inspiring boundless curiosity within a new generation of listeners and experimenting with sound to find ever more effective and entertaining ways to explain ideas and tell a story." In 2015 the *Radiolab* episode *60 Words* was awarded a George Foster Peabody Award.

Alongside his radio work, Abumrad continues to work as a composer and remixer. His music is currently being performed across the country. For more information, please visit www.newmusicensemble.org/projects/nationalparks/.

Engagement Activities

Saturday, September 26, 2015, 4 PM

JOURNALISM WORKSHOP WITH JAD ABUMRAD

Lecture, Q&A, Demonstration

During his visit to Virginia Tech, co-creator and host of *Radiolab* Jad Abumrad will lead a class for undergraduate students in print and broadcast journalism.

Special thanks to Derley Aguilar, Mike Horning, and Syrenthia J. Robinson

In the Galleries



Gerry Bannan
The Way of All Flesh, 2013
Ballpoint pen on Mylar
20 x 72 inches
Courtesy of the artist
© Gerry Bannan

BEYOND REAL: STILL LIFE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

September 3–November 15, 2015

Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery, Sherwood Payne Quillen 71' Reception Gallery

Artist Spotlight: Gerry Bannan

Roanoke artist Gerry Bannan references European Old Master paintings and prints in still lifes that, informed by the engravings of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) and Dutch Baroque masters, re-draw the still life tradition with ballpoint pens on expansive sheets of Mylar. In these contemporary re-imaginings of the memento mori or vanitas tradition, intricately drawn bones, vines, shells, and flowers allude to the transient nature of life and the inevitability of death and decay.

Hear Gerry Bannan speak about his work Friday, October 2 at 6:30 PM in the Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery. Artist talks are free and open to the public.

Also on view:

PHILIP TAAFFE

September 3–November 15, 2015

Ruth C. Horton Gallery

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM; Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM; closed for VT home football games