



**February/March 2010
Issue 2**

The U.S. Information Resource Center (IRC) of the American Embassy in Athens is happy to provide you with *Latest on Humanities*, a bulletin focused on American society and culture. This publication is a bi-monthly compilation of recent articles from a wide range of authoritative journals and periodicals. Internet sites related to cultural themes and current issues of interest are also included. By organizing and disseminating one more thematic publication about the United States, IRC seeks to promote better understanding of the principles and institutions that shape American values.

1. What Makes a Great Teacher

By Amanda Ripley
(*The Atlantic*, February 2010, pg. 58)
For years, the secrets to great teaching have seemed more like alchemy than science, a mix of motivational mumbo jumbo and misty-eyed tales of inspiration and dedication. But for more than a decade, one organization has been tracking hundreds of thousands of kids, and looking at why some teachers can move them three grade levels ahead in a year and others can't. Now, as the Obama administration offers states more than \$4 billion to identify and cultivate effective teachers, Teach for America is ready to release its data.

2. Taking Center Stage

By Barbara Pollack
(*ArtNews*, February 2010, pg. 80)
Looking for new ways to interpret familiar works –and attract new audiences to them –opera companies are hiring artists to transform classic productions into multimedia spectacles.

3. Fearless in Seattle

By Gigi Berardi
(*Dance Magazine*, February 2010, pg. 26)

“At one moment in Jean-Christophe Maillot’s *Romeo and Juliet*, in an act of supreme trust, Pacific Northwest Ballet’s Carla Körbes flings herself backwards into the arms of Romeo. This is a turning point in the ballet and crystallizes Körbes’ interpretation of Juliet as jubilant and transcendent. PNB’s Carla Körbes has found a new freedom and confidence in her dancing.”

4. Welcome to Your Neo-Future

By Justin Maxwell
(*The American Theatre*, February 2010, pg. 25)
It’s a chilly 58 degrees and pouring rain on this August night in Chicago, but a queue of hardy theatergoers winds up Ashland Avenue, around the corner and down Foster Avenue. They are probably just the kind of audience members you’d want lining up for a late-night show at your theater—boisterous, diverse and clearly looking forward to a good time. All of them are on their way to see *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, the ever-mutating cornerstone performance of an unruly 20-year-old company that calls itself the Neo-Futurists. This may be an ugly stay-at home-with-slippers-and bourbon night in Chicago, but the Neo-

Futurists are eight people short of sold-out house.

5. Project H Design Revolution Road Show

By William Bostwick

(*I.D.*, January/February 2010, pg. 48)

"In function, we are a design firm," Emily Pilloton says of Project H, the nonprofit she founded two years ago to champion and deliver socially responsible design. "But we are acting as activists. We don't have picket signs, but by doing the work, we are advocates for a cause." Project H, which quickly grew to nine chapters in the United States and abroad, designs products rooted in a deep connection with communities and their specific problems.

6. Keeping It Real

By James Wood

(*The New Yorker*, March 15, 2010, pg. 58)

"Keeping it Real" is the title of James Wood's review of Chang-Rae Lee's new novel "The Surrendered", which spans half a century and three continents. By way of an introduction, Woods examines literary conventions, Roland Barthes' "reality

effect", and David Shields' book "Reality Hunger: A Manifesto", which is a passionate plea for what Shields calls "reality-based art." Wood finds it difficult to decide whether or not literature is making progress: "Convention may be boring, but it is not untrue simply because it is conventional."

7. The Key to Her Locks

By Rachel Wolff

(*ArtNews*, February 2010, pg. 76)

The tangled strands in Mequitta Ahuja's elaborate self-portraits are at once large-scale abstractions and symbols of a multiethnic mix. Ahuja's layered musings on race and identity have made their way into museums around the country.

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Please visit our selected web pages at the following electronic addresses:

❖ **The National Center for Jewish Film**

<http://www.brandeis.edu/jewishfilm/about.htm>

The National Center for Jewish Film (NCJF) is a unique nonprofit motion picture archive, distributor and resource center housing the largest, most comprehensive collection of Jewish-themed film and video in the world.

❖ **Voices from the Gaps**

<http://voices.cla.umn.edu/>

VG/Voices from the Gaps, a website based in the English Department at the University of Minnesota, is dedicated to bringing together marginalized resources and knowledge about women artists of color to serve secondary and college education across the world.

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