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Even a wellness retreat could use a rejuvenating break. The Crossings has reopened its doors to reveal a property-wide makeover.

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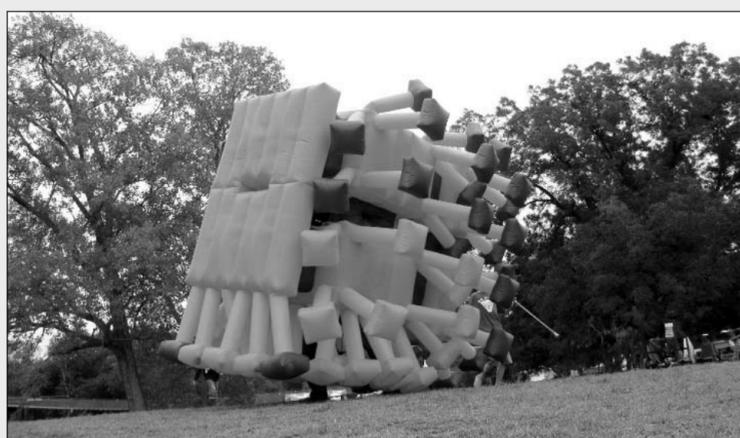
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MapQuest is stepping up its game at SXSW Interactive. On Sunday, the company won't just show you how to get to the Salt Lick in Driftwood, it'll take you there.

FASHION

Meet the designer. Meet fashion designer Korto Momolu during her visit to Austin today. (If you recall, the Liberian-born Momolu came in second place on 'Project Runway' behind Leanne Marshall during Season 5.) From noon to 2 p.m., Momolu will promote her new women's accessories line of jewelry and handbags at Dillard's (3221 Feathergrass Court, 833-9556, www.dillards.com), which officially opens today in the second phase of the Domain in North Austin. Then from 5 to 7 p.m., she will visit Dillard's at Barton Creek Square (2901 S. Capital of Texas Highway, 327-6100).

— Marques G. Harper

Return of the inflatable suit man



JIMMY KUEHNLE

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Jimmy Kuehnle in a giant inflatable suit at the Art Outside festival in Rockdale. Kuehnle is bringing his suit to Austin on Friday.

By Jeanne Claire van Ryzin

AMERICAN-STATESMAN ARTS WRITER

Last year when Jimmy Kuehnle walked the streets of downtown Austin in one of his giant inflatable, wearable, brightly colored creations, the San Antonio-based artist battled wind gusts up to 40 miles per hour and ended up being sucked into a parking garage when the wind caused a vacuum effect.

He's not looking to repeat the event when he dons 'You Wear What I Wear,' another of his inflatable suits, at noon Friday at Cesar Chavez Street and Congress Avenue and embarks on a random trek. But Kuehnle is hoping to surprise unsuspecting passers-by just as he has around the world.

A chance encounter with something as absurd as a guy in giant inflatable abstract balloon is, Kuehnle claims, a great means of breaking up the routine of everyday thinking. There's no proof that Kuehnle's antics have led to major intellectual breakthroughs, though they garner plenty of attention.

What happened at the Fusebox Festival last year when you got sucked into that parking garage?

Kuehnle: The day of the Fusebox performance was extremely windy. I did not know if I would be able to even hold the suit down in the wind, let alone walk down the street. People were waiting to see the performance, so I threw caution into the wind, literally, and pushed onward. Multiple times the wind blew me back, and as I passed a parking garage a suction effect dragged me almost 40 feet into the garage. I had no control over my movements once the wind took me. This has happened before in Japan and Finland with 'Big Red.' I designed the current suit, 'You

'You Wear What I Wear'

When: Noon Friday

Where: Starts at Cesar Chavez Street and Congress Avenue

'Wear What I Wear,' to be wind resistant and highly maneuverable.

What got you started making objects on such a scale?

I dreamed of owning an article of clothing that at a push of a button would expand to fill an entire room. These inflatable suits are along the path to that fantasy.

You've said you want to do anything that you can to get out into the streets and change people's thinking. Why?

Our thinking sometimes loses its critical edge and must be re-examined and recharged. We need to encourage empirical thought and rational thought. . . . Rather than walking around with a sandwich board sign (on me) and being written off as a crazy person, the public inflatable suit performances, which walk the line between spectacle and the absurd, are my small contribution to the need for constant questioning and re-examining our lives and our place in the cosmos.

How big is 'You Wear What I Wear'?

It is approximately 9 feet by 9 feet by 9 feet and can fit in a small duffel bag that I can strap to the back of my bicycle. The nylon fabric is relatively inexpensive since I buy it in bulk. . . . The largest cost is the labor, which includes lots and lots of sewing. I sew each seam twice to avoid incidents when out in the streets.

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CONCERT PREVIEW

Citizen Cope getting his music heard on TV shows, commercials

By Brian T. Atkinson

SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Citizen Cope entered consciousness as a small-screen backdrop ("Scrubs," Pontiac commercials). The Brooklyn-based songwriter, who self-released his lush "The Rainwater LP" last week, firmly champions licensing as essential modern marketing.

"If somebody hears 'Son's Gonna Rise' on a TV show and then goes and buys the record and then becomes a fan because the whole album's great," he says, "it's done a great service." Cope (born Clarence Greenwood) performs Friday.

What does 'LP' in the album title suggest about its contents?

It's something that would fit on a traditional vinyl album where the music couldn't be much more than 40 minutes. It's just the idea that "LP" is used in contractual talk. Since I wasn't doing this with a record company, I used a little slant on that. I was paying tribute to the great records made when that format was still alive.

'The Newspaper' might be its most topical

Citizen Cope

When: 8 p.m. Friday

Where: Stubb's, 801 Red River St.

Cost: \$27-\$30. Technically sold out.

Information: 888-512-7469, stubbs.frontgatetickets.com

song. It's a fairly harsh commentary.

It's about the death of journalism and the industry. Journalism has been somewhat decimated. It's supposed to be the watchdog of society and watch the government, but it has absolutely not done that. It's a shame. I still buy three or four different newspapers every day, (but) I'm just disenchanted with modern-day media reporting on important things.

How has your writing process evolved since (2006's) 'Every Waking Moment'?

We've been playing a lot of shows. It evolves because you've learned from all the songs you've written before and all the situations you've been in. Hopefully, you soak in the energy of the times and your songs are able to portray those struggles and emotions.

Why include both versions of ('Keep Askin' and 'Lifeline') on the disc?

Well, I did "Lifeline" by itself without the piano, and it was pretty strong. I just wanted people to hear the different broken-down versions. They both had their own identity stripped down. It's kinda cool to have that.

What freedom did self-releasing allow?

Creatively, I've always had the freedom to make my own records, but it's just about the ownership. I have control now. It's not owned and controlled by somebody else. Being able to follow your instinct as far as promoting and marketing it has been a real positive thing for me. Doing something basic doesn't take the approval of eight people.

You've played Stubb's a couple times. Are you looking forward to returning?

Yeah, I love playing there. Actually, somebody was asking me the other day which venue I wish I would've played in. I was thinking like, "Oh, Madison Square Garden and this and that." Then I was like, "I wish I would've played at the Liberty Lunch!"

CONTACT US

EXECUTIVE FEATURES EDITOR

Kathy Blackwell,
kblackwell@statesman.com

For features news, call 512-445-3690

E-mail: features@statesman.com

Fax: 512-445-3968

Mail: Features Desk, P.O. Box 670, Austin TX 78767

■ ARTS, MOVIES

Charles Ealy, cealy@statesman.com

■ TELEVISION, TECHNOLOGY, GARDENING
Sarah Beckham, sbeckham@statesman.com

■ BOOKS

Jody Seaborn, jseaborn@statesman.com

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Helen Anders, handlers@statesman.com

■ OUT & ABOUT

Michael Barnes, mbarnes@statesman.com

■ STYLE, HEALTH AND FAMILY ISSUES
Tara Trower, ttrower@statesman.com

AUSTIN360 EDITOR, MUSIC

Sharon Chapman, schapman@statesman.com

AUSTIN360.COM EDITOR

Gary Dinges, gdinges@statesman.com