

## Artist-in-residence holds "BARTER\_STATION" on campus

By Emily Wishingrad | Published 04/19/16 2:14pm | Updated 04/20/16 12:09pm



By Mihir Khanna/the Justice

TRADING PLAN: PEET talks with Caitlin Rubin, curatorial assistant for the Rose, listing out various roles he was looking to fulfill through participants.

“We are going to see the universe,” artist JJ PEET explained to the Justice on Friday night after he had successfully found a team of students with whom to complete his newest project “FIELD\_WORK.”

Standing under the bright lights of Chris Burden’s “Light of Reason” just before sunset, PEET (as he prefers to stylize his name) had just completed one of his “BARTER\_STATIONS” on the Brandeis campus. Usually, these stations are forums where PEET makes deals with individual customers for pieces of art. The catch is that no currency trades hands. Instead, patrons trade a service or a handmade gift (pretty much anything you can think of: a cooked dinner, a cello lesson, an

original song) in exchange for one of his PROXY\_Cups. Friday night, however, PEET had a specific trade in mind: one of his vessels, as he terms them, in exchange for assistance with a project that will be displayed at Rosebud, the Rose Art Museum's satellite gallery.

With his shoulder-length hair and dark grey beard, dressed in a long black robe and balancing a parasol on his shoulder, PEET was a sight to behold. As he took students aside one at a time, he spoke to them about the amount of time they were willing to commit to the project and what skills they possessed that would be of use to him and showed them one of his PROXY\_Cups, their eventual payment for participating. PEET was the highlighted artist for the Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts (April 15 through 17) and was named the Ruth Ann and Nathan Perlmutter Artist in Residence on April 5.

According to advertisements placed around campus, PEET was looking for a builder, an Electronics wiz, a Historical Accuracy/Archivist, a Master of Diversions, a Scrounger, a Time collector\_Master and a Time collector\_Jr.

About a dozen students, faculty and administrators gathered at the Light of Reason around 6 p.m., awaiting the arrival of PEET and chatting about what was about to unfold. About 30 minutes later than scheduled, PEET strolled up Loop Road from the Faculty Club, where he is staying during his residency, and set up his station at one of the ends of the rows of lamps. Holding up a cardboard sign with a number 10 on it, PEET motioned for the first person to approach his station. After a short pause of confusion, Elena Babineau '16, a Neuroscience and Psychology major, approached him. Others followed - each prospective participant would engage in a conversation with PEET, which would end in either an agreement to participate or in a parting of ways.



**By Mihir Khanna/the Justice**

CERAMIC SPEECH: JJ PEET, an artist in residence at Brandeis, describes his process of creating ceramic PROXY\_Cups, which he would barter.

There seemed to be two types of bartering going on at the BARTER\_STATION. The first was the exchange of a service and time commitment for one of PEET's PROXY\_Cups, but the second was the negotiation of the time that students were willing to commit to the project. PEET planned to work on the project from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but students could negotiate the number of hours that they were able to commit. If the two parties could not settle on such an agreement, no barter would take place.

No line formed. Instead, people went up in a randomized order when there was an opening at the station. But that was not PEET's original intention - it seems that lines usually form at his BARTER\_STATIONS. PEET commented that this less structured system seemed to be an especially "civilized" way of doing things. When there was a lull in the flow of people approaching the barter station, PEET would grab his parasol and move about the crowd, imploring people to make a deal with him. It was clear he would not stop until he had formed, to his mind, an adequate group of participants.

About 45 minutes after the bartering began, PEET had found his "faction," as he termed it. Five people had made a bargain with him: Eleanor Fruchter '16, Elena Babineau '16, Shane Levi '14, Jack Holloman '16 and Mihir Khanna '18. Mohammad Jafri '19 and Caitlin Rubin, curatorial assistant for the Rose Art Museum, joined the project later on.

As of Friday, the project was not fully formulated. It appears that it will include a video aspect, but PEET seems certain that the project will "see the universe." He told the Justice that he believes that the group may even find the universe on this campus. He also said that the group will use what he calls "time collectors" in order to realize the project. Time collectors, PEET told the Justice, include cameras and written accounts.

As part of PEET's residency, there are "takeovers" of screens around campus displaying PEET's artwork. The desktop computers on the first floor of the library, for instance, now portray PEET's pottery when they go into screensaver mode. Monitors in the Shapiro Campus Center atrium and the Heller School for Policy and Social Management are also part of the takeovers.

"FIELD\_WORK" will be on view from May 9 through June 4. Rosebud currently has one of PEET's works "PSYCH\_Up Animation" (2006) on view, which opened on April 7, will be on view through early May, according to the Rose's website.

*Editor's note: Mihir Khanna '18, a Justice editor, was one of the students who participated in the barter with JJ PEET. The images on this page were taken by him before he had any involvement in the piece. Khanna played no role in the selection of the images for this page, the writing of the article or the editing of this page.*

**Correction: The headline for this article was amended after it went to press, for clarity purposes.**

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