

The Invitational, Week 7: Arty Har-har

Give us an idea for a humorously audacious modern artwork. Plus, winning ‘circles of hell’ for particular offenders.

The audience is instructed to disrobe completely and put on kimonos. As they walk into the gallery, they see that the floor is clear glass. Crowds of people below are pointing, laughing, videotaping and sketching. Exits are not clearly marked. (Jennifer Hart)

An art exhibit consists only of the notice awarding artist grant for exhibit. It is mounted on wall with masking tape. (Fred Dawson)

Exhibit a Venus flytrap that was raised entirely on meat from a pig that had been raised on meat from a bear that was killed after eating a human.

Place hundreds of smiley face buttons, Beanie Babies and My Little Pony products into a coffin.

Create two locked boxes, each containing the other's key. Then throw them both into the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean.



February 22 marks the 36th anniversary of the death of Andy Warhol, who redefined modern art by, for example, painting super-realistic cans of Campbell's tomato soup. (That's not one of his, above. I apparently would have had to donate a year's salary to his estate to reproduce one here.)

Warhol was following in the footsteps of Marcel Duchamp, who -- as we stated in the last Gene Pool -- once declared a urinal to be high art, and it thus became so. Today we ask you to come up with new conceptual art in Andy's and Marcel's memory. Can be visual or performative. Marcel died on my 17th birthday, which is irrelevant except journalists have an insane need to justify anything weird by claiming it is an anniversary of something.

So, regarding Warhol, many years ago Tom the Butcher and I did this very contest, when we edited Tropic , the Sunday magazine of the Miami Herald. After Warhol's death, we ran a contest to replace Andy, and we flew in Ivan Karp to judge it — Ivan was the art critic who discovered Warhol, and newspapers had money back then. The winner he chose was a young woman -- an art student from Chicago -- who submitted a crappy seaside painting that she had bought at a driveway tag sale for \$5, but had then altered by painting a giant red “X” over it. The second prize was a basic metal clothes hanger, which, when you think about it, is an amazing elegant design.

The Invitational!

By Pat Myers and Gene Weingarten, Empress and Czar of The Invitational

For Week 7: Give us a funny idea — you don't have to draw it! — for a contemporary artwork, as in the examples above.

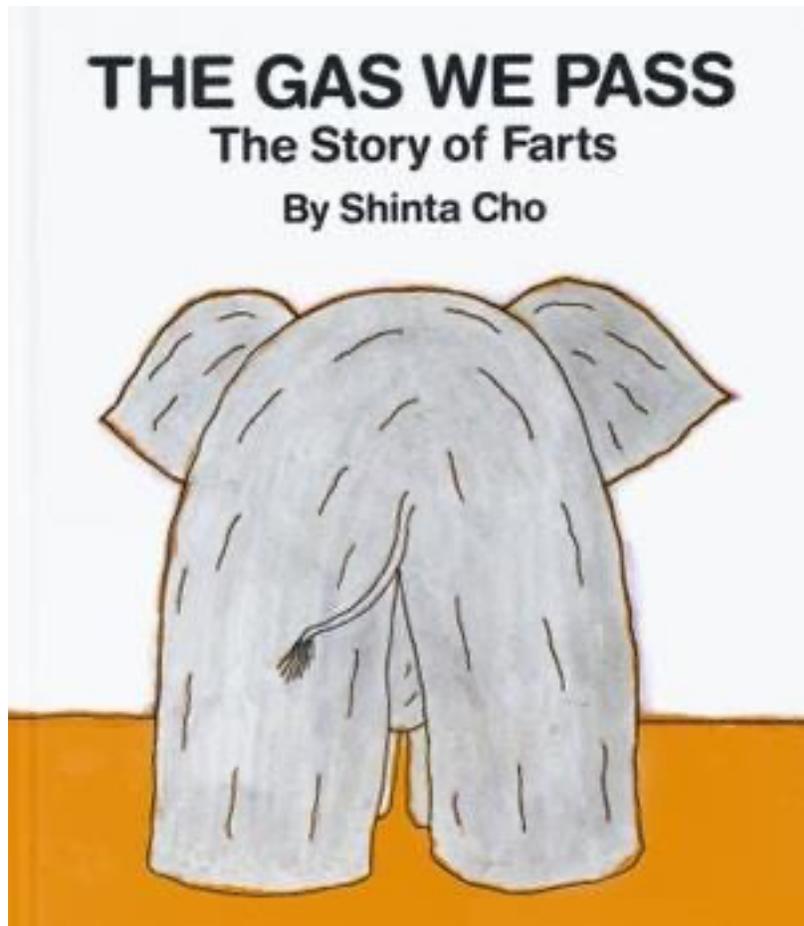
[CLICK HERE FOR THIS WEEK'S ENTRY FORM.](#)

By popular demand! If you want to return to this column over the course of the week, you can get here directly by typing bit.ly/inv-week-7.

Same for the entry form; that's at bit.ly/inv-form-7.

Deadline is midnight Friday, Feb. 24th. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, March 2nd. .

This week's winner receives the classic, truly endearing Japanese easy-reader book **"The Gas We Pass: The Story of Farts."** You might not be surprised that The Style Invitational awarded copies of this educational volume in 2004, 2010, 2018, and 2021. Attention must be paid! Donated by Longtime Loser Pie Snelson.



Revenge Served Up al Dante: Inking ‘Circles of Hell’ from Week 5

In [Week 5](#) we asked you to name and describe a “circle of hell” for various offenders. Wow, some of you seem to get just a wee bit too upset when someone puts down that 16th item in the supermarket express lane. Really, disembowling them and placing each organ on the conveyor belt?

This contest was the Czar's choice, so he chose the week's inking entries from a shortlist of about 125 that the Empress compiled. Then we both hashed out the final four.

Third runner-up: Those who **belittled others for enjoying their foods the “wrong” way** will spend eternity in the Food Nazi Circle. They will be forced to eat ketchup-drenched hot dogs washed down with a nice pinot noir with ice cubes melting in it. (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville, Md.)

Second runner-up: Cooks who knowingly **serve vegetarians meals with “only a little meat”** are fed a meal that contains only a small bit of their relatives. (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

First runner-up: If you **have lunch with a woman other than your wife**, you shall spend eternity covered in flies. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

And the winner of the book [“Farts: A Spotter’s Guide”](#):

People who brag about how smart their kids are will spend eternity reading their kids' Instagram posts about how dumb their parents are. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Damned Funny: Honorable Mentions

Crime: people who **cherry-pick Bible quotes** to support their own prejudices. **Punishment:** God gets to bitch-slap them with a Bible all day. (Lori Petterson, College Park, Md.)

Those who use the term “amount of people” will be condemned to forever eat meals that are in fact some amount of people. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Leaders of Topeka's hateful **Westboro Baptist Church** must spend eternity in “conversion therapy” from their actual sexuality to another one. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

A mansplainer: Whenever he says anything, Satan will go, “**Well, ACTUALLY . . .**” (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)

“**Karens**”: No hell needed; just send them to regular heaven, where they’ll be perpetually dissatisfied with God’s standards of service, yet can never get to speak to His supervisor. (Steve Bremner, Philadelphia)

“Fast & Furious” wannabes **who terrorize their fellow citizens with modified car exhausts that sound like bombs going off** when they step on the gas: They’ll be assigned as day care workers in Limbo. Every time they put their little imps down for a nap, just as they start to nod off, recordings of their earthly noise bombs will play on the Limbo loudspeakers, turned up to 11. (Lee Graham, Reston, Va.)

Any cable news panelist who **doesn’t know the difference between “can’t overestimate” and “can’t underestimate”** will spend eternity underestimating how unpleasant hell will be tomorrow. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Anyone in the audience **who sings along at a Broadway show** will henceforth always hear their own mediocre voice on the radio instead of the actual singer. (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Boomers who **insist that all the best music was made in the ’60s and ’70s** will get to listen to their favorite classic rock for eternity – performed by the Kenosha Kickers Polka Band. (Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)

Drivers who block intersections will suffer from eternally plugged nostrils, clogged arteries, and fecal impaction. (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Anyone who tells you each day **how many steps he has taken** will find that in hell, his Fitbit resets to zero every night at 11:59 p.m. (Karen Lambert)

[Leave a comment](#)

Customers who snap their fingers at the people helping them: Upon reaching Hell, they’ll have their thumbs tied to their pinkies and be made to sit at a table

with one leg that is ever so slightly shorter than the other three and perform calculus. A cup of scalding coffee next to them will spill all over their work whenever they jostle the table and be instantly refilled to the brim. (Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.)

DeSantis enablers will have extreme irritable bowel syndrome in a world where the only bathrooms are for transgender people. (Kevin Dopart)

Elected officials who **use migrants as political pawns** should spend eternity walking around a walled, guarded heaven looking for an entrance. (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Employees who **microwave fish in the office break room** will spend eternity in the circle of Hell where everyone wears cologne distilled from skunk farts. (Jeff Hazle)

For ChatGPT: There is no specific “ring of hell” for chatbots, as they are artificial intelligence systems created by humans and do not have a moral compass or consciousness. However, in a metaphorical sense, a poorly designed or malfunctioning chatbot could be seen as experiencing its own version of suffering or being stuck in a frustrating loop, unable to fulfill its intended purpose effectively. – *Actual answer from ChatGPT when asked, “Describe a ring of hell for chatbots”* (Gary Crockett)

If you trim your fingernails in your cubicle at work, you shall spend eternity in your cubicle at work. (Jesse Frankovich)

In hell, Donald Trump will meet women who actually are “his type.” (Neil Kurland, Elkridge, Md.)

Neighbors who **fire up their leaf blowers at 7 a.m. on weekends** will be issued foghorn alarm clocks that will wake them from their nightmares so they can start the next nightmare. (Jeff Hazle)

People unrelated to you who **tell you their Wordle or Spelling Bee scores every day** will be doomed to watch the same golf highlight reel in perpetuity. (Karen Lambert)

People who **constantly demand to see the manager** will certainly not be tortured by low-level incompetent fiends. Only senior, experienced torturers for those folks! (Duncan Stevens)

The Crotch Rocket Circle of Hell is for **motorcyclists who speed down highways** on their supersonic bikes, treating other vehicles like traffic cones. They will ride tricycles on a six-lane highway, forever cowering in fear as minivans and school buses dodge around them at 60 mph. (Terri Berg Smith)

People who **continually sniffle and snort** instead of blowing their noses will be reincarnated as wet-vacs. (Kevin Dopart)

People who **don't pick up after their dogs** will be reincarnated as bathroom tiles in a New Jersey Turnpike rest stop. (Kevin Dopart)

People who **honk from behind you .0001 seconds after the light turns green:** They will spend eternity going to restaurants and having their meals yanked away .0001 seconds after serving. (Duncan Stevens)

People who **send emails in all caps** shall spend eternity wondering why they can't get their password to work. (Jesse Frankovich)

People who **talk in movie theaters:** Every day they'll see a video with the Devil saying, "I'm about to tell you how you can get out of here," and then after that is nothing but background talking so they can't hear what the Devil is saying. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

Politicians who dodge questions have to ask the devil repeatedly, "When can I leave hell?" only to have the devil tout his new five-point economic plan. (Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.)

State of the Union hecklers should be assigned hecklers for their funerals.
(Duncan Stevens)

Editors who cancel humor contests must sit in a comedy club where everyone else is cracking up with laughter while they don't get any of the jokes. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

Circle of hell for those who **canceled The Washington Post Magazine, The Style Invitational and Gene Weingarten's column**: They must find all twelve differences between the two Second Glance photos – and there are only eleven. (Jon Carter, Fredericksburg, Va.)

And Last: The Now, Do You Get It? circle of hell, reserved for certain editors of The Washington Post: Here Satan torments people by explaining, in tedious and laborious detail, every joke appearing in The Invitational. For example: “The ‘joint legislation’ winner of Week 3, ‘The Ogles-Magaziner-Jackson-Self Act to encourage sperm bank donations,’ is humorous because the names in that order sound like ‘Ogles magazine, jacks on self.’ ‘Jacks’ in this context is a slang term for masturbation; in popular culture, sperm donation is depicted as a man going into a bathroom with a pornography magazine and masturbating until he ejaculates his sperm donation. The humor is amplified by the fact that the name of the legislation creates an unavoidably lewd image, but none of the words are themselves objectionable or crass; even ‘Jackson,’ the heart of the joke, is merely the name of either the new U.S. Representative from North Carolina, representing portions of Mecklenburg and Gaston counties, or the new Representative from Illinois, representing the South Side of Chicago. Now, do you get it?” (Madeline Lohman, Minneapolis, a First Offender)

“Al Dante” in the headline for the results was submitted by both Lori Petterson and Jeff Contompasis; Jeff also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running – deadline one moment before midnight Friday, Feb. 17 (well, if you're a day late this week, it's okay – we're busy Saturday morning): **Our Week 6 picture caption contest.** [Click here](#) or type in bit.ly/inv-week-6.

Not too late – Ingest foodstuffs with genuine Losers! This month's Loser Brunch is at Asian Palace in Columbia, Md., on **Sunday, Feb. 19**, at noon. (The E has to miss this one, alas.) More info and RSVP at [Our Social Engorgements](#) on the Losers' website, NRARS.org.

Banter and share humor with the Losers and the Empress in the [Style Invitational Devotees](#) group on Facebook; join (tell them you came from The Gene Pool) and the Devs will anagram your name every which way. And see more than 1,000 classic Invite entries in graphic form, also on FB, at [Style Invitational Ink of the Day](#).