

# tom thumb!



Founder Kjell Hahn, 2001

## Local Tradition Blasts Into the New Decade



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Who is Tom? What is so special about his thumb? In old English folklore, Tom is a thumb-sized boy who was wished to life by his infertile parents. In different versions of the story, Tom ends up cooked in a pie, eaten as bird-food, eaten by a cow, etc., but in Kirksville, Tom Thumb transcends legend, and comes alive in the form of a chaotic and spontaneous combustion of student/professor/town-produced art, performance, and music. Tom Thumb started back in 1998, and has since clenched its fist on Kirksville some-what annually to squeeze out raw talent--- much like ground beef from its wrapper.

Tom Thumb was originally created by two students, Jimmy Kuehnle and Kjell Hahn, both of whom have now graduated and work as professional artis. They wanted to create an alternative space outside the univer- sity for art and expression. Tom Thumb was meant to be an outlet for students to share themselves without restrictions imposed by the by the University. Past Tom Thumbs show how things get without restrictions. The beauty. The terror. The all around healthy and necessary force that is free expression. In 1998, when Jimmy and Kjell cleared out Kjell's apartment for Tom Thumb I, and spread art on the walls. They began a tradition that our community has upheld to this day.

The gallery doesn't reject any submission (ehem! like the Monitor..), allowing for goddam anything to be brought to the table. That's not the only Monitor-Thumb connection, by the way. When our paper was re- launched in 2008, it kicked off at that year's Tom Thumb. In past years, the gallery has also hosted a fairy wed- ding, the trashing and graffiti-ing of a kitchen, the destruction of television sets and other electronic equipment including micro-film machines and computers with sledgehammers, a synthesizer performance in a bathroom darkened with trash bags and lit with candles, and mystery mazes and bowling alleys. The festivals often have a guest speaker, who may or may not be clothed. Thumbs have been held in the former Aquadome, the old One World Store, the Kirksville Arts Association, and the Washington School; because of this it's known as a "floating" festival.

Special thanks to Jimmy Kuehnle, Allison Sissom, and Matt Johns for help with this article.



The first-ever gallery, in 1998



Jim Jereb smashes a TV in 2001



Attendees take up spray paint, 2000



Carving a roast pig, 2001