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arts, culture, and politics

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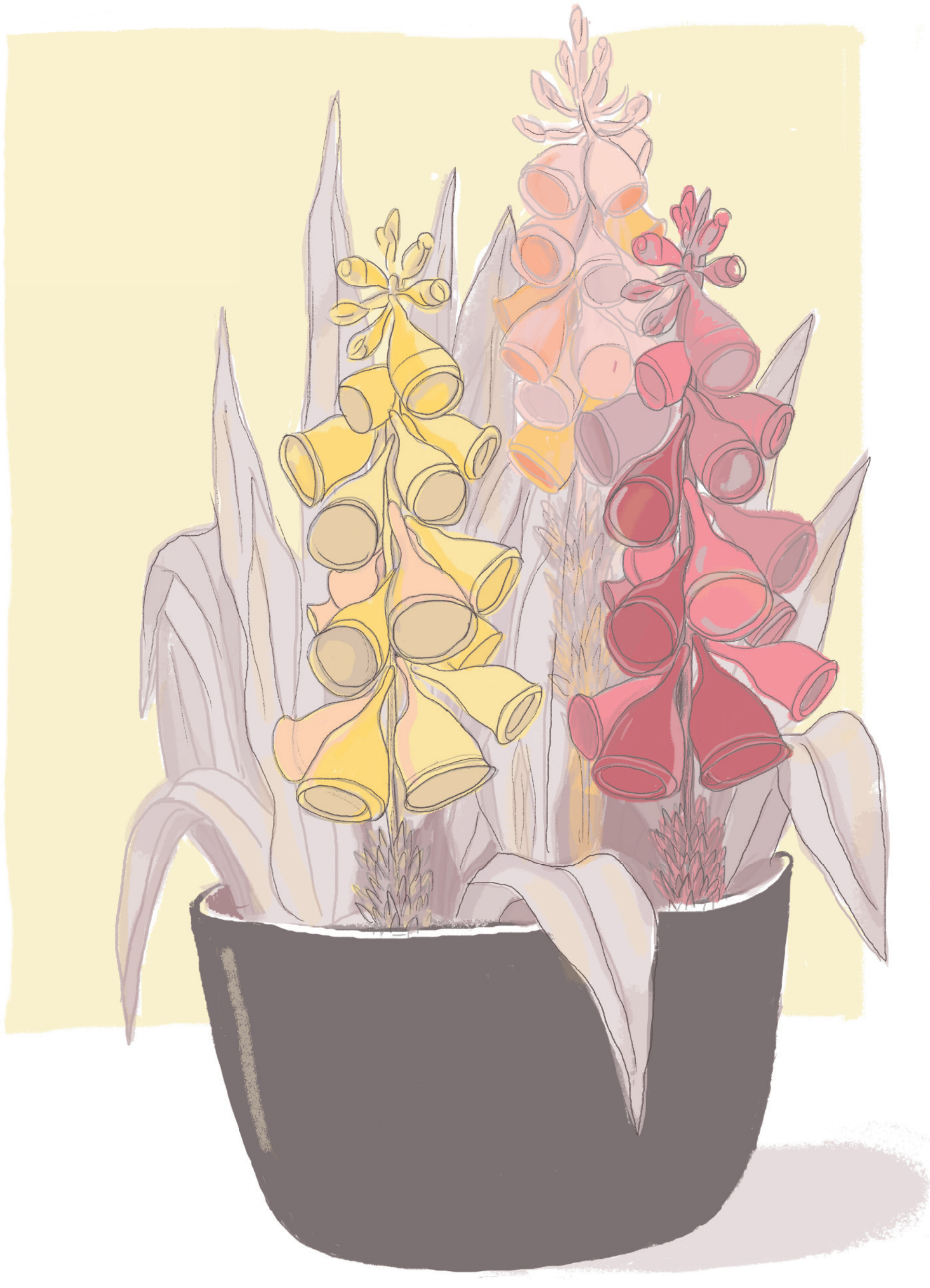

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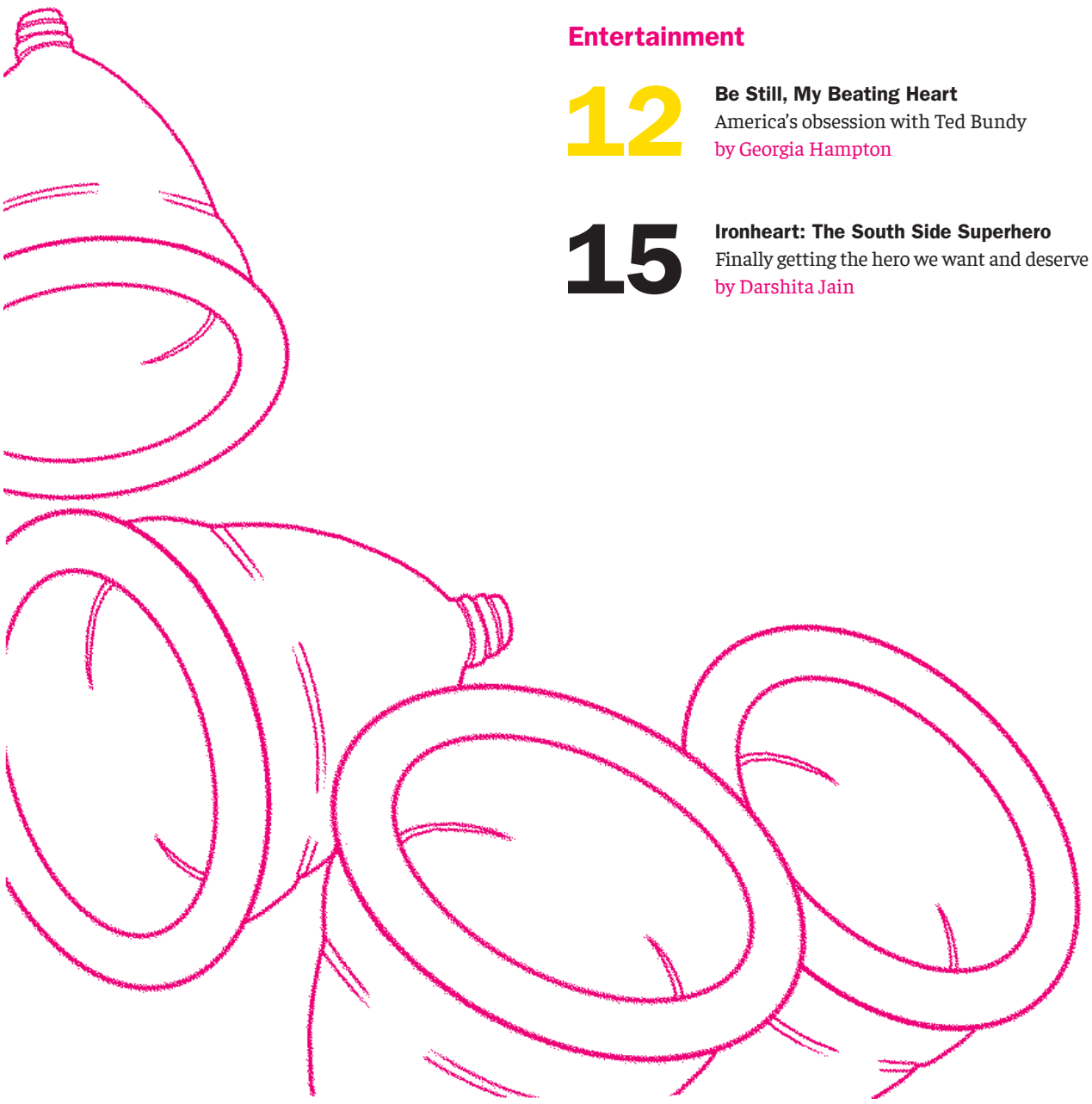
F Newsmagazine is a journal of arts, culture, and politics, edited and designed by students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The print edition is published eight times a year and the web edition is published year-round.

March 2019



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Crashing the Democratic Party

How the 1968 DNC changed presidential elections

by **Leo Smith**

Today, most Americans take it as a given that they can vote in presidential primaries. In fact, most states did not hold open primaries in presidential elections until 1976. The Democratic party overhauled their primary system following the chaotic 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC) and the disastrous election that followed. With unprecedented protests suppressed by intense police violence, and a candidate selection process that spurned majority opinions, the 1968 DNC revealed the massive gap between voters and the Democratic Party establishment.

The 1968 DNC was hosted in August, in a year of intense civil unrest. In the heat of the Cold War and the 13th year of Vietnam involvement, Democratic voters and student activists looked to peace candidates like Robert F. Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy as potential replacements for President Johnson, who had withdrawn his candidacy for president. But in June, Kennedy was assassinated, leaving a large portion of the delegates unassigned and the primaries in chaos.

Johnson did not run for re-election partly because of his low approval ratings. But despite his unpopularity with voters, Johnson still exerted a massive pull on the Democratic Party establishment. He used his influence to build support for his vice president, Hubert Humphrey, who would continue his agenda — including the war.

Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley sought to capitalize on party instability by asserting himself as an establishment power broker. After implying to Johnson that Democrats could lose Illinois's swing vote if the convention was not held in Chicago, Daley did everything in his power to suppress dissent surrounding the convention.

Protesters gathered in parks and on the streets of Chicago. They began arriving a week in advance, with plans to protest the war and the Democratic candidates. In preparatory retaliation, Daley enacted a curfew and called in 23,000 officers to control the 10,000 demonstrators.

Once the convention began, police and National Guardsmen attacked the nonviolent protesters with impunity. Police targeted journalists, photographers, and women, beating civilians with clubs and spraying tear gas. "It was the most intense week of hate I've ever experienced," photojournalist Dennis Brack later recalled.

By the fourth day of violence, over 600 people had been arrested and over 1000 protesters treated for injuries, 400 of them for tear gas exposure. Police aggression was so unequivocal, particularly on the night of August 28, that the incident became known as the Chicago Police Riot. Images of the police violence were widely broadcast, but, surprisingly, did little to evoke national sympathy for the protesters. Opinion polls after the riots showed that most Americans supported the actions of the police in Chicago.

Inside, the convention itself was in turmoil. The pro-war delegates eventually defeated the anti-war contingent by 500 votes, despite the fact that 80% of primary voters had voted for anti-war candidates. The flaws of this system became starkly apparent when the 1968 Democratic National Convention, with the clamor of riots outside, finally selected Hubert Humphrey, who had not won a single state primary, as its candidate. Humphrey went on to be soundly defeated by Richard Nixon in the general election.

The 1968 DNC riots not only expressed a grassroots outrage, but demonstrated how government authority would react to genuine dissent: with swift punishment and violent suppression. According to Professor James Galbraith of the University of Texas, that week marked the moment when state violence against minorities and counterculture became the "American way of life."

After the election, the Democratic Party formed a commission to investigate their electoral policy. This led to electoral reforms known as the McGovern-Fraser reforms, which were designed to make delegate selection more transparent and regulated, as well as diverse, with women, minorities, and youth more fully represented. These changes did not reduce the chaos in the short term; the 1972 DNC held in Miami was also internally tumultuous, although not violent. The chosen 1972 Democratic candidate, George McGovern, was defeated by Nixon in a landslide.

Changes to the delegate selection process were not enough. The primary system itself needed reform. By the 1976 election cycle, Democrats had decided the best way to pick convention delegates was through public primaries and caucuses. Today, all but 13 states hold open primaries for Democratic nomination; the remaining 13 hold caucuses.

This altered system gave rise to the model of swing state and caucus campaigning we see today. "Grassroots" candidates have a better chance of success in the primaries than they once did. If, like Barack Obama in 2008, they generate enough delegate support in individual districts, they can win with less establishment favor. However, this is only true to an extent: Obama was able to defeat establishment candidate Hillary Clinton in 2008, but Bernie Sanders was unable to overcome her establishment clout in 2016.

During the 2016 election cycle, both sides raised objections to how the delegate system obstructs popular non-establishment candidates like Sanders and Trump. In particular, candidates and voters objected to superdelegates, a subset of primary delegates from certain states who can vote freely. These superdelegates are usually party leaders, such as governors, senators, or representatives, and generally vote in line with the national party agenda.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley sought to capitalize on party instability by asserting himself as an establishment power broker.

Although the new system may be more inclusive, on a national scale it remains incomprehensibly convoluted. Geoffrey Cowan, professor at University of Southern California, calls these systems "dizzyingly complex." "No sane person can understand what they have to do to participate in a Democratic process," he says. "There ought to be more standardization of the system today." Each state has its own delegate selection process. And though they must conform to national party regulations, these regulations frequently change between election cycles.

With the 2020 presidential primaries approaching on an already packed ticket, the issues of delegate selection will arise again — superdelegates, caucuses, and gerrymandering are all likely to be hotly debated. The results of the 1968 DNC were a major policy change. It is hard to imagine, today, that we ever voted without open primaries. And perhaps there are aspects of today's system which, in 50 years, we may recall with shock.

Illustration by Katie Wittenberg

Leo Smith (BFA 2021) is a staff writer with an English BA. Their vinyl collection consists of one (1) Tchaikovsky piano concerto.

Tear Gas, Grenades, & Legislation

The French government's controversial responses to yellow vest protests

by **Leo Smith**

On February 1, France's yellow vest protesters — also called *gilets jaunes* — staged another demonstration in the streets of Paris and provincial Valence. This weekend, they marched specifically to protest police brutality and the violent treatment the group has experienced over the last twelve weekends. The demonstrators stated their aims were to pay homage to the injured, demand justice, and protest the use of rubber bullets and grenades by police.

Injuries have been widespread: As of February 1, 1,700 people had been injured, 82 seriously. A lawsuit to ban the use of rubber bullets and the controversial GLI-F4 grenades recently failed, with France's Council of State ruling, "The threat of violence during the yellow vest protests ... rendered their [the weapons'] use by police necessary." The march on Saturday, Feb. 1 was, in part, a protest against this ruling.

So what are the legal rights of the *gilets jaunes* protesters, and are they being upheld?

The yellow vest demonstrations began in November 2018 as spontaneous protests against President Emmanuel Macron's diesel fuel tax. The name comes from the reflective yellow vests that French motorists are required by law to keep in their cars. Though Macron eventually revoked the gas tax, the protests have continued almost weekly in Paris and other cities across France.

The government has mobilized against the protests in force. As recently as January 12, 80,000 police officers were mobilized against the 50,000 protesters. During January 8 protests, 5,339 people were arrested, with 1,234 released without further legal action. According to official figures, "10 percent of protesters are deemed 'casseurs,' or thugs who join demonstrations with the intention of fighting police or damaging or looting local stores." Many demonstrators are arrested each weekend, charged with misdemeanors, and usually fined.

As of February 1, 1,700 protesters had been injured, 82 seriously.

In contrast to the many open legal cases against protesters, there has been no action taken against police for violence towards citizens. French police watchdog groups — such as the French Human Rights League — have opened 101 investigations against police as of January 30, but the government has made no response to any allegations.

Lawyers representing protesters and bystanders allege their clients have suffered severe physical trauma, such as having their hands and feet mutilated. Dearmons-Les, an anti-police-violence collective, says that 20 protesters have lost an eye due to police violence during these demonstrations. One such protester is Jérôme Rodrigues, a "high-profile" member of the movement, who was struck by a flash-ball grenade on January 27. His lawyer stated that he is "disabled for life." Paris lawyer Aïnoha Pascual represents several other victims who have sustained physical injuries as a result of police use of explosive weapons. One person had part of their hand ripped off, and another was severely injured in the head and face, leaving them partially deaf. Among the 10 confirmed fatalities so far, most are road accidents. But one victim was an 80-year-old woman hit through a window with a police grenade while closing her shutters.

Many of the protesters' injuries result from the use of grenades. The French police use two types. The "sting-ball" crowd-control grenade releases a radius of rubber balls. These are meant for opening up crowds when police become surrounded, not for shooting directly at protesters. The second type is the GLI-F4 or "flash-ball," a grenade that contains 25 g of TNT and tear gas. The GLI-F4 grenade is illegal in all Western European countries but France.

These violent crowd suppression tactics have been criticized by many organizations, including the New York-based Human Rights Watch and even Amnesty International. The latter alleges that the police have targeted photographers and journalists specifically, as well as volunteer street medics.

These tactics, grenades, and rubber bullets were the subject of the lawsuit brought by the CGT Labor Union and the French Human Rights League. It was rejected on February 1 by the Conseil d'État (Council of State). The court overruled the suit, saying, "Contrary to what the applicants claimed, the organisation of operations to maintain order during the recent demonstrations did not indicate any intention by the authorities not to respect the strict rules governing the use."

On top of security forces and fines, the government is now taking controversial legislative action against the protests. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe proposed laws in January tightening restrictions on the *casseurs* and on demonstrations not declared ahead of time. As reported by Jacobin, the prime minister also suggested creating a register of "possibly violent" protesters so that they can be banned from demonstrating in the future. The bill is controversial, and opposed by the left as a "potential threat to civil liberties."

While the French Constitution recognizes the right to free speech, it also explicitly permits legislation that would limit it if deemed necessary: "No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established Law and Order."

Only time will tell whether the French government's executive, legislative, and judicial responses to the gilets jaunes is legally upheld.

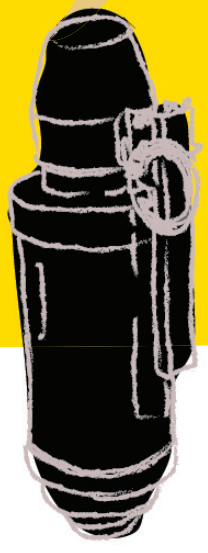


Illustration by Ishita Dharap

Leo Smith (BFA 2021) is a staff writer with an English BA. Their vinyl collection consists of one (1) Tchaikovsky piano concerto.

Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth

Hans Haacke's 'Gift Horse' has taken up residence on the roof of the Art Institute, but has it lost its edge?

by **Leah Gallant**

Shortly after the installation of Hans Haacke's "Gift Horse" on the roof of the Art Institute of Chicago, I saw the artist in conversation with Ann Goldstein, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, and Susanne Ghez, Curator of the exhibition. Haacke looked like a happy but recalcitrant old gnome, slightly uneasy about being the center of attention. The conversation progressed in fits and starts through all the mundane details of how the sculpture was brought to completion: How the visual reference for his monumental bronze skeletal horse was an engraving by equine artist George Stubbs, apparently chosen for its aesthetic appeal and because Stubbs lived at the same time as Adam Smith; how Haacke decided to enlarge the horse's skull slightly so it would appear proportional to a viewer one third its height; its harrowing installation by crane on the roof terrace of the museum. But when the conversation shifted toward the meaning of the work or the artist's purpose behind it, Haacke, smiling with some combination of mischief and shyness, evaded providing a direct answer. He preferred, he said, to leave the viewer to form their own conclusions.

When I visited the sculpture on the roof of the Art Institute of Chicago one afternoon in mid-December, the gibbous moon was visible just above its tailbone. A museum guard eyed me from the other side of the glass doors. There was no one else on the terrace. In the early winter dusk, the sky was a mauve that approximated the grey of the horse's base. The skeleton is very big; at more than fifteen feet tall, it towers from the top of its plinth. The viewer isn't even eye level with its hooves. Tied around the horse's delicately raised front leg is an LED ticker tape in the shape of a giant bow. The screen displays stock exchange prices as they are

Illustration by Katie Wittenberg

Without its site specificity, institutional critique loses its potential edge.

updated in real time, the business names gliding along the curves of the bow in and out of sight: McDonald's Corporation, Intel Corporation, International Business Machines Corporation, Goldman Sachs Group, Johnson & Johnson.

The ticker-tape is a gesture toward an economic reality, but one which, for all the specificity and precision of the stock values, remains so vague as to convey no meaning at all. When installed in Trafalgar Square, the ticker streamed updates from the London Stock Exchange; there is no information in its Chicago setting as to which stock exchange the ticker tape now shows. And yet, a mandorla of assumed edginess surrounds the sculpture. When it was first displayed on Trafalgar Square's empty fourth plinth, British art critic Waldemar Januszczak described the sculpture as "like letting Trotsky loose on Buckingham Palace."
If this is considered institutional critique, then institutional critique has become a method of talking around capitalism and the museum without stating anything new, relevant, or remotely interesting.

Haacke's "MoMA Poll" is one of the first pieces of what came to be known as institutional critique, artworks that lay bare the connections between the market and arts patronage or the inner workings of the museum. In the decades since, Haacke has continued to work with site--specificity to tie funding and politics to the art world. The descendents of this work are the research-based projects undertaken by artists and artist collectives to document some social phenomena. Haacke's influence is also visible in works that trouble the presumed democratic ideals embodied by museums as places of accessible learning; In Tania Bruguera's 2008 "Tatlin's Whisper #5," two mounted policemen used crowd control techniques to herd visitors to the Tate around the museum lobby.

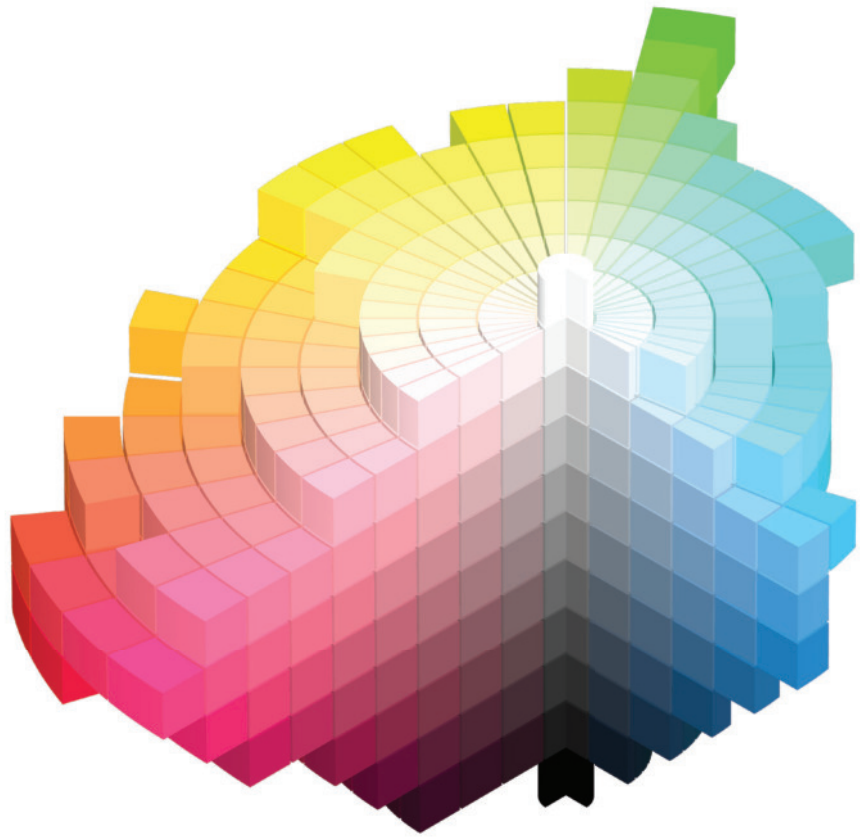
But Haacke's most interesting work was poignant because of the specificity of its references. "MoMA Poll" referred to a patron of the very space in which the poll was conducted, as well as to an issue (the Vietnam War and Rockefeller's likely campaign for president) that was urgent at the moment of the work's display. Although time is indicated by the sculpture in the form of the real-time updates of the stock market, there is nothing that lodges a critique of its own specific being.

It is in this respect — the inability of "Gift Horse" to name its exact relationship to particular corporate funders — that sets it apart from much of Haacke's other work. Like any other sculpture, it can be displayed in a string of art spaces. Without its site specificity, institutional critique loses its potential edge. During his artist talk, Haacke said its setting on the roof of the Art Institute, with the skyscrapers of the North Loop as the sculpture's backdrop, was important to granting it a new meaning. But this faith in its setting seems to be a convenient justification for treating it like most other art objects. It can be shown in any art space, anywhere in the world, at any time. Even when referencing its specific place and time, institutional critique is wholly reliant on being displayed inside of a gallery space in order to make its point. It is as reliant on the museum as any ostensibly depoliticized artwork.

There is nothing in "Gift Horse" that points to either its own creation — the source of the bronze, wood, and paint — or the coterie of assistants and art handlers who safely installed it via crane on the roof of the museum. It is exhaustive and deeply unsatisfying to try to imagine a documentation of the labor put into producing this sculpture. But if it is meant to be a provocative remark about capital, the near-impossibility of this task is what makes it urgent. There is no pure message about the market that is not also immersed in the market itself.

In September, at about the time "Gift Horse" would have been in transit, workers at 26 Chicago hotels went on strike to demand year-round health care coverage. Hotel workers are often laid off each winter, when business is slower, and are left without health insurance. Several blocks north of the Art Institute, doormen, housekeepers, and other staff marched in tight loops in front of the Ritz Carlton, chanting and drumming. The Ritz Carlton is just one of the many hotels and casinos owned by Neil Bluhm, the donor behind the Art Institute's Bluhm Family Terrace, where "Gift Horse" stands.

Leah Gallant (NAJ 2020) is the Arts Editor at F Newsmagazine. Like Brad Pitt, she is mostly made of water.



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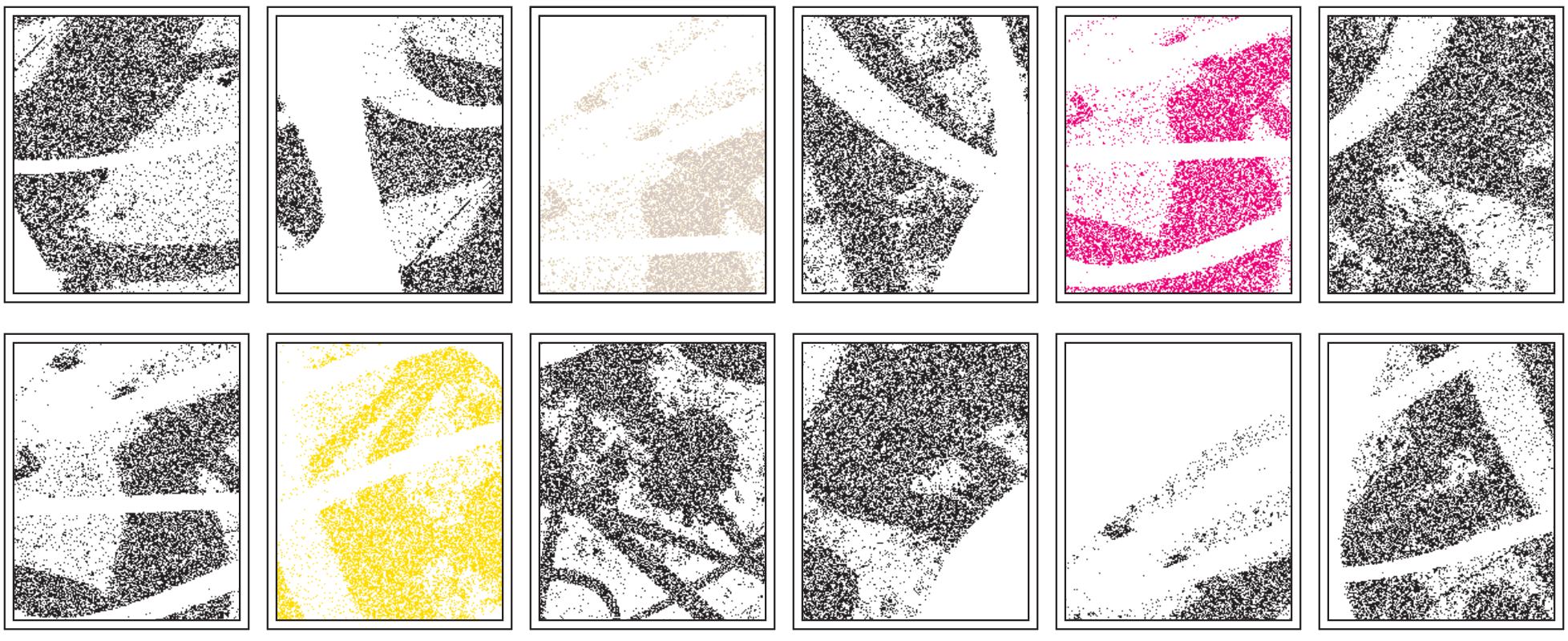

One Book, 31 Critics

A review of ‘What It Means to Write About Art’

by **Kristin Leigh Hofer**

What was an early important aesthetic experience for you? Jarrett Earnest begins his interviews with this question in “What It Means to Write About Art” (David Zwirner, 2018). The book includes interviews with 30 writers, from Roberta Smith and Holland Cotter, co-chief art critics at The New York Times, to significant poets and art historians, like John Ashbery and Darby English. Earnest admits to being selective in his choice of interviewees (as well as biased towards New York City), but the resulting conversations cover a range of experience in the art world over the last 60 years.

The interviews are swift and refuse to sprawl. Perhaps the most winding path is taken by Chris Kraus, author of “I Love Dick,” who ends her interview musing about grief and S&M. At times, I wished Earnest would ask a follow-up question. Much is said about the temperament of different art magazines, but there is only one question about the controversial Lynda Benglis advertisement that ran in Artforum and caused two editors to start their own publication, October. With Earnest, there is no hot seat. He kindly points out patterns in the critic’s work and invites them to respond.

Like Artforum and October, several subjects loom large across the interviews. Clement Greenberg is brought up as both a friend and an adversary. Douglas Crimp talks about “struggling against a Greenbergian model,” while Michael Fried admonishes his early work for not being closer to Greenberg in style. One of the gifts of a book in this format is that it reveals shared influences and experiences among the critics. It is informative, and often entertaining, to see them discuss the same exhibitions, books, and theorists. Though they frequently disagree, the book creates an alternate structure based on the items that are brought up repeatedly, resulting in what feels like an intuitive reading of the art world during the latter half of the 20th century. Earnest has made a record of that realm with first-hand accounts. Even without the virtuosic knowledge of every artist, text, or song mentioned (which Earnest clearly possesses), one gets a sense of the period. You may not be familiar with Glenn Ligon, but after reading seven conversations where his work is discussed, you’ll have a deeper understanding of his impact. This understanding is far more nuanced than an encyclopedic entry could convey.

Though most of the contributing critics are still working today, the focus remains largely on past decades. They don’t say much about today’s politics or how they may be influencing contemporary ways of looking at art. One brief exception is Hal Foster, who concedes that “in this moment it is crucially important to ask who gets to speak … and people like me should shut up more and listen more.” Jed Perl is cynical, “If you want to take a dark view of things, you can argue that a great period of cultural expansion and enlightenment may be ending.” He is talking about the rise of anti-intellectualism amid the collapse of democracy. Perl envisions a particularly dire future for those of us who will have to make do. Our only solace may be Foster and any others who will step aside to make way for more diverse, and perhaps more hopeful, voices.

Earnest’s book pulls back the curtain on the coincidences and willfulness inherent to the process of creating an art historical narrative. Reading “What It Means to Write About Art” feels like attending a lecture on criticism post-Greenberg, but there aren’t any slides and you can’t take notes. Somehow, you get the information just by being in the room.

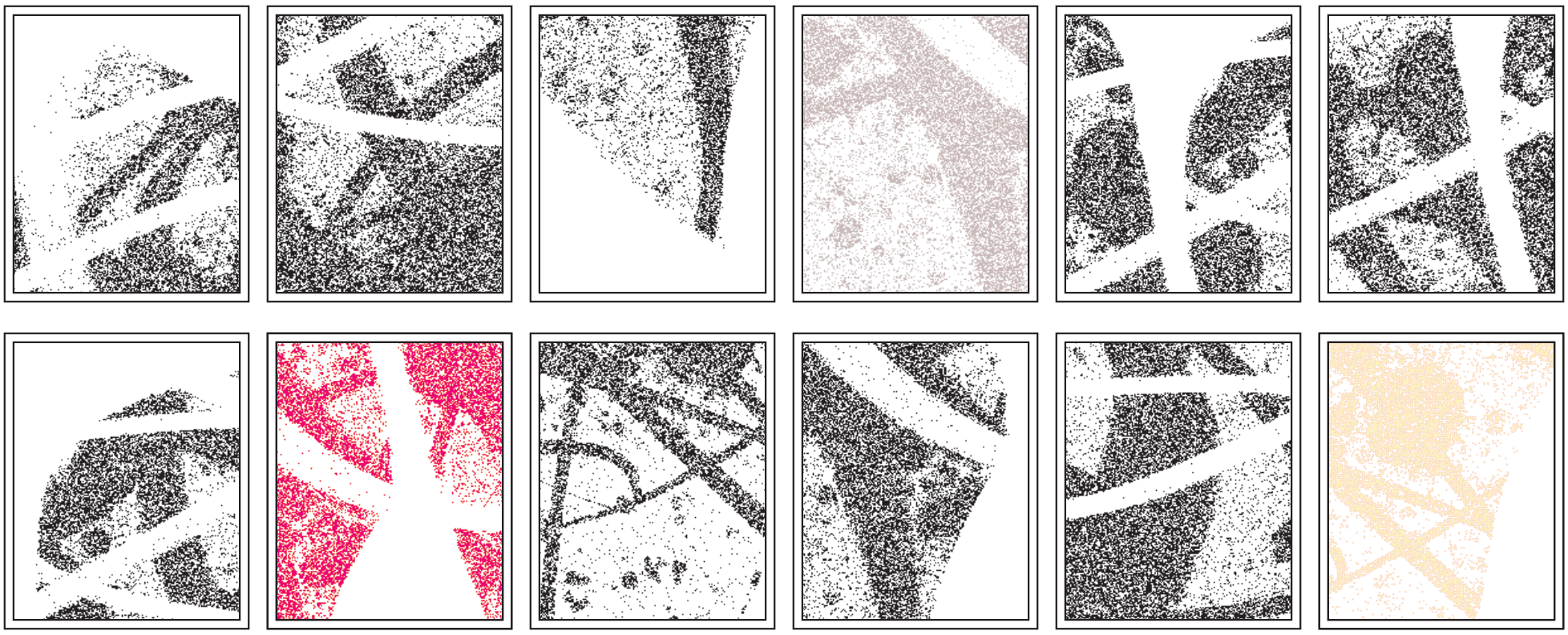

Illustration by Catherine Cao and Unyimeabasi Udoh

Kristin Leigh Hofer is an undergraduate student in the Painting and Drawing department. She wants to talk about what you’ve been watching lately. Ask her about the best Pop Danthology.

“Dialogues in Transit” is a series of conversations live-broadcast from a car waiting in line at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. Photograph courtesy of the artists (Cog•nate Collective).

Remapping the Border

Cog•nate Collective seeks to reframe narratives surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border

by **Leah Gallant**

The work of Cog•nate Collective seems to take place everywhere but the gallery. The collective, which is made up of artist duo Amy Sanchez and Misael Diaz, have staged projects everywhere from a line of waiting cars by the San Ysidro Port of Entry to the Santa Fe Springs Swap Meet. Many of their initiatives take place out of an updated 1980s camper van under the name of M.I.C.A. (Mobile Institute for Citizenship + Art), as part of a series of projects, which were included in “Talking to Action: Art, Pedagogy, and Action,” at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s (SAIC) Sullivan Galleries this past fall. We caught up by phone about their approach to social practice, what they’ve been reading, and how their work engages with the different communities of the U.S.-Mexico border region.

Leah Gallant: What was your work like before you started collaborating together?

Amy Sanchez Arteaga: We met in 2006, when we were both undergraduates at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). We both worked as co-editors on La Gente de Aztlán, a Latino and Chicano news magazine there. We did that for three years and then we realized it would be cool to collaborate in some other capacity, and so we did a project in Tijuana together. And then in 2010 we decided Misael would do his MFA at the University of California San Diego and we would spend more time at the border, and that’s when Cog•nate formalized. Working together has been the thing that has always been a constant.

Misael Diaz: We gravitated towards one another because we had a common experience of both having grown up along the

border and crossed it back and forth as kids. The way that the border was discussed and theorized was very foreign to us. The dynamics that it has on a more day-to-day basis do not figure as prominently in wider conceptions of and theorizing about the border.

LG: Has your relationship to the border region changed since you started making work about it?
ASA: When we first started working on the border, we conceptualized it as a smaller zone, as one community that is split by an arbitrary geopolitical line: Like San Diego-Tijuana, or Mexicali-Calexico, which is where my family is from. But as we've moved further from it, even angling to Chicago, we've realized that there is a specter of the border that people carry in their bodies, particularly people who have crossed that border and aren't able to cross it again for whatever reason. We sometimes speak about our work as holding a mirror up to what's actually there, as opposed to echoing the metanarratives we hear from politicians or popular culture. What it reveals is that it's actually a nuanced and expansive territory and concept, which our works seeks to undo in different ways.
MD: For many communities that are living in the region, there's a lot of crossing that happens. Many people commute on a daily basis from Tijuana to San Diego; the economy of San Diego is very dependent on people from Tijuana working there. Many students wake up at 4 a.m. every morning to wait in line and cross the border and come back. There's a fluidity that we were interested in exploring, because that was our own experience of the border, not as a space of extreme violence or trauma but as a space of dullness and waiting.

We began working at the San Ysidro Port of Entry, where the cars line up to cross from Tijuana to San Diego, and we worked there for several years, and then slowly we also began to approach working with communities that have a very different experience of crossing. So we started working specifically within migrant shelters in Tijuana and Mexicali. The shelters provide aid to migrants who are coming from Mexico and seeking to cross into the United States through an unsanctioned point of entry. But at the time that we started working there, in 2012 or 2011, they were servicing a lot of migrants that had been deported from the U.S. There was no structure in place to accommodate the high numbers of hundreds of thousands of people that had little connection to Mexico anymore. Many of them had no connection to begin with, because they were coming from Central America. We started developing projects with the shelters to support their efforts, including the tangible material needs that they were facing.

LG: What were some of the projects you did to bridge these two very different experiences of border-crossing?
MD: In "Something to do with crossing ... " we used narratives we had collected within the migrant shelters to formulate short scripts that we took to people who were waiting on foot to cross at San Ysidro, and we asked them to read them out loud for us to record. We then broadcast those recordings on the pirate radio from the port of entry. People crossing the border on foot through a designated point of entry were giving voice to those who were crossing through the desert. And we began to think about how to connect these two very different experiences of the border, and what is at the root of those differences, and why it is that there's such a disparity between those who cross by waiting in line vs. those who risk their lives to cross it.

LG: You work with a really wide network of collaborators, including organizations and university classes. I was curious how having all these collaborators shifts your idea of who the audience is for the work? How does this relate to your approach to social practice?
ASA: One of the issues with social practice work that we had is this parachuting model of artists figuring out a neighborhood or community that needs help and then showing up to be their savior. Artists mine that community's resources, then leave and take all of the material that was gathered and puts it in a gallery to enrich themselves. We're very wary of that model of collaboration, and so what that means is you have to create actual relationships and work very slowly with different communities. It's worked out that we've collaborated with students because students are inherently itinerant in a way that we've needed to be. We've been really proud of the students we've worked with in Anthropology or

M.I.C.A. (Mobile Institute for Citizenship + Art), is an '80s camper van converted into a portable project space for workshops that are part of the Mobile Agora Project (M.A.P.). Photograph courtesy of the artists (Cog•nate Collective)

There is a specter of the border that people carry in their bodies, particularly people who have crossed and aren't able to cross it again.

Chicano Studies who end up doing work in the arts. The way we sometimes think about our work is that there's two of us plus whoever else wants to hang out.
MD: It's hard to have the final thing that ends up in the gallery be just documentation of something that happened elsewhere for some of our projects. We try to collaborate in a way that allows people greater ownership of the process. It's been very enriching to open that process to students to provide them with tools for research that they can bring back into their own disciplines, and the tools for production can be useful in other ways, regardless of whether that work ends up in a gallery or not.

LG: You've also worked a lot with radio and broadcasting. How or why did you start doing that? Do you have a favorite project?
ASA: When we were working at the San Ysidro Port of Entry, we started thinking about the ways people pass time to fill their waits, and radios are a really big one. We had done projects with pedestrians, and projects between the cars, so we were thinking, "How can we make these public?" It's also funny when we listen to those early broadcasts. We listened to the really early "Borderblaster" recently, that was 6 or 7 years ago, so they also become a really interesting time capsule.
MD: Eventually we adapted the infrastructure for the "Borderblaster" project, we were broadcasting from inside of a craft market that's right at the crossing, so were broadcasting from inside one of the stalls.
ASA: It's a very small market in Tijuana, it's right between the lanes of northbound traffic before the border crossing.
MD: We were broadcasting originally from inside that market. We adapted the infrastructure that we were using to broadcast so that it would fit inside a car, powered by power packs and batteries, so then we began this project called "Dialogue in Transit." We invited people to sit inside of our cars and have a conversation that was simultaneously recorded and live broadcast, through pirate radio, as we were waiting to cross the border. We had conversations with musicians, with researchers, with artists about the border and as we cross it and as we wait in line. The duration of the conversations depend on the wait of the line. We adapted a speaker system so that vendors and cars around us can listen to the conversations.

LG: What's a book or article that you've read recently that you enjoyed? Or a text that's been important to your work?
ASA: I read a really lovely story about two gay penguins and their baby in The New York Times recently. I'm just tired of reading the news, and it was a beautiful story of family. They're fostering a chick that these other penguins didn't want to raise. I think they're called Sphen and Magic, so the baby's called Sphengic.

An important text that we've revisited a lot is "The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses," by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney. "These Days of Candy," by Manuel Paul López.
MD: That's one that's been in my bag waiting to be read. "The Album of Fences," by Omar Pimienta, a poet from Tijuana, who was a guest we invited on the first version of "Dialogue in Transit."

LG: If you were given the White House lawn as a space to install a work, what would you do?
MD: I would physically remove the lawn and install it somewhere else, leaving just empty dirt in front of the White House. I would steal the lawn and find a better community to take care of it.

Leah Gallant (NAJ 2020) is the Arts Editor at F Newsmagazine. Like Brad Pitt, she is mostly made of water.

Be Still, My Beating Heart

America's obsession with Ted Bundy

by **Georgia Hampton**

The noir detective, the rogue cowboy, the sly gangster. White, male archetypes in television and film change hands — white, male hands — from decade to decade. And they always represent a larger idea of what the Ideal American Man looks like. Sounds like. Acts like. So, what does it mean now, when the white, male archetype that is trodden out onto the big screen is a serial killer?

The trailer for the film "Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil, and Vile" — a biopic about the serial killer Ted Bundy — offers an interesting spectacle. The trailer shows Zac Efron as a devilishly handsome Bundy, smiling and cracking jokes through his murder trial while various women with appropriately feathered hair question whether a man like that could really be a killer. Bundy is charming, overly confident, and also — though the trailer fails to show audiences this until the very end — the man who ultimately confessed to raping and murdering least 30 women and girls, maybe as many as 100.

But the trailer skates over all of this, the thumping blues-rock guitar of "A World On Fire" by Philippe Briand & Gabriel Saban giving the retelling a flavor of Clint Eastwood cool. And Bundy — or at least, the Bundy in this trailer — oozes cool. He winks at the camera and treats the accusations against him with a level of nonchalant deflection usually employed when the waiter accidentally brings you someone else's dish. He's shown in the trailer as the kind of "bad man" that feels exciting. One almost expects this Bundy to turn to the camera and, with a wink, say, "Did you miss me?"

Here, Ted Bundy is desirable. He's the confident, playful-yet-dangerous archetypal man that we as an audience have seen before. Think Tom Selleck meets Norman Bates. And this doesn't stop at the trailer. A Netflix documentary series about Bundy by the same director sparked a cascade of tweets commenting on how "hot" Bundy was, leading the streaming platform to respond.

Bundy's apparent "hotness" speaks to a larger theme in the preservation of his personality decades after he was executed. He was charming and handsome — the trailer for "Extremely Wicked" got that right — and he used these characteristics to pacify the women he was hunting. Ted Bundy presents himself as a total heartthrob, the man of your dreams. He was clever, reportedly used a fake arm cast to appear less threatening to his would-be victims. He acted as his own lawyer in court, a startling move of overt confidence in his apparent innocence and, as one lawyer assigned to advise him had speculated, an inability to relinquish control.

Here is someone who, at the start, fits all of the characteristics of an Ideal American Man: charming, intelligent, confident, and, importantly, not one to let the law get in the way of what he thinks is right. Except, of course, his idea of what is right inherently includes committing horrific atrocities against others for the sake of his own enjoyment. He is the Ideal American Man inverted, using all the characteristics associated with this archetype to do unspeakable evil. He uses this archetype to enact his own horrific plans.

It doesn't take much to connect the cinematic portrayal of Bundy — and the white, male, American serial killer — to the white, male anti-hero trope. Breaking Bad's Walter White, Mad Men's Don Draper, The Sopranos' Tony Soprano: all men who we see do terrible things, but who we somehow find ourselves rooting for, even aligning ourselves with on occasion. They emulate all the characteristics we see in Efron's Bundy: charm, intelligence, psychological manipulation. They have their own ideas of what is right and wrong, and their own standard of what behavior is excusable if it leads to them getting what they want.

"We understand how conditions today don't allow us to remain clean, and that it's just a matter of how dirty we're willing to get in pursuit of what we've always been told we should want," AV Club writer Donna Bowman told the BBC in a 2014

Illustration by Katie Wittenberg

article about the rise of the television anti-hero. The idea of "what we should want" returns to the Ideal American Man and what he represents: power, agency, control, independence. The anti-hero serves as a kind of black hat version of the American Man. Still male, still white, but with a moral compass that doesn't always point north.

What's most troubling here, though, is idolization. Case in point: "Fight Club." Brad Pitt's anarchistic and aggressively masculine Tyler Durden was, as director David Fincher was intent to point out, a critique. But a large majority of men never got that message. Tyler Durden's philosophy on life was adopted by Men's Rights Activists and members of the Red Pill subreddit, a group who believe that the modern world leaves white men at a disadvantage.

This problem isn't new. Earlier portrayals of archetypal men have encouraged similar beliefs about the way men should be. Case in point here: the cowboy. The strong, stoic — and, as always, white— man who isn't always on the right side of the law but who audiences are meant to love anyway. So strong was the image of the cowboy in the mid-20th century that it was used to successfully rebrand Marlboro cigarettes from a "woman's cigarette" to a product that, as one ad described it, had "a man's sized taste of honest tobacco." The Marlboro Man was one of many archetypal cowboys — such as characters portrayed by John Wayne and Gary Cooper — who ushered in the tough-but-tender lone ranger as the American ideal of masculinity.

Over time, one white, male archetype got traded in for another, with increasing moral reprehensibility. But the connection between these tropes remain. In an early episode of "The Sopranos," Tony Soprano asks his therapist, "What ever happened to Gary Cooper, the strong, silent type? THAT was an American." He goes on to say that Gary Cooper "wasn't in touch with his feelings, he just did what he had to do." Here, the then-newest iteration of the American male anti-hero laments the diversion away from the particular idea of masculinity, seen through the cowboy. Soon, though, Tony Soprano would prove integral in the inception of a newer, rougher anti-hero: aggressive, manipulative, and, notably, murderous.

But audiences are still meant to root for Tony Soprano. He is the one the viewer follows through the show's six seasons, who is humanized and made vulnerable, who still struggles with parenting two unruly children. As Ree Hines wrote in a piece for Today, he "made the unlikeable likeable."

So in many ways, Ted Bundy serves as the next logical step in the entertainment world's unending search for a more anti- antihero. He's charismatic, enigmatic, and a raging psychopath. What's more, he's real. Tony Soprano may have been based on a real-life person, but nothing beats going straight to the source. Now, the "Ted Bundy Tapes" feels like the proverbial volley for Extremely Wicked's slam dunk of this new notion of the oh-so-bad and oh-so-real white, male serial killer.

As we've already seen with the "Ted Bundy is hot" Twitter debacle, the idolization of the anti-hero archetype soldiers on. So far, nothing has come out about men's response to this portrayal of Bundy, but it wouldn't be surprising.

Some people, including a Bundy-survivor, have defended "Extremely Wicked" as a word of caution for women, a reminder not to trust every man you meet. And perhaps that could be true. One imagines the uncomfortable moment of self-reflection after realizing that the well-spoken, handsome man who seemed so delightfully non-threatening was also one of the most notorious serial killers in human history.

But that moment of consideration often does not happen at all. Many viewers will not consider the possibility that they, too, fell into the exact same trap that Bundy used on so many women and girls before he beat them, raped them, and murdered them.

To show someone like Ted Bundy in a way that flirts with his innocence does not feel the same as showing Tony Soprano's home life. After all, this film is coming at what feels like a golden age for true crime content, and one that shows no sign of slowing down. This film is just the newest, shiniest addition to that fascination, but one that feels dangerous. As the latest iteration of the cinematic anti-hero, Zac Efron's Ted Bundy has the power to form, at least in part, a socially held idea of what an American man is. And, importantly, what kind of American man is desirable. And that's a problem.

One almost expects this Bundy to turn to the camera and, with a wink, say, "Did you miss me?"

Georgia Hampton (MANAJ 2020) is the News Editor at F Newsmagazine. She is most certainly wearing a turtleneck.

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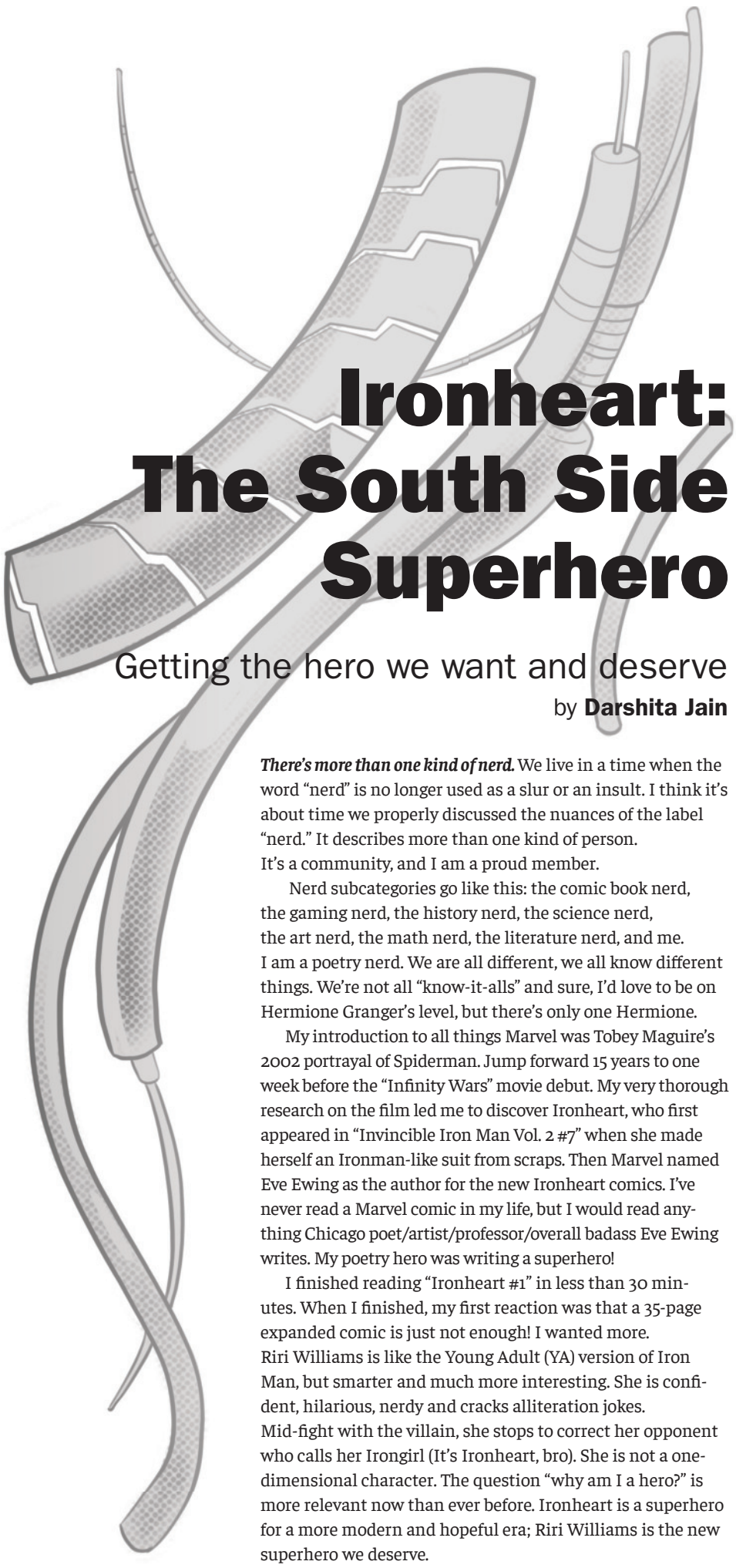


Ironheart: The South Side Superhero

Getting the hero we want and deserve

by **Darshita Jain**

There's more than one kind of nerd. We live in a time when the word "nerd" is no longer used as a slur or an insult. I think it's about time we properly discussed the nuances of the label "nerd." It describes more than one kind of person. It's a community, and I am a proud member.

Nerd subcategories go like this: the comic book nerd, the gaming nerd, the history nerd, the science nerd, the art nerd, the math nerd, the literature nerd, and me. I am a poetry nerd. We are all different, we all know different things. We're not all "know-it-alls" and sure, I'd love to be on Hermione Granger's level, but there's only one Hermione.

My introduction to all things Marvel was Tobey Maguire's 2002 portrayal of Spiderman. Jump forward 15 years to one week before the "Infinity Wars" movie debut. My very thorough research on the film led me to discover Ironheart, who first appeared in "Invincible Iron Man Vol. 2 #7" when she made herself an Ironman-like suit from scraps. Then Marvel named Eve Ewing as the author for the new Ironheart comics. I've never read a Marvel comic in my life, but I would read anything Chicago poet/artist/professor/overall badass Eve Ewing writes. My poetry hero was writing a superhero!

I finished reading "Ironheart #1" in less than 30 minutes. When I finished, my first reaction was that a 35-page expanded comic is just not enough! I wanted more. Riri Williams is like the Young Adult (YA) version of Iron Man, but smarter and much more interesting. She is confident, hilarious, nerdy and cracks alliteration jokes. Mid-fight with the villain, she stops to correct her opponent who calls her Irongirl (It's Ironheart, bro). She is not a one-dimensional character. The question "why am I a hero?" is more relevant now than ever before. Ironheart is a superhero for a more modern and hopeful era; Riri Williams is the new superhero we deserve.

A black woman from South Side of Chicago, Riri Williams is an introspective MIT engineer who writes poetry. She has all the antisocial tendencies of the beloved Sherlock Holmes and the nonchalance of Ironman. But she cares. And she hurts. Like almost all superhero stories, "Ironheart" touches on the tragedy in Riri's past. This time around, it's written in a way that's not fantastical or overly heroic. It is a devastatingly realistic depiction of a life altered by gun violence.

It is a devastatingly realistic depiction of a life altered by gun violence.

She is awkward and socially inept in the lab, but once she's in armor Riri comes alive with confidence and humor. The new armor has everything Iron Man's armor does: camera and radar sensors, defense and offense mechanisms like enhanced strength and repulsor grenades, energy shields and emergency stabilizers that Riri can control remotely through a bracelet. Trust Ewing to artfully combine a science nerd with a poetry nerd. Ironheart would rather tinker with a 3D printer and forensic data analysis than go out with her friends. She does not patent new inventions because she doesn't like their names (semi-autonomous electromagnetic power micro nodes). She reflects on what would turn a man from a scientist into a villain — called the Clash.

Ironheart is not exempt from self-doubt and nightmares of her traumatic past. She has a lot of quirks. She isn't the smooth-talking, flashy character fighting for short-term justice. She wants to confront real change. Riri is a human being, not a larger-than-life superhero.

Something that makes the comic fun are Riri's technological solutions to her problems. Riri utilizes her smarts and inventions to solve problems. It's not because she's Ironheart that she saves the day but because she's Riri Williams. This is a character with agency; she is a control freak who designed her own suit; she enhances her abilities and her powers on her own terms. She has no mentors who tell her how to be a superhero. Riri informs her own powers, not the other way round.

In an Instagram Q&A, Ewing, who was given free rein over "Ironheart #1" remarks on similarities between Riri and herself saying, "We are both black, nerdy girls from Chicago who got labeled 'smart' at a young age. She finds herself in a prestigious institution that is awesome in some ways and alienating in others. A little cynical, a little defiant, a lot awkward with a tendency to take on too much and try to fix everything." This is a black character from Chicago written by a black girl from Chicago. Whether it's quoting Maya Angelou or using African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) in conversation or mid-battle, this shift in superhero lore is important. Riri feels more inviting, more inclusive, like she could live on my street. She speaks the language the South Side speaks. Riri does not speak 'white scholar' language.

Marvel has tried to expand diversity within its range of characters. Eve Ewing is definitely another step forward. In an interview published by Marvel, she emphasizes how "Riri's identity and the place where she comes from means she sometimes has a different perspective than some of her peers on how to deal with people who are doing wrong." There is little to complain about in "Ironheart #1," to be honest. If anything, I'd say I would have loved to see Ewing delve deeper into the social issues she hints at throughout this comic. This is the first issue in an ongoing series, so there are plenty of chances to explore Riri, her story, and the city of Chicago.

Science nerds, poetry nerds, comic book nerds rejoice! Chicagoans and women of color rejoice! We finally have a superhero not written by a middle-aged white guy!

Illustration by Catherine Cao

Darshita Jain (MANAJ 2020, INPF) calls herself quixotic. On most days, she oscillates between being the human version of the exclamation mark and that of a question mark.

SESTINA FOR THE DIVA

Illustration by Unyimeabasi Udoh and Catherine Cao

by **Kaycie Surrell**

Her first period came in the morning
and she felt her insides boil and rage.
Her mother found her next, scared and pink —
brightest red on the clean, white towel.
“What happens next,”she whispered all soft
and quiet so nobody would know.

Mostly, the boy who could never know
that she had changed overnight, this morning
a woman with blood that dripped onto soft
skin and new panties, all the rage
and quick, her mother gave her a towel
to clean up. Then a maxi-pad in pink

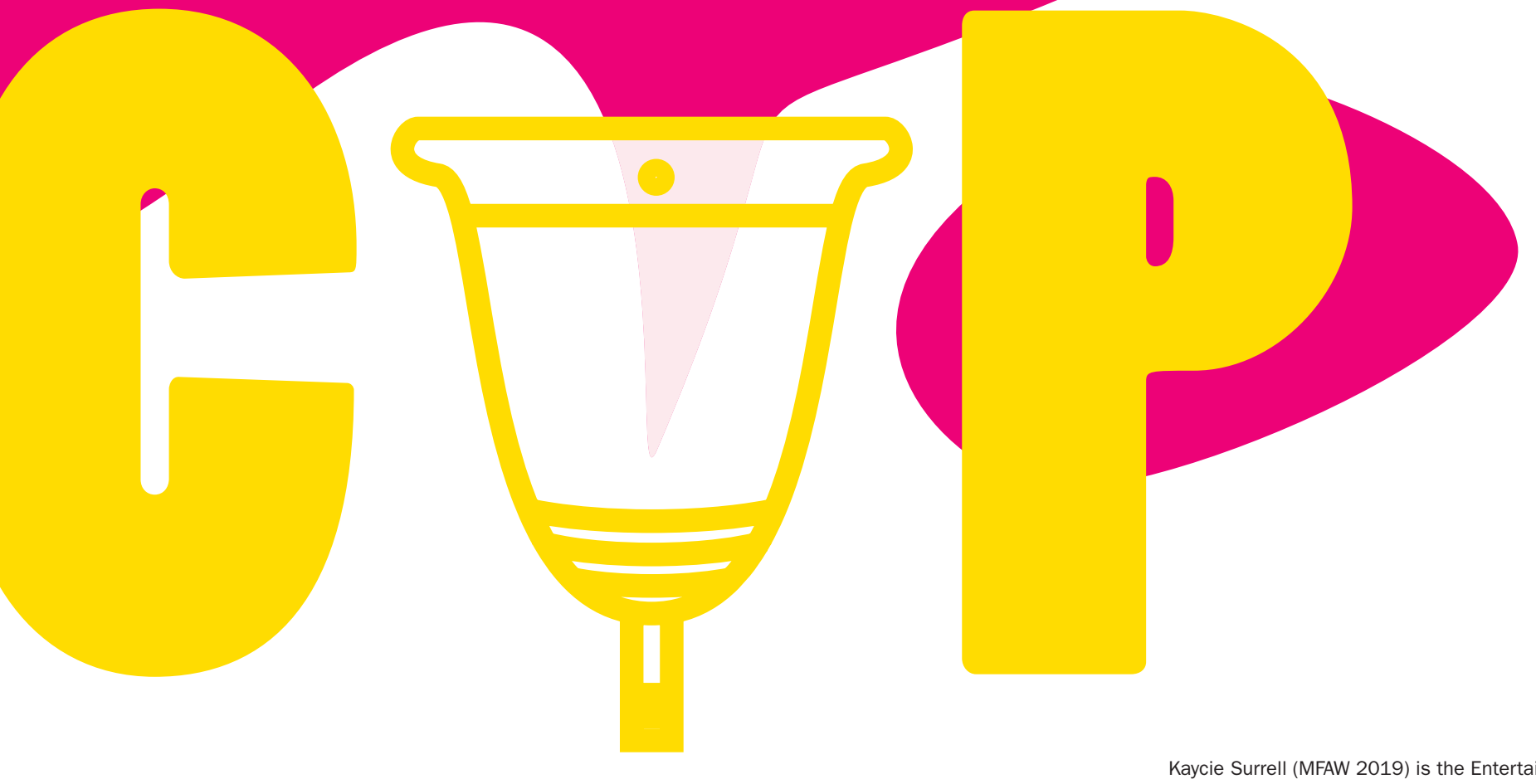
plastic to tape inside her new pink
underwear. “It’s this or that you know”
she said, a tampon next to the towel
like a dagger, too spooky for morning —
threatening to return each month with rage
promising her she’d never again be soft.

Every month she wrapped herself in soft
blankets, a heating pad on her bright pink
skin doing its best but still a rage
filled her. How could nobody know
a better way than this? A sweet morning
of relief before she threw in the towel?

Then suddenly, as she sat on her bath towel
a small, beautiful thing made of squishy soft
rubber caught her attention from her morning
magazine. It jumped out from the rest of the pink
glossy pages. Did nobody know?
How could she have been so blind? Hot rage

filled her then. An ad — “Brand new, all the rage
modern, reusable like a towel!”
“Twelve hours of total comfort, you’ll know
it’s the one for you! Our product is soft
and comes in cool, clear purple or pink!
Never have another stressful morning!”

and now she knows that small, rubber, perfectly pink
thing is meant to quell her rage. The DivaCup! So soft
like the towel she sits on when she shoves it inside herself each morning.



Kaycie Surrell (MFAW 2019) is the Entertainment Editor at F Newsmagazine. She loves dogs, expensive cheeses, and riot grrrl music.

For Want of Stars

Searching for home in Chicago's stars

by **Darshita Jain**

I spent my summers sleeping on the terrace of my house. Back in India, this was the only way to escape the incessant heat. I started this nightly ritual with ice cream and a bedtime story, then ended it by counting 100 stars before I slept. I don't think I ever outgrew the part of me that always wanted to look up and find familiar stars that wove themselves into constellations.

Here in Chicago, I can hardly see one star. I live in the Loop, and on most nights, even catching the moon behind the buildings turns into a walk in the chilling wind. We live in glass buildings. I just need to glance up to peep into another life. Be it day or night, the city remains lit. Everything is on display. The sky is orange.

I don't even need to worry about buying a night light. I can walk to the bathroom in the night without stubbing my toe, glared at by the well-lit Target across the street. Mannequins flaunt the new athleisure line before I walk back to bed. It is 3 a.m. There is no one in the store. But I am making a list of all things I wish I were thin enough to pull off. Or lists of things I need to buy to get thin. It's all right there, in the light.

I can see it all. I mean, good for Target. Bad for my sleep, but good for Target. Reports say regulations mandate lights be left on in order to enhance security cameras' images, thereby preventing theft. An article I read advises stores keep lights on as an additional marketing tactic. Yay capitalism!

But what is funny is that it's not only stores that do it. There are offices downtown, even just above the said Target, that leave their lights and televisions on all night. I walk the nights with a complete view of empty, ghost-town desks — their Christmas decor, their holiday mugs, their family photos. Everything is on display.

Light pollution comes to mind. A quintessentially modern environmental problem, the skies began to change in the 20th century with the increasing usage of electricity and the incandescent light bulb. Scientifically, this phenomenon is called skyglow: the diffuse luminance of the night sky, apart from discrete light sources such as the Moon and visible individual stars. It is a commonly noticed aspect of light pollution. Light pollution is amplified by excessive and unneeded use of light. The U.S. counts among a list of countries that report 99% people only seeing light-polluted skies.

Chicago, known for its orange skies, allocated $160 million to replacing its 270,000 high-pressure sodium lights with Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs) in 2017. It is the cheapest light source. Made from renewable energy, these LEDs are aimed at keeping the day hours running smoothly. The repairs, engineering, and restocking of supplies in stores and offices are done at night to avoid interfering with working hours. That is also why they leave the lights on — efficiency and productivity. Used all 24 hours of the day, the lights are cheap anyway. By contrast, France recently passed a national law cracking down on light pollution, including steps that will restrict the hours of storefront lighting.

But not Chicago. I mean, what does my night sky matter in comparison to productivity and security, two driving forces of capitalistic growth? We charge people to come see the night sky in a nature park outside of the city. It can be fun to get out of the city and visit a National Park or Reserve, but what is surprising is how far skyglow reaches. 80% of America cannot see the Milky Way anymore. 40% of Chicago's electric bill goes toward street lighting, about half of which is night light. The artificial light is not only messing with the sky, but also with our sleep patterns and wildlife. And really, who has time to drive all the way to a National Park to see some stars?

We walk on, well-dressed with everything we see in display windows. The only people who actually speak about the night sky are the few eccentric scientists we disregard. Comfort trumps all. Night skies have only inspired poets and dreamers, artists and scientists, conversations between fathers and daughters, and helped us build links to our past and future. But here I am, wide awake at 3 a.m., vainly praying for the return of my beloved stars.

The U.S. counts among a list of countries that report 99% of people only seeing light-polluted skies.

Illustration by Ishita Dharap

Darshita Jain (MANAJ 2020, INPF) calls herself quixotic. On most days, she oscillates between being the human version of the exclamation mark and that of a question mark.

Change is NEXT

A closer look at the NEXT Strategic Planning Initiative

by **Leo Smith**

This article is the first in a series on SAIC's Strategic Planning Initiative (NEXT). The series aims to shed light on the ongoing process and to explore the efficacy of SAIC's previous initiatives.

In an institution as large as the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), change requires a lot of momentum. Policy changes come down a long, bureaucratic pipeline before they reach the student body. These changes begin in strategic planning initiatives. The school is currently in the midst of a planning cycle that began in 2016 and will be completed in 2023. But how does this strategic planning process work?

SAIC runs its administrative and academic changes through a three-part cycle: research, strategic planning, and implementation. The strategic planning cycle is integrated and perpetual, meaning once a cycle is a few years into implementation, the next cycle begins. This integrated method is designed to make the administration "take stock" and "be accountable," Associate Provost of Academic Affairs Amy Honchell told F Newsmagazine. She is the chair of the initiative's steering committee, a body that oversees the planning process.

The current strategic planning cycle, known as NEXT (not an acronym, just emphatic), started in the 2016-2017 academic year. The cycle has three phases.

The first phase is a data collection phase, in which the committee surveys SAIC students, staff, and alumni to gauge their values and what potential changes should be explored. This stage was completed last spring.

Second, the committee selects and refines a set of specific initiatives. This cycle includes seven initiatives dedicated to topics like diversity, scheduling, and affordability. They form "Action Groups," — subcommittees devoted to particular initiatives. This is the phase NEXT is currently in, comprising the 2018-2019 academic year.

The third and final stage, implementation, will begin in the 2019-2020 school year, and go on until at least 2023, or as long as changes made by this cycle continue.
the previous strategic planning cycle, said the response was "enthusiastic." She said they received many applications and that part-time staff and students were especially well-represented.

Highlights of the Initiatives

- **Affordability and Value.** SAIC's 126-credit undergraduate requirement is higher than the national average (120). In fact, the credit count was lowered in 2015 for both undergraduate and graduate students. This did not arise from strategic planning cycles, but from the new budget committee plan implemented by Elissa Tenny at the beginning of her presidential tenure. Credit reduction is one method of tuition cost reduction that the committee is considering. Other ideas under consideration include a per-semester plan instead of a credit-based model. Like all the considerations of the Action Groups, these are only potential changes.
- **Belonging.** According to Honchell, most groups surveyed in stage one expressed a wish for more "unprogrammed space" on campus, or common areas for informal use. This is not new — the Neiman Center, completed in 2012, was built based on recommendations from the previous cycle. The current belonging group will explore the possibilities for a similar common area for faculty and staff, and potentially for alumni.
- **Diversity and Inclusion.** Another outcome of the previous strategic planning cycle is SAIC's Diversity Action Group. This committee was formed in 2010, following recommendations made in an equivalent diversity initiative. It is now a permanent body, tasked with maintaining a diverse curriculum and an accepting climate. Honchell, leader of the current cycle, helped form this group and is still a board member. The efficacy of these efforts is difficult to quantify. This cycle's diversity initiative will investigate future plans.
- **Time.** The time group is weighing possible changes to both class scheduling and semester calendars. They will examine class length and the 6-hour studio format. Do all classes need to be semester-long, or can SAIC offer shorter intensives? And what about a more substantial spring break?

  The remaining initiatives deal with interdisciplinary questions, faculty support, and alumni life.

What's Our Status?

The initiative is currently in its second stage, the Action Groups stage. In the 2018 fall semester, the steering committee put out a call looking for staff and students to apply to the seven Action Groups. Honchell, who was involved in the previous strategic planning cycle, said the response was "enthusiastic." She said they received many applications and that part-time staff and students were especially well-represented.

The Action Groups will now meet several times over the course of this semester. Meeting minutes will be posted on the Strategic Planning website. Each group's final product will be 10 recommendations on their particular initiative, ranked in order of priority. These recommended changes will come with details on who the measure impacts, its budget impacts, and a manner of assessing whether the measure is working. Action Groups must submit these recommendations by late March.

As the action points are only recommendations, none are guaranteed to be implemented. The final decisions will be made in the spring and summer by the administration before implementation begins in the fall.

Leo Smith (BFA 2021) is a staff writer with an English BA. Their vinyl collection consists of one (1) Tchaikovsky piano concerto.

Building Across

Jonathan Solomon, director of AIADO, talks design and citizenship

by **Dustin Lowman**

Upon being appointed Director of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects (AIADO) in 2015, Jonathan Solomon made clear that he wanted his students to prioritize social engagement in their practices. He proceeded to lead by example, co-directing Space p11, located in the Chicago Pedway, and inviting in socially conscious creative leaders like Amanda Williams and Eyal Weizman. I recently talked with Solomon about his personal history, his views on Chicago, and his hopes for the future of AIADO.

Dustin Lowman: When I was researching you, I saw that there was a Bitcoin mogul named Jonathan Solomon. I assume that's not you.
Jonathan Solomon: I am not a Bitcoin mogul.

DL: Got it. It was a little ironic, because looking through your work, I thought I traced a theme of anti-commercialism. Is that a preoccupation of yours?
JS: That's interesting. I wouldn't say I'm anti-commercial. Among the projects I've been working on lately is a gallery called Space p11, open in the Chicago Pedway. In that case, we're working with retail systems and structures, but in some non-standard ways. Instead of looking at the Pedway as a retail failure, we're trying to look at what it is successful at doing, and help it do that more. One way was to think of it as a network of cultural spaces, which, in addition to being a network of commercial spaces, it is. It joins the Cultural Center, the Design Museum of Chicago, the Fashion Incubator, et cetera. The gallery itself is non-commercial, so we're not representing or selling the work of commercial artists, but we're using the systems of retail display — retail signage, picture windows, literally the space of vacant retail — as a space for cultural production.

DL: How do you think growing up in Chicago impacted your approach to architecture?
JS: I think Chicago has a narrative — for its entire history, really — of modernity, progress, growth, commercialism. These are all deeply woven into the city's physical fabric and its founding myths. I grew up in Chicago, left for a period of time, and came back for this position at the Art Institute. Having returned as an adult, I'm now seeing Chicago at an inflection point in its history. It has to ask itself what it means to be a city in which vast areas are depopulating.

Illustration by Shannon Lewis

Disciplines

Or a city in which natural systems are being welcomed back into the physical fabric, rather than being mastered and regularized. What does it mean to be a city that is decentralizing rather than centralizing? The ways in which we use our land, the ways our economy works, the ways in which we move, are all changing. This isn't just Chicago, this is a story that is being played out in slightly different ways in cities around the world, particularly as we as a globe realize we can't grow our way out of every challenge. You can't extract resources forever, and you can't throw away your waste forever. At a certain point you have to learn how to live with what you have. And progress — all those myths, all those narratives — have to be reconceived. This should go without saying, but progress for one group usually came at the expense of other groups. In Chicago today, you see some results of modernity and progress that had not been part of that narrative, but boy are they part of the story now. I think my upbringing in the context of that Chicago narrative gives me a particular eye on it, but I also have the pleasure of working with architects and designers from all over the country and the world who bring that same insight from other places.

DL: I read, in the statement you made when you were appointed director of AIADO, that you want "to encourage designers to take an activist approach in culture broadly, to demonstrate the relevance and necessity of design in areas such as finance, politics, ecology, and more." Why was that so central a goal?
JS: The challenges that the world faces are larger than the impact a professional practice tends to make when it stays in its lane. My SAIC students are a generation that will have to tackle transcendent challenges like the threat of global climate change, or cultural challenges of communication, governance, and belonging. Technological challenges, the impact of technology on the way we live, communicate, work, recreate, et cetera. I want this generation to be leaders in responding to those challenges, and to do that, I need to encourage them to get out of their lanes a little bit. I need to encourage them to not just follow professional paths that were laid out by a generation before them, but to find new paths, and to see challenges more holistically, more transcendently, to communicate more horizontally with others in order to tackle them. I actually think the art school context in which I teach — design and architecture — is a spectacular environment to do that. It teaches communication, it teaches engagement, it teaches a belief in the creative process. I would say that the environment of SAIC is very welcoming to this. President Elissa Tenny speaks frequently and eloquently about a lot of these issues, and has created an atmosphere at this school that understands and respects what she refers to as "citizenship" as fundamental to the education of design art.

DL: Are students open to this approach to architecture and design?
JS: In many cases I see students leading it. In fact, I think it comes out of our students. Our students come to the studio wanting to have an impact that requires a position of agency in the world beyond the confines of their professions.
In our architecture studio, we teach fundamental things — how to draw a wall section, how to lay out a plan according to code. But we also teach ways in which the agency of drawing a building or planning a building can have impact beyond the confines of the profession. We encourage students, ultimately, to set their goals beyond the edge of the professional boundary.

For its entire history, Chicago has had a narrative of modernity, progress, growth, commercialism.

Dustin Lowman (MFAW 2020) is the SAIC Editor at F Newsmagazine. In 2020, he would like to see a cardigan elected president.

Zeroes

by Alexandra Ferreira

When I was twelve, my cousin came to live with us. She had grown too sick to work, too sick to live on her own. She had been passed from household to household to ours.

I remember her skin was fragile and pale like paper and her eyes were dull, so for a long time I was afraid to go into her room or look too closely at her. I was afraid she'd speak to me in her hoarse voice that made her sound like an old woman and tell me about how she had grown so sick and frail. I didn't want to know.

But my room was across from the living room where she slept on a hard old bed. At night, when I hurried from the bathroom to my bedroom, I'd pass her reading and her dull eyes would meet mine. I started waiting until she would go to sleep before going to brush my teeth and bathe. I would watch the space under the door for the light from her lamp to go out before hurrying out of my room, looking straight ahead. For the first six months she lived with us, I spoke only a handful of words to her: "good morning," "good night," "dinner is ready." Nothing important.

The summer she came to stay was the most humid on record for our country. Every single day heat oozed into our air-conditioned home and her health worsened. It was always worsening, no matter what.

The weather trapped me inside for days. She trapped me inside, too. As she grew weaker and my parents grew busier, she became my responsibility. Looking back, it was probably during that summer of forgoing childish fun that I began to resent her. She would stare in my direction with her glazed eyes that never smiled and thank me, hoarsely and softly, for bringing her water and lunch. Her words felt hollow. I bristled at them.

I sneaked away in the late afternoons to meet with friends or do anything to escape the indoors. When I got home, I was scolded for neglecting her. She said little in support of me or of my parents.

I asked if she had always been so quiet and learned that mentioning her, before illness, was taboo. After a while, I learned to walk out the front door loudly, slamming it behind me, so she would see how easily I could come and go. It didn't make her thank me more sincerely for tending to her.

I wondered if she ever got tired of her box, four walls and a bed with some extra pillows to prop her up. She spent almost all of her time typing quickly, with monotonous and steady concentration, on a laptop. In all the time she stayed with us, I never caught a hint of what she was so busy with. Once, I carelessly asked my parents what she did all day and was scolded for being nosy before they speculated that she was probably keeping up with old friends. It occurred to me that no old friends had come to visit, not once, although I was careful not to voice my observation.

I rarely invited friends over so I wouldn't have to mention her, or worse, introduce her. Despite that, close friends, who insisted on seeing my home, came up with wild speculations on her private life.

"She's a hacker," one friend said. "She's staying here undercover because the government is looking for her. That's why she's on the computer all day. I bet she's not even sick."

I deemed this theory too far-fetched for many reasons, but mainly because she was too sick to be faking. The next theory was that she was an internet scammer who tricked strangers out of their wealth on the internet by posing as a charming and beautiful woman. More theories developed. My sick cousin, secretly a spy, secretly royalty, secretly a murderer, secretly an impostor who had tricked my parents.

Most of the ideas we had come up with required her to have wealth and intrigue. She lacked both. Although she consumed little, she added little to the household as well. As days went by, she seemed to camouflage into the white plaster walls and sheets. Her presence shrunk by the week. But the speculations we made about her came to serve a purpose: erosion of the tension created by her presence.

Some theories I instinctively stifled before they could become a running joke and some I kept in the back of my mind and dwelled on when, unprompted, I would become overwhelmed with hatred for her.

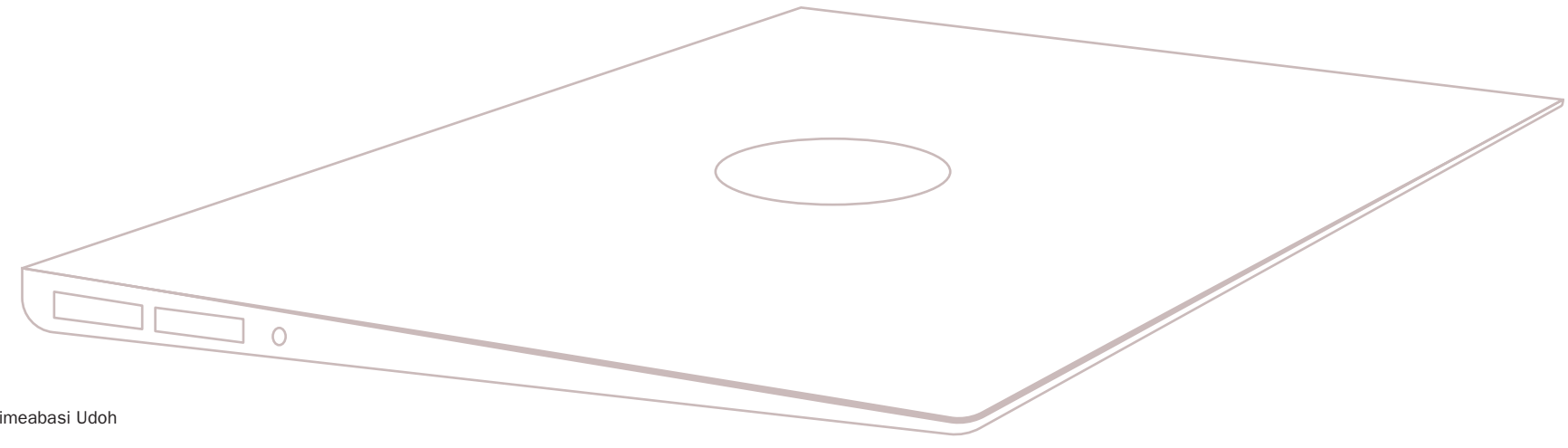


Illustration by Unyimeabasi Udoh

While I continued to resent her periodically, she grew sicker and sicker. After a year, longer than we had expected her to stay, my parents made it pleasantly clear that she would stay with us as long as she liked. I resigned myself.

When school started in September, I was only home for dinner and bed. I stopped wordlessly avoiding her and made a habit of wishing her goodnight. I suppose it was out of guilt; I assumed she resented me and my life outside of the house. But now, I suppose she barely noticed whether I came or went.

While sitting bored in class, passing the park, going to the corner store, I started to wonder if she missed those places. Her face, lit by the computer screen, betrayed no longing for the outside world, but it betrayed no happiness either.

I took pictures wherever I went and kept them in a folder for her but stopped short, again and again, of handing them over. Eventually, I assumed I would give them to her as a gift, on the day when she left.

As the second summer grew hotter, she ceased to even look out the windows and kept them covered. Her door almost always stayed closed and her eyes no longer followed me when I would pass her room. My fluctuation between curiosity, apathy, and hatred dwindled to steady tolerance for the times I had to interact with her. I stopped jokingly theorizing with my friends as we moved on to new topics. She shrank into her bed.

My parents had forgotten that I was supposed to care for her and I was free to spend most of my time away from home that summer. I intended to stay too busy, come home too tired to think about her wasting away across the hall during the second-hottest summer on record.

But as she grew weaker and quieter, she seemed busier than ever. Day and night, I could hear the faint tapping of her fingers, whirring of the computer fans. Her hollow eyes were constantly overtaken by strained concentration and the desperation that confirmed what my family had come to understand: She was nearly out of time.

We had established some normalcy to our routine. I started bringing her meals again, but only on my free evenings. When I did, she would nod and watch me leave with her sunken eyes, for she had all but stopped talking at that point.

Then, on a Tuesday in December, a day when no one was home, she left and took her few belongings with her. I came home from some after-school club, after my parents had already returned from work and my mother asked me to check on her. Her room was still and the bedding was cleaned and folded at the end of the mattress. The closet was empty of the bag and clothes she had arrived with. Her laptop was gone. We all had believed she was too weak to leave like that, all at once. My mother called the nearby hospitals and the police station. My father and I drove out to search the streets and underpasses. We all decided not to call the morgue.

After less than a week, they called us.

She had died in a hotel a county over. She had laid out her identification and our information on the desk.

My father identified her. “She knew it was coming.” He said. “She probably didn’t want us to find her body.”

My mother shook her head. “She didn’t want to die with us.”

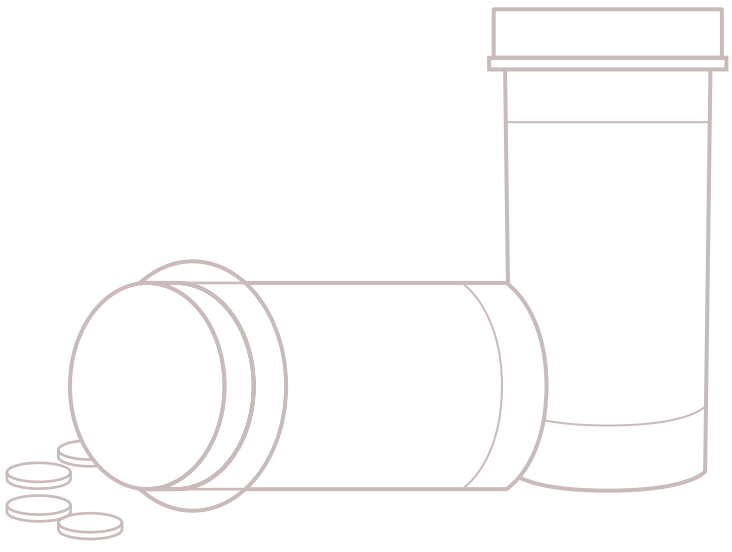
“Is there a difference?” he asked.

I said nothing and thought about the folder of photos. Significant space on my phone memory.

Her death didn’t surprise us, not even her manner of death was shocking. None of us cried, but we were not crying people. And after all, she had been on her deathbed for too long and our mourning had already taken the full course of her stay with us.

What surprised us was the discovery that she had a detailed, legitimate will that was found to be signed by her, witnesses whose names we did not recognize, stamped by a notary. Almost a year after her death, we learned that, in the end, she, my cousin, had left my parents some heirlooms. Earrings, a watch, a photo album, a set of wedding rings from her parents, and other such things.

What she had left me was, at first, less glamorous. A plain white envelope labeled with my full name. Inside, a username and password combination which unlocked her laptop. That, in turn, led me to her online bank account. The account itself was not under her name but every part of me understood that it had been hers and it was for me.



Alexandra Ferreira (BFA Architecture 2020) writes, designs ... you know. She has been published by Papeachu Press.

Frank & Fran: Where Do We Go From Here?

Part Five of the F-Exclusive Mystery Series
by Jesse Stein

Recap of Parts 1–4: Frank and Fran, on the trail of the neighborhood electricity thief, descend into an underground lair where they discover a shrine to Alicia Keys. Frank and Fran ambush their quarry, knock him out, and after an aggressive interrogation, uncover a plot to harm Alicia Keys.

"She's coming down into the tunnels, into the tunnels to sing a new song, bless her." Fungus tried his best to look pious, or sincere, but the jaundiced rope of snot trailing over his lips wasn't helping his case. Fran stowed away the whiskey bottle and rubbed her temples. As her adrenaline wore off, it was harder to make sense of what was happening. Frank, however, found his second wind; the fate of his favorite artist hung in the balance.

"You know, Fran, she did just drop a new single."

"He will do it today. I have seen him — BARRY! He hates her with his eyes. Before the tunnels, his parents died, yes. Crunching cars. They were dancing and happy, because she was singing, but they didn't see the truck, no. They went into blackness, but Barry did not, and now he seeks vengeance. She comes today to sing, and she brings wires and machines with her."

"Fran."

"Shut the fuck up, Frank."

"She's filming. Is that right, Fungus?"

Fungus nodded.

"She's shooting the music video for her new single. Today! Fran!"

"How did you get that from that?"

"I keep my ears to the ground."

"You keep your ears to the ground?"

"I follow her on Instagram."

"So you're in her inner circle then?"

"Do not shame me for this. Did you hear me complain when you went through your horse girl phase? Did I make a joke? Or did I get that Groupon for beachfront horseback riding for your birthday? Which one was it, Fran?"

"Ok. But ... who shoots a music video in a tunnel?"

"Francine Abigail Birkiwitz, she's done it before."

"When?"

Fungus chuckled into his chin. Frank cast his finger towards the shrine.

"Karma. The Diary of Alicia Keys. 2003, the year I discovered my sexuality. Music video shot in a subway station. It was a big year for me. How could you forget that?"

Fran remembered. How he sprinted up to her, like someone had just been murdered, to describe in vivid detail what transpired in his loins. She smiled and shuddered at the same time.

"Well I mean, Christ. Does it mean that much to you?"

Frank's eyes welled. He sniffed. "It really does."

"Young warriors." Fungus cleared his mossy throat.

Fran rolled her neck in his direction. Fungus twitched and raked his fingernails into the chair.

"Fungus has a plan!" A wonderful plan! But three is better than me, and I am scared, and there is no time, bless her."

Frank wiped his nose. "What's the plan, Fungus?"

Fungus spun around in the chair and pointed his big toe at the cars on the train tracks. "I fixed it. Fungus all alone fixed the tracks! Barry doesn't know. It's a secret. They go straight and true right to him. He will try and crumble the tunnel but we will not let that happen. No, we won't. We will slither behind him, like a mud snake, and aim for his knees. He has brittle bones, poor creature. You are strong warriors. You will save her!"

Frank patted his chest. "I do push-ups every other morning, so..."

Fran tapped her chin with the flashlight. "Well, obviously, I'm all for jumping old dudes who live in tunnels, but still."

"Oh come on, Fran! You wanted your answers and you got them, right? We have a chance to do something, to really make a difference, you know? For Alicia. Fifty years from now..."

"Jesus fuck OK! But if I find out that you're still using my electricity, I'm coming back down here and I'm going to burn this place to the ground."

Fungus bowed his chin into his chest."It will be done. Fungus will go back to his darkness and he will be happy. Very fair. Very just."

"If you're lying, and believe me I'll be checking my meter every Tuesday, you'll be burnt toast by Wednesday. Burnt toast."

Frank carefully placed his palm on Fran's shoulder. "I think he's got it, Franny. You got it, Fungus?"

He nodded violently.

Fran spit. "OK. Let's go ambush Barry."

She took out her keys and cut the tape off of Fungus. "But you follow my lead, do exactly what I tell you, got it?"

Frank took Fungus by the forearm and heaved him to his feet, and Fungus clicked his heels together like a marine.

Frank ripped a lead pipe out of the ground and laid it across his shoulders. Fran spun her flashlight like a gunslinger, and Fungus rooted around underneath his soggy mattress, producing a DIY warhammer, kissing it sensually. Frank and Fran and Fungus stuffed themselves into the pushcart, taking mouthfuls from the bottle. Fungus pulled a sweat-stained piece of cardboard from his shirt, and showed them the map he had drawn, tapping where Barry would be, and where they would take him. Fran looked at Frank, malnourished Prince Charming, grinning like an idiot. She looked at Fungus. He was praying to whatever gods lived underground. She threw up in her mouth, spit it out, and cranked the pushcart to life, holding the fate of America's greatest R&B artist in her hands, and, felt the hole inside her — the one she filled with overblown adventures — begin to close.

Illustration by Ishita Dharap

"Do not shame me for this. Did you hear me complain when you went through your horse girl phase? Did I make a joke? Or did I get that Groupon for beachfront horseback riding for your birthday?"

Stay tuned — Frank & Fran will be back with Part Six in April!

This is Jesse Stein's (MFAW 2020) first published work since the third grade, where he definitely didn't peak.

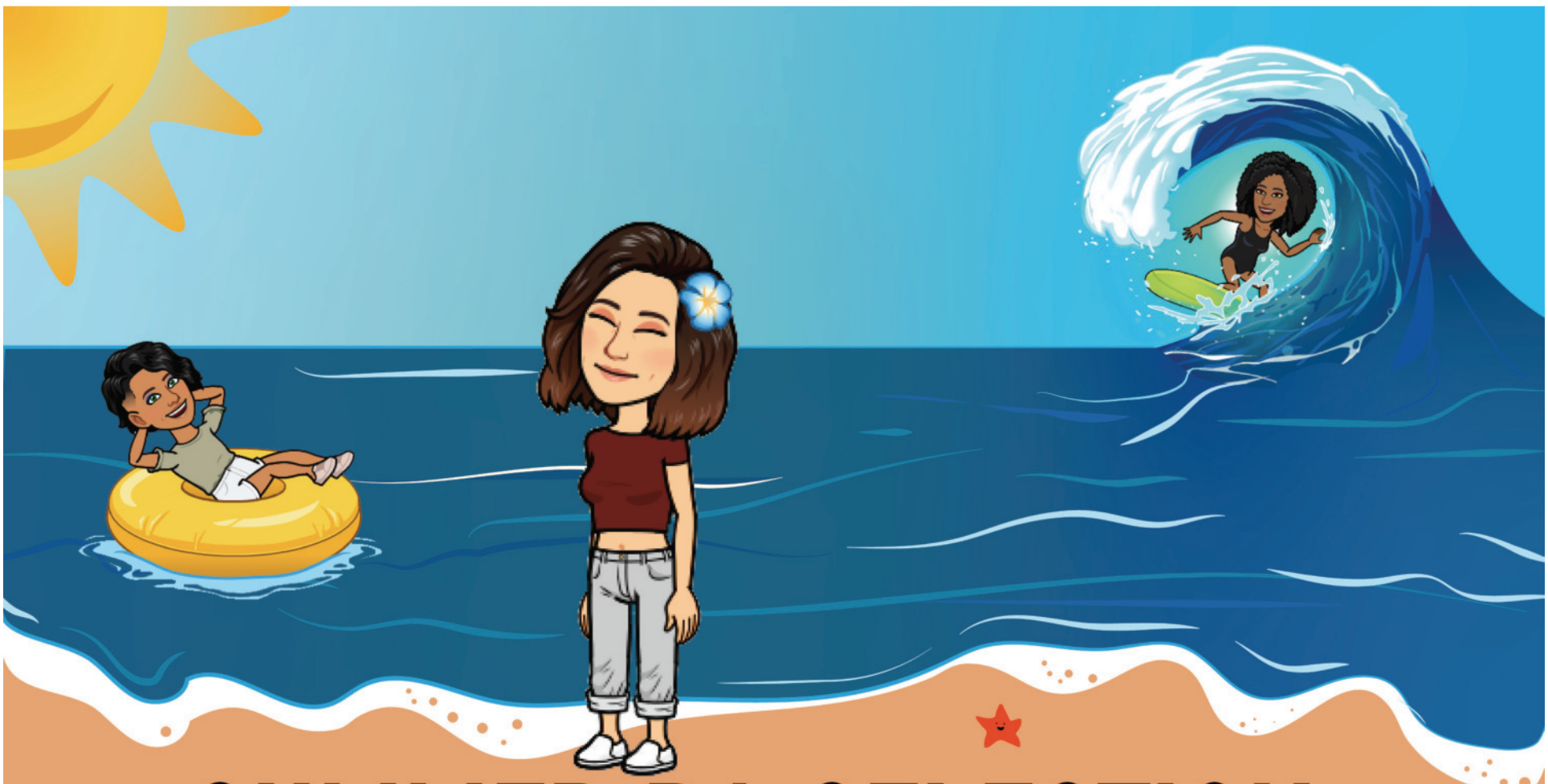
River Water Speaks

by Darshita Jain

In an Autumn leaf/an unknown grief/a family trip/my father's gifts/
Lovers' quarrels/secret hideouts/kissing under the tree/the sting of a bee/you were
singing to me — and talking, as fast as you can/Pinks as far as eyes can see/ the sky was
raining down on me/ hope/dream/love/guilt/guilt/guilt/guilt/guilt/Letters to my mother —
apologies — unsent/Songs for my sister — unsung/Poems for my lover — unheard/A grey rock under
the neem tree on this river of my childhood/holds photographs under every grain of dirt/under all the misty
water/photographs I wish you'd taken. Or maybe not/Of heartbreaks; plucking guitar threads/spitfire words I never
had courage to speak (though I swear the black on the pebbles is a result of me)/under her blues/ flowing into
unknown/my truth. Never to be seen; or told; or heard or seen/watered down/leaving no footprints on the snow/
flowing water engulfing me whole/or so I thought/She flows; Telling stories wherever she goes/Finding the
same tales over and over again: A quiet girl/Weeping over a torn mother and a guy/Trying to find
his place in the world/A couple, fighting, struggling to make ends meet/Unable to tell anyone
else/Other than the river/just like me, they have no idea she travels/She talks/Only
thing, she forgot: Names/wiped away with the same water/
Everywhere/skeletons look the same everywhere.
The river asks no questions/the river holds no secrets.

Illustration by Unyimeabasi Udoh

Darshita Jain (MANAJ 2020, INPF) calls herself quixotic. On most days, she oscillates between being the human version of the exclamation mark and that of a question mark.



SUMMER RA SELECTION

Summer Resident Advisor applications are open!

applications are located at
engage.saic.edu
from March 1-24

INFORMATION SESSIONS:	March 1st Jones Media room 5 pm	March 6th Sharp 215 4:30 pm	March 20th 162 Media Room 9:30 pm

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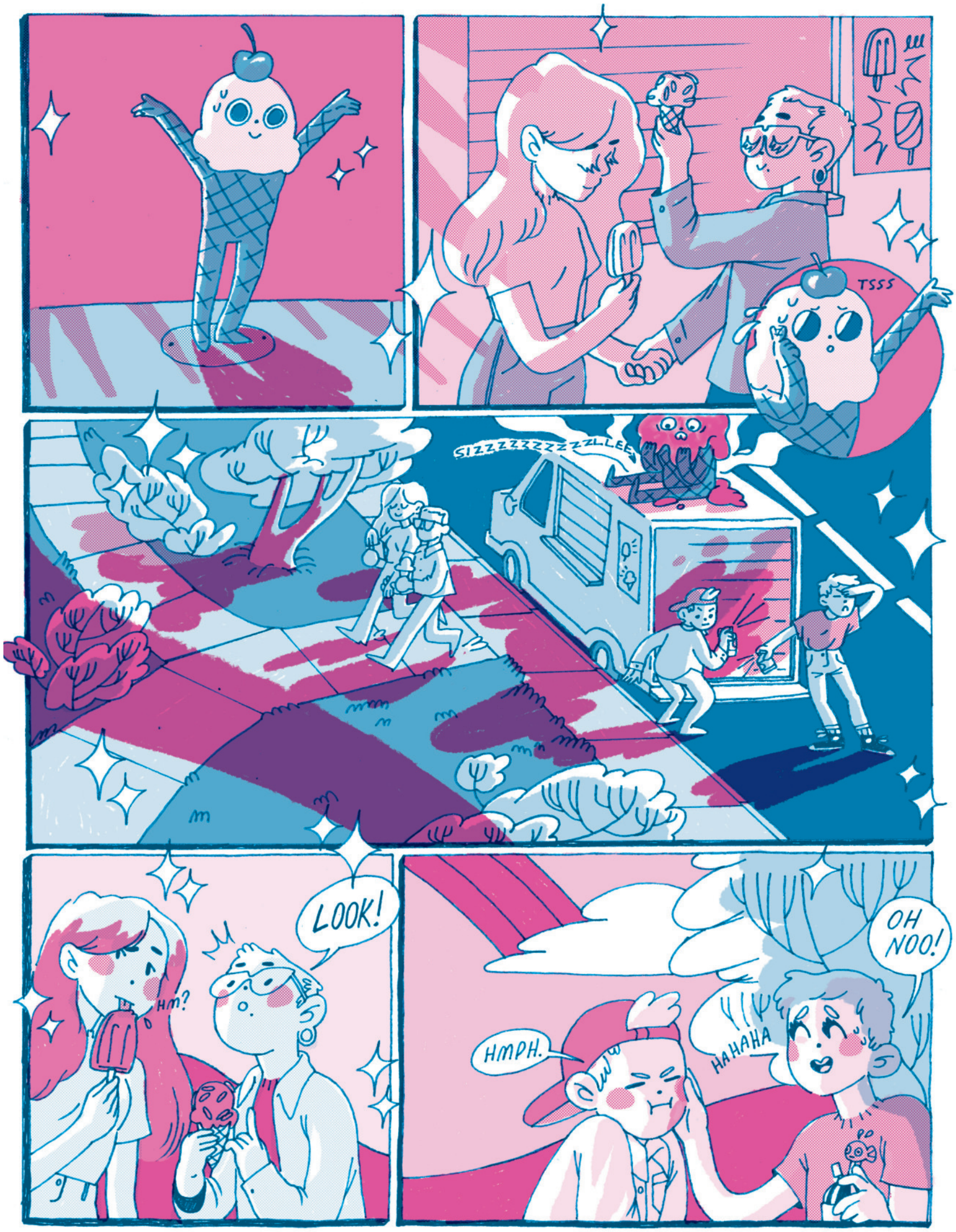
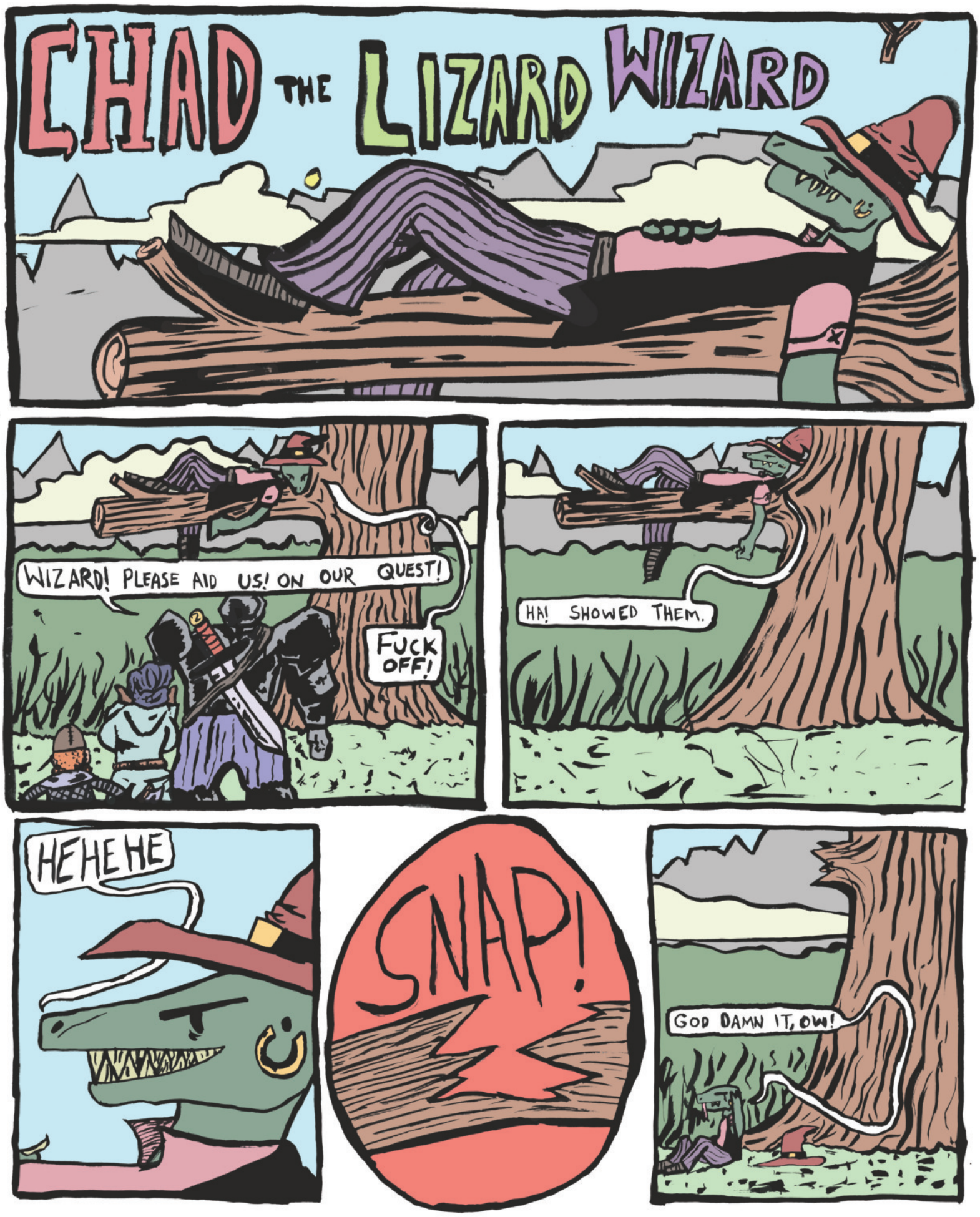
COMICS

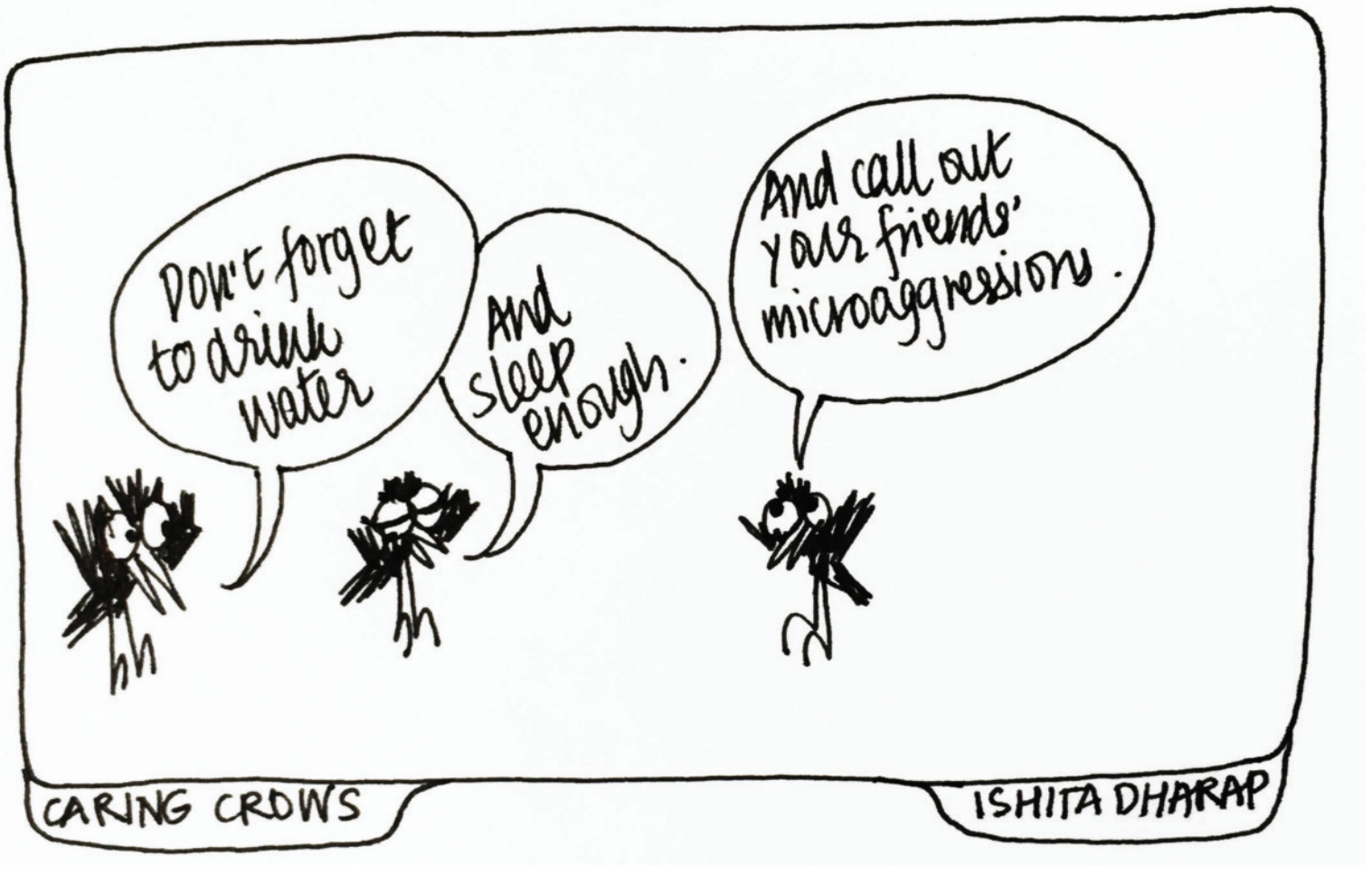
COLD BOY

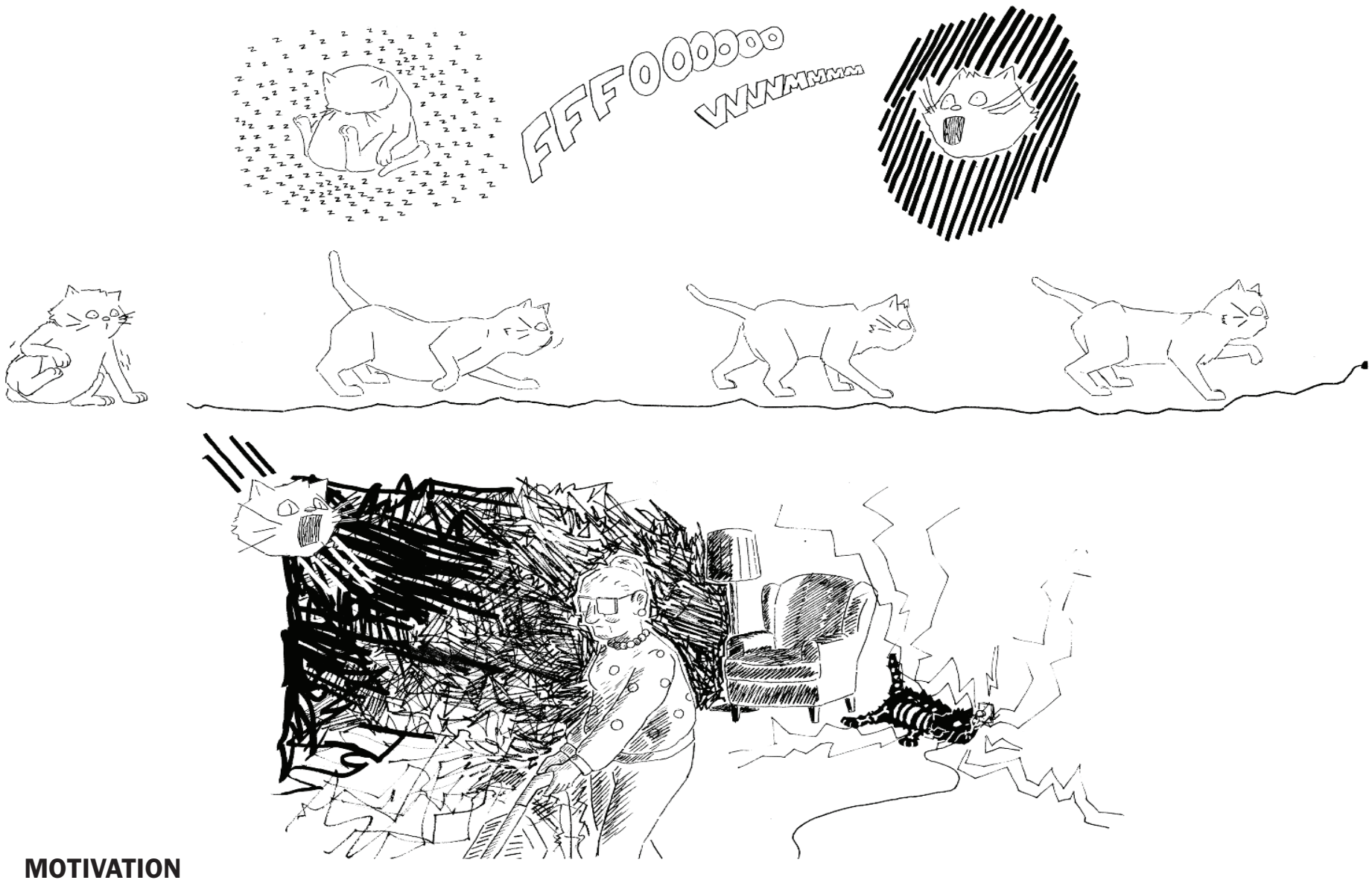


Bridget Bilbo

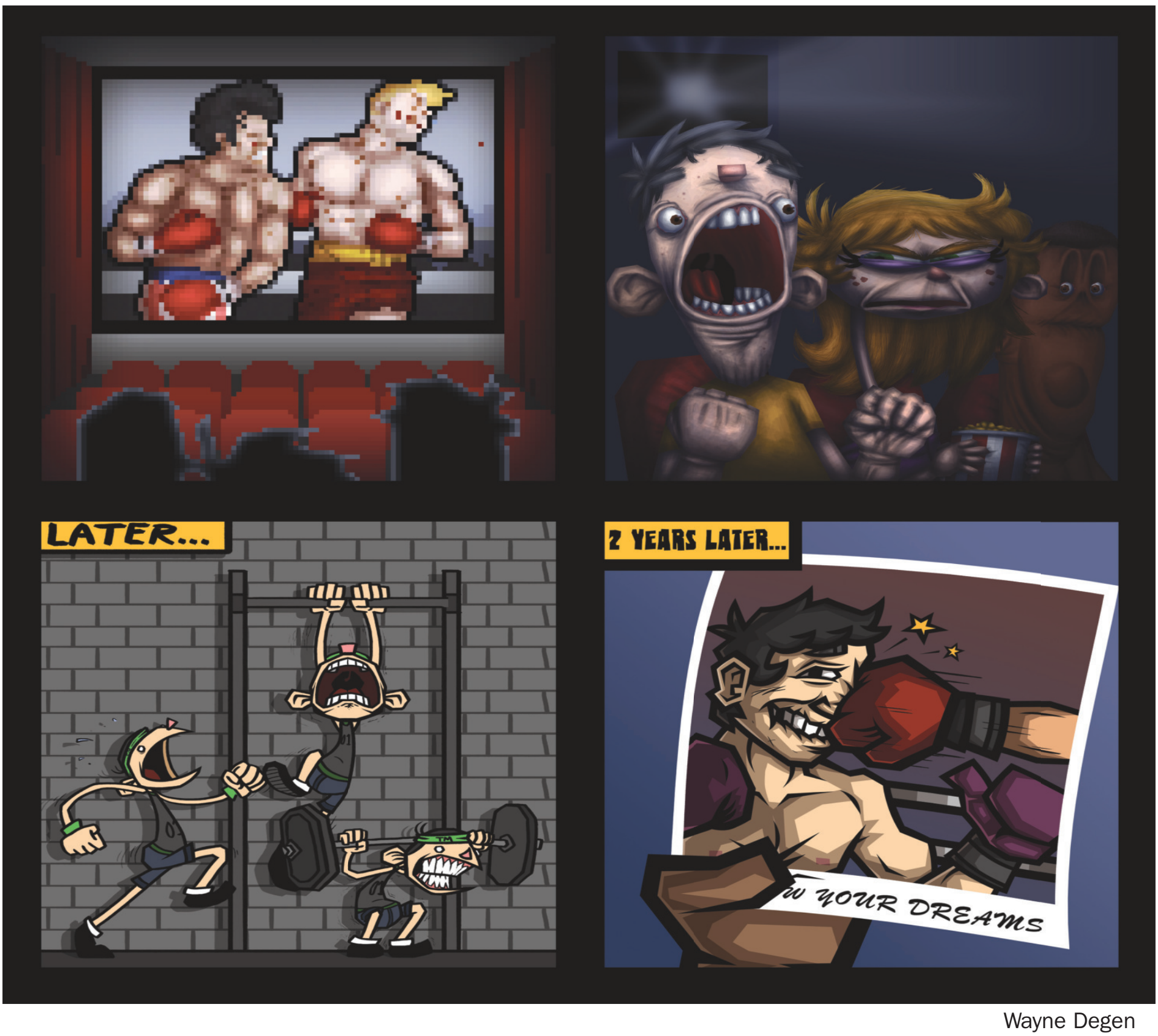

CHAD THE LIZARD WIZARD
WIZARD! PLEASE AID US! ON OUR QUEST!
FUCK OFF!
HA! SHOWED THEM.
HEHEHE
SNAP!
GOD DAMN IT, OW!

Finn Walker


Don't forget to drink water
And sleep enough.
And call out your friends' microaggressions.
CARING CROWS
ISHITA DHARAP



MOTIVATION



Wayne Degen

Jenny Rafalson

Hibiscus

Photography by Jenny Rafalson

Plumbago Auriculata

I was born in the former Soviet Union in 1986 and grew up in Israel, after having moved there at the age of five. Recently, I moved to Chicago to pursue an MFA at SAIC in the photography department.

As an immigrant in Israel, my father encouraged me to adapt to my new surroundings and meld with the Israeli culture. His well-intentioned approach to assimilation was made difficult by the hostile attitude towards immigrants in Israel. That made me so ashamed of my Russian identity that I tried to erase it, tried to be as Israeli as possible, as quickly as possible. When at last I felt Israeli enough, I began to take an interest in exploring and tracing my Russian roots. In my work, I tried to understand, investigate, and imitate the culture I had grown ashamed of. I did this primarily by creating memories — because I didn't have any of them — with material borrowed from friends and Facebook groups. Now, as a foreigner again in a new society, I am interested in what it means to belong, to truly be a local. When does something or someone become a local rather than an outsider? I address this through plants because I think it is very easy to sever plants from their places of origin, and then re-assign them to Western culture.

OX-BOW SCHOOL OF ART & ARTISTS' RESIDENCY

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SAIC ADV. REGISTRATION
& WORK SCHOLARSHIP SIGN UP
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1 PM:
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