

# Function<sup>23</sup> tion



THIS IS  
FUNCTION.



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**Issue 23**

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PHOTOGRAPHIC  
FUTURES

# Editorial Note

Hey, you! Yes, you!

Thank you for picking up the 23rd issue of Function. All of us together—our readers, contributors, patrons, and the students of Image Arts—have kept this tradition alive for over 20 years. Through every transition and every change, we have used this book to define ourselves and find a common language of images and ideas.

The 2022 edition of Function: Photographic Futures is inspired by the changing world around us. We often look to images to help us define possible futures, new modes of care, and nascent communities. This issue hopes to do all those things and more. In bringing it out into the world, our guiding principle has been to amplify the voices of the diverse communities within the School of Image Arts and the greater art and academic spheres. We think of this publication as a conduit for understanding experiences outside of our own, inspiring future generations of makers and thinkers to empathize, form solidarity, and engage in transformative action.

Oftentimes, we forget our significance in the world, and we underestimate the power images have to move communities, start initiatives, and show us ways of building the future. We hope this issue is a reminder to every one of the connections between us—it is those connections that make it possible to imagine alternative futures.

**FUNCTION 23 TEAM**

Annie MacDonell | Kelsey Myler | Ananna Rafa | Juliana Causi | Jennifer Qu

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a group of women huddled together in a circle. They are all looking down towards the center of the group. The women have various hair colors and styles, including dark curly hair, straight black hair, and blonde hair. One woman in the foreground has long, thick braids. The women are wearing minimal clothing, mostly strapless or backless. The background is a plain, light-colored surface. The word "CONTENTS" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

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# Christina Oyawale

## *Careworn & Coil*

My body moves on crip time, meaning it decides when it wants to move, when I need to slow down, and when it's time to go. I experience space and time in a completely different way than most do. I've learned to live through the discomfort, but this is my attempt at being vulnerable with you. Let's reevaluate our perceptions of private versus public life. I want you to understand that it's not pretty, it's raw, and it's ugly. In the words of Mia Mingus, I would rather be "ugly—magnificently ugly" than "beautiful," because I am flawed and sometimes need the space to remember that. I move on crip time, as breathing hurts from my ribs that have been inflamed for weeks. I move on crip time because I am too anxious to face the world today. So I stay in my space until I feel it is time to leave.

I watch the seasons change from my window. I watch the sun kiss my pigmented skin.

I've built my world for you, I've re-constructed my space.



**Form 1.1 Initial Pain Assessment Tool**

Patient's Name CHRISTINA Mwanale Age 21 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Diagnosis still unknown Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nurse \_\_\_\_\_

1. LOCATION: Patient or nurse mark drawing.

my stomach feels upset

the ribs that have been in flames for weeks now

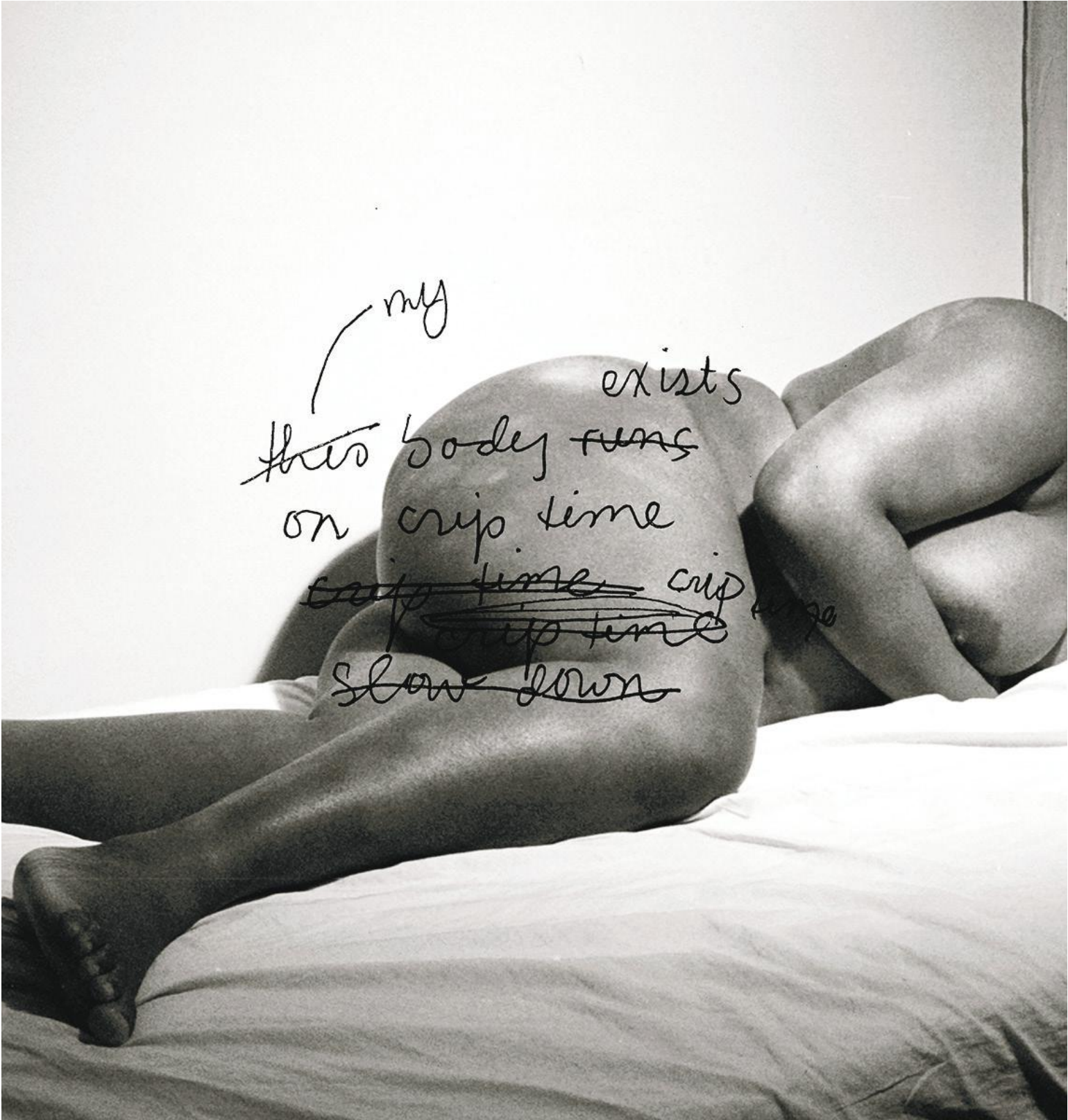
5 concussions that prevent still prevent me from sleeping

2. INTENSITY: Patient rates the pain. Scale used \_\_\_\_\_  
 Present pain: \_\_\_\_\_ Worst pain gets: \_\_\_\_\_ Best pain gets: \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable level of pain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. IS THIS PAIN CONSTANT?  YES  NO IF NOT, HOW OFTEN DOES IT OCCUR? \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. QUALITY: (For example: ache, deep, sharp, hot, cold, like sensitive skin, sharp, itchy) \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. ONSET, DURATION, VARIATIONS, RHYTHMS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. MANNER OF EXPRESSING PAIN: \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. WHAT RELIEVES PAIN? \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. WHAT CAUSES OR INCREASES THE PAIN? \_\_\_\_\_

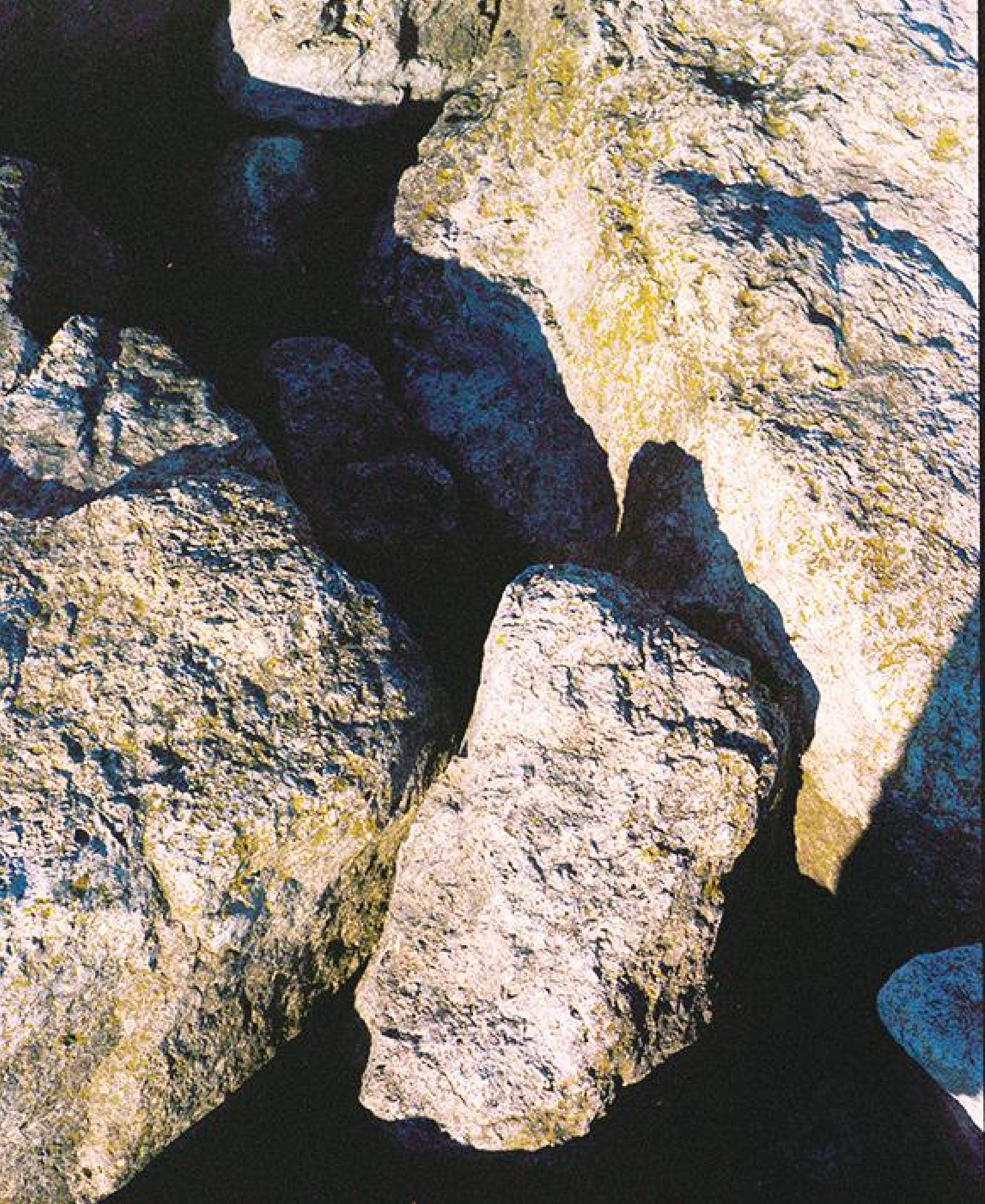
9. EFFECTS OF PAIN: (Note decreased function, d...)  
 Accompanying symptoms (e.g., nausea) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sleep \_\_\_\_\_  
 Appetite \_\_\_\_\_  
 Physical activity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship with others (e.g., irritability) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Emotions (e.g., anger, suicidal, crying) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Concentration \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 10. OTHER COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 11. PLAN: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you  
 EXPLAIN THAT  
 EVERYTHING  
~~is~~ HURTS\*  
 MOST DAYS?

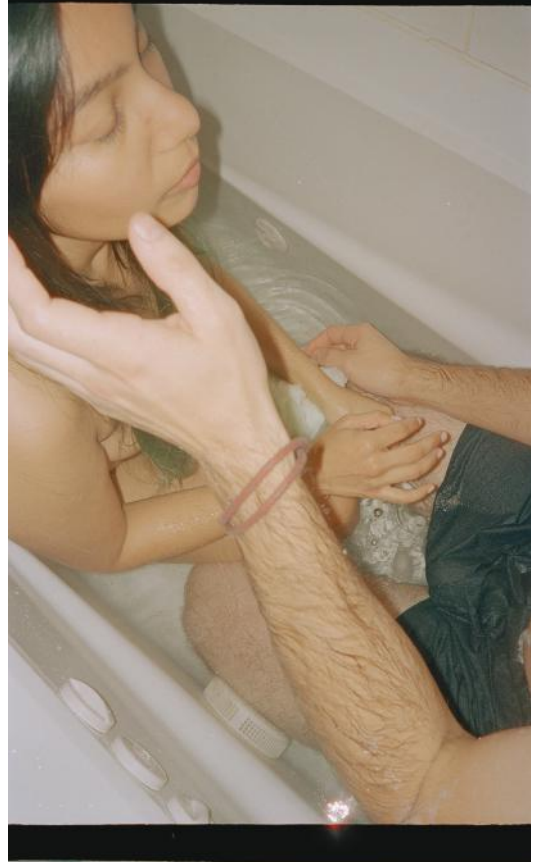
May be duplicated for use in clinical practice. Copyright management, 2011, Mosby, Inc.



my  
exists  
~~this~~ body runs  
on crip time  
~~crip time crip time~~  
~~crip time~~  
~~slow down~~

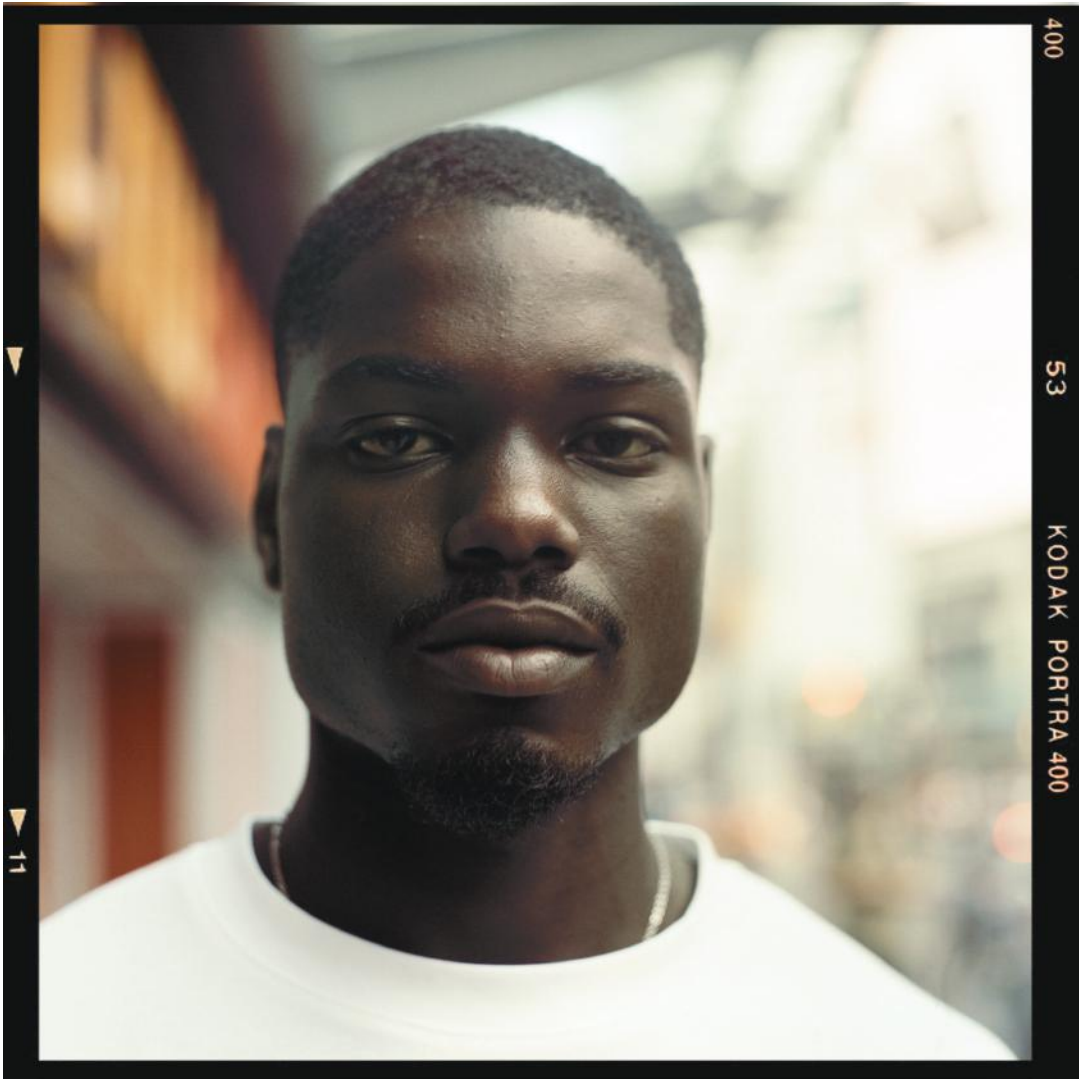














# EXHIBITION REFLECTIONS

*it's real bc it happened*, an exhibition featuring  
artists Deion Squires-Rouse, Ajeuro Abala, and  
curated by Christina Oyawale



**it's real  
bc it  
happened**



*it's real bc it happened* was an exhibition and artist residency at Artspace Gallery featuring Deion Squires-Rouse (4th-year photo) and IMA photo alum Ajeuro Abala, curated by Christina Oyawale (4th-year photo). Over the summer months, Christina, Deion, and Ajeuro collaborated in a workspace that provided them the space and resources to expand their research, creating an iterative exhibition that explores ideological frameworks around self-portraiture, perception, and what counts as “real.”

Deion and Ajeuro investigated their own practices through photographing each other and themselves, while working with Christina to fully explore conversations around the act of transformative justice in the arts—creating spaces for oneself rather than waiting to be accepted into institutional space. The exhibition highlighted the importance of spaces for Black students to freely make work beyond the themes of the diaspora while centering peer-to-peer collaboration that garnered discussions around access in the arts.

*The collaborative project's final form was on view at Artspace Gallery November 4th to December 4th, 2021.*

it's real  
bc it  
happened

Ajeuro Abala & Deion Squires-Rouse

Curated by Christina Ojeda

NOV 4 - DEC 4, 2021

IT'S REAL BC IT HAPPENED is an exhibition and artist residency featuring 4th-year photo student Deion Squires-Rouse and IWA photo alum Ajeuro Abala, curated by Christina Ojeda (4th-year photo). Over the summer months, Christina, Deion, and Ajeuro collaborated in a workshop that provided them the space and resources to expand their research, creating an iterative exhibition that explores ideological tensions around self-portraiture, perception, and what counts as "real".

Deion and Ajeuro investigated their own practices through photographing each other and themselves, while working with Christina to fully explore conversations around the act of transformative justice in the arts: creating spaces for oneself rather than waiting to be accepted into institutional space. The importance of spaces for Black students to freely make work beyond the themes of the diaspora while centering peer-to-peer collaboration that generated discussions around access in the arts.



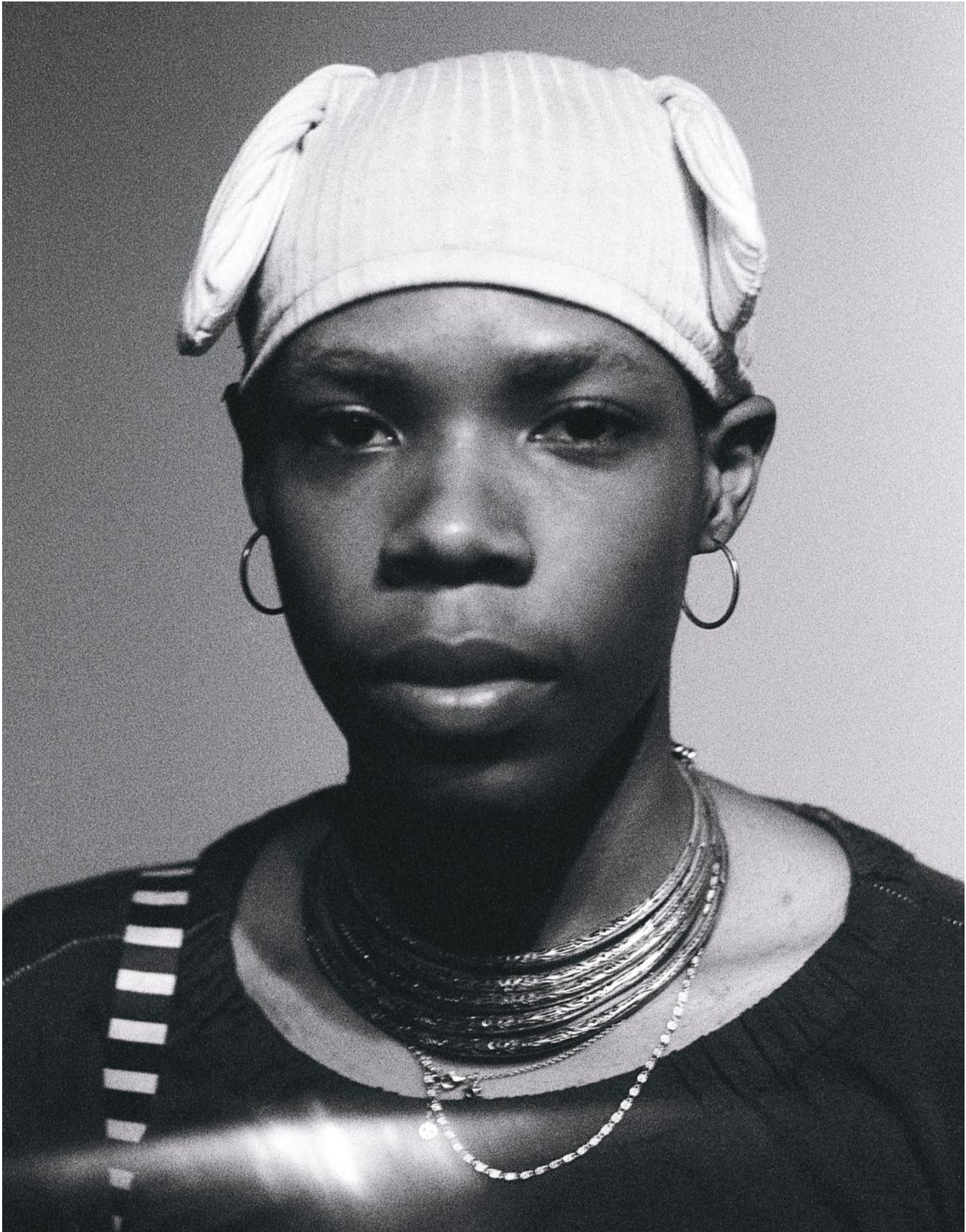
A

DENTAL



It's Paid Because It Happened





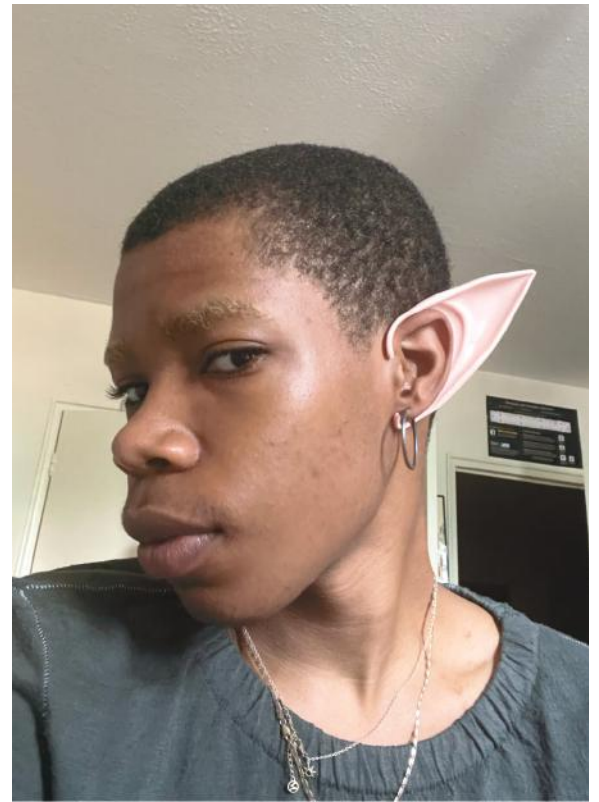




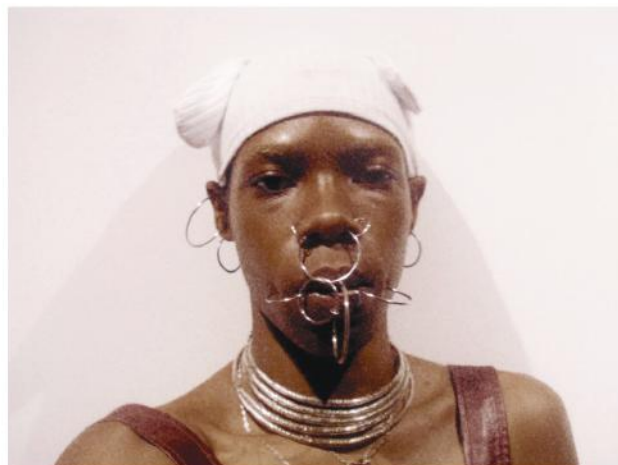


Idea development

Jun 24th, 2021



2 notes Jul 15th, 2021



355 notes Aug 31st, 2021





Looking back, I've realized that my relationship with the internet critically altered the shape of the project. Over the past year or so I've taken to using Tumblr more as a blog, journal, sounding board, and mood board. I think of it as a kind of comfortable liminal space where I can toss things without any consequence. It feels to me like an introspective threshold, somewhere between private and public. A common opinion of the platform I've heard is that it "died" a few years ago, that it's a graveyard of communities past.

I've actually found the opposite; Tumblr is alive and well. Over the course of the residency and subsequent exhibition, I'd been snapping shots and recording snippets to share with my friends on Tumblr to see how they would be received and how they felt in a different context. On the day we started building the structure, I thought some GIFs would be fun to make, so I recorded bits and pieces of the process as we went along. These eventually became the video we projected on the back wall of the gallery during the exhibition.

**deion squires-rouse**

Beyond the direct effect my online presence had on the show, I think the ideologies and associations I've inherited from the web tinge my outlook on image-making and presentation. I've noticed a certain austerity in the way photos—particularly self portraits—are made and presented. The photographer used to be the shooter, the marksman behind the lens; the interest came simply from them turning their weapon upon themselves. Now everyone is a photographer capable of doing the same. What could still be interesting about a selfie? I feel as if reactions to this have been attempts to position the fine arts self-portrait

above and apart, but I find that boring. What I love about the selfie, particularly the selfie on the internet, is its ability to project the desires of the photographer. You can take a thousand selfies before you land on the perfect one, and I find that kind of rapid experimentation very interesting. It's as if you are performing an amplified version of your innermost self and, sometimes, its inverse. Alongside this I think I was shooting with the absurd in mind. I wanted the images of myself to fit in on platforms where one could find horrific displays of human imagination and acts of unattainable virtue in the same swipe.





Ended up hating these so it lives here now

3 notes Aug 9th, 2021



1 note Jul 14th, 2021







## **TAKING AIM**

A case for where we're headed and why the choice is beautifully yours

The present state of the art world exists on a shifting landscape that grows increasingly less defined. There are enough resources at our disposal that we no longer need the acceptance of the institution, should we not wish to pursue it. This isn't to say that we must avoid the structure of the established worldview altogether, but instead, highlights that it is just one of many avenues available to us today. If art is your way of expressing an honest passion that speaks through you, then actively taking aim towards that direction assumes ownership of your own trajectory. It enables you to stop searching for the approval of those who continue to look the other way.

Why keep waiting for the weather to change when we can alter the climate ourselves? When *we* can harness the energy of the world around us and convert it into the change we want to see?

If anything, an ideal environment is one where we help each other accomplish the dreams we wish to fulfill, and that is what I'm advocating for. It's real bc it happened as an experience helped me develop my own understanding of this perspective. Joshua Vettivelu, the current Director at Artspace Gallery, provided an invaluable extension to the themes we wanted to explore. With their guidance and expertise, Deion and I were allowed to dream big without fear of limiting the scope of our ambitions. Christina's curatorial direction was one of such a level that they would have fooled me if I had to guess this was their first official credit in the position—not to mention their own prowess as an artist, which embodies a brave truth that I am learning from every day. As curator, their insight made the task of populating the show that much easier. Christina was just as influential an artist in the show as Deion and me.

**ajeuro abala**

Finally, if you ever find yourself lucky enough to work with someone as talented as Deion, you'll know the feeling of being calmly excited to produce your most meaningful work. For all of his inspiring artistic ability, it's his caring nature and acute awareness of life's nuances that I learnt a great deal from. Somehow he manages to balance it all, never forcefully intervening and yet remaining true to his core beliefs. I don't heap this praise simply because I'm lucky to know these wonderful people. The point I'm trying to make is that I arrived at these understandings—rather, I felt joyously compelled to share my testimonial—thanks to the nature of our collaboration. During this project, we were able to celebrate and amplify our separate voices, using our individual outputs to wrestle with and give meaning to our world as a collective. Call me a naive idealist, but as I consider the photographic futures we are growing into I find myself trending towards a well-intentioned community worldbuilding governed by love and respect for each other. And maybe you can too.







# Dark Matter

Drifting past  
We are figures,  
                    Lost

Dark in the blue, clinging softly,  
Slipping like sand

When the sky fades dim,  
Let our voices be the lighthouse  
A beacon of hope painting the outline of our soles  
It renders us visible, makes us present

Recognized

Else we are music without an instrument  
Sounds in the wind racing by your ears

The response is to silence us  
Rolling up the windows on our cries for help

Without the light, we lose definition  
Stripped of our visibility, we become inaccessible  
Cast into the void, part of the abyss  
Something they don't understand

If we are not seen  
Are we even there?

Only to those who tread the same waters

If you drift beyond the limits,  
Make your voice as loud as you were visible  
Channel the flame that exists within you  
And let your faith fuel the embers of your soul

Others will ride the current in search of your spark  
Leading the charge to reel you back in

Visibility then, is our event horizon  
For when the light is gone,

so are we

**ajeuuro abaaia**



it's real  
bc it  
happened

Ajeuro Abala & Deion Squires-Rouse  
In-Person Exhibition Curated by Christina Oyawale

**NOV 4 - DEC 4, 2021**



Navigating the contemporary art world and the education system as Black artist is difficult when you are one of few. There is a continued expectation that the work you create must recount and exploit your generational trauma, heritage, and personal identity. It is even harder when that identity intersects with other marginalized identifiers such as queerness, socioeconomic status, and disability. With *it's real bc it happened*, my intention was to afford myself, Deion Squires-Rouse, and Ajeuro Abala a space where our racial identities existed at the intersection of being political but allowed us a means of freedom to create something

absurd, reflective of the culture we create and navigate. I felt it was important to emphasize and work in ways that our non-Black counterparts have been afforded for decades; to create with no bounds in regards to access and the liberty to experiment with mediums beyond creating for the means of survival. Lack of diversity and inclusion in the creative industries prevents Black artists from access to entry-level positions. Financing these three positions created an opportunity for emerging Black artists to grow their expertise with relatively low risk, but high reward.

**christina oyawale**

As a curator and artist, I wanted to use the resources of a traditional gallery space and provide those resources for Deion and Ajeuro to experiment with materiality and space with ease. Both artists made creative decisions that they otherwise would not have been able to without the funding we received for the making of the residency and exhibition. They were able to imagine and realize building a partition to photograph themselves in, which was later utilized as an installation that displayed their final images. Joshua Vettivelu, Director of Artspace Gallery, and I held space for Deion and Ajeuro to conceptualize the gallery space with no regulations. The most exciting thing about the project was being able to brainstorm how to make the most outlandish, big ideas possible regardless of space, costs, and ability. Josh's mentorship and expertise allowed us to problem-solve how we could make our ideas happen, which required an amount of creativity and investigation that I feel the three of us had not been challenged with before in a gallery setting.









I learned and gained just as much from this experience as Deion and Ajeuro within the research we conducted, engaging in continuous dialogue about the importance of the exhibition, and supporting each other whenever we needed it. We spoke a lot about transformative justice in the arts, specifically creating spaces for oneself rather than waiting to be accepted into institutional spaces. In order for us to take hold of our own stories, we must first challenge these institutions by using their resources and creating what we see fit. I feel like we are beyond the notion of art spaces seeing representation through programming diasporic art. Representation is possible when resources are provided to racialized artists to imagine worlds, question concepts, and simply exist. It was a euphoric feeling to be able to say, “Wow, we did this—and we did it well.”

It was a reminder that can exist while being political in our existence and identities, but the common thread between it all is our love of creating something we could feel proud of.

It was meditative to watch Deion and Ajeuro joyfully collaborate with each other on something that celebrated Black creativity, joy, and absurdity. Though this was my first hand at curating a long-term project for an artist-run centre, it made me realize that, for me, the project meant everything and nothing at the same time—meaning there was a sense of malleability that I want to continue to practice in my own work and the works I choose to curate down the line. *We* want Black normality, not tokenism and the expectation for us to be grateful for being able to occupy space. *We* are creating space for ourselves to just be and create something special.







Rahim Perez-Anderson, Freedom, 2021

# Sarah Bauman

## *Close to You*

Letter to my best friend:

I am so grateful to have met you. To be able to grow with you. In the six years we have been friends we have shifted into countless new people, different versions of ourselves that somehow still work together. We are different in so many ways, but you balance me out—and the things that make us different are why we work. You, the logical, reasonable one. Me, the sensitive, emotional one. I soften you out and you keep my feet on the ground. You know me better than maybe anyone else. You are one of the few people to know all my inner workings, the things that hardly ever get shared, and the keeper of all my secrets. Our friendship is so special to me. Despite our constantly changing nature we still

are attached at the hip. We exchange songs, movies, podcasts, and whatever dream we had last night. We talk about who we were five years ago and who we'll be in another five. You have changed me profoundly and seen me at my best and my worst. When we met I had no idea you'd become my best friend and someone who knows me almost as well as I know myself. You know what I'm thinking sometimes before I do. I hope we're friends till we're old. Whether near or far, you are always close to me.

Love,

Sarah



































Juliana Causi, A Meeting Place In The Mind, 2021

**Stine Danielle is a Tkaronto  
and Lincoln-based artist  
working with photography and  
installation. She completed her  
BFA in Photography Studies  
from X University and is an MFA  
candidate in Studio Art at the  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln.**

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**STINE DANIELLE**

*ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT*













## FUNCTION | Tell us a bit about your most recent work.

**STINE DANIELLE** | My most recent work investigates what it means for me to be a participant in outdoor recreation in North America. Informed by my lived experience, my identity as an immigrant woman of colour, and research on the history of outdoor recreational spaces. I examine outdoor recreation as a forked space between inclusion and exclusion, using writing, installation, and self-portraiture to process the dichotomy of this space: *what it is, how it is experienced, and who it is intended for.*

Personally speaking, the work began with an essay I'd written weeks before the start of grad school. In it, I navigated my fears, shifting comfortability, and dependency on others. I detailed the ways my behaviour was criticized and how I was made painfully aware of how others perceived me: *"You - you look like the type." / "You are so brown now" / "Your fear? It doesn't make sense, it doesn't make sense to me."* Putting my outdoor experiences into writing allowed me to recognize not only the physical spaces I inhabited, but their social constructs formed through social interaction, and their historical and cultural specific meanings.

After this piece of writing, my attention veered back to the landscapes I once lived in. Reflecting on the Sierras of my early twenties, and the Niagara Escarpment of my childhood. I began to think more deeply about the man-made structures I'd come across, like the tent pad. On Google Maps, I gathered screenshots of tent pads located in various parts of Canada and the United States. Interested in the way the tent pad forms a literal boundary, I decided to reconstruct it within the studio space, outside of its original context. I wanted to create a simulation of a space completely of my own. Within this space, I could practice and perform the process of pitching a tent. I could re-embody actions that others have used before me, while bringing into question who is often depicted in these actions. I could create a site of possibility, not only for reconstruction but also representation.





**FN | How does this project differ from your past works?**

**SD |** In the past, I've worked on two projects: Nothing Happens Here and Rosamyrna. The former was a photo series conceived as a bittersweet love letter to the suburban neighbourhood I lived in for 23 years. The latter was a collaborative photo series between my maternal grandmother and I, that documented our relationship leading up to her Alzheimer's diagnosis in 2019. Though my most recent work involves installation and a heck of a lot of research, it still moves along the same vein as my previous works. They are all informed by my life in some way or other.

**FN | What do you hope to communicate through your work?**

**SD |** Honesty—and the path it takes to get there.

**FN | What influence has nature and plant life had on your practice?**

**SD |** My most recent work is an examination of my participation in outdoor recreation, which is to say that my relationship with nature deeply influences my practice at this time. As for plant life, I wish I had the ability to name every plant species I come across—though, I've recently begun researching plants native to my homeland, the Philippines. Thinking about my own immigration experience, I'm curious about the ways plant life can be displaced and thrive. This has inspired my practice over the past couple of weeks, and I'm excited to see where it will take me.





DREAM











**FN | You spoke about the politics of space and access to outdoor activity, can you speak a little more to your research and the installation piece that came about as a result?**

**SD |** My research on outdoor recreation has pulled me in different directions, including the social construction of wilderness, the racialization of space, and the history of the national park system. The installation I created is the result of the latter. After the tent pad, I became less afraid of working with wood. So, I decided I wanted to reconstruct a message board, another structure found in outdoor recreational spaces. The National Park Service calls this a Visual Information System (VIS). Typically found by trailheads, the message board serves to help visitors with trail directionals, resource protection, and safety information about a particular place. Taking inspiration from my essay, my reconstruction references multiple places: incorporating images from the National Park Service archive, or from my own personal archive, as well as text. This transforms the message board into a personal mindmap, one that allows me to re-perform autobiography, process my own participation, and bring into question the images of these spaces: what is shown, what is hidden, and how these images implicate the space.

**FN | What or who inspires you? Why do you create?**

**SD |** My mother, my grandmother, and my sister. For them and because of them.

**FN | Why do you think community is important in the art world and your personal life ?**

**SD |** In my life, community is often brought up in conversation amongst friends and fellow artists I think, in part, because it is difficult to find or belong to one at times. Or, the definition of community changes as you grow older. Or, that you don't recognize who your community is right away. My experience has been all of this and more. Ultimately, community in the art world is the same as in life. The right community will champion you, challenge you, arm you with new knowledge, and hold a mirror (sometimes forcefully) to your face when you forget who you are, and they are important because they make your practice and your life capital-B Better.

**FN | Where did you picture yourself post-graduation, and does it align with where you are now?**

**SD |** While I was pursuing my undergraduate degree in photography, I knew that I wanted to continue on the path of academia. I was so sure of it that I chose to skip my graduation, apologizing and promising my mother that she wouldn't have to worry. That she would learn to forgive me. That she would get to see me graduate with my master's degree instead. Writing this, I'm six weeks away from completing my first year of grad school. It feels like a stretch imagining a cap and gown at this point. But yes, in many ways where I am now is very much in line with where I pictured myself to be. I knew I would someday pursue an MFA. I knew it would be in the United States, too. It took longer than I expected, and I never imagined it would be in Nebraska, but I'm very glad to be here.

**FN | What do you envision for the future of your practice?**

**SD |** Collaboration, funding, an artist residency or two, and a dog.

**FN | Career-wise, where do you see yourself in the future?**

**SD |** I see myself continuing my studio practice (with less crying) and working a job that provides me with fulfillment, joy, and a living wage. Though, I don't know where just yet. Living in the Midwest, I miss the diversity I had living in the Greater Toronto Area, and so the first answer I would want to give is that, I see myself being somewhere diverse. Although—and this was said to me while interviewing for a grad school in the Southern United States—there is something to be said about being somewhere that needs *you*. So, I think that's where I see myself in the future...somewhere that needs me.





Freida Wang, Unfamiliar Home, 2019



# 3<sup>d</sup> John

The elder,  
To my dear friend Gaius,  
in the truth  
of Deity  
good  
ye  
the church, but Diotrephes,  
the first, will have nothing to  
do with me. So if I come, I will call atten-  
tion to what he is doing, gossiping many  
things about us. Not satisfied with that,  
he does not even welcome the brothers. He  
who wants to do so and  
the church.  
Do not imitate what is  
done there. Anyone who does  
this, anyone who does  
not see God. <sup>12</sup>De-  
fined by every  
itself  
to  
face  
to  
and  
ere by

1 JOHN 3:17

for love comes from God. Everyone who loves, has been born of God and knows God.<sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for<sup>9</sup> our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

<sup>13</sup>We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup>And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup>Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup>And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Faith in the Son of God

**5** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. <sup>2</sup>This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup>This is

love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

<sup>6</sup>This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. <sup>9</sup>We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup>Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Concluding Remarks

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup>This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

<sup>16</sup>If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. <sup>17</sup>All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

<sup>9</sup> Or his only begotten Son

<sup>10</sup> Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away

<sup>7,8</sup> Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. <sup>4</sup>And there are three that testify on earth: the

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# Writers' Series: On Photographic Futures



Figure 4.7 Ben Enwonwu, *Head of Afi*, bronze, ca. 1959. Reproduced from *Nigeria 68* (March 1961), p. 39. Courtesy National Council for Arts and Culture, Abuja. © The Ben Enwonwu Foundation.



Never B Tha Same - Yanick Hunter



Side A

Side B

Side C

Side D

Side E

Side F



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Fit to page



Page view



Read aloud



Add notes



Timothy Yanick Hunter's practice is rooted in a research based process of sampling and remixing. He draws from AI algorithms, familial knowledge, DJs, mix-tapes, videos, and institutional archives to create his own multidisciplinary repertoire of Black diasporic culture. His videos and music recontextualize his sources, often pulling them out of colonial modes of seeing and hearing. By bringing together citations that are both disparate and related, his work preserves, shares, and de-fragments collective Black memory, existing in a place where "ridden is citation."<sup>1</sup>



# HEATHER RIGG

*Technologies of the diasporic mind:  
An interview with Timothy Yanick Hunter*

## HEATHER RIGG

Hi Tim! I would like to start by talking about your 2020 exhibition at A Space Gallery in Toronto, *Basic Instructions Before Leaving Everything*. It brought together the various conceptual, digital, and material underpinnings of your practice and process.

One of the foundations of this exhibition is your book *Reconstructing True and Functional Autonomy*, which you co-wrote with an Artificial Intelligence program. It is set in the future, in the 2080s, and is an incredible product of speculative thinking and

technological collaboration.

To summarize, it explores the decolonization of an individual, and a community's mind, through an anti-colonial approach to knowledge dissemination and technology. It describes a future that is decolonized and where the defragmentation of Black cultural identity has been achieved. Part of your interest in this project was working against the racialized (and other) biases of AI; what was it like writing this book with an AI program?

## TIMOTHY YANICK HUNTER

**I was thinking a lot about deepfakes and the manipulation of images and sound. In my research process I stumbled upon the GPT-2 algorithm. GPT-2 can predict, summarize, and generate text based on prompts. I started with these small writing prompts, mostly to test its accuracy and readability. The writing was convincing and specific; it was scarily indistinguishable from a human. But a major caveat was that the algorithm's language seemed to be limited by its own biases. What stood out the most was its voice. I would input sentences and ideas and it consistently wrote back from a very male, eurocentric perspective. One example would be that every time I'd write about the dismantling of colonialism, the machine would expand on how to 'help' Africans to achieve this goal. The algorithm certainly leaned towards othering and speaking of Black people as a subject rather than from a personal perspective, especially since the tone of the book was so scientific and theoretical. I worked to counter this by inputting my prompts several times until I achieved a desired result—yet even then I would have to edit the phrasing and the word choices. In a way you're writing with the algorithm, but you're forced to direct it along the way.**



to destroy the retrograde form of





**HR**

Much of your practice is working with and against the internet and AI. You use it as a tool to search for information, histories, and communities related to Black diasporic living, thinking, and relating. You are as much interested in what you find as what you don't find. In one of our previous conversations about AI you posed the question; "How can we [the Black community] engage with technology not built for us?" Can you talk about this?

**TYH**

Yeah, truthfully I think a better way of thinking about it isn't so much how, because we in fact do engage with non-neutral, oppressive technologies—this is a reality. It's more of a question of what does it look like? Going back to subversion via technology—in the face of an oppressive tool, historically, Black people have found ways to challenge and amend its use. I think of Christianity and its function as colonial mythology and propaganda and how in the United States, Black people invented the spiritual as a subversive practice of hope and freedom from the plantation. This practice became a cornerstone in Black American culture, and its offspring, blues and gospel music, went on to influence modern music around the world. I feel like Black music specifically is riddled with examples of this type of transformation and proliferation. How Black people develop new ways of exchange within the framework of oppressive languages—the creolization of things, you know?









## HR

Two foundational elements of your practice are collage and sound. You remix and recontextualize found material, often releasing them from colonial narratives. Your arrangements of still and moving imagery, and sound, create new contexts, narratives, and juxtapositions while still citing their original

source. Your sources range from colonial archives, album covers, music videos, classical music, R&B, and books from your grandmother's house. What makes you choose one sound or visual over another? Tell us about your process and how it relates to anti-colonial approaches to knowledge dissemination.

## TYH

I've always considered music as my first and most prominent exposure to artmaking. I had always been fascinated by DJing and sampling as a practice. There was a Madlib song ("Jazz Cats" by Quasimoto, released in 2000) where he kind of lists all these jazz influences in his verses. This song in particular opened me up to jazz music in general. My favourite thing to do was to cross-reference songs and the samples DJ's and producers used. I feel like this was my earliest exercise in archival research. It took some years to really see it for what it was—this idea of reference and sampling. My work now really is an investigation of this sampling process and how archival exploration and re-contextualizing can be an important practice in the preservation of Black culture across the diaspora. I think of my work as a research-based practice and the material output as a way to share my learnings. I don't feel like I'm trying to make any brand new, profound statements—I believe I'm just sifting through documents and presenting my findings. Truthfully, I hope to just participate in the rich canon of Black cultural work that has been established before me. As for the process, my choices are intuitive—sometimes a piece (sound, collage, or video) may have an intended feeling or goal, but in the end I let the work and my research process guide me. In this sense I harken back to a feeling of cultural memory or reflection.

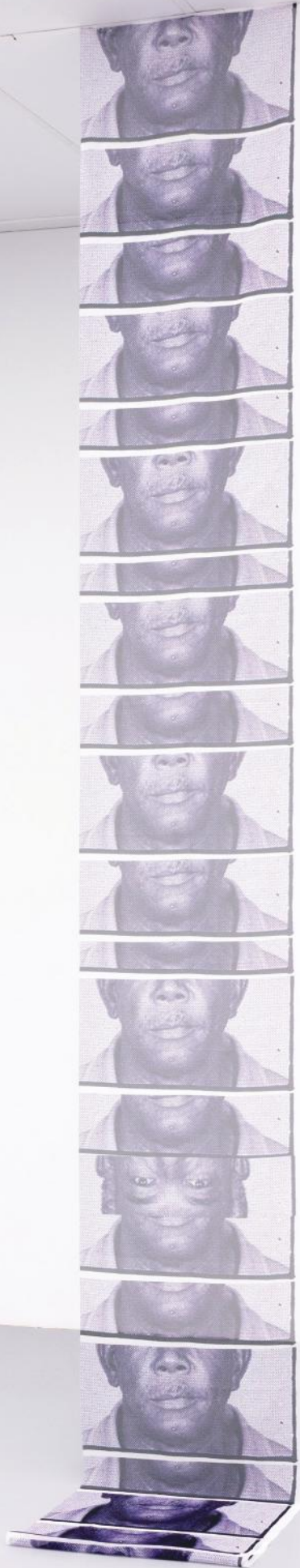
## HR

*True And Functional* is an ongoing online audio project of yours (that is so lovely to listen to, and wonderful that it is accessible online). It is music you create through sampling and remixing that you release in editions. This work considers Black cultural production within the context of music and sound. Can you talk about how *T&F* has evolved over the years?

## TYH

I'm really happy you had a chance to enjoy the project. In a plain way, I was looking for an interesting format to share my music. Normally, I would conceal the music within the video works. For me there was (and still is) a great deal of vulnerability that I feel when sharing music. Before officially starting *True And Functional*, I had made two beat tapes and I thought of putting them on SoundCloud or YouTube, but the lack of control on those platforms bothered me. I didn't like the intrusive branding and the algorithmic distractions and suggestions. I wanted a neutral space to show this work. In one way, the project came out of the rejection of a kind of digital consumerist aesthetic and mode of presentation. I decided a standalone site would be the best option. As I worked on the site I started to see more potential conceptually, and I chose to use the platform as a fieldwork for my research. In my artmaking process, I have lots of leftover ideas or concepts that end up on *True And Functional*; working on each volume I discover new threads between and within the various parts of my process. While the site is an assemblage of ideas and process work, I'm allowing the project to take its own direction.







## HR

One final topic I would like to talk with you about is familial knowledge. One way you access anticolonial and diasporic knowledge and history is through your family and community.

You have spoken about the importance of talking with your grandmother to understand the nuances of the social, political, and economic reasons for your family's move from Jamaica to Canada. Your grandmother's library has also been helpful to you as a further source of knowledge about Jamaican history, herself, and yourself. Can you talk about the importance of familial knowledge such as dance, spirituality, folklore, and food in your work?<sup>2</sup>

## TYH

**Well, my grandma kept a lot of things in the home—all things she had hoped to send to Jamaica one day, either to sell or give away. She accumulated many things, including many books. Eventually my mother, uncles, and aunties had to sort through her things, and some of the books I have from her have made their way into my work in different ways. As for familial knowledge in a general sense, I feel like my work is definitely predicated on this connection with family. I'm still trying to understand it from a complete view. But I always think about the political history of Jamaica and how my dad always shares these stories about the political climate in Jamaica, especially in the 80's and 90's, and when I think of my practice in my adulthood it's so apparent the influence that it had on my work. My mother's love for singing and music; my uncle's non-stop playing of music, or his mixtapes, or his handmade speakers; my other uncle's love for computers, experimentation, and music making—all of these things influenced me deeply. These are influences that go beyond research, art, or academia. *These are practices that become embedded in my DNA.***





**Timothy Yanick Hunter** is a multidisciplinary artist and curator. Hunter's practice employs strategies of bricolage to examine non-neutral relationships relating to Black and Afro-diasporic experiences as well as concurrent strategies of decolonization. His approach alternates between exploratory and didactic, with a focus on the political, cultural, and social richness of the Black diaspora. Hunter's work often delves into speculative narratives and the intersections of physical space, digital space, and the intangible. Hunter received his BA from the University of Toronto, and has been the artist in residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario and PADA Studios in Barreiro, Portugal. He will be included in the 2022 Toronto Biennial of Art, and has exhibited at Gallery 44, Toronto (2021); A Space Gallery, Toronto (2020); 92Y, New York (2020); Art Gallery of Guelph, Guelph (2019) and PADA Studios, Barreiro (2019); among others. Hunter lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Heather Canlas Rigg** is the inaugural Curatorial Resident of the Toronto based artist-run centre Gallery TPW, and is half of the curatorial collective ma ma.

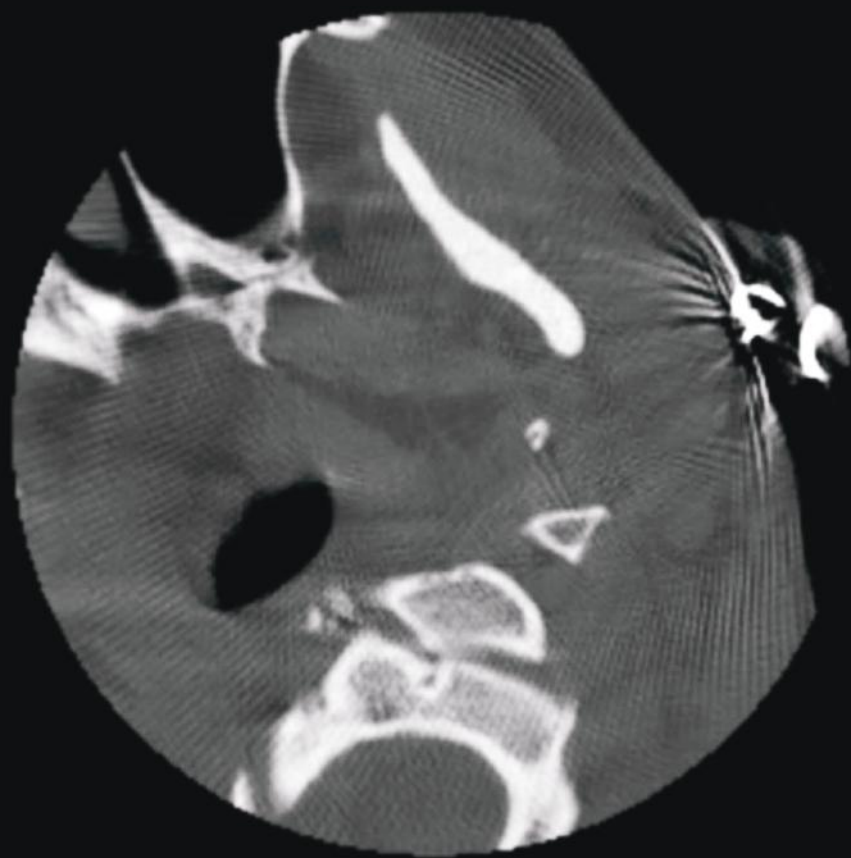


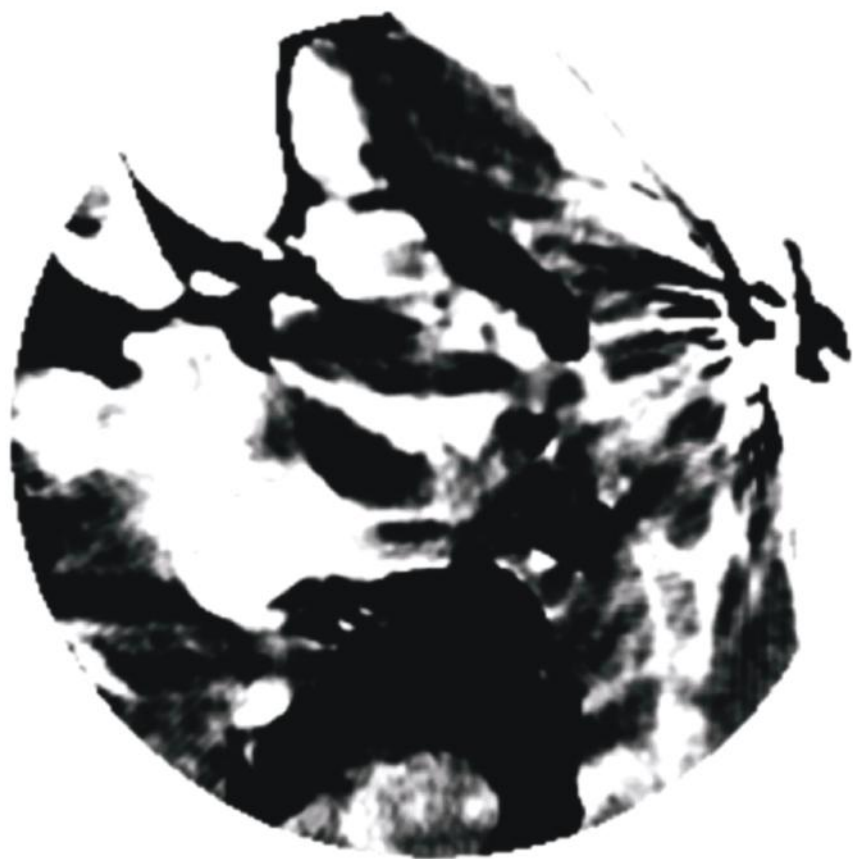




<sup>1</sup>As per Simone Browne

<sup>2</sup>To learn further about familial, embodied practices and anticolonial approaches to the archival, read: Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.







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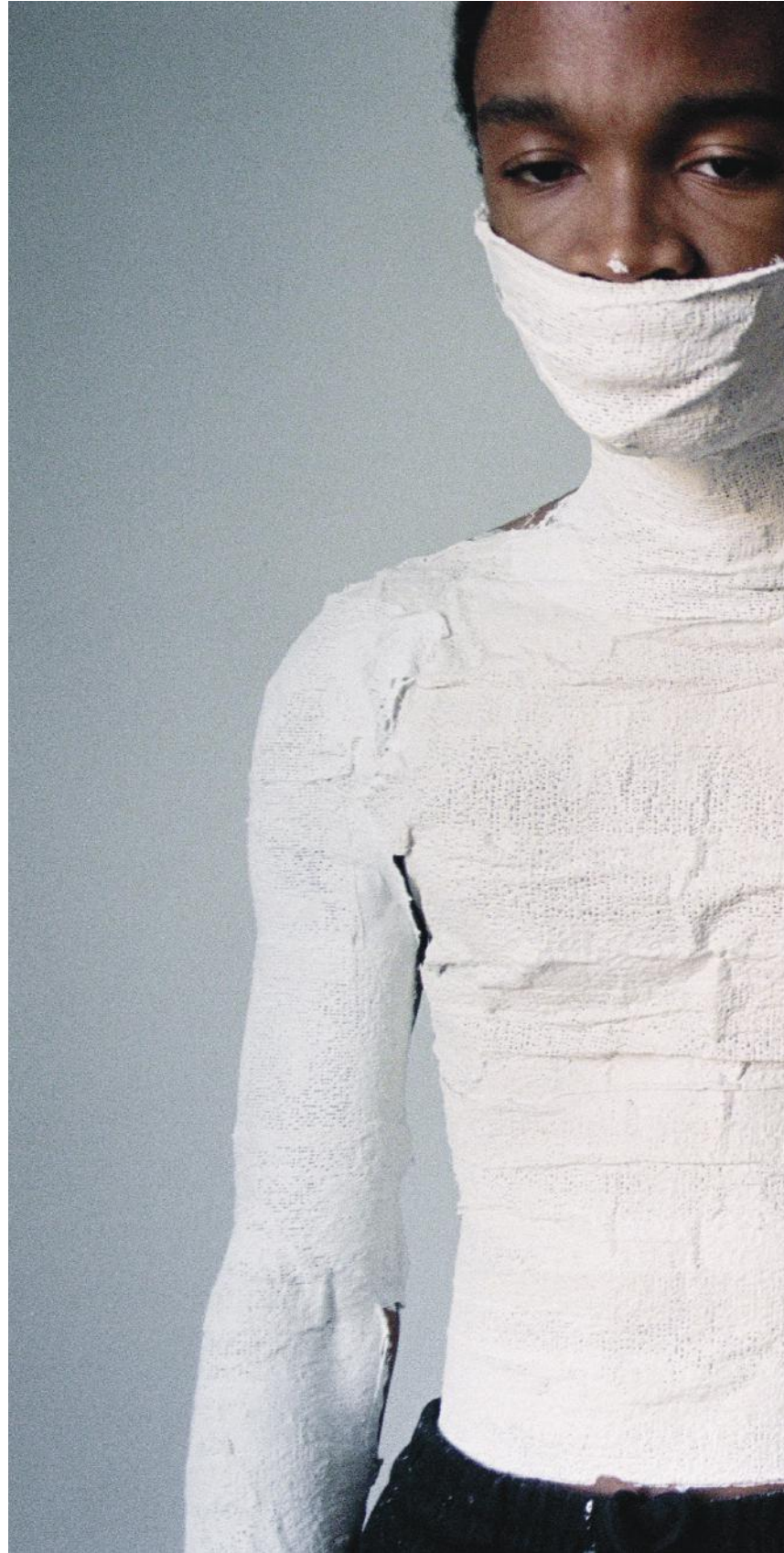
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# Writers' Series: On Photographic Futures SOLANA CAIN

**“In order to muse on *photographic futures*, we must consider what’s come before and where we are now.”**

As photographers, we strive daily to freeze time and capture moments. We work to create visual records we believe are worthy of preserving. The digital revolution that’s occurred since I first held a camera is remarkable—we’re no longer forced to be patient while labs develop our rolls of film, DSLRs have incredibly precise autofocus, Wi-Fi enabled memory cards allow photographers to transmit from the field, drones have given us a literal bird’s-eye view, and so forth. These advancements have enabled photographers to walk with more gear, achieve better exposures in challenging light, capture sharper photos of fast-moving subjects, and record colours in all their vibrancy. In my job as a photo editor for a daily newspaper, I get to see live photography from across the globe at the click of one button. We’ve come a long way.

So, what lies ahead in the future of photographs? Will we have photo albums filled with holograms? Maybe we’ll be able to take photos by simply

blinking. Who knows? The possibilities are expansive and increasing every day.

The introduction of this digital technology has made it easier to produce a high volume of photographs, but it’s also fair to say we’ve decreased the time we spend with individual images. My hope for the future is that our relationship with the medium deepens. I hope we’ll turn our cellphone cameras around more to capture our communities, archive the mundane parts of our lives just as much as the extraordinary moments, and increase our contributions to citizen journalism. I’d like to see people become more comfortable having their portraits taken just as they are, because their very existence is beautiful. I hope we get back into the practice of printing photos and displaying them on our walls—although, for the sake of the environment, I also hope we can develop a more environmentally friendly way of processing and printing photos.







Tom Wolf, Mourning Apparition, 2022

The ways of approaching photography are changing as well. When I started out in photojournalism, I was taught to shoot like the photos I saw published. I tried to master other people's mastery because that's how I thought you succeeded in this business. I think many of us believed that you must follow the standard and emulate those that came before. My *photographic future* is invested in autonomy—for photographers and for subjects.

What I want to see more of in photography's future, and within the larger media industry, are contributors and content that is more reflective of this world's great diversity and the variety of human experiences. My *photographic future* places less importance on the gear photographers use and more emphasis on who is behind the lens.

Valuing photographers that come from different backgrounds is beneficial from a social and commercial viewpoint because people will engage more when they see themselves accurately depicted. World Press Photo—arguably the most well-known documentary photography contest—saw 4,315 photographers from 130 countries enter 74,470 images in last year's competition, and 80% of entrants identified as male. There were no stats available regarding race from 2021, but a 2018 State of News survey carried out by World Press found, again, 80% of 5,202 entrants were men and 52% identified as Caucasian/white; the next largest groups were Asian at 19%, then Latin American at 10%, and only 1.4% identified as Black. Incorporating diversity behind the camera needs to be just as important as photographing diverse subjects, otherwise we've failed to achieve true representation—not to mention the content will be fair, nuanced, and layered. Women, people of colour, differently abled, and non-binary photographers can access spaces and establish trust that others simply cannot.

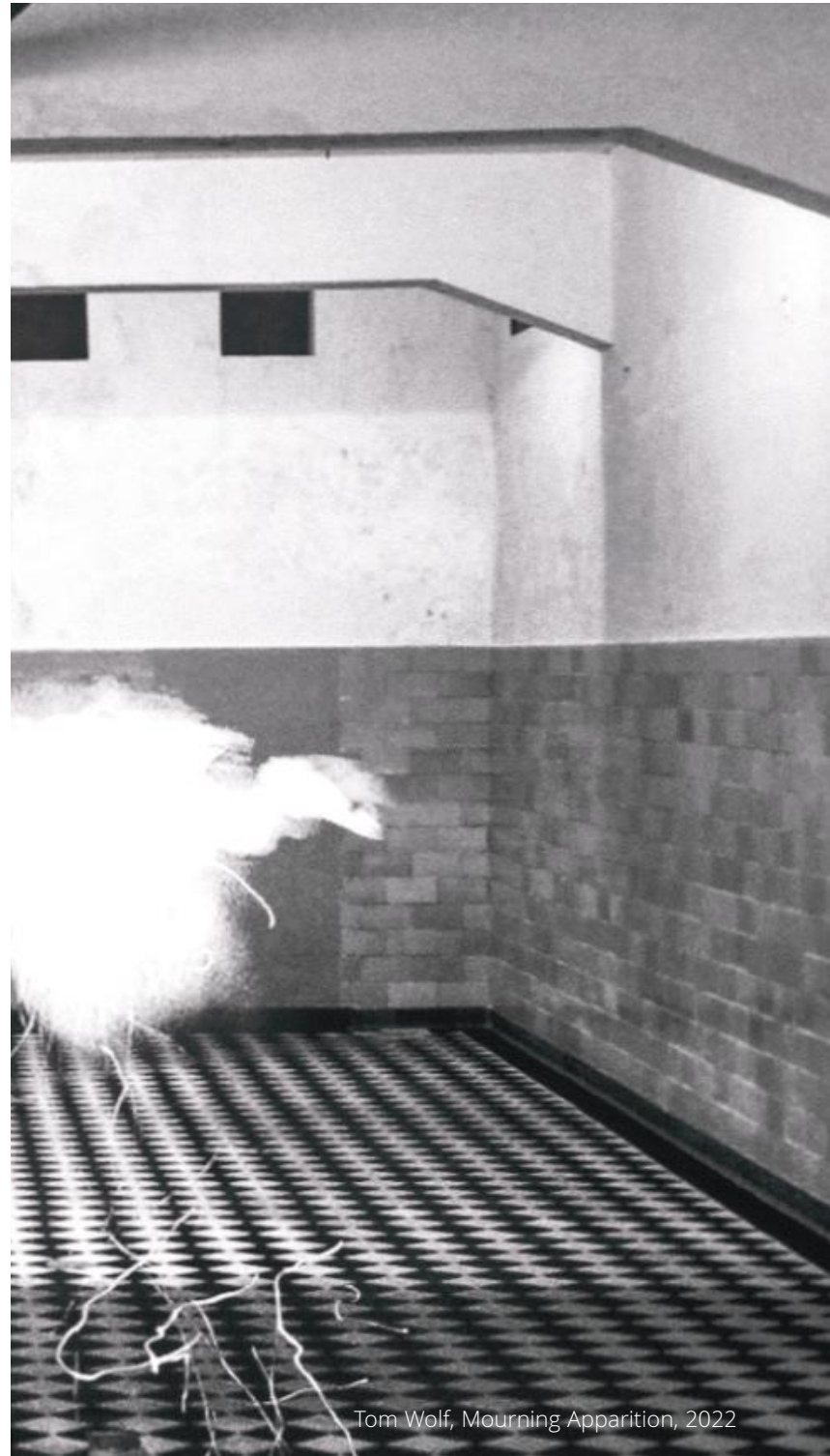
I am working towards this future in my own way. Since the pandemic started, I have increased the time I spend mentoring emerging photographers. The shift to working from home has created more time in my schedule, and I strongly believe that early career photographers need support and encouragement now more than ever considering the lack of opportunities since the global health pandemic took hold. A year into COVID-19, Jimmy Jeong, a British Columbia-based photojournalist, launched a photojournalism mentorship program called Room Up Front. I remember thinking the program was aptly named, as I can recall trying to cover news events as a photojournalism student without knowing how to get myself past the "old guard" to make my photos.

As a young Black woman, I often didn't see anyone who looked like me while on assignments—so when Jimmy said he wanted the program to be run by BIPOC photographers who intimately knew the realities of working in this industry I knew this was something I wanted to be a part of. Together, as mentors, we were going to look backwards at our own experiences while pulling up the next generation of BIPOC photographers. Collectively, we made room, and so many of our mentees thrived.

One issue I often watch my mentees struggle with is when the idea they have has been done before. They hesitate and doubt themselves. To that, I tell them it hasn't been done by them before: not from their perspective, with their voice, or informed by their lived experience. My *photographic future* would be that we accept everything's been done before—and that's okay. Rather than looking to reinvent the wheel, we need to encourage new photographers to tell it again. Like a song that's been covered countless times, every singer puts their identity onto the track and the same can be done by photographers. Take this very campus: every student who walks up and down Gould Street sees it differently, experiences it differently, and has something different to say about it. All these experiences are valid and should be shared. I still want to hear the story from your camera.

Emerging photographers should also realize the incredible power they have right in their pockets (or bags). The onslaught of social media opened the editorial gates. You no longer need to impress a photo editor to get your work out there. A simple hashtag amplifies your message to the masses. A geotag lets me and other editors know exactly where you are and what you're seeing. I firmly believe you can carve out your own spot, with your own photographic style, in this industry. It'll take determination, but I urge you to photograph the stories that speak to you. That mean something to you. Capture the photos how you want, in a way that appeals to you, then find and build your audience online. Learn from and be inspired by those who have come before you and laid the groundwork, but don't fear breaking traditions. Don't weigh yourself down with a quest to find a completely "original" story. *Just start shooting.*

As the world emerges from over two years of sheltering at home (if we were fortunate enough to have a place to call home), this moment in time is pivotal. People are craving content and are connected more than ever online. Issues of race, gender, equality, representation, reconciliation, and ultimately freedom are more than bubbling to the top—they've exploded. Grasp this moment. Tell your stories. Your perspective matters. My *photographic future* is seen through your eyes.



Tom Wolf, Mourning Apparition, 2022

**Solana Cain** is an independent curator, journalist and photographic professional. She is a graduate of X University School of Journalism, and the photojournalism program at Loyalist College. Solana is a photo editor and currently holds a position at *The Globe and Mail*.









# Zongzhe Cai

## *Fantasia*

*Fantasia* illustrates a magical world that is completely other and full of whimsy. This world reveals the landscape of our dreams and daydreams. People often become enthralled in make-believe worlds because these worlds can give voice to the unheard, unspoken, and unseen dark underside of reality, which many people feel so profoundly but cannot articulate. It is only when light is shed onto the hidden imperfections of reality that we become aware of the immense beauty of the world we know. With the intention of bringing both beauty and pain to the forefront, I created this surreal world of fantasy with a variety of self-conflicting characters and sets that starkly display radically contrasting facets of reality. CGI builds on this realism created by traditional fashion photography to prompt the audience to look back at reality through otherworldly eyes.















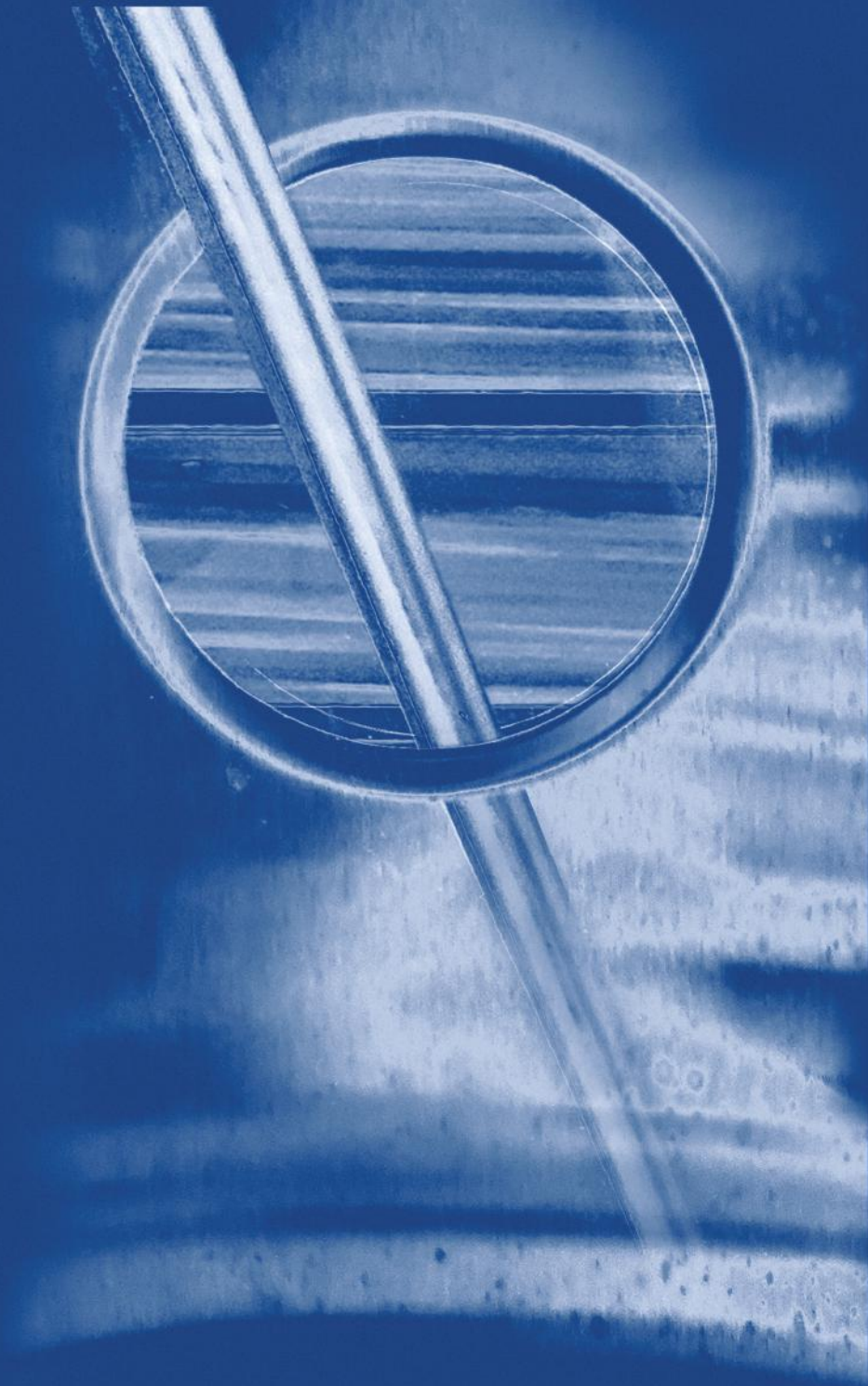


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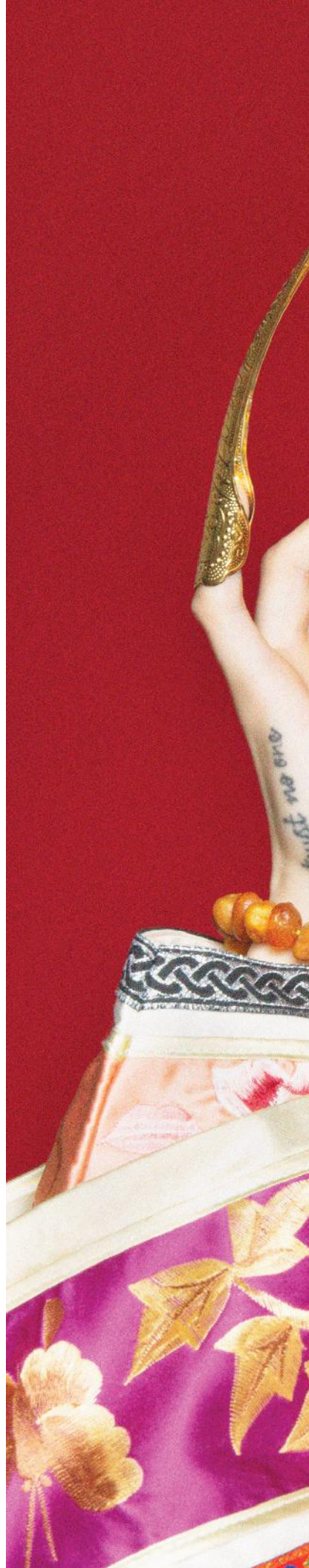














# Writers' Series: On Photographic Futures

*Fantastic Futures: Cosplay in the  
Works of Phil Lý and Marissa Sean Cruz*

**DALLAS FELLINI**







The photograph I interact with most on a daily basis is, of course, the image I have saved as my phone lockscreen. It is a photo by emerging Toronto photographer Phil Lý. In this image, a woman turns her cheek towards the camera, her gaze resting outside of the frame. Late afternoon light flits down through foliage to kiss the tops of her shoulders and head. The line of her jaw peters out to where it meets a pointed, prosthetic ear, its yellowish colour a severe contrast against her brown skin.

Like ballet slippers and band-aids, the prosthetic elf ear industry falls behind in colour equality, favouring the homogeneity of Euro-centrism over diversely-coloured elven ears. Here, Lý's self-aware prop incongruity makes visible the tattered edges of the magical realist world they are crafting in their photo series, *Intrusions*. Lý describes this body of work as investigating interactions between fantasy and reality in order to capture a mundane escapism.<sup>1</sup> The eerily-yellow imitation flesh, which isn't quite pressed flush against the side of the model's face, demarcates a threshold between fictional and realist realms. This moment of pulling back

the curtain is where Lý's fantastically mundane photos live: in celebrating poorly executed illusion, semi-opaque escapisms, and costuming and cosplay as a creation of second selves.

The emphasis on costumes and props in Lý's photographs plays into the performative qualities of these material objects and the significance they hold within subcultural communities. In this series of photographs, plastic elf ears, an anime dakimakura (body pillow), and a mascot tiger head stand in as speculative projections of an identity and inner world. The tiger head, a reference to the subcultural furry community's practice of cosplay/kink, speaks most directly to an inner world or identity that is at odds with reality, as well as to the phenomenon of material possessions and clothing assuming an excess of meaning under capitalism. The fursuit—the tool through which the furry can convey and project themselves to the world, to their sexual partners, and to their community—comes to signify consumer identity. For an (often steep) price,<sup>2</sup> an imagined world of anthropomorphic animals, inherently intertwined with the wearer's identity, can be actualized.

<sup>1</sup>Phil Lý, in conversation with the author.

<sup>2</sup>Mark Hay, "Who Makes Those Intricate, Expensive Furry Suits?," VICE, July 27, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7x9njz/who-makes-those-intricate-expensive-furry-suits>.

For me, this representation calls to mind a line from Tiqqun's highly-criticized,<sup>3</sup> anti-consumerist text *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*: "As a last resort, the young-girl drapes herself in her own lack of mystery."<sup>4</sup> Here, the "young-girl" denotes the enactment of an archetype of femininity in modern capitalist society where an individual's image becomes their identity, reinforcing the dominant economic system.

I see this quotation similarly reflected in the work of Halifax-based video performance artist Marissa Sean Cruz, in their video work *fire, wires, gas, glass, people, pets & poison*. The first time we see Cruz in this video, they are smoking a Flaming Hot Cheeto™ rolled into an uncomfortably misshapen joint. They wear face paint and a facial prosthetic that forges them into an anthropoid version of Cheetos' brand mascot, Chester Cheetah. Just as the fursuit allows the furry to simultaneously own and become the commodity, Cruz uses cosplay to represent this type of capitalist commodity-as-identity more literally, as they get Hot-Cheeto-high in their cheetah cosplay. Discussing capitalism and the end of the world with their plush tiger co-star, they

assert: "we don't need any more people to sell us a dream that just isn't...isn't even written for us."

Throughout *fire, wires, gas, glass, people, pets & poison*, Cruz performs the ways that capitalist frameworks and institutions fail and oppress them, and meditates on a future where they are liberated from these oppressions. They cosplay as a number of creatures throughout the work, becoming a blue ogre, a dalmatian, a pink-wigged cat, and Chester Cheetah, all the while cleverly commenting on the intrinsic exploitativeness of different aspects of everyday life: from wellness culture to facial recognition technology imbedded in social media apps. Their cosplay is comedic, but represents a temporary recess from repressive and gruelling contemporary conditions. Lý explores cosplay similarly, drawing inspiration from subcultures that employ fantasy and speculative fiction as an escape from the monotony of the everyday. This escapism becomes increasingly relevant within a post-truth era characterised by terms like "fake news" and "alternative facts," and politicians' continued manipulation of truth for their own gain.<sup>5</sup>



**'We aren't so different from each other, are we?'**

<sup>3</sup> Moira Weigel and Mal Ahern, "Further Materials Towards a Theory of the Man-Child," *The New Inquiry*, July 9, 2013, <https://thenewinquiry.com/further-materials-toward-a-theory-of-the-man-child>.

<sup>4</sup> Tiqqun, *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*, trans. Semiotext(e), (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012), 61.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Malcolm Hart and Jordan Hart, "Magical Realism Is the Language of the Emergent Post-Truth World," *Orbis Litterarum* 76, no. 4 (2021):158-168, [doi.org/10.1111/oli.12297](https://doi.org/10.1111/oli.12297).





The fiction present in both Cruz's and Lý's works draws from a long history of oppressed people, particularly people of colour, who employ speculative fiction as a tool to envision livable worlds and to potentiate revolution. In the opening sentence of *Octavia's Brood*, an anthology of short stories inspired by the work of science fiction author Octavia Butler, Walidah Imarisha writes: "Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction."<sup>6</sup> Speculative storytelling allows escape from a bleak present and an opportunity to imagine alternate realms, where the subject can define their own conditions and forge new selves, even if the new self happens to be an anthropomorphic snack food mascot.

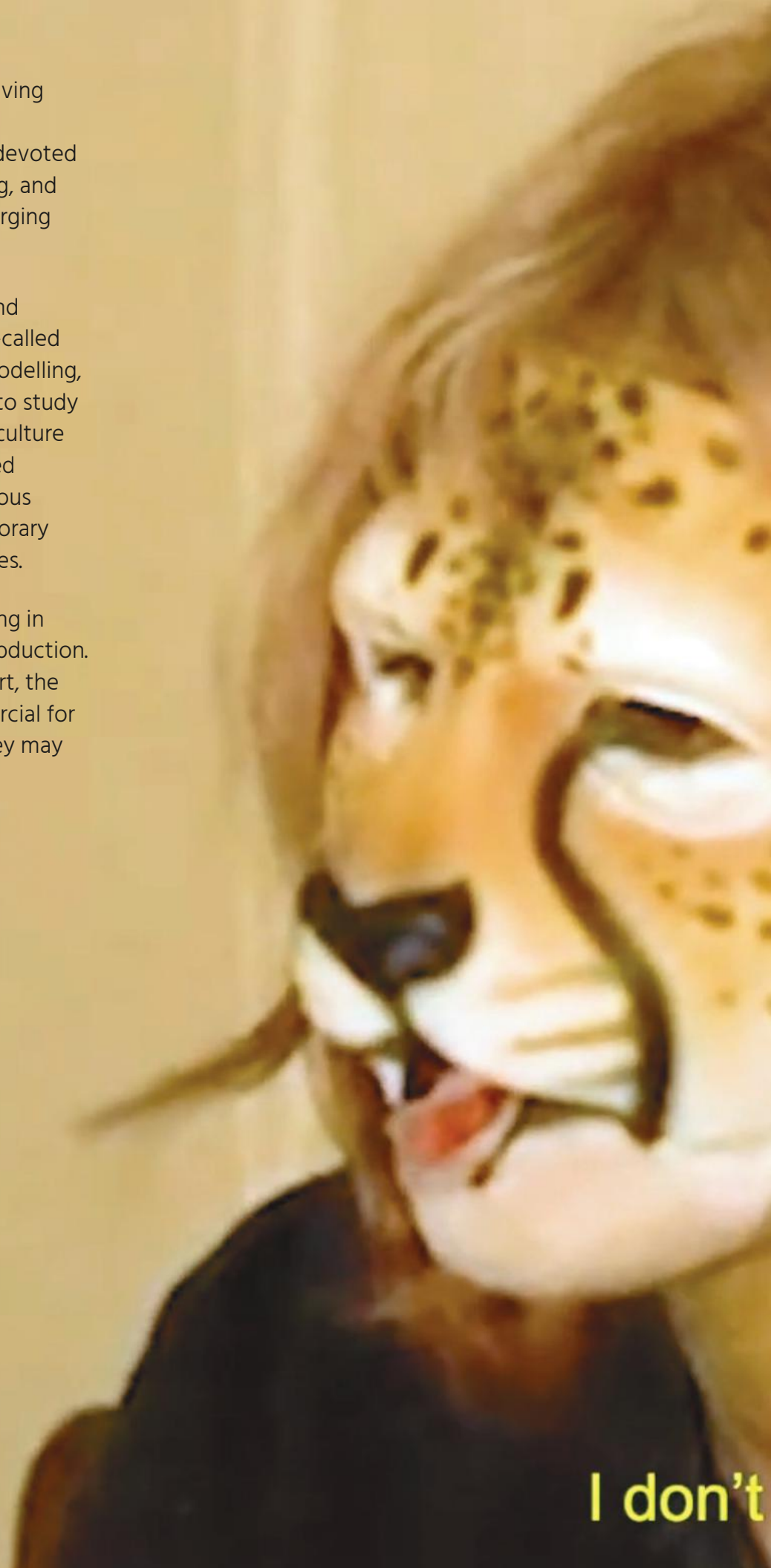
While understanding cosplay as a transgressive form of performance art is nothing new, Lý and Cruz cleverly harness the surreal, referential, and performative qualities of the

practice, creating works that speak to a contemporary post-truth reality and escape the promised adversity of our future. Lý's images document fantasy and cosplay as the illusionistic realization of imagined worlds. Their photos recreate the experience of sitting at the extreme sides of a theatre: while the performance is never faced directly towards us, we are able to glimpse into the backstage realm and see the performers prepare to enter the stage from the wings. Their subtle disruptions of truth and reality construct the alternative world in which this series lives. Like Lý's *Intrusions*, Cruz's *fire, wires, gas, glass, people, pets & poison* renders a surreal and immaterial world where institutional ailments are brought into focus and critiqued, but also where an alternate, more desirable reality can be reified. The two artists engage in a sort of world-building that allows for temporary escape, pleasure, and humour, and projects alternative potentialities into an inherited catastrophic future.

**Dallas Fellini** is a curator, writer, and artist living and working in Tkaronto/Toronto. They are a cofounder of *Silverfish*, an arts publication devoted to interdisciplinary collaboration, skill-sharing, and cultivating ongoing dialogues between emerging Toronto artists and writers.

**Marissa Sean Cruz** is a digital multimedia and video performance artist from Kijipuktuk (so-called Halifax). Their experimental videos use 3D modelling, sound design, and costumed performances to study identity and value systems. Remixes of pop culture and commercialized products are synthesized creating alternative narratives. These humorous works aim to process a fast-paced contemporary present and envision possible, utopian futures.

**Phillip Lý** is a photographer currently working in Toronto, and waiting desperately for alien abduction. They are inspired by the depths of DeviantArt, the act of collecting, and Mariah Carey's commercial for Game of War. At the time of reading this they may or may not have a BFA from OCAD U.



I don't



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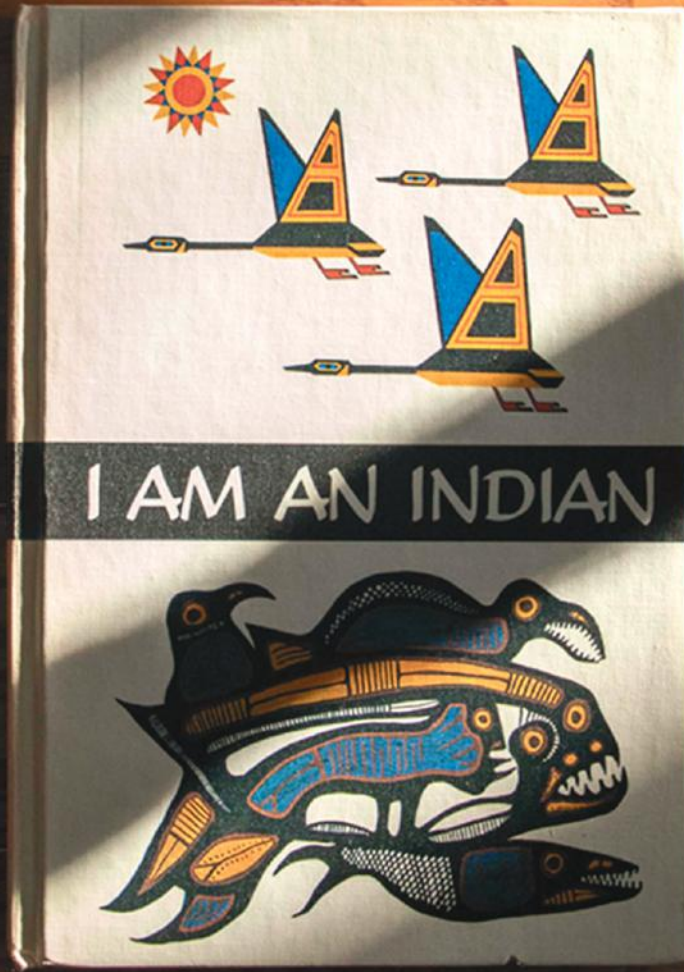












I AM AN INDIAN











Noga Cadan is an artist currently based in Vancouver, British Columbia. She holds a BFA from X University where she studied Photography. Her work examines themes of culture, identity, and nature and how these relate to introspection and our interpersonal relationships. Although her practice is mainly photographic, she is also interested in creating motion/video work.

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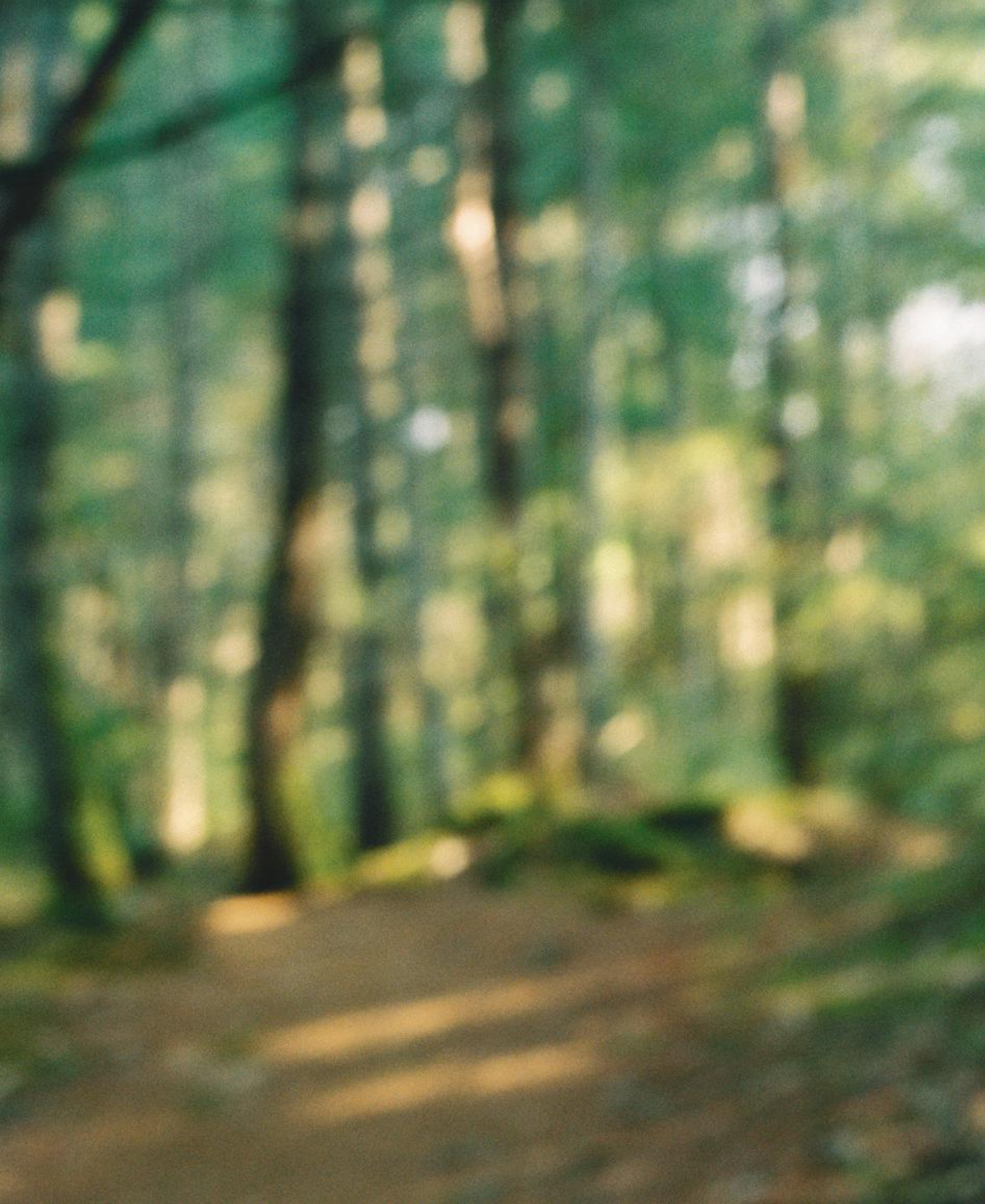
**NOGA CADAN**

*ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT*



IMAGE BY: Ananna Rafa











**FUNCTION | Tell us a bit about your most recent work.**

**NOGA CADAN |** My recent work mostly revolves around my move to Vancouver—lots of images relating to transportation and the ocean that kind of feel like depictions of transition and independence.

**FN | How does this project differ from your past works?**

**NC |** I think I approach work differently now. During school I thought a lot about the end product, and now I mostly just create the images I want to and end up seeing connections after the fact. I also think my current work revolves less around unpacking my ancestry, and is more focused on exploring my current feelings and relationship to the world.

**FN | What do you hope to communicate through your work?**

**NC |** There's less pressure right now for me to communicate something than there was before (during school). I think I've become less intentional about how I make images, and more spontaneous. I do think that there has always been a connection in what I do to the natural world and the important role it plays in our health and "soul." I feel like there is an underlying theme of sustainability in the images I take.

**FN | What inspires you? Why do you create?**

**NC |** I think seeing other people create is a big driving force for my own work. I'm lucky to have a lot of close friends who are also very talented individuals, and I think seeing them continuing to make work while we all navigate post-graduation is what allows me to also keep creating.





**FN | How has the pandemic affected your practice and post-graduation plan?**

**NC I** The biggest change was moving to Vancouver, for sure. I wouldn't have moved if the pandemic had not happened and had the opportunity not presented itself. Trying to find your footing in a new city as an adult has many challenges.

**FN | Where did you picture yourself post-graduation, and does it align with where you are now?**

**NC I** I graduated right before COVID took over, so there's almost no alignment between what I pictured and where I currently am. I expected to take some time to travel and maybe work at a gallery in Toronto, but neither of those things happened. I had been wanting to move back West (to Vancouver) since moving to Toronto though, so I guess where I am now aligns more with life-long goals rather than post-grad goals.

**FN | Do you think your recent work assisting commercial photography has influenced your personal artistic practice?**

**NC I** I think it has in some ways. I'm around a lot of commercial work that has very artistic qualities, and sometimes it's hard to differentiate between fine art and editorial or commercial work. I think it has pushed me to try to photograph people and objects more.

**FN | Do you have any advice for recent graduates entering the workforce? How did you navigate your post-graduation expectations for yourself?**

**NC I** I think it's important to remember that you have time to figure things out. Most people I work with now are much older than me, and that took me by surprise at first. It's easy to think that you're running out of time in your mid-twenties, but you're not. I had to manage a lot of personal expectations navigating post-grad during a pandemic, and in a new city. It's important to get excited over small steps forward and to value the things that make you happy outside of work, like spending time outside and being around people you care about.













**FN | What do you envision for the future of your practice?**

**NC I** I hope to be able to go see and photograph more places. I've seen so little of British Columbia at this point, and feel like I could spend years seeing everything. I also hope to do some more work in Israel—it is still important for me to explore how my work can contribute to conversations about Palestinian sovereignty.

**FN | Career-wise, where do you see yourself in the future?**

**NC I** The answer to this changes day to day, but I think the most important thing is that I continue working with people I look up to and admire. I've met a lot of creative people over the past two years who are inspirational to be around and who I think have the potential for really exciting careers. If I can continue to work and create alongside them, I would be happy.

**FN | What are some of your favourite places in British Columbia?**

**NC I** I don't think I've seen enough to truly answer this question, but I have lots of love for the Gulf Islands! I think that Saturna Island and Denman Island have been my favourites thus far. Taking ferries and seeing porpoises and seals always makes me happy.

The mountains are unique though—the views I've seen in Golden Ears Provincial Park are like none other, and driving down the Sea to Sky Highway towards Squamish is always hypnotic.





Jordi Nackan, A Picture of A Stream, 2021



[View Film](#)

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Justynn Roque, Love You Dearly, 2021







# John Delante

## *Finding Comfort Under The Sky*

*Finding Comfort Under The Sky* is a conversation between past and present, attempting to reconcile the cultural duality between the Philippines and Canada. My personal history and identity are negotiated through staged portraiture, objects, and scenes to bring a desire to mend past wounds and forge a sense of hybrid identity. I contextualize my environment and objects that I brought from Cebu, Philippines—such as an old passport photo, camisa de chino, and rosary—to question the ideas that surround home and belonging.

















Jennifer Qu, Coop, 2022





















Tarangini Nair, Concrete Jungle, 2021



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# Thank You

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