

WITHIN TENSIONS

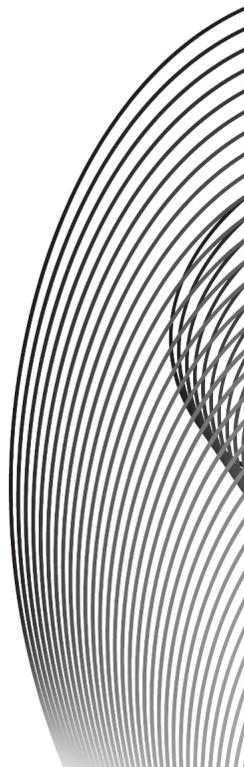


vol.15

RENAISSANCE



WITHINTENSIONS



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March 2021
vol. 15

RENAISSANCE



Table of Contents

Emulating Renaissance Sasha Cerino	pg. 2
A Renaissance: Contemporary Fashion and its Persistence through Time Opal Mclean	pg. 4
Review of Images That Take, Images That Give (2021) Natalie Chan	pg. 8
Select Works from, Infinity Canyon Series and All That Remains is Love Series (2020) Jason Nielsen	pg. 14
Estrella (2021) Francisco Berlanga	pg. 20
Born Again Sumaheep Khatri	pg. 25
Meet the Team Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, and Opal Mclean	pg. 26
Acknowledgements	pg. 29

We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the **Skwxwú7mesh** (Squamish), **xwməθkwə́əm** (Musqueam), and **Səlílwətał** (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous peoples who have lived here far before the arrival of settlers. We also want to push beyond land acknowledgements to further encourage acts of reconciliation. Recognition is great but it is nowhere near where we need to be. Reconciliation is comprehensive and takes more than an acknowledgment for occupying land. We always support marginalised peoples right to protest.

Emulating Renaissance

Sasha Cerino

This painting was one of those
on and off situations
where nothing made sense
revisited it multiple times
adding layers
overthinking

different versions of an unclear thought
until one brash decision
a mix of phthalo blue and white
intuitive fast brush strokes
quick glides of a palette knife
half rendered smearing

granting the effect of
a showering waterfall
or scorching blue flames
what a fitting image
for a resolve of the process

as for the gold tears
it's an homage for me
finally getting close with vulnerability
no longer a banished entity
or a friend I've been ashamed of
no longer seen as a sign of weakness

crying is an act of strength

it is me
placing value in my humanity
honouring my emotions
releasing

so I can start again



Sasha Cerino, *Self Portrait: a lesson of unlearning and learning #1*(2021)

A Renaissance: Contemporary Fashion and its Persistence through Time

Opal Mclean

We have now reached a point in fashion history that, rather than creating an aesthetic all its own, begins to reincorporate trends from the past. I see this in natural fibers that remind me of the 60s, or putrid colours that remind me of the 70s, shoulder pads which remind me of the 80s, an all-black wardrobe which reminds me of the 90s, and the early 2000s that brought low rise jeans and lip gloss. Even though many people never lived through the origins of these trends, fashion is passed on through generations carried by the nostalgia of their true context. There are no longer any rules that ground designers or consumers to this particular moment, rather a culmination of past trends that are reborn and continue to resurge. “The result is an eclectic assemblage of garments originating from different periods.”¹ Fashion, in its most modern context, has entered a renaissance; a massive rebirth delivered from a timeless ode to trends throughout history.

Part of this renaissance is due to the close relationship that fashion has to time. As quickly as one trends goes out of style, another is born in its place with an entirely new context. The industry must function under the laws of everyday life; “the fashion industry is organized

1. Aleit Veenstra and Giselinde Kuipers, “It Is Not Old-Fashioned, It Is Vintage, Vintage Fashion and The Complexities of 21st Century Consumption Practices,” *Sociology Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): pp. 355-365, <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12033>, pg. 356.

in seasons; fashion adoption is a temporal process, indicated with terms such as “early adopters” and “late majority;” and the entire notion of novelty is imagined as a condition of “ceaseless revolution.”² Consumption becomes a defining factor in how fashion evolves throughout time. There are those who adopt a trend in its beginning stages and those who carry the trend through once it has exploded. This becomes cyclical to create a fashion renaissance; a way to define a ceaseless revolution of trends that have lived and died through different decades. Each lifetime of fashion becomes a reference to many time periods at once. For example, the corset has been carried through centuries to still be present in modern fashion. Its presence has changed and shifted to fit a new generation but this fashionable garment follows a ceaseless revolution through many decades. Even after a trend has reached its ‘end’, there is no way to tell how many times it will resurge in the future of fashion. Each decade becomes new opportunity for a fashion renaissance and, although I would classify the 21st century as one itself, there is no way to tell how many more times contemporary fashion will continue to be rejuvenated or reborn.

Fashion also establishes a different relationship with time

2. Maria Mackinney-Valentin, “Trend Mechanisms in Contemporary Fashion,” *Design Issues* 29, no. 1 (2013): pp. 67-78, https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00197, pg. 69.

because it is rarely confined to one specific moment in history. Trends in fashion often begin as the other within its own time. It constantly remains outside of time in the same way that it stays connected with it.

“[Fashion] establishes a peculiar relationship with these “other times” --- certainly with the past, and perhaps also with the future. Fashion can therefore “cite,” and in this way make relevant again, any moment from the past (the 1920s, the 1970s, but also the neoclassical or empire style). It can therefore tie together that which it has inexorably divided--- recall, re-evoke, and revitalize that which it had declared dead.”³

Fashion itself is a constant contemporary—somehow existing within its own time while always referencing a potential future. There is no moment where a trend is truly considered dead. Rather, fashion becomes a constant revival of past trends in reference to another contemporary moment. This contemporary moment can only be seen, in fashion at least, as a culmination of all the contemporary moments before that. There is a reference, an appropriation of fashion history that creates this fashion renaissance that is seen today. The contemporary nature of fashion, as Agamben says, is

3. Giorgio Agamben, “What Is the Contemporary?,” *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, 2009, pg. 40-54, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503600041>, pg. 39.

a recall, a revitalization, or even a renaissance. This is all represented through a constant reference to a time where one was not living; a time that is passed on through generations to be reborn in a modern day.

We revive the trends of the past to push toward a boundless fashion future. The fashion revolution has taken centuries to arrive at this point where there is a timeless aesthetic. An aesthetic that encompasses generations of rebirth and re-upheaval. In the death of a trend in one period of history, there is a rebirth of that same trend in a different time. The 21st century, or the 'now' from my perspective, is the birth of a new era with no fashion rules through a revival of past fashion trends. These trends are reappropriated and recontextualized to inspire fashion designers to further push towards a future. A fashion renaissance becomes realized when there is no way to properly place trends within their own time. They become detached from their original context through a nostalgic rebirth as the contemporary. Contemporary fashion is both a revival but also brand new; to create an aesthetic that knows no bounds, not even the boundaries of history.

Review of Images That Take, Images That Give (2021)

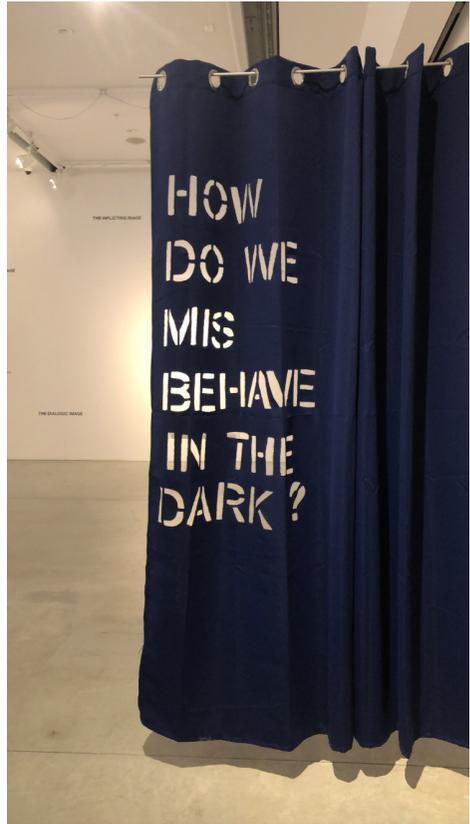
Natalie Chan

The exhibition, Images That Take, Images That Give, is an exploratory ground for the emerging visual artists of the third-year undergraduate program at SFU's School of Contemporary Arts; it is an offering of their site of research and showcase their collective and individual approaches in conjunction to the framework proposed by visiting artist in residence, Heba Y Amin: "Can art, in fact, mobilize change? And should we be expecting this from art in the first place?" This exhibition answers in return that, perhaps, even if art is unable to actualize immediate or tangible change, it can still change the ways we see. The heart of this exhibition is structured around a glossary of images and terms that were developed in their studies; the word image is combined over and over again with different gestures, and the phrases are distributed throughout the gallery that bridge the spaces between each piece and lend themselves as an additive measure of building relations. While it is impossible to cover each work that came forth from this exhibition within a limited review, I will speak on the ones that I personally spent more time examining.

I found it to be a gratifying experience, being able to find and create your own connections from the discursive text to the works within the space and see how they relate to one another, particularly enjoying this heavily

BFA Project 2021:
Images that Take, Images that Give
MAR 18 - 27, 2021

Heba Y. Amin, Sabine Bitter (with Helmut Weber), Debbie Chan, Sena Cleave, DAAR (Decolonising Architecture Art Research, Sami Hlail and Alessandro Petti), Askamha Ghosh, Sofia Grace, Shinnos K. Jhal, Rita Li, Daniel Liu, Quinn Lumardo, Sahar Rahimian, Oliver Pender, Permet Kaur Sidhu, Paige Smith, Xiaohong Sun (Shany), Lai Waikeggro, and Yvonne Xie (Deric).



text-based aspect because it reminded me of similar projects of my own in the past. For example, Lil Waldegger, ETA: PI (permanently injured) is hung on the open floor space, allowing for viewers to approach from all sides. The dark curtain poses a question Waldegger has for the visitor, “how do we misbehave in the dark?” The text cut out from the cloth carries the weight of the Maimed Image, an image that has been wounded; it asks not only to consider its present state, but also the way in which the image has been torn, the easily overseen damage where the fabric frays. It reflects on our behaviour when given incomplete information, whether purposely withheld, manipulated, or merely missing. With the spaces carved from the cloth, one can also peek through the gaps and notice the other phrases within the vicinity, the Hosting Image and the Resisting Image along the nearby wall, as well as the Inflicting Image and the Dialogic Image on a wall further back, the latter two which are juxtaposed near Debbie C.’s Left on Read (ghost). C.’s work is also text-based, and examines how our understanding may change even with simple visual choices. Their words are a direct address from artist to viewer, creating an intimate sentiment despite its banner-like scale; it feels personal because of its handwritten-look and the letter itself expresses longing and gently traces its inhabited space, yet is hung publicly as a large print, addressed to all who pass through and

take the time to experience what is embodied. This work is described alongside the Unravelling Image, where the fabric of a seemingly fixed reality has seams that can be tugged on and loosened as the weave of its making is examined. I enjoyed the way in which the artists express this term: “Through it [the Unravelling Image], we find plot holes and reformat fixed fabrications, dissolving language that was once carved into stone, and we begin to rewrite the narratives that have dominated us.”

Alongside the large focus on the text-based glossary developed by the cohort, Images That Take, Images That Give also draws attention to how digital technologies facilitate and translate our ways of staying connected when physical gatherings are not possible, a loudly relevant line of inquiry as we live through a pandemic that has changed and shaped our lives in countless ways. One of these works greet you as you come through the doors of the exhibition: Daniel Lin’s Smile! You’re On Camera is an interactive piece that utilizes screen-based manipulations; as a viewer passes through its frame, the image is distorted and the expectations of what is seen is subverted. In a celebration of the unnecessary need of high resolution imagery or unrealistic perfection in the pixels for viewing, perhaps there is an empathy to also be extended to the way we view ourselves. Image manipulation is also explored in Sahar Rahmanian’s To

Dear Reader,

Hope these letters find you well.
Think of them as threads
you can peel off the wall.

Full here that what you will,
but don't pull on the deep
hanging mechanical straps.

Examine the rough rim edges
that frame this space.
Tracing the line here
to a corner of the room

Where what you
was a still person
has now bled into what
remains the room.

Find that border
where the light
spills from the desk.

Awake eye contact
with the things that live
in the corner of your eye.

James Freely
1978



Zoom Into, a title which plays on the word association of “zoom”, the ever prevalent Zoom software, the zooming capabilities of a camera lens, and her own connotations of زوم (zoom) and magnifying glass made between the translation of Farsi and English. She considers how a webcam morphs into an all-seeing eye that sacrifices the private sanctity of our personal spaces to permit visual communication despite the distance, a Magnifying Image that zooms into our privacy and brings a greater emphasis to things that may have gone unnoticed before.

We are given much to consider in this exhibition, and they ask us to take it in and consider all they have to offer. I found that Images That Take, Images That Give offers an invitation to dialogue and makes an emphasis on finding relation from one image to another, from one person to another. While the question is asked of us, “who (or what) is doing the taking and what (or who) is given up along the way?”, the gesture of taking and giving cannot be confined to a singular exchange, but continues to be a reactive process from one entity to another; while asked of us within the framework of this exhibition, this line of questioning is just as applicable outside of the gallery space. While the show itself is now finished, there is still additional documentation that can be found on their Instagram @ca361_exhibition

Select Works from, Infinity Canyon Series and All That Remains is Love Series (2020)

Jason Nielsen

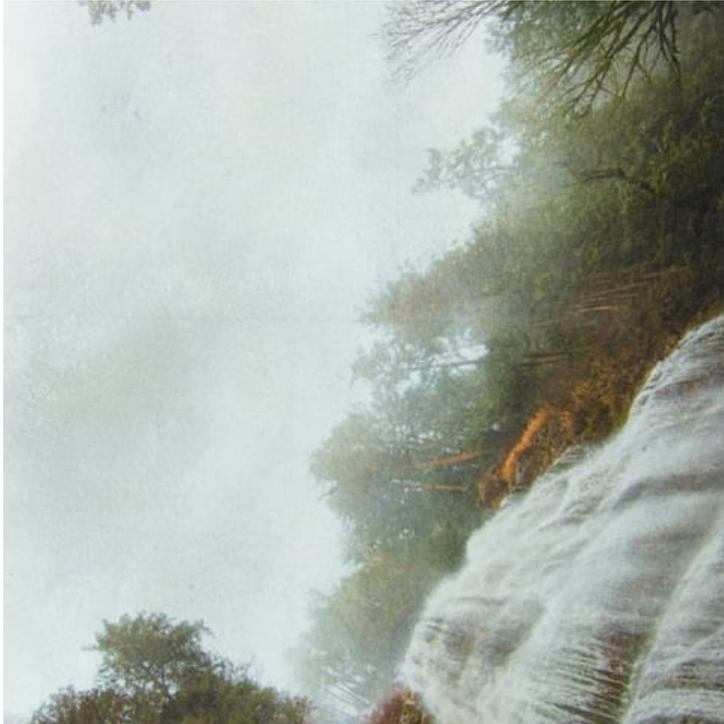
I chose a diverse group of images that speaks of optimistic themes. The quality of their light, as well as the gold-leaf application, lend an iridescence that celebrates nature's regeneration and renewal.



Jason Nielsen, Taken through an 'ice lens', *Infinity Canyon series* (2020)



Jason Nielsen, Pigment on kozo washi, *Infinity Canyon Series* (2020)



Jason Nielsen, Pigment on kozo washi and white gold leaf, *Infinity Canyon series* (2020)



Jason Nielsen, Hand-carved image, *All That Remains is Love series* (2020)



Jason Nielsen, Pigment on kozo washi, *Infinity Canyon series* (2020)

Estrella
(2021)
Francisco
Berlanga

For me, renaissance is rebirth,
it is a spring of ideas,
a revitalisation of what was old made new.

I often revisit the star piñata,
it has been a while since I've actually broken one,
but I remember them well.

The piñata is reanimated - it is a new form.

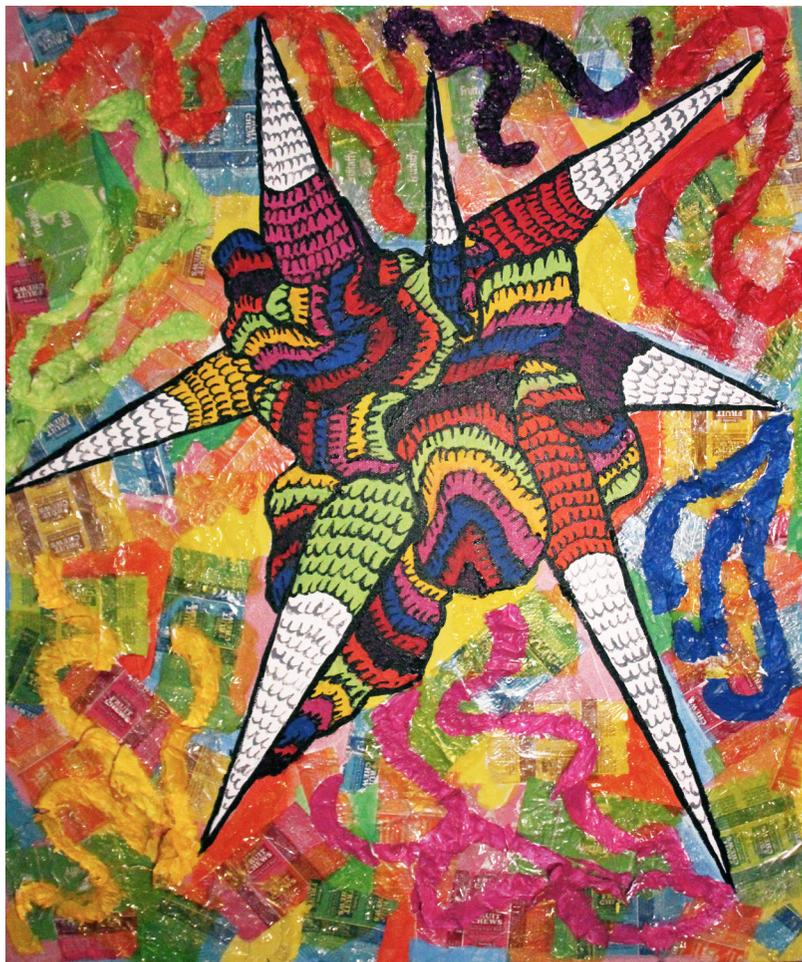
The piñata takes on its familiar colours and traditional 7
points,
but they are transformed.
Its body is turned in on itself morphing,
turning inside out and vice versa,
the spikes grow independent they begin to move,
swinging as it dangles from a rope trying to break free.

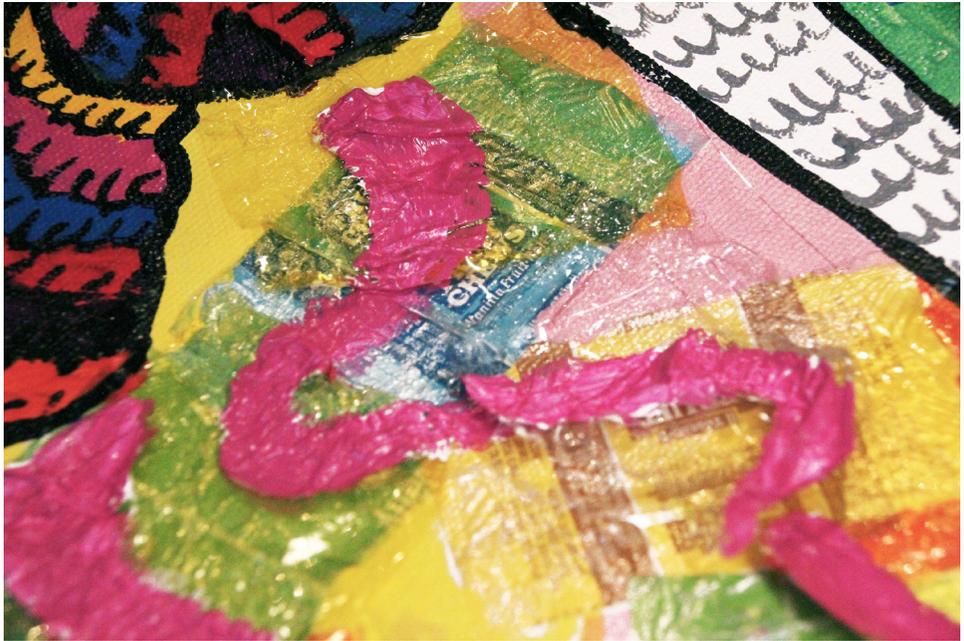
This work is inspired by the abstraction of tradition and
how it takes on new forms,
resemblant of a firecracker, a flower, or a dancer.

It presents its secret contents as an outward appeal,
the wrappers of discarded candies adorning the piñata
gilded in iridescence.

It is created,
It is re-lived,
It is passed on.

The piñata is icon.





Francisco Berlanga, *Estrella* (2021)





Francisco Berlanga, *Estrella* (2021)

Born Again

Sumaheep Khatri

Let your fears
and your sadness
Drown away
In the hot lava
of your mind.
Let it sink and
Let it die.
Let your fears
Die inside.

Bring forth the
confidence and
The unwavering pride.
You are not you
For your anguish has died.
But you are you
For your perseverance

Although you live
You are born again
Like a shrivelled Phoenix
Who is to burn and die
Only to be
Born again

Francisco
Berlanga



Meet the Team

We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, we inhabit a place between the seriousness of academic writing and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often succumb to cliches and trends as they pass us as we all often must.

We hope to present unique thoughts for you to consider. Our writing speaks for no one but ourselves. We do not reduce the similar experiences of others to what we have experienced. We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other.



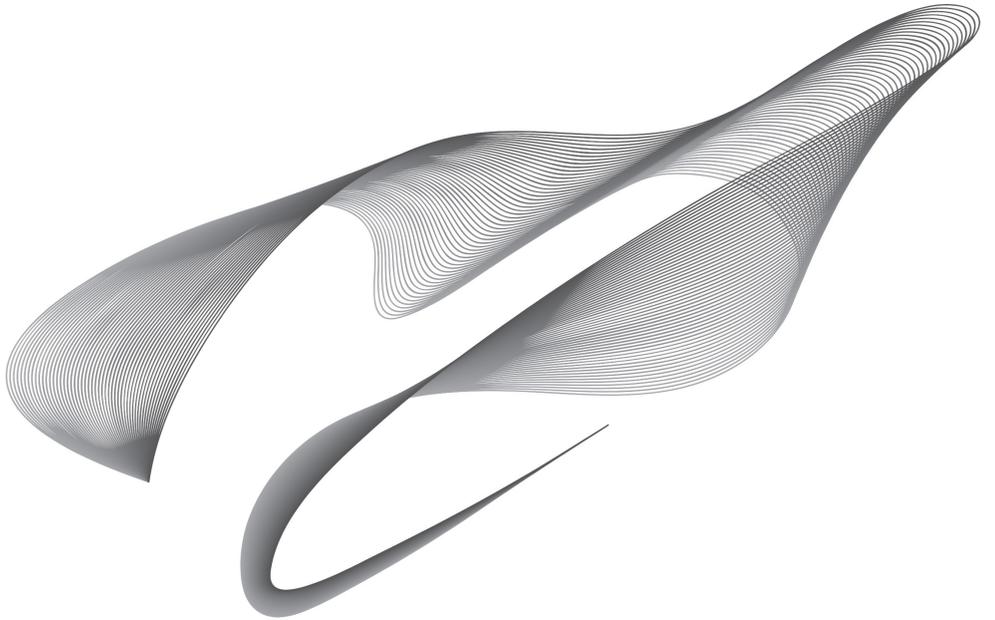
Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that lends to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:
@withintensions

or email us at:
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information, feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “Nature” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Sasha Cerino, Sumaheep Khatri, Opal Mclean, and Jason Nielsen

We would also like to thank Francisco Berlanga for his design and social media contributions, Natalie Chan for her assistance in coordinating and Opal Mclean for her editorial work.

We are excited to share our future works with you and we hope to provide more opportunities for artists alike.

