

WITH INTENSIONS



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TRUTH

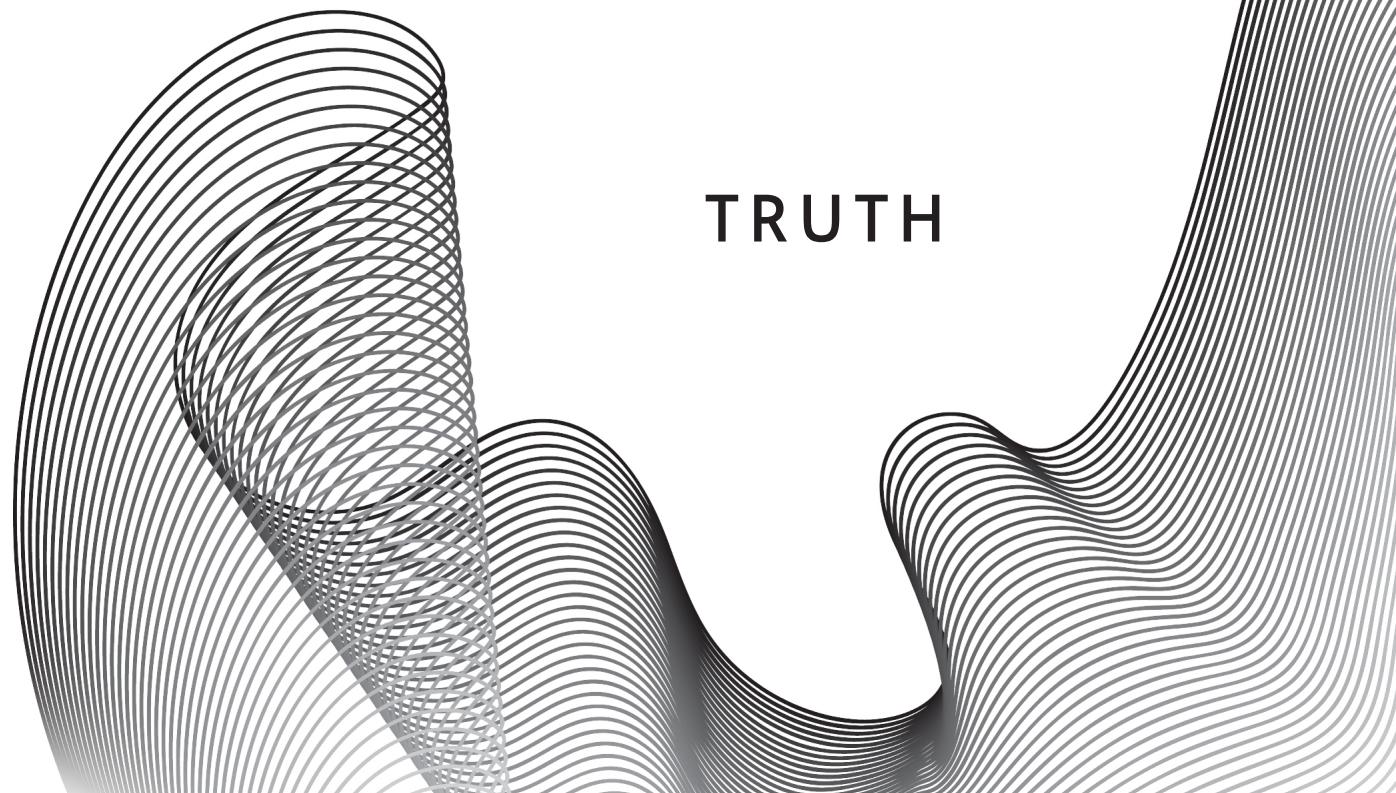


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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), and Səl̓ílwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous 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.



U.F.O (2026) resident.fartist

what do you think? do you believe in UFOs?
oh yeah, yes sir, definitely. they're out there man, i seen 'em...

Anda Marcu

After the Party

Cake crumbs
left on window sills
for invisible birds
to feast on before sunrise
(veritable ghosts,
present only in sound).

Protruding pile drenched
in the rain,
divided and flattened,

trickle by trickle
pushed over the rail
to travel four stories
down and conjoin
with the pavement.

Melted and spongy.

A Strawberry Garden for Me

You'd always choose cattail over
water lilies. Without a doubt. Too
manicured, these water lilies, you'd

say. You look for familiar shapes in
passing clouds and run your fingers
over the flat surface of each

smooth stone you set aside for stone
skipping. You pick out seeds from a
plump strawberry with a toothpick and

lay them out nicely on a festive paper
napkin. They're for the miniature strawberry
garden I'm growing you in the broken

watering can I slit in half, you whisper
lovingly. It was taking up space, yellow
and useless; too treasured to be discarded.

They Always Know

She looks directly at me as I am desperately trying to hide the audacious eye-roll I set in motion right before she caught me;

she knows it, she feels it,
she despises it.

She propels her darkest thoughts over me in retaliation and parades away, leaving me behind to admire her noble tread and think about what I've done.

She expects my gaze to follow until she vanishes through the door. She expects me to stare at the empty hallway, questioning if she'd return. She expects me to know I'm not allowed to go in.

She knows if I decide to look away and this can only make things worse. Cats always know.

Oblivion

On a clear day, I would pick up a marker and draw ships in a line on the upper side of my window.

When I go back to my chair and look at the sky, they appear to be sailing endless oceans. I would be

steering them with my mind, burning my mouth on steeped tea, ignoring the truth on the bottom side of the

window.



Dancer (2021) Anda Marcu

"And let each day be a loss to us on which we did not dance once!" - Friedrich Nietzsche

How could I try not to try?

Yihk Qu Chan

when Truth bids me to offer the reasons for which I cry,
my tongue still thick with reluctance prays—
if my body moves in remembrance to grieve,
will this heart's ache move You to cover them all?
when my tears spill without warning and the salt burns my vision,
the cost of my dreams weigh uncertain and I am a child again

uninvited, a good girl and a ghoulish one sit on my shoulders,
bickering callous bets of what my pain might catalyze,
alchemize, metastasize,
but innocence knows no words

Truth is an intrusion
a shifting, whether welcomed
and felt when ancient secrets stir—
how could I claim to know Truth when You are a rhythm?

when we meet I'll know you know
too, if your body softens,
holds, sways—
when you met with Truth,
could you weigh it all
and let go anyways?

avanzando (2025)

BELAK

avanzando documents an interpretation of normalcy, repetition, and imagination—a towel placed on the counter while toilet paper hangs in its place. The work speaks to a moment where the truth of the present, and the state of the brain, are unclear. To witness cognitive change is to sit in uncertainty, where meaning must be interpreted rather than understood. There is little to do but watch, accept, and remain present. *avanzando* holds the discomfort, sadness, and bleakness of that reality, asking how one makes sense of life when control is limited and answers are absent. Positioned between life and death, the image reflects a quiet truth: that care, grief, and reality often unfold through small substitutions, and that living means learning how to remain with what cannot be fixed.



Truth in Transit

Kerry Jo Bell

On my third day in Berlin, the city mailed me a letter demanding the truth.

It arrived in a thin white envelope stamped Amt für Ordnung und Richtigkeit—the Office of Order and Correctness—an institution I would later learn was neither orderly nor correct but deeply committed to the performance of both. The letter informed me, in stern bureaucratic

German and a clipped English translation, that my registration was incomplete, my address “unverified,” and my stated purpose “insufficiently truthful.”

Insufficiently truthful may result in penalties, it warned.

I read it three times: once normally, once upside down, and once with the solemnity of someone who knows that truth, in most places, is a negotiable currency—except in art school, where lying is encouraged as long as it’s interesting.

“Truth,” I said to the room. “They want the truth. Hfft.”

The room, a sublet in Tiergarten with furniture that had survived the nineties and several emotional collapses, said nothing. The couch groaned. The table

leaned, exhausted by decades of supporting other people’s revelations. A plant in the corner looked like it had witnessed too much truth already.

I made coffee and stared at the letter until it stared back, unimpressed.

I had come to Berlin with no clear plan, which I considered a kind of honesty. I had a suitcase, a notebook, a friend-of-a-friend’s apartment, and a belief—unproven but sincere—that the city rewarded those who arrived unguarded. I’d heard stories: people coming for three months and staying fifteen years; people coming for love and leaving with a techno label; people coming to disappear and finding themselves instead.

I had come to write.

That was the truth. Or at least the version of it I was prepared to share. I had come here for a boy. I stayed to find myself.

Berlin, with its artistic pull, carried an unmistakable creative spirit. Its art in all its forms compels you to examine yourself, to strip away pretence, to be honest about who you really are.

I folded the letter and put it in my coat pocket, where important things went to be ignored.

The Office of Order and Correctness lived in a building

that looked like it regretted existing. Gray, low, apologetic. Inside, the air smelled of paper, burnt coffee, and the quiet panic of people trying to be honest. I was trying not to be. I mean I do hail from North America. My nervous system is accustomed to fictionalized versions of, well, everything.

I took a number: 247. The screen said: serving 19. I muttered a few German swear words I had learned for emergencies.

A woman beside me knitted something narrow and tense.

"What are you making?" I asked, mostly out of boredom but also because truthfully, I'm nosy.

"A scarf," she said. "For my son. He refuses to wear scarves, so I make them thinner each year. Eventually it will be a string. Then he will have no excuse."

"Does he live here?"

"No. Vienna. He says its more 'emotionally honest.'"

"Fair."

Across from us, a man practiced sighing with the precision of someone who had studied the craft. Each sigh had a thesis.

When my number finally appeared, I had aged visibly. The clerk was young, severe, and wore glasses that

made her eyes look like punctuation marks.

"Purpose of stay?" she asked.

"I'm a writer."

She blinked.

"Employment?"

"I write."

"Yes, but for whom?"

"For myself."

She typed something that sounded like scepticism.

"Duration?"

"I don't know."

She removed her glasses. Her eyes still looked like punctuation marks.

"You must know," she said gently, which made it worse.

"I intend to be here," I said. "Until I'm not."

She inhaled. Exhaled. Replaced her glasses.

"You must declare your truth," she said. "We have a form."

Of course they did.

She slid a paper toward me:

INTENTION DECLARATION (SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM / TRUTHFUL) There were boxes. Lines. A section titled Supplementary Clarification (If Truth Is Evolving). "I don't know how to answer this honestly," I said.

She smiled thinly. "That is why we offer assistance."

She gestured to a door behind her. A sign read:

DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH IN TRANSITION

Inside, a man sat eating an apple with the seriousness of someone preparing a confession. "Sit," he said.

I sat.

He finished the apple, wiped his hands, and looked at me.

"Name?"

"Emilia ... with an E."

"Truth?"

"I'm not sure."

"Excellent," he said. "We specialize in that."

His name tag said Heinz. He wore a cardigan that had

survived several ideological shifts. Behind him were shelves labelled: ARTISTIC TRUTH, ROMANTIC TRUTH, NECESSARY TRUTH, INCONVENIENT TRUTH, TRUTH PENDING REVIEW.

"You are not alone," Heinz said. "Berlin attracts those who are still editing their truth." "That's... comforting?"

"The city requires a narrative," he said. "Even a provisional one."

He slid a folder toward me.

"What is this?"

"Borrowed truth," he said. "Temporary. Many people use them. You select one, live under it for a while, and see if it fits."

Inside were laminated cards:

To become someone honest.

To escape a truth you outgrew.

To fall in love with clarity.

To make art that reveals more than intended.

To be alone without lying about it.

To prove something to yourself.

I laughed.

"You think this is funny," Heinz said. "But these are very popular."

I chose: To make art that reveals more than intended.

Heinz nodded. "A classic Berlin truth."

He stamped my form.

"Welcome," he said. "Try not to hide from yourself. It complicates the paperwork." Berlin, it turned out, was excellent at forcing truth to the surface.

My days found a rhythm: mornings writing in cafés that looked like abandoned factories repurposed by sincerity; afternoons walking until my thoughts confessed themselves; evenings talking to strangers who asked what I did and then corrected my answer.

"You don't write," said Lena, a performance artist I met at a bar where the drinks were served with judgment. "You excavate."

"That sounds painful."

"It is."

She smoked like she was telling the truth for the first time.

"You should come to my show," she said. "It's about honesty."

"Of course it is."

"It involves a fax machine and my mother."

I went. The fax machine jammed. Her mother cried. Everyone applauded. I clapped too, confused and moved.

My neighbour, Herr Vogel, believed I was a spy.

"You observe too much," he said. "That is suspicious."

"I'm a writer."

"Yes," he said. "Spies say that."

He leaned in.

"Which agency?"

"Truth in Transition," I said.

He nodded, impressed. "Very secret."

At night, the city hummed with unspoken things. I wrote badly. I wrote too much. I wrote things that scared me with their honesty.

Then came another letter.

Pink.

Reminder: Truth must be revealed.

Back at the Office, Heinz greeted me like a therapist who had seen this arc before. "How is the borrowed truth?" he asked.

"I think it's working," I said. "Everything I write feels too honest."

"Excellent progress," he said.

He flipped through my file.

"You have not declared romantic truth."

"I don't have any."

"Everyone has some," he said. "Even avoidance is a truth."

We compromised on Open to Connection (With Boundaries).

I met Mira on a Tuesday pretending to be a Thursday. She was reading a book upside down on the U-Bahn.

"You know that's inverted," I said.

"I know," she said, unconvincingly.

She had short spiky hair the colour of a confession. She asked where I was from. "The North Pole, you call it Canada." I asked where she was going. She said, "Somewhere honest."

We got off at the same stop by accident—or truthfully, not.

We ate currywurst. It rained without conviction.

"Are you staying in Berlin?" she asked.

"... I think so."

"For...?"

"To see what becomes true," I said.

She nodded. "Acceptable."

We didn't exchange numbers. We met again anyway. Berlin has a way of recycling its people until you're forced to decide what to do with them.

I wrote a story about a city that interrogated its residents until they admitted what they wanted. I sent it out. It came back with a note: Compelling, but too honest.

I framed the rejection.

Mira and I argued about nothing. We laughed about everything.

"You're calmer now," she said one night. "Berlin is telling you the truth? Are you telling it back?"

"I have anxiety disorder," I said. "I've just learned to

perform. Fake it till you make it, et cetera."

"That's not very German."

"That's alright. I'm not German," I said.

"Yet," we said together.

The third letter was red.

Final Notice: Truth unresolved.

I went back to the Office.

Heinz looked exhausted.

"They are auditing us," he said. "Too many people living half-truths." "What happens if I don't decide?"

"They relocate you."

"Where?"

"Somewhere very certain."

I shuddered.

"What do you want?" he asked.

I opened my mouth. Closed it.

"I want to write something that feels true," I said.
"I want to belong without pretending. I want to love without losing myself. I want to stay, but not because

I'm afraid to leave."

Heinz nodded.

"That is a lot," he said. "But it is honest."

He wrote on a new card: To remain open while telling the truth.

"This one is risky," he said. "But so are you."

That night, the city felt less interrogative. Or maybe I was done lying to myself.

Mira and I sat on her floor eating bread and cheese, drinking Viennese wine, circling the F word: future.

"Are you leaving?" she asked.

"No," I said. "I don't think so."

She smiled. "Good. I just got used to your truth."

Outside, someone played an accordion badly. Somewhere, a club opened. Somewhere else, someone told the truth for the first time.

I went home and wrote until morning. It wasn't perfect. It wasn't polished. But it was honest. The next day, no letters came.

Berlin, briefly content, let me inhabit myself – complex, mostly truthful, forever balancing on the thin tightrope between truth and story.

I'll have melted ICE and my raspados back! (2026)

Sasha Cerino

The truth of the matter is facism is on the rise. Innocent people are being overtly othered by race, more so now than ever and facing severe dehumanization at its core. Only benefiting those who are a part of and uphold the white colonialist and capitalist system. Meanwhile, anyone else with a different skin tone and are not of the upper class, are being called into question, abducted, detained, and/or deported against their will. Citizen, or "illegal" immigrant (no person is illegal on stolen land), even with the proper documents and requirements, that is no longer a consideration when it comes to ICE. A target is a target. Even the likes of a 5 year old boy, by the name of Liam Conejo Ramos. It's at his home in Minnesota that he was being used as bait, so ICE could

also try and take the rest of his family. Currently, Liam and his father are now being detained in Texas. A clear abuse of power, it's cruel, it's disgusting, and it's the exact opposite of justice and protection.

With this month's issue being Truth, I could practically hear my former visual arts professor, Jin-Me Yoon, in the back of my head. Something along the lines of "make art that is reactionary to the current state of the world." Which is interesting to look back upon because when she was teaching our class this, it was the year 2016, and Trump was just recently elected president. That is when she also taught us what the word xenophobia meant. What a full circle moment on this knowledge that she has imparted in me. And so

this illustration I made was brought up by my visceral reaction to the brutal ICE activity happening in the US. A mix of my frustration and sadness towards the conservative propaganda that is trying to justify these raids, as well as the brutal actions in and of itself. As someone who grew up in the States, spent most of my early childhood in Los Angeles, and was immersed in its rich and lively hispanic community, it breaks my heart to see them go through so much unnecessary turmoil and trauma. I have such fond memories of those hot Californian summers where my family and I would take solace in many of the Tíos and Tías raspados stands. Providing a service of care and hospitality when they themselves are under the same sun, walking around the neighbourhood for many hours. All hoping to make enough money to provide for their own families. Now, there's this added pressure and fear that at any moment, they'll be taken away and separated from them. How disproportionately unjust and unfair. That is why I chose to showcase my truth by upholding theirs, to reveal the truth of the reality up against the "truth" that has been constructed by the American government. Last but not least, ABOLISH ICE!!!



Wesley Shaver



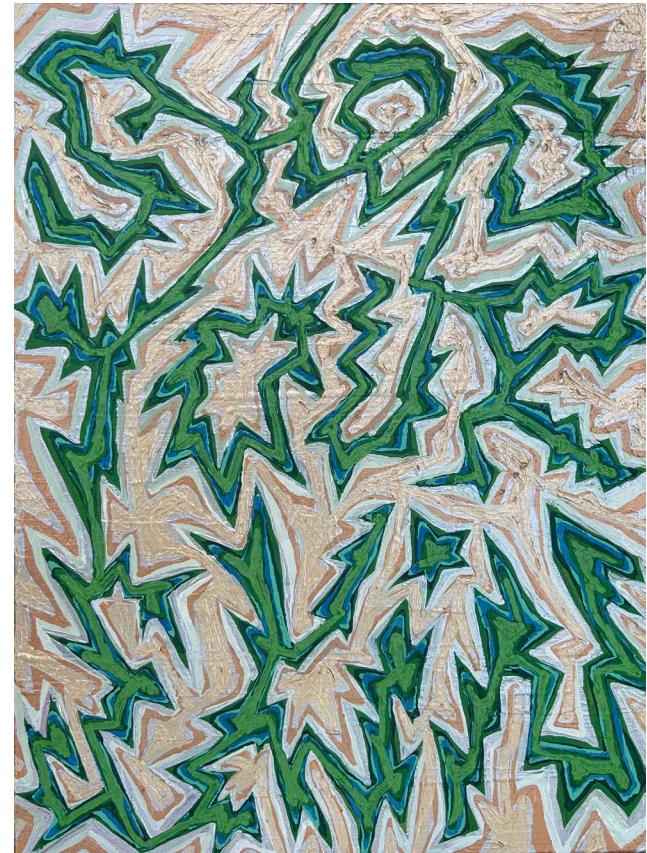
Simulation Theory (2025) Wesley Shaver



Who Am I? (2026) Wesley Shaver



Shed Your Skin (2025) Wesley Shaver



Stuck in My Skin (2025) Wesley Shaver

Meet the Team

Act with intention & dwell within tensions.

We are artists who are both lost and found, both within and without the spaces of institution and navigating the spaces beyond the horizon?

Navigating our various proximities to institutions and the spaces beyond them parsing through what we want to keep, what we want to let go of, and what we hope to transform.

Our goal is to house new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas, nurturing a space for them to take form.

We inhabit a place between the seriousness of academia and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often fall into cliches and trends as they pass us, as we all often must.

We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.



**THEO
BADZIO**
Publications Lead



**FRANCISCO
BERLANGA**
Creative Director
Publications Lead
Founder



**TORIEN
CAFFERATA**
Curatorial Lead

Francisco Berlanga (he/him) is a Vancouver based textile artist whose practice reflects on his relationship to his Mexican identity as a second-generation immigrant through the lens of Craft. He attempts to understand how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourse with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican "manualidades" or crafts. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility attempting to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other. Histories of repetition often produce apparitions of motifs that haunt his works. His previous exhibitions include a solo show at Grunt Gallery and group shows at the Morris and Helen Belkin gallery, the AHVA gallery, This gallery, and the Audain gallery. Berlanga obtained his BFA at Simon Fraser University and his MFA at the University of British Columbia.



**SASHA
CERINO**
Workshops Lead



**YIHK QU
CHAN**
Operations
Coordinator
Workshops Lead
Founder

Sasha (she/her) is an artist and settler based in the land of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) nations, colonially known as Vancouver. Coming from a Filipino background and being a child of immigrants integrally informs her work from covert to ouvert ways. Similar to how tides cycle all throughout the vast ancestral source that is the ocean. The waves make their way to the shore in varying intensities, from gentle ripples to destructive tsunamis and everything in between. Sasha explores the relationships, dynamics, narratives, traumas, conflicts; the beauty and nuances that come with who she is, but also how the world views her. For the personal is interconnected and represents the collective. Using art as a means of self expression ever since she was the age of 3. Always having a curiosity and interest in making things, mirroring her experiences as a tool of processing and also reflection. Her choice of medium(s) for her pieces are most often led by the concept(s) she is trying to convey. Overall, striving to make art that is honest, genuine and creates spaces for open conversations.



EMILY CHU
Community Events
Lead



**RAINE
HERMOSA**
Curatorial
Assistant

Raine Hermosa, also known as bcball or bishi, is an 18 year old queer singer songwriter and music producer based in from Victoria BC. He has been writing music since he was a child, and in his early days posted songs on Youtube and Soundcloud. His practice ranges from writing for piano and strings, songwriting and electronic music production. Outside of music he also works in digital art, drag, and creative writing. Raine is currently studying Music and Sound at the SFU School for Contemporary Arts in Vancouver.

Yihk Qu (she/her) is an artist whose practice is mimetic in form and exercises vulnerability through performance work and social practice. Raised within Vancouver-Hong Kong diasporic community as a second-generation Canadian, her work is produced from the tensions of embodying contrasting cultural values. Speculating on identity, heritage, and hauntings, she ritualizes gestures to produce symbolic markers of relationally held time.

Yihk Qu, as an Anglicized namesake, is a textual synthesis of her identities as Natalie Chan and 易翹—a pairing of characters which come together to mean 'to exchange the meaning of excellence'; Yihk Qu hopes to exhibit the transformative potential of translating across the borderlines of cultural landscapes. She obtained her BFA at Simon Fraser University and is currently researching at the University of British Columbia as an MFA candidate.



**AMANDA
KACHADOO-
RIAN JORDI**
Curatorial Lead

Amanda Kachadoorian Jordi is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores migration, bureaucratic systems, and hybrid cultural identities through mixed media, sculpture, and photography. Raised in San Diego and of Mexican, German, and Armenian descent, she investigates the emotional and psychological complexities of movement, belonging, and in-betweenness. Originally trained as a painter, she began with large-scale oil paintings of surreal, hybridized botanicals, each drawn from plants, flora, and landscapes developing a metaphorical language of layered histories and identities. Her practice has since evolved to incorporate unconventional materials through an evolving collage-based process, reflecting the layered tensions of movement, the weight of bureaucracy, and the fragile negotiations of belonging across shifting borders.

Jordi has exhibited at the Oceanside Museum of Art (California) and Ahoi Galerie (Lucerne, Switzerland), and her work has been featured in New American Paintings (West Coast Issue #163).



**KALEB
THIESSEN**
General Assistant

Kaleb Thiessen, also known digitally as BELAK, is a Peruvian-Canadian multimedia artist based in Vancouver, BC. He works with sculpture and digital media, using found materials and screens to examine how consumerism, selfperception, and technology intersect. Rooted in working with discarded materials from his local community, his practice reflects past cycles of consumption in the Lower Mainland, turning objects into living archives of use and exchange. He sees objects as witnesses to lived time, where signs of wear blur their origin and pull them away from the manufactured and standardized. This duality informs how he sources and recontextualize materials, embedding screens and digital fragments to create portals that reframe their narratives. At the core of his practice is a need to uncover how objects and systems operate, asking what constraints they were built to function within and how those limits might be challenged. Thiessen recently graduated from Simon Fraser University with a BFA Honours in Visual Arts. In 2024, Thiessen's work has been exhibited at the Audain Gallery, The Polygon Gallery, Lobe Studio, Haus der Statistik and Feldfünfin and will be displayed through the City of Vancouver's Launch Pad program in 2026.

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 a very special printed issue on the theme of "TRUTH & NOSTALGIA" and submissions are now open

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Kerry Jo Bell, Sasha Cerino, Yihk Qu Chan, Anda Marcu, Keith Miller, Wesley Shaver, and Kaleb Thiessen.

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



**In Memorium of one of our founders
Opal Mclean
1997-2023**

