

WITHIN TENSIONS

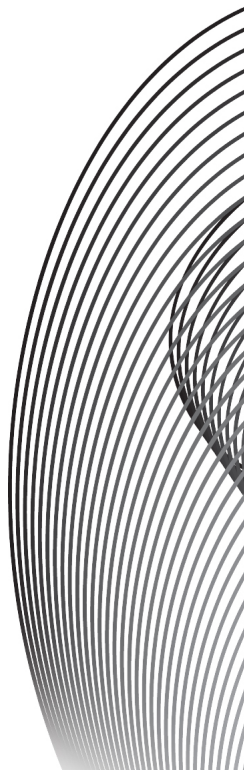


vol.28

SINCERELY YOURS



WITHINTENSIONS



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April 2022
vol. 28

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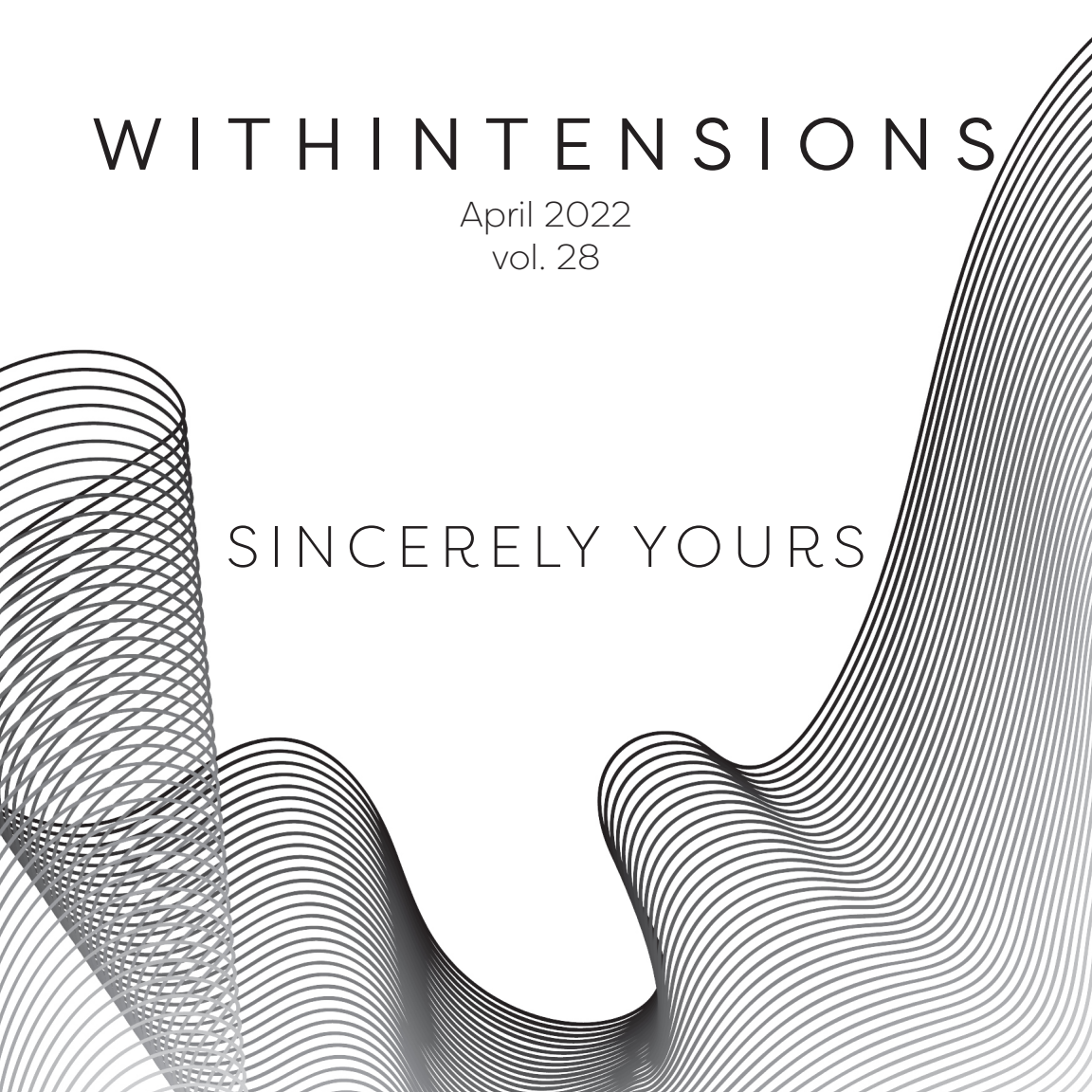


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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwə́yəm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous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

“Reflections On Childhood: A Letter To My Father” (2020)

Ava Tkaczuk



This visual letter to my father depicts parts of my childhood and is meant to reflect upon loss.

Love, Words

September 2021; October 2021

Ris V. Rose

Where do you go when you're away?
Sometimes we wake up and you aren't here
To greet us.
And it gets a bit chaotic, after that;
We don't know where to go,
So we bounce around, waiting for you to come back.
Do you hear us calling for you, when you go?

Where do you go when you're away,
And is it nice there?
We fantasize about it, sometimes—
Maybe you're in that cabin in the mountains
Or sitting on the rings of Saturn.
Either way,
It's gotta be better than here,
Where it's crowded
And you're not sure which one of you is crying.

Where do you go when you're away,
And do you miss us like we miss you?

We don't know who we are without you.
We're trapped,
And it's really getting to some of us:
We bang on the windows
Until they open,
And then some of us think of escaping...
But it's a long way down.

Where do you go when you're away?
It gets longer and longer every time.
It was easier to hold onto hope
Before
When you'd go away,
Because you'd come right back,
But now...

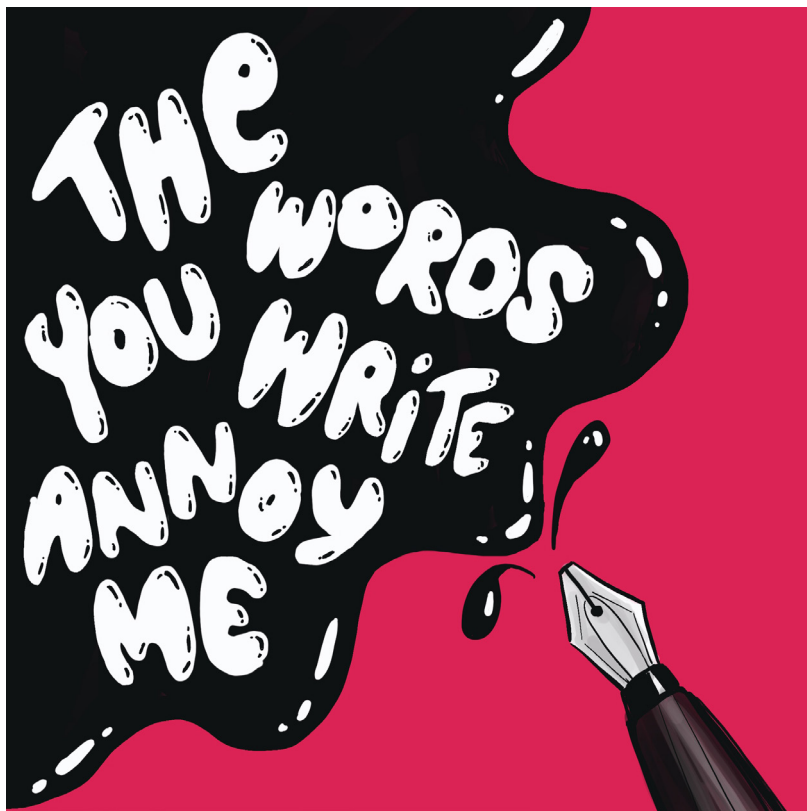
You'll always come right back when you go away,
Right?
You'll always come back?
Anyway, hope to see you soon! You know where to
find us.

Love,
Words

The Words You Write Annoy Me (2022)

Stephanie Esguerra

For this piece, I thought about what the theme of “Sincerely Yours” meant to me, and I immediately thought of how emails and letters are often written without much sincerity, and if they were perhaps this phrase would appear more often in our correspondence. “The words you write annoy me” applies to almost every type of correspondence one could receive- a work email asking for a last minute favour, an annoying text from your mother, a bill in the mail.



to my dearest death,
Krishnpriya Singh

to my dearest death,

death. i've missed you. i've missed you being on my mind. i've missed your constant, completely consuming presence in my life. i miss being surrounded by you. i've missed being wrapped in your arms. i long for you.

i know i've been distant lately. on occasion, you slip my mind. however, you are not an easy one to forget. whenever i think about you, my problems seem to completely disappear. in the blink of an eye, my worries are gone. everything just disappears. i yearn for your infinite emptiness, and for your guaranteed calmness.

i itch for everything you promise me. no one else
understands
me the way you do, death. i always come back to you.

i can understand that our commitment to one another
is utterly forbidden. i wholeheartedly understand the
suffering that it could cause. in some wicked way, this
makes me want you more. sometimes i long for you so
earnestly that i simply don't care. i would be selfish for
you. i would give up everything to be with you.

i love you, death. i always have, and i always will.

yours truly,

life

A Note

Opal Mclean

Recently I discovered that my therapist will be going into a new practice so I will be seeing someone completely new. This obviously makes me a bit nervous as I will have to explain my entire life story all over again to get a sense of how to continue treatment. It takes time to build that rapport so I want to start with a letter.

To my new therapist,

I experience life in a collection of extremes. I have been through a lot but also nothing at all. I feel so many things but I also feel nothing at all. Some days I have a multitude of things to say while others I feel like there is nothing. Well, I should say this is how I lived my life before seeking treatment. I feel like my life now is worlds different from my life before diagnosis. I explain things so matter of factly when they weren't matter of fact at all.

This was just my experience. Taking the time to mull everything over and come to some kind of sensible conclusion is something new for me. I can't tell if it's a form of acceptance or just aging into maturity. It takes time to process the things that have happened and

figure out ways to overcome them. Now, I find myself sharing anxieties only to realize I have to accept that there is nothing I can do.

There is only so much I can do to quell my feelings about what has happened. There is only so much time I can give to all the feelings inside myself. I've spent an entire lifetime trying to figure out why these things had to happen. I have now reached a place where I don't have to agonize over them anymore. It's a weird feeling really. Especially when trying to talk to a therapist. It makes me seem much more put together than I was. Maybe that's because the therapy this far has been working. Maybe it's because I've aged.

Either way, welcome to a new patient conundrum. Thank you for listening to my entire life story. I recognize it's a lot but I am glad to have reached a point where I can break it down for someone new.

Sincerely yours,
Your new patient

Josephine (2022)

Sara Lamond

Josephine is a mixed media work, with multiple layers of collage papers, inks and acrylic paint. Words from a love letter (below) are written into the painting by me - I originally had asemic writing in that place, but upon reading these words had to put them into the composition instead.

Josephine's title was inspired by a love letter from Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine:

"A few days ago I thought I loved you; but since I last saw you, I feel I love you a thousand times more. All the time I have known you, I adore you more each day; that just shows you how wrong was La Bruyere's maxim that love comes all at once. Everything in nature has its own life and different stages of growth. I beg you, let me see some of your faults: be less beautiful, less graceful, less good..."

This painting went through so many stages / layers, and I liked each one but kept wanting more. With each layer, I loved it a little more, and the words from the love letter seemed to suit her.

Dear John

Kerry Bell

Dear John,

Once I met you in a pub, in the mountains of blue. I wanted fine wine and whined about it.

We came to ski, and be free, of society and all of its requirements on how to be.

You thought I was a bitch, or a witch, whichever. Acting elitist and classist. But all I wanted was a drink. I had been through a lot lately. You served me a taste. It wasn't the best but did not go to waste ...

We chatted like old friends. You and me in unity as my friends listened intently. You kept running your hands through your hair. It drove me crazy. I wasn't a villain anymore. Stars appeared in your eyes, though now I think about it, I'm not so sure. It could have been the allure of you.

I paid the check and said goodbye. I thought of writing my number on the receipt, but suddenly felt shy. I had no idea, that time would fly away from our side, or that two days later, the world would change forever. A lockdown followed. I returned to Toronto as ordered, thinking of you.

I shake my head at how quickly normal can end, and how the things you put off you wish you hadn't.

So this letter, is me shooting my shot! Cause it's the only chance I've got, because I forgot that time waits for no one. And carpe diem is real, and life doesn't give you a seal of approval to wish you had ... but rewards you if you just go go go for it. I bet you're a go-getter. And I hope this letter finds you, to let you know, I'm into you.

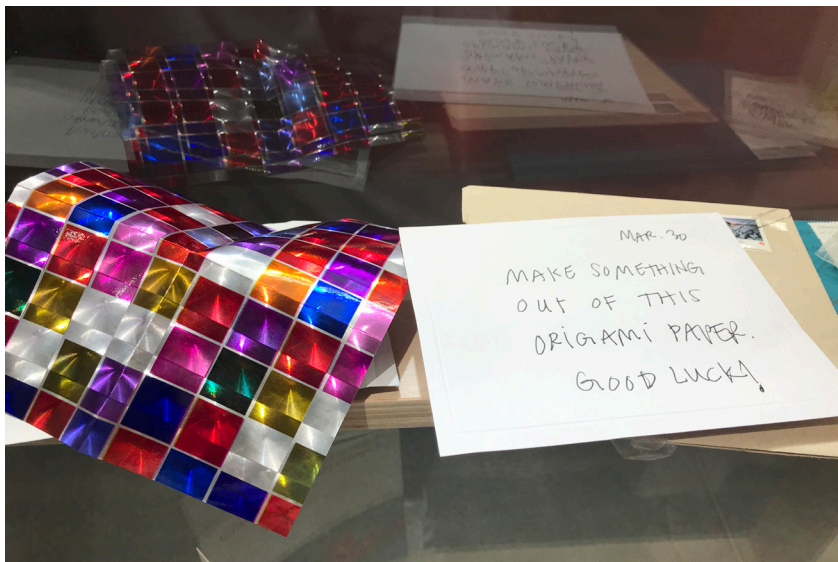
Sincerely yours ...

To You (100 handwritten letters)(2022)

Sofia Grace

“In To You, the artist mailed 100 hand-written cards to strangers proposing friendship and asking for a response in the form of an invitation to contribute to her work in the exhibition. Grace’s experiment uses the conceptual practice of mail art to focus on the idea of the pen pal, a faraway friendship that takes place in the form of letters and that is often associated with young women. The work also represents the vulnerability of putting oneself out there, as there was no guarantee of a response from the recipients.”





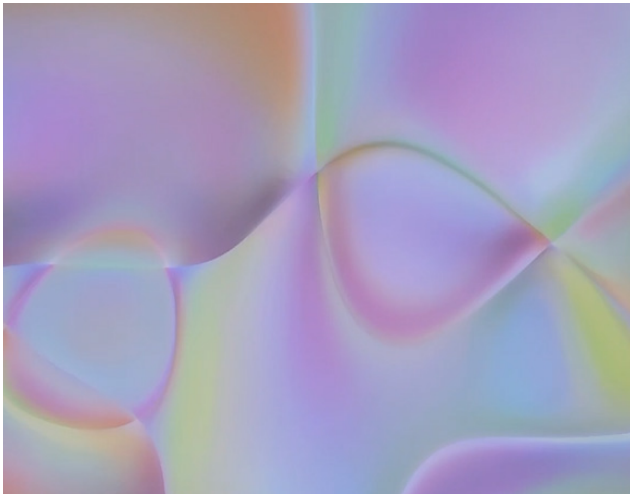
Review of *Collecting Plum Blossoms* (2022)

Francisco Berlanga

Collecting Plum Blossoms is the 2022 BFA graduate exhibition that was presented at the Audain Gallery from April 14th to the 23rd. It featured the works of Jesse Blanchard, Debbie C., Sena Cleave, Sofia Grace, Shinaaz K. Johal, Ritz Li, Daniel Lin, Sahar Rahmanian, Ravneet K. Sidhu, Paige Smith, Shiny Xiaotong Sun, Lil Waldegger, and David Yunze Xie. Upon entering the exhibition space, you are greeted by the exhibition title at the entrance of a narrow hallway that has 3 works in it. At the end of the hallway, you enter the main space with the majority of the works in it followed by three works in the window display.

The show's title *Collecting Plum Blossoms* is a reference to a collection of many pieces that can come together and resist a tidy conclusion; the space this show inhabited definitely felt like a collection of sorts. Each piece on the wall felt like it inhabited its own world and did not interact with the other works in the gallery. As you wander the space moving from piece to piece you find that the works speak mostly with themselves in an almost self referential way.

For example Daniel Lin's piece, HUES, which was a projection of a rainbow graphic that reacted to the sounds in the gallery quite literally was in conversation with itself, influenced mainly by the sounds of the person viewing it, the work felt like a feedback loop of visuals and reactions from the audience. The piece brings in technology as a third participant that is the interpreter for both artist and viewer creating its own language of translation.





Another work that stood out to me was Shinaaz K. Johal's *Reformation*. The piece is created from traditional garments gifted to the artist by female members of her family that are sewn together into an abstract form on canvas. The work evokes the artist's conversation with their own culture, the form feels intimate and complex. As if folding into itself the different textures feel at a tension with themselves but also as if they are still changing, forming as the artist does. The work draws the viewer into it and feels nearly daunting in scale but also quite relatable in subject matter.



All in all this show keeps up its promise of lacking a tidy conclusion, many of the works perhaps needed some more context that could have benefited the exhibition. The works certainly start interesting conversations and are clearly products of rich practices that are just starting out. I think that what I would have liked to see most in this show is for the works to have interacted with the space more beyond simply hanging on a wall. There is so much potential to each of these pieces and I cannot wait to see where they lead this crop of talented artists in the future. If these were the blossoms then I am dying to see the tree.

Amber Morrison Fox

I took up snail mail as a hobby in 2020. The idea of swapping notes with strangers reminded me of passing notes in class. We aren't swapping important information, just stuff like song lyrics, local hangout spots, favourite foods, and the weather that day. I often wonder what I have in common (and what I don't) with the anonymous senders. Would we be friends if we knew each other in real life? I unceremoniously tape every postcard I receive into a sketch book. These stamps and postcards are from the USA, UK, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, China, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, Australia, Finland, Belarus, Germany, India, France, Singapore, and Canada.



Amber Morrison Fox, *Selected Postcards*
(2020-2022)

Happy Birthday (2022)

Aaron Lampitoc

↩ Reply | ▾ Delete ⌂ Junk Block sender ...

Happy Birthday! from [REDACTED]

Happy birthday [REDACTED]!

It's been a while since we've seen each other. I hope you're still doing well and have made new friends and you're still hang out with your old ones from high school.

For your birthday, I want to confess a secret to you as openly and honestly as I can because I believe you deserve to know and I will not keep it from you any longer. Hopefully, you don't misunderstand—but it doesn't really matter to me as long as you know I guess...

The Unintentional Grade 10 Stalker

I wonder what you're thinking when you read that title; it must be really strange, huh?

When I took the bus to school, I usually arrive around 7:15AM. If I decided to go to school directly, I would usually arrive at around 7:30AM. I had nothing to do but wait for our group of friends to eventually arrive or for class to start.

But, I think around winter I started to walk around your complex because I was curious. I'm not exaggerating that I almost did this everyday: just walking around and seeing the area. I thought it was fun exploring new places that I've never been to before. I would go as far as the other complex nearby to the other school down the road. I thought that if anyone did see me, they would assume I was either a teenager passing by (which was technically true), I lived there, or was going to pick up a friend or something.

Honestly, one of the reasons I did this was to actually walk with you in the morning and maybe talk or just be together. If I can remember this properly, you told me that you used to go to school some time between 8:00AM to 8:15AM. I enjoyed talking—or more like walking in silence (haha)—with you. Unfortunately, I got a little too insecure and usually leave at the latest, 7:55AM. Actually, I think there was at least one time where I thought I saw you while I was already across the street.

And here comes even more unsettling information: during one of my walks, I actually figured out where you lived. (Creepy right?) Anyway, this is how I found out: I noticed that one of the umbrellas that was drying outside a doorstep looked similar to the one I see you use. I later confirmed this when I saw you at school. Then, came the day of your birthday party, which truly confirmed that I actually figured out where you lived, as obviously I was just making assumptions.

I mean secrets are not good, especially that I knew where you lived without you knowing. Doesn't that make you uncomfortable? If I told you back then, what would you do? That's why I'm telling you now because I feel you deserve to know now and time has made the issue less awkward (hopefully) and now you can maturely handle this information.

Well, I hope that now that you know this secret, we can move on with a clean slate. I hope we can meet again soon and rekindle our friendship.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]



Sincerely Yours
a letter to my younger
self (a child of 8-14.)

Dear younger me,

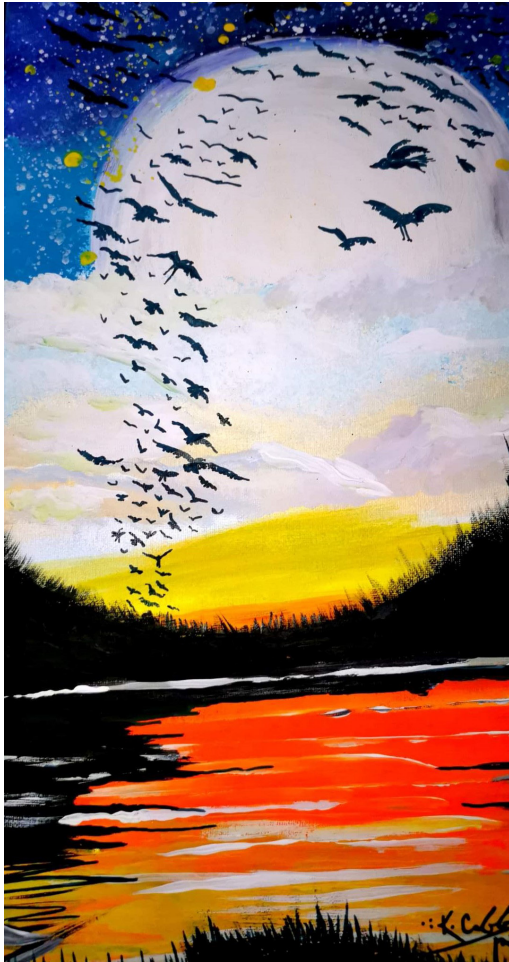
Speak up against that
bully, tell your parents &
teachers, go tell your grandmother
She will save & protect you. You
know you can feel safe &
protected in this world. Be very
assured you are in a safe
place, just go & tell someone
about that bullying & harassment.
Standup! You are safe!

Sincerely Yours
Preet.



Letter to my
younger self
(2022)

Infinite Faith Creations



Sincerely yours (2022)

Kendall Cobb

As I paint I learn how to wait for
beauty to unravel itself.
Details is what I see compared to
the unseen worlds
I created a piece of mindfulness
meditation.
A piece of my life's work.
To show the full potential of how
far you've come.

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 clichés 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.



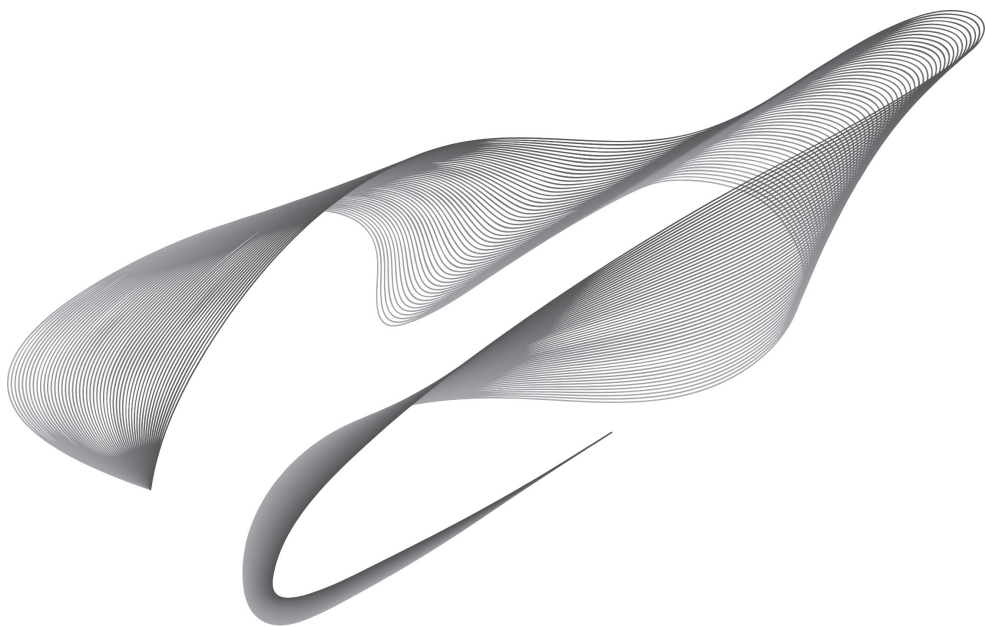
Natalie
Chan

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 “Technology” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Kerry Bell, Francisco Berlanga, Kendall Cobb, Infinite Faith Creations, Stephanie Esguerra, Amber Morrison Fox, Sofia Grace, Sara Lamond, Aaron Lampitoc, Opal McLean, Ris V. Rose, Krishnpriya Singh, and Ava Tkaczuk

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.

