

WITHIN TENSIONS

IF ONLY

IT WERE

FREE

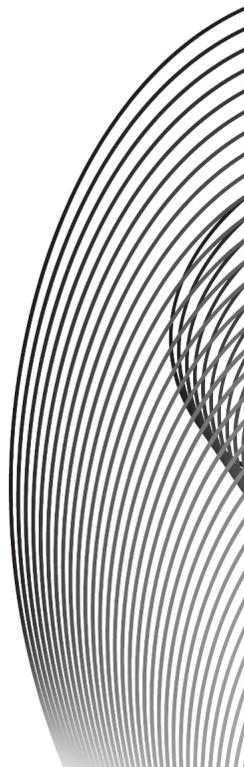


vol.19

MANIFESTO



WITHINTENSIONS



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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the **Skwxwú7mesh** (Squamish), **xwməθkwə́əm** (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.

You Are Enough

Ink and Gold Leafing on altered copy of King Lear
from 1904, Silkscreen
Monique Martin

**So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies
- Shakespeare – King Lear Act V : Scene III**

Look how beautiful, glamorous, fun, happy, balanced,
zen, successful, rich, valued.... I am.

Social media; the gilded butterfly of our time, when
“likes” became a plural noun. Only the best view, best
composition, best “reflection” of who we are appears on
social media, and the “likes” do seem to matter. Social
media masquerades as objectivity: When does filter and
fact become blurred? When does the footnote of a photo
become the subtitle and when is it the script?

Some efforts to make the perfect post takes it to a level
of ridiculousness, “influencers in the wild”. Technically, we
could gild a butterfly and make it more beautiful than it

already is but would it be worth the effort and the cost if the original beauty is forever hidden? Like a celebrity that can no longer just be a butterfly; the gilding limits their movement, weighs them down, and sometimes crushes them. The heart and the thumbs up icons on social media have become the added gold. This gold can hold people down, limit their movements, decisions, and ultimately drives much of the world we now live in.

Social media creates a fantasy world where people feel they can gild their own lives by creating exteriors. Making lives seem better, more exciting, more holistic, and more beautiful than in reality. Sometimes, life is just living no matter where you are. The human body has to be maintained; groceries have to be purchased, the meals cooked, the clothing washed, and the simple act of sleeping must be done.

None of these things can be gilded.











Dug from the Earth, Cut from the Cloth

Francisco Berlanga

My art is cut from the cloth.

It is built from the fibres of my memories, strands spun by someone else for me.

It is the art of upcycling pieces of a whole, of reuniting, and creating new.

It is an art that takes what it can get.

It is blended with fibres from different spindles, twisted meticulously with care.

It is as it needs to be, adapted for use beyond what I know it to do.

It is warm when wrapped around me and coarse when stepped upon.

It is fickle as a stubborn thread, reluctant to enter the eye of the needle.

It is the art that demands to be certain, it is not bound by metaphor and cannot waste its time with “like a”, “as a”, or “as if”

It is an art that seeks surrealism from mundanity, it revels in reality with joy and whimsy.

It anchors itself to me in moments of cultural learning.

It is matured as old as the practices that make and decays as the fibres that do the same.

It is obsolescence forced to the present, it is moments unearthed that I thought I'd forgotten.

It is a mordant that deepens a stain and fixes colours.

It settles like a sediment.

My art is dug from the earth.

SOUL OF INDIGENOUS (2021)

Infinite Faith Creations

The bird Raven is a messenger, a trickster, a teacher, a healer and a guardian spirit. It's very important to Indigenous people in Canada. The spirit of Raven protects, guides, heals, and brings transformation. As the maker of light, the raven symbolizes the ultimate creator of all things that existed before the beginning. This Raven was painted in watercolours.

THE SOUL OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE IS
ETERNAL TRUTH, IT CANNOT BE WIPED OUT,
FOR IT IS PROTECTED FIRMLY BY THE SPIRIT.



(Un)Conscious

Opal Mclean

I waver on my own thoughts.
As if someone can tell me they are wrong.
As if my own stream of consciousness is deceiving me,
in translation from thought to word.

Spoken words have always felt more comfortable for me.
because it is less concrete.
It cannot be published
unless recorded
but this recording often ages as I do
to the point of obsolescence
where my words are not heard anymore.

My voice ages alongside me while my writing remains
stagnant
A record of who I once was or what I once thought.
Is this ever the same? No,
because I am changing everyday.

Everyday becomes an opportunity to learn and to grow.
There is no pace to this growth.
I revert,
I digress,
or even stall altogether.

I can never tell you where I will be
until I am standing right in front of you.
That is the moment you know I am there.

I am there to listen as much as I am there to speak.
My presence becomes a performance that I cannot
explain,
as if I perform for myself
but those passing can still see.

I have never been one to like being watched
but eyes tend to find me.

Let them watch for I am done trying to be,
what is right in front of me.
Maybe that IS me
but that could also be him, her, them, or even this.

It will always be
No answer is true on this stage that I have taken.
The mundane, the everyday, things we all see.

Let me show you what it is like to be but through my own
eyes
Let me show you the world that I see
That in so many ways I create

As much as it has created me.

Window of Hope (2020)

Dr. Nafisa Sayed-Motiwala

This watercolor artwork is an outcome of the emotions that we all experienced during the pandemic lockdown. The artwork tries to capture the mixed emotions that we found being shut in our own homes and unable to meet our loved ones. The counterbalance of colours reflects the pain and emotions. The boy in monochrome is a reflection of each one of us who was let down; wondering what will happen next. The flower's branch coming from outside the window touching the arm of the boy is the ray of hope that we are experiencing right now by relentless efforts of frontline workers. The artwork tries to capture the pain and the impact of mental health that some of us might have experienced during unprecedented times and, yet, a single moment of hope has encouraged us to stay stronger. The spirit of going against all odds is the main idea of this work. It becomes a Manifesto as it redefines the concept of hope in times of uncertainty and reinstates the principle of survival of the fittest not only physically but mentally too.



New Worlds

M-A Murphy

Dream new worlds.
Dream worlds where there is justice.

Where flowers grow out of cracked pipelines,
Where baby whales survive.

Where heat waves aren't common,
Where the ocean can't light on fire from oil & gas.

Where people who are locked up are freed.
Where anyone and anything in a cage is freed.

Where there are no cages.

Where there is so much singing
And dancing.

Where healing is encouraged and supported.
Where time isn't commodified,
And neither are people.

Where land is given back
Where peoples' needs are met,
Where they can flourish and thrive.

Where children aren't taken away from their families,
Where voids within us are filled with healing and
community.

Where love can be seen
And felt
And heard.

Where kids are taught how to love in school,
Not how to do decimal fractions (unless they really want
to).

Where people don't fake orgasms,
Where it's safe for me to walk around at night,

Where the status quo is fucked with and dismantled,
Where there are no billionaires.

Where people can sleep in
And dream longer
And hold their lovers.

Where gender roles are abolished
Where weeds grow up through the concrete,
eventually pushing through.

Where no one goes hungry,
No one goes unloved,
No one is illegal, and
No one is left behind.

Where capitalism dies off,
Where we cultivate our inner and outer gardens
And the world sees so much gorgeous beauty.

Not the beauty that is through Instagram filters,
But a deep and real and true, profound beauty

One from the spirit.

Where we can all be who we actually are.
Because our hearts are given time and space.

“If you’re Free, you must Free somebody else” (2020)

Pedram Penhan

I created this sculpture in the beginning of the pandemic. As a queer refugee, who has sacrificed and has gone through so much to be where I am today, I wanted to manifest my freedom, and acknowledge my privilege of being able to speak up. I want to speak up for those who haven't been given a voice. For women, for Indigenous peoples, for Black people, for Queer people, for the people of Palestine, and anyone else who is reclaiming their rights and fighting for liberation and freedom. I believe if we have the privilege to speak up, we must do so. We must use our voices in times of injustice, even if it's not directly targeting us. We should stand up in the face of prejudice and division. I'm asking you kindly to speak up because it is much harder to do so for those who are being exploited and oppressed, and even more so because it is our moral obligation as human beings.











What Happened to Just Art? (2017/2021)

Audrey Shiu

*a/n: an add-on perspective
between my perspective of my
manifesto right now (written in
bolded letters) versus when I first
wrote it.*

Why is art the way it is now? What has changed for it to become this way? Has it always been this way and we were deceived about its true identity, when we were young aspiring artists?

We were deceived when we were children; that art was vast and full of freedom, where we were allowed to create what we wanted with our two hands and without concern of theories, rules nor opinions for that matter?

[In some way, I am reminded that we need to learn the rules to break it. I find it ironic that we have to relearn how to create more freely]

When we were young, we were able to create what we thought and were only limited by skill. Now, as older and 'mature' artists, we seem to have lost that ability in hopes to regain it. It is difficult to regain something that we had freely as 'children'.

[It is not that we have lost it. It is clearer that we were given limits and suppressed for our art, and thus seem to have lost something.]

In our earlier years, we knew nothing about the world we lived in yet were aware of everything it had. As aspiring young artists, art was a means to explore and express ourselves. Now? Art has become something cynical with judging eyes; whether from society or the biased norms that are forced upon it.

[Perhaps it is because we become concerned with the approval and conform to the expectations of others; seeking validation for our works]

What happened to art being simplistic? Yet rich with content. Not just concerned with philosophical ideas that could be seen as something gratuitous?

One's definition of art does not reflect another's.

It is defined by each person and artist. Should it be shared? Yes. Should it be decreed as an essential? No.

Art does not have to be just art.

It does not have to be serious. It does not need to be political, provocative, to be made into a statement or change the world. It can be but not necessarily.

[If it affects the individual, in one way or another, then that it is an accomplishment itself]

If needed, art can fulfill as a function. However, does it have to always be like this? Art does not have to be another tool to be used in order to create a movement. We are artists but we do not have to be politicians nor philosophers.

Art does not identify as a single form or universe. It is universal as long as one is able to perceive its potential.

Art is a craft that is created, not to be created. It is forever changing and hardly ever sticks to a single identity for long.

Art does not require guidelines to be considered as art. It can come in different forms and methods. Why can't we just create art for the sake of creating with our two hands, as if we were a god?

What happened to the freedom and emotions that art held, whether in its form or subject?

What happened to an art piece and its mere existence?

What happened to just Art?
[What is Art?]

Xibalba

Xibalba is rising unapologetically. The star, the inner light that brought joy to me as a little child, has now returned to reclaim herself, to express and to expand.

She is the manifestation of my breaking free from the set binaries and frameworks of social conditioning and programming. A dream unfolding to a scene, manifest, visible, fearless, loud, powerful, limitless.







Manifesto (Process-based Art), 2021

Aaron Lampitoc

"Art is an ideology exclusive to each individual, in which it is influenced through exploration, inquiry, and experimentation." (Aaron Lampitoc, 2015 [revised])

I believe that art is a constant process of continuously experimenting with one's ideas and material. Fundamentally, there are infinite methods and conceptual paths to construct one's work, and so it is the artist's choice to choose which path they want to follow. As a conceptual artist, I enjoy imagining the multiple variations my work can evolve into. I am fond of documenting my ideas to remind myself of these multiple paths and to perhaps inspire others to follow those paths in my stead.

I believe that an artwork has no conclusion—unless the artist "officially" declares it to be done. The work is open to constant revision, so it can constantly evolve. The artist can also decide to remake the artwork, restructuring it under a new context. Then, this process can be done over and over again, perhaps creating a series of works that originate from one focal point.

I believe that this ideology makes art-making fun and fresh. It allows people to find continuous inspiration and openly discuss artwork. Of course, this is not the only ideology to make art; but I find that this pursuit has allowed me to find new, creative ways to create art with limited resources.

Protest Baffoonary

Memoirs of a Moustache

There stands, in the shadows of the signs
The existential, delinquent eccentric, revolutionary
spokesperson
Writhing in spit and urine
They've been at this for hours
Cursing, cussing, yelling, and never yielding
For a word of rational logic to find the birth and maybe
change minds
Of the listener

They shout like dadaists
absurd and gibberish
Abstract and away from the point they wish to put across
To the listener
If they keep swinging their words like that, it all feels like
an aluminium bat,
not a friendly word spoken, not even a logical concept
written on the signs,
they wield
Like weapons of mass hysteria

Brainwash the masses
Just like the ones we're trying to overthrow
Brainwashed and hysteria
The protesters buffoonery

Slow down your tongue
You're not the first person to be upset by this
This isn't speeding away
We are all still young
Slow down
You keep sounding dumb
Slow down your tongue
You're not the first person to be upset by this
Slow down
Research the concepts your acting out against
Slow down your tongue
Be smarter than those you have disagreements with
Slow down

piece of heart

Natalie Chan

my art grows as I do
my uncertain steps grow steadier in time
as I confront the uncomfortable,
as I learn to trust myself

I lean in to embrace her
in all the moments she falters
because I know she can be strong,
she can be courageous
leading by listening to the voice within

my art grows with each question I ask
it muses to you the answers I've found
with the pulse of my heart that it carries
I am embodied within it
asking to be heard
my art flows crimson

the blood shed wraps me in healing
my veins carry the roots of where I come from, reminds
me how I am alive
so I pour out my past, present, future

my art sheds its veil for vulnerability
my art insists to share the precious life that I hold
my art commands quiet fervent
a turbulent storm where peace reigns still
my art forages on its sisyphian journey
my art dares to shed light on darkness that threatens
unfathomable

my art holds out its hands to you
in outstretched invitation
along the depths of humanity
to the heights of heavens
may my heart reach yours

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.



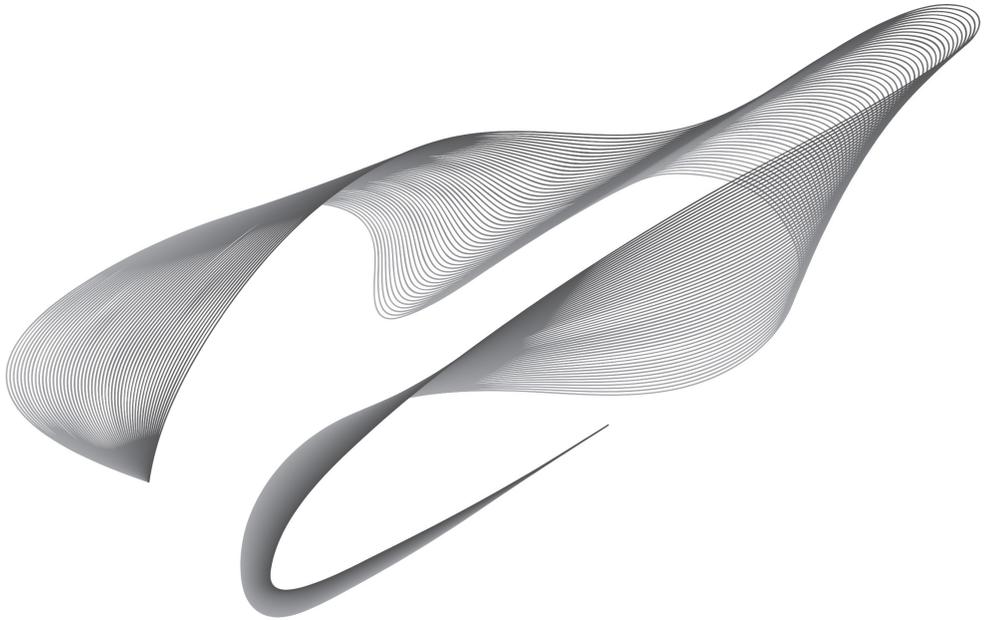
Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan is a contemporary artist based in Vancouver, Canada. She pursued her undergraduate studies at Simon Fraser University and obtained her BFA in Visual Arts. Her practice focuses on the emotional relationships that connect people & places, as well as the unpacking of inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. Often engaged with topics of trauma, she aims to create and facilitate spaces of reflection, healing, and reconciliation, offering them as tangible possibilities in each encounter with her artwork. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding the intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas & significance in mark making as a form of storytelling.



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 “Space“ and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

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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.

