

# WITHIN TENSIONS



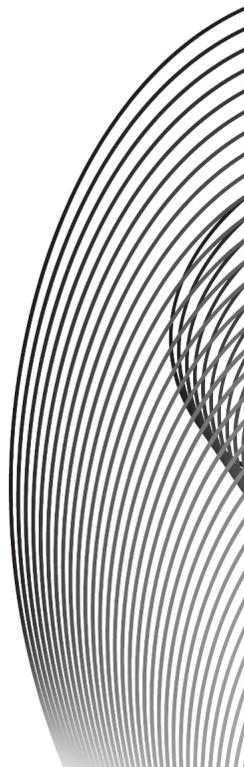
vol.7

PLACE





WITHINTENSIONS



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July 2020  
vol. 7

PLACE



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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.



Francisco Berlanga, *Spoils* (2019)

# Quarter Cubic Meter (2020)

Francisco Berlanga

A couple of years ago my cousin hosted a Posada celebration for the friends she had met in university.

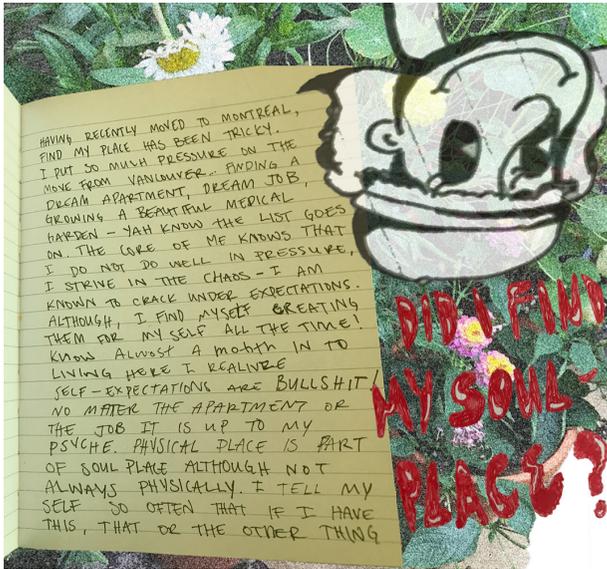
-A Posada is a Mexican advent celebration that is meant to prepare for Christmas. During the celebration, the men go outside and sing as if they are Joseph seeking shelter at the inn and the women inside sing as the innkeepers that deny entry three times. After the singing, traditionally, a star-shaped pinata is broken-

At my cousin's Posada, we didn't really know the lyrics to the song. Some guests didn't speak Spanish, and the only pinata we had was a Finding Nemo pinata that our aunt had given to my cousin when she was a kid. The piñata was one of the dozens that my aunt brought over when we were young. They had provided the piñatas for all my cousins birthdays, but this was the last one she had. When we broke open the pinata, the usual candy flew everywhere and we all rushed to pick it up on the freezing December pavement. I collected some cone-like pieces from the wreckage to gather my candies and, after examining the pieces, I realized that inside they were made with newspaper clippings from Mexico that were published in 2002. This pinata had been sealed for at least 15 years and the inside walls were like a time capsule to me.

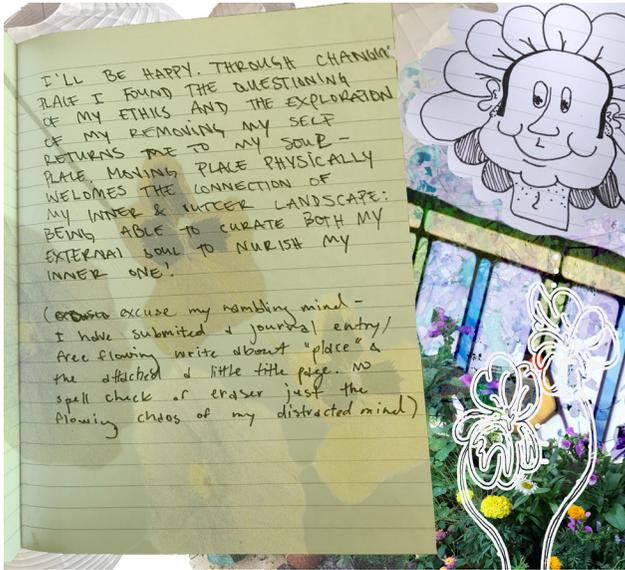
I think about how this was the last piñata we had that was made in Mexico, in a way I felt that the place of Mexico City was sealed inside it for 15 years. As It sat undisturbed in my cousin's house, for all I know Mexico City was still active inside it. Unobserved the quarter cubic meter of city air inside still resonated with smells, sounds, and feelings from the city that my aunt had sealed away for us. When we opened it, I wondered if it was lost? Maybe now a small quarter cubic meter of Mexican dense air still roams Vancouver maybe, its assimilation allowed for the whole of Vancouver's air to get just a little bit closer to Mexico?

I think it's really unlikely that my aunt would send us another batch of pinatas especially not shaped like early 2000s cartoon characters but if I make a pinata I hope that the roaming quarter cubic meter puff of air might find its way back into my papier mâché mess of a creation, at least for a bit. Since I'll never know for sure, I think I'll always act like it has come back to me. Each piñata with its potential to be holding that same air will hold in it a little bit of that place. Until I eventually open it, I'll have a small part of the city with me and, with every pinata I make, I think that I move myself a little closer to the place that we let out near Christmas a little while ago.

## Mind Place (2020) Kitty Walker



Having recently moved to Montreal, find my place has been really tricky. I put so much pressure on the move from Vancouver... Finding a dream apartment, a dream job, growing a beautiful medical garden— yah know the list goes on. The core of me knows that I do not do well in pressure, I strive in the chaos— I am known to crack under expectations. Although, I find myself creating them for myself all the time! Know almost a month into living here I realize self-expectations are bullshit! No matter the apartment or the job it is up to my psyche. Physical place is part of soul place although not always physically. I tell my self so often that if I have this, that or the other thing



I'll be happy. Through changing place I found the questioning of my ethics and the exploration of my removing my self returns me to my soul-place. Moving place physically welcomes the connection of my inner and outer landscape: being able to curate both my external soul to nurish my inner one!

(Excuse my rambling mind- I have submitted. Journal entry/free flowing write about & the attached a little title page. NO spell check or eraser just the flowing chaos of my distracted mind)

## The InBetween (2020)

Opal Mclean

Growing up in Suburbia, there was a certain lifestyle of travel. Home was tucked away from the city where all the business (and most of the pleasure) dwelled. My parents always praised the silence of the suburbs-- they said I was lucky to be surrounded by greenery and open space to run. We lived in the perfect place where the store was just up the road but the farms were equally as close. Both my parents eventually started working in Vancouver and, as a result, some days I joined them on their commute to work. I wanted to live amongst the noise my parents wanted to escape. For me, that's where life resided. That was the place that everyone flocked to whether it be for work, school, or entertainment.

It was around when I got my license that I realized how much time was spent travelling from place to place. Life was not as simple as waking up and driving five minutes down the road to work. It was planning to accommodate this in between space; planning to accommodate a travel time much like everyone else residing in the suburbs. I was torn between these two places. At first, I left the suburbs behind to pursue the running dream

of being an artist in the city. I found myself stuck in the stream in my daily life; going from place to place to do everything I could imagine. I was running but in a different way than when I was a kid. It was almost like being pushed by a giant wall toward a goal or destination. If I chose to run, maybe I would find a better place than the pushing forces behind me.

I still find myself running in between my two homes. Much like my parents, I enjoy the silence of the suburbs. The break from constant movement gives me the chance to reflect on where I am right now. If I had to give this place a name, it's the InBetween. Not only am I still travelling between two cities I call home, but I find myself at the launching point of my life. Graduated, with a degree, still living with my parents, on the verge of finding a career, in the midst of a pandemic. The InBetween comes with much uncertainty but it also comes with reflection. It gives me the time to reflect on my current and ever changing place in this world but it is also the road to a new place. One where I may be comfortable stopping for a moment.

## Preservation (2018)

(MDF, Glass, Quick mix concrete, Cardboard, Hibiscus, Vegetable oil, Vinegar, Salt, Sugar, White rum)

Dwayne Tonta



“This work is an attempt to physically preserve a memory from a distant past using traditional pickling methods with modern industrial elements. The two elements work in harmony in solidifying the memory of a place that is constantly “urbanized” and stripped of its natural beauty; a place once known for its vibrant colours and unique ecosystem is rendered grey and lifeless”



## Bare Bones, Bare Home (2019)

Natalie Chan

Bare Bones, Bare Home was developed out of questioning what it means to KNOW YOUR PLACE, the title of SFU's 2019 BFA Graduating Exhibition. To know one's place demands that we examine our positionality and asks that we sift through the varying streams of thought and information we receive and be able to process what is relevant and valuable to us. We, the graduating cohort, each presented our own ways to "unsettle and disrupt normalized narratives and cultural imperatives in hopes of seeking places unbounded by borders" through our individual projects. My work extends an invitation to viewers to wrestle with the complexities of place: in the context of the unceded grounds of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), x̣məθkwəỵəm (Musqueam), and Səl̓ílwatał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples which were seized through colonial efforts and are continually developed on today and our positionality as settlers who live here; more specifically, in the context of the academic institution and our positionality as students who are challenged to grow, yet are often presented limitations in its structure; more personally, in the context of my faith and my positionality between earthly and heavenly obligations.



My art practice aims to understand the relationships between people and place, seeking out the possibilities of healing and reconciliation. This project became a means to process the generational trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples, based in our geographical and historical context. The innate inability to fully articulate an instance of trauma – let alone a generational pain – challenges one to grapple with what remains instead; this task is extended to the viewer by invitation through my doorway – a literal and figurative site of encounter – and the manifestation of remnants are expressed as scattered text throughout the gallery. The threshold constructed of cedar offers a duality of aesthetics: one side has been handled to best remove any rough qualities of the wood and painted white, made to blend in with the walls of the gallery space. This sanitized look is contrasted by the natural cedar, an insistence that it belongs in the space just as well, a resilience seen even in the texture of the wood peeking through the paint

even after repeated sanding processes. My thoughts quietly filled the gallery space in white and grey text that blended seamlessly with the flooring and walls, interacting with the other artworks and questioning the structures in place. These snippets of text came together to develop my understanding of my own positionality and place in relation to this land, the people I share it with, and the contributions I can make through my art practice. Though I cannot personally speak to the traumas experienced by Indigenous peoples, as a person residing on their unceded land, I can respond by actively taking part in these conversations, learning from, and understanding their perspective, to not simplify the complexities of the situation to something that is easily digestible when it is not, and ultimately see progress achieved through the transformation of societal perspectives by inviting others into these dialogues as well.

(DE - ) CONSTRUCTION DUST  
GENTRIFICATION  
OF COMMUNITY  
OF THE SPIRIT  
OF THE MIND  
DIS - PLACE  
HISTORIC AMNESIAC  
SPACE  
THE LAND LIVES THROUGH  
US  
THIS WAY  
THAT WAY  
BARE HOME  
BARE BONES  
THEN & HERE NOW  
FOUNDATION

BLANK SLATE  
SPACE  
COM - MODIFY  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
WALLED IN LIMBINAL  
BORDERS  
MADE FOR A RENEWAL,  
WASHING WHITE  
MADE FOR THE REZONING,  
WHITE WASHING  
SHAKY FAULTLINE UTOPIA  
POSITION  
PRIVILEGE  
POWER  
WHERE AM I  
LOOKING TO  
I AM HERE  
I LIVE HERE  
WE ARE HERE  
WE LIVE HERE

This subtle affective quality of the work aims to facilitate a slow but steady healing process; though loss and pain is embodied throughout the work, it hopes to provide a space for mindful discourse by highlighting our connections to one another and this place we share, allowing for the gradual release of uncovered emotions and pain and lead to a collective empathic understanding. Bare Bones, Bare Home is a celebration of resilience, made to re-member and re-build community, and an offering of sacrificial exchange – it takes work for one to humble themselves and honestly confront irreversible wrongs of the past, and actively work towards a solution that leads to healing and reconciliation. It invites visitors to move forward together and embody gestures that work towards shaping this place we call home into a better place for all.

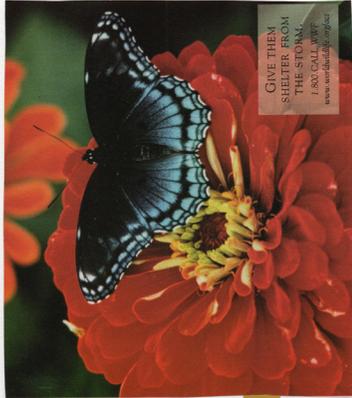
## The Messenger (2020)

Collage on paper

24cm x 31cm

Danyal Imani

While travelling across Europe two summers ago, I collected publication materials from different places as a way to have a piece of that place with me forever. Over the past couple months, I have decided to compile these pieces into collage works that describe a different narrative. 'The Messenger' is about two things in my life that I believe bring me messages constantly; the natural world and people. Whether it's overhearing a conversation that rings true to you in that moment, or finding feathers and butterflies that instantly remind you of something or someone. Only when we are not distracted, but rather in-tune, and living in the moment, that these messages become more clear.



## My Atelier (2020)

Victoria Mulja

For the past 20 plus years, I have lived in a private and safe life. On the top floor lies a hallway, leading into three different rooms, each with a unique personality and style. One of the rooms is a small confined, cramped, and chaotic bedroom, with a queen-sized bed filled with stuffed animals, and a working desk taking up most of the space. On one side of the bright green wall are various artworks, both in digital and traditional format. Most of the artworks are popular video game posters, in contrast to the centerpiece that is a large full body watercolor portrait of myself. All serve as inspirations for potentially future artworks. My workspace consists only of a desk, on which I use a laptop to create artworks. The workspace also serves as a place to sit back and leave everyday stress behind. Digital art is my primary art medium, and all it takes to produce them is two pieces of equipment; a laptop and a drawing tablet. My workspace includes a pencil holder, a mountain of colourful keychains, and a mini posing mannequin.

When I work on art projects and other subject matters, people occasionally moving through the space are those close to me since my birth. My mother is the first to come into the room when she asks me to do a non art related task. Other than my mother, my father, and my brother come into my room for non art related subjects. Those important in my art practice are my visual art cohort, whom I have known since the first year of university. They are the ones who critically evaluate my art projects, and work as a team to put together two memorable art exhibitions during 3rd and 4th year. I also got to know my cohort through the materials and topics they are interested in. From paintings, video, and installation work, we have stuck together like one big family. I will always remember them whenever I create art projects.

## Meet the Team



Francisco  
Berlanga

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.



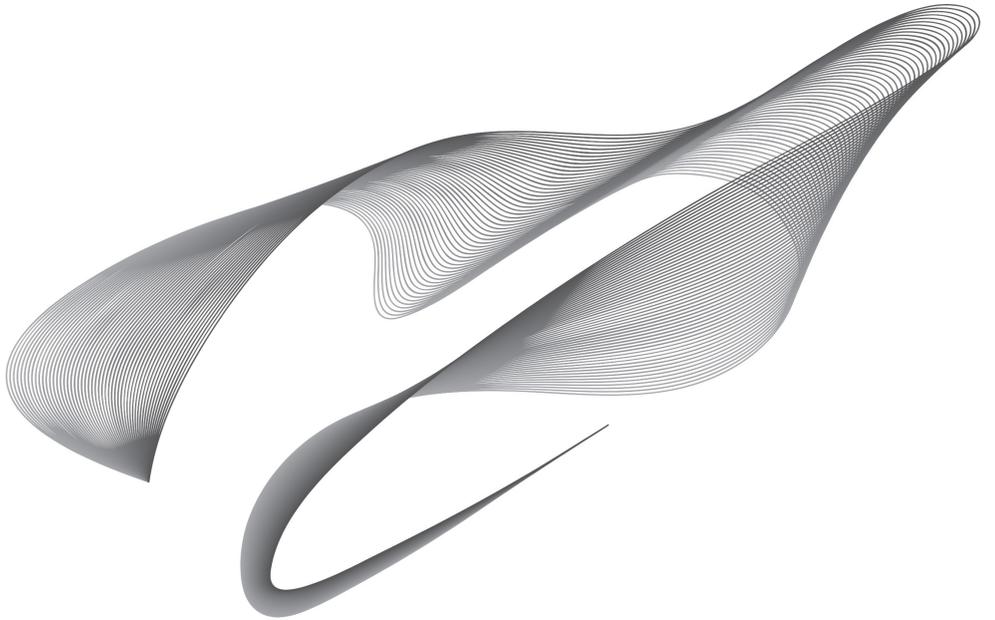
Natalie  
Chan

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 “Persona“ and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

## Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Danyal Imani, Opal Mclean, Victoria Mulja, Dwayne Tonta, and Kitty Walker

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.

