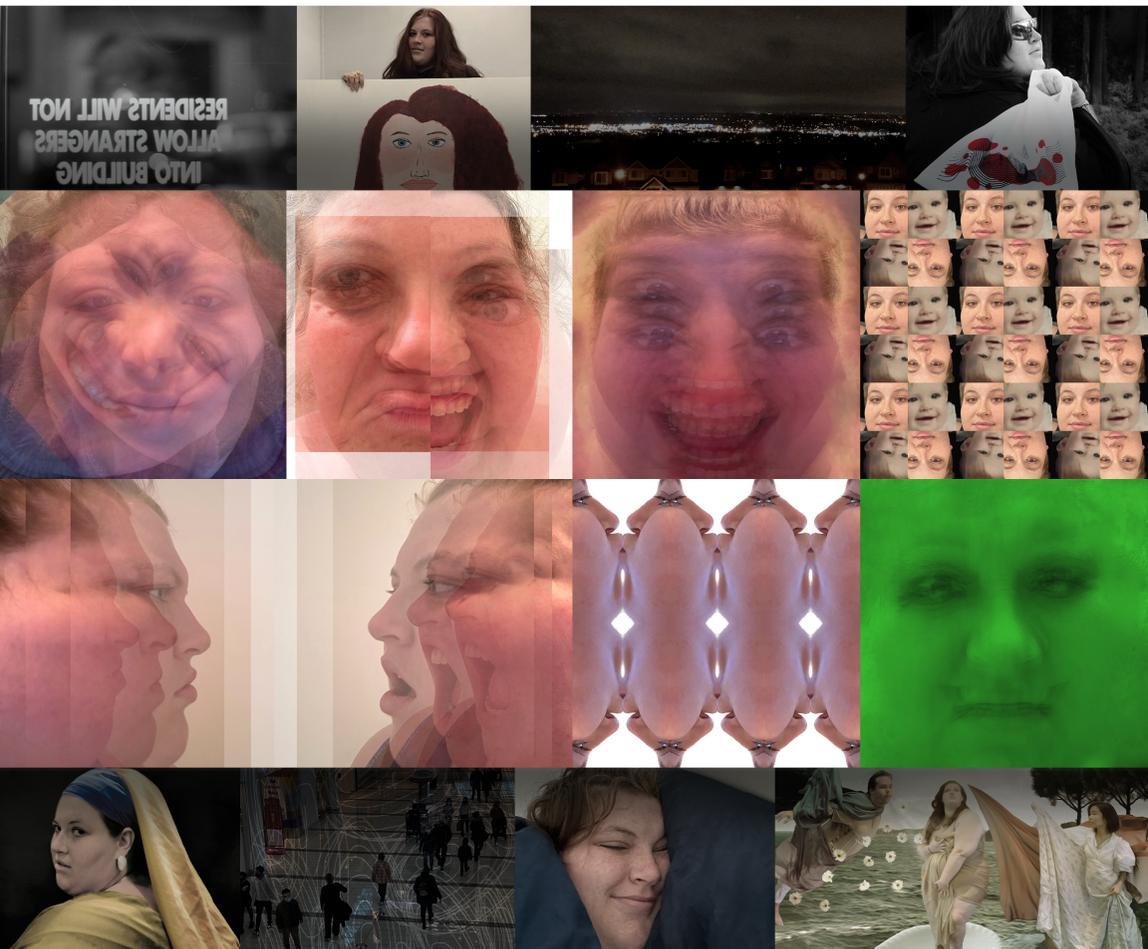


WITHIN TENSIONS

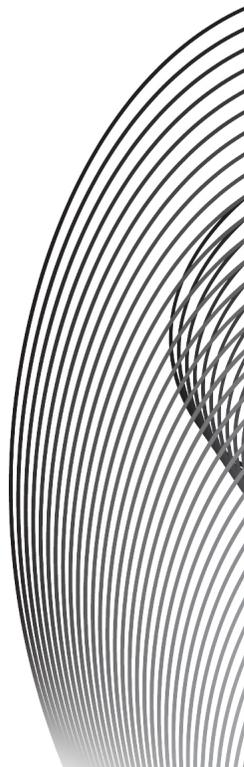


vol.44

OPAL



WITHINTENSIONS



WITHIN TENSIONS

October 2023
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OPAL

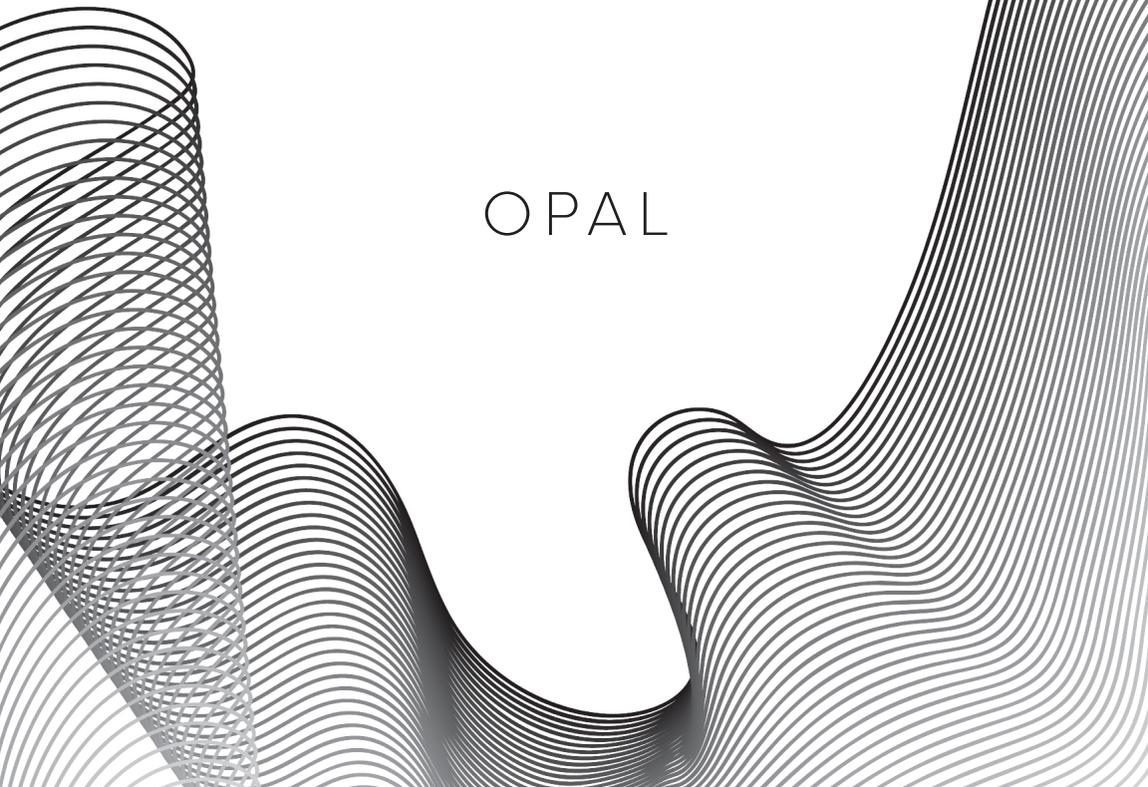


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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous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

This issue is dedicated to Opal Mclean who on July 19th, 2023, Opal Mclean was involved in an accident and passed away. There are not enough words in the world that could capture, that could truly express the loss of Opal.

Opal was a founding member and editor of our online arts magazine *Withintensions*. Every word that passed through our issues were reviewed by her eyes - if you ever emailed us, it is likely you spoke with her. It is impossible to describe the major role Opal took up not only in our organisation but in our lives. *Withintensions* was founded in 2019 by three friends who were simply trying to create an accessible arts space after graduating from SFU, Opal tied us together and helped form the ethos that we still carry on to this day. Opal was also a wonderful artist. Her work focused on her relationship with her mental health, often expressed through whimsical forms such as her dancing videos and her recent series of mutilated selfies. Her writings expressed her inner thoughts processed through memories, poetics, and musings. In her artist statement, Opal described herself as the "selfish artist", but anyone who has ever had the pleasure of collaborating with her knows that she always brought so much generosity to the process of creating. Opal, above all, was an irreplaceable part of our lives and her impact on us is something we will always carry with us.

Opal will be missed greatly, her vibrance lives on through her art, through the magazine, and through her friendships.

to my dearest Opal

Natalie Chan

I...wish I had sent this letter to you. honestly, there's so many things I wish for these days.

I wish I could hear your laugh again as much as I miss hearing your snores too, as you've dozed off again for the countless time while we're watching shows like Gossip Girl or Once Upon A Time together. I wish we were still deliberating over what place we should go for dinner and I'd inevitably hear you suggest hotpot for what seemed like the hundredth time, and I wish we were still able to share another meal together because I miss sharing pieces of our sushi rolls like it was a school lunchtime - you'd share your edamame and kaarage with me then, too, because your eyes would often be bigger than your stomach. I wish I could still wander serious art spaces with you and embrace them together with such a silly childlike attitude as you do with all things, posing with works that made you laugh, pointing out the ridiculousness of art world but still making it a point to take note of the art that genuinely moved you. I wish I could still sit in the passenger seat with you again as you drive me home after hanging at Fran's place, blasting whatever was playing on the radio, or singing and reminiscing along to Marianas Trench or Lady Gaga...whatever music shuffled on your playlist, from all those years ago that we grew up to. those late night drives home are my most treasured moments with you. I wish we were still sitting parked on my driveway, quietly sharing with each other what was going on in our lives and thoughtful silences. I wish I could still hug you goodbye and tell you "goodnight, I love

you!", if even for one more time. I hope I was able to tell you that often enough for you to remind you how loved you are. I wish I were sharing all this love I have for you with you, rather than pouring it out into more words you won't be able to read.

I wish I knew how to wrap my mind around your passing better. most days, my brain still likes to think, "it's been a while since I've seen Opal, I wonder how she's doing...it'll be nice to see her again the next time we hang out with Fran or Annie." before there's the whiplash of reality taunting me again. but I know that even though your presence is physically gone from me now, it'll never really be goodbye. not in the sense that I'm unable to make peace with what has come to pass, but that your life's impact is woven into the fabric of mine.

I was scrolling through Instagram today and I read this quote, "I am the sum of all the people who have ever loved me." so, thank you, Opal for all your boisterous, unapologetic love. I'm endlessly grateful for the time we shared together. what a blessing that I had so much of your time here, from our first encounter in Sharon's studio course to the last time we ate at IKEA and imagined our lives set in the showrooms we wandered through. thank you for sharing so much of yourself with me...for sharing with me the things you liked, the things you hated, the things that made you laugh, the things you dreamt of, the things you hoped to work towards, the things you were afraid of...thank you for trusting me with such precious parts of yourself. thank you for being such a wonderful friend. thank you for being my friend, my dearest Opal.

to my dearest opal,

I recently received a letter in the mail from Fran,
and I thought it was such an exciting idea to
combine my love of writing notes to those
important to me and the documentation of
the progression in our art practice. I hope to
receive a reply back from you ♥

I think, despite how difficult the past year
has been (or probably because?) rather than
despite), I have grown more and more comfortable
in my skin - who I am, and ^{as an artist}
_{now that translates}

Don't get me wrong, I'm still not satisfied with
how things are, ^{but} I'm learning to sit with
myself because there is no "end goal", but the
ever evolving process of growth. I think
it's so exciting to think of all the ways I see
you undergoing your own, ^{journey}, seeing the
moments where things click for you and there
are those bursts of inspiration.

I'm so thankful for you, both as a
close friend and someone who is an influence
in my art practice - in the moments

where I've had doubts in myself or wonder
if I'm maybe going crazy, you've always
been there to tell me it's okay to feel what I'm
feeling. I'm really grateful for that.



a drink of you from me &
from last year, when you
came over to my backyard
and played boardgames. it
(2020)

Toast the Audience!

Kitty Walker

Opal and I crossed paths during our time at university. Though our encounter was brief, the impressions she left on my life were profound and lasting.

From the very first day we met, Opal had a unique way of wrapping everyone she encountered in an aura of laughter and warmth. She had a rare talent for making people feel at ease, and her infectious laugh could melt even the iciest of moments. I'll never forget our days in video art class marked by our boisterous hooting and hollering, a sound that, looking back, I would give anything to hear again. We often spent hours watching the silliest of YouTube videos until our stomachs hurt from laughter. We probably have half the views of that dumb gummy rat video.

I've always considered Opal as a fearless artist, never hesitant to put her heart and soul into her creations. One

of many memories that stuck with me from our time in art school was our collaborative project, which we called Your Toast. It started as a joke to make a giant stuffed piece of toast, that turned into a pretty bomb piece of art. We created a massive stuffed toast with Josie, turning our studio into a makeshift toaster and projecting the toast's "burning."

While our time together during school was relatively short, the impact Opal left on my life is indelible. It's been over three years since I've last seen her, but I can't shake the memory of her infectious laughter echoing through the studio walls. Opal, I hope you're somewhere continuing to create, and that your laughter still warms the hearts of those around you.

I feel so fortunate to have crossed paths with you <3









Victoria Mulja

Hello. My name is Victoria, an artist and graphic designer who specialises in drawing, painting, digital art, and other mediums.

I have known Opal since my first year at Simon Fraser University. The first time that I met her was when we did a group project for our Moving Images class in the first year. We visited the art gallery and I remember seeing an installation of a person watching TV. I was talking to her about how it relates to me as someone who plays a lot of video games and she understands me very well. At that moment, I knew that she was an open-minded person who likes listening to what others have to say.

Other than being a talented artist and visual performer, Opal had quite the sense of humour. The one memory that I will never forget was our Victoria trip back in 2020. In the morning, the bus was about to board the ferry to Victoria. When looking out of the bus window, I saw some trees blowing in the wind and out of my mind I said:

“Wow. Those trees are quaking”

Back then, I did not know what “quake” means in terms of slang. After I said that, Opal started laughing, and she said that it was the highlight of the trip. From time to time, Opal would recall what I said and I would also start laughing too. One month later, I used that phrase for one of the withintensions issues with the theme “Humour”. I did a drawing and captioned it “well, looks like nature is quaking.” After submission, Opal DMed me about my submission, saying that it was fantastic. I knew that Opal still remembered that time when I said the phrase during the Victoria Trip, knowing that it was her favourite moment.

Opal, I miss you, your friendly and outgoing personality, your humour and your laughter. An amazing visual artist and performer gone too soon. It was an honour knowing you throughout our time at SFU.

-Victoria

Ava Fanzega-Mcbean

Opal Mclean, my lovely cousin, always radiated with her bright personality. Growing up, we spent time together baking at my grandmother's house. We enjoyed icing cakes and decorating cookies, I vividly remember the time we made hundreds of Halloween bat cookies for her classmates at school. These memories with Opal will forever hold a special place in my heart.

-Ava Fanzega-Mcbean



Jesse Del Fierro

Dearest Opal,

I named a little birdie tattoo after you.
She's contemplative,
but restful.
It's a little how I hope you are right now.
Not because I don't think you're partying,
Making a joyful raucous,
but because I hope whatever you get up to is everything
you couldn't even dream it would be,
everything you need it to be and so much more.

Because the world wasn't enough for you.

I think you would have loved being a reason to miss work.
I think you would have laughed at how Oscar told me the
news.
I wanted to make an Instagram post about you because
I think you would have appreciated it, and maybe
because I never post anything, it could have been
something special.
But I didn't because words were never enough, and we
are if anything,
recovering perfectionists.
I'm sure you would have laughed anyway at the extreme
effort of the many drafts I made.

I think you would have been okay with it.

I miss your smell.

Which is a fucking WEIRD THING TO SAY, but they say that smell is the strongest connecting sense to remember, and I never want to forget you. You made us feel like we were bigger than life, and that it was fucking rad to be bigger than what others wanted us to be. And let's be real, we were a lot of peoples favorites and a few least favorites. And what a way to live, to be so far from in between or negligible. We were extreme in the best fucking way possible.

Thank you.

Thank you for always believing in me. You always believed in me. Thank you for always loving me in such an utterly loud and beautiful way. I'm sorry I didn't get to see you after our years apart, but a part of me will carry you forever. I have a little birdie tattoo named after you, and every time someone tells me it's cute, I'll remember that you made me a little bit more beautiful. I love you so much. Thank you for letting me be a prince that could make you laugh. Rest in Power Art Hoe.

Meet the Team

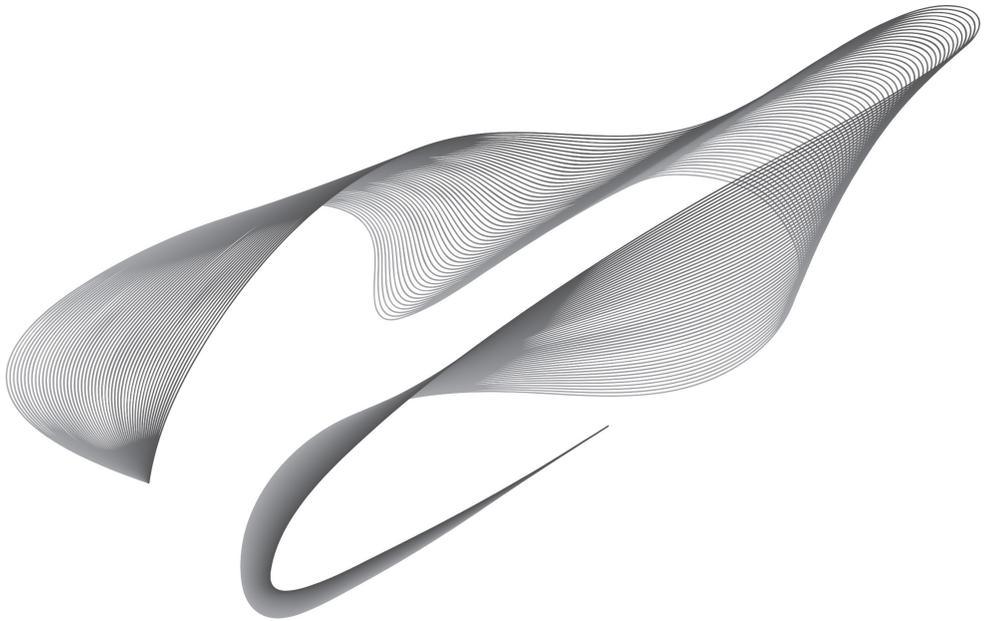
We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, 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.



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 theme of "Form" and submissions are now open

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Jesse Del Fierro, Ava Fanzega-Mcbean, Victoria Mulja, and Kitty Walker.

We would also like to thank Opal Mclean for all she did.

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

