

WITH TENSIONS

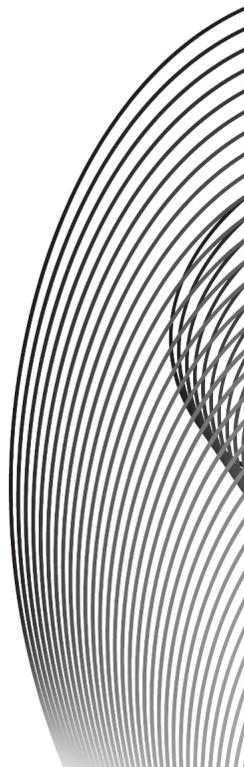


vol.27

FABLE



WITHINTENSIONS



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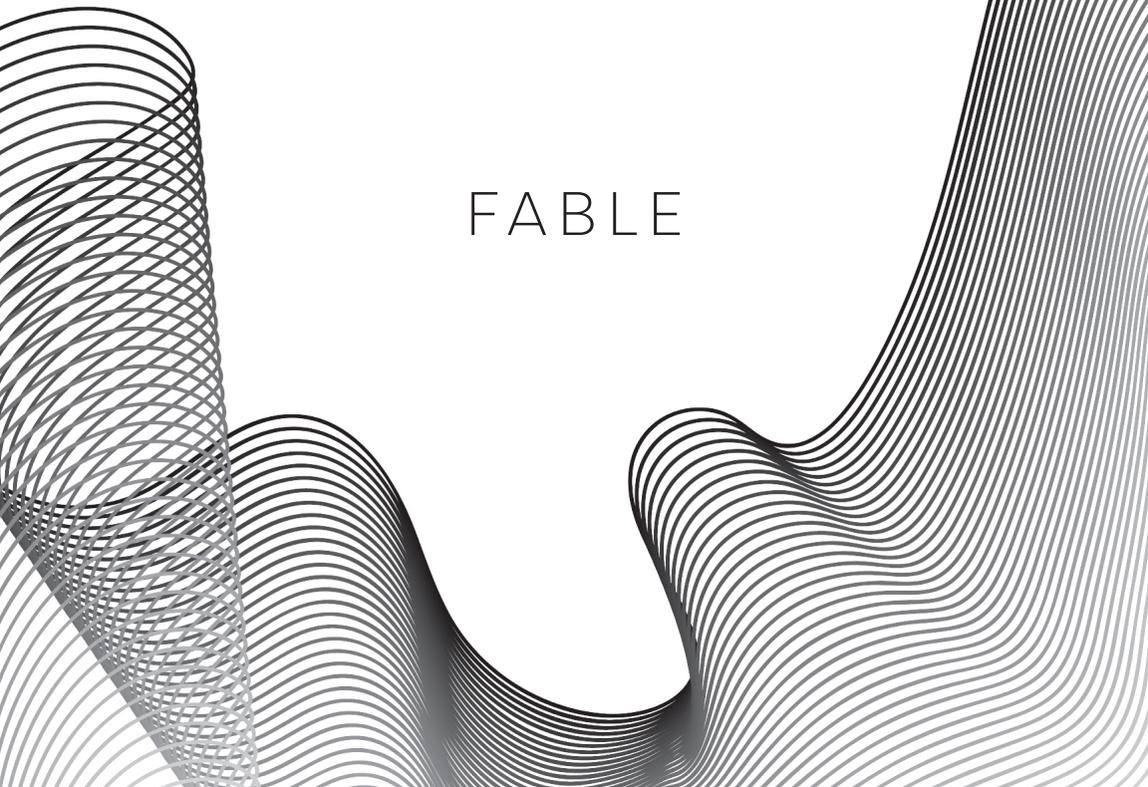


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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous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



The Blind Cat

Stella-Charles Fisher

This is the story of the blind cat with a hundred eyes.

The young blind cat was quiet. He sat in rooms for hours before anyone realized he was there. He was a watcher, and he preferred it that way, for you often hear more than is intended when you say nothing.

One such night, he lay on the beams of a tavern and overheard a greedy fox complaining to his company: "I shall not aid some beggar! If he wishes for riches he can take them like the rest of us. What does he expect? A sack of gold to fall at his feet?"

At that moment, the young blind cat leapt down from the beam onto the bar table where the fox perched. The young blind cat circled the greedy fox and purred:

"But you have no gold? And why is that? Are you not as fast and sneaky as the other foxes? Have you not the courage? The will? I could easily make a sack of gold fall to your feet."

The greedy fox did not take well to this and in an attempt to mock the young blind cat retorted "if you can do that,

you can have my eyes.” The crowd burst into laughter and the young blind cat slunk away.

But the young blind cat did just that. He knew the castle mice and they guided him to the royal family’s gold. He generously filled a potato sack with coins and gems and went on his way.

The next night, the young blind cat returned to the tavern and found the greedy fox. He placed the sack at the fox’s feet and waited. At first, the greedy fox just ignored him. But when he realized the young blind cat had done the seemingly impossible task, he attempted to take the sack without a word. The young blind cat was smarter than that; he caught the greedy fox swiftly and without another word plucked and severed his eyes from their sockets.

The tavern stood still for a moment as the greedy fox felt for his eyes and the young blind cat exited calmly.

Now, the young blind cat didn’t mind being blind - he preferred it in fact. But he couldn’t let a fine pair of eyes go to waste. So he placed them on his elbows, below his fur, just enough to see behind him.

The next week he found a prideful spider in a barn who'd bet the other spiders she could weave the largest spider web by morning. Her desperation clear, the young blind cat stepped in: "I could ensure you have the most beautiful web by morning." The prideful spider did not want to accept the help of the young blind cat but eventually gave in. She was running out of time and would be unable to uphold her reputation single-handedly. So, the young blind cat spun threads of silver for the prideful spider to weave. By dawn, the prideful spider had a web that rivaled Arachne's.

It was then the young blind cat revealed his payment: her eyes. Unmoved by the spider's fear, the young blind cat plucked her eight eyes out and left the spider with her web.

The young blind cat placed his new-found eyes along his back, the better to see in many new directions.

And on it went. It became almost too easy to find someone with a sin to prey on. That year, the young blind cat caught a lustful goat pining over a gentle gazelle.

A few winters passed, and the blind cat seized a gluttonous boar who was immediately won over by shaking the trees of a town for their fallen fruit.

Three droughts later, the blind cat trapped a raging lion in need of someone to enact his revenge.

After many moons, the old blind cat hooked the slothful sloth in search of someone to care for him.

Following many lifetimes, the old blind cat beguiled the envious cobra who wished for the rattles of ten rattle snakes to be sewed onto himself.

One by one the cat placed his new eyes onto himself, onto everywhere but where his belonged. The old blind cat became all seeing. Some say all knowing. The eyes gave the old blind cat a vessel to see through time and space; to experience, and loss. He gathered loss like eyes. A prophetic kind of instinct led him to more. More of those who could not help but to lean into temptation, to say yes to reward without knowing the price.

Who threw the baby over the picket fence?

Estranged memories tied together through broken translations

Francisco Berlanga

How do we form identity when we are left alone? Must I find a reference point to tether myself?

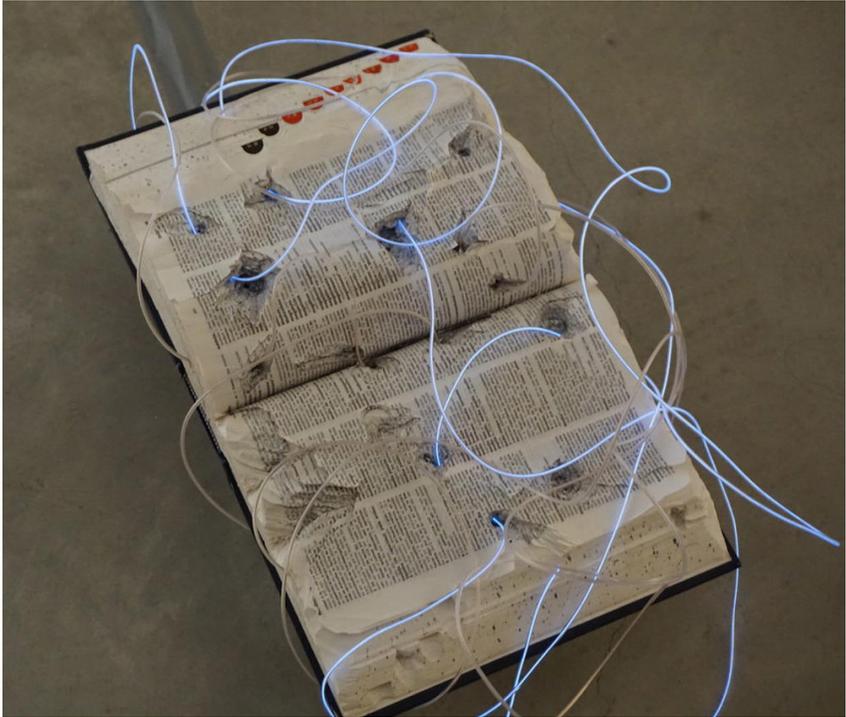
I tunnel through my knowledge excavating materials, producing loss but also providing pathways.

My lack of understanding often renders my past inaccessible. I am left to confront it with what little is still known and untouched.

Spaces become hazed in echoed stories and documents of my past. Like the introduction of a character late in the story I am blindsided by the past, once essential tools are rendered redundant and reduced to reliquary.

Artifacts decaying but yet growing new understandings, lines of story's that tie my ends together.

With what is left behind, I face a problem of whether I can speak of what I will never fully know, or risk becoming further estranged from histories I did not live but cannot deny? Perhaps I just dont have the words?



Egan Ksenia

Basement

I grew up
on construction sites, like
a neighbourhood
where we moved first
and no one ever followed.

The property lay wild and hollowed
out; the ground
carved out for basements
no one ever claimed
for a home, so

We whiled away summers
wherever the wild lilac
took over,
hid out in the trees by the field
where nothing ever grew;
chased our bikes down the
the slope of the street where my best
friend
bust her lip once and cried
so hard I did too.

We climbed up the naked
manhole covers we had
made castles and watched as the
tadpoles we caught fell asleep
in their buckets.

And last year
I found families
had grown homes there
after all.
I imagine they keep
baby pictures and broken
strollers
in the basement
where I once spent

a soft and sunny afternoon
daydreaming
in the late-summer hay.

I watched them a long time
from the passenger's seat.

Safety

When I was young and small
my tiny fists reached up to be held.
My hands the size of crabapples,
squirming for the closest person with
a pulse
to come,
pick me up,
hold me higher,
carry me.
Hold me so I know I belong to
someone
and I have a place in this enormous
world.
When I was young and reaching
to be lifted, higher and closer and
more,
that is how I feel when I stare at this
grown
thing in the mirror and think
“Will no one hold me?
Will no one wish to swing me up into
the air

and tell me I am theirs?"
Mom,
for what else will I call the calming
twilight space
Between my ceiling and the floor?
Mom,
I'm scared.
I think I've been dangling
from the inches of myself
that are growing wearier by the day.
I think I am growing
larger
without growing
better
because I can't even convince myself
I am real.
Mom,
I am always
wanting,
always looking,
never satisfied.
I am dangling from the last of myself,

and I am struggling to find home.
Would..
would you mind?
If you hold me one last time?
Between the ceiling to the floor,
hold me
somehow.
Hold me
in a way
that can bear the weight
of the chaos
under my human skin,
under my human ache,
my human hunger
for my own sake.
I am too large to be lifted now,
but come,
and let's pretend.
Let's see how long
I can hold myself at night
and call it
safety.

To All the Things I Almost Missed

when I was in preschool
the teachers would make us go
outside on warm days
and run through the sprinklers.

I hated it.

the waterlogged lawn squishing
between my toes,
the cold water spraying me in erratic
unforgiving bursts,
strong enough to hurt,
if I got too close.

I would do it for a few minutes,
chasing the other kids and laughing
like I was supposed to,
but then I'd return to the safety
of sun-warmed concrete
and the soft beach towel
that my parent had brought for me
that day.

I think this is when I first discovered
that I preferred to be indoors

sprawled across the carpet with my
cat and colouring books,
which later would turn into literature
as a form of escapism.
it wasn't until I was older,
maybe six or seven,
eight or nine,
that I rediscovered the outdoors.

my mothers parents had an acreage,
a farm.
my fathers parents had a cabin,
on a beach.
and one day my mother,
tired of me re-watching the same
movies
and re-reading the same novels
over and over and over,
herded me outside,
too fast for me to even put on shoes
and so I stumbled into the sunlight
and ventured into the grass, barefoot
it was cool and soft
and I smiled.

I spent the rest of my childhood
in my backyard
or at the farm
or on the beach.
on the cool green lawn
on the flowery slope behind our
house
on the large smooth rocks by the
water.
I loved the feeling of the damp,
packed earth
and the soft moss that grew in the
shade
though I learned to avoid
the wood-chipped logs,
torn apart by winter storms,
because they were sharp
and splintered.

but now I wonder how many things
I might enjoy
if I'd been allowed
when I first tried them
to try them on my own terms
if I'd been allowed

to explore the things that I liked
instead of being told how I was
supposed to have fun
because now that I'm older
I spend my days barefoot
forever chasing that feeling
of grass beneath my feet
chasing the memory of sweet-
scented tea roses
and brightly coloured wildflowers
in a place where butterflies and
hummingbirds coloured the sky.

I spend my days inside
missing something that I almost
missed entirely
because we're told as children
to run and play and be loud and
messy
but I was quiet and shy
and nobody told me it was ok
to want to sit in the grass
wishing on dandelions
or to make crowns out of clover.

When We Were Happy (2022)

Ava Tkaczuk

This is the first in a series of paintings portraying my younger brother which capture moments in time 'when'. When we found a red clown nose.

This series is meant to tell the stories of my childhood through the eyes of my brother and I.



Finding the Goddess Within

Esther Fisher

I lost myself. I lost everything I thought I was to the shadows, doubts and gossip of people I barely knew. It shredded who I thought I was to unsalvageable pieces. How do you recover from that? To be adrift in the lawless ocean with no sense of what land should feel like. Might as well drown right then.

I completely shut down. Shut the world out to focus on the emptiness inside. I can't remember days of my life. It's like waking in the middle of the night, and looking at the clock. You blink and suddenly four hours have passed. No recollection of the time between. It was a fog I couldn't find my way out of.

I left. A wanderer in my own mind, I left looking for a home to replace the one I lost.

The fog was thick. Suffocating. I kept seeing monsters in the mist. Things out to get me, seen from the corner of my eye. It was surreal. Fear and paranoia brought me to my knees every time. I shattered with every strike of panic.

One day, the mist and fog lifted. No reason, no warning. And everything was too bright, too sharp, too loud. The city screamed at me from all sides. Its flashing neon signs blinded me.

Again, I ran. This time to find the quiet, the peace I never knew, but thought could exist for me. From the city, to the suburbs, to the country, to nowhere. I wandered until I could wander no more.

An ancient forest. Trees stretched far overhead. Their bark marked with hundreds of years of elemental battles. The browns and greens of the foliage had a brilliant hue that city skyscrapers tend to grey out. Even greener moss carpeted the forest floor. A few golden leaves fell, landing as if individually hand picked and placed.

Feet squishing into the moss I walked and found a bubbling stream. Clear water, good enough to drink from the source. A flat stone rose just above the moss, shining veins of crystal running through it. A good place to try and find peace.

Paired with the dappled sunlight, the babbling brook danced with the leaves and had my mind floating away from me. Not far but just enough.

“You are far from home.”

Everything snapped into focus. She was tall, wild red hair half tamed by braids, a wooden shield in her left hand and a sword at the same hip. Her metal breastplate

caught the light as she sat on my left. We stared at the brook in silence.

“Why are you dressed so weirdly?”

“I could ask the same of you.” She smiled, nodding at my sneakers and jeans.

We sat for a while, side by side on that flat rock by the stream. Not a word passed between us as the sun sat low in the sky.

The woman took her sword and laid it across her lap.
“Not many people wander this far into the forest. Have you lost your way?”

“You could say that. I wanted some time to find myself again.”

She clicked her tongue, “A momentous task to be sure. One not to be taken lightly. What is your name?”

“Ari Sigmond. You?”

“You may call me Freja.”

“Pretty name.”

“Names have power. As do the words we speak.”

I snorted, drawing my legs close to my chest. “No, they don’t. They’re just words.”

Freja held out her hand. Dangling on her wrist was a twisted gold band. “I have made oaths on this armband. I have kept them all. Words have power. But only to those who believe in their worth.”

“You sound like a mystic hermit. It’s ridiculous.”

Freja stood and offered her hand. The intimidation of having a Viking warrior maiden looming over me was all the encouragement I needed. She pulled me to my feet. I stumbled into her breast plate, the metal stinging my cheek bone.

“Come with me.”

She led me deeper into the forest to a tree with a trunk twice as wide as she was tall. A foot from the roots was a horseshoe, stamped into the bark, opening face up.

“I too have felt the loss of one’s self. When my husband died, I travelled to Midgard looking for something. It was like when you know you are missing something but you do not know what it is, until you find it. It was here, with this horseshoe, I finally found it. I would like to help you

find your way. And, with your permission, I would hope you accept my offer of divine ritual.”

“Ritual? Like a cult?”

“Nothing like what you believe. Will you allow it?” I slowly nodded. “Kneel before the tree and place your hands on either side of the horseshoe.”

I was skeptical. It was a strange offer. In the middle of nowhere with a woman named, and dressed like a Norse goddess. How strange was it really? Under the circumstances, I was the strange one.

On my knees, twigs biting into them, I placed my fingers on the cool metal horseshoe. The horse to which it belonged must have kicked with tremendous force. Bark curled around the edges. The tree was slowly absorbing the metal as it grew.

“Close your eyes and listen.”

The birds called from the trees above. Ribbons of wind wound through the canopy, rustling the leaves. The setting sun cast golden warmth on my back. The horseshoe was cold and smooth against the rough bark. “Transfer your mind to where your heart beats.

Consciously feel all that you have been avoiding. Mourn for what you have lost.”

Simple words. Simple. They opened a flood I didn't know I'd dammed.

My chest collapsed, ribs in shatters, poking at my heartstrings. A long heartbroken wail broke through the forest. It burned my throat and lips. I sobbed for everything I was. Everything I wasn't. Everything I lost. Mourned for the versions of me who had died and were replaced by a stranger. The pieces of me that still lived with people who didn't care past the piece they got. It was dark. My legs, numb from kneeling for so long, wouldn't move to my will. My neck and shoulders were stiff. Fingers white from gripping at the bark.

“Ari, look up.”

Candles beautifully lit up the trees. A shrine to those who were brave enough to see it. Fireflies danced in and out of the trees, witness to an unknown transformation. Freja pried my hands from the horseshoe and pulled me to my feet, supporting my weight as my legs buckled. Steadied, she had me face the tree, and placed a wreath of flowers in my hair. “Until you can be sure of yourself, you will always fall back into the trap. You will always give

too much of yourself away until there is nothing left of you.”

Cold seeped into my heart. “I can’t do that again. I can’t become that again. I just can’t. Please. I can’t.”

“You have let go of what is broken. That is the beginning.” Freja stepped behind me and started braiding my hair. “We must bind you back to yourself. Marry what once was parted. I want you to repeat after me.”

“Okay.” I swallowed thickly.

“Remember what is said tonight. Remember when you give too much of yourself. You cannot possess me for I belong to myself. I give you that which is mine to give. You cannot command me for I am a free person. I shall not slander myself. I shall honour myself above all others. This is my vow before the Witness.”

I sank to my knees. A sense of relief swept through me. Breathless, new life breathed into me. I shook as if I’d run a marathon.

Freja knelt before me. She raised her hand to my forehead and held it there. Her thumb ran from my hairline, over the bridge of my nose and down to my lips,

chin then neck. She cupped my face, thumbs brushing over my cheek bones. The look in her eyes became ethereal. Taking on an almost golden hue.

“Above you are the stars and below you is the earth. Like the stars, your love should be a constant source of light. Like the earth, a firm foundation from which to grow.” She dug through the moss to the soil and smeared it on my cheek. “May the sun bring you new energy by day. May the moon softly restore you by night. May the rain wash away your worries. May the wind blow new strength into your being. May you walk gently on the earth and know her beauty all the days of her life. And may your days be good and long upon this earth.”

Her lips touched mine. Golden honeyed mead flowed over my tongue. Champagne bubbles popped over my skin followed by a blooming warm glow. Eyes fluttering shut I basked in the glory of a Goddess’ blessing.

The sun rose in all her glory. A pastel display of pink, orange and red. The dawn of an era. With the rising sun came a soul-aching peace. New, unshakable, and eternal. As I left the forest, flowers bloomed in my wake. Goddess begets goddess, and the Vikings would mistake me for one of the Æsir.

Endlich, Leonard Schmidt Dominé (2022)

Natalie Chan

ONCE UPON A TIME

*there was an art school full of ideas,
with exciting pieces being prepared...
as students documented their work, a staff came to the door -
a dread filled the air as he said,*

**KNOCK
KNOCK**



"hi, how may we help -"

"[xxxxx]'s work must be taken down."

"well, uh-"

*"he's out of country right now and hard to reach at the moment,
and we're not quite in a position to alter someone else's work..." they replied.*

unmoved, the students were warned:

**"this work is offensive,
you will have until 10:30
to have this piece removed."**

*when the staff left,
the class discussed amongst
themselves what to do.*

*unable to reach the classmate in question,
they closed the door to the room -
they could keep it closed until
their classmate was informed of
this situation.*

**KNOCK
KNOCK**

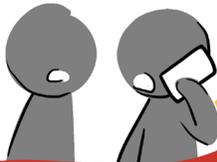
*but as they talked,
along came the chancellor!*

with a glare,

"there will be legal consequences,"

she warned.

**"the work presents a false statement,
thereby a lie,
so it must disappear."**



*the students
relayed what had
happened to the artist in question:*

"we will stand together!" they promised,

*and with a moment to ponder,
they came up with a plan.*

*"if they are adamant
in exerting their authority,
then I will comply - I'll adapt
the work to highlight their
censorship, it must
still be seen."*



*so the work grew and evolved,
altered to visualize this integral moment into the piece -*

with these changes, the students reopened the room for viewing again.

*not to be met
without backlash,
security soon came
to visit the room.*

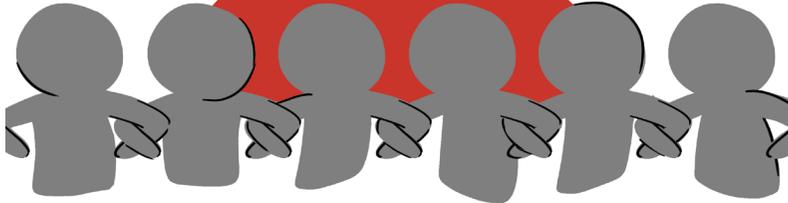
**"WE
MUST CLOSE
THE ROOM."**

*so they complied
while the security was around.
but when he left, they reopened it once more.*

*the class looked at one another,
"if there's no door at all, there will be no room to lock!"*

*so off came the door,
the work free to be seen!
as other classes began
to take notice, they
offered their
support:*

"We will stand with you!"



"if they come to lock your doors again, we'll lock ours in solidarity, too."

tensions grow between faculty and students,
the current solution unsatisfactory to the authority.

"we, the academic administration,
question the work's artistic value,
we urge you to find a **creative solution**

to present the work in a **positive way**

to not damage the **good
reputation
of the
Academy."**

in face of opposition,
the students stood their ground:

"there is a good reason why work
like this exists within the academy,
which the administration must face."



*dialogue escalated with each back and forth
between the class and the academy,
but the students were steadfast and courageous.
though misinformation was spread, the events of this
class were broadcasted and shared,
the people were made aware.*

*we do not want to change
our work for these reasons -
we do not want to find a
positive and creative solution
to protect the reputation of institutions,
we want our voices to be heard,
we want to be respected in conversation -
when our experience is made a spectacle,
we will be vigilant in standing by the truth.*

The Dreamer

Isabelle Call

Logic

It was the beginning of the seventh night and the sun was slowly starting to dip below the ocean's horizon setting the water a fiery blaze before the brothers raft.

The two brothers had been warned by the old Gods that should their journey not be complete by the eighth morning they would die; an impossible feat they knew, yet they had set off all the same. Logic, the eldest of the two brothers sat staring as the sun slowly sank out of sight and imagined himself tied to it, being pulled down into the depths of the ocean. He sat in the middle of the raft, as far away from danger as he possibly could. After all that was the most logical thing to do while on journeys across the open sea.

As he sat and wondered what death awaited him he began to take notice of his brother, the Dreamer he liked to call him.

The Dreamer sat on the edge of the raft, dipping his toes in and out of the luminescent plankton that was beginning to light up the night. He could hardly blame his

brother, even he could not deny the beauty of the water, but he knew it was also a trickster; the most lovely siren of all, beckoning you with hypnotic colours and coruscating lights. Only to swallow you into darkness, another soul to add to its collection.

As the night drew on the brothers sat in silence for they knew if they were to try and speak nothing would leave their mouths but songs of sadness, so they sat, and remembered all of the times they had shared in their short lives.

Finally as the first rays of sun began to claw their way back to the water's surface the Dreamer turned to his brother with a smile and croaked through his tears, "I believe this is just another adventure and we are being taken to see the greatest depths of the world," but Logic knew better. Death was death and there was nothing dreamy about it.

The boys watched while the sun rose, and as the last piece peaked into view an enormous creature came barreling towards their raft.

The Dreamer

The Dreamer waited, and slowly, as the creature got closer he laid down on the raft and rested his hand in the water; hoping to touch whatever it was that would take him on his next journey. He was not afraid, after all, why be scared of eternal sleep? A place where one can dream forever.

Logic

It had never occurred to Logic that he was scared of death until he saw it with his own two eyes. Speeding towards him with so much power and determination that it made his knees buckle, causing him to fall backwards into the sea. As he hit the water he screamed, calling to his brother to help him back onto the raft. He could not swim and soon he would drown, but his brother could not hear him for he had fallen into another one of his dreams.

Logic gave up, and eventually his lungs filled with water. He became heavy and just as he had imagined the night

before, the sun set with his drowning body and carried him into the depths of the ocean. A place where there were no souls, and no light, only darkness.

The Dreamer

He felt the raft rock as the creature stopped beneath him and the water danced over its body. Slowly he reached his arm down, submerging it to his shoulder. It was not enough. He rolled onto his stomach and pushed himself forward, submerging his torso as well, still it was not enough. Carefully, he lowered his whole body into the water and swam towards what he now saw was a whale, or what looked to be one. The creature was the size of at least two Roman long boats with scales the size of the boys body that glistened like diamonds in the moonlight that now shone down upon them. Its belly was the colour of peacocks in full plumage and its eyes looked like the cosmos.

Hesitantly the boy swam towards the creature's eye and looked into it, hoping he might see more of the universe. As he stared into the stars the creature's fin brushed past him, when it moved instead of the cosmos there was now an empty socket staring back at him. A space large enough for him to sit inside of. The Dreamer took this as an invitation and swam forward, seating himself in the socket carefully. Positioning himself so as not to fall out.

The boy and the creature travelled through the seas for a hundred years, living a life full of adventure and dreams come true.

Finally when the boy was no longer a boy, and too frail to hold on any longer, the creature swam down to the depths of the ocean where his brother's corpse still sat. The Dreamer said his final goodbyes to his companion, and glimpsed one final time into his starry eyes. Then he swam to his brother with open arms, and as their bodies met he died.

Logic

Logic was startled to see his brother return to him after so many years, as he had thought him to be trapped inside a dream. Soon the happiness faded as he realized that now his brother was dead, and trapped in nothingness alongside him. The light that his joy had brought was now diminished and again darkness surrounded and consumed him.

He stared out into the darkness, then felt his brother's arms go around him in a cold embrace as he began to speak. As the Dreamer spoke, his stories began to play in front of Logic, and the darkness lit up with thousands of colours as his brother told of his adventures through the seas of the world with the magnificent creature.

So the brothers sat there, as Logic stared into his brother's dreams and the Dreamer smiled, for he had finally brought light into his brother's life.

The Stardust Kiss

Isabelle Call

The earth beneath her feet had been placed there only seconds before as her mother reached between the stars and pulled down their dust to form the new planet. She now walked, silver hair billowing behind her in the wind, with her bare feet across the stardust pausing on every step to allow her toes to wiggle into the earth where new life might form. In a row behind her the most full and luscious garden she had ever created sat amongst the barren land illuminated from below by the soft light which the dust of the fallen stars still emitted. There were trees which reached so high that they touched the heavens from which she had come, flowers of colours which had never been seen before sat in full bloom amongst the greenest ferns and foliage of her ever expanding forest. She glanced back as she took another step and smiled to herself with satisfaction before she turned her rounded face upwards to look at the sky littered with the very things which allowed this planet to be.

“What a beautiful creation Luna,” the voice came from the loveliest of beings, Valuri, a being whose beauty even Luna’s was unable to match. Her eyes were filled with images of the solar storms which she helped to create, and a soft wind radiated outwards from her, holding her white hair in a constant halo which framed her dark face. She had bent down at Luna’s feet and now handed her a small compacted disc of star dust which had imprinted upon its face the image of a star.

“Was not I who created it, was the world herself,” Luna looked upon Valuri with a careful affection and gazed into the storms which sat inside her eyes.

“A gift from the world to her bringer of life,” Valuri sang as she motioned for Luna to take the disc from her hand.

Luna graciously accepted and held the disc to her barren chest. As she held it the disc began to form with the

skin which covered her mortal form, and soon there was nothing left save for the imprint of a star above her left breast, “I will cherish it always”.

With these words, and the gracious gesture of Luna melding herself to her gift, Valuri reached tenderly for the dainty fingers which still lay pressed against Luna’s cerulean skin, with her own of opposite proportions. As the thin fingers lay gently in her palm she bent forward and pressed her lips slowly to the back of the hand which she now held with such care. In return the Goddess who had created the earth bent forward and kissed the open space between Valuri’s brow, smiling down into the storms which so encapsulated her. Then the pair turned towards the barren dust lands which lay ahead of them, an entire world which they could meld into their own perfect home outside of the reach of the Beings which held sway over new courses which may separate them. A world in which they would be their own Gods and the Gods to all the creatures which would come to be as a product of their affection.

For nearly a thousand years the two walked hand in hand moulding their perfect world across the plains of broken stars, only leaving the body of the world in its natural form when the plains turned into vast expanses covered in the discs which shared the mark on Luna's chest. And as the dim light emitted from the broken stars ashes began to wane Luna sent a blanket of dancing lights into the sky. The blanket twisted and twirled in magnificent greens and blues and purples as it lit up the sky of the world, casting an everlasting rainbow above the forests and mountains.

On the eve of their thousandth year Luna and Valuri lay with their bodies entwined atop a cushion of moss, and stared upwards, mesmerized by the lights as one colour chased another in a sort of game. Behind them came the delicate and almost inaudible sound of one of their lovingly placed branches snapping, and crashing to the forest floor.

“Enough!” from behind the tall trees and foliage of the forest now emerged a man who was equally matched to the strongest trees. His hair sat in golden curls atop his shoulders and his skin looked as though it had been kissed by a thousand stars. His face held the fury of a thousand God’s and when he gazed upon the star which lay imprinted upon Luna’s chest his eyes glowed red.

“This has gone on long enough, I have allowed your world to come to creation, I have allowed you to walk in the hand of another. But your world is done, and you are mine, and with me always, you shall stay,” with a quiver of malice in his voice Soare reached towards the sky and to his hand was sent a golden sceptre. He waved it towards Luna in an upwards arch, moving too quickly for the lovers to remove themselves from their embrace, and soon she sat in the sky amongst the stars emitting a silver glow from her cosmic form.

Turning towards Valuri he gestured with his staff as he spoke coolly, “as for you, your body shall cover every bit

of this planet where your precious gifts lay and shall never touch what is mine again. We shall sit above you amongst the stars, our celestial bodies providing eternal light for this world, and you shall feel my presence warm your being as hers never will again.”

He flung his arms outwards in a great sweeping motion, the end of his sceptre glowing as his eyes had as it moved towards her and her body vanished, leaving behind great expanses of her salted tears. Lastly, Soare turned the staff towards himself and with one grand motion he swept himself into the sky to keep watch over Luna for all of eternity. However, while in his fury, Soare did not remember the blanket of lights which Luna had created, and in her final moments she had cast them into the furthest reaches of their world so that no one but Valuri might ever reach them.

Now each night, and each day Soare pulls Luna through the sky as Valuri stretches her body in vain to meet her eternal lover, who in turn reaches out her very soul imprinted by a star, to pull Valuri closer to the sky.

If You Go Into the Woods Today (2020)

The Bride Nicole

Are you afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? Have you ever been warned to stay out of the forest? Children are drawn to exploring fears through play and stories. While dressing up in costumes, this group of meddling kids transform themselves into creatures going on adventures through the woods. They imagine stories that are inspired by the nature that surrounds them.



**October 15 2021, TIN-008,
Place Genevilliers-Laliberté**
Joey Zaurrini

Cloudy and bright. Grey blue, powdery rain. An empty ping pong table to my left - the ink smudges on drops of rain - a motor in the center of my aural field, a fountain with sputtering stone geese held by stone boys to my right. No space to think, but I try to force it anyway. That thing I said about noise being neither good nor bad - I take it back, the ruckus is deafening. And the square is empty save for me, my microphones, someone else and their baby. Rain comes down harder. A seagull above squawks in a low guttural sound. After doing something worthy of his mother's praise, the baby boy watches me from a distance. I must look strange, sitting here, my microphones on their stand. On the other hand, I'm the only other

person here, not much else to look at. My jaw feels the rain, inside the bones, the cartilage, the connecting tissues. The baby throws himself in a pile of leaves near me, smiling; he's goofy looking. I smile too. He explores the steps around the fountain while his mother walks behind him with a fancy minimalist carriage. Back and forth, he picks something up off the sewer plate and turns around, squatting, and then points at something else. At some point, the motor engine stops and the soundscape is a little less dense. The tinier other sounds can be heard - men whistling, men sneezing, leaves falling, men on bikes. An orange leaf - thin and long - falls in between my glasses and the side of my face.

Don't Get Lost in Virtuality

Marguerite Marion

They played with their cell phones, sending photos to each other using different filters. Some gave them freckles, others different eyes, even the shape of their face changed. Sometimes they went from Fox to Rabbit, and from Rabbit to Horse. They had favourite filters and others that varied according to their mood. “Which animal suits me better today?” They asked. Eventually, they began to avoid looking at themselves, since that, they could not change. When others took the pictures, they edited them to change their face as they felt they were at that moment. They lived behind a screen, playing with different identities in relation to the changed and altered facial features that allowed them to feel like other animals,

which they were not. “Today I want to feel strong, so today I am a Tiger”, “In my case I want others to be afraid of me, so I am a Snake”. One day their cell phone broke and the parents gave them an old one, so old that the filters did not work. They could no longer recognize their faces, they could no longer understand who they were. They no longer knew which part of them was theirs.

As time went by, they reconnected to their real them. They realized that the strength, the caring, the speed or other characteristics they looked for with the filters, they already had inside them. When they were lost in virtuality, they missed what was really there.

The Crow and the Pitcher (2022)

Victoria Mulja

In a spell of dry weather, when the Birds could find very little to drink, a thirsty Crow found a pitcher with a little water in it. But the pitcher was high and had a narrow neck, and no matter how he tried, the Crow could not reach the water. The poor thing felt as if he must die of thirst.

Then an idea came to him. Picking up some small pebbles, he dropped them into the pitcher one by one. With each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it was near enough so he could drink.

The Moral: In a pinch, a good use of our wits may help us out.



Silver Salvation

Memoirs of a Moustache

You were born with a Silver Spoon in your mouth
I was born with a Silver Tongue in mine, with such good
health

Don't just simply listen...Comprehend the words spoken to
you

For I do not speak with the authority of me
I speak from the authority of the ones that are the true
authorities of these topics, the ones that came before me,
the ones that have experienced and speak of what
success and failures shall come to pass
The ones that were graced by the fiery tongue and spoke
to the many cultures in their midst

Prophets were never liars, since they have paved the path
for generations
Using their myths, their legends, their tall tales and their
fables
All were written, and prophesied while they all sat squarely
at the round table

You've only heard stories of riches and ruins
I've only read stories of valour and courage brewing
And for that I've dug my grave over the years and I am
still sauntering 6ft above the roses
My boots leave no footprints and once I shake the dust
from their soles
The bullet has already reached your heart
But don't you fain, for your soul will live on
Towards the Sun, towards the river Styx
Dashing from the vanities undone, dashing from the fix
Now with fashionable outfits does the man become the
perfect fit?
Black shapeless grins, Chelsea hints

So I ask
Who is the pawn?
Who is playing the long con?
And will the sun still rise on the blackened dawn?
Will the dry bones of the slain stand and breathe on?

It is the poetic who have written the psalms but it is the
blind who profess the praises
So I pray that the blind find these letters and fill in the
scenery with not what they see but that they connect the
lines with what they remember and seek
To the poets who stand against the current
To the prophets we have left beaten down
I can only dream to be blind and seek with my heart,
Struggling in agony
Then to seek with my eyes and be content in all I see,
Drowning in apathy

With the cross I bare by the book carried in the my right
hand
and my Left hand holding onto the pen I have used to
write down this reckoning

That it shall pass in the last days
That I will pour out my spirit on all flesh

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy
Your young men shall see visions
Your old men shall dream dreams
And on my maidservant, on my maidservant
I will pour out my spirit
I shall show wonders of Heaven above
And signs in the Earth below
Blood and Fire and Vapor of Smoke
The Sun shall be turned to darkness
The Moon into blood
Before the coming of the Great and Awesome One who
sits on the throne
And when this comes to pass'

I shall show you your Silver Salvation
I shall show you your Silver Salvation

Opal Mclean

Come to me

Come to me
Tear your mind
Speak your piece
Backwards
Again and again

Tell me a story of your past
And how it leads from your present
Into the future

Do you find yourself amongst the
stars
Or under the sea
Or even high amongst the trees
Tell me exactly where you want to be
And who you want to see

Tell me a story of your choosing
Then maybe you'll hear the same
from me
Back and forth we go
Until we cannot find anymore

Our lives are filled with fables

Waiting to be passed
Between friends
Or even generations

These fables become a part of me
I take them everywhere I go
And speak them to those that I know
Until they exist without me

Fables take on a life of their own
Meaning shifts and changes
with each story told
Their messages tell more than we
know
So sit back and let the true meaning
show

Come to me
Tear your mind
Speak your piece
Time after time
Until the pieces
Come together
Again

Rosie Hunt

Ashley J.J. White

On the other side of the tracks, life is different. Houses are shabbier, lawns a little more unkempt. My mom made me promise never to walk home this way, but it's a shortcut, so I always do. Sometimes I walk with friends, but on that particular evening, I was on my own. I was sauntering along minding my own business when something caught my eye and demanded my attention. Through the front window of an especially rundown house, I saw something gleam in a way that didn't fit with its surroundings. I took a couple steps closer to the fence and squinted. What I saw was a heart shaped diamond pendant on a long, silver chain hanging from a hook on the wall. It looked familiar. Without thinking, I opened the gate and walked up to the front door.

The pendant was familiar because it was mine. I'd lost it at school a couple days before and I was devastated. I cried all night long, thinking about how disappointed and hurt my dad would have been, if he could know I lost the last thing he gave to me. Mom tried to comfort me, but I could tell she was disappointed too. The next day at school, I looked everywhere. I retraced my steps, went to the lost and found, and asked everyone I could if they'd seen it. No luck. And now there it was, right in front of my face, in the house of a stranger. Suddenly, a wave of bravery overtook me, and I tried the front door. It wasn't

locked. I pushed it open and it made the loudest creak I'd ever heard. I winced and second-guessed myself. Then, against all my instincts screaming to turn around, I took a step into the house.

The smell hit me like I'd walked into the boys' bathroom by mistake. I recoiled and covered my nose. What was that? It smelled like sewage. There was garbage everywhere. I heard a scuttle in the corner and saw a rat run across the floor and disappear into a hole in the wall. I think I must have let out a startled yelp, but I can't be sure.

It didn't seem like anyone was home until I noticed a cigarette butt, still burning in an ashtray, its exhalation of smoke twirled around like a ribbon before dispersing into the foul air. My heart was pounding. I was about to grab my necklace and make a break for it when I heard what sounded like soft, muffled crying. I followed the sound to a door, slightly ajar. I opened it slowly and found Nicholas, a boy I know from school. He was crouched down, hiding, covered in dirt. He looked up at me with wide, startled eyes. His face was turning redder by the moment.

“Nick? Are you okay?” I asked as I reached out a hand to help him up. He flinched and backed away. “I’m not going to hurt you.”

He stood up slowly, on his own. He didn’t say anything. We stood there looking awkwardly at each other for a few moments, before I remembered why I was there in the first place.

“Did you take my necklace?” I asked him.

He nodded slowly, with his eyes cast to the ground. “I’m sorry.” He squeaked. His voice sounded strange, like he hadn’t used it for a while. “I saw it on the ground outside school. It looked expensive. I was planning to pawn it to buy food. My parents left weeks ago.” He said quietly, without looking up.

I stood in silence for a couple long moments. “I’m sorry to hear that,” I said, finally, “but it’s never right to steal. My dad gave me that necklace before he died.” My eyes started welling up. Before the tears had a chance to fall, I turned around, grabbed the necklace, and left.

My mom was thrilled, and when she asked me where I’d found it, I told her someone had turned it into the

lost and found at school. I tried to act happy so she wouldn't press. I was happy to have it back, but the happiness was overshadowed by something else. I sat down for dinner with my mom and brother: roast beef, potatoes, carrots, Yorkshire pudding and gravy. It's one of my favourite meals. My mom kept asking me why I was so quiet. I told her I had a big exam the next day I was nervous about. Normally, we sit and chat a while after dinner, my mom likes having that time with Ben and me. But instead she told me I'd better go upstairs and study, and I was grateful for the time alone. I sat on my bed toying with my necklace, absentmindedly leafing through *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but I couldn't focus. I couldn't stop thinking about Nick and how awful it would be to be left alone like that.

Once I heard mom and Ben go upstairs to bed, I snuck down into the kitchen and packed leftovers into a Tupperware container, crept out the front door and headed towards the train tracks. When I got to Nick's, I softly knocked on the front door. A couple minutes passed before he opened it a crack, and peered out at me. His eyes were red and puffy.

"Here, I brought you something." I said quietly, and handed him the food. He looked down at it, and the

corners of his mouth twitched upwards, just enough to notice.

“Thank you, Rosie.” He said, barely louder than a whisper.

“I’m really sorry about your necklace.”

“Hey, don’t worry about it.” I said. “One more thing, before I go. I know it’s not my place, but if you want, I can tell my mom, so she’ll pack a second lunch...”

“Please don’t tell her,” he interrupted. “The agency people. They’ll take me away. My parents will be back. They always come back.”

“Okay... if that’s what you want, I won’t tell. Will you be at school tomorrow?”

He nodded, and I left. I barely slept that night, thinking of ways I could help Nick. I decided I’d pawn my necklace. He needed it more than I did. My dad, he would understand. He always taught Ben and I to do the right thing. This was the right thing, I was certain.

The next day after school, I went to the pawnshop. The guy behind the counter looked at me with raised eyebrows but took the necklace anyway and said he could give me five hundred for it. I didn’t know exactly

how much food five hundred dollars could buy, but I was sure it would be enough to feed Nick for a little while, until his parents got home.

On my way home I stopped by Nick's and knocked on the door again, just like I'd done the night before.

I told him what I'd done, and handed him the money. "You need it more than I do."

His eyes filled up with tears. "No, Rosie, I can't accept that." He shook his head and tried to shut the door. I held it open. "Nick, it's done. Just take the money, please."

He sniffed, wiped his eyes, and sheepishly reached out and took the wad of bills from my hand. "I don't know how to thank you," he said, his voice cracking.

"Just buy food. That's what you can do. Don't be hungry." He lurched toward me and gave me a huge hug. He did not smell good. "And maybe buy some soap." He laughed and promised he would.

On my way home I felt lighter than ever. When mom

asked where my necklace had gone now, I told her I'd decided to lock it away, to keep it safe. I never would have expected selling my prized possession would make me feel so good. In the days and weeks that followed, Nick's improved hygiene, health and happiness meant more to me than any material thing ever could. I started wondering why any of us needed jewelry at all when there were hungry people right here in our own neighbourhood.

The question was eating away at me. The fact that me, my mom, and my brother were living comfortably and eating well just a couple of blocks away from where Nick had been nearly starving, it wasn't right. I vowed to do something.

I started by pawning the rest of the jewelry I had, and then moved on to taking stuff my mom never wore from her jewelry box and bringing it to that same pawnshop. Once my mom's jewelry was picked through to the point she'd start noticing, I moved onto my grandma's. And then to my friends and my friends' moms. The guy behind the counter asked me one day where I was getting all this jewelry. I saw no harm in telling him the truth.

“I know it’s not right to steal. But these people need the money more than we need the jewelry.” The guy behind the counter seemed touched. He started giving me better prices for the stuff I brought in.

I did get caught eventually. My friend Emma’s mom noticed a missing ring after I’d left their house one night. Emma confronted me, and I confessed. I explained why I did what I did. I told her I was sorry, but I didn’t regret it.

It was fun while it lasted, but I knew I couldn’t continue going around stealing. I had just turned 12, old enough to get a job babysitting. I started babysitting kids in my area and donated all the money I made to local charities; the food bank, the Salvation army, and directly to the cause in some cases.

A local newspaper came around my house one afternoon and asked to interview me. They called me a modern day Robin Hood.

I smiled and adjusted the feather in my hair. “Actually, it’s Rosie Hunt.”

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



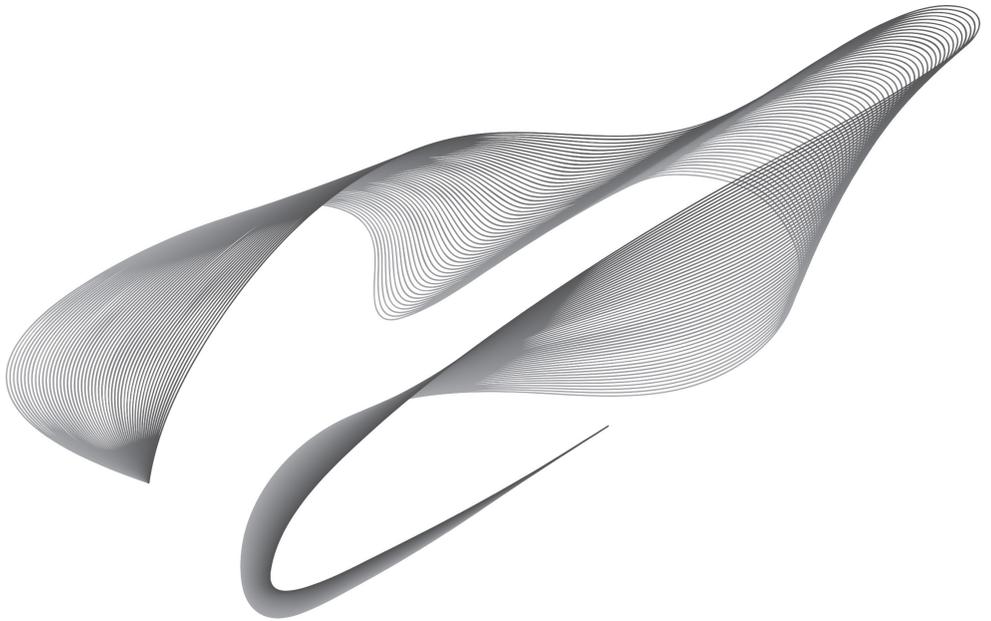
Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan 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 leads 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 “Sincerely Yours” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

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

