

WITHINTENSIONS

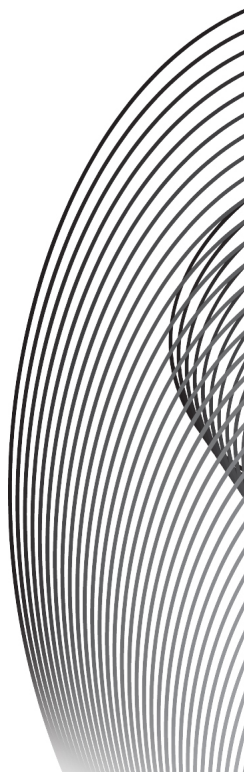


vol.35

DUALITY



WITHINTENSIONS



WITHINTENSIONS

November 2022
vol. 35

DUALITY



Table of Contents

My mother's daughter

Allison Chow

pg. 3

Inner Child

Opal Mclean

pg. 8

Do I remember me?

Francisco Berlanga

pg. 10

Twelve painting series (Untitled)

Natalie Chan

pg. 14

Do Not Synthesize

Katie Rouse

pg. 16

Flipping like a coin

Memoirs of a Moustache

pg. 18

God's Creation

Kendall Cobb

pg. 20

Meet the Team

Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Opal Mclean

pg. 22

Acknowledgments

pg. 25

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



Tyger dreams (2022) Allison Chow

My mother's daughter

Allison Chow

I am my mother's daughter. Do you ever look at your life and marvel at the frightful symmetry?

I come from a long line of tiger people, people like my mom that seem to bend the world around them. I am my grandma's black and white portrait of home, I am my grandpa's pantheon of dusty old gods and the faces of saints stacked like base-ball cards.

In our family there are medicine women, healers and dreamers. When I close my eyes, I can still picture the ferocity of their love - long nights bent over a foreign language, gutting fish after fish to carve out life in this haunted land. When I sit really still, I can hear them all drumming in my blood.

The word "Diaspora" always cuts me - each time a thin, almost translucent piece, shaved from my insides. Wrapped in the cool comfort of academia it's been a doorway to celebrate the resilience of the human spirit. Yet there is always a part of me that is tethered to those early days I wandered through a fog searching for a sense of home.

For years I looked for the woman that sold fresh egg waffles on the street. My fingers searched amongst look-alikes for the "shy grass" of my homeland - upward

reaching green fingers that would gently close at my touch. Seeing the familiar sparrows that dotted the side-walk gave me hope I too could learn to survive off crumbs in this new world.

But what does it mean when the black hair, wheat-coloured skin and almond eyes that once made me unremarkable in crowds of hundreds now made me the local representative to field questions about fortune cookies, chow mein, and eating dog?

Flying back to Hong Kong for the first time when I was 10 I remember remembering I had spent half my life in Hong Kong and half my life in Canada. With Kanye's "Homecoming" in one earbud and the roar of the plane in the other, I had a vague hope of finally landing where I belong.

Two things happened that I will never forget. Meeting the aunts and uncles from my parents' stories was like touching living history. I saw the liver-spots on the uncle that gave my dad his first drink, and tasted my grandma's famous tofu. Like a Sherlock Holmes flashback, my own memories mapped onto the world around me - I saw the light filtering in between the park bamboo I once walked through with my dad to lick stamps at the post office. I heard the long ago wrinkly old men in tank tops who spent the afternoon with their legs spread wide, glued to the neat row of cement chess tables. Each memory was a precious memento my body held for me.



CHOWDER

Tiger Dreams (2022) Allison Chow

In the same breath, it was not my world anymore. Pushing from stall to stall in the bustling heat with my grandma, market vendors would holler their guesses of my ethnicity. In Hong Kong there's a term "oy gwok yun" translating roughly as "outside of country person", in the hot flat my ye-mas offered "Maybe it's your nose", "no I think it's your mannerism", "it's definitely your eyebrows".

It made me wonder if I'm "Chinese enough" with my tongue-tied mother tongue and my made-up Western idiosyncrasy. If you cut open my veins will the sounds of erhu pour out or would it be maple syrup? Am I some sort of Frankenstein interloper exiled from my ancestors?

I used to feel insecure about the imaginings that seem to stand as placeholders for relationships that never began or were allowed to deepen. Every airport scene and movie goodbye still leave me sobbing. At funerals I mourn the story of the person I knew and the chance to know them I will never have again.

But today, as a spirited little thing that grew into a spirited big thing, I know I was always made of stories. I am the utility of choice, the sense-maker, the alchemist. The rivers that once ravaged my grounding have also carved out an aching desire to be seen and see others tenderly.

I am my mother's gossamer child, spun from morning dew and questions.

Inner Child (2022)

Opal Mclean

I spent my entire childhood wanting to grow up but the irony is that, as I get older, I find myself wanting to be a child again. It's like I never enjoyed it when I was young because I was constantly looking to the future for something better. Now, I look back and realize, damn, that wasn't half bad. There is something to be said for seeing the world in brighter colours and carefree moments.

Then, I flip the page again. Things may have been more vivid but so was the pain. I never felt free to be who I wanted to be. I cared too much about what other people thought. I wanted to be complete, to be finished, to be happy. It's with age that I learn that happiness is captured. I want to capture all the happiness that my childhood self could not.

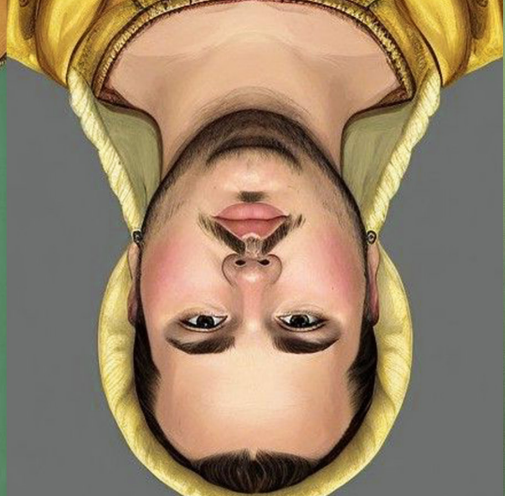
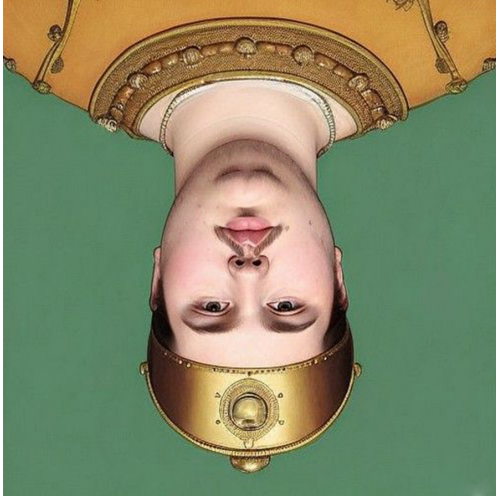
I want to enjoy those simpler moments. I want to give myself what the child never could. I am in pursuit of a peace that my childhood self could never find. I am hoping that one day, as an old woman, I can smile at my young adult self knowing she lived for every version of herself. She lived for the child who spent her time daydreaming to pass the time but she also lives to appease the person she will become.

That is her duality.



Do I remember me?
Francisco Berlanga

Portraits created by an AI that claims to
depict me in different eras of history.



In repetition I become nothing, I am a piece of data that is molded into a familiar shape.



I am both in these images and absent, they are not me, but yet I fester in their eyes.

I call to me and see myself unfurl, variants of an imagined past and a created conscious.





Twelve painting series (Untitled) - (2019)

Natalie Chan

A twelve painting study of the nuances between emblematic Chinese designs on everyday dishware and the meta of Chinoiserie design on a British teacup, found on a fabric print.

How closely do we examine to find abstracted similarities? What is it of the two sources that are on grounds for comparison - is it the similarity in colour palette, the quality of brushstroke line, the source of inspiration? Does the original influence of Chinese design establish its dominance over an attempted “replica”? If so, does that then make Chinoiserie design “less authentic”?

If I, as a Canadian-born Chinese, with family origins in Hong Kong, from complex histories of conflicting Mainland China and British ruling, emulate these designs, where does my authenticity arise? Is it even useful, or even possible, to find a line of duality?



Do Not Synthesize

Katie Rouse

Do not synthesize

my duality.

Be mesmerized by it,

by me.

See shadows

exist between

looks of light,

Mystery drawn out

by doubt's howls,

by my cries.

Side-by-side,

sentience hangs

in the balance
of liminal space,
and in the faces
we touch.

Try and make sense
of it,
try to understand,
and you'll lose
your grip,
you'll be unable
to stand
on your own
two
feet.

Flipping like a coin

Memoirs of a Moustache

flipping like a coin
spinning in the air
awaiting the grasping hand to snatch the spinning coin
from the air

held in palm
flipped onto the back hand of the dealer
as the gambler awaits the outcome

Heads or Tails
flipping over the edge
Right or Left
in a way one must turn
Wrong or Right
a ideal of ideas
Republican or Democrat
an animal in the Zoo
Dark or Light
revealing such sights
Spirit or Science

semantics for the best mind
Death or Life
a path in a destination
White or Black
blurring colours to render
Mystical or Material
one wave of the wand, cloak and dagger
Saints or Sinners
a breath in the holy land
Optimists or Pessimists
a view of such delight
This or That
moving with the Ebb and Flo with vigor

until it lands on its edge
creating the game of Colours and blends
back and forth
we all stand in attention
to be determined or indeterminate

God's Creation (2022)

Kendall Cobb

Duality is when you find yourself
within nature and God's creation.

We find ourselves connected
with ourselves trying to find one's
peace.



Francisco
Berlanga



Meet the Team

We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, we inhabit a place between the seriousness of academic writing and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often succumb to clichés and trends as they pass us as we all often must.

We hope to present unique thoughts for you to consider. Our writing speaks for no one but ourselves. We do not reduce the similar experiences of others to what we have experienced. We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other.



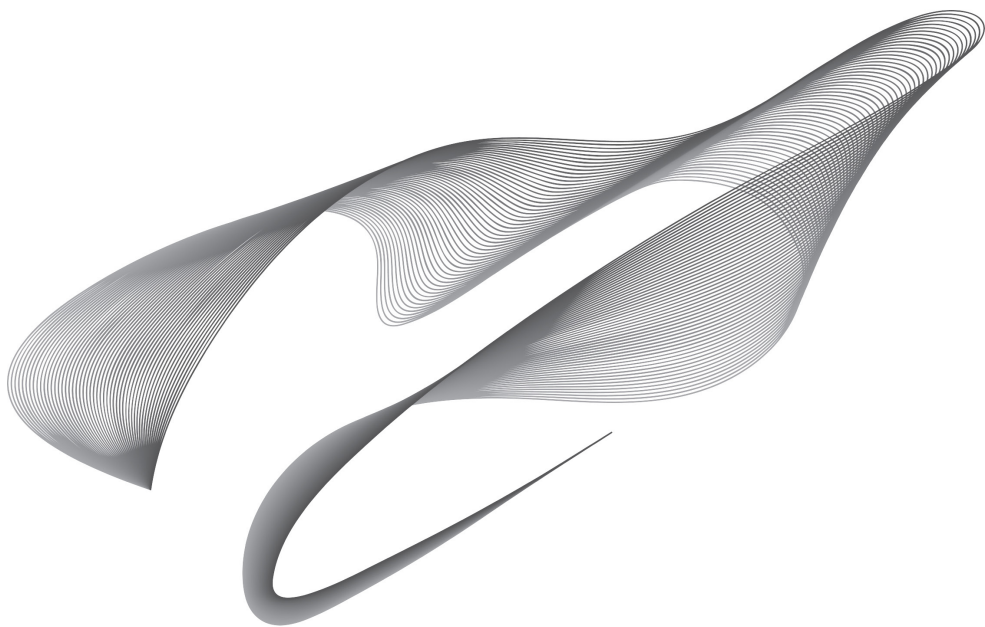
Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that lends to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:
@withintensions

or email us at:
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information, feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “Wonder” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Allison Chow, Kendall Cobb, Opal Mclean, Memoirs of a Moustache, and Katie Rouse

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.

