

The background of the entire page is a rich, brown leather texture with visible creases and variations in color from dark chocolate to lighter tan. Centered on this background is the text 'RATROCK' in a white, stylized, slanted font. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance. Below this, the words 'YEARBOOK THREE' are written in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

RATROCK

YEARBOOK THREE



photograph by Malena Steelberg

RATROCK

YEARBOOK THREE

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letter from the board

Firstly, we would like to thank all of the artists featured in the following pages. Without your contributions and your willingness to participate in and engage with the Ratrock community, this publication would not be possible.

Over the course of the last year, Ratrock has grown from a staff of nine people to one of over 50. This expansion, alongside the reorganization of the structure of the board, has allowed us to reflect on our goals and fine-tune our approaches to reaching these goals. To us, Ratrock is ultimately about building a community and a network of artists across mediums by providing a platform to amplify your voices. We have made strides towards this goal by personalizing the Featured Artist process. Now, every Featured Artist gets an interview, a photo shoot, and participates in a bimonthly Featured Artist gallery show. You, as an artist, are connected to your art. Your process is as fascinating to us as the final product, and we hope to display this sentiment in this Yearbook.

This endeavor in community-building is never over in our eyes. We are honored to have had the opportunity to partner with Bold, Beautiful, Black at Barnard, as well as the International Human Rights Art Festival at Columbia University in a concerted effort to highlight artistic voices that are often left out of the traditional canon. This practice of inclusivity is an active one that we are committed to upholding as Ratrock continues to grow.

Most of all, each of us feels incredibly lucky that we consistently get to work with such creative, multi-talented individuals. We have all forged connections that would not be possible without Ratrock. Through commitment and collaboration, we have been able to create a community, not only amongst you as artists, but also amongst ourselves as a staff.

This Yearbook is a commemoration of all of your extraordinary work this year. Without you, it is blank. It was made by you and for you. We are so grateful that you chose to include us on your journeys.

Alisa P. Silverman

Ally Cor-Glum



Elle Wolf

Lu Hu



May



Yun Van Phan





SIGNATURES

Loved being in art class
with you this semester!
H.A.G.S.
♡ Ratrock

OCTOBER 2018



**KASSIA
KARRAS**



**AJA
ISABEL**



**LING
GROCCIA**



**PHANESIA
PHAREL**

KASSIA KARRAS



photograph by Nico Lopez-Alegria



Do you think growing up in two contrasting places shaped your art?



I grew up in Beijing for 15 years and then moved to Atlanta for high school. I went back and forth between the two growing up. I'm half Chinese, a quarter Greek, and a quarter Cherokee. Having lived in such vastly different and contrasting environments, it has taught me to learn from the differences. Comparing and contrasting, not only the two countries but how the people in them socialize and how different they behave, has shaped my

worldview. I started thinking about the individual's relationship to the environment once I moved to Atlanta, because I found the lifestyle to be so introverted and isolated compared to the city lifestyle. I try to incorporate that sense of spontaneity in my art.

Talk about your use of animal and clown heads that pervade your illustrations?

I think the animals I draw are very unrealistic and more like toys or masks more than a literal animal. I really like the idea of playing with the masks we wear, because everyone has that persona they put on or multiple personas. Whenever I draw clowns or smiling animals it's to display these different masks. I like the idea that you can't tell what they're really like or what they're really thinking. You can only see what they're presenting and that doesn't always tell you a lot. It's up to the viewer to interpret, but often times there aren't a lot of clues so you end up feeling like you're searching. I like to put a lot of different elements within a piece, so you can search around and uncover something.



AJA ISABEL



photograph by Natalie Tischler

Are there any life experiences or moments that have shaped you as a person and are reflected in the way you make or mix music?

Well, one moment I can think of was when I was pretty young, and at my first Steely Dan concert. I was so mesmerized by the way the group grabbed the audience's attention and engaged with everyone in the crowd. Music isn't just about making a tune, it's also about interacting with people at an intimate level. When I'm deejaying, I keep that in mind. I want people to leave with an experience they'll remember. It's not going to be a Steely Dan level of experience, but it can be somewhat close.

How does being a black woman influence your work? Are you conscious of your identity? And if so, how do you perceive identity in music and production?

It's one thing being a female deejay, but it's another to be both black and woman on the deejay scene. It's like being a unicorn. I take pride in knowing that. The music world, especially music production has been dominated by white men, like Calvin Harris, Skrillex, and Martin Garrix. I can't list off of the top my head a single female black DJ who has the same popularity or platform as these white, male DJs. That's why Missy Elliot is such a role model for me. She's been in this for decades, producing, mixing, and making music. She's literally defied the odds.

Interview by Yosan Alemu



photograph by India Halsted

LING GROCCIA

Can you describe to me your artistic process from when you conceive something all the way to when you present it?

I feel like I'm a very organized, detail-oriented person, which is probably why I like metals so much. You need a certain thought process to know how all the moving parts are going to come together. You have to be conscious of the order in which you construct your piece. You can't move on to something prematurely, because often times you can't go back. For example, you can't go back to solder something once you've attached something flammable. It's important to have a really good outline to start with and knowing what all the steps you need to take are, and ultimately what you're trying to make. But then also, there's this weird paradox because at any moment, you could literally melt your piece to a ball. It's terrifying. So it's about figuring out what to do now and being able bounce back.



You have a human body series, can you tell me more about that?

My human body series explores how you can replicate and represent nature out of something seemingly so hard and inflexible as metal. There's the heart piece, the lungs, and a piece inspired by mitosis. I really loved making the heart. To make it, I used chasing and repoussée. Basically, you have this pot of tree sap and you heat it up and put the flat piece of metal in. Then you use different hammers and tools to make whatever 3D shape you want. It's incredible to see the depth you can get out of a single piece of copper. I had to use copper—you can only put copper in this certain type of tree sap, but I ended up covering it. If you look closely, it has my fingerprints in a red design all over!



PHANESIA PHAREL

photograph by Elle Wolfley

Describe your first moments of creating. Were you always interested in playwriting?

I started out performing, like a lot of people. I continue to perform when I can and however I can. When you're a black woman in theater it's different because acting can't be as fulfilling as it is for other people. I remember when I was 10 or 11 - maybe middle school, 12 or 13 - and I was auditioning for Oklahoma. It's a very classic American musical. I remember my drama teacher telling me I just didn't fit the part for a character in the show. I don't know if she meant it in that type of way but I was this very awkward, pudgy black girl with these sprouting dreadlocks - I wasn't very palatable as a kid, I think. And I knew it. There are so many instances where I just don't 'look the part.'

My goal was to go into comedy. Stand up, sketch comedy. Sarah Silverman, of course Joan Rivers, Wanda Sykes, Ayesha Curry as well; I listened to these women and I was like, 'This is so amazing, this is so funny, this is so fucking weird. I want to go into comedy.' Then I did this public program [in my sophomore year of high school] that was for young kids to get them to write plays. It ended up not having anything to do with sketch or comedy writing, and it was all about playwriting. I fell in love. I started writing plays. Now that's kinda my main gig, but I still perform and sing.

Interview by Alexa Silverman

Mangrove

This is the story of a mangrove. How she came to be in the water, what kept her afloat, and how she sank. The mangrove, brown girls cast between America and the Caribbean. Mangroves unable to pinpoint the root of their pain because there are so many layers entangled. Brown girls who just want to be loved. Mangroves carrying the weight of the world. Coral reefs and civilizations have been built off of brown girls for centuries without a single thank you. This is the story of a mangrove who loved the thing that she hates the most. In order to thrive and grow Mangroves need to find a pod, to keep them rooted in the ocean, in the same way that people need people. But who do brown girls need? Yet instead of looking for a pod she found herself falling for a lumberer, the thing she hates the most. A lumberer who looks at mangroves like meat and cuts them down, A lumberer who wouldn't blink an eye if all the mangroves got cut down despite being with a mangrove. A lumberer, who for lack of better words, is a piece of shit. And she felt that lumberers were all pieces of shit, until she met this one. The lumberer didn't really stand a chance anyway, he was raised in a town where the best thing you could do is cut a mangrove down. So when he met our mangrove, he knew he had to cut her down. This is the story of a mangrove.

NOVEMBER 2018



**STEFANI
SHOREIBAH**



**SONIA
KAHN**



**CAMERON
LEE**



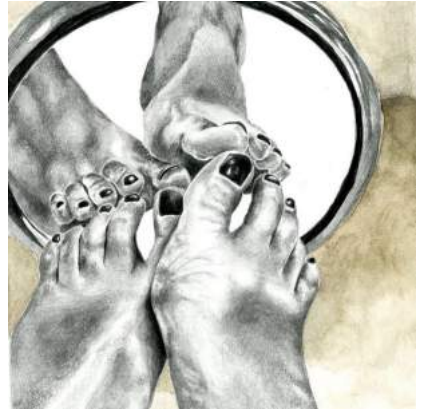
**AMY
GONG LIU**

photograph by Lola Lafia

STEFANI SHOREIBAH

In what ways do you incorporate nature and anatomy into your art?

With “subMERGED” and other pieces, I went outside and collected dead things. This will make me sound crazy, but I like to collect dead parts of nature. Not just dead leaves, I like to collect dead flowers. One time I found a butterfly wing and thought it was really beautiful and put it in a piece. I think it’s just artistic preference, to incorporate of anatomy and nature into my work. I like to think that my art reflects me responding to the



space I’m in. Nature being actual, literal mother nature, but also the nature of our culture and of our political environment. Art reflects the space where I am and how I incorporate this into a piece reflects how I’m responding to a space.



Regarding anatomy, I love the human body. I think it’s so beautiful in its different forms, and I love drawing hands and feet. There’s an aesthetic to the human body that is raw, something simultaneously fragile and formidable. Anatomy is an essential aspect in studying medicine, and likewise, in studying art. Every art class sequence incorporates some aspect of anatomy. Anatomy is the the strongest visual tie between medicine and art.

Interview by Elizabeth Meyer

SONIA

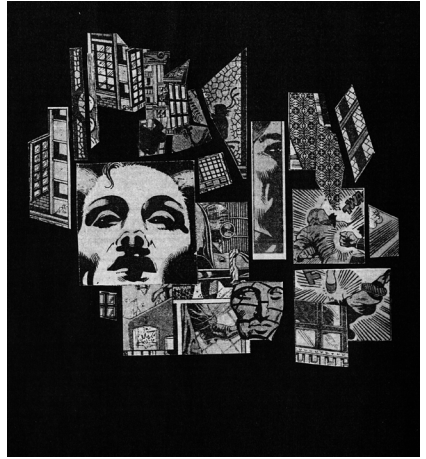


photograph by Margaret Maguire

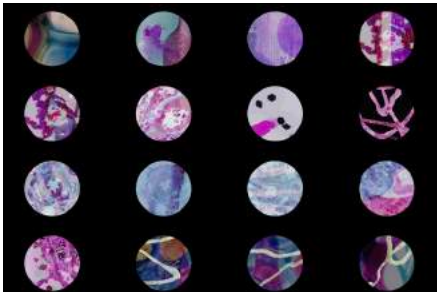
KAHN

With your work, I know that you express yourself through various different mediums: image manipulation, film, animation, projection, etc. How did you find these avenues?

In terms of avenues, or how I decide to use these mediums, I usually start off with a concept, an image, or literally any kind of thought. And from that I'll brainstorm; I was always taught that brainstorming is really good for when you're in the beginning stages of creating a piece, especially when dealing with abstract ideas. With the brainstorming, I then begin working through massive ideas that lead me to begin working on themes, or the bigger picture of my work (what do I want to convey, how can I convey it).



When looking at themes, I think again very conceptually, and from that I pick a medium to work in. I also go through a bit of experimentation along the process, notably in how I decide to use certain mediums. Most of the time, I begin with collage as the first entry because it gives me the most visual keys as to what I can continue to create moving forward. Collage is a great way



to physically see what you're working with. From that, I'll try to change mediums, like using print or projection, or quite literally any kind of medium I think best fits the central project of my work.

I would also say that I experiment with different mediums by way of my high school. At my school in England, not many people took art classes, so I had a lot of attention and careful guidance from my teachers.

CAMERON LEE

A black and white photograph of a woman with long braids lying down in a wooded area. She is wearing a dark, heavy jacket or sweater. The background consists of bare tree branches against a light sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

photograph by Morgana Van Peebles

As you introduced yourself also as a writer, how do you create in this medium?

My writing and my art are not usually directly tied together in the sense that I write prose in my sketchbook alongside a drawing, but occasionally I will illustrate something I've written to help bring a character to life in my mind. I almost exclusively write fiction, mostly in the third person, because I love the freedom it gives me to inhabit the minds of my characters while still getting the chance to invoke strong visuals and describe the setting, the characters, the world, etc.



Why do you focus particularly on faces and bodies?

I started drawing faces initially because that is what you usually first see when you look at a person. You look at their face and you see their body in front of you and it was intrinsic to me to try to represent that and to put that on paper. This is also partly why I enjoy drawing women and figures. It is so fascinating to me to see how we all more or less have the same features on our faces but everyone ends up looking so different. I am really interested in representing the variety of people that exist: the diversity of life and figures, the way faces and bodies can move, and the way bodies and faces can represent different emotions.





AMY GONG LIU

photograph by Maya Hertz

How are photojournalism and poetry different? How do they feel similar?

I think they're much more similar than they are different. When I think of a picture and a poem, I think for both to be good, they have to be first and foremost self-aware. Self-aware of their own limitations,

of the fact that they are both two-dimensional. Good photography, good writing, good poetry—it does something with its self-awareness, tries to take it and move something or someone outside of the image or text. It transports itself outside of its own limitations.



How have you engaged with Mandarin and English in your personal life? How does it come through in your work?

Blank Drift

Time emerging a companion
the sounds of seconds moving outside her
 window seasons functioning barely

Summer lasting one to the next but
 faltering somewhere along the
way when questioned

No answers little answers
acceptance culled from fixed memory so
 she never knows generations

How many remain hiding
practicing furthering away
 into hardened rites of safety

It's become, as a writer and as a person, the biggest question for me to answer. I tell people that I have a mechanical fluency in English in that I can speak it, that my hands and head know exactly how to work with it. But as I have started writing more about Mandarin and family and culture, I find that English just isn't enough to be able to capture whatever I'm trying to put on the page. There's a heart fluency, almost, that I have in Mandarin, that English will never reach. Mandarin exists in something like blood or form or poetics in me. Even in the things that are unsaid.

Interview by Isabella Rafky

DISPOSABLE



photograph by Yuping Zhang

CALL TO ARTISTS



photograph by Ellen Alt



photograph by Eliza Jouin



photograph by Adina Glickstein



photograph by Mathilde Nielsen



photograph by Nico Lopez-Alegria



photograph by India Halsted



photograph by Malena Steelberg

DECEMBER 2018



HENRY
ADESON



MATTHEW
SO



MICKAL
ADLER



RUBA
NADAR

HENRY ADESON



photograph by Nico Lopez-Alegria

How do you explore language in your work?

I guess a good way for me to describe this is with this document on my computer. It's called "Henry's Jargon File" or something. Basically, in all the classes I've taken here, I add the terminologies we use that I like to a collated list. I really like the culture of ascribing these intellectualized "ism" words to certain tropes or events. So I've got this list of things, of these terminologies that I like. Last year for my poetry class — this is kind of where it started — I would review this document and see ways

I could transcribe and transpose these poetic constructs and terminologies into either visual form or my own poetry. That kind of process of conversion is where the playful, linguistic element of my work started. And then subsequently, as I've gone into Art History more that has continued. I also think terminology is fun because it's such a constructed thing. Motifs and tropes are repeated across poets and artists, and they're so affected and contrived. I'm very drawn to that. So to reinterpret it or deconstruct it in a way, whether visually or lexically, I think is interesting.



When would you say you started developing your own style?

My individual style is definitely a recent development. A lot of my drawings used to document artworks and artistic events that I liked, and create an inventory that I could look at and use — but never anything actively creative or ideoplastic. It was always in reference to something or a eulogy to an artist. I think it's maybe America that has changed me. I've now had time to digest this derivative catalog of imagery and come up with an artistic individuality of my own, to synthesize all these things and give new meaning to them rather than just copying.



MATTHEW SO

photograph by Morgana Van Peebles

How do you see tea and making tea as an art form rather than simply a series of steps or just the drinking of tea?

I guess it's just that I'm cognisant of all of the factors going into making tea, from the farms it comes from to the type of cup it should be served in. I'm definitely cognisant of the environment that I try to serve tea in. But also I'm trying to improve my tea making skills to a point where it goes beyond just something for utility.

Whenever people come in [to my dorm room], they're like 'is this room even a dorm?' And that's exactly what I'm going for. I want people to just come in here and be taken out of the whole college environment; like this space is its own world for the hour and a half that you're in here drinking tea. And then when you leave, you get to go back into the real world. But here, people say they feel like time's stopping or something, which is exactly what I'm trying to do.

How does your photography coincide with the tea making practice? Do you take pictures separate from your tea making? What do you usually photograph?

I use my photography just as a tool to share my tea experience with people on Instagram, and I honestly would not say that the photography itself is the focus of my Instagram. It's for sharing what I'm doing, what I'm drinking. I do photography on my own. But that's a hobby. I guess tea is a hobby [too], but photography's definitely more casual for me. I travel a lot with my brothers, and I photograph them candidly on our trips.



Interview by Uma Halsted

MICHAEL ADLER



photograph by Eliza Jouin

What do you feel can be captured by an image of an exterior or interior that cannot be captured by an image of a human subject?

In one sense it's really fun to take pictures of people because your camera becomes the means of interacting with them, and they're aware of that. With things, they can't change because you're taking a picture. So it becomes less about the experience of being photographed and more active on the photographer's part.



In New Orleans, especially in the summer, you don't stay outside if at all possible. The only people who are outside are people who absolutely have to be. So you get that suburban feel all over New Orleans because no one really walks, so the streets are empty of people.



There are lots of cars, and the streets are very active, but it still feels empty. In my pictures there are dogs and cats, but not people. There's one where the dog's on the porch, and the door's open, and you have to assume that people are inside, because why else is the door open?

I feel like in those pictures you can tell how hot it was by looking at them, and that's what I wanted to convey: the actual experience of being outside and being alone and noticing little things. By not having anything to focus on, in terms of subjects in the pictures, you look for the little things.

photograph by India Halsted



RUBA NADAR



It seems like a lot of your work involves reconfiguration — of advertisements, novels, other artists' photographs. At what point in the creative process would you say a piece becomes cohesively yours?

That's definitely tough, because collaging with found materials involves a lot of other people's work — which I'm very conscious of. But when it's done, and I look at it, it's saying something about me. Some message. With a lot of the things that I do, it's about what's not there. I'll put something down and then paint over it, or rip it off

and you'll just see what's been left. It's more about the thought behind it. I cut out other people's images, but it's all about the composition. Once it's something that I identify with myself, once these colors are in line, once this stitch looks good with this, then I can say that this work is my own. Yeah, that's someone else's face, but it's all working together for something bigger.

Tell me about the role color plays in your collages. If you could only create monochromatic works from here on out, which shade would you choose?

Probably red. Color does play a big role; it works in different series. If red works on one piece, I'll do that for the next ten and get sick of it, move on to blue. But yeah, red is the most striking color in any shade and also has something to say by way of what it means to both me and to the viewer. Whether it looks like your grandmother's trademark lipstick or your favorite pair of socks, it relates to the most random of things.



JANUARY 2019



VERONICA
SUCHODOLSKI



MAMADOU
YATTASSAYE



BERNADETTE
BRIDGES



ELLEN
ALT



VERONICA

SUCHODOLSKI

photograph by Margaret Maguire

What are three words that describe you and three words that describe your work?

Post post-modern urban anxiety. Right now, I'm really into this idea of post post-modernism, it's what I wrote my thesis on. Post post-modernism is about pushing back on post-modern irony, absolutism, meta-narratives, and this idea that there is no meaning. I'm tired of that mode of thinking; I don't want to hear about it anymore. I'm interested in creating new systems of meaning and looking at old systems and acknowledging that those don't work. But just because those don't work doesn't mean that we have to be hopeless and that there's no meaning now. The urban anxiety refers to a sort of distrust of urbanism and capitalism. I'm from rural Massachusetts, so living in the city is an interesting experience.

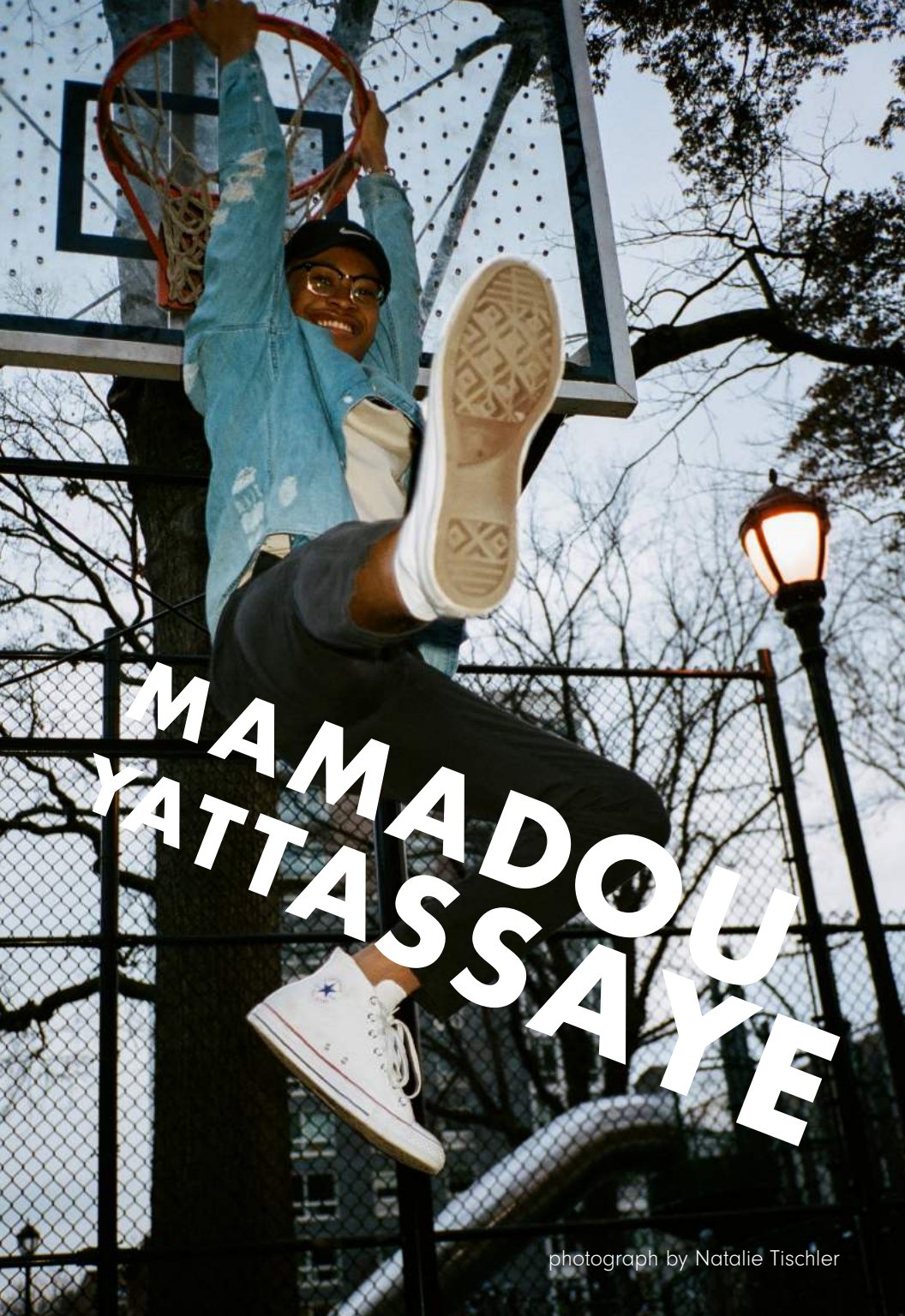
What teachers have inspired you?

I am in Mary Gordon's thesis seminar this semester on Virginia Woolf and something that she said in office hours was that she actually was going to be a poet, and then she read Virginia Woolf and was like, "oh I didn't realize that you could do this with prose," and that's why she became a very famous short story writer. I'm really interested in how to make prose not dead, how to make prose poetic and lyrical - which is very hard I'm finding out.

Interview by Elizabeth Meyer

Water damage

I wonder if this is the life our mothers meant for us, the sharp smell of your hair five days since your last shower somehow sweetening when you lie down next to me. We always end up stretched out on your sheets like wet laundry, worn from working too hard, from carrying in the bags under our eyes the weight of expectations handed to us from across an ocean. My love for you is atlantic. Maybe that could be enough, us side-by-side in a nest we've built for each other, where I could remind you to eat your leftovers and you could rest your hands against the hard lines of my body until they soften and give. Before the rot. Before things seep and crumble and grow in strange places, before my bones crack and collapse from the pressure, before you fold up and disappear before the void. We fall asleep talking about how it feels to drown and I start to think that you're the only thing keeping me afloat. I want to remember how it feels to be young and in your arms and naked from the waist down. I want to embalm myself in the patterns that your fingers trace around my neck, to find some sort of ancient preservation in the dimples on your skin. When it's my turn to cross the ocean it won't be amnesic. I'll imprint the contours of my body onto yours until they stick, and I'll measure my expectations against the way your breath feels on my forehead when you fall asleep at night.



**MAMADOU
YATTASSAYE**

photograph by Natalie Tischler

What is your writing process?

I don't know, my style is very spontaneous bro, because I can't be forced to sit down and try to mash out a poem. I mean I probably could, but I wouldn't be proud of it y'know? It just happens where I experience something, or I hear something - either through a song or a lyric - or I'll talk to somebody, or I'll see something while I'm walking; and right there in that moment I'm sparked; and in the next 20 or 30 minutes, I'm just writing down everything, and it's kinda like word vomit, just writing anything. And then once I got all my ideas and creative things out, now I try to format it and revise, revise, revise; make sure the way in which I wanna say things is precise. That's how I be writing my poems. And it's similar with how I write my lyrics too, with rap. I have the same spark, have a certain subject matter in mind, just word vomit and then try to match that with the way I wanna say things, cut off words, revise. So I mean they go hand in hand in terms of my approach in lyrics for rapping and my poetry.

Interview by Nigel Telman II



To him,

The projects
were a mansion

The street lights took him to different dimensions
Complexing fantasy and life
Illuminating hidden
Beauties and dreams

He drew streams
Emerging from the seams
on the palm of his hand

Words potent
A street poet

He untold times when
the sweetest wine was
intertwined in the hidden roots
of Africa

Of how each dribble
that rang through the park at Morningside
coexists within his heart beat,
a leader giving life to his
community

Instead of drugs,
he said to find love

Instead of gangbangers,
he saw historians

He was
the father
to his fatherless child

BERNADETTE



BRIDGES

photograph by Morgana Van Peebles

What are things that have been inspiring you lately?

I really like Edgar Wright, who's a comedic director. My brother and I watched a lot of his work over winter break. He directed "Scott Pilgrim vs the World" and also "Hot Fuzz." It's funny because I don't write a lot of comedic poetry - if you write comedic poetry I bow down to you. I guess comedy is inspiring because it points out the absurdity of...most everything.

In general, I find a lot of inspiration from country music. I'm from Atlanta so I've inherited an Atlanta-n appreciation for both country and hip hop. There's something cool and lonely about country music - and it's all stems from the blues, which I guess is the saddest musical genre. But then country is somehow subverted, so people think it's inherently sunny and happy. At the end of the day, you can't extract that sadness from country music. It addresses sadness - either explicitly or implicitly - because it's about monotony. That's something I really like. Thinking about the smallness of everyday life and how that can be sad but also absurd. Nothing's ever just sad; it's sad but it's also funny.

How do you think your work and writing changed when you came to the Columbia community?

At UGA I wasn't writing as much, and just wasn't as committed to it. All my life I've been trying to mimic other writers which is I think a common practice that helps you find who you are. But I think the writers that I am influenced by have changed a lot because my values have changed. A lot of young people when they are working in the arts really value intellectualism. As I said earlier, I was really into Samuel Beckett -- things that are straight up boring. I think I've opened myself up to enjoy life and its expressions more. Art can be entertaining and still be art.

Start Over Another Never Again

Another, lower, in the chest. Somewhere
beyond the body. Maybe? I see. Ok, I see.
Lower, lower. The muscles in my right eye.
My arm. My brother's face. My teeth, my flat sheet.
I get it, ok.
The hard ground. The loud shoes across a courtyard.
Lower than that. I keep seeing.
My phone under my left foot.
Every group of pigeons moves the day. Lower,
and another. Every single day is lower.
I see now. Ok.

photograph by India Halsted



I use impressionist themes of french culture from my childhood, sometimes using childlike colors, but always capturing my influence.



In representing a lot of different women in no way do I intend to speak for them. I just hope to give them any sort of visibility or platform. I show their faces in the hope that their stories continue. I have the privilege to paint these paintings and tell the stories of these women and hopefully give them more of a platform for people to see their stories. I really do hope to send a political message with my art.

I'm influenced by Aliceville and her abstract portraiture work. I paint more as a commentary on the policing of women's bodies and abortion rights, the work for these women to bring justice is also unfinished.

I think my process is more individualised without continuous access to a studio. Right now I think it's even more my own process. I am being more extravagant with the colours I am using, it is a working palette. At times I literally brush to get paint off by brush.



FEBRUARY 2019



**GISELA
LEVY**



**ANTON
ZHOU**



**MYLES
ZHANG**



**KOSTA
KARAKASHYAN**

GISELA LEVY

photograph by Margaret Maguire

When did you first start making art?

I started paper-cutting when I moved to China for a year as a study abroad [student] in high school. I had never paper-cut before then, so I think that that was probably the biggest influence on [my] artwork. But I've been drawing and making art my whole life, casually, not professionally. I've just always been in art classes and enjoyed that kind of space [and] trying on different mediums. A lot of people didn't like that about art class, having these constraints about what kind of materials to use or what kind of subject to draw, but I always felt that it enriched whatever I was doing. Because one way or another I always brought my style to it. So it just helped me discover what it was I was trying to do by pushing it in a different direction.

What is your approach to incorporating words and text into your art?

Usually my motivation for making a piece of art is that something is stuck in my head. Something about my life or about the world ... it's in there and it's not coming out. I'm constantly thinking about it, and I have to say everything that I want to say otherwise it will be stuck in this rotation in my head. When I get it on the paper, or cut out of the paper, I feel like my head gets emptier, and I've processed what it is that I'm thinking.

What is your favorite word right now?

I don't know if it's my favorite word, but the word that's on my mind is brilliant. And also the phrase in sweeping motions. I don't know, that's been stuck in my head.



ANTON ZHOU

photograph by Lola Lafia



What are you trying to capture in a portrait?

With every portrait, I try to leave something to be desired. I never paint a full-on portrait. I don't think it's the best way to capture someone's face. Sometimes I'll omit an ear or leave out a nose, or really develop the eyes and forget everything else. I want viewers to engage with the face and search for missing pieces.

When is a work finished?

For me, there are definitely moments when I feel I can close the curtains on a piece. But deciding this point can be difficult. Different levels of finish tell different stories. I can paint a decent hand in ten strokes, or I can go on for maybe a hundred, or two hundred. When do I draw the line? It's a decision you have to make. I'm always cautious of overdoing something.

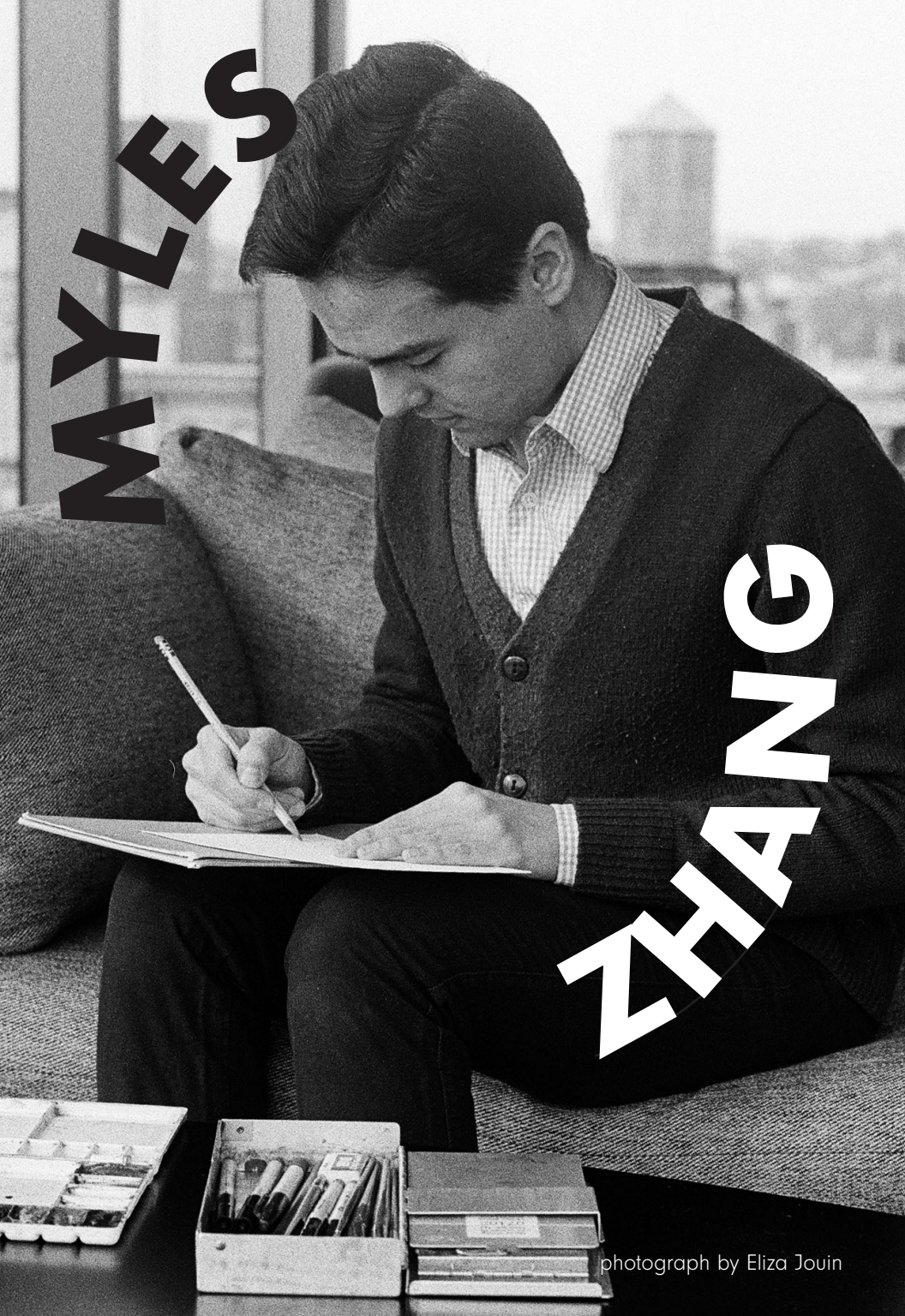


How do you want your work to be seen? What do you notice? What do you want others to notice?

I want people to get up close and personal with the artwork and really see every stroke and layer of paint that went into that piece. It's not just the overall image that's important [or] that is what captures a viewer's eye, but what makes you really appreciate a piece is the work that the artist puts in and the intimacy you have with the piece.

MYLES

ZHANG



photograph by Eliza Jouin

There is movement in cities that creates a spontaneity, a grittiness, and an identity that many artists have attempted to capture. In his project, Ten Days Walking in Manhattan, Myles Zhang, a senior at Columbia college majoring in the History and Theory of Architecture, creates a collage of representations through watercolors, photography, and large-scale maps.

Myles brought me back to each area of Manhattan that he explored in his project. In each neighborhood we visited, Myles relived how his perception of it has shifted as he has grown up living in proximity and now within the city: from as a child in Newark, NJ to a student at Columbia University. Myles detailed how the art created for Ten Days Walking in Manhattan has become a part of his personal archive. For each of his “days” in the city, Myles explained what he saw and the art that the neighborhood inspired.

Day Eight: Riverside Drive

That watercolor was done around 69th street on Riverside Drive. There is an old industrial area adjacent to Midtown with rusted derricks that were used for ships. In this image of the Hudson River, there is an old derrick [industrial crane] in the foreground. Before there were tunnels for trains beneath the river, ships carrying freight cars would unload onto the derricks. The train cars would roll onto the tracks, and the tracks would deliver the trains into Manhattan. The derrick that I painted is not in use anymore, but it’s preserved there as a monument.

Interview by Elizabeth Meyer



KOSTA KARAKASHYAN

photograph by Natalie Tischler

How is dance different from other media that you use?

The most important thing about a dance is a title, because that's the one place where you can guide the audience. It's always overlooked. I think context is really important. When I approach making art, I don't necessarily like to be vague or confusing just for the sake of it. I like art that will take you with it so that it doesn't exclude the audience. Dance is already a little bit underappreciated, and I think it's because people feel scared that they don't "get" it. You can do service to your audience and present it in a way that's understandable.



One of your interdisciplinary projects is the music video for "Drips" by Acrylics, for which you were the choreographer, director, and editor. How did that project come to be?

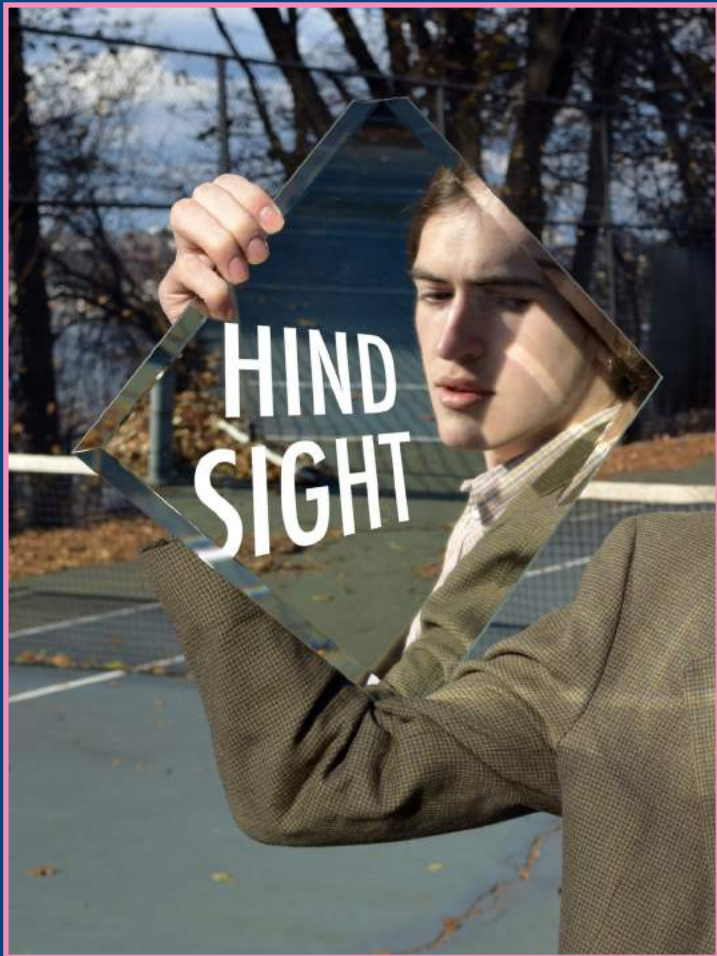
A friend of mine -- who I haven't talked to in years -- randomly reached out to me and said, 'I saw you're directing things; do you want to make a music video for me and my friend?' And I said, 'yeah, sure.' It was the Sunday before finals. I grabbed all of my class's dance majors. It was very last minute. I found the director of photography, Xuelong Mu. I'd never worked with him, but he was down. We rented a camera, we found a makeup artist, I went to H&M at Times Square. I always style people from there because it's open till 1 am. So I went at midnight the night before, got a bunch of clothes, and then we just made everything happen on the set. We had six hours in Diana. It was some-

thing out of nothing. The girls were so good.



Interview by Zoe Sottile

CALL TO ARTISTS



photograph by Nico Lopez-Alegria



photograph by Auden Barbour



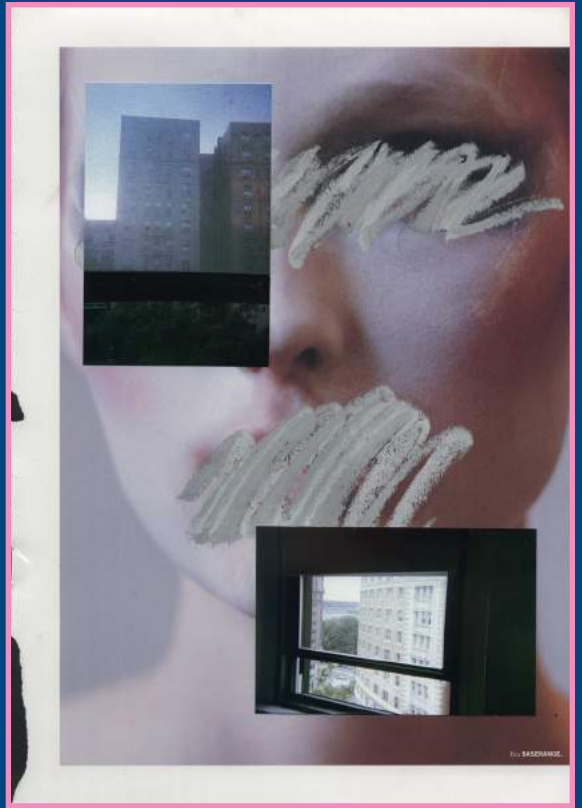
drawing by Cameron Lee



photograph by Natalie Tischler



photograph by Margaret Maguire



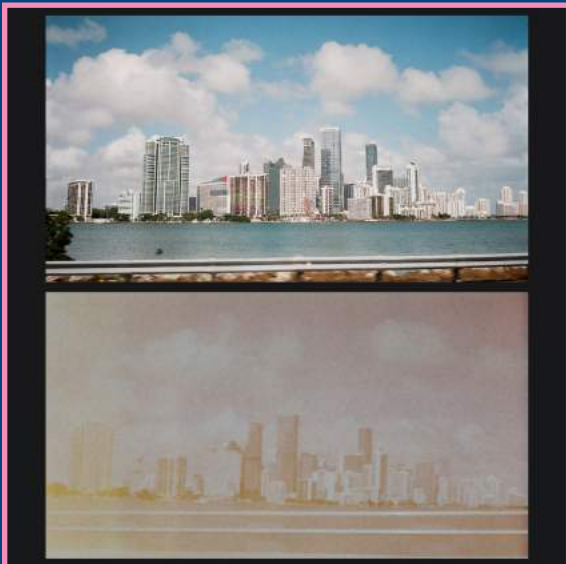
collage by Ruba Nadar



photograph by Elle Wolfley



photograph by Lola Lafia



photograph by Santiago Costa Peuser

OVERFLOW

Potted plants grow cascading
and disoriented amid stacks of blue
willow china and lumpy frog statues,
slender colored vases stemming from wooden
shelves like sheltering mushrooms
the whole marsh guarded by my mother's
straw witches that cast cooking spells
from their ceiling hooks.

Archipelagos of houseplants tether
the rooms together, they anchor
a dreamy blue fireplace waterfalling
down from the ceiling, paintings cast
in reds and browns blooming
ostentatious petals on either side.
Cracked leather couches grow
like ant hills from the earth, rows
of blown glass standing at dusty attention.
They brought them from Poland,
the glass and the couches, on a ship,
and I always wondered how the couches
didn't crash into the vases and the champagne
flutes in a great oceanic collision,
the presence of their delicate glass necks
a fragile rebellion in our living room.

The house where I grew up was big
and open, big and wide and maybe
that was why she tried so hard to fill
it, tidal waves of knick knacks funneling
through windows and doors, lining
the shelves crowding countertops creeping,
always creeping into the space I tried to clear.
I wanted empty space.

I wanted the house to be so empty I floated
inside it like something suspended.
I don't always know what to make
of our disparate strategies, a constant filling
and a desire to unfill. Perhaps she hoped the
weight of each object would tie her down
where gravity had failed, keeping her still
in this country that never felt like her own.

MARCH 2019



TAEOR
SCOTT



CALVIN
LIANG



SARAH
COURVILLE



NATHAN
FARRELL

TAE L O R S C O T T



photograph by Cameron Downey

What is the narrative you are trying to tell? Is it a humanizing process?

Storytelling has been one of my biggest interests since I was very small, and I found that I could combine my passions with visual art, like drawing

(but it didn't take me long to figure out that I could not draw for the life of me). With photo work, the camera, for me, helped me capture and create images that were always stuck in my head. Using the camera has been an ongoing learning process, and I really admire the discipline that comes with it. There is always so much more to learn. I don't know everything there is to know about digital photography, or analog, or large format. I rather enjoy my position as a student of photography, because I always get to be learning, improving, and changing.



I've noticed that a lot of your work deals with moments of intimacy and care, of liminality, space and instances of waiting. What do they mean to you? Why are they important to you and your work?

The spaces of liminality and waiting are two concepts that have become very important to me, because I used to see them as somewhere I was trying to get to. I didn't like being in moments of waiting or spaces of insecurity and unknown, of things not being at the right time.

But the spaces of liminality and waiting is where the living and the inspiration for living comes from. When you're at an impasse, you have to come to terms with that stuckness as a means of understanding and living.

Interview by Yosan Alemu

CALVIN

A photograph of a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark, long coat over a white shirt and brown pants. He is standing in profile, facing left, in a dimly lit, classical interior. The space features large, grey stone columns and a series of warm, glowing pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is moody and artistic.

LIANG

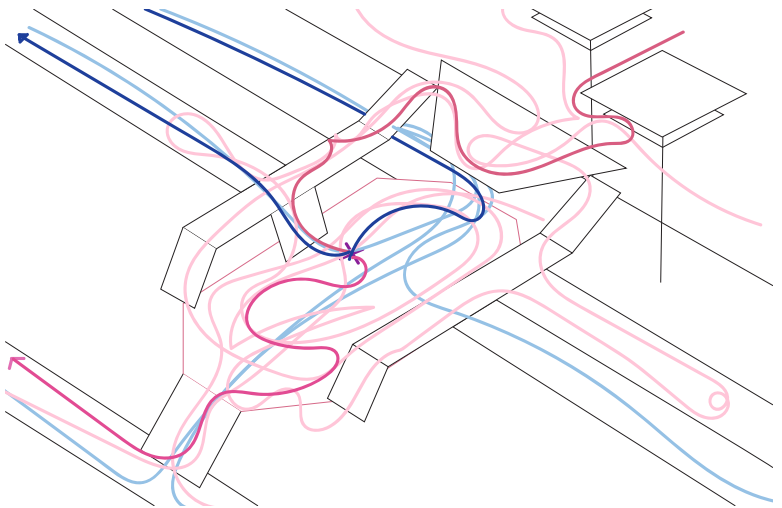
photograph by Santiago Costa Peuser

Would you rather be colorblind, or lose the ability to perceive textures?

There used to be a time that I was obsessed with having to have some kind of restrictive color palette, but I realized that sometimes the beauty of things is in their disorganization. I think I would be okay actually with being colorblind. What's rich about black-and-white especially is that it forces you to pay attention to details that we take for granted with color. We associate foliage with green, or the sky as blue, but, there's details in all of those things—like texture, for example—that we don't really pay that much attention to when color is present. When we strip that back, I think there's a whole different story that's available.

What are the merits of sculpture and architecture over two-dimensional arts, like photography or drawing? Or vice-versa.

Architecture, for me, is art that's trying to solve a problem. With other [artistic] mediums, I don't believe that problem-solving is necessarily the goal. I can posit questions, or bring attention to details, but I don't necessarily have to have a solution. I think the beauty of art is that you get people to think about issues, or even just things that exist in their natural state. And [you] mak[e]ing people question them by putting it in their faces. Different issues and different problems have different mediums. I don't necessarily have a bias over material or representation. It does come kind of case-by-case for me, really.



photograph by Pedro Damasceno

SARAH COURVILLE





How did your time in Berlin shape your art?

I really didn't start collaging until I got to Germany. I guess the winter came, and I had to figure out a coping mechanism or a way to kind of track my mental, physical, and emotional health, channel it into something. And in Germany in the winter, the sun sets at like 3:45 p, so everyone lives mostly in darkness, indoors. My collaging was totally shaped by being in Berlin. There

are lots of these secondhand bookstores in the city that sell old magazines, books, newspapers, and the like. I picked up a couple things at one of these shops, just because I like images and old things. Then I began thinking about the images and texts through a different lens and found that it was a good channel to develop my creative thoughts.

Do you think that exploring the body in your work is an act of giving yourself back control of the body?

Totally. It's the same reason I like having tattoos on my body. When you exist in a body that you can't control -- and me it's like ninety percent of the time I can't control it -- you are forced to seek agency in other ways. And I'm attracted to images of the body. So a lot of the magazines and things that I've collected over years have to do with the body in some way. I have old Playboy magazines, and I have amazing German magazines on Freikörperkultur [free body culture], books on body language, anatomy.

Interview by Uma Halsted



NATHAN FARRELL



photograph by Sabine Ostinvil

Would you describe yourself as a performer? What do you feel like when you perform?

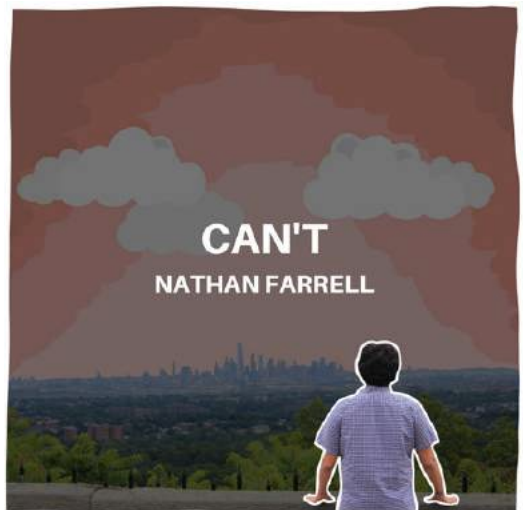
I would definitely describe myself as a performer because that is most often the medium in which I will be relaying my art. I think music itself and performing music are very different. A lot of performing is learning to be you in the most authentic way. It is about putting it all out there and that is something that I do a lot in general. So for me, performing is something that I have a little bit of an inclination for, but it's also something that I am still developing when I perform on or off campus. I found that I'm best at performing when I don't really view it as being on a stage, on an elevated platform. I perform better when I am literally not on a stage because it's almost as if I was talking to others in a different way. I think it is very hard to perform on huge stages, like stadiums, in a way that a lot of very big stars will do because you cannot connect to your audience as well.

It is interesting what you describe about authenticity because when we think about people on stage, we often think of them as playing a role, as being something else other than themselves...

Yes, that's also a part of it because sometimes your performance does not have to necessarily correspond to how you feel in the moment. A performance can be performative.

If I'm sad and performing at a party, I have to draw on other feelings. But, even if it's performative, I think there is always something genuine about it because to successfully do it, you have to draw on a genuine part of you. There is a little bit of a tension there, but I think it is still ultimately authentic.

Interview by Noa Levy Baron



BOLD BEAUTIFUL BLACK AT BARNARD 2019

Bold, Beautiful, Black at Barnard is an annual festival that centers the experiences of Black students at Barnard. This year, through a series of events that took place between March 29 and April 3, BBB specifically celebrated Black women in the arts. Phanesia Pharel, the Student Government Representative for Arts and Culture and the founder of BBB, partnered with Ratrock to curate and host an art exhibition entitled "Redefining the Center." Held in the Altschul Atrium, it featured student artists Elise Logan, Carla Melaco, Mariah Viman, and Phanesia Pharel and paid tribute to influential alumnae, including Djassi DaCosta Johnson '96 and Ntozake Shange '70. Displays of poetry, art, and photography framed the room, leaving an open space in the center for spoken word and dance performances. Pharel performed Ntozake Shange's play "For Coloured Girls" and Logan and Melaco presented original choreography. Although only in its second year, the well-attended exhibit confirmed that Bold, Beautiful, and Black at Barnard has already become an influential tradition, forcing Barnard to rethink its attitude towards and its commitment to its Black students.





photographs by Morgana Van Peebles

APRIL 2019



**TUESDAY
SMITH**



**NAOMI
CHANG**



**LUIS
COLLADO**



**JAZMIN
MACO**

A photograph of a woman with short, vibrant red hair crouching on a sidewalk. She is wearing a light-colored, textured cardigan over a dark top and dark pants. She is looking to her right. In front of her is a closed metal shutter door, which is part of a storefront with green-painted metal frames. The scene is lit with warm, low-key lighting, suggesting an evening or night setting. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

TUESDAY SMITH

photograph by Emily Sures

Do you identify as an artist?



I've been thinking about this a lot, because I don't know if I ever really thought of myself as an artist. I always thought of myself as being artistic but artist felt too professional, and like I had to do that for a living. I also just didn't feel intentioned enough because artmaking is kind of more spontaneous for me and I kind of doing it just to process things happening around me. I didn't think

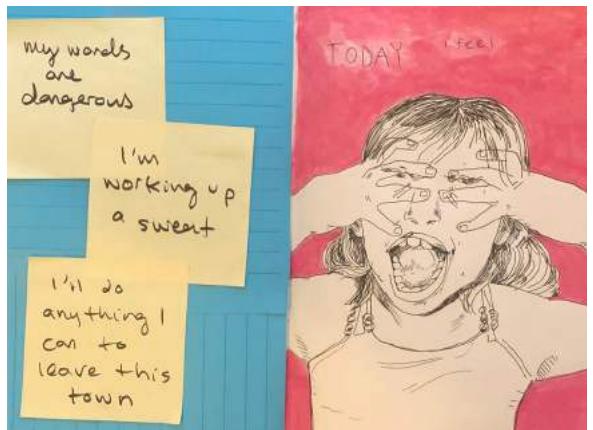
of myself as one until I stopped drawing last year which made me realize that making art is a huge part of my identity.

What do you find yourself representing the most?

I usually represent people and bodies. In high school I did a lot with public transportation and how people relate in public spaces. Thinking about times when you're alone but [are] still around other people, and how that changes how you position yourself in space.

If you could only artistically represent one subject for the rest of your life what would it be?

I think it would be touch. I feel like that's broad enough that I wouldn't get bored. Because that could be—I don't know... I feel like [for] a lot of [humans] navigating public transportation is [about] trying not to touch, or moments before touch, or rebounding when you're forced into it. I think that art that overlays images of movement is really interesting, like Jenny Saville. She's like a big inspiration, and her's are all about motherhood, femininity, bodies, and gender and a lot of things about touch and relationships. I think that's something that I really enjoy looking at. Just people. And distortion.



A black and white photograph of a woman, Naomi Chang, performing a backbend on a sandy beach. She is wearing a floral-patterned dress and a thick, textured cardigan draped over her shoulders. Her head is touching the sand, and her hands are also on the sand. She is wearing a necklace and several bracelets on her right wrist. The background shows a building with a grid-like facade.

NAOMI

CHANG

photograph by Margaret Maguire

You bring up dreams as an influence in your work. Do you feel like there's a tension to navigate between the subconscious and reality?

The process of making art, for me, is similar to dreaming because I'm taking elements of my experience in real life—interactions with the natural, physical world, and with people around me—and repurposing them. A lot of the time, going into creating work, I'm not really thinking about what I want to do specifically. Sometimes different symbols or scenes will come to mind, and I'll arrange them in a way that makes sense to me. Or I'll base the way that those elements interact on my observations of how things work in real life, if that makes sense. I feel like that is a similar process to how my dreams take shape. So the process of making art isn't really a conscious thing for me. I can see and understand how my mind works after I've made something, go back to it, and try to make sense of it.

Specifically, how does your interpretation of the female form manifest in your 2D work?

I really enjoy creating wonky proportions and mangled looking positions in the bodies that I draw. I see it as a way of trying to break out of some kind



of box, or challenge a set of ideas about what bodies are supposed to look like and how they are supposed to function. Identity is a super expansive concept that goes past our physical vessels, and even manifestations of our personal expression of gender. I think it's interesting to push what that means visually.

LUIS

A portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark blue jacket with a grey collar and a backpack. He is making a playful, pouting face and winking with his right eye. The background is a bright blue sky and a green hillside with some buildings in the distance.

photograph by Pedro Damasceno

COLLADO

What was it like to transition from mostly making music alone to performing for an audience?

Dude, it's so hard to sing and play guitar at the same time. That shit is impossible. I tried to sing a song for my girlfriend in high school, and it was so difficult to just say anything while playing the guitar. It was like walking and chewing gum at the same time. I also didn't know how important it was to be able to hear yourself while you sang. There's a video of me at Snock just not hitting the right notes. And everyone was very supportive, but I was really screwing up. It was tough to do the singing thing, and it was tough to be yourself on stage, because a lot of the time stage fright makes you avoid doing things that are wacky or funny or otherwise in character in favor of not messing up. So you can seem closed off and stressed out on stage. And then letting go - knowing that you're yelling and not feeling weird about it. Those were all tough, but it's super fun and everyone is super supportive. Once you do it once, you [see] alright cool, I can do it again.

You mentioned the importance of knowing what you sound like. Can you expand on that?

The expression that you're doing, playing the notes, is so different from the expression that everybody else is picking up from the amplified sound. I wish I could clone myself at events, so I could have me doing whatever instrument I'm doing, and then one of me front row, and then one at the back of the room, and have their input. I have a certain idea in mind, and I've become nitpicky about it by running sound at so many events. I want to play the bass, but I also want to know how the bass sounds. You need to reconcile the two. Ultimately, what it comes down to is having a sound person as part of your band, which is difficult.



photograph by Lola Latifa

JAZMIN MACO



Jam-ai-ca

Arrived in Papine -
I remembered this place.
It remembered me too.

So much history here
where generations mean something
because everyone is here
to witness them grow

Tavern 18
the weather is eating away at you from the outside
you are crumbling from within.

Everchanging -
But you're still the same.
People are Grown
People are Growing
But this place just sits.

I bet
by the time the gully takes its last bite
there will be no one left to scream.

Months after I'm gone
We will speak of you
I will smell your smell
So distinctly
it would be like I was standing in your belly,
never left.

Is there a time I don't return?
If mom didn't come
neither would we.
I want to see her home,
her people.
But aren't they all gone,
in search of better
from the sleepy countryside.
I guess there is no home in the grass now.
I guess there is no one left.

MAY 2019



**CHARLIE
BLODNIKES**



**IVANNA
RODRIGUEZ**



**MALVIKA
JOLLY**



**NATALIE
TISCHLER**

photograph by Eliza Jouin



CHARLIE BLODNIÉKS

PSALM FOR GOD'S MOTHER

plead with god in secret. o, moonlight. how you witness me
crack open like no other. here, i am on my knees praying god
will make me boy. my grandmother overhears and i know
god said no. o, body, wretched, unholy thing. you have never
survived a man's gaze; so if god is a man, tell him i don't want
him watching me change into myself. coming out
of a suffocating womanhood i have been forced to call home.
tonight it is a drowning. a royal asphyxiation. body drenched
in an unknowing of future. i am not allowed boyhood. i do it
anyway. the moonlight listens and i yell: if god is a man, tell him
i'd like to meet his mother. o, goddess. woman of the changing
leaves. turn me over like springtime. i am body ever-churning.
o, mother. press your hands to my chest. push my body into
wax-coated wings, pristine. please. i don't want to see the shame
in them. yes, mother. i run off the cliff and fly this time. the sun
cannot stop me. i am free. i gift myself a new name, etched
on the back of my hand with a quill from my spine and mother:
i am still life as the sun melts my wax. behind me, every feather
becomes a bird. they sing and i become that sound. fill the air.
i smile and now i am the thing illuminating. o, goddess, i am
the sun. i will not die. on earth, my mother is warmed in my
light. eternity passes. and passes. and passes. and i am always
the sun. her son.

Reading over the work you submitted to Ratrock, I really loved your Psalm For God's Mother piece. If you would like to share, what inspired you to write it? How did you write it? Why?

The poem was actually my individual CUPSE poem from last year. So CUPSE is the College Union's Poetry Slam Invitation—the Barnard/Columbia slam team goes to every year. That poem was initially three minutes, and I performed it with other members on the team. My best friend Taylor Thomp-

son was singing Moses Sumney's "Plastic" while I performed the piece. I think that poem has a lot to do with the specific moments of my transition last year, which was around this exact time actually. I had just come out to my family as trans, and I just started requesting people use my correct pronouns. That was a really, for me, a coming into my own moment, my own self. I was thinking a lot about space, and how to request and demand space for yourself.

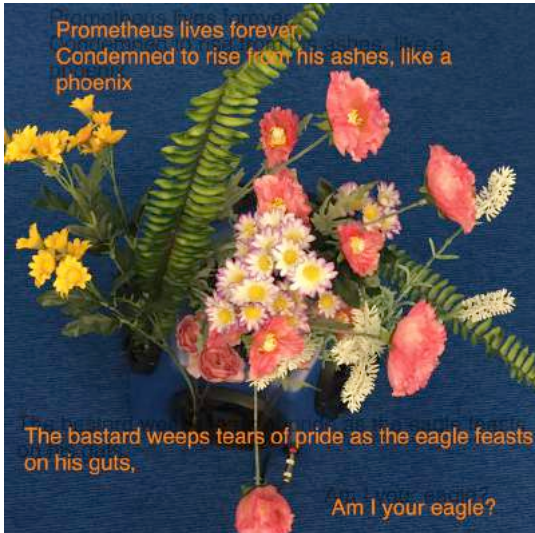
A large part of the poem also got me attached to Icarus imagery, of flying too close to the sun, especially in terms of space and proximity. I'm always really anxious about taking up too much space, and I felt very uncomfortable with asserting my gender identity and my transness—I had a lot of complicated feelings about it. I still do. The poem also dealt with my relationship with my family, and me announcing to them and the world that I can do these things on my own, I can transition on my own, I can do it myself. Even though there is a lot of sadness to it, there is also some power hidden within it. It might be quiet but still deeply comforting.

photograph by Morgana Van Peebles

IVANNA RODRIGUEZ

Cuanto afecta Miami a tu arte? Cuánto extrañas a Miami?

Yo extraño a Miami con todo mi ser, es mi hogar--y pienso sobre él diariamente. No creo que mis padres entienden lo cuanto que amo a Miami! En términos de mi poesía y fotografía, pienso que aunque no todo lo que produzco está directamente vinculado con mi ciudad, de alguna manera refleja alguna parte de mi personalidad. Llevo casi 14 años viviendo en la Florida, así que aunque no quiera hacerlo intencionalmente, me influencia muchísimo. Miami, tal como yo es un lugar cálido, colorido, y lleno de vida--espero que mi arte también tenga el poder de evocar estos sentimientos tropicales y únicos de mi amada península.



TRANSLATION

How does Miami affect your art? How much do you miss Miami?

I miss Miami with my whole being, it is my home - and I think about it daily. I do not think my parents understand how much I love Miami! In terms of my poetry and photography, I think that although not everything that I produce is directly linked to my city, in some way it reflects some part of my personality. I've been living in Florida for almost 14 years; so even if I do not want to do it intentionally, it influences me a lot. Miami, just like me is warm, colorful, and full of life - I hope that my art also has the power to evoke these tropical and unique feelings of my beloved peninsula.

photograph by Sabine Ostinvil

MALVIKA JOLLY





Describe your series **Voices of Pullman**.

The photographs that are in exhibition in the Lewisohn building this year are part of a broader project on the community of Pullman, in Chicago's South Side, where I lived until I moved to

New York to come to school here. All of those photographs feel like an anomaly to me— there are hundreds of them, made at breakneck pace over the course of about six weeks— during that time I was working on them constantly and with a kind of urgency.

In that case, my process was informed by the broader framework of the project I was working on with my friend Faith McGlothlin, who was collecting oral histories and conducting interviews at the same time as I was making photographs. It was a really pragmatic way to work, actually: I shot portraits of her interview-subjects and other neighbors and scenes from their everyday lives. I photographed everyone we were hanging around with in between, and neighborhood scenes, and parts of community life we were in or around. The logistics expanded out from there. It was the dead of summer— so there were a lot of porch haircuts, family scenes, children at mischief, our neighbor's bicycle repair-shop. The whole thing felt very in line with a tradition of American street photography of the sixties and seventies— just chance encounters in public spaces. Except the public space was very, very small and everyone knew everyone else, which leads entirely different kinds of encounters. Now that I am revisiting this work I also see the impact of a compressed time: of leaving a place I will not move back.



NATALIE



photograph by Nico Lopez-Alegria

TISCHLER

How has photography helped you engage with the city? I know you're from Woodstock; that's a very different environment!

Yes, I think it makes me explore for things more. Sometimes I want to do a photoshoot at a specific site that I think is really cool, or at a concert with a little band so I can be like 'hey, do you need a photographer?' which isn't something I would normally do. It definitely gives me a better appreciation for the city. I feel like I look through a lens of photography - imagining everything as being a photo - and it's interesting. It's subconscious at this point.



How do you want people to perceive your work?

I honestly don't know. I think there are different types of photography for different purposes: expository photography, journalistic photography, photography that's trying to make a statement. I don't think that my photos are like that, but I definitely think I would like to do more things like that,

that have a purpose or serve to send some sort of message or evoke something. I think in just my regular work portraits or photos of my friends, I don't know. It's just aesthetically something to look at. I don't know what that does for other people. The important part is I like it. There's no pressure on it for me, so I think it's nice that I have something I objectively value. I can keep it if I like it and discard it if I don't. It's like I'm carrying a journal. Photography is really just for me.



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