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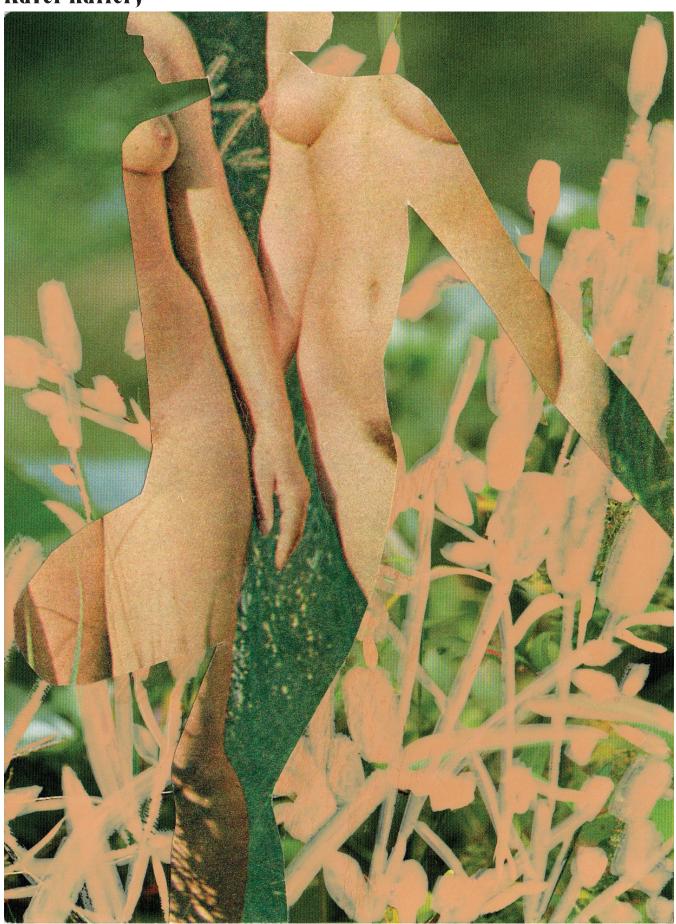
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Mother / Nature

This issue is dedicated to the places we call home.

Lia Ottaviano Lesbians are Miracles

Kavel Raffery



Raised by Lesbians —

by Cody Curran

When people saw my mom, Mel, out and about with me or my brother when we were babies, Mel says the first question people always asked was, "Is it a boy or a girl?" Mel always answered, "It's a healthy, happy baby." We were raised by lesbians. I grew up assured that my moms were proud of me, at times for my accomplishments, but always because I am me. In the mid-80's, our family was among the first to be made by two lesbians that decided to start their own family from scratch. Our home was free from boundaries on gender and there were no expectations

of sexual orientation; we were encouraged to explore ourselves and to express ourselves.

We were given androgynous names so that we could decide for ourselves who we are. Our moms changed the pronouns in storybooks they read us so that we would have

family; nothing more, nothing less."

I didn't know my family was any different than anyone else's until Lwas pretty old. Liust thought a family was

of a butch lesbian holding a sign that says, "Love makes a

I didn't know my family was any different than anyone else's until I was pretty old. I just thought a family was people who loved one another. In first grade some kids were talking about a club of dads and daughters that danced together. This is the first time I realized I didn't have a dad. I remember thinking to myself, "Hmm, would I bring my mom, both moms, my brother, borrow my male neighbor?"

Then, as my reading developed, I started noticing that on every field trip form I had to cross out "father" and replace it with "mother." I remember thinking, "Why don't they change this to parental guardian(s) so no one feels left out?"

Being raised by lesbians made

role models that were fluid, creating infinite possibilities for what kinds of goals we could create for ourselves. Seeing illustrations of children with different lengths of hair, wearing different styles of clothing, sharing various emotions, and participating in a rainbow of activities made me feel like I was in every story, and that connection from story to self at such a young age built my self-esteem and created an environment of deep learning and self-awareness.

My mom, Mel, taught me that I could make almost anything. If I saw something at a store, in a book, or in my head, we would make it together at home; this taught me the power of manifesting reality by visualizing what you want and making it happen step by step. Did Mel teach me this because as a lesbian, she didn't have any support from her biological family and had to make things for herself? Maybe. My moms taught me to make my own family, too. There was always a postcard taped to our bathroom door

me aware of inequality and the ridiculousness of societal rules, roles, and expectations; my brother and I were encouraged to question authority and to stand up for what feels right. I know now that our white skin protected us from any real fear of authority, so we did what our moms taught us to do—we questioned our teachers, our peers, our principals, and our moms themselves. Wherever we went, we expanded our perspectives by just being ourselves and asking questions.

How can I explain the lesbian lifestyle, or culture, I grew up in? The culture our moms created in our home, which they modeled outside the home as well, accepted me for who I am, and others for who they are. Our moms modeled love for one another, love for themselves, love for the Earth, love for others, and love for us. There were no expectations of who anyone would become or who they would love. Family was defined by unconditional, reciprocal love, and not by blood.

My brother and I were raised with a firm knowing that we were wanted. We knew our parents went out of their way to make us real because they wanted children to love and support. We were raised with an open-minded perspective and good examples of adults being their authentic selves. Our world consisted of love; we were protected from the traumas our moms experienced growing up for just being their authentic selves. We were taught to question everything and to make our own rules based on our morals and values and to stick to them in all environments. We were taught to take action when we felt injustice targeted at ourselves or others. We were taught that we could change the world by being ourselves, loving ourselves, and choosing to make our own happiness. Our moms taught us this with their words and through their constant actions.

On my brother, Dana's, first day of kindergarten, he saw a group of kids playing with Barbies and asked to play with them. The kids said Dana couldn't play Barbies with them because he was a boy. This confused Dana, so at home that afternoon he asked Mel and Paula, our moms, why the kids wouldn't play Barbies with him. "They called me a boy," he said, "I thought I was a kid?" Mel and Paula then had to explain that a lot of people believe in boys and girls and have rules for how they can play and act. Then, they went to the thrift store and bought a bunch of Barbies for Dana to bring to school. The next day, everybody played Barbies with Dana.

A couple of months into my kindergarten year, my mom, Mel, dropped me off at school. As she walked out of the school building thinking to herself, "What a nice, sunshiny day," she heard some sixth graders yell, "Dyke!!" from the second floor windows. In Mel's head, she prompted to herself, "Slowly, I turn," and she went upstairs and said calmly, "Okay, you just called me out, what do you want?" All the student's mouths dropped to the floor. Then, Mel educated them. "You don't yell anything out the window at someone's mother; you don't yell the n-word, dyke, you're fat, nothing; you got it?" she said. She turned around to leave the three sixth grade teachers standing there in awe. One teacher said, "What she said!"

Even though children used derogatory words and made fun, my moms taught me that they weren't trying to be mean, they just hadn't been taught about difference. My moms also taught us that actions have consequences. Leading by example, and by having family discussions, my moms taught me to educate calmly and rationally through using my words and actions when faced with exclusion and discrimination, and so I did.

When I was five years old, my neighbor, China, became my first friend. China and I were in the same kindergarten classroom, where we wore colorful sweatpants outfits. One

day in class, another classmate, Kelly, who lived down the street in a pink house, was whispering to a group of kids and laughing. China came over to me, tears welling up in her eyes, and explained that Kelly had started a club and that China wasn't allowed to join it. I immediately started a club in response. I announced to the room, "I'm starting a club, and everyone is allowed to join." Kids came over and I ceremoniously welcomed them to the club. Then Kelly came over, slowly, timidly, head tilted down. Kelly asked if she could join the club. I remember, as a five-year-old little me, knowing that I was teaching her, and the class, something important, and that I couldn't be mean or else the lesson wouldn't be learned. I answered, "Yes, Kelly, everyone is allowed to be in my club." Her body language changed, she filled back up with energy, and my friend China was happy.

My moms taught me responsibility from a very young age. They taught me that it was my responsibility to protect and celebrate myself and everyone around me. They empowered me to educate myself and others and to actively change situations that didn't feel just. I taught my classmates the consequences of using derogatory terms, and they stopped using them. If a five-year-old can turn a micro classroom environment of exclusivity and discrimination into an inclusive and equitable classroom environment, then macro realizations of equity are possible. Perhaps the people that have been excluded and discriminated against are the ones who need to be consulted to solve the problems that will, once solved, lead to a world where a five-year-old doesn't *need* to be the one to make the changes.

I founded and run a school called The Sovereignty School For Love, where all family dynamics are celebrated, selflove is taught by teachers modeling self-loving behavior, children are given responsibility and sovereignty, and children are treated like humans, not boys or girls. I envision all schools becoming places of inclusivity and love, where children's self-awareness and growth is supported by educators and pedagogies that are informed by the perspectives of lesbian lifestyles, Indigenous lifeways, and other under-represented cultures full of wisdom. I base my educational pedagogy on self-love and sovereignty; the self-love and sovereignty I learned because of being raised by lesbians. We can change the world by loving who we are and sharing that love with others; by authentically being ourselves; and by celebrating other people's expressions of their own authentic selves. •

Susie C.



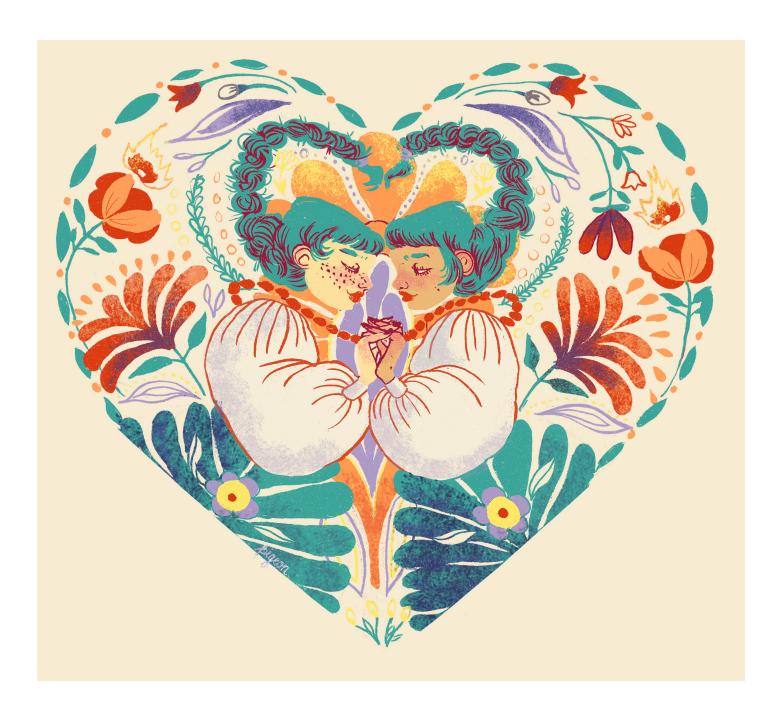
Emma Vieser



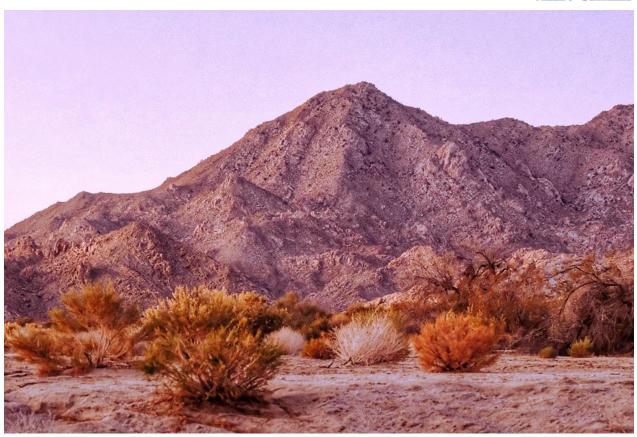
LeeAnn H.



Kamila



Allie Shinn





Where the Sego Lillies Grow

by Eva Lopez

Somewhere in a distant memory, Buried away among the chaos of my mind, Is where you live. A dream of my life with you.

Bliss as cool, mountain air, you light my fire.

My lips know the way back home. Sparks light the trail, and wildflowers spell out your name.



ph, new york

May cover model Typhani Sheppard talks to us about her creative process, inspiration, upcoming collection, and hopes for the future. Visit Typhani at ph-newyork.com and find her on Instagram oph-newyork.com and oph-newyork.

Tell us about yourself, your heritage, and how you identify.

My name is Typhani Sheppard. My pronouns are she/her, and I am from Brooklyn, New York, where I was born and raised. I am Afro-Caribbean, and both of my parents are also native New Yorkers. My maternal grandparents, however, are from the Caribbean. I grew up mostly with my mom's side of the family, so a lot of my background goes back to Caribbean and Afro Caribbean culture.

I'm a fashion designer, most specifically in knitwear.

Talk to us about your art form and your experience with art.

I graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology, where I studied fashion design with a concentration in knitwear. I chose to go forward with knitwear because I really like a challenge—it is a very different form of fashion design in the sense that I'm creating my own fabrics as well as my silhouettes, and in most cases with fashion design, you are using already manufactured materials to create something new, but with knitwear you're really starting from zero. I'm building everything into this one piece. It's super tactile, and I like the challenge of it, because there's a very fine line between it being basic or being crafty, and I like to straddle the line of using really emotional stitches, and using handcrafted and artisanal aspects, without it going into "old school knitting pattern" territory.

Is there another art form that you feel drawn to, or did this come out of any art form that you were practicing before you became a designer?

I've always been really interested in fashion design because my mom had been a designer for a while, so I was always, at least as a kid, wanting to be just like my mom. That's what got me interested in it. But then, as I got older, I started to see how our aesthetics differed and how I wanted to go into it differently than how she was in it. She's left the industry since and now she's working as an event planner, so she's still in that creative world, but I decided to stick with fashion and knitwear, and it's kind of an obsession at this point. I think if I didn't find knitwear I might not be so interested in fashion anymore, because I feel like it's a really tough industry, and it's really oversaturated. There's something that's a little more down to Earth in knitwear. People have emotional connections to knits, because they think about gifts, and they think about family. So I think that, had I not found knitwear, I wouldn't be as interested in fashion as I am currently.

What is it that you want to give the world through your creativity?

I would hope that, if anything, my work elicits an emotional response. I want people to feel comforted by my work. I want them to really feel like [a piece that I create] is a little treasure that you want to keep, when it gets worn out, you want to repair it, and you want to give it to someone you care for when you don't have any use for it anymore. I'm really looking for this kind of specialness. Fashion turns over so quickly, you get things and you throw them out or you wear them once and you never wear them again. I want to give people things they want to treasure, things they want to keep close to them, and it brings them back to that nostalgia. If someone knits something for you, you're not throwing that away. Even though I think of myself as a brand, I want you to feel like I knit this for you. It's not just a piece that's manufactured.

In what ways does your queerness inform your art?

Actually, this is a point that I really wanted to touch on. To be perfectly honest, my queerness does not inform much of my work. My work has more to do with my identity as a black woman, and less to do with my queerness. I think that, you know, there's lots of intersectional things that I feel as a queer, black woman, but outwardly people don't see me and assume queer—in society, I'm viewed as a black woman first and foremost. That's how I interact with the world, and how I interact with my work.

Previously my work, in school, was inspired a lot by art and history, but since then, my work has been more informed by my blackness than by my queerness.

What is your process for creating clothing and jewelry?

I'll talk about my process with my new collection, because this is the first real collection that I've put together since leaving school, on my own. I feel like what I did in school is valid and great, but I also had to follow a certain rubric in school, and here, doing this collection for myself, and by myself, I can choose the way I want to do it, as opposed to having conform to the way the education system wanted me to create my collections.

So, with this collection, it started as an emotional reaction to the Black Lives Matter protests. That was a pretty hard time for me. I had just lost my job, I was stuck in the house, watching all these things going on—I had a very hard time being on Instagram and seeing anything that was there. Trying to distance myself from the internet turned me to knitting. And that's how it started—I started looking at yarns, originally just to do something for myself. That's what sparked it.

What I usually do is I start with the yarn. So, I look for whatever calls me. I went for things that made me happy—like confetti yarns, and soft cottons, and things like that. From there I start working on stitches, and I look at the stitches, then I start to create silhouettes. I also spoke a lot with my mentors in the industry whose opinions I value, including past professors, my senior year critic, and my former boss. Once I have a general idea of the silhouettes, it goes from being super tactile to really digital. I use a program called CLO3D to help organize my work. It helps with conception —I don't need to buy a ton of yarn or buy a ton of fabric to perfect my silhouettes, and it's great because once I figure that out, I can use it to estimate how much material I need. But that's how this collection came together, and over last summer a lot of people were talking a lot about Black women in the workplace and how many of them, if they're hired, they're the only Black woman in the office, they don't have any sort of upward mobility, they're passed over for promotions, and I didn't want to focus on the bad things. Yes, the bad things sparked the project, but in this project, it's not about that—I'm not interested in showing Black trauma or creating work off of Black trauma. So this collection has more to do with empowerment, through color. As for my jewelry, I was just so inspired by this collection, I was overflowing with ideas and that's how those additional pieces found their way in.

I chose lots of bright color. I looked back into my own heritage, I thought of colors as a uniting force, and how colors can create community. I looked at my grandmother's church— St.Gabriel's in Brooklyn, which had a mostly Caribbean Immigrant congregation, and one way they connected with each other and created social groups and a sense of community was by wearing colors of their flags, especially for events. So my grandma would sometimes go to church in red and yellow because that's on the Grenadian flag. Jamaicans might wear green, or people from Barbados would wear blue. It was a way of not only creating a community between the people who were there, but also to show pride in their heritage, and show pride in where they're from. I thought that was a really great way to combat all of the hardships that are thrown at Black women in this country. And to create a collection that is inspired by their pride, and their visibility, wanting to be seen, and not shying away from that. So there's a lot of bright colors in this collection. I'm really excited about it, and it makes me a little emotional.

What are your hopes for your future?

Right now, this collection is not really a business to me. I'm looking at this work as art. This is just my medium—my medium is clothes, and that's what I want to present. I'm not looking at it from a business point of view, at least not yet. But

if I were to scale, I would really like to work with artisans, I'd really like to involve myself in a fair trade, especially working with particular communities that have a big background in handcrafted things, knitting, and weaving. I know there are manufacturers and communities like that in South America that have these ancestral backgrounds in textiles, and being able to work with them and learn from them—because I'm a pretty good knitter, I studied it—but these communities have this magic that I would never be able to figure out myself. I want to have open conversations with them, whether it's internationally or domestically. If I started putting things into production, that's a way that I would like to do it. Making it as ethical as possible, making sure that whoever I choose to produce with make sure their craftspeople have safe homes, they have childcare if needed, and have whatever they need to make this product and have been paid duly for their work. I don't see myself growing into a huge thing, I think a lot of the stuff that I would like to do would still be on the small level—a lot of handcrafted, a lot of made-to-order things. But, having a couple things here and there that are in stock also helps with price. It's great that I can make these things that are made to order, but that also puts it at a very high price and makes it inaccessible to some people, and I feel, for myself, if I want to be able to champion Black women, in this country, unfortunately, we're not always in that kind of financial position. I don't want my only clients to be affluent people that have the money for full custom wardrobes. It's all well and good to be able to make these kinds of couture pieces, but I also want to find a way to make it accessible. Maybe not everything will be accessible, but I would like to have a portion of my work be accessible to the people I'm trying to champion.

How can readers view your work?

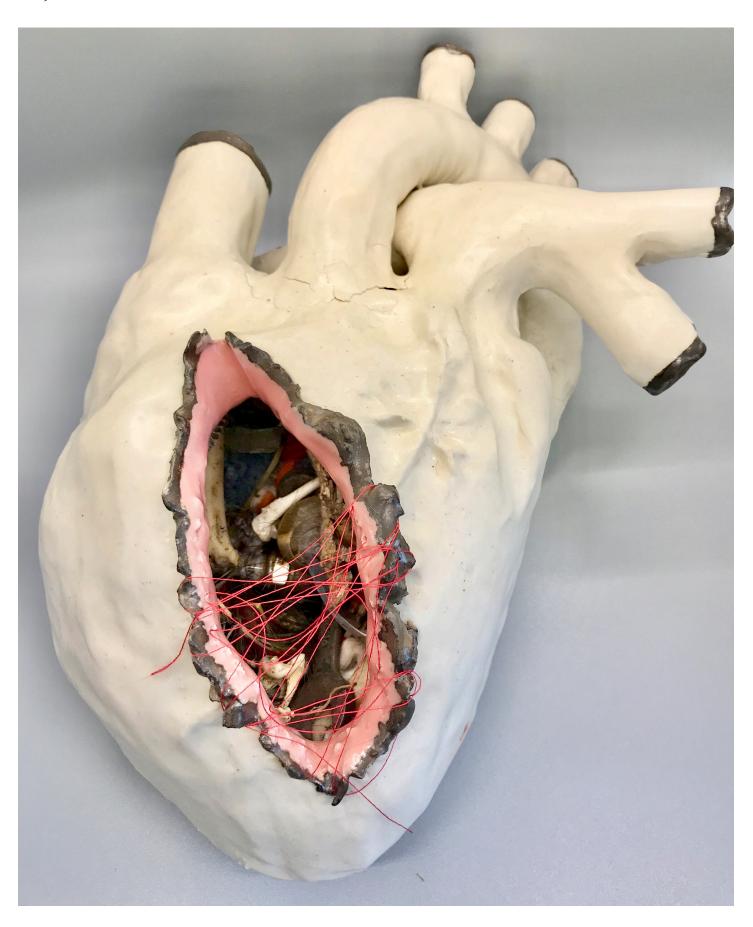
Right now, Instagram is the best place to see my work, or my website, ph-newyork.com. I am planning an exhibition with my friend Juliana Casteneda; she is also a designer and a painter, and she is doing a set of paintings in the same color story as my collection. She's Colombian born and moved to Miami when she was young. We will be doing this joint exhibition, we're still trying to get all the stuff together and my mother is helping us plan, which is great because I get to be hands off as she handles all the logistics. I have named her the Vice President of Events as a part of ph, new york, and she is being paid in unconditional love from her daughter. My mom's boyfriend, a designer, will be the creative director of the event, and he'll be paid in good vibes. So, it's definitely a big, collaborative event, and I'm really happy to have the support of my family, my partner, and my friends. But I will be posting little bits of the collection as it goes on, and then it will be debuted in September. ♦



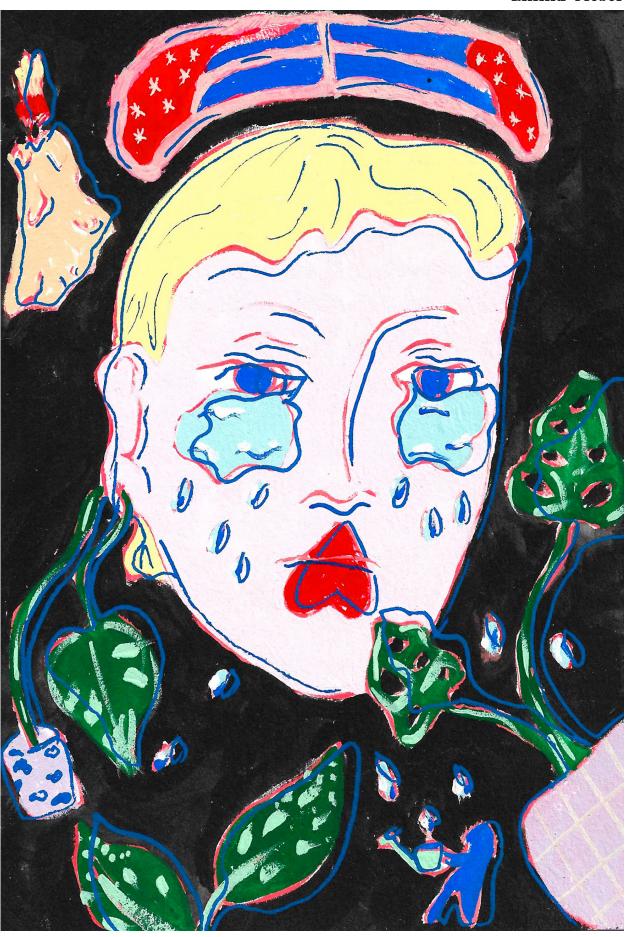
Mychelle Moritz



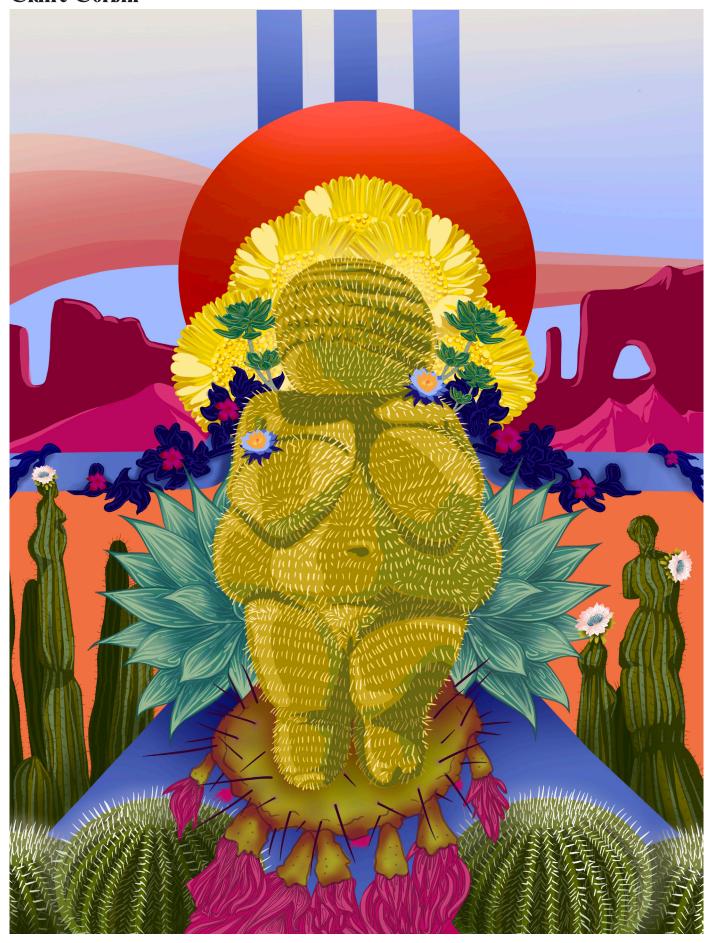
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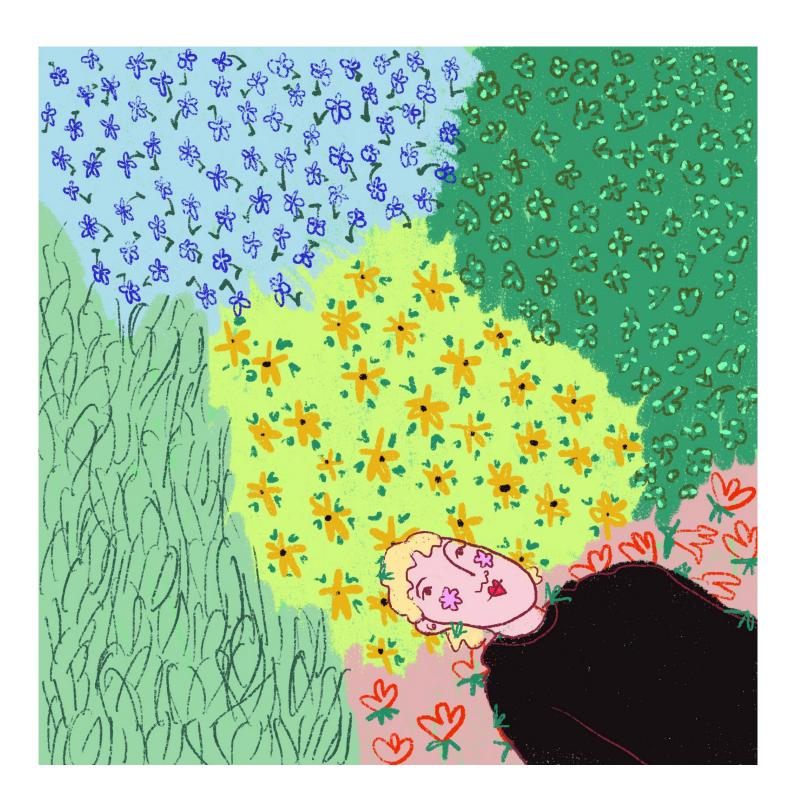
Emma Vieser



Claire Corbin



Emma Vieser



Leila

by Lindsey Eisenmann

what if my precious plants find pleasure
in watching me grow?
do you think my monstera emerges from slumber,
stretched out to reach for the rising sun
growing taller to kiss the cheek of the one who tends to it?
do the pothos share stories of the tears they've seen shed
or how they've noticed my back stand up straighter
my head held higher
chin up like the cactus on my floor?
all this time i've spent caring for my plants
i failed to even notice how my soul
has been tended to in watching them grow



Water Cure

for Dante by Amelia Possanza

It's just like riding a woman's leg, he says. Wobbly cedes to pleasant, pleasantries become a soft ache the next day, when certainly he will already be gone.

I straddle her. She is heavy, rusty, but I try not to judge. He shows me how to nudge her on, to get going with a firm press. To keep at a gentle rhythm. (I could never catch up.)

He teaches me like a father would, like a brother, a mother a proud parent standing at the end of the drive with a beard and a beer and another baby slung across his chest, a husband in the kitchen and a lover on the way over and me burning brightly against the setting sun on the endless loop of the cul de sac.

We toddle toward the beach, me the unsteady foal following his flukes.
He hardly looks back.
In his trust, I could grow.
Sweat slips between the dimples on my back.
That's how you know she's close, he says.

(A girl I kissed is married now; a boy, dead.)

We watch the wind whip up the swells, tug at our hair. The gulls peck at stiff peaks. The sand tickles our skin. There is nowhere left to go.

He shows me the way home, leaving in his wake the gift of something to do all on my own.

Lady Of The Dark Moon

by Zara Bosman

Hecate, the Lady of The Dark Moon Goddess of the Crossways Ghostly places where the barrier between worlds is thin And shadows lurk on the threshold Flanked by the black she-dog transformed from the Trojan Queen Hekabe Who leapt into the sea after the fall of her city

The shadow self of Artemis
Daughter of Titans
The lady of wild things
Lover of the woods
And the untamed chase of the mountain's breath
The sacred cypress, silver arrows and swift death

Lory Lyon



Practicing Motherhood

by Audrey Lang

In every play I write, I find, I am practicing how to be a mother. Maybe baby fever starts hitting at 22 or 23, but I don't think so, because I don't really want a baby yet and because several people I know already have two-year-olds. So I don't want to be a mother right now, but I keep practicing anyway. I don't know what to make of that.

I wrote a social media post for Lesbian Visibility Day that was both joyful and honest: everything I strive to be. Rainbow emoji. "Lesbian is not a dirty word and I'm still practicing saying it out loud without discomfort." Rainbow emoji. "I use 'queer' and 'gay' interchangeably with 'lesbian' but if I'm being specific, 'lesbian' is the word that most describes me." Rainbow emoji. "Words matter and I think it's interesting that 'invisibility' is a common superpower. What if 'visibility' were a superpower? What if it already is?" My cousin, 20 years older than me and straight as far as I know and a mother of two, commented,

"When I think of words to describe you, 'Lesbian' is not at the top of my list. Smart, talented, funny, kind, eloquent, friend, daughter, sister, etc. are all things that come to mind. The fact that you are attracted to women doesn't matter to me, and doesn't even come to mind."

Her mother commented in agreement. Another cousin added, "I so agree with you. It does not matter who you love as long as they treat you like a princess. I would not think Lesbian as a first thought either."

I know these people love me. I know they are well-intentioned. And I know that this was not my coming out post, not by a long shot--I've been out online since at least freshman year of college, really since junior year of high school--and that at least the first two of the three know this very well. Yet, they have managed somehow to make me feel invisible on my day of visibility, awkward and confused on my post of honesty and joy. Will I reply? Will I like the comments? Will it matter one way or the other? They will forget about this post in a day or two. Will I?

In my play You Have To Promise, most recently developed in the 2020 Pride Plays festival, 17-year-old Maeve struggles to come out to her stepmother Rachael. Their relationship is fraught at best, and even though her girlfriend Nessa is counting on her, Maeve is afraid that showing Rachael this part of herself might lead to the same outcome of Nessa's conversation with her own father: sudden homelessness. It takes realizing that her fear might lose her the person she cares about most for Maeve to talk to Rachael. (By this time, Rachael already knows that Maeve and Nessa are dating, but she and Maeve haven't discussed it.) Maeve says,

"i never said out loud before
to anyone except her
that i'm gay
but when i said it out loud to you it
...
it felt good to say it
out loud
it felt like
like it mattered
that i said it out loud
to you."

And Rachael's response?

"i wish you had told me sooner because wow i just i would have loved to know you sooner but i'm so glad you told me now."

Later in the scene, Maeve tries to thank Rachael. Given the reaction that Nessa's father had, she feels the need to express gratitude that Rachael reacts so much more positively. More to the point, Maeve doesn't think Rachael owes her that positive reaction, because of the negative relationship they have always had, as stepmother and stepdaughter. Rachael stops her, with my very favorite line in the play:

"who you kiss in secret on my front porch that doesn't change that i love you and that it is my responsibility and it is also my great privilege to love you so you don't have to thank me."

What's important to me about both of Rachael's reactions to finding out Maeve's sexual orientation is that Rachael never tells Maeve it doesn't matter. She tells Maeve that it doesn't change her love for her, but she also says that she is grateful to know that Maeve is gay, because she knows her better as a result. She says that she wished she had the opportunity to know Maeve in this way even earlier. She affirms that her love and support is not conditional, while acknowledging that who Maeve loves is an important part of her identity.

In another play of mine, *Indoor Voices*, Sophie and Carina are a young couple pregnant with their first child. Sophie is a fifthgrade teacher, and one of her students comes out to her. Sophie realizes that despite being an out and proud lesbian herself, she is unprepared for what she might say to her own child, were they to come out to her. She and Carina figure it out together:

"SOPHIE

i love you

CARINA

exactly

we love you

SOPHIE

and

...

CARINA

and we are here for you

100 percent

SOPHIE

and we are excited for you

CARINA

we are so excited

that you're figuring out who you are

SOPHIE

and we love you no matter what

no

not 'no matter what'

because we don't love you in spite of who you are

we love you because of who you are

we love all of you

with all of us

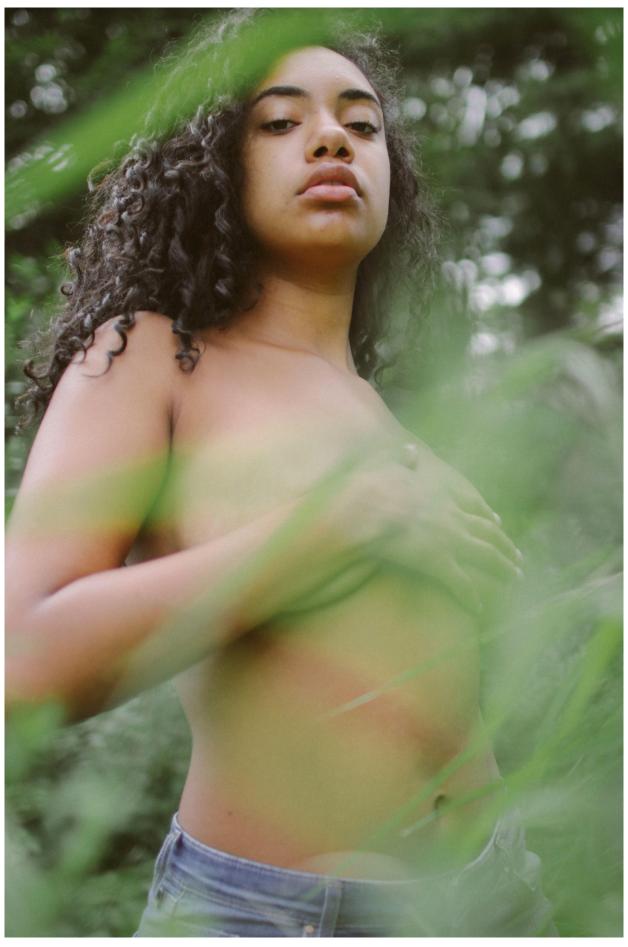
always."

In every play I write, I am practicing how to be a mother. So, maybe I do know what to make of that a little more than I thought.

I have a lot of love for the many mothers in my life, including those cousins. Including my own mother. Among countless reasons I could name, I love that she sends me every writing or acting opportunity she sees that is looking for LGBTQ+ artists. I love that she saves newspaper articles about pride for me. Perhaps most of all, I love that she came with me to my first Pride Parade after coming out, and bought me a rainbow flag to wave from the sidewalk. And I appreciate that these cousins were trying to say they care.

But I am a writer, and so words matter a great deal to me. When I think about these well-meaning but poorly-worded Facebook comments, and about all the words both said and unsaid throughout my journey with my lesbian identity, more than anything else, I become determined to do it better when it's my turn. I practice when I write dialogue for my characters. I practice with Maeve and Rachael and I practice with Sophie and Carina. I even practice when I watch "The Fosters." I practice so that someday in the future, when I am a mother, or a relative, or even a mentor, I will be better-equipped to have this conversation than my cousins were. I'm certain that I will flounder and fall in many regards, as every parent does, but this one conversation—I can learn how to have that really, really well. I know that being a lesbian is more than who I am attracted to. It's a culture. It's an identity. That matters. Being visible within it matters. And when it's my turn, I will not take for granted that I will know exactly what to say. I will take it on as both my responsibility and my privilege to say something a little closer to the right thing. ♦

Leeza Lakhter



migration

by Erica Kuhlmann

one day i will return to happiness like an ancestral home, like the salmon swims the strong currents clear-headed for strange shores, like the sea reaches up towards the ever-foreign moon, like the butterflies and birds i will know where to go.

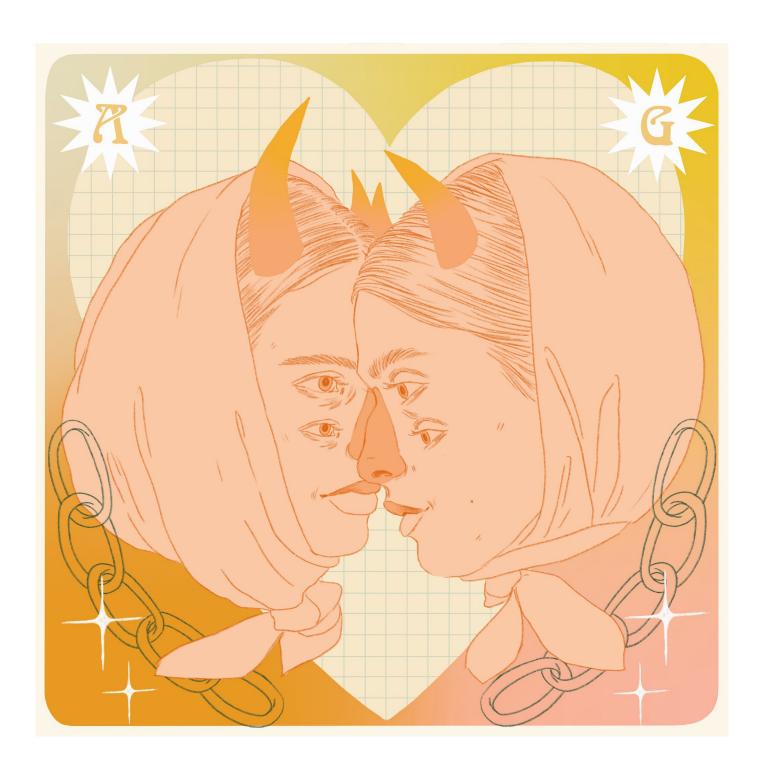
listen: life is all about cycles, right? like the fish before me i will find my way out of the water

and be comfortable there.

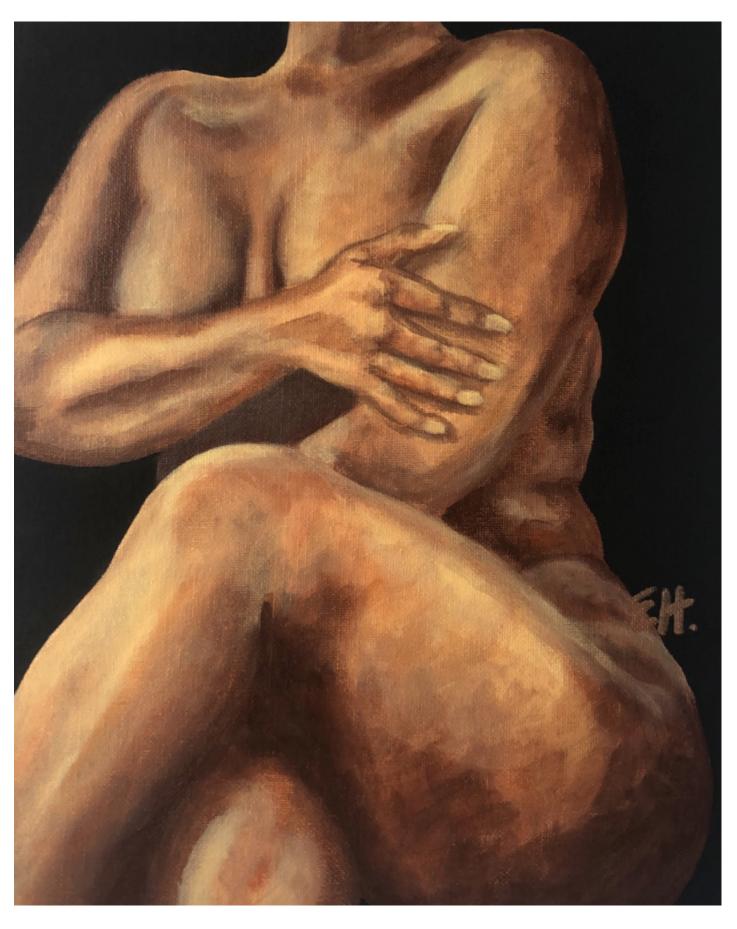
Betsy Falco



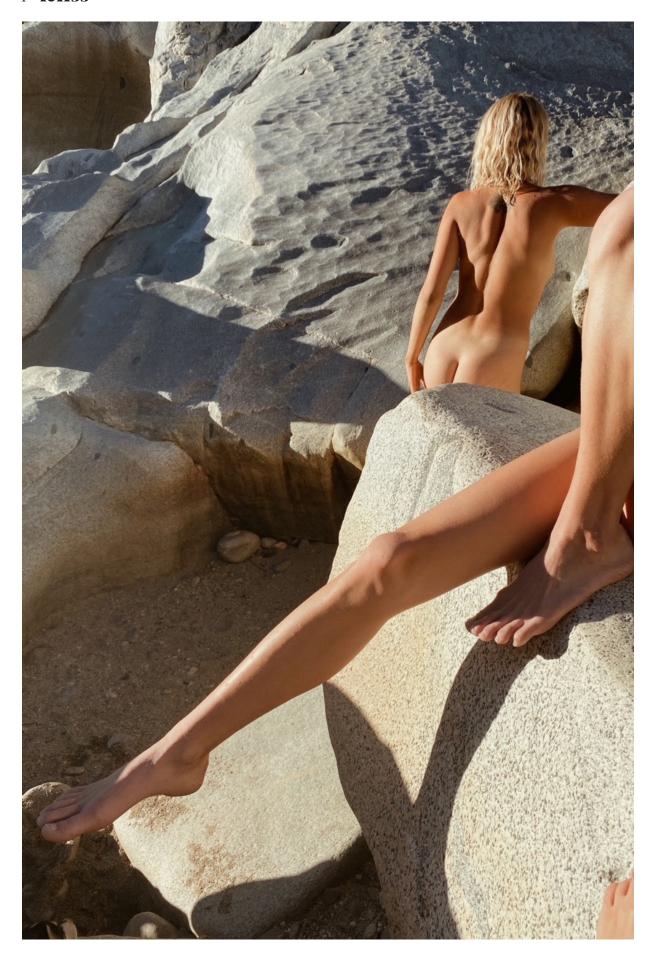
Betsy Falco



Evelyn Harris



Meliss



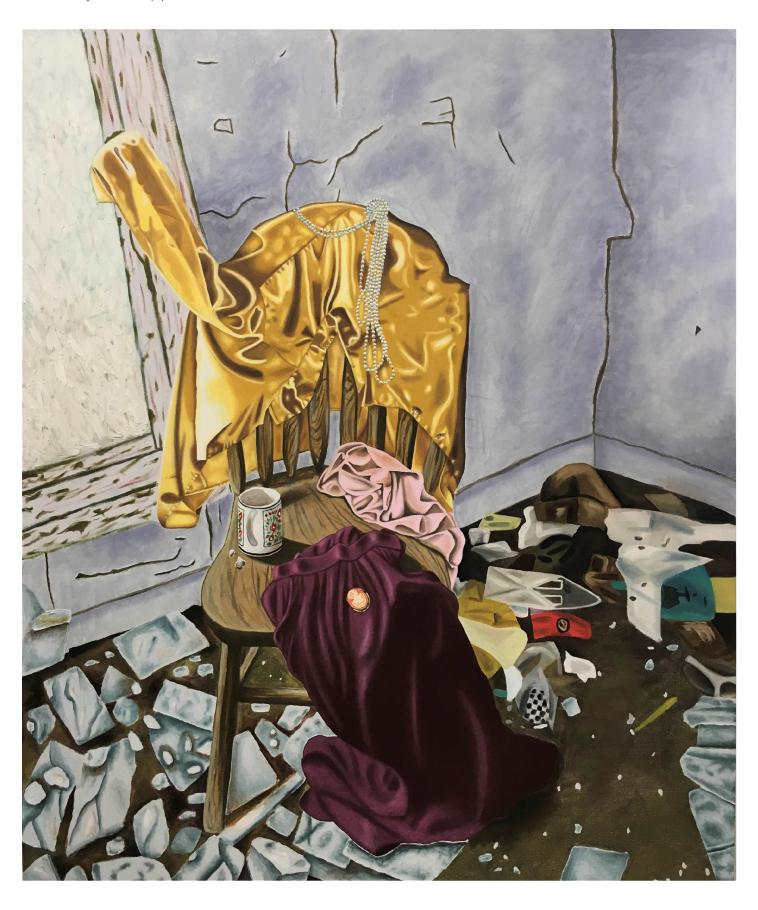
turncoat

by Erica Kuhlmann

we don't know who trampled
the changeling dandelions.
i think you've been cultivating and
keeping a fragile magazine in your head,
all-stained-glass bullets,
and when you are empty you can mourn the loss of your art,
your masterwork,
the church soul bright and warm you once had,
tutting at my web of scars,
i walked through the cabinet and shook them all down
with my stomping
and fell like a downed jet in the shards.
we both remember what happened,

call it an accusation or call it a mother's day gift.
despite all the threats of leaving and leaving and staying gone, it was never one of my nightmares.
did you know,
tripping used to mean lovely?
nothing happened to your impish daughter,
nothing changed your caterpillar chickadee
except maybe you, did you know
not to touch the wings of butterflies?
well, now you do.

Bethany Habegger



Bethany Habegger



Bethany Habegger



B.M.I Don't Give A Shit, Brenda?

by Laquerrière

LISTEN UP, you motherfuckers: I am F A T. I am a fantastically large lard-arse, I am a blimp-butted MOON-bellied BASTARD, and I am here to tell all you feckless SHITES that I AM the marshmallow-buttocked MOUNTAINhipped gender-bending almightily-MALLOW-thighed bell-shaped bellend of your DREAMS. Nah, wait. You know what? I am beyond your dreams. I am beyond your reality, I am BEYOND your pitiful aspirations, beyond anything YOU could ever wish yourself worthy of; I have squidge for DAYS and a cunt to DIE for, and you know what? That's chubby as well. The only sharp edge I've got is my tongue and honestly, THAT'S usually too busy driving itself through CARAMEL peaks to bother wasting VALUABLE calorie-consuming-time putting you back in your SODDING little piss-place. When I return to sea, check among the bobbing waves for my bobbing bum, floating off in RUDDERLESS majesty led by the WARM mountainous expanses of my teapot-shaped TORSO, drawn through the tides with arms like BLOATED sun-kissed boa constrictors after judging a PARTICULARLY satisfying parish bloody TRIFLE-MAKING competition

Julie Phoenix



Tobey Katt



Rosa Li Dietl



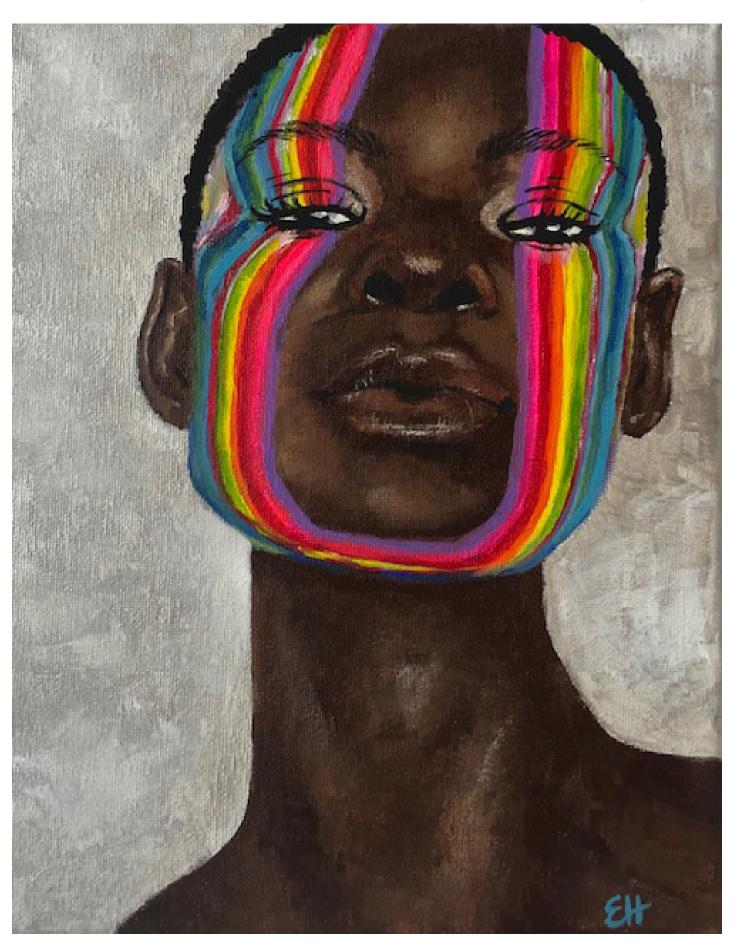
Olavo Costa

Spicy Self-Love

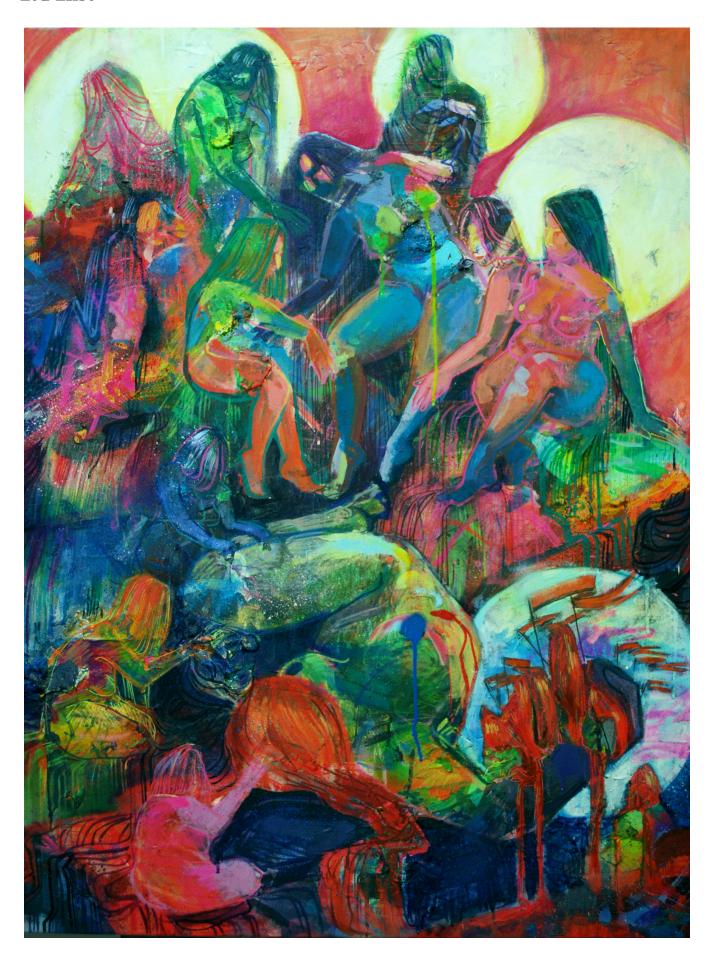
by Cody Curran

Tuck me in the dirt I died. My life's complete my fingers, clawed, won't open I've squeezed the life out of me my legs are ticking with aftershocks the rising so easy after the flood rushing like contractions clearing my mind aware of every hair my body is on grasping for air, for nothing, for myself I am the source birthing energy from the earth, my toes, and up my legs building, filling me, looking for release the most familiar smell coming to me self-love I'm free. I died. I'm alive. Tuck me in the dirt.

Evelyn Harris



Lea Elise



There Is a Riverbed

by Megan Paris

At the end of each day, Amelia and I stand along the river bank and watch the men dock their boats, unload their cargo. We stand close enough to see them but not close enough to hear their soft animal grunts as they heave boxes and heavy sacks onto the wooden planks. Some days, we remove all our clothes and wade into the green water together, careful to remain shrouded by the outcropping of trees and brush.

I could stay here forever, digging my toes into the silt of the river floor, watching Amelia's hair move about her in the water, thick and glossy like a thousand tiny water snakes. And I'm sure that she could stay forever, too, feeling the freezing water crawl up her scalp and watching the dockworkers.

Once, after all the wading and watching was through, we laid back down together in the sand of the river bank. It was hot and the water clung to our skin, growing sticky and warm as if it were our own perspiration.

"I've heard that the river leads to the ocean," Amelia said, looking up at the sky, "Somewhere it just bottoms out, it gives up, lets the saltwater consume it."

She chewed on her tongue, and I watched all the muscles in her jaw clench and release, rippling under her skin. When she got like this, it was best to just let her talk.

"Sometimes, I imagine myself following the water until it empties out. I'd float on my back for days, maybe weeks, and let the sea birds land on my chest and pick at my skin. I wouldn't get hungry, I wouldn't get thirsty. I would just float. And all the towns along the river bank would hear about the girl who was drifting out to sea, and they'd come to watch me go by and throw roses into the water for me." Amelia ceased her tongue chewing and closed her eyes, "Maybe I would get bloated. The river would get jealous

of me being inside it for so long, it would finally take a turn at being inside me. It would seep into my skin, make me swallow it, saturate my hair until I got so heavy I might sink if I was not already made up of so much river. And then, finally, I would reach the ocean. The sky would open up and the mouth of the river would drop me into saltwater. And I think, after floating for so long, I wouldn't be used to it. My body would reject the sea. I would go into shock. And the sea would sense my frailty and swallow me up, sinking me down to the sandy floor and wrapping me up in seaweed and keeping me there forever. Or at least, keeping me there until my eyes turn blue and my skin flakes off in sad, soggy clumps."

I like to imagine Amelia just as she described, a waterlogged body held captive on the ocean floor. In turn, I imagine that I am the river tide guiding her through every port town. I am the salt water begging to carry her.

Once, when we were girls, we went swimming in the widest part of our river, where the bank opens up into a great pool. Here, the current of water slows enough for children to safely play in it, swirling softly around the edges of rocks and stuck branches. It was a gray kind of day and the air was heavy, bearing down upon our shoulders like coats. The wetness in it seemed to saturate Amelia's hair even before we got to the water.

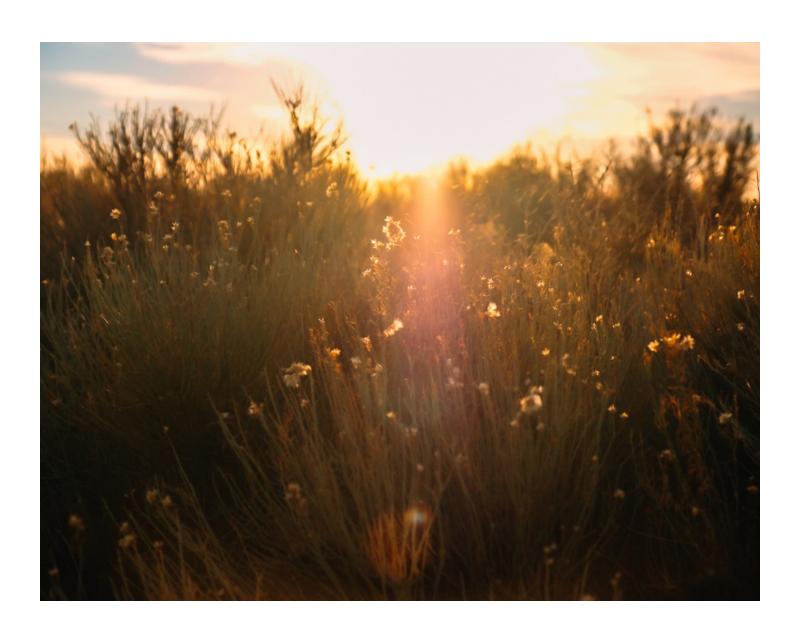
Together we walked out into the middle of the river, embarrassed at the way our dresses billowed up and sat on the surface like the pillowy bodies of ducks. And because it was a gray kind of day, we could tilt our heads back into the current, lift our feet off the floor, and stare at the sky, not worrying about hurting our eyes. •

Lindsey Eisenmann





Allie Shinn



Rage as the History of Fire

by Mary Luna Robledo

The water from the garden's fountain consumes you. The villagers take your body to the shore, It is night.

They pass a stick around
With every hand that rubs it,
It grows warmer so that Sparks begin to fly.

Eventually, the stick is passed to the smallest person: a girl.

The last child left by the waves,

The child holds the stick and rubs it, once, twice, then a third.

She creates fire.

The girl walks to the center of the circle where your body lies and stands over you.

You look up and begin to cough up the spit you swallowed. With every breath you take,
You throw up every instance you have made yourself small,
The girl crouches down and places the stick in your mouth.
You become fire.
You burn and burn and burn until ash becomes you.
The girl takes your ashes in her hands, and
From your ashes the first flower is born.

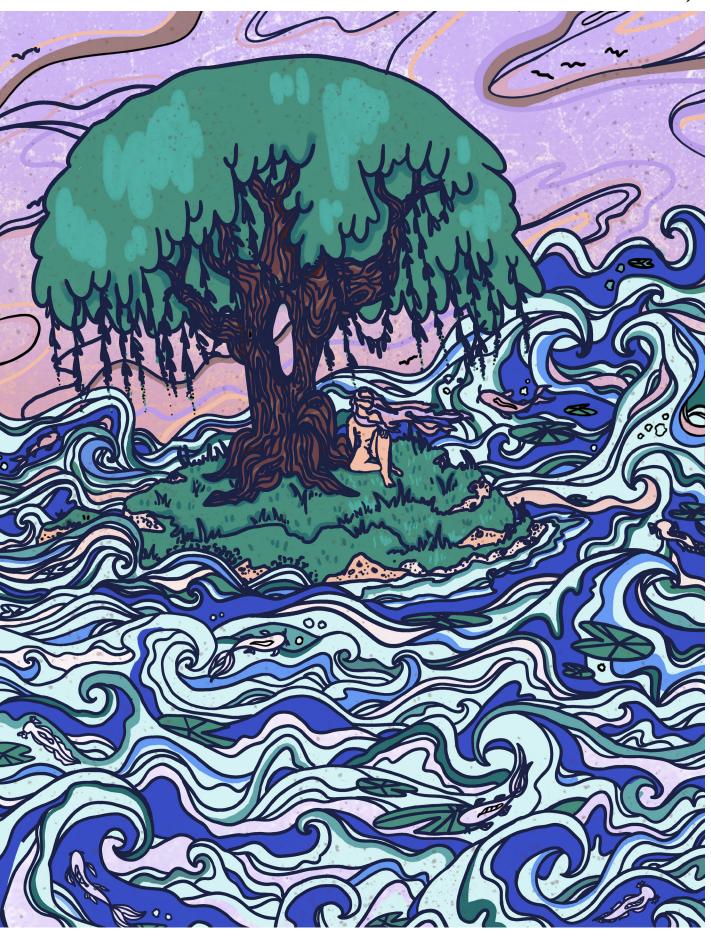
Kavel Raffery



Lauren Hurrell



Emerald Skye



Mimosa Tree

by Jenna Vice

i have the thirst of a stoner as they sit high in mimosa trees. this virgo, so at ease, smirks down at me. expelling smoke, eyes red, they ask me then: have i had real love? could i be had by them?

they're waning like the moon, staring straight through. i'm inebriated off their love, makes me want to succumb to.

virgo in mimosa trees, blow your rings down at me, you sit at a height the others just can't reach. this high leaves me sound of mind, eyes were shut for such a long time. dressed in blue, you make me remember, that i found a free drink in this desert.

winds push through leaves as they reach down to me, my limbs catch on thorns to touch their hand. twisting like vines to meet my eye, they kiss away tears i cry, asking me what i need like my health is key.

they're waning like the moon, staring straight through. i'm inebriated off their love, makes me want to succumb to.

looking up through my lashes i climb up their branches, hoping they'll hold my hand while daylight passes. i had the thirst of a stoner while they were high in the trees. now we're side by side, getting lost in the breeze.



* Day Moon Wands x Natalia Rose *

Tell us about yourself, your pronouns, where you live, and how you identify.

Salutations! My name is Natalia Rose. My pronouns are she/her. I identify as a Queer Witch, Intuitive Artist, Chakra Enthusiast & Bringer of Light. I currently live in Woodstock, New York. I am from San Francisco, California. I lived in Livingston, Montana from ages eight to eighteen years old.

What is it that you want to give the world through your creativity?

I make one-of-a-kind wands with crystals and wood. I burn intuitive designs into each wand. The crystals are wrapped to the wood with brass wire.

As a wand maker, what I long to share with the world is the magical bond between a human and their wand. To be very deep and Scorpio about it: I believe that the purpose for my being here (living this life in this body on this Earth) is a purpose of sharing and healing. I hesitate in calling myself a healer, but I find that the wands do help humans as they heal and grow. We are all here on our paths. Life can be so painful, so fun, so confusing, filled with so many FEELINGS. I make these wands to be friends, companions, and tools for their humans as they navigate this tumultuous, wonderous world. There is an energetic and spiritual connection, a magical bond, with a person and their wand/s. The wands bring a joy and a reverence for life. I want to give the world this joy and reverence through my creativity. And also to move people—I love moving people with my creativity and art.

How did you arrive at your art form?

Two things I have always loved are crystals and trees. In my youth, I often felt an energy in my hands. I knew I was meant to create something with them but didn't know what. I was raised creating art and dabbled in many art forms during college. In my early adulthood I became fascinated with chakras. I began regularly tuning into my subtle energy and started using crystals to support my chakras' well-being. Many years later, my spouse, a talented woodworker and luthier, taught me some woodworking basics. This new skill, my love of crystals, and my interest in chakra well-being led me to wand making. I finally had found the use for that energy in my hands. I've been told a few times that wand making is something I've done in past lives; that I'm re-learning wand craft in this life. Like I'm apprenticing myself. It certainly feels that way.

In what ways does your queerness inform your art?

As a queer person, I am constantly trying to open my eyes more to the ways we have all been socialized to think. An attempt to push myself to see beyond socializations. When I make wands, I try to be as free as I can, and not limit myself. This creative limitlessness makes the process of wand making quite time consuming, but it's how I create a deep relationship with each wand; we go through something together. I get to know each wand intimately as it comes into being. That is very adjacent to my growth within my queer identity. I have learned a lot about different ways of thinking through my queerness. This has led me to an attempted limitless perception of the vast capacity of the human experience; and this comes through in my process as well as my art.

What is your process for making the wands?

On the woo side of things, my approach to the process of wand making is different for Custom Wands than it is for wands that I'm making for my website or Mirabai.

For Custom Wands, I get to know the person I'm making the wand for before I start the physical wand. When a custom order comes in, I often literally feel the energetic beginning of the wand in my being. I contemplate the needs and wants of the person ordering the wand as I find the wood and gemstone. Sometimes I find the crystal first and then the wood and vice versa. For the wood and gemstone, I either have it or I search for it.

For the physical creation, processing the wood is very time-consuming. First, I cut the wood to size. Then I take off the bark and shape/carve the wood. Next, the sanding process; each wand is sanded at least seven times (four times before I begin burning the designs and three times after the burning is complete).

The designs in the wood are done by pyrography (wood burning) and are mostly intuitive. I get requests for different things (a dragon, antlers, etc.) and honor these as best I can. I let the wood "speak" to me and show me where to burn. I often use the knots in the wood to guide the designs. Wood can be a slow communicator!

After I finish burning the designs, I sand the wood the final three times and then polish it with a piece of cashmere. Finally, it is ready for the crystal. I use a brass wire to secure the crystal to the wood. Sometimes a wand asks for a charm or a tail and I oblige.

What does wand making give you in return?

Wand making ultimately gives me joy, bliss and excitement. It is an exceptional feeling to witness someone discover their wand or read words of someone meeting their wand for the first time. It's the connection; that spark that turns into a journey of friendship, ritual and exploration. It is unique and special. I often do not feel like I fit into the world's set of normalized expectations. When I make wands, I feel like I am doing what I am meant to, a sense of alignment.

What attracts you to the wood you choose for the wand? What attracts you to the crystal?

Nearly every physical object has a personality to me. Everything is made up of energy, right? I feel that I connect with the energy that

connects us all in physical objects and I communicate with said objects via that energy. More specifically though, for the wood, I look for a certain shape, usually a V-type shape at the end of a stick. This shape helps me secure a crystal to the wood. I find the wood while walking; it often feels like the wood will jump out at me. For example, I had a commission for a wand with a request for birch wood, but I didn't have any in stock, so on my afternoon walk with my dogs, I kept my eye out. At one point I literally felt like something moved my head to the right and I saw a piece of birch wood laying there, no other sticks around it. The birch wood was calling out so eagerly that it was as if the sun shone down upon it and the angels were singing at its discovery! That wand turned out very lovely and powerful.

When I'm buying gemstones for wands, I literally go with whatever I'm drawn to, while doing my best to note where the crystal is sourced. It's advice that I've given when consulted on what crystals one should buy. I always say to go with what you're drawn to because you won't be drawn to a crystal you're not supposed to have. So, I open myself up when I go crystal shopping, tapping into future "wand to human" connections, and let myself intuit what gemstones are needed. Though, for all the intuiting, there are practical



aspects, like size and shape that influence what I get, but I try to let myself be open and creative with this; I've put some pretty fun shapes on wands!

What do you hope your wands bring people?

Healing mostly. A sense of acceptance of the self. Ritual. Joy. Laughter. Confidence. Authenticity. Courage. Whatever the people need from their wand. Whatever they want from their wands. I want the wands to help people on their journey, with their discoveries. I want the wands to mark accomplishments, represent turning points in their human's lives, to be something special that is there to make ritual out of everyday life. It's a wild world out there and everyone needs a wand to brighten the path and as we carry on. Some people need more than one wand! Myself included.

How do you share your wands with the world?

Through my website, www.DayMoonWands.com, and on Instagram @daymoonwands. For custom wand inquiries, folx can email me at info@daymoonwands.com I also have a display of wands waiting for their humans at Mirabai of Woodstock (23 Mill Hill Rd, Woodstock, NY 12498).

What are your hopes for the future?

I have dreams of doing installations one day with fallen trees. I have loose visions of what could be when I see a fallen tree that looks like it could be a massive wand.

I would love to live in a world one day where I didn't have to sell my wands. I would love to just make them for people without needing money in exchange.

More broadly, I'm a performer. I love the stage. I love to act and make music. I write songs, sing and play the mandolin. My work as a performer is powerful and often moves people. I want to do much more of that in the future. ◆



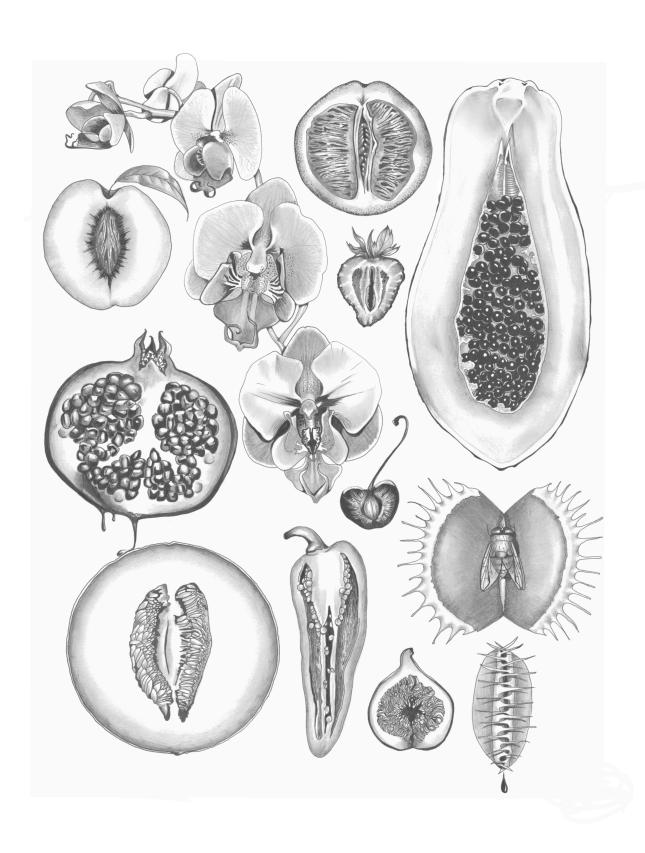
Claire Corbin



Claire Corbin



Claire Corbin



Bullfrog Birth

by Kate de Laforcade

"You're leaving?"

"Yeah," you answer, the word practically an exhale in the empty woods.

A bullfrogs' splat, croooack, punctured the silence, making it almost comical, sitting under that sky.

(dirty Jersey's dirty clouds.)

"All the way," she pauses, in pregnant silence, "all the way away from me."

The hirsute grass rustles underfoot, like it's afraid of Her,

like she's angry at the cattails for swaying, at the tadpoles for ripping their delicate homes apart. For climbing out, for growing up.

"Away from everything," you reply, hoping that makes it seem less personal. "Not just you." "Isn't everything just about me?" she jokes, believing she has the right to.

You would've laughed at that six months ago, but if you laugh now you won't stop. Evil, isn't it?

Leaving Her all alone with Her parents and Her pills, those stupid fucking frogs that never shut up.

Mothering Towards Stronger Communities

by Lucky Starrs

I am disabled in a way where I cannot have biological children, nor do I want to. What I want instead is gay people on a farm, nurturing each other, holding each other's babies, growing mushrooms. I want us to take turns laying in a sun filled field of berries we grew while we change diapers and tell stories about our lovers. I want my hair to turn grey as the trees around us continue to grow. I want to uproot what it means to be a mother outside of birthing my own children.

Growing away from my own ability and into a heightened state of disability, I have been forced to re-examine how I define care. The way "caring" for someone is perceived is often closer to "providing." When I go see my doctor for the fourth time this week, she will give me a questionnaire to fill out. The questionnaire will include a list of questions about whether or not I can bathe myself, walk myself to the bathroom, brush my own hair. I will answer her the same way I have for two years now, saying that I can do those things about fifty percent of the time. I will need someone else to help me with the rest. As my girlfriend allows me to lean on her shoulder to walk home, I will catch myself thinking about my mother, who rarely, if ever, helped me do these things as a child. I won't think about her with resentment, but rather with compassion and curiosity for her own lapse in caring and being cared for. I know that she received less care and in turn was able to provide less care because she grew up poor. Our world has defined care largely within the confines of the nuclear family, which has continually proven not to make individuals feel cared for. The sense of community is lacking. Her sense of community was lacking.

The older I get the more I see how precarious our notions of care in relation to motherhood are. The feminization of poverty created a structure that caused my mother to focus on providing rather than caring. She was consistently under pressure to provide materially for her children rather than nurture her relationships with them. When she finally left my father, this dynamic became even more apparent. Her experience became one of radical survival; she was coping with the loss of what she was conditioned to view as a community, while trying to physically provide for two children. While she was busy with the task of survival, I became busy with the task of nurturing. This made me, a sex working fifteen-year-old heroin addict in rural Oregon, responsible for the emotional wellness of a thirteen-year-old boy in addition to my own.

It goes without saying how deeply unsustainable this is. Almost every other person I know from that town who was socialized as a woman has a similar experience. I have felt immense pressure to break this cycle of harm that stems from poverty, until I found out I could never birth my own children three years ago. I felt a profound sense of relief, like my own independence would save me. The more chronic my illness becomes, the more I realize that couldn't be further from the

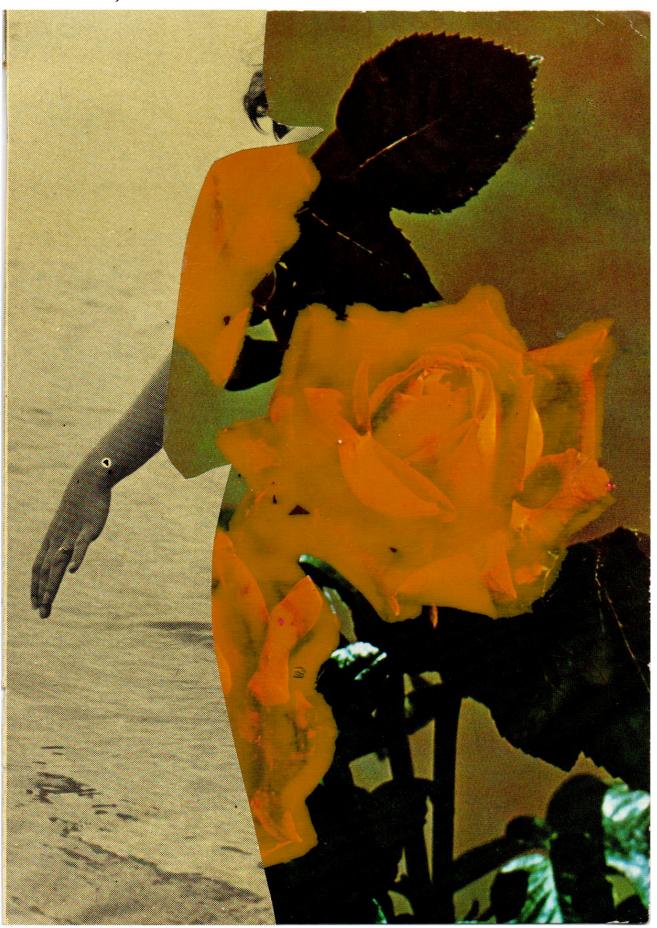
truth. My ability to do something will always be in relation to someone else's ability and desire to assist me. The way I access care will never be an independent act. Up until recently this made me existentially nervous.

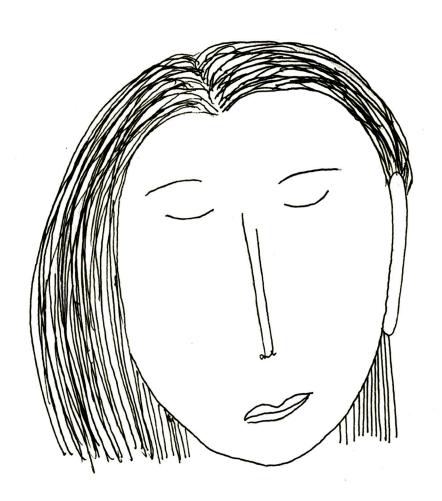
When my mother gets nervous she refuses to eat. When I get nervous I pretend I am in my own womb. I think to myself, "If I try hard enough, maybe I can be my own mother." Is it possible I can birth my own fully abled body? I envision the soft tissue of my empty cavity swelling up to cradle my failing organs, asking them for forgiveness, an act my mother and I both struggle to do. I want to swaddle my own inflammation, provide stability for my own body. I envision my belly swelling up so full I can't see my own toes. Inside my womb is an entire community, one so large and rooted I feel it pressed against my rib cage like a tree trunk. Strong.

This image comforts me always. I wish I knew what comforted my mother. I wish she knew it is nothing short of a miracle that her and her children made it with only themselves as each other's community. I want not only her but everyone else to know that mothering is not an individual task. Mothering is a mode of operation, a way for a community of individuals to collectively provide care. We must be dependent on each other in order to nurture our relationships. I think this involves obliterating the idea of raising children in nuclear families. Beyond it feeling unnatural to many people, it is a perpetrator of violence, especially for those surviving in poverty. In order to transform the way we mother, we have to transform the way we live in relation to children. To do this I think we need to explore our sense of obligation or rejection surrounding raising children. I think to engage in mothering as a community task, we need to switch our way of living to being genuinely communal. My hope is that this will allow me to commit to their care, as well as my own. This will require collective imagining, then reimagining, and actions coming from a place of radical love. For me, the imagining looks like dreaming towards the reality I want to see.

I want to see a bunch of little children running barefoot in the grass as I teach them how to press poppies, while someone else is getting me my meds because I can't walk inside to get them. It will look like everyone having two to three partners because it makes us all happier people. There will be one person brushing another mother's hair, while another person kisses their cheek, and another washes the babies spit up off their dress. It will be cherry pies the kids baked for their mothers because they feel cared for, and mothers helping their teenagers learn to eat right. I am envisioning a natural occurring cycle of abundance. More than anything, I want to dream my own mother there. \blacklozenge

Kavel Raffery





MY MOTHER THINKS I AM STRAIGHT

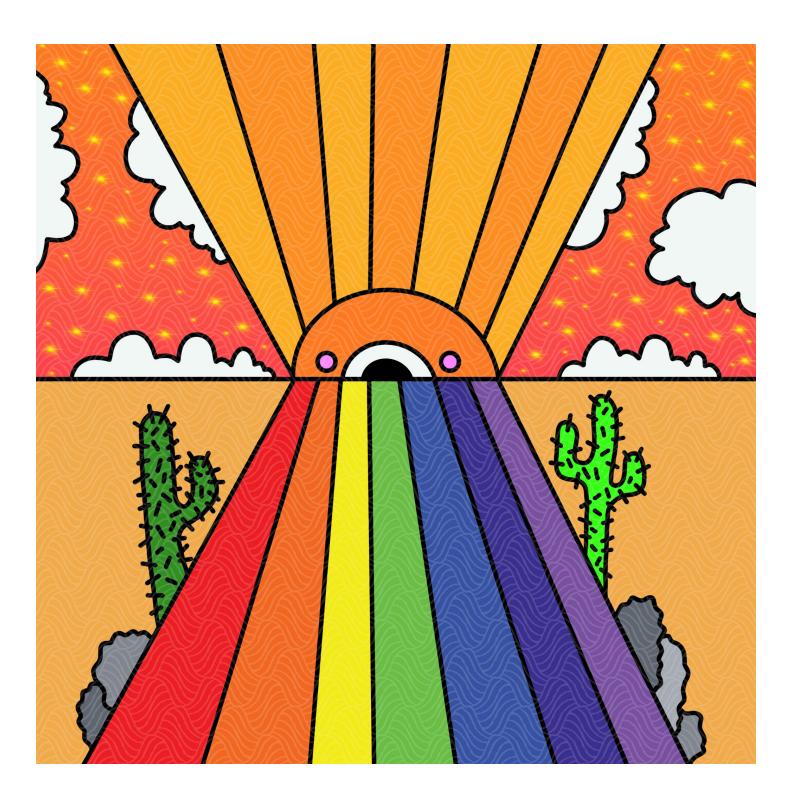


MY MOTHER DOESN'T LIKE MY MOUSTACHE

Jo Altmaier



Lizzy Lehman



Of Course

by Maddy Rolon

Denied of a childhood of my own, of course, it is my luck to find myself in the background of someone else's. An extra in the coming of age tale my brothers are living. Maybe a supporting cast member? Best case as an odd auntie to dispel knowing wisdom but more likely as a kooky neighbor written to break the tension. There is undoubtedly tension.

Being a child is torture that lasts eighteen years. I used to feel funny about that description when I first thought it. It felt condescending to consider a seventeen year old a child and gratuitous to call the very state of being a child torture. The farther away I am from the jiggling wonder of being eighteen, years before I strapped my chest down and could move freely, the more sure I am it is apt. I think it may even be an understatement.

Children are the downtrodden that we all have risen through the ranks of and escaped against all odds. That does nothing to stop our instincts, when we feel pebbles of snow falling on our feet, to join the avalanche tumbling towards us by keeping our back to it and running with all our might to the children who are not yet born as our bruised arms and hairline fractured legs fall out of their human outlines into the very powder that has pushed you to the point of your body's current alchemy. It's better than being smashed and frozen to death, of course, suffocating on snow in frigid darkness not knowing if we are digging up or down.

This is hyperbolic only if you don't have good enough binoculars to see the avalanche coming your way. This is dramatic if you are comfortably building a cabin on this mountain with no escape route. Of course, these are insane ramblings if you already have transfigured into the snow chasing down everything smaller than you.

Why do so many of us turn around and inflict that same pain with the filthy dull knife gifted to us by our parents when they forget they left it lodged in our young flesh? Mine has a Victorian design, older than my parents by far, with dirt caked in the intricate ebbs and flows in the engraving. I wonder what parts of the tangled composition are still hidden by the dehydrated grime on the handle. I wonder if I will ever have the tools to—not the tools but the time—not the time but the—I wonder if I will ever uncover it all. I wonder what I would gain from seeing the nuance in my murder weapon. Attempted murder weapon? Who decides if an attack is attempted murder or merely assault?

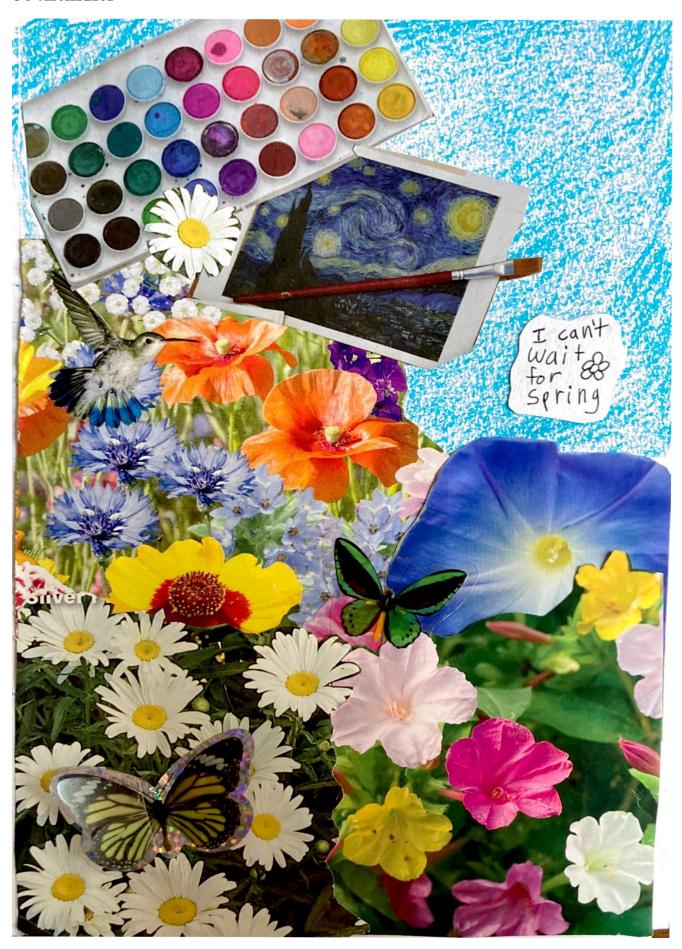
Born to a clown and a tightrope walker I am exceptionally bad at both art forms. Far too cautious to clown effectively and far too reckless to walk the tightrope.

If scientists bred a crocodile and the plover bird picking from its teeth that poor abomination would die, wouldn't it? Would it die before birth? Die during birth? Die in its youth as its contrasting traits tore its biology apart? Die being gobbled up by the crocodile-father? Its liver pecked for eternity by its plover bird mother? Maybe this filicide does not exist despite the animals mutualism so adored by 7th grade science teachers but because of it.

My thoughts often turn to Issac. I imagine myself bound to an alter with hesitant hope. Well, of course, God will step in. Well, of course, He will tell my father he was only joking and tell him to puncture a ram instead of me and we will all have a laugh over ramsandwiches and cold glasses of milk.

Of course, unless I am the ram.

Jo Altmaier



Meredith Lee





B. Hayden



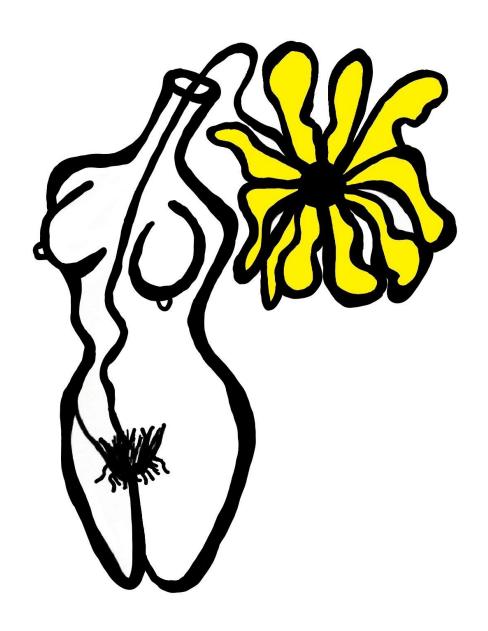
Fixed feral feminine

by Liv Greene

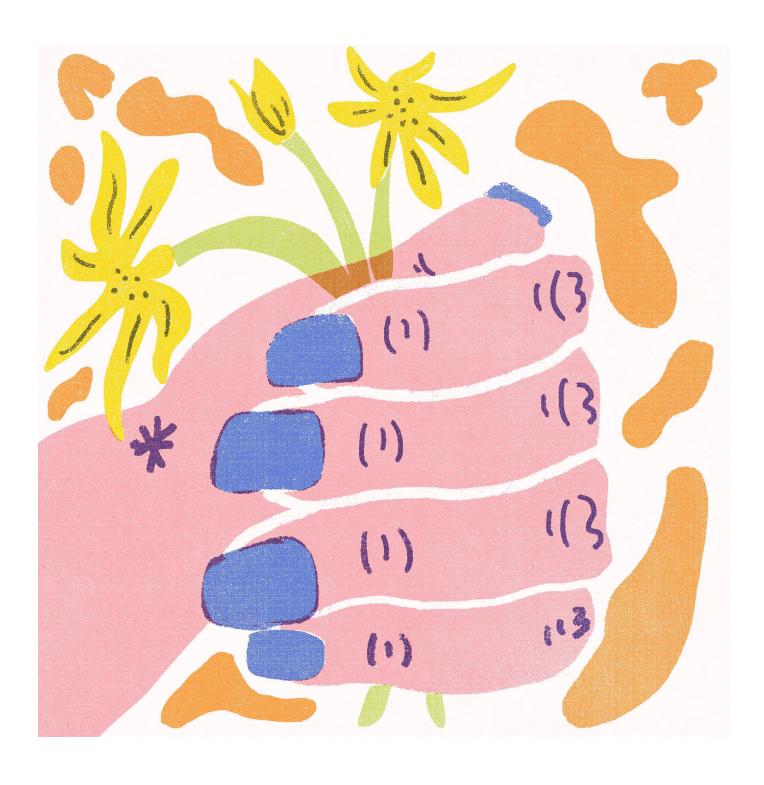
I shovel handfuls of blueberries into my mouth, not stopping to check for stems that scratch my throat as they go down with the muted green mush

I have some questions: what happens next time I stretch and you don't respond? why did you let me eat moldy strawberry jam? do you think I sound like those women in porn?

Stray Hare



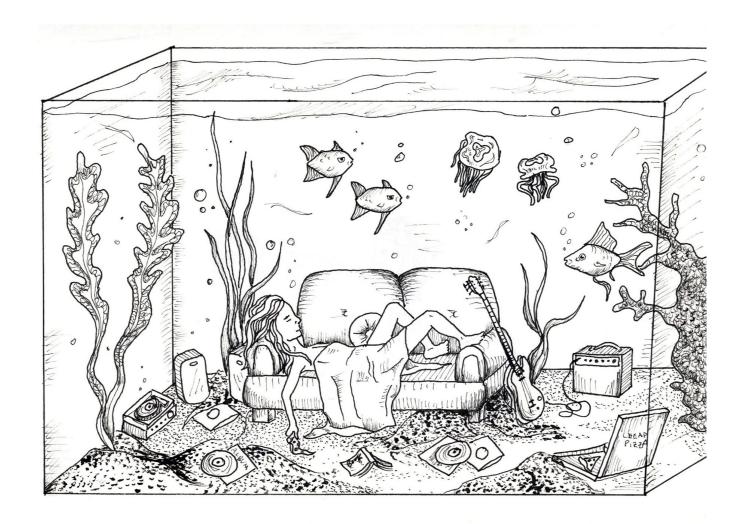
Emma Vieser



Erica Kuhlmann



Janie Peacock



Morgan Lieberman



Morgan Lieberman



Cecil Pulley



Spirit Daughter of God

by Buck Adams

your gender was established in the premortal existence when you were born as a spirit daughter of god

who is your mother? is she a feeling?

mine is a crocodile that sometimes looks like a log that looks like a crocodile. i am the water. i am the blood in the water. i am shaking my jar of mud. mom,

the first time you'll learn about everclear will be in a true crime book, just before the girl dies. the first time you drink it, you'll see how it melts the varnish from everything it touches

you will be drinking, too, when you die: it'll become like a controlled departure, a ripping the stitches out to reexperience that moment of passing into another world, a new last cry of understanding.

i'm having this dream about anointing myself, mom.
in the dream i paint my legs slick with menstrual blood
and i burn pieces of the illegal godwood tree, drawing crosses on my forehead and neck
with the ash while it's still hot.

in this dream, i'm terrified of horses in all their forms—

dogged by

a curio of mules like silver bullets, granite fetlocks, horses whose motors scream with age—in my dream they run me down, make a home inside my body like parasitic wasps tenting my borrowed skin until i am mostly unrecognizable to myself but first my aneling: i rinse river mud from my blond hair with cupped handfuls of antifrozen liquor. i rake the bike grease from my forearms.

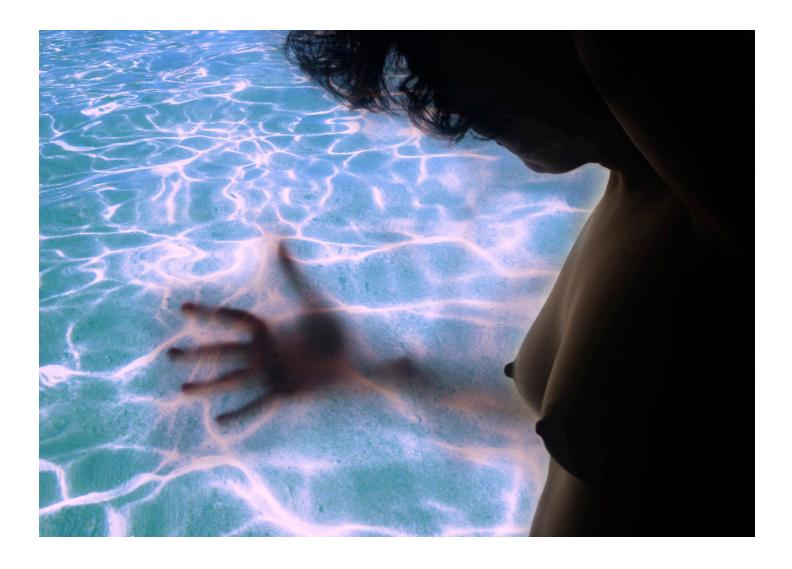
in my dream, i fall asleep waiting for the lunar eclipse, and i don't wake up until morning.

morning.

i come to like a baby who's crying for no reason like a person who suddenly needs glasses at the age of their mother when she gave birth, having her own dream, that time.



Renata Spolidoro

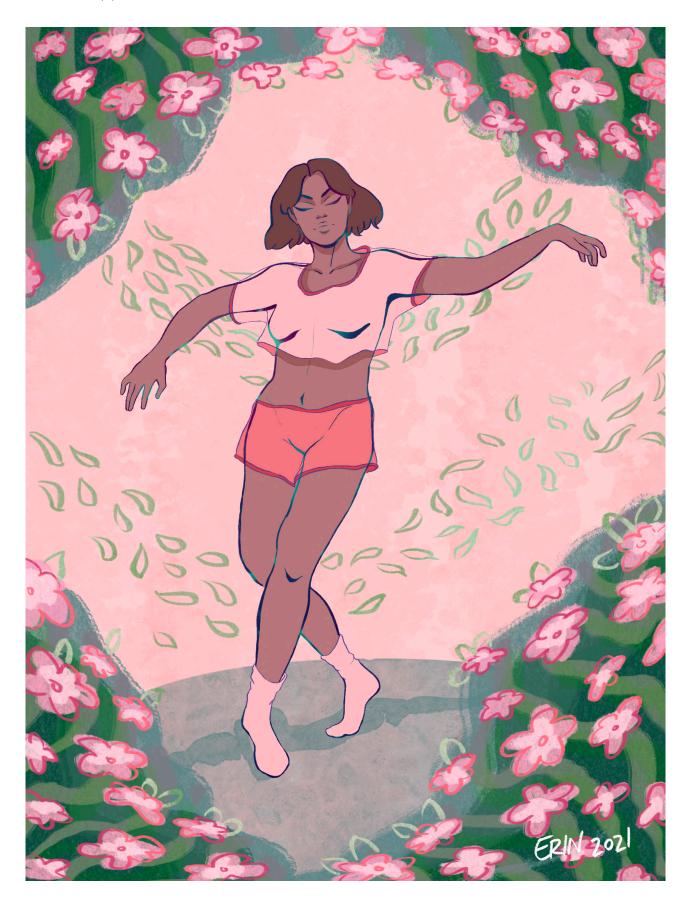


Elisa Blobaum





Erin Beggrow



Emerald Skye



Esther Renehan



we love our Contributors!

Buck Adams (they/them) is a writing consultant, and a professor of writing and rhetoric at Boise State University. They have an MA in rhetoric and composition, and next they're headed to law school to study human rights law. Their other interests include plants, video games and gorenoise. Find them on Instagram or Twitter @veganmisandry.

Jo Altmaier (they/them) is a 19-year-old Colorado based artist who works in digital drawing, painting, print making, and sculpture. Their art focuses on nature, queerness, tarot, and mental health. They run a small Etsy shop called Jo's Little Art Shop. You can find them on Instagram @jo.alt.art or @jos.little.art.shop.

Pati Avish (she/her) was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1991, after finishing high school, moved to Vienna, Austria, to study business and economics. During the lectures, she was daydreaming and wondering what she was doing there and drew simple drawings, wrote short poems and prose in her notepads. Finally, dropped out of the university, Pati found her true self. She started doing street-art, learning 3d animation, working with an emerging singer and composer AYGYUL — Pati writes lyrics for each song. Pati is known as a poet and street-artist who uses simple words and simple lines to describe and visualize the deepest thoughts and feelings. Follow Pati on Instagram @pati.avish.

Erin Beggrow (she/they) is a queer designer operating in Columbus, Ohio. Erin is currently a senior communications design major at Pratt Institute, where she does everything from illustration to animation to design. Her personal work often pertains to be nonbinary wlw experience. You can find Erin on Instagram @e.beggrow and on her website, www.erinbeggrow.com.

Elisa Blobaum (she/they) is an artist currently based out of Lincoln, Nebraska. She primarily works between alternative process photography, printmaking and textiles. Her work is interested in exploring place and memory through process. By hand manipulating photographs she explores the unstable way we recall memory and attachments to a space. She received her BA in psychology with a minor in photography from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2020. Follow Elisa on Instagram @commikiss.

Zara Bosman is an advertising creative and writer based in London. Originally from South Africa, she started writing poetry at university in order to impress a love interest and has

continued since. Her poems appear in the anthologies *Hysteria* 6, as well as *Greetings*, *Unheard Of*, and *The Creative Collective Anthology*. Follow Zara on Instagram @zarajbosman.

Sam Bruguera (they/them) is a 29 year old butch, non-binary, SWANA, attorney living in Little Armenia, Los Angeles. They started lino printing in 2019 when they needed to spend a lot more time at home after developing chronic migraine (15+ migraine days/month). They like using prints to explore their Iranian Armenian heritage, their experiences as a queer person, and, as seen here, fun concepts in physics. Connect with them on Instagram @gazani_prints_.

Susie C. (she/her) is a multi-media queer artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. She's recently turned to nature for inspiration, drawing and painting landscapes and flora as a way of slowing down—investigating nature's natural rhythms of life and death during the Covid-19 pandemic. Follow Susie on Instagram @susiecarterart.

Claire Corbin (they/them) is a queer, nonbinary artist based in Washington, DC, who works with digital, ink, and acrylic mediums. After losing their dream winemaking gig at the start of the pandemic, they went running back to their first love: art. Claire dissects the complexities of femininity in relation to their personal journey of coming out as non-binary, allowing them to celebrate the parts they do and don't identify with. They hope to do more work exploring womanhood from an outsider's lens, developing a deeper understanding of the grace that derives from resilience. Currently, Claire mostly does commission-based work which includes everything from custom pet portraits to greeting cards to freelance illustrating. Follow them on Instagram @clrscrbn and visit them at www.etsy.com/shop/CLAIRESCORBIN.

Olavo Costa is a Portuguese bissexual artist, studying drawing in the Lisbon Faculty of Fine Arts. Their body of artwork consists of figurative representations of the human figure. They draw mostly female and transgender nudes. Olavo tries to maintain a correct anatomical depiction of the human form, while exploring different graphic solutions that enhance the quality of the artwork. Their work is a mixture of painting and drawing. The primary theme in their art is the destruction of the sexual taboos, such as fetishes, and freedom of gender expression. Follow Olavo on Instagram @ola.vo.

Cody Curran (she/her) was raised by lesbians and is the founder of The Sovereignty School For Love, a nomadic school/

community focused on developing self-love. She is a birth doula, family dynamic consultant, and menstrual empowerment artist. Cody's art helps menstruators track their cycles and develop self-awareness to create an authentic lifestyle. She's currently working on a master's degree in education aimed at validating self-love as a subject that needs to be woven into school curriculums. Reach out. Love Revolution. Follow Cody on Instagram @wolfnanny and visit her at www.codydoulacare.com.

Rosa Li Dietl (she/they) is a lesbian artist based in Berlin, Germany. She is inspired by people who break rules and boundaries of what's acceptable, who put our systems into question and dare to stray from the norm. Their work is inspired by those people that are radically themselves, by their experience with queerness, femininity and kink, and by everything deemed unusual or unacceptable, while always giving it softness. You can find more of their work on Instagram under @daddirosi.

Lindsey Eisenmann (they/them/theirs) is a non-binary lesbian in Oklahoma City. Film photography has become their greatest passion and a way for them to explore their identity freely. When they're not at work as a barista, you can find them with their camera strolling through their neighborhood or taking self-portraits in their home. Follow them on Instagram @lindsey_eisenmann.

Lea Elise (she/her) is a queer artist living and working in Montreal, Canada. Through expressive processes of painting and drawing, she explores the boundaries between self perception and external standards. She uses her own experience, dreams and fears, portraying the power of womxn reconfiguring the conditions that were cast upon them with romantic and surreal references.

Betsy Falco (she/they) is a queer artist and craft goblin. Follow Betsy on Instagram @arose.garden, on Twitter @arosegardenart, and visit them at www.arosegarden.co.uk.

Liv Greene (she/her, they/them) is an environmental and creative writer based in Salt Lake City, UT. They care a lot about the intersection of identity and the land, and they are excited to keep exploring their own. Follow Liv on Instagram @livgreene and visit them at www.livgreene.org.

LeeAnn H's (she/her) subjects are always women and she loves incorporating bright colors and shapes into her work. She is currently a university student and working toward a career in fashion! Follow her on Instagram @lemongacha.

Bethany Habegger (she/her/hers) is currently a BFA painting candidate in residency at Indiana University Bloomington. She was born in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1999 to a family of artists. Raised by two painters, Bethany has been creating work from a very young age. In her work, she shows the beauty of these lost places and how they age. She explores the passage of time and utilizes the medium of oil paint to demonstrate this through texture. She represents these spaces in a highly naturalistic way but withholds information from the viewer. The way these abandoned places are interpreted through paint show how they

must be preserved and respected. That they are not a waste of space; abandoned places are a reminder of what our culture has gone through and how everything changes when they are lost and forgotten. Follow Bethany on Instagram @bethanyhabegger and visit her at https://www.bethanyhabegger.com/.

Stray Hare (she/her) is a self-taught cartoonist and self-taught lesbian, hopping onto the Portland street art scene, particularly the city's subversive sticker culture. Stray Hare's work focuses on themes related to existentialism, mental illness, and gender identity primarily through bold line art, both hand-drawn and digital illustrations, also at times, experimenting with collaging, murals, and comics. To gawk at some weird art, follow @stray_hare.

Evelyn Harris (she/her) is a self-taught visual artist, living and working in Atlanta, Georgia. She enjoys exploring modern impressionist, semi-abstract, and figurative painting. She works predominantly with acrylic paints, but also incorporates oil pastels, charcoal, and digital art. Follow her on Instagram @evelynharrisart.

B. Hayden (she/her) is a figurative artist born and raised in Houston, Texas. B. received her B.F.A. in Drawing and Painting from the University of North Texas. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a resident at Oasis Studios with Paradice Palase. Follow her on Instagram @_b.hayden_.

Kamila/Pigeon (she/her) is a Polish illustrator based in the UK. Her recent work is focusing on re-discovering Slavic folklore and mythology. She makes zines and art books, and her debut short comic "Rusalka" will be published this summer. You can find her in all sorts of internet places: Twitter: @yourlilpigeon; Instagram: @pigeonxperson; and Tiktok: @leafypigeon.

Tobey Katt (they/them) is a white queer interdisciplinary artist from Baltimore. They work to comfortably document the sweet friendships and two-fisted joys that make the gay freako community thrive (pure magic baby). Follow them on insta @tobeykatt and visit them at www.tobeykatt.squarespace.com

Leeza Lakhter (they/them) is a queer licensed, trauma-informed, self-taught tattoo artist from New York City. Leeza's mission and artwork center around spreading awareness for mental health, body and sex-positivity, and LGBTQIA+ empowerment—just to name a few. Leeza is best known for their tattoo artwork, drawings, graphic art, mixed media, and photography, highlighting the importance of self-love, acceptance, and mental health. Leeza has a safe and comfortable private space for their clients to get tattooed in—open to all bodies, races, genders, aliens, in Brooklyn, New York. Visit www.letmepokeutattoos.com for more information on tattoo booking and mental health resources and follow them on Instagram @letmepokeu.

Audrey Lang (she/her/hers) is a lesbian Jewish playwright and actor born, raised, and based in New York City. Her play You Have To Promise was a part of the 2020 Pride Plays last June,

and a monologue from it will be published in Smith & Krauss's *Best Women's Monologues of 2021* anthology. As an actor, her proudest credit to date is Pearl Gluck's award-winning short film *Summer*, which has screened at festivals including the New York Jewish Film Festival at Lincoln Center and NewFest. She holds a B.A. in Theatre Studies from Ithaca College and when not writing or performing, can often be found coding websites or crocheting. Follow Audrey's work on Instagram and Twitter @AudreyGLang and www.audreyglang.com.

Laquerrière is an author, artist, and gender non-conforming broadly transmasculine person who passes the time creating things, battling insanity, and taking care of a three-legged old rescue cat who loathes people and loves exhaling directly in my face. Follow them on Instagram @midsummerqueens.

Meredith Lee (she/her) is an Austin based illustrator, poster artist, and cat enthusiast. Her favorite subjects to explore are female villains and monsters, queerness, and death. An indecisive Pisces, her art style ranges from fem-punk to eco-goth to however she is feeling that day. You can find her at @meredeath.atx and meredeath.com.

Lizzy Lehman (she/they) is a queer singer-songwriter and digital illustrator living in Austin, Texas. She has always enjoyed drawing but was mainly focused on playing and writing music before the pandemic. The closing of music venues left her free to explore digital art and it has been a great source of joy and calm for her—a momentary relief from the weight of the world. Through her art, Lizzy aims to erase mental health stigma, spread love, and simply make someone's day a little bit better. Follow Lizzy on Instagram @lizzy.lehman.

Morgan Lieberman (she/her) is a documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. She is most drawn to narratives of queer identity, subcultures often unseen, and women's empowerment. With empathy and kindness, she believes the journey is more rewarding than the destination. Clients include Refinery29, AARP, The Wall Street Journal, and several other editorial outlets around the country.

Eva López (she/her/ella) is a queer Salt Laker and Latina, born to Mexican immigrant parents. She currently serves as a Community Liaison for Salt Lake City's Mayors Office and is working to decolonize bureaucrat processes. In her leisurely time, Eva plays tackle football for the Utah Falconz and enjoys wearing a dapper suit for all occasions. Follow her journey at @eevalopezz on Twitter and Instagram.

Mary Luna (they/them) is a Mexican immigrant and senior at Smith College. They identity as a non-binary lesbian. Their poetry explores themes of color, gender, and history. Follow them on Instagram @maryberryluna.

Meliss (she/they) is a photographer, multimedia artist and doula loosely based in Boston and Paris. Their primary medium is 35mm film which they digitize and collage. Their art and body work takes interest in the mythology of place,

framing unintentional readymades within landscapes and human forms. Follow them on Instagram @mielphette

Liv Meyer (she/her) is an undergraduate at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a lesbian, Pisces, florist and artist. She is passionate about stories and their intersection with lived experience. Her discusses sex, love, gender and liberation. She writes in a number of genres including poetry, journalism, short fiction and creative nonfiction. Her work has been published in Glitterary Magazine, Pest Control Magazine, Unbound Magazine, F-News and SAIC's Emerge Journal.

Mychelle Moritz (she/her) is a lesbian living in Portland, OR. She is an art therapist with a private practice as well as a mixed media sculptural artist. Her most recent works are ceramics-based and often incorporate both natural and fabricated materials. You can follow her work on Instagram @tellus_fabulas.

Megan Paris (she/they) is a lesbian, writer, and gardener who currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. She enjoys writing about nature and her place in it. You can find Megan at @megg.paris on Instagram.

Janie Peacock (she/her) is a queer illustrator, graphic designer, and musician based in Brooklyn. In the past she has created content for Sony Music, Rough Trade, Captured Tracks, NYTimes, Taproot Magazine, and for local bands. Her art is directly inspired by the female experience and is created for a non-male audience. Follow her on Instagram @janiepeacock and visit her at www.janiepeacock.com.

Julie Phoenix (she/her) is a lesbian writer and artist currently living in St. Louis, Missouri with her wife and kids (human and otherwise). You can follow her watercolor work on Instagram @thetwistedsycamore

Amelia Possanza is a water sign who is happiest at the beach. A full-time book publicist and a part-time writer, she currently lives in Brooklyn with her cat. Her writing has appeared in The-Washington Post and BuzzFeed, and she is currently at work on a book, LESBIAN LOVE STORY. You can find her on Twitter @AmeliaPossanza.

Cecil Pulley (they/them) is a young college lesbian from Texas currently pursuing studies in gender studies & art history in the middle of nowhere, Ohio. Their piece reframes the story of Benedetta Carlini, an abbess infamous for a trial that is one of the only surviving records of lesbian activity in Renasiance society, to center the beauty and sacredness of lesbian love and grapple with issues of religious trauma, representation and queer joy. Follow Cecil on Instagram @yujowheelies.art and on Twitter @yujowheelies.

Kavel Rafferty (she/her) is interested in the female gaze, messing with the context. She plays with the objectification of women. She hopes to challenge stereotypes by cutting, redacting, and painting the source materials. Kavel creates images reminiscent of double exposed photos or the end of a roll of film, women

in summer meadows naked, half hidden, intertwined with painted camouflage. In her most recent series, Queer Flower, she explores the artistic tropes of flowers to examine ideas of remembrance, sexuality, and censorship, reclaiming flowers from their somewhat domestic life by combining them with (soft) pornographic imagery of women. Follow her on Instagram @kavelrafferty.

Esther Renehan (she/hers) is an artist, illustrator and dog walker living in Clerkenwell, London. An art school dropout, she honed her skills through many different media, including sculpture, felting, crochet and painting. She is currently focusing on digital illustration. Her art is influenced by nature, fat bodies, the occult, old movie musicals and abundance. Follow her on Instagram @clouds.and.cakes.art.

Maddy Rolon (they/them) is an actor, writer, and butch lesbian. You can hire them to act/write/be a butch lesbian at double-u, double-u, dot maddyrolon.com. Follow Maddy on Instagram @maddyrolon.jpg and on Twitter @maddyrolon.

Allie Shinn (she/her) grew up queer in Oklahoma, and it is her experience struggling to survive in the bible belt that drives her passion as an activist and as a photographer today. In recovery from alcohol abuse since 2012, Allie's art is often an expression of her refusal to miss the quiet moments that make up life, from which she spent the first 25 years of her life running. Though insufficiently organized for a consistent gender presentation, moody outdoorsy lesbian fits the bill most days. When she's not taking photos, Allie reads, grows food, works full time to build a leftist Oklahoma, and can usually be found camping with her partner, who runs an art collective and a coffee roaster, and her senior dog, who largely does nothing at all. Follow Allie on Instagram @itsallieshinnyall.

Emerald Skye (she/her) is a queer illustrator originally from the north shore of Oahu who now lives in Portland, Oregon working actively to pursue her career in the arts. Her mediums explore themes of mental illnesses and sharing her experiences and struggles with CPTSD, bipolar, anxiety and depression. Emeralds work also celebrates queerness, body positivity and intersectionality. Follow her on Instagram @Emerald.paints.the. skye and visit her Etsy shop @EmeraldPaintsTheSkye.

Renata Spolidoro (she/her) is a visual artist and book designer from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She has a Master's in Theory of Literature and Compared Literature from UERJ (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro). In her work she deals mainly with: body, memory and lesbianities. She is the co-founder of Filipa Edições, an independent, lesbian-owned, publishing house based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Visit her on Instagram @renata.spolidoro.

Lucky Starrs (they/she) is a queer artist, sex worker, and activist focusing on creating work that nourishes their community. Themes of their work include the intersection of capitalism, intimacy, and sexuality as it relates to modern relationships and sex work. Through their practice they want to create radically

non men spaces for marginalized genders. Their goal is to transcend and transform present realities by rewriting past ones and writing for future ones. More of their work can be found on their Instagram @luck.ily666.

Jenna Vice (she/they) is a nonbinary lesbian singer/songwriter based in California. In her work, they elevate the importance of hearing stories that lesbians can relate to and see themselves in. Growing up without such stories to template, Jenna took it upon themself to create some in her own unique voice. Jenna uses writing both as an exploration of themself and of the world around her, in the space between poetry and song. See what else they're up to on Instagram @jenna_vice.

Emma Vieser (they/them) is a multimedia artist based in Knoxville, TN. Their work is primarily focused on self reflection and admiring the natural world around them. In school, they studied photography and printmaking, but are now exploring painting, digital art, and ceramics. When they aren't working in their studio, they're likely tending to their 50 houseplants or spending time with their cat, Basil. You can find their work on Instagram @emmaelyseart or on their website' emmaelyseart.squarespace.com .

