

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Issue 4
May 2022



Marías at Sampaguitas

Mariñas at Sampaguitas

Issue 4, May 2022

CAMP:
GLITTER IN OUR EYES

Cover Photograph by Jonathan Taala

Pagsulat sa mga bulaklak Writing on flowers

MARIAS AT SAMPAGUITAS is an online literary magazine whose aim is to highlight voices of the under-resourced & underrepresented, such as the Black, Indigenous, POC, LGBTQIA+ communities, all marginalized genders, and everyone in between.

**CONTENT
WARNING &**

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In our call for submissions, we encouraged our contributors to explore the far reaches of their creativity and to continue challenging the social norms that attempt to limit and define us. The work we present here are reflections of these explorations and include difficult topics such as slut shaming, homophobia, transphobia, body dysmorphia, gender dysmorphia, insinuated sexual assault, colonization, and racism, and vomit imagery, among others. Please read with your well-being and safety in mind.

In addition, due to explicit content, we've applied an advisory logo to this issue. Reader discretion is advised. Guardian guidance suggested for non-adult readers. This issue contains a **BEHIND THE CURTAIN** section for sexual content, nudity, and gore.

issue credits

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Our thanks to everyone on staff for their hard work on this issue!

For **Staff Bios**, see PAGE 126

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CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

In order of appearance

Jonathan Taala (he/him/his) is a second generation Filipino-American photographer and arts educator from Spring Grove, IL. Taala is an alumnus of Columbia College Chicago, receiving their BA in Cinema Art & Science with a minor in Photography in 2016. In his work, he utilizes medium and large format cameras, and bookmaking as his primary mediums to examine the world around him while exploring themes regarding the institution of family, cultural displacement within diaspora, and the complexities of the quotidian. He has exhibited works at The Observatory Gallery, Hokin Gallery, and Throop Studio in Chicago, IL and also El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe in Santa Fe, NM. He also has published work in textbook: *Carbon Transfer Printing: A Step-by-Step Manual*. He currently resides and works in Chicago, IL.

daizy (she/they) is a black nonbinary lesbian visual artist from the south. she has spent most of her life drawing pretty girls, and is thrilled to share those pictures of pretty girls with anyone who asks. they post their art on twitter at [@fruitpuppi](#).

Perry Wyatt (she/her) is a writer from Cardiff, Wales, with a love for all things strange and magical. She achieved a BA in English from the University of Exeter and a Masters in Creative Writing from Swansea University. She is a true jack-of-all-trades wordsmith with screenwriting, journalism, and two novels under her belt. Poetry is her most recent adventure and has been shared in *Gaia Lit*, *Fahmidan Journal*, and *Moss Puppy Mag*.

Maria Helena Mikkelsen (she/her) is a Bolivian-born writer of Danish-Malawian descent. She is a third culture person, having lived abroad her entire life. By day, she freelances as a generalist copywriter. By night, she is a poet-author-artist hybrid whose work has been featured in several anthologies and zines, most recently being "Carpe Noctem: Vampires Through the Ages". Outside of writing, she also creates digital collages to accompany her poetry, viewable on her Instagram account, [@shylovr](#).

Dior J. Stephens is a proud pisces hailing from Midwestern waters. He is the author of *SCREAMS & lavender, 001*, and *CANNON!*, all with Ghost City Press. They tweet at [@dolphinneptune](#) and Instagram at [@dolphinphotos](#).

Demetrio Domingo is a retired dentist, currently studying in Rome as an art student. His paintings were completed during his year's stay in Paris, where he acquainted himself with Gen Z culture, walked millions of miles in his Merrel trail runners, and learned that he paints very fast.

Eric Asuncion (he/him) is a pop culture essayist and Social Media Coordinator of Marias at Sampaguitas and Sampaguita Press. He is a graduate from San José State University, holding a Bachelor's degree in English. As a writer and creative, he caters to the audience with a keen attention to detail, as well as the ability to use insight to simplify otherwise more complex ideas.

Tarae McQueen is a Queer non-binary Black person living in the Central Valley. Tarae currently attends a CSU in Southern California, and is double majoring in History and Theatre with a minor in Creative Writing.

Ewin Ponce holds an MFA from Emerson College. Some of his poems appear or are forthcoming in *Eastlit*, *Asian American Literary Review*, *TAYO Literary Magazine*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Pacifica Literary Review*, and *RHINO*. He has a manuscript called *Pilipinas, or; Ending up in Modern Day Metro Manila*. He is new to the Pacific Northwest.

Tianna Andresen (she/they) is a 22-year-old Filipinx artist, educator, student, and organizer born, raised, and residing on Duwamish Land. She is a fourth year at the University of Washington Seattle double majoring in American Ethnic Studies and Education, Communities, and Organizations. They are also involved with their community through different means and make stickers, prints, bucket hats, and fashion items. Visit [linkt.ree/barkadababy](#) or [@barkadababy](#) to see Tianna's work.

Laarnie Barcelon is a First Generation Filipino American Fashion Wardrobe Stylist & Costume Designer residing in Los Angeles, California.

Kyle Vaughn's poems have appeared in journals such as *The Journal*, *A-Minor*, *Adbusters*, *The Boiler*, *Drunken Boat*, *Poetry East*, *Vinyl*, and *The Shore* (2021 Pushcart Prize nomination). He is the author of *Lightning Paths: 75 Poetry Writing Exercises* and the co-author/co-photographer of *A New Light in Kalighat*.
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katrina m (she/her) is a queer biracial writer and poet residing in Redding, CA, USA. She graduated from Southern Oregon University with a Bachelor of Arts in English, minoring in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. You can find her work in various indie magazines such as *Polemical Zine*, *Silk Club*, and *Mariás at Sampaguitas*. Follow her on Instagram @[thelittlemoonbi](https://www.instagram.com/thelittlemoonbi) for more poetry, cats, podcast shenanigans, and boba.

Jennifer Nessel is a Baltimore teacher working with ESOL students in reading and language arts. Their work can be found at *Defunkt*, *Apple in the Dark*, *Flash Frontier*, among others. They live outside of Washington, D.C. with their partner and two cats.

irish joy deocampo -- irish is her first name, but she is, in fact, not irish, but filipina. she is a fan of drag and drag queens. she hopes to perform a lip synch of "it's all coming back to me now" by celine dion in full drag fashion before she turns 30. she watched her first live drag show in an underground club in sofia, bulgaria in 2021.

Mikey May (he/fae/xe) is a queer trans man poet, linguist, and trainee teacher based in Birmingham, UK. Faer self-published poetry zines about sex, gender, and Taylor Swift can be found at mikeymay.itch.io. Follow xyr queer shenanigans @[lavenderblueboy](https://twitter.com/lavenderblueboy) on Twitter and @[mikeymayblues](https://www.instagram.com/mikeymayblues) on Instagram.

andrew michael joseph (he/him) is a queer, asian-american artist from albuquerque, new mexico. working primarily through photography, his implementation of theatrical, visceral, and erotic imagery informs his work as he investigates the nature of being human. find him on instagram @[chiaroscuroh](https://www.instagram.com/chiaroscuroh) and andrewmichaeljoseph.com.

Greyson Murray (They/He) is a Portland based SFX and multimedia makeup artist. Launching their career in 2021 Greyson has been fortunate enough to work on several indie TV series and films: "Ellie's Revenge", and "Buried" to name some favorites. With a focus on prosthetics, creature makeup, and realistic injuries, Greyson is excited to keep playing in the transformative and occasionally campy world of makeup. See more of their work on Instagram @[grey_makes_monsters](https://www.instagram.com/grey_makes_monsters)

Trinidad Escobar is a cartoonist, poet, and musician from Milpitas, CA. Her comics have been featured in journals like *Shenandoah* and *The Brooklyn Review* as well as other publications such as *NPR*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Nib*. In 2019, Trinidad was named as one of YBCA's most influential global artists for her comics-journalism and community workshops grounded in gender and racial justice. In 2020, her works were featured in Eisner and Ignatz-winning anthologies like *Drawing Power* (Abrams) and *Be Gay, Do Comics* (IDW). Her poem-comic on sexual violence is currently on display at the first-ever international Women in Comics exhibit in Rome, Italy. "Ode to Keisha", a one-shot comic illustrated by Trinidad and written by Jamila Rowser of Black Josei Press, won a Broken Frontier Award in 2022. Her YA graphic novel *Of Sea And Venom* will be published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (Books For Young Readers), and *Tryst* is forthcoming from Gantala Press in the Philippines. She is also one-half of the femme folk band, blue ghosts. She lives in California with her son, partner, and their many animals. Instagram: @[escobarcomics](https://www.instagram.com/escobarcomics)

Dakota Noot is a human paper doll. Through crayon and color pencil drawings taped to himself, Noot transforms into characters beyond his own species and gender. These drawings reference his upbringing in North Dakota; but also body horror, camp, and the food industry. Noot resides in Los Angeles, but continues to exhibit in both California and North Dakota.

Lucien V. Sebastian (he/him/his) is a queer artist practicing in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Working with an interdisciplinary approach, he uses his artwork as a means to convey his experiences of the world and to process what it means to be a human. Lucien works to push the boundary of seeing, ripping through the restraints of the surface level visual, diving into what it truly means to confront existence. See more of his work at @[lucienvsebastian](https://www.instagram.com/lucienvsebastian) on instagram, and his website at <https://www.lucienvsebastian.com/> !

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Interview with Tianna Andresen, & "From Scratch" Project



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erotica collection, ARRIVE IN MY HANDS

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

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Letter from the Editor



In her 1966 essay “Notes on Camp,” Susan Sontag attempts to define the aesthetic cultural movement, and she gets really close. Sontag writes that “the whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious,” which is observably accurate. As we’ve seen in contemporary events like the 2019 Met Gala, camp is conceptualized as a challenge to what is considered normal, what is considered palatable. So she had a point. But there is much more.

With all respect to Susan, as well as Janelle Monae’s Christian Siriano eye-boob, camp is much more than bourgeois boredom and angst parading down the red carpet for a thousand-dollar charity dinner — it’s also a political movement that questions the heteronormative, patriarchal illustration of who we are and what we should be. When she writes that camp “is by its nature possible only in affluent societies, in societies or circles capable of experiencing the psychopathology of affluence [re: boredom]” Sontag not only overlooks the thriving presence of camp taste in non-“affluent societies” but she also dismisses the political importance of aesthetic and art to drive change. Using camp to rebel against social norms isn’t born out of boredom, but out of being sick and tired of the oppressive systems created by othering people who fall out of those definitions.

The LGBTQIA+ community is a historic home for camp, with drag queens and kings exaggerating and poking fun at the gender binary (looking flawless while doing so). Black transwomen, pioneers of gay and queer liberation, understood the power of glitter and color to interrogate the boxes that we’ve created around white heteronormativity — Marsha P. Johnson exemplified these intersections of theater and politics in her own work and activism. As we continue the interrogation, the rebellion, the fight, we carry on her legacy by singing louder, dancing wilder, loving harder.

Working on this issue gave me a broader understanding of camp taste, but it also showed its vulnerable, critical purpose. Anywhere where people can identify, play with, and deconstruct social norms is capable of making camp. And not just because we’re bored, but because we must.

With love,
Dina Klarisse



I struggled with the tiny buckle on my party shoes,
Pinching my toes with red bows,
My sister's dress by my knees,
Shrinking against back wall,
I couldn't convince any of them to dance,
Disco lights blinding us all.

The smell of someone drowning in cologne,
Bathroom sink sticky with hairspray,
Lip-gloss called 'Baby Doll',
My tights were too big,
Jessie's mum had done her eyelashes,
I wondered why she'd used caterpillars.

Teachers huddled like a war meeting,
Someone was swaying, another giggled,
Not noticing the boys requesting dirty songs,
Or the little one's scooping handfuls of glitter into their mouths,
By then it was too late,
Sparkling vomit ruined my shoes.

Perry Wyatt

A POP SUGAR COMPLEX & STRAWBERRY GLOSS
on satin panties— dearest diary,

 i can never remember if i'm the Madonna
or the whore in this narrative but Mama,

i think they like me best when my make-up runs!
playing dress-up with rum on my tongue, always fingering

that heart on my sleeve. 'course, the dream girl keeps it *caj*,
the sweet girl keeps it tight,

THE COOL GIRL makes white lies out of boyhood dreams, turns pain
into a three-course meal—

 cue a candid of *Lil Bo Peep*,
rhinestone blush, lapping salt out of another girl's reddened palm.

lie, caption, print & retweet my
so-called friends calling me a carnivore whore

as they drink from the wounds of another primadonna
gone wrong.

ipop! my gum or clock your gun but first
lemme rewrite the o-bitch-uary. YES, the rumors are true;

YES, i've been picturing you naked—see,
these heels dig trenches into pedestals;

purple, pink, blue blossoms all over my saintly feet. i'll
post my screencap apologies once the media frenzy breaks,

 blow kisses to the camera with a split lip, host
livestreams where accusations fade into thin air

till glitter loses her glimmer and this IT GIRL becomes
a bitch girl, driven to the frontlines of your best heartbreak album

Maria Helena Mikkelsen

On Purpose

Nashira de la Rosa

I stopped shaving and you didn't hate me. I stopped starving and you didn't strive to carve analysis out of my body. I stopped stressing when you didn't ask me to try on the dress that fit my chest like a death sentence — you don't know how different I find this love from the hatred I know by blood. I am no longer afraid of what I could become under the sun.

My family swore they meant no harm with their words, but tsismis scars. Scorn comes as second nature to Filipinos, it seems. The parts of my upbringing I reminisce are far and few between; I remember my grandmother by the softness of her bonnet, the clicking of bangles and her silk duster swishing as she welcomed in a home full of guests. I'm seventeen when I finally get it:

I have nothing to prove by my appearance. Aesthetic comes second to spirit, and the art of getting dolled up becomes magic when you do it for yourself. I find comfort, now, in performance: there are no mismatched patterns when shapes serve only to spark joy. I'll rock sweatpants over spanx and I am more than comfortable going out with a half-braided scalp. I paint my face with different intent than I used to, and the compliments are great, but I no longer need them to feel like I succeeded.

I used fear getting to know myself, that everything inside me, my sexuality, would spill out before I knew how to describe these feelings, before I could even decide myself. Oh, the mental gymnastics I pulled trying to pass for pretty. Nerves shot and praying no one would see how much of me I was faking, I feel like I've only just started healing.

In community, I find life worth living. One where I don't need to explain my choice of name or date. Out here stunting in a bonnet paired with a blazer, I find serenity in being.

On Purpose

Nashira de la Rosa

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] **SUN.**

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] **NATURE** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **SPIRIT,**
[REDACTED] **ART** [REDACTED] **MAGIC** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **SEXUALITY,**
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] **HEALING.**

[REDACTED] **LIFE** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
SERENITY [REDACTED]

04/29/2020

savage pink lemonade-----

SLURPEE STRAWS TYPING OUT HALF-ASSED STORIES OF WATERED DOWN TOMORROW, SMELLING PORK RINDS, SMELLING SALT, CRYSTALS IN HOLES UNIDENTIFIED, FLOATING, SPEAKING OF BLACK SILK EBULLIENCE.

FRAMING FANS AND BLOWING CHARCOAL, CRUSTING OVER THE EYES OF NORMALCY -- I SEE THE QUALMS OF THUNDER IN THE STREETS, LICK MY CHARGED SANDSTORM, & PRONOUNCE STILLNESS AS MY MOTHER.

DREAMING OF RED WINE VALLEYS, A WORLD WITHOUT DISEASE, POISONS OF THE SOIL. CROCHETING TUMBLEWEEDS INTO CLAY POTS & SINKING TEETH INTO CHLOROFORM.

*FEELING MYSELF SOFT,
GREEN WAVE, FEELING MYSELF
GODS GREEN LIGHT.*

Dior J. Stephens

4/16/2021

crash dummy dip into first wave rem river red crow cried as we said our farewells even though the fairness was lost in translation;

boogie down subjects hungry for a herd enough jobs for every redwhitepink but the party never stopped;

it's a doozy riding the mare til your marrow resynthesizes hoping next lifetime comes equipped with wings and warranties cluster pricklepoints over a dustbowl's sonata;

no longer caring for understanding just caring for the thrill exaltation of self identification my push pop hotmails extend into lincoln's third blind eye;

maybe there ain't
much to say
anymore;

a way of life

grab blast-off bronze neck with
ochre hands, pronounce an old
burgundy backside as your dominion.
the next battleship gray afternoon leaves
no markings, leaves no trace of
a love bound in midnight. the
upholstery remembers, recalls how the
body bent, made vinyasa cry
pedestrian. i said: *i feel sorry for your*
neighbors and you cast them to hell
with a crimping of bold brows. crystals cry
hit for a kiss cant

help but wonder does hit negate hold does choke negate care does smile
across face mean trouble, surrendered,,

4/20/2021

say you'll never ever
leave the porch light
on say the tumbling
caverns of our forefront
have been filled shut
with snail shells
say the knot of
near doom loosened
half a click at
three thirties;

staying focused on
the dismantled prizes,
trophy of rubble and
new roots,, until then,
we celebrate in undertones,,

say less of what the
algorithm wants to hear,,
spout revolutionary letterstamps,,
scream at the bar and
scratch the tangles out of
your flesh; say less;

Dior J. Stephens



grand lilac

i.

used
to be
so worried
about
following directions; now
we sing in prismatic
forests &
farms; wrap lilac
around our breastplates;
create an abolition
of experience;
abolish the old masters
along with the new; ; making
waves of being; knowing our stars
like
we know our multiplying poisons;

a cradle in the back & a
rubbing of jasmine on
sweet potato crowns; used to
undress myself for all the
piano keys at the grand; now i
shimmyshamwow my polemic arms &
beam legs freely, like an oaf

FROM BEYOND GLITTER: OPEN LETTER TO



When I was in high school, I secretly wanted to be a pop star. I thought about being on stage, dancing around beneath bright lights and the crowd cheering my name as if I was like a K-Pop singer, BoA. In reality, I was too nervous to perform onstage in front of a crowd. Not to mention that I didn't fit society's beauty standards: tall, skinny, and very light skin. I wasn't meant to be a star until I learned about drag. Drag is a performance art that exaggerates gender binary, man and/or woman, for entertainment. My only vague introduction to the art form was a drag queen named Willam Belli. Her duet with Latrice Royales appeared in my YouTube feed as they fawned over a group of male dancers while they sang "thick thighs make a dick rise." Back then, I didn't even know what drag was until I went to my first drag show in college.

It was the day of Club Crawl, where different campus clubs greeted students and encouraged them to join their clubs. I came with my group of friends when I noticed, towards the end of all the booths, there was a poster plastered on the wall for a show called *Winter's A Drag*. Reading the headline, I thought it was a roast kind of like Comedy Central's annual celebrity roast where comedians come together and throw jokes and jabs at different celebrities. Still, I wanted to see the show. As Club Crawl drew to a close, a long line of people started forming at the entrance to the auditorium where the show took place. I turned to my friends if they wanted to go with me. Long story short: I went alone and it was worth it. As I entered and sat close to the front of the stage, a cabaret of students dressed up as drag queens and kings, a burlesque dancer, and a legendary drag queen who had performed around Oregon. I came out of that show feeling so brand new. I wanted to be that kind of star.

Two years later, I got the chance to be part of that same drag show for the first time. I knew I wanted to use the name Danny but I couldn't figure out how to pair it with a last name. One night, I watched a marathon of one of my favorite slam poets, Alex Dang, and I asked myself if anyone ever introduced him as if he was the best dressed person in the room: "Alex DAAAAAAAAAANG!"

Thus, Danny Damn the Drag King was born.

DANNY DAMN

My first performance as Danny Damn felt like an opening act. I performed two lip-sync songs: Jay Park's "Me Like Yuh" and Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel." It was my debut as a drag king, but it still made me nervous that I was performing not once but twice. I didn't have enough money to cut my hair and didn't know how to do drag make-up, let alone any make-up. So, I asked a friend who does *really* fantastic anime cosplays of *Haikyuu* and video game characters, to do my make-up like Taemin from SHINee when he made his solo debut, "Danger" but with gold glitter. I laid out my outfits for my set: a sleeveless *The Breakfast Club* black shirt for "Me Like Yuh" and a white collar shirt with a tank top in different shades of blue for "The Way You Make Me Feel." Looking at my outfits I pulled from my closet, a shot of doubt came into my mind. I wondered if people would love my set, if they would like Danny. On the night of the show and as soon as I made my first move, the crowd roared. Gliding on the small gray ramp with my black shoes and its heels covered in gold spikes, I felt almost invincible. I lip-synced to both songs as if they were my own while showing off Danny's charms: a little edgy, charming, and even if he looked silly when he danced, at least one person in the audience will smile and think, *At least he's having fun.* When I got off stage, one of the staff members working behind the show came up to me and said people didn't start tipping money until I started to perform.

If my first performance was like an opening act, then the next year was my main act. I graduated from my undergrad but I stayed one more year for work. Like last year, I came back as a performer and lip-synced two only but now it was for two nights. I got so excited about coming back and performing at *Winter's a Drag* that I even had enough money to cut my hair short. This time, I dedicated one of my performances to my dad as I wore his old jean biker jacket and doing a dip for the first time to Prince's "Let's Go Crazy." I used dad's old white kimono as a robe for the big 80s rebel reveal. My friend, who was also one of the drag performers at *Winter's A Drag*, loaned me his fishnet gloves to complete the look. When I stepped on to the gray stage, twirling and landing with an imperfect dip, it felt like I was floating on air.

After dancing to NCT U's "Boss," it was the last time Danny performed. I still think about returning to drag but was too lazy to buy wigs or improve Danny's make-up. Some days, I fantasized about returning to being Danny Damn and being such a badass performer that *RuPaul's Drag Race* would finally bring drag kings to compete on their show and I would be one of them. If only I had known there was a male breast plate and I knew how to sew my own clothes, Danny Damn might still live on. Who knows.

Even though I had to hang up my black and gold shoes, I got to finally live my high school dream in drag.

Danny Damn, thank you for letting me live my pop star dream.

From #AselaWriteWhateverChallenge

Two years since
I painted my jawlines with foundation
to look sharp like Jun.K's and strapped
into my black and gold-spiked shoes,
I miss dancing in Drag.
Being on stage under the moniker
Danny Damn,
I lived my high school dream
of being a K-Pop superstar
glowing beneath the lights
as I lip-synced to Bruno Mars
part of me has never felt so alive.

Sometimes, I still practice my routine.
Blasting Doja Cat's "Boss Bitch,"
I picture myself styling a red wig with a mullet
like G-Dragon's
and in a black-and-red suit
I strut around in my room with
charisma as if I haven't forgotten
my stage presence. I
don't know what is stopping me
but
I miss it. I miss being Danny.

DRAG

ASELA LEE KEMPER

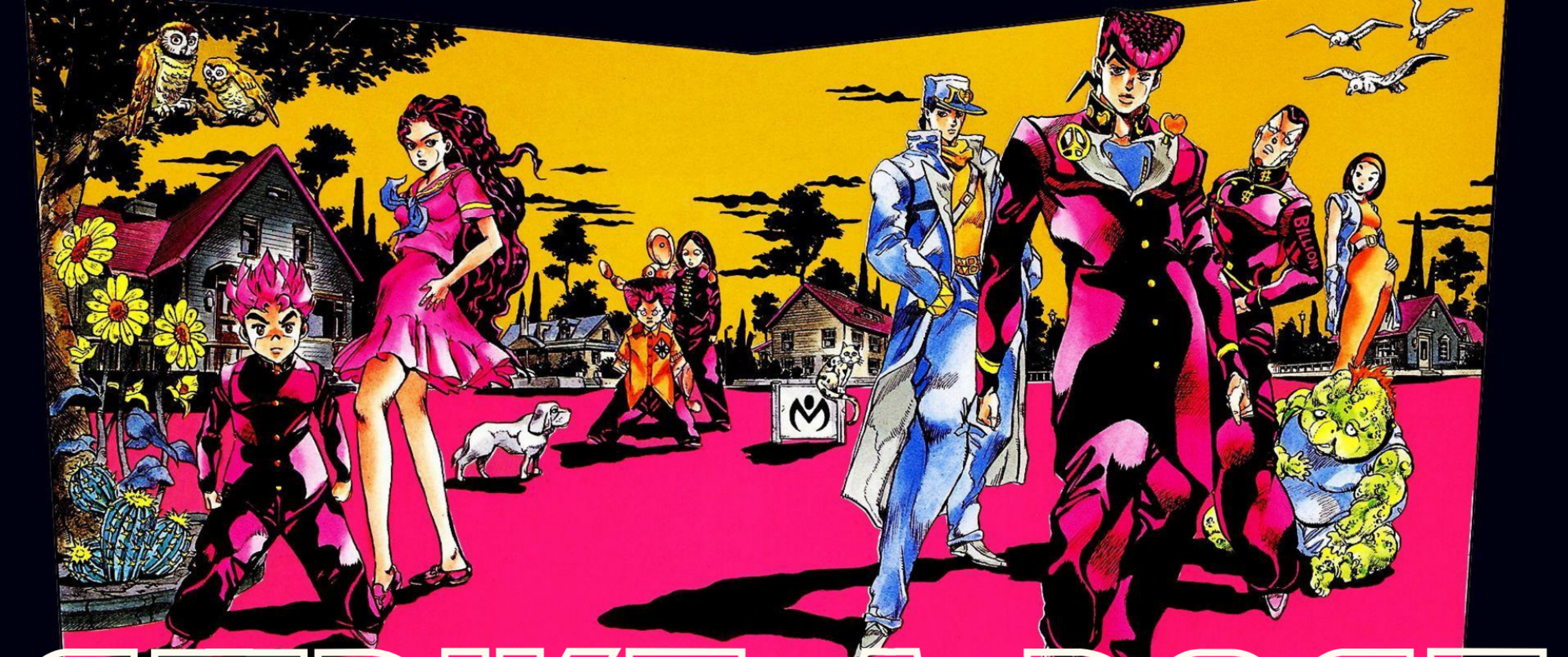


DENNETT RIO DOMENGO





TEET



STRIKE A POSE

The Camp of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*

By Eric Asuncion & Keana Aguila Labra

THE DEFINITION OF CAMP FASHION IS

best understood when seen. Those who are not well-read in queer spaces involving drag and voguing might puzzle at articulating what “camp” is in words, but no one mistakes it for anything but out on the street. And this is how Susan Sontag defines camp in her famous fifty-eight-point listicle, “Notes on Camp,” defining it as “an aesthetic over-the-top-ness with bad taste as a vehicle for art.” Camp has made its way outside of the queer enclave, where even Hollywood stars have touched upon it, such as the Met Gala in 2019, of which the theme was chosen as a nod to Sontag’s essay. Despite the essay’s penning dating back to 1964, the camp aesthetic remains beloved by the queer community. And as the queer (notably BIPOC) youth take and make space for their opinions and contributions, we find that camp also makes its way into manga and anime, most notably, *JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure*. The longstanding, beloved manga title by Hirohiko Araki exudes camp aesthetic with its marriage of vibrant colors, high fashion inspired character designs and outfits, and the characters dynamic poses and eccentric personalities.

The series is broken into different parts, following different members of the Joestar family battling different evildoers using their inherited powers, which evolve from hamon into “Stand” usage. Even if one isn’t familiar with the summary of the manga or anime itself, most folks can recall the “JoJo pose” trend on TikTok coined by Black creator, Apollo Fresh, back in 2020. The sole criteria for this challenge was to “strike a pose like a JoJo.” The audio would start with the comment “JoJo pose” and each consecutive “pose” would prompt the user to mimic a pose in the JoJo “style”, which is known for its unconventional and exaggerated nature.

While manga is traditionally in black and white, the characters’ movements and body posture remains bold and the outfits fabulous. While Araki is a mangaka (both author and illustrator of *JoJo*), he is arguably a designer as well having established a distinct brand the past thirty-five years since *JoJo*’s beginnings in 1987. As detailed in an article by The Collector, Araki draws his inspiration not only from high fashion but classical techniques, painting, and sculptures. A technique prominently used in his art style is synthetism, which integrates flat areas of color and bold outlines. He also integrates a stylistic choice shared with Post-Impressionist painter, Paul Gauguin, by utilizing color-blocking and unrealistic color, like choosing to make the sky orange and the ground pink (see title spread).

THE LONGSTANDING, BELOVED MANGA TITLE BY HIROHIKO ARAKI EXUDES CAMP AESTHETIC WITH ITS MARRIAGE OF VIBRANT COLORS, HIGH FASHION INSPIRED CHARACTER DESIGNS AND OUTFITS.



AND THE CHARACTERS' DYNAMIC POSES AND ECCENTRIC PERSONALITIES.

**IN A FULL CIRCLE OF INSPIRATION,
JOJO HAS ALSO BEEN WELCOMED
INTO THE FASHION WORLD AND
HIGH ART.**



**SUCH AS A GUCCI COLLABORATION
BACK IN 2013 AND AN EXHIBIT AT
THE LOUVRE ART MUSEUM.**

This distinct style is parented by Araki's love for high fashion, a uniqueness that brought fame to him and his art. As the series continues, the new characters' runway poses and outfits carry on this homage. Within fashion itself, Araki draws from fashion illustration, executing masterfully one of fashion illustrations' tenets: "a good fashion illustrator not only draws a piece of clothing, but also interprets it in their own way and is able to convey a certain mood(s) behind a designer's collection." The campiness of *JoJo* is best seen in its anime series produced by studio, David Production, by staying true to its bright and vivid colors. This is where one can best see how he uses stylistic choices to bolster his designs, adjusting his palettes and color-blocking to align with his protagonists, such as cool dark colors for moments of tension or bright pastel colors for slice-of-life interactions, etc. In a full circle of inspiration, *JoJo* has also been welcomed into the fashion world and high art, such as a Gucci collaboration back in 2013 and an exhibit at the Louvre art museum.

Overall, this series definitely lives up to its name; being "bizarre" is one of its integral, and arguably charming, aspects of this series. In Sontag's extended definition, she adds "when something is just bad, it's often because it is too mediocre in its ambition. The artist hasn't attempted to do anything really outlandish. Camp taste is, above all, a mode of enjoyment. It wants to enjoy." And truly, Araki takes the soul of "pose and performance" and injects his characters with enthusiasm yet still maintaining a distinctness among his eclectic cast. Most importantly, he has fun with it, an infectious type of fun that brings in (and keeps) an authentic audience of loving fans. Where the attendees of the Met Gala may fail, the characters of *JoJo* never do and consistently bring the essence of camp with every pose and outfit for a satisfying serve.

Image Sources

Title Spread: 1993 manga *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Part 4, Diamond is Unbreakable*, also posted on Araki's personal Twitter, @ByAraki.

Page 33: 1993 manga *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Part 4, Diamond is Unbreakable*

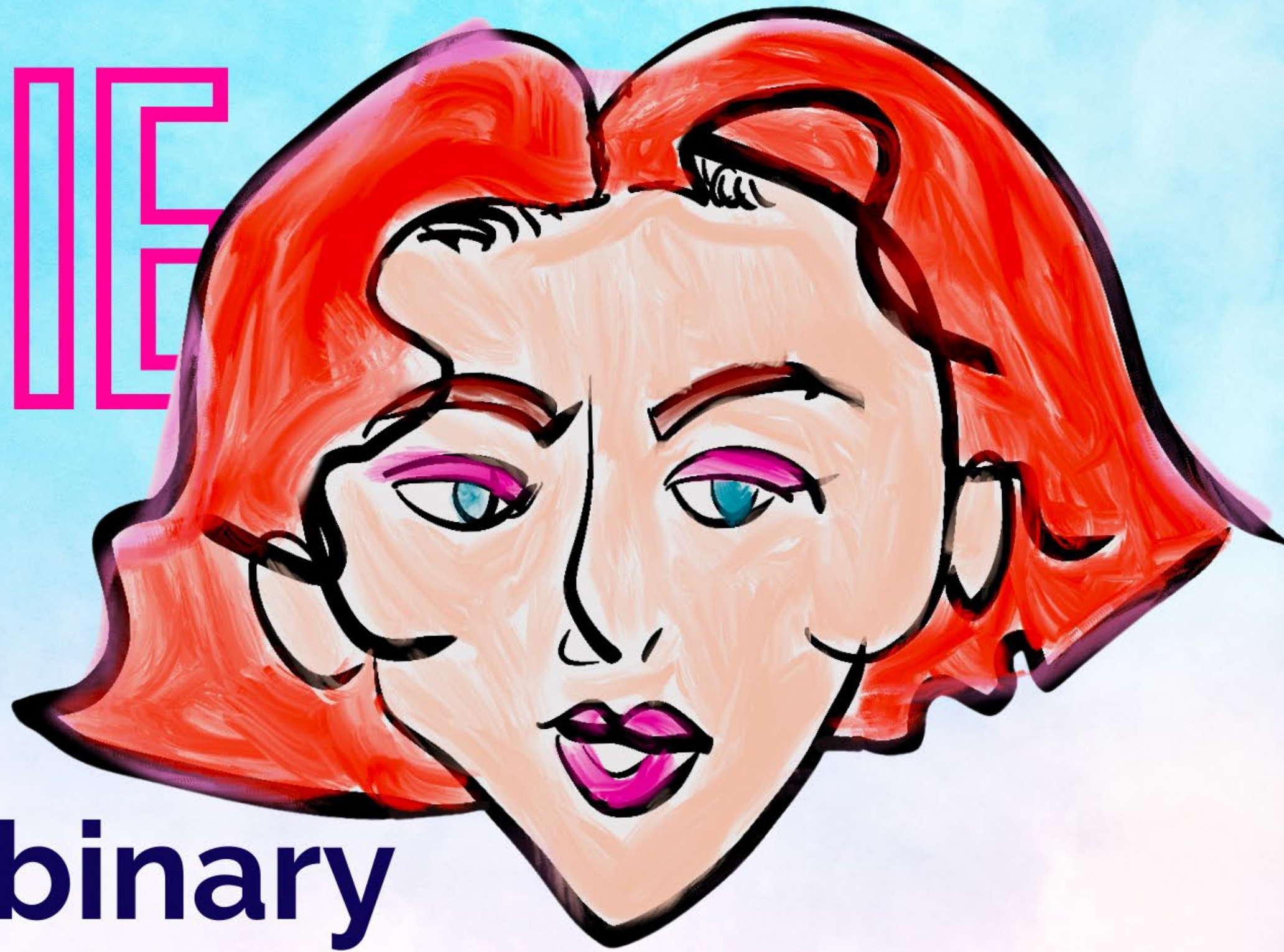
Page 34: (left image) Gianna Versace Donna A/W Catalogue, 1995-96, via Vintage von Werth; (right image) *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Part 5, Golden Wind Chapter 3* by Hirohiko Araki, 1996. Provided by Drummer le Chuck, via Jojo Fandom website.

SOPHIE

**Capturing
the Oil of
Every Nonbinary**

& Trans Folks/x' Un-Insides

Art & Essay by KEANA AGUILA LABRA



Track 1: It's Okay to Cry

We are not met with vulnerability. In a climate of capitalism, our parents didn't (and don't) have the capacity to nurture us outside of our immediate needs. We were clothed, fed, and sheltered, and hardened in different ways to ease the responsibilities in the home. These children were parentified and learned immediately that crying did not receive comfort, but rather punishment. An aversion away from gentleness and softness was negatively reinforced in an attempt to protect us from the "real world."

It was here, a lonely thirteen-year-old, sat cocooned in a room of purple, in front of her hand-me-down laptop scrolling through Tumblr. It was here that this young person found language to the myriad of their identity: questioning then queer then bisexual; girl and fem and nonbinary. It is to this person SOPHIE beckons, calling them to the surface (before they knew they were they). Not even a minute into the OIL OF EVERY PEARL'S UN-INSIDES first song, "It's Okay To Cry," SOPHIE tells us, tells me, tells this thirteen-year-old girl: don't take this the wrong way; I think your inside is your best side.

And the thirteen-year-old girl who is now in their mid-twenties cries and cries and cries.

Track 2: Ponyboy

The non-binary experience is a varied, expansive one. The environment and decisions made around each of us carves the path toward the declaration of our selves. For me, this turmoil was masked by bravado. Those who know me now would find high school me completely unrecognizable. Ponyboy, the speaker and protagonist of the novel, *The Outsiders*, is our parallel. Where he and we are sensitive and resilient, we are also naive. We create a facade of loudness and banging. But underlying is always a note of confusion, of uncertainty. We enter relationships with our false confidence. This is where a wavering sense of self intersects with assault. This is the start of our scars. Almost ten years removed from these incidents still incites the sour of fear. The last fourteen seconds are a shrill silence.

Track 3: Faceshopping

Halloween meant opportunity. Here, I could explore without invoking too many questions. "My face is the real shop front." I draw on my face. The face I deem too round, too soft, too feminine. With eye black, I un-become. I wear my dad's hoodie and basketball shorts. That year, my father also bought me Nike

high tops. I hide my butt-length hair in a bun under my hood. I keep my eyes down. "Oh my god, look at her! She really looks like a boy!" "Huh, I wouldn't have known?" This is still not the truth. But the climax of the song is angelic: "do you feel what I feel? Do you see what I see?" I am the artist and this is the first stroke of revealing my un-insides. This is the first taste of euphoria.

Track 4: Is it Cold in The Water?

Trauma impacts memory. Of the four types of memory, semantic, emotional, procedural, and episodic, episodic seems the most severe. The National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine states in a memory systems infographic: "trauma can shutdown episodic memory and fragment the sequence of events."

Earlier today, my sister reminisced about a crepe shop in downtown Mountain View. Warmly, she said, "Aw, I remember when you and Eric took me here after school!" I smiled and nodded. This is my go-to to hide my unknowing.

Presentation and identity are nuanced and complex. Queer creative, Josh, also known as @notjoshingwithyou on TikTok, aptly explains: "instead of relying on the no nuanced take that 'clothes have no gender'; [it's equally important to realize] clothes are a tool people use to align with their gender."

And now, the first trauma. Or rather, the first trauma I remember. I am lying in the grass with a high school boyfriend. He is looking at me in my entirety. Up and down. Then, he frowns. Before I can ask, he answers: "the only feminine thing about you is your hair."

I've left my home / soft ace, me / earth shaking / I feel alone.

Track 5: Infatuation

Kimberly Nguyen has sculpted arms. As sculpted as they can be on a teenage frame. I am unsure of who I am, but I know what this is. I wanna know / who are you? Kimberly, not Kim. Kimberly, with the husky voice.

It wasn't that she didn't like girls. She loved girls. She loved us all. She and a girl I envied were the It couple. But was I a girl? With my Nike high tops and neon green trim, round face, and a ponytail that rivaled the contrail clouds above the track.

I couldn't approach a girl asking her to accept me when I didn't accept myself.

I wanna know.

On the last day of school in our last shared class together, I watched her leave. I watched her back recede. I kept looking until she was no longer there.

Track 6: Not Okay

We dance to the electric lights. We move with our blue jeans and red high-top converse. We think we are grown. So baby come and try, try, try, try, try. I tell myself I am grown.

The same boyfriend who thinks I am too masculine, who thinks I am not enough feminine, beckons me toward him. This is not what I want. This is not who I am.

But we dance because it is Homecoming. We dance because we are supposed to be in love. I dance to find this love.

Track 7: Pretending

I was just pretending.

This track is open space. It takes me to Monterey Bay Aquarium. Below the aquatic shadow and wave and the jellyfish. They move so slowly, but they are so beautiful. I could cry at their magnificence.

I look at these jellyfish and see myself. I'm young, so I'm self-conscious at this family outing, thinking I'm too grown to spend time with anyone but my friends. I tug at my red flannel and shove my hands into the too-small pockets of my skinny jeans. I tempt myself to ditch my family, but I don't. I can't.

We approach a large wall with smaller sharks and big fish. The discordance makes me anxious. Now, the light the water casts is too bright. My breaths become more shallow. It is senior year, and I don't know who to become.

I am girl, but not girl.

I was just pretending.

I am girl, but not girl.

I was just pretending.

Is there room for both?

I was just pretending.

I was just pretending.

I was just pretending.

"Ate?"

My brother pulls me out of my reverie, and we walk away.

Track 8: Immaterial

We are now in the present. Here, we dance out of joy.

The first time someone gave me name to what I am was on July 9, 2020.

At the time, I was a staff writer for the publication, *revolture*. I wrote the

piece, "there is no pride in self without acceptance: the conflicting existence of conditional acceptance + homophobia in the philippines." Keyatta Brooks, founder and editor-and-chief of now defunct *revolture* wrote the summary for the essay detailing, "filipinx, bisexual, and nonbinary staff writer keana aguila labra tackles the homophobia that's currently happening in the philippines and it being ruled under duterte doesn't move its people forward from that."

In a single sentence, freedom.

I remember exactly where I was when I read that sentence. My breath caught in my chest.

Filipinx.

Bisexual.

...nonbinary.

Alone and in the kitchen, I broke into laughter. This release I was withholding from myself was so freely given by a stranger, by my editor, by someone who lived miles and miles away from me.

I could be anything I want.

Track 9: Whole New World/Pretend World

While I know who I am, we are not yet in a world where we can all freely be this person. I often contemplate small things, such as pronouns. Do I signal to a young questioning nonbinary person that I, too, use they/them primarily? Or do I only show she/her so I'm not asked invasive, loaded questions by family members?

For BIPOC folks and intersecting immigrants and children of immigrants in the diaspora, social media keeps us connected with our family. For better or worse, this is a revolving door. The burden of advocacy is also often upon folks of these marginalized identities.

I want the pretend world of our purple rooms to become the whole new world.

The last two lines have an air of melancholy to me, asking: I feel so cold / is this the way I feel?

So much of our experience, in childhood and adolescence, signals that we are not safe. But I don't interpret these lyrics as pessimism, but a warning. A warning of how thousands upon thousands will feel if we don't strive for change.

I want to hold the me that knew that she was a girl but not a girl but couldn't say it.

I want to hold their cheeks and wipe their tears, to smile in triumph.

I want to say, we are here, we are here, we are still here.



THE LESBIAN SLUTS INCIDENT TARAE MCQUEEN

The place: Portland

The time: Spring Break 2018

The action: walking along Hawthorne Street

It was my first visit to Portland. It was also the first day of spring break. It didn't take long for my friend's mom to drive us, and we still had a few hours left in the day. We decided to take a turn around Hawthorne and Division to explore all the places that I would be experiencing throughout the week. We had finished up on Division and were walking back down Hawthorne towards my friend's house.

It was approximately 8:50.

To set the scene: we were walking on the right side of the street going towards SE Division; to our immediate right, a liquor store, and to the left, a partially defunct porn theater. We passed by the liquor store, chatting about nothing as a truly spectacular specimen emerged from within. The most accurate way to describe this man was to take Ed Sheeran, age him up approximately 30-40 years, and cover him in a layer of grime. This decrepit man had a PBR in one hand and a cigarette hanging on his lip. We walked past him, and as we did, he mumbled something entirely illegible in our general direction.

Since we were the only people on the street, we stopped, exchanged a glance, and asked this uncanny look-a-like what he had said. He repeated himself in the exact same way. (He had not removed the cigarette from his mouth the entire time this conversation occurred.) We exchanged another glance and continued on our way. As we walked away, this aged replica of the English Grammy winner must have removed the cigarette from his mouth, and he called out at us in this exact inflection:

“lESbian sLUts.”

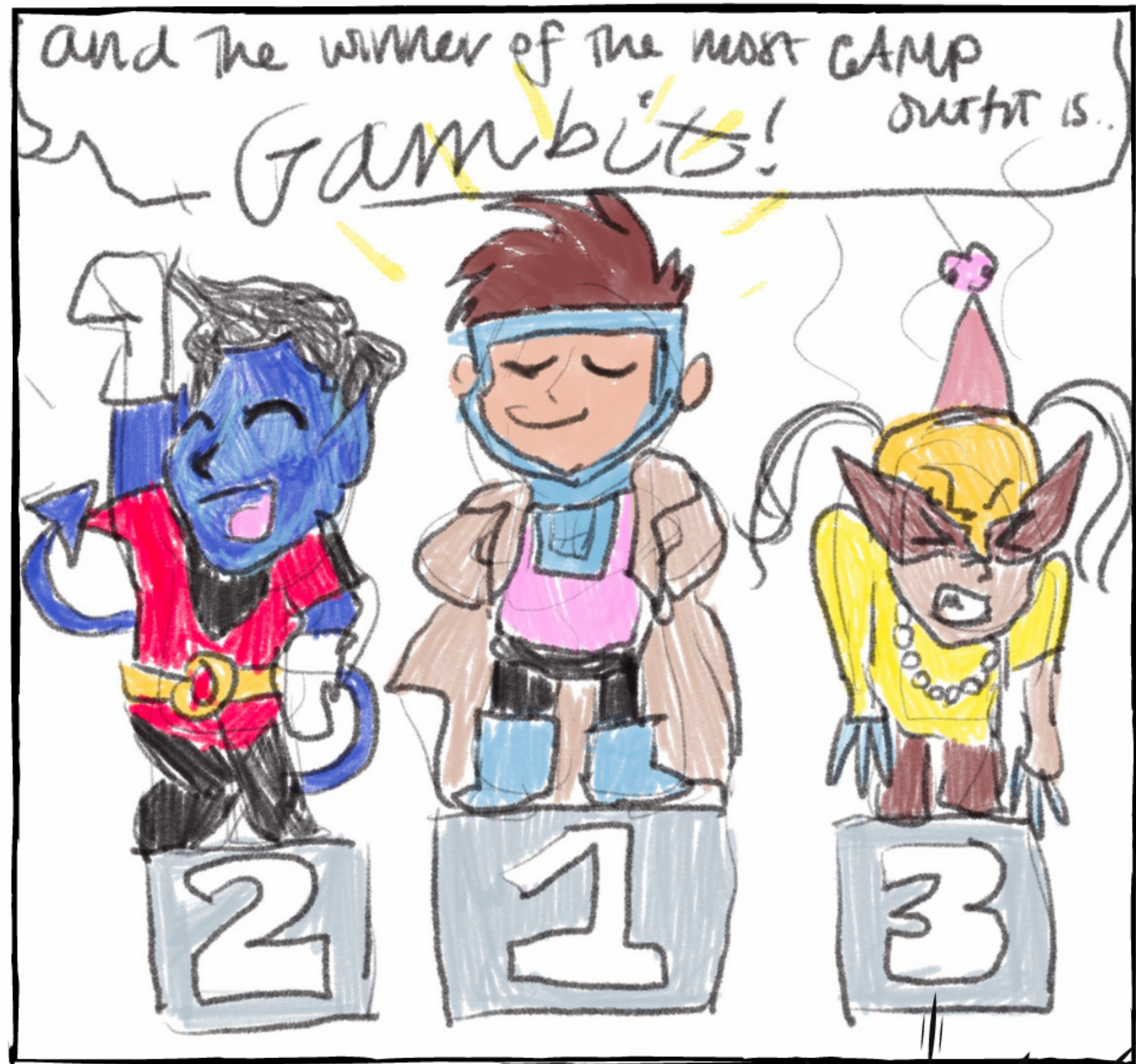
Now, in any other situation, I would've been horribly offended.

This was not one of those times.

DON'T HATE ME BECAUSE I'M MARIAN RIVERA

There is a woman in Manila dancing on Sunday All Stars Showdown: Mother's Day Special, for a live audience and viewers at home. The tabloids love to hate her. She's just as nice as the next person. She doesn't talk about Spanish blood. If she gets annoyed at a presser it's not her fault the air conditioning goes out, or that they keep asking her the same question about the same sex scene. She lives in a house in Forbes Park and she gets to travel, but love is hard work for her too. When she greets poor children at Bantay Bata she smiles like Mother Mary and then one of them talks about her tits. She still smiles for every camera. She likes drinking in bars. She fell in love. She cries. When she was Darna she liked the idea of superpowers but the special effects were Third World. She loves this city, but sometimes she wishes she were famous somewhere else.

BY ERWIN PONCE



"AND THE WINNER IS . . ."

BY ERIC ASUNCION & KEANA AGUILA LABRA



Interview with **TIANNA ANDRESEN** Artist & Organizer By Isabel Angeles

Please introduce yourself!

Hello! My name is Tianna Andresen (she/they) and I am a 22 y/o Filipinx artist, educator, student, and organizer born, raised, and residing on Duwamish Land. I am a fourth year at the University of Washington Seattle double majoring in American Ethnic Studies and Education, Communities, and Organizations. I also am involved with my community through different means and also make stickers, prints, bucket hats, and other fashion items. To see some of my works, visit linkt.ree/barkadababy or @barkadababy

When did you first realize that you wanted to become an organizer?

Honestly I have no idea. I think the community that raised me instilled the idea of care

so deeply into my practices as a human, that I didn't really realize I was “organizing” until someone told me LOL

What/who influenced and inspired you? How do you think their impact shows up in your work?

Growing up in Seattle’s Central District and the Filipinx community, and as someone who has teachers for parents, I was always taught about my culture, its history and politics, and what it meant for me to carry on Filipinx resilience and resistance. From the very beginning my parents and their peers influenced the grounding I have in community, education, and art. As young college students, my parents would bring me around the community to meetings, cultural club events, classes, and educational sessions. My community has taught me the idea of “Know history, know self. No

history, no self” and so from a young age I have carried on this wonder and feelings of empowerment throughout my schooling as I would engage in any educational opportunity I could, both in school and in community. Various uncles and aunts took care of me during this time and along the way I was very fortunate that many of these people were involved with some sort of community organizing or instilled in me a sense of collective care and justice.

Was there a specific moment that encouraged you to radicalize?

There wasn't a specific moment, rather a culmination of moments and connections I have had the privilege to make with people in my life. I will say that the murder of Trayvon Martin really sparked my pursuit of action and the yearning to learn more.

What orgs are you a part of?

Anakbayan UW/Seattle, Filipino American National Historical Society, Washington Ethnic Studies Now. At UW: Filipino American Student Association, Asian Student Commission, Homeroom UW.

You are a student at UW, very involved at your uni! How do you balance your work as a community leader with your academics?

I'm lucky in that my academics are inherently intertwined with the community. Through my academic majors, I have developed a critical pedagogy based around the works of many scholars including bell hooks, Pablo Fiere, and the various stories that I have had the honor to hold from community members. Not only does my major encourage us to seek out “real world” opportunities to engage, but specifically I see ethnic studies as a way of being, rather than just a “school of thought.” Much of my academic life has been bringing in my own lived experiences and contextualizing them with ethnic studies frameworks, experiences from my peers, and history. For education, my main goal is to make sure that other marginalized youth have access to an education that encourages them to embrace the power that they have. To do this, you have to have an investment in marginalized youth and do your best to understand their experiences or at least understand the systems that shape their experiences.

What kind of work do you do as an Equity and Race & Social Justice Intern at the Seattle Department of Transportation?

Currently I am supporting the Transportation Equity Framework at SDOT, which is a framework aimed at reimagining what public servants can do with and for the community, and providing tangible steps to enact those changes. I also support social justice based education and relationship based workshops/modules for coworkers alongside community organizations. For Title 6, I support the portfolio by making graphics for people to easily understand what Title 6 is, what the demographics of the city government are, and ways to hold each other accountable. Recently I finished a



Language Guidelines project, helping people at the City with talking with and about race, place, and culture.

What methods do you use to educate/empower marginalized youth as a community organizer? How do you keep young folks engaged, and excited/willing to learn more about their histories/communities/selves, etc?

To preface, one of the blockages to engagement in history and community is that systems of oppression baked into educational institutions make it seem like these things are disconnected. The practice of my mentors has shown me that the key is making sure that people see these connections between themselves, others, their histories, and the futures that they can have. When we are invested in each other, it feels impossible to disconnect and not be engaged.

My favorite methods to use are collective and reflective activities grounded in something that requires imagination. Youth are incredible visionaries, and when they can see that within themselves and their peers, there is not much that can stop them from making those visions a reality. This is also what keeps them motivated and engaged and curious. What they reimagine is based on their lived experiences, their relationships with others. They have the opportunity to think about what brought them to where they are and what will bring them to where they're going.

Another method is through art and highlighting youth assets. Challenging the group to put on a talent show, create a play, or showcase themselves and what they know through creative means has been what has saved me personally as a student, and so I understand the importance of these opportunities. It is also an act of vulnerability needed to really build connections with each other.

The last method is simply through relationship building. Building trust or at least an understanding that we are all here to learn with each other is super important to my practice. I also get to learn what they want/need.

What do you hope to see happen as youth are radicalized/more educated?

LOVE THIS QUESTION AHHH! That the fruits of labor from those before us see fruition in a way that nurtures everyone :3 aka tearing this shit down and rebuilding!!!

What advice would you give to other community organizers who have the same mission(s) as you do?

Build genuine connections and recognize your positionality-the community always knows what it wants/needs. Follow their lead with the intention of building. Connect with others who share the same missions/plans!

Don't get comfortable. Sometimes I feel like I find myself in a cycle or in a place where

I am surrounded by only people who think like me. Push yourself to find new ways to reach other people. Always critique yourself (lovingly) to grow and resist complacency if safe.

What do you believe makes a good leader?

Vulnerability. The ability to make mistakes. Accountability.

What does community/solidarity mean to you? How would you define it? How did you learn to define it the way you do?

I learned to define it because of the people that have been a part of my life, whether brief or not. Community solidarity is honoring each others humanity and understanding how we are linked, while still honoring our different experiences. It means showing up for each other in the ways we can and holding each other accountable to our collective well being. Solidarity can look different but is always rooted in listening, learning, and doing.

What's something you wish to do in the field you are working in?

Long term: Restructure the educational system in a way that is grounded in Ethnic Studies principles, which includes and is often grounded in Indigenous ways of being (lol land back in education). Short term: Offer skill share classes tied with social justice education, implement Filipinx studies in my states school mandates.

What kind of future do you hope and envision for your communities?

Resilience that isnt forced upon us! End to gentrification and anti-homeless sentiments in my local community.

What do you think is the most important thing for Filipino/x folks to remember/carry with them?

To remember that we are a culmination of those before us, those with us, and those in the future who we are doing this for.

What makes you feel proudest to be a Filipino/x?

It really is the community and history that we hold.

Can you give us some insight into your process? What does a typical day of creating look like for you? What moves you to use bright and pastel colors?

My typical process of creating consists of sketching or writing out an idea when I have it, leaving it alone, and either chipping away at it slowly or doing it all at once and then asking for input from loved ones LOLOL but I always want to make things that stand



out and relate to the concepts (hence why I have holographic, clear, glow in the dark, and water proof stickers). A lot of my creative process also comes from me challenging myself or giving myself prompts whether it be spoken word, fashion design, or photography.

I really enjoy this question hehe :3 but I feel like I use a lot of pastels and bright colors because those are the colors I feel like encompass how I feel about certain pieces. A lot of my pieces come from a place of joy or gratitude or just are simply aimed at fueling our collective life :3 Those are the colors I envision around people and things that I love and care for so I think naturally I use them a lot in my works. TLDR; these are the hues I see life through.

How long have you been an artist? Who/what inspired you to create?

My parents and siblings and friends have all inspired me to create in many different ways so from a young age I was into spoken word, photography, singing, acting, dancing, and anything creative I could get my hands onto. A lot of my current mindsets/the values I hold/the learning I've done has been because of other artists and creators.

As an artist, what is the most integral part of your art for you?

I've always held this quote by Toni Cade Bambara close to my heart: "The role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible." To me, as an artist, the most integral part of my art is that it either encourages others (specifically other marginalized people) to create or act or learn or think or that it brings them one step closer to realizing how important they are to collective life, thus bringing them one step closer to understanding collective liberation.

Why did you decide to create Barkada Baby? What was the mission/goal behind this shop? What vision did you have in mind for it?

Since the beginning, I wanted to create a space for especially marginalized communities to come together around art and connect with each other. My main goal with fashion design is to showcase identity, presentation, and help others feel confident in how they present themselves and what they want to represent. Based around these, Barkada Baby has become what it is now. My mission with Barkada Baby is to simply remind people of their own strength and importance to collective life. The main goal is to foster growth, liberation, healing, international solidarity, and joy through storytelling, celebration of identity, indulgence in what makes us happy, and through relationship building. Initially my vision was just an art page but as I continue to grow and change and shift, so does my shop. I honestly didn't think it would become what it is today, and I can only credit my support systems for helping me get there.

How do you manage to balance community leading/organizing, and work with your creative side?

Similar to the above, however with the creative side/business side of this...LOLOLOLOL there's a lot that has to be done under a capitalist system like this and so I definitely get tired from balancing all of these things especially when I have a new drop. I try to plan ahead and also remind myself that I don't need to push out things just because it feels like I'm "falling behind." I'd rather not rush or force my creative work for the sake of capitalism and so I also remind myself to slow down and remember why I'm doing this.

What made you decide to design bucket hats?

At the core of my fashion journey was seeking out ways to express and explore my identities. As I started wearing different things and figuring out how I wanted to present myself, I found that bucket hats were some accessories that boosted my confidence. It's also something that people of all genders often feel comfortable wearing and it's an accessory that can go with most things. Also: The bucket hat history is also one rooted in Black innovation and creativity, and learning about it and how it evolved was something really special. Learning about the history of fashion is super important!

I love all the colors and designs: the Community Made hat (proud to own one, hehe!), the Track 5 hat, and the Megumi hat (JKK, taste!) What made you decide to go with those three main designs?

"Community Made" hat with custom friendship bracelet that represents my core values of community building, collective care, and how we are all linked together. "Track 5 Paradise" hat with cloud chains that represent my love for BTS and also the anti-capitalist message that the song Paradise holds. "Megumi's Demon Dog" hat with a silver chain arranged in the silhouette of a demon dog that represents my love for JJK and the ideas of fairness, commitment to collective wellbeing, and care from Megumi's character. I chose the colors and styles based on "I've never owned a green corduroy hat...o.o" and also what would match best with the color schemes of the original art I had KJSFKLA Hehe thank u for ur compliments and support with this drop btw <3333

How did you get into fashion and fashion design? (You've got style, kas!)

My parents were very fashionable people as they raised me and I was a very theatrical kid growing up so I can remember being interested in clothing and presentation and also wearing things that made me feel happy. As I got older, I recognized the ways that fashion/presentation and identity are linked and how a lot of power (and also oppression) can come from how you present yourself (lol also kind of helped me start exploring my own gender identity). I started experimenting a lot with my fashion sense (especially after I got into BTS) and my ideas around my identity and what made me feel confident. Fashion was also a way for me to start the healing process from being self-conscious and very hard on myself. Just getting up every day to look in the mirror, pamper my body and soul by putting together something that I loved, implicitly told me that I am deserving of love, confidence, and that I care about myself enough to get ready (even if I was an internal wreck).



On the flip side during this pursuit, I quickly started to learn about consumerism culture (retail therapy too), trend cycles, inaccessibility within the fashion industry and the ways I was engaging in it. Combined with the fact that a lot of things I wanted I couldn't really afford and that there were things I wished existed, I started upcycling clothing. Using what I had to make things was a therapeutic creative and introspective process. I started challenging myself to create clothing out of a bag or create something that represents a garden or just do little experiments. Turning thoughts, feelings, and values into wearable items became something I fell in love with and since then, I've been working on building more skills and connections in the fashion community.

Will you be adding more products to Barkada Baby in the future?

HEHEHEH yes <3 I am working on a one of one fashion line currently and plan on adding more prints, stickers, and perhaps other accessories ;) This probably won't drop until after my universities Fashion Show, where I will be showcasing a bunch of pieces.

What do you hope Barkada Baby becomes in the future?

In the future, I hope that Barkada Baby can provide educational resources on fashion, skill share workshops/meet ups, creative parties, and maybe an example of a brand/business model that isn't based around fast fashion/exploited labor. I'm very excited to see what becomes of Barkada Baby :)

What do you hope to do with your art in general in the future?

One of my goals is to create a piece with all of my loved ones. I want my portfolio to reflect my community, the people who got me here. I want to create a collective museum/showcase/line/whatever and have it be something that others can contribute to in some capacity. Not sure what it looks like yet but I'm excited :)

What makes you happiest when you are creating art?

Honestly the process of finishing it and comparing it to where it started and also realizing the things I could fix (LOLOL) because I get excited to try another skill/style.

What makes you happiest when other people receive your art/creations?

When people tell me that my art made them feel some way, or when people tell me they saw someone with it randomly, or that other people gave them compliments when they wore my pieces. I've kind of been redundant with this, truly the point of my art is to build community and empowerment. If someone connects with my art in any way, I am grateful. If they connect with someone else because of my art, I am grateful.

Do you have any advice for other BIPOC and LGBTQ+ creatives who want to get into art? What do you believe is the most important thing for them to

remember, especially younger folks?

There is not one way to do things and everyone's process is different. Please give yourself grace and reach out to other QTPOC creators and build a support system! Don't fall into capitalism's traps!

What do you yourself think of campiness, and what's your relationship with it? Would you consider yourself an artist who participates in camp?

Honestly, I didn't really know about camp until recently, however I feel like, especially for marginalized people, a lot of what we do can be considered camp. Many major trends now and days are influenced by *specifically* Black Queer culture, and the concept of camp is no different. In terms of participating in camp, I always center marginalized people and their stories in my work in one way or another and try to push myself past the norm or what is expected out of fashion.

Do you listen to any music while you work on your bucket hats? (Drop the recs, kas!)

Paradise by BTS / I play my BTSerotonin playlist after KJFSLKJ / The Feels by Twice Amine (generally) / Are You With That by Vince Staples / All Me by Boys World / Entirety of the Silk Sonic album / Broken Record by GSoul

What's one place in the Philippines you'd like to visit?

Palawan because of the biodiversity and history!

Favorite article of clothing you own?

....FHHJKSDNJKGJJGDKJK BRUH. Maybe this blue SF puffer jacket that I got matching with my siblings because its sentimental, warm, and the fit really goes well with the style I typically wear on a daily. It classes up my lazy day outfits LOL

BTS bias?

I'm OT7 but Jhope/Hobi is my boyfriend fr <333

What advice would you give your past self?

It's not so much advice but an affirmation that they are doing the best they can with what they have. Every version of them is proud of them :) Maybe a small advice to keep on trying things even if you aren't good at them right away (LOL IM STILL LIKE THIS)



PRODUCT OF THE PHILIPPINES

DESIGNER & MODEL: LAARNIE BARCELON
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The Balikbayan Box

Laarnie Barcelon

Early memories of the Balikbayan box sit deep in the archive of my mind,
the sounds of tape and cans in harmony with reruns
of Wheel of Fortune and Wowowee
Each brown shipment, full of memories and faded photographs,
the expectations we bear heavily on our shoulders between generations.

From every box, every photo.
Every postcard, every flag.
I am reminded of my blood.
Reminded of my mother,
and my mother's mother.

I am a product of their suffering;
the feelings of loneliness, isolation, and abandonment that swells within.
I am a product of their sorrow;
the relinquishment of independence and individuality
that confines her from exploration and healing.
I am a product of their hard work;
their sacrifices brought peace, protection, and preparations.

We are a product of generations who loved and prayed so hard,
they dreamed a better tomorrow
into today's bittersweet reality.

FROM EVERY BOX, EVERY PHOTO

EVERY POSTCARD, EVERY FLAG



I AM REMINDED OF MY BLOOD.

Like the bag of salt at Island Pacific,
the bagoong alamang at American Ranch,
the patis at Seafood City,

I am a product of my motherland;
its oceans, rivers, and farmland in my veins.

I am a product of circumstance;
a family tree bearing bruised fruits fertilized by centuries of love and loss.

I am a product of my mother's, my mother's mother's
hearts; blood, sweat, and tears personified.

My treasured Pangasinan blood, and my exterior of soft brown tones,
My heritage whose roots give my existence its culture and meaning,
My land who gave my family their origins and history,

I am a Product of the Philippines.

I am a Product of Pangasinan.

I am a Product of my mother's mother's eternal legacy.



I AM A PRODUCT OF MY MOTHERLAND;

ITS OCEANS, RIVERS, AND

FARMLAND

IN MY VEINS



Bluegreen bird, desire as notes of
a song with pedal steel, lemon
air all swallowed up in
a sky. My hair is a wave, high
tide. Tan chest. Necklace from a girl.
All my teeth. The person here is silent,
unable to look beyond July. Under
my eyes, the glint of a blade.
I thought myself horrid.
But if I knew—if I—what I
wouldn't give to be
more kind to myself.
If I had been more able, surely
I would have spared myself one ray.

Photo, Age 18
Kyle Vaughn

untitled
queer
SEX
magnet
poetry
katrina m

fairy queen
pink bi butch
do flirt
i change between identity
pleasure and commitment
dance together
strong dreamy union
- dated 6/2/19

shutter love
make possibility between
body and heart
her wonder
his pose
digital capture
flash
open me here
taste candid hand
giggle whisper kiss
thought of you
- dated 5/24/19

kiss the bisexual queen
and think or live
happy
as sappho could
- dated 3/14/19

want
flirting between skin
you feel you choose
passionate queen
Intimate dream
i laugh, eat them up
i love and dance
- dated 2/6/22

SONICALLY, A THERAPY SESSION AT A DRIVE-THRU IS THE WORST.

As usual, I pulled up to the side of the McDonalds beside the menu, perusing the hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, chicken nuggets, milkshakes. I tapped my fingers against the vinyl seating of my Honda—yes, this is a kind of room I always seem to wait in—anticipating the voice on the speaker, when suddenly what started off pleasantly enough—*Hello, Jackie, how are you feeling today?*

Uh, hi Dr. Campbell. It's an okay day, not too bright out but I do hate that winter sunlight, you know? The kind that fills your whole window when you're merging? Reminds me of how my mom used to drive me to school and she would wear these big sunglasses. Took up her whole face.

—turned out to be difficult.

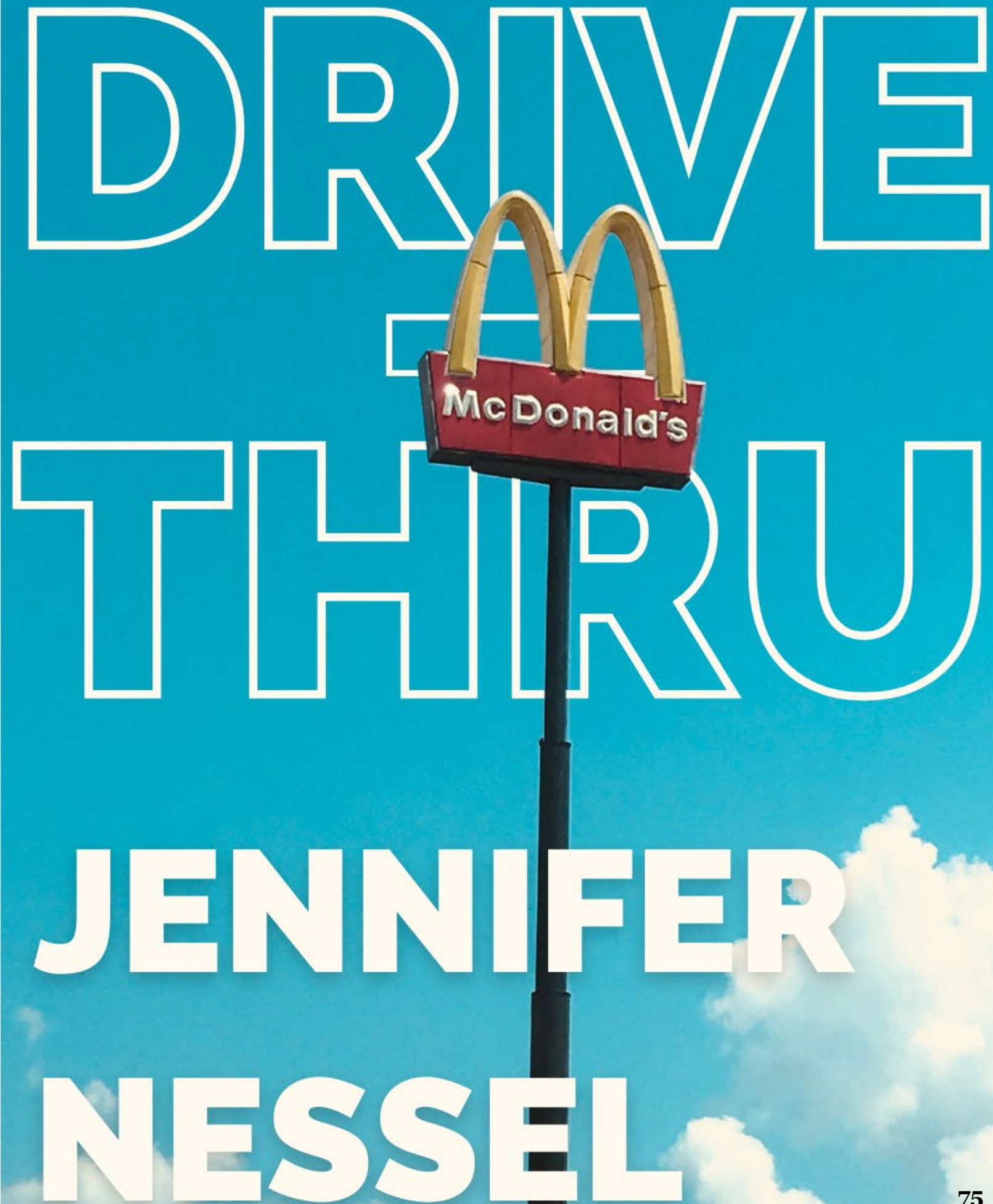
*Yes, I understand that. Well, it's interesting that you mention your moth—
What would you like to order?* She cut me off.

Jackie had been overworked. I could sense it in the slight pause between the way she asked what sauce I'd like with my chicken nuggets: *ketchup, barbeque?* The static click of her tongue as she popped bubble gum. I shuffled my notes in between finding my wallet. Loose papers flew out of my hands. A receipt picked up the winter chill and was soon out of the thick, blasting heat of the car. I adjusted my glasses, newly fogging against the oncoming cold, and leaned out to remind her of our last session.

No, no sauce. Do you want to pick up where we left off two weeks ago? We were talking about your recent graduate school acceptances—

There's another car behind you, she replied.

Yes, I'm aware. Don't let my being in front of another car bother you. Last session, you told me about how you were worried your mother would disagree with you studying literature. How did she react when you told her?



HELLO,
JACKIE,
HOW ARE
YOU
FEELING
TODAY?



If that's all for your order—wait one moment. The static clicked again. *Of course, I need to worry about you being in front of another car,* I heard her sigh on the speaker. I blushed. Jackie had left her microphone headset on. I listened as she filled up a Coke for the customer in front of me, mentioning to Derek or Darren that they were out of napkins and could he run to get some more? There was the rustling of brown paper, thick like dead leaves shuffling, slight humming noise in the foreground, perhaps the soda machine or maybe a motorcycle across the street. I shifted in my seat. I had grown accustomed to her gruff voice across the radio wave, the way that she would pause so that she didn't cuss into the mic. After all, she had only been coming to me (or more like me to her) for the last three months. There is still that level of hyper-formality reserved for therapy sessions, even at a drive-thru. It's an odd situation, to be sure. When Jackie had first written to me that she couldn't get the time off from work, what was I to do? The situation was unorthodox and unethical, but those qualifiers insinuate a choice to be had between the two of us. Thus, here I was, losing my focus against the bright reds and dark blues of the menu when her voice came back,

Look, we don't have to keep our sessions if it means they're through the drive-thru.

I hesitated. *Was it what I said? Do you want me to come into the restaurant?*

No, no. It's not that.

I waited.

It's just that I really want to quit this job. You don't understand, because your job pays big, the kind of money that I'd just take and get out of here if I were you. Rent a beach house and just spend all day reading, you know?

I waited.

I used to read a lot. Big novels—Austen, Twain, even Dostoevsky. On and on. Day after day. I fell in love with all of that, but you know. There's not much time for it anymore.

I waited.

And there's another car behind you.

I know that, I replied.

But do you understand? There's another car behind you.

I understand it, it doesn't make a difference to me, Jackie. Your time is important, too.

Yes, it's my time. All of this is my time, Dr. Campbell, her voice shook.

I had other clients I often visited down the street. At the ice cream shop, the CVS, the post office. Young students, broke students, lonely students. There, at their jobs, they stretched their arms wide to catch the last bit of sunlight before it fell behind the steel curtain of their young lives. I could see them now, miles apart from one another but inches in spirit. It overwhelmed me to think of all of them catching that orange sunlight. I sighed.

I'm sorry you have to come here all the time, she said.

Don't be, it's my job, I replied.

But don't you want to go home?

Don't you?

Of course, I do.

Jackie, how are you feeling right now?

Tired.

Me too.

Can I ask you a question?

Of course.



**THE SITUATION WAS
UNORTHODOX AND
UNETHICAL, BUT
THOSE QUALIFIERS
INSINUATE A CHOICE
TO BE HAD BETWEEN
THE TWO OF US.**



**THERE, AT
THEIR JOBS,
THEY STRETCHED
THEIR ARMS WIDE
TO CATCH THE LAST
BIT OF SUNLIGHT
BEFORE IT FELL
BEHIND THE STEEL
CURTAIN OF THEIR
YOUNG LIVES.**



What do you do with your money? Do you take great, big vacations? Mexico? Puerto Rico? Or, wait, maybe Europe—Paris, Berlin?

I can tell you like to travel.

I'm not asking about me, I'm asking about you.

Sometimes I take a vacation with my wife.

Yeah? Where to?

The shore. About an hour from here.

Oh.

It's nice.

It's not that special, though. Why don't you go somewhere far away?

I paused.

Do you have the time?

I didn't say anything. The car behind me honked. I wanted to tell her, no. I didn't have the time and wasn't paid as much as she'd expected. I looked in my rearview mirror and saw a man not much older than me. His hair was receding, but he was gently pulling it back. Again and again, he would rake his large hand across his head. My eyes followed to my lap: papers strewn across my Honda, my coat half-pulled off my person and draped across my back, my glasses still fogged, my beard, black speckled gray, overwhelming my face.

You should pull around. My manager's coming around. Um— static again — that'll be \$3.89.

Thank you.

I pulled up to the second window and handed her cash. She wiped a stray tear from her eyes, and I watched her exchange the five and count the loose change in her hands. Slow, wordless counting. She handed me back a dollar and eleven cents and asked me what was on the radio I turned down before I came to

the speaker earlier on.

Oh, classical. I know—laugh—pretty lame.

It's not lame.

Do you want to talk about it?

Talk about what?

The job.

We all gotta do what we can, yeah? Someone would kill for this job that I have. I'm pretty lucky in that way. Quiet tears streamed down her face. What about you, do you like your job?

I wanted to say I liked it enough, but for some reason, the words were overwhelmed by an unnamed feeling. Anxiety, pressure, hopelessness? I wasn't certain. It was growing clear that there wasn't ever enough time for what Jackie needed. My days were filled with choices, but never the kind that I could live with. I let out a small chuckle, *it pays, right?*

She smiled and gave me my food, *it sure does.*

WE ALL
GOTTA
DO WHAT
WE CAN,
YEAH?



TEACH ME HOW TO GROW A WIG, ANTO

While sobering up after watching a Live drag show in Sofia

drag me home
take me out of
my electric joy
i'm a material girl
immaterial girl?
yes, no, maybe so.

i feel the beat
wings on my feet
a feat to take in
all the secrets you
shared, my skin has turned blue
yes, no, maybe so.

last night, the city
was alive with us.
light and purple eyelashes
beaming. apologies to
mary oliver, but we announced
our place in the family of things.
Yes. No. Maybe so.

IRISH JOY DEOCAMPO

After Dorian Electra
A response to the album/song "Flamboyant"

*don't tell me what to do
don't tell me what to say
you know i like it loud
cos that's the only way
no taste for subtlety
and no time for restraint
no, i go all the wayyyy*

dear Dorian Electra,
thank you for your services
to trans faggotry.
when i first saw you
on my tv screen,
all glitter and wigs
all cheekbones and hips
all stained glass and taped nips,
i felt like i was witnessing
my own becoming.

remembering that boy
who dreamed of men,
holding him like he
was one of them.
who found himself in fiction,
in the prose of *Two Boys Kissing*,
shucking off the deadweight skin
of girlhood
and slipping on the sequinned shoes
of gayhood.

*not feminine
but effeminate,
every limp-wrist
cocked-hip
inch of me
suddenly making sense.*

FLAMBOYANT

this body like a language
i'd been trying to read all wrong –
now camp became
my own Rosetta Stone.
i studied her for hours
to perfect my fluency,
learning from the fags
who came before me.

from the fem fags
and the masc fags,
the brown fags
and the Black fags,
the fat fags
and the trans fags,
the fags who took back faggotry
from the hands of their oppressors.

dear Dorian Electra,
you know that when the cis men
notice us,
those abdominal butterflies
are more than puppy love.
they are the joy of self-perception
reflected back at us,
of knowing we are fag enough.

but there is more to us than that
which others choose to validate.
there will always be those
who refuse to cooperate,
who twist themselves in knots to state
we are not what we claim –
but it takes more than wounded manhood
to fill my guts with shame.

dear Dorian Electra,
i still recall the first time
i saw that slur reclaimed,
and only hoped that one day
i'd be proud to do the same.

dear Mikey,
here i am –
the fag you always dreamed of.
i'm alive and i'm breathing,
i'm thriving and feeling,
i care and i love
and i help and i cook
and i sing and i fuck!

i'm a nancy
a pansy
a queer
a queen
i'm the happiest that i have ever been
and i compromise *nothing* by being this way

*i'm flamboyant
i go all the wayyyy!*

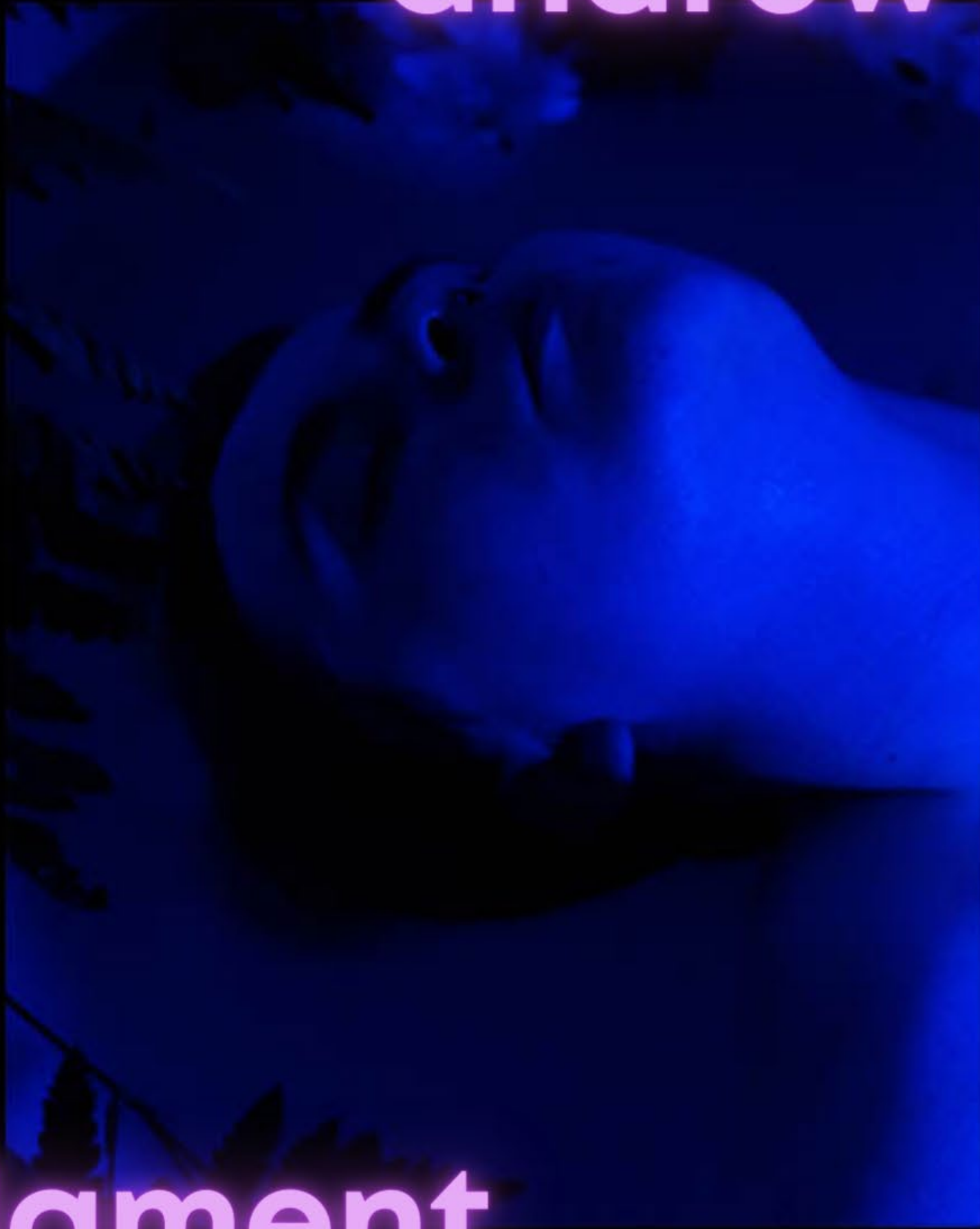
MIKEY MAY



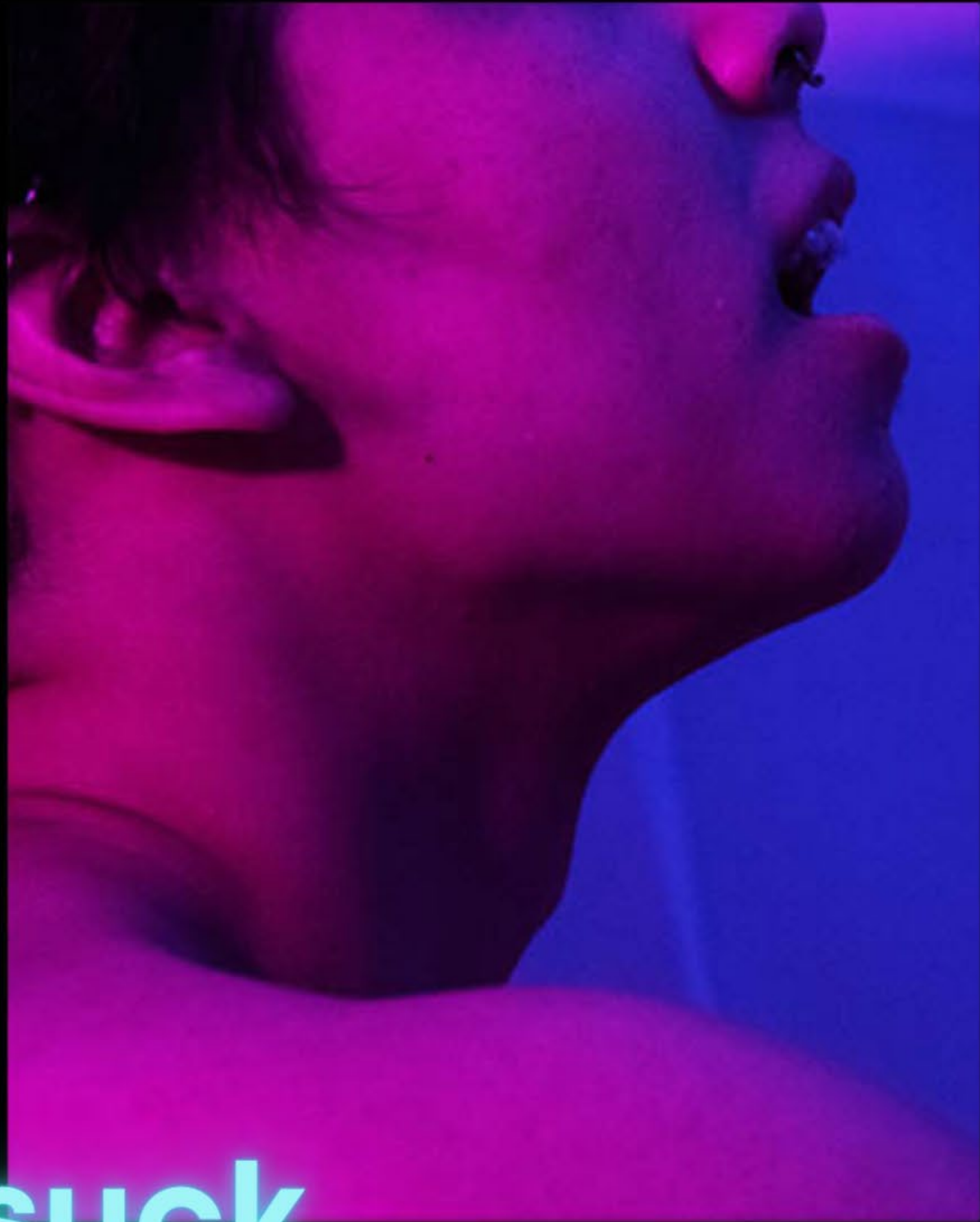
BEHIND THE CURTAIN

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

andrew michael joseph

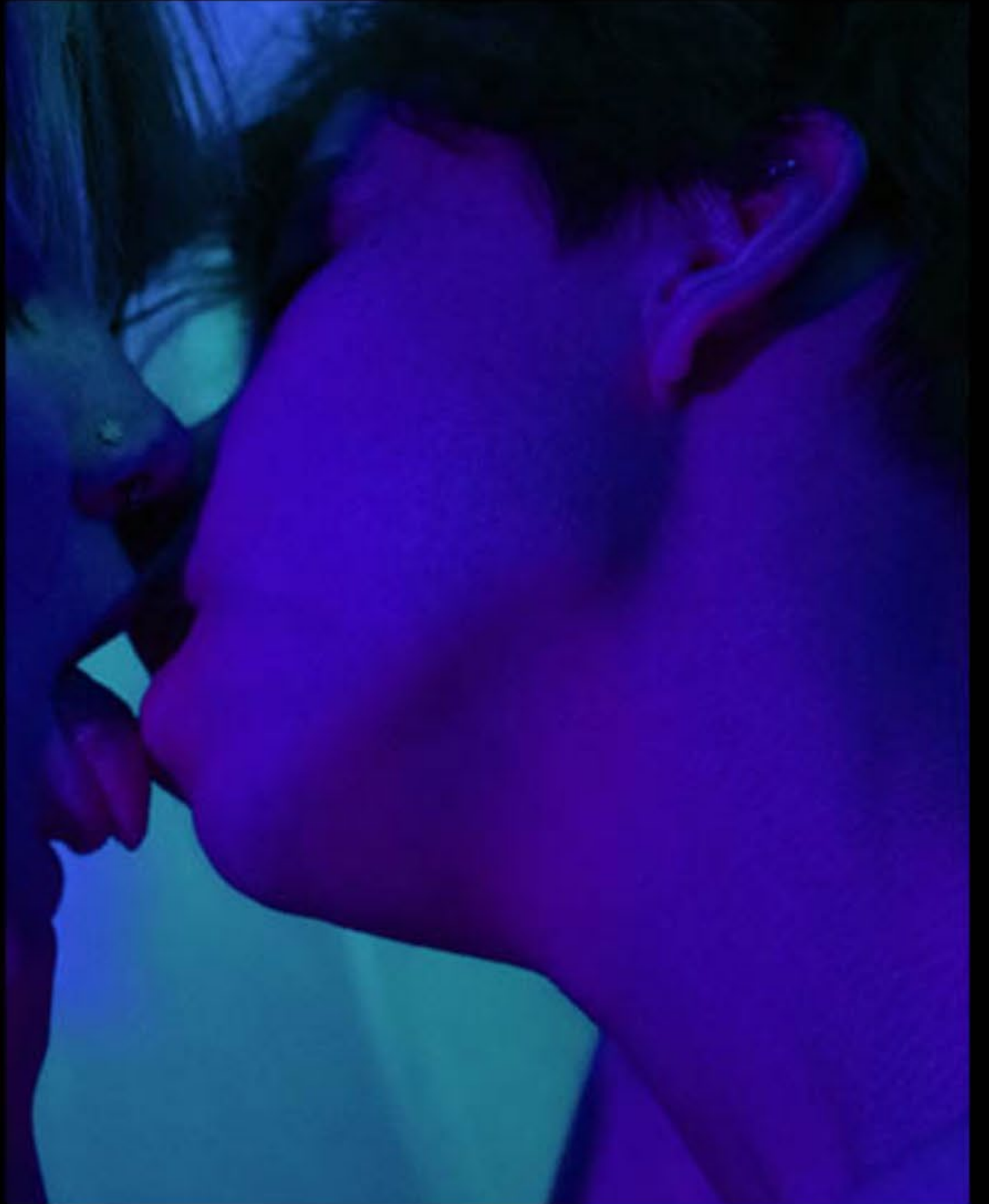


lament



suck





taste

EW:
CLOWNS,
BLOOD,
GORE

GREYSON MURRAY





Interview
with

TRINIDAD
ESCOBAR
COMIC ARTIST

KEANA AGUILA LABRA
MARIA BOLAÑOS
DINA KLARISSE

TRINIDAD ESCOBAR
ARRIVE
IN
MY HANDS

QUEER EROTIC COMICS



"WITH THIS UNAPOLOGETIC BOOK, TRINIDAD ESCOBAR HOPES TO ADD TO THE GROWING CONVERSATIONS ON QUEERNESS, GENDER,

LIBERATION; AND, SHE INVITES OTHERS TO ARRIVE AT LIBERATION WITHIN THEMSELVES."



ARRIVE IN MY HANDS (BLACK JOSEI PRESS, 2022) is a 120-page collection of Queer erotica comics by award-winning artist Trinidad Escobar (*Be Gay Do Comics*, *The New Yorker*, *Ode to Keisha*). It features 22 color erotic comics, poem-comics, and illustrations beautifully written and illustrated by the Filipina cartoonist and poet.

Using poetry comics and speculative comics, Trinidad Escobar explores the power of the erotic and her demisexual lesbian experience. These comics play and tease the reader with doses of temptation, waves of fantasy, and a bit of magic. The artist finds the erotic, unexpectedly, in apocalyptic scenes, touchless sex, revenge, voyeurism, and even decay. Trinidad invites others to Arrive as their whole being, sensitive to the world within themselves.

Arrive In My Hands is also Escobar's rebellion and response to the violent images of the hypersexualized and submissive Asian woman. As well as an exploration of eroticism and demisexuality, free of colonial shame and judgment. With this unapologetic book, Trinidad Escobar hopes to add to the growing conversations on Queerness, gender, liberation; and, she invites others to Arrive at liberation within themselves. Please note, this book contains nudity and adult content and is for readers 18+ only. For more info on how to purchase the book, go to blackjoseipress.com

Read more about the Cartoonist and Publisher at the end of this interview.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST START DRAWING AND CREATING COMICS? WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO CREATE THIS TYPE OF ART?

I made comics with stick figures and animal cartoons in elementary school. I wrote short stories, poetry, and plays as well. I was in a Filipino cultural program to rehabilitate gang affiliated youth in the 90s. The teachers used poetry and art as tools for young people to understand history as well as the experiences of Filipino families. Spoken word performance was my world throughout my teen years. I continued to write with both words and images into college and pursued a degree in Creative Writing. I combined my favorite parts of poetry with comics about ten years ago and have been making books and strips ever since. I enjoy exploring the limits of the form. Poetry-comics and speculative comics are comics from the margins, more so than many other kinds of comics, and that challenge is exciting to me.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE COMIC ARTISTS, OR ARTISTS WHOSE WORK HAS INFLUENCED YOU?

Some of my favorite cartoonists, writers, poets: Gary Larson, Lynda Barry, Kate Beaton, Breena Nuñez, Lawrence Lindell, Tanna Tucker, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Octavia Butler, Eileen Tabios, Barbara Jane Reyes, Elsa Valmidiano, Emil Ferris, Bex, Samuel Sattin, Matt Silady, Justin Hall, Li Young-Lee, Joan Didion, Mary Oliver, Ai, Janice Mirikitani, Juan Felipe Herrera, Yusef Komunyakaa, Patrick Rosal, Anne Rice, and many more.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR NON-COMICS INFLUENCES, AND HOW DO YOU THINK THEIR IMPACT SHOWS UP IN YOUR WORK?

Before studying poetry and comics seriously, I was pursuing a path in behavioral sciences. This was largely due to my experiences in my gang rehabilitation program as a young person. I wanted to understand why this kind of community support was so crucial to healing. I was interested in intersectionality, human interaction, human apathy. Most of the texts that shaped me were the essays and plays of James Baldwin, the Italian anarchists, Audre Lorde, and the lives of activist poets like Janice Mirikitani. Their impact shows up in my work explicitly and in subtext because my work is identity-focused and obsessed with many forms justice, including revenge. I enjoy horror films, too. My framing and pacing are influenced by ideas of fear and suspense, especially in my erotica comics. My favorite movie of all time is Aliens (Alien 2).

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY OF CREATING LOOK LIKE FOR YOU? OUR STAFF IS COMPOSED OF CREATIVES WITH NEURODIVERGENCY AND CHRONIC PAIN. WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO CREATIVES ON HOW TO BALANCE WELL-BEING AND THE OUTPUT THAT COMES WITH CREATING?

I live with depression, anxiety, and had PTSD most of my life. My symptoms include chronic pain, fatigue, dissociation, etc. I hear you. I think my answer to this question would have been different a few years ago when I was working on comics like mad to pay bills. Back then, I would have said "make sure to take breaks, schedule time to take a walk." Or, "there are waves of work and waves of rest." These days, I don't have advice. I can only say that I changed my lifestyle so that making is a natural part of my day. Striving for balance is amazing and so far, for me, there isn't much balance. I kind of stopped striving for balance and instead noticed that there is always a natural balance in every choice we make that serves us. So, I guess I started asking myself "does this serve the life that I want?" and acted accordingly. If I am sitting down for five hours drawing then that probably isn't serving the life that I want. I'll get up and walk the dogs, spend time with my son and partner. I journal about my mental health and levels of anxiety daily.

I want a family, health, and I want art. I feel comfort tending to it all. Some weeks I write intensely for many days, and other times I spend weeks watching my son playing video games and reserve the rest of my energy for work that pays bills. What's consistent: I leave paper everywhere in my house and write on receipts. I write in every room of my house. If I only write one line in my head on any given day, then I count that as a successful writing day. I process the world through creative work. It is both work and play for me. I don't like too many rules for work or play. This probably looks chaotic or unhinged to many other people. I find peace in it. Changing how we write isn't going to necessarily compromise the quality of our work. Writers who are non cis white men have often written away from the stiffness of a desk, in a field, with their families fighting loudly in the background at a BBQ. Find inventive ways to get your creative work out of you and don't apologize for anything.

PART-TIME TUTOR

ARE YOU PRACTICING CALCULUS FORMULAS ON MY CLIT, AGAIN?



"I WANT A FAMILY, HEALTH, AND I WANT ART. I FEEL COMFORT TENDING TO IT ALL."



BLACK JOSEI PRESS X TRINIDAD ESCOBAR // ARRIVE IN MY HANDS

YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS ARE SO DREAMY, AND THE WAY YOU USE COLOR, LINES, AND MOVEMENT DRAWS THE READER IN, LIKE WE'RE PEERING INTO SOMEONE'S FANTASY. HOW DID YOU FIND OR DEVELOP YOUR ART STYLE? DO YOU TYPICALLY STICK TO ONE STYLE, OR DO YOU EXPERIMENT WITH OTHERS?

I think I have two or three cartooning styles that I gravitate towards (I switch usually between horror and humor styles) but mostly I enjoy working with graphite on cotton paper. The medium lends to the feel of my comics. Someone once said that my style looks unique and that was funny to me since I am influenced by so many cartoonists. Read: for many years, I was a biter. I loved copying Jhonen Vasquez (the creator of *Invader Zim* and some violent underground funnies) when I was much younger and thought I would always draw like him. Then, I loved copying David Mack and challenged myself to use watercolors like him, and I think there was some competitiveness there. I wanted to be better than the white boys who dominated the comics field. I always failed at copying, but that effort shows up in my current hand. My vengeful Asian lesbian energy made my style what it is. To any young or new artists, it's totally okay to be a biter for a while. It's what gets you up and drawing. Enjoy this period and move on when you realize that their style doesn't tell the story you're trying to tell.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE TOOLS / SUPPLIES FOR ILLUSTRATION AND WRITING?

I use graphite powder, liquid graphite, a round sable brush, cotton paper, and cheap spiral notebooks.

THE POETRY AND ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS BOOK SEEM TO HAVE MANIFESTED TOGETHER, AND IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE ONE EXISTING WITHOUT THE OTHER. HOW DO YOU START A PIECE? DO THE WORDS COME FIRST OR THE IMAGES?

How I start comics changes from piece to piece but the most common way that I start is by looking at notes that I've collected on my scraps of paper, my writing folder, my notebooks, or in my phone. I put on music that I think evokes the aesthetic and mood of the comic and then I write/draw simultaneously. I don't consider myself an illustrator though I can illustrate to some degree. I think my drawings are more akin to writing (in process and result). I work the writing and drawing out all on the same paper and decide what to keep as words and what to render as an illustration. I dance and draw, eat, smoke weed, and finish an 8-panel comic within a day or two. I treat pages like stanzas and rework them as much as I need but tend to leave pieces alone sooner than later.

WHAT BOOK IS THE MAIN CHARACTER READING IN "PATIENT & SEETHING"? [EYES EMOJI]

>o< haha! They're reading Anaïs Nin or Audre Lorde, "your hands/on my lips like thunder/promising rain"

WE LOVED THE WAY THAT YOU USED COLOR TO WASH SCENES IN A CERTAIN MOOD, AS WELL AS YOUR USE OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ACCENT COLORS TO ILLUSTRATE CONFLICT AND EMOTIONS. DO THE COLORS COME BEFORE OR AFTER THE STORY, AND WHAT'S YOUR PROCESS OF INCORPORATING THEM INTO SCENES?

I'm not a colorist so I will only say that all the colors for all my comics are inspired by houses in my neighborhood. The color combinations are the painted fences and garden décor and children's toys scattered across lawns in my neighborhood. I take note of these colors and use them when the story strikes.

THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR THIS KIND OF BOOK, ESPECIALLY REFLECTING ON THE BROWN AND BLACK ADOLESCENTS CURIOUS ABOUT THEIR SEXUALITY. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THIS COLLECTION? WHO ARE YOU WRITING THIS FOR?

I first found my mom's *Joy of Sex* book by her toilet in the master bathroom. Then, I found her erotic novels and snuck them into the bathroom with me every chance I got. It felt thrilling to find this world of literature. As a kid, I was a voracious reader. As I got older, I naturally gravitated towards erotica and erotic poetry. I have a distinct memory of being physically turned on after reading "I Sing the Body Electric" by my bisexual white Lolo, Walt Whitman. Poetry can do that, however, without the poem being explicitly about sex. There are so many ways we can tap into the erotic and use the erotic for other purposes other than romantic or sexual connection. Finding it, knowing it, is a gift that fuels other areas of our lives.

I wrote this for young, Queer Filipinas and Filipinx folks who want to be seen. I wrote this for Pinays who are taught to attract men their whole lives, shamed for being sexual, and then find themselves coming out as Queer later in life without community or guidelines let alone the agency needed to claim their bodies. This book isn't a depiction of all Queer sex and sensuality. It's just an elbow nudge, really. One sis saying to another, "There are no rules for how to be Queer. Go for it and trust yourself."

THE STORIES IN AIMH ARE VULNERABLE YET EMPOWERING. SOME OF OUR STAFF COME FROM INCREDIBLY CONSERVATIVE, CATHOLIC BACKGROUNDS, AND IT'S STILL A PROCESS FOR SOME OF US TO RECLAIM OUR BODIES AND SEXUALITY. WHAT DO YOU WANT THE QUEER, BROWN AND BLACK READERS, WHO ARE LEARNING ABOUT THEMSELVES IN THESE WAYS, TO TAKE AWAY FROM THESE STORIES?

I got kicked out of my Filipino church when I was 13, so I am not the person to turn to for respectable behavior and morality. I turned my back on the Catholic church before I left elementary school. For a long time, I was judgmental about my family and the brainwashing that I was witnessing. As a young person, I saw a lot of injustice and suppression of the truth, the oppression of women left and right. The church, in my eyes, was a concentrated lagoon of murky secrets, hypocrisy, oppressive rules, and a history of violence. This aversion to organized patriarchal religion absolutely shaped my love for Self, sisterhood, agency, storytelling/speaking. These days, my own



"WHEN I TRIED TO STAND ON MY OWN AND DO MY OWN THING CREATIVELY, SO MANY MEN TOLD ME IN THEIR OWN WAYS, 'YOU CAN'T.' I HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THEM AND DON'T REMEMBER THEIR NAMES. WHAT DO I WANT FOLKS TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS BOOK? IF ANYTHING, 'DO WHAT YOU WISH.'"



parents, who are in their 80s now, have stopped going to church due to the silencing of sexual abuse victims. They remain spiritual but are mourning their failed relationship with Catholicism. These days, I understand why my friends and other Filipino folks still practice our traditional religion. Yet, I remain critical of the church and point a finger directly at it when I talk about sexual violence against women/trans/Queer folks in the Philippines, and patriarchal family practices that harm us until this day.

I think a part of me enjoys being rebellious, testing the sensitive nerves of patriarchy. Many Filipino men like to act like Filipinas serve them, still. Many act like I am beneath them because I don't draw for Marvel, a patriarchal corporation that formulaically entertains the masses. When I tried to stand on my own and do my own thing creatively, so many men told me in their own ways, "You can't." I have never believed them and don't remember their names. What do I want folks to take away from this book? If anything, "Do What You Wish." (AUYN, *Neverending Story*).

WERE THESE STORIES INSPIRED BY YOUR FANTASIES AND/OR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES?

The book is partially dedicated to my partner M.. M. is nonbinary/transmasculine, a Scorpio, and the former quarterback of her high school football team. I am a femme, Cancer, former mean goth kid of her high school. We have been friends for almost 20 years and when she first met me, she said out loud, "Damn." Twenty years is a long time to wait to finally get together. Imagine the tension? ;p The stories are absolutely inspired by real feelings and real experiences.

THE STORIES YOU CREATE IN THIS COLLECTION TAKE PLACE IN WORLDS THAT BALANCE A WONDERFUL LINE BETWEEN MAGICAL REALISM AND OUTRIGHT FANTASY. THERE ARE SOME TRULY BREATHTAKING SETTINGS IN THIS BOOK. WERE YOU INSPIRED BY PLACES YOU KNOW IN REAL LIFE, OR ARE THESE THE PLACES OF YOUR DREAMS AND INTERIOR WORLD?

All the settings in the poems are inspired by places I visited on road trips while visiting M. when we used to live long-distance. A few times in 2019-2020, M. got us a cabin in the woods so that I could write in a mystical setting. The cemetery in "Date Night" was a cemetery we found in the back of the cabin. Writers from different backgrounds go to wilderness or the dark to absorb everything and carry the beauty around until it clicks with something else floating around in their bodies. There are a few places I return to write that are a secret, but my favorite part of Milpitas is the winding Old Calaveras Road and also Marsh Road that leads to the reservoir. I've written in seven states but writing in California is magickal for me. California roads and the mysterious places that they take us are comforting to me, inspiring.

EROTICA IS STILL CONSIDERED BY MANY AS "LOW-BROW" ART, DESPITE NUDE BODIES AND SENSUALITY BEING HISTORICALLY CENTRAL TO "CLASSICAL" ART. YOUR WORK IS TESTAMENT TO HOW EROTICA CAN BE THE VEHICLE TO BEAUTIFUL,

INTRICATE STORYTELLING, AS WELL AS STAND ON ITS OWN AS ARTISTIC, POLITICAL, AND INTELLIGENT. WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS GENRE, AND HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR WORK PLAYS A ROLE IN ACHIEVING THIS?

I think few non-cis men are celebrated for their grasp of the erotic in literature. The idea that erotica is low-brow is intertwined with religious morality and gender. The poet ee cummings wasn't always respected. Their experimentation with the erotic was seen as flowery, feminine, anti-art. Our relationship to our artists and art changes with the generations so I don't care really what people think about the height of this art form. If someone buys my book, they might go out and look for more erotica that is similar to it, or better, and that makes me smirk a deliciously evil smirk.

OUTSIDE OF ARRIVE IN MY HANDS, WE'VE READ EMBODIED: AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST COMICS POETRY ANTHOLOGY, WHICH, LIKE YOUR WORK, MARRIES POETRY AND COMICS. WHO ARE QUEER BIPOC COMIC CREATORS YOU'RE READING NOW THAT DOES SIMILAR WORK?

There are so many amazing creators! I recommend turning to Power & Magic Press for their inclusive anthologies that are perfect introductions to many Queer BIPOC creators, indie, alternative, and mainstream. The California College of the Arts comics reading series is a year-round on-going event and they include more Queer BIPOC folks than I've seen anywhere besides indie conventions. Please check out their free readings. They also do their annual graduate show each summer, Emanata, which often features cartoonists who are up and coming but also established folks in the industry. You can chat with them and see original comics pages up close and personal.

IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION, THE SOUL OF CAMP IS ABOUT CENTERING, CELEBRATING, AND EVEN LUXURIATING IN BODIES AND IDENTITIES HISTORICALLY OTHERED AND CONSIDERED OUTSIDE THE "NORM." WHAT DO YOU YOURSELF THINK OF CAMPINESS, AND WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH IT, IF ANY? WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN ARTIST WHO PARTICIPATES IN CAMP?

There are deep camp roots in Queer art history and erotica's history. It can be fun, necessary even. Camp can allow for a safe gateway into the world of erotica. For instance, considering a pinup "cute" or "clever" is often more digestible to a new fan of erotica than feelings of overwhelming embarrassment or shame or arousal. Camp allows for discussions that challenge the status quo and the zeitgeist. A lot of drag can be seen as camp, for instance. Drag often delights in critiques of masculinity and femininity, plays with the discomfort, celebrates difference. Erotica, like drag, must entertain otherwise it isn't much of a show. A lot of the appeal of erotica is this audacity to entertain, to show everything. In *Theatre of Terror*, edited by Justin Hall, I illustrated a feminine aswang holding in her arms a swooning woman. They stand atop the bodies of children and dead men. The camp in the illustration provides the drama, points to the irony, and in high art we don't point because that's not classy. I guess I point with my lips.



"THE APPEAL OF EROTICA IS THIS AUDACITY TO ENTERTAIN, TO SHOW EVERYTHING. ...CAMP IN THE ILLUSTRATION PROVIDES THE DRAMA, POINTS TO THE IRONY, AND IN HIGH ART WE DON'T POINT BECAUSE THAT'S NOT CLASSY. I GUESS I POINT WITH MY LIPS."

*I will look for
your glowing spirit*

*in every pair of
kind eyes that
I meet.*



KEANA AND DINA ARE ALSO FROM SOUTH BAY! HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MILPITAS IN FIVE WORDS?

Golden, sloping, haunted, verdant, bright.

WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES AND THINK OF MILPITAS, WHAT DO YOU SEE? CAN YOU "SMELL" MILPITAS, OR IS YOUR NOSE STILL MILPITAS-IMMUNE?

I hope the smell keeps everyone away because I want the gentrification to stop, lol. After living away in Oakland for ten years, I can definitely smell it now!

ABOUT THE CARTOONIST

Trinidad Escobar is a cartoonist, poet, and musician from Milpitas, CA. Her comics have been featured in journals like *Shenandoah* and *The Brooklyn Review* as well as other publications such as *NPR*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Nib*. In 2019, Trinidad was named as one of YBCA's most influential global artists for her comics-journalism and community workshops grounded in gender and racial justice. In 2020, her works were featured in Eisner and Ignatz-winning anthologies like *Drawing Power* (Abrams) and *Be Gay, Do Comics* (IDW). Her poem-comic on sexual violence is currently on display at the first-ever international Women in Comics exhibit in Rome, Italy. "Ode to Keisha", a one-shot comic illustrated by Trinidad and written by Jamila Rowser of Black Josei Press, won a Broken Frontier Award in 2022. Her YA graphic novel *Of Sea And Venom* will be published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (Books For Young Readers), and *Tryst* is forthcoming from Gantala Press in the Philippines. She is also one-half of the femme folk band, blue ghosts. She lives in California with her son, partner, and their many animals.

Website: trinidadescobar.com

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ABOUT BLACK JOSEI PRESS

Black Josei Press is an award-winning indie comic book publishing company known for publishing *Wash Day*, *The Saddest Angriest Black Girl In Town*, *Ode to Keisha*, and more. They are focused on celebrating comics by and for women of color and non-binary people of color. We hope to change the comic landscape for the better by providing a space for marginalized creators to tell their stories.

Website: blackjoseipress.com

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DAKOTA NOOT

YOU'RE NOT OUT



OF THE WOODS YET

DON'T SKIP

TO YOURS





LUCIEN U. SEBASTIAN

**BLESSED BE
(A SONG FOR
A DEAD DOUÉ)**

CLEANSE





ACHILLEAN

Our Staff

Keana Aguila Labra, Founder & Co-Editor in Chief

Keana Aguila Labra (they/them/she/her) is a Cebuana Tagalog Filipinx poet & writer in diaspora residing on stolen Ohlone Tamyen land. She works to provide a safe literary space for underserved & underrepresented communities as the Editor-in-Chief of literary magazine, *Mariás at Sampaguitas* and the co-Founder of the BIPOC/LGBTQIA+ focused publishing press, Sampaguita Press. Outside of MAS & SamPress, she is the Interview Lead for the Walang Hiya Project, an arts collective centering Filipinxaos of marginalized genders & LGBTQ+ folks. She is also a fellow of the Kearny Street Interdisciplinary Writer's Lab cohort of summer '21 & currently a Barangay Tanod intern with the Bayanihan Center in San Francisco. In her free time, she is a book reviewer with City Book Review. She is the author of the chapbooks, *No Saints* (Lazy Adventurer Publishing) & *Mohilak* (Fahmidan Co. & Publishing), and *Kanunay*. She served as one of the Honorary Santa Clara County Poets Laureate of Oct. '21 alongside Lorenz Mazon Dumuk. Her biggest secret is that Tagalogs can't tell she's Cebuano when she speaks Tagalog. Unfortunately, all Bisayans can tell she's Tagalog when she speaks Cebuano.

Maria Bolaños, Co-Editor in Chief

Maria Bolaños (she/they) is a Filipina American poet, book reviewer, co-Editor in Chief for *Mariás at Sampaguitas* and co-Founder of the indie publisher Sampaguita Press. She is committed to building spaces to nurture and showcase Filipinxao literature as well as Black, Indigenous, and POC literature. Maria's poetry was nominated for the Best of the Net Anthology in 2021, and their work has been featured in North American publications such as *Touchstone*, Cut Fruit Collective's *Cut Fruit Stories*, and *decomp journal*; and international publications such as South Africa-based *Antigone* and Singapore-based *Yuzu Press*, among others. Her debut poetry chapbook, *SANA*, was published in April 2022 with Sampaguita Press. IG & Twitter: [@mariabeewrites](#).

Dina Klarisse, Editor

Dina Klarisse (she/her) is a writer, poet, editor, and serial procrastinator. Poetry is her way of making sense of her experience as a queer Filipina American immigrant and recovering Catholic, as well as her interest in the intersections of history, language, culture, and identity. Her work has been published in ASU's *Canyon Voices*, *The Daily Drunk Mag*, *Chopsticks Alley*, and *Kalopsia Literary Journal*, among others. She serves as Poetry & Issue Editor for *Mariás at Sampaguitas*, as well as Editorial Director for the indie publisher, Sampaguita Press. She lives near San Francisco with her partner and can usually be found on a nature walk, looking for whales, in a secondhand bookshop, or on her couch. Her poetry chapbook, *Handspun Rosaries*, is forthcoming June 2022 with Sampaguita Press. More of her writing can be found on her Instagram [@hella_going](#) and blog [www.hellagoing.com](#).

Kelly Ritter, Editor

Kelly Ritter (she/they) is a reader, writer, & crafter currently living life in Muncie, Indiana. She recently graduated from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Arts in English & a minor in Creative Writing. When she's not reading or tweeting, she's outside practicing yoga or cuddling her kitties.

Asela Lee Kemper, Editor

Asela Lee Kemper (she/her/hers) is a poet and editor. She holds many positions including Poetry Editor at *Variety Pack*, Prose Editor at *Mariás at Sampaguitas*, and Editorial Director of the BuliLit Series at Sampaguita Press. She also has published works in *SOU Student Press*, *Flawless Mag: The Border Issue*, *Silk Club: QUIET*, *Reclamation Mag*, and the anthology *No Tender Fences*. Asela uses her passion for creative writing to open conversations on diversity and identity in literature. She currently resides in Oregon, USA with her family. You can find Asela on Twitter [@AselaLeeK](#) and Instagram, [@thesakuraink](#).

Nashira de la Rosa, Editor

Nashira de la Rosa (she/her) is an Afro-Pinay Polynesian artist from Cebu, by way of Melbourne. She has a passion for writing about culture and history, and believes art is an essential learning tool we can all use to keep these things close to the heart. She can be found on Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter [@nashxra](#).

Noreen Ocampo, Editor

Noreen Ocampo (she/they) is a Filipina American writer and poet based in Atlanta. She is the author of two micro-chapbooks, *Not Flowers* (Variant Literature, 2022) and *Teaspoons* (Daily Drunk Press, 2021), and their poems can also be found in *{m}aganda Magazine*, *Depth Cues*, *Taco Bell Quarterly*, and *Hobart*, among others. She is a blog co-editor and web editor for *COUNTERCLOCK* and studies English, film, and media at Emory University. Say hi on Twitter [@maybenoreen!](#)

Isabel Angeles, Editor

Isabel Angeles (she/they) is a 22 year old non-binary and bisexual Filipina writer/artist attending UCLA. Isabel's poetry navigates her identity as a 1.5 Gen Filipina, her experiences with queer love, and love in general. She is also the founder of The Walang Hiya Project ([@walanghiyaproject](#)), an arts collective for Filipino/a/x folks of marginalized genders and LGBTQ+ Pinoys. The collective strives to be a safe space for expression, healing, and decolonization. You can find her at [@roni.isabel](#) on Instagram, and her poetry at [@buwanbeams!](#)

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