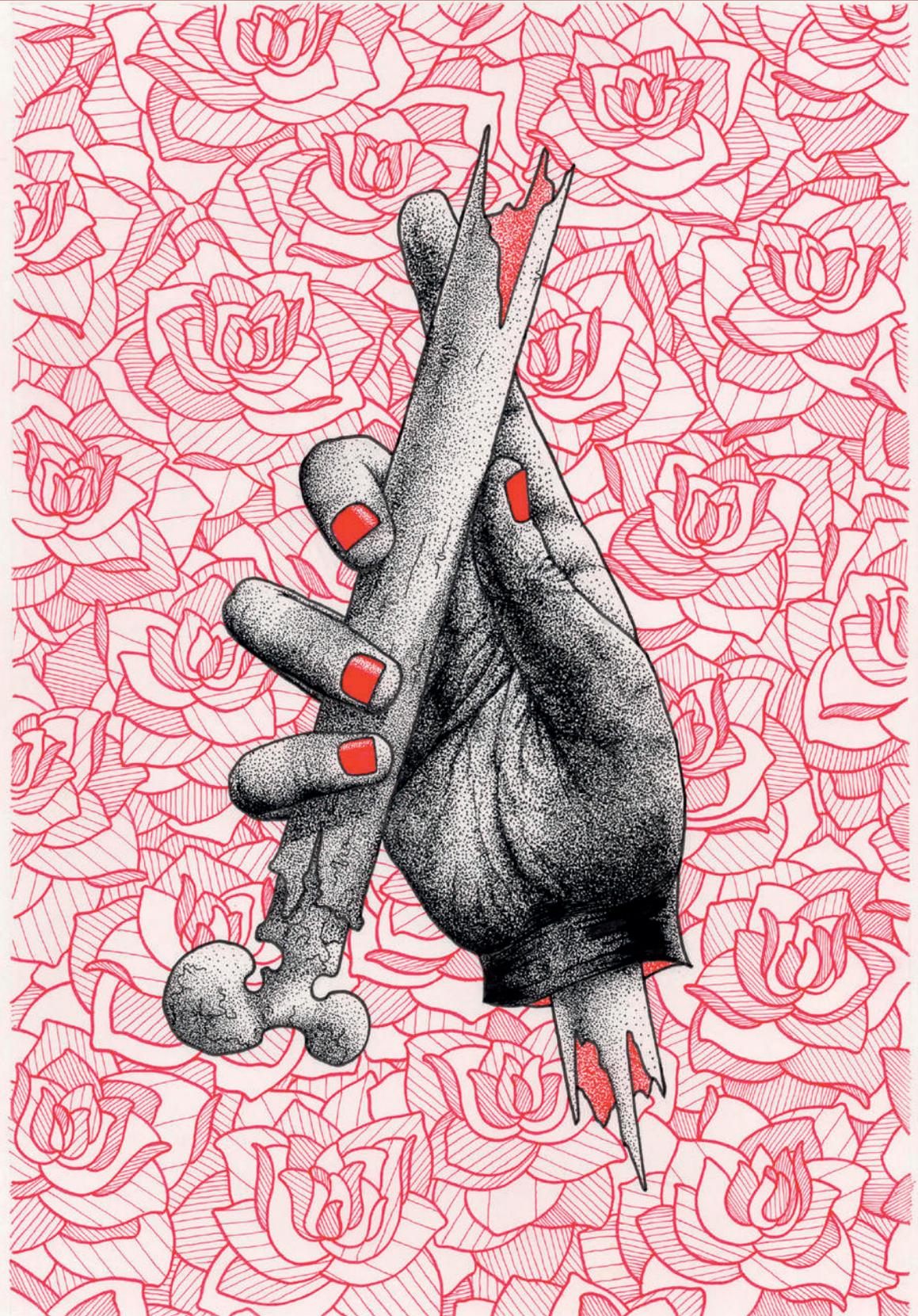
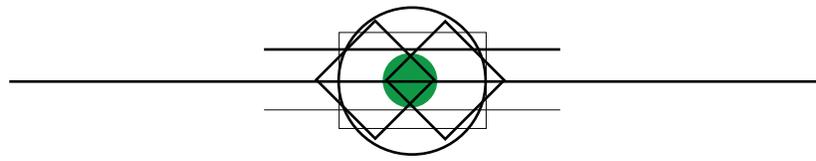


FIX MY HEAD

ISSUE EIGHT

CONFLICT, FAMILY, RITUAL





ISSUE 8 - CONFLICT, FAMILY, RITUAL

Front and back cover illustrations: Matt Lazer

Intro. VO

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Interview. KAIRA VO

Interview. Sareena, THE INFOSHOP - KATHMANDU

Vegetarianism Is Not for Me. GIANG

Lost In Transition. JEN CHEN

Ma-Ma. JEN CHEN

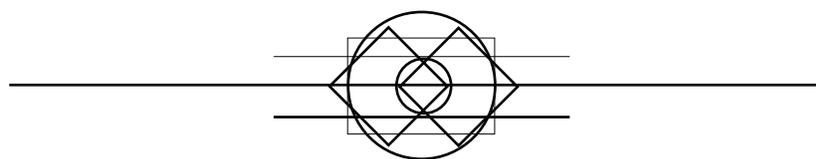
Review. INTERSECTFEST

We Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident. ANNA VO

MAIR SIERRA

Diaspora, Conflict, Discovery, Resolve. TIFFANY LE

MATT LAZER





SUBMISSIONS FOR FUTURE ISSUES - ANOUTRECORDINGS@GMAIL.COM

MY DEPARTURE POINT FOR THIS ISSUE WAS WANTING TO START A CONVERSATION ABOUT CO-OPTATION THAT EXTENDS BEYOND AESTHETICS; AND IN PARTICULAR, THE APPROPRIATION AND CONSUMERIZATION OF CUSTOMS, RITUALS, AND CULTURAL HABITS OF IMMIGRANTS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR. WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH "TRIBAL" REFERENCES, DIA DE LOS MUERTOS IMAGERY (THIS ISSUE IS COMING OUT RIGHT BEFORE HALLOWEEN), AND SKETCHY-AS-FUCK COSTUMES WITH RACIST UNDERTONES. MORE THAN ACKNOWLEDGING IT AND COMMISERATING ABOUT IT, BUT EXAMINING HOW TO RECLAIM "AUTHENTICITY", WHAT THAT WORD EVEN MEANS AFTER GENERATIONS OF DISPLACEMENT, HOW TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS LEGITIMATELY AND UNDENIABLY PART OF OUR IDENTITY.

ONCE I READ SOMEWHERE THAT WE ARE POST-GEOGRAPHICAL, GIVEN THE DIGITAL AGE, AND IT'S BEEN DECADES FOR SURE SINCE I HAD A CONNECTION TO A PHYSICAL PLACE. HOME TO ME HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN BOOKS, SPENDING TIME OR SPEAKING ON THE PHONE WITH MY FAMILY, AND SEEING OLD OR CLOSE FRIENDS. UNFORTUNATELY, MY EMAIL INBOX PAGE BECAME ONE OF MY HOMES ABOUT A DECADE AGO, AND THE FAMILIAR WEIGHT OF MY PHONE WHEN I'M RECEIVING TEXT MESSAGES. "GENUINE" PARTS OF MY IDENTITY ARE SPLINTERED BETWEEN SNATCHES OF INTERACTIONS THAT HAPPEN IN THE GAPS BETWEEN WORKING MY TWO JOBS. THERE ARE SO MANY BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS TO HAVE, BUT NOT ENOUGH TIME TO HAVE THEM. CAPITALISM AND CONSUMERISM CHOPS UP MY TIME, MY IDENTITY, MY BODY, MY FACE AND MY WORDS.

I TYPE THIS IN THE 5 MINUTES I HAVE BEFORE I HAVE TO CATCH THE BUS TO THE PHOTOCOPIERS.

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT SEGREGATION, HOW CAPITALISM DIVIDES AND CONQUERS, HOW IT SPLITS UP THE STRENGTH THAT WE FIND IN OUR IDENTITIES, AND HOW IT WEARS DOWN OUR ABILITY AND CAPACITY TO GATHER AND ORGANIZE. I THINK ABOUT HOW IT HAS DECIMATED COMMUNITIES THROUGH A LONG LINEAGE OF NEVER-ENDING DISPLACEMENT AND RE-HOMING. THROUGH COLONIZATION, THEN IMPERIALISM, MILITARY INVASIONS, OCCUPATIONS, AND MISSIONARY WORK, WHICH BUILT BRIDGES FOR IMMIGRATION WITH WHATEVER DANGLING CARROT OF FALSE HOPES FOR A "BETTER" LIFE, AND THEN THE RESULTANT DIASPORAS BEING ATOMISED THROUGH GENTRIFICATION, WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS BEING TORN DOWN EVERY GENERATION, TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW, HOMOGENOUS VISION OF A CAPITALISTICALLY ATTRACTIVE MODE OF LIVING.

FROM THE MICRO TO THE MACRO, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW TOURISM IN NEPAL, FOR EXAMPLE, STARTED FROM A POST WORLD WAR II CONQUEST BY THE BRITISH EMPIRE - OF MT EVEREST, RESULTING IN CONTINUALLY SHALLOW CONSUMERISTIC EXCHANGES IN THE NAME OF A VACATION. IN THIS ISSUE, I INTERVIEWED SAREENA, FROM THE INFOSHOP IN KATHMANDU THAT GOT AFFECTED, AS DID THOUSANDS OF OTHERS, IN THE APRIL 25TH EARTHQUAKE.

POETRY FROM JEN CHEN, AND AN ESSAY FROM GIANG ADDRESSES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY, CULTURE, MEMORY AND MEANING. I ALSO INTERVIEW MY 14-YEAR-OLD SISTER, FOR THE FAMILY THEME, TO HIGHLIGHT HOW DIFFERENTLY IDENTITY POLITICS PLAYS OUT BETWEEN US, AS WHEN I WAS HER AGE I HAD NO COMPUTER, AND NO

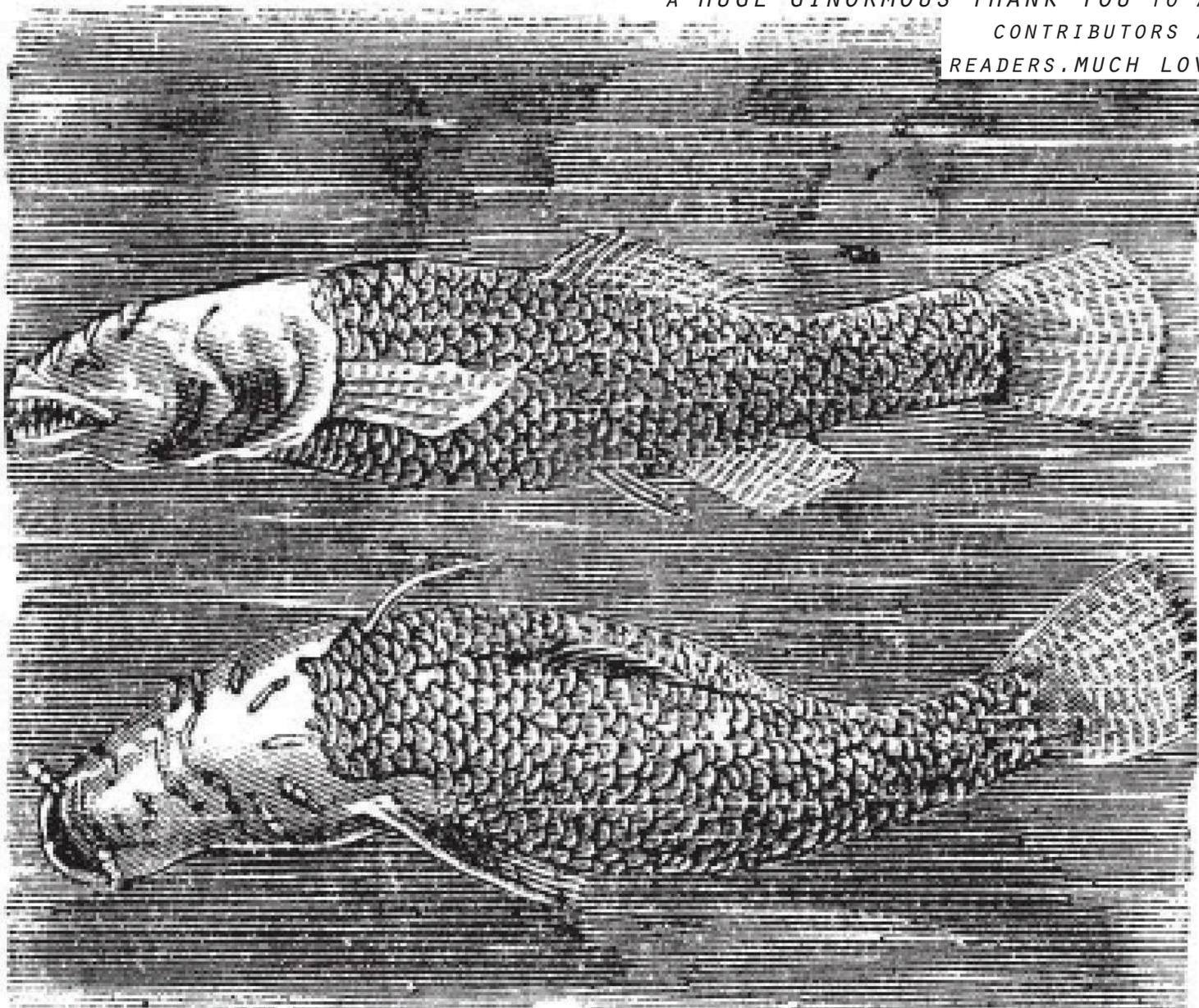
SOCIAL OR ELECTRONIC SUPPORT FOR MY FRUSTRATIONS, WHICH I THINK TECHNOLOGY NOW PROVIDES WELL, AND *CAN* HELP US COGNITIVELY PROCESS REACTIONS, RESPONSES, EMOTIONS AND ANALYSES QUICKER AND WITH BROADER PERSPECTIVES AFFECTING OUR CONCLUSIONS.

IN THE INITIAL SUBMISSION CALLOUT, I EXPRESSED MY FRUSTRATION WITH THE BORROWING OF "NEW-AGE" THERAPIES AND RELIGION, RITUAL AND OCCULT SYMBOLISM BY WITCHY WOOLEY PUNKY QUEER HIPSTERS AND THE BLATANT DISRESPECT AND DEHUMANIZATION THAT THOSE SAME COMMUNITIES OF COLOR STILL RECEIVE (PLEASE REFER TO THE WEEKLY POC-ONLY YOGA CLASS IN SEATTLE BEING BANNED AS A RESULT OF THE "WHITE RACISM" UP-ROAR). LISTENING TO SUBCULTURAL COOL KIDS AROUND ME CASUALLY THROWING AROUND ISLAMOPHOBIC OR ABLE-IST REMARKS, AND

SHOCKED THAT IT'S STILL SO ENTRENCHED IN OUR THINKING IN 2015!

I HAVE BEEN ENJOYING LEARNING FROM MY FRIENDS FROM NATIVE BACKGROUNDS HERE IN THE PNW, AND HEARING THEIR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES. I AM STOKED TO HAVE MELANIE FEY, MATT LAZER, AND JASMINE A KOSTER IN THIS ISSUE WITH THEIR WORK. ONE THING I DID NOT FORESEE, BUT AM NOT SURPRISED BY IS THE SUBJECT MATTER OF FOOD, AND IN PARTICULAR, THE CULTURALLY INSENSITIVE PRESSURE THAT FAD DIETS PLACE ON HABITS OF CONSUMING TRADITIONAL FOODS, ESPECIALLY IN RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNING WITH FAMILY. THIS IS ANOTHER THING I'VE BEEN STRUGGLING WITH THIS YEAR. FINALLY, TIFFANY LE, MAIR SIERRA, SBTL CLNG AND RAJU RAGE SHARE PERSONAL POWERFUL WORK ABOUT IDENTITY, DIASPORA, AND QTPOC BODIES.

A HUGE GINORMOUS THANK YOU TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS AND READERS. MUCH LOVE.



Growing Gills in Rising Seas; or, Cultural Revitalization in a Colonized World

Jasmine A Koster

Growing up as a Dena'ina Athabaskan youth in rural South Central Alaska, I was on the frontlines of decolonization and cultural revitalization. I was involved in tribal activities aimed at ensuring my people would thrive forever, and I "got it" in an intuitive, immersive sense. But, I hadn't yet had the perspective-bearing distance from it that travel and living far from home would soon provide.

An inspiring group of mentors, teachers, and elders within my tribe are employing youth within tribal programs with the dual purpose of giving them job experience and a sense of cultural heritage. For a couple summers I led interpretive tours on Dena'ina culture to tourists and locals alike. I also was involved in numerous camps--art camp, fish camp, subsistence camp, environmental camp--and worked with Dena'ina children in the headstart program. This group of people are working diligently to raise the youth up and revitalize our culture.

Growing up, I also shared space with the descendants of colonizers, and these people were my close friends, lovers, and peers. We fished from the same cerulean-blue river. We swam in the same ice-choked ocean. We carried each other's siblings on our backs, and called each other family. So I held no anger or blame for these descendents, who are now naturalized citizens to Alaska. Even though the institutionalized structures are still well and alive.

I understand well that my culture will die like a rain-soaked flame if I don't bear the torch and protect it from the torrential downpour that is every single odd against us. So, I learned my culture's values and stories like my life depended on it. I'm slowly learning my language, which was almost snuffed out by assimilation; breathing gently into the coals.

There's this ethic, integral to Dena'ina culture, of respecting the plants, animals, rivers, oceans, etc. through specific ritualistic behaviors. For example, it's very important to use everything you possibly can when an animal comes to you, and to return the remains to their proper place and in the proper way; this ensures the animal returns. This made a lot of sense to me, especially as I watched people around me nonchalantly wasting food as if it weren't utterly indispensable. As I observed my home changing rapidly and learned of species going extinct, I wondered if obvious factors such as habitat destruction weren't the only factors at play. Maybe the waste and disrespect also has something to do with it on a spiritual level beyond what we can measure or quantify.

When I was in my senior year of high school, I did an investigative report on vegetarianism and the factory farm industry. I started out curious and anyways needed a topic. Long before I'd finished embedding videos and photos into my e-magazine, I'd become a devout vegetarian--with one exception. I still ate the salmon, hooligan, halibut, moose, and trout which came to my family. I still do to this day.

When asked why, I explained that it was simple: I do it out of respect for the animals. This was a cultural ethic I chose to embrace because it simply made sense to me. Now, I struggle to understand how I might spread an awareness of how important it is to respect the beings we share the Earth with. At least, without my contribution leading to, first, "harmless and well intentioned" appropriation; then "let's exploit this as a new

niche for capitalism" gentrification; and finally, a jaded attitude of "yeah, those hippies embraced that back in the 20__'s and we're sort of over that now."

People who don't know me well or are just ignorant have called me a hippie time and again for continuing to embody Dena'ina cultural essence in the wider world. It's beyond annoying. It's offensive. Even when I explain that I'm expressing my ethnicity, they often (unintentionally I'm sure) try to erase me by asking "how much native" I am--because if I don't have dark skin and black hair, I must not be Native American.

On one sense this is correct: because my physical appearance doesn't match the stereotypes Western culture has about First Peoples, I can sort-of enjoy racial aspects of white privilege. I can blend in, if I want to, as long as I don't show any aspect of my cultural heritage or worldview. And if I do show some of my heritage, people will just assume I'm a hippy, but in most cases there won't be too much danger.

Except, that assumption erases me each time someone makes a racist joke about Native Americans in my presence, or denies my claim to my ethnicity when I raise my voice. So these assumptions are damaging to the cultural identity I was raised with. First Peoples, being a diverse group, don't all fit that stereotypical look and some tribes of Dena'ina in Alaska have been known to have fairer skin. Some would say that I can never claim to be white OR Native American, not fully--I straddle both worlds. But, I wasn't raised with my father's heritage, and struggle through the tide of consumerism regardless. The generational wounds of colonialism, with all the structural and ecological racism intact, continue to fester with each generation. I carry the scars.

But going back to cultural vegetarianism. Ironically, though I still choose to partake in cultural foods, a changing climate makes these harder to come by. I can shun factory farmed meat all I like, but the farms keep emitting carbon and boiling the salmon in their bathwater. At the same time, hippie culture, both that of the broke-wandering-artist-bohemian and the urban-dweller-with-privileged-access-to-healthy-food-choices, encourages infinite niches to appear within capitalism, extrapolating upon the desire for local, organic, vegetarian choices. Thus, colonialism continues, and the system doesn't get uprooted by "new" ideas, it simply absorbs them and exploits them.

I admit, I also participate, by shopping at food cooperatives and supporting local farms. I'm lucky I don't live in a food desert. I'm privileged in that I can choose not to live in a food desert. I'm lucky I can learn about permaculture (which, after all, is indigenous agricultural knowledge, appropriated and re-branded) and access stolen land on which to plant native plants in community gardens. But, here in the Pacific Northwest, I haven't harvested crab, mussels, or clams since I was a kid. Yeah, I have the organic produce I wouldn't have in Alaska, but I don't have the salmon.

So maybe I'm just running away. Sidestepping responsibility. Fooling myself into thinking life is better in a place where nobody knows who I am, or where I come from, where nobody knows what to do if it snows or the power goes out, or what it means to be fully aware of our inseparable relationship to the land. Where I can be erased, and remain indignant at my erasure.

Or maybe I'm not running away. Maybe I'm treading water in rising seas. Maybe I'm growing gills.

I'll be freed when this fisherman's net has nothing left to consume but itself, I suppose. Or maybe I'm just fooling myself. But I know one thing: it will take more than my personal choices to transform our relationship to the land from that of colonizer to steward. If I want to eat wild salmon again, I have to make peace with swarms of hungry bears, with the full knowledge that this is their house I'm in, that I'm just a guest passing through.



Glenbow Archives NA-2242-2



STEREOTYPE THIS.

Melanie Fey

Today I couldn't handle the pain of being an American Indian
There's a clawing deep inside,
 Like a spider in a thirsty drought
And it screams in broken lullaby:

I don't want to be a drunk Indian
I don't want to be the drunk Indian

Today a boarding school sat like a lump in my throat
And the ghosts of dead Indian children
With butchered hair and broken Christian wings,
Shattered bottles down on my feet and screamed:

We don't want to be drunk Indians
We don't want to be the drunk Indians

Today I walked away from my lover
How do I tell him that I feel the Trail of Tears like hard sand in my veins?
That I feel Wounded Knee like a frozen battle field in my stomach?
That I feel the Long Walk like snapping branches in my legs?
I feel it all every time I sip from another bottle of burned memories—
 The residue of genocide
And it hums in broken lullaby:

You are a drunk Indian
You are the drunk Indian

And I feel coyote pull in my finger tips
 Porcupine in my skin
 Crow in my hair
My feet like broken stairs

Because history moves like a fevered heat down through the arteries of generations
Because PTSD to the family tree is like an ax
Because colonization is the ghosts of buffalos with broken backs
Because today only burning flags could be found at the ghost dance of my people

And they all chant in unison:

We are not a stereotype
We are not
 Your stereotype

Here you will find a conglomeration of photos that have had a very painful yet profound impact on me: Ho-Chunk girls infected with small pox, a white guy standing on a pyramid of buffalo skulls, Native children lined up in front of the infamous Carlisle Boarding School, etc. The histories that lie behind these images have shaped the landscape of contemporary Native American life, whether it be economically, socially, spiritually and so on. In most US history text books and classes, often one will find that these histories have been skimmed over, ignored or hidden under the guise of 'Manifest Destiny'. But the genocide that was inflicted upon Native Americans was/is very real. And in our contemporary society, the use of stereotypes (the drunk Indian, the mystical Indian, the stoic Indian, etc.) appears to mock that genocide. The egotistical charade and obvious revisionist history being put forth by US colonialism has been largely successful but I'd like to offer up my resistance to that infrastructure, to push back against all those damned stereotypes. I'd also like to add that my poem Stereotype This! was recently declined for publication by the Oregon Poetry Association. So happy that FMH decided to print it instead.

~~NEITHER HERE NOR THERE~~

MY
BODY AS A SOCIALIZED

LANDSCAPE

private
as a microcosm
of the dominant
culture

THE FAMILY
CONSTRUCTION HAS

NEVER LEFT MY
MUSCLES ~~AND BONES~~

THE PATRIARCHY'S INFLUENCE ON
PSYCHIC
CONDITIONING
OF YOUR
ROLE + FUNCTION
IN REALITY

THE PAIN
OF ITS
GRIP ON
YOUR
SPINE



homesick for nowhere -
reflections on being from
neither here nor there:

Subtle Ceiling/SBTL CLNG

Subtle Ceiling (SBTL CLNG) is mixed media artist and self-publishing zine writer Carolina Hicks (b.1991); first generation Colombian raised and currently existing in Los Angeles, CA. My work focuses overall on mental health, addressing personal and collectively/culturally experienced trauma(s), and investigating DIY methods towards personal empowerment and healing. Being a person is the strangest thing I've ever experienced but I've decided to unlearn self-hatred and survive this for as long as I can --my main objective is to make sure others find their strength to do the same.

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+ MY STEPBROTHER YELLED,
 in front of ME + my 9 yr old
 niece, my sister and our MOTHER,
 [TO MY MATRIARCH: +
 "YOU' FUCKING CUNT -
 RE A go back to your
 country (COLOMBIA) you fucking
 maid, uneducated maid." +
 YEAH, SHE WAS A MAID!!
 remember when she held you
 as you cried yourself to
 sleep, grieving your own
 mother's death? she was +
 your maid.} +
 HATED CYCLES AND
 AOTS ITS OWN
 ROOT



"FAMILY" AS THE CONTAINED
 UNIFORMITY IN WHICH
 LARGER SOCIETY PLAYS OUT
 IN THE VIOLENT SILENCE/
 PRIVACY OF THE "HOME"

SCALES IN SCALES

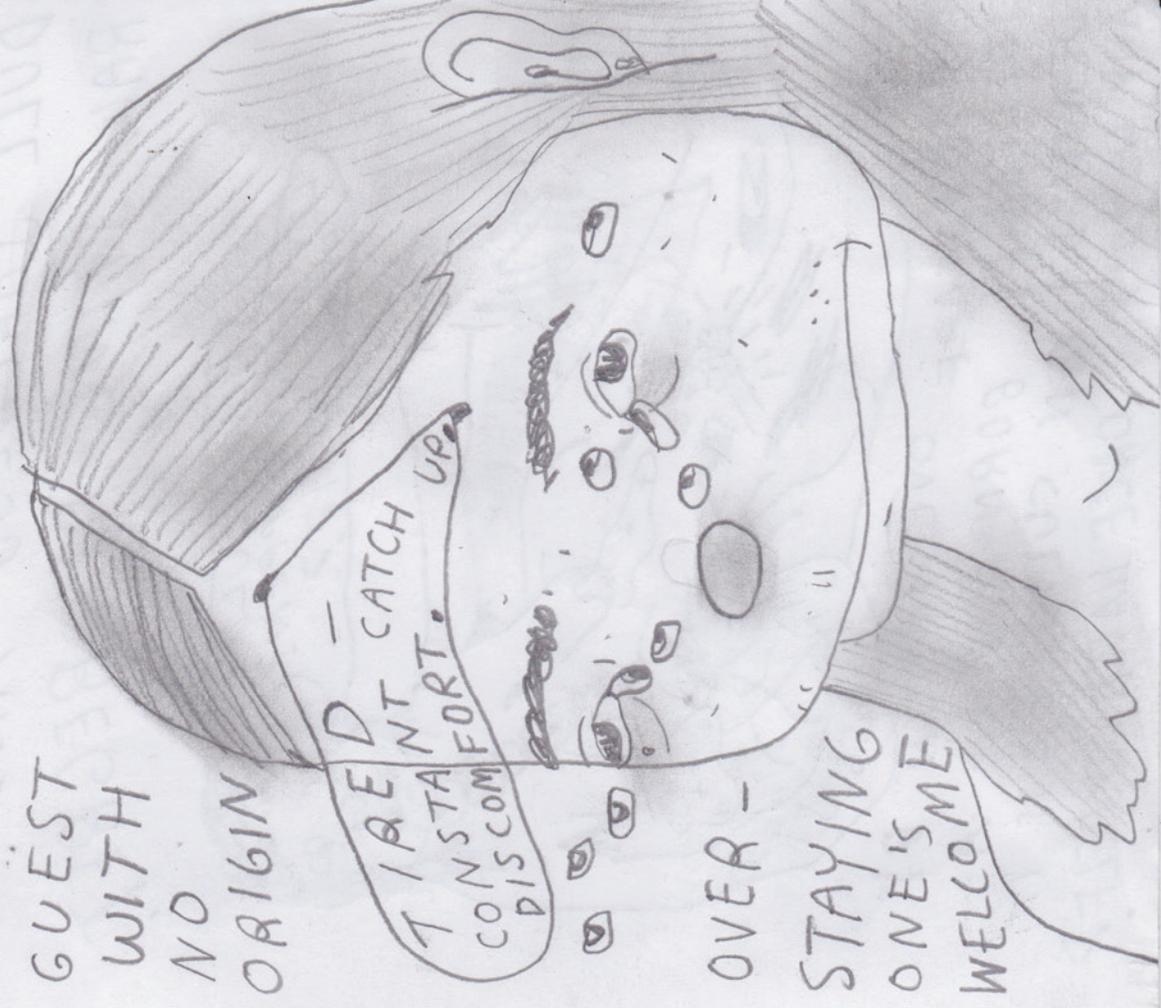
POISON TOWARDS EARTH
 HATRED → ↓ ↓ HOME



THE PATRIARCHY ~~REQUIRES~~ REQUIRES
 ENFORCEMENT: FATHERS,
 BROTHERS, UNCLES CAN BE
 FOUND TAKING IT UPON THEM-
 SELVES TO REMIND YOU OF
 YOUR PLACE - VIOLENTLY
 CORRECTING YOUR SUBORDINANCE
 W/ THEIR VIOLENT APATHY
 + EMPTY DOMINANCE

MEN! FUCKING! SCARE! ME!
FALLING IN LOVE WITH A CIS
MALE/GUY MAKES ME FEEL
LIKE A TRAITOR TO MY OWN
PAIN(S). HOW DO I HEAL WITH-
OUT SABOTAGING THE GLOWING
BEAUTY & SAFETY I'VE FOUND
WITH THIS SOUL SIBLING/FLESH
LOVER/FRIEND? THE SOCIALIZ-
ATION OF FLESH HAS ME
FUCKED UP. I'M TERRIFIED OF
MEN, MEN ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE MOST VIOLENCE I'VE EXPERIENCED
IN MY BODY. BUT I'M
IN DEEP LOVE WITH ONE. BUT
I'M NOT BI ENOUGH, NOT STRAI-
GHT ENOUGH, NOT QUEER ENOUGH,
GHT, NOT COMPLACENT ENOUGH,
TOO SCARED, STILL RECOVER-
ING, STILL SIFTING.

NOT WHITE BUT TOO GRINGA
NOT STRAIGHT NOT GAY NOT
WOMAN ENOUGH I'M NOT FROM HERE,
I'M NOT FROM THERE →
HOMESICK FOR NO WHERE



GUEST WITH NO ORIGIN
I ARENT CATCH UP
CONSTANTLY DISCOMFORT.
OVER - STAYING
ONE'S WELCOME

MY BODY AS A LANDSCAPE
OF CHOICES AND LACK
OF MY MEMORY AS A
SITE OF CONFLICT. THE
DULL SORENESS AND
RAW STING OF REGRET.



A LANDSCAPE OVERTAKEN BY
IDEOLOGIES BORN OUT OF A
DEATH DRIVEN CULTURE: IS IT
ANY WONDER I ONCE HATED MYSELF?

THE STING OF GUILT BUILT UP
YOUR SPINE.
THE WEIGHT OF ASSIMILATION:
FICTIONS THREATENED INTO
YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM.



DOES TRAUMA LOSE
ITS GRIP AT ANY
POINT?

Kink, Culture, Conflict

by Raju Rage

I am a visual artist working with sculpture, performance, installation and live art. I am particularly interested in history, the archive, memory, narratives and ritual and how these impact identity, especially in migration and in the context of the diaspora. My work 'The Dilemma of the Diaspora to Define' examines the tensions and conflicts of negotiating a complex diasporan identity.

This ongoing work focuses on exploring occupying and performing race, ethnicity, gender and queerness, particularly the way 'South Asian' queer non-conforming people have to navigate and negotiate their bodies in western contexts, where there is often a conflict between tradition, culture, defining and expressing constructed identities.

I am interested in enabling the manifestation of conflict, and in working to transform that conflict into something more healing. I attempt to do this by deconstructing and unpacking aspects of identity through the making process, usually connecting unspoken links. Primarily using my own body as a tool of resistance, I work with multimedia assemblages of sculpture, using interruption, confusion, and disturbance as multi-formulations of unspoken narratives. Diasporan identity is layered and complex which is what I try to express this in my work.

Part of my journey has been a research into 'project/tions' - how different ideas about racialized and gendered identity are projected on our bodies through the space and gaze that we usually navigate. We are often performing projections of other people's ideas and expectations of us: as our role as mothers or wives (essentially carers), as sexualised women (to be objectified, often without consent), as men as sole providers (controlling or in control), and (as Black people and people of colour in various western contexts) as labourers, as criminals, as not belonging. I have been working specifically with South Asian archives in researching migration, labour, war and trade, looking at the trade and politics of cloth, the construction of gender by imperial armies, the depictions of S Asians in History and exploring the missing gaps and erasure of narratives such as the stories of our grandmothers (basically women in Herstory). I have been exploring how history and memory have shaped diasporan contemporary identity in all its nuance and complexity, making links where I do not feel the dots have been connected before (although I acknowledge that I am NOT inventing the wheel). The work I make is about not leaving parts of ourselves at the door. It is about carrying all of those things that have shaped us - that so often end up being in conflict with each other - and seeing what can happen.

For example, I am queer, transgender AND South Asian. This is often seen as a contradiction both within [the South Asian?] community - due to the pressure to assimilate and integrate in western society and (Christian based) values - or in the world outside those communities, in which a racist gaze constitutes S Asians as traditional or patriarchal and thus as homophobic. I wear a turban and a sari (often together) and this again is seen as a conflict: that you should not wrap a 5 metre cloth in different ways, despite its flexibility and fluidity and the fact that this reflects the flexibility and fluidity of my gender. I practice kink, which I view as a contemporary ritual. For me it is a personal way of dealing with trauma and violence, and a practice of total self-love of my gender non-conforming body. This is so often a taboo, something I would be too afraid to share with my family for fear of judgement. It is usually shunned as being too western or un-spiritual, or too often it is too white dominated for my own comfort and safety, despite it being a ritual that for me is rooted in my ancestry, connecting me to my whole being including my culture. For me, the rituals of kink feel very similar to tying a turban and the spiritual reflection involved in that process. However, kink, pornography and sexuality are deeply connected to the legacies of colonialism, which also produces an internal conflict necessary to unpack.

My latest work began with a photoshoot with fierce photographer Ajamu

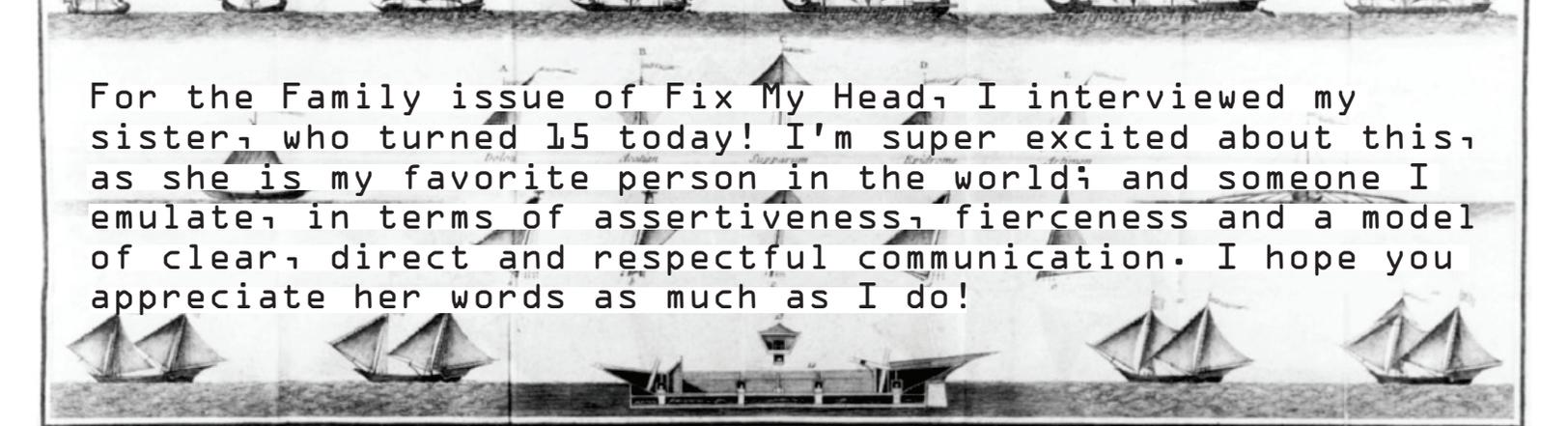
(<http://ajamu-fineartphotography.co.uk/>)



Ajamu's work is central to kink and black and brown bodies. His work is both simultaneously a celebration and a provocation of these beautiful bodies, existing and challenging stereotypes that people may have about them. I had been thinking a lot on the use and materiality of rubber. I had been tying a rubber turban made of inner tubes (mainly because it practically lends itself, in design, to a similar technique used in tying a traditional muslin cloth turban, which needs to be rolled or folded into thin strips before wrapping around the head). But I am allergic to rubber, and knew that it usually produces a reaction on my skin. The irony. I like the materiality of rubber, the way it feels tight and smooth; I have also used rubber dildos and I like the solidity of them and their feel. I like the blackness of dyed rubber which reflects the dark turbans that Panjabi Sikhs have taken to wearing in the UK - probably to replicate the colour of their hair in an attempt to assimilate and not stand out (in contrast to the brightly coloured paghs in India for example). I like rubber. But with it also comes a history of colonial trade. A friend insisted I read an article by Anjali Arondekar - For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India featuring 'The story of the India-rubber dildo'. In it Arondekar talks about the relationship between sexuality and the colonial archive and how empire and Victorian sexuality (and pornography) come together in the India-rubber dildo, an instance in which the construction of the dildo as a symbol of modernity and the 'new-world' is brought about by the colonial manufacture of India-rubber. The article discusses in length and depth how the technologies of sexuality fuse with the technologies of colonial industry. Arondekar thus asks 'What happens when we tell the story of the India-rubber dildo? What happens when we unfold the colonial narrative of the familiar prop of pornography, where the labour of its making is hardly ever questioned? Where 'foreigners and foreign substances', transported from one colonised place in the world to another, are 'managed for home profits and used for pleasures that go out of bounds on the other'?

These threads of race and colonialism cited by Arondekar and woven into the story of the India-rubber dildo are nowhere to be found in Victorian pornographic archival examination. Where sexuality, class and money are discussed, there is little to connect it to its history of empire. Similarly, in contemporary contexts, there is little to connect the gestures and materials of kink to their colonial legacy and its impact and influence in the kink clubs and play parties that I have attended, nor to the sites of ritual and culture that I carry and perform within my complex self. These are the conflicts with the space, the gaze, the cultures and rules I must negotiate with my brown gender non-conforming body.

My current work 'kink, conflict, culture' offers a much needed space to critically and creatively explore, unpack, connect and imagine these figurations of material and absent presences of identity and explore how they impact the body, in embodiment, by using the body, and not solely by researching, reading and writing about it. Using the inspirational research that Arondekar has conducted as a foundation and visually telling the story of the India-rubber dildo and how it connects to my own story.



For the Family issue of Fix My Head, I interviewed my sister, who turned 15 today! I'm super excited about this, as she is my favorite person in the world; and someone I emulate, in terms of assertiveness, fierceness and a model of clear, direct and respectful communication. I hope you appreciate her words as much as I do!

1. WHAT DOES RITUAL AND BUDDHISM MEAN TO YOU? I NOTICE THAT YOU USE RITUAL TO PAY RESPECTS TO OUR PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS?

THE RITUALS THAT MY FAMILY AND I DO DAILY ARE MORE RESPECTFUL AND MORE ABOUT HONORING MY ANCESTORS AND THEIR MEMORY THAN ANYTHING ELSE, REALLY. BUDDHISM MAKES ME THINK MORE OF FESTIVALS, FAMILY, MOON CAKES, AND THE CONNECTION WITH MY RELATIVES BACK IN VIETNAM. TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT BUDDHIST BELIEFS OR ANY OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS FOR PRAYERS OR DEITIES. RATHER, IT'S SOMETHING THAT I WAS BORN INTO AND HAS SHAPED MY CHILDHOOD WITH ITS MANY WAYS OF MAKING ME SPEND TIME WITH COUSINS AND FORCING ME TO FACE MY CULTURE, BACK EVEN WHEN I WAS YOUNGER AND ASHAMED OF ITS "EXOTIC" WAYS, I STILL HAD TO BE THERE.

2. WHAT ARE THE HARDEST THINGS ABOUT GROWING UP WHERE YOU DO, AND THE BEST THINGS?

I LIVE IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE TOWN, AND ONE WHOSE RESIDENTS ARE VIRTUALLY UNAWARE OF THEIR IGNORANCE, AS MANY IGNORANT PEOPLE ARE. I'VE HAD WAY TOO MANY ACQUAINTANCES ASK ME ABOUT "WHAT I AM" OR TELL ME THAT I DON'T "LOOK" ASIAN. ONE GIRL EVEN THOUGHT THAT ASIA WAS SYNONYMOUS WITH CHINA. BUT BEING ONE OF THE FEW VIETNAMESE PEOPLE HAS KIND OF MADE ME EMBRACE IT EVEN MORE, SEEING AS WE'RE RARE. TO OTHERS, I'M UNIQUE, AND REGULAR EVERYDAY ASPECTS OF MY LIFE CAN INCITE CURIOSITY AND AWE IN THEM, LIKE SPEAKING VIETNAMESE, OR OUR MEALS WILL EXCITE THEM. THAT'S QUITE AN EGO BOOSTER.

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK MIGHT BE DIFFERENT FROM YOUR GENERATION AS A YOUNG WOMAN OF COLOR, COMPARED TO MY GENERATION AS A YOUNG WOMAN OF COLOR?

MY GENERATION AS A YOUNG WOMAN OF COLOR IS, OF COURSE, GOING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM YOURS. FOR INSTANCE, I THINK I BECAME AWARE OF MANY OF THE ISSUES REGARDING BEING ONE EARLIER THAN YOU GUYS. WITH SOCIAL MEDIA AND SO MANY SOURCES TO HEAR NEWS

FROM, IT'S A LOT EASIER TO GET DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND VANTAGE POINTS TO OPEN ONE'S MIND. BECAUSE I'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO SO MANY VARYING WAYS OF THINKING, IT'S EASIER TO BE OBJECTIVE THAN TO TRUST ONE OUTLET EXPLICITLY.

5. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK TUMBLR OR THE INTERNET HAS PLAYED?

(I THINK I ANSWERED THAT IN THE LAST ONE, CHI HAI!! HI)

6. WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED, AND WHAT ROLE DOES IDENTITY, OR YOUR IDENTITY PLAY IN FACING THOSE CHALLENGES?

THE CHALLENGES I'VE FACED HAVE MAINLY BEEN INNER CONFLICTS, LIKE "OH, AM I ENFORCING STEREOTYPES BY DOING THIS?" OR "DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO GET ANGRY OVER THIS SLIGHT COMMENT, OR AM I JUST BEING OVERSENSITIVE?" THEN I USUALLY REALIZE (OR AM TOLD) THAT THOSE STEREOTYPES SHOULDN'T EVEN EXIST AND THAT MAYBE LETTING SOMETHING SLIDE IS LESS GRATING THAN CALLING EVERYTHING OUT. I'M NOT SAYING I'M AWARE OF ALL THE PREJUDICE THAT A PERSON COULD FACE, BUT BEING PUT IN A POSITION WHERE I'M FORCED TO NOTICE SOME TENDS TO GET ME BOTHERED ABOUT THE CASUALLY OFFENSIVE THINGS THAT'RE BEING STREWN ABOUT.

7. WHAT DO YOU FIND HELPFUL, INSPIRING, ENCOURAGING WHEN THINGS ARE TOUGH?

THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO PERFECTLY, THOUGH. USUALLY, I OVERESTIMATE MYSELF AND THE THINGS I'M CAPABLE OF AND TAKE ON MUCH MORE THAN I CAN HANDLE. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I GO IN A TIZZY ABOUT ALL THE THINGS I NEED FINISHED AND THE TASKS I NEED DONE. LASHING OUT AT OTHER PEOPLE OFTEN COMES FROM THIS, EVEN IF I REGRET IT LATER. WHEN THE REALIZATION KICKS IN THAT I'VE BECOME A TENSE MOP OF IRRITATION, I CONSULT THE COMPANY OF MY FRIENDS. THEY ALWAYS PROVIDE THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR ME THEN, WHETHER THEY TELL ME TO CHILL AND JUST TAKE A BREAK WITH THEM OR BERATE ME FOR PROCRASTINATING. I LOVE THEM, AND THEY'RE HARSH BUT FAIR.

"LOOK TO YOUR FRIENDS: THEY'LL GET YOU BACK ON TRACK IF YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SCREWED."

Interview with Sareena Rai.

THE INFOSHOP -

KATHMANDU

1. Tell us about the Infoshop you ran. It's name, how it formed, who else was involved, and what happened to it during and after the earthquake?

I was running a small infoshop in the tourist ghetto of Thamel. It was just 'The Infoshop - Kathmandu' you know. We split a nice tiny space with my friend's tattoo shop. I asked the vocalist of my current band Yuva Ekta to volunteer for a bit. This infoshop has been running in different locations since Dec 2004 when I used to run it with my ex who was the drummer of Rai Ko Ris - my band of 14 years. It was just a place with zines, cds, patches, shirts, stickers + books. It is the only place with a focus on women/lgbtq stuff in it + alternative women's health info. When we were running it from home in the past couple of years, it became a place for house gigs + where I hung out with girls from the village there, taught them to form bands + held self defense classes. It was small but productive during this time. It is a shame that a relationship issue can destroy all this. I hope new things will be reborn from all my past activities...

The earthquake made a water tank smash through the ceiling one story above the latest infoshop where somebody was running a bar + venue. In general we all felt vulnerable for at least two months. People were at a loss as to what to do. It was like time stood still. I lived in and out of at least 4 different places, hauling my kids all over the place. Naturally we packed up the infoshop + got out of there. I learned later my tattooist friend also fled to the East during this time. Everyone went off in all directions + it was hard to keep up with everyone's escape.

2. What other political projects are you involved in?

Being in a band we always stood as a political project. Each time we played a show, we put up political messages on flyers around town; addressed issues live on stage - it's one political statement each time. Life should be that way, and the way you live it, no? Since Rai Ko Ris split up in Feb 2014 I continued to play in my other band Yuva Ekta + remain committed to taking a stand against the norms of the culture or society that we are taught to embrace in this crazy world. I've contributed to causes but I tend to do my own thing. My life is just one political ...what...mess of chaos. I have never been involved in any party or organization, however have personally taken on things that put me in the front line against what everyone seems to think is great + accepted. This could mean from playing guitar or bass in a country that doesn't easily accept women in these roles (I don't know if its normal in any country in fact, it's still not mainstream I guess)...consciously staying away from the mainstream + struggling to keep socio-politics at the front of music/art; being an anarchist; having two kids that I didn't give birth to...marrying a white man in the context I live in...separating + being single, with the kids; being divorced + hanging out with anyone I choose (this is hard); not able to pass on citizenship (yet) to my kids as a woman in a patriarchy society, rendering my kids stateless; deciding to start rock climbing at 42 years old [being a woman in this scene is also 'rare' still esp in Nepal]; facing racist embassies every time we want to get a visa to get out of here to tour or something;

t facing sexist assholes at the airport in Nepal every time we leave the country [it's important to carry a letter from a patriarch in your family stating that you have been given permission to move...they say this is to 'protect' women from trafficking]; being a different 'mom' from most I see around me; being kind of queer but not gay, but feeling alienated in my desires as a human being that go beyond or below sexual; looking + acting boyish – I get shit for that a lot so I try hard to look feminine, but it's tiring; so these are general things I fight with on a day to day business. I am as always in solidarity with all sisters + brothers in this world who face similar alienation every day. Humans are such fucked up creatures; we have created such boundaries within our own selves, we are doomed to alienation, so every move becomes political – in the sense that we have to fight to feel to want to live. If you get what I mean.

3. How is it being a single mother, and what is your experience of sexism growing up in Nepal?

I grew up in Hong Kong, Brunei, Singapore, UK, Nepal. Sexism ever present everywhere. You can only change this by the way you raise your children. Let them know that one can always question society + roles.

Being a single mother totally + utterly sucks. I want to live with a community of people + raise mine + their kids together (“mine” – that's a joke. They are mine only in responsibility, but they belong to the world. The world just doesn't want them.)

Being a single mum is shit depressive + again, alienating. In Nepal you're basically a whore if you don't sit at home crying everyday alone in the dark. So if you go against this and try to change your life + perception of being a single mum, you're rendered a 'bad' mum, a whore, a stain. And the other side would be to be seen as a 'strong woman'...like Amazonian, but genderless, asexual. And you are by no means 'allowed' another sexual relation with anyone. If you're a single father or widowed, the first thing people here do is encourage you to get married again

or go out, enjoy life, start again. Not if you're a woman. Women = dangerous, asexual. That's it. I have a hard time getting around these issues in my head. Like I have some young guy friends who are helping me out every now and then with my kids, my situation, who are really nice friends. But I have to be really careful not to get too close; not to hang with them too much for fear of what society is thinking; I have to also be careful that it doesn't look like I'm this cougar seducer or something, even though all I'm doing is being my normal self – a little friendly, honest, and not hiding my situation. So there's always these boundaries I have to be careful not to cross for fear of giving the wrong messages or for fear of just letting go + being me with other people who themselves are just letting go + just being themselves with me too. Same shit as I said above about human beings being fucked up. I think its universal – all these issues. Not just in Nepal. We are so conditioned about what is right + what is wrong. It has become impossible to be free in our minds because we have to move about like programmed suppressed zombies.

4. Are your children going to school at the moment and enjoying it ?

They go to school because they HAVE to because their mother is working + doesn't have time to home school them or because their mother is a wreck + can't juggle work + home duties too well...believe me I tried these past 18 months as a single mum...and I've fallen to exhaustion, so I had to put them in boarding school to cope recently. And it's the snake biting it's tail, this capitalist system – I have to separate from my kids in order to survive + work, yet I have to work in order to pay for their school and all their needs, etc. I am from a fairly well off family in Nepal – my father is an ex gurkha soldier, employed as a mercenary by the British for many years. He came back here with the sterling pound, a wealthy man for Nepal. But it doesn't mean much in the end. You suffer you suffer. You may have a big house

+ house keepers, but if you get sick or if you're dying, you're dying. In the end, if you don't have a community of friends or family, you are nothing. And capitalism breaks that very thing we need in order to exist. Children, parents, we all suffer.

5. You are the first person I have asked about their experience of the earthquake/s earlier this year. What was it like for you, and how does it affect you, your family, your community, and the country nowadays?

As I said above, we all scattered in all directions. Most people in the city fled to their villages because of the very fact of the alienation here.... they were scared + needed to be with their kith + kin. When the shit hits the fan, friends + family are needed, not the capitalist economy. Offices, restaurants, homes were all abandoned; people ran to their families in the hills, even if things were hard there. Also, food + water is more available there than in the city, as is hygiene. We feared a cholera epidemic here because everyone was out camping on the grounds + death was everywhere.

I moved with my kids to Pokhara for some peace of mind. But I still haven't found it because I lacked friends + family...The place is beautiful, nearer the mountains, the forests + rivers. But without love + companionship + camaraderie, one is lost....in a search...I don't know. It takes time to settle from an earthquake. Everyone was numb.

6. What is your opinion about tourism, Thamel, people coming to climb mountains, etc?

I think its fine because that is what western people need to feel their sense of life + we on the other hand, need their dollars. It's an exchange that one cannot really comment on. As long as there is a fair trade, and as long as nobody is imposing their ways on another, and there is respect for differences, we can do this tourist thing. Thamel is just a ghetto of food, music, prostitution, shops, and people genuinely want-

ing to make friends with people from outside so that they can learn something, get exposure. The seedy side will always be there as in any city with a ghetto. The thing is, individual responsibility. We could def use more tourists who practice with restraint + humility. Most come here + **the fact that they are treated like kings + queens gets to their head + they start to do as they please, talk in loud voices about their opinions** + a 'holier than thou' mentality sets in. That can cause all sorts of intricate cultural fuck ups. I'm no sociologist, but I'm sure you know what I mean. There's the flipside where you get the really humble tourist who just thinks all Nepalis are so kind + nice + cannot see that their very presence is changing that Nepali's mind each minute + that a cunning person will take advantage of the naivety.

It must be so hard being a tourist. You just don't realize the impact you are having as you move along these paths of subtle cultural mishaps. **You are not actually perceived as who you think you are being perceived as.** You are a foreigner, whether you like it or not, you will never be one of them. So, accept it + move along quietly. I wouldn't know how else to advise. Do your shopping + move along. You can dig as deep as you want, but you can't ever be one of them + they can't be you. You can speak the language and still not get accepted because your whole mind + education, etc is different; your perception + theirs is different. But that's kind of general what I'm talking about; I'm just really surprised that people don't get it + expect to be best friends with a Nepali on the street + be surprised the next day when that person lets them down or steals their iPad. On the other hand I don't wanna tell tourists to be paranoid. Nepalis are by far the coolest people left on this planet. We have such a deep sense of wanting to look after people, it's a little overwhelming + I don't know where it comes from. Wanting to look good to strangers? I just don't know...

7. What is your opinion about international politics, immigration, capitalism, trade, and the USA, etc?

They're all just words to describe various aspects of the constructs of human nature, according to the way each was born + raised. Stay away, is what I would say here. It will also turn you into a monster.

8. Do you have any art or photos you would like to submit with the interview? I would love photos of the infoshop, or any other political projects!

I can add one recent pic of the new shelf Nozomi + Ben bought – a couple from Brazil + Israel respectively sent me just the other day. They set up the latest incarnation of the Infoshop in Pokhara in my house, while I've been away in Kathmandu on....personal business matters...he he..they have now gone on the guerrilla walk where the revolution in the 90's started here.

I have stuff, but I can't access it just now. You can look up some of my articles or cartoon stuff on Peace News online (look up 'contributer – sareena rai') in the UK which I write for once in a blood moon. They ask me for stuff every now + then (it's the oldest anti-war newspaper in UK. My brother Milan Rai + his partner Emily Johns are editors. She's a political artist + does really lovely black lino prints). Im not a pacifist though.

9. Anything you would like to add?

*If you want to know something,
ask people,
go there,
feel it,
breathe it,
smell it,
be physically there.*

*And if you can't, then
try to experience
something close by.*

*The internet is not
physical, and
nothing beats the
physical movement of
going to someone or
something +
experiencing it.*

*This is the biggest
problem of our
next generation.*

It's all mental.



VEGETARIANISM IS NOT FOR ME.

AT THE AGE OF 20 I FINALLY COMMITTED TO BECOMING A FULL TIME VEGETARIAN. BY THE AGE OF 23 I CHOSE TO BECOME A FLEXITARIAN.

FLEXITARIAN AS UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTICED BY MYSELF IS THE ACT OF FOLLOWING A MOSTLY VEGETARIAN DIET FOR THE MOST-PART BUT BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE TO CONSUME MEAT PRODUCTS IF IT FEELS RIGHT TO DO SO.

WHY DID I MAKE THIS CHANGE? BECAUSE OF FAMILY. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD BEING A VEHICLE OF LOVE GIVEN FROM MY MOTHER, AUNTIES, UNCLES AND FRIENDS. BECAUSE OF THE TRADITION THAT IS EMBODIED IN FOOD.

I'M NOT SURE I WOULD HAVE MADE THE SAME DECISION TO BECOME A FLEXITARIAN HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE FACT THAT I AM A 2ND GENERATION VIETNAMESE-AUSTRALIAN. MOST OF THE FOODS I WAS EATING AS A VEGETARIAN WERE BORROWED RECIPES FROM OTHER CULTURES SUCH AS SOUTH ASIAN CURRIES, MEXICAN BEANS AND RICE, AND BASTARDISED SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE. LIVING IN SOUTHERN AOTEAROA (NZ) MEANT THAT TOFU AND SOY PRODUCTS WERE EXPENSIVE AND HARD TO COME BY, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC INGREDIENTS TO VIETNAMESE CUISINE.

AS I GREW LESS ASHAMED OF MY NON-WHITENESS AND MORE INTERESTED IN RECLAIMING MY HERITAGE, I FELT DISCONNECTED TO THE FOOD I WAS CONSUMING. MY MOTHER, MÁ, HAS 2 CHILDREN. I AM THE ONE WHO ENJOYS COOKING YET I HAD LIVED AWAY FROM HOME IN ANOTHER CITY 1062KM (660 MILES) AWAY.

MÁ GREW UP WITHOUT A MOTHER, HAVING LOST HERS AT THE AGE OF 6. SHE HAS SPENT HER LIFE CONNECTING WITH MATERNAL FIGURES THROUGH SPENDING TIME WITH THEM LEARNING OLD VIETNAMESE RECIPES.

AT THE AGE OF 23, I RETURNED HOME TO THE SAME CITY AS MY MÁ. SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO ACCOMMODATE MY DIETARY CHOICES OVER THE YEARS IN BETWEEN BUT HAVING NO EXPERIENCE COOKING WESTERN FOOD, HAD STRUGGLED TO PROVIDE ME WITH ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF SOY PRODUCTS AS A SOURCE OF PROTEIN. ONE SUMMER I HAD DEVELOPED A SOY INTOLERANCE JUST FROM THE SHEAR AMOUNT I WAS CONSUMING.

NOW YOU CAN CRITICISE ME FOR NOT MAKING MY OWN MEALS BUT LIKE MOST VIETNAMESE MOTHERS SHE NEVER EVEN GAVE ME THE CHOICE NOR OPPORTUNITY TO COOK FOR MYSELF. SHARING MEALS WERE THE ONLY TIMES WE SAT DOWN AND BONDED AS ADULTS. COOKING SEPARATE MEALS MEANT NOT EATING TOGETHER AT ALL. COOKING TOGETHER MEANT SHARING STORIES AND TRADITIONAL FOOD PREPARATION.

I KNEW MY MOTHER'S STORY OF HER FLEE FROM VIETNAM INSIDE OUT, HAVING BEEN TOLD ABOUT EVERY ASPECT OF IT IN COUNTLESS AMOUNTS OF WAYS WHILE SPENDING THIS TIME WITH HER OVER 5 MONTHS. SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE I HAD BECOME VERY DESENSITISED FROM THE TRAUMA THAT EXISTED WITHIN THOSE STORIES.

WHILE VISITING SAN FRANCISCO, A VIETNAMESE FRIEND BROUGHT ME ALONG TO A MONTHLY POT LUCK GATHERING WHERE 1.5 AND 2ND GENERATION YOUNG PEOPLE MEET UP TO PRACTICE THEIR VIETNAMESE. (AS AN ASIDE, I WAS SURPRISED BY THE FACT THAT EVERYONE THERE WAS AN OMNIVORE AS I AM SURROUNDED BY VEGANS AND VEGETARIANS - ALL OF WHOM ARE WHITE. PERHAPS THERE WAS A RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRONG VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY PRESENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO AND THE CULTURE OF FAMILY GATHERINGS AND MEAL SHARING IN VIETNAMESE CULTURE). AT THE POT LUCK THE DOCUMENTARY, "A VILLAGE CALLED VERSAILLES", WAS SCREENED. THE DOCUMENTARY FOCUSED ON THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN EAST NEW ORLEANS. IT WAS CHOSEN AS IT WAS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA.

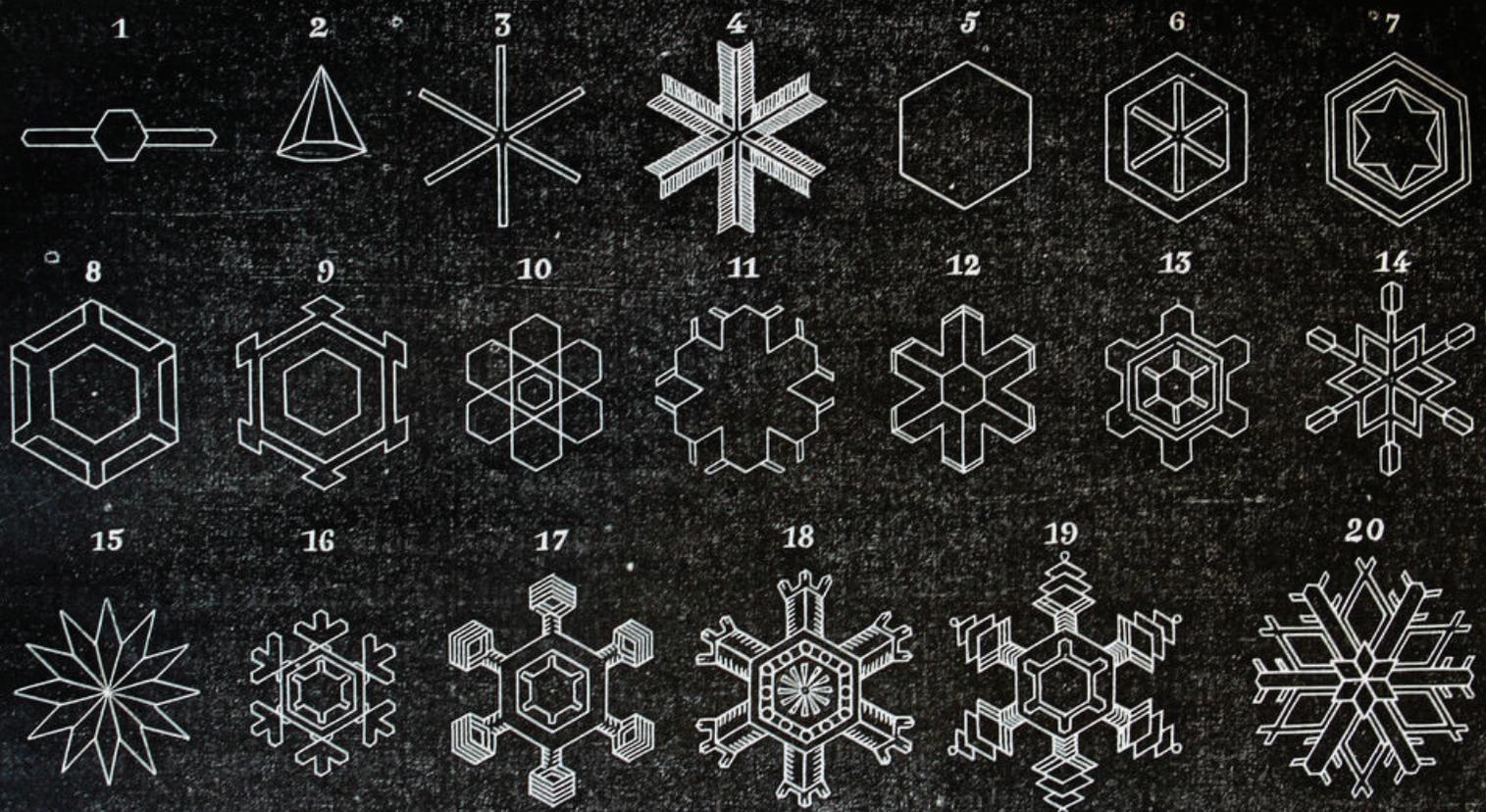
WATCHING INTERVIEWS WITH THE ELDERS AND ADULTS AND HEARING ABOUT THE RE-TRAUMATISATION OF DISPLACEMENT SOME 30 YEARS AFTER THEIR FIRST DIASPORA, AND THEN WATCHING THE AFTERMATH OF REBUILDING HIT HOME FOR ME IN A BIG WAY. HEARING THAT BEING PLACED IN LARGE SHARED LIVING QUARTERS, SOME OF WHICH WERE THE SAME PLACES THEY WERE PUT DURING THEIR FIRST RELOCATION TO THE US, LINING UP FOR FOOD, SHOWERS AND BASIC SUPPLIES AND THEN COMING BACK TO WHAT WAS LEFT OF THEIR HOMES THEY HAD SPENT 30 YEARS WORKING TOWARDS RECONNECTED ME TO MY MOTHER'S STORY.

I AM THANKFUL FOR MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MÁ THAT HAS BEEN FOSTERED BY MY DECISION TO CONSUME MEATY MEALS WITH HER. I BELIEVE NOW THAT IT MATCHES PERFECTLY WITH MY POLITICAL BELIEFS THAT VALUE AND RECOGNISE THE INTERSECTION OF RETAINING CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR DECOLONISATION WHILE STILL MAINTAINING MY ETHICAL BELIEFS TO CHALLENGE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE MEAT INDUSTRY. I AM A 27 YEAR OLD 2ND GENERATION VIETNAMESE-AUSTRALIAN FLEXITARIAN.

GIANG

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Lost in Transition

It's hard to know how to put one foot in front of the other when

1. You don't know where you're trying to go and
2. You're relearning how to walk entirely

What I thought was clear before has no been put on the stand for questioning

With me both the judge and the questioned

With new questions stemming from old stories

Enlightenment on old stories creates questions of my current one and even more questions on the one I am creating

I've been given the power to create only with the catch of losing the supports I thought I'd always stand on.

With each question I dare to ask

One support crumbles, keeps her safe distance or deems me too "lost" to know how to hold.

I've spent enough time convincing them I'm not drowning in sin to feel like I might drown in their indoctrinated heartbreak

I'm trying to walk but my legs call bull shit

Because the ground I'm breaking is as foreign as my blood

When breaking ground feels like breaking skin,

How do I convince my own body that this is returning home ?

To a place we've never been

That our new supports, a chosen family, will hold us where our blood connections don't know how to.

How do I convince myself this trade off won't abandon blood origins that I've warred histories of exclusion acts to stake claim to?

It's an unlikely story that my soul needs, my heart believes, and my gut denies

Leaving me as unsteady as that ground-breaking ground I'm learning to walk on.

Walk on.

Ma-Ma

Had some time to spare *to heal*
To wander, choose a place to wait
A place where I might find you.

I could have gone somewhere to fill up with more noise,
But instead, I went to an empty Chinese restaurant.
I asked for a table for one and began to drink my own personal one pot tea.
Little stone cup by little stone cup...

Noticed the familiar smell of you, MaMa

The only sound was the running water in the overcrowded crab tank and the Emotionally. Deafening.
Sound. of chatting Cantonese women
...drawing upon memories too deep to actually recall, only feel.

I order a wonton noodle soup
Self-consciously wonder what the waitress thinks about me having to order in English, and wait.
Remembering how from time to time your foreign tongue still speaks to me with wishful
thinking...

Did you love me less because she carried more of you than I knew how?
A perfect China-doll face was all it took for one grand-daughter to be cherished over the other
I wonder: if I reminded you of a life lost and a foreign incomplete identity gained.
It's a self-centered fear, I know.
I've heard stories.
Life was never kind to you.
Your disagreeable shell is one of **survival**.

The steaming bowl comes out,
I taste. and the fishy broth brings me back further into those unreachable memories my brain can't describe
but my heart awakens to.

I eat slowly, letting my taste buds scream **belonging** where my American tongue can't.
Food with a relationship so deep, you feel **whole** and undisturbed eating alone.

Food that tells me **there is enough of you in me to be loved**.

Jen Chen
jeffachen.tumblr.com

INTERSECTFEST

POC and DIY

A RECAP & REVIEW. ANNA VO

In Portland OR - where I live - a few of us got together earlier this year to organize a Punks of Color festival. It will be the first of many, we hope.

It was decided during the first open organizing meeting not to restrict the scope of the Fest to strictly “punk” pursuits, and to open it up to POC organizations, non-profits, communities, groups, artists, dancers, and makers of crafts and comics, etc. Mainly to bring people together, to attempt to build a space to allow people to connect, especially across subcultures, and in this case, parts of the city (by inviting groups from the deep east of Portland to join us at the Fest in North Portland).

On the other hand, in order to provide a safe space away from the white gaze, we made most of the Fest POC only, especially the workshop and discussion spaces. We allowed for one event (the “superdooperpunk” show) to include white folks, and knowing that it would attract the most funds, we decided to donate the proceeds to Black Lives Matter Portland, in order for them to get some programs off the ground. That show sold out. And overall, about 300 people attended the entire Fest. The other intentional funneling of resources from white people to POC, was that we accepted donations of food and money from white donors, and asked our white friends to work volunteer hours independent of the Fest - to earn the free use of the venue for the first day of the Fest. This was to ensure that the division and burden of labor did not fall solely upon POC.

The schedule and photos are printed on the following page for your perusal.

*When asked how I feel about the Fest, I thought it was a bonding experience for organizers and attendees (by my observation), and the most powerful moments for me were during the opening ceremonies by the Aztec dance circle, Coatlicue. I can only hope that visitors got something positive or meaningful from the Fest, and that it has sparked future friendships or working relationships amongst some of us here in Portland. This city is renowned for its pervasive whiteness, but I haven't found that to be true in most contexts - except at punk shows. Many POC communities and neighborhoods have been displaced to fringe locations, but if you scratch past the surface, **they are there**, and it's easy (I find) to immerse myself in a predominantly POC place of employment, neighborhood and house to live in, and places to eat, etc. I once heard a person who runs an art and events collective say: “I would include POC artists, but there just aren't any here in Portland”, which in my opinion is **not** true, and reflects lazy or no research.*

People have asked me what the point of intentional community-building is, and sometimes - besides survival, maintaining positive mental health, and to promote further organizing - I don't have a revolutionary answer. It feels good though, and I won't stop. Please feel free to ask or critique anything about this -

anoutrecordings@gmail.com

INTERSECTFEST **-POC- -DIY-**

email punxofcolorpdx@gmail.com for info

Saturday Sept 5th:

Workshops at Center for Intercultural Organizing, 12 - 6pm, POC ONLY

12:30pm - Mad Maps: A Tool for Mutual Support and Radical Care
2pm - Decolonizing Veganism: An Exercise on Identity and Privilege
3:30pm - ReImagining Accountability
4:30pm - Horizontal Oppression in POC communities

Tabling 12 - 6pm:
Vegans of Color
Critical Resistance PDX
Fix My Head Zine
An Out Recordings
Joamette Gil
APANO
Andy Panda Comics
The Borreguita Crafts
Open art/zine/info swap table!

7:30 - 11pm - ALL AGES SHOW, BLACKWATER, ALL WELCOME

--- PROCEEDS GO TO BLACK LIVES MATTER PDX ---

Novelas (hc from Eugene)
Golden Hour (poppy melodic punk)
Mictlan (blistering raw hardcore with melodic licks)
Wretched of the Earth (d-beat post hardcore with Iron Maiden-esque riffs)

Sunday Sept 6th:

Workshops at Anarres Bookshop, 12 - 6pm, POC ONLY

12:00pm - Massage and Bodywork
1:00pm - Card Weaving
2:00pm - DIY Show Booking
3:00pm - POC Sobriety Caucus
4:00pm - Intentional Community Building
5:00pm - Street Art, Stencilling and Stickers (TBC)

Tabling 12 - 6pm:
Vegans of Color
Critical Resistance PDX
Fix My Head zine
An Out Recordings
Going Places zine
Andy Panda Comics
The Borreguita Crafts
Open art/zine/info swap table!

7pm - 9pm - BBQ AND DANCE PARTY, Anarres Bookshop, POC ONLY

7 - 7:30pm - ANNA VO
7:40 - 8:10pm - WIZARD APPRENTICE
8:25 - 8:55pm - TROPIC GREEN (ex-New Bloods)
9pm - onwards - DJs!!





IntersectFest is a D.I.Y space created by and for people of color. This space is a POC only space.

As people of color dedicated to do-it-yourself politics, we see this intentional space as a radical gift to our community.

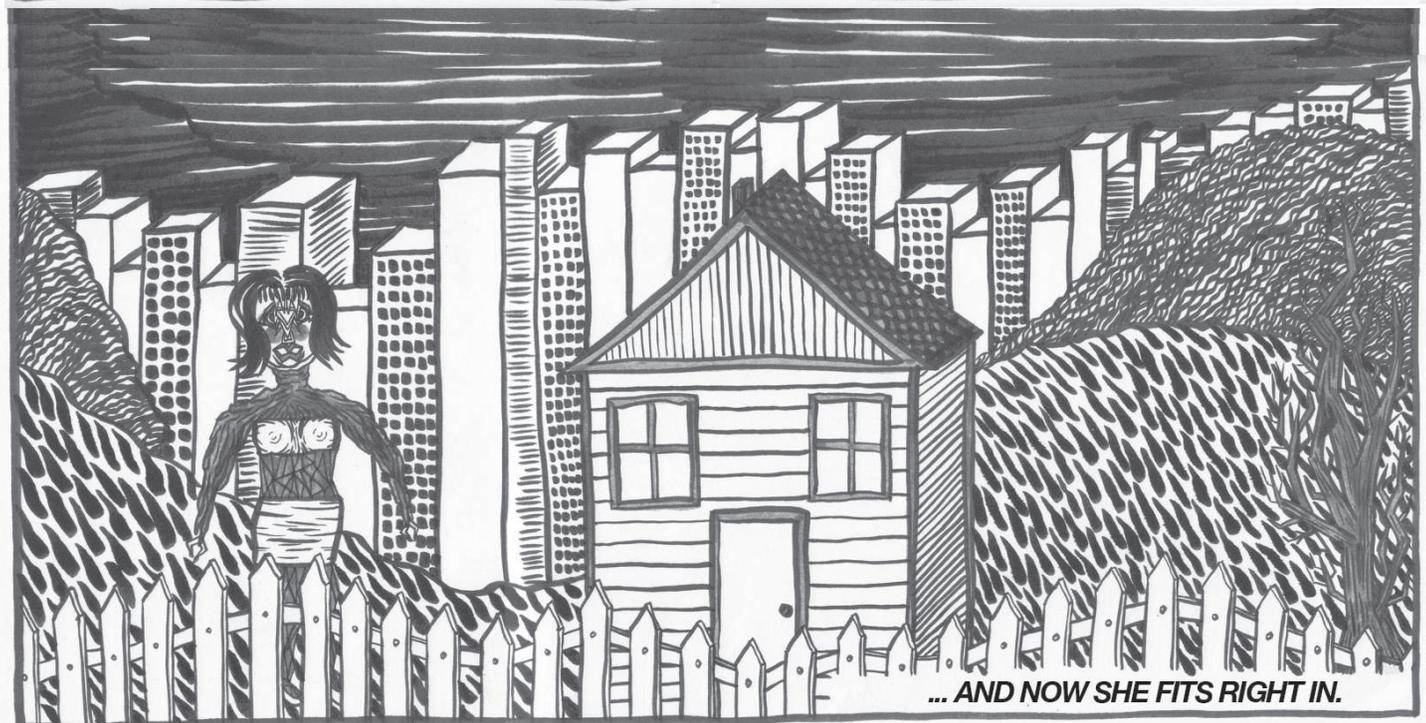
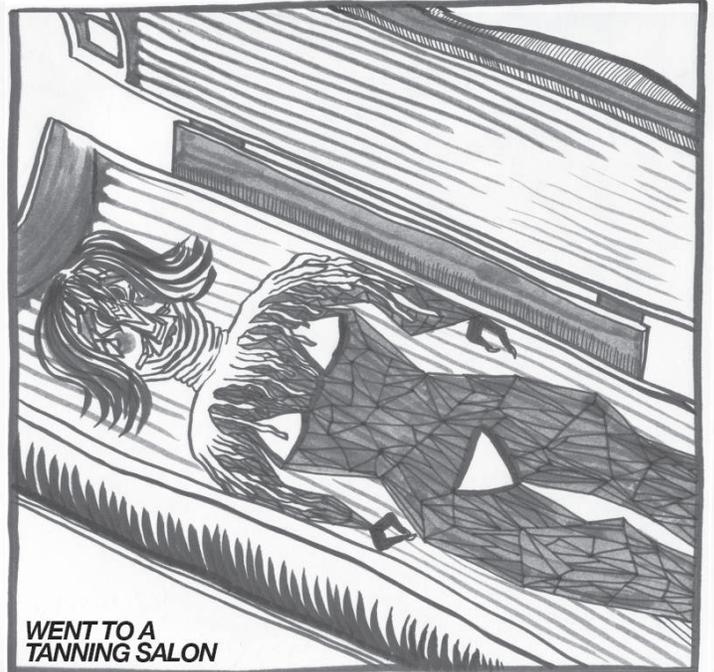
We invite white identified peoples to act in solidarity of this radical act by not entering this POC-only space.

We ask that people who identify as white respect this space as a liberated zone.

We invite white identified people to dismantle the systems of oppression that benefit them.



WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT





I SPEND DAYS LIVING,
NIGHTS TRYING,
A LIFE GRASPING,
TRYING TO BE WHO I AM.

YOU'VE SPENT A MINUTE
TRYING TO CONVINC
YOURSELF
OTHERWISE.

MY ANONYMITY-
TO BE MYSELF
MEANS MORE THAN SUCCUMBING
TO YOUR STANDARDS-
NEVER REALLY BEING
ALIVE



SEE PAST YOUR EXPECTATIONS. PAST YOUR IGNORANCE. PAST PERCEPTION



XXO.
MAIR SIERRA

“Diaspora: Conflict, Discovery, Resolve”

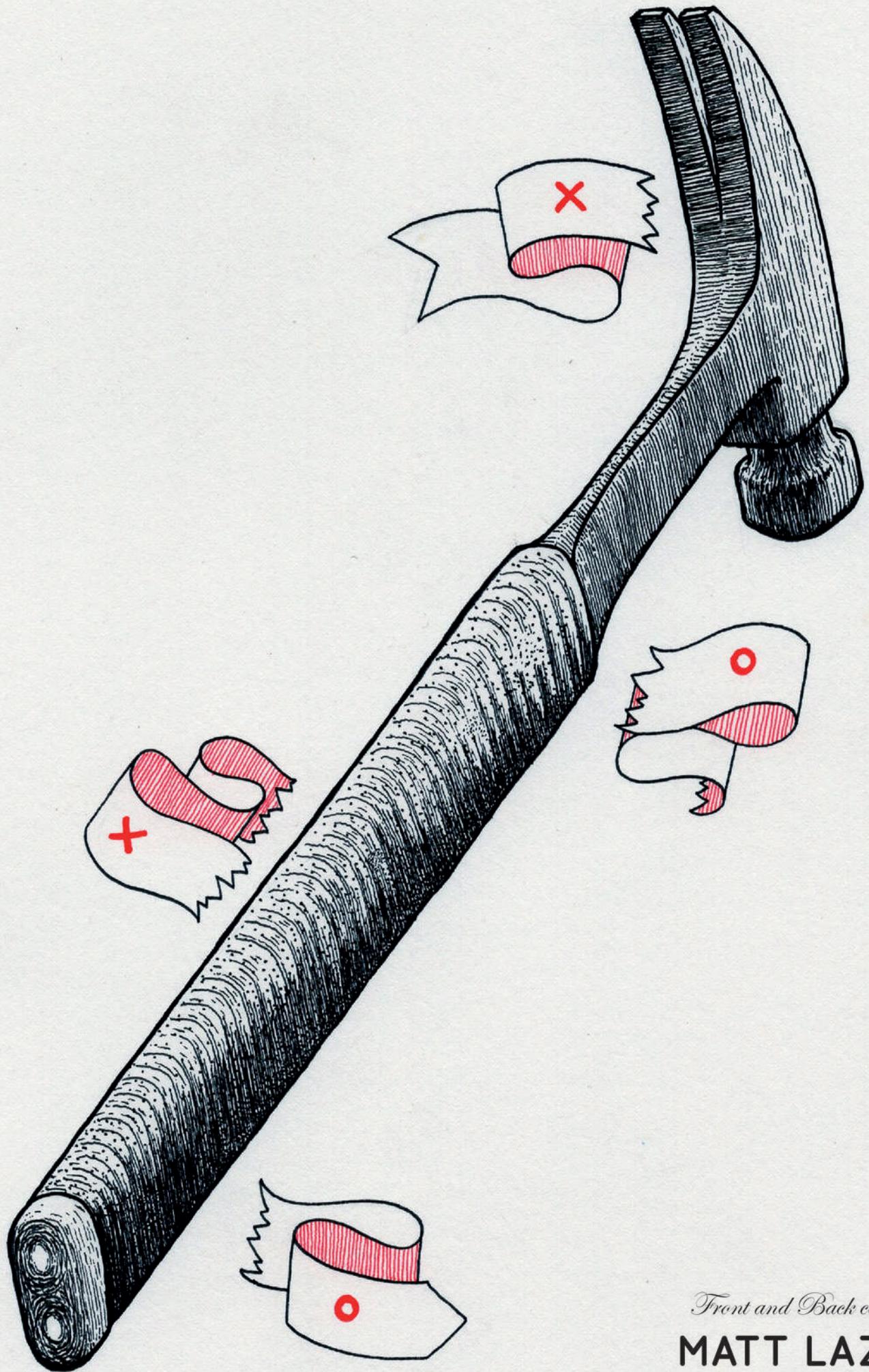
Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Date: 2012

Artist: Tiffany Le
Website: <http://letealegf.prosire.com/>

As part of my capstone thesis on understanding the barriers between first and second generations of Vietnamese-Americans through visual narrative, this project depicts working through the difficulties of conflicting cultures, learning history, and making progress with family.





Front and Back cover by
MATT LAZER