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The School of the Art Institute of Chicago arts, culture, and politics

Special Weed
Issue
April '18





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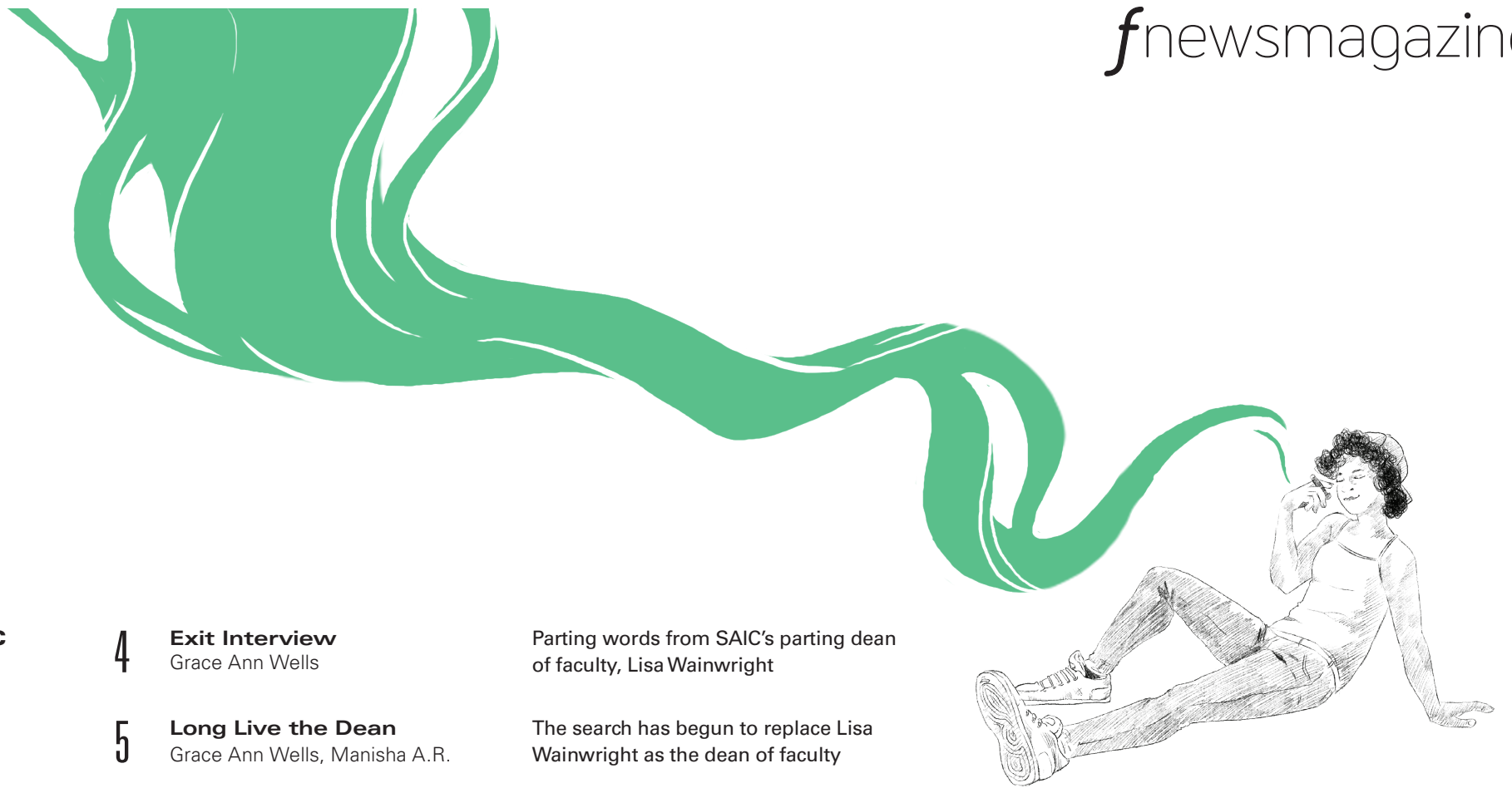
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On the cover
It's like "The Birth of Venus," but with weed.

Cover by Sacha Lusk

Some
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Letter from the Editor

It's finally spring and working on the April issue of F Newsmagazine has been a welcome break from writing my thesis. It is such a relief to channel my creative energy into something that isn't my thesis. My thesis has really taken a toll on my body and mind, and not writing my thesis for even a short amount of time feels like a necessary palate cleanser. Additionally, this 420-friendly issue of F, which isn't my thesis, in the years preceding KD's very first performance piece, "Appearance," two significant political and social shifts had occurred within the Soviet Union which would have had directly and indirectly affected the participating artists: the first being the Thaw under Khrushchev, and the second, the Stagnation under Brezhnev. The rupture in between marked a most significant period of change and uncertainty across the Eastern Bloc. While the citizens of the Soviet Union were battling the so-called lethargy of this liminal historical moment, artists were specifically sensitive to both the changing political and social climate and the physical and – Irena Frumkin

Letter from the Art Director

3 down: stressed
16 across: doesn't
87 across: even
34 down: begin
9 across: to
11 across: describe
14 down: it.

– Annie Leue



Dean of Faculty at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) Lisa Wainwright is stepping down at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year after 21 years of administrative work. During her tenure, Wainwright gave birth to her son while beginning an elected administrative position, removed a man in power from office to protect the institution, used cocktail parties to build relationships between the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) and SAIC, and worked to begin addressing the mistreatment of part-time faculty. That's a lot for someone who rose to power during a time when panty hose was still an essential part of a woman's professional dress. ✓ While she isn't sure where she'll put her collection of art and books in her new office in the Art History, Theory, and Criticism department (I didn't dare ask what she'll do with the set of weights stashed under her bookshelf), she's excited to be in conversation with students again. F Newsmagazine sat down with the powerhouse (and Libra! Who knew!) that is Lisa Wainwright to discuss her time at SAIC.

SAIC’s retiring dean of faculty talks candidly about what’s next for the last museum school of consequence.

Grace Ann Wells

Grace is School News editor at F Newsmagazine. She didn't know what else to put in her bio, so just picture her chugging coffee somewhere.

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I was looking you up, and there’s actually an Encyclopedia Britannica entry about you. You’re a big deal! So, you started doing administrative work in 2002 as interim dean of graduate studies?

Lisa Wainwright

No, I started my admin experience here as the elected undergraduate division chair. That was before we had undergraduate and graduate deans. I had my kid in 1998; in 1997 I started as the undergraduate division chair. The faculty elected me to that position, and I did that for five years. That’s when I knew that I was stimulated by administration. Then there was a failed search for a graduate dean, so Carol Becker, who was the dean of faculty, put me in as the interim graduate dean. They opened up the search and I applied, and I got the job. I did that for five years.

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And then you moved to interim dean of faculty.

LW

Yeah, I was the interim dean for two or three years; it was a very bumpy period in the history of the school. [We had a president] who was “not a good fit” — I’m saying “not a good fit” in air quotes. The institution wanted stability after he left. So, they asked me to present my materials and meet a committee that assessed my portfolio and my strengths and then I became the dean.

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It sounds like the environment has changed a lot in your time here. Broadly, what are some things that you’ve noticed that have changed throughout your time as faculty dean?

LW

There’s more transparency around what happens with the administration now. Elissa Tenny brought a level of transparency and professionalism to what we call the 8th floor. It allowed me as the Dean to do more thinking around the curriculum and hire more faculty. I think one of the things that’s changed is our relationship to the museum. We’ve never had such a strong relationship to the museum. We’re across the street from each other, but we don’t necessarily have enough time with one another. I really pushed [for] that, and I think it has yielded bountiful projects and great relationships. The school and the museum have a much closer relationship than we ever did.

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For a lot of students, the museum feels built for us. Originally, it did exist for the school. I think it’s important for students to feel like the museum is accessible.

LW

We’re the last remaining museum school of consequence, and what does that mean? How do we utilize this resource, and how do they utilize us as a great resource? I think what’s also changed over the last decade certainly is our increased commitment to diversity. There is [more] work to be done, no question. It takes so much work and it’s really important work. I think the institution has grown up and are leaders now in how we think about matters of diversity as it pertains to art and design schools.

We’ve got [to show] our work in crits; we’re naked all the time. So we have these really intense conversations about identity, about politics, about culture through form, of course. We have intense conversations around here because we’re in the field of intense conversations through form. The diversity questions that the country is grappling with, that’s what we’ve been grappling with too, in a really raw ways as makers.

In tandem with that, I guess, is Title IX. How do we understand and work within this new climate, both with all the federal regulations and our commitment to the rights of individuals? There’s been a lot of work there.

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Another thing that’s drastically changed is the cost of tuition over the past 20 years. How has this economic factor impacted your role here?

LW

Well, it’s a complicated issue because we are a tuition-driven institution, so we build our budget based on enrollment and tuition. We can’t make drastic changes just because we believe we should. We do believe we should. The cost of tuition is a real concern for all of us. That’s one of the reasons we went from 132 credits to 126 credits. I have been an advocate for keeping the tuition down particularly on the graduate level. You are correct: It’s too expensive. It’s a national problem. But that doesn’t shuck our responsibility. It’s the same with part-time faculty teaching — and I know that we pay our part-timers more than average, more than the market. [But] I don’t give a shit about the market: We need to pay our part-timers more. We just do. You can quote me on that because I’ve said it all along. Where do I cut — that’s the question. If we pay them more, what do I cut? The cost of tuition is insane.

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The cost for my individual credit hours for one class is the same, if not more, than the total amount my professor will make to teach that class for the entire semester. There are part-time faculty members who make \$6,000 a class and it costs me \$9,000 to be one student in it. Has the quality of education and facilities changed in relation to those costs?

LW

I like to believe that we spend our dollars well. We have an issue with the cost of education, there’s no question about it. We all know it, the president knows it. We also know that there’s an issue with part-time faculty and their pay. I’m all about equity for part-timers. And, we spend our dollars well. That’s the problem. We’re a downtown campus, we need studios. The real estate is so effing expensive. I wish we had more undergraduate studios. We have some amenities, but not like other colleges that have fancy housing and fancy meal plans. We spend a lot of money on technology; we have to. We spend a lot of money on the facilities. Keeping the class count low is important; I don’t want to be a school with

a 300-student class of art history. I don’t think we’re throwing away money. But what we can cut is a really big question.

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Have you seen changes in content and materials the faculty and students are interested in?

LW

Yeah, the curriculum keeps adjusting in relation to faculty and student interest. A successful art school is a group of amazing designers, fabulous faculty, and great students and you put them together. We are just so hungry to address the world around us and we are so fortunate to be able to do that through visual means.

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What are you going to miss most about being dean, aside from the office?

LW

Working with Elissa Tenny. She’s so cool. It’s nice, also, making final decisions. I have the final word as dean and it’s very satisfying. Having the final word, I’ll miss that.

Wainwright will return to SAIC to teach at the graduate level following a one year hiatus.

continued over there



The search has begun to replace Lisa Wainwright as the dean of faculty. Here are the candidates.

What That Dean Do.

The dean of faculty (DOF) position is a key and long-standing role at SAIC. The dean is the internal representative for the faculty, communicating with students and administration, etc. The dean works closely with the faculty senate, its committees, and other shared governance groups to ensure that the faculty’s ideas and opinions are incorporated into the discussion of academic initiatives. The DOF reports to the provost and oversees a team that includes dean of undergraduate studies, dean of graduate studies, dean of budget and administration, the chair of the faculty, the director of architecture, interior architecture, and designed objects, the director of the visiting artists program, and is supported by the assistant to the dean. With SAIC’s deep connections to one of the world’s greatest cities and museums, the breadth, independence, scope, and scale of the dean’s role is unique. The dean of faculty joins a collegial community of professionals dedicated to myriad practices and excellent teaching.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

- Lead the recruitment and retention of an eminent faculty
- Collaboratively refine the academic vision
- Maintain and develop diversity and inclusion at an institutional level
- Strengthen administrative structures
- Support academic innovation and new curricular opportunities
- Serve as a thought leader and public spokesperson for art and design education and their role in society

Grace Ann Wells & Manisha A.R.

Grace is the school news editor at F News-magazine; she didn’t know what else to put in her bio, so just picture her chugging coffee somewhere. Manisha is a writer, bookmaker, and wine-based life form.



Martin Berger

Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Professor of History of Art and Visual Culture at the University of California Santa Cruz



Kymberly N. Pinder

Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico



Stefano Harney

Academic Director, Masters of Science in Management at Singapore Management University

As he put it, Martin Berger’s decision to pursue an administrative position at SAIC came after realizing such a role could give him the chance to “make the kinds of changes that make the lives of students and my fellow teachers better.” This sentiment was echoed later when he stated that “structural change is what we need in society, and that is why I’m interested in administrative work.”Berger’s art practice focuses

on images in art and culture that visualize the constructs of race and gender. The widely-published author described his practice as “making visible things that have otherwise been invisible.” In his presentation, Berger emphasized the need to view whiteness as a lens through which Europeans see the world. Berger envisions a school environment efficiently run without administrative interference in the classroom. He said, “academic freedom is a paramount value of any institution,” and that “professors need academic freedom in their teaching as long as it doesn’t harm students.” Ample time in his presentation was dedicated to discussing student debt and students’ ability to get (or not get) jobs after graduation. He emphasized an interest in providing strong liberal arts education alongside technical training in order to improve students’ chances of success in the workplace. Berger made note of the importance of international students, SAIC’s relationship to Chicago Public Schools, and SAIC’s public support of diversity, though he had a critique of the latter, as well. “If a corollary of the effort to diversify is that a large group of black and brown kids leave here with debt and can’t make a living, we’ve failed them.” Berger’s phrasing when discussing technical versus liberal arts education struck a chord with Painting and Drawing Department Chair Terry Meyers, who asserted that technical training was extremely important to students, and the reason that many of them attend the school.

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[“If a corollary of the effort to diversify is that a large group of black and brown kids leave here with debt and can’t make a living, we’ve failed them.”](#)”

“Training isn’t sufficient,” responded Berger. “We need to provide students an education beyond [technical] skills, [which] only take you so far. The vast majority of our students won’t support themselves as painters. It’s not universal that students have the written skills to talk about their work, and it’s imperative that they graduate with those skills.” Berger’s sincere interest in offsetting the cost of attending SAIC was expressed throughout his presentation. “It’s appalling if students leave with debt and don’t graduate,” he said. It’s our fault if students are failing.” When asked by F Newsmagazine whether Berger planned to address the widening financial divide in institutions of higher education between part-time faculty and upper-level administrators, Berger said he is “actively interested in working on that issue,” and that he “understands that 70 percent of [SAIC’s] classes are taught by part-time faculty.”

In her work as a scholar, Kymberly Pinder has chosen to explore art being made outside traditional art institutions, and public murals in particular. She spoke to her experience as a woman of color in an academic ecosystem composed mostly of white men. “I’ve always amplified and embraced my real and perceived marginalized status as a woman of color in academia,” Pinder said early on in her presentation. She shared several anecdotes over the course of her time, illustrating how she challenged what was expected of her. She described an incident where one professor wanted her to write about “good art,” i.e., art made and displayed inside of art institutions and museum spaces. (Her book, “Painting the Gospel: Black Public Art and Religion in Chicago” tackles this subject.) The former Chicagoan chose to spend the rest of her allotted time and much of the Q&A portion discussing the importance of commu-

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[“I’ve always amplified and embraced my real and perceived marginalized status as a woman of color in academia.”](#)”

nity engagement and her interest in bringing diversity to the administration. While complimenting SAIC’s access to high-end technology for art-making, Pinder hinted at redirecting the funds to different resources and needs on campus. “I just had a wonderful tour over at the Columbus Building, seeing all those new and improved studio spaces that you have with a lot of extra technology like 3D printers and CNC cutters,” she said. “I mean, we’re not making it any less expensive.” Pinder went on to express how she intends to fundraise for scholarships, develop partnerships to access spaces for students and getting donors to pay for the high-end equipment was her way to “offer something that is top notch and current but also make sure it’s affordable ... We all know that art education never pays for itself — and never will.” Using a quote by David Hammons (“art happens when you leave the gallery”), she

segued into a session about meshing her experience as a professor with that of an administrator. She made reference to her experience in dealing with misunderstandings about art education at UNM and inter-departmental issues. She stated that she once resolved the conflict about the validity of an art practice with a science professor by equating collaboration on an art project to co-authoring research papers. Questioned about how she intended to make the school campus a safe space for students, Pinder responded by redirecting this responsibility to faculty and offering to support students when “they come into [her] office.” Pinder appeared to be heavily focused on pedagogical adjustments to the curriculum, less on direct administrative or policy amendments. Pinder said she hopes to equip SAIC staff with tools they can use to encourage each student to have a meaningful art practice.

Founder of “nomadic study collective” School for Study, Stefano Harney has published extensive writing on the topic of race, power, and colonialism. Described by some as a “maverick,” Harney started his presentation describing his upbringing in Berkeley in the 1960s. (His family later moved to Canada where his father founded a government-backed anti-racism agency.) In college, Harney said he was “deeply immersed in black studies” and was “trying as much as possible not to impose a voice but to make space for the voice of the community.” Harney explained his interest in “working with others to develop holistic changes to curriculum” via an administrative position. In addressing administrative power, Harney shared a personal failure in his own use of power; he learned that “power is lonely.” Harney did not address how his position and privilege as a white, cisgendered, American-born man would be balanced against the additional power he would gain as dean of a largely female and international institution, though Harney’s anti-capitalist jokes landed well. The questions he posed seemed an appropriate fit for a student body that regularly questions capitalism, race, and colonization in their studies. Harney’s interest in re-thinking business schools was the subject of some discussion. “I’m pretty much certain that race is what

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[“What if we call business post-colonial capitalism? How can we integrate critiques of race and colonization into business school?”](#)”

business produces. That’s its product,” he explained. “How do we refuse this market? An institution like [SAIC] might be able to protect itself by working a more demand-side version of things.” Because of the economic and racial divides he feels capitalism creates, a large portion of Harney’s candidate presentation focused on removing elements of capitalism from higher education entirely. He outlined aspirations to see SAIC function like an artist collective, where creatives create their own society and set their own terms by which to socially and artistically reproduce. On the subject of faculty pay and student debt, Harney emphasized the importance of faculty to be free to unionize. “Because of student debt, we increasingly live in a society of the few and the many,” he said. “The importance of retaining a democratic framework in our institution couldn’t be greater. We are not democratic

if we are not fair internally.” During his Q&A session, Harney kept his responses vague and academic. Perhaps the best example of this was when a faculty member questioned why Harney did not note a single female influence, collaborator, or family member in his presentation. He responded with an example incorporating one female co-worker, but left the question largely unanswered.

Weed-free at SAIC

By Simone Viteri Barmettler

There are many stereotypes projected onto art students. To some people, we are just a bunch of all-black wearing eccentrics who like looking at naked people and engaging in illegal substance consumption. Smoking weed has been scientifically linked with increased creativity, but as with all stereotypes, this simply doesn't apply to everyone. It's a popular substance at any university, and its familiar, musky smell can be found anywhere from dorm elevators to house parties.

Cannabis consumption levels have risen steadily over the years, as decriminalization and legalization across the nation rise, making weed safer and easier to obtain. This is not necessarily a bad thing. THC has multiple medicinal benefits, some associated with easing the symptoms of degenerative diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis or Parkinson's.

According to the administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Michele Leonhart: "Marijuana is far less harmful to human health than most other banned drugs and is less dangerous than the highly addictive but perfectly legal substances known as alcohol and tobacco." As for recreational uses, marijuana use has become a common activity for people to participate in and become exposed to as early as their teenage years. Besides the simple act of sharing a joint, participating in the same activities and helping each other not get caught creates a "bond among smokers." Also, cultural factors associated with weed create a phenomenon that can be seen in movies, popular music, and even trendy clothing.

What does it imply in the modern age to fully abstain from smoking weed?

The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion reports that 52 percent of Americans, 18 years or older, have tried marijuana at some point in their lives. As weed is often compared to alcohol in terms of safety and substance abuse, this statistic can be juxtaposed with that of the National Institute of Health (NIH), which states that 84 percent of American adults have had an alcoholic drink at least once.

However, a surprising amount of college-aged people have chosen to quit smoking pot or abstain from using the substance altogether. In fact, over 50 percent of college students today are choosing to pass. The most common reason they give when asked, "So, you don't smoke?" is that it gives them anxiety. This is an instantly accepted response to abstaining from smoking, as the vast majority of smokers have had at least one instance in which they've been uncomfortably high.

An SAIC student who identified as a recreational smoker, stopped consuming cannabis for a month altogether after smoking too much one night lead to a panic attack and feeling anxious for at least a week after the experience. Many of those who have similar moments of panic while high take temporary "breaks" from weed, but find that once they start again they don't experience that kind of anxiety anymore. There are also some people who cannot smoke weed at all because every time they do, it gives them overbearing anxiety, which could just be avoided by steering clear of weed altogether. Anxiety isn't the only reason why young adults have chosen not to smoke weed. Ariana Rubin, a photography student at SAIC, explains, "I really don't want to hurt my lungs, or my voice, because I sing." Despite her decision not to smoke, she emphasizes that she has not felt pressured to do so, nor has she felt left out from socializing with those who do. Justine Guzman, another student at SAIC, has also chosen not to smoke as she "never felt the need to [and] didn't want to start just because of peer pressure," adding that she didn't like the idea of not being in control of herself.

Overall, it seems that there isn't a wide divide between smokers and non-smokers. Both of the students who said they abstained from smoking mentioned that they had friends who did, and overall did not impose any judgements on them. Especially in art school; there is a tight community due to the similarities in our career paths and interests that doesn't seem to waver depending on what substances we choose to use, or not use.

Simone Viteri is a student in the visual critical studies department, representing (and missing) Ecuador.

Collaborative Expansion

At SITE Galleries, Jasper Goodrich and Alden Burke have a visual conversation

By Manisha A.R.

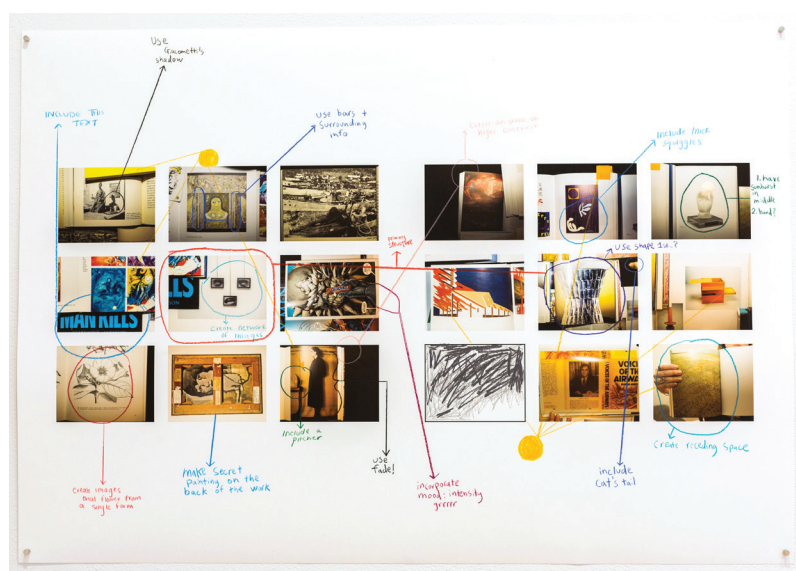
As I stepped into the SITE Galleries opening reception for “How to Dig a Hole Outside of Itself,” I was surprised by the sheer amount of work on display. Pieces were everywhere: placed high on the wall; almost touching the ceiling; generously spread out on the floor. There was a lot of color, too: bright yellows, reds, blues, a few glimpses of green — even white felt less like background and more like color in the works that were on display.

Unframed and held up on the wall with small magnetic circles, each print was a detailed composition of a wild idea that had been doodled, sketched, and painted. Using an assortment of media from acrylic paints and digital photographs to graphite, collage, and colored pencil on paper, Jasper Goodrich (MFA Printmedia) and Alden Burke (MA Art History) have sparked a conversation about the benefits of sharing ideas.

Process, ideas, inspiration, critique, feedback, profound words, and provocative imagery usually find their way into our notebooks. Scribbled into the margins, hastily saved as a note or sent as a text message, artists salvage the different inspirations they find for their work as they go about their daily lives. “Idea Chart: AB + JG 2/Paintings” (2018) is one example of a conversation two art students might have. Reminiscent of a mind map, “Idea Chart” can take the viewer in any direction they choose.

I heard someone next to me whisper, “This is just like his studio, typical Jasper. He has artwork put up everywhere.” I have not had the opportunity to visit his studio, but here is what Burke had to say in a Facebook status that announced the show: “The first time I did a studio visit with Jasper, I was left with a specific feeling: light, energized, alive, and excited about all of the amazing people and opportunities I was suddenly surrounded by.”

In a personal statement on the Printmedia Department website, Goodrich talks about building an archive of his ideas and daily inspiration: “The archivist in me says to inventory these ideas. I will create a large set of tags/keywords for each idea. Maybe even 50 tags. They could include categories such as landscape, figure, funny, sad, composition, formal, color, and on and on. So, if I ever wanted to make a painting about a sad figure in the landscape with a formal composition and hints of pink, I could search just that and a list of ideas would appear.” “Ideas to Objects” (2018) is a selection of objects placed on a shelf with another visualization of a list on paper using graphite and markers placed above the shelf.



It's an example of an exchange of ideas between Burke and Goodrich.

In this show, Burke is offering Goodrich a new pair of eyes; in exchange, Goodrich offers Burke collaborative reign. Together, they have created a new series of works that invite viewers to participate. Goodrich's work is a (great) hot mess of textures, colors, prints, shapes, and patterns. “Family Tree” (2018) is a thorough exploration of the concept of a family tree both as a physical representation on paper as well as a concept in itself. By assembling his prints using an array of mediums, from Xerox to oil paint, Goodrich recreates the shape of a tree.

Meanwhile, Burke's academic interests lie in “the parergon as a framing device in conceptual and performative practices.” Her interest as an academic pushes Burke to parse out Goodrich's vast archive of ideas and stored inspiration from which she curates the show. Challenging the traditional role given to curators, Burke took on a more participatory

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The more I looked at the works, the more my mind unwound at the endless possibilities each work presented.

”

role. Burke didn't simply curate, she made her own art in collaboration with Goodrich.

The more I looked at the works at SITE's “How to Dig a Hole Outside of Itself,” the more I saw the endless possibilities each work presented. Each piece forced me to reflect on the relationships I share with artists and the different ways they play out in the work. It makes a person wonder how all those conversations, critiques, friendly banter, or even emails play into every artist's process.

Manisha is a writer, bookmaker, and wine-based life form.



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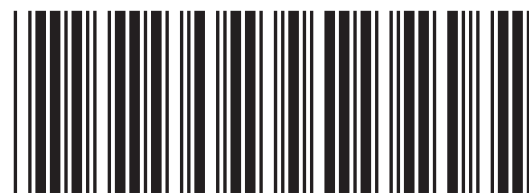
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"Catfish" | Image courtesy of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, City of Chicago

Wild Cards

Tangled culture is reflected in
Nina Chanel Abney's "Royal Flush"

By J. Howard Rosier

Few spectators took a neutral position on former President and First Lady Barack and Michelle Obama's presidential portraits. Amy Sherard and Kehinde Wiley — prominent artists in museums, galleries, and art schools, yet hardly household names — chose decisively interpretive stances on their subjects. Like the Obamas themselves, the achievements (or failures) of the paintings lie in the eye of the beholder. It's difficult, if not impossible, to get a "real sense" of the the first black presidential family; the artists felt it better to articulate the thorniness of the discourse surrounding them, and let the chips fall where they may.

One gets a sense, looking at the paintings of Nina Chanel Abney, that this trend in painting isn't an aberration, so much as an

official acknowledgement of our shift in taste. Abney, a Harvey, Illinois native, whose first solo exhibition is currently on view at the Chicago Cultural Center, rides many fine lines. A handful of paintings on display — "Untitled, 2013" and "Untitled (Yo, 123), 2015" — are rendered in grayscale, revealing a formal proficiency contingent less on hue than on texture, while most of her work is recognizable from its confluence of colors. Profoundly interested in narrative, the works refuse to show a clear arc. Rather, the viewer moves along a series of simple shapes and vaguely-familiar images, forming a composite in their mind. Unabashed in her depiction of social issues such as police brutality, global warfare, and interracial adoption, she refuses to pick a side, forcing viewers to accept the middle ground between sides.

Part of this is achieved through a simple juxtaposition of images. "Beauty in the Beast," for example, shows a white man and woman in blackface — one holds a black baby, the other holds a piglet. The checkerboard floor they stand on, a t-shirt that says "360," and a tattoo that reads "Rebel" together manage to bundle together the white savior complex, society's ever-shifting viewpoints on integration, and the fetishization of marginalized peoples.

Meanwhile, "Make it Reign" shows a pair of German Shepherds barking at a stripper who resembles Iggy Pop in his prime more than the women on staff at Starlets or Magic City. Here, Abney makes inseparable the history of institutional racism and the subjugation of women, simply through changing the color of her subject's skin.

"Pool Party at Rockingham #2" shows two gay, interracial couples playing chicken by a

pool. Does a scene of two white men riding piggyback on two black men call to mind the promise of our post-racial society, or is this a mandingo fight from our antebellum past? The black man with a lighter skin tone is brandishing an erect white phallus; the flock of doves flapping at the top of the painting (as well as the words "he" and "she" framing its upper-left and center-right) allude to some semblance of unity. Or does the hierarchical positioning of the words articulate the emasculation of black men by a white world afraid of black male sexuality? The floating dollar signs and the "XXX" do much to muddle it.

Given her emphasis on racial politics, it's worth looking at Abney in the context of Kerry James Marshall, an accomplished painter whose commitment to showing black lives has unfortunately allowed him to be used as shorthand for representational justice. Abney also seems concerned with the parameters of blackness; both "Untitled (IXI Black)" and "Untitled (XXXXXX)" show black police officers in a position of power when pitted against white protesters. But where Marshall's radicalism arises from making blackness more visible in the absence of whiteness, Abney's smashes blackness and whiteness together — slices each into pieces and jumbles them into an angular collage. Oftentimes, it comes off as a mess, but that's because we are.

Taken this light, Abney's formal tendencies more closely resemble the crumbled, pipe-cleaner cubism of Stuart Davis. Her clashing primary colors and layered shapes thrillingly repurpose abstraction for our chaotic century. Once upon a time, deviating from representation gestured toward an avant-garde, intellectual purity. In Abney's universe, doing so articulates topics discussed with such abundance that the resulting narratives conjure sighs of exasperation rather than ah-ha moments. Indeed, their tangle represents our culture's lack of them.

J. Howard Rosier (MFAW '18) is the Arts Editor at F Newsmagazine. He is probably wearing a blazer and cradling a stack of papers.



Nina Chanel Abney | Image courtesy of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, City of Chicago.

WEED BETWEEN THE LINES

A reading list for
pothead bookworms

By Delaney Eubanks

Want to fact-check? “Weed: The User’s Guide” by David Schmader is the book for you

The U.S. is in a golden age of weed. After years of prohibition, it is beginning to be decriminalized in many states. It is also legal for medical purposes in many states, including Illinois. To learn your rights, read “Weed: The User’s Guide,” by David Schmader. The author is witty and blunt (lol) when it comes to the most important weed facts, including strains, recipes, safety, and legality.

Wanna feel less awkward and paranoid? Read “Bossypants” by Tina Fey, probably

Fey writes about growing up funny and what it’s like being a goofy oddball in room full of men. She has a wonderful sense of humor when it comes to breaking glass ceilings. If you’ve been mansplained to recently, pick this book up. And if you haven’t read it yet, where have you been since 2011?? (If you get stoned and read it you can pretend it is *still* 2011 and Obama is still president! Turn off all your notifications and just take time to laugh, because how long has it been since you did that?)

Love myths and magic? “Epic Celtics Myths and Tales” is a must-read

A page-turner with a beautiful gilded green cover, this book is sectioned into oral histories of witchcraft, magic tales of giants and ghosts, fairies, and sea-folk origins and legends. This one is good for anyone who loves “Game of Thrones.” If you typically watch television after lighting up, consider this book instead.



Smoking is enjoyable, and so is reading — so why not combine the two? Behold, a list of stoner books. All of these books are exploratory in scope, from in-depth explorations and descriptions of cannabis, to Odyssey-esque quests. A few titles speak to the sensation of smoking, the sense of wonder and curiosity that come with a spliff. ✨ For those of us who are often distracted when smoking, this list is perfect. There are titles that include illustrations, rhyming, and allegories for your mazelike mind. ✨ So lay back, relax, and enjoy the lit-erature.

Haven't read *The Phantom Tollbooth* in a while? Check "The Phantom Tollbooth" out

Written by Norton Juster with illustrations by Jules Feiffer, "Tollbooth" is good for anyone looking to twist their perception of the world. Possibly the best book of all time, it tells the story of a young boy who has grown bored with his life. The day he concludes this, he receives in the mail a mysterious tollbooth. The tollbooth leads him to another land where he runs into a whole host of unusual and extraordinary characters. The entire book is an allegory and everything feels new and interesting every time you read it. "Phantom Tollbooth" is like "Alice and Wonderland" but less contentious and not yet ruined by Hollywood.

Feel like getting lost in imagined landscapes? "Redwoods" is for you

Writer and illustrator Jason Chin intended "Redwoods" for children, but its images and interesting facts make it a worthy adult read. The story follows a young child on a subway trip who happens upon a magical book about redwood trees. The book leads the boy to a redwood forest, where he is dwarfed by the most humongous trees in the world. The story line makes you want to take a walk in the woods (preferably while toking.) What a luxury that would be for us city kids!

Looking to escape into an adventure? Try out the "The Children of Blood and Bone"

One night, magic disappears from protagonist Zélie Adebola's world: A ruthless king has targeted and killed magical people, leaving Zélie without a mother. In Tomi Adeyemi's amazing debut book, Zélie goes on a campaign to outfox the monarch from eradicating magic forever, fighting with a vengeance to return magic to her people. The book is best enjoyed in a cloud of smoke, candles, and incense lit. Just like you.

Delaney wrote this article. Thanks, Delaney.



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WHAT TO DO IN CHICAGO

DISPENSARY



ENCYCLOWEEDIA BR/CANN/BIS

All you need to know about the devil’s lettuce but were too paranoid to ask

By Sarah Miller

Whether you’re a **tok**er or a non-toker, the way of the weed is not always common knowledge — but it should be. There’s a science behind the forbidden fruit, and that science can answer lots of the questions you may have about getting high or why so many people are talking about and smoking weed.

As articulated in the hempfarm.org library, weed is a derivative of the hemp plant. Durable and used throughout history for multiple purposes, the most useful hemp plant is called Cannabis Sativa. The parts of the hemp plant — seed, fiber, pulp, and oil — have applications for all kinds of products, such as paper, fuel, and much more. (See p. 20) “Weed,” aka, Mary Jane, reefer, devil’s lettuce, pot, ganja, kush, “art supplies,” is the name for the blossoms of the Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica hemp plants.

Sativa strains have long, thin leaves. They are typically described as producing an energizing and uplifting brain high. Sativa strains generate creative thinking, and are typically more potent than Indica strains. They are used to treat depression and eating disorders. Common examples of Sativa strains are Maui Wowie, Green Crack, and Sour Diesel.

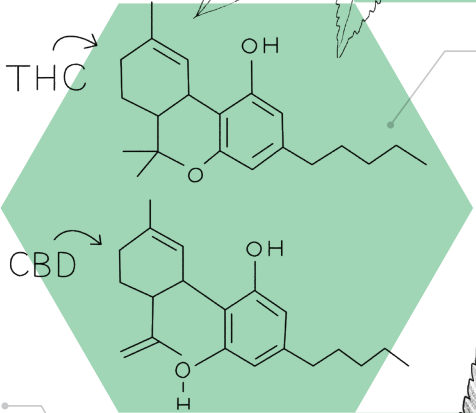
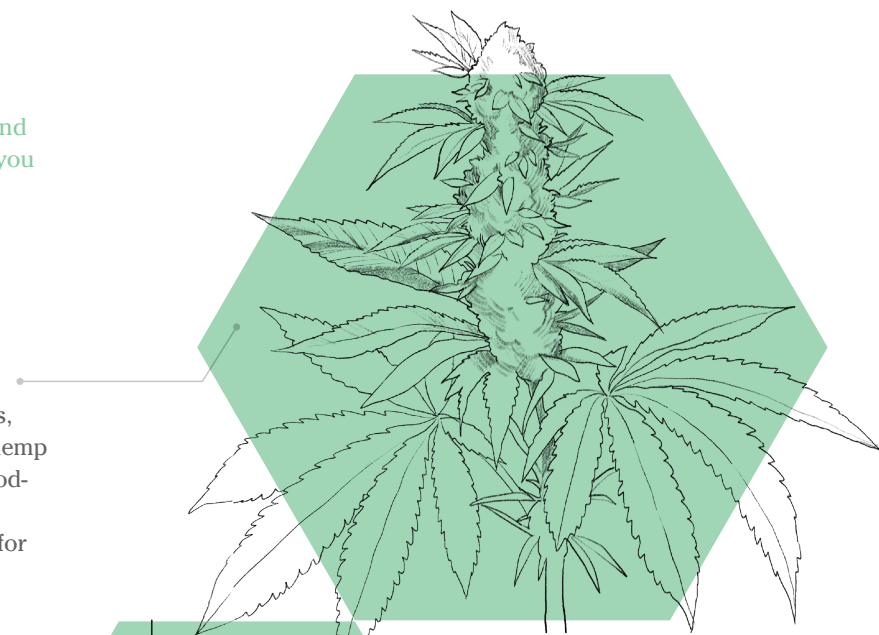
Indica strains have broad leaves and grow in colder climates with short seasons (wink, wink.) Indicas are known to produce a physically sedative high, which can be perfect for watching a movie or before going to bed. Indica is the strain most often prescribed medicinally because it functions as a pain reliever, sleep aid, anti-inflammatory, anticonvulsant, and anxiety reliever. Popular, if unofficial, names of Indica strains include Granddaddy Purple, Bubba Kush, and Northern Lights.

Genetically, indicas and sativas can be combined in order to make hybrid strains that exhibit characteristics of both strains. Popular hybrid strain examples include Blue Dream, OG Kush, Pineapple Express, and White Widow.

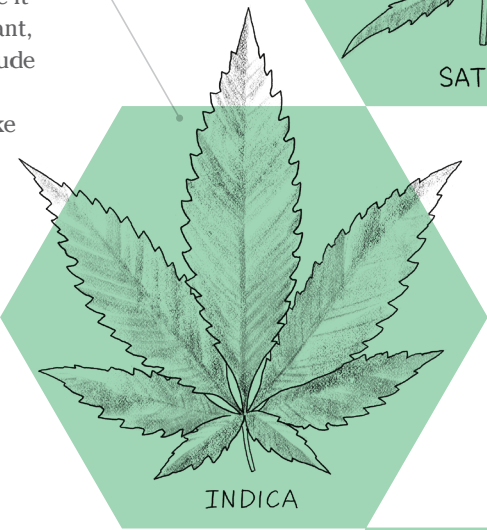
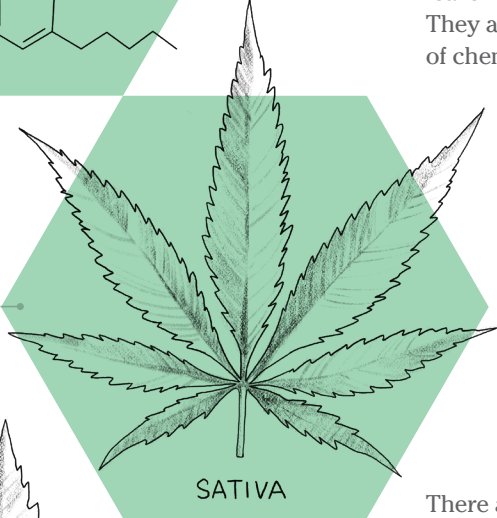
Legalization is a hot political topic. The cannabis and hemp markets have a lot of environmental, economical, and medical benefits. This information may make a difference to your experience with weed. If you are interested in smoking weed, it’s important to understand how it works, know what you like, and be able to use that information to control your high. It can’t hurt learn about what is arguably the most present drug in our culture.

Chances are, whether you smoke weed or not, you will encounter at some point an excited stoner eager to spill weed information. Now, you can save yourself the time of a lengthy weedsplain — because you know the way of the weed.

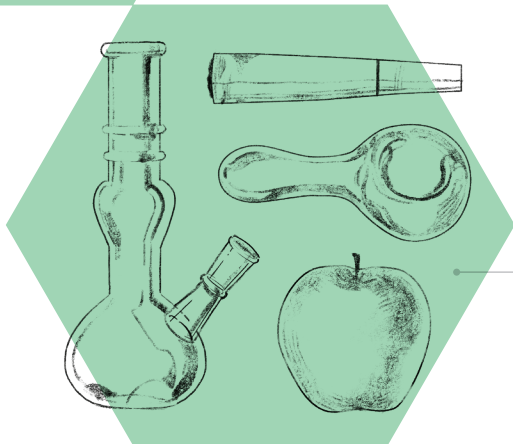
Sarah Miller is a first year student at SAIC working in the photography and writing departments and loves kombucha.



Pot makes you high because of a chemical called tetrahydrocannabinol, THC for short. Weed also contains cannabidiol (CBD), which is the medicinal component of the substance. CBD has been used to treat all kinds of conditions, from schizophrenia to cancer. Weed produces different types of highs depending on what strain. Strains differ in their chemical content, leaf shape, growing conditions, and potency. They are created by mating different variations of chemical components THC and CBD.



There are a million ways that cannabis can be consumed. The most common way is to smoke it, as you can pretty much smoke kush out of anything that has air flow. You can roll up the wacky tobaccy into a weed cigarette, what a cannabis smoker would refer to as a “doobie” or a “joint.” You can pack the bud into a water or dry glass pipe. Weed wax can be converted to oil and wax, too, which can be smoked out of a vaporizer. You can smoke reefer out of a water bong, or even an apple! You can also make weed edibles by using weed butter. The process smells very strong and takes a lot of work but can yield a super-potent product.



PIPE DREAMS

The owner of Chicago's first medical cannabis dispensary discusses distribution with F Newsmagazine

By Noël Jones

The bright white and pale green modern décor of Dispensary 33's sunlit lobby took me by surprise: On my first visit to a legal marijuana dispensary, I half-expected I'd be navigating a shadowy obstacle course of vitrines full of bongos and pipes. 🍃 In 2013, the Department of Justice (DOJ) under the Obama Administration issued what's come to be known as the Cole Memo, discouraging federal authorities from pursuing marijuana-related offenses in

states where marijuana sales had been made legal. But on January 4, 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the DOJ had rescinded the Cole Memo. 🍃 I decided to visit one of Chicago's 19 dispensaries to see how the medical marijuana business in Illinois might have impacted. I spoke to Zach Zises, owner of Dispensary 33, a legal medical marijuana dispensary at 5001 N. Clark Street.

F Newsmagazine How long have you been in business?
Zach Zises We opened our doors on December 9, 2015, the first dispensary in Chicago to do so.

F News How does someone become a "registered patient" of Dispensary 33?
ZZ Anyone curious about getting a medical cannabis card should first read through our website, Dispensary33.com. The biggest impediment to joining the medical cannabis program is finding a doctor to sign a patient's certification, because the vast majority of physicians refuse to do so. But we have come to know of some sympathetic doctors and can steer people in some good directions.

F News How's business?
ZZ Governor Rauner, to the greatest degree of his authority, has done his best to throttle the medical cannabis program. He has refused to accept the mounting evidence that the availability of medical cannabis reduces the rates of opioid addiction and [overdose] fatal-

ities, and has refused to broaden the medical conditions for which Illinois residents would qualify for cannabis cards. He also keeps the Illinois Department of Public Health woefully understaffed. As a result, receiving a card now takes more than three months rather than two weeks, and this wait time increases every month. That said, the program has been an enormous success for those who have received cards. The quality and innovation of products in Illinois rivals anywhere else in the world and our patients are, on the whole, thrilled with what we are able to provide.

F News Has the decision by Jeff Sessions to rescind the Cole Memo affected the operation of your business or scared away investors?
ZZ It was great that the rescinding of the Cole Memo generated so much press. It served as a wake-up call to Washington that any actions they take against cannabis will be big news and will create a huge amount of push back. And the reality is that that action had zero impact on our industry. We receive an enormous amount of protection from the Rohrabacher-Blumenauer Amendment, which forbids the DEA from expending any resources to prosecute state-legal medical cannabis businesses. [However], if Congress doesn't extend that amendment in its new budget, Sessions will have a far broader spectrum of potential weapons at his disposal.

F News Are you encouraged by the support of certain members of Congress, and by leaders at the state level?
ZZ Cannabis is flowing the same way gay marriage did, albeit a lot faster. Wherever cannabis becomes legal — both as medical and as adult [recreational] use — it wins the hearts and minds of a public who sees that its benefits far outweigh its harms. On a more delayed timeline, politicians come to find that their support [of legalization] does not hurt their reelection chances, and that in fact it is good policy. [Legalization] generates tax revenue, reduces incarceration rates, and saves law enforcement resources [to pursue] crimes that actually matter. The horse is out of the barn. It's all just a matter of time at this point.

F News Jeff Sessions stated recently that the DOJ is not interested in busting small-time cannabis users, but instead intends to focus on drug gangs and larger conspiracies. Does that give you any comfort?
ZZ The Attorney General can say whatever he wants. It's mostly just noise.

F News Are you nervous that the Fraternal Order of Police has spoken out in support of rescinding the Cole Memo, and that local police have

the right to seize money and property under civil forfeiture laws, if they are cooperating on a federal drug raid?
ZZ Civil asset forfeiture laws seem incredibly difficult to reconcile with our Fourth Amendment due process rights, and I am sorry that it is a tool that law enforcement entities have the power to use against anyone. The local police work for my locality — which has licensed me to sell cannabis — so I have no idea how that would actually play out. As for now, the feds are barred from raiding Illinois dispensaries while Rohrabacher-Blumenauer remains the law of the land.

F News Some law enforcement officials in states where cannabis is legal argue that legalizing it has created a growing black market in a cannabis trade run by those who don't comply with the law. Is that your sense of what is happening?
ZZ One statistic I've read showed that legal cannabis has destroyed the cannabis trade from Mexico into the U.S. and forced the cartels to move into other lines of operation. I think that's a great development. Sixty-two-thousand Americans died from overdosing on opioids in the past 14 months. I have no patience for anyone who says we should be focusing on some puny amount of black market activity in a substance that demonstrably saves lives; [a substance] from which no one has ever overdosed, and which improves quality of life wherever it is available. The myopia of such people is jaw-droppingly astounding.

F News A federal lawsuit involving NFL player-turned cannabis entrepreneur Marvin Washington was recently dismissed from federal court. What are your thoughts on the judge redirecting the plaintiffs in the case to petition the DEA to get cannabis removed from the list of dangerous substances?
ZZ The arc of the moral universe is longer in Washington than most everywhere else. Justice will come, just not nearly as soon as it should.

Noël Jones is a staff writer for F Newsmagazine, a graduate student in New Arts Journalism, and creator of the EYE TO EYE Flashcards series.



Spring Unsprung

One student’s lukewarm reaction to spring

By Adrián Orozco

I come from Mexico, where we can have easily 80 degree afternoons during the time of the year other places call winter. “Seasons” simply don’t happen where I’m from. In my hometown, we have seemingly endless, dry, hot-as-hell period, followed by a rainy couple of months, followed by more heat, finally followed by two or three weeks of “cold,” with temperatures between 40-60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Back home, trees tend to keep their leaves all year long; flowers bloom any time; hummingbirds hum every single day; and the sun is rarely behind the clouds. But here in Chicago, there are seasons — plural.

I arrived to Chicago at the end of last summer. My flight was less than four hours long, and when I arrived, I was pretty sure Chicago felt hotter than Mexico City. But that didn’t last. A couple of weeks later, the weather started to change. A few days later, it was, for me, suddenly winter — you know, around 60 degrees, colder in the mornings and at night.

I was so naive. What I was experiencing was not winter at all but something called “fall,” something I only knew about thanks to Nat King Cole’s “Autumn Leaves.” (Believe me, the song amuses me more

than the cold wind hitting my face.) From then on, of course, it just got worse.

I wrapped myself up in more layers than I ever had before, and it was just early November! Leaving my building in the morning felt like an insult to my wellness and health. Blasts of wind colder than I’d ever experienced blew into my chest, and no matter how warm I was inside, the moment I stepped out the door, I was helplessly freezing.

But that was just me being naive once more because soon I realized it was just the beginning. I can’t imagine how it was living in Chicago before heating units were invented; seriously, I can’t.

As the year was ending, the temperature dropped so low it ... didn’t feel possible. I wished I was dead. That’s what people call winter.

I did enjoy some aspects of my first Chicago winter. I had seen snow before, but never so much, and it was just gorgeous. I spent several hours walking, filming, and photographing the icy landscape at the park near my place, even while the snow was falling. Once, while filming by the lake, a sudden blast of wind made a wave break right in front of me. I was soaked and frozen, my hands so cold it was painful

to carry my camera home, which was then covered in ice. But I regret nothing.

Over winter break I went back to Mexico, and it was chilly the morning I arrived — chilly by my former standards, anyway. I took a bus from Mexico City to my hometown and it was definitely warmer there. At least, warmer than the “almost spring” weather my Chicago cousin mentioned a couple of weeks ago. Seriously? Spring?

For me, spring is just an endless cold hell, and it will continue to be so until we hit 80 degrees. For now, “spring” looks to me as if the weather were a passive-aggressive lover who teases you with warmth one day just to let it snow the next one.

This whole thing has amused me so much I even started to work on a story in which the main character’s goal is to survive winter by generating corporeal heat, which he obtains through masturbation. Talk about spring fever!

As spring approaches and temperatures go up, (though not enough of course), I just sit in front of my window. From there, I can see a park with leafless trees and yellowish grass and I wonder: Is this spring?

It seems to be, and while I loved winter’s strange minimalist beauty, I’ve decided it lasts too long here. And it will last a little longer, unfortunately, though watching the green of trees come back and the flowers bloom again is something I’ve never seen before. That will definitely be worth it.

Adrián García is a first year MA candidate in Visual and Critical Studies who works with stop-motion animation and music.

“
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how it was liv-
ing in Chicago
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invented.
Seriously,
I can’t.

”

Branching Out

The author's infatuation with one special tree

By Line Kuzniar

Have you ever just touched a tree? Laid a hand on the bark? Try it, sometime. Can you feel every grain of the wood, every crack in the surface? Can you feel the tree — really feel it? Can you feel the whole world opening up beneath your hand? Can you feel the roots endlessly spreading beneath your feet? The branches and leaves tirelessly reaching for the skies?

I'm going to go out on a limb (haha) and call myself something of a tree expert. Though I don't have any qualifications or proper training, I sure do love trees. As a kid — and now, if presented with the chance — I would climb any tree in sight. More than once, my parents, to their horror, would find me at the very top of trees that most would deem unscalable. It was simultaneously freeing and calming to be held in the arms of a tree, that beautiful intersection of being grounded in earth while touching the sky.

There was a point in middle school when I would make conversation with other kids by asking them if they knew what kind of trees grew by our school. They had no clue; children are not generally reading up on trees in their spare time. So, I would launch into a conversation about the history of, say, catalpa trees.

There is one tree in particular that has received most of my love. It's a beautiful maple tree that is currently staning in my grandparents' yard in the Chicago suburbs. It has been growing there for at least 25 years. Most trees (and plants in general), have green leaves due to chlorophyll converting sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide into energy. In autumn, the leaves of most trees change color before falling, but all year long, my grandparents' tree has leaves of deep burgundy and purple reminiscent of dark wines and luxurious velvets. It's a subtype of a maple, possibly a "crimson king" or a "royal red Norway maple." But my grandparents and I simply call it a red maple tree. To the common person, including myself, it's a pretty neat sight to behold.

I have spent hours lying under this tree, resting my head in dirt and mulch, watching the sunlight dance through the leaves, creating new colors in the deep purples and reds. This is the tree I spent hours climbing as a kid, sometimes clutching a book in my arms. This is the tree I dreamt of living in, not planning to build a house there, but just simply refusing to leave its branches.

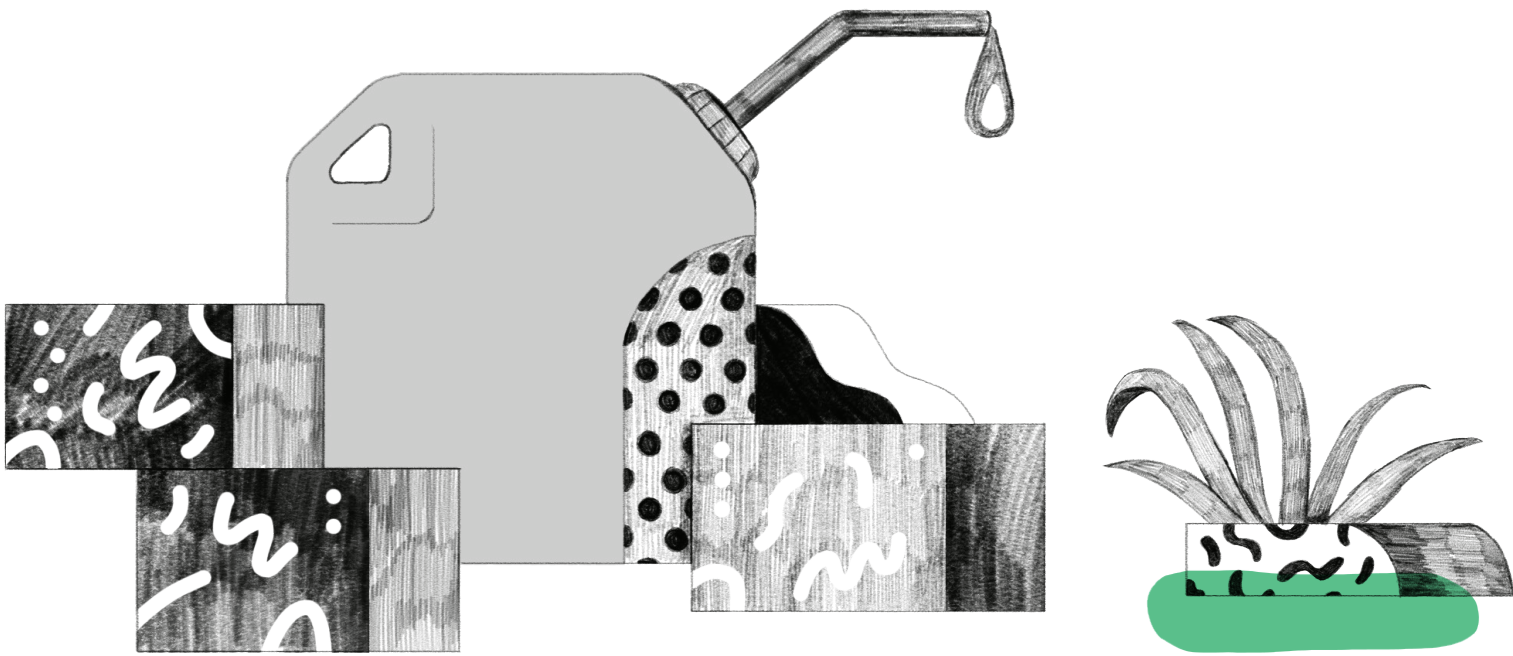
Everything about this tree is art. The limbs were perfectly spaced for a challenging but not impossible climbs, and if I got high enough up there was a perfect fork in the branches where I could safely recline above the ground. It was a refuge from the taunts of my sisters when I needed a break, since they couldn't see me through the thick, dark foliage. In the fall, my whole family would gather up the leaves and make a game of tossing them at each other. We would watch the colors rain down on one another. The maple was a cornerstone of my childhood.

I recently visited the tree and my grandparents. (I have been seeing the tree less and less.) As it was February, the tree didn't have a single leaf on it; instead, it was covered in snow. Despite lacking leaves (usually its most distinguishing feature), I felt a wave of nostalgia and love wash over me. Isn't it funny that a piece of living wood can do that? How weird is it that I found where I belong years ago, and it's next to an enormous plant — a tall and purple one.

I cannot wait for spring and mild temperatures, so I can sit in the shade of the red maple once again. Maybe I'll even go for a climb.

Line Kuzniar (BFA, 2021) loves plants and is often eating toast. Their name rhymes with fine.





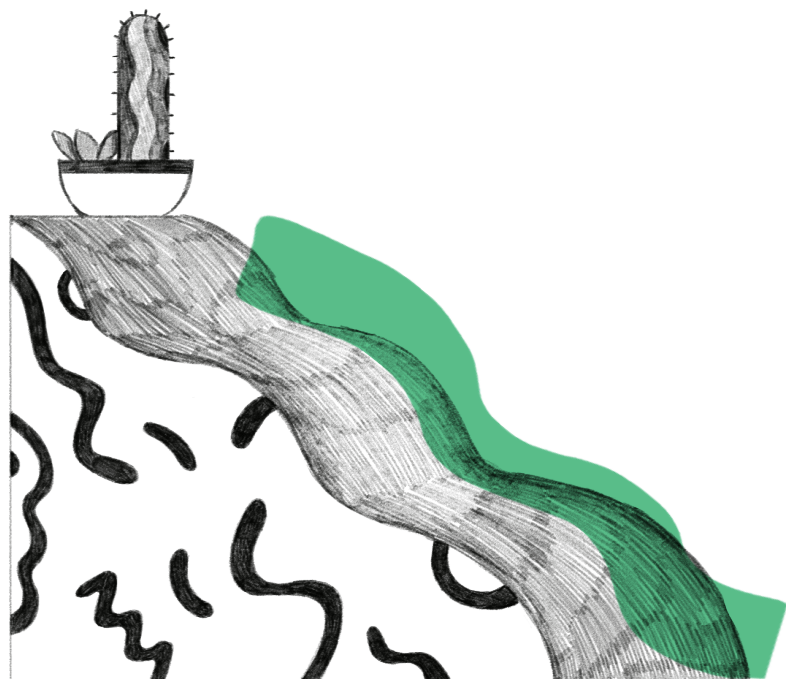
ALL *THE DOPE* WAYS YOU CAN USE HEMP

The cannabis sativa
plant as material

By Sarah Miller

Marijuana isn't the only fruitful part of the cannabis sativa plant. Hemp is a variety of the cannabis plant containing zero psychoactive properties. (That means that no, hemp products cannot get you high.) But because hemp is mistakenly confused to be the same thing as cannabis, a stigma exists with hemp-based products. Therefore, our generation is unaware of the benefits that industrial hemp offers. But the hemp revival is blossoming; the possibilities are endless.

Sarah Miller is a first year student at SAIC, working in the photography and writing departments and loves kombucha.



Raw hemp produces four raw products: seed, fiber, pulp, and oil. In variation, these products can be used to make over 25,000 different products. You can basically use it to make anything. Industrial hemp once was a prominent crop on the American landscape. During colonial times, colonies produced hemp as a material for British consumption. (The Declaration of Independence was drafted on hemp paper.) After the Revolution, hemp fiber was so crucial to the young nation that farmers were allowed to pay taxes with their crop. Hemp production during the 19th and early 20th centuries quickly spread to Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky farms. There were a few attempts at

technological innovations which would mechanize the production of hemp but none of the machines were ever approved for a patent. In 1937, the Marijuana Tax Act was imposed, which placed strict regulations on the sale and cultivation of all cannabis variation, including hemp. However, it only did so by levying high taxes on individuals growing, producing, or selling hemp material. The American Medical Association was so high opposed to the legislation that they proposed in court that cannabis be added to the Harrison Narcotics Act, and won the case, thus rendering the entirety of the cannabis sativa plant, inaccessible.

In 2015, the U.S. imports approximately \$78.2 million in hemp oil cake, which is made from pressing hemp seed into oil, and related products because hemp is easier to import than to get a permit from the FDA to grow. In recent years, the modern American hemp market has grown 20 percent from year to year, averaging about \$688 million in consumer sales. Still, the benefits attached to using hemp as material call for a much larger market. Major companies, including Ford Motors and Patagonia, import industrial hemp materials and use them to make products. Hemp is an organic alternative material that, if mass produced, could eliminate and replace a multitude of artificially-rendered products. Here are some examples.

Manufacturing and Housing

Hemp products have long been a primary ingredient in creating strong and durable supplies such as rope, cordage, and cloth. During World War II, the United States government commissioned a black-and-white film that implored American farmers to grow hemp as a crop to supply the army with badly-needed supplies. Hemp can be used to make plastic that is more durable, sustainable, and organic than petroleum plastic. One of the most promising applications of hemp is “hempcrete,” which can be used in building homes. Hempcrete acts as a thermodynamic insulator and reduces energy costs of a living space by 50-70 percent annually. Hempcrete-constructed homes have zero construction waste. When you consider that 55 percent of the world’s energy consumption is construction-waste-related, there is a lot of talk about using hemp to reduce our carbon footprint.

Fashion and Beauty

Hemp oil contains vitamins B1, B2, B3, B6, C, D, E, zinc, iron, magnesium, and all 10 amino acids that can benefit our skin. In addition, hemp contains Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids in a ratio that helps all that good stuff to get absorbed so that your skin can be soft and clean. You can purchase hemp face masks, bath bombs, shampoo, conditioner, and makeup. I recently purchased a bottle of hemp lotion at Walgreens. In addition, a market for hemp clothing is growing, as the fiber of the hemp is extremely durable. You can typically find hemp clothing at small scale smoke shops and boutiques, alternative clothing sites and stores, and some large scale brands that support hemp such as LuLu’s.

Food

Food products made from hemp won’t get you high or make you fail a drug test. Hemp offers all sorts of nutritional benefits — and it tastes great! In fact, food products made with hemp can be very high in proteins and vitamins like zinc, which have been shown to assist the immune system. Common hemp food products include raw seeds, oil, tea, protein powder, energy bars, coffee, milk, and yes, even hemp vodka and beer. Blaze Chicago, a vape shop on N. Western Avenue, sells Hemp20, a brand of hemp vitamin water.

Fuel

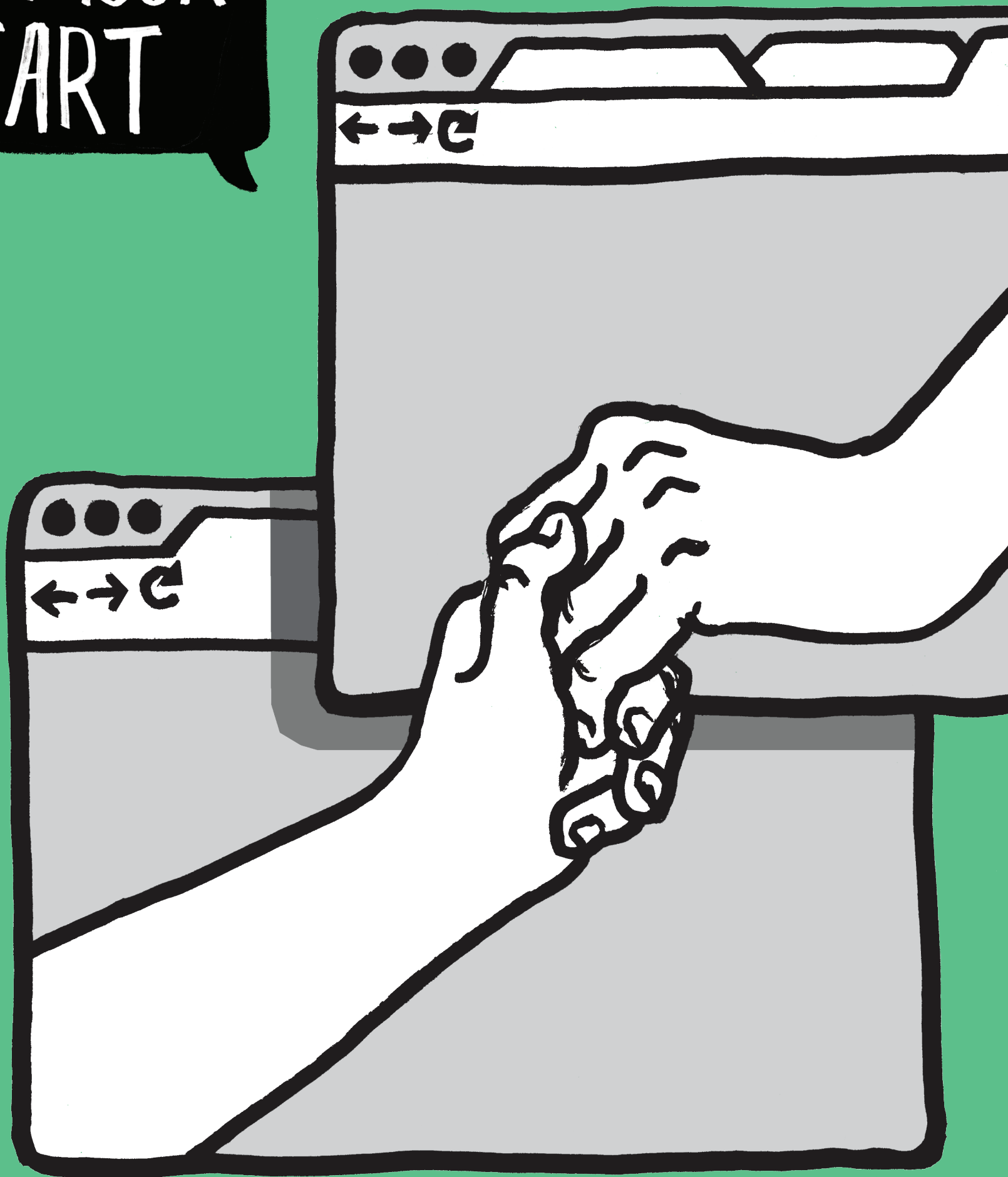
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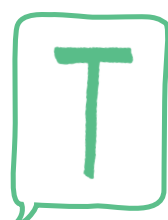


SIMON SAYS,
TOUCH YOUR
HEART



With 'Love, Simon,' gay youth get the teen love story they've been waiting for

By Jose Nateras



There are few surprises to be had in "Love, Simon." If you've seen any teen rom-com from the last couple of decades, you'll be able to spot each major plot point coming. "Love, Simon" makes no attempt to reinvent the wheel. It is familiar, charming, mainstream, and marketable.

"Simon" is also something more. For the first time possibly ever, all of the standard tropes and familiar set-ups of teen cinema are centered around a gay main character. It's not an art film. It's not Oscar-bait. It's not a drama. It's not about "self-discovery" or burgeoning sexuality. No one dies. It's a simple teen love story that, yes, features a coming-out narrative both relatable and realistic.

Using voice-over, montage, and email correspondence "Love, Simon" tells the story of high school senior Simon Spier. It is clearly established that Simon is "just like you," except, of course, he has a secret. He's gay. Even though he is closeted, the movie directly acknowledges that Simon knows he's gay, and he's okay with it. This story is not about sexual awakenings; rather, it focuses on the complexity of the coming-out experience and the tumultuous nature of first love.

For many in today's society, being gay isn't necessarily that big of a deal. Simon acknowledges that, if he chose to, he could come out. His parents loving, accepting, and liberal-minded, and would love and support him if he came out. His friends are great, too. Yet Simon is not ready to do so. When another student uses a pseudonym to announce his presence via the school's gossip blog, Simon realizes he's not the only one okay with their sexuality who's afraid to come out publicly. The two start a pen pal relationship via pseudonyms and, as you might expect, fall in love.

The beauty of "Love, Simon" lies in its simplicity, in the subtly revolutionary way we see a queer narrative handled so straightforwardly. It is not sensationalized, sexualized, or any more dramatized than the plight of teens in "She's All That" or "10 Things I Hate About You."

In fact, "Love, Simon" has more in common with those films than that other queer narrative film from this past year, "Call Me By Your Name." Yes, both are about young, white, relatively-privileged cis males dealing with the ups and downs with their first loves — specifically of the homosexual variety. But "Call Me By Your Name" is a sensationalized homogeneous fantasy that, in a lot of ways, comes across as a straight imagining of the gay experience. (The original novel is written by a straight man and the film is cast with straight actors.)

"Love, Simon," by comparison, is far more realistic. It's awkward, clumsy, earnest, funny, and poignant. The cast is diverse and features actual, out gay actors like Joey Pollari, who plays the character Lyle in the film. It also specifically includes out gay actors of color: Keiynan Lonsdale, who plays Bram (known

as star of "The Flash"), and Clark Moore, who plays Ethan.

Racism within the gay community is a real issue; it's not unusual to see dating profiles that read, "Only interested in White guys," or "White and Latino only." Rarely in mainstream media do we get to see diverse queer characters that aren't the sassy best friend, or otherwise stereotyped, victimized, or limited to being the punchline of jokes. In "Simon," we see these characters as three-dimensional people with hearts, desires, and struggles we all recognize: being a high schooler; feeling misunderstood; being the outsider; wanting to be loved, etc. As with the best teen movies, universality is achieved through specificity, and "Love, Simon" ends up being a movie to which many will relate.

I saw this movie at a well-attended matinee showing. There were a couple of youngish, twenty-something gay guys, a much older gay couple, a middle aged gay man and his female friend, myself, as well as moviegoers of all stripes. During a film that is decidedly non-tragic, people were audibly sobbing. I know I cried multiple times. As the credits rolled, people applauded.

Yet the response to this movie from the audience was indicative of a poignant difference between "Simon" and films like "Call Me By Your Name." By allowing this queer narrative to be simple, familiar, and relatable, and by inclusively and diversely cast with actors who have actually gone through the difficult and singular experience of coming out, "Love, Simon" has done something special. I can't say with 100 percent certainty that if this movie existed when I was in high school, I would have come out after seeing it. But part of me is fairly confident that my experience as a young gay man would have been different. Honestly, "Simon" is probably going to change the lives of young people who see it.

In an interview with Ellen DeGeneres, actor Nick Robinson shared a story that illustrates the impact of this movie. Robinson, who plays Simon, is one of seven children. During the filming of "Love, Simon," one of his brothers actually did come out as gay. According to Robinson, due to his experience playing Simon, he found himself uniquely equipped to handle that conversation. This is a movie that will undoubtedly start a lot of conversations, and help a lot of young queer people on their journeys. Not all teen rom-coms can claim to be culturally ground-breaking, but maybe "Love, Simon" can be an exception.

Overall, director Greg Berlanti's film is a sorely needed love letter to queer youth. The core message of the film is that young queer people can have the same sort of love story we've seen in straight narratives all our lives. Not only can we have those stories, but we deserve them. It's a message that so many of us didn't know we've been desperately needing to hear: "You deserve love."

Jose Nateras (MFAW '18) is a self-described writer/actor/nerd.

“

By allowing for this queer narrative to be simple, familiar, and relatable, 'Love, Simon' has done something special.

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SMOKE SHOW

By Manisha A.R.

When you get that email that says, “Our records indicate you will be graduating in May,” your self-care needs to be as aggressive as your stress level. At times like these, you need more than just a bottle of wine and a long bath: You need to retreat into the arms of a certain herb we all know and love. And hey, you might want to watch a movie.

So, inhale deeply — coughing is okay — kick off your shoe, and peruse this handy viewing guide to Mary Jane-friendly movies so that you’ll be ready for those times you’re nice and baked, no longer stressed, and in need of visual pleasure.

‘Waking Life’ (2001) • 3.5 / 5 dabs

Have you recently found yourself questioning the purpose of life? The purpose of art? What is the purpose of anything, really? Richard Linklater’s “Waking Life” is an “animated philosophical docufiction film” starring our favorite on-screen (and in this film, animated) couple, Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy. This film and its protagonists navigate a series of conversations with multiple deep thinkers throughout the movie to help us answer those Big Questions. The animation avoids being gimmicky, resembling someone’s sketchbook come to life. “Waking Life” is aesthetically very pleasing: Color palettes are easy on the eyes, the music is mellow, and the anecdotes relatable. Warning: Very deep thoughts possible.

‘Planet Earth’ (2006) • 5 / 5 spliffs

It’s the planet ... Earth. Earth is definitely my favorite planet to live on, and it’s the one that supplies us with that dank, dank kush. This wildly popular nature documentary series first aired on the BBC and is now available on Netflix. The award-winning film saw a resurgence in popularity amongst millennials around the same time as the 2016 presidential shitshow was endlessly happening. As it turns out, being immersed in beautifully filmed, stunning environments expanding before our very eyes while a soothing British man talks about science is incredibly appealing, even if you’re not stoned.

‘BoJack Horseman’ (2014) • 3 / 5 edibles

Animated comedy series “BoJack Horseman” builds an alternate world and attempts to answer some of the pressing and meta-y questions we often find ourselves confronting in our studios and free time. Created by Raphael Bob-Waksberg and designed by Lisa Hanawalt, “Bojack,” in four seasons so far, crosses many genres: black comedy, animated sitcom, adult animation, comedy-drama, and more. Though not a personal favorite, the show’s emotional-nihilist approach to mental health makes it a go-to on many people’s Netflix queue.

‘Pineapple Express’ (2008) • 4 / 5 joints

Released in 2008, this action/comedy featuring James Franco and Seth Rogen is guaranteed to make you giggle incoherently. The plot follows Rogen’s character, who enjoys a rare strain of marijuana before he and Franco, who plays his dealer, accidentally witness a murder. Of course, their concern is more about the piece of evidence they left at the crime scene — their roach — and it being traced back to them. I can tell you from experience that this movie cannot be enjoyed sober.

‘Riverdale’ (2011) • 2.5 / 5 tokes

If you have never been even a little curious about what Archie of the “Archie Comics” would look like in real life or what kind rich-girl clothes the character of Veronica would wear if she were a real human, then don’t watch the “Riverdale” series. But if you are a tiny bit curious (and very embarrassed about it), then you can “accidentally” pull this up on Netflix when your head is in the er, clouds. “Riverdale” is very pro-Jughead — the true hero of the comics, if we’re being honest — and this is one of the main reasons I put the show on my list. Interestingly enough, it’s fun to watch young people do creepy, bizarre imitations of vampires and adults when you’re in an altered state of reality!

Any Rihanna usic Video • 5 / 5 bong hits

Not ready for the emotional attachment required to watch even the dumbest movie or TV show? Living pop-superstar bombshell Rihanna has spent millions of dollars and given her blood, sweat, and tears to build a magnum opus of music videos, and they’re all under six-ish minutes. Start out with RiRi’s early “Pon de Replay,” work your way to “Rude Boy,” or the version of “Work” that currently has close to one billion hits on YouTube. After that, check out “Can’t Remember to Forget You,” or pair up “Disturbia” and “Bitch Better Have My Money.” (Note that YouTube will ask you to confirm that you are of-age to watch some of these videos). There are multiple paths on the Rihanna route; you will not be disappointed with any of them. Just feel your vibe and YouTube’s suggestions. Light ’em.

Manisha is a writer, bookmaker, and wine-based life form. She communicates best when given hugs, Kit-Kats and coffee.

Smooth Costumes, Wrinkled Plot

Stunning visuals and POC excellence, but is ‘A Wrinkle In Time’ too ambitious?

By Kira Ryter

When I heard about the new movie version of “A Wrinkle In Time,” I remembered that years ago, when I was around 10, one of my father’s coworkers suggested to me that I read the book. She said Madeline L’Engle’s writing was one of the reasons she moved into science as a career. Since then, “A Wrinkle in Time” is and has always been one of those books that exists in the back of my mind, even though I couldn’t really get into it at first.

Originally written in 1962 as the first book in a four-part series, Disney made “Wrinkle” into a television film in 2003. Last month, “Selma” director Ava DuVernay released the new Disney film adaptation, starring Oprah Winfrey, Mindy Kaling, and Reese Witherspoon.

“A Wrinkle In Time” follows the journey of a girl named Meg Murray (Storm Reid); her brother Charles Wallace (Derrick McCabe); and a classmate Calvin O’Keefe (Levi Miller), as they journey across the universe to find Meg’s lost scientist father (Chris Pine). Their search is aided by three supernatural beings: Mrs. Who (Kaling), Mrs. Whatsit (Witherspoon), and Mrs. Which (Oprah). Together, they fight off the impending dark force of the universe, known as “the It.”

Going into the movie was odd, as I had vague memories of what I had read when I was a kid. While “A Wrinkle In Time” did not turn out to be one of my favorite movies due to its many clichés, it is ultimately a feel-good and wholesome film.

One of the first things I noticed and appreciated was that the main character’s family was mixed.

With recent movies there has not been a wide range of representation for smart scientific women, much less women of color. L’Engle wrote the character of Meg Murry as a young white girl, so the film’s decision to cast a young black girl ties into today’s necessary focus on the need for diverse casting.

Director DuVernay is the first black woman to direct a movie with a \$100 million budget. Despite this, the film’s quality leaves a lot to be desired. The dialogue felt clunky and awkward. Many of the CGI scenes were overly (and distastefully) rendered; the plot felt rushed; and the trust and relationships between characters seemed forced, without a good foundation or buildup. The movie seemed too ambitious. The dialogue and character presentation from the older supernatural beings was awkward. Mrs. Who can only speak by using others’ words,

yet the use of dialogue felt out of place. (It was Kaling’s character, however, who speaks occasionally in slang, making her the most relatable of the three.)

Though each scene in “Wrinkle” was vibrant and complex, one scene quickly snaps to the next as the kids jump across the universe. While it surely was hard to express many alternate worlds without speeding through some of the aspects of each reality, these jumps weakened the difficulty of the characters’ task of crossing time and space. Some of the CGI felt overwhelmingly complex when used to express each of the universes, which took away from the believability of scenes.

The relationship between the two main characters, Meg and Calvin, both 13 in the film, was distracting. The movie pushed the age-old nerdy girl/popular boy romantic trope. Prior to going on their multi-dimensional jump, the two had never interacted or spoken to one another. In one scene, Calvin spots Meg on the playground; in the next, he materializes out of the blue while Meg and her brother Charles Wallace are out walking their dog — who also appears out of nowhere because the dog is never seen again — to tell her that he felt like he “needed to be there.” Each time Calvin looks at her with his blue, puppy dog eyes, mouth agape, the film feels like it’s pushing a love (or lust) scene mostly in romantic films where the love interests actually have chemistry. As a result of all these flaws, the goal of creating a movie that is reinforcement for a positive self-image falls short.

I did deeply appreciate the costume designs in “A Wrinkle In Time.” Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which were each adorned

in avant-garde shapes and their costumes involved mixed materials. Award-winning costume designer Paco Delgado dressed Oprah’s character in shiny layered metals, pleated plastics, and other reflective materials, highlighting her powerful warrior status in the universe. For Mindy Kaling, whose character only speaks through existing texts, the quilted textiles, multicultural prints, colors, and embroidery garments warp the shape of her hips. Reese Witherspoon’s character, a free-spirit, wears flowing, soft fabrics and looser abstract shapes in shades of green, blue, and white. Each character and costume comes with an equally vibrant makeup and hairstyle.

With great visuals and messages to kids who can identify and relate to the characters, one can appreciate “A Wrinkle In Time,” a movie that is inclusive, inspirational, and moving to younger audiences. Even if you aren’t into the plot, the film is a good source of inspiration and observation in artistic practices like new media, fashion, and film.

Kira Ryter is a sophomore doing photography and fashion. Her current favorite photographer is Laura Letinsky.





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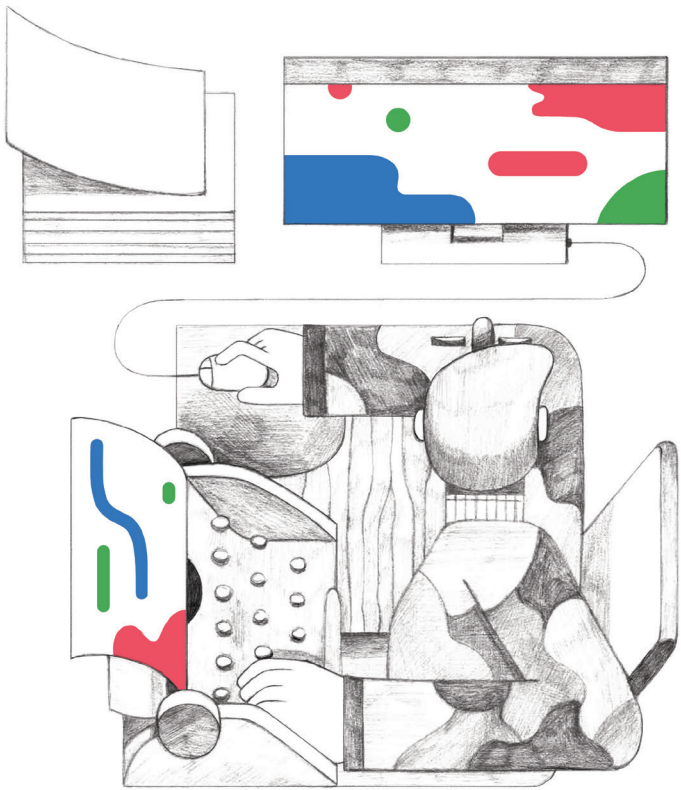
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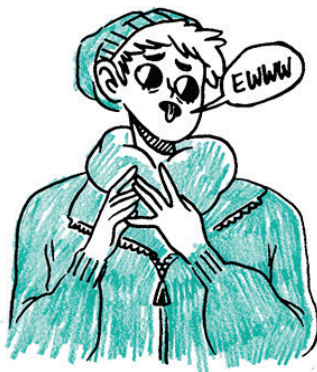
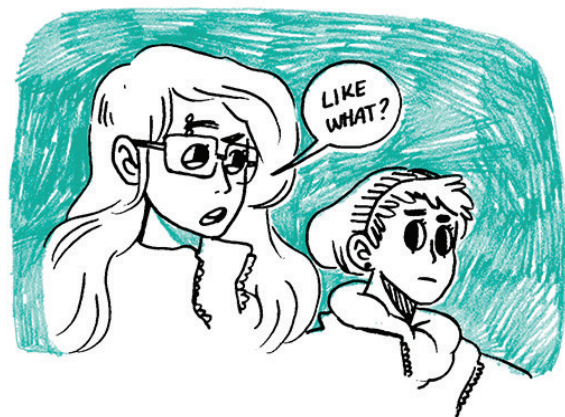
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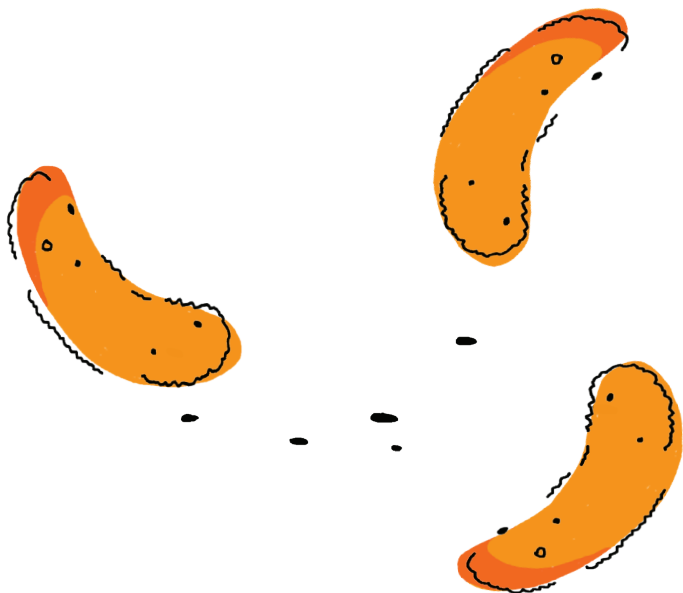
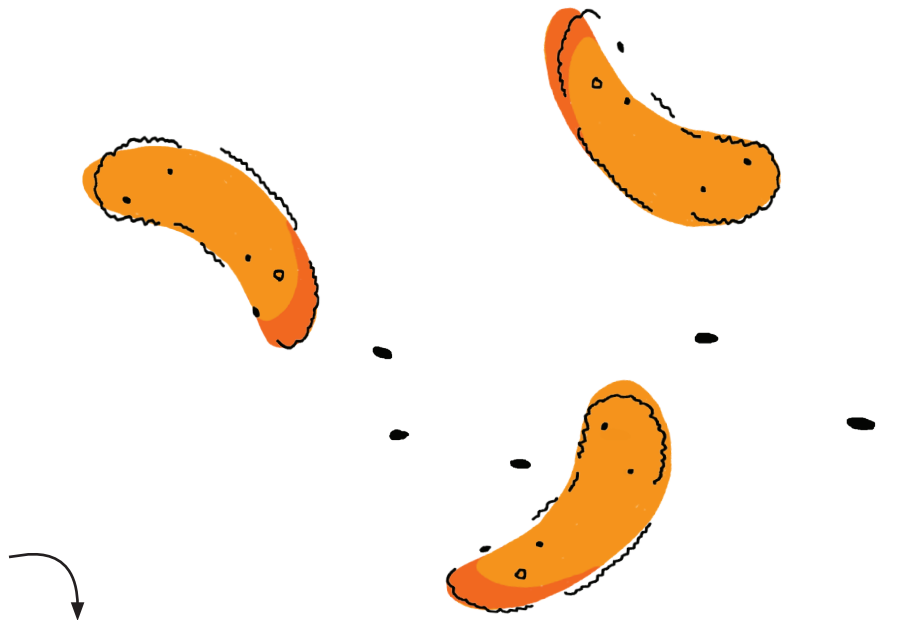
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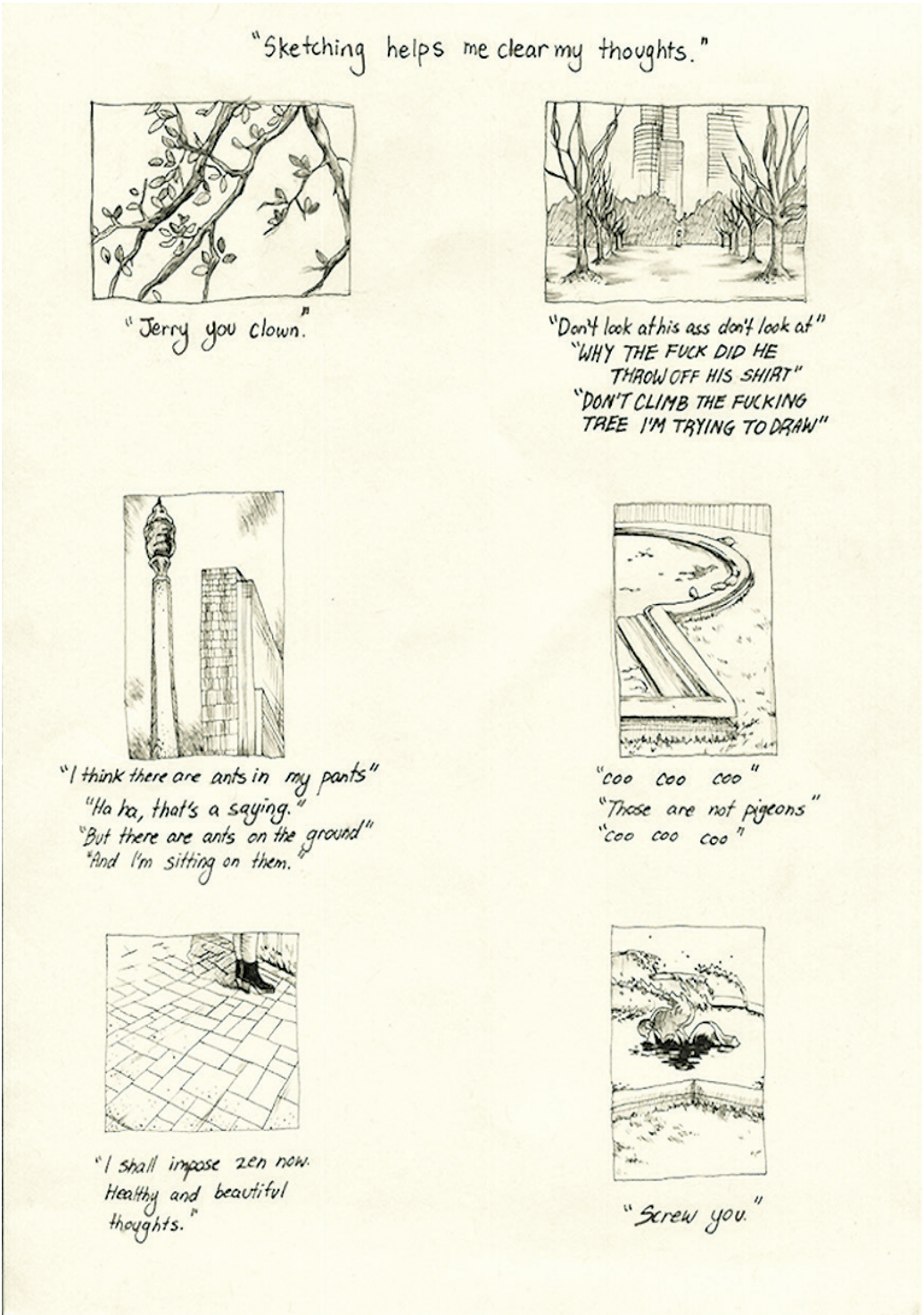


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