

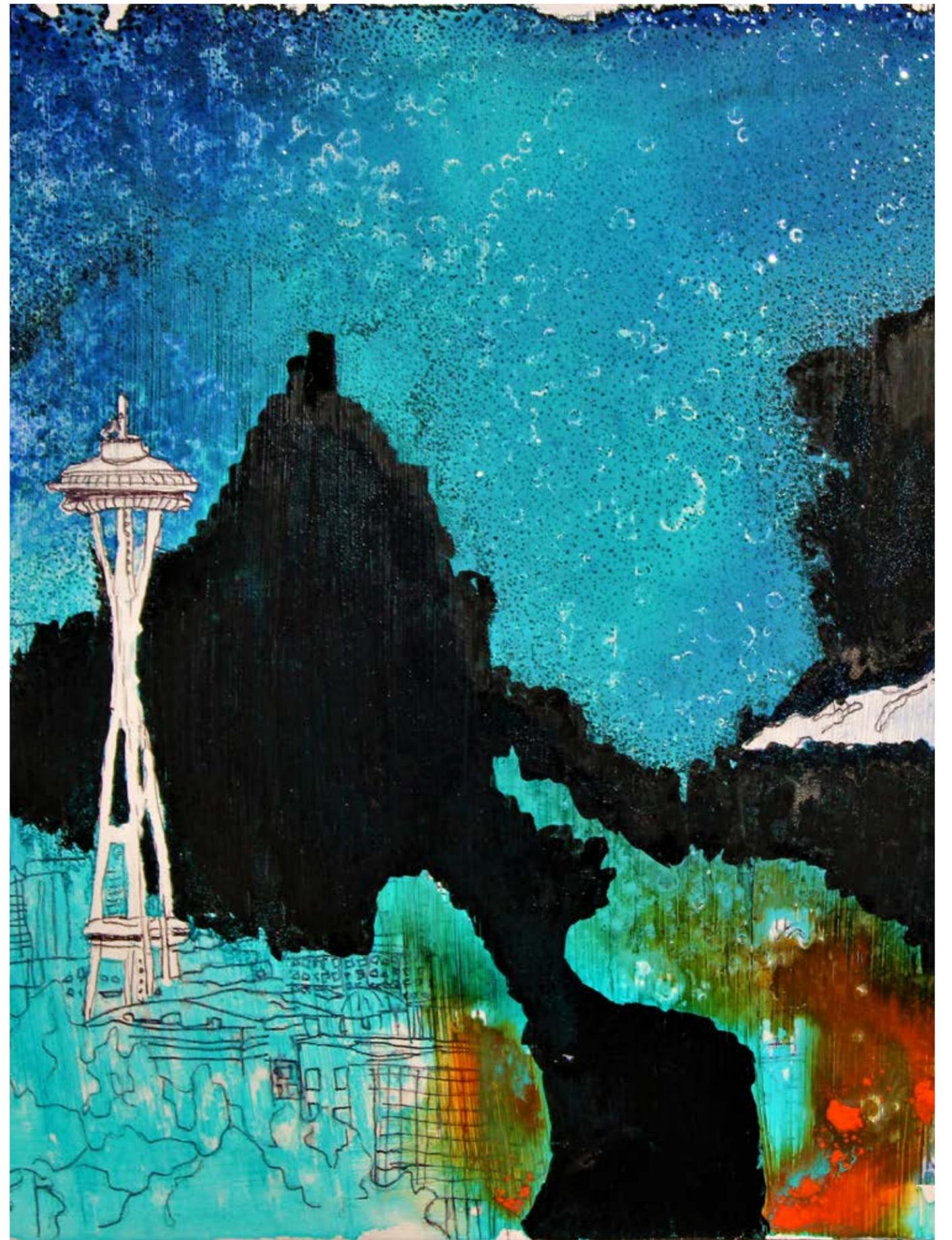
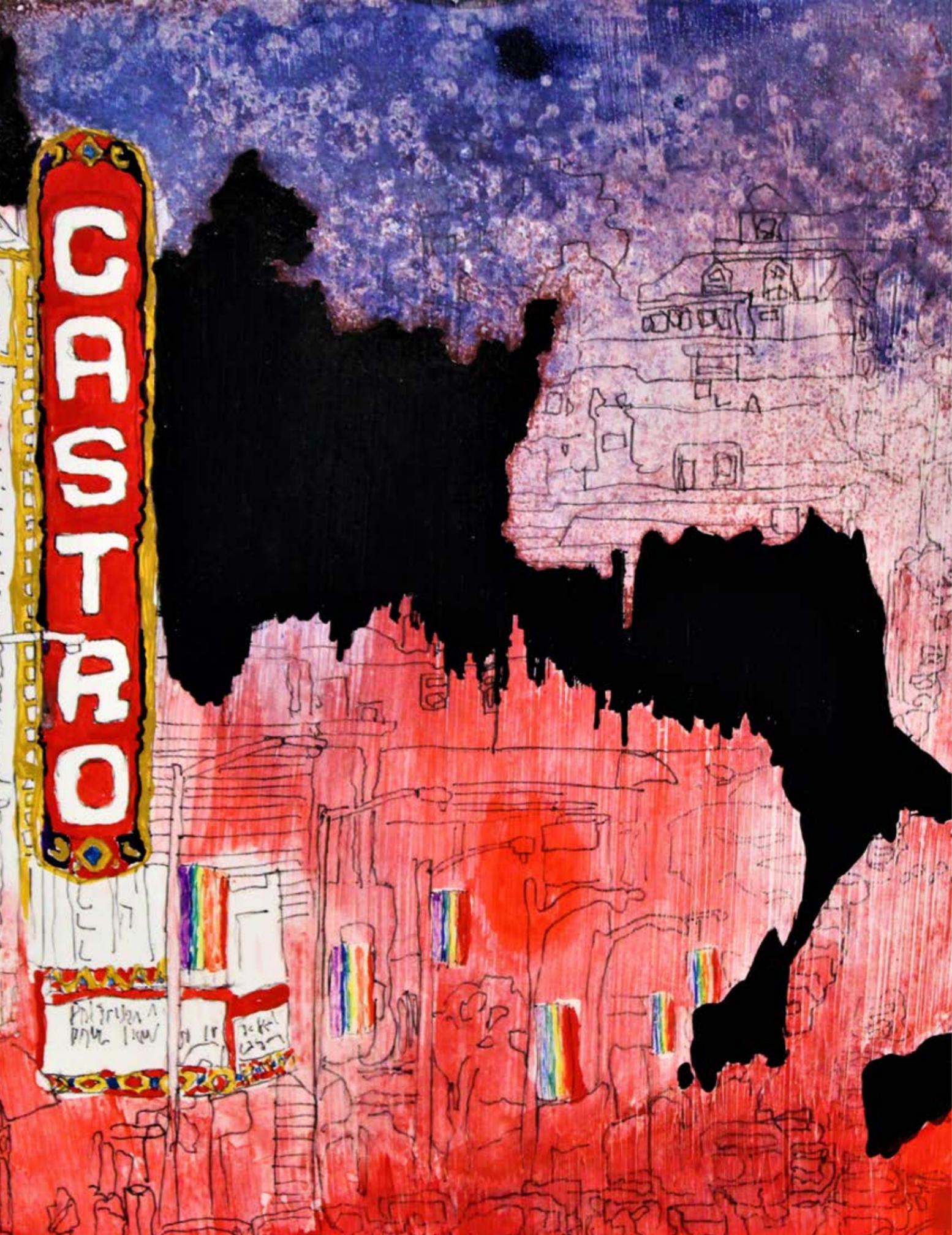


# QUEER QUARTERLY

2. the mind issue

Summer 2021





PALM SPRINGS







# QUEER QUARTERLY

Issue 2  
Summer 2021

## the mind issue

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(cover) [Angela Masker](#), Death of the Gorgon  
(pages 1-8) [Bill Bybee](#), Places: West Hollywood, Castro, Seattle, Palm Springs, Fire Island, Provincetown, Mixed Media  
(next page) [Marc Savoia](#), Pulse, Mixed Media Collage  
(back cover) [Enrique Castrejon](#), Calculated Sensation in Pink, Mixed Media Collage



55

10



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## from the editor

Hello artists, art lovers, and all the odd and queered and inbetween,

Welcome to the mind issue (2), which collects the art and words of a diverse and global cast of artists. Each shares a bit of their thinking with us in fine art, essays, fiction, and interviews, helping to define Queer-Mindedness as it exists today.

I have long held the belief that Queer peoples—especially the artists, writers, and thinkers—are leading the charge to redefine the post-modern, deconstructed zeitgeist of contemporary belief. Where the philosophers and artists of that era guided us to the understanding that in deconstruction all things are equally meaningless, the contemporary Queer (artist) is consistent in their desire to create and define meaning.

In the godless void of post-modernism, Queer peoples, from the beautifully successful collage and mathematical works of Enrique Castrejon to the fresh take on traditional drawings by Angela Masker (both appear in this issue), are engaged in providing context and purpose to human existence. Each of us, born under the oppressive release of value, strives to imbue life, oftentimes through visual imagery, with purpose.

Collage and other layered artworks such as digital, paintings, and assemblage, lend themselves

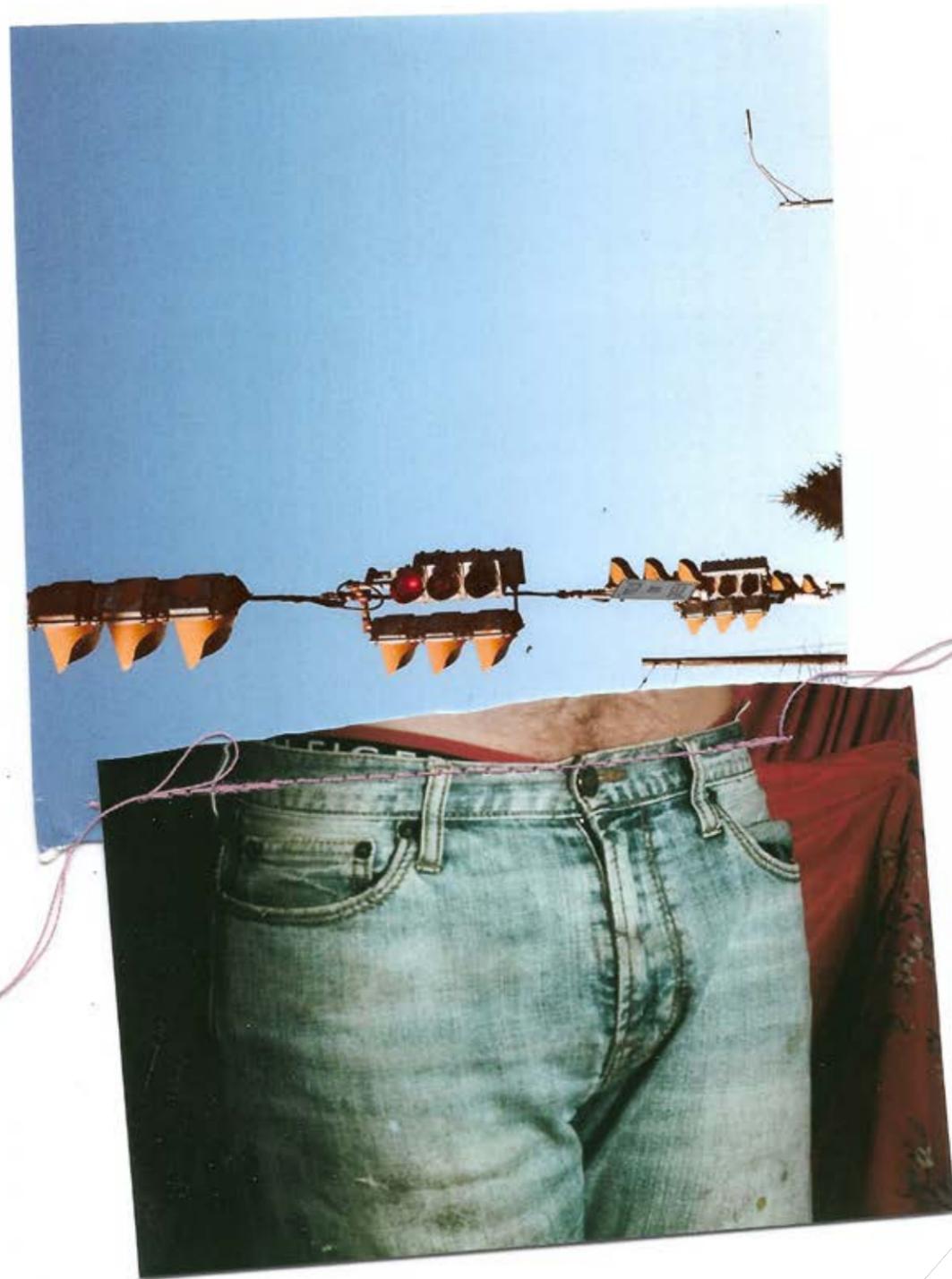
to defining our post-deconstruction desires because they are often concerned with multiplicity, concealment, and in the best of cases, revelations. Collage and layered works are featured throughout the issue because our Queer experiences—and the minds that guide them—are also layered. We are the people who must live as multiplicities. For regardless of culture or heritage, all Queer people share the marginalization imposed by macro-societies. We have learned to walk in many worlds (and reject them).

Our voices may speak in different ways but each, when paired with others in our tribe, adds to the unique harmony of contemporary Queer thought. With the mind issue, I encourage all readers to explore their beliefs. Allow our artists to open portals into new experiences. Taste of the meaning-making, the grit, the drive, and the joy of being alive and Queer today.

Using art, we define life.

—Ryan





(pages 13-16) [Joe Klaus](#), Color Studies, Mixed Media Collage



# WTF is QuEER??

## What do you mean, QuEER??

QuEER means

DON'T lay Your assumptions down on me...  
I might just not fit Your BINARY definitions  
...that game of EITHER/OR  
Those pigeon holes You want to place me in

Who knows, or even cares

I might just be Gay & Straight & Bi & NEITHER  
and just WHY do I have to say or choose  
just to make YOU comfortable with a  
DEFINED IDENTITY??

And, maybe, I don't want to be  
with just ONE person at a time  
Or even anyone at all... or Both... or Neither

Or just, perhaps & possibly  
ALL of the ABOVE

Must we have a Gender?  
can't I be a little bit of both AND neither  
Wouldn't it be fun, and possibly, oh so freeing  
to be a little bit of EITHER?

and think of myself as Ze or Zir or Ve or They  
Instead of HE or SHE (but never IT)

I think it might be fun to take a break out on  
the playground of IDENTITY  
break some rules and have the chance  
to play some new games that don't involve  
the (rules) of HE or SHE and try  
a new way to be REALLY free

I so very much like the idea of.... ALL of the ABOVE and  
NONE of the ABOVE and  
BOTH and NEITHER

# So WTF does QuEER mean to me?

I'd like to try and live, and think, on a continuum  
OUTSIDE the BOX society Inslst I make my home

I'd like to think that I can change from day-to-day  
maybe even minute-to-minute  
approach my life as PLAY and have the chance  
to try on many outfits, many ways

To love aLot

To Play  
aLot

just to fully  
fresh out what it is  
to just be ME

without the need to wiggle to  
or be BROKEN by the rules  
society would place on me

in all of that, in all of the Above &  
NONE of the Above, and  
EITHER, BOTH or NEITHER

the single Rule I choose to Live By is  
is simply stated... JUST DON'T BE MEAN

So... that's my story.

that's my guide

That's how I define as QuEER

So then, a Very QuEER day to you, too, Zir  
Viva la QuEER Résistance!



Fine Art Film

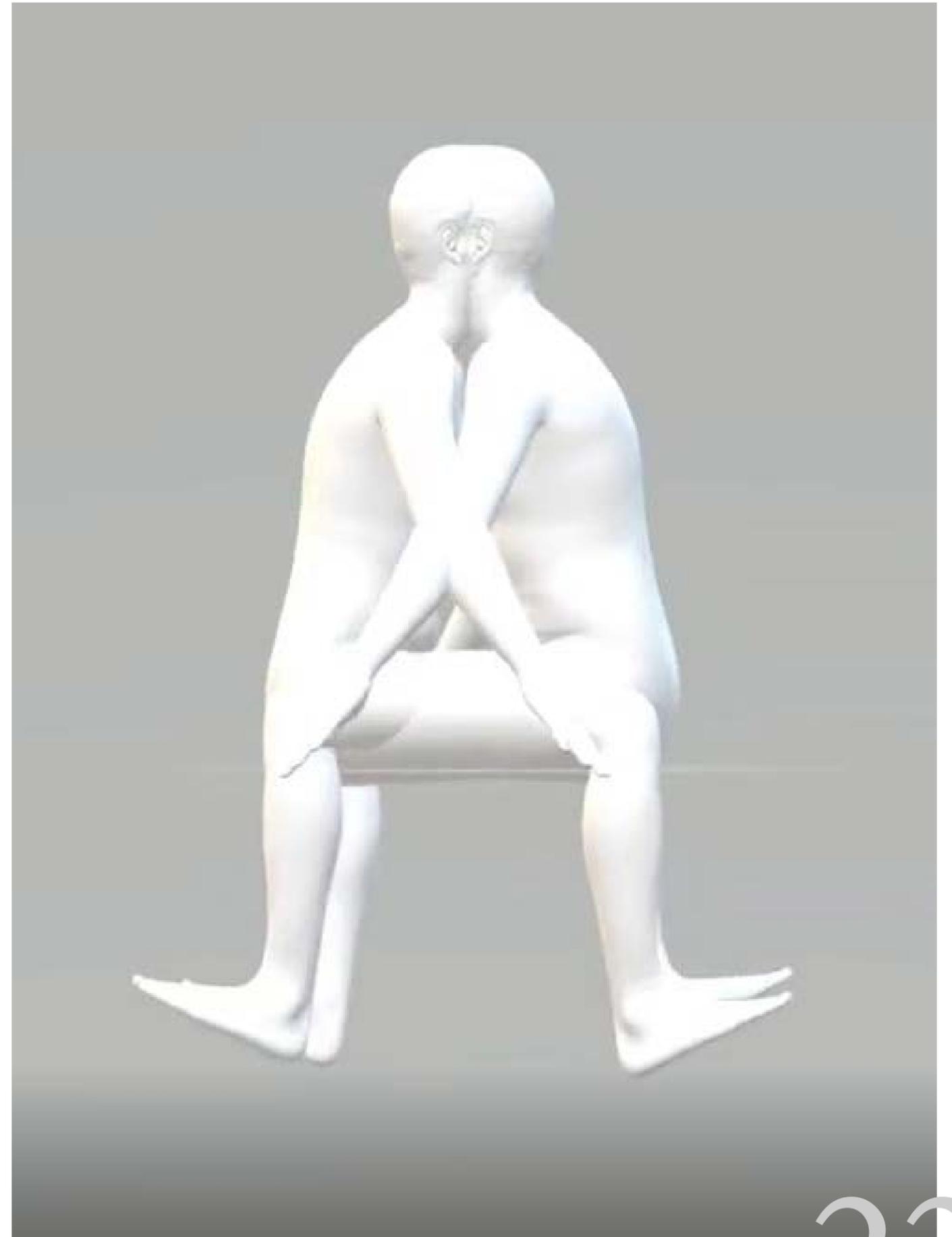
# The Calamus Emotion

Stiofan O'Ceallaigh

*The Calamus Emotion* is a film in which the artist's body is broken up into (meta)physical parts to convey aspects of the homoexperience in an imagined visual conversation with poet Walt Whitman. The Calamus root was used by Whitman in his poetry as queer codification for everything "phallic."

Originally commissioned for exhibition 'Encounters With Whitman' as part of the Whitman Bicentennial (Philadelphia, USA), *The Calamus Emotion* has since been screened at exhibitions 'Queer Art(ists) Now' (London, 2019), part of the 'And What?' Queer Arts Festival, 'The Crossover/Oversteken' (The Netherlands, 2020), 'Sissies in Zandvoort' for Zandvoort Pride (The Netherlands, 2020) and was an Official Selection for the 'GAZE International LGBTQ+ Film Festival' at the Irish

(pages FILL IN CORRECT NUMBERS) *The Calamus Emotion*, Digital Stills



Film Institute (Dublin, Ireland, 2020). Forthcoming screenings include: 'Craic Fest' and 'GAZE on Tour' at the New York Irish Center (USA, 2021) and exhibition called 'PORTICO PRIDE' at the Portico Gallery, Maryland (USA, 2021).

The video component to the exhibition 'Encounters with Whitman' examines, reinterprets, and celebrates Whitman's Calamus poems. Forming part of Whitman's larger collection of *Leaves of Grass* (1855), the Calamus poems remain one of the earliest and most explicit poetical sequences celebrating homoerotic love and affection between men. These poems also helped to shape individual and collective gay male ideas of democracy, masculinity, sex, freedom, and community. It is the exploration of these aspects of Whitman's work we seek to highlight through this exhibition.

"Intertwined with personal narratives and archive footage in this film," explains filmmaker, Stiofan O'Ceallaigh, "I imagine a reconciliation with homoself via direct discourse with a queer ancestor: Whitman; connecting homo/queer genealogies and finding 'my roots... my calamus roots...'"

#### Film Credits

Stiofan O'Ceallaigh - Visuals

Roy Allen - Voiceover

Donna McKeivitt

& Derek Jarman - Music & Lyrics





# ALAS! CUM!

Loving of capable am myself, I  
 As love that them to only, but - it of give, will  
 I.  
 Reserve I that (side-pond) - the bywater.  
 The from-drew-I.

What?!  
 But each to something giving.  
 Have shall he what one each to indicating?  
 (Me from loosely them throw) - Or pass I.

As touch or to point.  
 Wandering.  
 "Spirits of cloud.  
 Thick a by-around compass'd.

I these cedar... aromatic.  
 The and blows plum and currants of stems,  
 And chestnut ... and orange wild of bunch!  
 Aah! AND MAPLE OF TWIGS! And..."

Back it render none.  
 Let -- ...other.  
 Each  
 With youths it interchange

Shall root-calamus this.  
 Comrades of token!  
 The henceforth shall this!  
 O! And this!

Me!  
 From separate...  
 To never again returns,  
 And me loves... tenderly.

That him saw last.  
 I here, oh.  
 Side-pond the in-wading  
 Water the from draw, now.

I, what here? And sage?  
 Of handful...  
 AAH!, and leaves...  
 Laurel, and pinks (some),

Here.  
 Down-trailing.  
 Hung.  
 It --- as --- Fl-or-id-a.

In oak live a off pull'd I,  
 Which moss some pocket.  
 My off out here.  
 Pine of branch 'a with lilac.

Here me near is... whoever.  
 Toward tossing tokens for something.  
 Plucking them with wander,  
 I - there singing, dispensing, collecting...

Middle the in I, and crowd great a come  
 They thicker alive, - or dead  
 Friends dear,  
 Of spirits the-they neck or arms

My embrace some and behind some and  
 side my,  
 By - walk some.  
 Me around gathers.  
 Troop - a soon yet - thought had I... alone

Silence the in-then, and - now stopping.

Smell...  
 Earthly....  
 The smelling...

Solitary go!  
 I where think.  
 Before SUMMER!  
 In the later sauntering, or forest,

The in-far... far...!!!  
 Pass I these beyond  
 Them cover partly  
 And stones

The through up-come  
 Weeds and vines, and flowers, wild, and ac-  
 cumulated.  
 Have fields the from pick'd there  
 Thrown stones old

The, where fences rail and post the by.  
 Now gates the pass  
 I soon  
 But world...

The garden,  
 The traverse...  
 I?  
 Collecting comrades.

Of poet the be, should I?  
 But who?  
 For lovers?  
 Collect spring in singing.

I these. (end)







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## Spoken Word Poetry & Performance

# I Painted My Fingernails a Rainbow

Jason Jenn

I painted my fingernails a rainbow...  
So you would know precisely what kind of person I am.

*(holding up the right pinky – painted pink)*

First, see here on my pinky a dollop so dinky  
But powerful, potent, and purposely pink!  
Within its tiny confines, my little girl dream twinkles  
To distract from all these growing wrinkles

(pages 30-37) [Jason Jenn, Spoken Word Performance and Photographs](#)



Once upon a time, you might think pink was weak  
But have you not seen its profound prowess united?

Not tickled pink but ticked off pussy power pink  
Taking no more shit from others but plenty of numbers

Pink is strength imparted from its corresponding tender parts

To nab something drab and transform the norm  
Oh pink! Queerest shade under the sun  
Oh pink! Always on the brink of something fun  
Pink! Pink! Pink! I don't think I could squeal any more in delight

Than I do for you, my darling and daring princess, pretty in pink.

*(holding up the left pinky – painted purple)*

And on the other hand, reflecting time so refined  
The regal and stately shade known as purple  
Properly placed outward for my dainty old lady to sip her tea  
In calm and comfort with a sense of high society  
Not wishing any harm to anyone,

but wisdom upon everyone  
Well respected as reflected through the ages like the sages  
Dressed in various sensible shades and bountiful brocades  
So gloriously refined and tastefully designed  
The perspicacity of plum, the vibrancy of violet  
The exquisite ambiance imbued by amethyst  
Or the light lift that you get as a gift from lavender  
Vaulted and exalted in its holiness and loyal to its royalty  
Purposefully elegant and graciously

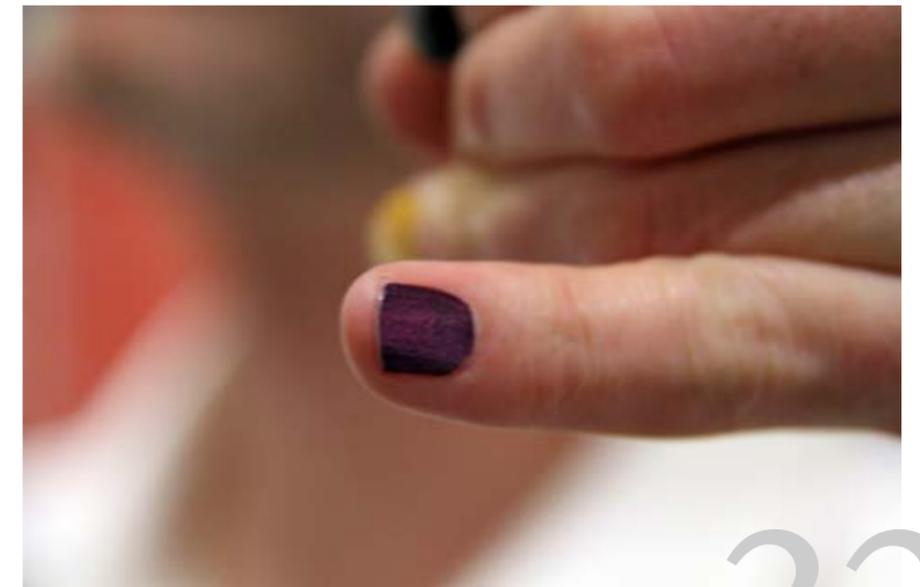
poignant purple!

*(holding up both thumbs – painted dark and light green)*

Now hang loose you'll find on my hand's caboose  
My apprehensible and indispensable opposable green thumbs

To represent the lush Eden inside me  
Both the untamed jungles of sensuous mystery within

Alongside my meticulously groomed hothouse





Now should I still be found sucking my thumb  
 It means I've come to enjoy the endless green  
 pastures of delight  
 All manner of savory succulents and vivacious  
 vegetation for elation  
 For that is how my garden grows  
 But it's also where my envy shows  
 I hope my bitter herbs aren't tossed in the mix too  
 often  
 A little spice when I'm not feeling nice  
 For should I bite my thumb at you – it is indeed  
 intended as an insult  
 What can I say, you wouldn't like me when I'm  
 angry  
 As which I mean, it's only natural – green

*(holding up left ring finger – painted yellow)*

Now watch out! Pay attention! Look here!  
 You've been warned, but don't be too alarmed  
 dear fellow

That beneath the sunny disposition warm and  
 mellow  
 To be faced with vibrant, vivid, livid, and not so  
 timid yellow  
 Now, I'd be lying if I said I didn't fear  
 That you'll dismiss me as a mere lilted daffodil or  
 dandelion queer  
 You can paint me a coward yellow  
 But whatever might dribble down my pant leg  
 metaphorically  
 It is merely one moment of this bold and buttery  
 blonde – so beware!  
 Should I release my wits upon you'll be showered  
 and certainly not in praise  
 Like the wasp or bee that stings you will feel the  
 burn  
 Caution is required for such awesomeness ac-  
 quired  
 Highlighted in the accent of yellow

*(holding up right ring finger – painted blue)*

And here we find ourselves at blue  
 Among the throngs a frequent favorite hue  
 Not just for baby boys, but go on paint up your  
 beards  
 And release your tension lest I mention your balls  
 Sunk into a funk of a picasso period somber  
 mood indigo  
 The weight of regrets where blue bruises forge  
 tearful rivulets  
 Or fleeting moments cut off too soon – come  
 back I miss you midnight blue  
 Things that were never said or said with dread  
 until all blue in the face  
 I want to moan - oh why do I feel so alone!?  
 Give me strength to embrace navy blue – shock  
 me into awareness electric blue  
 Let me dive into a pool of cool mid-century blue or  
 Soar once more into the vast and wild blue yonder  
 of the sky  
 Oh, yes, give me smooth soothing baby blue, I  
 love you

How could I not stay true on a planet so blue!?

*(holding up left middle finger – painted orange)*

Now, how to define a color that defies to rhyme  
 The brash and bold, does not always do what is  
 told, orange  
 But do not get me started on that vile atrocity and  
 hypocrisy  
 A disgrace to the particular hue and the entire  
 human race  
 But yes orange can be gaudy and audacious,  
 bawdy and salacious  
 Like daggers in the eyes of sensibility  
 So feisty and zesty in testing the limits of taste  
 Tart and tangy, sweet and sultry  
 Appropriate color for a citrus fruit and much more  
 to boot  
 The chakra source of our creative and erotic self  
 Sending vibrations to our imaginations from mild  
 to wild

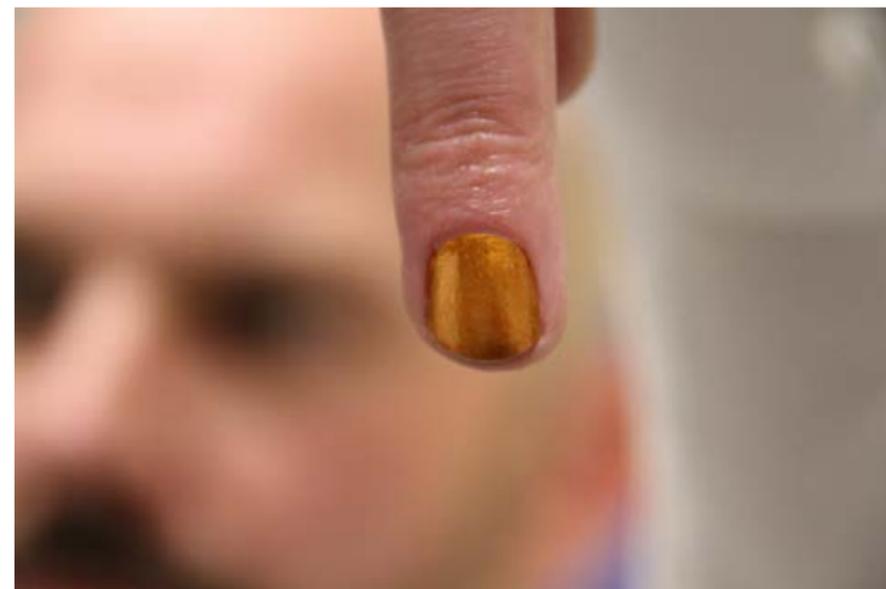


Orange ubiquitously encapsulates  
 an entire season of autumnal  
 splendor  
 From falling leaves to all hallowed  
 eyes  
 So wicked when you need it to be  
 So cute as a pumpkin as required  
 Abounding and astounding so, go  
 for it already!  
 Orange you glad you did?

*(holding up right middle finger –  
 painted red)*



Now at last give in to your tempta-  
 tions and bite the apple red  
 It may be reductive, but what could be more se-  
 ductive?  
 Such a striking stunning cunning color  
 Worn in all the right places and dressed to im-  
 press  
 Intoxicating like a fine wine – feel the rush as  
 cheeks blush  
 Lips drip and bosoms blossom popping with rosy  
 radiance and a cherry on top  
 So totally thrilling – and simultaneously chilling  
 Afterall, cut us open will we not bleed – red  
 Spill too much of it and we're dead – red



Wrap us in ribbons, bandage our wounds, paint  
 the town – red  
 Are we seeing nothing but – red  
 Are we boiling over as the world heats up in an-  
 ger– red  
 More than a scarlet fever has reached a ferocious  
 fervor in our head  
 There's a most uncivil war of otherness over-  
 whelming all our senses  
 Political fires burning bridges, burning crosses,  
 burning truth and reason!  
 Witness the witless demise of our society!  
 Is this what we get with republican, right wing,  
 fascist regime red?  
 No! No! No! No! Fuck you red!  
 We are ready to serve it right back  
 to you  
 Red revolution Red resistance Red  
 rage  
 God damn you, mother fucking,  
 what the hell is happening  
 If we keep this up we'll all end up  
 dead red!!!!!!

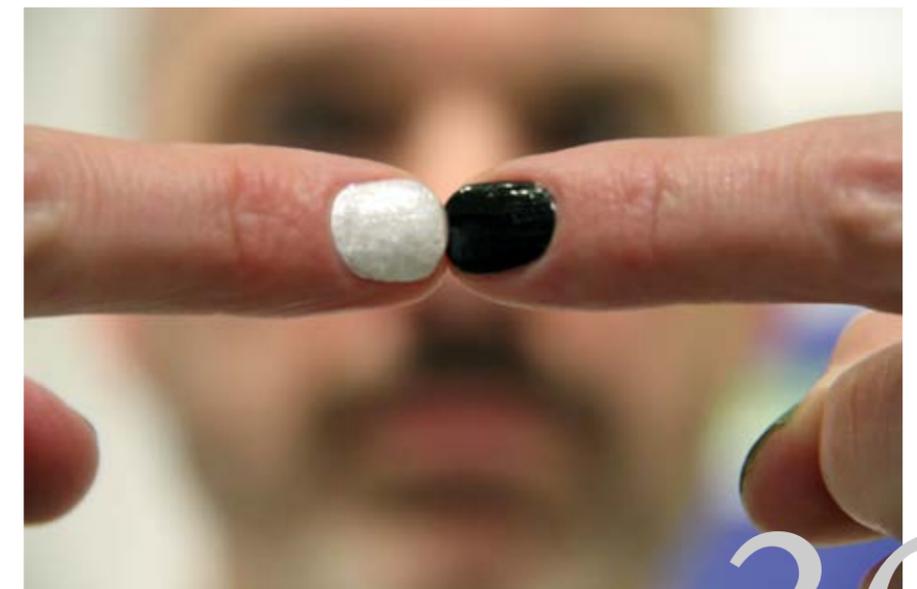
*(deep breath while putting togeth-  
 er both index fingers left painted  
 black, right painted white)*



But oh there is a calm to be found in the palette of  
 the palm  
 When the black and the white unite  
 We just might be alright  
 Making adjustments in this teeter totter balancing  
 act of the universe  
 The cosmic dance of yin and yang through time  
 and space  
 Combining all the colors, removing all the colors  
 The blending of sight and the absence of light  
 Everything and nothing  
 Tranquility and clarity  
 In the realm of possibility  
 Reset restore renew refresh rebe-  
 gin  
 There is so much to be said about  
 black and white  
 But they speak volumes for them-  
 selves in their voluptuous  
 wavelengths of silence  
 Shhhhhhhhh

*(holding up all the fingers)*

As I gaze upon these fingertips, I  
 am reminded  
 That I possess all of this and more  
 A kaleidoscopic collage of colors



and contradictions  
 And in the patchwork pattern, a  
 most dramatic chromatic diorama  
 My fingertips are bright little sign-  
 posts  
 Telltale transmissions  
 Of this is who I am  
 This is the queer I am here to be  
 And I see the prism you imprison  
 behind yours as well  
 Free the full spectrum of who you  
 are  
 We all contain Whitman's magnifi-  
 cent multitudes  
 Let us paint the world with our  
 many-splendored being!

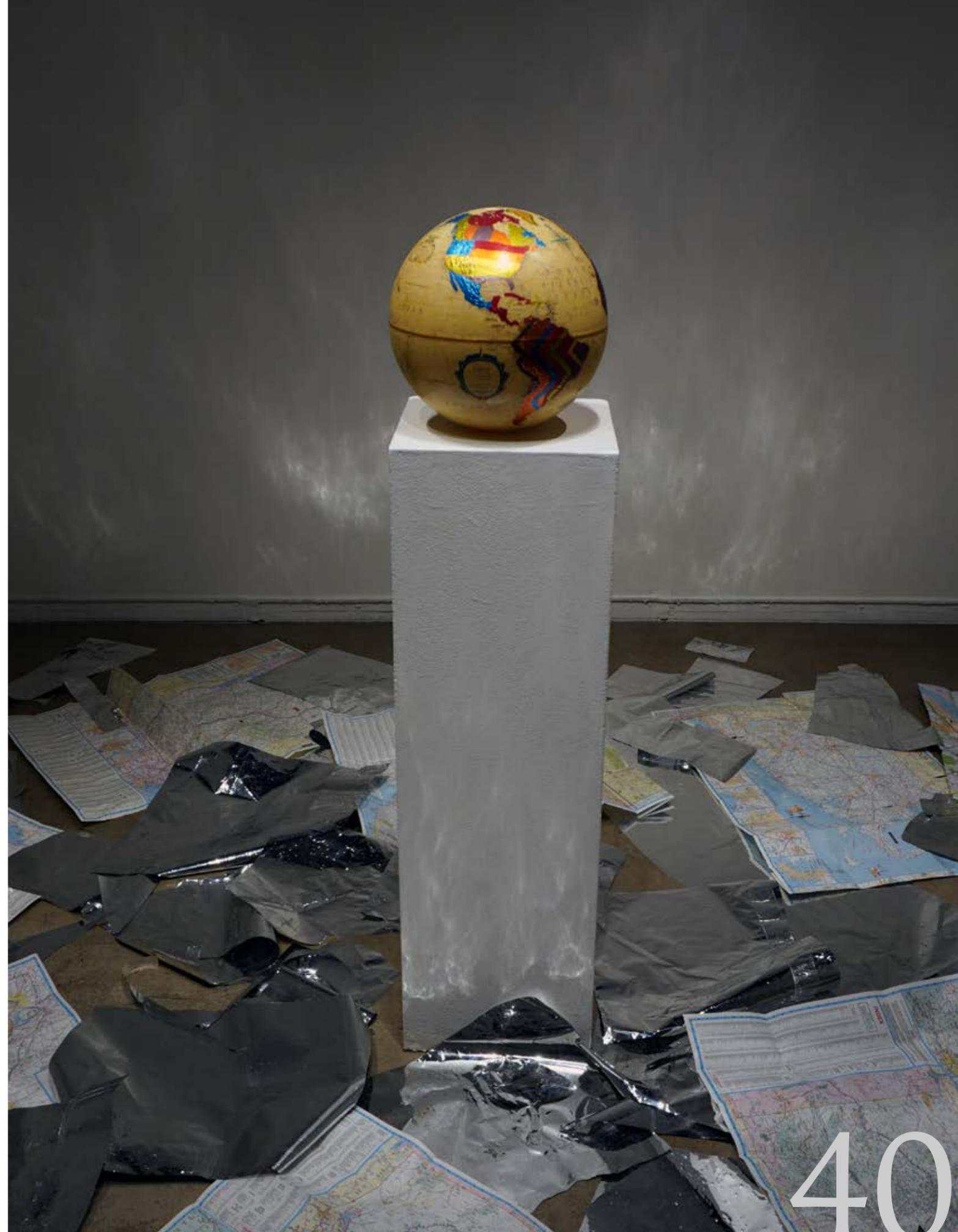
I painted my fingernails a rainbow  
 So you would know precisely what kind of person  
 I am.







(pages 38-40) Jason Jenn, Global Outing, Mixed Media Installation,

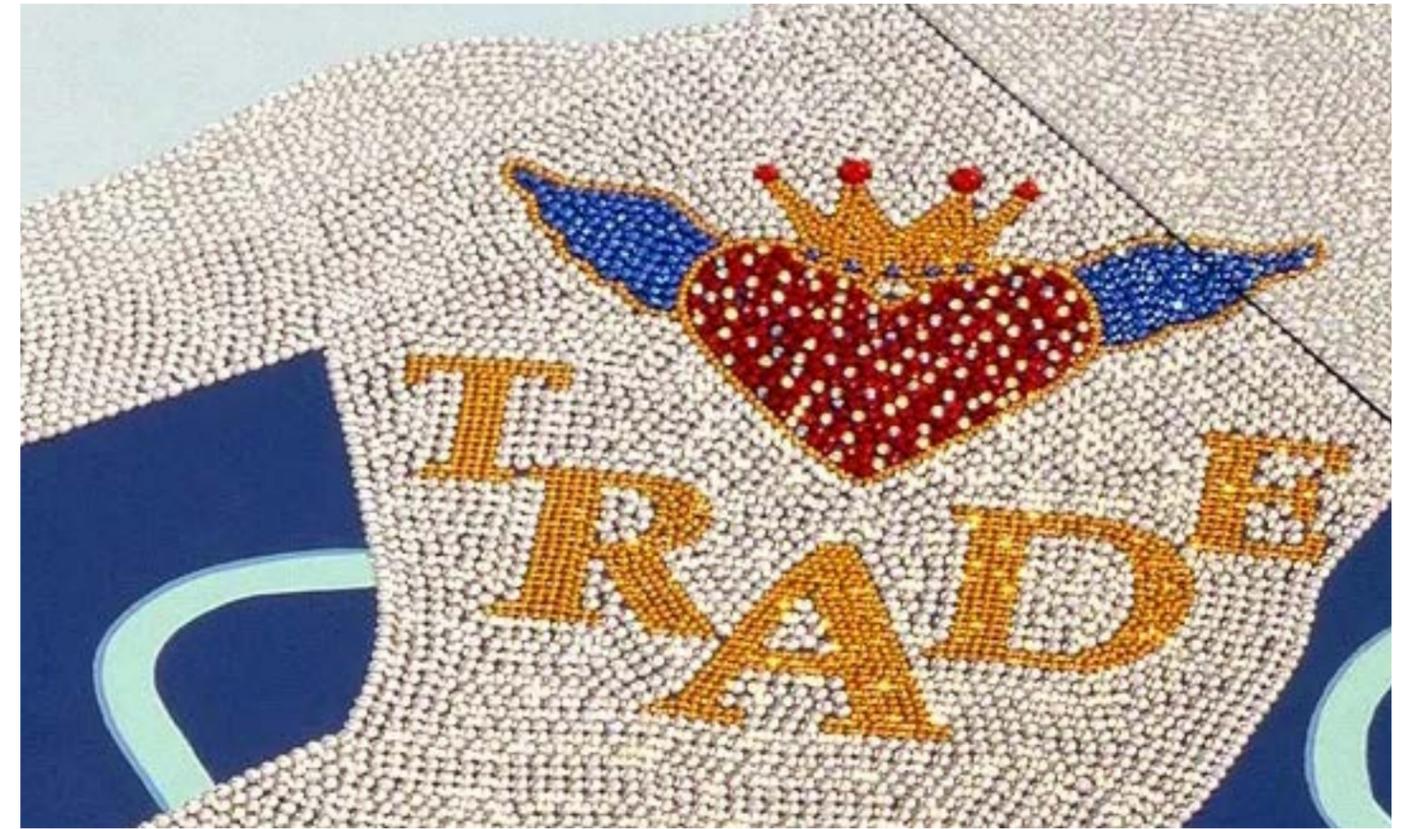
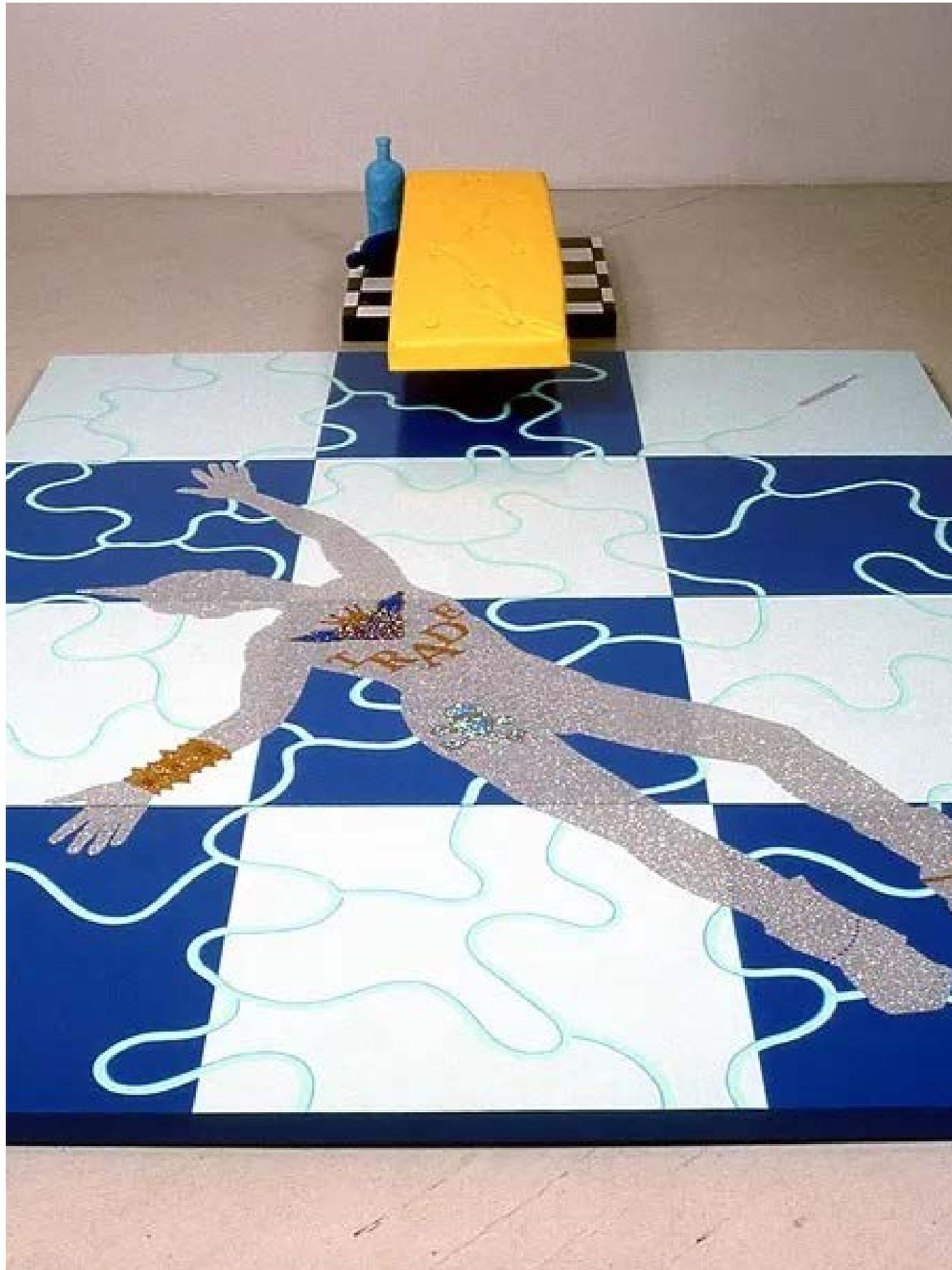




(previous) Nelson Munares, I Continue, Digital Art  
(left) Sean Yang, Beyond the Blue, Mixed Media Sculpture  
(next pages) Jason Russel Young, Untitled, Acrylics







(previous) [David Plath](#), Labels, Digital Art  
[Julien Tomasello](#), Ophelia: The Ciao! Manhattan Re-Release, Mixed-media sculpture  
(next) [Meg Pursell](#), She Was Just Like Everyone Else, Painting



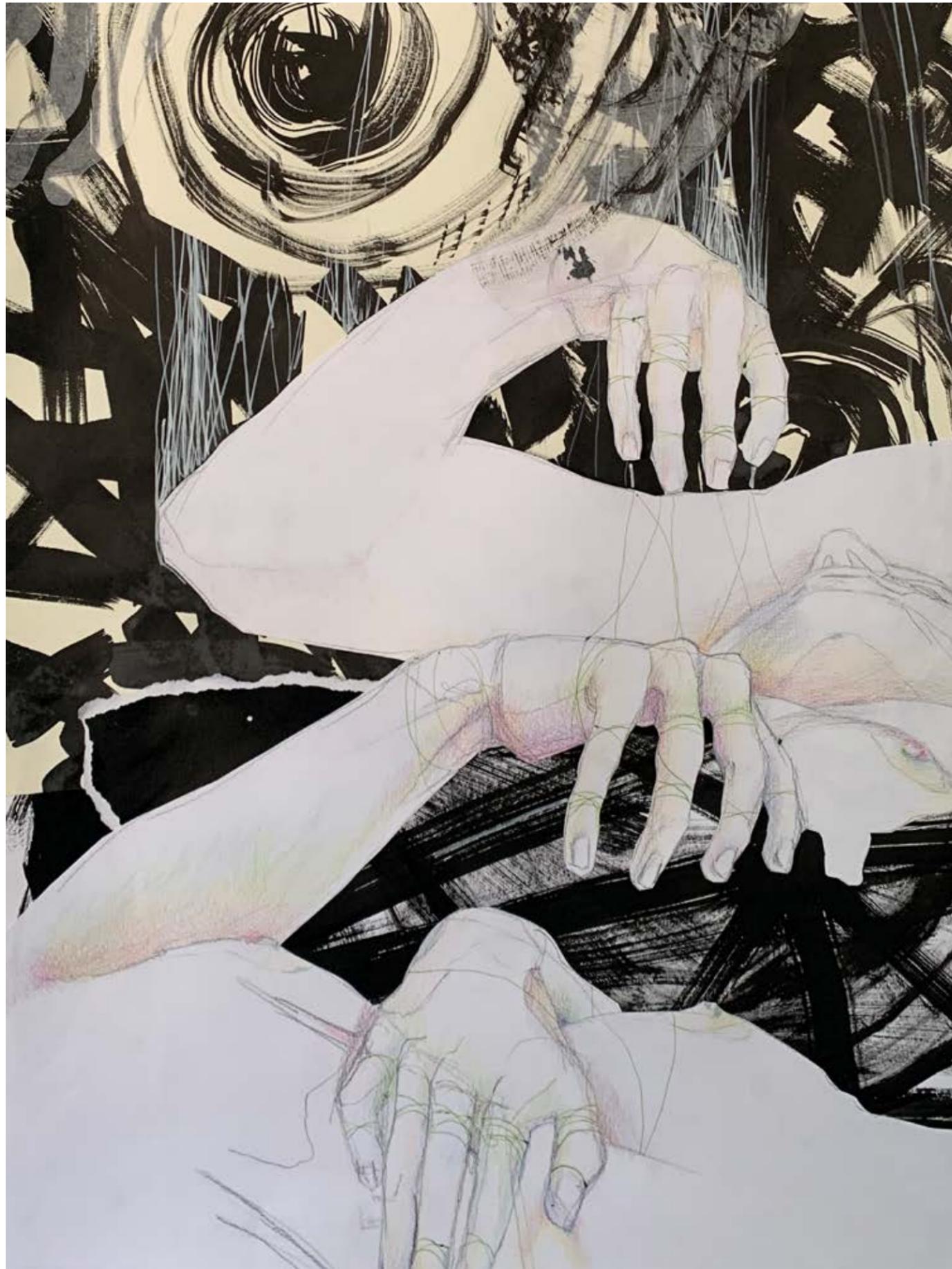




[John Boudreau](#),  
Gem in the Robe,  
Mixed Media

(this page)  
[Dave Emmett](#),  
The Husker Dü Starcluster,  
Acrylic Pour Photographs  
(next pages)  
[Giovanni Ortega](#),  
Ascending, and Burrow,  
Mixed Media







Art & Words  
**Queer Sensibility**  
Marc Savoia

### **The Art Broadly**

As an artist who operates in the realm of the subjective, I use techniques of image appropriation as an external means to negotiate my internal world. In the treatment of sourced images, specifically through fracturing, disrupting and subverting, I re-enact a formal fracturing of identity. A tension of opposites reverberates throughout my practice—object and subject, self and other, male and female, straight and gay, surface and meaning—in a capacity that can be subversive, anxious, delicate and harmonious.

The work speaks in private communication, in language that is symbolic. It needs to be translated and decoded. Whereas my fine art draws on the ephemeral and disposable (commercially-driven magazine and image culture from the mass media) my clippings are assembled and populated like characters in a story or as decorative allies towards a subversive goal. Messaging and language take time to decode as the mind is invited to unscram-

Domestic Bliss  
Collage, 26.4 cm x 18 cm

ble the linkages and piece together narratives and relationships from the disparate elements of each clipping.

As the producer of the work, the metaphorical value of images speak to me as if looking through a photo album in which I reflect on memories. My works are composed in such a way that a personal interpretation allows me to revisit a disorientating sense of nostalgia.

Working within the realm of the subjective, the collages reflect a psychological space I inhabit as an artist living with mental illness—depression and anxiety. My practice involves collecting images and separating them into categories. It is an obsession that transforms the way I experience the world, reorganizing knowledge to make sense of time and my place within it.

My practice can be interpreted as a multi-tiered form of argot, speaking to a variety of groups—from the art connoisseur to those that appreciate camp and are able to interpret the work through a queer lens or slang. I pay homage to old-fashioned styles and the visual stimuli of bygone eras. I emphasize the metaphorical power of the floral and decorative to seduce the viewer and amplify the seductive. Body and sex exist in the art, but it is veiled through a process of layering. The irresistible potential of the material forces me to treat it in such a way that I psychologically, creatively, and literally abject the memories in the work. In this sense the artwork functions as both disease and cure.

(left) Hinge,  
45.2 x 33.1 cm  
(right) New Kid on the Block  
43.5 x 24.6 cm





Oberon's Son  
45 x 36.5 cm



Heterochromia Iridis  
43 x 29 cm



## Mother Dearest

The piecing together of appropriated images and the synthesis of memories are also used to address guilt and self-loathing. The disapproval growing up as a first generation Italian Australian in a conservative, Catholic household, has left a lasting impact. A recurring autobiographical theme is the mother connection. Having experienced a close and loving—but also challenging—relationship with my mother, the issue of separation forms a crucial subjective link. This fracturing also applies conceptually to the themes and messages I am concerned with, and formally in my techniques of image appropriation. Just as mother is deeply entrenched in the internal world from which I draw on, she is also present externally in my work, sometimes through literal reference, often implicitly like a shadow over the masculine. As an issue, the notion of the mother provides a tension between my internal and external worlds in the form of anxiety. It underpins my attitude to the feminine, which in turn informs my treatment of gender. My private connection to the maternal has long brooded in an unmapped area of memory, instinct and the unconscious. My practice is a form of restorative behavior because it seeks to address feelings of disappointing my mother and not fulfilling her expectations. Even when I examine the masculine and subvert or deface the masculine ideal in some way the mother is present. A desire to be the ideal son is followed by a rebellion against this ideal and with it, mother.



(left) La Suora  
35.5 x 25 cm  
(right) Flesh Tone  
35.5 x 27.7 com

## Masking Up

Each collage incorporates a metamorphic, transitional form of hybridity through use of the mask device. The figures are caught in a state of transition brought about by incorporation of mask-like elements that simultaneously reveal yet obscure and regurgitate. On a level of personal narrative, they reference the theatricality of the mask I had to wear when my sexuality was concealed. Its metaphorical value is extended on principles of metamorphosis. The mask as a technical device presents opportunities in my work not merely to conceal but to extrude substances from or to penetrate by peering through.

## The Closet

The closet remains a spatial symbol of privacy and exposure, safety and danger. As an experience, it has a profoundly subjective relevance. Throughout my teenage years I lived in fear in the closet, running away from home, experiencing family disapproval and being sent to a psychiatrist. This symbolic function of the closet in my work is achieved through concealing agents, such as the mask or veil, operating on a two-dimensional level of layers rather than a three-dimensional space. The closet, like the mask, represents another connection point between the internal and the external worlds.

## On Camp

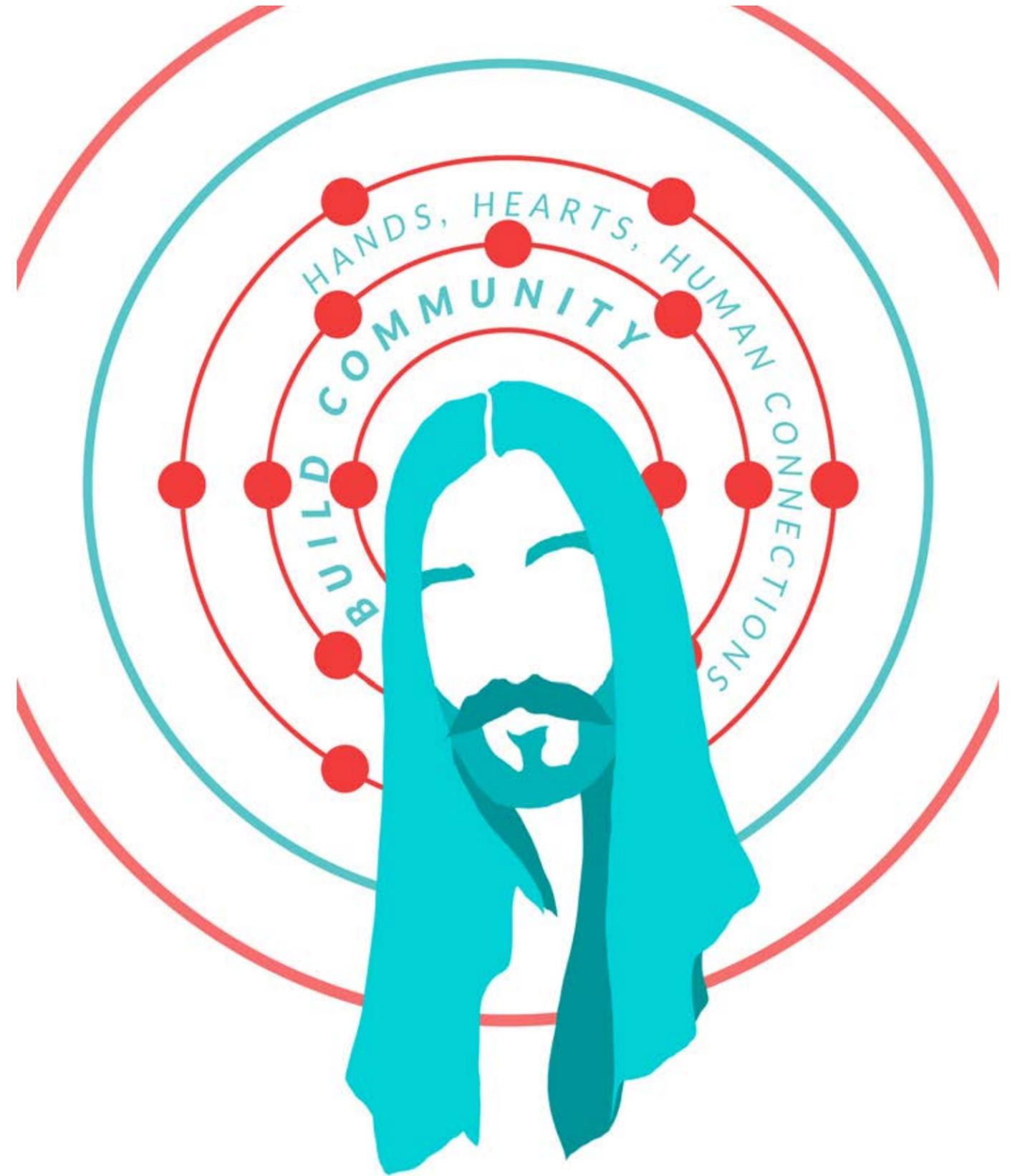
The glamour of books on the golden age of Hollywood have always had an influential appeal in my practice. While they feature among the source material in my found images, I also draw on personal recollections of scanning through these books on the coffee tables of gay friends who honoured the glamour of divas from days gone by. As an iconographic resource, it inspires drag performers to reproduce celebrity through impersonation in exaggerated form, in particular the hallmarks of the feminine. My use of glamour and celebrity is part of the historical survivalist fantasy of my Queer predecessors who were drawn to women of power. Camp expands with the ornate use of handiwork to mask, cloak, and adorn the subject. Dressing it flamboyantly, evokes notions of drag as artistic practice.

Camp blends the worlds of beauty and ugliness into one grotesque whole and this is where it has potential to intersect with monstrous themes in my practice. Camp has a savageness in that it validates and dismisses using irony, mockery and wit through its interpretive sensibility. Through its hidden-language properties, camp in effect places a mask on itself. While I apply it through media and image selection, there is a tradition within camp that applies the mask linguistically. It is maintained that Camp was a humorous means for homosexuals to cope in a dominantly hostile, heteronormative environment; a means of diverting the stigma of being recognized or victimized on the basis of sexual identity.



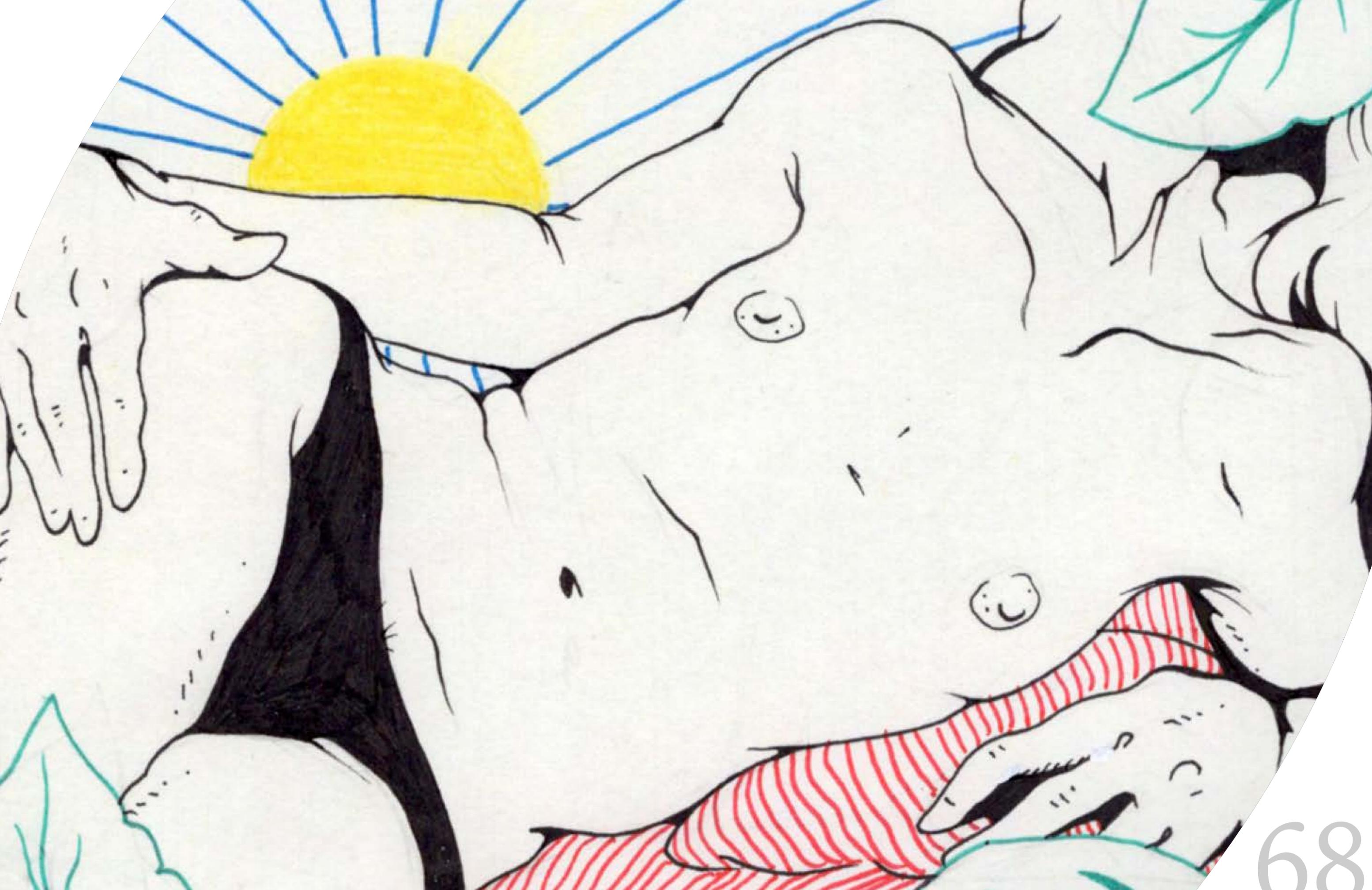
(above) Mal'occhio  
67 x 30 cm  
(right) Jock  
28 x 26 cm  
(next page) Fall from Grace  
46 x 33 cm





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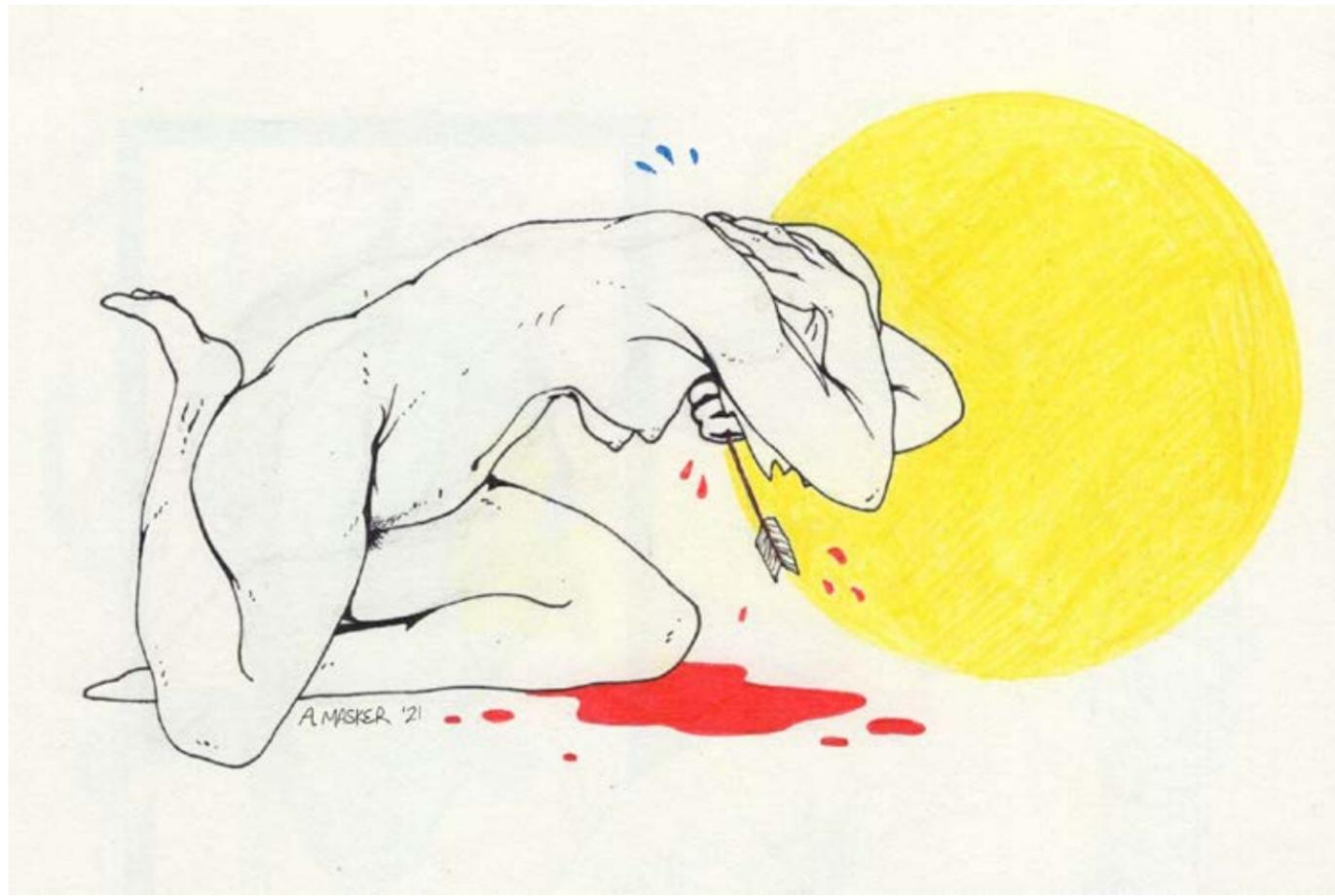


Drawings & Interview  
**A Symbolic State**  
Angela Masker

**Queer Quarterly: Tell us about your art and your practice.**

**Angela Masker:** The majority of my recent works are self portraits. My own face and body serve as reflections of thoughts and emotions that I grapple with, especially throughout the pandemic, in isolation. Nostalgia, stress, anxiety, depression, and fear are recur-

(previous) Reclining Nude, Ink and Colored Pencil, 6.5 x 5"  
(right) Death of the Gorgon, Watercolor, 11 x 14"



(this page) Untitled II, Ink and Colored Pencil, 8 x 5"  
 (right) Untitled I, Ink and Colored Pencil, 8 x 7"

ring sentiments expressed in my work, with subject matter predominately centered around the transformations that I have experienced over the past two years, how they have changed me, and how I have coped. Each piece acts as a documentation or an entry in a non-verbal diary of sorts. Like pages in a diary, the works are small and intimate; one must get up close and personal to view them.

**Each piece acts as an entry in a non-verbal diary of sorts.**

My work revolves around self, memory, and personal experience, yet I strive to depict many of my concepts in ways that allow viewers to project their own story onto them. Impulses, intrusive thoughts, fond memories, anxieties about the future, and subconscious musings all bubble to the surface, often in unexpected ways. My process for developing concepts and compositions typically relies on stream of conscious-

ness drawing, thus the works reflect my thoughts and state of mind in the moment of their creation.

The stream of consciousness outcome generally serves as a springboard toward a finished piece, prompting further exploration and research into symbolism, probing ideas, and delving deeper into memo-

ry. These steps are often therapeutic and cathartic. Many of my pieces document a healing process. As my mental state improves and my ideas, experiences, and emotions evolve, I see a reflected change in my visuals and subject matter. The solace that I found in creating art brought me joy and fulfillment during a difficult and complicated year, developing a dynamic



visual timeline to complement complex events and an ever-changing state of mind.

**Viscera is a recurring visual theme in your drawings—from gaping mouths to bleeding wounds. What drives you to these symbol sets?**

Viscera has been a recurring theme in my work since high school. I find that most often it serves as a visual metaphor for catharsis. The bleeding chest wound for example, is something I typically associate with depression—the weighted feeling in the chest—and in these images that weight is being released. Menstrual imagery is another visual I tend to incorporate for similar reasons; as someone with endometriosis symptoms I view it as a metaphor for the ability to withstand intense pain. Internal imagery, blood, and other viscera form a connection between deep-seated (sometimes even hidden) thoughts or emotions and the inside of the body, blurring the lines between the two and illustrating intense physical reaction to emotion and vice versa.

**Your figures are faceless. What motivates that decision?**

Anxiety can make you want to hide, isolate, detach, or put up a front.

I feel that keeping my figures faceless adds a sort of emotional ambiguity to a piece, which I like. Without seeing a facial expression it can be difficult to pinpoint how or what they are feeling and it's more in the hands of the viewer to decide what

they think a work means. To an extent it also relates to the mental illness aspect of my work—anxiety, depression, and the like can make you want to hide, isolate yourself, detach from reality, or put up a front to prevent people from seeing what's actually going on under-

neath the surface. Generally, the facelessness is a metaphor for that.

**You often keep a limited and primary palette. Does this help or hinder your process?**

I find that keeping a limited palette actually often aids my process rather than hinders it. I don't dwell on palette options or color combinations because I have a standard set that I almost always return to for each piece. Additionally, I feel that my palette creates a sense of unity across my body of work, uniting pieces in different mediums and styles that otherwise would be vastly different from one another, from ink to watercolor to oil, et cetera.



(right) Becoming, Ink, 8.5 x 12"

**How does queerness (or your personal queerness) affect your work?**

I feel that my queerness is present everywhere in my work, at times in physical form but most strongly in an emotional aspect. Whether the pieces have to do with my own sentiments and sense of self, or my relationships and interactions with others, they are always inherently about queer people and queer experience.

**What/Who are your influences? I read wonderful bits of mythology and love the retro-like feel of your style.**

As an Art History student, my studies are a primary influence on my work. For example, I draw inspiration from classical figurative works for my oil paintings, 20th century Modernist visuals for my abstract backgrounds, ancient art and architecture dealing with mythological themes, et cetera. Whatever time period happens to have my interest at the time is typically reflected in my own work, but some recurring favorites are ancient Greco-Roman and Mesoamerican works, Baroque period paintings, Bauhaus theory and visuals, Abstract Expressionism, and 1970s Feminist art. I also find a great deal of inspiration in vintage and retro textiles, advertisements, interior design, and the like. Peter Max, John Luke Eastman, that sort of aesthetic.

**Angela Masker (she/her) is a visual artist based in Phoenix, Arizona. Connect with Angela on [Instagram](#).**



(right) Ensnared, Ink and Colored Pencil, 8.5 x 12"





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# 20

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# 78

Fiction & Art

# One for the Road

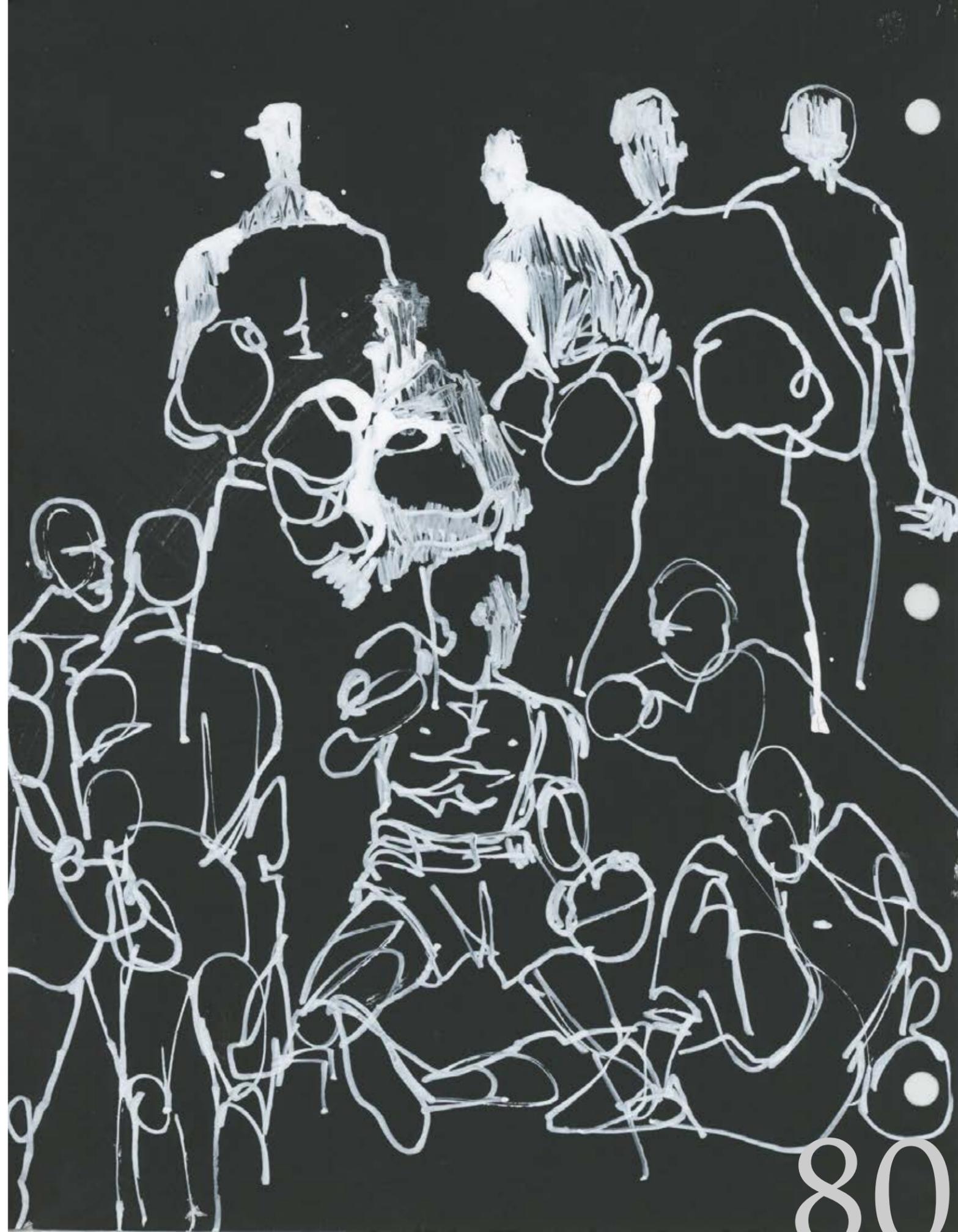
Artist Maucrice Moore

*It was a cool on de old Notsink farm dis evening. -smile- And all de lil churen plus mos of the farm-hands huddled as usual round de fire ta hear de old man's story. Dat old boi only asked folks for bout a gallon of water, and maybe a bag of lavender for one of dey tales. -pops tongue- Bout all people could afford at dat time mind you. -laughs- Heck, Daddy would jus been elated if all yall did was let em pick roots ovah back yonder. Even signed for folks who beez a lil hard of hearing like me wit no extra charge of course. -smile- Anyhow, our teller pulled a shimmering copper-colored tin from his left pocket and loaded his dark cheeks wit tobacco ta begin his tale.*

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- Hush up folks. We gon start soon as I get dees ole hands togetha. Yall know how dis itis be in de cold. Now where was we last time? -Spits in slop cup-

**Child:** -whispering- Sir, you said yall gon start tellin us bout de great Warlocks.

(previous) Notsink Farmhands and Churen, Ink on Paper, 9 x 12"  
(right) Rasheed's Beauty Aka The Great Ebony Lion, Acrylic on Paper, 9 x 12"



**Oldman:** -laughs- Yes, yall churen wanted to know mo bout de Loc's, and dat sweet smoke de give off. Empowerin folks or what have you. -Spits in slop cup- Well, I guess it happened ovah dare at de Honey-pot when it usta dazzle. -laughs- Back in Big Mamma's day when it was jus a club where all de legendary churen usta get down jus like dis. -Waves arms back and forth gyrating-

**Group:** -Laughing and Giggling Shouting- Go Oldman! Go Oldman! Go!

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- Ok. Betta stop dat. Don't want to hurt myself doin de most before I finish de story. Now de Honey-pot be jus a rundown apothecary now. Guess it was round bout three or so in de morning. One year older, an old cat sat reminiscing wit anyone who would listen bout dey glory days. -Spits in slop cup-

**Child:** Yes, de great Lion! -growls-

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- Yes, baby de Lion.

**Leroy:** Hey, Mx. Rasheed! -smile- It's bout time fo us ta close up shop fa de night Sir.

**Rasheed:** -smiles- Hey young fella what chu know good!?

**Leroy:** -smile- Sorry, it's time to head home Mx. Rasheed.

**Rasheed:** -smile- Come on Leory? Jus one mo drink for de road please? It's my birthday, and I have not had de pleasure of anyone's company of any kind for a long while.

**Leroy:** -smiles- Well, since it's yo birthday Sir, let's have dat drink! -winks- On me!

**Rasheed:** -eyes light up- Yes, Leroy, I turned eighty-two today! Dees ole' bones have seen some thangs baby. -Singing offbeat- Some be sweet, and some be sour I tell you! -smile- But none as sweet as you Leroy.

**Leroy:** -smiles and shakes head- Have ya now Sir?!

**Rasheed:** -smiles- Yes, I tell ya!

**Leroy:** Same drank as usual Sir?

**Rasheed:** -smiles- Yes!

**Leroy:** -pours drinks into two shimmering pynk shot glasses- Ok, Mx. Rasheed. On three. One! Two! Three!

**Rasheed:** -slams glass on glimmering blue countertop- Auhhhh! Still burns like my first time baby. Not to be in yalls mess Leroy. But, is you headed home in such a hurry ta meet yo love? You usually take ya time mos nights.

**Leroy:** -smiles- Well, if by love? Yall mean my cat Anansi, then yeah Sir I am.

**Rasheed:** -smiles- No, we mean your man?

**Leroy:** Ohhh no! -laughs- No man here Sir.

**Rasheed:** What! You too beautiful ta be single Leroy! -laughs- I see how all de boys and lil femmes be lookin at yall. -whispers- Even sum ah de trade too.

**Leroy:** -laughs- Thanks. -smiles- Dat's sweet. But, after de last one, imma stay single for a minute. Jus focusing on my studies Sir.

**Rasheed:** -smiles- You know I usta be beauti-

ful too Leroy! -pauses- Leroy, from yo expression Mx. Rasheed can see dat you don't believe him? However, I usta look jus like -whispers- dat peanuthead bouncer Toni ovah yonder. -whispers- Wit bigger arms though. -unfolds old piece of paper- See! Dis was Rasheed in my wrestling days. Boi I was something back in de day! Dey called me de Great Ebony Lion back den! -Leans forward to whisper- Almost went toe to toe wit Griffith it weren't for dat incident way back when.

**Leroy:** Stop it! You still handsome as evah Sir. -Winks-

**Rasheed:** -blushing- Well, I guess I will head on home Leroy.

**Leroy:** -smiles- Well, take care. See, next week.

**Rasheed:** -nodes- Will, do. Finna go to de little boys room before I head out Leroy. -walks to restroom-

**Leroy:** -smiles- No problem Sir.

**Toni:** -taps countertop- Well imma head ovah ta de dinner. -mocking- Unless you want me to wait for you, and yo new boyfriend.

**Leroy:** -rolls-eyes- See, ya later Toni.

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- I guess bout 30 minutes had passed. Leroy started ta notice a sweet fragrance in de air. To sweet fo Honey-pot anyway! -Spits in slop cup-

**Leroy:** Hey, Mx. Rasheed! You alright?!

**Rasheed:** Leroy! Help! Dis smoke be everywhere. We can't see! -Coughs-

**Leroy:** What?! Fire?! Not suppose ta be smoking in here Sir!

**Rasheed:** No fire! -Coughing- Somethings wrong!

**Leroy:** -runs over to door- Open de door!

**Rasheed:** I can't -voice changing rapidly, bones cracking- help me Lee-r--oy!

**Leroy:** What's dat smoke commin from de door! -mumbling- Why de hell is it yellow?

**Rasheed:** -coughing and gagging- It's ripping me apart! -grouling- Run Leroy!

**Leroy:** Relax, Sir! -Hits the fire alarm yelling- Stand back Mx. Rasheed! Imma kick de door down!

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- Leroy kicked at dat door as hard as he could! But, it would not move an inch. Smoke was pouring out from the door from all sides now. -Spits in slop cup- Strange thang is there was no heat comin from de door. It was actually freezing. Rasheed took a couple steps back and ran at de door wit all his might! Bang! The door crumbled like a sand castle. -Spits in slop cup- Leroy tripped and hit de wall face first breaking his nose in de process before fallin ta de floor in pain. Gazing up from the cold linoleum before passin out. Leroy couldn't believe de sight before him! It was Mr. Rasheed! But he looked jus like dat old picture he showed Leroy earlier. -Spits in slop cup- Rasheed's muscles were ripplin and his skin was shimmering like dark gold wit all dat yella molasses smellin smoke jus pouring off of him! -Spits in slop cup-

**Leroy:** -stammering over his words and winc-



ing in pain- Mx. Rasheed?! Dat you Sir?!

**Rasheed:** It's Lion now! -Roars!-

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- Next thang ya know bout three cops enter de bar with guns drawn! Hands Up! One screaming "Let me see your hands Boy!" Wit Leory crawling out from de restroom grunting in pain trying to stand. -Spits in slop cup-

**Leroy:** -hands raised blood dripping soaking his shirt- Officers everythings ok now! It was jus a misunderstanding!

**Rasheed/Lion:** -roars steps in front of Leory- Pigs!

**Leroy:** Rasheed stop! There is no fire Officer. Jus a pipe burst is all. It hit me right in the face. -nose gushing with blood- Rasheed was jus trying to help...

**Officers Jim:** Hold it right their Boy! Drop de weapons or we will shoot!

**Rasheed/Lion:** -moves closer to Officer Jim- Who you callin Boy?! -whispers- Pig.

**Leroy:** -hands shaking in the air- Lets jus talk bout dis Officer!

**Officers Jim:** Boy I said let us see your hands!

**Rasheed/Lion:** Ain't nothin ta talk bout wit dees... Pigs Leroy!

**Officers Jim:** Get down on your hands and knees Boy!

**Rasheed/Lion:** -growls- They ain't gon be to many mo Boys Officer Jim! -grouling- Jus like ya Granddaddy we see?!

**Officers Tyrone:** -winces- What's wrong with his face Jim?!

**Officers Sarah:** Look at those claws!

**Officers Jim:** Granddaddy? -Shakes head- Not gon tell yall gain Boy. -cocking gun- Get yo butt down ta de ground!

**Officers Tyrone:**  
Please, jus comply Sir.

**Rasheed/Lion:**  
Ain't no complying wit dis fool Ma'am.

**Officers Sarah:** Yes, baby. Please, jus do as

Jim says.

**Rasheed/Lion:** Well, Sista. -laughs- I see yall on dat Blue Lives shit.

**Officers Sarah:** No bodies on anythang Sir!

**Officers Tyrone:** Jus, don't want anyone gettin hurt is all.

**Rasheed/Lion:** Only folks got to be worried bout getting de ass handed to them is yall.

**Officers Jim:** Was dat a threat Boy?!

**Officers Tyrone:** -Holsters gun- Let us handle dis Jim. -Smiles- Now, Son you need to listen to

me. -moves closer to Leory- We jus wanna help ya friend. Leory, are you sure you're ok baby?

**Leroy:** -slowly lowers hands- Got a couple of ribs broken maybe I thank? But, I am ok.

**Rasheed/Lion:** Well, if yall jus trying ta help why yall got ya guns out?

**Officers Jim:** What are we doin? -Points gun at Rasheed/Lion's head- Hands up Boy!

**Rasheed/Lion:** -Slashes gun in half with one swoop of his claws- How you like dat Jimmy?!-growls-

**Officers Jim:** -falls to the ground in fear- Well shoot Him gals!

**Officers Tyrone:** -attends to Leroy- Let me see?

**Leroy:** Rasheed chill!

**Officers Jim:** Didn't you people see what dat boy jus did ta me?! -Goes for stun gun-

**Officers Sarah:** -Grabs Jim arm and twists- Maybe yall better go wait in de car, and let us -mockingly- people handle dis mess Mr. Deescalateor!

**Officers Jim:** But! Dat, Boy!...

**Officers Sarah:** Aint gon tell ya again Jim! Dis ain't de first time...

**Officers Tyrone:** Officer Sarah!

**Officers Jim:** -Walks out slowly and heads to the car mumbling-

**Rasheed/Lion:** -growls-

**Officers Sarah:** Don't chu mind him Sir. Sorry, for how we entered.

**Rasheed/Lion:** What?

**Officers Tyrone:** We were following his lead. -Points to Lions four-inch razor sharp claws- He said you had a weapon.

**Rasheed/Lion:** Well, they are part of me. Can't take em off.

**Officers Sarah:** Are they retractable?

**Rasheed/Lion:** -growls- Not when I am being threatened, I guess. -retracts claws-

**Officers Tyrone:** -Jumps in fear- Well, the ambulance is here now Leory. We better get you some help.

**Leroy:** -sigh of relief- Good, I can barely keep my eyes open.

**Officers Sarah:** You can ride wit him if you like Rasheed?

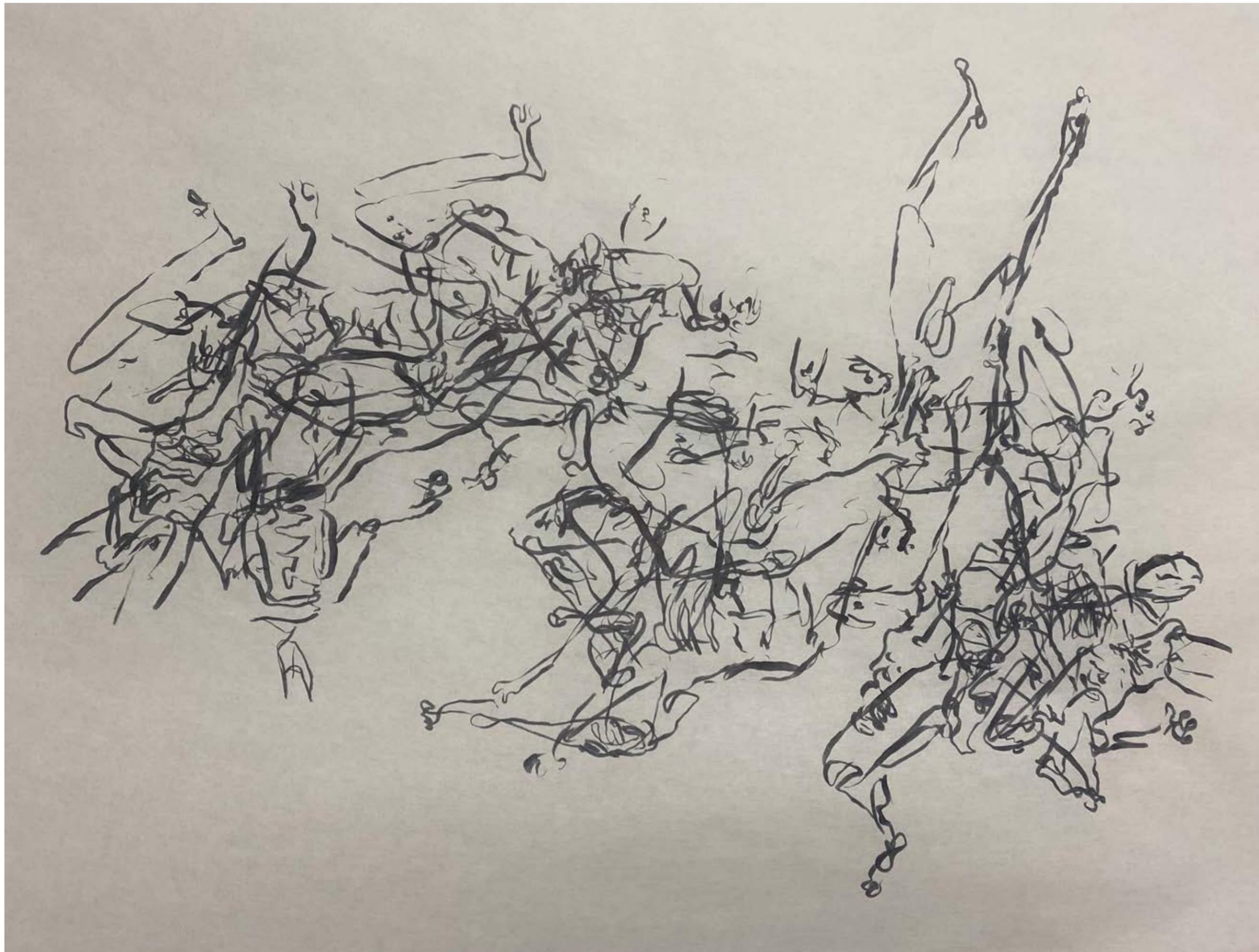
**Leroy:** -Making his way out the door with the officers help- Yeah, maybe they can help you too Rasheed?

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- As the ambulance was taking off. A flash of gold appeared dat only Lion and weirdly enuf Tyrone seemed perceive. -Spits in slop cup-

**Officers Tyrone:** Rasheed, you best be taking off now. I'll make sure your friend get de care dat he needs.

**Rasheed/Lion:** -smiles- I'll be on my way

Who you callin  
Boy?! Pig.



now. Unless, there is anythang  
else officers. -Cuts eyes at Jim  
while leaping into the air- And,  
it's Lion now! -roars and takes off  
into the night-

**Officers Jim:** -Cowers in fear  
in car- Yall gone jus let dat boy  
leave...

**Officers Tyrone:** -enters police  
car whispering- Yes, my love has  
work ta do.

**Officers Jim:** What was dat  
Tyrone?

**Officers Sarah:** Love? When  
you start swinging dat way?

**Oldman:** -Spits in slop cup- In  
a flash sweet smelling smoke be-  
gan ta fill dat police car! Tyrone  
grabbed Jim by de neck crushing  
it, slamming his head through  
the window. Sarah screamed  
blasting off a couple of rounds  
before being ripped to shreds and  
devoured like Jim! -Spits in slop  
cup-

**Officers Tyrone:** -whispers-  
Cease children. -snarls eyes  
glowing wit lavender colored  
golden fire- And, let my beauti-  
ful fragrance rid you of dis new  
world's weak magic!

**Land Acknowledgment:**

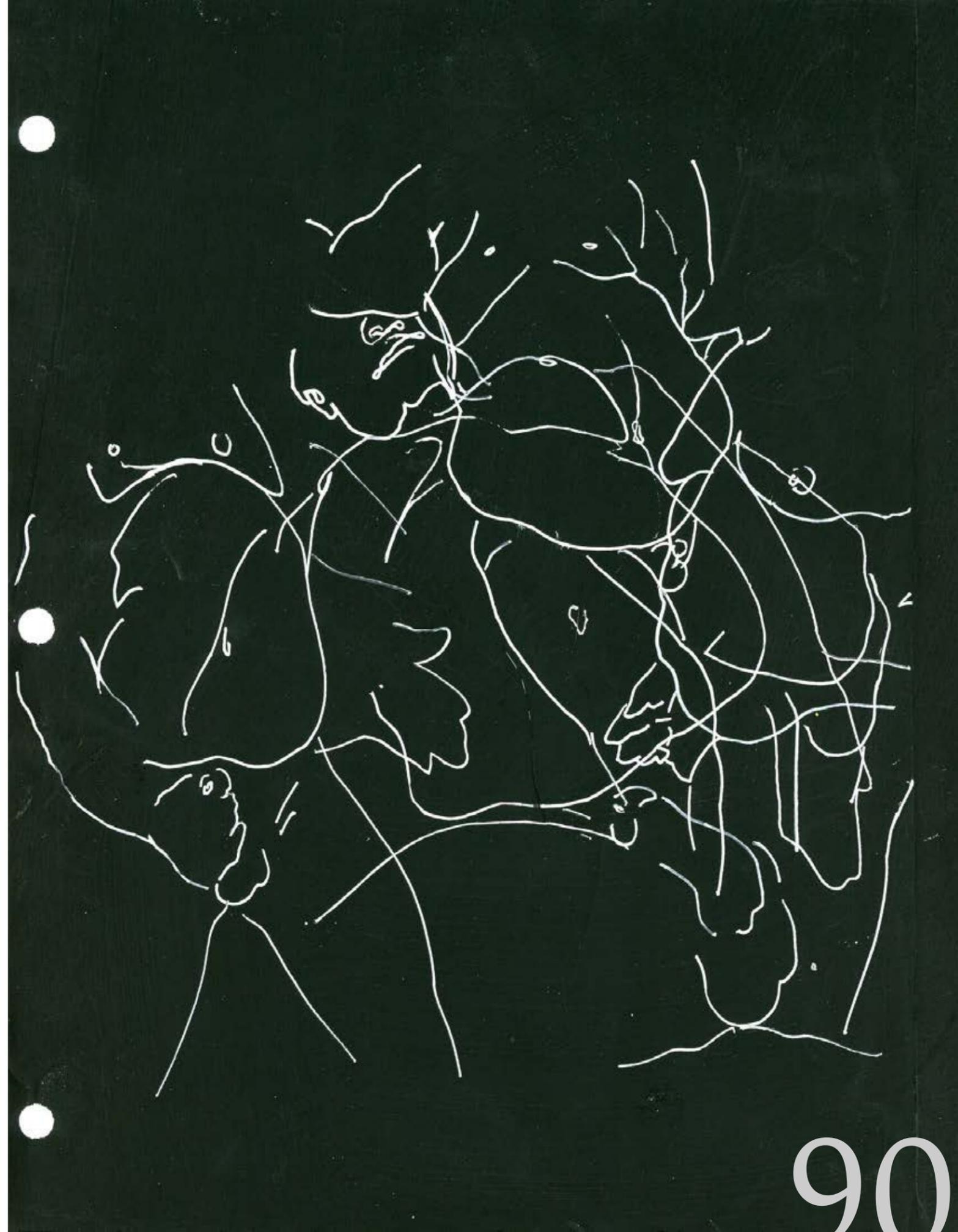
Eno  
Miwko  
Walli

**About the Author and Artist**

[Maurice Moore](#) is a fat, Black, Queer, neurodiverse creative from NC, and is currently a doctoral Performance Candidate at the University of California-Davis. From 2011 to 2021, he has exhibited work and performed at the International House Davis (I-House) in Davis California, The Memorial Union Gallery at North Dakota State University, Christina Ray Gallery in Soho New York, Weatherspoon Museum of Art in North Carolina, and performed with Rios/Miralda in Madison Wisconsin. His upcoming creative non-fiction, fictional and visual works have/will appear in Harbor Review, Struktur-riss Quarterly Journal, The bozalta Collective, Rigorous, Wicked Gay Ways, Unlikely Stories Mark V and Confluence, Communication and Critical Cultural Studies, and HIVES Buzz-Zine between summer 2020 and summer 2021.



Devouring of Jim  
Acrylic on Paper, 8.5 x 11"



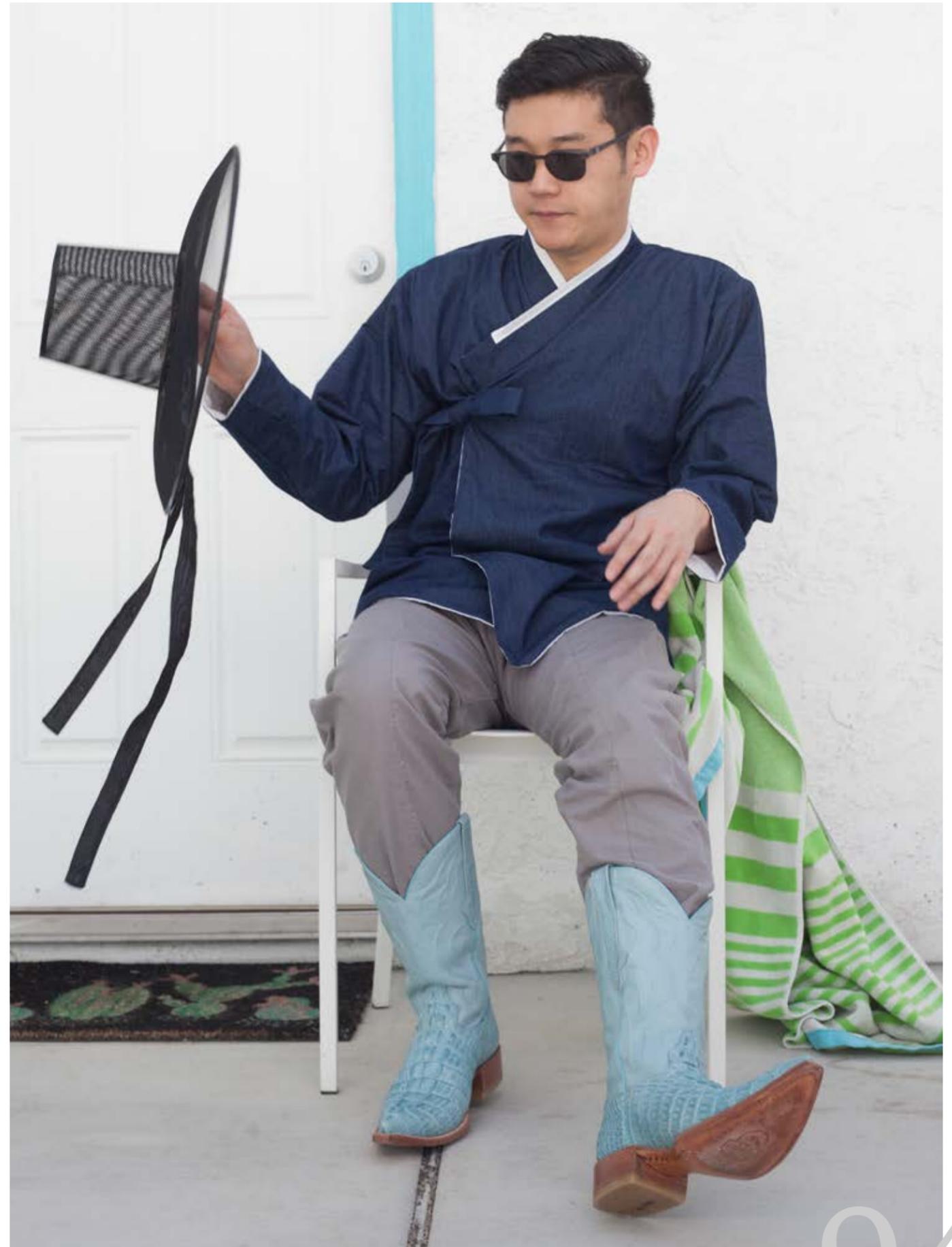
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Hanbok & Essay  
**America the Strange**  
**Cover for My Flesh Cage**  
Chuck Hohng

The United States never welcomed me. I let myself march right in, and carved myself within the limited space that was salvageable. I am not remorseful about the decision that my parents made to move back. I am also aware of my privilege to be where I am—yet privilege is a different narrative when you are constantly reminded of your otherness whether by your genetic makeup, the culture you grew up in, or the culture you are assigned to live in.

In school, an instructor once commented he could not see my identity within the work. I was not taking photographs of male nudes. I was not writing a manifesto about the war that tore my family apart. And I was certainly not fetishizing my otherness as your token Queer Asian. I stuck it out, but often joked to my colleagues I should have worn a Kimono while sucking on a rainbow dildo for my final thesis project. Maybe I would have had an easier time making “art work”





about femininity, putting pink tissue paper on a wall and playing some video of a little girl twirling on a loop. Wait, that was covered by a cishet, caucasian male who was in my program.

Hardest, but the most obvious lesson I learned in art school was that cishet, caucasian males may choose any narrative they want. No one will be there to point and shake a finger at them when they decide to make art inspired by using significant symbols from another culture without the willingness to pay respect. No one will expect them to do in-depth studies of cultures they appropriate (which I was accused of while I was making art about growing up in Catholic family). No one in academia will dare to question another straight man's choice. His cultural background, gender, or sexuality is never questioned since the world is for cishet men (at least they claim it is!).

But I was there to make art, not to explore and exploit my own race and sexuality—besides, I was paying too much tuition to work on a subject which I felt was a secondary concern at the time. However, with this skin, this sexuality, and my upbringing as a person who grew up mostly abroad, what else would they want to see?

As a human we often make hasty assumptions about others. From a short burst of 'you must be good with numbers' to 'I love hairless sub

bottoms' typed by faceless users on apps, I am rather desensitized by these reactions. To many, I am a 'boy,' often the 'token Asian' of the group, and also sometimes a 'traitor' for not consuming enough culture from my motherland. Being Korean gives me unique position as a fetishized object. I get plenty of non-Asian men who want a submissive boy in their locked bedrooms as well as fellow Asians who want to reenact scene from *Winter Sonata*. I honestly do not mind; it is their fantasy, not mine. People can project whatever they want, and as long as I am amused, I'd play along. Sure, why not. Besides, I make hasty assumptions on people who show interest in me with the comments above, too. It is hard not to judge people once those words are spoken.

Despite my past feelings, I chose to start making Hanbok, a traditional garment of Korea. I'm well past my 20's where I cared about where I stand and who I am in the context of this land and where I grew up. I am finally at peace. In this world, in this society where looking different will not only cause a scene but also may harm me physically, I am blindly going back to my roots, for myself. Despite the fact that I spent most of my earlier life living in South Korea, I was singled out as somewhat of an oddity due to my own family's interaction at home and being more westernized. After my family moved back to the United States, I had to face the fact that I am considered a FOB, too Korean





to assimilate even within second generation Koreans. Who am I and what am I was the question for the last decade of my life. Now I certainly care less because I know who I am.

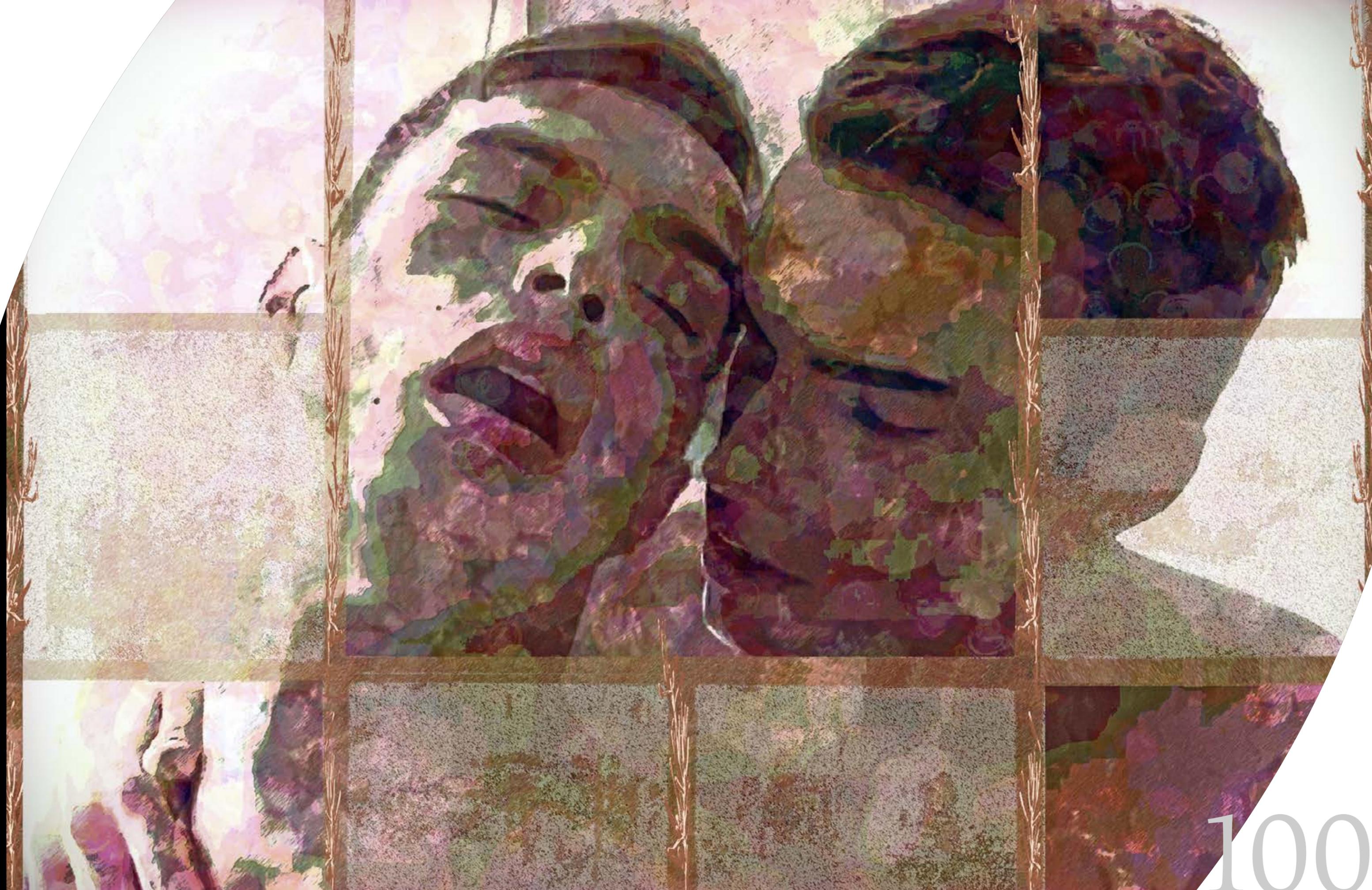
I have been going back to my personal history weaving the story of my grandfather. He left my family with a tangible nostalgia that was his ‘Americana,’ with the goal of us being Americans. After fleeing North and settling down in South Korea, Soon-Won Hohng, my grandfather, started work as a houseboy in the U.S. Army base. He then became a translator working for the United Nations. His dream was to live in the US. In his later years, he accumulated quite a collection of memorabilia of Americana—a set of cowboy boots and cowboy hat, the tail of a rattlesnake, and canned tuna made from his own catch, to name a few. America to my youth was a land of lost opportunity. It was the place where I was born, but not to settle down.

I still wonder about my grandfather’s thought process when he chose his and my grandmother’s English name from *Peanuts*, a Sunday cartoon featuring children, to represent his being. His name was Soon-Won. He chose to become Chuck, not Charles, a brief nick-

name of something friendlier, and something child-like. I never got to ask him about his decision. As my namesake and grandfather, he passed away even before I was aware of the unusual choice he had made for himself and for me. I will never know. Years before due to dementia, he lost his ability to talk in Korean; the only language he spoke English. He regressed to the happiest days, where he dreamt about moving to the States. I am finally here, living his fantasy as his flesh and blood, fulfilling and disappointing his American dream.

In the end, maybe that professor was right. I may become a novel savage and bow to submit myself to almighty America. Perhaps I will put my angry, muffled self back to deep sleep. I know I won’t be their challenge. I will not step into Western ideology and carve out my space in a history written by white men. At most, my career will be a clever one liner in history textbooks (or a brief diatribe in an online magazine) to make the text looks more inclusive. Besides, with uncountable numbers of ‘artists’ here, who has time to look at anything other than ‘true’ American art? I am a hyphenated-American, so I shall say goodbye with my portion from this pie.

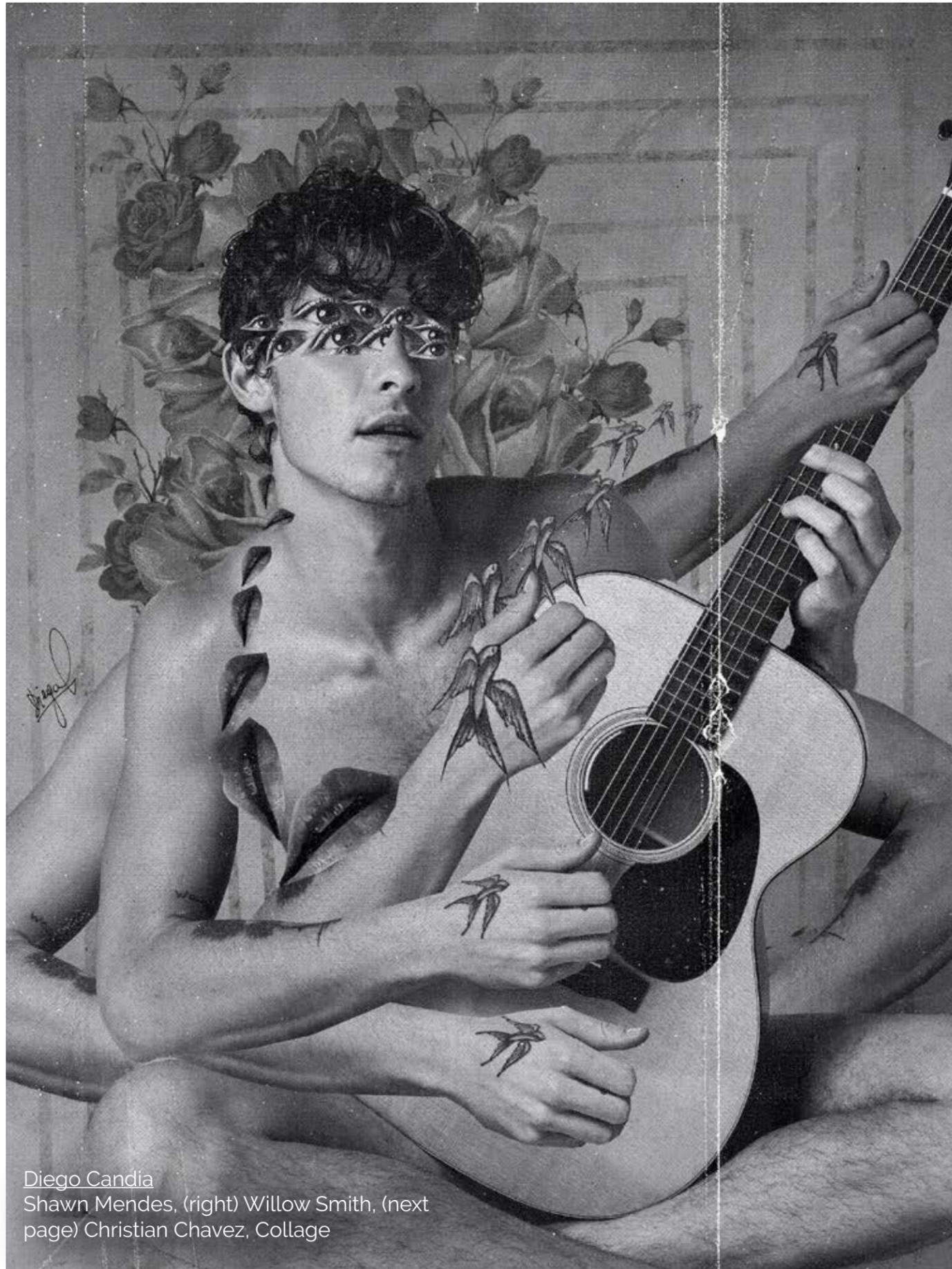




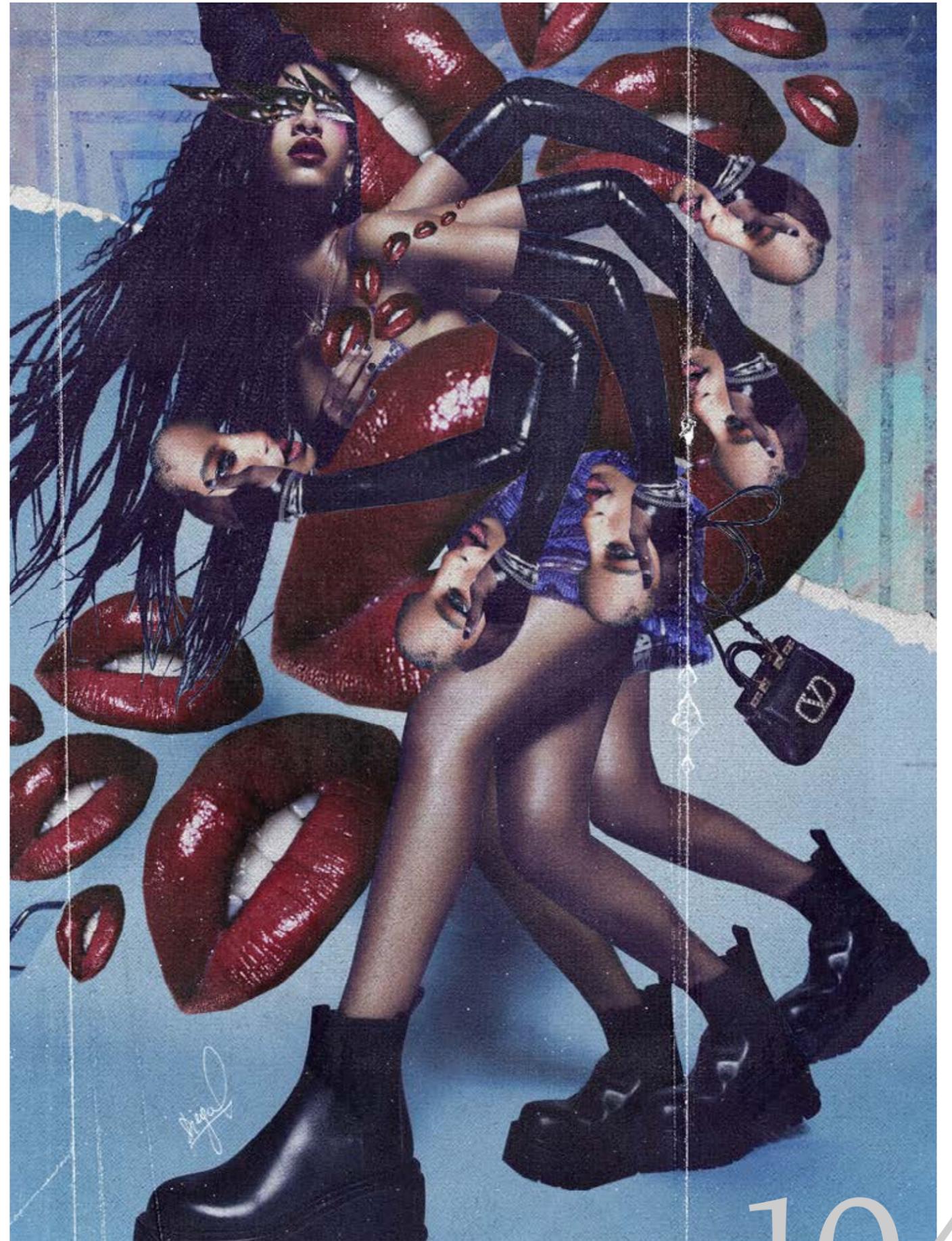
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Diego Candia  
Shawn Mendes, (right) Willow Smith, (next  
page) Christian Chavez, Collage

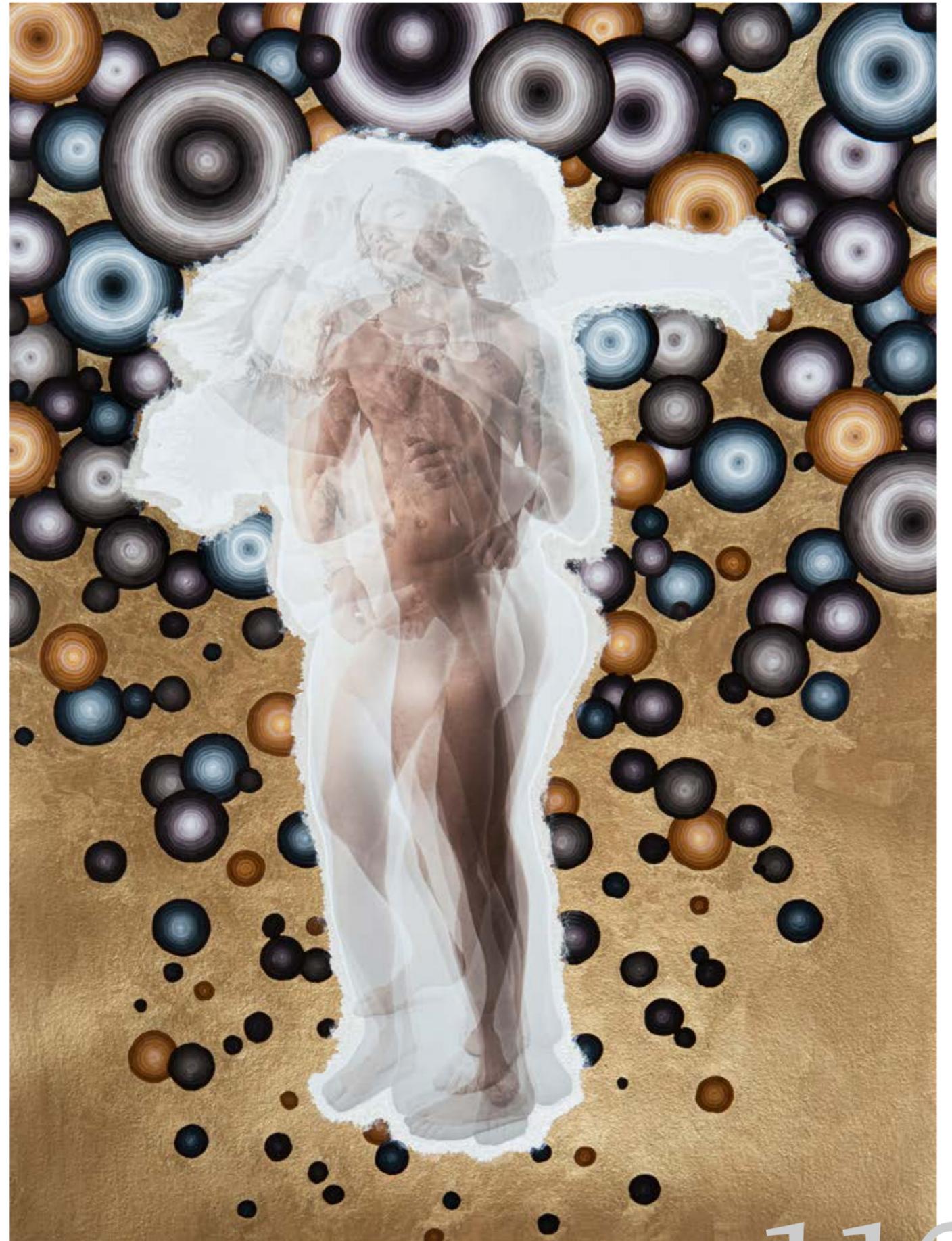








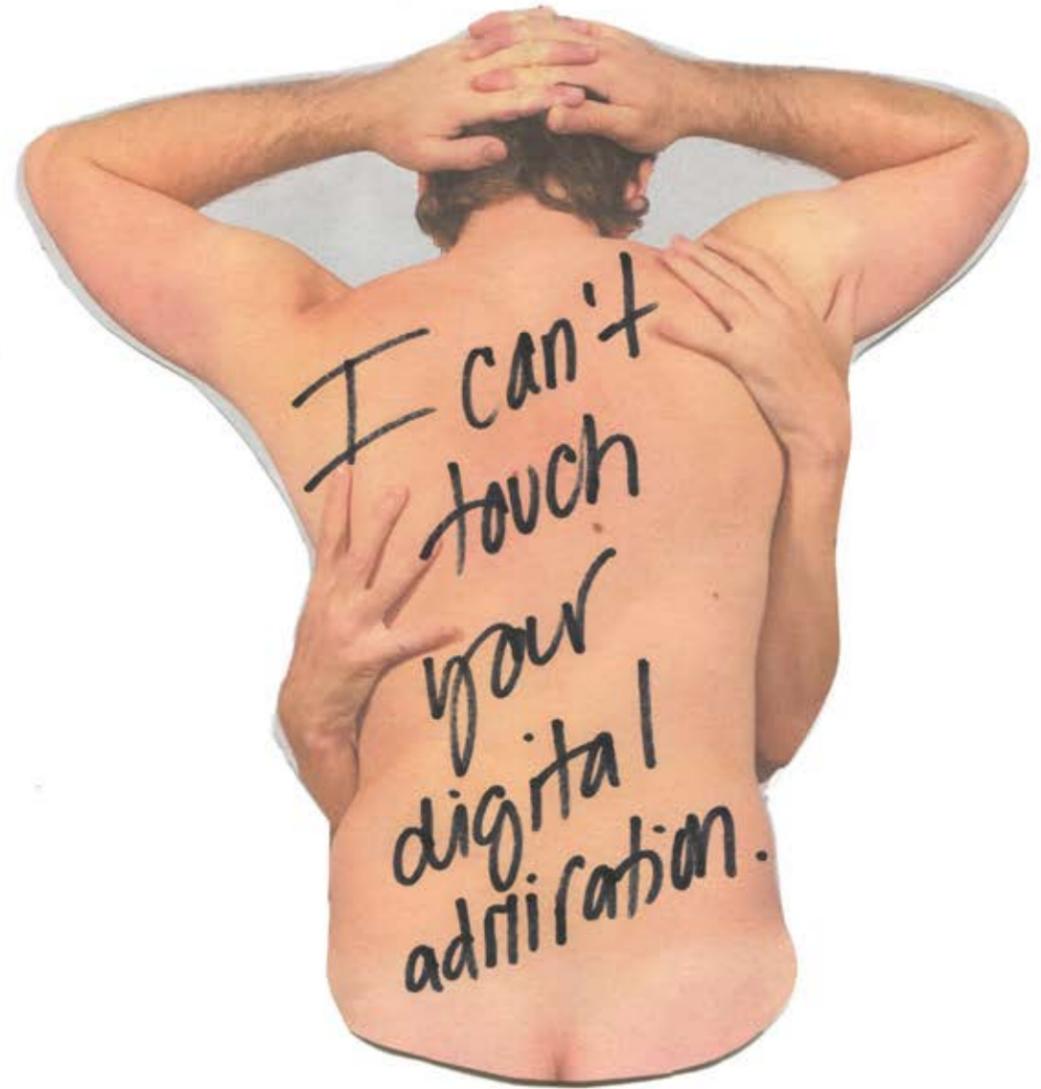
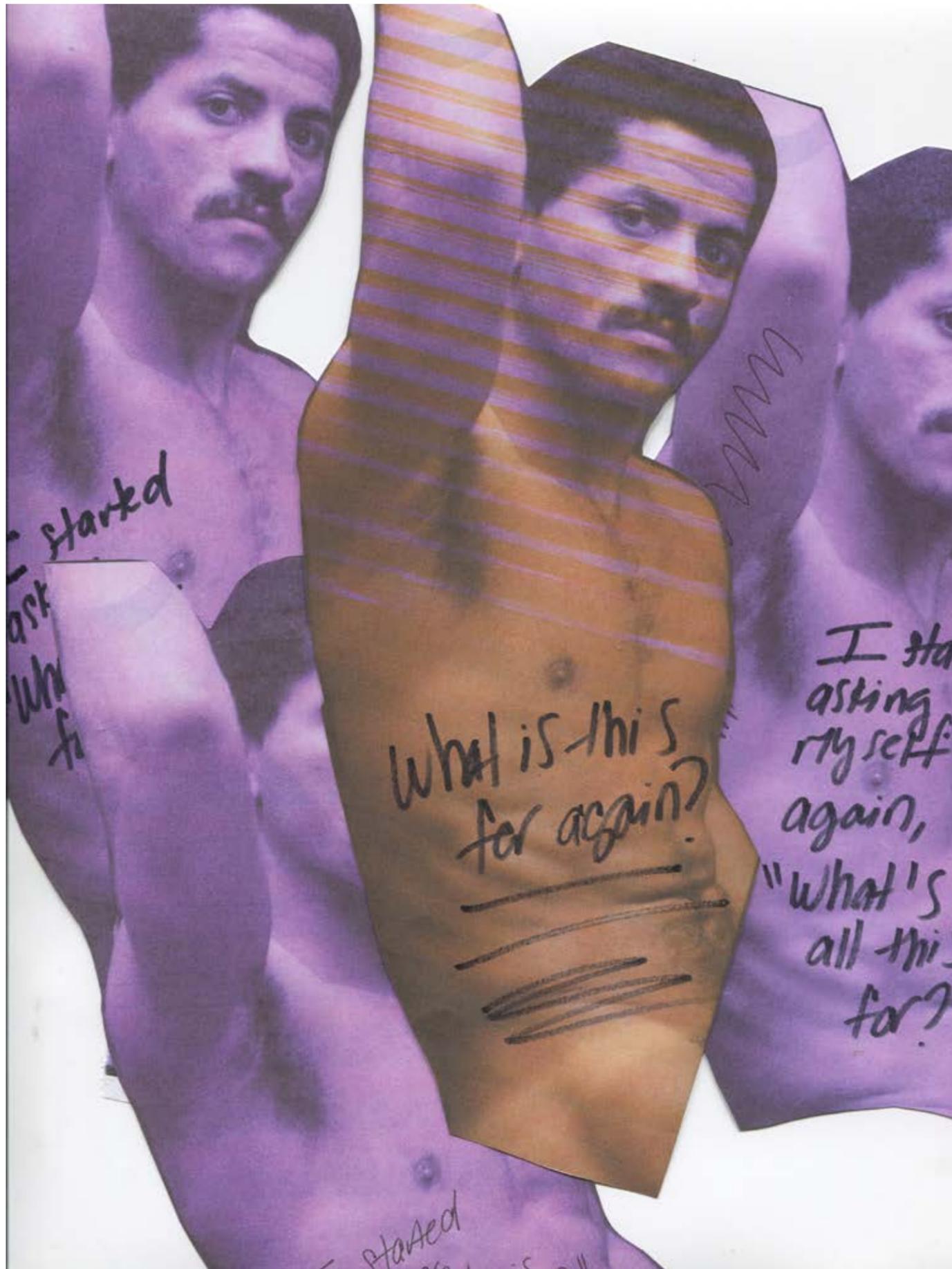
Gaston Lacombe  
(previous) Tackle, (this page) Dance Oblivion #1, (right) Dance Oblivion #3





[Paul O'Farrell](#), The Little Book of Knowledge, (next pages) La Femme Fatale , and Frida Alone with The Elements, Mixed Media Assemblage





[Jason Haaf](#). (left) What Is This For? (this page) Digital Admiration, Collage



Juan Boilero, (left) THANKS, (this page) DAD, PALO SENCILLO, Paper Collage





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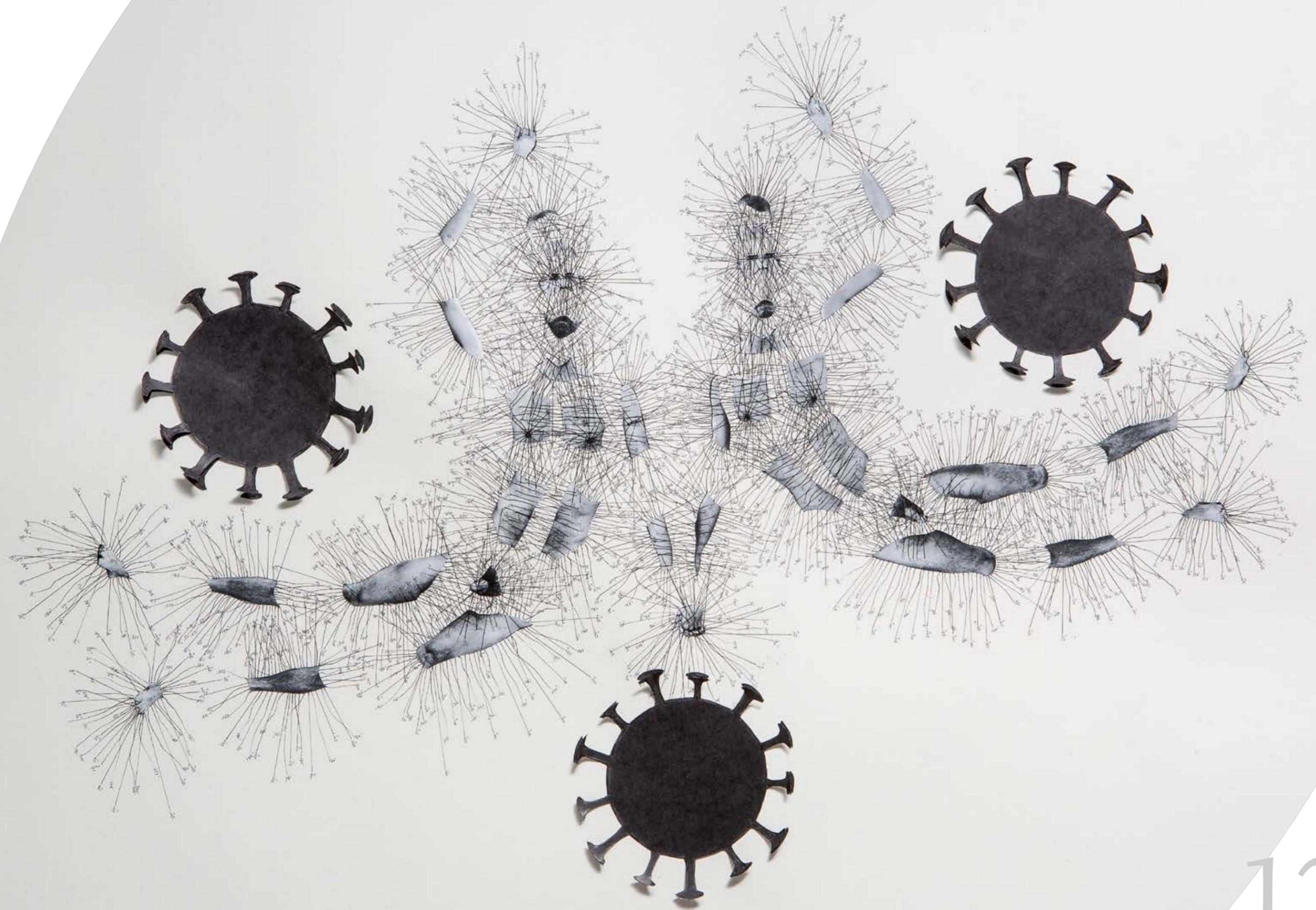
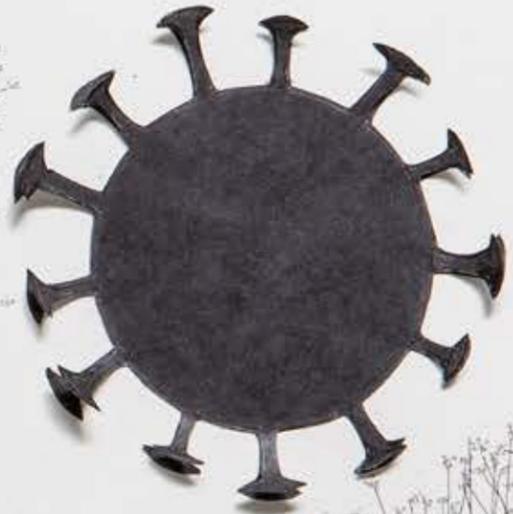
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A. MASKER '21

[John Paradiso](#). (previous) Bedroom Window IV (Lap Dance), and (this page) Bedroom Window III, (Wedding Night), Old Porn Magazines and Vintage Lace Collage

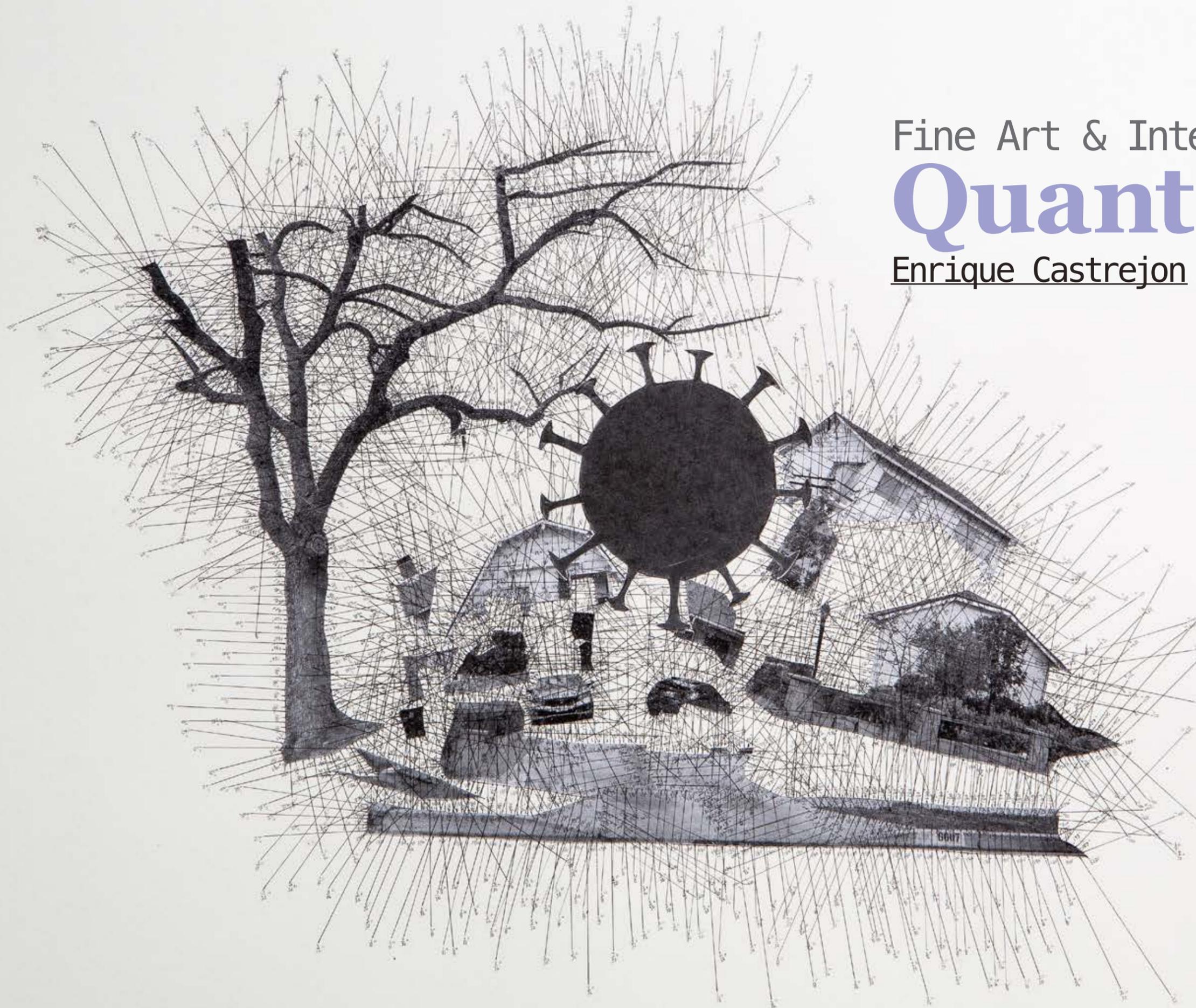




Fine Art & Interview

# Quantifiable

Enrique Castrejon



Fine artist Enrique Castrejon invites us into a place where Queer rage and mathematics meet—where lines and angles are more than the fleshy collisions of life, made instead a quantifiable shout to the universe: I measure, therefore I am.

(previous) Vax 4 Vax / Vax'd 4 Vax'd / Vaccinated (Sexual Connection in the Time of COVID), Six Linear Feet Series, ONE Archive, Collage, Archival Glue, Pigmented Ink, and Graphite on Paper. 18 x 24"

(left) Covid Hitting My Family Home, Six Linear Feet Series, ONE Archive Collage, Archival Glue, Pigmented Ink, and Graphite on Paper. 18 x 24"

I'd invite you to get lost in images made by Enrique's wondrous hand, but the artist maps his paper universes so well, that one feels compelled to wander along his calculations and delight at the spaces he builds inbetween. There is a want to lose yourself, but Enrique's guiding hand controls not just our wanderings, but the interpretations we make of the world.

Where fine art collage is often concerned with layering—and concealment in Queer Art contexts—Enrique turns the media on its head by exposing instead the gaps between his materials before laying bare their souls with quantified measurements. In each of his collage works, Enrique dissects his subject, rendering them into deconstructed parts. The artist then carefully and (to my observation) painstakingly measures their distances in lines and angles. It's as if with each measurement Enrique is seeking to quantify beauty, and through it existence.

...a quantifiable shout to the universe...

The artist's contemporary and pop art sensibilities display throughout his works, echoing in his recent explorations of isolation and pandemic. *Vax 4 Vax* pokes fun at gay culture with its title but reflects the strained isolation and need for companionship that was shared by communities around the world. The message is further reinforced with *Covid Hitting My Family Home*. The virus seems to land, bomb-like, among the exploded fragments of the artist's Los Angeles home. We watch—calculate—as the fragments expand outward from the devastation of the viral impact.

Yet Enrique seems no stranger to subjects of isolation. His *Summer Lovers*, for example, are segmented and analyzed, leaving no space for them to

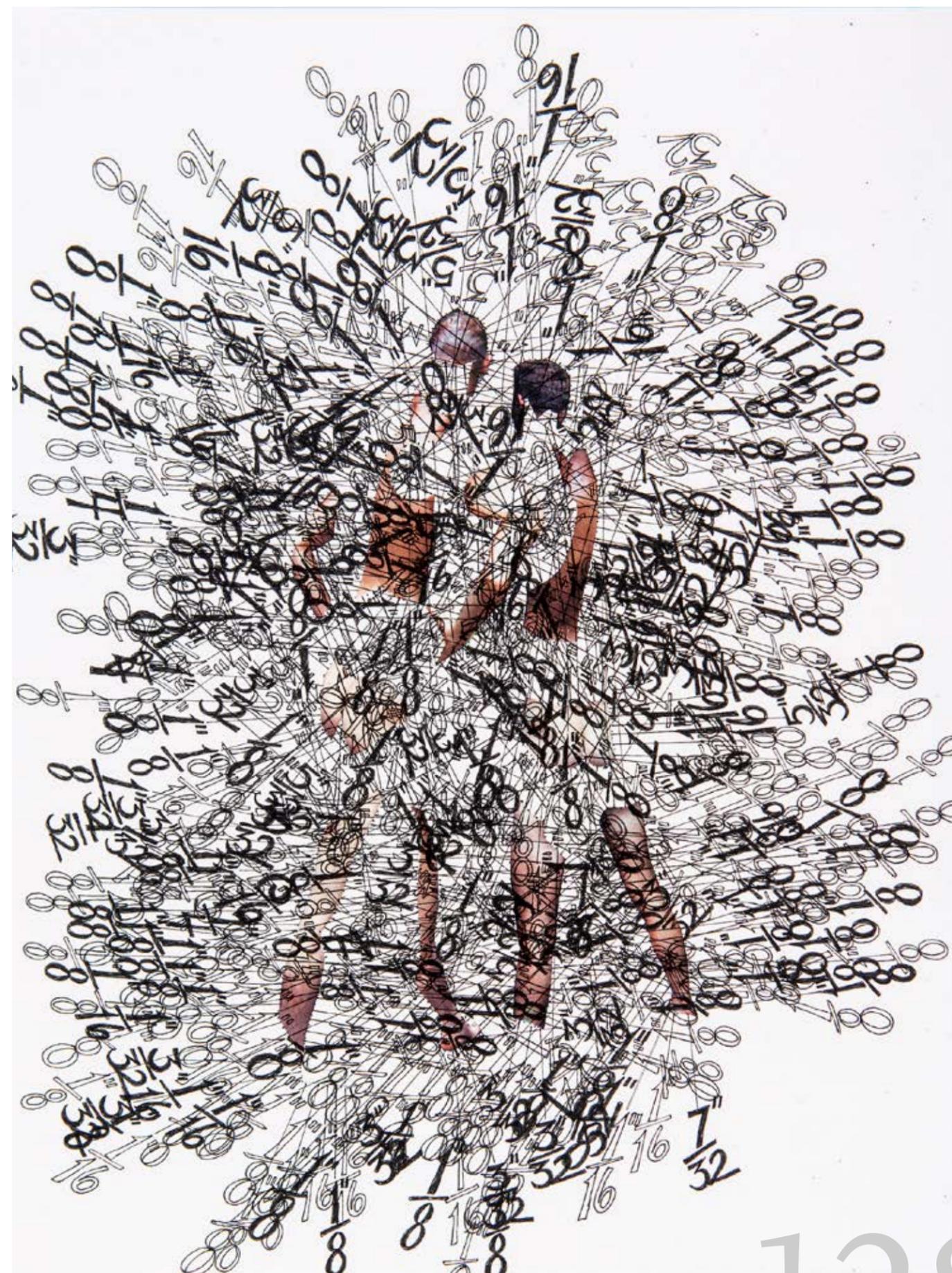
come together—save perhaps during their eponymous season. The artist himself is and advocate for LGBTQIA and HIV awareness, creating fine art that aesthetically addresses queered experiences, stigma, and violence. Echoes of longing, desire, and the measured gaps between become hallmarks of contemporary Queer life under Enrique's gaze. By measuring the spaces between his subjects, and guiding viewers with his calculations, Enrique challenges the separation of deconstruction to create a fullness of image that helps—both metaphorically and visually—fill the gaps.

In his *Investigations of an HIV Cell*, Enrique makes the intangible feel real by placing it within measured contexts. Quantifying and graphically increasing our view of the virus, makes the object tangible. If it can be measured, we can agree that it is real.

And that agreement—what is measured is real—is at the center of Enrique's art. Like his want to fill deconstruction with the

statistical information of measurements, the artist challenges the free-for-all notions of post-modernism by illustrating, clearly and with mathematics, that there is meaning within a godless universe. Shared feelings of longing are fulfilled with the calculations of Enrique's art, and we as viewers are lifted and expanded along with him on his quantified journey through existence. *Anatomy of Kiss* and *The Stars We Are*, for example, allow viewers the opportunity to measure love. In calculating our emotions, the artist touches upon our shared desire for proof. For in the act of measurement, that kiss (and we can only hope all kisses) is made con-

Summer Lovers, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 14 x 11"



crete. Like Keats' *Ode*, when Enrique measures, he carves into the realms of immortality, using the language of deconstruction to subvert itself towards the meaningful.

Enrique was kind enough to spend a little time with us, answering questions about his artwork, the measurements, and his inspirations.

**QQ:**

Thank you for taking the interview. I know you have a lot of projects on your plate and a busy art season ahead. What's coming up for you over the course of the summer and beyond?

**EC:**

It has all been great. I have been really happy with the interest in the art and all the opportunities to create new work, and being able to budget it in with the work I usually do with The Center. You know, the pandemic had that silver lining because everything was closed and I wasn't going out anywhere. I had more opportunities to stay in and create and be more productive.

I've been busy creating ten new works for a new show at [ONE Archives](#) called "Six Linear Feet."

That came out of an experience with my sister—who was infected with Covid as a result of working as a grocery cashier—and the anxiety behind that. It's interesting how new works carve out of these life experiences. That show is going to be displayed in September. We thought it would only be a virtual exhibition but now it's a physical exhibition.

And the next one is my solo show, which is coming up in three months, also a year in the making. This one is closely related to my father's illness—

dementia, heart disease, and rectal cancer—and being able to process them in sculptural works. That will be at [Bermudez Projects](#), also in September, so I'm working

on that too.

Both of those shows are the result of what's come about with the pandemic and the summer. And now that things are opening up, I'm budgeting my time to not go out. I need to work and work and work.

**QQ:**

Congrats on the upcoming shows. Both are very exciting. I've been in love with your work for a while and was completely blown away with what you built for the COLA award show. What advice you have for artists, especially queer artists?

**EC:**

I would say, create what you love. And continue to do what you want to create. You have to know that even if you make something, you might not get recognition or exposure, but just continue to make the work that you do. Let it mature, sink in, and grow. Sometimes when you don't let the work grow, you get stifled and contained in one little area. When this happens, your art cannot move. When the work becomes uncomfortable, you cannot shine through. Regardless of thoughts of exposure or reward at the end, you just need to keep creating the work.

And also, you need a community that helps to fos-

ter the growth of your work. Building a community is important because you just can't do it on your own.

My success up to this point has been through trial and tribulations, but also through the community of artists, curators, and writers who believed in my work. Reaching out to other artists in the community, to see work and critique it, has helped me through the past. The beauty behind it is creating your own tribe.

And, yes, you will get people who don't understand your work or don't get what you are doing. That in itself is okay because you just can't create art that resonates with everyone. But that push and pull is important—it's where you play—it's where the art is able to continue growing, based on critiques and what you set forth and allowing it to evolve.

It's been wonderful seeing the people in my life who have helped me come to where I am at. Even the small gesture of coming to the show and looking at the work is deeply meaningful.

**QQ:**

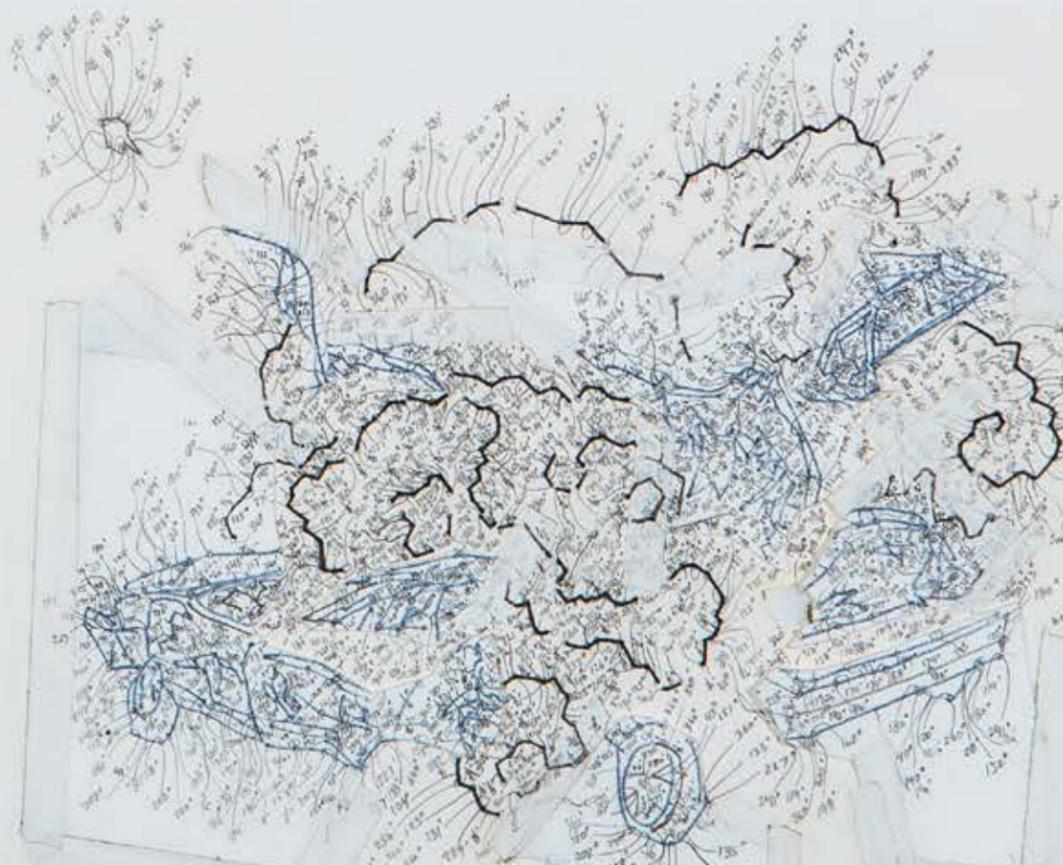
I completely understand. I was just reflecting on an art opening and running through my head all the people who came or sent messages and flowers. It's important to pay attention to that because once the show or exhibit closes, it's a huge let down that leaves you depressed as fuck, right?

**EC:**

Anticlimactic, yes! And it's incredible when you do get that communication that your work has affected someone. Even the smallest thing. I always enjoy when I'm in the gallery and you can hear that "wow" or see that the work has affected someone.



Car Explosion 2, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Graphite, Paper, Glue, and Adhesive Tape, 23 1/4 x 31 x 1"





Investigation of HIV Cell, No. 2, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 15" diameter

That to me really resonates with what I want my work to do—to have moments of reflection and a portal to some space where a conversation can be held. It's that give and take that comes in—that reciprocal quality—where the viewer really completes the work.

In my case, like at the COLA show, when those bodies were up on the wall it was my first realization of that art. I was working in pieces in a small

space. Being able to see the work completely mounted and contained in its habitat and architecture was impactful. I really appreciated the curator who allowed me to be in that space, to contain it. Otherwise in the main gallery they would have been overwhelming and flowing. But being in that space with more bodies in it was really activating. And to me that was very beautiful. I really enjoyed the play with bodies in space, with the architecture as well.

**QQ:**

That reminds me—the mention of interaction with the audiences—we had two visitors to your work in the gallery the other day and one had a parting question. What drives a person's mind to make all these

calculations and measurements. What's going on there?

**EC:**

Well, for starters its interesting you bring the question up with architecture. I started measuring architecture and spaces. My drive as a little kid was seeing nooks and crannies in buildings and in the

rocks and the street. I grew up in Taxco, Guerrero, Mexico—well I remember being six years old—but I can see that my influences of fragmentation comes directly from the cobbled streets and the rocks. It's a colonial town and so it seems like everything is made with rocks and fragments and shapes of rocks coming together. So that's been the major influence on how I started to break things apart.

And then exploring spaces, for me, is how bodies flow within them. And that has a lot to do with measurements and how our bodies fit in the world. So I was always observing how shapes—from moldings, to walls, to the edge of the wall to the ceiling—I may not have measured with numbers, but it was something that I was always doing.

And so from architecture, I started to then explore structures in magazines. But the way I would understand it was through fragmenting the subject. By taking it in small chunks, I could conquer the whole space. It began as an investigation and also questioning of my surroundings. But overall, it is also controlling the environment. In that, it becomes irrational because the measurements can be overwhelming and chaotic. It's an ordered chaos and it creates a whole other possibility. There's a bit of futility in it, for as much as you want to understand your environment, you

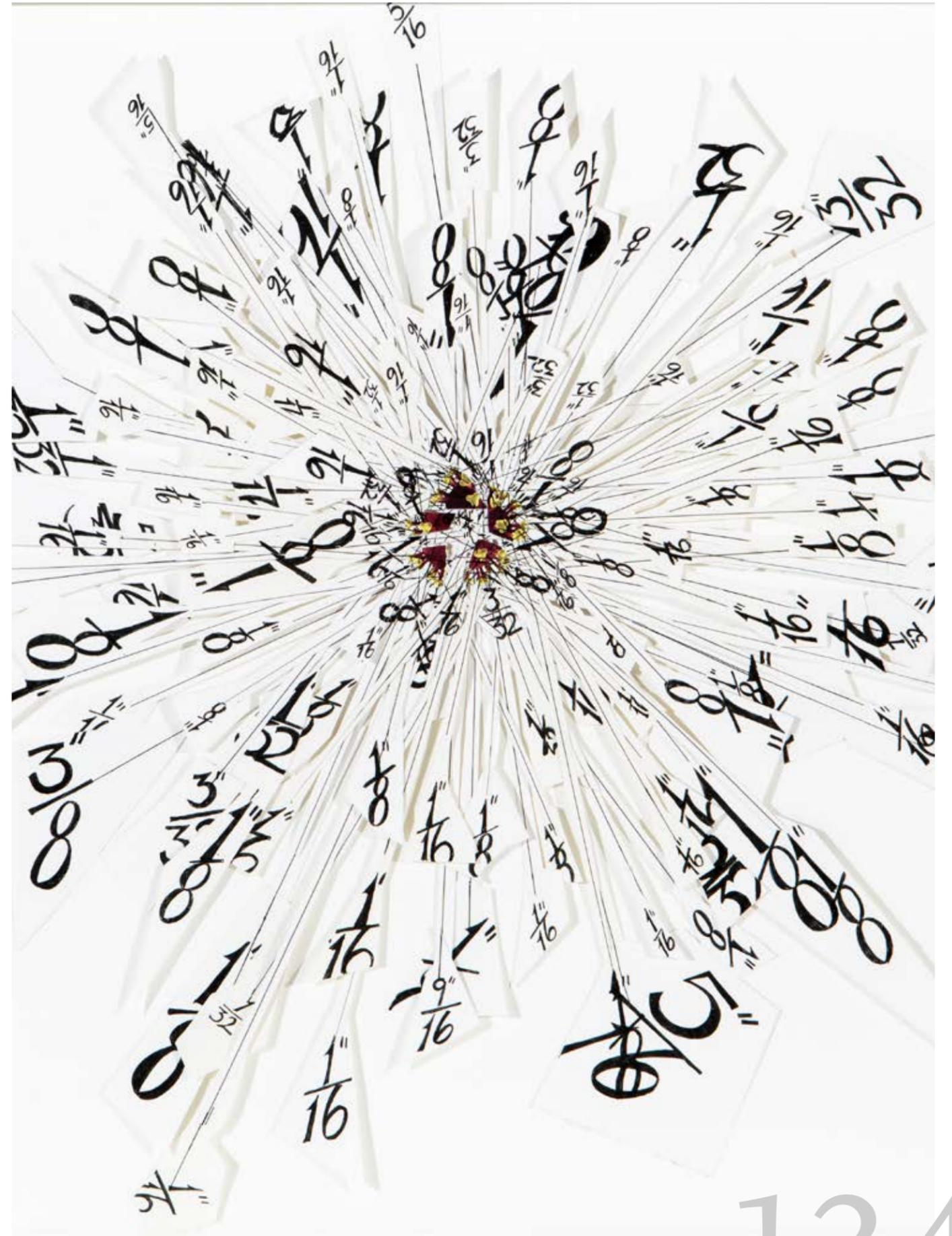
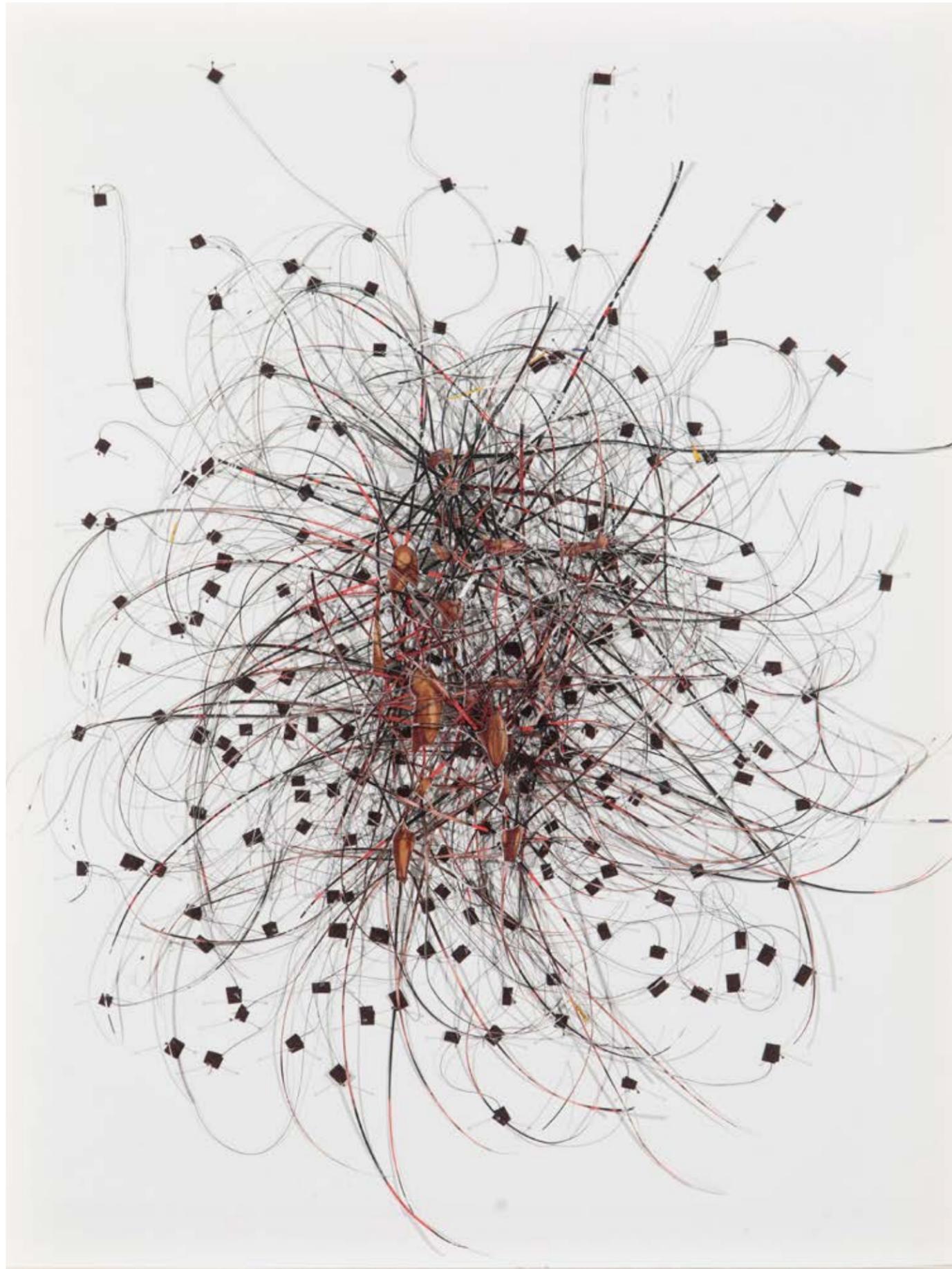
can never really understand it. I'm always trying to understand what it is I am trying to see.

From the architectural magazines, I started to look at spaces—I have my guilty pleasures like *Architectural Digest* and *Dwell*—that people live in and are beautiful and poetic and wonderfully designed. I was always questioning who was living in these spaces and what are these places about. For me, breaking designs apart helped me understand them.

I also started to use the concept of fragmentation with editorial magazine and newspaper photographs. During that time period, the Iraqi war was taking place. I would see these images of war and began to question them: who is taking them? how are they framing them? how are they really capturing these moments that are chaotic and horrific? For me, breaking these images down was questioning how do we deal with war and what we feel with images that are horrific. Using math and

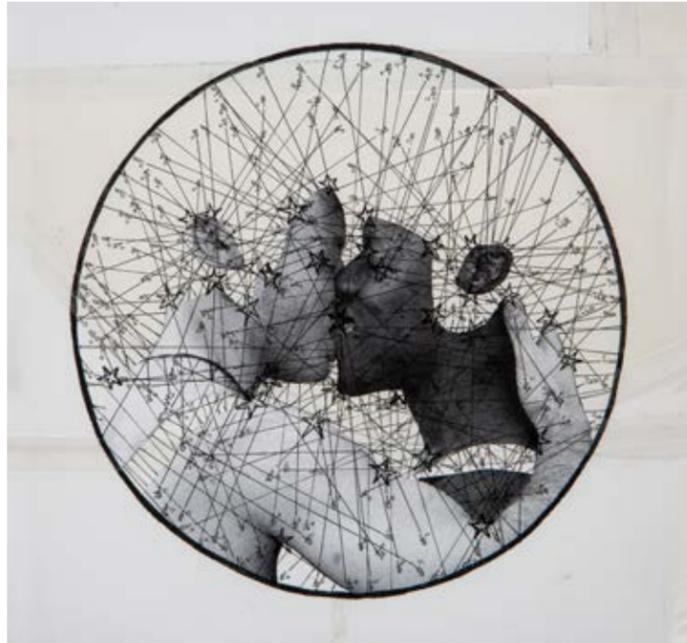
**Measurements  
are everywhere.  
The work is just  
me trying to  
bring that up in  
inches and  
angle degrees.**

(next) Anonymous Passenger: Black Inches, Boyz in the Mood Linear Dissection Series from Episode 1: Elmo is surprised to See People on the Subway at 2AM...by Ed Cervone, Collage, Glue, Pigment Ink, Nylon String, Pins, and Graphite on Paper, 26 3/4 x 23" (following) Investigation of HIV Cell, No. 1, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 15" diameter



measurement was a way to reintroduce these photographs, to allow the audience to make decisions about what they are really seeing. Math, numbers, and units, for me, are a language to describe sometimes horrific and traumatic events in a way that is not heavy-handed or didactic. They allow an investigation for others to enter into the space and question what is happening. Math has helped me explore the nature of these images.

The same is used with men and homoerotic imagery, which helps me to understand what “beauty” is and what is dictated to me as beauty. Fragmenting the male form has helped me to break those notions of beauty. When they see the work, people can sometimes read violence in the fragmentation. But what I do is dissect the body in order to understand more than what is represented in a two-dimensional magazine. It’s different when you start to investigate the angles and the lines of the body. In the works, the measurements are revealing my gaze and the judgements that we always make when we are looking at and interacting with another.



Measurements are everywhere, which is beautiful. You can actually collect data. Even our phones, our bodies, they are collecting and processing data. The work is just me trying to bring that up in inches and angle degrees.

**QQ:**

One of the things I love about your work is that it speaks of post-modernism and deconstruction with meaning and intent. Where the philosophers pointed us to emptiness—the center is hollow—I feel that we think differently. We are interested today in what’s beyond the meaningless, in filling the hollow. It’s what I take from your art.

**EC:**

(left) Anatomy of a Kiss, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 8" diameter  
(above) The Stars We Are, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 8" diameter  
(right) Quantified Nude Male (Study for Nude Performance for Highway's Performance Space), Pigmented Ink, Paper, and Glue, 12 x 9"





Even when I deconstruct, I am reconstructing that body and giving it meaning with its own measurements. Of course that depends on how the image is being represented. Part of the equation always involves the sense of the person (viewer) along with the artwork, making it all multidimensional. But when I look at the art, I see it as three dimensional, with the lines and explosions of numbers coming outward in all different angles.

**QQ:**

This really comes across in *Covid Strikes My Family Home*, which is delightfully horrible with the bomb of Covid falling on the fragmented house.

**EC:**

It's incredible how—well that is one of the drawings for ONE Archives. The virus also looks like the sun, or another planet, and altogether becomes otherworldly. It is a sense of the horror of what we cannot see. It's impactful and I find that to be very powerful—to tell what occurred when you have this presence and anxiety in the home. Where is *IT*? How do we deal with *IT*? And you just have to wait and see. There was concern because my parents live there. But luckily there was no further expo-

sure. My sister is doing well, but she did lose her sense of taste and smell for months. So it happens. And I had to capture that moment. It's timely, And I was fortunate to get the artwork out and produce it over this last year.

**QQ:**

Thank you. This was delightful. I appreciate your time and sharing your thoughts and the artwork.

**EC:**

Thank you, for connecting artists and arts community.

[Enrique Castrejon](#) was a recipient of the COLA Award in 2019. His works are held in private and public collections, including the AltaMed Art Collection, Los Angeles; the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California. He has been featured in group and solo shows; and art fairs throughout Southern California and abroad, including the Armory Center for the Arts, Art Platform: Los Angeles, Barnsdall Art Center, Claremont Art Museum, LA Art Core, LACE, MOCA, Pulse: Miami, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Outpost of Contemporary Art, Torrance Art Museum, and the Wignall Museum. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles. All images are courtesy of the artist and [Bermudez Projects](#), Los Angeles.



(left) Calculated: Gogo Boy, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Marker, Magazine, and Glue on Paper, 10 1/4 x 6 1/4"  
(back cover) Calculated Sensation in Pink, Mixed Media Collage, Ink, Paper, and Glue, 14 x 11"

