

NATALIA
IVANOVA
(MOUNT) WITH
MARC HERBST



The Commons:
of Friends &
Lovers

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Performing Pro Arts Common (PPAC)

What happens when we turn a part of the law that has become sacrosanct across the world — the economic rights of IP producers — against its intended purpose? What if IP producers reclaim the legal and economic scaffolding surrounding their individual creative works to protect social actions, be in solidarity with workers in supply chains, or highlight the absurdity of maximalist intangible property?

Performing Pro Arts COMMONS project, a collaboration between Pro Arts & OccupyIP, uses the law as a medium for building an Activist Art machine and practicing community self-defense and care, through the act of occupying intellectual property. We are building a commoners' coalition that unites artists in changing the terms upon which their art enters the economy. Our experiment utilizes the legal technology of copyright, which gives an artist the right to exclude others from using their art on whatever terms the artist includes in a copyright license.

As praxis of 'recognition' Performing Pro Arts COMMONS IP licensing enables artists to define their own 'terms of creation,' while simultaneously contributing to the collective power of the commons. The constellation of licenses is stitched together to create a governing constitution of the commons reflecting the morals clauses of each artist.

VOCAB

COMMODIFIED: To turn into or treat as a commodity; make commercial.

COMMONS: Social practice of governing a resource not by state or market but by a community of users that self-governs the resource through institutions that it creates.

ECO-FASCIST: Environmental historian Michael E. Zimmerman defines “ecofascism” as “a totalitarian government that requires individuals to sacrifice their interests to the well-being of the ‘land’, understood as the splendid web of life, or the organic whole of nature, including peoples and their states”.

HETEROTOPIC: Heterotopia is a concept elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe certain cultural, institutional and discursive spaces that are somehow ‘other’: disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory or transforming. Heterotopias are worlds within worlds, mirroring and yet upsetting what is outside.

MORALS CLAUSE: A morals clause is a provision in a contract or official document that prohibits certain behavior in a person’s private life. It allows an individual or company to quickly sever its relationship with the offending individual; thereby distancing the company from whatever the person did (or is alleged to have done).

TRANSGRESSIONS: A violation of a law, principle, or duty. Synonym: breach. The exceeding of due bounds or limits.



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© €
Natalia
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INTRODUCTION

by Marc Herbst

The Commons: Of Friends & Lovers was written at a time when sharing and building an open, political commons out from public space seemed like a memory. That is, it was co-authored over the course of the 2020 to 2021 Covid lockdowns. But the common sensibility shared by its co-authors, Natalia Ivanova (Mount) and Marc Herbst, is one of attending to the emotions and relations that compose and bind the micro- and macro- politics which determine the fates and ways of individual and common being.

So, while this is an intensely political book, it is more an intensely personal one. It asks, “how do I feel about, and how do I feel through all the work of being entangled by and entangling others in a common community?”

Ivanova (Mount) has been the curator and provocateur of a hybrid experimental common platform, Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS, in Oakland California, since 2015.

Herbst has been co-editing a diffuse but coherent intellectual commons through his work at the Journal of Aesthetics & Protest since 2001, and has been engaged in several other community and commons-based initiatives, with friends and through experimental art spaces.

Both Ivanova (Mount) and Herbst are relatively recent divorcees, and are working through the raw emotions of a newly erotic world. The erotic attention is not directly about sex, though of course desire, love and physicality flow through them and this book. They flow through this book because erotics - the pulsing of desires, interests, emotions - are what we have to pull at or run from in order to construct and hold the amorphous social commons they both participate in.

Some sad souls think of the commons as purely economic things. That a commons could be bound through cold economics, with suppressed erotics and libidinal energy, is the Protestant dream for money.

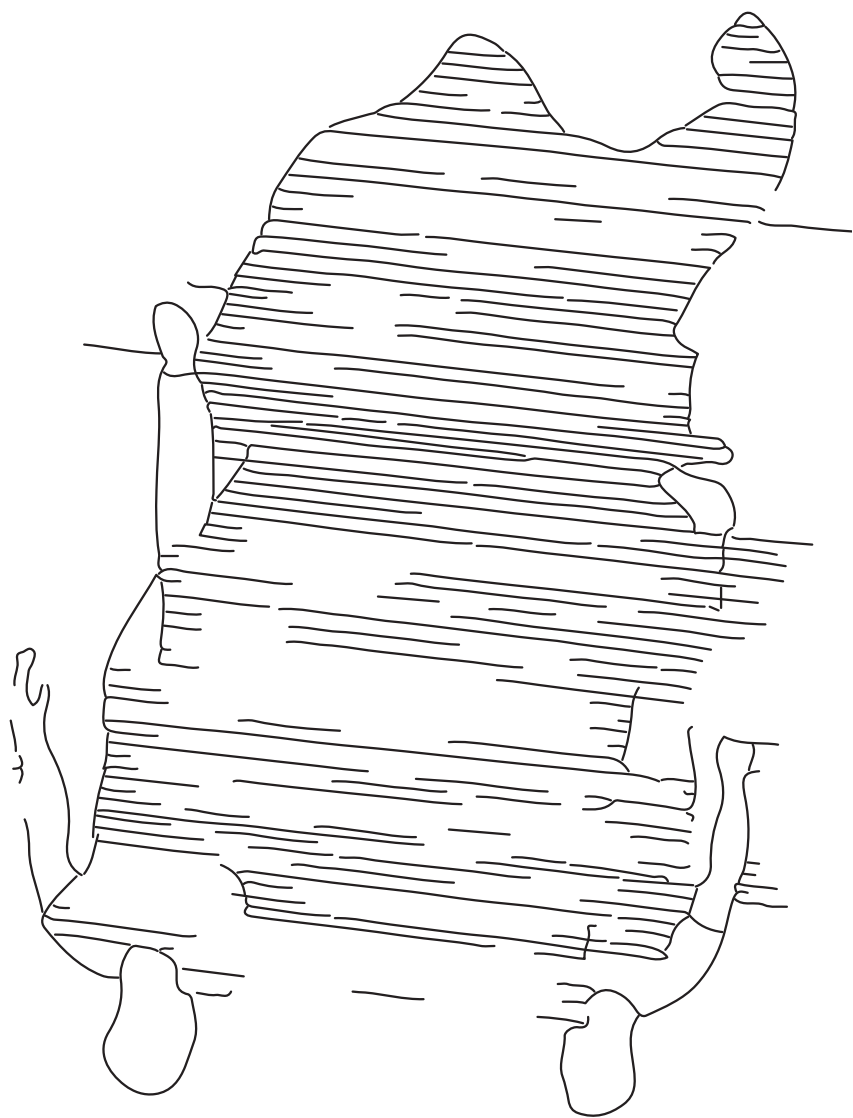
Money is not the coin of the commons that Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS works with. While Natalia's work does deal with money and funding because Pro Arts does pay rent and also pays honorariums in the hyper-capitalist Bay Area, the sort of commons that she has been working towards is one that grasps at love, exchange and a non-capitalist cultural ethic that values human-ness, being and being in relation. This is Oakland.

Herbst works with more intimate commons- smaller platforms and intimate ritual settings. This commons is more tame in scope than Ivanova (Mount)'s who aims to make a commons of the city. For him, his intimacy has a more focused temper. His is a commons for ritual and practice and intimate friendship- this is a common of shared goods and hard times. He also works with another common space, the Prinzessinnengarten in Berlin- a community run, experimental garden.

Over the course of the years, several regimes have held leadership roles there, each seeing themselves as having the most ideal of practice. They each try to balance professional and personal interests to deal with the coup that brought each group into power.

One thing about politics is that we have words to describe them because politics are written upon rules, regulations, laws and agreements. Politics can have nice words, but to wade into those emotions and dramas that are the actual stuff of any exchange is something else.

Wading into those emotions, felt through the wildness of a city like Oakland and the intimate play of a sensitive heart—this is the substance of this book.



I

Natalia: Pro Arts is one of the oldest independent art spaces in the Bay Area. Embedded in the community since 1974, Pro Arts has supported more than 20,000 artists and cultural workers over the years, and claims a soft spot in the hearts of Oaklanders. Over the past 6 years that I have worked at the helm of the organization, I have been experimenting with models and modes of its operation, with the mission to re-establish it as a node in the heart of a more liberatory, horizontal cultural commons. One whose operation reframes the value of art and art labor in the context of a different kind of sharing economy. In fact, my relationship with Marc, my co-author here, and my inspiration and accomplice for many transgressions that I dreamed up over the last few years, started when I gave Marc my essay on the subject, way back in 2018. I asked Marc if he would publish it in the *Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*. He did. This was the beginning of a beautiful friendship and love story.

For the past several years I have been organizing, advocating, hustling (mainly hustling!) artists and cultural workers to demonstrate that YES, a different model for working together in the arts IS possible. I have been met with both enthusiasm and distrust. By now, I am used to the mundane flow of non-committal energy, characterized by the perpetual in-and-out relational dynamic of emotionally unavailable comrades. They tell me all the time they love Pro Arts. "I love Pro Arts!" They say. I hold my tongue. I want to answer: "But do you? Really, do

you? Is it love or lust? Are you loyal? How loyal? Will you be there for me in the darkest times? Or are you here, passing through, wanting only to receive a quick personal and professional gratification before you move on to the next new model in the arts?"

Ultimately, and despite my otherwise uber experimental nature, I have always been that person that seeks VIP treatment in the form of commitment, from my comrades who I play and work with.

Hence, it has been difficult for me to handle, process, and respect this non-committal flow of energy between friends and lovers within the construct of the commons. All I want is to work from the basis of abundance, I shout. Let's share material and immaterial resources, I persist. Love. Respect. Love. Love. Love. How can we transmute pain into love? How can we work together despite our differences? What does radical access and radical openness look like? Who are we supposed to be in this whole mess called the art world?

Maybe I have been asking the wrong questions... Maybe I stand alone at the end in my convictions, holding the commons, holding the idea of togetherness, of unconditional love. I am left with holding a space that will never be truly OURS to share.

Why so many dichotomies when we talk about the commons? I ask why we perceive the intensity of one character transgressive of some norms, or spaces for that matter? We talk about space as either sacred or transactional. But where is the space within art for the heterotopic, the profane? There is no space in art left for that, I am afraid.

We, in the arts, like to control the outcomes of our labor and levels of success. Copyright, estate property, insurance, funding, accounting – these are all systems that support the development of property management that serves one of the most unregulated economies in the world– the arts.

We are obedient in following the pathways to power within its construct – we all try to play the game well. We flaunt our PhD accolades and critical thinking skills and the many hours labored over books and instruments, mastering our craft – but we wake up unsatisfied and walk around unsatisfied all day, all the while intending to be managing social satisfaction through the arts.

We keep carrying our traumas, no matter the place or time. We have a long history of compulsion when it comes to history and it repeating itself. We carry the weight of humanity and its eventual failure. Feelings of excruciating pain. We make our move to strategically navigate around capitalism, never cashing in our cards, while maintaining autonomy.

But are we complicit? Or are we accomplices?



Marc: The commons showers us, the collective, with the collective of our own being. It, the commons, is an organization of what we know, of what we allow, of what we think we understand. Its politics of what and how we love or can stand are the simple ways we hold ourselves together – our selves; that is, me and me and you and us . Our love is independent from the actual objects that cause us to feel what we love. The politics of how we love in common is some form of understanding.

The commons showers us with a shower of shit, of beautiful crap, of crap that must be something beautiful because they are so near.

I am interested in this politics of mundane and economic but also passionate love, of a horizontal culture oriented towards exhaling and chilling.

This weekend I attended a political fight in the experimental garden where I work; I saw the death of a commons at the hand of narcissistic fascists who think they are leftists but who are fascist control freaks. Under the tent, a plenary in a garden, they used Roberts Rules to politically block a regenerative process driven by those in this group that I love.

“I am asking for this garden to be a space for us to lean into each other rather than just be a line of kale. By leaning into each other or simply being a row of kale, both ways will result in kale. But if we work with each other rather than ignoring the pain we have inflicted on each other, our garden and its soil will be so much richer.”
Instead, I hear a loud and bald man shout, “The

documents of this garden says that we do not have to address requests for meeting agenda changes!"

We had intended to intervene into a political but also a social process gone wrong.

A critical mass of members had learned, through heart-work and political reflection, that so much division and name-calling will not benefit the garden, each other or its notable art projects. Rather, we had come to recognize that the cure for capitalism was to learn how to get along despite our differences.

But a few members had gone the other way, choosing to believe that a cure for community ill is its opposite; to solve out difficult conversations by placing them out of order. Heart-talk could be replaced by name-calling, spit and poison. Procedure and process could take over this something in common— in 6 months it will fall apart under the weight of its bile.

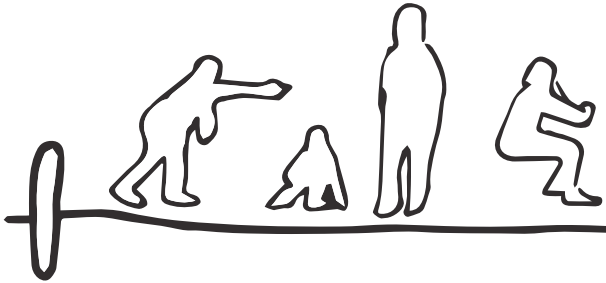
Or, it will learn to celebrate its eco-fascist cloak, and soil the eco-femimist shawls it once wore to the horror of our Kreuzberg neighborhood.

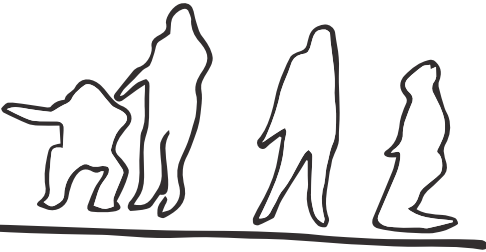
Sad, as, fuck.

N: I am interested in the politics of love. Tell me more...

M: One of the garden members used to be my lover. Though it is not true, she is the reason I am still there- tracing the love I have entangled in through her into all our relations. I loved her as my tomorrow and my simple everyday and how can the everyday just come to an end because our intimacy did?

So I am there, still loving the idea of her that is without her- because that love is still palpable in this space. When I speak about conflicts in the garden- all this identifiable conflict we can see as name-calling, spitting and poisoning- this conflict seems silly in relation to my broken heart I on the mend. These manifest public conflicts cut one way between two groups now easily divided. But there is at least one other conflict I attend to- one that must hold on to what I love about her in myself besides the facts of my broken heart.





II

N:

I VALUE LOVE as currency so much greater than any coin or NFT.

I value:

- Human eyes
- Touch
- Heartbeat
- Helping hands
- Affection

The oppressive system always exposes the cracks in our collective humanity and our complicit role we play as empaths is amplified as we try to feel through and also counter-intuitively heal those breaks. Narcissists do not get enough credit for their role in destroying the commons - a system built on human error. An error in the predictive formula for optimism, and most precisely how the value of reciprocity is created and propagated to only serve the narcissist in all of us in the end. Duality in peoples' character is overrated. Always the demon and the angel. Always the empath and the narcissist. Always the same. Are we not more nuanced than that?

Alas we art workers all know about the transgressions of the unregulated art market yet despite this knowledge, we try to save it from certain death, ignoring our collective debt. Why do we keep trying? Why do we follow false prophets 'till the end? Are we afraid to look straight into the Sun? Are we more comfortable releasing our gaze only when the Moon descends?

They say if you look too long into the Sun you will go blind. They are correct. I looked straight into the Sun - I fully lost my sight. They are correct. I truly cannot see beyond myself these days...

I am too radical. Am I too correct all the time? I say I am. Do I shove my politics down others' throats? Do we give each other enough time to process pain? Or love? And are we really capable of rejecting our collective shame? Did I go so blind that I forgot that I am a new solo, smacked right into the cacophony of the many art prophets not born yet?

Think about the immense power of the Sun. Think about the immense power of us. Did you know, I observed the sunset the other night over the Lake and I swear the Sun is most beautiful in its death - in its setting. In its end. It has a blood aura, and it looks mad. And it looks bad. And good. Duality is overrated. Keep it for the Lunar eclipse cleanse.

WE are most beautiful in our shadows, in our transgressions, in our madness. In our chaos, a beauty emerges as our bonds correct. I believe in the messiness of Us, as we transgress the commons' nest. I know what to expect. I am a mother and a warrior; and warriors, like



the Sun, must also rest before each new conquest.

Just think about the intellectual property we create on a daily basis. Like the Sun. Every hour, every minute of our being is relied upon by others who pocket the royalties, at the end. “Comrade” they say! The Commons? Has the “commons” been commodified? Who do we sell our labor to? Follow the supply chain.

Pain.

Trauma bonding in the commons is common. Trauma bonding is the answer to mutual-aid.

Because we are good in a crisis. We know what to do. We know how to unite + survive + preserve our history of protest, of resistance, and excruciating pain.

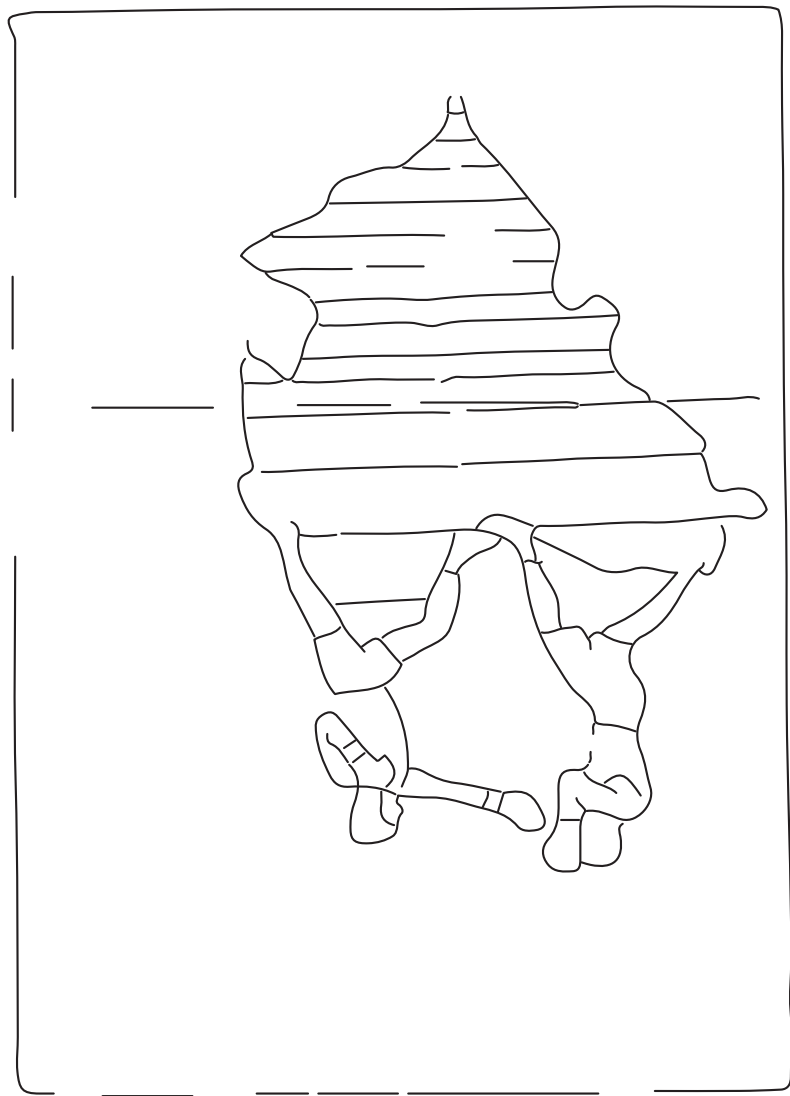
Pain.

How do we get along despite our differences?

We don't. They remain. We are considerate to them, always there to remind us to transgress the set boundaries of claim. Transgress the copyright. Fuck the pain away. That's the only way we can work with our differences.

That's the only way we can.

III



N: The vibrancy of a public, of a common making in art: the heartbeat of street art, of graffiti in New York, of the sideshows in Oakland. I think about the creative hustle that emerged just during Covid. The street murals in Oakland as an archived protest. The brunch carts, the date nights on the Lake, catered by unemployed bar staff. What's more - the energy of the reclamation of our streets. The joy. The disruption. That cathartic feeling and release of PAIN.

The celebration in this iteration of revolt. The events and hustles outside of the law, or besides it, or counter to it, sometimes. The Art Market is still the most corrupt market, so why judge? Let it go and don't commodify it comrade. DON'T.

When Art is Outlawed. When events are Outlawed. When culture is outlawed. When people are outlawed. When the police are gone and we take our streets back.

“In the 1990s, many underage Black and Latino youths gathered in East Oakland to attend sideshows: suped-up, unsanctioned car demonstrations performed in front of hundreds of spectators and fans.” (JSTOR)

The pure rawness of expression in these street celebrations of the community scared the “public”.

Once again.

“Sideshows are illegal in Oakland, with drivers facing \$1,000 fines, 90-day prison sentences and impounded vehicles.” (SFGATE)

Don't commodify it comrade. DON'T.

The hordes. The sheer number of Us when we show up
on Our streets!!!

Spitting and poisoning the well.

Release power. Take a deep breath. Don't take yourself
so seriously.

Be a poet. Be an Artist. Be a false Prophet.

We lack empathy.

Personal gratification before all else.

So how do you decentralize pain? Boundaries and re-
appropriation of trauma. Endless cycle of rebirth and gain
for someone else...

If possible, avoid at all costs Narcissists, dressed up as
good people and those that come under the pretense
of comradeship. Abuse is abuse. What do you do when
abused by a comrade? You withstand? You reconcile?
You forgive? You forget? Should you simply walk away?
The pain of being a part of the underclass, of being a
loser under society's terms? Of dealing with loss and
wanting to find other ways?

Un-commodify our relationships - decentralize the PAIN.

Always.

And forever.

And in perpetuity.



There is an expressed camaraderie and sportsmanship in the sideshows of Oakland. It is like the mosh pit – the embodiment of violence exists only within the context of its formation and mutually agreed upon rules of engagement. I watched this really loud motorcycle sideshow on the Lake on a Sunday – I saw one guy who fell hard from his bike, his luck gave away, while the rest of the ‘team’ buzzed by him to only come back when they saw what took place and extend their helping hands.

How about the circle of thieves and crooks and gangsters? I like the idea of camaraderie in their ranks. And who are we to judge anyone or have any moral ground to stand on?

M: There are some real motherfuckers. Folks who would appear to be friends because they talk the same words as you, but their actions prove that they mean something entirely different from you.

This is more than a lover's spat. Motherfuckers find their home in things greater than misunderstanding. This Shit leads to a real negotiation of what is actually the common understandings of interested parties. Real motherfuckers don't want to talk, they just want to steal and take, or purposefully bend situations for their benefit.

I am convinced that to love our collective being is to call them out, name and shame those assholes. Conflict is not violence, but violently appropriating meaning and commonwealth is violence— even when done by someone who speaks like a friend.

No gods, no masters, only baby bosses.

N: TRANSGRESSIONS

Blood, tears, revenge!... The Aries in me.

IX



buildingbeautifulsouls.com

“Aries: Uncomplicated and direct in their approach, they often get frustrated by exhaustive details and unnecessary nuances. They like things quick and dirty.” (ALLURE)

N: But what are we, the copyrighted rams of this world, those born between March 21 and April 19? The Self? The Drive? Ah, I know - those who always strive for justice, for life, for an ability to pay the rent. We have a drive that is maddening and deep. We don't need validation from the rest, especially the fakes. We know we want no Gods. Only baby bosses, art prophets, and endless parades.

We need transgressions to deal with our collective pain.
We need transgressions to see ourselves in others.

We need the triggers, and the prophets, and the looming monthly rent. We need transgressions to erase the doubt that always churns our brains into a negative mess - the narcissist in us is often too strong of a voice. The empathes never win. They can't.

We are good in a crisis. But after that - disband...And forget that we are here to transgress. We Aries are here to transgress boundaries. To challenge our brain. To be Badass. Big dicks. Big balls. Why do all attributes of power spell men? We channel power through our bodies and our zest - big vaginas and big breasts. The only word — an ass — describes someone who is female or male or both just the same.

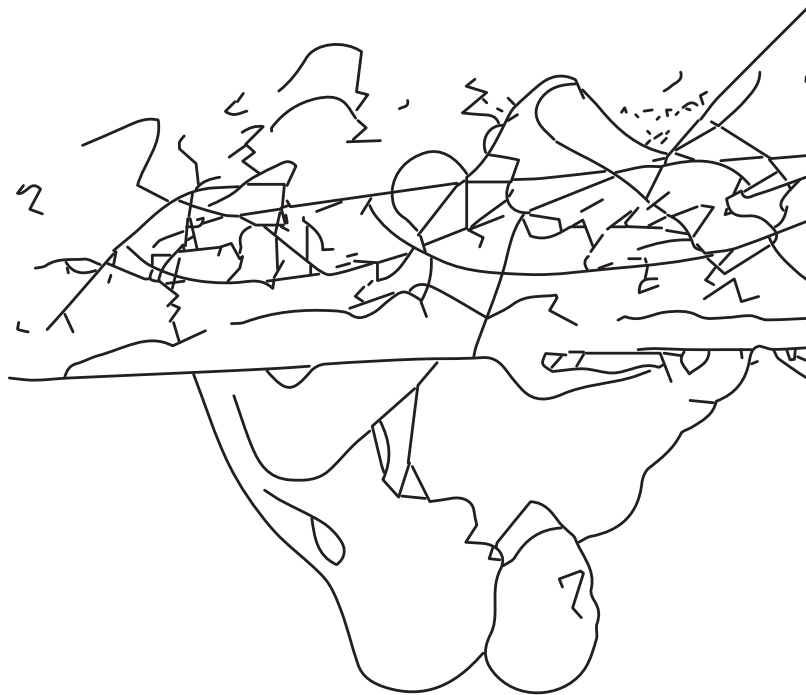
And who do we challenge? The ones who CANNOT transgress.

It is difficult to transgress. No gods, no masters, only baby bosses.

It is difficult to say "I did my best but failed". And when we fail, who is there to heal the collective pain?

A lot of the ideas of the commons fail. And living with failure is most likely a source of our strength today. Failure is much more likely driving us ahead than proverbial stories of success.

But I transgress....





X

I was sitting around the dinner table with my dears,
enemies

talking about ANGER. One is talking

LOVE

about how she is feeling sick and torn-up; she has spent
excited energized because

the day listening to a lecturer

she hates him for his narcissism but nevertheless likes for
his ideas.

respects for his commitment to the subject though not
necessarily agreeing with his ideas.

She wants to avoid opening her heart and mind to him
while also wanting to hear and think through his words.

The other one responds a bit differently saying that she
no longer has any patience for asshole poets

has never had

~~*even if they can turn a good phrase*~~

as she thinks they are all crooks and thieves and at best
imposters/sociopaths/narcissists

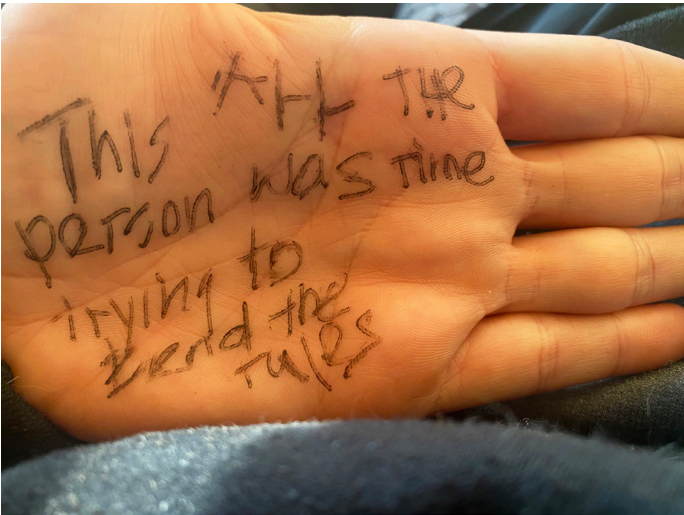
~~*– their words constituting the worldview of an asshole. I*~~
~~*am torn. In practice, I know an asshole, but it is part of*~~

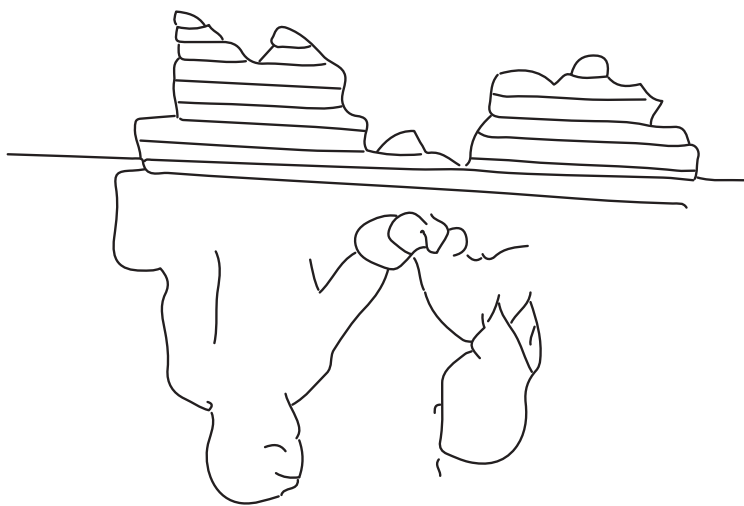
don't see the

~~*the work we do to learn and live from the informed errors*~~
~~*of those assholes. I am torn.*~~

/human.

I am torn.





N: What is love? What is to love someone unconditionally yet x-ray their soul and know its darkness and betrayal? How does it feel to love a monster? Do you know how to open your heart and receive love? Do you know HOW?

Do you know how to use magic? Do you know how to give magic to others and still fail?

They say people have a certain light. They say that each one of us has something no one else has.

Someone cursed me. Someone I had helped. I didn't curse them back. I didn't have to, because the power is in my light. And that is a fact.

They call me Baby Boss 'cause it sounds cute but they don't know. They always overestimate the power of the light. Because light turns into

FIRE and FIRE burns bad





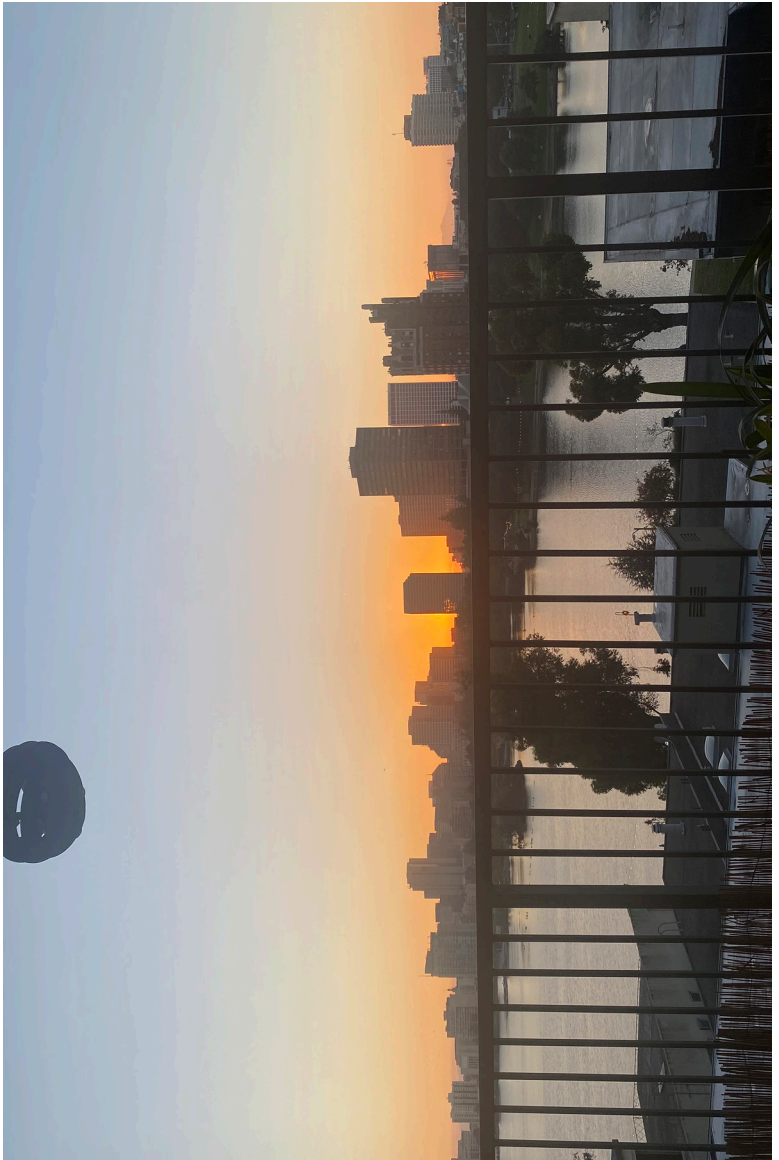
M: “Look, we’re having a party. It might not be a great time, but fuck it, lets see what’s gonna happen.” One thing that has happened to me as I get older is that I can enter into most situations and figure out how to have a good time. I don’t know if it’s a question of perspective-like if when I was younger I was just too self-involved to recognize in any party the possible imminence of joy... **I had to make everything complex for myself.** This doesn’t mean that I enjoy everything, it’s just that I can appreciate what situations have to offer. Now I don’t expect everything to happen for my benefit or reveal some deeper truth – now I’d rather just enjoy what I can and be surprised when something exceeds expectations.

N: I had to make everything complex for myself, instead of tuning to the sound of the Lake...

The sound of the Lake. The sound of life after death. The beautiful chaos, the collision, the pain. The jazz, the drums, the loud disco, the church choir, the Bulgarian band, the neighbors and the people and the life ahead. We are alive. It is difficult to say what you feel when you say that because the words are divorced from the brain. The only way out from trauma bonding is to spell it out - we need HELP. And the PTSD? The remorse? The pain of letting go of control and going with the flow? Who is after whom, who is next? There are no organizers, there are no hustlers but we are that. There are no Gods. Only baby bosses. And a mess.

Are we constantly self-sabotaging?





N: There is a dedication to L-O-V-E in the commons. Then, there is the rest. The micro-circuits are already established - the ones that don't fit, the ones that do, the ones that don't care and the ones that do. Who else is there? The typical, the known, the alternative at best. The avant-garde.

My mother told me that I am not successful in running art businesses because I am too avant-garde. And people don't like the avant-garde. She is correct.

There is, however, hope. What if we shove the avant-garde down their necks?
Or better yet...

Don't commodify it comrade. DON'T.

I like the beautiful sound of life, of life after death. The sound of the Lake on the weekends - without police, we took the Lake back. And now we have life on the Lake. On Sundays, when the sun rays are really strong, around 5.54pm, I lay down and stare straight into the Sun. I know that people say that the Sun makes you go blind - but I don't care. I challenge the Sun and call my powers to my defense. At 7.30pm the light is different. And the perspective is once again fresh. And then at 8.30pm the Sun is slowly

really

wanting

rest.

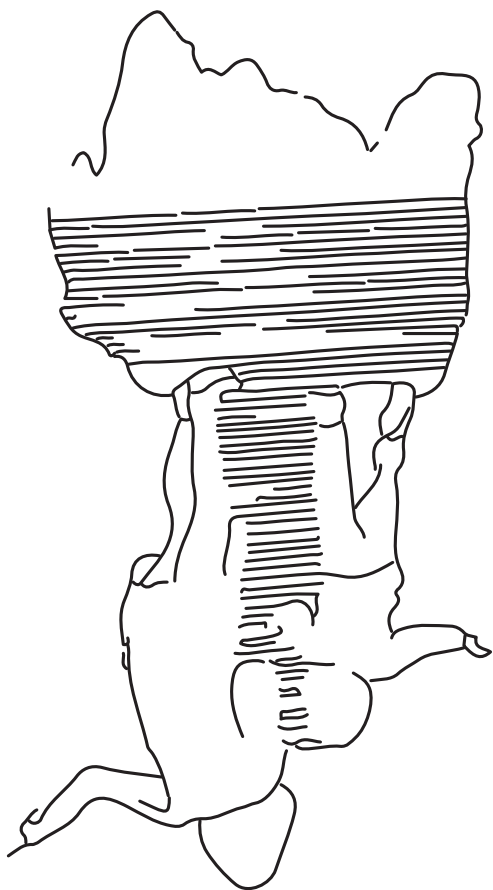
And I keep staring. Until it is time for me to rest.
All warriors rest. It is ok to not be ok, they say. My friend
Marc told me once, when I was down:
“...but then also knowing that sometimes to get high
again, you gotta stay low.”

And sometimes you have to give up on your dream and
fail and feel the pain to start again.

M: I got into another argument today. I feel like I am
constantly giving to someone who asks for me to give, but
then never takes what they have asked for. They seem to
just want to have the exchange they ask for as an excuse
for why they are unhappy. I am annoyed because I can be
using this loving energy instead to make plans.

Luise and I met today for that thing, and if we can get
it done, there will be a sea-change in how childhood
development and play is considered in this city. It will
be more integrated between migrants and citizens, and
importantly, children will be met as kids- not as units of
success or failure. Kids have enough to worry about. And
this is especially the trap that many immigrant kids are
caught up by. Further, we will have demonstrated that
open play rather than frontal learning.

It is surprisingly not so easy to work on this project, I'd
rather than think about my argument– **my anger and
my displeasure can be so addictive.**



N: I often think that it is impossible for me to ever be happy. Once, when I moved here from Bulgaria at age 18, I thought that I would never have friends. I also thought that I would never learn English. People say I am intense. People think that I am a baby boss but then I show them who I am and yet. They are confused. They are looking for someone else.

Also once, I thought that I could be someone else. Or change. Or remain the same.

I failed.

The point is that we all fail to be humans. Now and then. And more often than not, we succeed and build the future but then- whose future? This is contested ground again. I need to rest.

Anger is good. Anger fuels passion. And passion and anger make for an explosive revolutionary mixture and content. And also, makes for a great foundation for friends and lovers. I must rest.

What is the tangible connection between my ideas and the rest? Between what I want to achieve and what the world craves? I must rest.

Are we ready to let go of our egos? I didn't think so. Because, and mainly because, I still insist on being called Baby Boss. My IP name. That is right. I occupy IP.

I occupy space.

I occupy too much of it.
And I am fine with that.
My power is my Light.

And I gladly give it away to those who can handle it and
use it for the common great.
And those who can't you ask?

They go away...Repelled. I badly need to rest.

XI

N: At the end of the day, we are humans and humans need interactions in order to experience the essence of humanity. And what better vessels for humanity than artists? While artists are the chosen carriers of stories and images, they are also on the forefront of a massive economic machine, and while they may be political (the artist) the machine is certainly not clean of massacres. The supply and chain machine, propped up by intellectual property and patent law, is dripping with blood and crying for our help.

And now we have a different psychological and physical disadvantage because of the pandemic. We used to share residency space. Utensils. Art. Stories. Walks. Intimacy. Love. Sex. Friendship. And Conflict. And Anger. And Prayer. And all the regular emotions one must feel among other individuals. Now, we have become devoid of those. The distance has suddenly illuminated the cracks in the dark matter – we need each other more than ever.

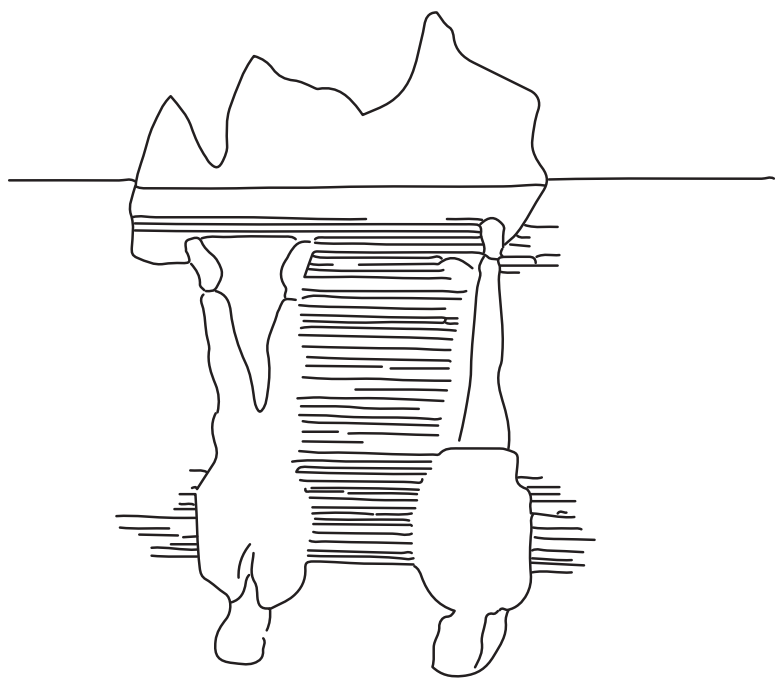
M: I am balancing unease with an understanding that I must trust things and processes. I am no one's boss and have only nick-names related to my twin, or two of my family. Actually, that's not true- I used to be called "woozy" because, when stoned with friends in the snow in the forest in the night I bumped my head on the branch of hemlock tree and said, for laughs, "I feel woozy". My friends thought I said it in a moment of stupidity and, as stoners do, it became my nick-name. I liked the joke in it, and it was a joke all along... although I eventually got a little sick of the name. I give people reasons to laugh and think. I give in surprising ways, for I am a twin and I don't know what is mine and what is yours.

Oh, I had a nick-name once. It was "sparkle." Margaret and Justin called me that. We had a love triangle, or better, tried to start a free love commune. Sparkle was my prize for being free with my love when no one else actually was.. I like the name, especially when it comes from certain people's mouths. We were young, and Sparkle always will be a name of someone who falls like dust- but beautifully.

I have made my life a common thing and forgot to ask others for things in common. I was talking to my dears earlier today and said, "there may be no difference between getting along with everyone regardless of whether or not they want different things from you, and getting along with everyone and telling them what you need from them."

I have tried to preserve my anger for things that are truly fucked up. Instead I find myself mumbling at car doors as I bike down the street. I have tried to live as common a life as possible because I don't know what money means, though I have been told it's important. I am 48 and broke and that feels funny. I am now seeking a way to work for free and live among my people. My arms are connected to my body at their shoulders.

85 is a number.



N: We must be kind to each other and love each other better.

How do we make a sense that fits all perspectives? How do we achieve consensus or interpersonal consent when one is impossible to reach with our masters, with our lovers, with our friends? Even the once upon a time transgressive Burning Man Fest is today nothing but a playground for the rich to replicate the master and servant play they play, anyways, each day...but I transgress...

Magic, meditation, culture, history objects, all are being preserved today and archived and collected - by whom? For whom? To what end?

The independent art space is gone. It is ok as it will remain in archives and books but what has taken its place instead? I insist that what comes next is the heterotopic space – the one that both mirrors and counters the current idea of a space. Only then, we will acknowledge our emotions to ourselves and maybe then stop playing the art game. Maybe then...

And this is why it is sad to see the commons fail. Much like that perfect lover that sometimes leaves when the affair ends. Those eyes are full of tears because we fail to recognize the real value of our transactions, which is the L-O-V-E we give each other, or the hate perhaps.

**What do you do with all the emotions
you have not felt yet?**

You transgress.

MORALS CLAUSES

Marc Herbst

I am drunk with love and the angle of the sun or my head
and I ask that you at least cock your head in this or any direction
and commit to passionately crying out in joy, anger, sadness or passion
or you should whisper, whisper, whisper.
to whisper is the only register that is actually about loving communicating for it holds the secret of my breath near to me and to you.
Assholes and fascists who lie through their teeth can not read these words, and can in uncertain terms copy or reproduce elements of this text- not only because they are dipshits but also because I said so.
This book is a whisper and a shout.
Connection is what we make when we exchange LOVE.

Natalia Ivanova Mount

Through my words seeps LOVE.

I give this love to you.

Love shall be the currency of exchange and the foundation of our relationship.

I wish to only experience the love I give to you and take love back and be emotionally satisfied that you are reading this book.

This book is for sale and love is too.

So if LOVE is the currency in which we deal then it follows that this book is for friends & lovers and those who believe that we can transmute pain into love through our interaction with each other.

I build with love, in love, for love, always.

Agency is given to those who reciprocate in love and value love above all.

So you can copy and cut and paste but only if you and I exchange a love letter, or become friends.

Attachment is not a connection.

Connection is what we make when we exchange LOVE.

Mollie Underwood

Nothing is too abstract, nothing is too conceptual. What more could a person want than to be met halfway, to **tried** to be understood. Writing is sacred, and we will make it last. Friendship is sacred and that will last too. Meeting a person through a person through a person, that is love. What more could you want from life than friends & lovers.

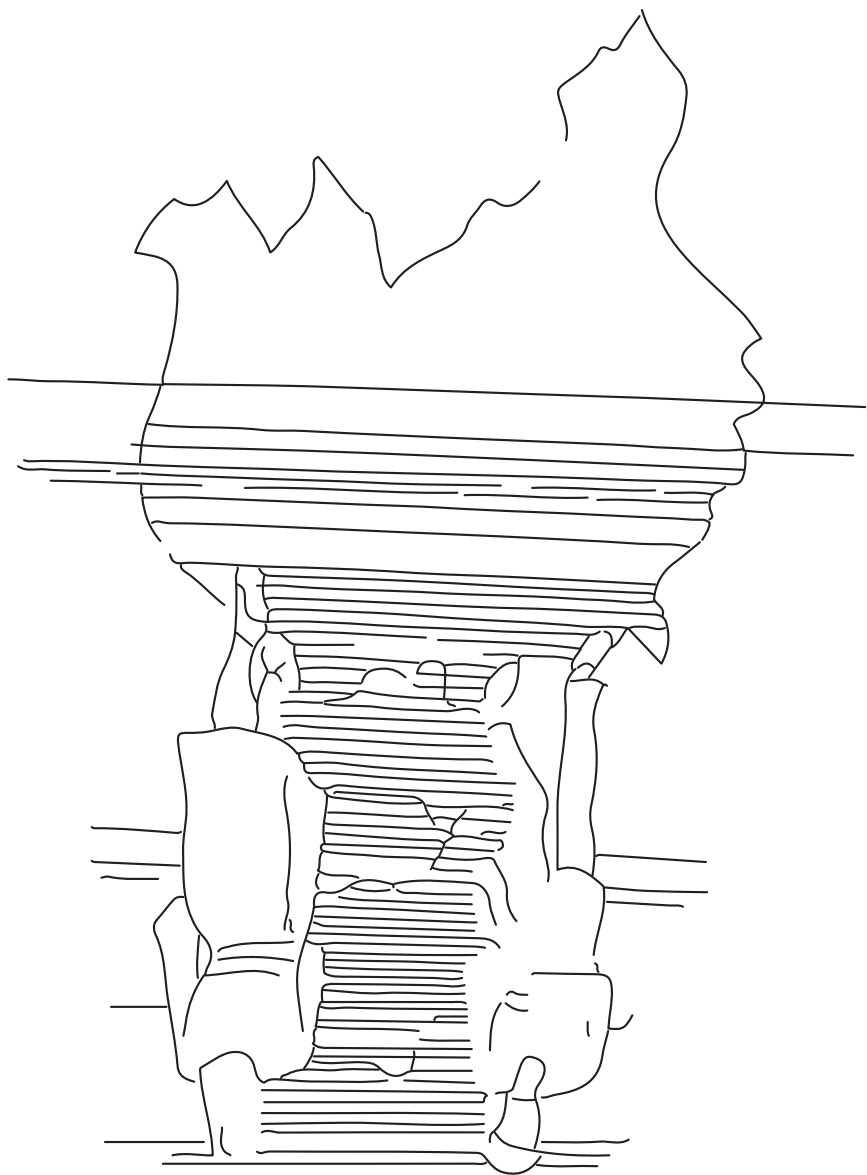
Casey McAlduff

That we find each other in the sentence,
In the voice that calls forth through the page.
That we- despite the distance of readership-
Find the closeness that belongs to those who listen,
Our ears together, our brain on this same book.
That we connect across the journey of thought
Into ink. That we find each other in song,
In art, in the making of meaning,
In the Interpretation of revolution, in the many
pathways
Of love. Dear reader, we share the same view,
Though always shifting—these words, this delight
In the commons. Our synapses firing perhaps
At different moments of recognition, but to be alive
In the same text— that is love, and I am honored
To be in its presence with you.

Chris Byrnes

I wrote it on the walls of the cave
where I sit, inside ancient granite
under the tantric light reflecting
through my black hole soul.

Gravity and love; exclusion becoming inclusion
You accept a duty of care when you read this
to love the work and to honor the meaning
of your own brokenness. To drink the poison
and to transfigure it into wisdom,
to love yourself like you were always here.
Reproduce at your own peril, safely only in love.



Labor/Reciprocity List

Marc & Natalia (Aries + Aries)

Encouraging words when in pain and down

Always there

Drinks & Food

Having fun

Visiting each other

Talks

Hugs

On my mind

Happy thoughts

Style, baby, style. And an appreciation of it.

Side eyes and trust with the risks you take.

Commitment to something that no one seems to understand.

Passion, for what else is there?

Cigarette smoke on your fingers, and memories of smokers I've known in my head.

Mollie & Marc (Aquarius + Aries)

Solidity and trust

Knowing their craft

A well of generosity

Privacy

Bagels and leftovers

A swerve and a bend and a story

Living together

Working together

Respect

Print and all things tangible

Mollie & Natalia (Aquarius + Aries)

Drinks at the Hatch
Sandwiches from Safeway
Girl time at the PORT
Dancing & laughing at the Ruby Room
Late night chats/facetime shenanigans
Shoulder to cry on
Millions of hugs that matter
Always there for you

Casey & Natalia (Leo + Aries)

Tears & joy
Pizza & pre-rolls
Drinks!!!
When in need, always there
Trillions of phone calls and texts about lovers & friends
Mi casa es tu casa, always
Fire to fire,
We expand the other's flame.
A hearth to count on,
smoke on the balcony,
the night lighting up
when we meet to talk.
A sister in all weathers,
our reciprocal soul catalyst,
your revolutionary incendiary,
leaning in to light my match.

Chris & Natalia (Aquarius + Aries)

Mediation, music, divinations
Writing the PPAC back and forth
Precious time at the Lake bonding
Inspiration & excitement
Respect & loyalty
Always there though the distance is hard
WhatsApps millions of texts & calls
Brainstorming
Collaborating & co-presenting
Giving each other space & feedback
Hustling baby, hustling!

Chris & Marc (Aquarius + Aries)

What is this?
Who is this?
How are you possible?
- in other words, questions on admiration
There is a sweater I have I think you'd like to borrow
Art or Revolution, or, Art and Revolution
Plans, and the more dangerous the better. Or so I say.
Maybe some reticence is good.
Let's make Revolting Art

Mollie & Chris (Aquarius + Aquarius)

Aquariuses
Bond
Understanding
Similarities
Inspiration
Future
Good intentions
Sweetness

PRO ARTS GALLERY & COMMONS

Pro Arts COMMONS is a heterotopic site in Oakland, California that both mirrors and counters the purpose and function of a normative art space. Through the sharing of material and immaterial resources, we reflect Oakland's artistic and cultural moment, while working together on reframing the value of art and labor in the context of a new, solidarity-based economy.

We are also a global, peer-to-peer networked spearheading a movement towards a post-capitalist economy. We disrupt the logic of capital through sustaining those commons-centric spaces, practices, and value production models that rewire the broken connections between artist, community, and everyday life.

PRO ARTS COMMONS PRESS

Pro Arts COMMONS Press is a small publishing house and Risograph Printing & Artists Editions Studio in Oakland, CA. We serve a city that is widely recognized for its unique and innovative character as it pertains to art and culture. We amplify BIPOC and LGBTQ+ voices and center our work on the principles of mutual-aid. We support the community through programs and services that are highly accessible and/or free. We print: critical theory, monographs, essays, artists editions, experimental print projects, pamphlets, self-defense tool books, exhibition catalogues, zines, and political posters. We run a writers' residency program, and provide free design, printing and distribution resources to social service and social justice organizations. We collaborate with commons-centric publishing and printing studios around the globe and curate projects that showcase Oakland's creative talent and encourage public making.

PERFORMING
PRO ART
COMM



Multiple sheets of white paper with printed text, likely flyers or notices, taped to the board.

Two sheets of white paper with printed text, held together by green clips.

Several small pink sticky notes attached to the board.

WUOC COPYIF SPACE



PRO ARTS COMPLEX

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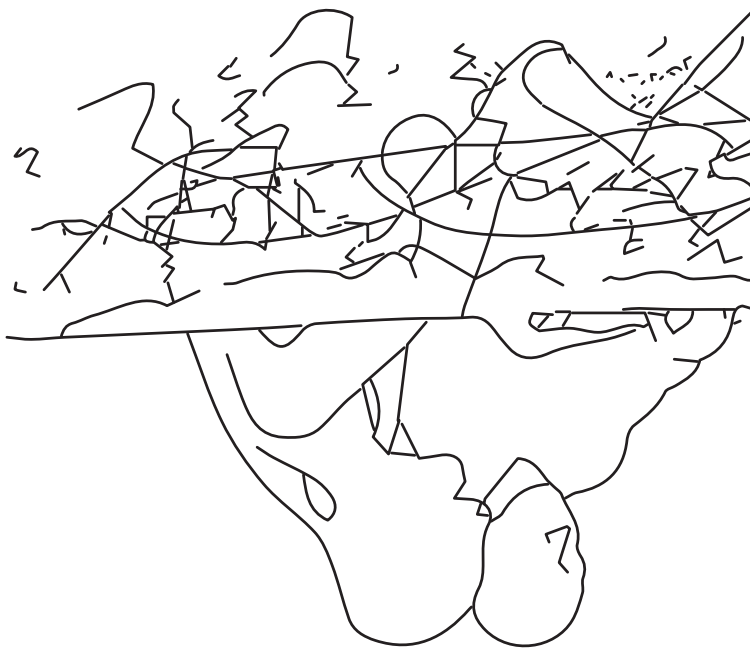
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ALL COPS ARE
BASTARDS

NO TO THE OPENING OF THE MUSEUM

BLACK LIVES MATTER

28



www.proartscommons.org