

CollabArts Humans in Harmony

absence,

presence,

and the space between

HUMANS IN HARMONY COLLABARTS MAGAZINE
-ABSENCE, PRESENCE, AND THE SPACE BETWEEN
VOL. 1 ISSUE 1

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

We thought of ____ some room for absence in compiling the first issue of Humans in Harmony. This seems like an impossible task, for editing the magazine itself resembles an exercise of filling in the blanks. (And we encourage you to do so as well, by filling in the blanks of this letter with your own interpretation.) Every piece that goes down the pages is an endeavor to negotiate that absent arena, in visual, audio, semantic, and embodied forms.

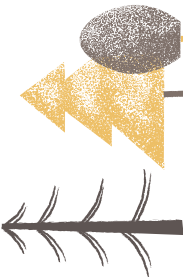
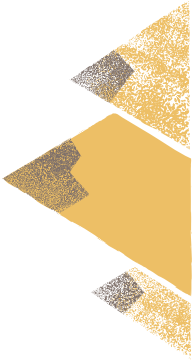
At Humans in Harmony, we believe in the power of the arts not only to comfort and connect but to transform and reimagine. We hope, therefore, that this impossible task can open up endless _____. We hope every attempt to bridge the absence can enable a new mapping, a ____ mode of connecting with each other.

This task becomes ever-pressing with the ongoing pandemic in which we continue to live. Since the past _____, we've been longing for presence, contact, and physicality with each other. We've also struggled to make sense of the other polar—the _____ of loss, distance, and virtuality. We are prompted to explore new channels of togetherness: under the fuzzy light of the screen, by the _____ stage of internet platforms, we speak and write, sing and dance, so close and so far, present with passions, toasting to absence.

The irresistible urge to re-imagine our experiences together leads to the genesis of our issue title "Absence, Presence, and Space Between." Included in the multimedia corpus are conversations, collages, contemplations, and records of such imaginative _____. The richness of their forms and the multiple narratives they offer convey the _____ we long hold: that everyone is a creative artist, and every person has a story to tell. We hope this magazine can do some patchwork with these stories, to make them grow and flourish in new directions.

Now, we invite you to join us in this _____, to create unfinished connections on the borderline of absence and presence, to explore this swinging space between as you flip through the pages and jump over fuzzy hyperlinks.

Haitian and Jacqueline





CITY OF MALE-BRAIN BOX

A GRAPHICAL COLLAGE OF A SPECULATIVE CITY

GREEN GROUP (TIEYANG, NAYOUNG, SHINY & NOAH)

The City of Male-Brain Box is a combination of the virtual and real worlds. In this program, Green Group focuses on deconstructing some concepts which are ordinary in our daily life such as signs and landmarks and try to redefine them. With the process of zoom in and zoom out, Green Group has described an abstract but fantastic city on different scales.



NOAH CURTIS

Pronouns: He/Him

College/Grade: Art Center College of Design / MDP /
Development Year (Yr 1)

Educational Focus: Media Design Practices

What art means to you: Art to me is a means of honest expression and vulnerability. Unique to each individual, art has the ability to evoke every single conceivable emotion.

NAYOUNG KWON

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

College/Grade: Art Center College of Design / MDP /
Concept Year (Yr 1)

Educational Focus: Media design

What art means to you: For me, art means a way of expressing ideas and communicate through diverse mediums. I think the beauty of art is that depends on the audience it could be read in many different ways and meanings. And in this project, our intention of drawing a speculative city can be interpreted in diverse ways to the viewers and we hope that people who see this can indulge in the joy of imagining a speculative city in their own way.



"NOAH, NAYOUNG, TIEYANG, AND SHINY ARE GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM THE MFA MEDIA DESIGN PRACTICES (MDP) PROGRAM AT ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN IN PASADENA, CALIFORNIA."



TIEYANG LI

Pronouns: He

College/Grade: Art Center College of Design / MDP
/ Development Year (Yr 1)

Educational Focus: Engineering & Design

What art means to you: Since I have a background in engineering, I would like to think about most of the problems in my life from a scientific perspective. However, gradually I find that it is hard for me to understand and explore the world without humanity. So I believe, while science reveals the inner rule and secret of our world, art is another way to show the charm of human practice and the interaction between people and Nature.



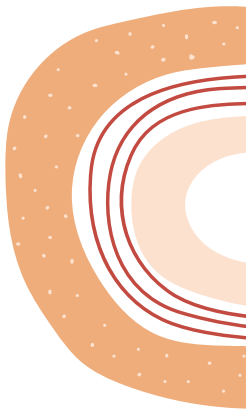
SHINY SHUAN-YI WU

Pronouns: She/Her

College/Grade: Art Center College of Design / MDP /
Concept Year (Yr 1)

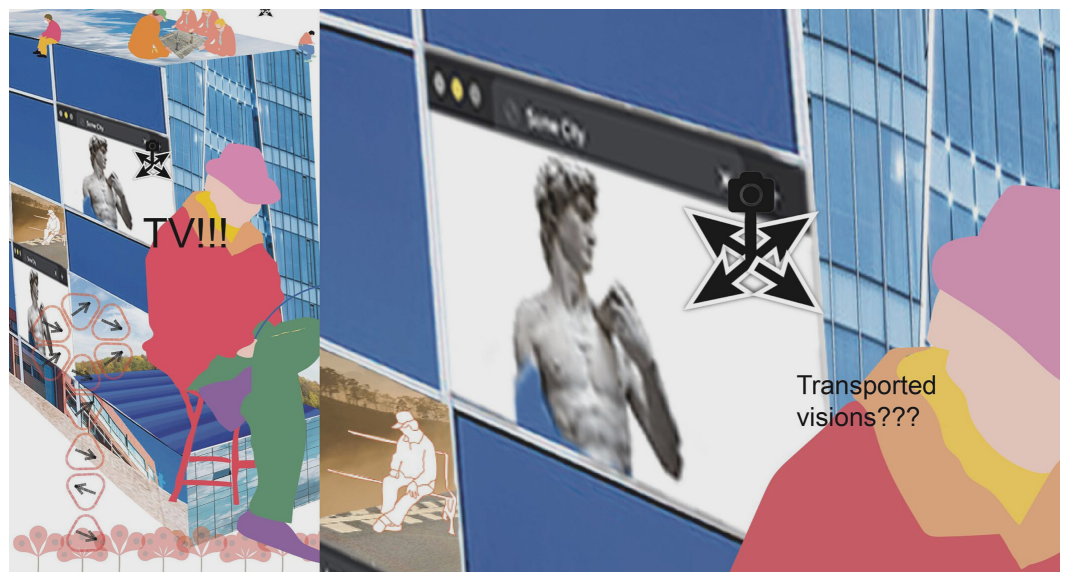
Educational Focus: Creative technologies, Media Design

What art means to you: The interactive narrations between individuals and collectives, between private and public, that is how I connect with art. It is a way in and way out of embodying those narrative experiences when making art that allows me to critically engage with what's happening in the world, which often is not so much about the content itself but the purpose of doing it.

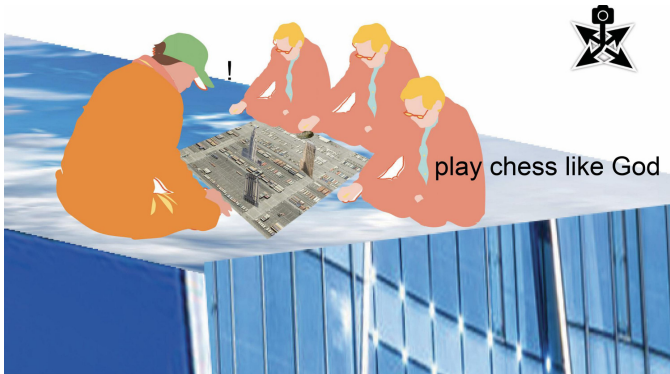




In this city, the plants are made up of the icons which are used to represent the position in Google Map. It means that everything in this special city, like buildings, creatures, and any normal objects could be personalized. Since they are so unique for different people, all of them can be the landmark. Am I a landmark? Are you a landmark? Are we all landmarks?



Behind the man, there is a wall of television programs. Each block in this wall grid means a different combination of time and space. People in our city are able to get access to any time and any space if they want. The traditional boundary between time and space has been broken.

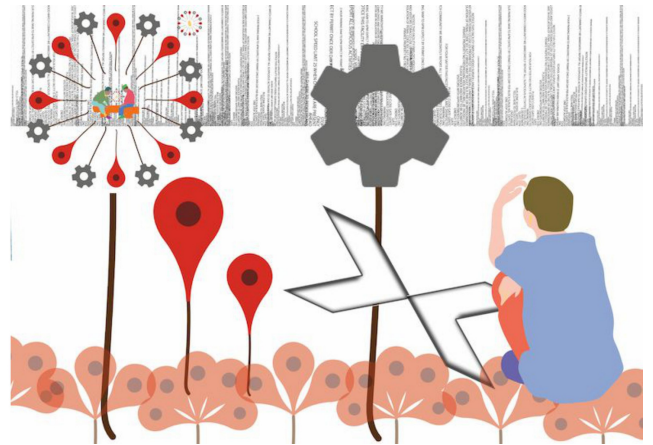


(Image Above) People are playing chess on the top of the wall and they regard the buildings as chess pieces. Also, a shipping port is playing the role of a chessboard. It means that the relationship between people and buildings in cities has a dramatic revolution.

(Image Below) In the mind of this contemplative man, it is another dimension of the city. The structure which is so similar to a windmill shows that the form of this city is uncertain and can be folded, rotated, and reconstructed. Each person could find the best life style both in physical and psychological dimensions.

"Am I a landmark?
Are you a landmark?
Are we all landmarks?"

Why??



(Image Above) Since everything is so different from its original state in the normal world, in our city, it is so common that residents here will sometimes feel lost and be confused about how to define the city and their life.

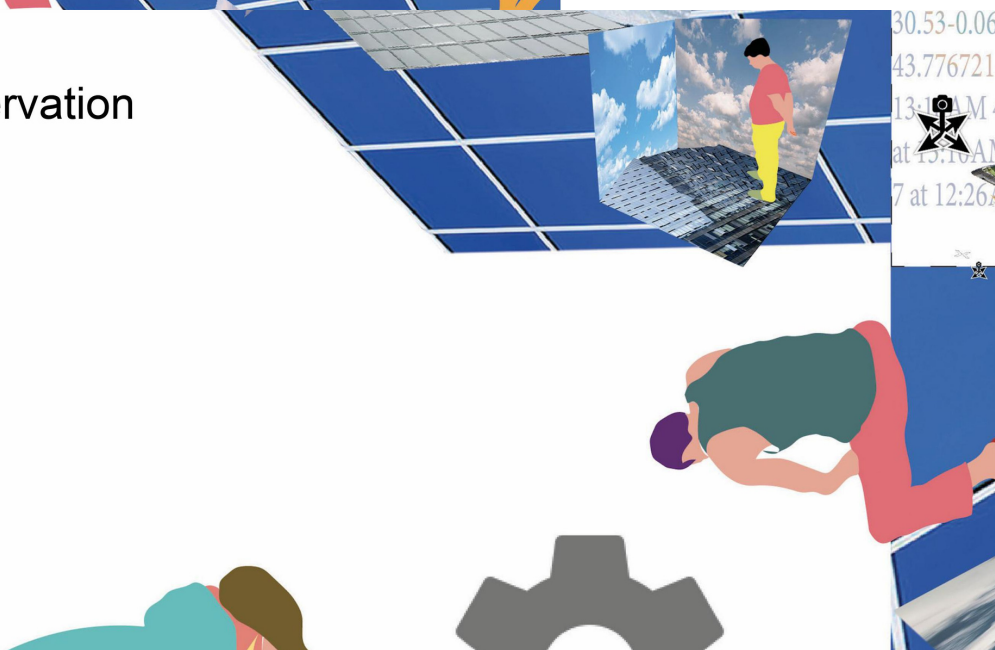




another
one???

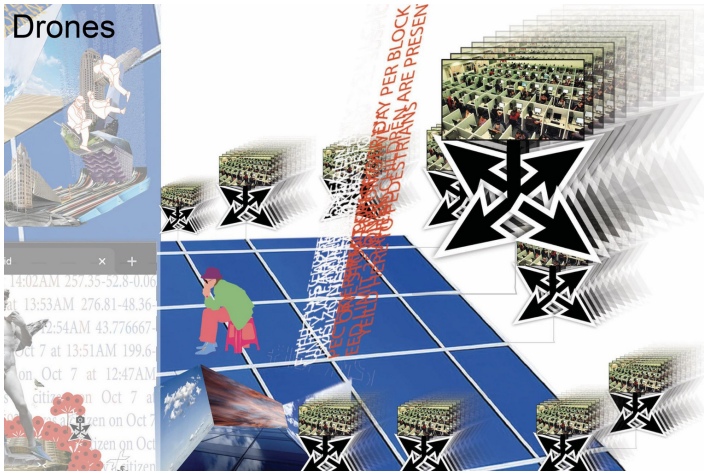
When we zoom in, we could find that people are sitting on the edges of the building, chatting, or playing games. They are looking at the different spots, thinking and wondering something, just seems like bystanders. In the meantime, there is another small windmill on the edge of the bigger one which means that the structure of our city is an endless loop and there are countless opportunities for people to think and create.

Observation



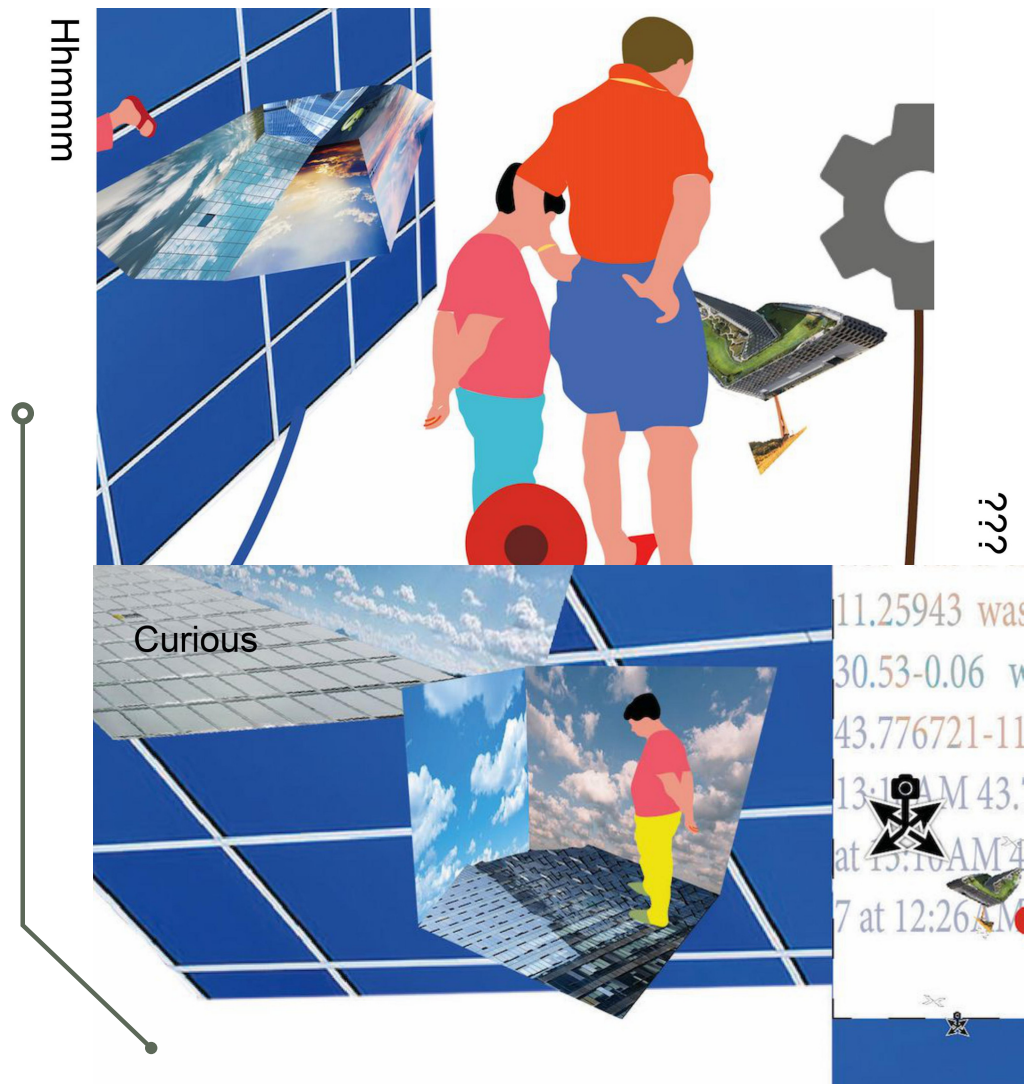
Game

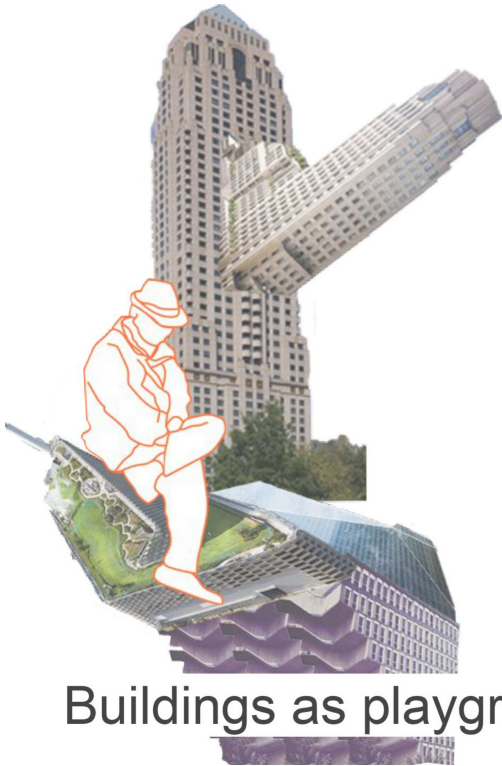




The cursors with different directions have a fancy way to unite with several layers of our daily workplace. This kind of new product has evolved into an indicator or “landmark”, to remind people of the freedom to make their own decisions.

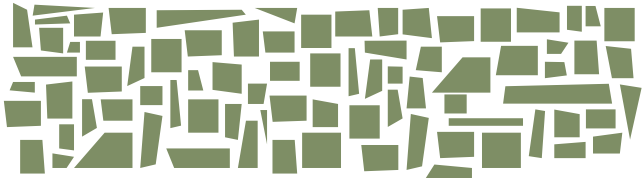
In such an abstract city, the glass wall of landscape and sky form the different corner of time and space, which enables residents to enjoy their own space. New things which constantly appear in the city always attract people's attention from time to time.





Buildings as playgrounds

Now, there is no doubt that everyone can regard this city as a special playground, where people can play with various buildings that have an exaggerated change in scale and dimensions.



We could call it a virtual city, since it shows us an unreal life in a mental way, instead of the digital form. People are always influenced by all kinds of colorful digital worlds that are depicted by novelists, game designers, and filmmakers. However, have they ever tried to create a world in their own brain? It can be colorful, abstract, or even lustrous and dazzling, but it can still make sense.



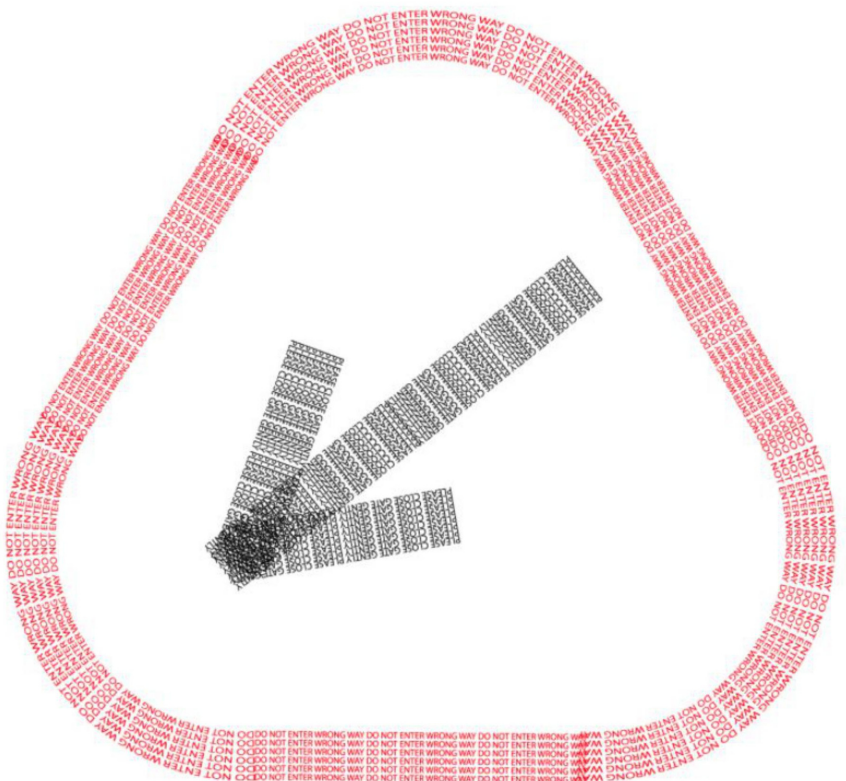
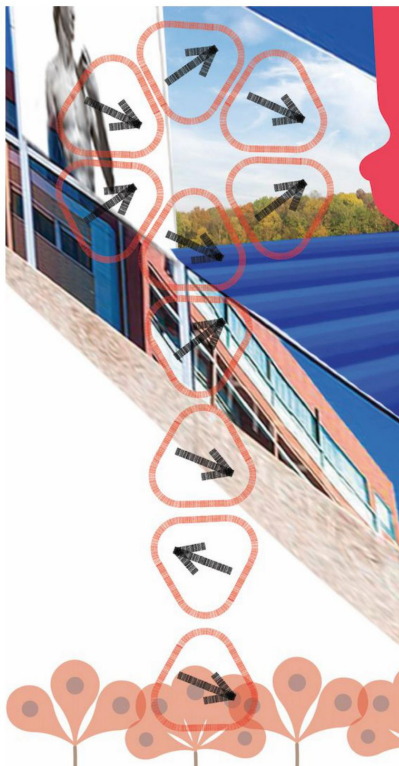
This is
real
This is
fake





"THIS IS THE STORY OF A CITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SIGNAGE, FROM A DISTANCE IT'S INDISTINGUISHABLE AND CLOSE UP, THE CITY BECOMES RESTRICTIVE AND CONFINED. MOST OF THE SPACE SHOWN HERE IS PRIVATE. AS PEOPLE EXPLORE THIS CITY SCAPE THEY REALIZE WHAT IS OPEN AND WHAT'S NOT."

**STOP FLOWER,
THIS IS THE STORY OF A VERY
RESTRICTIVE SIGN BECOMING
SOMETHING THAT HAS
NOTHING TO DO WITH ITS
ORIGINAL SELF, BUT REUSED
AND CREATED AS A FORM OF
DIGITAL NATURE**





**OUR OVERALL PERSPECTIVE
OF OUR CITY,
A LARGER MOMENT FILLED
WITH LOTS OF UNIQUE AND
SIGNIFYING MOMENTS
THROUGHOUT**

INTERVIEWS WITH CREATIVES AND CREATORS

PAVEL SHIBAYEV (HE/HIM)
CO-FOUNDER, RESEARCHER, ENGINEER
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY '15



PAVEL SHIBAYEV

Pavel is a co-founder of Physics Unlimited, a 501(c)(3) non-profit currently addressing educational inequities in physics at the high school level, particularly within the US, and providing students worldwide with opportunities to explore content from novel areas of research and to demonstrate their problem-solving skills. A condensed matter experimentalist and MBE engineer working with quantum materials, Pavel is a graduate of Princeton University Department of Physics ('15), and all interviewees in this series are alumni from various departments of his alma mater.



Over the past month, I interviewed a number of friends who have lately been active in producing original works of art or initiating creative projects, be it poetry, paintings, virtual mystery games, song covers, movie shorts, or educational YouTube channels. Some of them were conceived, launched, or restarted during quarantine, marking a silver lining in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged the globe in 2020 and caused many of us to reassess what it means to be *present*. In this set of interviews, collected over email, you will find similar questions posed to each creator about their respective sources of inspiration, the planning process, the role of feedback, and how the pandemic has altered their workflow. These seven people collectively span a broad range of art: at least four writers (of whom three are also poets), one is a painter, one is a filmmaker, and one is a music cover creator.

For any readers thinking about creating one of these forms of art, it is my hope that you will find their responses inspiring and motivating in developing your own passion or furthering it into concrete projects. For anyone willing to follow or support the interviewees' works, responses to the last question in each interview would lead you to the relevant resources.

Note: the seven interviews are ordered alphabetically by the creator's last names.

SARA ANJUM



Sara Anjum is a full-time Materials Science Ph.D. student working on using minuscule wires for energy sustainability applications such as generating solar power in space and converting sunlight into liquid fuels. I have played the piano and violin and since elementary school, and performed in various orchestras and choirs throughout the years. I have performed internationally in South Africa and Spain with my undergraduate choir, and am currently in my university's orchestra and chamber ensemble. Since the pandemic, I have started a YouTube channel where I cover pop songs, singing along to piano and string instrumentation.

Can you tell us a bit about your music-making pursuits?

I've always loved music, and have been in various choirs and orchestras over the years performing both classical and contemporary repertoire. The pandemic spurred me (and gave me time) to pursue music on a solo level by giving me the time and extra motivation I needed to start a YouTube channel and learn basic music production skills so that I could post polished audio that was at least somewhat comparable with other YouTubers' professional-sounding audio.

What inspired you to record covers in the first place?

I love singing, but I haven't written my own songs (yet), so covers were a natural choice for me. In light of that, I definitely do not see covers as "selling out", namely because I do not yet have my own music and I do like a lot of "older" pop (at least a few years old). I do, however, enjoy singing and listening to emotional vocals, and I think stripped-down instrumentation/production (especially piano and orchestral strings) can really enhance emotional vocals, so I also felt I could add something somewhat different to the cover space, especially since a lot of "stripped down" covers focused on acoustic guitar instrumentation. Sam Tsui is my biggest inspiration among cover artists — his and Christina Grimmie's cover of "Just a Dream" by Nelly, still one of their more popular covers was to be more emotional and true to the sentiment of the song than the original, and that has stuck with me all these years with regards to the magic of covers. Currently, Cinematic Pop, a group

that was on America's Got Talent, inspires the sort of pop cover arrangements I would like to work up to eventually (although I'll have a lot to learn about orchestration and arrangement along the way!).

What does your planning process look like, whether in terms of song creation, delivery, or recording?

It depends on the goal of the cover. I have realized, by talking to professional musicians, that to build a following one of the most important things is to post regularly on social media, but due to time constraints and current skill level in production, I cannot record and mix covers with a one-week turnaround time, so for my weekly uploads, I simply choose a song I like which has a nice piano karaoke track and sing to it. Depending on the time of year, I might choose a song to reflect it (eg. "Last Christmas" for Christmas, or "Flashlight" to bring in the new year by thanking those who got us through 2020), but the main consideration is whether I like it. For covers which I record with a proper microphone and actually mix and record video separately, I now also consider the popularity of the song + the competition. VidIQ has a helpful extension that gives a score based on a balance between the two. A popular search term with many associated videos will get a low score, but something that is reasonably popular but has much less competition will get a higher score. This helps me seize songs on which I will likely stand out more, especially given the level of effort that will go into them. I currently do not really plan my recording or mixing, but that's something around which I aim to build more structure in the future.

Do you employ feedback of any kind in your work? What considerations do you use to determine that a cover of yours is complete and ready to be uploaded?

It had been hard to find people who could give me feedback I trusted but also be kind/encouraging about it and speak to my level. There are some nice producers out there, but also some snobby ones, and a lot of online communities are filled with rather professional producers so it can be awkward or uncomfortable to ask for feedback at my beginner level. However, through an online music production course I bought, I won two listening sessions and got feedback on a past cover as well as a cover in progress, so I have some more direction. I also know I can turn to that community comfortably for initial feedback, and feel a bit more confident about my skills, enough so to ask producers in other communities for feedback.

Up until now, my main considerations for when I decide a cover is “complete” is mainly whether it sounds good enough to me and whether I feel I have reached a point where I am tired of my current project and can’t get more yield out of the further effort. However, now that I have a bit more practice and more time in the evenings and on the weekends due to being done with classes, I aim to record more projects at once and cycle through them so I can avoid the fatigue of overworking on one individual project and have higher standards for quality.

How do you usually go (or plan to go) about publicizing your creations? Is there a routine you default to or an avenue you

have yet to explore?

Currently, I am taking the advice of many musicians who guide indie artists and attempt to be active on social media and either cultivate a “culture” around my music or just post content vaguely related to my music journey (such as the music I am working on or the music-related things, such as songwriting or music production, that I am trying to learn). Then, when I do share my music, such as the weekly live covers I record on my phone, it feels less intrusive and less like constant self-promotion, but I do post those on all of my social media as well, with links to my YouTube channel for the full covers. I have also reached out to the pianist who covers the Bollywood piano tracks I use for my Hindi covers and asked him to create a playlist of people’s covers who use his tracks since he has a solid following of 25k+ subscribers. He graciously agreed.

So far, Instagram has undoubtedly worked the best with regards to social media engagement in general, and by extension in getting strangers to follow my musician account. There also seems to be a correlation between my more frequent Instagram posting and the uptick in my subscriber count. I am trying to explore Tik Tok because of how popular and successful it is amongst various musicians, but I will admit I do not feel quite as natural on that platform. I’m hoping to experiment some more with different ideas to make the most of it and my Facebook page, which also has not had much traction, but I am definitely looking for advice!

Has the pandemic affected your creative

work and/or output in any way? If so, how?

The pandemic is what kickstarted all of this, honestly! Before this, I didn't have the time to learn music production or video color grading, and would not have felt comfortable posting anything on a YouTube channel given the proliferation of professional-sounding covers and the seemingly-crowded marketplace.

I'll admit I probably also felt (and still do, to some extent) pressure to pursue music through campus community groups like choirs and orchestras because of the guaranteed performance opportunities/audience, even though I never got a chance to really shine. By shutting all that down, the pandemic left YouTube as the undoubtedly best platform to have an audience to perform for, and also gave me the time to learn basic music production so that I could feel good about the content I put out.

Looking into that also led to Facebook showing me a lot of ads for music marketing, which not only inspired me to want to create my own music someday by showing me I COULD find an audience for my work and COULD even find superfans for good-quality original work that I may create someday, and it also introduced me to the world of online music marketing, which showed me a vast world of possibilities even as a part-time musician, full-time scientist. It inspired me to use social media and channel my natural extroversion into connecting and engaging with people who enjoyed my music and my related social media posts and encouraged me to post regular content even if it WASN'T perfectly

produced and polished or edited.

The pandemic has certainly been devastating for so many, but in my case, I can honestly say it's the reason why I'm doing any of this in this way.

Are you currently working on any particularly exciting project(s)?

Yes! I'm in the process of mixing a cappella cover of a Taylor Swift song off of her album "folklore". Once I get all of the new equipment I need, I also look forward to recording a few more covers for which I have some basic arrangements going, and maybe even filling out the arrangements I currently have.

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

"Just follow me on all of my social media (you can find me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and Tik Tok at @sarascovers17), subscribe to my [YouTube channel](#), and please like + comment if interested, and share my posts with those whom you think might enjoy my covers! If you would also like to support me financially and receive exclusive benefits, including early releases of my videos, social media shoutouts, and more, then consider becoming a patron on my [Patreon page](#).



Can you tell us a bit about your various writing pursuits?

Most recently it's been more academic writing mixed in with clinical work. When I'm doing academic writing though, I find myself drawn to the creative side - I'll often start the mornings with some creative writing (poetry, short prose) which then morphs into the academic project (e.g., my dissertation).

What inspired you to pursue the writing project you have been working on?

I don't think the form of my writing project fell into place until the pandemic months when everything about social care and health took fuller force and cohesion in my mind. I was inspired by the mentors and teachers whose classes I had taken and thought about the necessity of a seemingly vanishing concept of the common good, which crystallized my ideas into "Common Time: Music, Empathy, and a Politics of Care."

What does your planning process look like, whether in writing prose, poetry, or songs?

I tend to keep an eye out on lines in writing or music that startle, arrest me - the kind that makes you stop, reread, and savor. When I find that kind of a line or phrase, I'll want to analyze it and highlight its sonicity-how it feels in the mouth, in the step, its syntax, its rhythm. Then I'll want to try to create it myself, and sometimes that turns into a piece; or when I'm stuck I'll turn to my favorite artists (poets in particular, Bishop has been a recent one, but also some beautiful academic writers and journalists!).

ERICA CAO



Erica's interests are in the arts, health, and civil society. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Cambridge University's Centre for Music and Science and a medical student at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. She co-founded Humans in Harmony in 2017 and is grateful to be continuing as an advisor with the wonderful team, supporting the ongoing and new initiatives at Humans in Harmony (like this inaugural magazine!) however she can.

Do you employ feedback of any kind in your work? What considerations do you use to determine that a poem or a journal article of yours is *complete*?

Bringing my work outdoors, perhaps with a sunset or under a tree is its own kind of feedback. There's something about having a distance to the work and change in atmosphere. A lot of it is being in that expanded state of being where you can calmly look at your writing and ask yourself if it feels right. A lot of time for me, whether in creative or academic work, that means asking myself if it feels genuine.

How do you usually go (or plan to go) about publicizing your creations? Is there a routine you default to or an avenue you have yet to explore?

A lot of the writing just happens, and then it stewes and sits. I'm not sure if it's going anywhere to be published, but it was something I wanted to write. Then, maybe, it finds itself out there in some way - either reformatted into a formal publication, or I come across a publishing opportunity and think of the piece. I'm always on the lookout for ways to learn and share my writing. (The HiH magazine is a great place for example, especially for exploratory or collaborative works!) It feels so rewarding when it resonates with even just one person.

Are you currently working on any particularly exciting project(s)?

Current exciting project: learning how to doctor! And a lot of that is the poetry of reflecting on some deeply personal and challenging situations of everyday human life. I'm finding this with my classmates in our reflection and conversations. Perhaps it may, when it feels right, morph into something to be shared more widely. There's so much richness in that first exposure to clinical work that demands preserving, and I'm hoping I can do that this year.

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

Come join! I'm excited to share and collaborate on whatever projects might overlap in the journey of getting people organized and energized to make a change or see beauty or create together.





(left) This is a painting of her current series. titled "Danza de los Zunzúnes" or "Dance of the Hummingbirds" in English



KASSANDRA LEIVA

Kassandra Leiva is a Cuban-American living in Essex, CT. She received B.A. in Architecture at Princeton University, Masters in Architecture at Yale University, and currently works as an architectural designer at Centerbrook Architects. All her life she has been an artist. She has dabbled in a little bit of everything, but painting has always been her preferred medium. She has shown her works at Princeton U., Yale U., and at Middletown.

Can you tell us a bit about your creative endeavors?

I often say that I'm an architect by day and an artist by night. My official profession is as a designer working at an awesome architecture firm in Connecticut. For me, architecture and painting come hand in hand. Through my studies in architecture school, my perspective and understanding of physical space have really transformed and shaped the way I portray space on a canvas. Space has consistency. There is color, there are light and darkness, sharp edges and softness. Space is something that can be felt with all your senses, but of course, when it comes to painting, it's primarily visual, maybe tactile. For me, color and the rendition of light and shadow become key to a work of art. Currently, I'm working on a series of larger oil paintings inspired by my cultural heritage, as well as a series of abstract acrylic mini paintings.

What inspired you to paint in the first place, and what keeps you motivated these days? What themes are you most passionate about?

I've been painting since I was very little. It's a way for me to meditate on my feelings, but it's also a fantastic way to share ideas with the world. Transferring wispy elusive thoughts onto a canvas or a page is one of the most magical experiences out there. Lately, I've been really interested in playing with color, texture, pattern, and ornament and how these relate to flat surfaces. It's an ongoing study for sure.

What does your planning process look like? Do you always stick to the plan when you create a painting?

My process can be all over the place. Sometimes I just want to paint, so just start adding paint to the canvas, and it's kind of like a *dérive*... I let it take me where it may. A lot of other times, though, I kind of get this image in my mind and I start sketching it and figuring out how to capture it on paper, and then I transfer it to the canvas. Once here I start blocking the different areas out with colors. This is where I make a lot of decisions about color. Although, because of the medium (acrylic or oil paints), I can always change my mind and tweak colors and details whenever.

Do you employ feedback of any kind in your work? What considerations do you use to determine that a painting is complete?

Sure. Any experienced artist knows they have to be self-critical. And the first step to doing that is stepping back... literally. While I'm painting I step away from my easel every 30 minutes to an hour. When you're painting you can get very myopic, so stepping back allows you to see things compositionally you wouldn't see otherwise. As for other feedback, I have always had great critics around me. My mom, my sister, and my partner. They're all great critics. As for completion of a painting, that is the million-dollar question! I never really decide that the painting is done. I simply decide that I'm done working on the painting, for now. I leave open the possibility that I could always come back to it, and sometimes I do.

How do you go about showcasing or publicizing your art? Is there a routine you default to or an avenue you have yet to explore?

I showcase my art on my website, my Instagram, and my Facebook page. The latter two are great venues for finding new viewers. I've recently gotten involved with the Connecticut Women Artists group, a rather established institution here in Connecticut, and I'm planning on showing some of my work in local shows.

Has the pandemic affected your creative work and/or output? If so, how?

While I've painted all my life, I'm fairly new at integrating myself into the local art scene. The pandemic has made it difficult to meet cool new artists and curators at gallery showings. So I've slowly been trying to reach out to people as I develop my work. But as for my creative output, I think I've had a wonderful explosion of creativity in the last however many months we've had of pandemic-time and art has been one of my survival tactics.

Are you currently working on any particularly exciting project(s), painting-wise or otherwise?

Yes! I'm currently working on a series called "Mitos y Raíces" (in Spanish), which translates to "Myths and Roots". This series explores my relationship to Cuba, my birth country. A little piece of my soul is still in Cuba, and I want to understand that part of me better. My work shows themes of spirituality, dance, nature, and dreams. I consider the relationship between the human figure,

animals, and colors and textures. So far it's been a joy to work on these!

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

Check out my work on social media. All my work is for sale, so if you see something you love or think you know someone who will love something I've shown, please share! Or if you are an artist and want to talk, I'm always excited to start a new conversation or even a collaboration.

Please check out my website at:
<https://www.kassandraleiva.com/>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/Kassandra-Mar%C3%ADa-Leiva-Art-110717397363748>
(Kassandra María Leiva Art)

Instagram: @kmlleiva





(above) a photo she took of an NYC subway map where someone had drawn an eye in the place of the Rikers Island jail.

YOU LI

You Li is a lawyer and poet who was born in Beijing and lives in Philadelphia. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in Lunch Ticket, Asian American Writers' Workshop's The Margins, THE BOILER, Shenandoah, Poetry South, Scoundrel Time, and elsewhere.

Can you tell us a bit about your writing pursuits?

I write poetry.

What inspired you to create poetry in the first place, and what keeps you motivated these days? What themes are you most passionate about?

I'd always loved writing and reading. I was born in China, where (old) poetry is widely taught at a young age. I memorized my first Tang Dynasty poems in pre-school and loved to write my own poems growing up. I returned to writing poems as an adult when I read Michael Dickman's book *End of the West* in college. It excited me because it showed that poetry can drive down into seemingly impenetrable cores and explore complex emotions in a revelatory or cathartic way. Those poems were like jewels that refract light in different directions as you turn them and at the same time they were the light that made the jewel beautiful to look at. I write primarily to figure out certain elusive feelings, about family and love relationships, and about the legal system.

What does your planning process look like? Is spontaneity a key element of your poem writing?

Often, lines or ideas come to me. I keep notes, and later, I build out the poem when I think of or happen upon something else that I want to hold up against the first thing, to see how they relate. Sometimes I write poems that start from "found" texts -- in that case, I explore what grabbed my attention in the text I read and try to explore from

there. You can read more about one of these poems here: [link](#)

Do you employ feedback of any kind in your work? What considerations do you use to determine that a poem is complete?

For years I have had a workshop with friends. I'm pretty lucky to have people who can see new pieces in the context of much of my body of work. It's hard to tell when a poem is complete, but usually when I feel comfortable stopping work on a poem when it is able to show me something new or surprising.

How do you go about publishing or publicizing your writing? Is there a routine you default to or an avenue you have yet to explore?

I send poems to magazines from time to time. While literary magazines serve an important function and bring brilliant new work into the world, I'd love to reach more audiences who don't themselves identify as writers by publishing outside of "literary" spheres.

Has the pandemic affected your creative work and/or output? If so, how?

The pandemic has changed my relationship to time. Having more time in many ways, I expected to take advantage of this period to produce more. Having more time, though, changed my orientation to it. I'm prone to giving more time to letting poems mature on their own, in my head or in the world, while trying out more new things.

Are you currently working on any particularly exciting project(s), literary or otherwise?

I've been working on a project that takes a wide-angle lens to look at the criminal legal and prison systems in the United States, in their vastness and depravity. I work, by day, as a lawyer. Through this work, I encounter texts—court cases, interrogation transcripts, and words said “on the record”—that is publicly available, yet obscured from public view by nature of their volume and apparent impenetrability. I incorporate these texts as found material and use my experiences as an inspiration in my poems.

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

I'd love for you to read my poems! And I'd love to hear what you think. I currently use my Instagram (@gentlegrid) to share poems.





JAMIE WONG

Jamie Wong is a queer multiracial writer who is currently working on a YA novel about a queer boy, an enigmatic witch, and a moving house. Gods and madness ensue. She is a twin (but not a Gemini), and she enjoys it when her girlfriend serenades her with the guitar. She is an alum of the VONA/Voices of Our Nation Writers Workshop for writers of color with Shay Youngblood. Her work has appeared in InQluded and Edible Jersey.

Can you tell us a bit about the murder mystery games you write?

I started writing virtual murder mystery games under the moniker The Dagged Pen at the start of the pandemic as a way to help people connect digitally and build a shared experience together. The online environment requires a bit more structure to flow well, so the games have a scripted portion that is followed up by a more flexible discussion round to allow for that spontaneous interaction that we all miss from in-person communication. So far I've written three games: one set at the tavern in a fantasy city, another at a wizard castle, and the final one at an Ivy League institution.

What had inspired you to write these murder mystery games in the first place? Why murder mysteries?

One of my friends loves murder mystery games, and we played one together at the start of lockdown for the pandemic. Then she suggested I try writing one myself since she knows I'm a writer. And I thought, Why not?

At the time, I thought I would be going to grad school for writing, so I thought I would write these murder mystery games as a small way to make money on the side. Grad school didn't work out because of the pandemic, but the games are actually a great way for me to stretch my writing muscles in ways I normally don't. For instance, I normally do not outline my stories, but with these mystery games, I find that I have to impose a lot more structure than usual. It's also a low-stakes way for me to practice writing humor and planting

clues and red herrings, since I normally don't do funny or mystery in my regular fiction writing.

What does your planning process look like?

I come up with character names first. I want them to sound interesting of course, but the names are also my only opportunity to make the characters sound non-White without explicitly saying so. Because I don't know who will play these characters, I don't want to say "so-and-so character is Black/Asian/etc." to avoid any instances of people engaging in black- or yellow-face, for example. But I also don't want it to sound like the world inhabited by the characters is lily-white.

Then I'll come up with connections among all the characters. For example, character A and character B share this secret, and character C and character D don't get along because of this other thing. Then I make sure to give all the characters a motive for the murder.

I won't decide who the murderer is until I've already written two-thirds of the game.

Do you employ feedback from early players to make revisions to games later? Any memorable examples of changes you had to make in the past?

Absolutely! Feedback and revision are a crucial part of the process, just like with any other kind of writing. I love when my friends come up with great lines off-the-cuff while playing a game. I'll steal the funniest, snarkiest lines and sometimes even tweak a

character's personality a little if I really liked the way someone played a character in a test round.

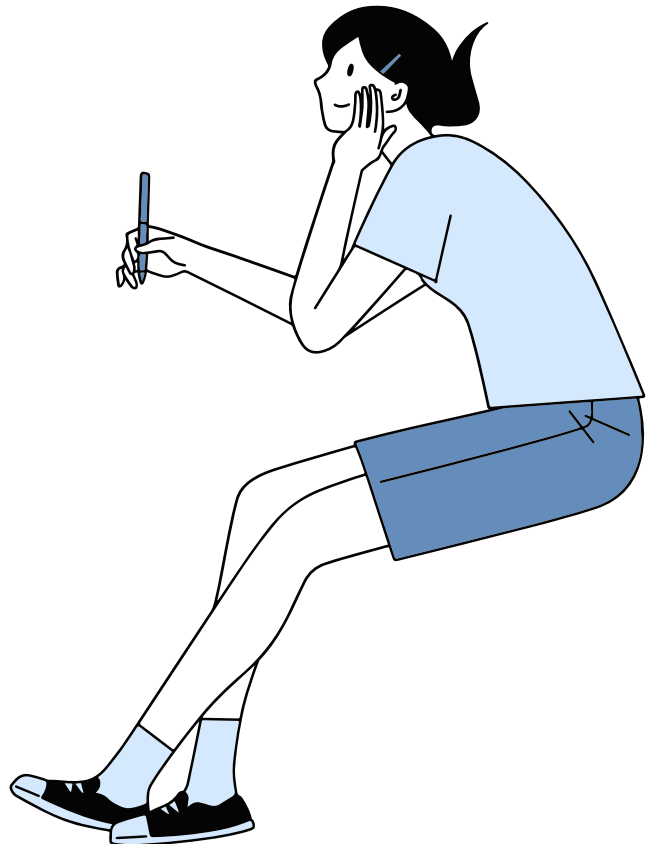
How do you publicize your murder mysteries?

I started a Twitter account (@TheDaggeredPen) to publicize my games, but I have to admit that I'm not amazing at marketing. Coming up with regular content is a puzzle I haven't yet cracked.

Is there anything else you would like readers to know about The Daggered Pen? What does the future look like for this endeavor?

The more games I write, the more I'm realizing my niche is fantasy-oriented murder mysteries—which makes sense, since I'm a fantasy writer. I want to write a mystery that's a riff on the Hero's Journey, a superhero mystery, and a fairy tale princess mystery. Let me know on Twitter @TheDaggeredPen if you have any other ideas!

Thank you for a great interview!



Can you tell us a bit about your filmmaking pursuits?

Sure. I started filmmaking as a way to create my own content--stories I was interested in telling. As an actor, you are always a part of someone else's project. I thought it would be cool to do my own.

What does your planning process look like, whether in creating films or YouTube videos or as part of the acting process?

For film, you have to plan the shoot to best utilize your time and resources. My first short film Metro was a learning experience. I did plan--definitely not enough--but as always, things don't go according to plan. One big lesson was to dedicate more time to pre-production to be better prepared and also develop trust with your actors and crew. Then again, there's so much you discover when you're actually shooting that you never could have possibly imagined. That's what I love about the process, and that holds true for both behind the camera and in front--you prepare and then throw away your preparation.

For acting too, so much is improvised and felt out on the spot. The location and chemistry, as well as direction, really change anything you've prepared for.

Do you employ feedback of any kind in your work? What considerations do you use to determine that a movie short (or other work) of yours is complete?

Yes, I love getting feedback, but at a certain point in the process. In the beginning, you're

BRIANA LIU



Briana is an actress, filmmaker, writer, and painter based in Los Angeles, CA.

still working through many things and I think you have to control the voices you're being influenced by. It's complete when I feel like it's done. That could take a long time if there's a lot of details that I want to improve. At a certain point after I try all the variations I have to realize that it's good the way it is. In any form of art in general I realize there's a fine balance between trying too much and feeling regret at not having tried more. When you do too much it takes away from the product just as much as not doing enough. Sometimes things can be too "full", or overworked.

How do you usually go (or plan to go) about publicizing your creations? Is there a routine you default to or an avenue you have yet to explore?

I'm pretty bad about publicity. Sometimes I do things for the sake of doing them--the creation is what gives me enjoyment. Of course, when I have shown my work in the public in the past and gotten good reception, that is a pretty euphoric feeling. Like you are truly bonding with people who share in the experience and understand the emotions and creativity behind the work.

Has the pandemic affected your creative work and/or output in any way? If so, how?

Yeah, the industry was on a full halt for a while. Things are picking up again, happily!

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

Feel free to subscribe to my Youtube channel [bananaliuzz](#).



ARI SATOK



Ari Satok is an author and educator, based in New York City. He also teaches writing and storytelling workshops and has given talks about his books and his work in countries all around the world.

Can you tell us a bit about your writing pursuits?

Absolutely. The two writing projects I'm most proud of are certainly my two published books. The first, titled *The Architects of Hope*, captures, through poems written by me, the stories of young people from all around the world, whom I interviewed during a yearlong storytelling project I led, traveling to international schools on four different continents. The book contains 16 poems about 16 different young people, all centered on the theme of hope. The young people whose stories are captured in the book come from all over the world – from Guatemala to Syria, from Brazil to Ukraine – and they really are remarkable.

The second book, *The Beautiful Chaos of Growing Up*, is a heartwarming collection of poems on the journey through college and into young adulthood. It's a really relatable book, especially for those just entering post-college life.

In addition to my books, I write a lot of other poetry. In late 2019, I launched a weekly poetry newsletter which has been a particularly beautiful opportunity to use poetry each week as a way to think about what I'm experiencing in my life, and what we're experiencing as a world, and then try to write and share something about it.

What inspired you to write each of the two books you have published so far?

In regards to the first book, I was actually conducting a research project about a network of international schools called the United World College network.

As part of my research, I was lucky enough to visit some of the schools (in Italy, the UK, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Canada) and each school had students from about 80-100 countries. During my visits, I'd meet these students and I was so inspired by them that I instantly felt compelled to return to these schools after my research project to try to lead a different project aimed at documenting their stories. There was just so much wisdom and inspiration in their narratives and so I felt deeply motivated to try to expose more people to their stories.

And the second book, *The Beautiful Chaos of Growing Up*, was directly inspired by my own journey of graduating college and stepping out into the real world. Early on in my post-college life, I started writing poems about my own experience, primarily as a way for me to reflect on what I was going through. At a certain point, it became clear that the poems I was writing were the seeds of a new book.

Has the pandemic affected your creative work and/or output? If so, how?

For sure. In mid-March, as things began shutting down in the United States, I decided to start writing poems focused on the pandemic to share with my weekly email list. My hope was that the poems would help people emotionally cope with what we've been experiencing. Through different poems I was writing, I wanted to bring people hope, help them feel less alone in their fears, and, occasionally, give them a reason to smile or laugh in a time that's often felt dark.

Are you currently working on any particularly exciting project(s)?

Yes! I'm collecting all of these poems I've been writing into a book of poems responding to the pandemic that should be coming out sometime in the spring

How can readers of this Issue help your work(s) reach a larger audience?

They can buy my two books on Amazon:
[The Architects of Hope](#) and *[The Beautiful Chaos of Growing Up](#)*

They can spread the word about my books and share them through any platforms they have!

They can join my email list. Those interested should send me their email address to arisatok92@gmail.com and I will gladly add them to the list.

And a final way they can support me is that I sell poetry art prints (I've partnered with amazing artists who've made art pieces that incorporate text from my works), so anyone interested can certainly order prints. More info on the prints is online here: <https://www.poetryartprints.com/>



HAITIAN MA

CLOUD NOTES OF MEMORIES, AND VICE VERSA



HAITIAN MA

TRANSLATOR, WRITER, LOVER OF SOUNDS | UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Haitian is a graduate student of Comparative Literature and Critical Translation at the University of Oxford. She is also a theatrical translator, interpreter, and collector of fragments. Haitian's interest ranges from the history of outer space to the art of printmaking, and her greatest joy since the COVID lockdown has been improvising cooking for her housemates in snowy Oxford.





Please click here or scan the QR code on the right to play the audio-visual piece.

Cloud Notes of Memories, and Vice Versa is an audio-visual blend of 15 entries scattered in the Note of my computer. The app has been a lovely space for miscellaneous happenings: to-do lists for next week, grocery bills, paragraphs cut from essay drafts, wandering thoughts for developing an outline, sudden inspirations, and random screenshots. It keeps track of my forgotten memories and interstitial joys, and I thought it would be lovely to create something for the yellow icon in return to express my gratitude.

In curating this 8'13" blend, I shuffled between careful selection and intuitive composition. All entries come from the year of 2020 and 2021. They range from lexicon of food items, broken notes of previous lectures, to hummings of my mum's favorite songs. After recording them on my phone and importing them into Audacity, I let go of the audio content and aligned them by the form of their sound waves. In the meanwhile, I gave each record a unique title, and merged them together into a cover image on my sketchbook. Juxtaposed with the palimpsest of voices, the image lights up as much as it clouds over the listening experience. They form a conundrum-like archive of the everyday, exposing its secret to us at one moment and fleeing our grasp at another.

I hope the piece can bring you subtle wonders and small sparks. And if you end up creating your own little Cloud Notes of Memories, please share it!:)

Switch from literature to history & whether that sounds like a good idea?



UNTITLED

Yael Haruni,
21 years old,
Sophomore at the School of Visual Arts



STORM KING

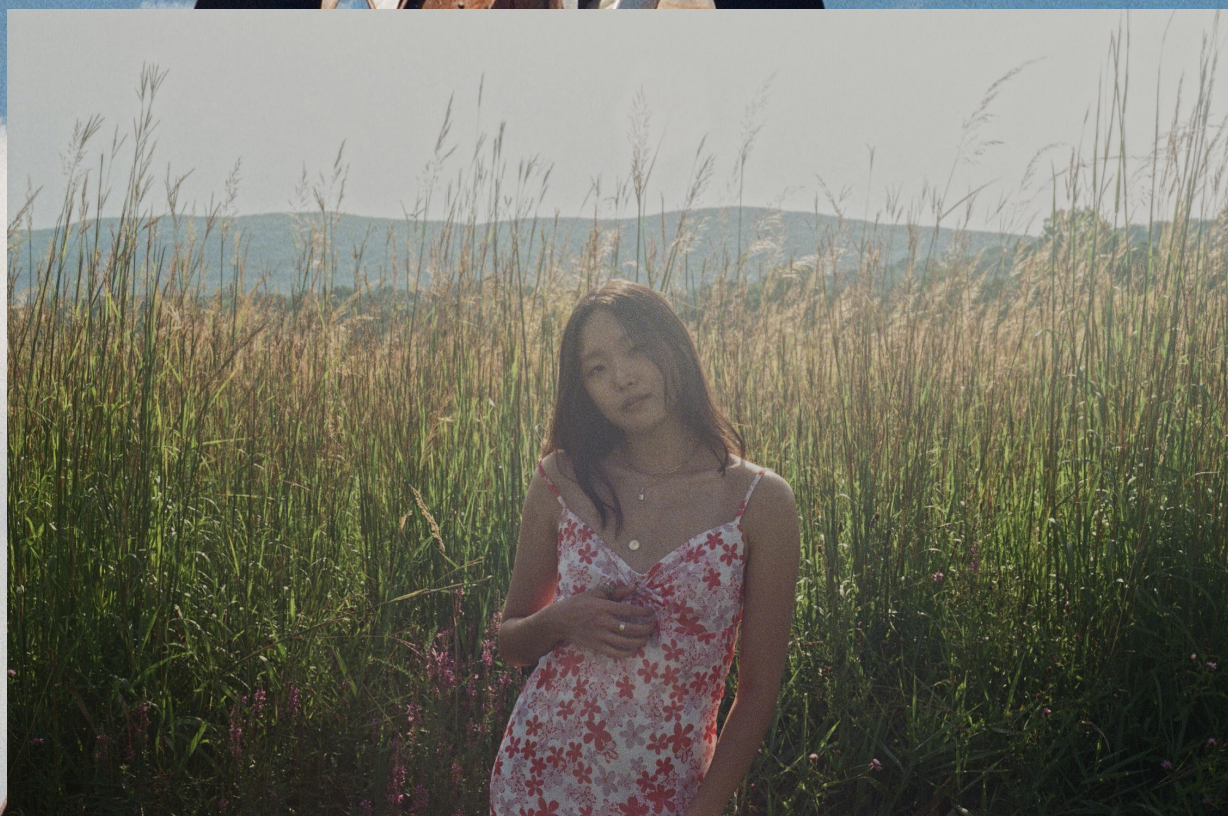


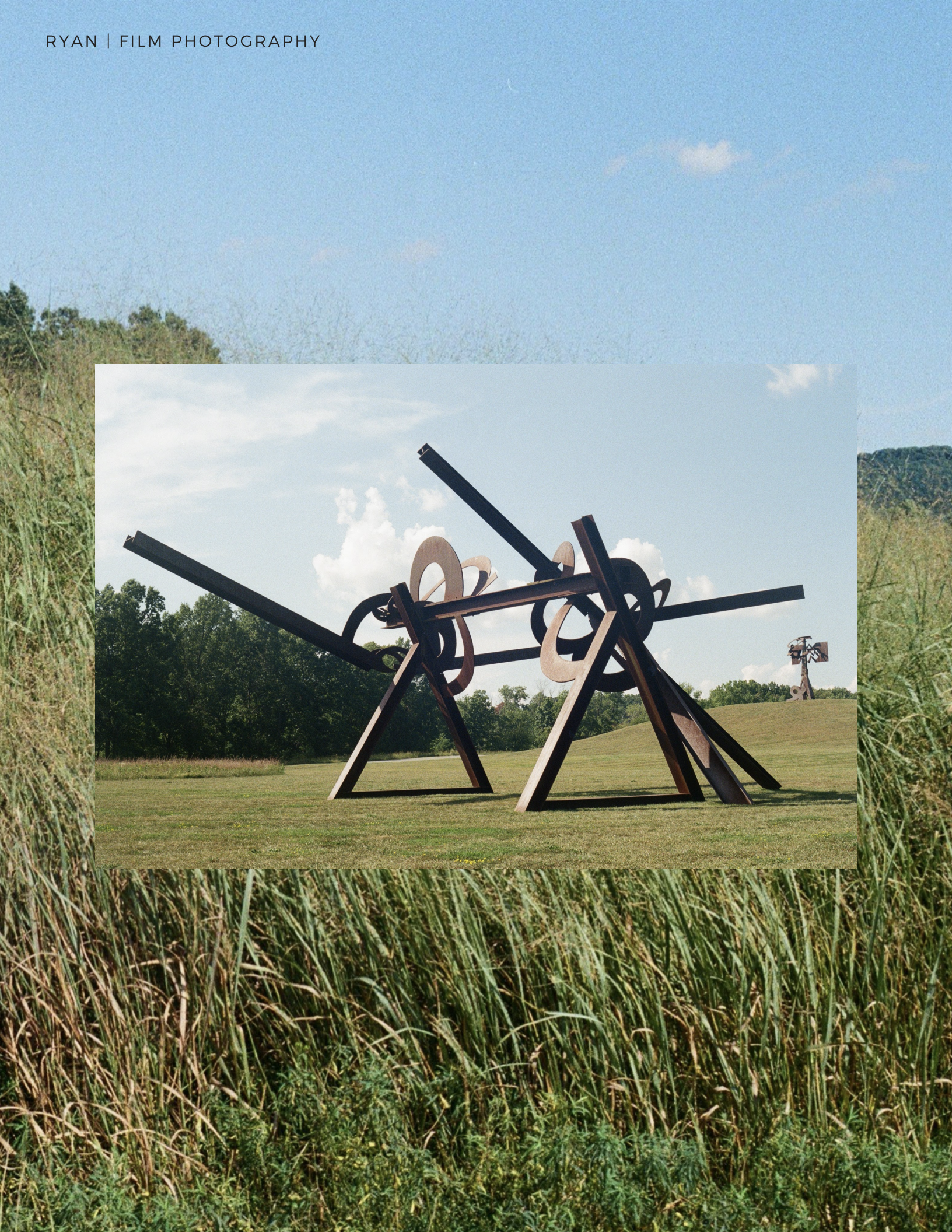
HAILEY RYAN

Junior at Barnard College
studying Political Economics
and French

These photos were taken at the Storm King Arts Center in Mountainville, New York. This outing marked the first time I hung out with a friend since quarantine, a strange reentry into supposed normalcy. It felt appropriate that after spending so much time apart, so much time consumed in absence, that we came together in a location defined by empty space. I brought my film camera for this reason--- it allows you to see past the physical and psychological space and really see the world around you. It allows you to be present.









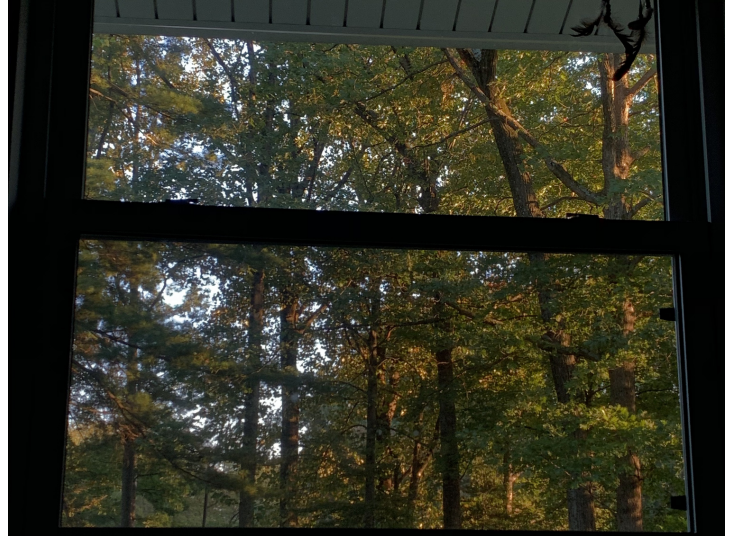
Jacqueline Yeon

BEDROOM WINDOW

photos taken while lying on bed



August 22, 2020, 16:34



October 6, 2020, 18:11



October 24, 2020, 07:17



November 2, 2020, 06:49



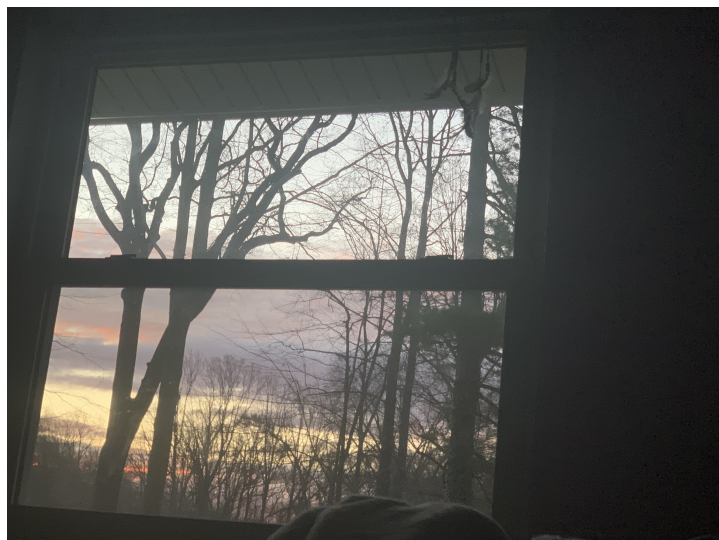
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November 18, 2020, 07:06



November 19, 2020, 06:32



December 2, 2020, 07:10



December 8, 2020, 06:50



December 9, 2020, 08:24



December 10, 2020, 07:46



December 12, 2020, 08:30



December 14, 2020, 07:06



December 15, 2020, 08:05



December 15, 2020, 16:58



December 17, 2020, 17:01



December 17, 2020, 07:02



December 17, 2020, 07:39



December 23, 2020, 07:10



December 30, 2020, 10:02



January 13, 2021, 07:42



January 14, 2020, 07:01



January 16, 2020, 07:56



January 19, 2020, 07:21



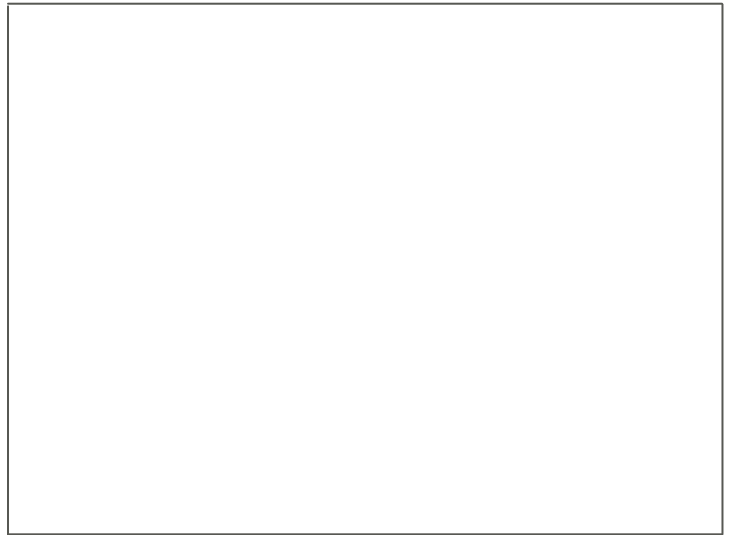
January 21, 2021, 08:20

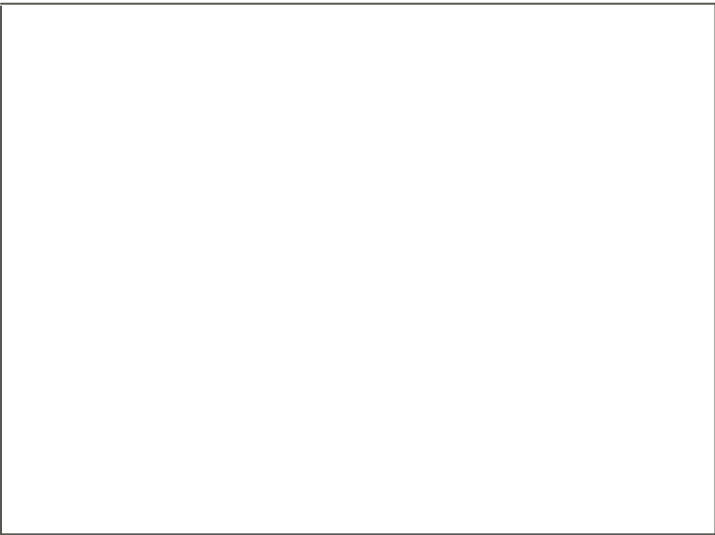
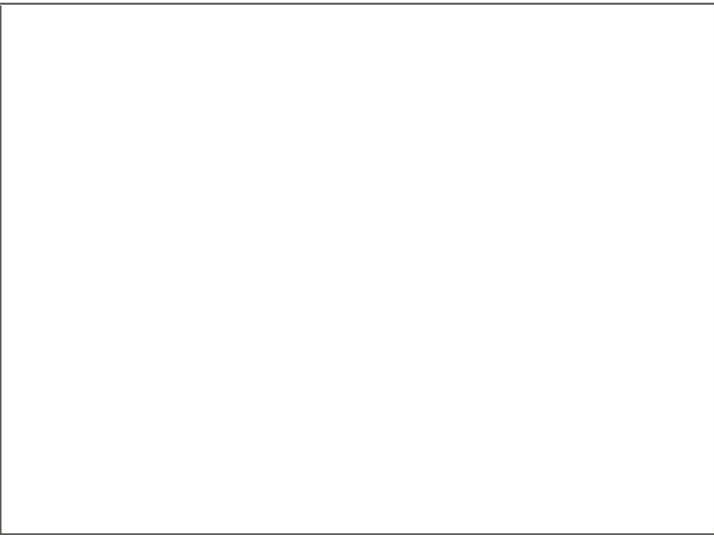
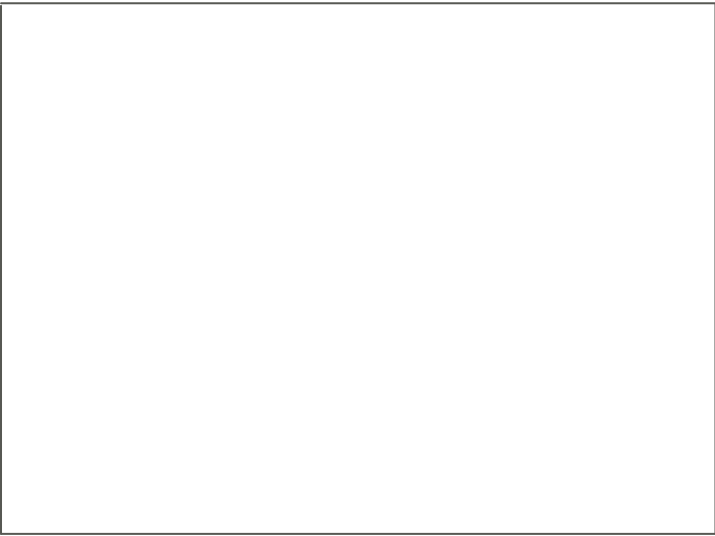
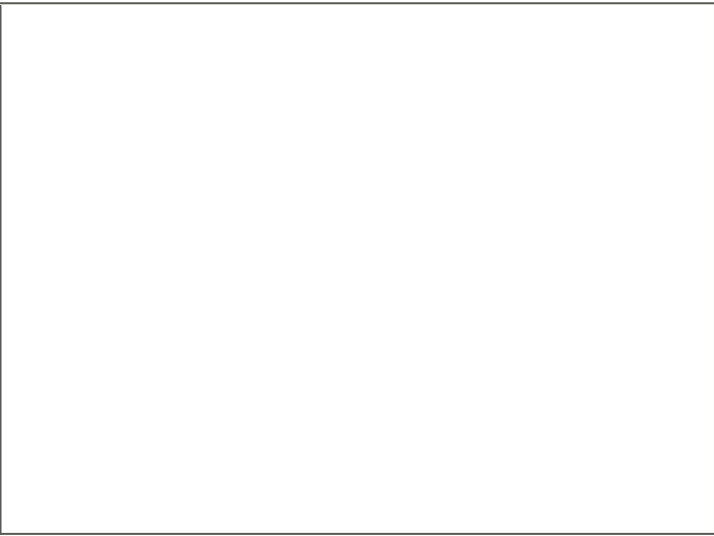


February 7, 2020, 08:52



February 23, 2020, 16:03







CollabArts - EP

Humans in Harmony

SINGER/SONGWRITER · 2020

▶ Play

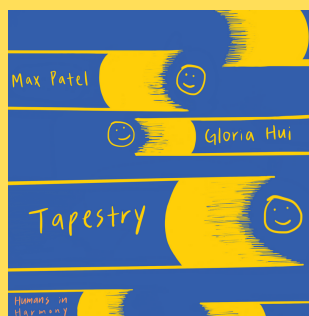
⌂ Shuffle

At Humans in Harmony, we believe in the power of arts to connect people across cultural and geographic boundaries in this unstable time of the COVID-19, it is more important than ever to find creative ways to connect with each other. Humans in Harmony is adapting to these difficult times by using virtual means to connect people from different backgrounds.

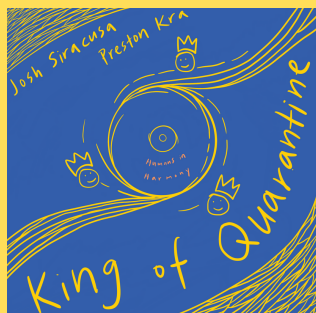
Last summer we launched a virtual Collaborative Arts Project, connecting people from the United States to the Netherlands to China in creating multimedia art projects and sharing our stories together in this isolated period of time. Here are the songs that were released on our EP album.



Summer Bop
by Gaoyang Ganjin
and Rommel Nunez



Tapestry
by Gloria Hui
and Max Patel



King of Quarantine
by Preston Kra
and Josh Siracusa



Starless Sky for Us to Share
by Haitian Ma
and Jacqueline Yeon



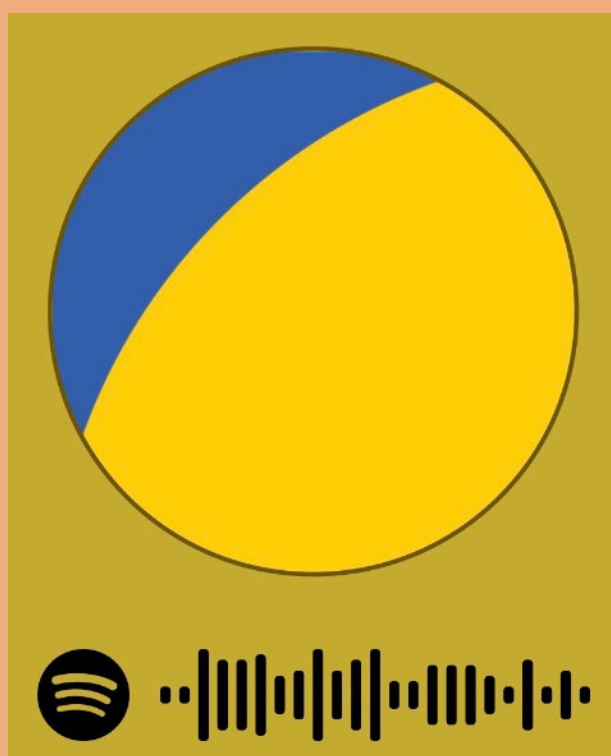
[MUSIC VIDEO](#)

PODCAST



Our podcast <Heart to Heart> gives a more intimate look into the creative process behind our Collaborative Arts Project, Giving participants a platform to share the inspiration behind their songs. The Collaborative Arts Project used the power of songwriting to connect people across cultural and geographic boundaries during these isolated times. The project is more than an anthology of songs, but a living, breathing relic of an unprecedented time. For our first episode, our hosts Hailey Ryan and Haitian Ma interviewed Josh Siracusa and Preston Kra, the writers of a full musical project titled “King of Quarantine”. Check it out!

PLAYLISTS



We have asked friends of Humans in Harmony songs they would listen to in certain scenarios. Their personal picks are now compiled into a series of playlists. Check out on our Spotify Channel what these scenarios are, and don't hesitate to send us a message if you have a pick in mind!

HUMANS IN HARMONY COLLABARTS MAGAZINE
ABSENCE, PRESENCE, AND THE SPACE BETWEEN
VOL. 1 ISSUE 1