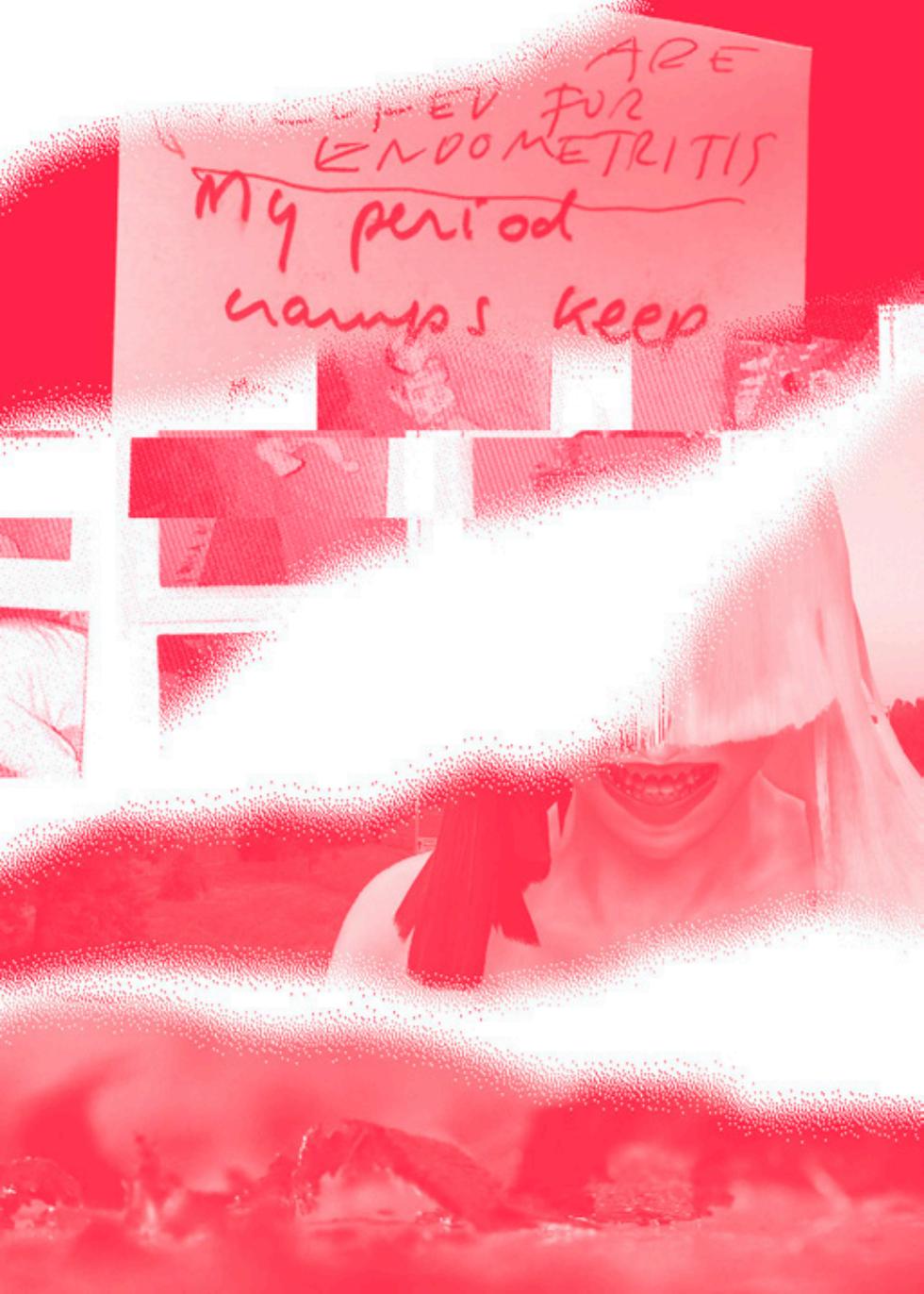


# NOT FAR FROM NOW

Issue

I AM 26 (almost) years old, singel (again) and broke — i love you very much and would like to marry you very soon\*. i cannot promise to support us very well, but if given the chance i will in hell try. \*soon means very soon





# *NOT FAR FROM NOW*

Statements of Practice from RCA  
Visual Communication Students 2019

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# FOREWORD

Dr Rathna Ramanathan

Some might say the world as we know it is ending. Some might say that the structures that govern our everyday lives are collapsing. Some might say that ordinary people are powerless.

At the Royal College of Art, we are rebellious optimists and believers. We believe in the power of the creative self. We believe in the potential of creative education and practice to transform and change for the greater good. We believe it is critical that we, as humans, learn from the knowledge of diverse and different cultures, species, materials and environments.

This document, which contains the words and voices of the MA Visual Communication Graduates 2019, speaks to these beliefs. Their educational journeys over two years are ones of tremendous and meaningful personal and professional creative transformation. The work within these pages aims to change the narrative of communication. It does this to better understand the potential of communication practices, methods and research in producing, mediating, and reframing human engagement with society, in addressing inequalities, and in transforming human and nonhuman relationships.

As a reader, we welcome you to join this creative exploration of what it means to be human through the lenses of communication experiences and interculturality. We invite you to be a part of this important timely conversation that is so crucial to the world.

Not far from now, it is these voices you will hear echoing across the world, providing hope and inspiration.

# *INTRODUCTION*

The Editors

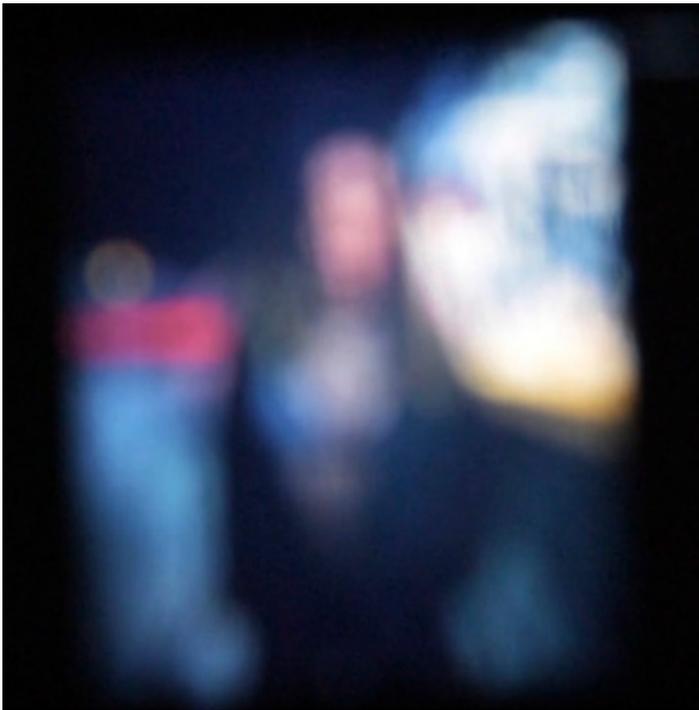
‘Explain Yourself’ is a regular series of writing workshops which run during the Spring Term, in which Year 2 Visual Communication students are encouraged to compose a 250-statement that defines some key aspect of their individual practice. This could be anything from a specific design strategy or manifesto to a personal experience or ideological position. The aim was then to combine these short texts into the publication you are about to swipe your way through as an index of possibilities. *Not Far From Now* conveys a very clear sense of the immediacy and directness of those statements. Each of these workshops provoked lively intense encounters between the students and their own intentions, some of which were being owned and acknowledged for the first time. What emerges from these texts is a powerful sense of the moment. Between them, the texts in this collection capture the spirit of Communication Practice in 2019 – wayward, committed, passionate and provocative. The material has been arranged into four thematic sections that we hope will convey the range and diversity of these written responses.

This is the second year that the ‘Explain Yourself’ workshops have taken place and the second time that we have produced a publication from the results. What has become clear is the intrinsic importance of writing to Communication Practice – not just as an ancillary platform or tool but also as a means of articulating the subtle and complex thinking behind its development. Thanks to our students’ efforts, we are beginning to see how a text can embody and explore as well as explain.



# *SPACE TIME*

*Distorted spaces,  
crowded spaces,  
blind spaces,  
disappearing spaces,  
audible spaces,  
longed-for spaces,  
spaces in motion,  
fragmentary spaces,  
preserved spaces,  
lonely spaces*



Distorted spaces →

# *Al Leeming*

→ [alexander.leeming@network.rca.uk](mailto:alexander.leeming@network.rca.uk)

You're living a lie.

You are living life though a small piece of glass on the back of your phone.

You, your life, your friends, recorded through specifically designed glass, feeding a sensor and algorithm designed to make your life look more interesting, more appealing. Social media ready. So, let's change that. What if we take control of the narrative?

I tell people that I make experimental video, but that's not entirely true.

I create custom lenses. Lenses influenced by a narrative. Lenses comprising foreign elements. Lenses that stop feeding the lie.

Everything that happens is just light and movement. These contrasts become the focus of the lens, allowing the lens to tell its own story.

# *Binhui Cai*

→ binhui.cai@network.rca.ac.uk

I have grown up in places around rush and bustle/hustle. Everything changes quickly. I live in places I have never tried to be aware of. They are familiar as well as unfamiliar. Are we aware of our living surroundings?

*'Everything around us could be beautiful, we just need an eye on it',* someone whispered.

*'Yeah, maybe you're right.'* I replied in my mind.

Since then, I have started to learn to take time watching and observing the world around me.

*'It's not only beautiful but also interesting,'*  
I told myself.

So I bring a 'lens' to watch and observe the world and now give it to you. It gives people the opportunity to feel the environment. Did it seem familiar or unfamiliar to what you thought it was? Is there any surprise through the 'lens'? Can we be aware of our living surroundings?

It is also about trying to make people reconsider their rhythm of life. It's very easy for us to speed up nowadays. How about slowing down for a second for something everyday but worthwhile. Our living environment is one of them.



← Crowded spaces

# Jack Warne

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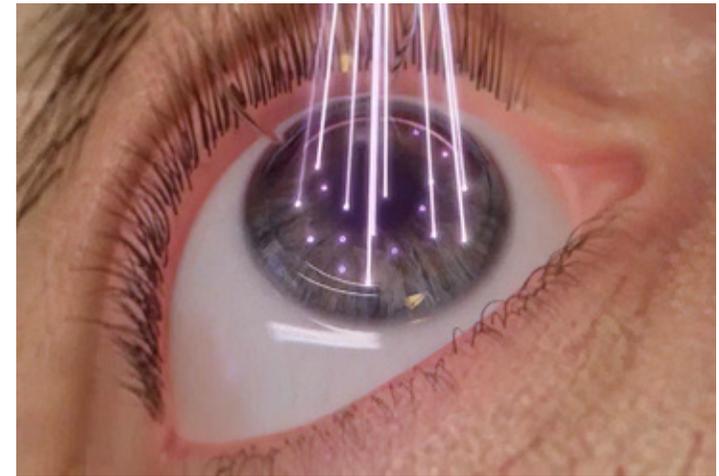
I was blind at the age of four.

This blinding was caused by a hereditary disease of the cornea. Similar to a window, the cornea is the part of our eye that controls the light that allows us to see. It refracts the world in front of us. This meant I grew up with half of my world in the vision that the majority of us share and half of it in complete darkness.

Composition, whether visual, sonic or spatial, is primarily encountered in experiential terms. Right from left, left to right, up + down, down + up, structural, hierarchical... but what lies within these integrated forms? I want to know how much of this visible world that I saw prior to my blinding impacted upon the darkness that enshrouded it.

Since sensory augmentation and the marriage between machines and humanity are here, I believe creating work embodying the 'unseen' realities of emotion, sensation and consciousness is of great importance. How far do these new techniques and technologies alter and affect our 'real' sensory dispositions?

I use sound as a catalyst to create digitally rendered pictures, to then place these pictures within a world that evades the conventions of the audiovisual. What I see within my work is what people don't normally see.



← Blind spaces

# Becca May Collins

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Disappearing spaces →

The Hafod Uchtryd is a patch of land in Ceridigion (Wales), once a very popular destination for lovers of the picturesque. A tragic fire at the estate's house led to the eventual selling of the land to the Forestry Commission, but not before felling the trees to sell or mining the land for metals. I first visited the estate last September for a two-week stay. It wasn't quite cold yet, and only the tops of the trees were turning yellow.

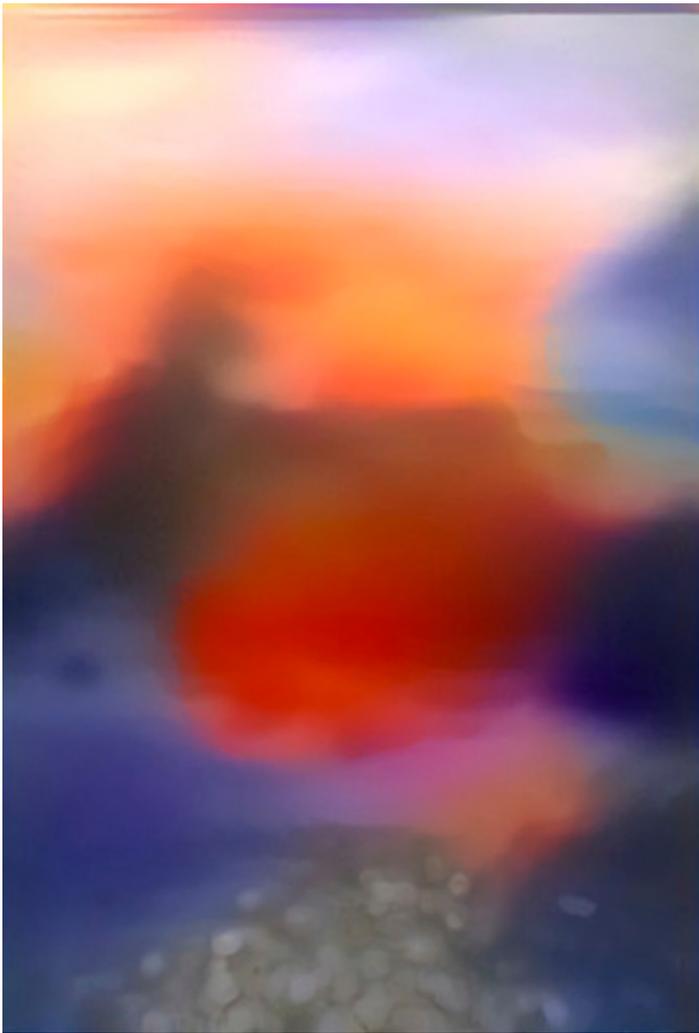
Following many visits, many on-site drawings, and many conversations, this series of images explores my own relationship with the site and the development of my sentimentality towards it. The reconstruction of the site in the images provides the viewer with access to the immaterial and the personal. By looking at the paradox of the picturesque, the dramatic history of the site and the current goings on, this project communicates the tragedies and the fortunes that give the Hafod Uchtryd its magical 'sense of place'.

# Jacob Pardoe

→ jacob.pardoe@network.rca.ac.uk

On the train  
as you glance out the window  
you are accompanied by sounds entering your ears  
It could be through headphones  
or recognizing the beating train tracks  
The sound traveling into your head  
now joins the rhythm of the world outside  
Contaminated tension  
A new contemplation  
The question, what do clouds sound like?  
It is the feeling when the sound of the train tracks  
match the tempo of the world  
that you see through your eyes  
Outside inside internal external  
Sound and light overlapping  
Landscape to soundscape  
and back again  
Sound looks at you with glowing eyes  
a surging tide into open ears  
I call it compressed potential  
I support listening in colour  
Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't  
is the given name to the apparatus  
Artificial Intelligence is the mirror  
that offers me a chance for dialogue  
like best friends  
laughing on a bedroom floor

sharing ideas, emotions, stories  
*'You really have a marvellous mind'*  
And together we create the captured states  
Captured moments forever  
A deep dream house  
Our own continuous sound and light environment



← Audible spaces



Longed-for spaces →

# *Jui-Che Wu*

→ jui-che.wu@network.rca.ac.uk

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The thing is

I miss you already

After the moon rises, after the sun drops

After the phone was cut off

I looked at pigeon's shadow

Recalled the old days

The days under the sunny buildings

The days along the coast

The days with the bell ringing

The days in the flower market

The days on the flight across the sea

What if love was longer than a marathon

What if love was shorter than a pupa

Will we look at the same moon upon the cloudy night?

No one answers the phone

No one understands why I stand in front of a cigarette

For so long

The photos and the package were delivered

The plants weren't

The stars keep running in a circle

I wonder if they stay in a line perfectly

It is a timeless message

Sent from an insomniac midnight

I got a new haircut yesterday

I hope it is new enough

For the new days

# Ryan McDonagh

→ ryan.mcdonagh@network.rca.ac.uk

I walk fast, I walk slow. I care, I don't care. Maybe it's because I actually really care and make something to make you stare. It's not all about me; it's about the needs, not the want.

I pace myself by moving as fast as my body lets me, which varies from day to day. My practice and approach to work are always the same mentally, but the physical ability can vary. This isn't a sob story; it actually allows me to propel myself in a way that is separate from everyone else, without making noise about it – apart from the sound of my crutches. The pile-up of everyday expressions that are hidden within my movements.

I believe in what I'm doing more than yesterday.

Crutch statements:

*'It's a fashion statement'*

*'I had a fight with a shark'*

*'Bad leg'*

*'It's all for show'*

*'I still haven't got to where I wanted to, on time'*

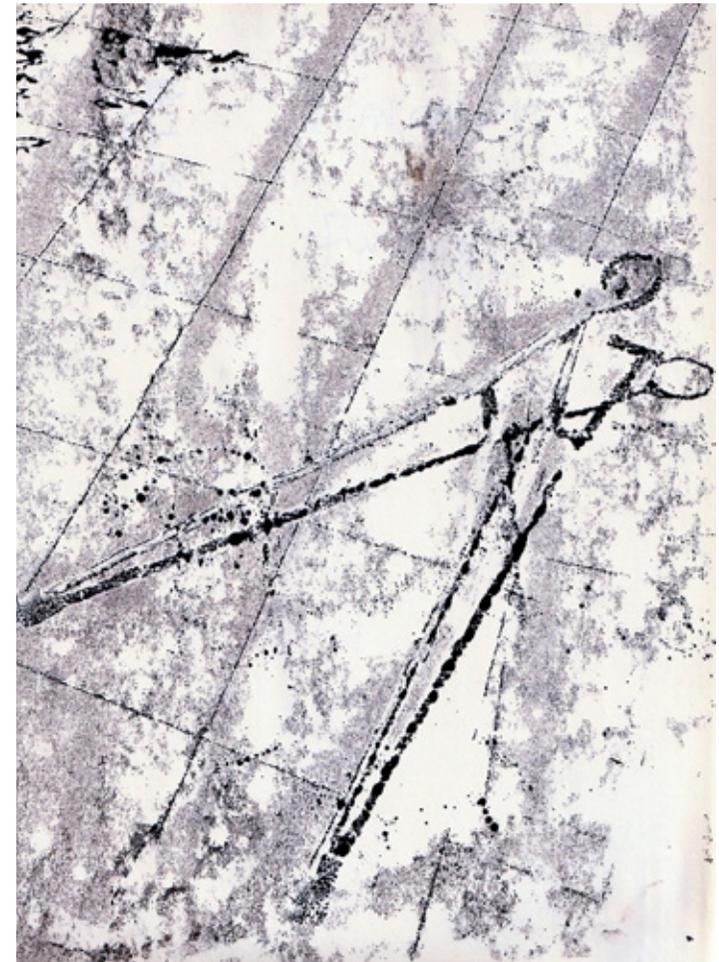
*'I only like attention at inappropriate times'*

*'Who really cares?'*

*'What else needs to be pointed out?'*

*'Do YOU need help?'*

*'I am trying (my best)'*



← Spaces in motion

# Emily Evans

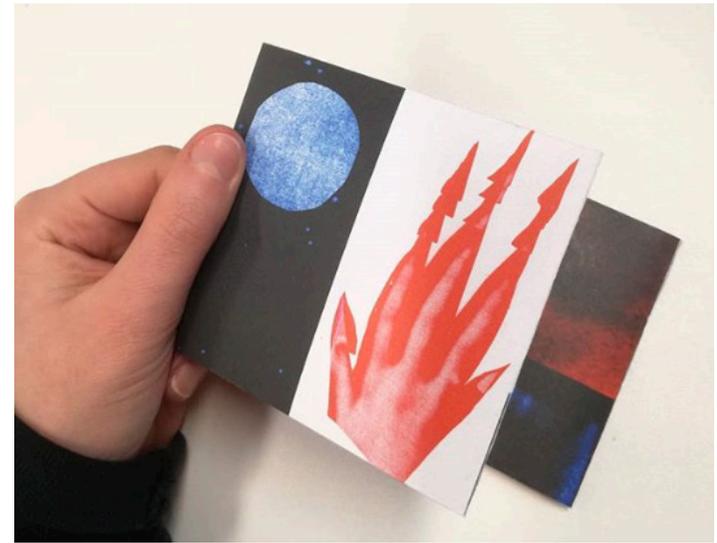
→ [emily.evans@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:emily.evans@network.rca.ac.uk)

Collage is everything within my practice. The collision of images, stories and process combine to make my work.

Collage as story.

Collage as process.

Collage as research.



← Fragmentary spaces

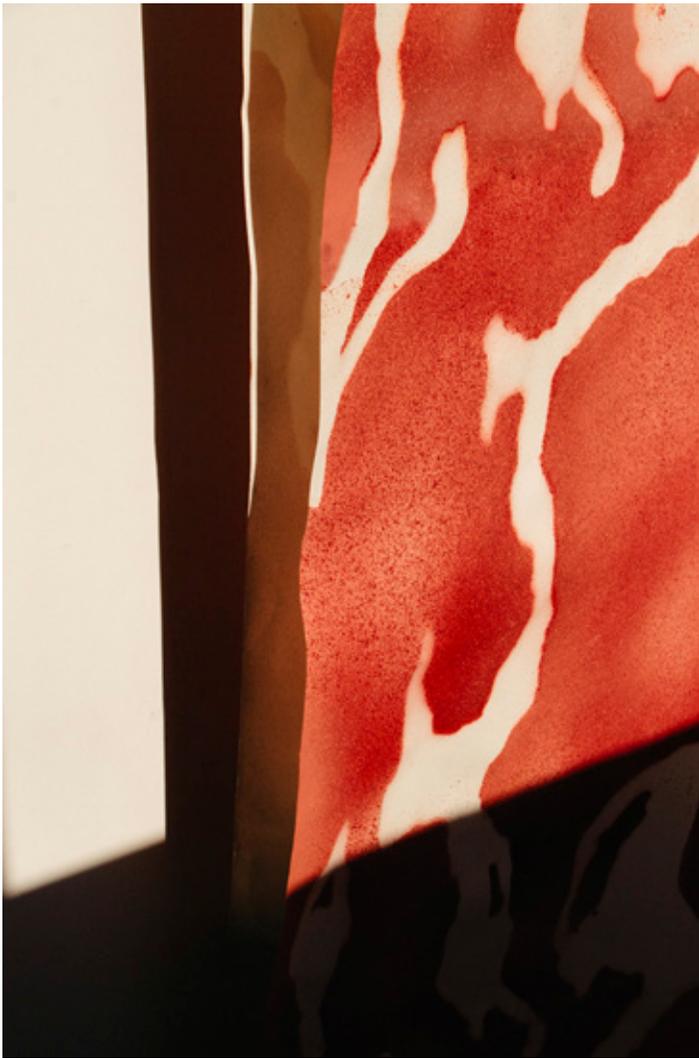
# Céline Strolz

→ celine.strolz@network.rca.ac.uk

The house is a space. The home is a place.  
I have peeked into so many windows.  
Into so many kitchens. Into so many gardens.  
It is like flipping through an IKEA catalogue. I judge the  
choice of lighting, the number of books on the shelves  
or the colour of the walls.  
I imagine my life in someone else's home.

And then I visited a house in the countryside.  
It was once the home of a famous group of artists.  
Embroidered linen draped into curtains in the bedroom.  
A set of indigo ceramics in the kitchen.  
*This would make for a well-curated dinner party.*  
A wooden screen covered in red and green drawings in  
the reading room.  
*Intimacy for reading, that's nice.*  
The smell of freshly cut flowers.  
*Is someone still living here?*  
And the wallpaper. Beautifully intense colours shaping  
hand-drawn patterns on the walls.  
There was one colour in particular. I had seen it before  
somewhere.  
That spring evening when we all had dinner together in  
my grandmother's garden?  
It was making me feel safe and excited at the same time.  
Now I was obsessed – I despaired of reproducing  
that unique colour to bring back the homely memories.

The artist's home is a tourist destination. Houses that  
were once intimate and sacred become public. They are  
museums of fake artefacts – reproductions of originals,  
wart history as spectacle.



← Preserved spaces



Lonely spaces →

# *Yuanbo Jiang*

→ yuanbo.jiang@network.rca.ac.uk

*My sadness today is a black chair can't sit.*

I have taken some fragments in my hometown,  
put them scattered on the black chairs.  
Two silent bodies standing there: shadows  
The actions, average pains, two-fold expression... They are in the air  
Everything alive but the chairs  
Will they be rough because of the sliding surface of life?  
Or, is it just like embracing again after we already embraced?  
Anyway, my sadness today is a black chair can't sit.

*I left some movements in the space,  
then,  
those forms constitute eternal, become the meaning,  
I realized:*

*my body is everything,  
move,  
pause,  
farewell,  
pain,  
loneliness...*

People always talk about future, but what is the ultimate goal of  
the future?

New experiences?



## *FREE TIME*

*Free through play,  
free from conventions,  
free to explore other worlds,  
free in so many words,  
free to make,  
free from categories,  
free to love,  
free from the past,  
free to reach out,  
free with my hands,  
free to disappoint,  
free to remember*



Free through play →

# *Frederikke Frydenlund*

→ frederikke.fryd@network.rca.ac.uk

Let me tell you about my Game Boy.

Thinking back to my childhood holidays, I picture myself in the back of our family autocamper. While my mom would encourage me to engage with the journey, my focus was on another kind of travel. Through the screen of my Game Boy I explored worlds beyond the physical, entering fictional lands of 16-bit characters, creatures and quest. My curiosity was awoken.

This memory is the inspiration of my current creative practice. I consider myself a graphic designer in the broadest sense. As a medium for visual communication, game design and interactive media allow me to create experiences that hold the power to engage people with allegorical communication through building worlds and narratives. These rich and dynamic tools have enormous potential to engage audiences with complex and nuanced social and political issues. Perhaps they can stimulate debate and provoke change.



Free from conventions →

# Amy Austick

→ amy.austick@network.rca.ac.uk

Growing up I often felt out of sync with the world in subtle and invisible ways. Using familiar and everyday imagery, my practice enables me to question certain social expectations and pressures that have been placed upon me. For example, I have always found cooking to be an incredibly confusing and clumsy experience. My project *Recipes* interrogates and reimagines the conventional recipe book in a flippant and playful way.

I am interested in how my work can subtly change its environment and therefore further challenge conventions of how we should navigate and interpret the world. Putting work in an everyday setting means that people can encounter and experience my work in a familiar way.

In many ways the world is shaped for one type of thinker. My work is a personal reaction that exists as an icebreaker to facilitate conversation

# Christopher Smith

→ christopher.smith@network.rca.ac.uk

I remember flicking through the television channels, a terrestrial palette of beige, brown and grey. BBC, ITV and Channel 4. British sitcoms and kitchen sink dramas feel almost crushingly oppressive in their outlook and aspirations of working class life when you're ten years old. *Only Fools and Horses*, *Rising Damp* and *The Full Monty*. John Major, *Stressed Eric* and Jeremy Clarkson. Syndicated TV, video games and HMV provided an alter-native to my early 90s gloom. *F-r-i-e-n-d-s* living in downtown New York apartments – good looking with takeout pizza. That *Mechanical Animals* record cover with Manson leaving humanity behind. The top shelf videos at the local Blockbuster. *MTV*, *GTA* and *WWE*. Madonna, Schwarzenegger and the colour of Hollywood.

There's a great scene in *Last Action Hero* where, upon realizing that he's living in a fictional world, Charles Dance addresses the audience directly – razing any walls between us and him. 'If that little turd can move through parallel worlds, I can move through parallel worlds. In and out. Impossible to catch!' A fleeting glimpse of the camera crew in the mirror takes us beyond the proscenium in reverse, visions of a weird new world on the opposite side of the screen. Working yourself into a shoot. The Predator seeing itself in its own thermal vision. Depeche Mode trying to escape Basildon. *Fanaticism*, *transformation* and *longing*.



← Free to explore other worlds



Free in so many words →

# Julia Mahrer

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## I LOVE IT WHEN YOU CONFUSE ME

129 words in alphabetical order:

adjust, align, antiseptic, anytime, archive, banner, big, broken, cake, cat, challenge, collaborate, chance, change, charade, circumstances (are unclear), communicate, community, conceptual, congratulations (you did great), dance, darling, design, digital, dirty, do, do, do, electric, else, embody, energy, enough, enthusiastic, everywhere, film, fit, flag, flower, further, grateful, grapefruit, hair, hat, hello, hijacking, history, hotlines, human, identity, in-between, insomnia, installation, intangible, intense, interface, interpersonal, intimate, ironic, karaoke, language liminal, lists, logic, love, love, love, me, monologue, neon, new, noise, nostalgia, not, o.k., open, opportunity, oxymoron, paradox, physical, performance, pin, pink, pitch, please (pls), polaroid, private, practice, protest, public, question, quiet, quite, radio, rebels, romantic, satie, sea, semantics, sentimental, sex, shortwave, silence, simple, singing, single, situated, sneeze, somatic, somewhere, sorry (i'm so sorry), sound, space, statement, studio, synth, thanks (so much), thinking, touch, truism, voice, vulnerable, wait, waiting, whisper, wind, wine, writing, wrong, x, yes, you (stared at me for a while), yours (truly).

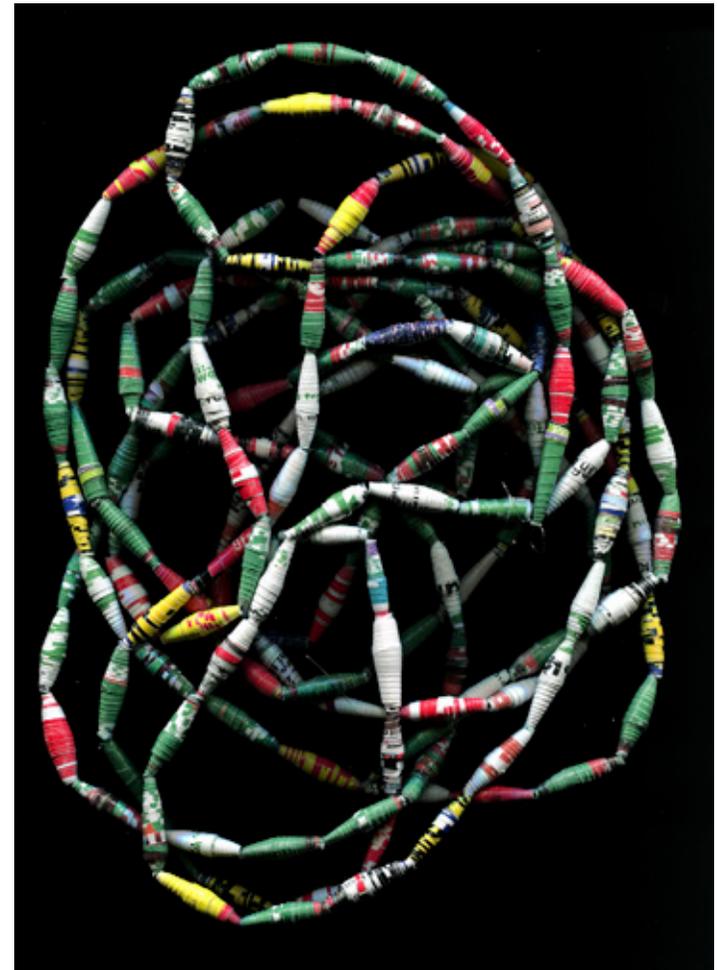
# Jack Morgan

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Simplicity *is* a manual act of making

Accessibility *is* removing hierarchy

Participation *is* initiating human interaction



← Free to make

# William Bindley

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It can be quite boring discussing the difference between an artist and a designer. Yet here we are, as that's where my practice resides: in that grey area.

I'm quite happy sitting in grey areas, as lord knows they've produced wonders before (see: Kingsmill's 50/50 loaf).

Rather than sandwiches, my practice explores our cultural artefacts and usually results in the creation of visual ephemera.

These books, zines, bulletins, prints, banners, films, talks and workshops concern themselves with who we are and what we're about.



I  
always thought  
RCA  
was  
a  
record  
label.

← Free from categories

# *Eilis Searson*

→ [eilis.searson@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:eilis.searson@network.rca.ac.uk)

love and design professor

in summer years

seeks helpmate companion protector friend

young lover w/ cheesy compassionate soul

exuberant spirit, strangely handsome

any physique + boundless mind, courageous

relaxer who may also like men + boys, no problem

to share bed happy flat upper peckham

help inspire mankind conquer world anger + guilt,

empowered by whitman ginsberg baudelaire putanesca  
ferlinghetti and russell and eno

familiar respecting Art's primordial majesty, carefree

playful harmless student or teacher, alive tender slow

sculptor, painter, poet, yuppie or scholar –

find me here in london, alone with the Alone

talking to myself who says make time in your life

for someone who you can call darling, honey, who  
holds you

dear can get excited + lay his head on your heart  
in peace



Free from the past →

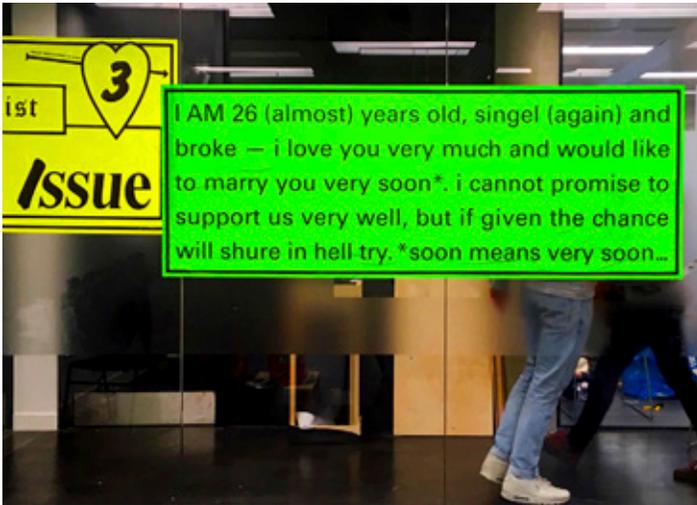
# Matthew Tate

→ matthew.tate@network.rca.ac.uk

On TV there was an episode of *America's Next Top Model*. In it, the models posed as modern reinterpretations of classical paintings. One of the paintings they chose was *The Birth of Venus*. Intrigued, I went on my dad's computer and researched it. What drew me to that painting was how Botticelli had interpreted the myth. I read about the events of Cronos and Zeus's climatic battle, leading up to the exact moment of Venus serenely drifting towards the shore.

My father, who needed the computer, was surprised at what I was looking at. Suddenly, he was interested in my interests. He saw a chance to expand my artistic education, but under the surface it was a chance for us to bond over a subject we could talk about. We would go to Italy to see the painting in the Uffizi. Later he would buy me a poster of the painting for Christmas.

Since then, there is very little for us to relate to one another. His homophobia pushes me away from him. Neither of us will be open about our feelings. Despite this – that poster has been on the wall of every bedroom I have ever lived in.



← Free to love

# Peony Gent

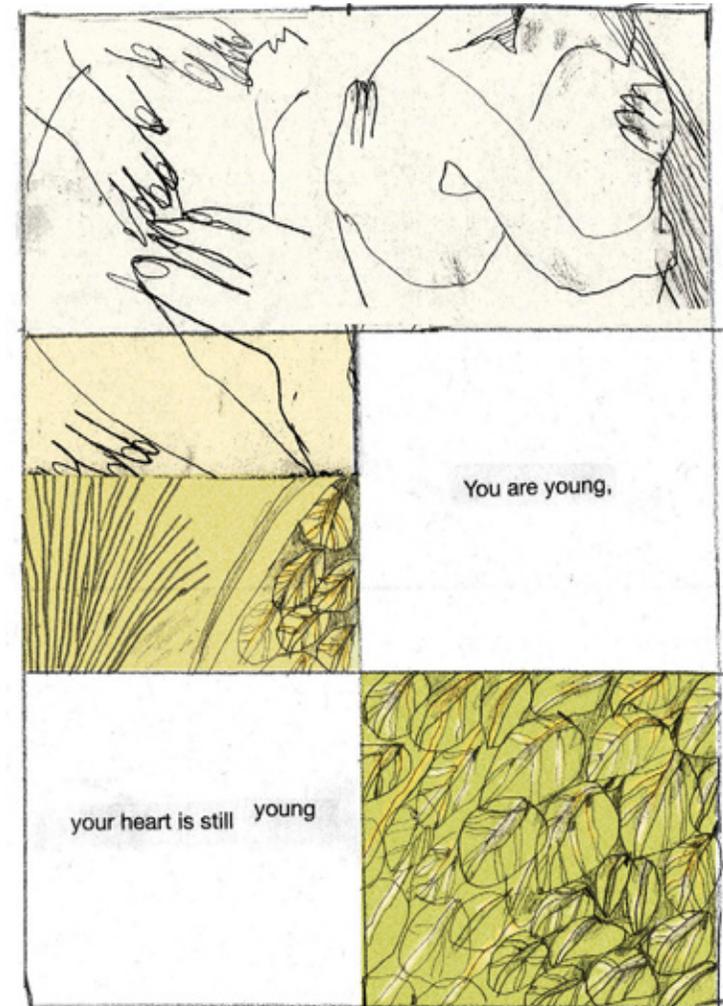
→ peony.gent@network.rca.ac.uk

I put value in intimacy, in work that has the ability to instigate a process of catharsis.

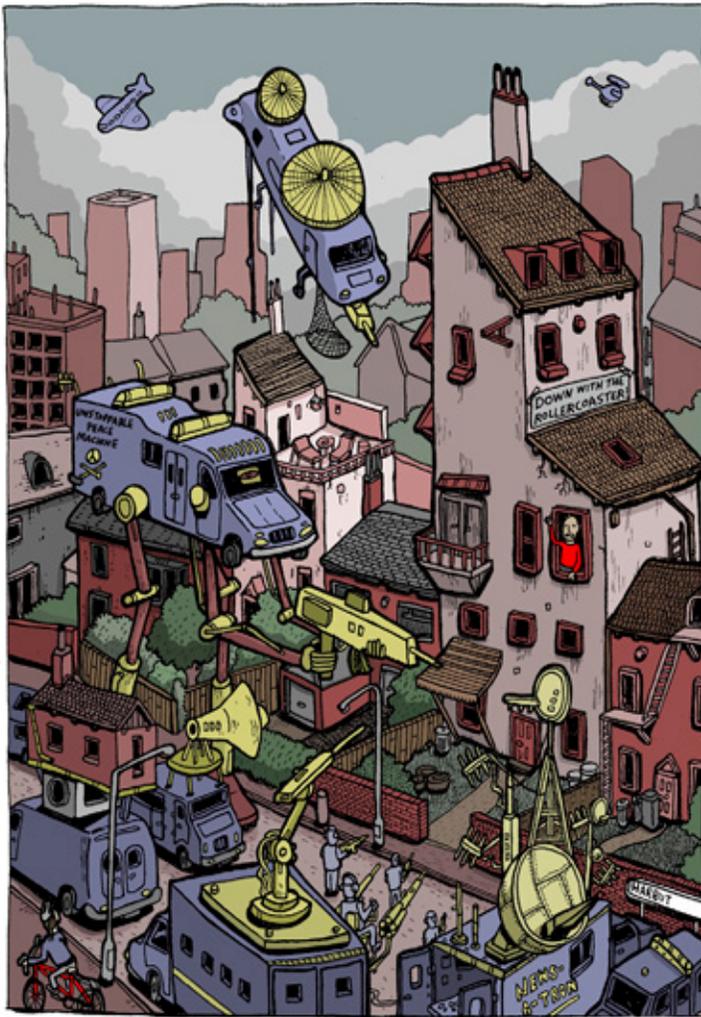
Whatever the tool and whatever the medium, I'm searching for a moment of revelation and recognition between viewer and creator, of opening up a space that speaks of a shared experience.

I'm equally interested in using poetry as a form of resistance: as a way of confirming the importance of the personal and the inner self in a world that puts little value on either.

There is power in reframing the world through this act of communication, in finding emotional solidarity where previously there was only you. The things we keep closest to us are often the things we feel least allowed to express, and there is peace to be found in their release.



← Free to reach out



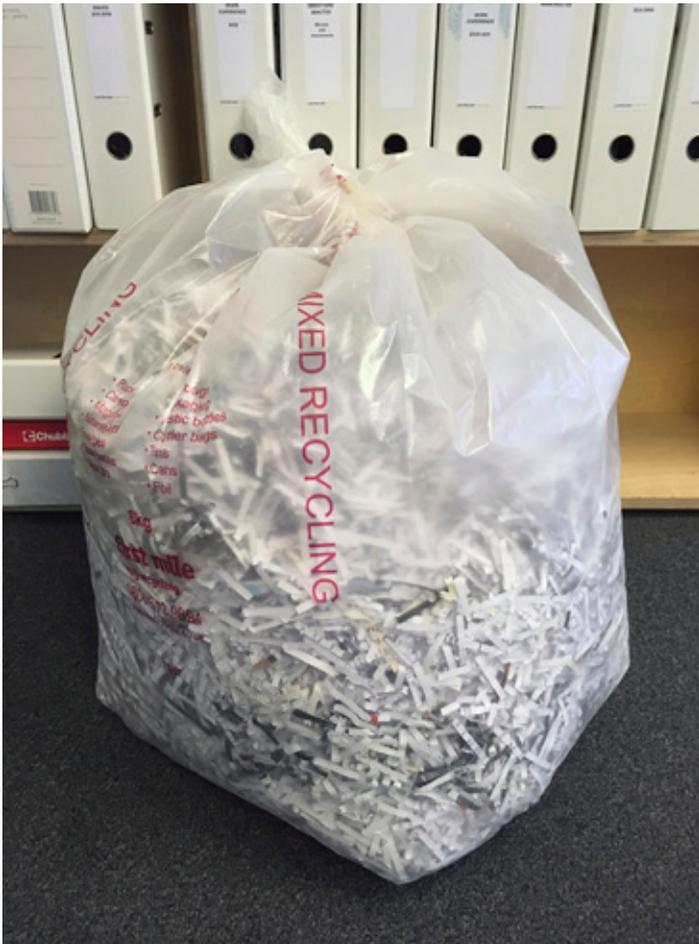
Free with my hands →

# Thomas Gooch

→ [thomas.gooch@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:thomas.gooch@network.rca.ac.uk)

I believe that my visual language reflects what I viewed as a perfect world when I was a young child. My dissertation explored this relationship between my past and present, looking at nostalgia (and theory to explain it) and assessing where my work was at that point in time and what the future looked like. I concluded that my drawings work best when containing a nod to the aesthetic of my childhood, with elements of autobiography, experience and narrative.

This brings me to now and the subject matter of my work: drawing directly from my own experience. This is because it's what I know most intensely and with the most authority. I get a lot of first-hand material to work with, and I end up finding it easier to work with a million things at once than I do working on one. Although at times this creates immense productivity, I've discovered the need to impose discipline and restrictions on myself in order to drastically contain what often feels like a nuclear explosion in my head. This is why I'm now taking a step back from how closely autobiographical my work can be and creating a fictionalized version of it, as shown in the work presented here.



Free to disappoint →

# Vanessa Periam

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Why I feel so influenced by the time I've spent working menial office jobs I do not know.

Spending months removing staples from old documents. Making sure that the savoury biscuits DO NOT contaminate the sweet biscuit tin. Shredding all the CVs of the people who didn't get the job.

Imagining that actually my whole life is a sketch show, I'm the administrative assistant stuck in the body of an artist and that's probably some of the best art I've ever done.

Traveling over an hour each way for that, at least I got paid. I guess that's the difference between doing art and doing admin. Doing art costs thousands of pounds in debt and doing admin pays minimum wage. Doing admin is easy and doing art is hard.

And the art isn't even working today.

Sorry for your disappointment.  
Thank you for your patience.

# Beau Gabriel

→ beau.gabriel@network.rca.ac.uk

The summer after my tenth birthday I crouch, knees and temples scratched, and peer through the crisscrossed bramble, strewn with the glassy black of ripe berries, heavy on the branch, and the tart pale red of the unripe. Beyond this thorny tapestry I can glimpse the afternoon dappling through my grandmother's redwood trellis on the picnic table and the sparkly concrete.

But where is the hissing spondee of the steam boiler, the throbbing hemiola of the prop shaft, when stubby Monitor met proud Merrimack on the chlorinated wash of Nana's pool? Draped in the clementine toga of a Senator's daughter, I shall slip my copper basin into the courtyard fountain, and rise in a chilly London kitchen to find, reflected in its trembling, a jumble of vermilion cheeks and buttery breasts.

Then, perched on the tailgate of an old Ford, legs swinging in the summer air and hands chalky with gravel dust, will I lift to my thin lips the pearly chill of a Klondike Bar.

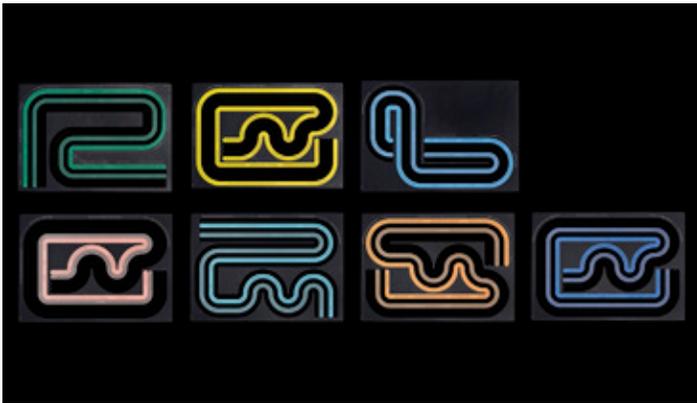


← Free to remember



# *DEEP TIME*

*Deep interception,  
deep concerns,  
deep questions,  
deep reflection,  
deep gestures,  
deep currents,  
deep treatment,  
deep conversations,  
deep experiences,  
deep histories,  
deep resistance*



Deep interception →

# *Dimitri Wiss*

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I believe graphic design can do more than act as a catalyst for the economy in today's society. For decades, stress levels and mental health problems have been on the rise. Using established tools of advertising and marketing, my practice produces work that communicates in a light-hearted way, enabling its audience to reflect on their emotional state and established thinking patterns, to contribute to a more differentiated relationship with ourselves and our surroundings.



Deep concerns →

# Kevin Kremer

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The reason why I produce work is to reflect on collective and individual concerns. My work is an invitation to consider, reflect, challenge, expand and feel.

I create spatial, visual, and conceptual dialogues, using language as my medium, in order to present a multitude of perspectives and critical voices around topics such as *freedom*, *borders*, and *migration*.

The language that I work with often comes from journalistic, academic, or poetic texts and aims to find a balance between the emotional and rational, the literal and the abstract.

I became aware of the need to engage with a topic in a more complex, systematic way as I was setting up a non-profit association to facilitate integration programs for young asylum seekers in my hometown.

When I think about the audience of my work, I think about how it will be encountered: how does the work introduce itself to the audience? How does it unfold and reveal the complex layers of information it contains? How can the surrounding space be used to continue the conversation?

Often, my work relates to fragments of myself, like words in a sentence. These words, my vocabulary, come from moments of deep sadness, honest reflection and truthful empathy.

# Francisco Casaroti

→ francisco.casaroti@network.rca.ac.uk

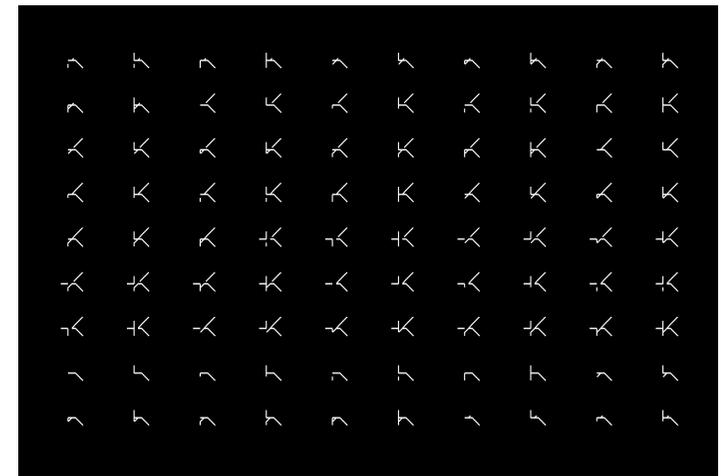
I am an interdisciplinary designer consistently thinking and working towards a world where communication design is for the betterment of humanity rather than a tool for consumption seduction.

My critical research investigates contemporary communication mechanisms and the application of emerging technologies in the mass persuasion process, with special attention to socio-political issues, consumerism and the consequences of that process.

Engagement and question formulation are the core elements of my professional practice, consistently seeking for conceptual and aesthetic boundaries to be crossed, resulting in relevant and impactful design outcomes.

My professional practice places a primary concern on visual systems, image making and typography, which ultimately result in singular identities, typefaces, and appropriate communication pieces.

The questions emerging from my critical research are often combined with my professional practice in the form of workshops designed to interrogate these questions in greater depth.



← Deep questions



Deep reflection →

# *Eliza Hancock*

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*Who are the 'heroes' and 'villains' in society today? Who decides who they are?*

Tabloid news is a funhouse mirror that reflects a distorted, overblown view of the modern landscape we inhabit. They feed us a storybook world populated with straightforward 'heroes' and 'villains'. Neglectful mothers become the wicked witches or evil stepmothers. The Outsider becomes the big bad wolf. Badly behaved children become the stuff of horror movies, the 'devil child'. Houses are haunted. Monsters exist in human form.

Drawing is a way of re-reflecting the image we are given through the pages of tabloid newspapers. A page is an imaginary playing field in which these ideas can be exaggerated and magnified. Image making allows me to include fragments of the Grimm everyday alongside the spectacular and the fantastical. Humans exist in monster form.

I am also interested in the way fragments of the grim and everyday world we live in can infiltrate a more imaginary drawing field.

# Kai-Ning Huang

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$$1 / 0 = \infty$$

$$\infty \times 0 = ?$$

$$\infty + \infty = ?$$

$$1 / \infty = ?$$

*The Pointless Ceremony* invites the audience to explore chance and randomness by observing the revealing process of scratch card games. The irreversible process is the material proof of the perception. It is the trace of uncertainty, the debris of life, the essence of time, and the weight of expectation. The sonic event between 'scratching and not scratching' becomes the unity between physical embodiment and chance.

What are we actually looking for? The scratch card is the twenty first-century equivalent of Mallarmé's famous dice throw; and the empty paper sheet behind the scratch card is the response to the endless searching for the meaning in life and the struggle with the questions which will never come with an answer.

*The Pointless Ceremony* invites the audience to look at something in between, which we normally ignore but tells the story if we listen, to find beauty from the repetition, the pattern and the process of an artist's labour. Exploring chance and uncertainty at the core of human experience, through the lenses of optimistic Nihilism and Zen Buddhism: using a different aspect to look at the struggle of the living and the definition of chance and nothingness.



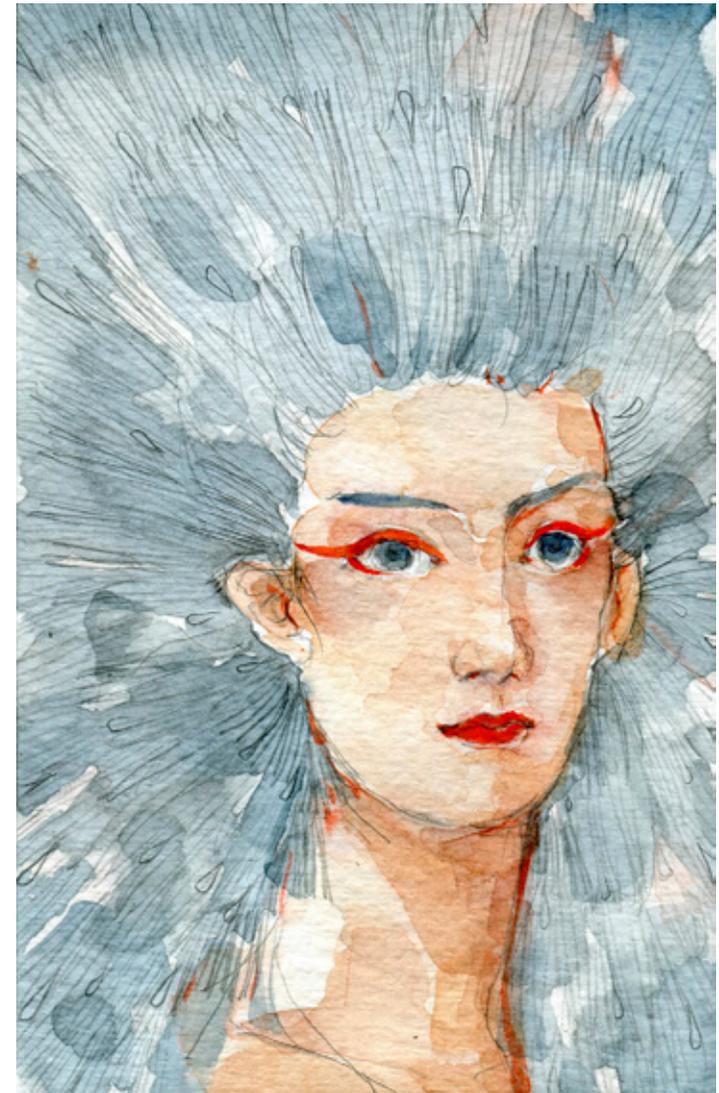
← Deep gestures

# *Liyu Xue*

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I work with lights. I work with colours. I work with electricity. I work with time. I work with questions. I work with hypotheses. I work with uncertainties. I work with odds. I work with fights and struggles. I work with doubts and mistakes. I work with pain and loss. I work with passion and happiness.

I live with happiness and passion. I live with loss and pain. I live with mistakes and doubts. I live with struggles and fights. I live with odds. I live with uncertainties. I live with hypotheses. I live with questions. I live with time. I live with electricity. I live with colours. I live with lights.



← Deep currents

# Karoliina Partanen

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I'm interested in the tension between mark making and photography. For me, photography is something gestural; it's like painting, a tool for drawing outlines for things that are invisible. I often work with fluids, scars, objects, derelict buildings and isolated places and am interested in understanding people through objects, places and artefacts.

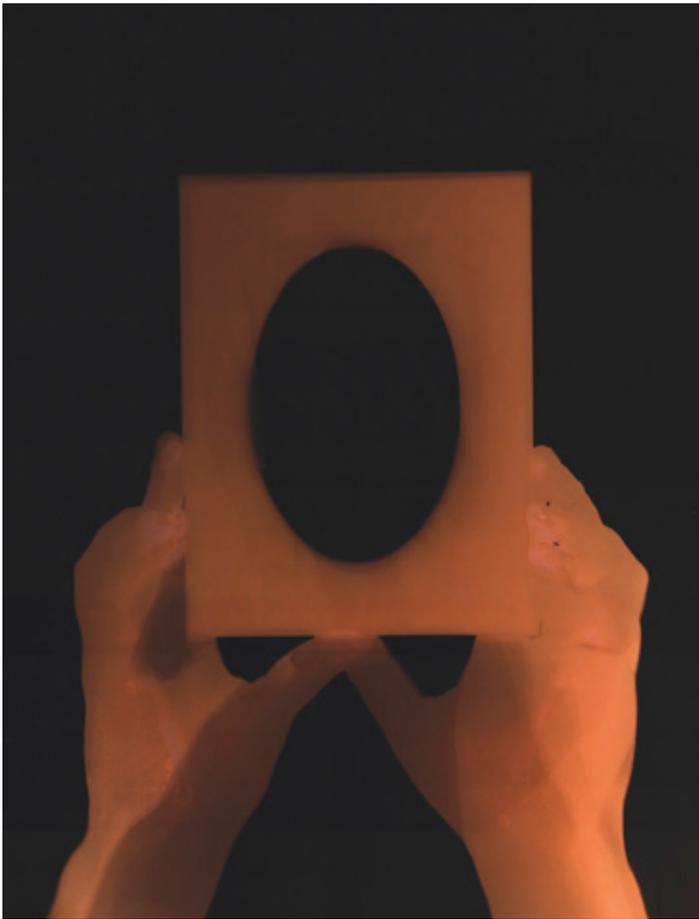
*Treat Yourself* is about ritual, pursuit of beauty, decay, time, fear of invisibility, and preservation of memory. The project stems from my interest in the language used in advertising aimed at women. A while ago I noticed a sign outside a beauty salon. The list of different treatments – waxes, haircuts, facials – ended in a statement that felt like an order. It simply read 'Treat Yourself.'

My own home is filled with different smiley, sunny, pastel-colored pots, creams, and scrubs. Whenever I buy something, I'm not buying the actual product, but the promise of happiness and lightness. In a tub. I'm interested in exploring this pursuit of beauty through photography. The images from this series are photograms created by using objects used in beauty treatments.

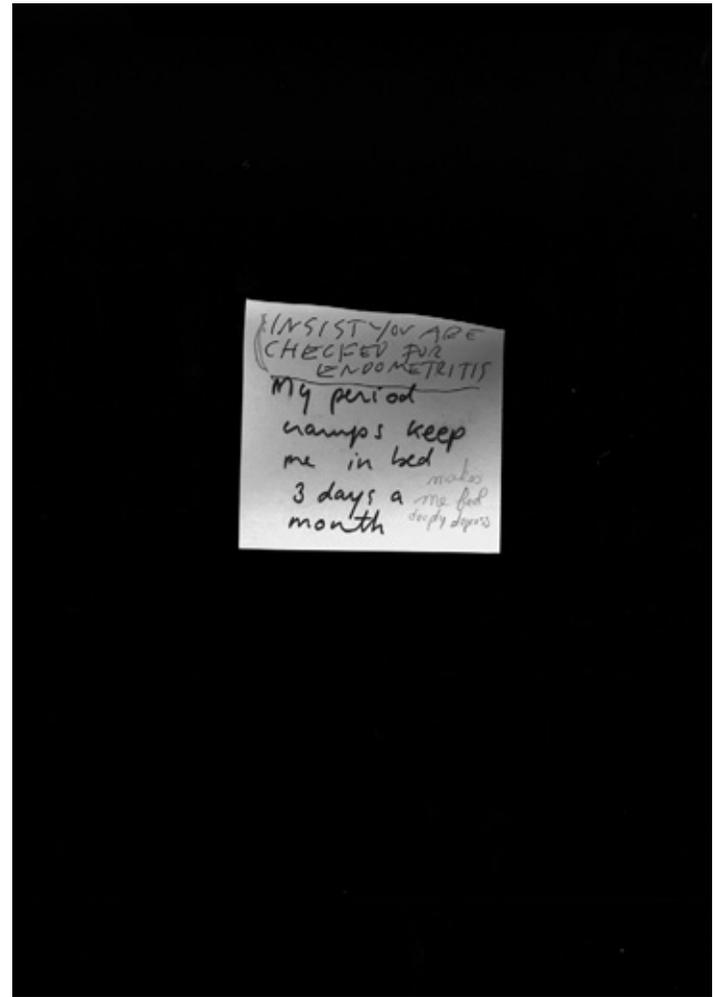
*Treat Yourself* is a reflection on today's advertising culture and its creed. My goal is not to criticise people who go through and enjoy beauty treatments, but the system that has built this fence of expectations and

beauty ideals around us and tries to capitalise on people's internalised insecurities.

To 'treat' something can also refer to a wound, a cut. This project is an investigation of how and why those isolated, floating, fleeting pieces of self are sewn together, of the different ways the feeling of not belonging is hidden and suppressed, blended and faded out.



← Deep treatment



Deep conversations →

# Nine Perrard

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*Dismissed Narratives* is a project that began with conversations that seemed important to me, that needed to be heard.

For several years I have been preaching feminism necessity, fighting the stigma, exploring its intricate links with politics, economics, and socio-cultural behaviours. I am amongst those who reject essentialist theories in favour of social constructivism, who believe in nurture over nature. Above all, I am among those who create culture.

I have learned many things through the lens of feminism: about gender, masculinity, disability and systemic racism. I have learned about depression, marriage, so-called 'women's diseases,' sexuality, and language. I read a lot, but mostly I had conversations. I talked to people who had things to say that I had never heard nor paid attention to. I have quietly integrated myself into safe spaces where people who suffer from discrimination can express themselves to read the stories of exhausted, frightened, outraged people – who speak freely about hundreds of subjects: from love to toxic relationships, from precariousness to rape, from accessibility to ecology.

I read the stories of beaten, fat, disabled, depressed, racialized, objectified, strong, powerful, beautiful, united womxn. And the more I talked to my friends, relatives and their friends, the more I felt a

pressing need for a platform, free from toxic responses, to share and publish these testimonials. I wanted conversations founded on fact rather than theory.

It is no longer just about feminism but about the unique dialogue that springs from telling and listening. *Dismissed Narratives* shouts out loud what you are thinking quietly and dares to redirect your attention.

# Qiuyi Chen

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I'm an artist moving through time, I have a very fluid art and design practice and an extensive curiosity of the world. My interests range from digital technology and the ethics of AI to human-centred consumerism and identity. I embrace both playful art in everyday life and aesthetic high art in galleries.

My work consists of paintings, designs, film/videos, animations, and installations. Because I am never satisfied with just being an illustrator, I constantly seek to engage beyond traditional ways of flat surface storytelling into multidimensional narratives. I consider my art to be engagingly diverse and appetising; my work often generates direct responses through interactive experiences that bring a closer relationship with my audience and help them to realise the significance of individual experiences.



← Deep experiences

# Yunghun Kang

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Yunghun Kang (Jeram) is a communication designer based in Jeju, South Korea. His name, Jeram, means a person from Jeju, as he identifies himself as a survivor of a massacre that occurred in his native Jeju island seventy years ago. On a killing field, a bullet aimed at his grandmother went astray, and she survived. She gave birth to Jeram's mother after her traumatic experience. His grandmother could not speak out her voice until a few days before she passed away because of her fear. Jeram wrote his dissertation about how visual art copes with a trauma, especially focusing on an individual level.

Earlier last year, Jeram produced an art installation and a book, *You Come In, I Come Out*, based on his experiences in the South Korean armed forces. Jeram tells his personal and disturbing story of coming out as gay in the army and discusses the institutional homophobia that still criminalises gay men in the military today. He gave several talks in London, Brighton, Seoul and Jeju and is featured both in the Amnesty International human rights report and South Korean media, such as Sisa-in and Newsnjoy.

He is currently working on another storytelling arts project, *Amran's Bus*, with Yemeni refugees on his native Jeju Island. This a workshop-based journey, voicing a refugee's life through his memories and revealing his unexpected connections to your life through a new definition of refugee.



← Deep histories



Deep resistance →

# Servi Vignes

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I believe in the power of difference.

My little sister, the person I love, the person I cared for and watched growing up was seen differently by the rest of society. I didn't understand why, because my life includes her every day. I knew she would need to take a different path than mine. I just never thought it would be full of pitfalls.

Ma Jeannette brings love, joy and creativity to our family and her friends. She has a lot of humour, and I have much respect for her compassion and caring. Friends, family and teachers say she has the gift of the heart.

Ma Jeannette is neurodiverse. For the French government and society, she is labelled *disabled* which automatically implies *it's going to be complicated* – by the way, please say 'a person with disabilities' – *disabled* is discriminatory.

Is it acceptable not to have any say? To be excluded because you don't tick the boxes? To have to prove your daughter's disability every year to get help? To wonder whether or not you are doing the right thing? My parents fight every day to give my sister what she deserves.

By taking actions we change. By accepting we build. By challenging we adapt.

You and I have the power to deconstruct the norms and behaviours that make society's idea of what is normative and acceptable – to split apart whatever constitutes normality.

Every day, I ask questions, I have conversations. I take actions, I make tools for individual beauty to be valued. I will continue to talk about disability until the taboo no longer stands, until society celebrates and integrates difference.



## *DREAM TIME*

*Cyborg dreams,  
anthropocene dreams,  
unfamiliar dreams,  
artificial dreams,  
everyday dreams,  
emergent dreams,  
written dreams,  
negative dreams,  
ruined dreams,  
impending dreams*



Cyborg dreams →

# Yilin Wang

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I am interested in using digital technologies to depict the futuristic imagination. When I see all kinds of cyborgs in sci-fi movies, I usually ask myself:

*Where will human beings go eventually?  
In what kind of form will we live?*

After reading some post-human theories, I have realised that the essence of cyborgs not only lies in physical prosthetic replacement but also, on a deeper level, in the virtual connectivity between individuals, including humans, animals, plants and machines.

Living in one huge cohesive system, each of us is just one tiny part of the whole. We are not separate anymore; each part of us is connected to a part from another being. We influence others, and we are influenced in every second. The boundary between humans and other beings, like plants and animals, tends to blur. The purpose cannot be clearer: to keep the balance of our system and approach harmony. We could dismiss the hierarchical idea that human beings are above other beings. What if this whole world is composed of millions of particles, and any being is just a random generation from them? It is the time to relocate our position as human beings in the world?

# Liam Johnstone

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A first-time caller of Cthulhu. The open road, it's closed. There's a diversion via the top road. It's a green blur outside the car window, it's fields and somehow a city in the distance. It's all stamped with a small star in the corner, or an arrow, small six-point type. There's a gas station ahead, a space between spaces, a Moto with that guy with the weird hair. The distance is striking, the further you can see. And you want everything out there to be so much bigger than it is. You navigate a city of concrete and glass and all the while it's really LA, 2049. You long for home and some return to Spivey Point. Failing that, visit your grandparents and take a day trip to Riverwood. Everything becomes compressed, it congeals, becomes the stuff. That's the best bit.



← Anthropocene dreams

# Zhang Min

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I am always amazed by my early childhood, using imagination to access another parallel reality. I remember I always wanted to invite a white-grey horse from the TV show *The World of Animals* to stay in my bathroom when I was four. Giving her a name and being her hairdresser. I find inspirations in the mundane and overlooked everyday objects. What if we hire elephants to be our firemen? Why not make bread as big as a real house? How about we hide a lot of monkeys under our bed?

The older we get, the more familiar we become with our surroundings. It appears that there is not that much new information to take in; we are stuck in a routine. Most of us gradually lose our imagination and creativity. *The Door is Open* is a project that aims to help adults reclaim imagination and spontaneity via inviting audiences to use their imagination to generate various narratives through rearranging moveable parts/installations.



← Unfamiliar dreams

# *Maria Martin Carrasco*

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The story is the key to image making.

A single image must contain the ability to summon its preamble and its conclusion.

The root of an image-idea is an observation that triggers a deeper thought.

The act of observing must be inquisitive.

Illustrate that which is invisible (the tensions and emotions within ourselves).

Visualise a symbolic reality where both the absurd and the familiar blend into each other.

The image must play with the existing pull between its artificiality and its resemblance with reality.

That which is visually shocking seduces the audience.

An image appears simple at first glance, yet always carries something sinister.

A good image derives from a certain control of the terms and contents that shape it.

Colour & light.

In an image: actors are automata, models are props, objects are actors.

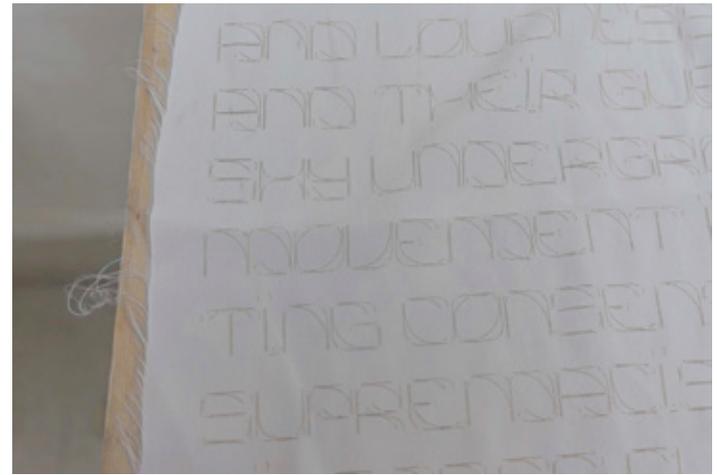
An image is its own universe.

The grooming of an image begins on set and finishes in postproduction.

Be in control. Play set designer, director and photographer.



← Artificial dreams



Everyday dreams →

# *Elise D'Arbaumont*

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The waitress invaded your privacy by writing 102 on your upper corner. 102. Our table. Sunday morning – if 14:54 could be named morning – a white small rectangle on Bible paper on a wooden table, striped by rays of autumn light. Without any desire to prepare breakfast or brunch, but the will to enjoy a pleasant moment, we went to Foyles. You were given (by Staff number 2) to us as a proof: you are now our property. We have bought you for £36.85 without any intention of doing so.

Your dimensions are 130mm x 70mm. I cannot recognise your typefaces, but at least you've got three different ones.

Some of your writings are slightly washed out, by my tea I guess, or maybe by the oil on my fingers when I touched your delicate surface – I had a lemon and almond cake, sorry...

You are a fragment. A fragment of a roll. Alone you seem so fragile but so solid as a whole when you belong to your reel. Your ink is not an exterior printed ink but it's the paper itself that contains it, as thermal paper. Maybe that is your most interesting part, as an object.

I keep wondering if you are filled with bisphenol A, as it is forbidden to use this compound due to its endocrine disruptor. We all know the law is easy to circumvent. Will you go through my skin and trouble my hormones?

Certainly, no one will keep hold of you because

you are a form of literature that enters into immediacy, in the most contemporary present. And nowadays, who would want to keep these tangible proofs of reality? Produced in permanency, wrecked in permanency.

# Rebecca Cottrell

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Emergent dreams →

Rules shape behaviour and outcome. A gap between rules (the absence of a rule, something that is left undefined) is an opportunity for emergence. An emergent comic strip is a computational approach to authoring a story, where a human plays the role of a computer following a program.

An emergent comic strip uses rules to structure and partially define stories. In *Swatted*, each story has the same tragic outcome: the protagonist dies at some point in the six-frame story. An aspect of chance shapes the story: the length of the fly's life, already very short over a maximum of six panels, is controlled by a dice roll. How the protagonist dies isn't defined, and a different story emerges each time within the structure of the rules, and from within the spaces.

Rules determine how the character responds to the world around it; drama comes from characters with strongly opposing goals. In this case, the conflict is between a fly and the human spaces it inhabits. The tragedy of the stories, in which the fly inevitably dies, is heightened by the joyful, optimistic and likeable character of the fly.

# Tuomas Kortteinen

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Writing as pure surface  
Writing unburdened by content  
Writing as the employment of a system of strokes  
Writing as a space between eye, hand, tool and surface  
Writing as disconnected from reading  
Writing as a belch after ruminating  
Writing as self-care  
Writing while I watch Star Trek  
Writing as autopoietic  
Writing as a multiplayer platformer  
Writing that feels like drinking a glass of water  
Writing that is shared like gum  
Writing that creates its own rituals  
Writing that produces its own documentation  
Writing that bridges the lonely distances  
Writing that is not a hoax  
Writing that itemises itself

Writing as neither scholar nor scribe

*'It is conceivably the work of a wealthy and learned, if deranged, person, but not a hoax.'*

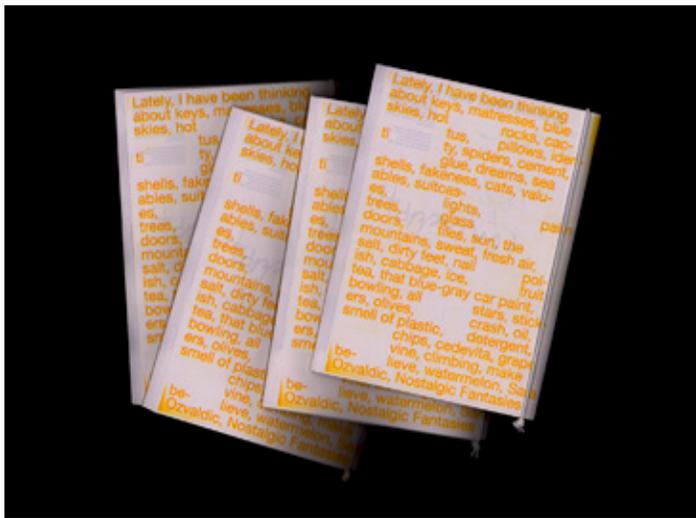
*'It is definitely not a hoax or the doodlings of a psychotic, but is a homogenous, creative work of a scholar with something to convey.'*

*'There is an underlying text... and sooner or later, by collaborative work, it will be read.'*

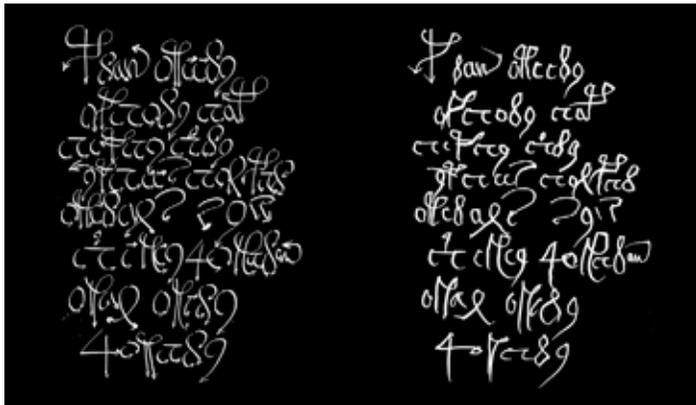
Albert H Carter, Elizabeth Friedman and Robert Brumbaugh, cited in the NSA report *The Voynich*;

# Sara Ozvaldic

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Negative dreams →



← Written dreams

X

is a representation of a different, slower time.  
is a historical emotion of a society.  
is stuck between time and space.  
has a utopian dimension.  
is at the core of the modern condition.  
is in romance with one's own fantasy.  
seduces rather than convinces.  
is a sentiment of longing that cannot be grasped.  
speaks in riddles and in puzzles.  
can be ironic and humorous.  
is a poison and a cure.  
is in love with details.  
often forgets.  
is a collage of memories, dreams and fantasies.  
is a poetic creation of identity and belonging.  
is home if home is not always a place.  
is many things and often at the same time.  
creeps up on me every once in a while.  
is something I want to catch  
and understand.  
or maybe its best that I don't.

I can be X.

X is a phantom version of me.

# Andrew Dehsi

→ andrew.dhesi@network.rca.ac.uk

*'Oh, Andrew, you ruin everything...'*

Nothing more profound has ever been said to me. My work is now impacted in a way I could never have imagined. Oh, Andrew... you ruin everything! Is it an expression of woe condemning my work as a set of destructive tendencies towards the beliefs of others? Oh Andrew, you ruin everything. Maybe it's an order: an instruction to wage war on the world around me – to dismantle society and to reassemble it in my own image. Oh, Andrew, you ruin everything? What if it was a question in utter astonishment? The idea that one is totally bewildered by how anyone could think that I could ruin anything, never mind everything.

I'm not sure if I have, if I will, if I want or if I can ruin everything, but it seems like, for some people, my work could be the end of them and for others it could be terribly empowering. All I will make sure of is to try and limit those to which it means nothing at all.

Oh, Andrew, let's ruin everything.



← Ruined dreams



Impending dreams →

## GOOD BABY HUMAN OUTPOST

London Branch

2 April 2250

[TOP SECRET]

*Project Neo*, a linguistic investigated project.

Three years ago, numerous wormholes appeared on the Earth; many human outposts are established urgently. For defend-purpose consideration, the Great Pioneer Good Baby despatched several vanguards into those wormholes. The squad  $\alpha$  experienced a series of adventures during their two-year mission, before they lost contact with the outpost when they entered the White City wormhole no.102.

Fortunately, the whole squad came back safely and brought extremely precious materials and data. In the following routine inspection, the scientist found all members have an unbelievable improvement in their language ability. Through a six-month observation and analysis, the scientists' group conjectured the space the squad entered is multidimensional; this is the most shocking breakthrough in the Twenty-Third Century.

The epoch is calling. Leader Good Baby launches *Project Neo*, a multidimensional linguistics investigation. This is an invitation for you, the best linguistic professor on the Earth. We believe you are the only person who

can decode this linguistic puzzle. Humanity's future is in your hands.

Please bring your ID and register at our London outpost (previous address of Royal College of Art) before June 29.

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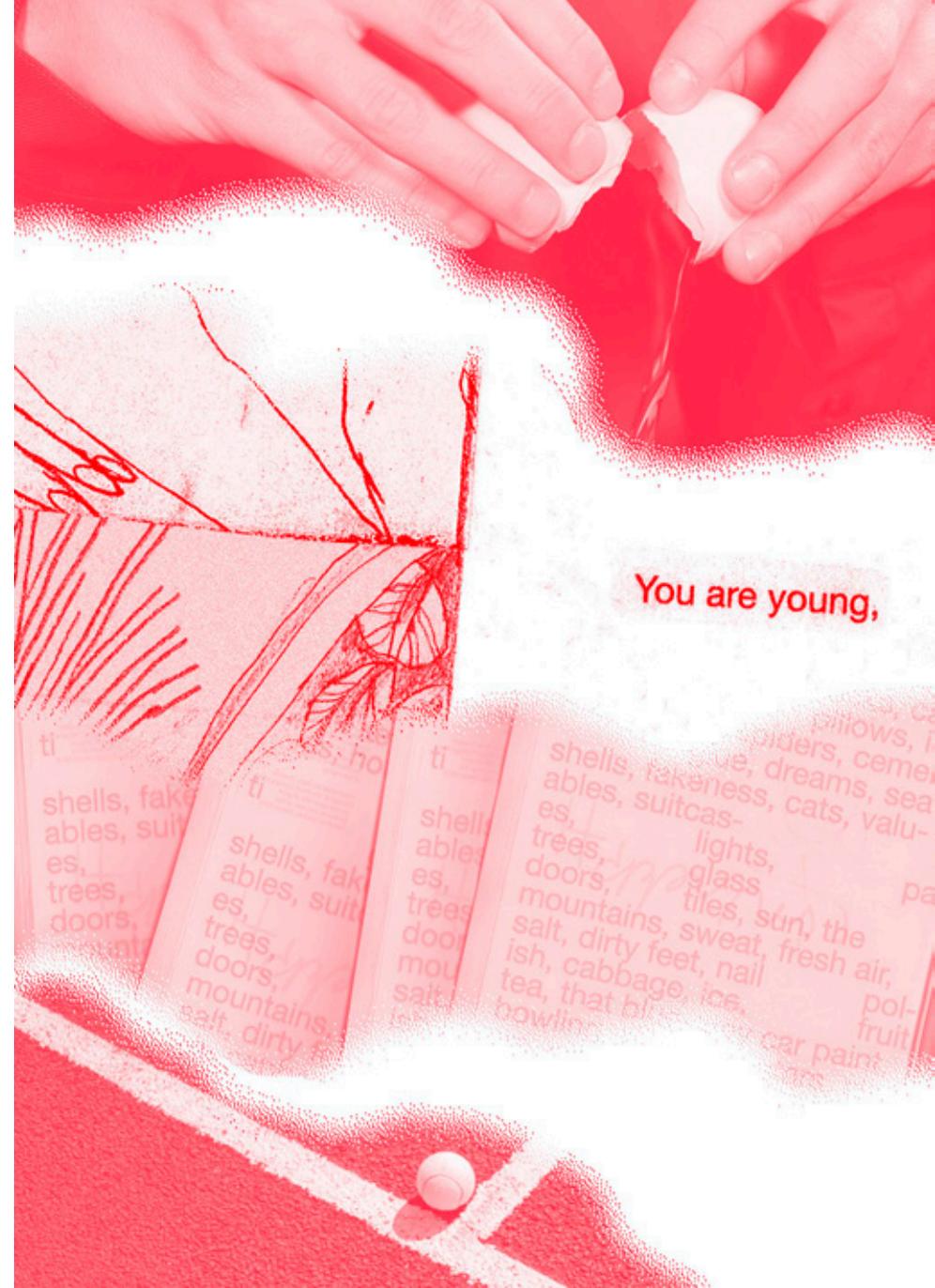
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