

SOJOURN

01



GUM

OCTOBER 2020





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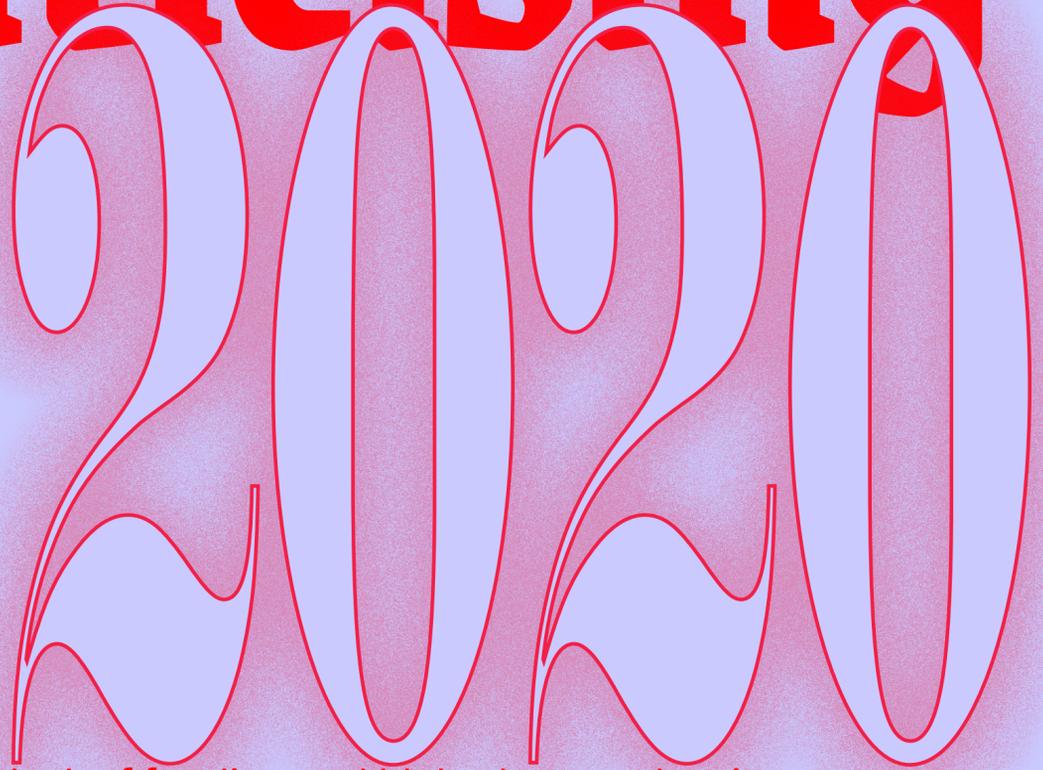


'Self-Portrait with a Harp', by Rose Adélaïde, 1791

via The Met collection archive (CC0 1.0)

(edit by Raquel Fonseca)

romanticising



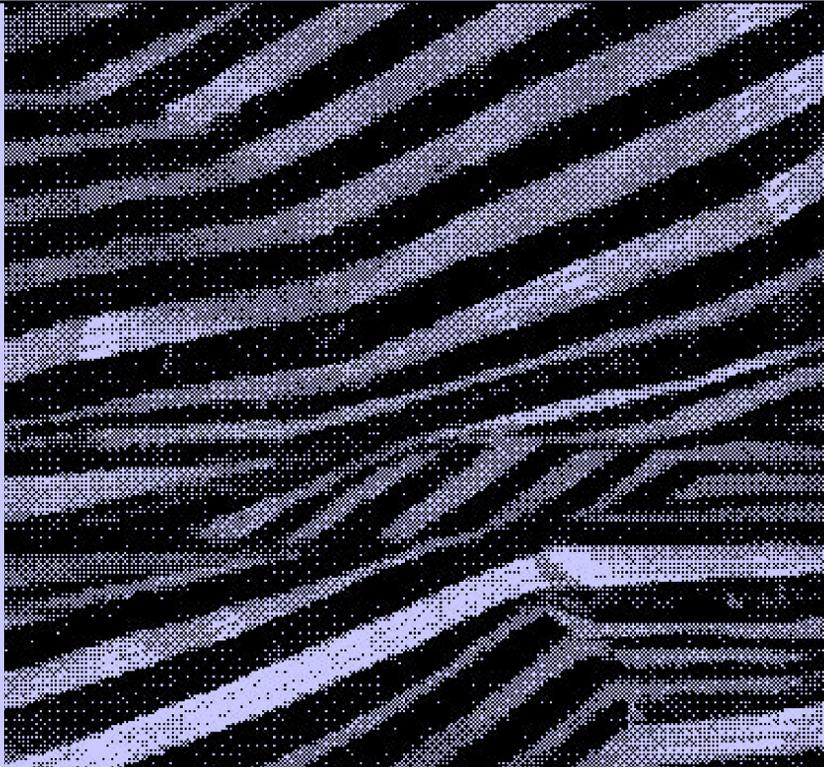
■ There can be comfort in the practice of romanticising: the desire to believe in the best version of our lives. But this process can leave us with an airbrushed memory, disjointed from reality. Despite the chaos of 2020 there has been an inclination towards romanticisation - whether encouraged by the government for their own political gain; performed, as ever, on social media; or, in each of our own romanticised retrospective reflections on lockdown. With such a turbulent year, are these acts of romanticism a damaging form of escapism as we deny objective reality? Or are they a valuable coping strategy that allows us to still see the beauty in life?

At the beginning of the pandemic, much of the Government's statements embraced war rhetoric: positioning themselves as the courageous victors over the enemy of the virus. Here they sought to romanticise reality by calling upon war time nostalgia and nationalistic pride in an unashamed attempt to unify the population into sympathetic deference and to protect themselves from public criticism. In this vein, NHS and other key workers were depicted as heroes to be celebrated with optimistic rainbows and weekly cheers. As many NHS workers pointed out, their jobs had been made a greater challenge by the government's

lack of funding and blatant errors, leaving PPE unavailable. This approach was an attempt to increase nationalistic pride and therefore romanticise the situation into one that could be overcome by unity, neighbourliness and high spirits. While optimism has its merits, it cannot be a substitute for effective governance, or policies that extend past mere symbolic support for our 'heroes'. Romanticisation, used in this way, can be toxic. The public sought desperately for comfort, for moments of lightness and positivity, and the government played into this by offering up a romanticised narrative of the pandemic that distracted from their shortcomings.

The further we move from the intensity of that initial lockdown, from those first moments of complete anxiety and disorientation, the easier it becomes to romanticise the period. One common view I've heard, and share, is that once we adjusted to life in a global pandemic, many of us began to enjoy aspects of lockdown, that, upon reflection, we now miss. Now that our lives have opened up, with a return to work, to socialising, to studying, there seems a nostalgia for the period of lockdown when, without these obligations, we rushed to take advantage of our government mandated exercise allowance and sought out soothing and

BY DYANI SHEPPARD (SHE/HER)



time filling activities like baking, reading, crafting. Anything we collectively brand as 'wholesome', essentially. Does this romanticised recollection speak more to what we were lacking in everyday pre-global pandemic life? Perhaps, collectively, we are happier with a regular routine, healthy habits, less work or academic stress, and relaxing activities that invite a bit of creativity into our days. These simple and healthy elements were romanticised even early on, revealing that they were not a part of most people's lives previously. Can this romanticisation be used to motivate change - be it in our individual lives or in regard to wider societal changes? Can then our romanticisation of lockdown act like a utopian vision? As we reflect and see the value in certain elements, perhaps we will strive to bring them forward into our 'normality'.

However, romanticisation isn't necessarily confined to our retrospective; it can also work in the present, as was shown in lockdown, when it became a coping method. Many seemed to romanticise aspects of the situation as they returned to nature and found a renewed appreciation for their local spaces, and sought to find beauty in the daily stillness we found ourselves in. In this way, this period has arguably proven that we need a degree of romanticism

to be at peace with the ugly, painful, and unjust aspects of life: to allow escapism within the confines of our real lives. Maybe this increased trend of romanticism was a by-product of our constant reminding that this was an 'unprecedented' time - this sense of living through the exceptional made us feel like our individual feelings and the recording of these feelings became more important. We were no longer cruising through normality but suddenly in an intense, unique situation which brought our interiorities under microscopic examination.

Perhaps this is the reason for the popularity of the TikTok main character trend in May, which encouraged viewers to see themselves as the main character in their own lives: to romanticise the self in order to fully embrace our existence. While partly playful, the concept still glamorizes the individual and works on the assumption that our lives are uniquely valuable. Society encourages us to take this approach and believe ourselves to be exceptional with unique behaviours and thoughts. The unquestioned acceptance of individualism in our society leads us to romanticise ourselves, conflating our value with uniqueness. However, the pandemic disproved this use of romanticism as it evoked a blanket of similar responses: we all panicked, exercised, baked, longed for



normality, and experienced similar waves of emotion. This period revealed that we may be more alike than we tend to believe, and while some may find comfort in our assumed uniqueness, I find comfort in the contrary. Considering our complex interiorities as something relatable and common helps alleviate isolation. It is empowering to be able to share a deep part of yourself with a mass of strangers who on the surface you may not feel remotely connected to. It was a humbling and humanising realisation during an otherwise strange and isolated period.

There is a tempting glamour in over-romanticising the self as an individual which can lead us to become detached from one another, forgetting the fundamental similarities that connect us. Similarly, when we are sold romanticism by external forces it is often a toxic attempt to distract us from a reality that we should be aware of. But we need romanticism. We need it to raise our aspirations, to separate ourselves just enough from reality so that we are reminded that life is not stagnant but full of possibility. It reminds us that there is beauty found even in the smallest moments of our everyday, that there is something to always be grateful for.

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strangers

a graphic education

by **Julia Hegele**

columnist (she/her)

Justice is waiting for you on Instagram, wrapped in the warm-toned ribbon of an unseen story, perched at the top of your feed. No longer locked in the exclusive channels of books or lived experiences, one can now familiarize themselves with hundreds of complex sociological topics with just a few clicks.

In the wake of the eruption of injustices across the globe: from the tipping point of centuries of racial violence in the US, to the persecution of the Uyghur Muslims in China, to the breaking of years of capitalist hegemony over our society, it has never been a better time to learn. Information is everywhere on every subject. A glance at your friend's recent story will likely treat you to a bubblegum pink graphic on sex workers rights in between aesthetic photos of her new plants, a few swipes and you'll be up to date on the flaws of American democracy, then quickly treated

to a crash course on eco-friendly period provisions before a boomerang of some pints.

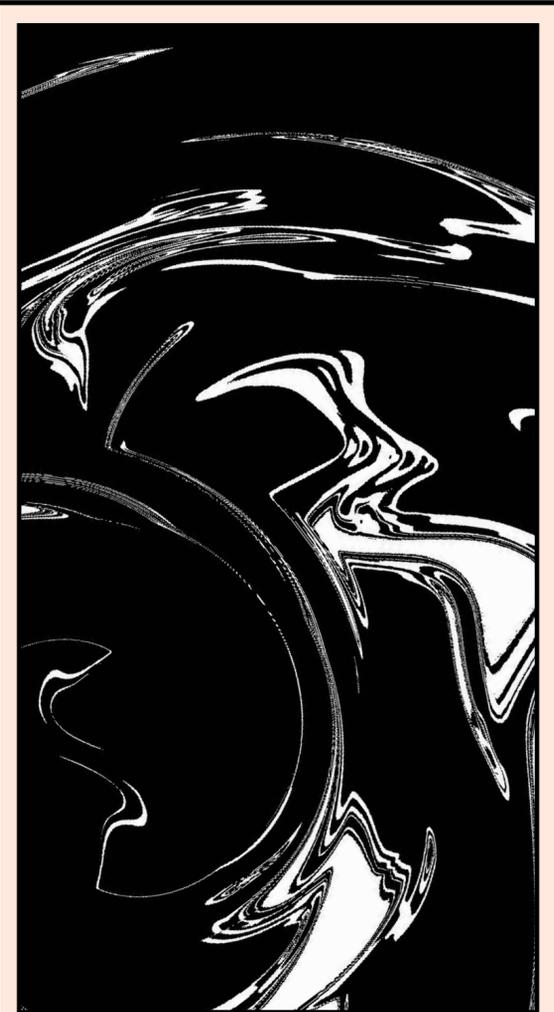
This deeply saturated approach to dissemination has, arguably, ignited a fervor in young people all across the globe to become engaged in their respective politics. Well at least that's what it looks like. There is no doubt that some, if not all, of these graphics are read through in their entirety, vetted for their sources, and diffused into the reader's everyday life ... how else could we trust the well-intended deluge of information hitting us from all sides? And therein lies the flaw to what could be a beautiful step towards a communal consciousness. The sheer volume of posts and the intentionally fleeting nature of a story removes the impact from these well intentioned shares, creating a pastel wormhole of buzzwords and recommendations that we can let



play while we flick absentmindedly between apps. There may be a few posts that spark an idea or prompt a quick signature, but for the most part the saturation of information is too great to provide a consistent through-line: just when you think you understand the concept of gaslighting your attention is shifted to an overview of prison abolition. Neither concept is given the consideration they deserve. Eventually both are drowned out and lost in another wave of tastefully illustrated concepts with a tap of a finger.

No intention is purer than the desire to enlighten your friends. Vines of recommendations and condensed theories have hung hazily in the forefront of everyone's Instagram since mid June, aching with the fruit of knowledge, just waiting to be plucked. But sharing a list of books is not the same as reading them. There is no way one can familiarize themselves with the oeuvre of bell hooks with a few slides, yet we share her titles as if they are worn paper copies, imploring our followers to enlighten themselves past the point of ignorance that we (not 15 seconds ago) were also clinging to. The pretense of dispersing information is no longer an act of education, but **performance**. Sharing educational graphics is a social statement, a comfortable alternative to taking to the streets, to lobbying your elected officials, to speaking in person without aesthetic bullet points to bolster your opinions. Before you share, ask yourself: are you actively participating in the dismantlement of systems of oppression, or has the comfort of a screen become too necessary a part of your radicalization?

Instead of allowing ourselves time and energy to genuinely learn, unpack our privilege, and combat our internal biases in real time, we glance at a fleeting concept, bookmark it, and continue scrolling.





Media reproduction is in no way the most effective form of education. In fact, the form itself reduces room for activists to grow or evolve their ideas, encouraging aspiring leaders of social movements to claim these doctored diatribes as gospel rather than to open a discussion for a mutual exchange of information. The intention of these graphics is to catalyze those new to conversations of social justice, not necessarily to simply inform. They are prompts to further, more complex investigation. When we share them and assume we've paid our dues as allies we miss the whole point of this pre-packaged initiative. These are but appetizers to the veritable feast of radical ideology that we as potential activists are starving for.

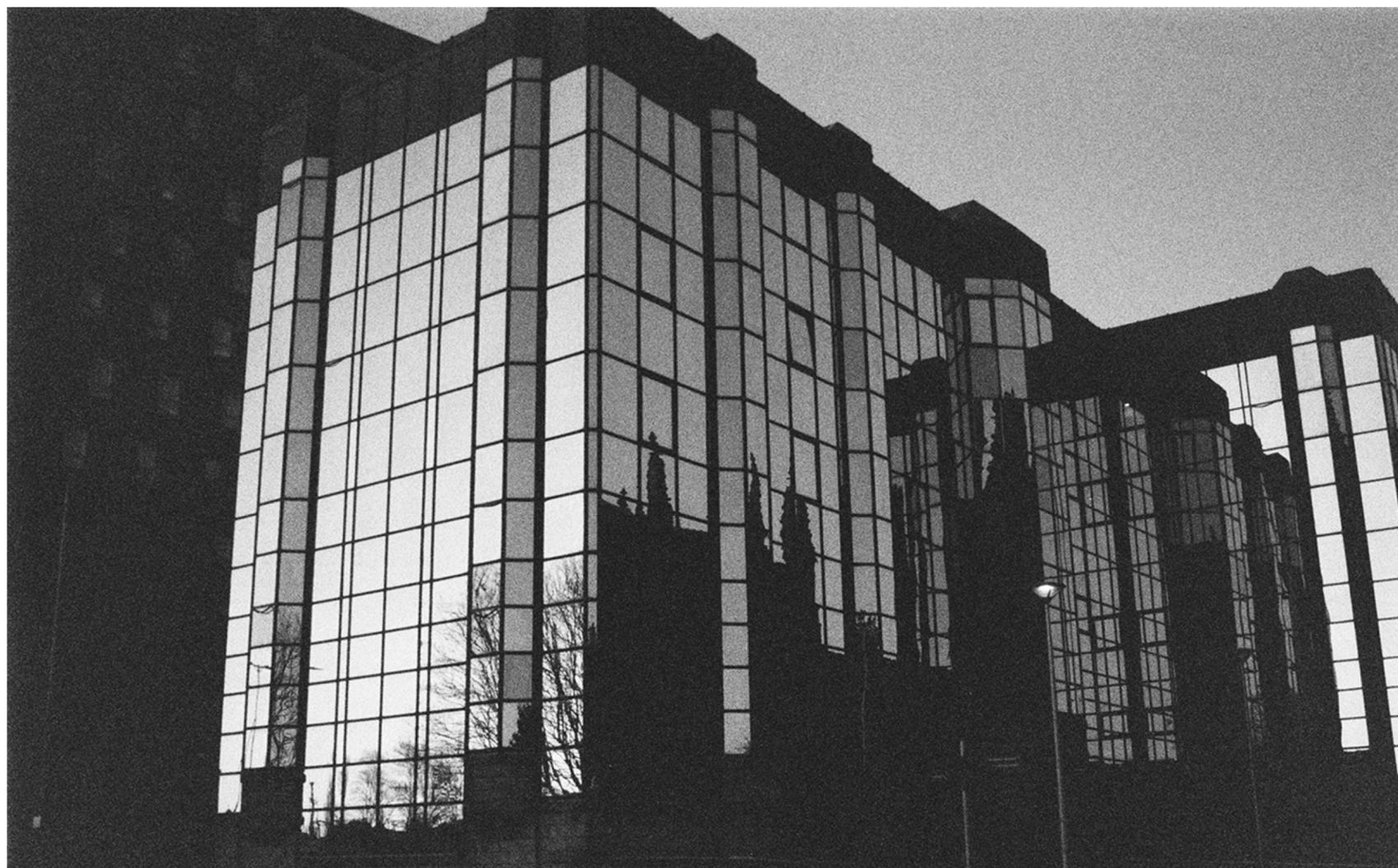
The reality is that these concepts are massive and difficult to process and,

whether we accept it or not, they will take substantial time to integrate into our everyday lives. The first step to genuine change is to recognize that we cannot unlearn centuries of prejudice in thirty seconds. Until we treat these graphics with respect and nuance, until we can set time aside to learn and better ourselves offline, and until we understand that true justice cannot be found in an idle fifteen minutes waiting for a train, but in a lifetime of practice, only then can we begin to swipe, (and live), with integrity.

between apps

photography by Julia Dunn (she/they)

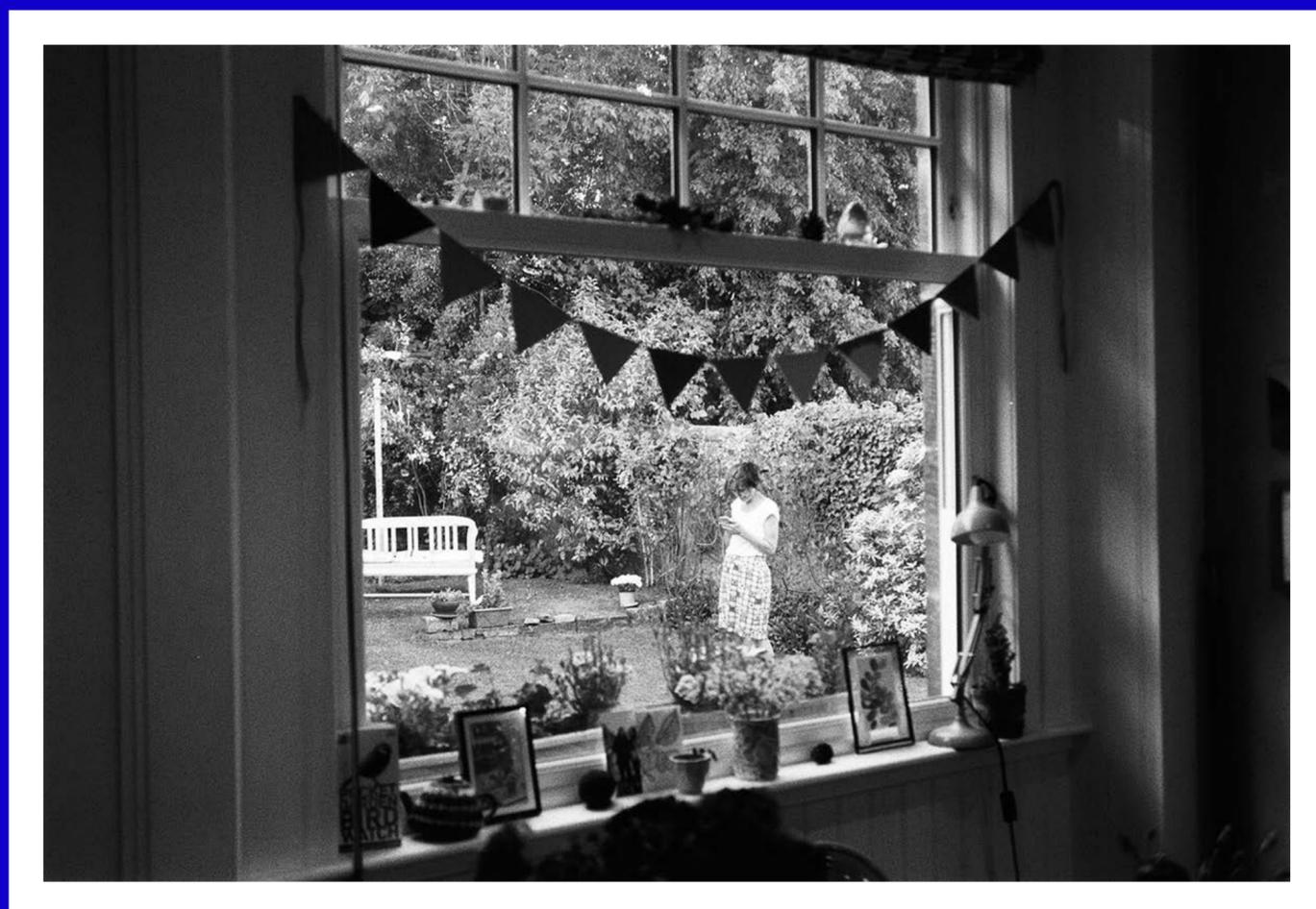
VIEWHOLES

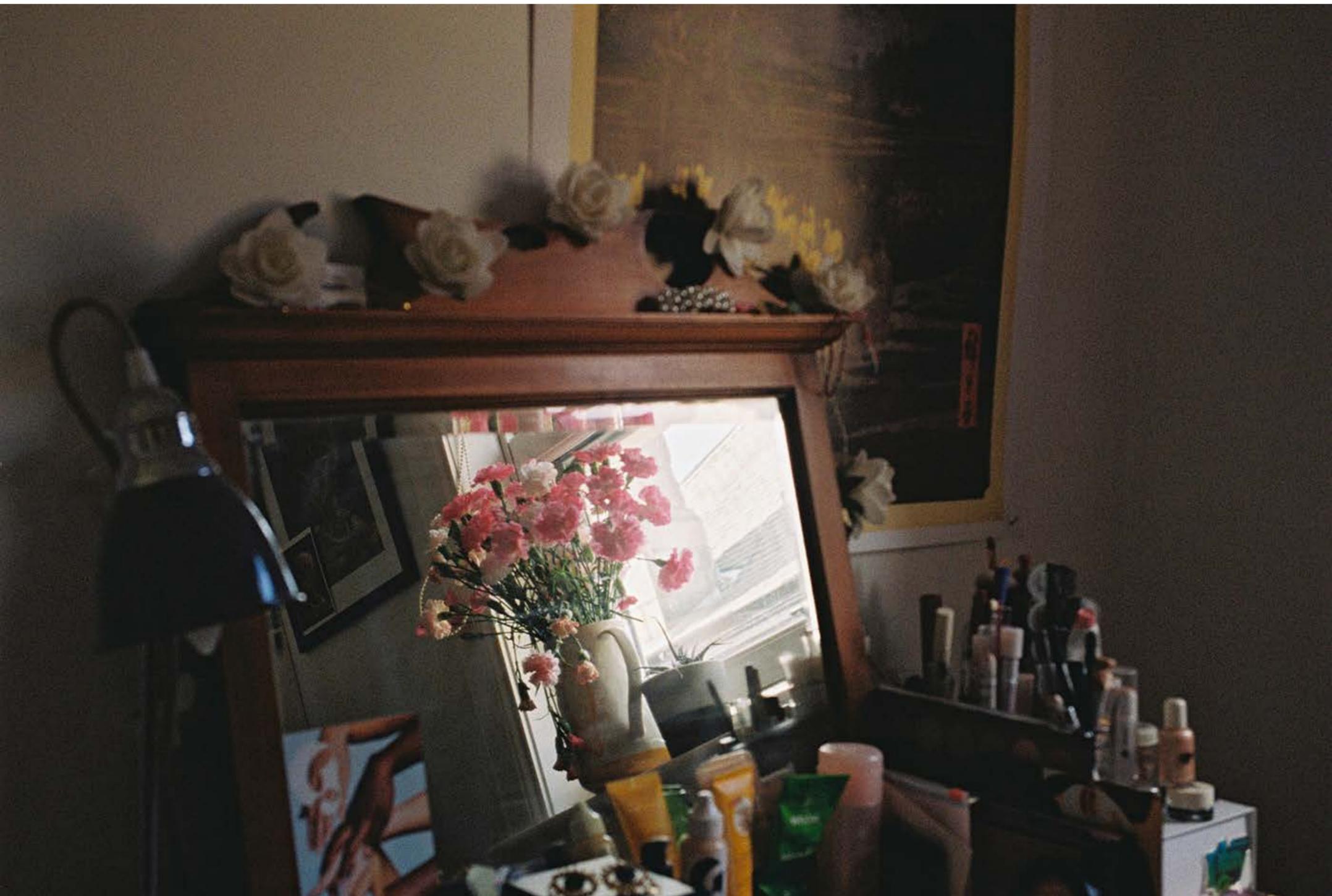


ARTIST STATEMENT *WHEN MAKING PHOTOGRAPHS I AM INTERESTED IN CAPTURING THINGS, MOMENTS AND PEOPLE, THAT BLEND IN WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS AND OFTEN EASILY UNSEEN. TAKING THE TIME TO OBSERVE THEM ALLOWS ME TO SEE THE WORLD FROM A SLIGHTLY ALTERED PERSPECTIVE AND FEEL MORE AWARE OF MY ENVIRONMENT.*



WORKING WITH FILM REMINDS ME TO BE DELIBERATE WHEN TAKING PHOTOS AND CAPTURING FEELINGS. EVERYTHING ABOUT FILM PHOTOGRAPHY REQUIRES *INTENTION* — PURCHASING, LOADING, SHOOTING, AND DEVELOPING. I THINK THIS SENSE OF INTENTION IS OFTEN PRESENT IN THE PHOTOGRAPH PRODUCED, WHICH IS PRETTY COOL.







Is it a bird? is it a plane?
**NO, IT'S THE MALE
 GAZE ONCE AGAIN**

■ This time, the focus is on e-girls: an online clan distinguished by their anime-inspired, bubblegum pink, choker-wearing aesthetic. Like its ancestral subcultures, e-girl culture bases itself around a collective look, which in the 21st century looks like a marriage of chunky Doc Martens and blusher on the nose. The term (often used derogatorily) can be stretched to refer to any womxn with a strong online following, but Tiktok has paved the way for the newest branch of baby-faced e-girls to move into the mainstream.

Just like everything on the internet, e-girls became politicised as soon as they surfaced – not just for their counterculture foundation, but for the sense of community they've created for young womxn. As I watch a video of e-girls peacefully drowning out the sound of a homophobic preacher on Buchanan Street, I wonder how the term ever really came to connote negativity. Then a quick search on Google tells me everything I need to know: it was created by men. Thinking about the disparity between e-girls and the type

of people who slander them makes their bubblegum sweetness quickly turn sour. As the popularity of the term grows, the e-girl ideal has morphed into a childlike aesthetic that arguably glamorises perversion. When we consider the implications of this, can we really brush over our uneasiness with a bit of blusher?

The concept of an e-girl becomes problematic when we delve further into understanding the baby-face masquerade. E-girls are synonymous with the expression 'I'm baby' – the way they typically look, act, and speak exaggerates youthful characteristics. As the popularity of the term grows, so does the fetishization of childlike attributes. I couldn't help but wince when I drew the comparison between the perverted beauty standards for womxn in porn, and the e-girl persona: helpless, hairless, and childlike. As Vox discusses, the e-girl identity echoes characteristics of the Daddy Dom Little Girl (DDLG) kink – where the womxn plays the role of a dependent young girl whilst the other is the caregiver. Between consenting adults, engaging

by CHARLOTTE
 MACCHI WATTS
 (she/her)



doing a bite-sized dance routine for millions of viewers is anything but scary when you're armed with a shield of pastel hair and heavy eyeliner



ART BY ELLA EDWARDS — EDITORIAL ARTIST

(SHE / HER)

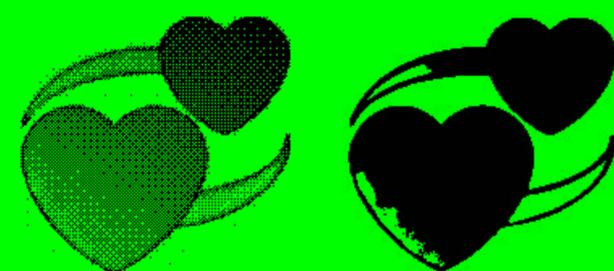
in these sorts of roleplays is perfectly acceptable, but as these once-radical kinks are absorbed into the mainstream, users of all ages are exposed to this content. When underage creators then wear harnesses typical of BDSM and have masses of engagement, it feeds into the normalisation of sexualising minors. In an ideal world, dressing up in costume would be purely for enjoyment, but the internet finds a way to pervert absolutely anything – especially if it’s a womxn. An online phenomenon like this one exists to be corrupted.

It is important to reiterate that a womxn’s body is hers to own and express, and that enjoying kinks, costumes, or anything of the sort, should not be shameful. It is when the production of this sort of content promotes a childlike beauty standard, that it becomes extremely problematic. There is often an uncomfortable disjointedness between creators and those who consume content, giving predatory eyes a chance to prey on their innocence. The e-girl personality wades into an ambiguous, and frankly dangerous, ageless territory, where anyone from underage children to grown adults can cosplay for a day.

Reminiscent of the days of Tumblr, where users found a way to romanticise just about anything, some e-girls have also taken to Tiktok to glamorise facets of their personal life – above all, mental health. The ‘manic pixie dream girl’ (MPDG) personality is the newest ‘subcategory’ of e-girl, evolving on Tiktok from the fictional character type seen in films (think Ramona Flowers). A quick search on Urban Dictionary defines this personality as – unsurprisingly – a helpless, whimsical, womxn who exists to guide and teach males, without ever gaining anything herself. This stock character,

which pervades our phone screens as well as everything else, perpetuates a dangerous stereotype of a womxn as being nothing more than a pretty face and an emotional dumping ground. Of course, there can be exceptions, but in my own personal experience MPDGs tend to explore traumatic content. As a result, this self-deprecating persona normalises processing others’ emotions before our own. We all have our ways of coping, and in a lot of cases these can be to turn to our phone screens, but not everyone is able to process their worries in the same desensitised, sarcastic manner that we see on social media. Painting an elaborate face of makeup and dancing for fifteen seconds may well be a way to cope and engage with others, but one size of Doc Martens does not fit all.

For all its downfalls, it is important to consider the merits of online communities. Whilst Tiktok might not give us free therapy, it does give us the (unconventional) tools to seek the help and support we need. Doing a bite-sized dance routine for millions of viewers is anything but scary when you’re armed with a shield of pastel hair and heavy eyeliner. After all, the internet is a space where all of us can find refuge and community, and the same goes for e-girls. For some people, creating a character and a safe space is a necessity – one that exists online and acts as a barrier between them and the daunting world outside. When I watch these e-girls, all I really see is young people enjoying themselves and unwittingly evolving communities online. More often than not, these creators are just young adults doing what they should be doing – loving and expressing themselves.

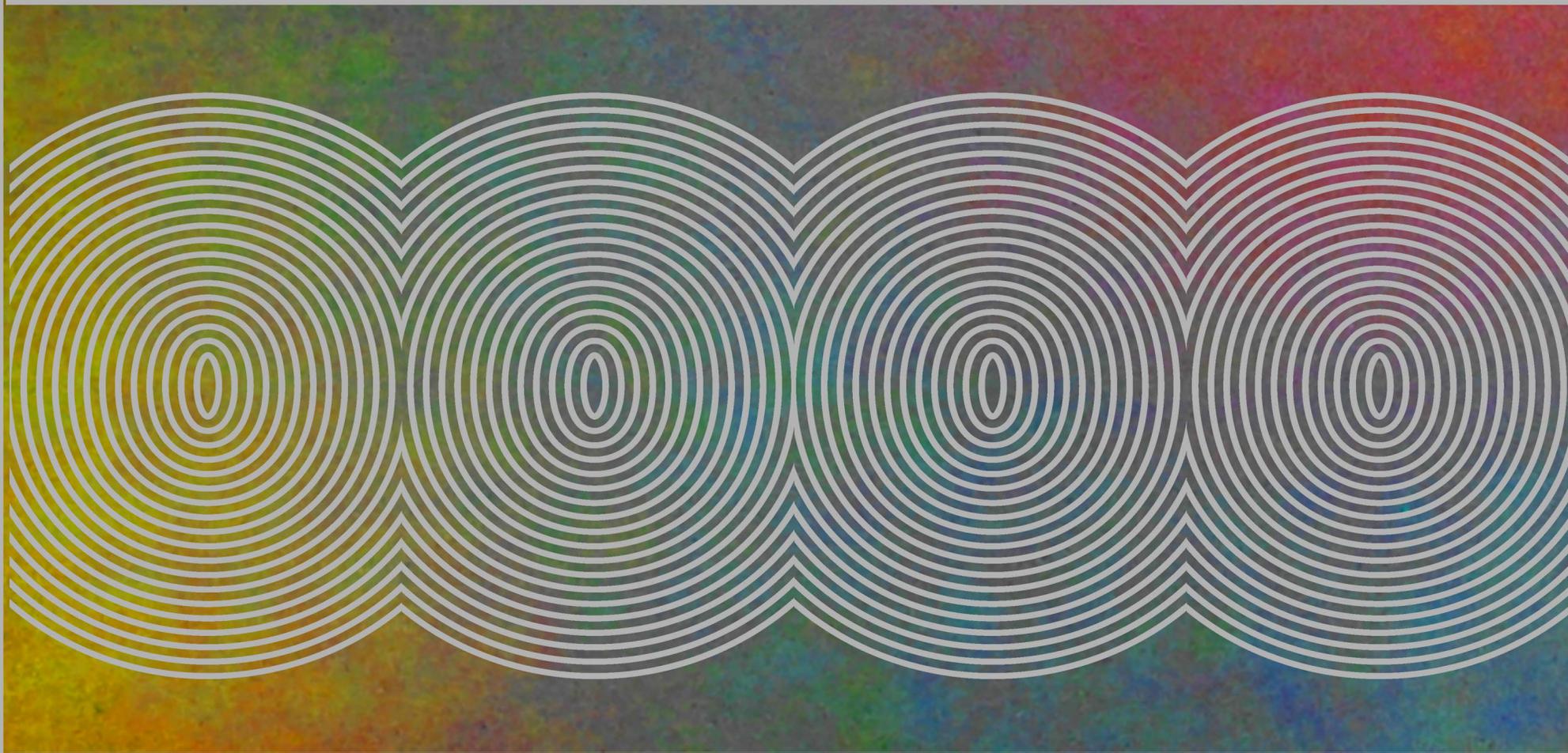




content warning – contains discussion of racism

GUM Reviews 09/20

Deri Ronan, Music Columnist (She/Her)



YOU'RE DOING OKAY

by HAPPY SPENDY

(LOCAL ARTIST REVIEW)

Happy Spendy's new album, *You're Doing Okay*, offers the listener one big synth-pop hug. Released on the 5th of June through Lost Map Records, the album is a collection of the Glasgow-based bands' self-released EP's since 2017.

The Happy Spendy project identify as a DIY pop band who paradoxically create sad songs to make you feel happy. It was originally founded by lead-singer Eimear Coyle from Derry, Northern Ireland. Upon Eimear's relocation to Glasgow, the band formed its roots; and now consists of Rosie Pearse, Siobhain Ma, Connell King and Kieran Coyle (Eimear's brother). Since the release of their EP *You Look Lovely* in 2017, they have been authoring their claim on the lo-fi bedroom pop scene and have supported artists such as Self Esteem, Lomelda, The Spook School, The Vaseline's and Bossy Love.

In *You're Doing Okay*, it is evident that Eimear perceives song-writing as a form of catharsis, as his songs navigate heartbreak, loss and growth. For example, the track *Holy Smokes* is palpably intimate, providing the listener with what feels like an exclusive insight into Eimear's internal monologue as she processes the loss of her father. Skilfully, the track is kept abbreviated (only following the format of a single verse), a dynamic which only serves to intensify its authenticity. Although the bands' self-description alludes to the difficult topics that their lyrics explore, this heavy subject-matter is comparatively enlivened by synth piano and soft beats – a favourite example of which is the track *Fresh Air*.

You're Doing Okay is a brilliant project, and is testament to their claim to being pioneers of the Scottish bedroom-pop scene. Fans of their work should also check out *stmartiins*, *Still Woozy & Local Boy*.

SONG 33

by NONAME

Although released at the beginning of summer, Song 33, Noname’s first solo single of 2020 still channels an imperative message. The song is said to be Noname’s reaction to criticism within the music industry towards her work - namely through her mention in J. Coles single Snow on Tha Bluff.

In response to the criticism she faced, Noname offers a grounding reminder that rather than bringing one another down, we all need to be collectively working towards more pressing causes - something which could not be more imperative in light of the abhorrent murder of George Floyd and the continuous, illegitimate and discriminatory use of force by members of the police force towards people of colour. She pointedly raps:

“Wow look at him go/He really ‘bout to write about me while the world is in smokes?/When his people in trees, when George was begging for his mother saying he couldn’t breathe/you thought to write about me?”

Beginning as a slam poet in Chicago, Noname has gone on to release two full-length albums - Telephone (2016) & Room 25 (2018). She has also collaborated with artists such as Donnie Trumpet & The Social Experiment, Chance the Rapper and Mick Jenkins. This single emulates the artists’ commitment to social justice and activism, in addition to which she has launched a book-club which aims to promote the work of writers of colour and within the LGBTQ+ community. Musically, the track is a balanced development of the style of her previous work, which has clear influences of Lauryn Hill mixed with Noname’s unique observant, quick-witted lyricism.

Noname is a critical hip hop artist of the moment and repeated listening of her two previous albums, mentioned above, is highly justified.



DARK SIDE RIDDIM

by EZRA COLLECTIVE

The London five-piece Ezra Collective dropped their new single Dark Side Riddim last month. The track was released alongside their previous single Samuel L. Riddim on Spotify. The band have a unique sound which pays respect to their classical jazz roots, whilst equally welcoming undertones of afro-beats and hip-hop - best illuminated in their collaborative projects with Loyle Carner & Ty.

Their 2019 album You Can’t Steal my Joy was a stand-out project, and was followed by a spirited UK

tour -which included an acclaimed performance at Oran Mor. Although the likelihood of such an event happening soon may be slim, the Dark Side Riddim instrumental makes a concession by bringing equal joy and stamina to the table.

If upon listening you are craving more of the same good energy, it is worth checking out We out Here - the 2018 collective album which includes Ezra Collective alongside other artists such as Kokoroko, Maisha & Moses Boyd.



TOGETHER IN TECHNOLOGY

JAPAN'S TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE

"Tokyo demonstrates that 'city' is a verb, not a noun" – Mori Toshiko

■ The veins of Tokyo are wire cables, vivid blues, and startling yellows, ethernet, coaxial, fiber optic. The tangled network routes the city in a map of intricate connections. Its bloodstream: a steady flow of fizzing megabytes which careen along tramlines and scale towering skyscrapers. The current flows into the panels of billboards, illuminating the skyline with an artificial glow. Frayed cables devour palettes of primary colour until eventually they regurgitate the pixelated spew all over the screens: gleaming stills of manga girls with pigtails and knee-high socks, their irises large and purple.

Underneath the crowds operate almost mechanically; seemingly unaware of the vertiginous metropolis that towers over them. Businessmen perform their refined routines; raise their wrists, check their watches, and turn left at Shinagawa station. They stand on crowded metallic platforms and stare downward at the reflection of their black polished shoes.

Sipping the reliable elixir of a tall double espresso they wait for the Shinkansen, or rather it waits for them, the anticipated bullet train traveling at a speed of 199 mph (that's almost 6 times faster than the Glasgow Subway). On a neighboring platform, groups of teenagers pace idly. Some stand in displays of embellished cosplay while others are clad in a hybrid of high fashion brands. They hold the tattered remains of red metro cards as they board the train to one of Tokyo's glorified arcade blocks.

Back below the glowing advertisements of Mitsubishi and Mugicha barley tea, tourists venture down narrow roads; the delicate capillaries of Tokyo. The alleyways showcase a quieter side to an otherwise roaring city: underground whiskey bars, and hidden eateries. Where power lines cross overhead like string washing lines and air conditioning units cling precariously to concrete walls. The metronomic droplets ricochet off waxed raincoats into overflowing drains. Yet even in the quieter passages of the city, modernisation creeps silently: luminous vending machines fringe

(she/her) (she/her)
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the road, painting the ground in their blue futuristic hue. The contents are a little more obscure than expected: fresh fruit, flowers, and pink-laced underwear.

It's no surprise Japan champions some of the largest names in the technology field: Casio, Toshiba, Hitachi, as well as gaming giants Nintendo and SEGA. Travel in any direction in Tokyo and you'll be met with more cutting edge creations: from toilets that test sugar levels in urine to soft-eyed robots with the capacity to detect human emotion. Pragmatic innovations have helped craft this digital landscape into its current chiseled state. Blessed with fervent investment in education, statistics reveal current Japanese youth are still upholding the rigorous standard of their predecessors; leading in fields such as science and mathematics.

Yet behind locked doors and between twitching curtains, an entire community resides in isolation. They've swapped towering high rise complexes for leaning stacks of manga magazines. Glowing billboards are instead a singular glitching TV screen - a secluded microcosm in their very own bedrooms. Hikikomori is Japan's lost generation, those who have completely withdrawn from society. At current an estimated 1.15 million hikikomori reside in Japan alone. They immerse themselves in a digital world; tethered solely to society by the umbilical

cord pumping rich digital nutrition into their desktops.

In an attempt to pull the recluses from their spiraling rabbit holes of isolation scientists now look toward technological solutions. These come in the form of augmented reality: software applications that provide an interactive experience of a real-world environment. They act as a digital inoculation: a calculated dose of pixels and bytes. Other amalgamations of the online and offline world are also proving effective. Media companies have released video series of faces in direct eye contact with cameras, a simplistic concept to facilitate hikikomori in building the foundations of social contact. Similarly, the online 'rental sister' scheme schedules frequent visits from 'sisters' to help coax young men out of their isolation.

Despite the emerging report of success stories, Japan's hikikomori community is still growing exponentially, with a projected figure of over 10 million. It draws into question whether technology can fully solve the issue at hand, or is this simply the price to pay for a society so advanced?

Content Warning: racism, sexism, transphobia and homophobia



“Elvira at Knott’s Berry Farm, 1997” from the Orange County Archives (licensed under CC BY 2.0)

Dressed to Distress:
**HOW WE RECOGNISE EVIL
THROUGH DRESS IN FILM AND TV**
by Ruth Underwood (they/them)



FIGURES of EVIL are a PROJE

■ In film, the embodiment of evil, in monsters, witches, and satanic figures, is instantly recognisable to us. Film uses visual cues such as dress to communicate key information about characters and their roles. The way dress is used to communicate this comes from a long history of image and the ways that artists envisioned evil figures such as witches, devils and monsters. Primarily, the way they imagined these figures was based on a projection of desire and repulsion – taboo and hatred. The way we instantly understand that Elvira is a witch, or that HIM is satan, is based on our understanding of visual cues that come from a longstanding tradition of projected hate and desire.

Witches are instantly recognisable from their gothic dress. Characters such as Elvira (Elvira, Mistress of the Dark) wear black velvet, heavy eye liner and tall black heels. Witches such as Alice (Moomin) and Meg (Meg and Mog) are instantly recognisable from their tall, pointed hats, and their broomsticks. The historical basis for witches' reputations as wearing tall, pointed hats and all black clothing is difficult to pinpoint. Many point to the Salem Witch Trials' description of the devil as "a tall, dark man in a high-crowned hat"[1]. The devil has been historically linked to witches; during the Black Plague, the number of witch hunts pursued increased exponentially due to a heightened fear of the devil's influence. Combined with condemnation of pagan rituals and beliefs, this projection of anxiety onto women, pagans, and people of colour evolved into a characterisation of witches by dark colours, pointed hats, pentagrams, and magical powers. Satan is instantly recognisable from their red skin, horns, hooves, pointed tails, glowing eyes and general nudity. Satan's animalistic appearance can be traced back to the early Christian condemnation of pagan beliefs, as he is often linked visually to the pagan

God of nature, Pan, a half man-half goat figure whose characteristic lustfulness "made him easy to associate with the forbidden"[2]. He has also been compared to the demon, Lilitu, from early Babylonian texts, a winged female demon who flew through the streets at night seducing men. The association of these characters with lust and carnal appetites made them easy to associate with sin, and their appearance as horned, winged creatures made them easy to differentiate from angelic figures in early Christian art. Films such as *The Devils* and *Bedazzled* portray a hypersexual satanic figure, and films such as *Night Train of Terror* portray Satan in as horrific a way as possible.

Figures of evil are a projection of desire and hatred, and their dress gives us important visual cues about this. Elvira, for example, does this in a comedic way, as a parody of Hollywood depictions of dark, powerful, evil figures. Wearing low-cut, split-skirt black dresses that show her cleavage and legs, she embodies sexuality and deviance. Figures of evil, such as witches and satanic characters, embody a projection of desire. Issues such as women's control over their sexuality and men's confidence around homoerotic temptations are portrayed as taboo by the mainstream and this attitude is projected onto figures of evil as a means of condemning them in mainstream society, thereby allowing an element of control over women and queers. The sexualised appearance we associate with evil is a product of this. Even in *The Powerpuff Girls*, HIM is depicted as a masculine satanic figure dressed in women's clothing. This association of queer aesthetics with evil using dress is a symptom of the media's projection of societal attitudes onto figures of evil. Evil characters sometimes act as a visual embodiment of

ETERNITY of DEEPER and HATED

fearmongering. Condemnation of other faiths and races are embodied in the aesthetic of evil in film and TV. Witches may practice voodoo, with white glowing eyes and painted skin, or they may use traditional pagan symbols such as pentagrams to seduce men.

Sometimes figures of evil in films are dressed in a relatively ordinary, conservative manner. Their evil powers are acquired incidentally, or part of their evil is their ability to blend in with the rest of society, often to coerce others into assisting them in their deeds. This is the case in TV shows and films such as *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *The Exorcist*. Their lack of symbolically dark attire does not halt the mainstream audience's tendency to project their fear. However, Linda Blair, who played Regan in *The Exorcist* when she was only 12 years old, became the subject of Christian groups' hate shortly after the film was released. She was made visually recognisable as a monstrosity by prosthetics such as scars and contact lenses and scripted to act as if the devil had taken over her body. Christian groups projected their anxieties about satanism onto her, a child actress. The way we recognise evil in films, therefore, is two-fold; figures of evil may dress provocatively, in ways that are dark and taboo, or they may dress conservatively, in order to play on general anxieties about evil being hidden among us, even in the most innocent members of society.



"A witch carrying a child on her broom" ca. 1880-1910
by José Guadalupe Posada via The Met collection archive (CC0 1.0)
(edit by Raquel FonseSca)

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BY A WINDOW WHERE THE SUN COMES IN

BY VIOLET
MAXWELL
[SHE/HER]

I pick up grains of rice. Place them in my palm
clammy with an inability to forget
I count each bit of starchy plasticine

Once, this meal would have fed a whole legion of lovers
but now

I chew and I chew and my
jaw falls short

Ether and a long dark hallway that leads to
The suburban shopping mall
Sprawling and ubiquitous and uncaring

I reach up to grab mama's hand but
she is an ocean away and i'm left grasping

My fingers brush something familiar

More rice, this time being tossed from the
aisles,
from the mahogany pulpit

I am at your wedding and the ceilings are
lowering as you exchange your vows

And a windowsill teeming with life

I find myself plucking off each whimpering alien like fruit from an unyielding tree

Remember when living wasn't sacrificial?

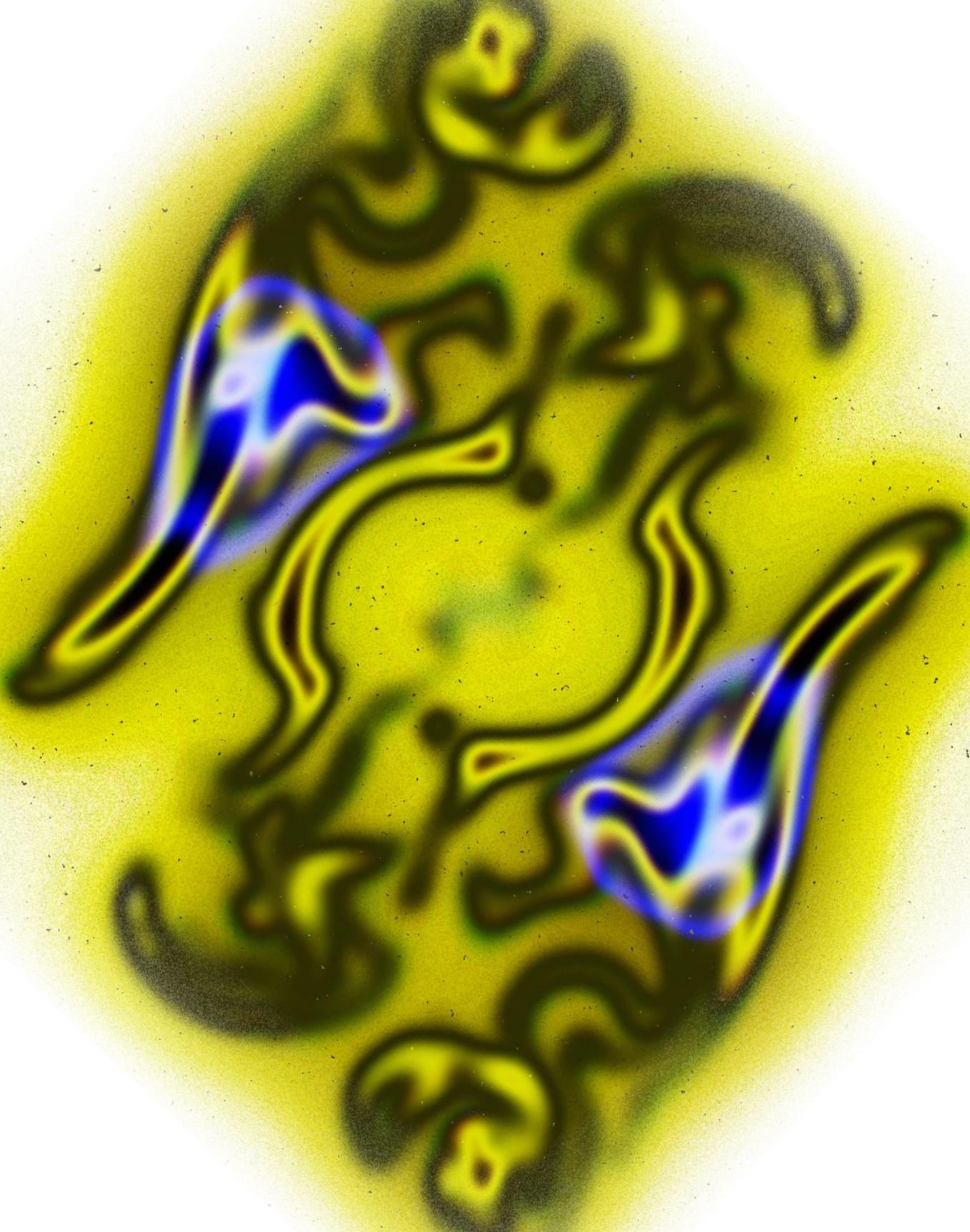
I whisper it to you but you're already lost to me
Lifted away by headlines waxing apocalypse
Widening eyes dulled by 21st century light

RESTLESS

But it won't be until
The following morning
When you notice it.
It will have seeped through
Your pillows, brushed hands
With the cotton on your pyjamas.
It flirts with the empty space
Beside you until he comes home,
It kisses your mouth
And whispers in your ear
'Come with me.'

Sometime during the night
You wake to his snoring
And turn to face him,
Brushing the hair from his eyes.
You kiss him lightly
And listen to the space
Between your bodies, until
Sleep finds you.
But it is him, now.
It is his snoring
His naked torso the colour
In his cheeks.
You won't notice it until
The morning, when you pack a
Bag and get into your truck
And leave.

[BY LILLIAN SALVATORE (SHE/HER)]



GUM
GUM
2020