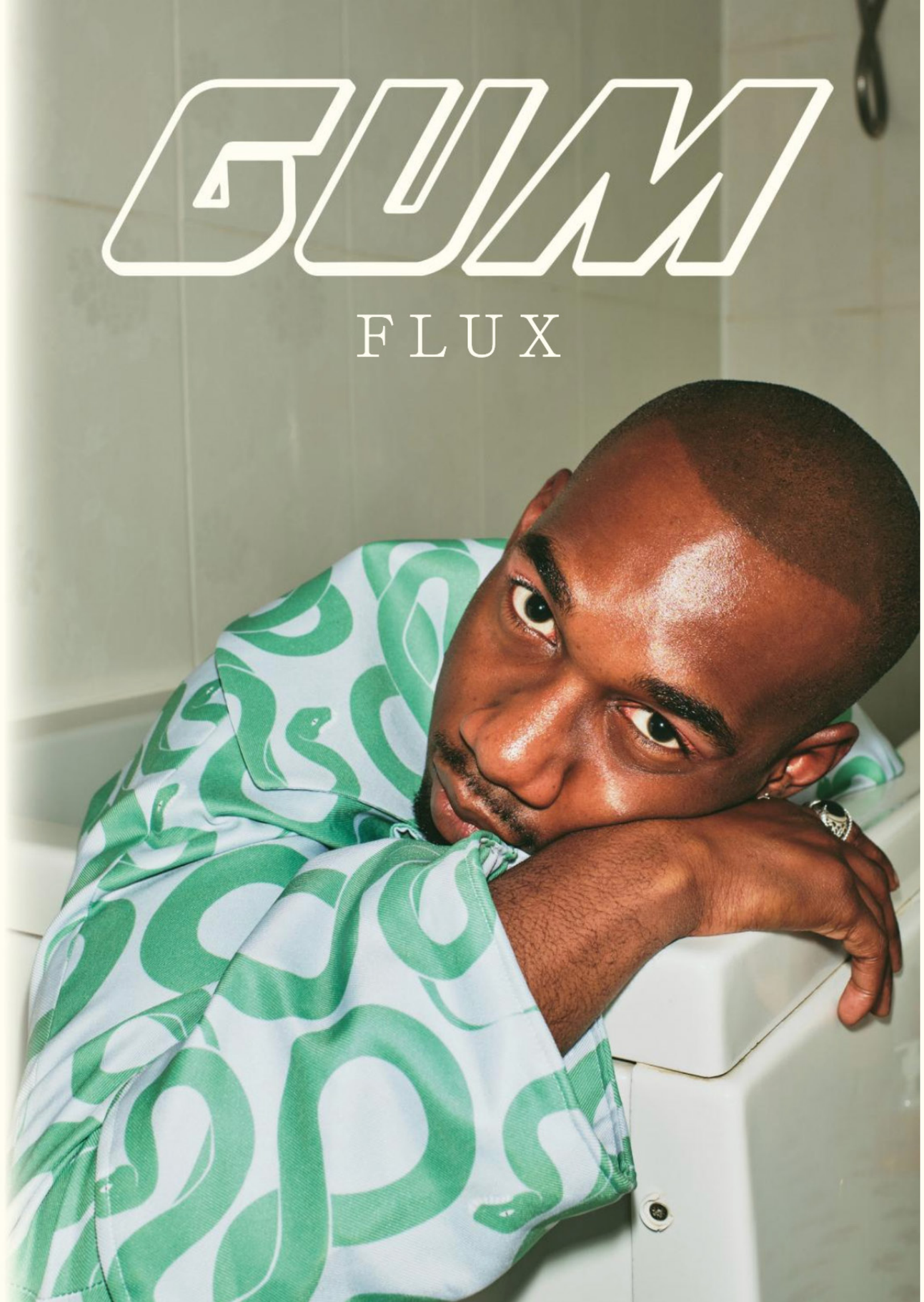
GUM

FLUX



This issue is kindly sponsored by
The Alchemy Experiment

FACEBOOK *Glasgow University Magazine*
INSTAGRAM *@gumagazine*
TWITTER *@gumagazine*
WEBSITE *www.glasgowuniversitymagazine.co.uk*
EMAIL *editors@glasgowuniversitymagazine.co.uk*

EDITORS' NOTE

We came out of this year and a half of yoyo-lockdowns, thinking we were "ready": we thought we had done enough growing up, enough working on ourselves, enough healing. We thought wrong. Rather, we've stumbled out into this uncharted space between certainty and uncertainty. We don't really know where anything, including ourselves, stands - emotionally, socially, or politically.

FLUX embodies the quarter-life-crisis. It's an ode to discomfort, transgressions, and fear, but also to the joy that comes with these; there is, afterall, a certain peace to be found in impernance, in mess and chaos. We don't think we've found it yet – but god loves a trier.

In this issue, we look to the collective, through a collective: the collective of our team, our contributors, and, now, our readers. We hope you feel this – to us, it's palpable.

Laced between these pages we hope you'll find a well needed reminder that you are not in this alone. Environmental degradation getting to you? Unpack your climate anxiety with us. Mummy issues? Talk MILFS with us. Crying in the club? Us too – second to last page.

If FLUX is a party, then we're IN THE BATHROOM. This issue's shoot seeks to centre a sense of intimacy and vulnerability found in our bathrooms. Behind these doors is a refuge from the chaos outside; and so, dear reader, we've welcomed you in.

In all honesty, this issue and its production is a bit too 'meta': FLUX is about change and discomfort and not really knowing what the fuck you're doing; as we've pulled it together, we've dealt with change, we've sat in our own discomfort, and – quite frankly – we have not once known what the fuck we've been doing. It feels quite nice to admit that, if a little vulnerable.

We'll see you again in the spring, when – hopefully – we have our shit a little bit more together.

With love,
Eilidh + Tiarna

FEATURES

CULTURE

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

POLITICS

EDITORIAL SHOOT

STYLE & BEAUTY

SCIENCE & TECH

CREATIVE WRITING

THE LIMINALITY OF OUR NEW EXPERINCE

WORDS
EVIE GLEN
(SHE/HER)

ART
ALISTAIR QUIETSCH
(HE/HIM)

We search for certainties. As creatures of habit, it is in our nature to evade any profound sense of uncertainty. Such would prevent the ability to construct plans, routines, and schedules, to develop new relationships, preserve old ones, or maintain any form of order in our lives. When a global pandemic made this void inescapable, we were thrust simultaneously from our individually constructed customs towards one single, internationally prevailing, regime. However, while in theory this regime - in its destruction of our accustomed routines - may seem far from regimental, in practice the impositions of lockdown provided a sense of certainty that filled some of the aforementioned void. By consequence, as the strict regime of lockdown began to ease, this void swelled. Caught within a strange emulsion of pandemic and pre-pandemic life, we are now occupying a vast liminal space that is perhaps more disconcerting than our time spent in isolation.

Within this state of liminality, our uncertainty reaches peak levels. We are balancing upon a tightrope between two certainties: certain risk and certain safety.

In the spring of 2020, with no idea when, how, or if lockdown would end, the world - united in uncertainty - came trembling to a halt. We were confined to a restless stagnation. Such an involuntary idleness, seemingly void of any structure or routine, would understandably quicken the heartbeat, dry the mouth, and seize the muscles of those most willing to contemplate the prospect. This stagnation, however, was a paradox from the beginning. Arbitrary and uncertain by definition, yet imposed by regime, our restless dormancy was perhaps not as unpredictable as the prospect might suggest. For one, the knowledge that we were in the nexus of a pandemic was indisputable. So too was the knowledge that we must see nobody but those within our household, must not travel to work or school, must cancel all social commitments, and simply stay inside, indisputable. This certainty, insomuch that we knew precisely what not to do, cushioned the ambiguity of an otherwise unprecedented time. When these restrictions blurred, however, this ambiguity emerged to prominence, imposing a state of liminality upon our lives.

Within this state of liminality, our uncertainty reaches peak levels. We are balancing upon a tightrope between two certainties: certain risk and certain safety. We lack the fearful adrenaline that would preoccupy our minds in the certain risk of the pandemic, yet our shoulders are not quite unburdened by a feeling of unequivocal safety that can only be achieved by a confirmation of the pandemic's end. Despite this, we try to live a normal life. Motivated in part by a desperation to return to a pre-covid reality and a feeling that we must make up for lost time while we have the freedom to do so, we try our best to forget cases are rising. While we share the recycled breath of a hundred strangers in a 400 sqft club, we try our best to forget the 18 months spent at a 2 metre distance from everyone. As we taste the stale dregs of festival beer that showers down from a plastic cup thrown by a boy in a garish green bucket hat, we try our best to forget the death toll still habitually updated on the morning news. We make every futile attempt to talk of the pandemic as an anecdote of times gone by, but it does not stop our ears pricking up every time someone coughs.

With the prospect of 10 days in isolation and incessant rumours of yet another lockdown, we feebly grasp our recovered freedoms - our hand weakened by an uncertainty around how long these freedoms will last. Thus, this transitional period is made substantially more difficult by a nonexistence of outcome. When such profound and ambiguous change is not coupled with a certain ending, a feeling of emotional stability is entirely unattainable. This feeling of instability becomes particularly concentrated when the changes inherent within the pandemic are coupled with significant change.

This liminal period has been especially exhausting for new students. Generally, when starting university there is an urgency to do as much and meet as many people as possible, or risk not acclimatising. This year, then, freshers face a vexing conundrum. Should they choose to go out with a different group of people, to a different bar every night, accepting the risk of 10 days in isolation while those single-night friends continue their lives together? Alternatively, they could limit their contact with everyone, in the hopes of preserving their freedom, though in doing so accept the risk of not making any friends at all. Either way, there remains an abject difficulty in any attempts to settle into university life when neither your social circle nor your freedom is certain. This difficulty has contributed to the emergence of a new variant of covid anxiety. Such is not necessarily modelled by a hypochondriacal fear of the virus, but by fears of abandonment and loneliness. These fears are characteristic of an uncertain transitional period.

As we traverse the vast expanse of this liminal space, we understandably question what is next. Following the social upheaval of the pandemic, there is a desire to return to the normality of pre-pandemic times. This concept of normality, however, is warped by the rose coloured glass of nostalgia. Such a desire to return to the past, entirely in search of a sense of familiarity, is futile - not least because that familiarity is nonexistent. We cannot reverse the social metamorphosis of the pandemic. Instead, we have no other option but to endure the uncertainty, in a bid to carve out our individual places within this immense and ever-evolving space.

GROW OLD WITH ME

WORDS
LILLIAN SALVATORE
(SHE/HER)

A few years ago, I attended a weekend-long conference on writing and the publishing industry. I sat in on discussions given by different writers, artists, and publishers around the UK. The closing talk was given by a man at the top of his game, an important figure in Scottish journalism and publishing; he was someone I looked up to and greatly admired. I was excited for his talk, eager to take notes on how I could one day be a part of this industry. But instead, I kept my notebook closed as he insisted throughout his talk that the young people of today would never be able to achieve what he and others his age had all achieved, that we are a 'lazy' and 'entitled' generation who could never put in the same amount of effort as he had. He helped make his industry what it is today, and he insisted that young people were going to come in and ruin it all. It was a horrible thing to hear, and I left the conference feeling disheartened and angry that someone I had respected and admired could ever hold those opinions about someone, simply because of their age.

Ageism is a form of discrimination that touches us all. It's not something that just one 'group' of people experience, but affects everybody. While we may think, as I thought at that time, that ageism is something predominantly directed toward older people, younger generations experience it often too. In traditional workspaces, for example, we are often told that we need experience to be considered for jobs; but experience is hard to get when no one will employ you without it. Within the UK, the National Minimum Wage is structured hierarchically by age, so that younger people make far less than their fellow employees who do the same work, simply because they may be twice their age. Often, the attitudes toward young people in traditional professional industries run by older people in power can be negative, and young people are seen as far more incompetent than their older fellow employees, who have both time and experience behind them.

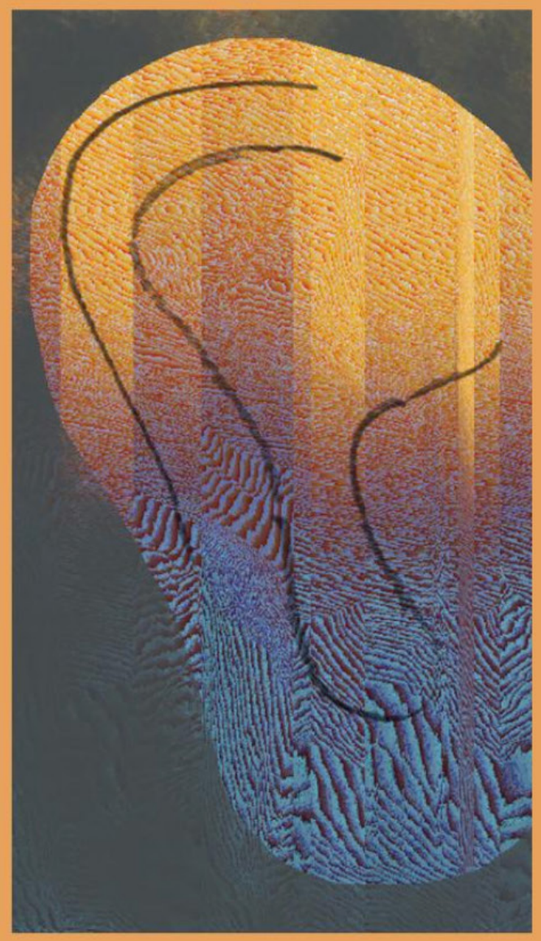
The reactions we feel as young people experiencing ageism are also felt by older people. Ageism feeds on fear, that we are one day going to become old, that we have become that old person. But this 'fear' is constructed by our society; it is not real, and it is something that we can work to dismantle. Notions of ageism follow us around everywhere in western society, but they are inherently biased toward the younger generations. Western society's perception of 'old people' is often viewed through common stereotypes that we associate with older generations, such as being kind and generous, but also needy and unstable. While there are both positive and negative stereotypes surrounding older people, a recent survey conducted by the non-profit organisation Centre for Ageing Better, found that perceptions about older people were upheld by mostly negative stereotypes.

In popular culture, representations of older people lean into these stereotypes, but rarely supply us with a different view. There is an overwhelmingly persistent aesthetic of youthfulness within film, fashion, and social media which blatantly disregards the experiences of older people, particularly older women. It is no secret that the film industry contributes massively to ageism as narratives about older women are rarely given screen time, instead favouring younger stories and indeed, younger actors. Major magazines and fashion houses still insist on using predominantly young models to model clothes, and the makeup and skin care industry's 'anti-ageing' serum has been translated into skin-smoothing filters on Instagram. Western society has capitalized on stereotypes about older people and fuelled ageism so that the beauty standard has become 'youth'. Those that do not conform to these standards will rarely see themselves reflected in our popular culture as anything more than 'outsiders.' As a result of this, we are persistently told that the experiences of older people are unimportant within our society. Their voices are practically silenced, marginalised and deemed unnecessary within the evolution of popular culture.

We also need to recognise that from a very young age, ageism becomes an internalised problem too. There are societal expectations placed upon us from a very young age, such as the right 'time' for having sex, getting a degree, buying a house, and having children. If we haven't achieved these things by the 'correct age', then the older we become without having done so, the lesser we become as a person. We start aging the second we're born, and from then onwards we are conditioned to think that ageing is bad, that it's negative. Coupled with the representation of old people in popular culture, becoming 'old' is an undesirable quality to possess. A natural fact of our existence as human beings is something we are made to feel shameful of, something we grow to hate.

The man who gave that final talk was a wealthy white man who has benefitted from the help of other wealthy white men throughout his career and his life. I find it easy to be appalled by his ageist attitudes toward young people, but I also find it interesting to see that his ageism toward young people is perhaps built on the fear that people who are not white or straight or male are one day going to work in his industry and by doing so, insight change. Older generations may hold certain views on young people not just because of their age, but because of the change we represent. Western culture has long thrived on patriarchal, heteronormative ideologies, and today, with the advancement of social media and technology, young people are able to spread their opinions more widely, and for many of us, it is a desire to make change within our longstanding patriarchal society. Ageism feeds ageism feeds ageism. It's difficult to imagine dismantling something which is so intrinsically inherent within all of us. But it is worth taking the time to step back, look up and recognise that while, as young people, we often have it bad, so do older generations. It is something that seems impossible to break down because it is so fundamentally written into the fabric of our society, but recognising that our worth is not intrinsically tied to our age is a good place to begin.

THE MUTABILITY OF MODERN MUSIC



WORDS
SOPHIE BOYD
(SHE/HER)

ART
OLIVIA JUETT
(SHE/HER)

"The Cramps, for me, were the dawning of everything, luring me to distant musical shores. The discovery that a vast proportion of their repertoire was actually obscure '50s and '60s cover versions led me to seek out and savour the delights of the originals..."
– Sam Knee, 'A Scene In Between: Tripping through the Fashions of UK Indie Music 1980-1988'

Over lockdown, I heavily relied on music as a coping mechanism. Buying vinyls online filled the long, repetitive days. I constantly made playlists for my friends, not simply because I wanted to create something meaningful for them, but because it kept my mind distracted from the stress that life had become. I crammed my head with so many different genres and styles: as a result I didn't have space to listen to my own anxieties. I would never have found some of those artists without the endless time I now had to troll through vinyl websites and Spotify. I could finally properly examine the nature of the music itself.

From what I can gather, current music is an amalgamation of past styles and sounds repeated for us to experience in the present. Listening to an older album can transport you to another time; whether that's to listening to a CD as a child, or exploring music from decades before you were born, times you may otherwise fail to have any insight into. Some of our most celebrated modern artists take directly from the past and form connections through time that never existed until that song was created. The perfect example of how artists do this is through sampling. Famously, Destiny's Child sampled Stevie Nicks' 'Edge of Seventeen' guitar riff in their song 'Bootylicious', and their music video even featured a cameo of Nicks playing her guitar. It's vastly different to Stevie Nicks' own witchy folk songs, yet the tune lends itself perfectly to the upbeat 90s anthem, constructing a totally different audio atmosphere. Frank Ocean's 'White Ferrari' samples The Beatles' 'Here, There and Everywhere'. This seemingly seamless sample manages to effortlessly repurpose a song from the sixties into a queer love song of 2016.

Despite huge progress in technological advancement, there has been a noticeable revival of formerly retired listening formats in the last decade or so. Vinyl has made a mainstream reappearance while some artists have even started selling their music on cassette and CD. Regardless of the ease of listening to music on our phones, many audiophiles prefer to consume their media through a more practically involved system that can at times seem ritualistic. Maybe we stubbornly remain in the past because 'the times' are bringing us right back to our childhoods, a comforting kiss on the cheek, a welcome home. Vinyl sales went up massively over lockdown, perhaps due to a nostalgic longing for a simpler time. The relief of being able to transport yourself through time to a different childhood world can give listeners a freedom that they might struggle to reach elsewhere. This pleasure isn't restricted to the technology itself: the physical rummaging for a material object can feel grounding too. When time is so mutable and unforgiving, the opportunity to recognise your own presence in the world through simple acts, like treasure hunting in a flea market, can bring great consolation.

The music industry appears to stretch into the past and the future simultaneously. New software in audio production has enabled music to be made by AI artists who don't exist in the material world. Digital musical instruments were showcased by Samson Young at the Talbot Rice Gallery in 2019, and the exhibition shone as a prime example of just how limitless music has become. The show was a collaboration between Young and The University of Edinburgh's Next Generation Sound Synthesis (NESS) research group, who created a software that can play the sounds of long forgotten or imaginary instruments. Music transcends our very conceptions of time.

We live in an age of experimentation, in which electronica has flourished. Digitally created music can be produced without geographical limits or even a recording studio. Artists like SOPHIE and Arca both refuse to conform to gender binaries; it's fitting that their music likewise refuses to conform. Electronica ushers in a new freedom of expression rare in other genres. Charli XCX's How I'm Feeling Now was composed through lockdown and gave us insight into her own experiences of the pandemic and the effect it has had on her music. Without the upheaval of COVID-19, it is unlikely we would have heard these creations at all.

The strain put on musicians through the pandemic meant that some were more inclined to use the time to delve into new genres. Taylor Swift's Evermore and Folklore strayed from her usual Americana Country Pop and instead presented haunting indie ballads, gaining her many new fans. Softer and calmer bedroom pop has also thrived at a time when other forms of music making, like live music, could not. Clairo's new album Sling offered us sad, quiet melodies, seemingly reflective of the time.

Integrating the past and future into modern music constructs relationships and connections through time, allowing us to realise the never-ending possibilities of music and the depth of its abilities to help us cope - and, sometimes, thrive.

THE SECRET HISTORIES OF DARK ACADEMIA

WORDS
LOLA O'BRIEN-DELE
(SHE/HER)

ART
ELLA EDWARDS
(SHE/HER)

CW
DISCUSSIONS OF RACE

Picture this: polished black oxfords. A tweed blazer. Lipstick stains on coffee cups, annotations in old books, wire glasses, and fountain pens. Gothic architecture. Worn leather satchels. Grecian Statues. This is Dark Academia, the online aesthetic, subculture, and visual philosophy born on Tumblr, but popularised during the pandemic on Tiktok and Instagram. COVID-19 left university students in limbo; away from their campuses and their friends, their educations put on an indefinite pause. It's unsurprising that some students took to recreating the feeling and idea of academia in their bedrooms.

On the surface, Dark Academia is simply a way of romanticising the daily grind of student life. It teaches you to embrace dark and stormy weather, light some scented candles, drink a glass of red wine or a steaming cup of coffee, and enjoy studying.

It makes a ritual of learning. Dark academics prioritise learning disciplines like Classics, Literature, and History; in a culture where the arts and humanities are often dismissed as unemployable and 'soft', education is treated as a commodity, and the corporatization of universities is rapid, there is something quite radical about learning purely for the love of learning.

But the deeper you delve into the online world of Dark Academia, the more prescriptive the experience gets. There are thousands of blogs detailing the perfumes you should wear (either delicately floral, or musky and woody), the hobbies you should take up (classical piano, badminton, and archery), even the accent you should try to speak in ("British", or at the very least, Transatlantic). They teach the aspiring dark academic to learn French, Italian, and Latin; to listen to Mozart and Tchaikovsky; to read Oscar Wilde and Sylvia Plath; to attend universities like Oxbridge, Durham, Edinburgh, or our very own University of Glasgow. It becomes very clear, quite quickly, that the lifestyle they are glorifying is one of old money, wealth, status, and whiteness. This is a subculture nostalgic for an imagined existence on an elite college campus of a bygone era.

One thing it seems to have embraced quite wholeheartedly is segregation. It is a visual philosophy obsessed with both exclusion and homogeneity. As you scroll through the Dark Academia tag on TikTok, Tumblr, or Pinterest, the only faces you should expect to see are white, gender-conforming, and with an air of private school about them. What perhaps began as a love of learning and passion for academia has evolved into the upholding of a culture that perpetuates elitism, classism, and racism. 'Dead Poets Society' and 'Kill your Darlings' are both films that appear frequently on the Dark Academia tags, and both have entirely white casts. Oscar Wilde and Sylvia Plath are both venerated by the online Dark Academia culture, and the common theme between them seems to be the racism and antisemitism present in their novels and their politics. And while there's definitely a wider discussion to be had about separating the art from the artist, and whether we can or should consume a creation if we disagree with the politics and morals of the creator, this subculture is entirely lacking even a subtle awareness of that.

This is a world concerned only with how things look or feel. There is no discussion or analysis. No questioning why the majority of books' determined classics are written almost exclusively by upper class, white, westerners; why the languages and cultures deemed the most beautiful and intellectual and worthy of study are European. Ancient universities are championed as the domain of learning and sharing knowledge, but philosophies of exclusion are the backbone of these institutions; they were never built for People of Colour, or women, or the working classes. According to a diversity report by the University of Glasgow, 'Women were not allowed to matriculate until 1892 in any Scottish University and were not taught

It becomes very clear, quite quickly, that the lifestyle they are glorifying is one of old money, wealth, status, and whiteness.

completely co- educationally at Glasgow until the 1930s - segregated in the Library reading room until the 1950s.' It took 780 years after the University of Oxford's conception for a Black person to matriculate (Christian Cole, Oxford's first Black graduate, received his degree in Classics in 1876), and 144 years later, there were still only 106 Black students admitted (a total 3.7% of the university population). 7% of UK children go to private school and yet 42% of offers made by Oxford and Cambridge go to privately educated students. These are the very same universities which benefitted directly from slavery and - other than Glasgow - have not as of yet made any attempt at reparations, but these realities of the elite academic experience are ignored by Dark Academia because it doesn't fit the narrative. Even the privileges of having the freedom to experience university as an entirely intellectual pursuit, rather than a set of hoops to jump through in order to get a job in a difficult economy, is disregarded. There's such an opportunity here for ideas on how we can radically evolve the education system, how we open up academia, how we decolonise curricula, and unlearn white supremacy and western-centrism. But instead of that, all we have is an aesthetic devoid of critical consumption or self reflection.

Donna Tarrt's 1992 novel The Secret History is the bible of Dark Academia. It's an inverted detective story, exploring the relationships between six Classics students at a liberal arts college in New England, and their descent into murder and betrayal. It's easy to fall into the trap of idolizing the lifestyle of these characters. They are exclusive and unapologetic in their pretentiousness. They smoke Lucky Strikes, drink champagne, play croquet, and perform ancient drunken rituals worshipping old gods.

Many fans of the book would purport this to be the ultimate Dark Academia lifestyle, but in reality, this is a book which not only condemns the gatekeeping of knowledge, but indicts elitism and exclusivity as the corrupting agent of the academic system. Richard Papen, the novel's narrator, describes his hamartia, his fatal flaw and the reason behind his eventual downfall as the 'morbid longing for the picturesque at all costs'; perhaps that should be the lasting message of this novel, and this aesthetic more broadly.

Academia can be beautiful and romantic, but without scholarly, analytical and critical engagement, it can be fatal.

LIVE TWICE

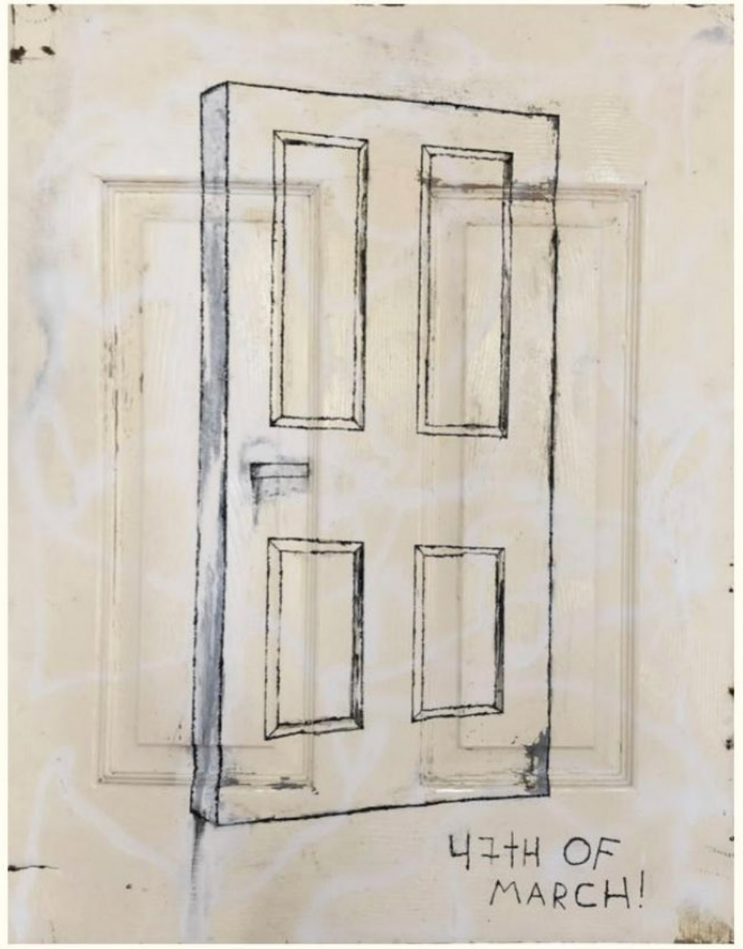
MARY LYDON

Gate to Oneself, Gouache on MDF, 93 x 122 cm

In her recent body of work 'Live Twice,' Mary Lydon responds to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the artistic community. A lack of space, restricted resources, financial difficulty and exhibition opportunities has forced creatives to adapt their practices in order to continue making new work. 'Live Twice' came into fruition through Mary's ability to recognise the potential in the limited resources she had access to. Over several months, Mary collected discarded objects found on the streets of Glasgow. Abandoned doors, tyres and planks of wood transformed into textured canvases, that she would then wash, cut to size and prime before painting. 'Live Twice' explores the theme of rebirth: a rebirth of materials, a rebirth of the environment around her and a rebirth of the artist. Through her work, Mary reexamines the confines of lockdown through the image of a gate. Whilst a gate may suggest connotations of restriction and hostility, it could also imply passage and opportunity.

Location: Under M8 Motorway, Glasgow

2 Meters, Gouache, spray paint on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



47th of March!, Gouache, spray paint on an abandoned door, 76 x 95 cm

Imposed isolation pushed Mary to re-engage with the environment around her, thus creating a more thoughtful and emotional body of work. Mary intended to exhibit 'Live Twice' in the remnants of St Peter's seminary, an abandoned modernist building located in Cardross. Like her materials, she wanted to re-energise a forgotten, discarded structure with human life and creativity. Unfortunately, the exhibition was unable to take place. As an international GSA student, Mary faced difficulty paying the outstanding tuition fees and sadly had to leave Glasgow and return to her home in Kyiv, Ukraine last year. We wanted to share her work in this edition of GUM Magazine, as we believe 'Live Twice' is an extraordinary ode to creative life in Glasgow. Mary is currently living, creating (and thriving!) in Kyiv. Currently, Mary has been creating set designs for musicians as well as curating exhibitions within Kyiv's creative community. Mary is also working on 'I Love Graffiti. Evidence,' a photographic book documenting her street art in both Glasgow and Kyiv. Almost all of her paintings from 'Live Twice' have been sold and found new homes. For more of her work, follow her on Instagram @mary.lydon.

OUT OF SIGHT,

WORDS
MEG RUSSEL
(SHE/HER)

ART
SÉANIA STRAIN
(SHE/HER)

CW
SEXUAL ASSAULT, ABUSE, SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIOUR, SUICIDE, DEATH OR DYING

It's been touted as Australia's 'national shame'. Re-introduced in 2012, Australia's offshore detention policies have seen people seeking asylum transferred to Papua New Guinea (PNG), and the small Pacific state of Nauru. Rhetoric of 'illegal migrants' and calls to 'stop the boats' has demonised those trying to find a safe home. In 2013, the then Labor government implemented a policy that created a second class of refugee; anyone arriving by sea 'illegally' was banned from settlement in Australia. Instead, they were indefinitely detained and kept in a prolonged state of uncertainty and limbo.

Australia's contentious policies have been upheld by successive governments, blatantly ignoring findings from the UN that they were violating numerous international conventions. At least twelve people have died in the centres as a result of medical neglect, suicide, and murder. Leaked documents, dubbed 'The Nauru Files', published by the Guardian in 2015, brought to light the extent of the horrific mistreatment, detailing evidence of sexual abuse, self-harm attempts, assault, child abuse, and the squalid conditions those in detention were subject to.

It seems that the UK's Home Office isn't perturbed by the appalling track record of Australia's immigration policies. Much of Priti Patel's proposed Nationality and Borders Bill seems to take Australia's policies as a guide. The UK government's aims might be to deter people smuggling operations, and reduce the numbers of people attempting to cross the Channel, but evidence for the effectiveness of these methods is sparse. While there is debate over the existence of plans to implement offshore detention centres (and their feasibility), the overarching nature of the bill remains a concern.

As the number of people crossing the channel has risen sharply, increasing anti-immigration rhetoric belies the fact that actual asylum claims have been falling. COVID and Brexit have also made it more difficult to cross the channel by other, historically more common, means. A media discourse which all too often frames immigrants as 'invading' could dangerously increase public appetite for the cruel plans the Tories want to implement. The panic over channel crossings also obscures that of the 82.4 million displaced people worldwide, the numbers the UK receives aren't even a drop in the ocean. The framing of 'illegal immigrants' and push-backs in the channel echoes the national sentiment in Australia at the time it launched 'Operation Sovereign Borders' which made attempts to reach Australia by sea near impossible.

Human rights campaigners and lawyers alike are resounding in their condemnation of the UK plans. A team of lawyers has declared that the Nationality and Borders Bill will breach international and domestic laws in at least 10 ways. Even without the implementation of offshore processing, changes to the UK system will see the introduction of new 'second-class' refugees, who arrive by 'irregular' means, granted 'temporary protection status'. This means they'll face restricted rights and regular assessment for removal. Most people seeking asylum in the UK are already prevented from working, and therefore heavily reliant on state support. The increased precarity of 'temporary protection status' arrangements will only compound the anguish of a life in flux while the UK tries to clear a massive processing backlog that has seen some people waiting for initial decisions for more than 5 years.

Australia insists its offshore processing policies are necessary to prevent a resurgence of boat arrivals, and estimates put their spending around A$-12billion since 2013. With governments outsourcing the running of asylum processing centres, there's a huge financial incentive for private companies to lobby for contracts, and create a perceived need for these centres. The privatisation of detention centres is deeply embedded in capitalist ideology. In the UK, onshore detention centres such as Yarl's Wood and Napier Barracks are privately run, and have been marred by their own controversies. Outsourcing these services obfuscates governmental responsibility. Involving private corporations (or other governments) creates a context for plausible deniability. All the while, the realities of those trying to build better, and safer, lives for themselves are buried and obscured, existing in a liminal space of constant uncertainty.

Whether it's literally placing people who seek asylum out of sight by way of offshore detention, or even behind the fences and walls of onshore detention, the UK's plans to commit to further divisive strategies in the name of 'safety' and preventing 'illegality' is catastrophic. Any person that is in the position of applying for the status of refugee is already in a position of limbo and extreme precarity. Placing people in detention centres, or on temporary visas with restricted rights invariably heightens feelings of vulnerability and impermanence. To prevent Australia's national shame becoming the UK's too, policies need to be born from a place of humanity; it's a matter of life and death, not profit and power.

OUT OF MIND

CLIMATE ANXIETY: THE LATEST PANDEMIC

WORDS
SORREL HUMPHREY (SHE/HER)

CW
CLIMATE CRISIS, MENTAL ILLNESS

I've just been scrolling through Instagram. Having been bombarded with posts about plastic pollution, zero-waste swaps, #savetheamazon, veganism, and ecofeminism, I'm now feeling a little overwhelmed. Maybe this abundance is partly my doing because I'm a bit of a nerd about climate change, but, regardless, I think this is something many of us can relate to. It's a feeling of defeat over the state of the climate, a feeling that the problem is too big for us to handle. There's a name for that feeling: climate anxiety. The American Psychological Association defines it as a 'chronic fear of environmental doom'; the term was described by Grist magazine as the "biggest pop-culture trend" of 2019. But the climate crisis is not trendy. There was a 23% increase in deforestation fire activity from 2019 to 2020. It's enough to make anyone feel like our planet is doomed.

Climate anxiety is definitely something I experience; many heavy conversations with friends have told me that others feel the same way I do. Studies have found that over half of those aged 16-25 feel 'sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty' about climate change. Clearly this is a big issue.

I believe a significant contributor to climate anxiety is big corporations shifting the responsibility of their environmental impact onto the consumer and away from themselves. There's an emphasis on the individual - and what the individual has done wrong. Consider Coca-Cola's marketing strategy: the 'Please Recycle Me' message finding its way onto every one of their plastic bottles. Each bottle is pleading with you - it's desperate. This is all pretty ironic, coming from a company that produces 2,981,421 metric tonnes of plastic annually without providing any take-back programmes for their product packaging.

Since 1950 'only 9% of used plastic has been adequately recycled'. We clean, sort and separate out our glass jars and tin cans, diligently trying to be eco-friendly and 'do the right thing'. Yet 81% of it will not even be recycled: the global recycling system is fundamentally broken. Before 2020, the world exported its rubbish under the label of 'recyclable materials' to China at a volume of 45 million tons. The west doesn't want to see the plastic pollution they create through overconsumption and lack of investment in recycling infrastructure so instead it's shipped off to lower income countries to deal with. Recycling makes us all feel better: it alleviates some guilt about buying plastic. But, for many, the weight of climate anxiety will not be lifted by rinsing out a few tin cans.

Perhaps we need to think back to primary school - those days where the climate crisis was all about the 3 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle. Clearly too much emphasis has been placed on the third R - and it's just not working. Buy everything zero-waste and unpackaged- the problem will be solved. I would love to live a completely waste-free lifestyle and avoid recycling all together but, sadly, it's not that simple. Zero-waste stores, while on the increase, are for the most part inaccessible to the majority of the population. They generally tend to exist only in big cities and even here, in Glasgow, they are few and far between. Furthermore, the high cost of buying zero-waste groceries means many people simply cannot afford it. This includes myself, a full-time student who has quite deliberately never lived more than ten minutes from a Lidl. So, here we are: stuck. We can't afford to eliminate plastic packaging and we also can't ensure that it gets recycled. This is just one of dozens of climate-based issues we face today. It's easy to think: what can I really do? Sit by and watch while the planet burns? That certainly would be the easier option.

But I, like many others, am passionate about tackling climate change. Some may say annoyingly passionate. I refuse to let climate anxiety crush me into inaction; instead we must be proactive in handling this issue. Individual choices, while important, are not going to solve this issue single handedly, we must demand system change.

Taking climate action can feel isolating. The government's inaction can leave us feeling abandoned and betrayed, rather than supported. However, surrounding yourself with a community of people who are positive about climate action and want to take steps in the right direction can help us feel less alone. The recent #uprootthesystem march on September 24th, saw climate activists in Glasgow come together and empower each other to demand climate justice. After over a year of lockdowns, where protests were largely banned, the experience left me hopeful for the future. Climate anxiety sucks; but actively working towards climate justice might just elevate it - at least a little.

CLIMATE ANXIETY:

IN THE BATHROOM

DESIGNER
HOLLY MACLEOD
@hmacleod.designs

PHOTOGRAPHER
CRAIG SHEWRY

DIRECTION
EILIDH AKILADE,
LUCY MCLAUGHLIN,
TIARNA MEEHAN

MODELS
ALEX BENJAMIN,
GEORGINA SPIVEY

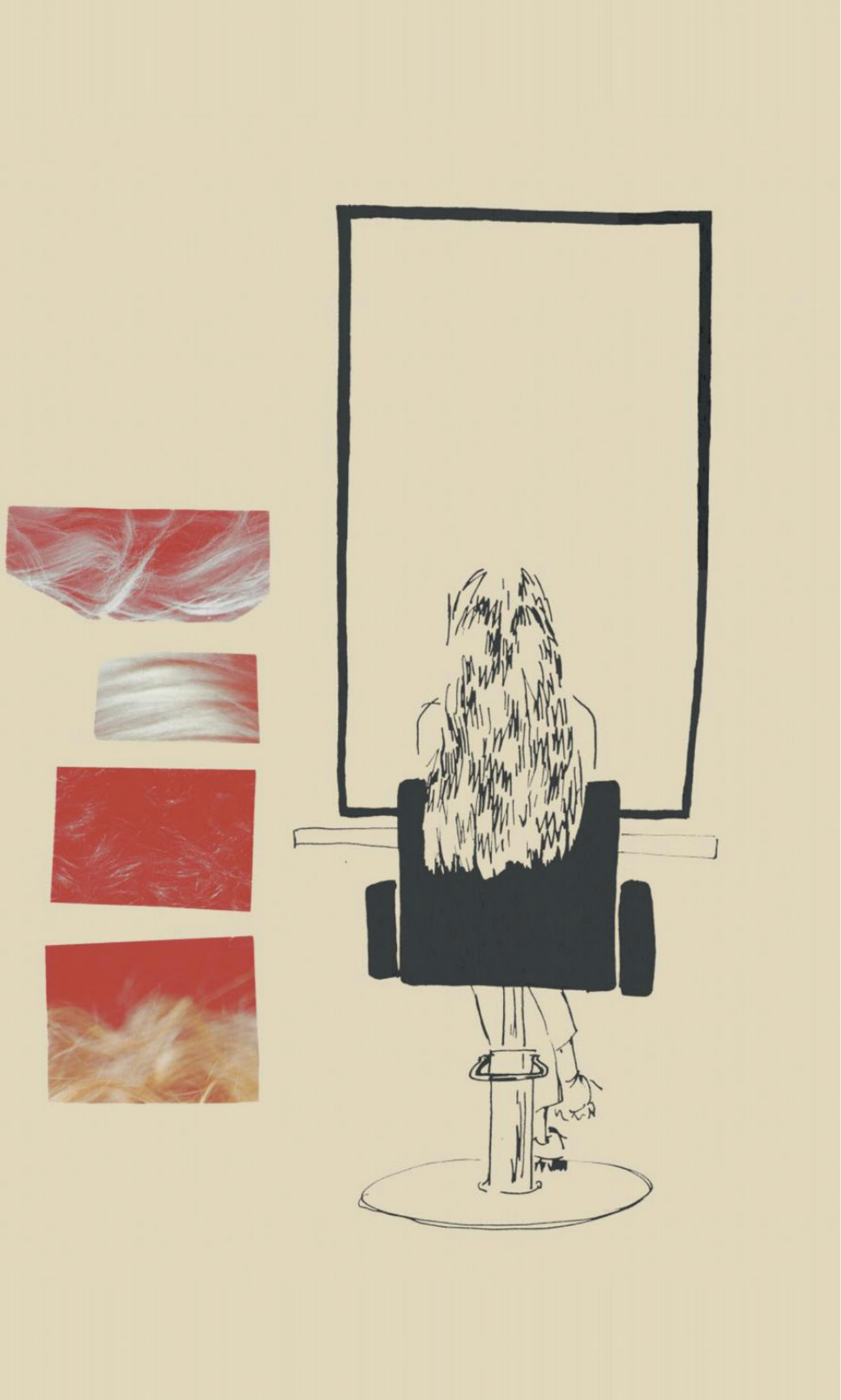
WHETHER IT'S A SHARPIE SCRIBBLED CUBICLE OR A MARBLE TILED ENSUITE, BATHROOMS ARE PRIVY TO OUR INNERMOST CONFESSIONS. WITHIN THESE WALLS WE OBSERVE AN EPITOME OF CHANGING STATE: FULL THEN EMPTY, DIRTY THEN CLEAN, LOW THEN HIGH. THE BATHROOM IS A PLACE OF WELCOME RESPITE. WE'RE GRACED WITH A BRIEF, YET ESSENTIAL MOMENT: A MOMENT TO RELIEVE (OURSELVES), A MOMENT TO REAPPLY (THAT MASCARA), A MOMENT TO RETHINK (THAT DRUNKEN TEXT). THIS EDITORIAL SHOOT CAPTURES THE BEAUTY OF THIS FOUND LIMINALITY, WITHIN EVERYDAY MUNDANITY.

THE AES-THETICS OF HEARTBREAK

WORDS
ESTHER MOLLESON
(SHE/HER)

ART
OLIVIA JUETT
(SHE/HER)

THE AES-THETICS OF HEARTBREAK



When you look in the mirror, you aren't the same person who belonged to them: you belong to yourself now.

Breakups suck. They can leave you feeling empty, unsure of who you are; and, what's worse, the one person you would usually confide in is now the very source of your emotional torment. So now you must, once again, face the reality of single life. This is hard to do when everything reminds you of your partner: when you look in the mirror you see the hair they used to touch and the face they used to kiss. It feels like your body doesn't belong to you anymore: instead to someone who no longer wants it.

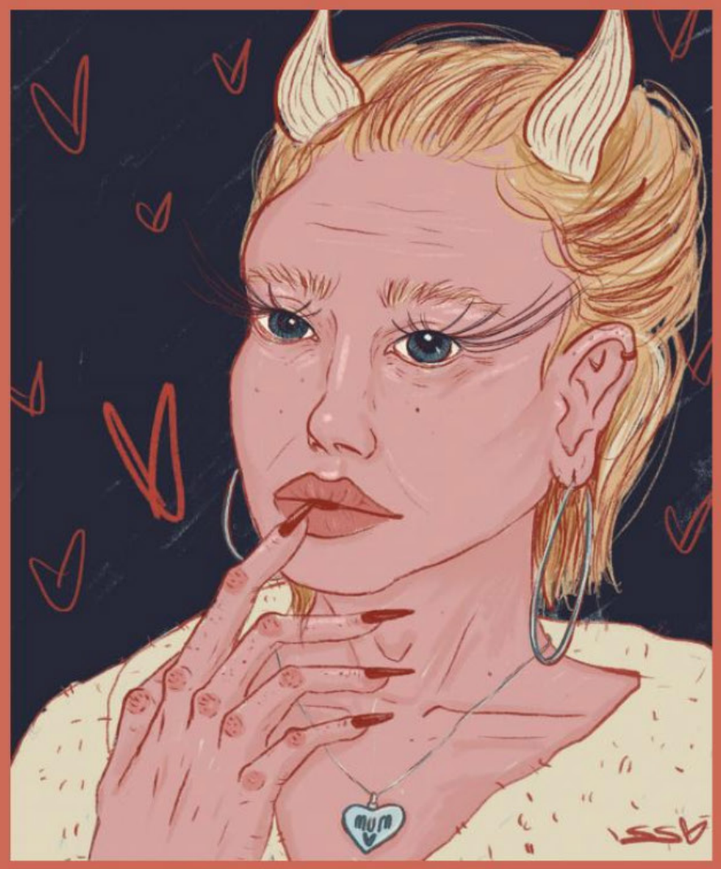
Scissors in hand and a sizable glass of pinot in the other: no sensation quite parallels the unadulterated freedom of a post-breakup appearance overhaul. And when it's finally your turn to enter post-breakup makeover mode: go wild, this is not the time to hold back. Although, from my personal experience, I've found it's best to always consult at least one friend or family member before you go and give yourself that pink mullet. The real fun of the drastic makeover lies in the sweet high of social rebellion - just know that if your trusted advisor says it's a good idea, then you're probably playing it a little safe.

More often than not, your breakup isn't the last time you'll see your ex – you may have to see them on a regular basis (rendering the makeover that bit more cr ucial), or perhaps you'll just bump into them every now and then, at some mutually loved coffee spot. Cutting your hair, getting a new piercing or adding a new tattoo to your collection sends a message that, while your relationship may be over, your life is not. It's not just about ensuring your ex knows that you're managing fine without them (although it is satisfying to see that shocked look on their face): it's about the way your changed appearance reflects back on your subconscious. When you look in the mirror, you aren't the same person who belonged to them: you belong to yourself now. And this can be a very meaningful step towards getting your confidence back when you're still internally disorientated.

Empowering as it may be to go for the big chop, you'll learn to understand that there is a certain stigma attached to the breakup makeover: prepare to be patronised. As a woman, I've found that perhaps the most freeing aspect of a relationship ending, other than the money and time you save in singlehood, is the period before you are ready to start again with someone new. If you're anything like me, you probably internalised the (sometimes less than) subliminal messages in 'chick flicks'. You ought to have a love interest on your radar at all times – until you eventually get married and have babies with one of them, of course. But when your heart is still aching from the loss of your last partner, you are granted this sweet, albeit normally short-lived, period of time when you aren't seeking external validation. In fact, you actively don't want the complications of a possible new partner while you're still reeling from the last one. Embrace this time: you are finally free to look, dress, and act however you want, without the concern that it won't appeal to romantic onlookers. And this, I would propose, is the very reason why, just when you're feeling your most liberated, suddenly nobody will take you seriously. The patriarchy cannot accept a woman who does not live to appease men; and so, a woman who impulsively cuts a wonky fringe at 2am is labelled 'unstable', 'emotional', and 'immature'.

So do whatever the hell you want. Your mind and body are entitled to this state of flux. As you heal inwardly, why not project outwardly? Navigate this newfound autonomy with the comfort that time heals everything - bad haircuts and all.

‘I <3 MILFS’ & OTHER REVELATIONS



WORDS
ESME LLOYD
(SHE/HER)

ART
SÉANIA STRAIN
(SHE/HER)

‘Chick’s a MILF!’ This proclamation, from *American Pie*, is exclaimed in response to a picture of Steve Stifler’s mother. It was this moment that the word ‘MILF’, an acronym for ‘mom I’d like to fuck,’ was first recorded in film. Yet even before its cinematic debut in 1999, , the concept of the ‘MILF’ was solidified in our cultural consciousness, with Mrs Robinson fulfilling the role as early as 1967 in Mike Nichol’s *The Graduate*. For some contemporary MILFs, we may look to Will’s Mum in *The Inbetweeners*, Gloria in *Modern Family*, and, of course, Jean Milburn in *Sex Education*. In popular culture, the MILF conforms to Western standards of beauty. She is often white, curvy but slim, confident in her femininity, self-assured and unattached. Frankly, she looks like she would do housework in a pencil skirt.

The activation of the male gaze within the MILF trope is usually obvious. Using voyeuristic camera angles and constrictive costume design, directors tend to position the MILF within a narrative told by the male protagonist. Yet beyond the camera, the male fantasy of the MILF has real world implications; projecting these pressures onto real mothers further alienates women from their own bodies at a time where they may already feel unfamiliar. Despite the blatant objectification of women within the trope, there is an undeniable satisfaction that comes with an alternative representation of motherhood. Societally, we have been encouraged to view motherhood as inherently unsexual. The minute a woman has a baby she is undesirable: her biological destiny is fulfilled, and thus sexual agency removed. We have a specific term to describe this lack of sexual appeal unique to mothers - ‘mumsy’. This title characterises an unequivocal frumpiness, paired with a body that looks like it has been through the process of birth. There is no male equivalent, no ‘dadsy’.

Perhaps this is why Amy Poehler’s character in *Mean Girls* was so eager to pronounce herself ‘a cool Mom’, not a ‘regular Mom’. We don’t romanticise the aging process in women in the same way we do in men. We don’t swoon over their salt-and-pepper hair or trip over ourselves to crown them ‘silver foxes’. This is partly the seduction of the MILF; for all her problematic, objectified, fantasised existence, she is an older woman romanticised in a way that is culturally unusual. She is rewarded for doing the impossible - being a mother and being hot (something apparently oxymoronic). In this way she is a subversive figure, confidently occupying two roles we place opposingly.

It is this subversive quality that has attracted a new generation to the character of the MILF. The hashtag #MILF has over 469.8M views on TikTok, with ‘I <3 MILFS’ profile pictures and usernames plastered across the platform . Many of the videos on #MILF are also tagged with #wlw (an acronym meaning woman-loving-woman, usually used to identify queerness in women online). The song ‘I Fucked Yr Mom’ by femme queer punk band Sorry Mom also went viral on TikTok, used almost exclusively by women for makeup tutorials, outfit checks, and, of course, queer thirst traps. It now has over two million plays on Spotify. In 2021, the queer community in particular has embraced a subversive use of the term MILF,

The coexistence of her motherhood and sexual agency is dangerous; it is unknown and unconsidered.

detaching it from its misogynistic origins and using it to describe a desire separate from the male gaze. Of course, the ‘I <3 MILFS’ tees, mugs and even thongs that are readily available on Etsy will always be a little tongue in cheek, but for young queer people right now, ‘MILF’ represents a different presentation of queer love. It represents an appreciation and desire for older, independent women who are often left out of our sexual cultural dialogue.

The MILF is a cultural confusion: she resists sliding into the more ‘acceptable’ plain but nurturing mother archetype, but is more complex than the unbridled slut caricature. This woman can’t be defined or explained away into either category. The coexistence of her motherhood and sexual agency is dangerous; it is unknown and unconsidered. This is a threat to patriarchal representations of women: therefore, reducing her into a digestible trope and objectifying her is necessary to protect patriarchal power.

As our depiction of women and mothers on screen broadens, and as younger generations begin to question the cultural landscape they’ve inherited, both the role of the modern MILF and our understanding of it is changing. On my next *Sex Education* rewatch, I still intend to admire Jean Milburn in all her unashamed sultry glory, but I’ll watch with the added understanding that her identity is far more multifaceted than just a ‘hot mum’.

THE PHASES OF LUNAR LOVE

WORDS
MELISSA TIPPING
(SHE/HER)

Whether you're an early bird or a late night grinder, the moon is a well-known companion in our daily lives. This celestial body overlaps scientific discoveries with the religious and spiritual world, two often juxtaposed constructs that have managed to find harmony in our great love for the lunar. For such a silent figure in nature, the moon's influence on us has been phenomenal. For millennia we have looked up to it for advice, guidance, and truth. The moon is the earth's only permanent satellite, perhaps an explanation for our extreme attachment to something that is, scientifically speaking, a 'rock'. In a universe with such uncertainty and darkness, do we trust the moon because 'she' lights our night skies so peacefully? We're seemingly unthreatened by a mystical object we know so little about. As she drifts away from us, slowly but surely, surely we'll find ourselves come rather undone.

Theoretically and literally, the moon conducts our day to day living in a many matter of ways. Lunar calendars are perhaps the most obvious example of this. These are assembled and constructed around the moon's phases: new, waxing crescent, first quarter, waxing gibbous, full, waning gibbous, last quarter, and waning crescent. This terminology may sound peculiar to those unfamiliar with cosmic lingo, but, simply, these all refer to the visual phases of the moon. Before the Gregorian calendar, this process of time-telling was the most reliable source to determine seasonal changes, time span, and solar events.

The moon is a piece of home that never leaves, and she's provided this same solace for so many, across our global collective time and history.

The first record of a lunar calendar was discovered by Alexander Marshack in a sequence of archaeological excavations in Germany and France between 1964-1990. These carvings, dating to the Late Upper Paleolithic age of Europe (around 32,000 B.C.), were an extraordinary discovery. They illustrated how much we relied on and trusted this unknown and distant object to direct and govern our early existence, prior to any scientific understanding of its material composition or our connection to it. It's no surprise that our persistent adoration for the moon is so strong: it runs in the (ancestral) family.

The infatuation continues heading into the era of moon rituals. Within many Indigenous cultures, the moon became a figurehead of 'womanhood'; its cycles mirror the menstrual cycle, becoming a feminist symbol for the fluidity and divinity of female growth. During this time it was considered that 'Grandmother Moon' - the name provided by the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island - would provide enlightenment and rejuvenation for those in their heightened state of fertility. However, now, as our understanding of gender develops, so too does our understanding of the moon itself. We may now appreciate its beauty, detached from enforced gendered states.

But there is, of course, an extent to which the feminine positioning of the moon possessed a certain artfulness. It became especially relevant in the cultural shift in literature. Shakespeare speaks fondly of the moon in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', referring to her physical and aesthetic presence countless times. 'Moonbeam', as said by Titania, originates from the play, and has been used since for all manner of alluring poetic imagery. Shifting forwards to the age of romantic poetry and the Sublime, poets such as Keats, Shelley, and Dickinson all dramatically displayed their love for the moon. However, without clinging to gendered personification, Wordsworth's 'Strange Fits of Passion I Have Known' addresses the moon's power and influence, granting it increasing psychic abilities as we descend down each stanza; our moon was not always hailed as 'female', and its strength remains without the label.

In the digital age, our devotion to the moon still stands proud. We've expressed our fascination through contemporary trends such as the infamous Brandy Melville moon phases t-shirt, a product of the large Tumblr moon following of 2014. There's the rapid rise in enthusiasm for astrology on Twitter, particular attention drawn to the intimate 'moon sign' of one's birth chart. Lastly, the recognisable patterns from (largely, ancient indigineous) moon rituals have had an online resurgence on 'witchtok', the witchcraft community on TikTok, where individuals teach and encourage lunar appreciation through acts such as collecting 'moon water'. This continuous, recurring movement where parts of our past roll back into our present, is much like the moon's phases themselves.

Although there is little physical contact between myself and the moon, she's still integrated herself as an incredibly awe-inspiring part of my life. A hidden comfort above: wherever I am, whoever I'm with, if I look up she's sure to be there. The moon is a piece of home that never leaves, even though I may, and she's provided this same solace for so many, across our global collective time and history. I guess in retrospect, this is somewhat my love letter to the moon.

THE PHASES OF LUNAR LOVE

WHAT'S IN SEASON?

WORDS
ANDREW ROGERS
(HE/HIM)

ART
MAGDALENA JULIA KOSUT
(SHE/HER)

CW
MENTAL ILLNESS

'I'm getting ahead of it this year,' he says, apprehensively stubborn and altogether kidding himself. He's picked up a couple lamps, a houseplant (brave), and a 100 push-ups in 30 days exercise routine. 'This year's different,' he says, 'I'm ready for it.' We, my friend and I, are sharing preparatory tactics of something we both know is coming, but neither of us have said its name yet.

It's a dirty word, overcast with shame. Just as depression has the potential to sound hyperbolic, it offers that same feeling of perceived exaggeration. Because, as we all know, everyone gets sad sometimes.

But this isn't just sad, this is skamdegistunglindi: 'depression of the short days,' as Icelanders call it. It's a phenomenon ubiquitous in Northern European cultural histories. In Sweden they have lappsiuka, literally 'sickness of the Lapps.' We anglophones have the wonderfully flippant 'winter blues' and thanks to the work of South African psychiatrist Norman E. Rosenthal MD, we have the unified medical term: Seasonal Affective Disorder. And this year I'm ready for it.

The symptoms of SAD fluctuate in tandem with seasonal changes. This is a result of decreased exposure of light, causing: the increase of melatonin (a chemical that makes you feel sleepy) and the decrease of serotonin (a chemical that makes you feel happy). According to the NHS website, the symptoms are as follows: feelings of despair, guilt, and worthlessness, feeling lethargic and sleepy during the day, sleeping longer than normal and finding it hard to get up, and craving carbohydrates and gaining weight. SAD can be described, in short, as depression affected by seasons.

Professor Alfred Lewy's case study, Manic-depressive with seasonal cycle, was the first case report to study recurring winter depression treated with bright light. Another case report by Rosenthal describes the same patient as a 'bipolar patient'. One individual's testimony from the Witness Seminar discussing the recent history of SAD, held by the History of Biomedicine Research Group, described their misdiagnosis of manic depression and Bipolar II, before eventually becoming one of the first diagnosed with SAD in the UK in the 1980s.

Despite an extractable intensity equivalence between the diagnoses of manic depression and bipolar disorder, and Seasonal Affective Disorder, it is still often viewed as something everyone just deals with; a part of human nature, an evolutionary adaptation to cope with the winter months. But therein lies the rub, these days, there's not much need to adapt for winter. Instead, we push on, like nothing's changing right up till that special day.

If I think about when SAD sets in for me, Christmas seems to mark it. That atmosphere of busy streets and Christmas markets, fleets of families in shopping mode as lights blink in the puddles by their feet. But I don't hate Christmas, I've actually got quite a soft spot for it. I don't hate markets either; I'm all up for record fares and car boot sales. But when it comes to those winter crowds, a heavy loneliness sets in. Or maybe it was already there and is simply heightened by the contrast. There's a stillness to it, like the world is sleeping. Like you've woken up in the middle of the night. So, I go to sleep too.

When the air gets that special kind of chill, and every day is damp with mizzle, all I want to do is sleep. Not just stay in bed. Sleep. It is the oddest feeling. It's not fatigue or exhaustion: it's as if sleep is all I need.

It's well documented that most of us stay up later and later each day if we don't have a resetting cue. So without a consistent sunrise, we have to rely on abstract consistencies to get us out of bed. Most years I have this type of structure to keep myself on track – a job, university – but when that's not there, it's goodbye sleeping pattern and hello circadian drift.

As I was reading into this topic, one testimonial of someone with SAD stood out. Jennifer Eastwood, the same person who described her misdiagnoses at the Witness Seminar, made a point of the similarities between SAD and animals going into hibernation. 'Everything stops,' she said. 'They don't have to function in society during the winter and [...] that causes the problem.' The symptoms are there: lethargy, increased appetite, sleeping longer than normal. The only SAD symptoms not on that list are the feelings of despair, guilt, and worthlessness. Maybe the difficulties people with SAD have, paired with an inability to function productively in society over 'the short days,' is what causes the feelings of despair and worthlessness. For me, I don't think that failing to maintain involvement in society is the cause of the negative thoughts, but I do think those feelings of failure perpetuate detrimental self-image and can spiral the problem.

So does the cloud have a silver lining? Or do we just sit and watch the clock till they spring forward? The NHS suggests getting as much sunlight as possible and exercising regularly (we've all heard that before). It also suggests antidepressants, such as SSRIs, and talking therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Waiting times for non-urgent talking therapies through the NHS have a maximum waiting time of 18 weeks (in my experience, maximum should be read as minimum), so try to book in early.

SAD is still best treated by bright light, according to the specialists. A 2009 randomized control trial performed at the University of Utah demonstrated that 'bright visible-spectrum light therapy has proven effective in the treatment of seasonal affective disorder,' and in a rather ironic twist, a 2020 Harvard publication shows that blue light (which we've all been avoiding before bedtime) is twice as effective at suppressing melatonin compared to other wavelengths, therefore combating one major cause of SAD symptoms.

I've already invested in my SAD lamp. The second cheapest option from *insert generic shopping website*, and so far, it's actually helping. We're still in the preamble of winter, though, so it's still too soon to tell. If you suffer from SAD remember, when you do get really down, message your friend. What they say may not help, but the blue light from your phone just might.

EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE

WORDS
REBECCA KANE (SHE/HER)

CW
MENTIONS OF WEIGHT/FATPHOBIA

[Well I guess a lot has happened]
[you'll learn it again and again and again]

[everything will be fine, everything will be fine, everything will be fine.
Stop being so numb.]
[It scares me but it's also kind of relaxing]
[How] [I'm confused at a lot of things]
[I know your upset but don't be]
[hopefully you won't be afraid next time]

[8:6 1/2 stone] [and it doesn't matter]
[Get down]
[to better.]
[5) You can have your own opinions and
your own ideas. Stop taking everyone else's
and hoping they turn out alright.]

[Good news!]
[I will not be apologetic for my feelings.]
[4) say no to people]
[just get]
[so cringy]
[Things 16 Year Old Me Needs to Learn...]

[You have a right to be crying]
[It's not illegal to be loved]

[you are currently trying to pick between]
[thick skin] [and] [disappointing people]

[I
have
this
dream
where]
[I keep thinking about jumping]
[How mad is that]

[everything's just been building]
[you still bite your fingernails]
[but these things happen.]

[Everything will be fine.]
[It will be insignificant soon]

[Do more things for you]
[Paint] [august]
[and struggle]
[It isn't the world but it's a fun time]

[It's okay to think]
[It's recommended]
[It's really not the end of the world]
[be kind to yourself please]

[It's nice to be happy again.]

[So I'll leave this here
So you can start writing again a different day.]

EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE

A CROWDED PLACE

WORDS
NAOMI MAEVE (SHE/HER)

CW
DISCUSSIONS OF ALCOHOL

Recently, whilst working through the nightmare-inducing set reading for my Theatre Studies class, I came across a hefty discourse on the concept of "liveness". In performance, liveness is the inherent feeling that something you see is present, and happening. It's almost easier to define liveness by what it's not- it is the antonym to "deadliness", to boredom. My attention was piqued when the essay brought up clubbing; how it embodied liveness in its most pure, and physical sense. That feeling of mutual experience, a shared consciousness, the knowledge that everyone around you has a heart thumping to the same proverbial rhythm (probably 'American Boy') as you do.

I had two lockdown birthdays, only turning eighteen as we emerged from that primordial swamp of governmental restrictions and came gasping for the air of people, to just exist in the same oxygen space as others. By the time my group of friends were all eighteen, we were a fortnight from Freshers and didn't want to jeopardise a week of free club entry by catching COVID back home, and so, we played it safe, never experiencing the post-COVID club euphoria. Reaching Glasgow and experiencing the climactic swing of thousands of touch-starved people, all shaking with that fervent energy of the hedonistic, electrified me. It was immediately addictive.

The viscerality of clubbing, drinking, (blacking out), dancing, laughing, (crying), was ensnaring. I remember vividly my hands slipping off some anonymous body's shoulders, slick with sweat and alcohol, the balls of my feet pounding against linoleum, purple crescent moons swelling on my forearms under a hazy fluorescence. My friend and I swayed into the corridor, perfectly conscious and attuned to the rhythm of every beat, foot and call around us. There was a tangible exchange of intoxicated familiarity between everyone I locked eyes with, like I had seen them in a life before and knew I'd someday see them again. We stopped halfway to the smoking area, and that was when the swell of adrenaline-compounded-alcohol hit me like a freight train and I realised I could barely stand. The unapologetic headiness of the dancefloor had rendered me momentarily sober and as soon as we stopped moving I felt like caramel in the kitchen heat, stretching and floating, completely interior, suddenly separate from everybody else in the room, but not removed. The feeling was religious.

I wasted away the hours until I could be back in that space. Even when in the depths of lockdown's sensory deprivation tank, I found I didn't crave the presence of other bodies near me like I did then. As a fox picks a dead foal down to the bone, conscious it might never eat again, I experienced in those clubbing nights a form of excess of living that would've made it seem, to an outsider, like I had three hours left on Earth.

And then there was the guilt. After a year of tentative elbow taps as our primary form of physical contact, waking up in other's sweat, tasting other's stale tobacco in your mouth, knowing that close by there were people still holed up and masked in the 9th floor of a high-rise, completely isolated from the fellowship I was revelling in, wracked me with self-loathing. And yet I couldn't feel regret! I loved those nights. That mutuality of experience, the camaraderie between strangers; it negated the fear. It was a token of our shared humanity.

It takes a room of complete strangers to feel so present. All you share are your feet on the same floor, the same kick drum in your ears, the same vision of a sticky green room and it's sticky green-tinged inhabitants. It's alien and yet it's so unequivocally human. And that's liveness.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
FLUX, WINTER 21/22

CONTRIBUTORS

WORDS
Evie Glen, Lillian Salvatore, Sophie Boyd, Lola O'Brien-Dele, Meg Russell, Sorrel Humphrey, Esme Lloyd, Esther Molleson, Melissa Tipping, Andrew Rogers, Rebecca Kane, Naomi Maeve

VISUALS
Alistair Quietsch, Olivia Juett, Ella Edwards, Seania Strain, Magdalena Julia Kosut

EDITORIAL SHOOT
Designer: Holly Macleod
Photographer: Craig Shewry
Direction: Eilidh Akilade, Lucy McLaughlin, Tiarna Meehan
Models: Alex Benjamin, Georgina Spivey

TEAM

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
Eilidh Akilade, Tiarna Meehan

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Lillian Salvatore

FEATURES EDITOR
Anest Williams

CULTURE EDITORS
Sophia Archontis, James Taylor

POLITICS EDITOR
Conal McGregor

STYLE & BEAUTY EDITOR
Lucy McLaughlin

SCIENCE & TECH EDITOR
Kieren Mehta

CREATIVE WRITING EDITOR
Hannah George

COPY EDITOR
Meg Gray, Megan Farrimond

RUNNING COLUMNISTS
Izzie Chowdhury, Lola O'Brien Dele

GENERAL COLUMNISTS
Rosa Gilder, Cameron Rhodes, Marta Zarantonello, Jackson Harvey

PODCAST MANAGER
Rebecca Kane

VISUALS DIRECTOR
Magdalena Strzyczkowska

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:
Esther Omez **(JOURNAL)**
Giulia Saporito **(PRINT)**

GRAPHIC DESIGN ASSISTANT
Jessica Harle **(JOURNAL)**

EDITORIAL ARTISTS
Olivia Juett, Séania Strain, Magdalena Julia Kosut, Eliza Hart, Ella Edwards

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY CURATOR
Eliza Hart

WEBSITE MANAGER
Nadim Ouf

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS
Violet Maxwell, Mia Squire

BUSINESS DIRECTOR
Jade Harries

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Roisin Craig

EVENTS MANAGERS
Jess Sullivan, Marta Przygodzka

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION OFFICER
Ross Tanner