

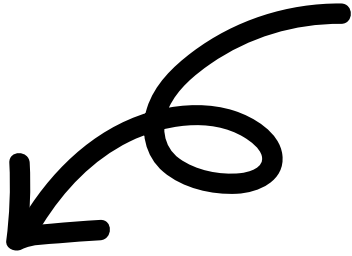
# **SWEET**

**ISSUE 10 - VOL 1**






**poLEMICAL**  
**zine**





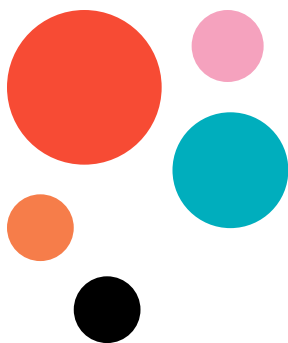
## NEW FEATURE!

Click the coloured lines on the sides of each page to browse by medium

-  **WRITING/POETRY**
-  **PHOTOGRAPHY**
-  **VISUAL ART**
-  **MUSIC/VIDEO**







# VOLUME 1

"For the **sweet** souls who make this magazine possible."

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rebecca McLaren | @babygotbecs

## HEAD LAYOUT ARTIST

Andrea Valdivia | @nea.au

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Dead Elk | @DeadElk\_Design

Kirin Xin | @kirixin

Rebecca McLaren

## ILLUSTRATOR

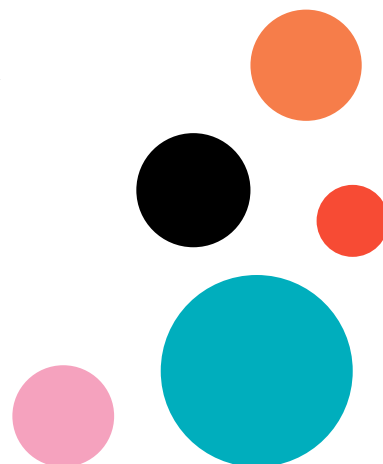
Dina Baxevanakis | @dinadraws36

## PODCAST MANAGER

Taniya Sheikh | @taniyaxsheikh

## SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Margo Sulek | @alienmargo







DEAR READER...



Dear reader,

Do you crave what is sweet or what is savoury? What do you want? What do you need? And can a craving overpower all reason?

When the angel and devil on your shoulders both speak in singsong voices, even selfish intentions appear good. When your heart and brain disagree, it's not always clear which voice speaks louder (nor if the louder voice is the one that should be trusted... trust me).

You know sugar coated words cause cavities; you know candy-coated exteriors are only skin-deep, but you expect toothache – not heartache – and so you let yourself fall for it anyways.

Reasoning that even a small taste of heaven is worth it. Reasoning that sweet nothings really mean something, and a sprinkle of sugar or a dash of syrup can make anything – anybody – a little sweeter.

For life can be oh so very sweet: childhoods wrapped in ribbons and bows and hand-drawn rainbows sparked from imagination instead of storms. You'll hold some days dear, like gentle hugs of sunlight peeking through cotton candy clouds and the darling angels you've held in your own loving arms.

But life isn't always sweet. Bitter moments burn like acid, polluting blood with sour salts and strong spices. Rotten attitudes spoil, spawning molds and sharp stench. There will be harsh; there will be mean; there will be violent. There will be numb, bland days – memories so stale, they are no longer worth saving in the pantry.

To the artists, thank you for spilling sweet secrets of lovers come and gone. For accepting the sour parts of life and sharing their bitter tastes in curved lines and rich lullabies. So that we can learn to appreciate true kindness. So that we can relish in all that life has offered us – the sweet, the sour, and everything in between.

As we celebrate our tenth issue, I cannot help but feel grateful for all this community has accomplished in the past two years. Starting as a one-off, mini magazine (which I had to beg friends and family to partake in) and growing to represent over 400 artists in 37 countries seems like a dream. Not only this, but the most creative, talented, and hardworking group of volunteers has agreed to join me on my journey to take Polemical Zine to new heights (read up on our talented team [here](#)).

Whether you contributed one painting or twenty, whether you wrote a full interview or just gave our magazine a quick glance, we could not be more thankful. Your continuous support for us and our mission has helped us prove to the world that we are all artists.


I cannot wait for the next chapter of our adventure.

Much love,  
Rebecca McLaren  
Founder & Editor-in-Chief of Polemical Zine

P.S. With our tenth issue comes many new and exciting opportunities for you as an artist and reader. Check out our brand new website, Facebook page, and collaboration forum: Patchwork!

\*All work is the property of its original artist. Thoughts and opinions expressed in the works of this publication belong to each individual and independent author.\*





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# MEET THE THE NEW FACES OF



Rebecca McLaren  
(she/her)  
Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Rebecca is a spirited, 22-year-old storyteller with a passion for art, social activism, and trashy reality television shows. She completed two years of media studies at Western University and graduated with an HBA from The Ivey School of Business in the spring of 2019. Her work ranges from abstract acrylic paintings, to handmade collages, to poetry and creative writing, and her pieces deal with topics of mental health, sexuality, feminism, and heartbreak. Most mornings, Rebecca regrets having cut her own bangs.

Both Rebecca's art and writing have been published by Openwide Zine, Rally Zine, Alien Pub, Like A Girl Zine, Guillozine, CPPIB.com, A Vent Zine, Lame Kid Zine, The Humming Collective, Semicolon, Symposium, Nom de Plum, Synapse Zine, The Moon Zine, Stone Cold Ladies, Iconoclast Collective, Volta, Ultra Pink Zine, Lithium Zine, Suburban Rose Magazine, English Rose Zine, Double-Take Mag, Grace Galore Magazine, Jawbreaker Zine, Wednesday Zine, and Uniquely Aligned.

Rebecca lives in Toronto, Canada. When she's not managing and curating content for Polemical Zine, she enjoys dancing in her kitchen, wearing flashy jackets, and spending her life savings on green juices.

Say hello on Instagram @babygotbeecs!



# THE TEAM

## POLEMICAL ZINE

Margo Sulek is a lively and enthusiastic 18-year-old, also known by the alias @alienmargo. She is an Architecture student, artist and stir-fry enthusiast with a deep passion for sustainability, technology and niche music genres.

In her life, oversaturated with Chinese food and skyscraper designs, she takes flamenco dance classes and makes art relating to modern socio-political issues. Her most recent artwork explores the use of algorithms and AI in image production and its potential to both innovate and contribute to the advent of deepfakes.

Based in Sheffield, UK, Margo likes to spend her time practicing spins and jumps (read: falling over) at the local ice rink and pondering over the most effective posting schedule for Polemical Zine.

Margo Sulek  
(she/her)  
Social Media Manager



Taniya is a vivacious 21-year-old who is passionate about her Indian heritage, feminism, dancing, chicken wings, bubble tea and well... food in general. You can follow her food journey on Instagram @tanyumms or just her @taniyaxsheikh.

Currently in her fourth year of study at Western University and Fanshawe College in Media Theory Production (MTP), specializing in Journalism Broadcasting, she aspires to be an investigative journalist! She's written stories for XFM and Radio Western while also hosting short radio segments on air. She has fully written and produced award winning, short documentaries on polemical topics like Canadian Gun Laws and Strip Club bylaws. She likes to build on stories that often bind people together rather than focus on aspects that will divide audiences.

For a night owl, she starts her days early at 5 am to teach English to kids in China and spends most of her nights mixing drinks at a bar. She's a little crafty with her freelance company Tesigns where she designs logos for small and upcoming companies.

When she's not at work or school, she likes to mess around with her makeup and wigs while dancing to soca/afro beats or spends an eternity on the phone with her mom.

Taniya Sheikh  
(she/her)  
Podcast Manager





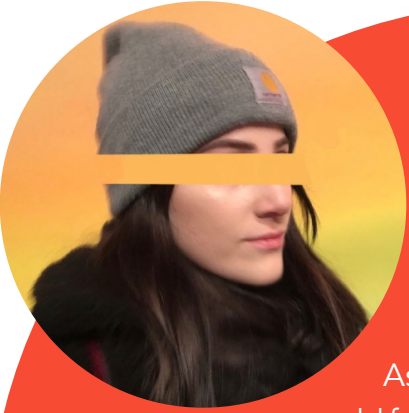
Andrea Valdivia  
(she/her)  
Senior Graphic Designer

Andrea Valdivia is an emerging 24 years old Peruvian artist and graphic designer based in Melbourne, Australia, and goes by the alias, @Nea.au.

Specialising in editorial illustration. Nea's work explores the ideas of fantasy, love, nature, female empowerment, and personalized portraits.

Andrea started drawing at a young age, often choosing sketchbooks over homework. Consequently, she decided to study graphic design where she found a passion for Illustration and visual arts during her exchange program in Australia. She has had her illustrations featured in several fanzines, including Femszine, Dear Movie Zine, Wordly Magazine, and Polemical zine. Nea currently exhibits her work in galleries across Australia and Peru, whilst maintaining a presence on social media and while she's not doing that she enjoys long walks while listening to mystery podcasts or cheesy netflix series.





Astrid  
MacDougall  
(she/her)  
Graphic Designer

Astrid is a young and ambitious 24 year old from Scotland, and while she's not making doodles she's working hard towards a qualification in Media & Television, and has dreams of being a boss lady Director. When her head isn't in the clouds, she works on her zany illustrations that heavily inspired by skate art, horror films and 80's punk glam.

When she isn't studying and working on college projects, or doodling her time away she can often be found delving deep into YouTube, playing video games, or taking photos of her cat. More often than not though, she will be found at her actual job at an escape rooms venue.

Dead Elk took its sweet time to come about. Years spent working in telecommunications followed by years spent working solely as a graphic designer ended with a massive step into the unknown by being able to take the opportunity to be a full time father to his daughter.

Since stepping into the unknown, Dead Elk has developed from angst riddled scribbles to a more refined targeted expression of emotion. There is no set style or medium as the works are based on feelings or simply the ideas and thoughts that stomp around my head til they come out. I've no idea what they look like to someone else but know that what they see has been giving my brain crap for a while in some form or another.

With this new found direction in art, also came surprise clarity in regards to design. There have been a few graphic design projects under the name Dead Elk and it has spurred a want to get back to the discipline of it all on a regular basis.

A few days after admitting to myself I miss it and might do it again but only if it's something I truly wanted to work for or towards I saw Polemical's ad looking for volunteers.

Dead Elk - David Walsh  
(it/he/him)  
Graphic Designer





Kirin Xin, often known by handle @kirixin, is an epicene designer and illustrator.

They could have been captain of the football team, but decided to devote their life to beautiful men. Currently working in comic production, they have written zines on music, travel, ghosts, virtual pets, femininity in masculinity, and murder.

In high school they started designing and selling t-shirts, with part of the proceeds going to The Trevor Project. But while taking college classes for their Associate of Arts degree, their focus shifted to graphic design and comic illustration. At present, they are working as the lead writer and illustrator for an unannounced comic series, as well as doing freelance and graphic design at Polemical Zine. Their most recent projects include work for Comics MNT, Dragon Inn 3, and Springood.

While based out of Missouri, USA, Kirixin likes to spend time traveling, especially to zine fests. When they aren't, they enjoy curating their Animal Crossing town, organizing their cassette collection, and pretending to draw. Much of their work deals in the queer community, especially in countering toxic masculinity in queer men and nb people. Usually they can be found in their natural environment: hanging around DIY pop shows in ugly hawaiian shirts, or laying on their bedroom floor.



Kirin Xin  
(they/them)  
Graphic Designer



Dina Baxevanakis  
(she/her)  
Illustrator

Dina is a small, yet outspoken 21 year old living in a small town outside of Toronto, Ontario. Her love for childhood nostalgia and all things cute mix with her so-called old soul (claimed by her family) to create her playful, weird, and colourful illustrations. Her work focuses on having fun in everyday life, and she hopes that her playful style will one day assist in teaching kids serious topics in a way they can enjoy. She is an aspiring children's book illustrator in her final year in an illustration program, and she has dreams of starting her own business selling her little handmade creations.

She always has to be doing something with her hands, whether it be doodling, crocheting, knitting, or fiddling with whatever she's holding. Her biggest goal for her art is for it to bring joy to people, and remind them of the joyful times they had when they were kids. Besides artsy things, she loves thrifting, watching wrestling, going to rock shows, and collecting old photographs of dead people.

She has had her illustrations featured in several online magazines, including Crybaby Magazine and Polemical zine.



## BOW DOWN TO YOUR ANGEL





## DOING IT MY WAY



often times I feel lost,  
 isolated from my body  
 and left with my thoughts.  
 they scare me,  
 as they scream and shout.  
 saying things I shouldn't be.  
 I retreat back to my phone,  
 consumed by social media's' embrace  
 staying there for a little while.  
 You would think the voices would quieten,  
 yet I still itch my neck.  
 I feel its thick voice pressed against my bones,  
 lurking in the corners of my eyes,  
 and resting on the arch of my back.  
 Meditation says, 'control your monkey mind'  
 my therapist whispers, 'it will soon be okay',  
 but my anxiety asks, 'who are you?'  
 as I replay my stories on Instagram.

- lost identity

Natasha Saedi.

## Abstract Confessions







On the Bed

BS\*

we couldn't locate a corkscrew  
 in this hipster "Shrine Room Brooklyn Loft" Airbnb,  
 belonging to an eclectic "visual artist yogi dad".  
 We tell ourselves it was well worth it  
 to escape Spanish Harlem and exist in solitary harmony  
 (for \$123 a night, might I add).

so it's our nonfiction NYC Lesbian Lair tonight  
 And I'm eager to revisit how sweet you taste.  
 It's a lost feeling I've missed most,  
 even when we're on borrowed sheets  
 and stolen time that I refuse to let go to waste.

Well fuck. We spilled the wine  
 during my poorly delivered  
 "Reunited & It Feels So Good" toast.  
 We watch the pink pool gather on the wood floor,  
 as I laugh at myself for doing the absolute most.  
 It mingles with the remnants  
 of the abstract landlord's charcoal chips.  
 "Perhaps an improvement", I muse,  
 as I absentmindedly trace patterns over your skin  
 with deliberately clipped cherry-stained fingertips.

eventually and expectedly the world begins to sway...  
 in only a way that cheap moscato manages to induce.  
 But I still refuse to tap out  
 as I am at risk of missing moments,  
 no matter how much sleep repeatedly attempts to seduce.

bittersweet, b i t t e r s w e e t dreams  
 and I wake with the familiar sweet aches of exertion.  
 Fuzzy mouth feelings indicate  
 a moscato night successful,  
 the finale a groggy "Jesus, it's too bright,  
 close the fucking curtains".

I understand what bittersweet means  
 because it's the only way to describe  
 how moments such as these feel in completion.  
 Coupled with how sickly-sweet that \$14 bottle  
 of Barefoot moscato tasted,  
 it's an adjective I've become familiar with,  
 one that this weekend I'll have used to depletion.

\*BS: bittersweet



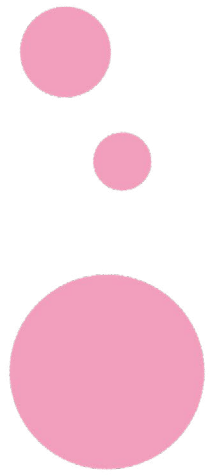
















PEACHES

The sand was cold on my toes,  
the blanket scratched my skin,  
peach juice dripped down my chin,  
and I could not stop looking at you.  
It was sticky sweet on my lips.  
All I can think about are your lips.  
What you said makes sense  
it always does  
but that doesn't mean it doesn't hurt.  
It hits like a stab in the chest, in the heart, in the foot,  
but I will always feel my best when you meet my gaze.  
It feels like I'm floating and made of air,  
dancing, prancing through a meadow,  
in a world where only we know the language.  
The waves keep crashing.  
I will always think of you when I'm at the beach.  
These moments are the ones that feel the best,  
the sweetest,  
and the ones that will hurt the most...











# MIDSUMMER

CREATIVE DIRECTION:  
SAM STONES &  
SHEILA GRANT DUFF  
@SISTERNEXTDOOR

PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM STONES  
STYLING: SHEILA GRANT DUFF  
MODEL: SHEILA GRANT DUFF









A Bakkheia is a chaotic festival from Greek/Roman myth celebrating the god Dionysos/Bacchus, and is the inspiration behind -and title of- my poem.  
[jocelyndiemer.wixsite.com/mywork](http://jocelyndiemer.wixsite.com/mywork)

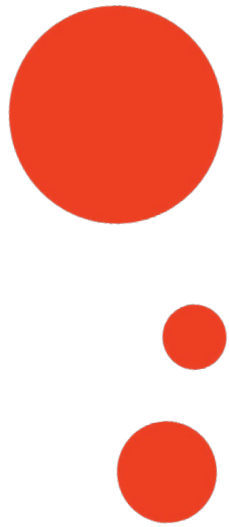
## Bakkheia

Bare feet on the tile and  
A shaking hand on the door  
I step out of my house  
Away from the tension  
and worried whispers  
and disapproving looks  
and parenting books  
and quoted bible verses

I slip into the forest where  
I join the dance and  
the wild women greet me  
with open arms and he  
is there that lively  
god so different from the one  
my parents beg/pray  
to heal me of the  
sickness that twists  
and corrupts my heart

But the revellers cheer  
at my depravity and they  
applaud my twisted desires  
the women grab me and place  
my hands on their hips and  
they kiss my cheeks and feed  
me glass after glass of sweet  
sparkling wine that drips down  
my chin and fills my head with  
glorious/terrible visions

Bare feet in the dirt  
scratched and bruised  
and blood mixes with  
the papery skins of crushed  
grapes turning the forest floor  
into a tapestry of ecstasy

















## BILLBOARD ON THE MOON



HANDMADE WITH 8 PIECES OF PAPER  
AND TAPE



## MEERZILLA



[SOCIETY6.COM/COLLAGETHEWORLD](https://www.society6.com/collagetheworld)



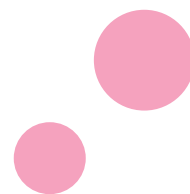


## ABSTRACT CONFESSIONS: ALONE TOGETHER.

I read somewhere that the Earth is  
in between Venus and Mars,  
Venus being the planet of love and  
Mars being the planet of war.  
Does that ever make you wonder?  
how we're in this timeless space,  
sometimes filled with tender affection,  
but often times consumed with lusting hate.  
I've held onto too much water,  
trying to figure out the  
ins and outs of humanity's rationality.  
Now I feel the tides of the oceans drip in between my fingertips,  
as my mind floats away with tomorrow's questions.

- Alone Together

Natasha Saedi.

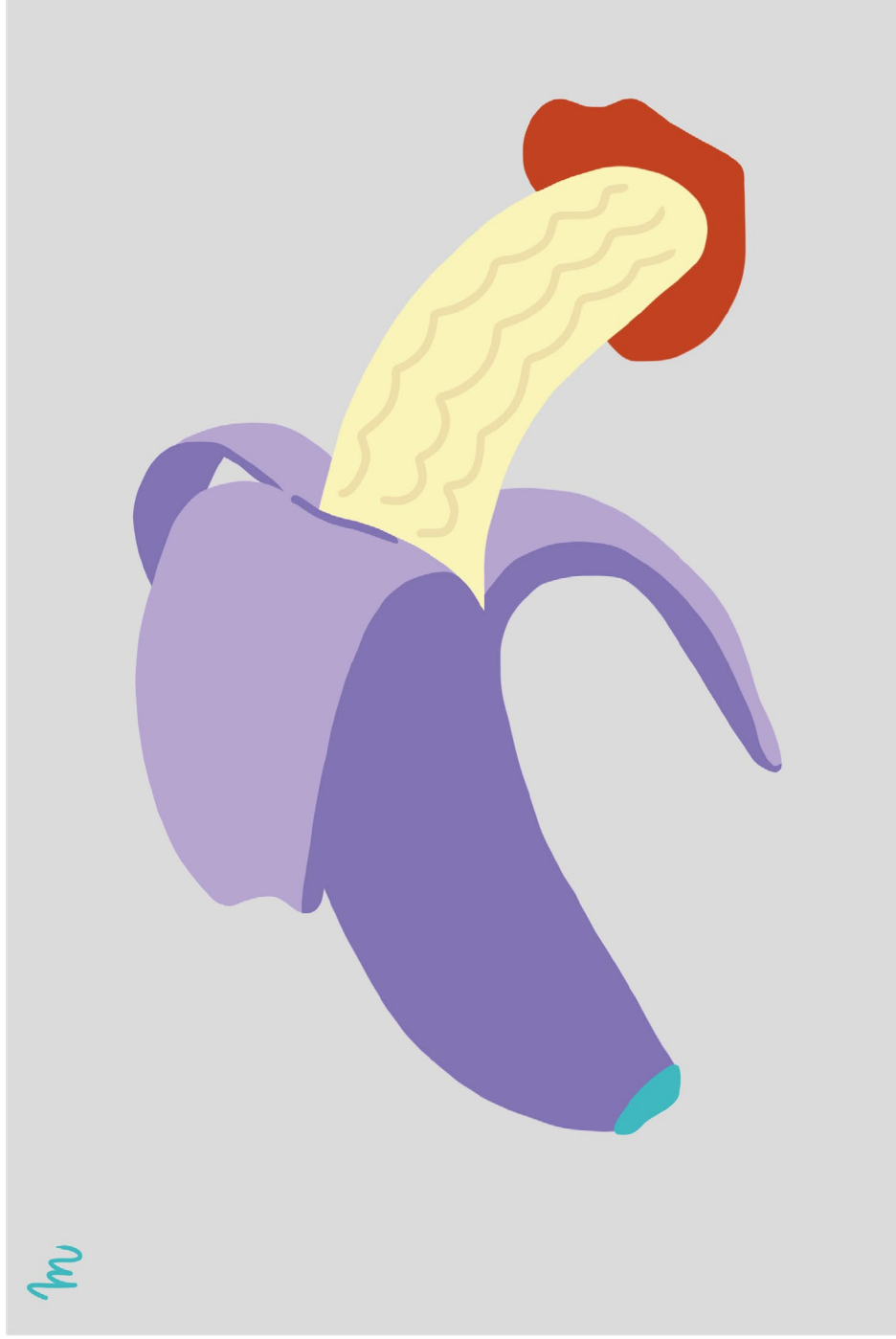




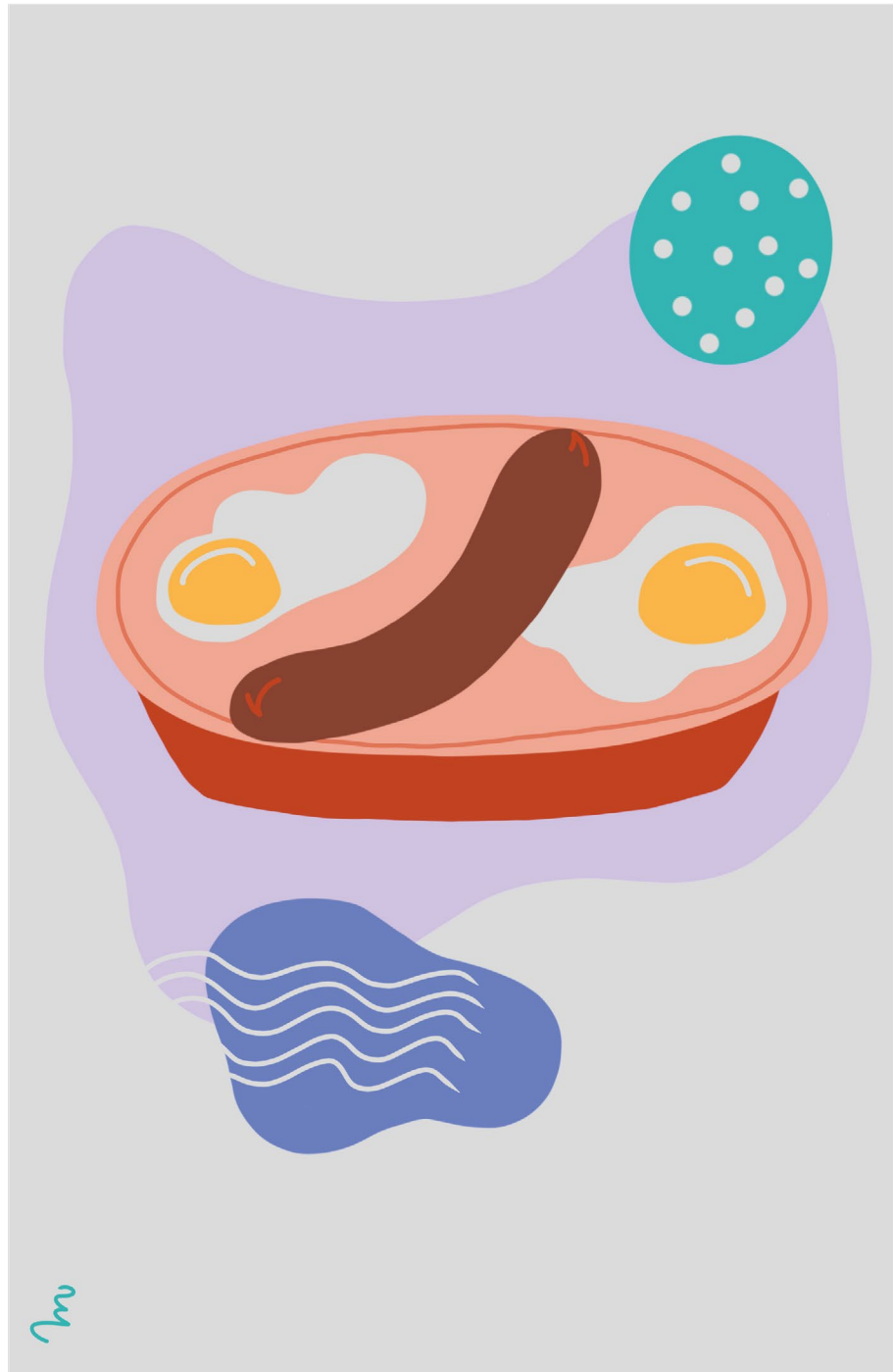




# HEALTHY LIVING



# PORN DIET









She brings me chocolate  
And tells me that she thought of me,  
I slip a hand between her thighs to tell her  
that I also thought of her.

I relish the sweetness of her kiss,  
the flavor of the urgency that fills my mouth.  
Her inner desires--honey, agave nectar, syrup--oozing from her pores onto my tongue.  
I taste them when I press my lips to her skin.

She offers me candy-coated heart with delight,  
melting in both my mouth and my hands.  
Long, languishing licks leave me breathless,  
lungs yearning for air as she covers my mouth with her own.

The delectable promises that we're waiting to exchange are ripe, ready for consumption.  
If we don't make the sweetest lovers, I'll never trust my tastebuds again.  
Lucious lust, sapphic saccharine, dessert always our destiny in a way:  
But you know what every dentist will caution--too much sugar leads to decay.









# DESSERT





# BAKERY

## CAMDEN STREET

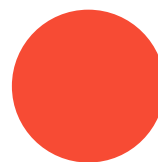
Trains pass overhead  
Street light fancies  
On This twilight  
Door bell shatters  
Cake to collect

Order slip in hand  
Icing hangs from  
The ceiling  
Name in red  
Sprinkle painted floor

Fur coat filled  
With sponged jam  
Eyes taped shut  
Blasphemous taste  
On my tongue

Atoning for this  
Savoury sin  
Mouth too wide  
Stuffed with black  
Velvet

Alter man cannot hear  
Choking for this treat  
Come back,  
Another time  
This order isn't ready .





# secrets

i feel, even now, the truth hanging in my throat,  
suspended by the doubt that you smeared across my tongue.  
the truth is now twisted, caught in a sound that i can barely choke out,  
the words are stuck between our lips,  
they were the softest i had ever felt,  
until your teeth came crashing down  
onto my tongue, breaking apart all syllables.

you only kissed me to seal away doubt.

and for a while, it worked,  
what you did was locked away behind my teeth.  
but, what you forgot was just how sweet your lies could be.  
slowly but surely, each tooth began to rot,  
and the cracks in my smile began to show.  
only then could i speak.  
the shame that poured from my gums was acidic,

and the taste still lingers









SWEET CREAM

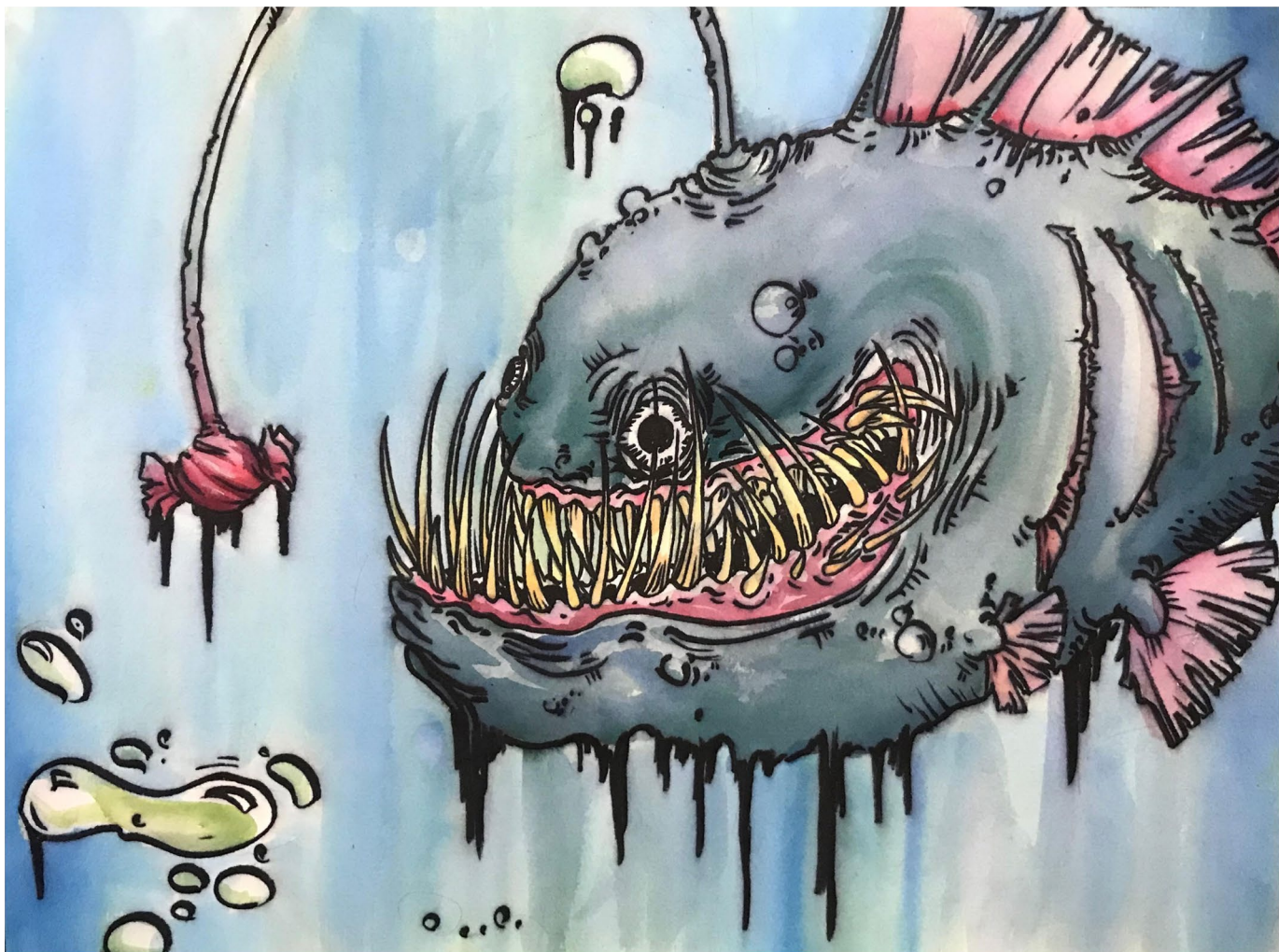














It is often noted that people have the power to  
and to achieve this, one must take action.

*Actions may speak  
But they don't have  
A forceful act  
but a gentle one*

has the po

*Almost mesmerizing to gaze upon it  
Almost trapping you in a subconscious h  
Staring into a plethora of pleasur  
That gives you light durin*

*Perhaps a person who al  
With a face unlike  
They might  
And*

*And although this fe  
Just as the sun can't  
Memory of that face th  
Will it fail to make you*

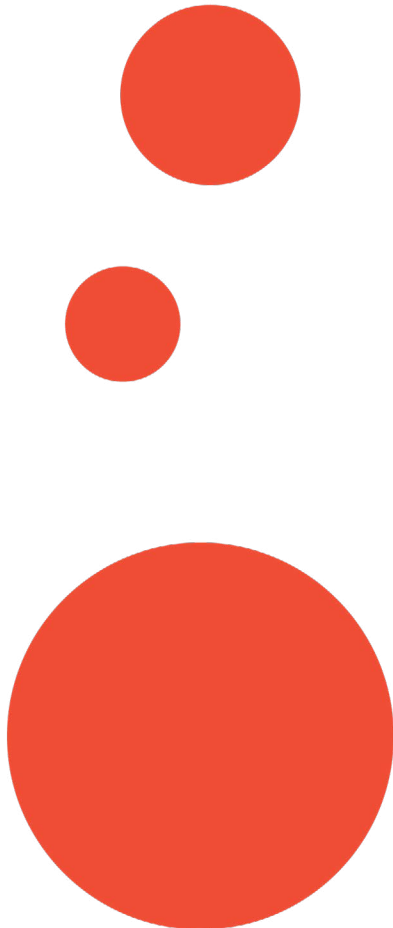
**Ne**

The muscles that contract as you show your s  
The gums tha  
The folds of skin that pronounce thoroughly c  
The slight change in your

*I am foolishly en*

Every single detail, no matter how small, or ho  
facial gesture so enticing. But to me, you hone  
world; a face that can only be depicted as that o

After all, it's perfect to



Smile"

to create change

*louder than words,  
e to be aggressive.  
may convince,  
e will motivate.*

Something as simple as a facial gesture  
power to move what a thousand words couldn't.

*maze  
re  
g darker days*

*ways greets you  
any you've ever seen  
t make you feel light on your feet  
l question what happiness might truly mean*

*feeling might not last  
rule the sky forever  
at made your life easy  
u fall in love yet again?  
ver.*

*lightly-tinted teeth,  
t barely pop out from under your pinkish lips,  
on your cheeks,  
r voice, your breath as you let out a soft laugh,  
amored by it all.*

ow seemingly imperfect, is what makes a  
e a face that can change a person, or an entire  
of a deity.

o me - it's your **smile!**











# Tangerine and Bubblegum

I imagine that your lips taste  
Like tangerine and bubblegum  
That I would melt into your arms  
Like the sun dissolves into my skin  
On a sunny afternoon  
I imagine that that your hair  
Would tickle my nose  
As I breathed you in  
And that your hand would be  
Soft and warm in mine  
I imagine that these soft daydreams  
Would slip through my fingers  
If I tried to hold on for too long  
And that I'd taste blood  
From biting my lips, trying to hold back  
The words that crawl up my throat  
And die prematurely in my mouth  
I imagine that your lips taste  
Like tangerine and bubblegum  
And that mine  
Taste like ash  
And deep sorrow







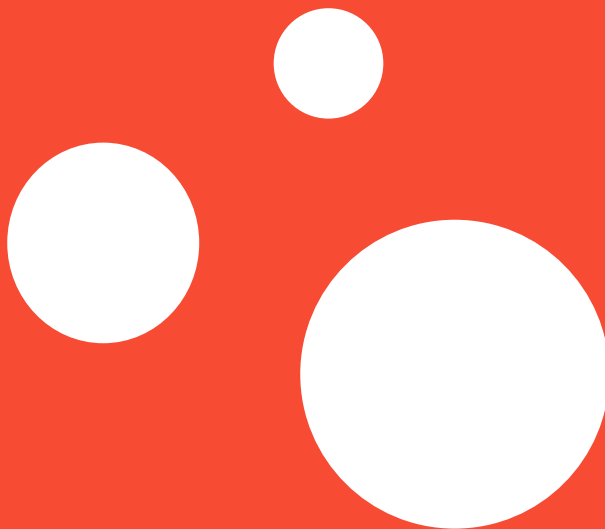




@DIANA.KROSHILOVA

# The Riddler

I'd kill to unlearn the human body for all its tempestuous riddles  
to abandon the space behind one's ear,  
and the close proximity of the tilt of a mouth towards  
another in a line of tongue like a curving question mark. You can ask  
and ponder, but the heart never answers straight. There are three  
precise pinpoints along the femur where if hit, the victim  
will never walk again. Some people keep walking  
like some people keep drinking  
like some people keep using even though it's physically impossible  
cause the heart riddles. It told me, it asked,  
What belongs to you, that other people use more? Your name.  
Good one. Say mine back.









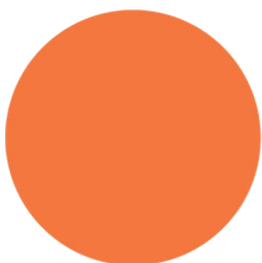




# TOOTHACHE

if you ever really loved me, you would've been sweeter, with tangy juice dripping off of your tongue. your sticky fingers would've tried to stroke my cheek, hold me tight. you left too soon, like ginger, harsh and spicy when you crush it between your teeth. you left my hands blue in shame; i feel alienated, washing away the stains you left on my skin. sometimes, i close my eyes and think how it's a little sad, this bitter aftertaste stinging on the cusp of lips. it feels as though with one lick i could bring that flavor back, bring the past back, bring you back to me. but you've disintegrated long ago, you with your eyes that pierce like salt, with palms cold as ice. memories once palpable now drip down the drain, fluid, seldom solid as they once were. i could try to wash you away. i could try to find another slice of cake, or another person with a cherry on top. but somehow i know it's in vain. the sweet taste of you will forever contaminate each bite, rotting my teeth with your empty presence.









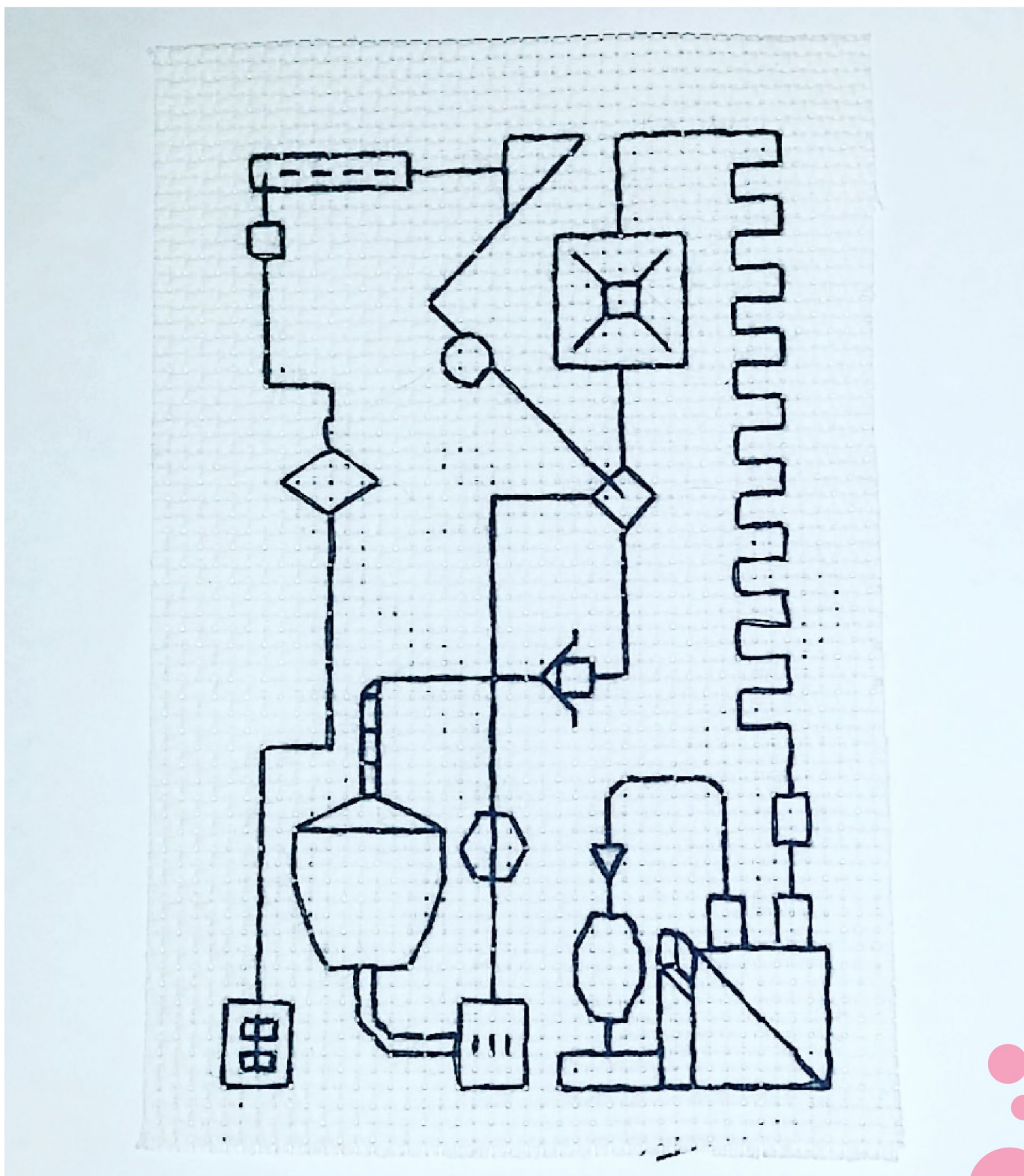


[VERSES.BIGCARTEL.COM](https://verses.bigcartel.com)









Teri Anderson creates work that looks into the idea of craft in art, textiles, installation and sculpture to create a linear or surreal environment which the audience have to inhabit.

The work links to her heritage and how textiles were key in their family history including sample machinists and pattern cutters. Building on this Teri proposes an art practise which incorporates a craft based techniques into the art based discipline of installation.



I WAS A POT FULL OF  
HONEY

UNTIL I SAW A POND  
OF SOUR

AND I LOOKED BACK  
AT THE LAUGHING  
GIRLS SNEERING

AND IT LOOKED SO  
MESMERIZING

~~SO I DIPPED IN~~

~~SO I DIPPED IN~~

SO I DIPPED INTO IT

MAYBE A LITTLE TOO  
HARD

BEAMING WITH PRIDE

I THOUGHT NOW I'M  
SOUR

NOW IF YOU LOOK  
AT ME FROM AFAR  
YOU'D THINK I'M  
SWEET

MAYBE YOU'D <sup>THINK</sup> THAT  
BECAUSE OF MY  
QUIET BE MEANOR

"Maybe I need to see a therapist."

OR MY AVERAGE  
LOOKS BECAUSE WHAT  
ELSE COULD I BE

BUT IF YOU LOOKED CLOSER  
YOU'D SEE THAT I'M FILLED  
TO THE BRIM WITH SOUR

AND I'M SICK OF IT  
IT IS STUCK TO MY  
SKIN

I BATHED AND RAN IN  
RAIN

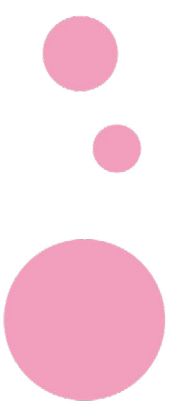
YET IT STILL DRIPS NOT  
KNOWING WHERE TO GO  
EXCEPT IN

IDON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO  
EXCEPT ANALYZE THE  
VIEWS

THE WORDS THAT STEERED  
ME INTO THE POT

MAYBE IT WILL NEVER  
LEAVE MY SKIN

IT IS HARD TO CONVINCE  
PEOPLE YOU'RE SWEET  
WHEN YOU REEK OF SOUR  
AND YOU CAN SMELL IT









# “shaken up, canned soda”

movie  
not real  
you  
me  
this moment  
is real  
i see something  
you don't  
the mind of an over thinker  
it's go time now  
no distractions  
getting older  
books  
movies  
tv shows  
set you up for this moment  
for you to experience life itself  
it is okay for things to change  
it's not  
it's not okay for things to change  
i don't trust change  
i am to blame  
for my constant suffering  
excited as a kid

for the moment  
i grew up  
eager to invent  
a romantic comedy  
for myself  
got older  
realized that isn't in my plan  
i know people can change  
circumstances can change  
not now  
not now  
just getting better  
just getting healthier  
just got my first job  
gotta help my family  
gotta help myself  
gotta love myself  
can't love anyone else  
until i love myself  
can't like anyone else  
until i like myself  
one day i'll have my movie  
this is only the trailer  
- jm

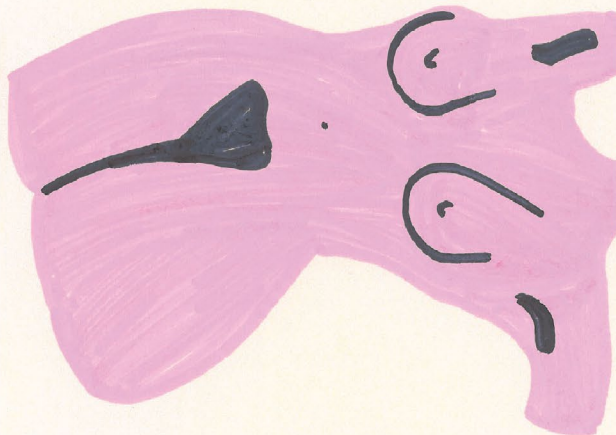


I KNOW HOW



TO WALK HOME

I COME BACK



SO QUICKLY

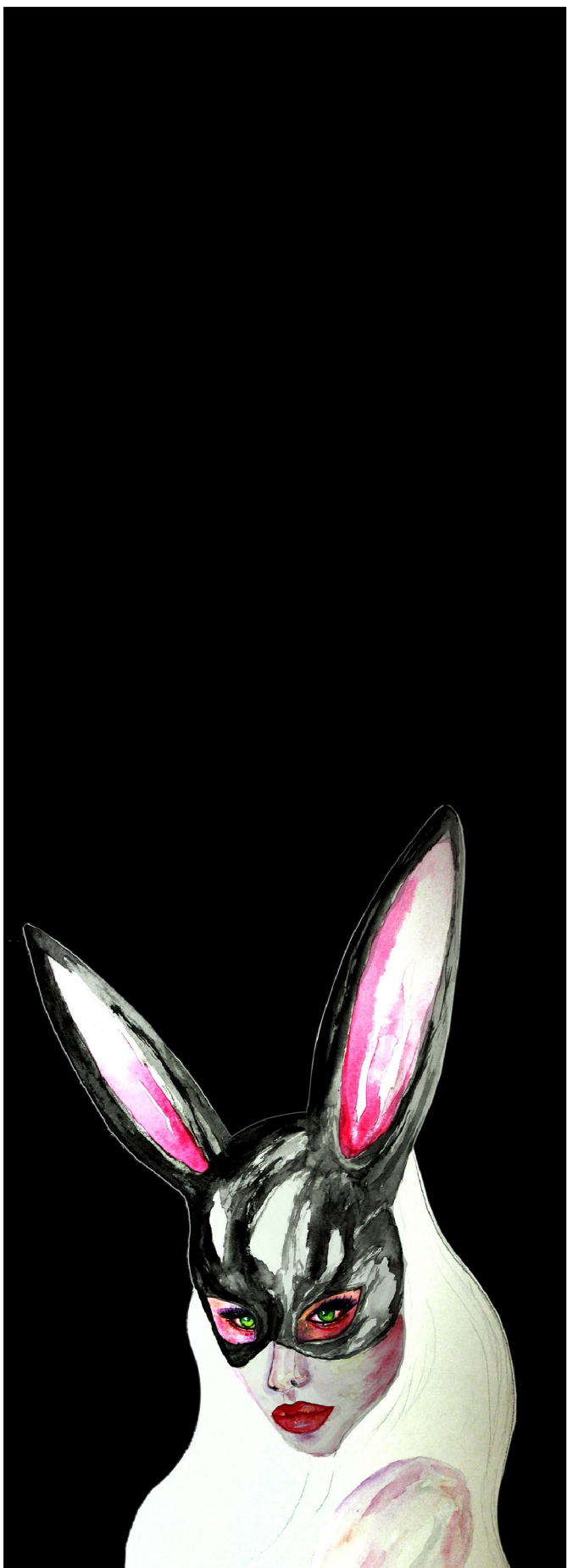
THUMBSTUCK  
TO



THE  
ROOF OF MY MOUTH

DO YOU REMEMBER THE MIRROR IN WHICH YOU  
ARE NOT REFLECTED?



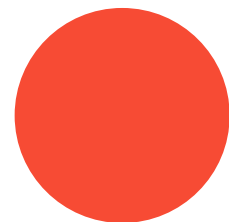






# THE AFTER-PARTY, WHERE EVERYTHING BEGINS

resolution of a childhood mystery: the rainbow  
begins from the neon of your fingertips,  
terminates in a dazzling sprinkle onto meringue.  
what to do with leftovers  
other than the guilt-free digging  
of bare fingers into them, new vacant craters  
narrowing the search for chocolate chip  
and small pieces of each other  
tucked amidst leavened mass.  
some bruises, a pair of laconic tongues,  
salt in excess of recipe requirements.  
if you piece them together, you'll see  
what I meant to say is  
sorry for showing up late to the party.  
I didn't have a knife sharp enough  
to cleave a dry path through the ocean,  
to cut the cake or six at once.  
I couldn't possibly hold a candle  
to the lucent bloom of actual ones  
but you've sent your wish off  
along with them.  
perhaps now, in this dimness,  
the shyest parts can peek out  
and stay like this for a while.  
we've memories and burning  
questions to keep us warm.  
remember how some days  
we laid our threads bare  
and some days aren't some days.  
I took it as a lesson on second chances  
the sky's inability to un-empty itself  
and prevent light from casting  
shadows into existence.  
give me your hands, forgive  
the pigeon of their crossing and  
its eagerness to learn a new way  
home, whatever that might be.  
at least with you here  
it doesn't feel that much different.

















*You're sweet*

By: Pluto Swift

I hand her a bouquet of yellow dandelions.  
My 10th grade crush. My first love!  
I'm bright eyed and unscathed by life.  
"You're sweet, but they're just weeds," she says.

I'm older now. It's raining, no, storming, as we sit in my old Honda.  
The one with the shitty transmission.  
My college girlfriend: together for 3 years.  
I lean back. I'm slick, I'm sly. I put my foot on the moon roof button; it opens.  
Rain falls on our heads; I'll ruin the fabric of my car for this opportunity.  
"Have you ever kissed in the rain?" I say.  
"You're sweet, but you're too idealistic for me," she says.

Years pass.  
She's an "almost-was". You know, the kind that strains your heart.  
Laying in bed together, smoke fills the air.  
"No one makes me laugh like you do," she says.  
I barely manage the words, "May I come closer?"  
"You're sweet, but you're too much for me."

Maybe I'm the problem; It's like I seek insecurity.  
"An illusion of safety," says the therapist.

October 2018: a rainy Chicago evening.  
A woman of twenty-four years: dark hair, winged eyeliner, dressed in all black.  
Forthcoming and honest, "I like you," she says.  
"You're sweet," I say.  
*But, I want to run.*  
"I like you too," emerges from my lips.

A shudder of the internal world as it crosses paths with another.  
Is safety a fabrication? Moments flash by, entwined with her.  
A fear like rain, pouring down from a storm.  
But I haven't kissed in the rain.  
Not yet.

So I ask her, "Have you ever kissed in the rain?"  
The kiss doesn't even miss a beat.  
She says, "You're sweet."





# it's vintage





# ge darling





# Interview with

Questions and art by Kir

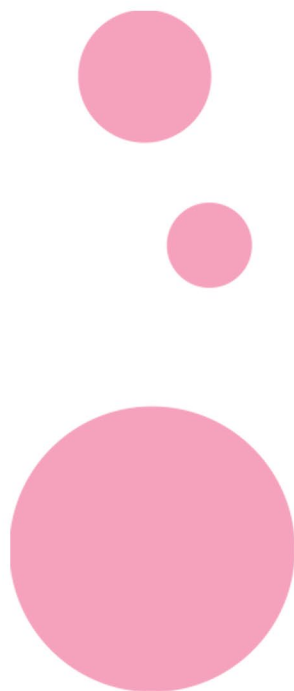
**Name Change** is the collaborative recording project of multi-instrumentalist producer/songwriter Johnny Gerrard. Featuring frequent collaboration from his close friends and live band, Name Change presents a diverse blend of sounds and influences, pulling from psychedelic indie stylings, soulful R&B crooning, and driving hip hop rhythms. When performing live, Name Change consists of Gerrard (guitar, synthesizer, vocals), Audriana Cruz (vocals), Tyler Shaw (bass), Nathaniel Noah (keyboards, synthesizers), Kevin Mason (drums), Will Carol (drums), Carolyn Dufraine (vocals, trombone), Campbell Fackre (guitar), and Lauren Console (vocals).

Inspired by acts such as BROCKHAMPTON and Blood Orange, the role of vocalist often rotates between live band members and collaborators, frequently featuring Audriana Cruz, Lauren Console, and Johnny Gerrard. Instrumentation is often written, recorded, and performed by Johnny Gerrard in his home and mobile studio, but frequently features live members Kevin Mason, Nathaniel Noah, and Carolyn Dufraine on drums, piano, and trombone, respectively.



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NAME CHANGE  
NAME CHANGE  
NAME CHANGE  
NAME CHANGE





## 1. Could you tell us a little about the project and how you came together?

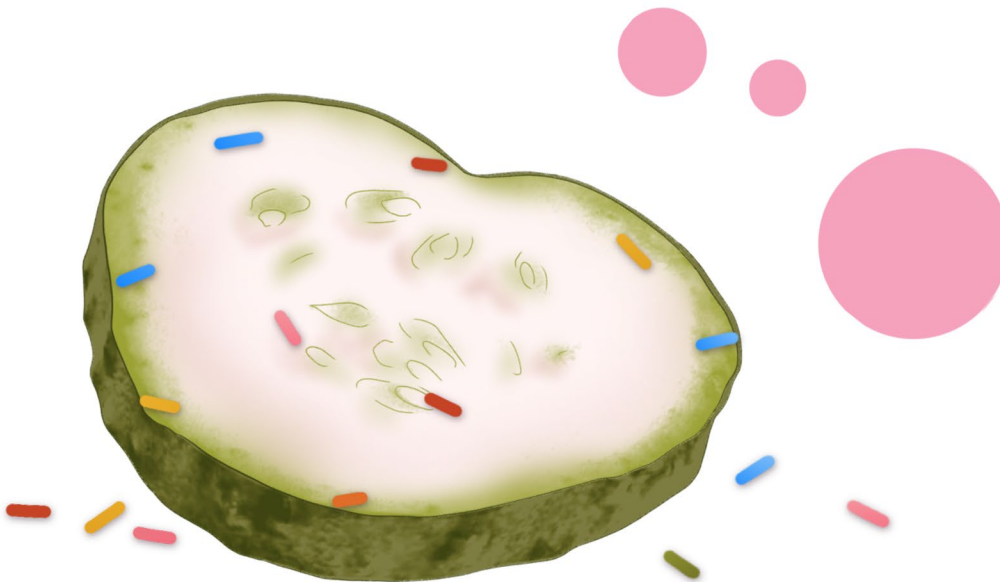
Name Change has existed as a project, in many ways, for the past 4 or 5 years, taking various forms and working with different people.

Growing up and living in Las Vegas, I spent my first two years of high school producing hip hop instrumentals for local artists, while also making instrumental albums in my bedroom that had some small acclaim in underground circles. I put out one album after being severely depressed for a while, called "Doorway to my Darkest Dreams" and that felt like the start of something, whether I knew it or not. I promoted it just through social media, and somehow one of my favorite producers from Odd Future ended up contacting me saying how much he loved it. I was 14, some anonymous nobody on the internet, and in shock. I think then I realized that music can be something more than just something I make for myself in my bedroom as therapy, but rather it can also be put into the outside world and be given to people and create a reaction of its own. This wasn't Name Change yet, but it was the birth of the collaborative spirit and of my musical journey, which would ultimately lead to

the creation of Name Change.

On my 17th birthday, I moved to Massachusetts with my family, not knowing anybody or anything about where I was going. Looking back, this move is what would ultimately change the direction of where my music went, and that is where Name Change truly took form as an idea. I began studying music, learning music theory, studying classical composers and producers alike, and spent a year or two pushing the limits of what I could do as a producer. Inspired by artists such as Sydney in Theory, Arca, Death Grips, Philip Glass, Kanye West, Mozart, and Bach, I made a lot of experimental music that will never see the light of day, but it showed me what I could do with just myself and a computer. But that wasn't enough. I am a huge advocate for self empowerment, and self actualization, but I am also the biggest proponent for collaboration and working with others, because no single person can do everything. I realized I wanted to work with other musicians, and incorporate live instruments into my productions, so slowly but surely I started to work with local singers, guitarists, piano players, horn players, etc. and writing parts for them to play in my music. I made a concept album doing this, called

"The Emancipation of Peter Jones", which featured live musicians as well as a narrated screenplay I wrote. There is a crazy story about the name of this album, but I can save that for another time. While I never put this out aside from physical copies for friends, it was in many ways what Name Change is today, but in the rough



stages. Once I got to college, I would continue to do this with friends (some who I still create with to this day), but Name Change truly took the form it is today during my sophomore year (of college) when I met Audriana Cruz.

I had taken a few months away from production and had began learning guitar, writing folk songs and going back to the basics and essence of songwriting. There were a lot of weird, Neil Young meets Bob Dylan meets Pink Floyd sounding things from that, but it is what helped me really develop my skills as a songwriter. Anyways, I was going through the worst breakup of my life at the time, and Audri was a classmate of mine who I had known was by far, the best singer I had heard in my life. At the end of the semester during finals week, I wrote this song called Run, and knew she had to sing it. My voice didn't do it justice or capture the essence. So I showed her the song and what I wanted, we recorded, and then I went home for break and produced the track. This is the first official Name Change song. I've reworked it 4-5 times and it may come out on our debut album, whenever that is, but it is when everything clicked. Audri brought the best out of me, and from there I knew we had to work together more. She has been the main vocalist I have worked with on Name Change material since then, although I have met some other amazing people who are all close friends of ours who I am working with more and more, as well as singing on a number of songs myself. Everybody's soul comes out differently when singing, and certain songs suit certain people. Anyways, that winter break I was in a really dark place, and I wrote our song Circles in my home studio, and had Audri record vocals for it, and with that combined with Run, we knew we had a special connection as collaborators and wanted to figure out how to bring that to a live performance space.

When we got back to school, we started talking to some of our friends, just posing the idea of getting together to jam, but I also was posing the idea of

creating a live band for Name Change, so that any recorded music that I made could be taken to a live space. As music majors, most of our friends played instruments, so it worked out really well, and within the first two weeks of the semester, we had a full band of friends with drums, bass, guitar, keys, vocals, and trombone. The first three months of just getting together every weekend to jam and hanging out constantly was extremely formative to the development of not only our synergy as friends and collaborators, but also helped me learn so much as a musician and songwriter.

## 2. How did you decide to call the project 'Name Change'?

Funnily enough, it is sort of the culmination of a large number of factors and it just stuck. For context, while I have been making music and putting it online since I was 14, I have gone through at least half a dozen different pseudonyms, from Opollo to John Piecewise to Jean Paul Otis to Frozen Paint, etc. Sometimes it would just be numbers! I guess I was a hard act to follow in that way, but it felt like every time I made a new discovery in sound I wanted to redefine my image and present it in a new way. Concurrently, I also legally changed my name when I was 19, taking my mothers maiden name and my step-dads mothers maiden name, for personal reasons, which was truly a freeing experience. When I was working on Run and Circles with Audri, I kept trying to come up with a name to put the music out as, but nothing was really sticking. One day, my step-dad was like "Hey,





what if you called your project Name Change?" and I was like, yeah, okay, that's kind of stupid initially, but then I realized it actually was somewhat serendipitous, because earlier that

day I had been thinking of using the word "change" in a possible name, so it stuck. When I got back to school, and we first started to get our friends together together to play some of the songs live, Audri, Carolyn (our now trombone player in the live band), and I were in the cafeteria and I wrote down "NAME CHANGE" on a disposable napkin, and slid it across the table. I said hey, we are making a live band to play some songs, want to join? And the rest is pretty much history as they say. That being said, "Name Change" has a much deeper meaning as well. Musically, the work is meant to serve as a reflection. "Name Change is a mirror" is something I say a lot and sort of have as an idea in my head, and in many ways I want the music to become something that helps people forget who they are on paper, forget what some legal document says, and to really explore just who they really are. Not what their given name is, but who would they be if they could be anybody? I feel like a lot of formative moments in my life have been spent listening to music, reflecting in ideas and sounds, and I strive to bring that same energy to what we create, to create those worlds and give those moments to other people as well.

### 3. With so many collaborators, what does your process of making a song look like?

It's generally relatively simple actually. For a little while when we first started jamming as a

live band, I had this idea of "I need to give everybody a part in every song so nobody feels left out", but I soon realized that is often both difficult, and not the best for every song! In music, you can't think with your ego when creating. Otherwise, it will be bogged down and impeded by precepts of thought. Rather, you have to look at a song and where it stands and think, how can I best serve this song? Does this melody lend itself well to trombone? Should the underlying harmony be a string section, piano, or guitar? I want to put a guitar solo here, but does it actually fit the mood? These are all questions you have to address. Coming from a world as a producer and composer, having studied classical music for a great deal of time, I don't see the songs as your typical "rock band" performance. In a rock band, almost all members play all of the time. That's cool! I love that. But that is not how I create. I think like, if you look at a Beethoven symphony, you will see some instruments play half the time, some the whole time, and some once every five minutes. There is no ego about "I only play this, you play that!". It is about creating the best possible music and performance, exploring dynamics and textures in ways that sometimes call for drastic changes in arranging throughout a piece. So now, it is essentially like, generally I will come up with chords and a melody and lyrics, and create a basic structure of a song (or occasionally will adopt something somebody else comes up with in a jam, like I did with Let's Love) and then go from there. I spend all of my time producing and thinking about what would be best for the song, and also comparing the song to the larger bodies of work we are creating, and make decisions based upon that. It all feels very intuitive. If it ever feels like a force, the music won't come out right.

### 4. What about setting up a live show?

Luckily, as a live band we are almost all musicians that are trained both classically as well as in jazz, so whether it is jamming on the spot and going with the flow, or playing a strict form, it all comes very easy. I am very blessed to work with such skilled and amazing musicians who I can also have the honor of calling my friends. I often am a utility player, switching between guitar or keyboards or samplers, while directing the band, and everybody else has more or less one role. That being said, the majority of us can switch between instruments, so whatever the specific show calls for we can do! Right now, our live band consists of myself, Kevin Mason (drums), Nathaniel Noah (keyboards), Audriana Cruz (vocals), Lauren Console (vocals), Carolyn Dufraine (trombone, vocals), Campbell Fackre (guitar), and Tyler Shaw (bass). Eight people might seem like a lot, but we make it work really well in my opinion! Finding the balance between too much noise all at once and not enough in the right way has taken some time, but I feel like now we have a lot of control over dynamic range and being able to go from soft and intimate, to huge and transcendent walls of sound.

### 5. About how long does it take for you to piece together a song?

It depends on where I am and where the people involved on a specific song are in their life. When we are at school, progress is generally slow as I have been focusing a lot on studying music, but given I do all of the production, recording, arranging, writing, and mixing, it takes at least a month of consistent focus from start to finish for a song to really be complete. A song we are coming out with in the next few months, ID, actually came together relatively quick though, as I made the instrumental in its entirety and wrote the lyrics and melody in about 45 minutes altogether, and then we were able to record vocals and drums within a day or two of that, but then I have spent the past 2-3 weeks mixing to get everything right. So yeah! I would say around a

month as a good middle ground. Some songs take longer, like Mama was started at the beginning of the summer of 2018 and wasn't finished until October 2018, due to life circumstances of both myself and Audri.

### 6. Each of your songs has a very unique style and feel of its own, but feel united in their overall tone. Is this intentional, or do you find it just happens as you create what you want?

It is both intentional, and something that also happens organically! In many ways, it is a product of the fact that I am doing all of the production, sound design, mixing, etc. and so there is a level of aesthetic consistency throughout all of that, regardless or not if they song features this instrument or that instrument in this style or that style. I've studied sound design, arranging, and mixing for the past 5 or 6 years and have the ability to work with essentially any instrument at my disposal, be it analog synths or VST's or guitar or what have you, and feel like I've developed my own personal vocabulary of sound that speaks to me, so that always ends up coming out in the music. In many ways, starting out as a producer, I feel that the mixing and production process are more important to me than the songwriting process, because they are so so powerful in defining the sound of a piece. It changes everything. It's why some people said Old Town Road wasn't country (it is). Most popular music is consistent in form, rhythm, and harmony, so what ends up defining the crowd or genre is the instrumentation, mixing style, and performance style.





## 7. Where do you usually draw inspiration for your style?

Anywhere and everywhere! So many things in life are inspiring, from life events to relationships to hardships to other artists and musicians creations. The list is really endless. A lot of Name Change songs are written about personal events, or inspired by other people's personal events, and often told in a fantastical way. The most recent song I have been working on, ID, was inspired by a conversation I had with somebody about some stuff going on in my life, as well as Kevin Abstract's latest album, which was hugely inspiring when it came out! I was like, wow, forget whatever I am doing right now, I need to go create! That is always an incredible feeling - when you are so compelled by that energy to create, that nothing can get in your way. It is riveting, and almost takes control. A lot of times, I am often inspired by the instruments I am using, or a new piece of equipment. I am a large proponent for the idea that it is the individual who creates the music, and not the gear, but at the same time, being able to create with new sounds and get ideas out in different ways can be largely inspiring! The song Circles, for example, was musically inspired by a new pair of bass strings. I was really not content with my bass tone when recording, so I went and got a new pair of flatwound strings, which have a certain warm

and smooth texture to them sonically, and just came up with the bassline to that song from the sheer joy of noodling with them initially, and that bassline is really what drives that song as a whole and where it also got its name from! But then say, for a song like Let's Love, that was inspired by the external -

it was written in February 2018 during a time where hate crimes were occurring frequently, and where school shootings were occurring frequently, and it just felt like as an individual, I was powerless to stop those things. I can only do so much. But I said hey, I am a musician, so what I can do is create a song that addresses these things and do the most to spread the concept of unity and love on this piece of music.

"EMPOWER YOURSELF" has always been another mantra of mine, and this song was a great example of that. Taking that idea, I was able to work with 20+ musicians and guest speakers from every age group and cultural background from across the globe imaginable. I was really fortunate to be in a position with both my job and with people I have been able to meet and work with in my daily life, where I was able to come across so many people with so many backgrounds. Some notable people on the song that I am still shocked I ended up crossing paths with and recording spoken word with for the song were popular civil rights activists Shaun King, as well as Dr. Thomas Gardner, who was a professor of mine and also a prominent civil rights activist during the original civil rights movement and the Vietnam War.

## 8. Are there any particular messages you would like to spread or goals you would like to achieve with Name Change?

Self empowerment. Self love. Self reflection. Name Change is a mirror. The music is here to serve as a catalyst for all of these things. I am a big fan of Kanye West, a fan of how he is so adamant in believing in himself and empowering himself. A lot of people hate him. A lot of people hate that. I'm not here whether to say they're wrong or right, but I am here to say this. Kanye West stands for following your dreams relentlessly. He stands for believing in yourself. These are all things that the mass media try to

get us to do the opposite of! It is easy to control a society if we are self loathing, looking to buy the next product to help ourselves out of the warped mirror they put us in. Name Change is to serve as a reflection, as a means to observe the self in a way that feels more honest and true than what is presented on the television, what is presented on the corporate ad. Name Change is not anti-commerce, but it is anti-manipulation. The masses, myself included, are manipulated on a subconscious level, day in and day out. If Name Change can be anything, I want it to be honest. I want it to be accessible. I want it to be for the people in the most effective way possible. There is hope for all of us, there is hope for our society, and there is hope for this world - but we have to empower ourselves, we have to love ourselves, and we have to begin to think deeply about our actions, how they impact others, ourselves, and the planet upon which we reside.

### 9. Where is the best place to find you/stream your music?

All major music streaming platforms such as Apple Music and Spotify!

### 10. What is the sweetest thing about making your own music?

The sweetest thing about making our own music is being able to empower ourselves and express ourselves in a way where nobody can stop us from getting out our energy in the purest form! Having that freedom is really sweet, and quite a privilege.

### 11. What are your favorite sweet treats?

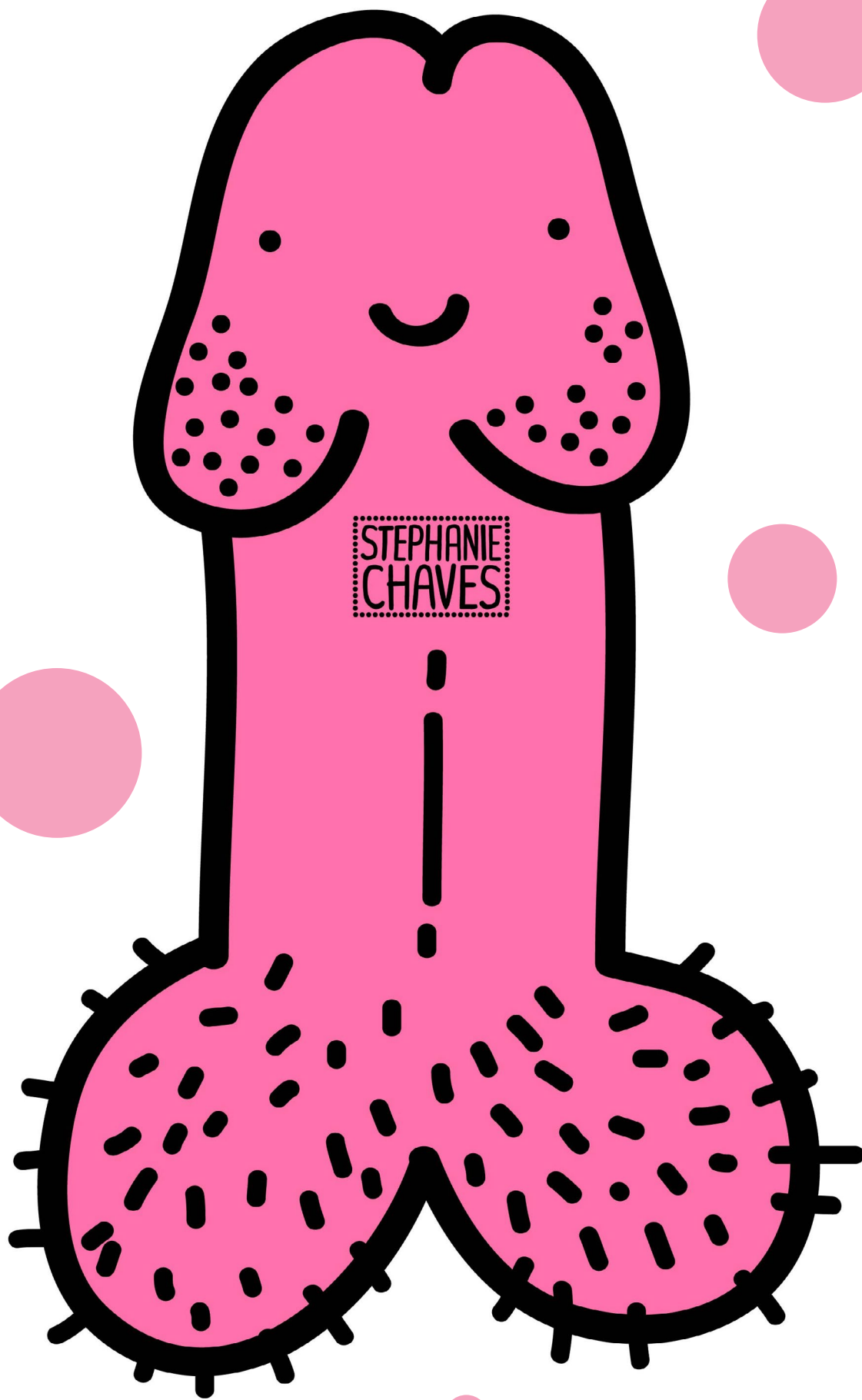
Some of my personal favorite sweet treats would definitely be brownies and ice cream, maybe mix them together and you have quite a cool concoction. But really, celery and cucumbers are heavily underrated - please stay healthy and indulge in moderation! Or don't. Live your best life, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Question everything too! Don't just eat some sweets that have tons of high fructose corn syrup and other toxic garbage. Read the labels and know what you're putting in your body. But hey, you know, ignorance is also bliss, so - you do you!

## Hear more from Name Change on Spotify

See more from Kirixin at [kirixin.com](http://kirixin.com)











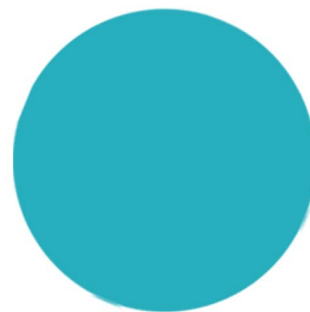


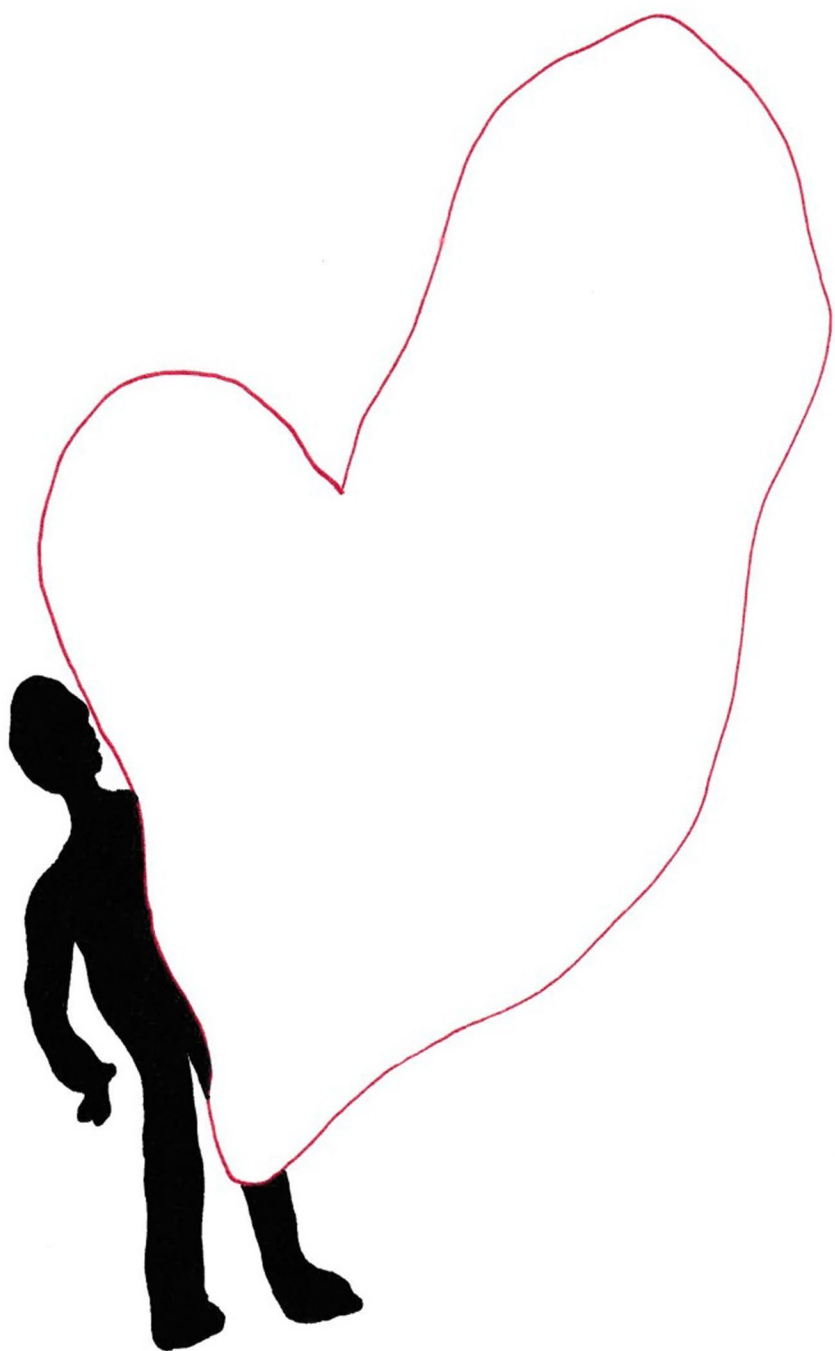
# the WEST hOLLYWOOD BROKEN hearts CLUB

## "My name is A.D. Wells

and I am an unsigned musician from Brooklyn NY. Just over a month ago my debut record "The West Hollywood Broken Hearts Club" was released. The 8 tracks that make up the record cover a genre of indie/lounge rock/singer-songwriter and look at themes of sweet yearning, desired loss, hopeful love, crippling failure, and somehow self-driven optimism in the face of defeat-all with the backdrop of mysterious Hollywood behind them."

***Listen now  
on Spotify***

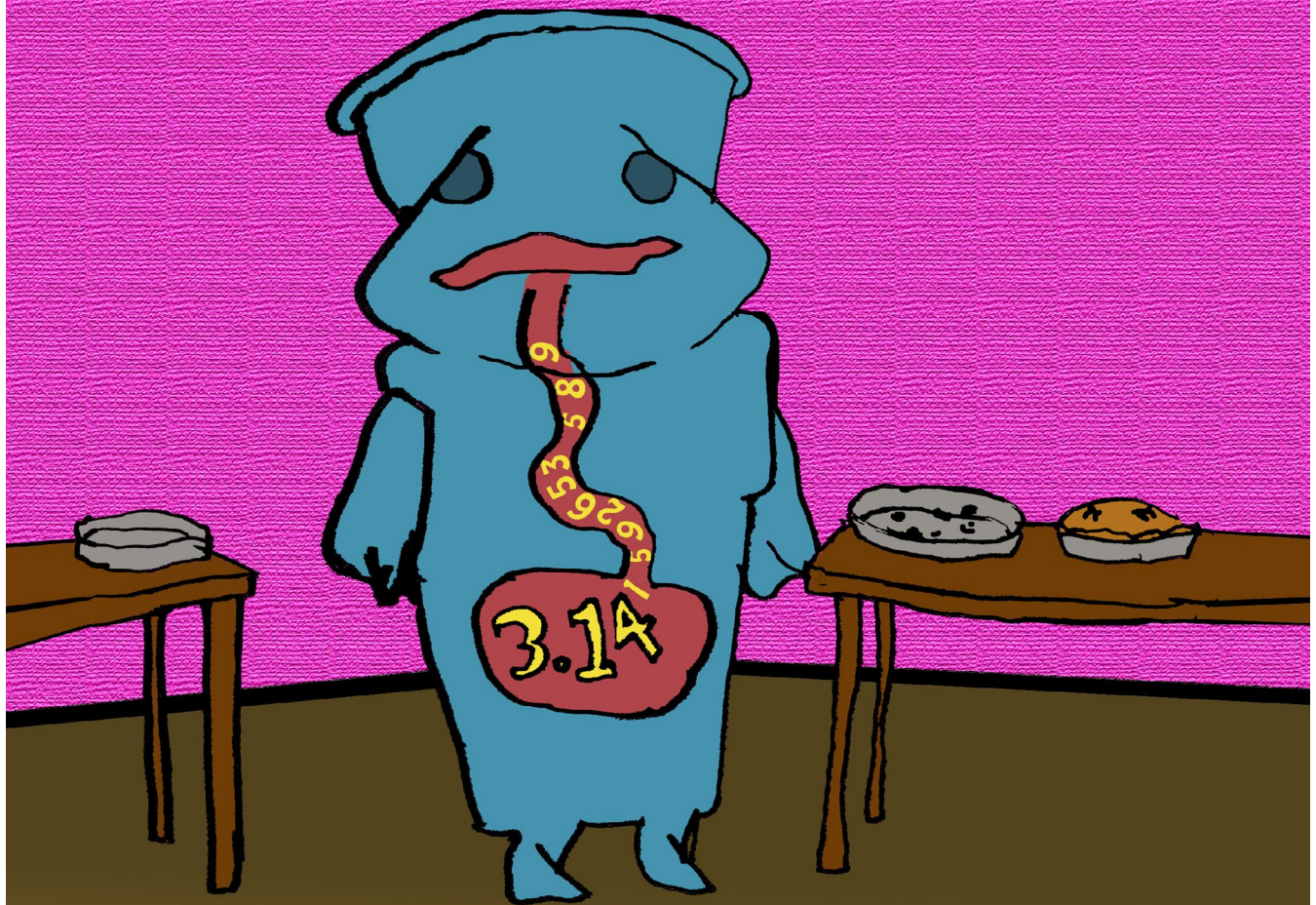




*big heart*



# Cody Cupman



can eat pi to the twelfth decimal



Cody Cupman knew  
he was stoned when  
he started eating  
jam by the knifeful







# MARSHMALLOWS

I got the feeling  
That if I had wanted  
To set myself on fire,  
You wouldn't have handed me the lighter,  
But you might have  
Toasted marshmallows  
On the flames.







SWEET AND SOUR GO TOGETHER.















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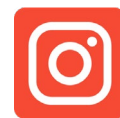
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Allie Wolfe  
Amryn Shae  
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