

PALETTE

Issue VII. May 2022.



from the editors

Dear Readers,

Medicine, like art, calls for **colouring outside the lines**: challenging fixed beliefs, innovating new solutions, and celebrating all the ways that we are different. Give yourself permission to take on creative and unconventional journeys, and not be limited by how others define you or what you do.

For our new readers, *Palette* is a student-led arts and culture publication founded in 2019 with the goal of encouraging creative self-expression and discourse among medical learners at U of T. Since then, *Palette* has successfully published six issues showcasing the remarkable talents of our medical students, faculty, and alumni. In addition to the four original sections of *Palette* Magazine—Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Lifestyle, and Performance Arts—we are excited to introduce Conversations, a section dedicated to interviews with incredibly talented U of T medical students and alumni who are involved in the arts. Our issue starts off with Visual Arts, which features over 25 exhibits of artwork in a wide variety of mediums and forms: ink, coloured pencil, acrylic, watercolour, clay, digital artwork, and photography. Our Creative Writing section includes a collection of beautiful and evocative works that represent themes of advocacy, friendship, grief, and end-of-life. Special to this issue, we invited *Palette* co-founders and our shining predecessors—twice removed, Annie Yu and Sarah Ge, to reflect on their time in medical school in the form of a “Letter to My Younger Self.” Turn to our Lifestyle section for some mouth-watering baking and cooking inspiration, and for some fun and unique ideas for your next arts-and-crafts night with friends. Here, you will find a special spread showcasing the talents of our very own *Palette* team in the form of a collaborative art project inspired by our Issue VII theme. In Conversations, we are delighted to share our interviews with fellow classmates Shreya Jha, Vincent Trinh, and Yuang Chen, as well as Drs. Chase McMurren, Jennifer Bryan, Jo Jo Leung, and Telisha Smith-Gorvie, who speak to the role and importance of art and music in their lives and medical careers. Finally, the issue rounds off with our Performance Arts section celebrating the musical talents of students in our program, who impress us with their rich vocals and masterful piano performances.

We thank the continued support of our sponsors, the Student Initiative Fund and U of T Medical Society, without whom this issue would not be possible. To our team—Ali, Brittany, Bronte, James, Jinny, Judy, Katie, Suhaila, and Olivia—we will dearly miss each and every one of you and would like to express our final gratitude for your hard work and energizing enthusiasm. We have become a little family within this medical community. We will miss the long hours we spent sharing wild ideas and eventful life updates over dinner, board games, and an endless supply of coffee (surrounded by “sky”-high views of the city). We would like to extend our most sincere thanks to our contributors, interviewees, and readers for joining us in celebrating the diverse talent of our U of T medical community.

As the academic year and our time with *Palette* comes to a close, we prepare to part with our roles as Editors-in-Chief. We joined the magazine two years ago, working on layout, content editing, and promotions. Despite not meeting in person until the following year, we immediately connected as Co-Editors-in-Chief, and even better as friends. Beyond celebrating *Palette*’s mission to foster arts and humanities among a family of like-minded peers within U of T Medicine, we have truly come to treasure *Palette* as a passion project and our own creative outlet. As hard as it is to say goodbye, we are comforted and excited knowing that *Palette* will be in the capable hands of our incoming Editors-in-Chief, Ali Almail and Jinny Kim. Ali and Jinny, your dedication and passion for *Palette* have inspired us in many ways, and we are confident that your ability to colour outside the lines will take *Palette* to new and brilliant heights!

As always, we hope every issue of *Palette* finds itself in safe and welcoming hands.

Warmest regards,



Zahra Emami & Cindy Cui
Editors-in-Chief



*Cover Design:
As part of the “Body Heat” series by
Charlotte Axelrod, 2T3, Fitz*

meet our team



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Content Editor



Suhaila A.
Content Editor

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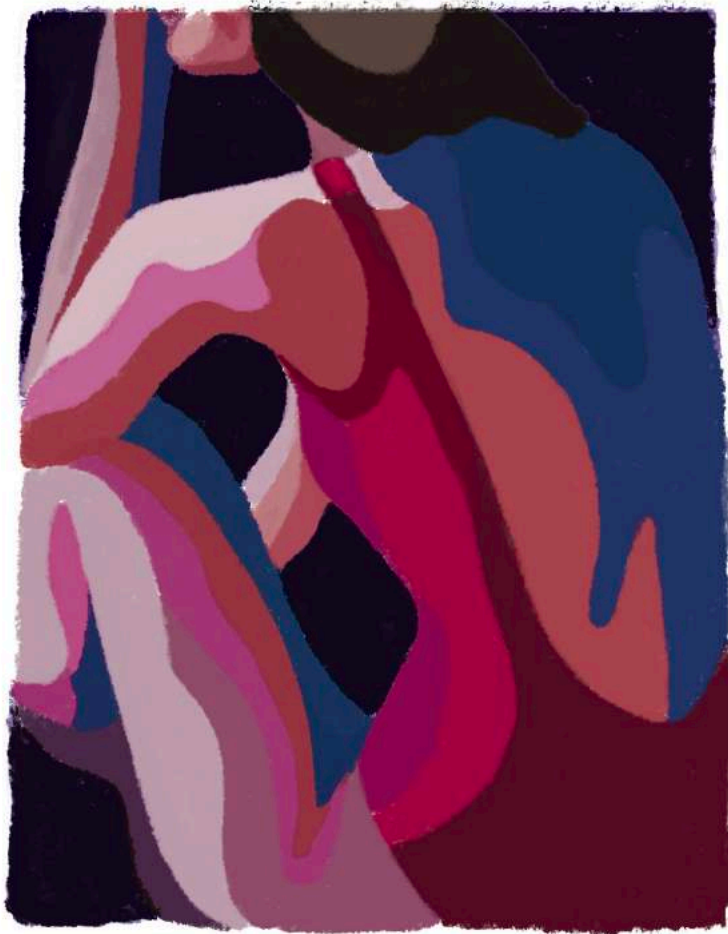
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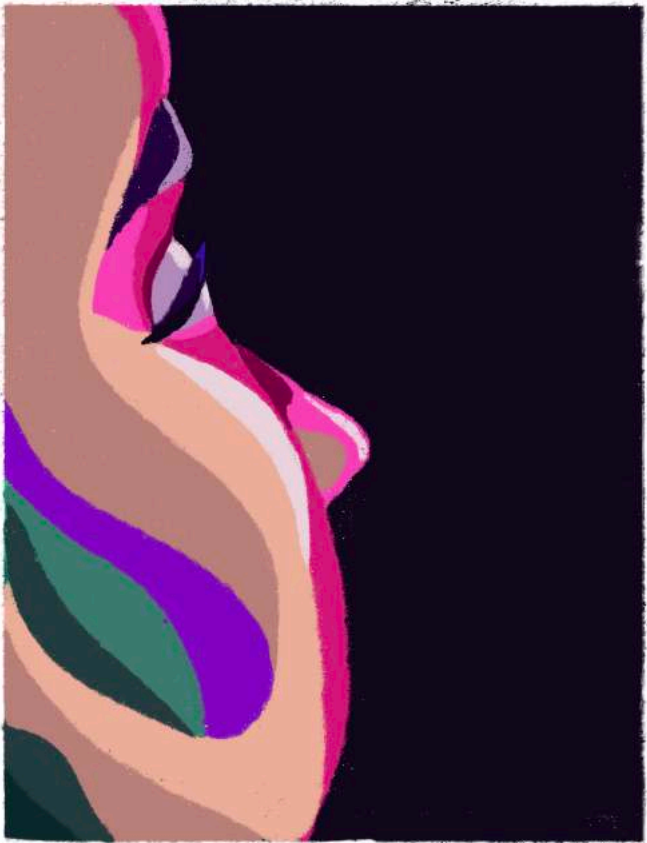


01

Visual Arts



Body Heat
Charlotte Axelrod
2T3 Fitz



Artist's Statement: Is it boring to admit that spring is my favourite time of year? Regrettably, it lasts four days where we live, interrupted alternately by snowstorms and heat waves. But for those few afternoons where we marvel at the lasting daylight, turning our heavy heads to the sun, it's as if the weight of the last six (eight?) months has been lifted. This triptych represents the contrast between seasons, the heat of the coming weeks, and the darkness we are leaving behind.

À la Maison
Elya Quesnel
2T3 WB



Moonscapes

Olivia So

2T5 WB

Website: <https://flickr.com/photos/oliviaso>

Medium: Mixed media on canvas

Artist’s Statement: For as long as I can remember, I’ve been looking up. Dreaming of exploring the skies, imagining I could be anywhere, and wondering what, how, and why? I picture the space and life outside our tiny world as a universe full of magic and wonder, just waiting to be explored. Moonscapes is a 3-part piece that hopes to convey that wonder, abstractness, and discovery I feel every time I look up. It conveys a sense of calm, the feelings of stress and everyday worries slipping away, and the feeling of getting lost in a world far from ours.





Times Two
Sunny R
2T5 WB





Toronto Medicine Love

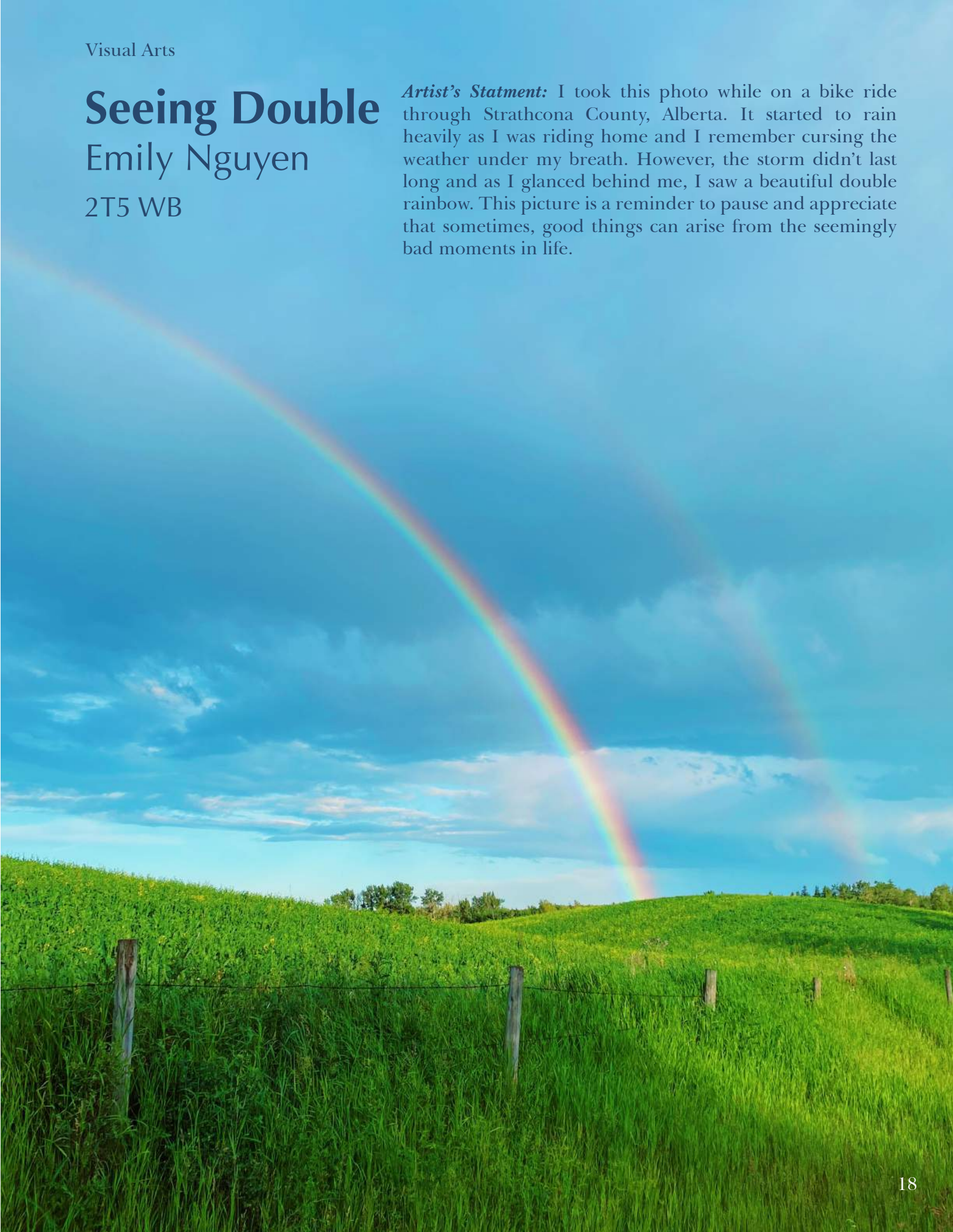
Sunny R

2T5 WB

Seeing Double
Emily Nguyen

2T5 WB

Artist's Statment: I took this photo while on a bike ride through Strathcona County, Alberta. It started to rain heavily as I was riding home and I remember cursing the weather under my breath. However, the storm didn't last long and as I glanced behind me, I saw a beautiful double rainbow. This picture is a reminder to pause and appreciate that sometimes, good things can arise from the seemingly bad moments in life.





Frozen lake

Vivid nature

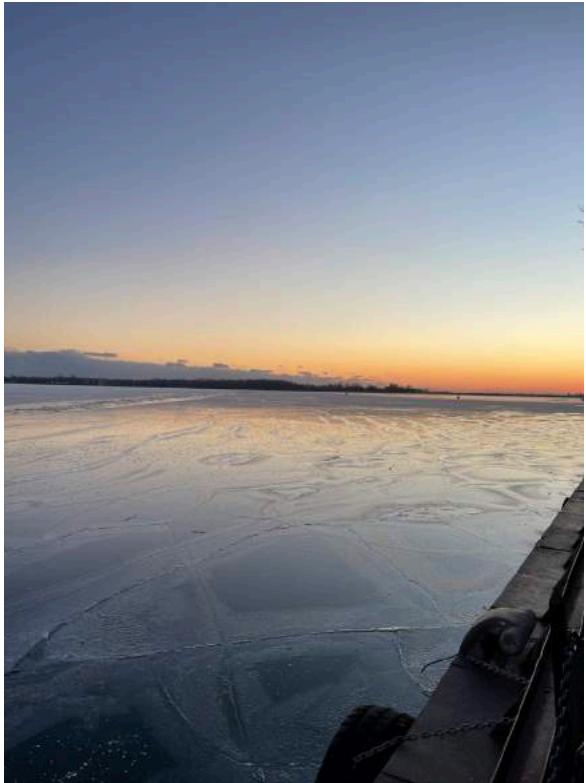
Kesikan S Jayaraj

2T4 WB

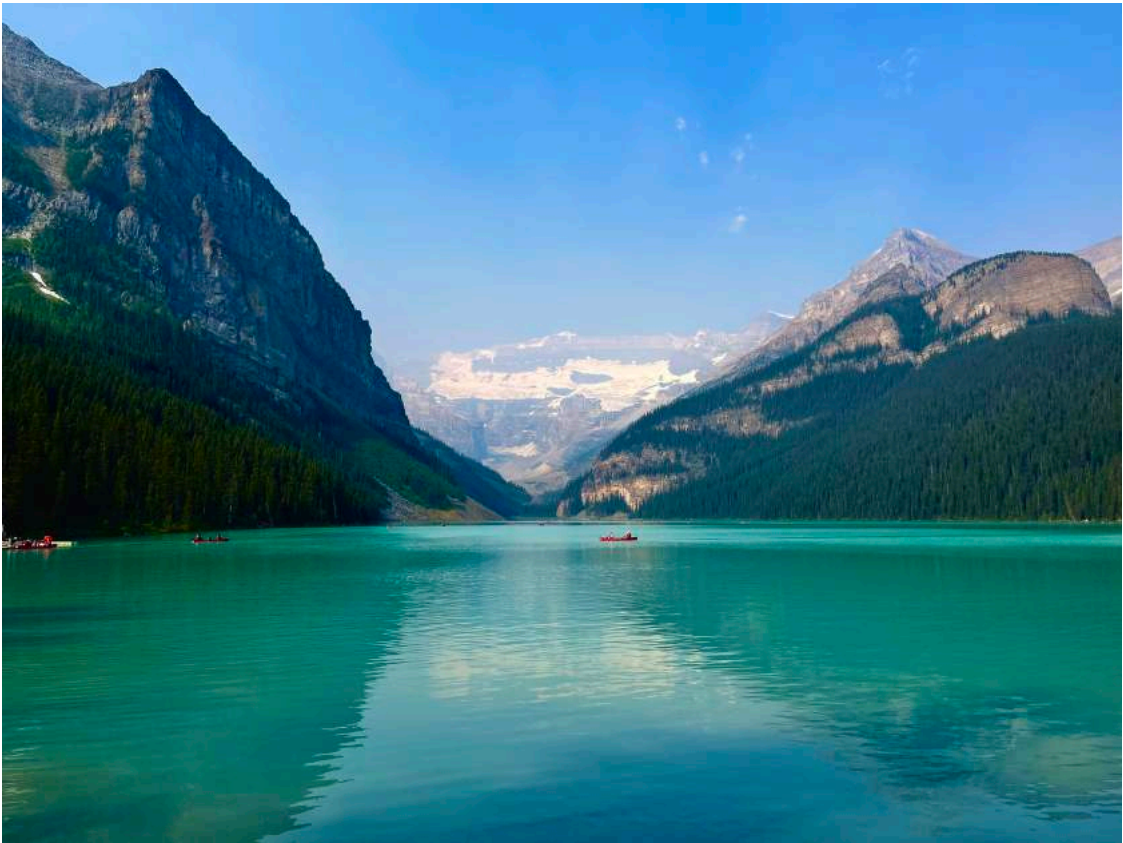
Instagram: @kesigram



Johnston Creek - Banff



Sunset - Lake Ontario



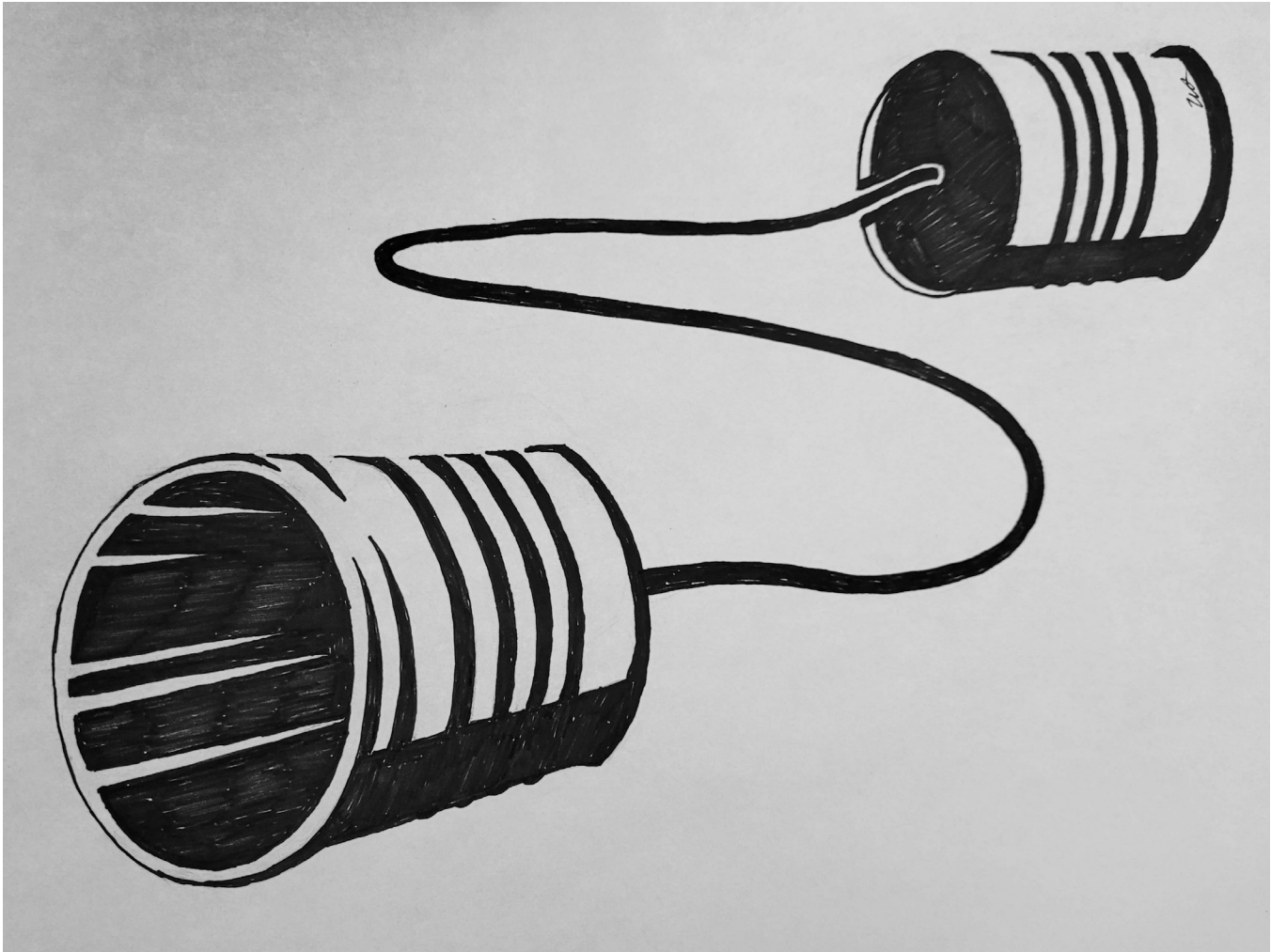
Lake Louise - Banff



Late Night Gatherings
Tania Saha
2T4 Fitz

Artist's Statement: Covid-19 has limited the amount of interaction we can have with our peers, but as restrictions lift and we can gather once again, it reminds us that these moments are precious. Late night gatherings are something that should no longer be taken for granted.

Just Listen
Winston Li
2T3 PB

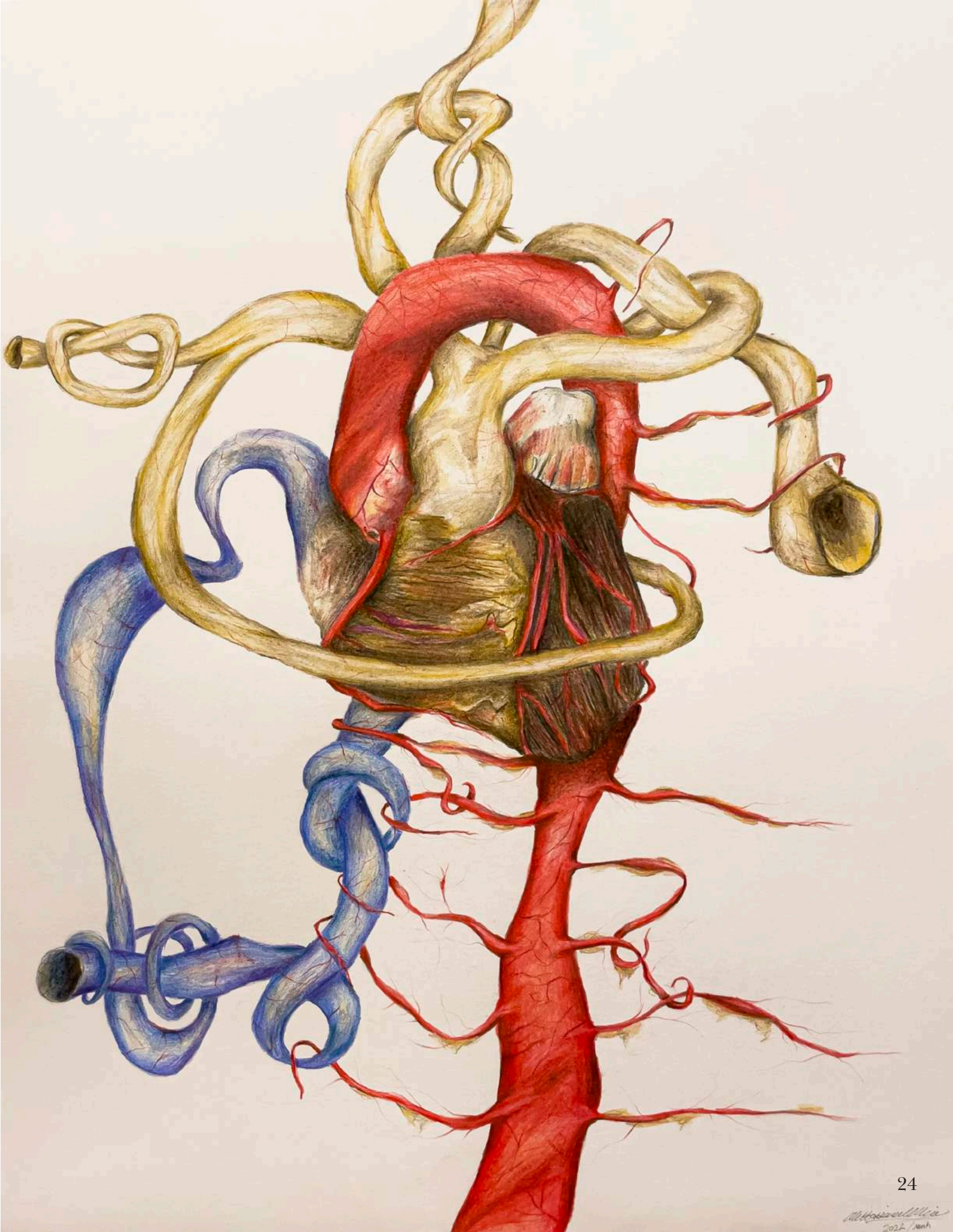


All Tied Up

Ali Almail

2T5 Fitz

Artist’s Statement: A visceral depiction of feeling all tied up inside. All the great vessels and their tributaries intertwine with each other, wrap around the heart, creating the suffocating feeling of being wound up inside. This piece illustrates feelings that are often hard to describe in words, when heavy emotions consume oneself and cause an inward contortion.



Still Waters

Ali Almail

2T5 Fitz

Artist's Statement:

I decided to experiment in a new medium: aluminium plates.
This piece yielded interesting textural fields, creating a dynamic and deep piece. The meaning of this piece is as follows:
Let the light illuminate your still waters,
Let the light illuminate your darkness,
Let the light illuminate the journey before you.



Wasteland

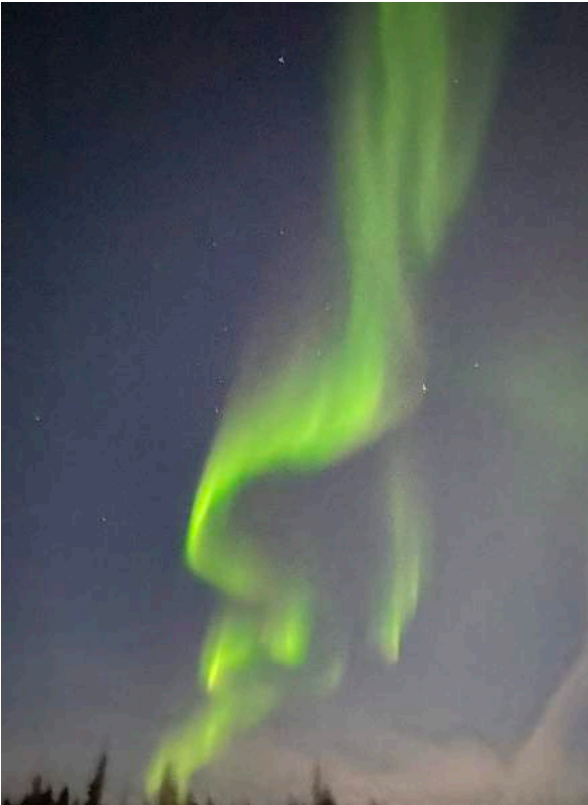
Ali Almail

2T5 Fitz



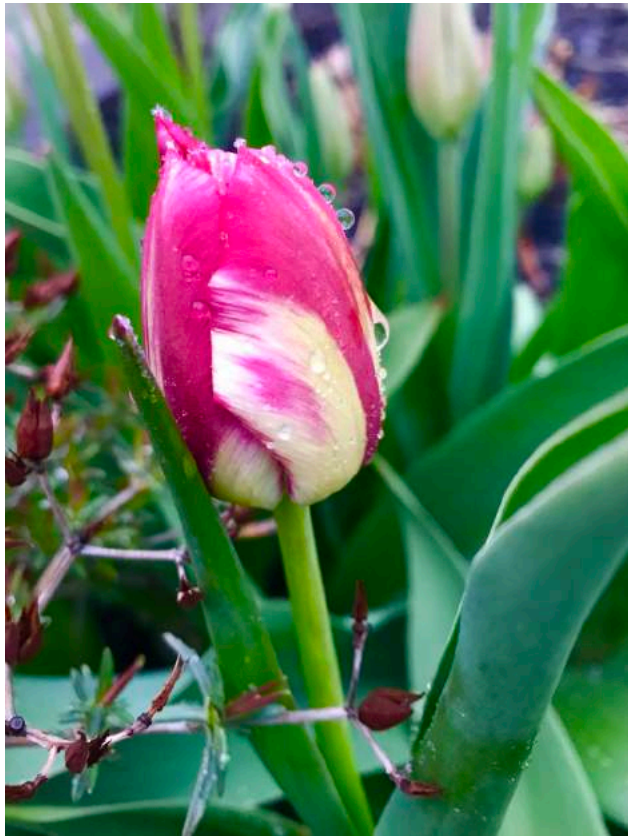
Yellowknife for March Break

Nancy V Wu
2T4 Fitz



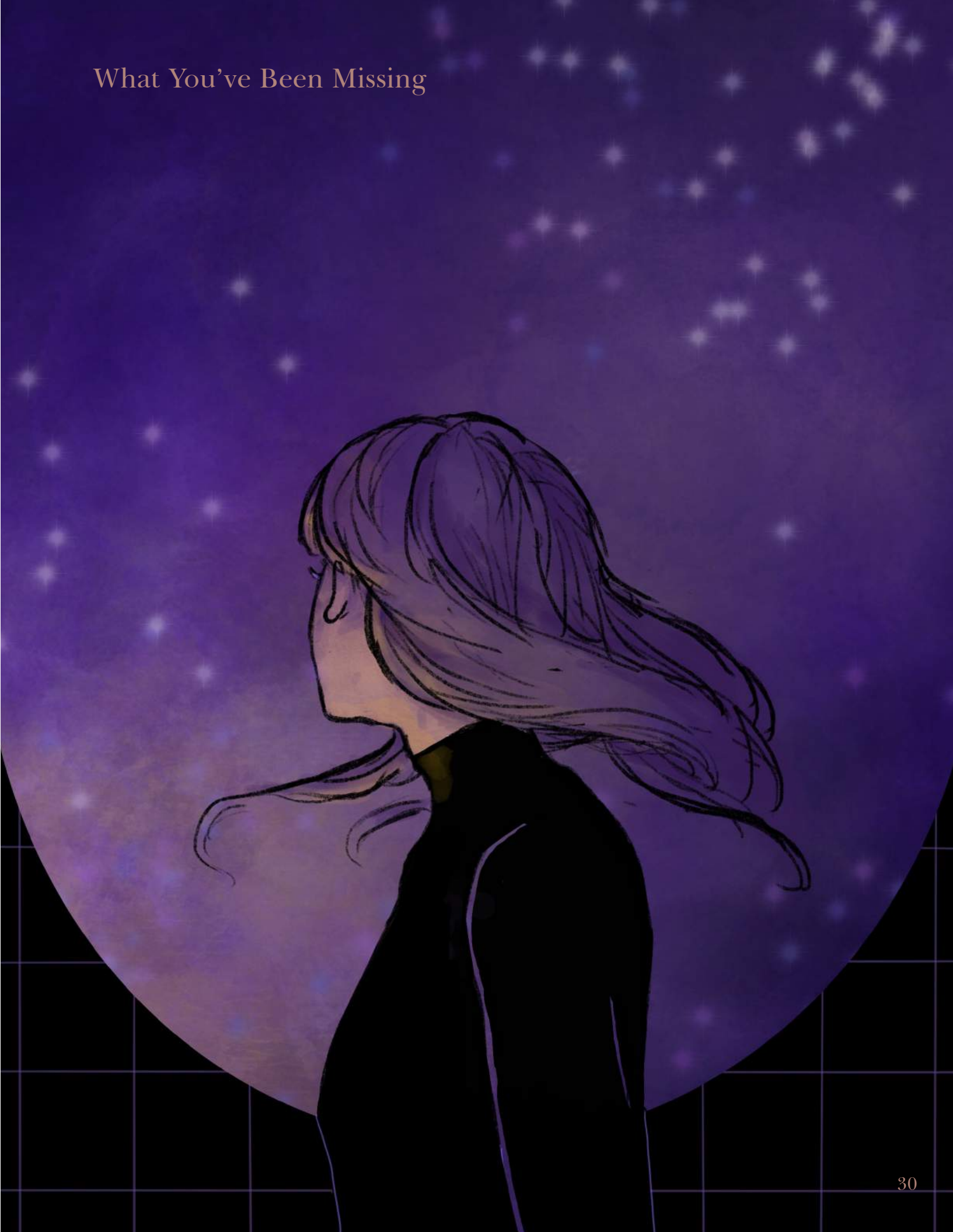


Spoiled



Just You, on a
Quiet Afternoon

The Works of
Nancy Wu
2T4 Fitz



What You've Been Missing



Northern Flicker



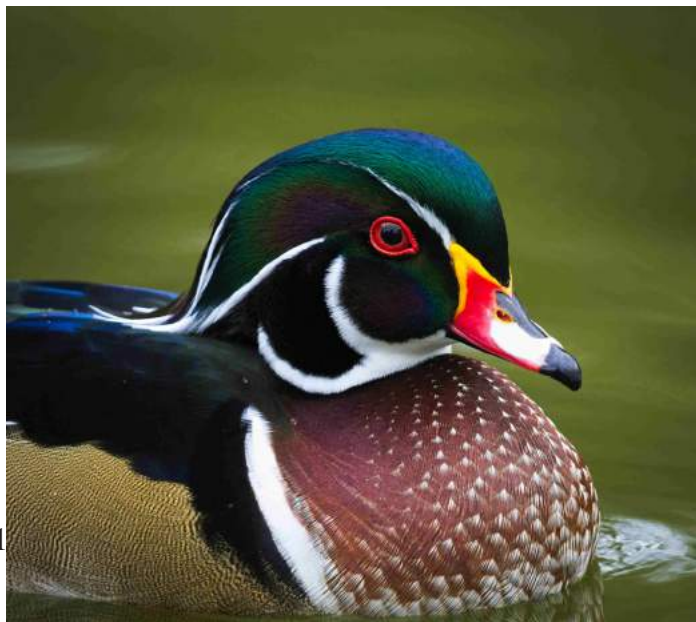
Red-tailed Hawk

Birds of Ontario

Gee Hung Leo

2T3 WB

Artist's Statement: Before I started birding, I thought bird diversity only existed in Costa Rica or Mexico or Brazil. Only now do I realize the amazing diversity we have in Ontario, especially around the Great Lakes. In fact, many of the birds we see here migrated from the tropics! Bird migration also means that birding is never dull. Each week, I say goodbye to migrants heading north, while saying hello to other species settling in. Winter is excellent for seeing ducks like the Long-tailed Duck and the so-called 'Snowbirds,' the Dark-eyed Juncos. Spring is when splendid songbirds like the Eastern Bluebird start preparing their nests. Summer is a good time for shorebirds like the Greater Yellowlegs to relax on the beach. In Autumn, raptors tend to be especially busy hunting for their growing fledglings. All these pictures are taken in local parks as I seldom travel far to watch these feathered friends. Next time you go on a walk, I implore you to look and listen more carefully—I bet you will encounter some beautiful birds!



Wood Duck



Osprey



Long-tailed Duck



Dark-eyed Junco



Greater Yellowlegs



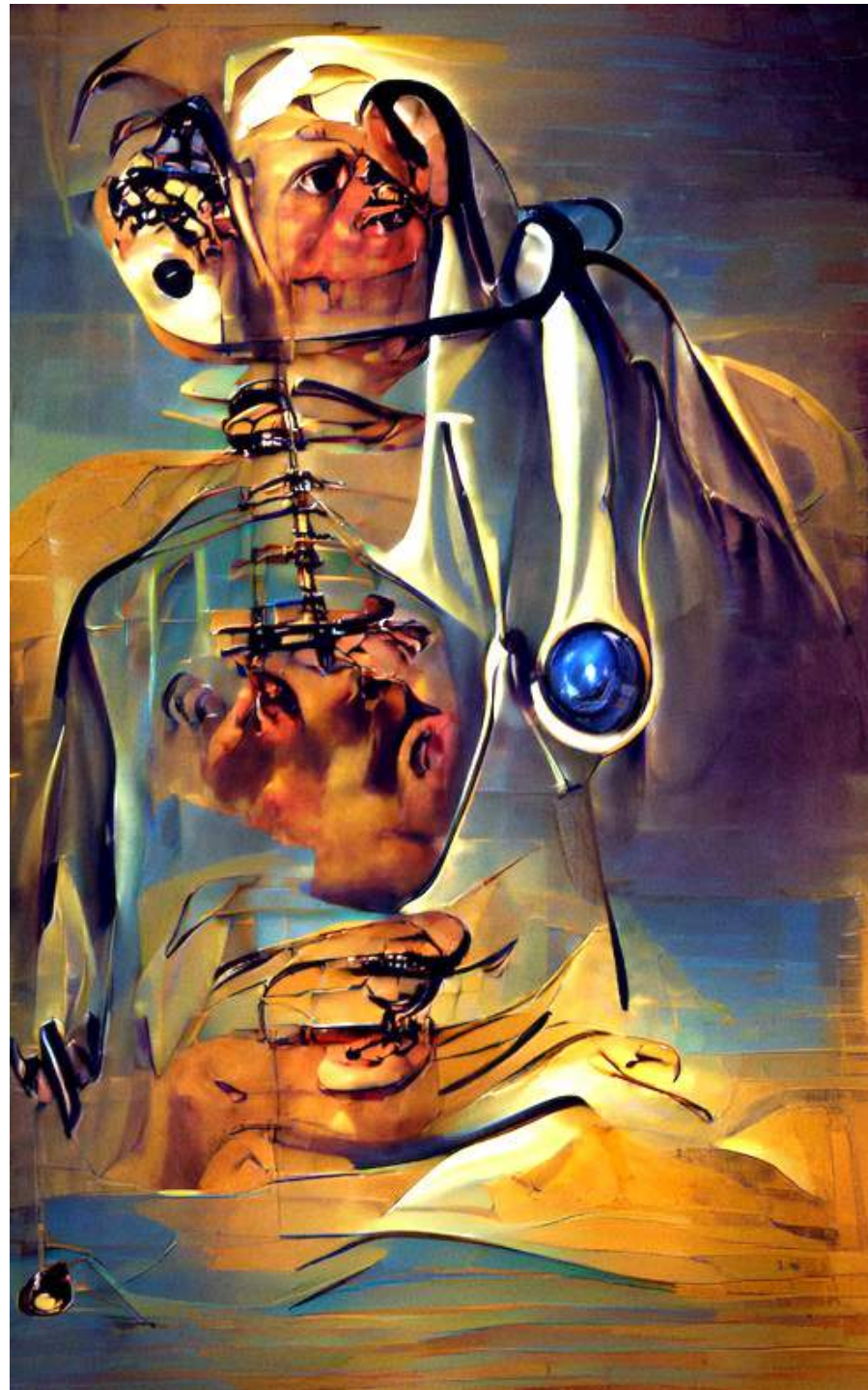
American Kestrel



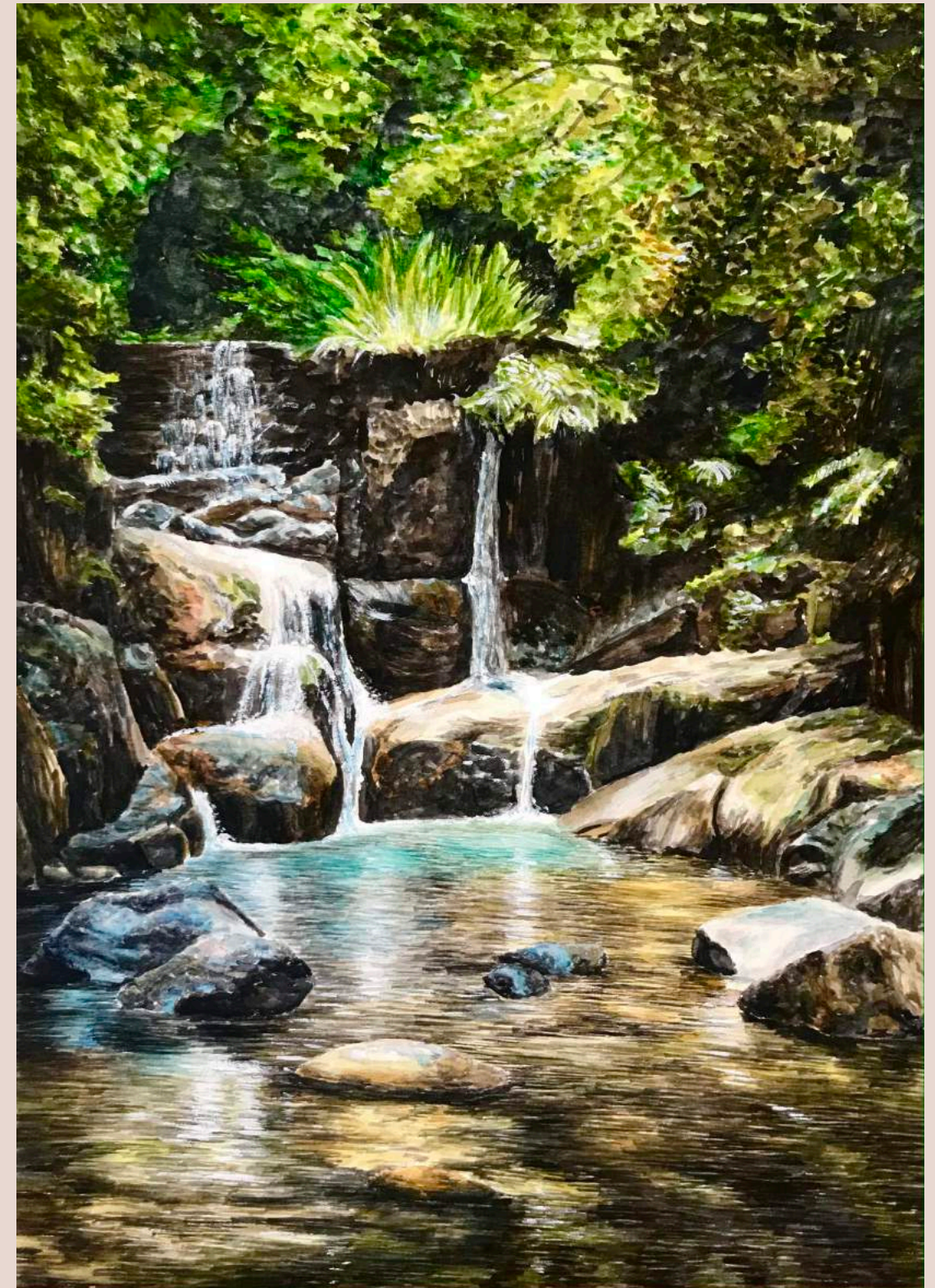
Bald Eagle



Eastern Bluebird



bonemeal
Michael Balas
2T4 WB



The Source
Grace Huang
2T3 MAM

Artist's Statement: Transparent watercolour
on 140 lb cold-pressed paper 11" x 15"

Website: <http://www.gracesfreetime.art>

Aggressively West Coast

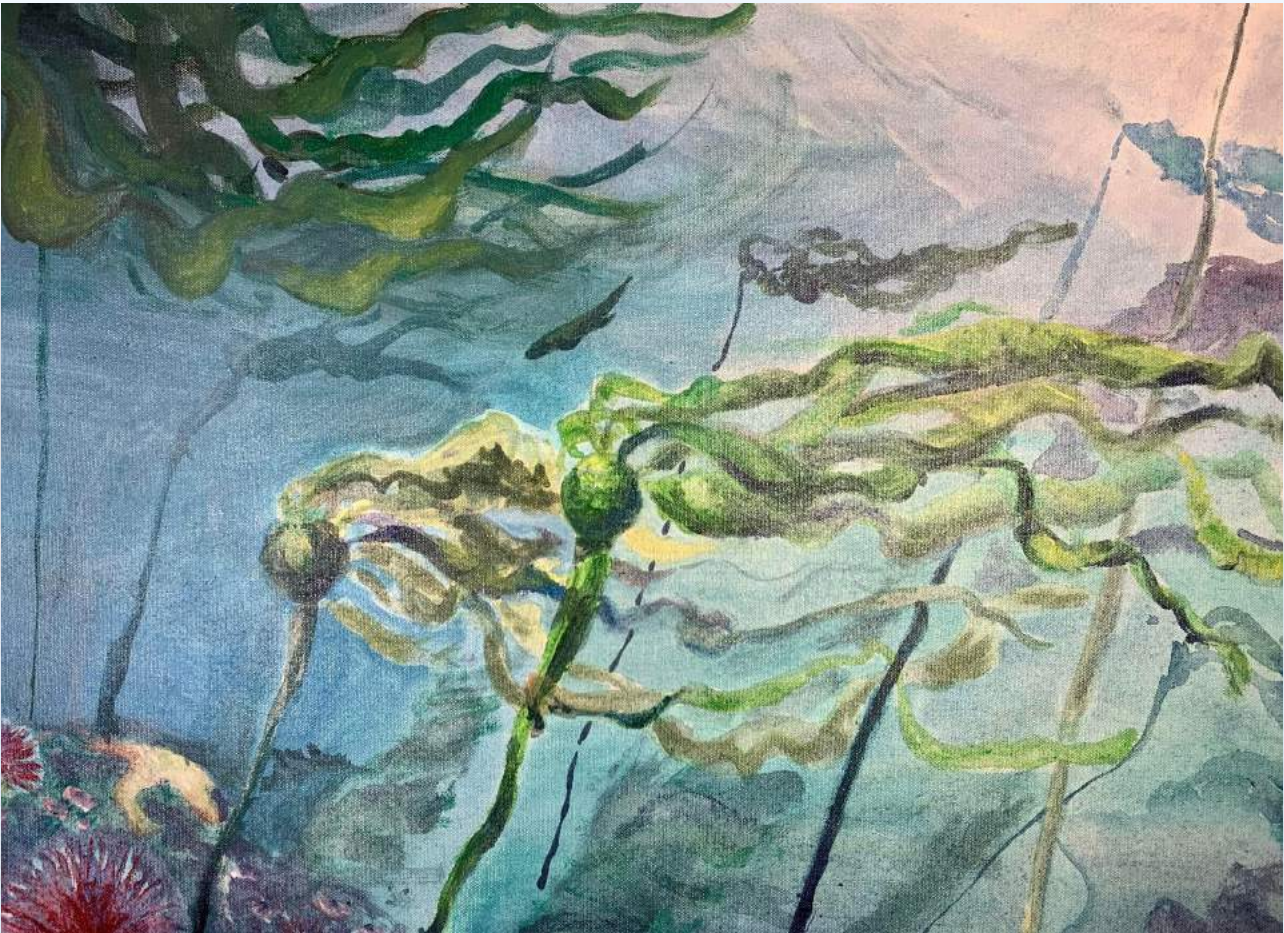
Laura Tang

2T5 WB

Aritst’s Statement: When I think about what it means to “ground oneself,” I think about the places where I feel happiest and most free. On the far edges of the continent, the Vancouver Island coastline is one such place. In this painting, I tried to share the diversity of life and rich colour beneath the waves. Peering over the edge of a canoe, you can glimpse deep purple sea urchins jostling for space between saucer-sized sea stars, as fronds of bull kelp wave to the rush of the warm currents. (In this memory, we leaned too far and tipped the canoe, falling in!)



Reference Image



The Works of
Serena Tejpar
2T3 PB



Sunny Days



Refresh

Rocky Thoughts





The Betrayed

Brittany
Chang-Kit

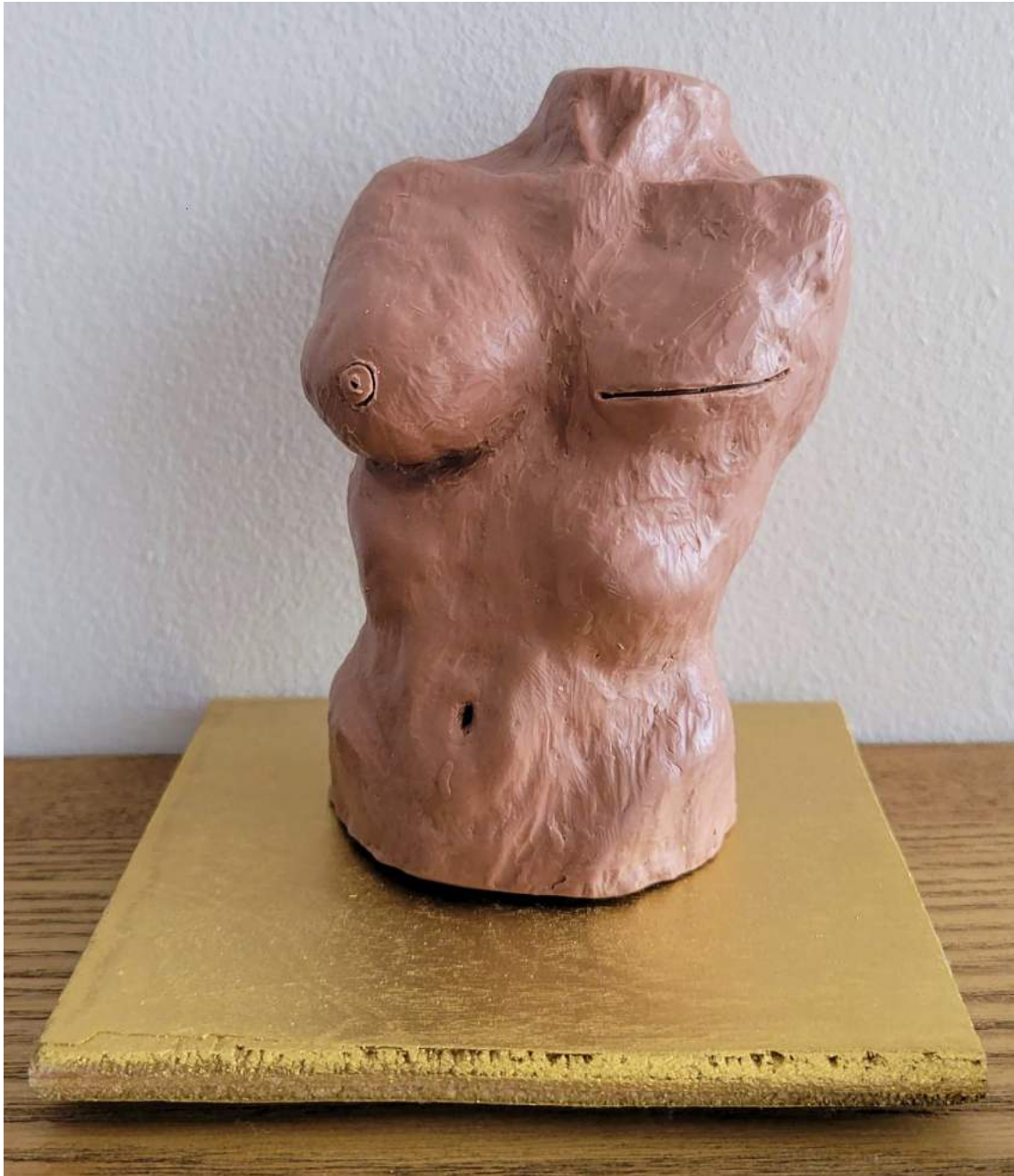
2T5 PB

Artist's Statement:
Inspired by visuals from
The Lighthouse (2019) dir.
Robert Eggers.

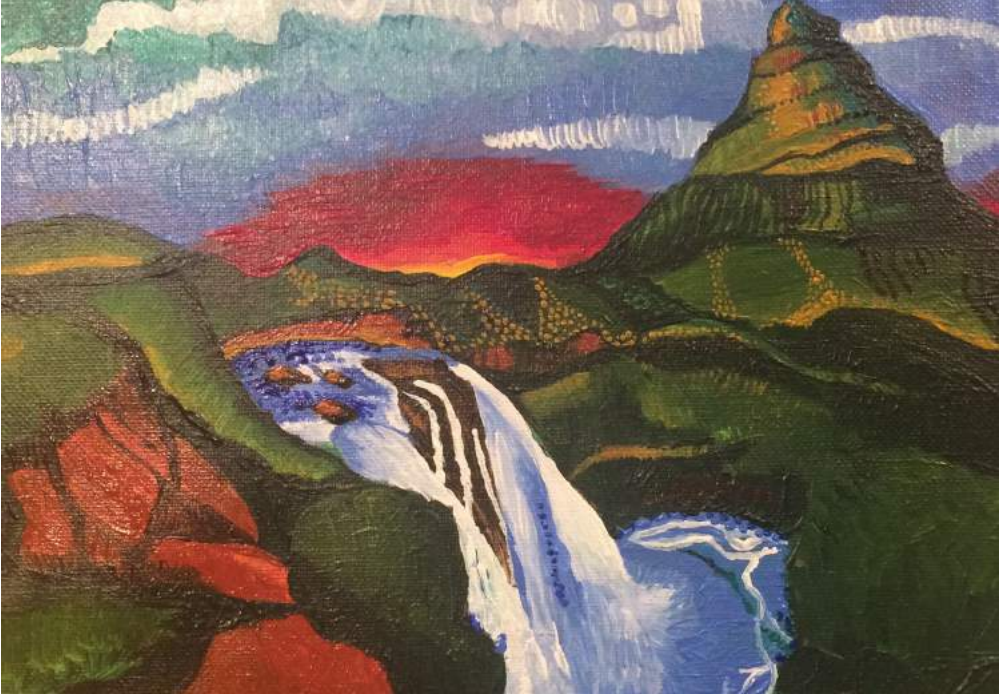
Battle scars

Shaishav Datta

2T3 WB



Arists's Statement: Piece named by basbe. Material used: monster clay



bright and boundless

The Works of
Hannah Dolin

2T4 WB

fridah



Birth



Friendship has no bounds
Tony Nguyen & Chris Choi
2T5 Fitz



Artist’s Statement: Chris Choi and Tony Nguyen’s trip through the desert and sand!



The Works of
Leah Bennett


2T3 WB



Light and Lilies



Sunset in Acrylic



02

Creative Writing

There is no poetry

Mijia Murong
2T3 PB

There is no poetry in diseased tissue sitting inside a pathology jar, holding all the answers to the question, “How long do I have, doctor?”
no poetry in progress notes that say “consult palliative care”
Or the chief resident’s pager piercing the hallways at 2 am
Or an ICU full of beeping monitors

There is no poetry in the way we euphemize death with words like
“recurrent”
“poor prognosis”
“not a surgical candidate”

We tuck our fear into fancy words and protocols and a rainbow of codes,
in funny sayings like GCS 8, intubate
in acronyms like MVA—motor vehicle accident
GSW—gunshot wound
DNR/DNI—do not resuscitate/do not intubate
VSA—vital signs absent

There is no poetry in the way a man’s pale limbs flew into the air in the trauma bay
every time the paramedic forced her body’s weight down on his sternum
or the way a patient’s self-inflicted, nail gun injury just missed the cluster of
vessels that would have caused the hemorrhage he was looking for

There is no poetry in a hospital
just flesh and bones and beeps and moans
just people—healing, dying, in pain, hopeful, scared
I can’t find any poetry here.



Fool’s Hold

Suhaila Abdelhalim
2T5 WB

Delirium came along,
then laid me gently,
ever so gently,
on the brittle coral.

She decorated my hair
with fragile fragments and vibrant fish,
and the dipping waves looked an awful lot
like pulsating intestines,
criss-crossed with venous light rays.

She ironed the air out of my lungs,
and I was sure
I had landed on a dragon,
comatose for millennia,
camouflaged by generations of sea creatures
settling between its spines and scales.

She prepared me for a final waltz,
and I saw him approaching,
a dark figure,
descending through the current—
with elongated fingers,
reaching out,
to take me.



Blank Stares

Golsa Shafa
2T3 PB

Twitter: @golsashafa
Instagram: @golsash



Artist's Statement: This poem was inspired by a patient suffering from dementia who, for a brief moment, recalled his long-term memories of youth and love after hearing a nostalgic track. It is about the power of music and the grim reality of dementia.

Blank stares are interrupted with
intrusion of confusion at best
questioning time and my sanity
leaving me stressed and perplexed

The hollow feeling in my chest
little did I know would be replaced
and the clueless cloud over my head
would for a moment get erased

My head fills with bits and pieces
of your puzzle as the music plays
after all these years with lapses
in my memory, I see your trace

I listen to the music of our days
and I'm magically out of this maze
with brief memories of you I conquer
my memory loss and blank stares

You Feel Like Home

Violet Galliard

2T5 MAM

I spent years trying to be this person I thought I had to be
But underneath all the bells and whistles
They saw me

Flaws and everything
they chose to stay
and I am eternally grateful for that
every day

Not a doubt in my mind
My friends are truly,
one of a kind

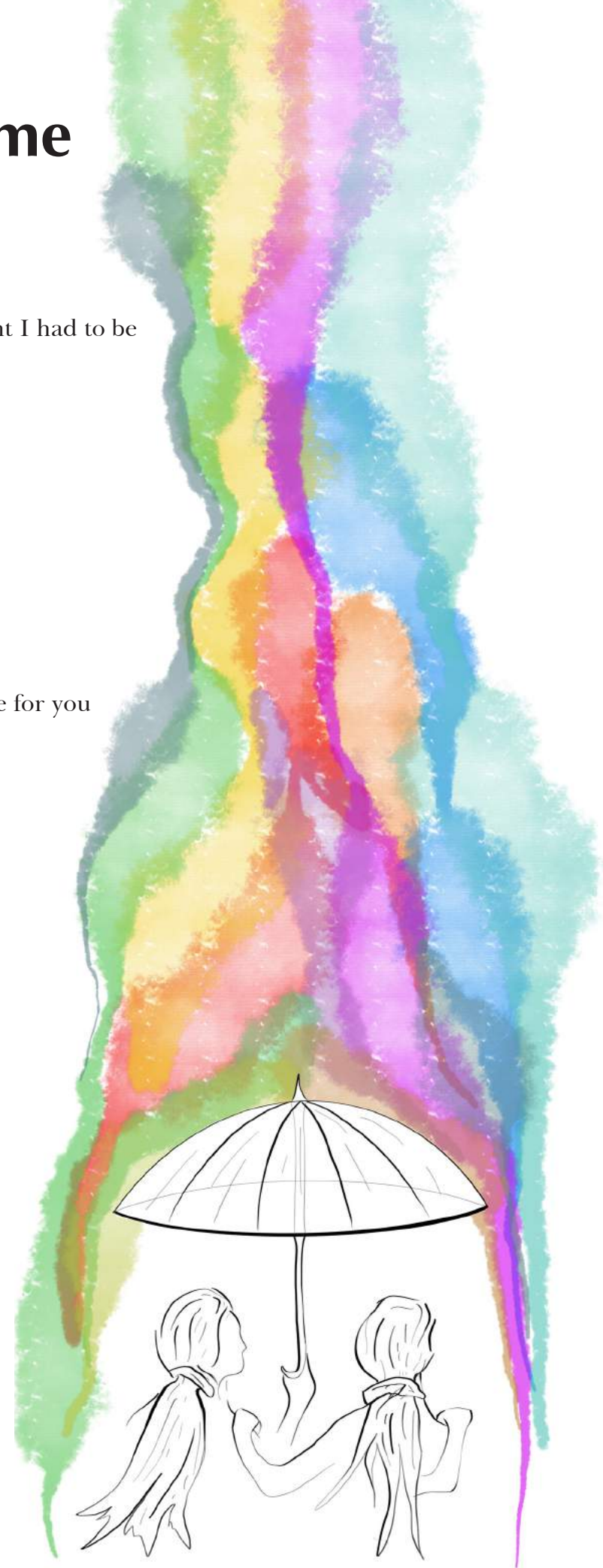
They are the people in your life who are there for you
Always in your corner
Your number one supporter

Every day I am grateful
For the friends who stand by me
When they certainly don't have to
But day in and day out,
they still do

We are all in different places
In life
Physically
Mentally
But we are tied together
Forever
By a bond that can never be severed

But most of all,
I found myself in the people I love
A piece of me in each of them
And when I feel lost
I go to them
And I stick around
Because with them, I know who I am
I am found

Here's to the friends who always feel like home



Why fear uncertainty?

Pooja Sankar

2T5 PB

Why do we fear uncertainty
When it may not be that bad,
Maybe it's this doubt
Guiding our intuition and actions,
Unapparent to the senses,
Yet our consciousness acts in our best interest.

This same uncertainty prompts introspection:
Why not let the mind wander
Before it's made to choose?
Sticking to a single path is no easy feat
In a life, filled with so many choices,
How come not choosing right away isn't one?

Let the mind continue to wander
Before a decision must be made,
Let the senses feel it all
Before the brain must decide,
Let the body process every possibility
before committing to just one.



Do you see?

Kabisha Velauthapillai
2T4 Fitz

***Artist's Statement:** A piece moving us to reflect on the dissonance between the beauty of trees and the cataclysm of oppressive structures that shape our (lack of) relationships with each other and with the more-than-human. I dream of practicing medicine and more broadly, living life in ways that cultivate strong relationships with oceans, forests, and the occasional lichen on the side of a rock on a Toronto sidewalk. Intrinsic to this dream is the recognition that there is no proper environmentalism without strong anti-oppressive practice, including a commitment to decolonization of all types of relationships. There is also no proper medicine if we do not understand how fundamentally tied we are to our wider ecological communities. Our concrete jungles are an illusion that allows us to sit comfortably until we, or the generations after us, come to a reckoning that there is no human health without the health of our air, our waters, and our lands.*



Have you ever stopped to observe a tree? No, I mean, really observe.
Take a look at the texture of the bark.

Are there lines?

Do they travel straight?

Do they twist? Do they turn?

How does it feel?

Is it smooth? Is it rugged?

And what about the colour?

Does it emanate a rich, dark brown? A brilliant red-brown?

Have you stopped to see its lichen?

What does the lichen look like?

Is it bright green?

Grey?

Black?

Is the lichen string-like? Or plastered?

Does the tree have pine cones? What do they look like, and how are they shaped?

Are they stubby or lengthy? What shape do the scales take?

And are they closely bunched, toward the center of the cone,

or

are they flaring out, distinguished from one another?

Do the cones share a smell? Or is the smell silent to our crinkling noses,

seemingly odourless to our receptors that search for a smell to settle upon?

Have you thought about the pine cone you once held in your hand,

and how much potential it had for life?

Not just for tree life, but for life in the form of communities, ecological communities.

Each tree has, within it, many communities,

has beside it, many communities,

has under it, many communities.

And the collective of trees bear many more communities,

Different beings. From insects to microbes, from birds to deer.

And each being lives, survives, and sometimes thrives.

Don't these beings merit our respect? Our appreciation?

A designation

within our headspace and our commitments

to do better for the world around us?

But here we are,

building pipelines, logging, clearing,

expanding, consuming, privatizing,

Oppressing.

We are content with remaining in economic and political systems
that deny Indigenous peoples their rights, their lands, their sovereignties,
that deny the very laws, the very worldviews that can bring us out of this impending reality
of a climate and a planet that can no longer sustain us or itself.
We are content with maintaining domination over oppressed peoples.
We are content with polluting the lands on which Indigenous, Black, and other racialized
communities
live, work, and play on.
We are content with the reality that these very communities will bear the brunt of a climate
that is experiencing sheer turmoil.
We are content with our abuse of power,
of each other,
of the more-than-human.
We are content with maintaining these systems
of settler colonialism and racial capitalism.
But we do have choices. We do have the capacity to collectively refuse
these structures.
We do have the responsibility to learn from and work with
Indigenous communities who have been the rightful stewards of these lands and waters,
to reconfigure our relationships with marginalized communities,
to reconfigure our relationships with the more-than-human.

For more information:

soolalenvironment3.wixsite.com/soolal



A book of beginnings

Katie Ann Lee

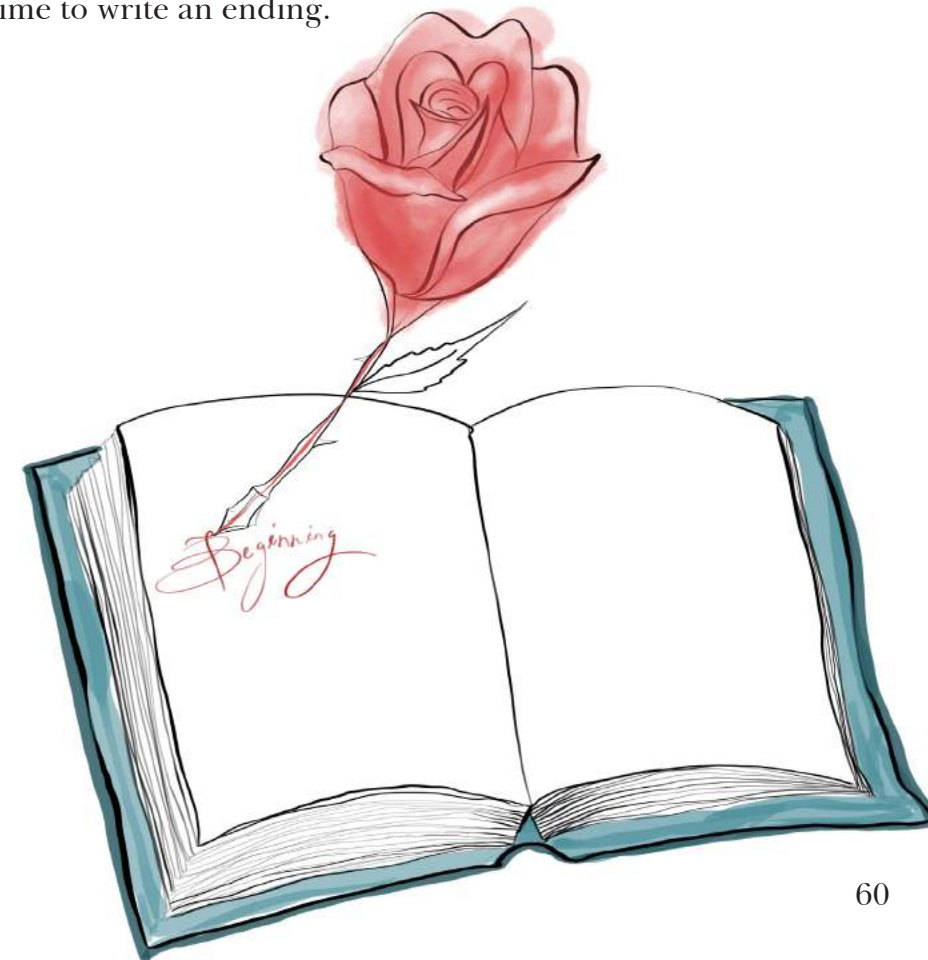
2T5 Fitz

And if she wrote about every romantic thing that ever happened to her,
she'd have a lot of beginnings—
a lot of locked eyes in crowded rooms,
everyday words, heavy with hidden meaning
that maybe she'd find if she let herself look.

There'd be an ode to the first boy to ever call her beautiful,
a diary entry on the one who still listens to her playlists,
conversations in gentle lighting, and a half-finished "To Watch Together" list in her notes app.

It's the story before the part where they call it love
though perhaps there were times when it was;
was there an "i love you" tucked behind that last "good-bye"?
a confession left unsaid at the doorstep as she watched him walk away?

And so, on her nightstand,
there sits a pen and story about a girl,
clutching rose-coloured glasses that have faded to blue,
and maybe one day, she'll decide it's time to write an ending.



Creating Space, Moving Space

Brittany Chang-Kit
2T5 PB

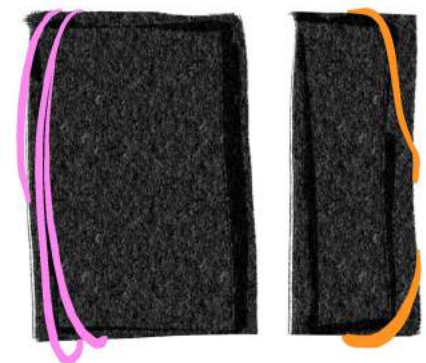
Artist's Statement: This is about the turbulence of old and new friendships alike.



Two minds
Less than a meter apart
Hand in hand
Signaling reassurance, acceptance

Warmth flows through our palms
Almost sweaty, comforting
Backs on the baseboard
and cold ground beneath

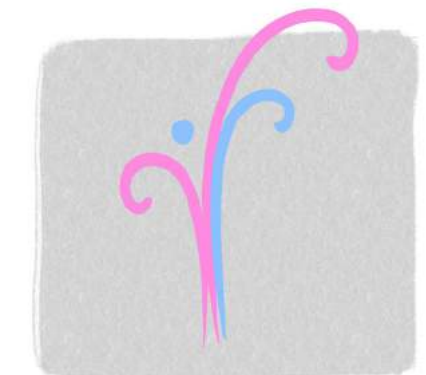
We are enclosed in this space
Safe and out of harm's way
In pain and in relief
At least for this brief moment



Two hearts
Occupied with their own
Virtual connection
Signaling distance, avoidance

Bitterness spills out over words
Biting and sharp, disguised as truth
The blasphemed truth
An irrevocable insult

We are separated in space
Physically apart, hardening hearts
Flames licking at the door
with soot collecting beneath



Two souls
Uncertain of the other
Newly introduced
Exploring excitement, tolerating disappointment

Cautiously creating space.

A Letter To My Younger Self

Annie Yu, 2T2 PB
& Sarah Ge, 2T2 Fitz

Annie Yu and Sarah Ge, 2T2 students, are the co-founders of *Palette* Magazine. As they approach the end of their time in medical school, we invited them to share their reflections on the last four years and the role that arts and humanities have played in their lives, in the form of a “Letter to my Younger Self.”

Dear Annie,

April 25, 2022

Dear Annie,

One night you'll walk into your apartment and see water gushing onto the floors from the air-conditioning machine. You'll be briefly paralyzed and then scream for help into an unfortunately empty hallway (oops). When The Flood happens, you and Sarah should 1) unplug all the electrical outlets, 2) call 911, and 3) trust that very soon your entire building will recover. Troubles like this remind you that you don't own anything, not even your fears or pains. You can't hold onto moving water no matter how tight your fist.

The flooded home isn't the same home that you're in right now, and for a long time after you leave your current one (and probably always), you'll keep tugging at the good memories. Memories like baking elaborate cakes and the daily conversations on the couches and decorating your first live Christmas tree. But I promise in both homes you'll have birthday streamers pinned across the walls for forever. You'll dig deep into the places you live and cry at parties and learn how to love from scratch again.

When you first start clerkship, you'll be really, really excited. People will tell you how medicine won't take care of you, but the people who tell you this will. They'll remind you to eat even when they won't, and you'll later inherit their habit of having only a meal a day, amongst other untenable ones. Those won't sustain you and you'll start to feel trapped again. You'll realize that you won't know the answers every time, or even most of the time. Your patients will wonder if you can truly understand their despair. There will be the 15-year-old with alopecia and the 72-year-old with metastases all over but who will still try to crack jokes with you. You'll grieve with them and laugh with them; they're the ones who will teach you optimism. Eventually you'll talk about Palette for fourteen days straight on Zoom and think about how colouring outside the lines can make a good difference in medicine. I'm grateful for your courage, and more importantly, for the people around us who raised this abstract baby.

What else? I wish I could tell you that I've cracked the code and there's nothing but glowing light ahead. But the truth is that these days I still struggle in the same way that you do, that even after having what I should want I'm still wading through muddy puddles. Give up on the ghosts. In Chinese we say 舍得, which means a willingness to shed, and that the shedding has to precede the having. Fail. Okay, again. You'll slowly get better at what you're trying to do despite often believing that you'll never learn. All your life you've had your hands on the brakes worried about letting go, but the next few years will push you out from the tunnel and into the open air.

Maggie Smith: *This place could be beautiful, right? You could make this place beautiful.*

Dear Sarah,

Dear Younger Self,

It seems like only yesterday that I began medical school—sitting amongst my classmates in MSB, haphazardly scrapping together CBL responses, and having breakfast with my ICE group in Li Ka Shing. I remember the beginning being overwhelming and nerve-wracking. But, when I look back at the whirlwind of experiences that is preclerkship and clerkship, I remain incredibly grateful for its unexpected twists and turns. 4 years later, I am different but still the same.

Palette Magazine was born almost serendipitously; it was more of an inside joke than a concrete idea. In a Google Docs folder called “abstract baby” was the beginnings of a whim, but at its core was the steadfast belief that the human connection underlies so much of what we do in medicine. It's the connection I found in my friendship with Annie, hidden somewhere amongst the pages of Palette's first issue. But it's also the connection I found amongst the greater medical community. The humanities impart a deeper understanding of our interactions not only with patients but also with each other. Despite our individual journeys in medicine, art builds connection by conveying how we experience hardship, growth, and love. And it's this sense of overarching comradeship—that we were all in this together—that comforted me during some of the most difficult moments in medical school.

And there were really challenging moments, some of the most challenging in my albeit very short 24 years. There's the sheer exhaustion of showing up every morning (I'm really not a morning person), the looming dread of a 5-letter acronym that is etched in my memory (if you know, you know) and the crippling isolation of COVID-19 (am I the only one feeling this lost?). During clerkship, I also witnessed the extremes of the human experience: the death of my first patient; the grief of someone's mother; the joy of the first breath of life in a delivery. I had to be thoughtful about how all of this affected me. One of the most humbling lessons I learned is that not all patients have easy answers or happy stories. The difficult reality is that there are limits to the answers we can give in medicine. But the connections you build with your patients and with each other, that's something that makes a difference when all the medical therapies and procedures have failed. At the end of the day, medicine is intrinsically linked to the human condition—our everyday job is just as much about understanding the suffering and joy of our patients, as it is about learning the sciences. It's the person beneath the patient that you can't lose sight of.

I don't know what the future would bring, so I won't get into that. To my younger me, I would say to be kinder to yourself. You will make mistakes, that's okay. Things matter less than you thought they would. Your identity is so much more than your preceptors' evaluations, your performance on an elective or your future dream residency. Something it feels like all we talk about is medicine. But who you are outside of medicine is entirely yours and the richness in experience you bring—that is so unique to you.

I am still learning what I've learned over the past 4 years. I'm so excited for you to learn it. Good luck!

Sincerely yours,
You from the future



03

Lifestyle

Recipe

Matcha Cookies with Red Bean Filling

Tiffany Ni
2T4 PB

INGREDIENTS:

Makes 12 cookies

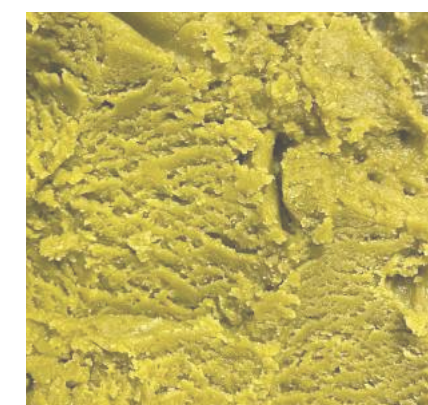
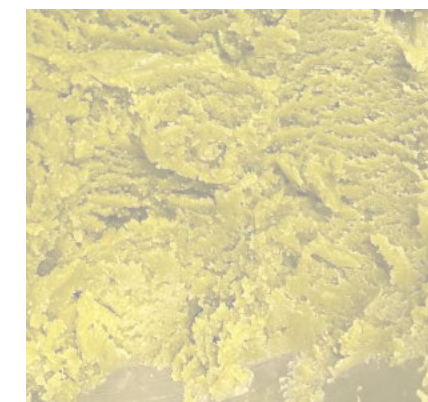
Wet:

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups of fine red bean paste (you can find this at any Asian grocery store or if you are feeling crafty, make your own paste at home! *I personally really like this recipe: <https://www.justonecookbook.com/how-to-make-anko-red-bean-paste/>)*

Dry:

- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda (NOT baking powder!)
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp matcha powder
- White chocolate chips (for a little décor)

Instructions on next page...





INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Brown your butter by heating the unsalted butter on the stovetop over medium heat in a saucepan until the butter turns a golden yellow color. Pour the browned butter into a heatproof bowl to cool. As the butter cools, it will get darker in color.
3. Combine flour, baking soda, salt, and matcha powder in a medium-sized mixing bowl using a sifter to remove any lumps. Mix well and set aside.
4. In a large bowl, cream together the browned butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until smooth.
5. Once the wet ingredients are well combined, add in the eggs and vanilla. Whisk together until you get a creamy texture.
6. Slowly add in the dry ingredients from Step 3. Combine with a spatula until a green dough forms!
7. Place the dough mixture into the fridge to chill for ~30 minutes. This process is critical as chilling the cookies allows the fats to cool, making for a chewier and sweeter cookie!
8. Using a spoon, scoop out a small ball of cookie dough (3 cm in diameter) and flatten until dough is 0.75 cm thick.
9. Add 1 tsp of red bean paste and gently fold the dough back into a ball shape.
10. Place the cookies on an ungreased baking sheet and gently flatten with the bottom of a jar/measuring cup.
11. Decorate the tops of the cookies with a couple of white chocolate chips as you'd like.
12. Bake for 10 minutes or until the edges are golden brown.
13. Let cookies cool for 5 minutes, then enjoy!
14. Store in an airtight container—good for up to 1 week.



Recipe

Peaches and Cream Bars

Michelle Lim

2T4 PB



INGREDIENTS

Base

- 110 g salted butter, softened
- 35 g white sugar
- 110 g all-purpose flour

Cream cheese filling

- 1 package (250 g) cream cheese, softened
- 70 g white sugar
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp vanilla

Finishing touches

- 1 can (398 mL) of sliced peaches
- ½ tsp sugar mixed with ½ tsp cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preparing the Base

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Add flour and mix until the combination forms a dough. It will look slightly rough in the beginning but trust the process! Keep mixing and it will eventually form a ball of dough.
4. Press this dough into an 8" x 8" pan or loaf pan.
5. Bake for 20 minutes. Let cool.

The Filling

6. While the base is cooling, beat the cream cheese and sugar until well incorporated.
7. Add in the egg and vanilla. Mix well.
8. Pour filling onto the cooled base.

Ready to Bake!

9. Increase oven temperature to 375°F.
10. Arrange peach slices over the cream cheese filling in any pattern you'd like.
11. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.
12. Bake for 30 minutes.
13. Cool and refrigerate for 2 hours before cutting.

Tip: Once peaches are in season, feel free to use fresh Ontario peaches!

This is a light summer twist on a cheesecake. The final product looks like it took some work, but in reality, it's very simple to make. This is the perfect recipe for busy medical students looking forward to warmer months!





Recipe

Spicy Pesto Pasta Alla Claire and JP

Claire Sethuram & JP Bonello
2T4 WB

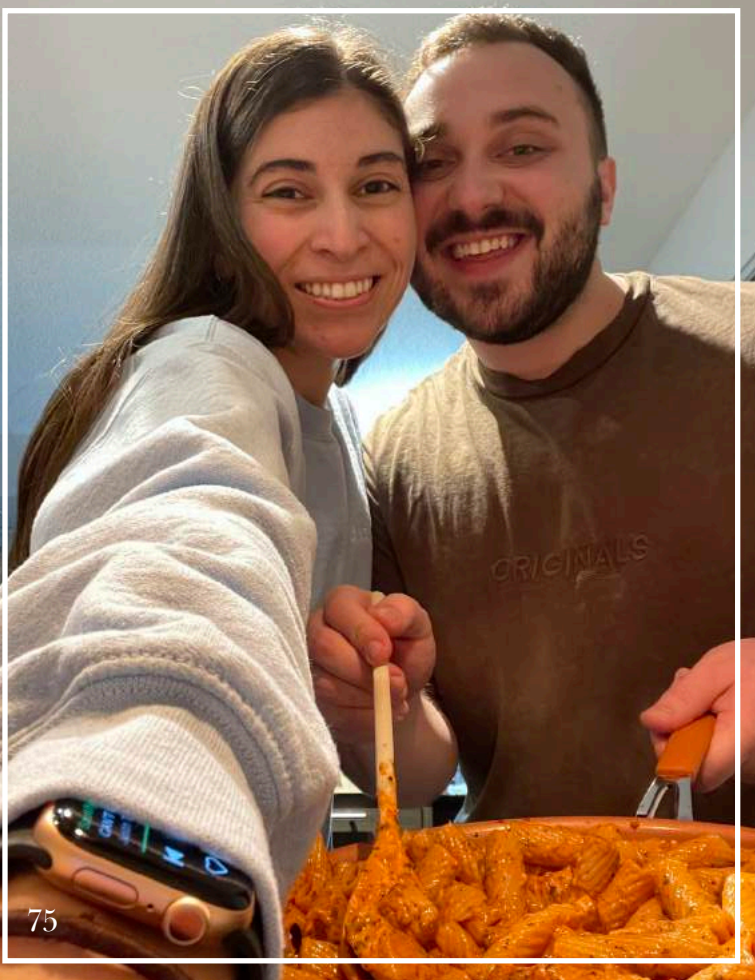
Recipe adapted from *Half-Baked Harvest*

INGREDIENTS:

Serves 4-6

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 finely chopped shallot
- 4 finely chopped cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (use more if you want to make it spicier)
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 1/4 cup vodka
- 3/4 cup basil pesto
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 pound short cut pasta
- 3 tbsp salted butter
- ~500 g chicken breast, cut in cubes
- Grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese, for serving

Instructions on next page...



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add oil. When the oil simmers, add the shallot, garlic, and oregano.
2. Cook for about 5 minutes or until the shallots begin to caramelize.
3. Reduce the heat to low, add the tomato paste and red pepper flakes, and cook for 4-5 minutes.
4. Stir in the vodka and cook for another 2 minutes.
5. Stir in the pesto and heavy cream. Keep warm over low heat.
6. Heat another skillet over medium heat and add the chicken. Cook until the chicken is no longer pink and all sides are white. Keep warm over low heat.
7. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until *al dente*. Before draining, reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta cooking water. Drain pasta.
8. In the vodka sauce, add the pasta, 1/2 cup pasta cooking water, and the butter, tossing until the butter has melted. Add the chicken.
9. Divide the pasta among plates and top with cheese. *Bon Appetit!*

Craft Pals Paint Pots for Plants

Lovini T
2T5 WB



A fun (and cost effective) craft night in! Requires terracotta pots, acrylic paint, snacks, your favourite playlist, and good company. Candles optional. Wet and stormy weather preferred. Paint whatever makes you happy! We painted a doughnut with sprinkles, some succulents, a topographic map, and forest plants.

Co-authored by Ovin Thomas and Laura Tang



Craft

Palette Magazine Presents...

Fur-miliar Friends

An Art Relay Project

We, at *Palette Magazine*, wanted to create a collaborative art project inspired by our Issue VII theme, “Colour Outside the Lines,” to share in a special spread for our readers.

We came up with the idea of an art relay. The first member of our team began the relay with a unique art piece, guided by our Issue VII theme. Each member thereafter created a piece inspired by their interpretation of the previous team member’s contribution. The order was specified beforehand and each piece is arranged in sequence across the next few pages. We only had one week each to hand off our piece to the next member in the relay—no dropping the baton! The arrival of each piece was highly anticipated, and every week we were blown away by the creativity and talent of our team. By the end, we had 11 unique pieces, in a variety of mediums, including ink, watercolour, acrylic, origami, graphic arts, creative writing, and a few unconventional materials and art forms. It was interesting to see how our original theme evolved from piece to piece, but also how elements of the first piece carried over to the last.

See if you can spot the common thread throughout—it shouldn’t be hard to *catch*!

We hope that our project inspires you to try this with your friends and delight in each other’s creativity and talents, and to find some time in your busy schedules to create art, whatever art means to you!

Love,
The *Palette Magazine* Team

At a Glance



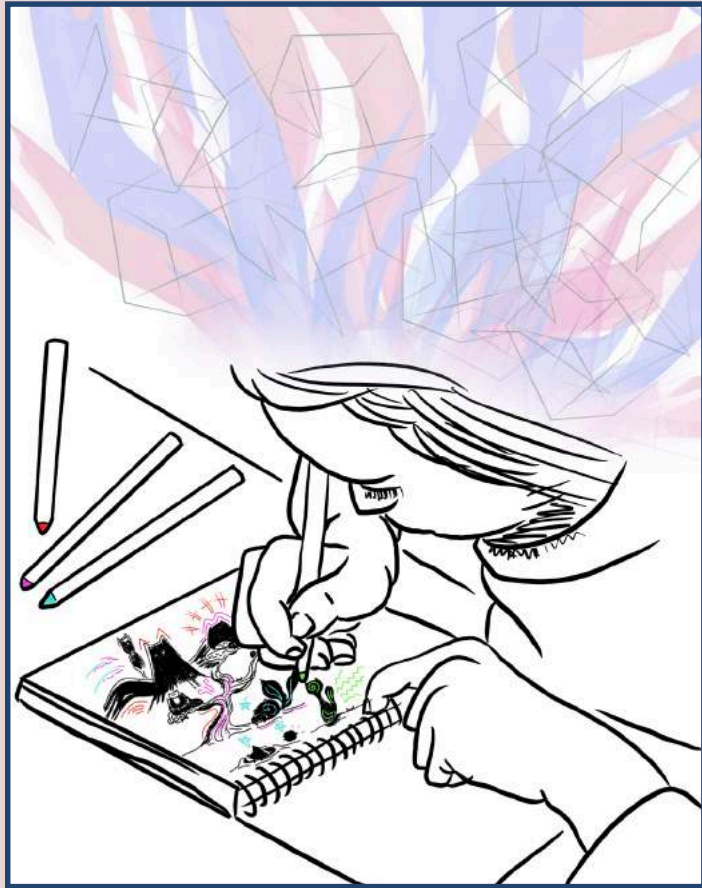
1

Crazy Cat Lady

Olivia So
2T5 WB

Medium: Pen and marker on paper

Artist's Statement: Inspired by Kamwei Fong and all of the studio Ghibli movies I know and love <3.



2

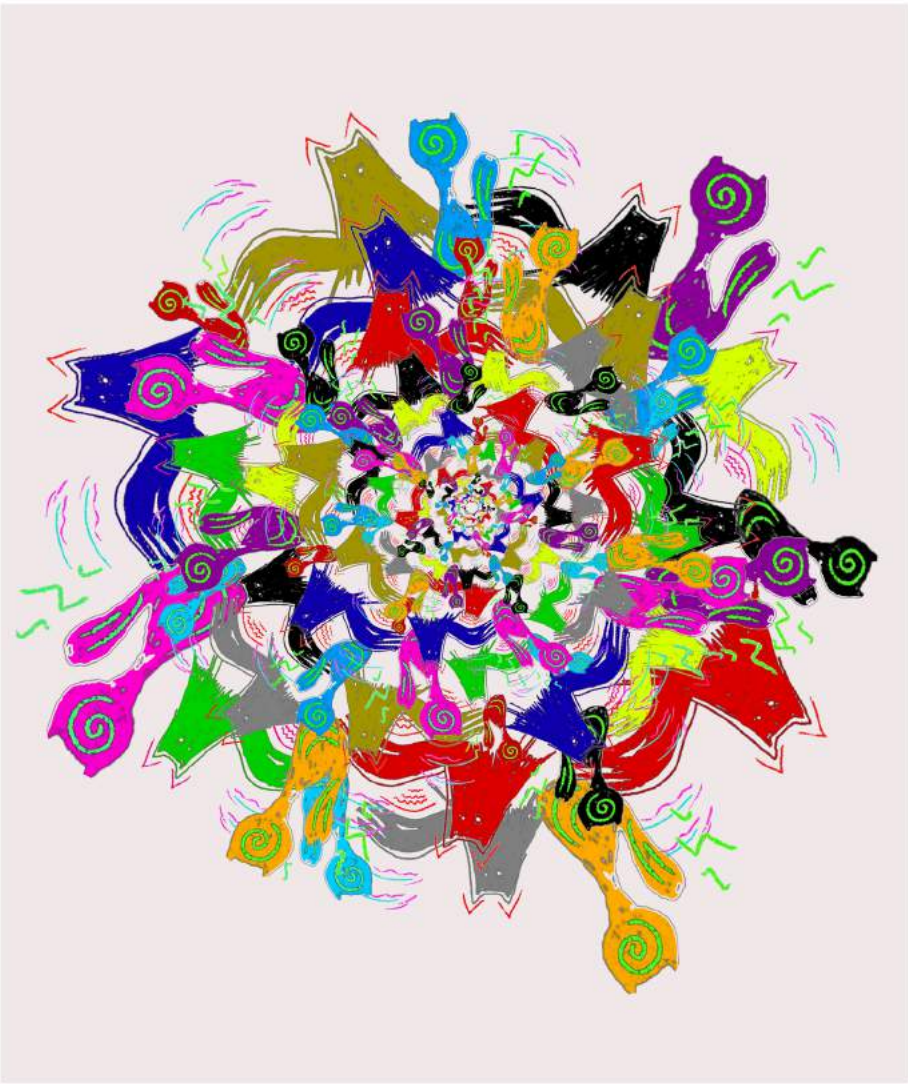
Colouring Outside the Lines

Jinny Kim
2T5 MAM

Medium: Digital art

Artist's Statement: There is something exciting and romantic about colouring outside the lines. For me, it's when I am able to be the most creative!

3



Ali Almail
2T5 Fitz

Medium:
Digital art

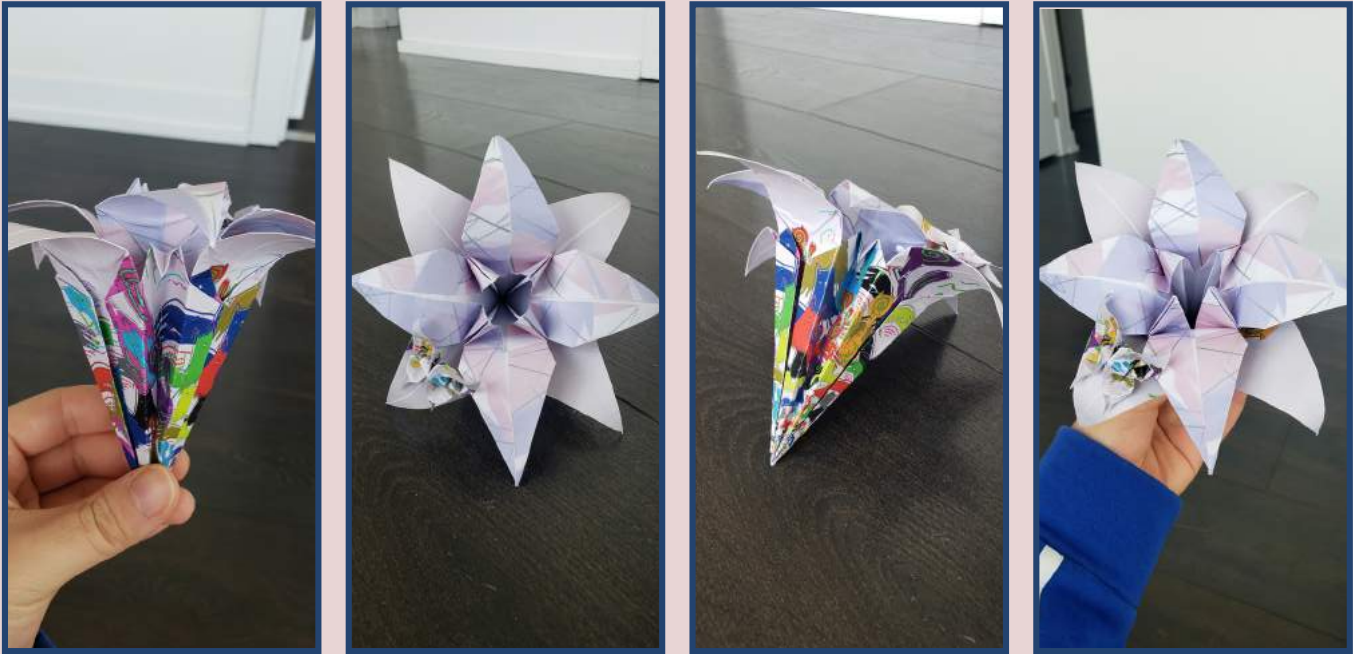
Artist's
Statement:
A pop art-
inspired piece
filled with cats!

CAT-CEPTION

4

Folding Outside the Lines

Judy Kim
2T4 PB



Medium: Paper

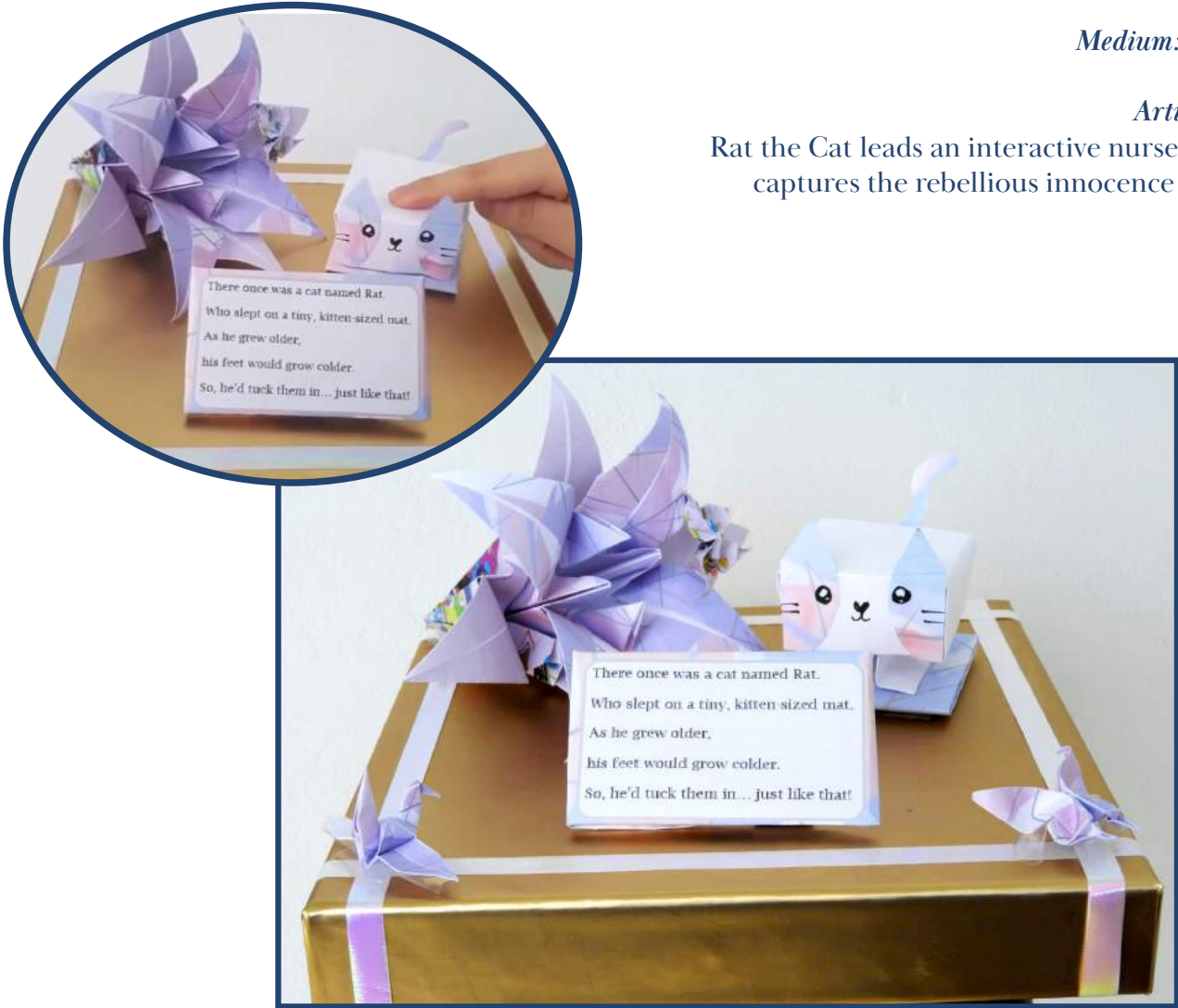
Artist’s Statement: Whenever I see paper—whether that be my notes, newspaper, or receipts—my hands mindlessly wander. There’s something about origami that is therapeutic—it’s procedural, exact, and magical. I fell back to my roots with this project. Enjoy some of my classic pieces from my repertoire.

5 A Cat Named Rat

Suhaila Abdelhalim
2T5 WB

Medium: Mixed media

Artist’s Statement:
Rat the Cat leads an interactive nursery rhyme that captures the rebellious innocence of childhood.



There once was a cat named Rat.
Who slept on a tiny, kitten-sized mat.
As he grew older,
his feet would grow colder.
So, he’d tuck them in... just like that!



6

Green-Eyed
Sass Queen

Bronte Lim
2T5 WB

Medium: Watercolour

Artist’s Statement: I adopted my cat, Belle, when she was 7 years old from the Boston Animal Rescue League... She was tiny and underweight, and had been abandoned by her owners and brought to the shelter by their landlord, who described her as “completely antisocial.” She had resided in the back of the shelter, away from all the noise and strangers, for two months when we met. She nuzzled my finger cautiously. And something in her eyes called out to me—cleverness? Hope? Turns out it was 100% unadulterated sass.

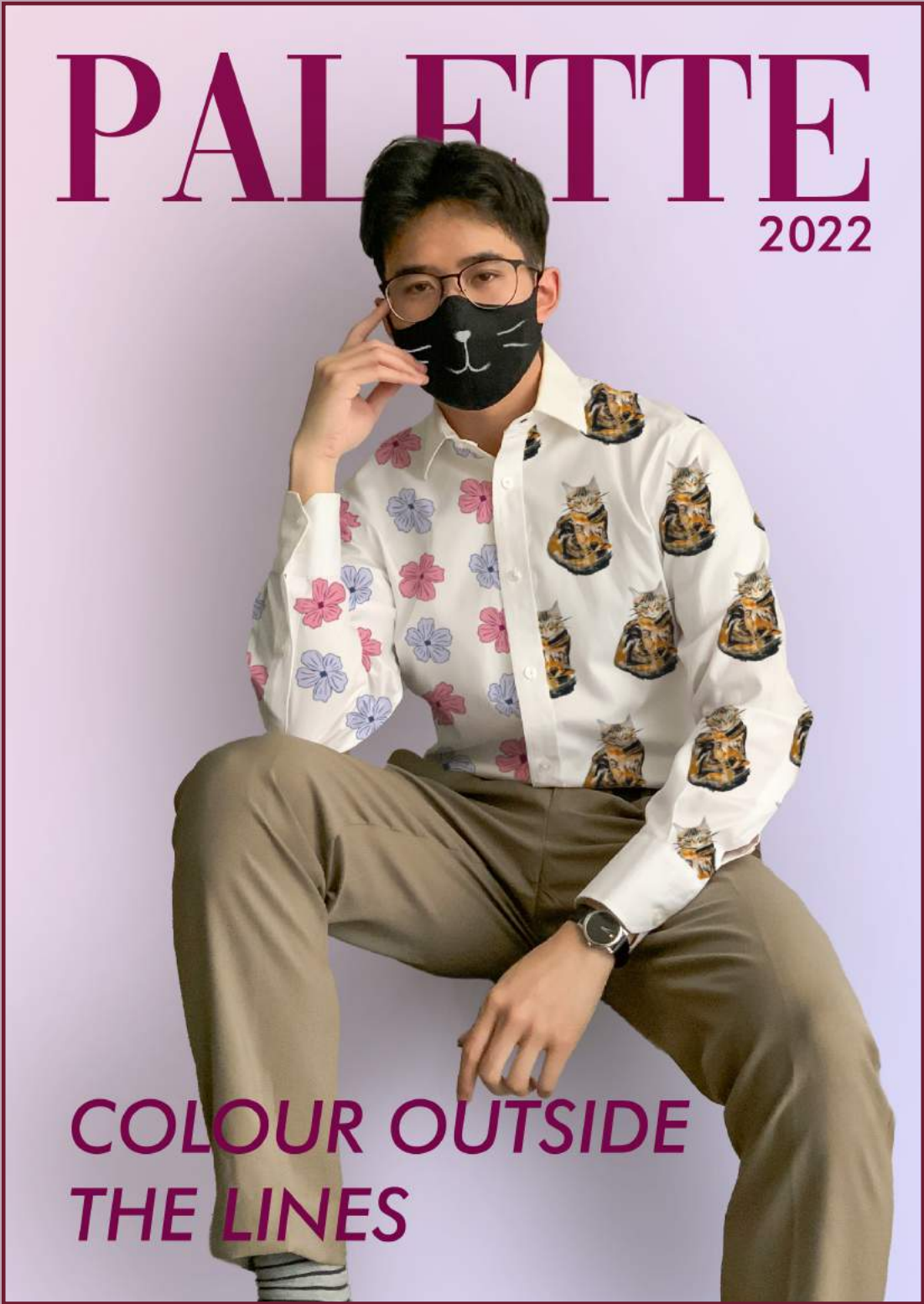
7

Haute Cature

Brittany Chang-Kit
2T5 PB

Medium: Procreate (Digital Art)

Artist’s Statement: Fashion was my first art love as a young child. I remember I fell in love with Valentino Garavani’s creations and it spiraled from there. My motto is form over pattern, and this is what I attempted to show in “Haute Cature!”



8

Rogue

James Huynh
2T4 Fitz

Medium: Graphic design/digital art

Artist’s Statement: A Vogue-inspired piece that incorporates my passion for graphic design. Created using Photoshop & Illustrator, Rogue continues the themes of fashion and rebellion, and includes elements found in previous relay pieces =^,^=

9

I Think We're Lost

Katie Ann Lee
2T5 Fitz

I think we're lost.

My fingers trace our original route on the map – a thin line from downtown core to a little town just north of the city. What was meant to be a fairly straight-forward trip from point A to B has become a wildly roundabout mission that I'm uncertain we will complete before day breaks.

We took familiar city roads until we hit the 400, and then we drove for miles. As we left the city behind, the air became lighter, and the sound of traffic dimmed. Skyscrapers were exchanged for open fields, and every few minutes, one of us pointed out a collection of farm animals. We sang throwback songs destroyed a bag of snacks, and made our way through a tasteful selection of fashion magazines. There was something to be said about the comfort of a car ride to a place unknown.

It was perhaps that thought, along with the outward reflection that we were making great time, that did us in. We thought we might as well stop for a quick early dinner. And then, it was for gas. And then, there was a road closure or two. And now, the sun is hanging low in the sky, and I think we're lost. I say it out loud this time as I hand the map to my friend in back seat. We are trying recount the last street sign we saw when suddenly, we break hard.

The car sputters to a halt, and I smell burning rubber. After ensuring everyone is ok, I turn to the road ahead. It seems my friend has stopped the car as there is a cat in the centre of the dirt road. It seems unbothered by our headlights and the hum of our engine. It is licking its brownish-black fur with an attitude that almost seems regal. We decide that stopping to figure out where we are is probably for the best anyhow, and so we hop out of the vehicle.

The evening air is warm against our skin, and moving my legs feels like a treat. I feel like I could run the rest of the way, if only we knew which way that was. We survey the area around us; in both directions, the road seems to go on endlessly. Decidedly however, forward must be west as that is where the orange sun seems to be setting. We lay the map on the hood of the car, orienting it so that west is west. This is when that sneaky, country cat hops atop the hood of the car, snatches the map up in its mouth, and scampers off into the field next to the road.

It is instinct to follow, and the cat seems to know it. We run clumsily through the open field. I'm close enough to scoop up the cat when it makes a swift turn around the corner of an old barn. Turning as well, we find ourselves facing the most beautiful field of wildflowers that I've ever seen. Light purples and blues on long stalks are swaying in the gentle breeze. The cat seems pleased with our stunned expressions as it settles down comfortably by my feet. Laughing with resolve, we sit as well. It is sweet surrender not to rush off and to instead savour this perfect summer night.

And so, though perhaps we are still hopelessly lost, I feel present and at ease. In this field of flowers, there is only the warm air, people that I love, a cat on a map, and the big endless sky. The rest we'll figure out later.

Artist's Statement: This is a story about some friends getting lost and making the most of it! I liked the idea of going off route as a way of incorporating the theme and had fun adding elements of the pieces before me in the relay (e.g., flowers, cat, magazine, etc.)



lost (stills)

Cindy Cui
2T4 WB

Medium: Film, digital art

Artist's Statement: A frame-by-frame illustration of Katie's beautiful short story "I think we're lost," overlaying some film strips from a road trip I took back in 2018. Katie's piece brought back memories of driving off the beaten path, sitting beneath the setting sun, feeling simultaneously lost and at peace. I hoped to capture some of that imagery and wistfulness in these 'photos', drawn on negatives still to be developed... a metaphor for a story waiting to be imagined.

Life in Bloom

Zahra Emami
2T4 PB



Medium: Acrylic, flowers, video, a mischevious cat

Artist's Statement: Inspired by the running theme of "colouring outside of the lines" and Cindy's photo-reel-istic interpretation of a cat in a flower field, I wanted to capture my cat Missy surrounded by blooming flowers with acrylics on canvas. I brought the scene to life with real flowers extending outside and beyond the canvas, and captured the piece over 2 days, as the flowers ran their course. In a short video clip, Missy sits looking around her before leaving the frame to reveal the painting of her still form (and the withering flowers) behind her—capping my four-dimensional rendition of our Art Relay theme and it's progression.





04

Conversations

Interview with Shreya Jha



Shreya Jha is a Toronto-based composer, lyricist, playwright, and medical student with a keen interest in the intersections between music and science. Shreya has worked with ensembles, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra and the Gryphon Trio. Her first musical Statistics debuted in 2019 and will run again at the 2022 Toronto Fringe Festival. Shreya has since written two other musicals, Connections (2019) and 18 Palace Road (2021). Shreya's research interests include the impact of music on dementia, the psychophysiology of piano performance, and the impact of music education on developing brains.

Q: I know that you wear many hats in the artistic world; you've dabbled with embroidery, created several musicals, and are listed as a composer, playwright, educator, and medical student. Can you tell us a little bit more about your creative roles and your journey through the arts?

I would say that my primary role career-wise is composition. I've done [composition] pretty much since I can remember—quite young. I started piano lessons at five, and right away, I showed an interest in composition. I always knew that in some capacity, I wanted to be a composer. That eventually led to playing strings when I was a little older. Eventually this path led to me doing a dual bachelor's degree in music and neuroscience in my undergrad. I knew I wanted to have a mixed career of music

and science. It took me a while to reach the realization that medicine was the best next step for me, which is a whole other conversation.

Compositionally, my training is in contemporary classical music. I do a lot of piano work, small ensemble, and I did some larger ensemble orchestral work as well. I really love vocal work. And then in the middle of my undergrad, I discovered musical theatre composition, which I fell in love with, and—I don't like to say it's my main interest compositionally because I kind of do half [musicals and half other compositions]—but it's definitely a big part of my compositional passion currently. I've now written three musicals entirely by myself, and two in collaboration with other people. The first musical, *Statistics*, was actually about science and the pre-medical journey. *Statistics* is actually going up again this summer—shameless plug! Musicals and composition have been an interesting way to not only explore what I love so much about music—storytelling and bringing people together and making them feel something—but is also a way to highlight the stories in the science world. I feel like that's something I was definitely able to explore with *Statistics*, and I have so many other ideas for how the stories of medicine can be put onstage in that capacity. And that's something that I'm really looking forward to doing for the rest of my music/medical career.

"Musicals and composition have been an interesting way to not only explore what I love so much about music—storytelling and bringing people together and making them feel something—but [also] a way to highlight the stories in the science world."

Q: What goes into making a musical? What components are entirely your own creation?

Musical theatre has three components: the book or the story, the music, and the lyrics. For the three musicals that I refer to as entirely my own, I don't usually do the direction. Usually, I pass that off to someone else to take on, but I'm still pretty involved in [direction] too. Especially with my most recent show that premiered in October, because there were so many logistical issues with COVID-19, I was quite involved in the direction and the logistics of getting it up. But usually, the direction goes to someone who has more of a drama theatre background, which I do not.

"The relationship between music and science is very much what made me pick neuroscience, because of this budding field of music in the brain."

Q: It sounds like quite the collaborative process. What do you find new directors bring to the production?

Definitely, I really love [the collaborative component] of musical theatre and seeing what different directors bring to the story. For example, *Statistics* is now going up for the second time, with a different director this time. I'm really interested to see how everything changes from the first iteration. [Directors] can modify what the actors do on stage and what the message they want to show is. The same stories can look really different depending on the director.

Q: How do you find a director to work with?

Before, all of my work was in student theatre—U of T undergrads working in the extracurricular realm. [The process] involved asking who [was] available and who wanted to direct. Usually, I'm looking for someone who has the background that I would be interested in. Particularly for

Statistics, the first director was a fellow science student, which I really loved. She got it. This new director actually isn't [in science], but I think that's good for this iteration of the show, because I'd like it to be relatable to a larger audience. And for my [other works], a lot of the time it's a student leader. It's people who I've enjoyed working with in the past in any capacity, who I'm friendly with... I think it'll be an interesting process as I transition into more semi-professional or professional stuff. I'm not sure what that process looks like.

Q: Would you mind telling us more about your double major in neuroscience and composition?

The way I enrolled was kind of illegal, but it's all done now (*laughs*). I didn't really know what I was getting into. I really wanted to do both! But if I did both within one faculty, say neuroscience, then my music degree wouldn't really be to the fullest extent—it wouldn't be a true music education in the way that I was looking for. So, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Music within the Faculty of Music, and then I was manually enrolled in a Bachelor of Science at the same time. And I did the Bachelor of Science part-time while doing the music full-time. Taking advantage of summer school over the [following] few years, I managed to finish both. It was definitely not allowed. But the Faculty of Music was still very supportive, so I was able to make it work.

Q: Good for you! That sounds hectic and exciting. Did you notice any similarities between your majors? Did they share a common path?

The relationship between music and science is very much what made me pick neuroscience, because of this budding field of music in the brain. My research interests are music and science together. I did some work on music and psychophysiology performance, and now I'm doing some work on music and dementia. I did some stuff on music, psychology, and kids... So I think [the subject matter itself] involved a big overlap. But in terms of actually studying

both majors, I really liked that they were quite different. It was just an entirely different experience. The music faculty is tiny, like the size of a high school. You know everybody. You're, in a way, more defined by your instrument and your specialization than your actual year. The science faculty, on the other hand, is huge, obviously. The classes were really big and were a lot more knowledge-based. So, I actually found that when I was getting fed up with one it was nice to switch to the other in my undergrad. And it was nice to discover those connections between the two [aspects] of myself. I think [music and science] have connections that served me well in paving the rest of my career, but they're both different, which is still something I continue to enjoy. For example, I finished a full day of Monday class and CBL, and then ended my day with going to teach a class at my old high school [for which] I'm writing a musical piece. I like that kind of balance. I like being able to switch between the two. It feels very rewarding in that way.

"I think that melody-writing is probably one of my strengths as a composer, and it really aligns with my sort of outlook on composition: the melody is what sticks with you; that's what gives a song its life."

Q: Do you think that your science background has changed how you approach composition, music or your creative process?

That's an interesting question. I think my science background has definitely made for really interesting material. In my instrumental work, I have looked at trying to pick out scientific processes and the scientific stories that I like to put on stage. I think I was so set on compartmentalizing the work that I did in [the sciences and music] that I didn't think too much about the similarities.



When I first started my composition, I approached it thinking that it needed to be entirely driven by inspiration, which was fine because I was passionate about it. But like science—which demands systematic thinking and effort—ultimately, composition is still work that you need to sit down and grind out at times. There have been times that I've thought *I really don't want to finish this piece*, but felt the responsibility of [others] counting on me. Sometimes I'm like, I really don't want to finish this piece, but I'm getting paid, so I'm not going to complain about it. That's the kind of methodological thinking I went through, where I need to sit down and get the piece out.

Q: Could you walk us through your creative process?

It's definitely changed over time. My process right now tends to be something that I'll describe based on a song in a musical [I'm writing right now], because that's something that I've been sitting on and having a bit of trouble with. For lyrics, I usually have a melody in mind. So, I'll think about what I want the song to showcase, and I'll have a "word-vomit" document. I think my "word-vomit" documents are usually longer than the actual shows themselves. And then after all that, it's a snowball effect—it just kind of keeps going. After a while, it feels like the song

takes on a life of its own, with its own direction that I just need to discover. And with that comes the melody. That's the inspiration-driven part. There's a little bit more systematic stuff where I'm thinking, *okay, this rhyme doesn't work. I have to fix it. Or, what have I not talked about yet? Let's figure out what the audience needs to know.* The rest of it is more methodological. For example, *this is the harmony that I want to use here. These are the chords to the chord progression.* And then I'll usually just sit down and crank it out, either on the piano or I'll put it on sheet music. Eventually, when I am forced to, I will orchestrate it for whatever instrumentation I need.

"If I liked this trinity of composition, research, and clinical work, then in order to do that, medicine was probably the best way to go."

So, it really does turn into more of a systematic process after the initial "life" of the song is created. But there's still definitely a lot of creativity in it. There's a lot of joy and discovery. I think maybe a shortcoming that I have is... [sometimes] I feel like the song takes on a life of its own [and] I feel like I can't change it. I think [the song is] supposed to be [a particular] way, which is definitely not the case. You can always improve things. So sometimes, I really have to

go back after a long time and think. [Later], I look at the piece with fresh eyes and think, *okay, maybe this is where I'll go*. That's my song-writing journey.

Q: What is your creative style?

I'm very melody-driven. I think there are composers who really like structure and harmony and the journey of a piece, which I think are so important, but for me, sometimes I will just hear the melody, and I'll know that's where it is. I think that melody-writing is probably one of my strengths as a composer, and it really aligns with my sort of outlook on composition: the melody is what sticks with you; that's what gives a song its life.

Q: What's it like working on the orchestra for Daffydil [U of T's musical theatre production]?

It's been really interesting. I think I wasn't quite sure what to expect. There are so many really great and really talented people on [the *Daffy* team]—which I did expect—but it's on a whole other level. It's been unfortunate that because of the pandemic, the show was committed to an online format again this year. I think I would definitely like to see *Daffy* in its full glory [on

stage] at some point. In terms of my own work, my main contribution was an original song. I finished the vocals about two months ago. I was wondering how I would feel doing a musical piece for a medical musical, but in the end it's simply a musical, and it felt like writing any other song. It's been fun, hanging out with other musically-driven medical students. It's really interesting to see what everyone else does and how dedicated everyone is. I'll have to see what's in the cards for my own compositional [work], to see whether or not I do *Daffy* next year, because it was a struggle to fit *Daffy* [within medical school] this year. But if I don't [join next year's *Daffy* team], then I will definitely be in the audience cheering the entire time.

Q: With your extensive musical background, why did you choose medicine as a career path?

I think there's a lot of people who have known from the very beginning that medicine was exactly what they wanted. I find that so admirable because that was not [the case for] me. It took me pretty much all of fourth year to understand that my perception of medicine was not right. Medicine actually serves my goals really well, because my hope has always been to

have some kind of career where I can use music in a scientific capacity to make an impact on people's lives, as well as do my compositional work. I eventually realized that a full-time freelance composition or classical composition career was not what I wanted, just from what I had seen from working in the industry. I wanted music to be *part* of my career, but not all of it. I also thought, if I liked this trinity of composition, research, and clinical work, then in order to do that, medicine was probably the best way to go. So, it was a very convoluted way to come to the realization to pursue medicine. But I do think that I will definitely be going into a field of medicine that is directly connected to music. Some of my interests include dementia where I do a lot of my research. There's been a lot of discussion of music therapy in dementia. A lot of the research suggests that musical memory might be largely preserved in dementia or be protective for dementia, which would be huge. I'm also interested in pediatrics – especially in undergrad, I was involved with music education for low-income neighborhoods. Neurology was also something that I was interested in, but I don't know how I feel about it now because I don't like imaging. Overall, it's definitely been a weird, non-traditional path to medicine and it was definitely a late and slow realization. I don't fully know to what capacity music and medicine are going to combine in my future career, but I'm excited to discover it along the way.

"Volunteering really taught me about the impact of music education and education in general on pediatric populations, and really reaffirmed my interests."

Q: You mentioned your interests in pediatrics. I read that you're involved in volunteering at Sistema Toronto and created a composition program for children. Could you tell me more about this?

Sistema Toronto offers an entirely free music

program to kids. At the time I started my involvement, which was 2013, it was all in one neighborhood, but now I think they've expanded to up to five neighborhoods. The program is four days a week for two and a half hours. The kids do choir, percussion, strings... The really little kids do music movement and discover music in that way. It's a really great, tight-knit community with a lot of really awesome teachers who genuinely care about the program. I was involved with them all through high school; then, I did a couple of things here and there in my first two years of undergrad. I thought it'd be really cool for these kids to be able to explore composition and writing music, and thankfully at the time, [Sistema Toronto] was also looking to start something like this, so we were able to work together and develop the program in 2018. A donor generously agreed to fund it. I planned lessons and helped organize the sessions. Volunteering really taught me about the impact of music education and education in general on pediatric populations, and really reaffirmed my interests. 2021 was my last year of teaching there, and I have since passed it on to two colleagues from the Faculty of Music. It's really awesome for me to see that it's still going and that this is something we've been able to establish. And even now, I'm still somewhat involved with [Sistema Toronto], writing pieces here and there. It was really a defining experience for me.

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Links:

18 Palace Road full musical:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJaFAkLLYI4>

Toronto Fringe website:
<https://fringetoronto.com/>

Shreya's website:
<https://shreyajhamusic.com/>



Interview with Dr. Chase McMurren



Dr. Chase Everett McMurren [he&him] has Michif (Métis), Celtic, French and Ukrainian ancestors. Originally from Southern Alberta on traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory, he's been living in Tkarón:to | GichiKiiwenging | Toronto for years. His clan is the Turtle and his spirit name is Water Song Medicine Keeper. Chase is a harp-playing, home-visiting physician for long-living people, and an integrative psychotherapist for artists. He is the Theme Lead for Indigenous Health in the MD Program

and Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine within the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. Chase is training as a nâtaiwôwêw* [not-a-way-who-ee-oo], or Medicine Man (*in Michif) & is a certified practitioner of the Hakomi Method. Currently, Chase is honoured to co-chair the National Consortium for Indigenous Medical Education (NCIME) Physician Wellness & Joy in Work Working Group.

Q: To start, could you share a bit about yourself and your artistic background?

I've made music for most of my life, although I started studying piano when I was in elementary school and eventually started studying the harp and harp therapy, or music thanatology, in the last few years. I wanted to find a way to bring music into the work that I get to do, particularly in home-based care, and I realized that bringing pianos [to my patients] isn't particularly [feasible]. A lap harp felt like a really lovely way to bring music [to someone] and use it as a tool for supporting people as they're dying, or as someone they love is moving towards death.

Q: That's beautiful. As you mentioned, part of your practice involves making home visits to long-living elders, and you provide them with harp therapy. How would you define harp therapy and its goals?

Harp therapy really considers the use of the harp as a way of connecting with and supporting someone who's suffering, in a gentle and very responsive way. Something that I find really fascinating is a technique called prescriptive music: the musician or the therapist who's creating music plays in response to what they're noticing in the person they're supporting. For example, a harp therapist will very carefully observe the breathing rhythm, heartbeat, and facial expressions that someone's making, and then deliver a response to them. It's the idea of attunement and connecting with someone where they are, and then playing in a way that helps them move towards more ease and peace. So, if someone is quite agitated, the therapist might match the person's pace and temperament and help them shift by perhaps slowing the tempo of the music... responding in a way that helps the person feel more at ease. [Harp therapy] is definitely an improvisational approach. It's not like playing in a recital. It is much more about arriving, settling in, and slowing down—to really notice where a person is, in terms of their current level of comfort or discomfort and helping them be there and rest a bit more.

Music thanatology is another subfield, which

was developed specifically by a person named Therese Schroeder-Sheker. She is a harpist who developed a whole curriculum, specifically focused on using the self and using music to support the dying process. I have not trained as a music thanatologist, though I love the term! It came to me a few years ago that I really wanted to play the harp, so I sought out a harp therapist in Toronto who was willing to teach me, and I started there. I've had ongoing lessons that are focused on purposefully the harp and creating music in a therapeutic, responsive way.

Q: How did your interest in using music to promote healing start?

To be honest, at different points along the way, I haven't had the courage to pursue music as a vocation. I remember in high school, I decided I wanted to become a music teacher, but my music teacher suggested that I choose a more employable subject area. She said that there are usually only one or two music teachers in a school, whereas there are a handful of English or science teachers. I took her advice seriously and chose to become a high school English teacher. I did my undergraduate in English and minored in music education. I had this idea in mind that it's good to have a job.

"If we are stuck in believing there is only "one way" or "one viewpoint," then we are shutting out most of life."

Fast forward to shifting gears and choosing to study medicine—I had a similar relationship with music therapy, where I respected [the skills and profession], though was afraid of not having the security of employment. I think that's heartbreaking, and I kind of feel like a coward that I didn't have the courage to become a music therapist professionally. In the end, I made a deal with myself that in practicing medicine, I would make an effort to promote and advocate for music as a therapeutic approach.

It is a sad reality that in our colonial biomedical system, biomedicine is generally prioritized. Even within a team, whether we like it or not,

"While uncomfortable, the misunderstandings and ruptures are often opportunities for really powerful healing, if we have the courage to slow down to be curious and humble."

physicians often get a bit more attention paid to them. Music therapy or art therapy programs are often perceived as add-ons, and in many contexts, they are reliant on donations or sponsorships or people making an [additional] effort to make them available.. It's not uncommon for volunteers to do this work instead of a professional health practitioners. Often, it's not considered part of the therapeutic plan or approach to care. Hopefully, this will continue to change over time, though it's still quite typical that music is not seen as medicine, and if it is, it's seen as a highlight for fundraising.

Q: You also work as a psychotherapist for artists. I'm curious to know, what does that involve?

What a delight to talk about this! It's such an honour for me to offer this sort of support. I was privileged in my family medicine specialty training to get some extra training in providing psychotherapy. Initially, I trained in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (or CBT). I shifted from that, and now I'm much more integrative with my approach to supporting artists. There are more than 400 modalities of psychotherapy.

At the end of the day, there are some common factors that determine efficacy across the board, and it's essentially the quality of the therapeutic relationship that seems to be healing. It's the capacity to have a supportive, safe therapeutic relationship. It's the opportunity to feel seen and heard and also repair a relationship when it's ruptured, or there's a bump along the way. While uncomfortable, the misunderstandings and ruptures are often opportunities for really powerful healing, if we have the courage to slow down to be curious and humble.

When there are hiccups or conflicts in relationships, initially, there are barriers to healing it with ease. In therapy, the hope is that the practitioner has the nimbleness and capacity to [weather] the storm and not get pulled in [such that they] can't continue to provide support from a place of compassion, self-awareness, and kindness. While I'll use techniques and tools from cognitive therapy (CBT), I tend to be more focused on how *our bodies keep the score*—in reference to the book by [Dr.] Bessel van der Kolk. Our bodies are an unconscious, physically-embodied memory of our lived experiences, and [our bodies] tend to have a more charged

memory of difficult experiences. Anxiety is an interesting example where we can't really talk our way out of feeling anxious because that dismisses the reality that anxiety is experienced in our bodies. So much of my work these days is about supporting people in being able to notice what's happening inside themselves, in their bodies, and to develop the capacity to keep themselves company with kindness—as they notice strong feelings, to be with [those strong feelings] long enough to get a sense of what is needed for the discomfort to change in a way that feels good. This is a mix of cognitive practices and body-oriented approaches.

I specifically practice a type of therapy called Hakomi, which is based on the idea of being aware of our bodies and using that awareness to notice what happens habitually. That way, we can make our habits conscious, and then decide whether we want to keep the habits or not, at the same time respecting how the habits have been helpful somewhere along the way. So much of our day-to-day life happens on autopilot. We're often responding to ourselves and the world around us in a habitual way, mainly because our brain does that to make life easier. If we were conscious of everything all the time, there'd be too much to figure out. When we slow down to notice what's happening, we have the freedom to choose whether we want to keep operating in this default way or if we want to update our operating system, so to speak. Updating our operating system, not unlike with the iPhone, can be really scary because you never know what's going to happen. I think the work involves being curious and kind as we make room for change, because change is so uncomfortable.

One word that is helpful in describing this is turbulence, which was shared by Deirdre Fay, a trauma therapist with whom I trained. We're making changes and moving off of autopilot, becoming more conscious and deliberate, and it can feel quite bumpy and unsteady because it's unfamiliar and uncertain. That can often get in the way of making changes that we consciously know would be helpful, like cutting down smoking or going to bed earlier. Most people know what would be healthy, and yet there's often so much

more going on outside of awareness that keeps us from making those changes because it feels so scary and destabilizing. In my work, I try my best to help journey alongside people while they make these changes, celebrating micro-progress along the way.

Q: Why is it important to have a space where specifically artists can benefit from psychotherapy?

I made the difficult decision to leave the Artists' Health Centre as the Medical Director in January to make more space for my work in Indigenous Health at the University, as I realised that it's hard to do so many things at once. That said, I continue to provide psychotherapy for artists, though in a more contained way in my private practice. Being curious and learning about the complexity of people's lives is important to me.

The themes and difficulties [artists] face are somewhat similar. For example, there is the common challenge of precarious employment, where jobs come and go, particularly during the pandemic. People can have both an artistic practice and a "job," like being a server during the day and a performer at night. All of that can [disappear] quickly, and there is often this terror of work changing or drying up. It's also not uncommon for people to feel that if they say no to an opportunity, they'll never be asked again, which creates a stress-filled and vicious loop of being ambivalent, burnt-out, resentful. When we, as practitioners, have an idea of what someone does for work and how they make a living and what brings them joy, we can pause before we go on autopilot and offer "fix-it" solutions to complex crises.

There's an implied idea that if we go see a doctor, we want the doctor to help us and tell us what to do. And yet, it's so much more nuanced and complex because most of us struggle with receiving advice. From a polyvagal theory perspective, our nervous system interprets advice as a threat. If we don't feel really connected with somebody, we're likely to fight, flee or freeze in response to being given advice—even if we've come to a physician for help. Recently, someone

in my practice spoke to their family physician, who showed them how much money they could save if they got an IUD relative to paying for oral contraceptives. The process was well-meaning, though the person was so offended and hurt that this physician imagined they would have the money available to pay for an IUD [up front] as a lump sum. In moments like these, it's important for us to not try to be clever or offer great ideas or solutions until we have a sense that someone wants to hear them! When in doubt, it can help to explore what someone has already considered and tried.

I think it's easy for us to imagine that people haven't already suffered immensely and tried a handful of approaches before they met us. Speaking for myself, my first instinct is not to book a doctor's appointment. It's such a hassle, and it's stressful. There's nothing easy about going to the doctor for most people. This person—the patient—is the protagonist of their story and has probably tried figuring whatever is afflicting them already. They're not coming to us because they think we're smart. They're coming to us because they feel like they need our help. Going back to music, I can't think of something more upsetting than telling someone to just listen to a happy song. I would probably feel quite unseen. At the end of the day, there is this idea of connecting before correcting and the idea of acknowledging or validating someone's experience, rather than offering reassurance or solutions. It might then come up in conversation that they want some ideas, or that they're open to suggestions. At that point, we can offer something or share our own experience... [A thought like], "I love listening to this song when I'm feeling down, because it reminds me of my grandma" is offered in a way that's not quick and efficient. It is not felt or experienced as reductive [by the recipient].

Q: How would you like to see art-based therapy grow in the future or be more explicitly integrated into our medical care?

I'm nourished and delighted by the curiosity and respect that current medical learners have

for seeing an expanded view of healthcare and support. My hope is that with the openness that learners have towards this more expanded understanding of healing, complexity, and nuance, there will be more space to consider and explore other ways to support the healing process.

"At the end of the day, there is this idea of connecting before correcting and the idea of acknowledging or validating someone's experience, rather than offering reassurance or solutions."

There's a Rumi quotation that I really like: "Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." There may be an even more fitting quotation from Virginia Satir, who was an inspiring, trailblazing family therapist. She was a schoolteacher first and realized that her students were so affected by what was happening at home and that the complexity of what she was seeing in the classroom was a reflection of something more interconnected and complex. She said she did some "silly research" and found that there were more than 250 ways to wash the dishes, depending on who was washing and [what] ingredients [were] used. If we are stuck in believing there is only "one way" or "one viewpoint," then we are shutting out most of life. I love this quotation because it's easy in medicine to get very persnickety and uncomfortable when things aren't the way we think they're supposed to be. It is a reminder for me to remember that "evidence-based medicine" (EBM) is based in a very particular context. Who decides what is studied, who is studied, and how? I find it helpful to imagine marginalised folk signing up for EBM studies. Are they reflected in the research that guides evidence-based practice?

My hope for medical learners is that they will become increasingly aware of what medicine is and what helps people heal or be well. It's so much broader than what we learn in medical school, and I hope that people practicing

medicine or any health profession will develop a death-respecting approach to the way they support people. Advances in modern medicine are wonderful at extending life. Where I think we can do better is in how we support people in living well with advancing illness. In my humble opinion, I think it can be empowering to know that we all have an expiry date. That is something we can do consciously, or we can easily avoid it and talk about A1c's and ejection fractions. Ideally, there can be room for both disease prevention and reduction along with reducing suffering while acknowledging dying as a healthy part of life.

In my opinion, physicians cannot be afraid of respecting dying and death as part of the circle of life. It is equally as important as birth and similar in so many ways. I hope we can turn inward individually to explore what's in our way of welcoming death when death is near. I know some people have trouble doing that because it's not something that we're culturally taught or [something] our society has much openness to explore. Looking back in time, within music thanatology, when medical advances weren't there, music played a prominent role in helping people as they moved toward death and as a

way for those around them to have something to do, like singing healing songs at the bedside. As practitioners, we tend to fix things by prescribing or looking for something to fix because it's so uncomfortable to simply be—we feel like we're not doing enough or we're missing something. I think it's similar for those who are supporting someone who's moving toward dying. Simply being often doesn't feel like enough. So, I think music can be one of those ways we can use our voice, which is something substantial. Each of us is the only person in all of history and all of creation who has our voice, so being able to use our ability to make sound and make noise—beautiful or not—can be a powerful way of showing up and connecting with others.

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"Each of us is the only person in all of history and all of creation who has our voice, so being able to use our ability to make sound and make noise—beautiful or not—can be a powerful way of showing up and connecting with others."

Interview with Vincent Trinh



Vincent Trinh is a first-year medical student at UofT and a music producer specializing in electronic, jazz, and hip hop. He is lucky to have collaborated with rappers, toplineers, and other producers in creating R&B and K-pop demos, which have yet to be accepted. With the help of some recognition he received for his more personal music side-projects, such as a feature on SOHO Radio and other Youtube channels, Vincent is now determined to work towards his first official release, a beat tape blending his eclectic music taste. Despite how uncertain and competitive the music space can be, Vincent continues to find joy in the creative and explorative nature of music-making.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your experience with the arts?

My intro to music was piano class, which I started when I was probably five. On the side, I played some guitar, but it was not as in-depth as piano. I did piano up to around RCM grade 10. I learned the usual RCM stuff—Classical, Baroque, and Romantic, but jazz was something that really made me want to learn more.

It wasn't until the middle of high school that I stumbled across some music-making program on YouTube, and I just fell down a rabbit hole.

I decided to give it a shot myself. I got FL Studio, and I went ham; I pulled all-nighters and ignored school to make music. That was a lot of fun. Originally, I would just send it to my friends, but eventually, I turned to Youtube. I started posting very amateur stuff, but people would comment and be super supportive about it.

It all came alive in Grade 12 when I started to recreate other people's songs. I remade a bunch of dubstep songs because that's what I listened to. I remember listening to Bruno Mars' new *24K* album. It really stuck out to me, so I decided to remake "That's What I Like" from that album. I posted it, and that blew up unexpectedly. It almost got 100k views, but it was taken down. People were super supportive about it. Some started commenting to see if they could use the song in their other videos. I'd see myself pop up in other people's videos and on pretty big channels like Frugal Aesthetic and Bart Baker. My friends kept telling me that I should sign a contract, but it felt weird to imagine getting money for songs that weren't mine.

After that, I did a few songs that people requested in the comments. A whole new chapter began when a producer from Sweden heard my version of Bruno Mars' "Finesse" and reached out. He said that BTS needed a song similar to "Finesse" and thought that I was pretty good at producing in that new jack swing style. I helped him put together a submission, and then, for the next few years, every time JYP or other K-pop labels would send out a call for a certain style of song, we would spend a few days making a demo. We did disco pop, trappy pop, and all kinds of styles. I would send [the producer] songs, and he would add parts. Then, we'd send it to a top-liner, who would write the lyrics and add the melody. They never sold, but supposedly the songs are still being pitched to publishers.

Q: That sounds like quite the journey, from making music on your own to sending demos to K-pop labels. Have you made any songs recently?

Sometimes when I make music uninterrupted for too long, it can start to feel uninspired. This was not the case [for a piece I recently created] for Portfolio though. I was digging deep, and that came out in the song. It's called "Imposter Syndrome." I played it for my friends, and they were quite impressed by the emotion. That song is sitting unlisted on Soundcloud right now, and my original plan for it was to put it on a beat tape on Spotify. A beat tape is a long-term goal for me. However, a rapper recently reached out to me saying he wants to collab, so I've sent that song and a couple others to him to work on. We'll see.

I also recently got a placement with Tory Lanez! The manager of the producer that I collaborated with from Sweden knows Tory's engineer; we've been sending him beats pretty much every few weeks to land a placement, and it finally happened! We're going to continue to send him beats in the meantime, but we hope Tory feels comfortable enough to release that one soon! The funny thing is the beat that Tory sang on was one that we made probably 2 years ago that was intended for someone else. We never thought it would go anywhere.

Q: Do you have a favourite project?

I think it's one that I am working on right now that isn't released yet. A lot of my work is inspired by other songs. This project is inspired by a jazz piece that oddly has a melody that sounds like it is from a Vietnamese

ballad. I had never thought of jazz and Vietnamese music like the kind you'd hear in *Paris by Night*—which is a Vietnamese variety show—connecting very well. I liked the vibe of it and wanted to try something in that realm. This project has Vietnamese melodies with some contemporary jazz rhythms and chords.

Because things have been busy, I've been working on this since August. I ended up [collaborating with] a guitarist as well, because I don't play guitar very well. He is also waiting for me to finish it, so hopefully I can finish it soon.

"I had never thought of jazz and Vietnamese music like the kind you'd hear in *Paris by Night*—which is a Vietnamese variety show—connecting very well."

Q: You mentioned working with the producer from Sweden and a few others; can you tell us about the music-producing community and anyone else that helped guide you in your creative journey?

The really cool thing about the music-producing community is that nobody's too big to talk to.

The producers I looked up to in high school started Discord [channels]. I'd join the Discords, and they'd share their tips. These were people like Lophiile and Anomalie, who were making really good music.

A lot of the people I've met during the pandemic have been online. There are some for whom it makes sense to meet online for practical reasons. For example, the producer





from Sweden and I met on Zoom. With some of these people, the plan is hopefully to have a jam session or something once we can be in-person. There are a few other producers in our class actually. One uses the same piano and software as me; it's cool to feel like we can speak the same language.

Q: You mentioned that you are often inspired by other songs. Is there a particular way that you look for new music?

I usually find new music through Spotify playlists. My producer friends will send me songs. I have one friend that always sends me stuff that is super out there that I'd never normally listen to. And of course, just Youtube recommendations... they always seem to know what I like.

Q: How do you feel music and medicine intersect in your life? Do you notice any challenges navigating the two worlds of medicine and music?

That is something that has popped up in conversations a few times. Practically, music has probably helped me to do things like listen to heart murmurs. In a more abstract sense, I wonder if making music helps me think in a different way—maybe it helps me disassemble things a bit easier or solve problems. I also think that being involved in the arts in general is helpful for being a little more in touch with people's emotions.

"The really cool thing about the music-producing community is that nobody's too big to talk to."

To me, music and medicine feel pretty separate, although there might be some subconscious overlap. I definitely need to do both to stay mentally healthy. I can't do music by itself or [I'd] feel burnt out; I don't have enough creative energy to sit in front of the piano for 24 hours a day like some people do. At the same time, I'd feel the same with only medicine. In that way, they both give me the energy to do the other.

Q: That's insightful. What would your advice be for somebody that's starting music production?

Give it a shot, and don't be afraid to do things! In terms of software, I started on my own with FL Studio; now, I use Ableton Live 10 Suite, and if you use Apple products, Logic Pro is pretty good. It's cool because a lot of big-name songs are made on software that is accessible. It shows that anyone can give it a try.

It's really easy to feel like an imposter, and that you're not good enough, especially when you hear other people's music. This seems to be a shared sentiment amongst music producers. That's why it's nice when they talk about it

publicly; it makes you feel like you're not alone. Also, you shouldn't feel like you need to adhere to a certain genre or music style. Just do whatever you want to do. Even if it doesn't sound exactly the same as what you hoped [for it to sound like], at least you made something. And who knows? Maybe someone will like it, and you could start a whole new genre.

"Just do whatever you want to do. Even if it doesn't sound exactly the same as what you hoped [for it to sound like], at least you made something. And who knows? Maybe someone will like it, and you could start a whole new genre."

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Producers I look up to (and follow on Discord):
Lophiile*, Kiefer, Anomalie, Kenny Beats

*Lophiile was the producer I mentioned I looked up to early on in high school and found out was very down to earth

Other producers/musicians I look up to:
Slowya.roll, Alfa Mist, Mansur Brown, CARRTOONS, Knxwledge, Omari Jazz, Flying Lotus

Software I use (aka Digital Audio Workstations or DAWs):
Started off using a pirated version of FL Studio, but then bought Ableton Live 10 Suite which I now use exclusively
Logic Pro (for mac users) is another popular DAW, but I don't use it.

My Links:
<https://www.youtube.com/c/VincentTrinhMusic>
<https://soundcloud.com/vintrinhmusic>
<https://www.instagram.com/vincent.the.trinh/>



Interview with Drs. Jennifer Bryan, Jo Jo Leung, and Telisha Smith-Gorvie



Dr. Jennifer Bryan



Dr. Jo Jo Leung



Dr. Telisha Smith-Gorvie

Jenn and the Holograms are Dr. Jenn Bryan (lead vocals, piano, guitar), Mr. Justin Kwitco (lead guitar, backing vocals), Dr. Jo Jo Leung (piano, violin, vocals) and Dr. Telisha Smith-Gorvie (bass guitar, backing vocals). They first performed at the UHN Emergency Medicine conference in 2014, and have been jamming ever since. Jenn and the Holograms' repertoire spans over eight decades and a variety of genres including pop, jazz, rock and even a Newfoundland folk tune!

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your experience with the arts?

JB: Jo Jo, Telisha, and I are all emergency physicians. Every year, UHN hosts an emergency medicine conference. It's a gathering with music and a chance to socialize. We were all invited to play music for the conference, and that's how we came together musically. I think we each had very different experiences with the arts before coming together. Before medical school, I had always enjoyed music. I sang with a band here in Toronto and wrote music with Justin, [our fourth member], for some time. When medical school started, I found other ways of musical expression. We had a medical school band for which I played the euphonium for four years.

JL: My background is in music. I started playing piano at the age of four and violin at the age of five. I got my bachelor's degree in piano performance and transitioned to medical school from piano performance. So, for all intents and purposes, I was a professional musician prior to coming into medicine. That being said, I always knew I wanted to do medicine. With an undergrad degree, you have four years to do anything you want—so that's how I made the decision to study piano performance while also getting credits towards the MCAT. I used to play in various events, including nursing homes and various social gatherings. In medical school, I was also an organizer for Healing Tonics. It might have fizzled out during COVID, but throughout medical school, we would go to different shelters and hospitals to sing.

TS: I started piano lessons when I was six, then took up guitar at age ten. I was even nerdier than Jen and played tuba in my high school and university band, which was fun. In high school, I was in jazz band. Our bass guitar player graduated, and we didn't have a [replacement] so I thought, "two fewer strings than an acoustic guitar—it can't be that much harder!" I also played in the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra. Then in medical school, I played in our class band for four years.



Mr. Justin Kwitco

Q: Can you tell us more about how your group came to be?

JL: I think it was fall of 2014 that Jen and I first performed at the conference.

TS: I joined in 2015. I remember getting involved when I saw Jen photocopying some music and asked what [she was] doing, with no chill at all. I said I played the bass guitar if she was looking... and that's how I became involved with the band!

JL: That's so funny, I don't even remember that! We weren't so much a band initially, just some people playing in the background at this cocktail party. Then later with the addition of Telisha, we actually became more organized and gave ourselves a name: *The Holograms*.

JB: It's true. It was then that we started expanding beyond the conference. We played at various hospitals and different University of Toronto events looking for more ways to have fun playing music together!



Q: What were some of your motivations to pursue this artistic endeavor alongside your work as emergency physicians?

JL: I would say music has the power to heal and the power to connect. At work [as an emergency physician], a lot of your time and energy is focused on efficiency and getting things done. When you are performing, you can just be in the moment while connecting with a large group of people.

TS: That's exactly it. We got into medicine to help people, but the arts, as Jo Jo was saying, also has a way of healing. One of my favorite memories was when we played at Toronto Rehab a couple years ago. There was a patient sitting with their loved one, holding hands, and they just had a look on their face. I nearly teared up seeing that because you just knew how much they were there for each other.

JB: For me, it started off as a challenge—something fun and different compared to what we're doing every day. I've also always enjoyed music, so the opportunity to share that with friends and colleagues was very exciting. We

made conscious efforts to try to choose music that would be uplifting and engaging! Some of my favorite memories are when we had a group singing “Hey Jude” along with us in the lobby of Toronto Western, or “Sweet Caroline” at the Veterans Centre at Sunnybrook. Being able to share that feeling of freedom through music was a very special moment.

"Music has the power to heal and the power to connect."

Q: Could you walk us through a typical session together or comment on how you get a project started?

JB: Well, it generally starts with tea and baking! We're a very food-oriented group... We love playing music, but we also love spending time together. So, once we've decided on a time to meet, we start with tea and catch up. Then, we each bring different songs that we'd like to try out—some work and some don't. We have

[songs] in a folder since about 2014 that have not worked, but we live in hopes that one day maybe [they will]. Depending on where we're going to be playing, we try to pick songs that we think are going to best resonate and fit with the audience.

JL: I will add that oftentimes, our practices are a chance for us to catch up because we don't get to do that at work. I also wanted to highlight that Telisha is an amazing baker. She actually has her certificate from George Brown. So naturally, our practice also involves eating something that Telisha has made.

"Music just opens up a different avenue of connection."

Q: Is there anything that you learned or gained from the experience of working together?

JB: I can say that we have quite different tastes in music, which is often an adventure. This [group] has pushed us all musically!

JL: We've gotten to know each other really well over the years, which is a very nice feeling as

opposed to, “Oh, this is just a work colleague.” On the rare chance that we do actually cross paths at work, it is nice to catch up and quickly chat about what we want to try next time.

JB: I completely agree. This has been especially important over the past few years. It's a nice feeling when I'm at work, and I know I'm going to be handing over to Jo Jo or Telisha, or vice versa. Through the pandemic, we haven't been able to play in person, but we've still done what we could to practice online. We actually get together regularly [online]—us and our partners—just for social things. We still want to maintain the closeness and group feeling that we've built over the years.

Q: That's amazing. It seems like you've also formed a community amongst yourselves outside of music as well! How has your experience with this group or your background in the arts influenced your perspective of healthcare?

JL: Something an emergency medicine mentor of mine once shared was, “Find a moment of connection with every single patient you meet.” That moment can be as easy as asking about the book they are reading or the picture of the dog



on their phone—anything that's not related to their chief complaint. I think that participation in the arts opens up another avenue to find that moment of connection. For example, I had a patient with dementia just a few days ago who was very agitated. His daughter shared that he really likes the opera, *Carmen*, which is an opera I also know. So, I pulled it up on my phone and played it for him, which helped him settle down. Music just opens up a different avenue of connection. I will also say that training through the arts and learning to perform on stage brings a lot of other intangible benefits throughout your training and career. The ability to handle pressure performing in front of an audience, whether that be on a stage or in the middle of a resuscitation, or the ability to think ahead and decide what you want to do—these are examples that show how music enhances careers.

JB: As a mom of two little girls, that's a big reason why I wanted them involved in music. They're taking piano lessons and learning to sing, not necessarily because I think they're going to be professional musicians when they grow up, but because of the skills and the sense of accomplishment associated with the work. I think those are very important to learn, and something we were all fortunate enough to learn through our music training at early ages.

TS: Playing in an ensemble in music is about teamwork, and so is healthcare. These past two years especially have shown us how much we rely on each other, and the importance of working together to achieve something more. It's being able to empathize and feel [each other's] emotions as you're playing, listening to music, and even talking to patients about it. I've actually had a mini karaoke session with a patient who had some music playing on their phone. We both sang and rapped along. It wasn't good, but

we had fun. I really appreciate little moments like that.

Q: Thank you so much for sharing. What do you love most about this group? And what is your most memorable or favourite music moment?

JB: I'm so tempted to say the pies! But I love the chance to make music together to brighten other people's days. I think Jo Jo and Telisha alluded to this before, but as emergency physicians, we're generally seeing people on their worst days and doing the most to make those bad days better. [The goal of] this group is a little different—instead of trying to fix or address those bad days, we bring a little bit of light and joy. It's a wonderful complement to what we do in our work.

JL: In general, one of my most memorable moments is when patients or staff see this random group of people performing in the hospital lobby and recognize, “Oh, that's Dr. so and so!” I think it highlights who we are as individuals—not as this mythical doctor figure, but as a person. We are persons with identities, who have hobbies and interests. We are humans, just like our patients, and I think that is a nice thing for patients to see.

Q: Is there a message or a song that you want our readers to discover?

JL: I will throw in this song from *Finding Nemo*: “Just keep swimming, just keep swimming.” Basically, just keep plugging away. I would say the medical training journey feels like a long one but remember, you are still the person you were coming into medicine. Yes, some things have to be temporarily put on hold for a few years. That's okay. They'll be there for you when you want to return. And if you just keep plugging

away, eventually, you'll be able to rediscover that part of yourself.

JB: I never want to say anything after Jo Jo has answered because that is the perfect response right there! There's sometimes a tendency to think that you have to separate all the bits and pieces of yourself, but I think that us playing music together is a great reminder of how important all parts of you are. Our patients benefit from everything that we bring to our work—not just our medical training, but our experiences, values, and interests in life outside of the hospital as well. We're fortunate to be able to express those other parts of ourselves [through singing]. As physicians, we are also human beings who get to fully participate in life.

TS: I think the first thing that comes to mind is the song by the band Radiohead, called “Optimistic.” The lyrics go: “You can try the best you can, you can try the best you can, the best you can is good enough.” We're human, right? That's all you can do.

Q: That sounds lovely. Are there any final thoughts you wanted to share?

TS: I know it's hard to find time, especially for preclinical students who are on Zoom all day or during clerkship when you feel like you haven't slept in days. Just find an outlet for your own creativity, whatever that may be. Try to [sustain that for] as long as you can because medicine is tough. Even for just two minutes, do something that speaks to your creative self. Being able to connect is what makes us, us.

JB: I agree with what Telisha said. During your medical school years, you might not be able to spend a whole half hour or hour doing something, but maybe take five minutes to play or listen to one song. Or paint one part of a picture, sketching a little bit at a time. Just do it for five minutes and then move on. It's good to have that reminder that you are a person outside of medicine.



"One of my most memorable moments is when patients or staff see this random group of people performing in the hospital lobby and recognize, “Oh, that's Dr. so and so!” I think it highlights who we are as individuals—not as this mythical doctor figure, but as a person."

Interview with Yuang Chen



Yuang Chen (Seycara Orchestral) is one of the most exciting, up-and-coming voices in the world of popular orchestral music. As a classically-trained composer, pianist, and trumpeter, Yuang is a graduate of the Faculty of Music at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. His music is most accurately described as an easily enjoyable jambalaya of catchy pop style tunes and opulently lush orchestral score, all the while being delivered in an endearingly original style that is impossible to find elsewhere.

Deciding to make the merging of the worlds of classical and pop music his calling, Yuang has collaborated with Billboard top 100 artists in creating official, orchestral re-imaginings of their chart-topping hits. In the concert world, Yuang's music has been performed by ensembles such as the Kingston Symphony Orchestra and the Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra.

In his "day job," Yuang is a final-year medical student studying at the University of Toronto with sights set on pursuing the specialty of family/emergency medicine. Since 2018, Yuang has been the music director/composer for the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine's Daffydil, an original, charitable musical production starring medical students & staff with all proceeds going to the Canadian Cancer Society.

Q: Were you interested in composition early on?

Like many small Asian children that were forced into playing music, I played piano for a very long time. And I also hated piano for a very long time. But, I started to learn this thing called theory and harmony, a mandatory part of the [Royal Conservatory of Music] system. I almost failed my first theory exam because I just hated it so much. But I still learned all this theory and harmony. I thought, *What am I gonna do with this?* I decided to start learning how to use this music theory to compose. This slowly became a hobby that I would do on the side. I would go to my theory lessons, come home, and instead of writing the actual theory homework, I'd try to write my own pieces. Those early pieces were pretty bad—I showed them proudly to my band teacher, and they'd give me back a list of many, many problems. “The piece is not well-structured.” “There's no melody.” I eventually got myself a professional composition teacher, because I loved it. Luckily, these minor setbacks didn't discourage me from pursuing the art further.

Q: Could you tell us about your undergraduate education in music?

I applied to do music composition at Queen's and was accepted. I was also doing some bio courses at the same time, in ecology and general bio, but I think this sort of path was definitely unique because I definitely had to make a lot of compromises on a social level. For example, I was transiting back and forth between the bio building and the music building all the time. I lost all of that post-lecture, dedicated socialization time, which I would say is crucial, imperative even, to making solid friendships in undergrad.

But aside from that, I think one of the big benefits was that I had a holistic education in the truest sense of the word. In pre-med classes like organic chemistry, things are very definite. In music, it's so much more free. Most of my classes were one-on-one, just the professor and me. A professor really got to know you as a student—your strengths, weaknesses, style. They would show me an excerpt of music but remind me not to feel pressured to follow X, Y, and Z—to take



[the musical excerpt] as a guide, and play with it. Be creative. See what you come up with.

As an artist, the most important thing is to develop your own style, your own aesthetic and preferences. I came up with pieces that are good, and some, not so good. And I developed the skills and foundation to build music that was my own and unique. This would [end up establishing] the skills I need to go on YouTube and Spotify and publish unique music that people would enjoy listening to.

Q: What opportunities have come up since you started medical school?

I was director of *Daffydil* for a couple years. One of my fondest memories of medical school so far is directing the pit orchestra and composing the original songs. It was a fantastic collaboration between multiple years of talented med students. We also had music students who helped out and the audience was fantastic. Great shows all around. There's literally nothing bad I have to say. Except for maybe the cockroaches.

Since then, I've been continuing to run my channel, *Seycara*, on YouTube and Spotify, which has been growing steadily over the years. I've

also been doing some more soundtrack work recently. For example, I'm working on a piano concerto for the mobile game, *Deemo*, which is going to be coming out next year, as well as an original soundtrack for an anime that will also be released next year.

Q: What brought you to pursue music during medical school? What challenges did you face taking a less conventional route?

Back during first-year of medical school, some friends begged me to do a cover of "Shelter" by Porter Robinson, which was a very popular music video and song at that time. For reasons unknown to me, it went viral on YouTube, millions of views. Lots of subscribers came in, and I had to take advantage of this opportunity because the YouTube algorithm in its ever mysterious ways only gives you a chance for a certain amount of time.

I took a year off from med school. In my year off, I did professional music. Crazy amounts of work writing all kinds of covers and original songs for an entire year. I didn't suffer too many consequences in this case, except for redoing first-year, but the two months of ITM I had to redo? A worthwhile sacrifice.

"But nothing comes free. That is the lesson."



"People want to be in control of their health and of their art. Scoring a film or taking care of a complex patient case both require a lot of those communications skills as well as the humility to let things happen."

Going on into clerkship was extremely challenging. To be doing music after you come home and continuing to pass exams and be a functional clerk on a ward or surgical team, that definitely took a lot of determination. When you wanted to sleep, you actually had to do this other thing. But I also felt more rewarded. I ended up passing my exams and learning important medical knowledge at the same time as I was building my music career. But nothing comes free. That is the lesson.

Q: Could you speak to the overlap in skill sets between your two careers?

There's definitely many complementary skill sets [between medicine and music]. For example, as a private contractor composer who works with filmmakers, animation directors, and game developers, you have to have very solid communication skills and people skills to be able to fit yourself into the team because the composer is never the one calling the shots. In these projects, you're there to provide a part of the overall entertainment media experience, and that part needs to contribute to the grand vision of the director or whoever's in charge. So negotiating your vision is a vital, important skill.

As a physician, you have to accept the decisions of a capable patient. People skills, and being able to make compromises are one of many examples. People want to be in control of their health and of their art. Scoring a film or taking care of a complex patient case both require a lot of those communications skills as well as the humility to let things happen.

Q: If you had like one protected day with no responsibilities, what would you do?

It can take a long time to encourage music out of my creative subconscious. Sometimes when it's very rushed, I can feel like I'm actively using a boat motor to tug material out of my creative consciousness, which doesn't feel as good for obvious reasons. So, if I had a day to myself that I was able to do anything, I would probably write some vocal songs with acoustic accompaniment. With this free day, I would probably just take my time and write music as I please. And this would come in the form of taking my time to write down the notes, write down the lyrics, try out things at the piano for an hour or two, and then have time to do other things in life, like exercise.

Perhaps this day will come one day, maybe next year, as soon as all [my current] projects are completed. I say to myself, I won't take more paid commercial projects, but I'm not very good at keeping those promises.

Q: Have there been any instances where you’ve been faced with conflict when collaborating with other artists?

I was collaborating with this artist—who will go unnamed—this one time. Basically, their agents had got in touch with me through my YouTube channel, because they saw my “Shelter” cover. I was like, *oh wow, this is amazing*. And it was great working with that well-known artist. But then problems started to come up when the music was actually finished. Their agents came to me and basically informed me that my work was going to be unpaid.

I wasn’t asking for much, just a fair rate for my work. But they replied that they don't have the means to make it happen. After a lot of thought and not being in any dire financial circumstance, I said that it would be okay. They put a \$1 payment for my services in the contract. So that was my very, very bad experience working [with] a bigger label in the popular music industry. And the surprising thing is, it has nothing to do with the artists themselves. The artists themselves were nothing but nice, very approachable people that respected my expertise. All the bad stuff came afterwards, with disregard for the smaller artists working under the label. I think I made a very pragmatic decision given the options. But I will say that I will probably never work in this big music industry ever again, should the opportunity ever present. Once is enough.

Q: How do you compose music across so many genres and media?

I've ventured into many genres at this point. I did my training in classical music, studied the old, classical masters like Mahler, Schumann, Beethoven. That was the stuff that I really knew and really enjoyed and loved. But after graduating and trying to make [music] into a financially sustainable career, I had to diversify. It may not come as a surprise, but pop music these days is not more complicated [than Mahler] in music theory.

A lot of the things I had to learn on the job related to producing music. How do I record things? How do I mix music? How do I EQ [equalize] the sound to make it sound like a pop record versus a video game record versus whatever that I would be working on at that time? But those are more technical skills that you can learn by doing the work itself or [learning it] online.

Q: What's the most enjoyable part of composition for you?

The enjoyment really comes in a sinusoidal function. When I'm starting out with an idea, it’s amazing. I'll get a sudden rush of inspiration. I'll write stuff down. Because I'm a piano player, mostly I play on the piano, new melodies, new themes, new chords, new harmonies. And then it falls. *Where should I go from here?* And then I will get inspired by something else. I'll do another burst of writing again, and then there'll be another low and then when I'm nearing the end of the piece, I'm like, *holy cow*. This is the grand epic finale. I get excited, and I write it down again.

Now, if we're talking about deadlines, it's a linear function. You have to force yourself to finish *X* piece by *X* date. There's less time for doodling, less time for experimentation. You just have to put pen to paper, get stuff done.

"And then it falls.
Where should I go from here?"

Q: If you could have a meal with like any musically related person in all of history, who would it be?

I want to talk to Maurice White. He is the lead singer of [the band] Earth, Wind, and Fire. I've listened to “September” so many times.

Q: Maurice White’s “September” famously begins with, “Do you remember / The 21st night of September?” How do you feel about the 21st night of September?

I was born on the 12th [of September]. So, I was the opposite, the Made in China version.

• • •

"The enjoyment really comes in a sinusoidal function. When I'm starting out with an idea, it’s amazing. I'll get a sudden rush of inspiration. I'll write stuff down."



05

Performance

Arts

Cover of Whitney Houston’s “I Wanna Dance with Somebody”

Jonathan Zhao
2T5 PB



Artist’s Statement:

When a friend asked if I wanted to submit a piece for *Palette* earlier this year, I said I’d record something if I could find a song that was special to me. I came across Whitney Houston’s song, “I Wanna Dance with Somebody” and immediately knew this was the song.

This was a song I sang to audition for Daffydil last semester. Daffydil has been such a big part of my life. Whenever we are rehearsing or filming, I completely forget about the stresses of school and get lost in the silliness of musical theatre. But while singing and dancing are always fun, it’s really the company that makes the experience. So, I’d like to dedicate this cover to all the members of our Dafffamily.

*Backing track was purchased off Sing2Music Productions Pty Ltd, audio files were mixed with Audacity



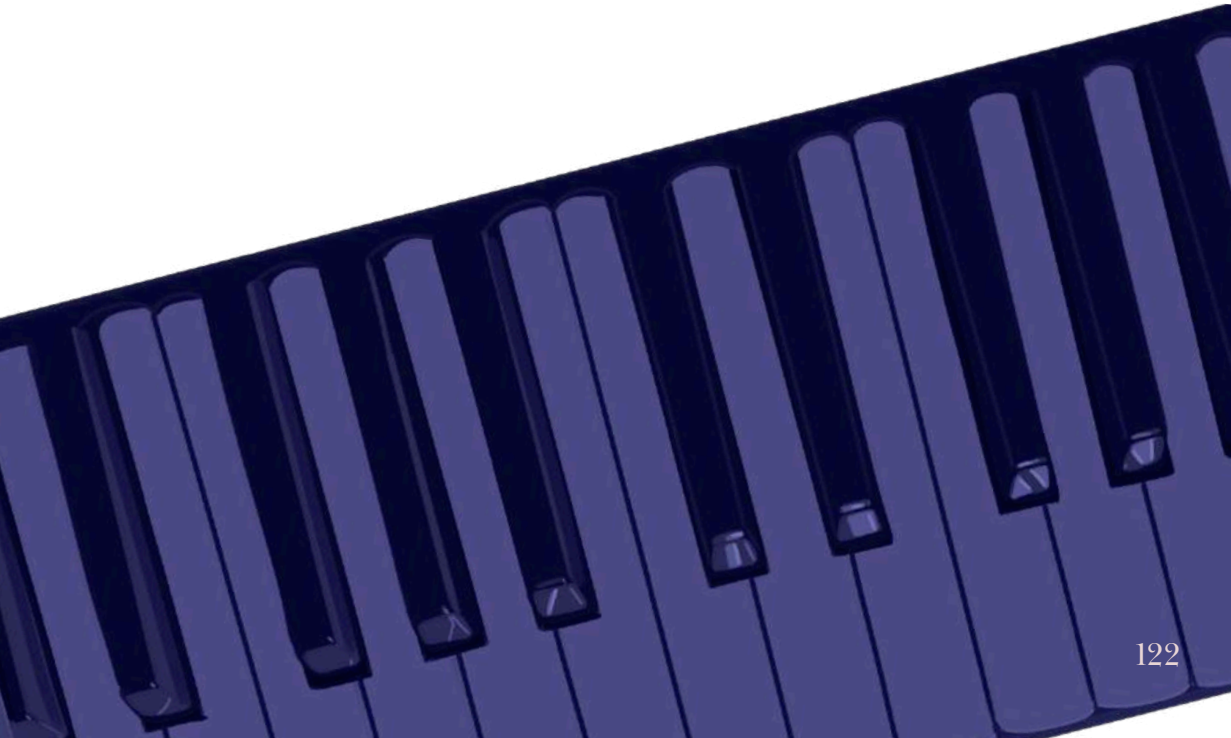
Cover of Comptine d’un autre été

Niki Esfahanian
2T5 PB



Artist’s Statement:

Comptine d’un autre été is the last piece that my piano teacher taught me six years ago. Even though it’s simple, and reminds most people of *Amélie*, for me it’s a reminder of my teacher back home and a time when life wasn’t so hectic.



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Interviewees

- Shreya Jha
- Vincent Trinh
- Yuang Chen

Faculty & Alumni

- Dr. Chase McMurren
- Dr. Jennifer Bryan
- Dr. Telisha Smith-Gorvie

And so, on her nightstand,
there sits a pen and story about a girl,
clutching rose-coloured glasses that have faded to blue,
and maybe one day, she'll decide it's time to write an ending.