

The DODO



Issue #1

The RCA Student Newspaper

Wednesday, 1st November 2023



Andrew Sviridov, MA Visual Communication

Your Newspaper For The 2023/24 Academic Year!

The Royal College of Art has a long and rich history of student newspapers. This academic year, we are very excited to be reviving The DODO, a print publication from 1985 unearthed from the Kensington campus archives, with the support of the RCA Student Union.

This paper is a platform for RCA students to share their creative projects, ideas, and musings, voice any critical—and non-critical—perspectives on cultural and collegiate events, and engage in meaningful discussions with one another across disciplines. We showcase work by both previous and current students, and any contributions for upcoming issues are very welcome! Our second issue will be released at the end of the first term, so if you have any ideas, feel free to send them our way: the.dodo@rca.ac.uk.

As a flightless bird, the dodo is something of a walking contradiction. It's a symbol of playfulness, of incongruous affinity. In a time of ever-increasing global uncertainty, we want this paper to serve as an unlikely space of community. We hope you enjoy it!

Bethan Hancock and Julia Merican (The Editors)

NEWS | Updates on student-led exhibitions and publications, news from the Student's Union, and a message on sustainability

CULTURE | Short fiction by Indra Tincoca and Zen Collins, poetry by Sara Christova and Amy Mcgivillray, and an exhibition review by Haijia Luo

GLOBAL | An essay on Llanelli by Mandy Lane, a sketch from Amsterdam by Celine Cheung, and life drawings from the Royal Albert Hall by YO Shuan

GALLERY | Visual art by Marian Miñarro, Lihong Bai, and Lucy Hu

SATIRE | Cartoons by Madeline Horwath

With special thanks to:

Shravan Sunil, MFA Communication
Shruti Dange, MA Information Experience Design
Kelsey Bebbington, MA Animation
Antonio Paolillo, MA Digital Direction
The RCA Students' Union

RCA Student's Union Event Calendar

ArtBar Regular Events:

Every Monday & Thursday is CocktailMania!
2 cocktails for only £10/£12 from 5pm - 7pm.

Every Wednesday, Karaoke in the ArtBar
from 6:30pm!

For more
information
and more
events visit the
Students' Union
website!



No Man's Land Non Academic Show, Dyson Bar, 14th - 16th November, Private View: 14th from 6pm	Disability History Month, 16th November - 16th December	Meet a Guide Dog, ArtLounge, 16th November from 12pm. £3 donation entry on the door
The Fallen Heroes at the ArtBar. Live music from 6pm, 16th November, limited entry	Create a Braille Poem, ArtLounge, 20th November, 1pm	Christmas Fete, 7th/8th/9th December Courtyard Gallery

A Message on Sustainability

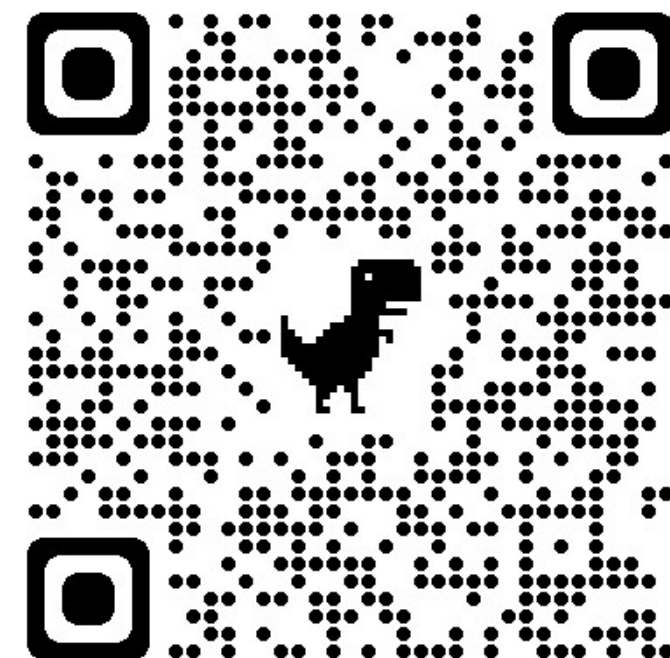
Right now, we are in a decade of action. With the twin crises of climate and biodiversity, we urgently need to reverse the damage that humans have done to the planet. The RCA plays a pivotal part in creating solutions to these global challenges through our academic mission - and you, as students, have a fantastic opportunity to explore this throughout your time at the College, whether that's through AcrossRCA or the Terra Carta Design Lab or beyond.

I joined the RCA six months ago as our first environmental sustainability manager. These first six months have been eye-opening; I'm new to working in Higher Education and new to working amongst artists and designers. The research and teaching at the RCA on climate change and environmental sustainability at a global scale is mind boggling. This needs to be reflected in how we operate as a College. A key priority for me this year is to draw the threads together, tying in the various efforts, to deliver a holistic strategy for how we improve our environmental impact and reduce our carbon emissions.

As individuals, we can all have an impact on our planet. The climate crisis can feel overwhelming, and that our small actions won't move the needle. However in this decade of action we can collectively make a difference. As artists and designers, every choice you make from the materials you use to the processes you follow can shift the impact of your practice. If there's one thing that I could encourage you to do this year (and beyond!), it would be to think through the impact of what you create, by understanding the sourcing of your chosen materials, how they can be used and reused, how they can be dismantled and disposed as needed. By collectively changing the way that we create, make and operate, we can have a positive impact on these huge challenges we face.

We are starting to make progress in our sustainability plans and I hope you can come along the journey with us this year as we develop and refine our approach. You can read more about our progress so far and plans for this year on our newly refreshed intranet page. If you have any questions, please do reach out to me - megan.jones@rca.ac.uk

Megan Jones
RCA Environmental Sustainability Manager



Student-Led Exhibition: If You Are Lost Then This Is Where You Can Be Found

16th-19th November

[Opening 6pm-9pm Thursday 16th November]

© Safehouse 1 Peckham, London



This city can be an overwhelming place thick with infrastructure, twists and turns. An industrial continuum of tunnelling, construction, mechanics, metal, concrete and petrol. "If You Are Lost, Then This Is Where You Can Be Found" is a group exhibition of early career artists taking place at Safehouse, Peckham. Instead of escapism, the artists in this show engage with the urban framework as the material fabric of the work itself. The lines between Safehouse and the art are blurred, offering a place for connection by creating an immersive and visceral environment through painting and sculpture.

Curated by
Eva Yates and Kate McClenaghan.

Featuring - Hattie Malwwcomson, Summer Mapplebeck, Gaia Ozwyn, Jeanie Gibbs, Imi Williams, Samantha Jackson, Shannon Bono, Charlotte Worthington, Frankie Tobin, Annie Shead, Georgia Stone, Kathryn Armitage, Issy Wilson, Georgia Ghaznavi, Katie Hackett, and Chrysa Kanari.

PEREDIZA Magazine

Zofia Kierkus is engaged as a Creative Director to the independent magazine *Perediza*. They've just launched issue ii and will be announcing soon open call to the issue iii, so make sure you stay updated!

Perediza is a humanities/philosophy-based magazine divided into 4 topics in the following order: climate change, art, style, and life. Every article has a common thread of questioning and philosophising. This issue is based on the relationship between art and nature, nostalgia and exploration of what forms

our identity. The cover of this issue is in the beautiful Klein Blue colour, that will pop up on every shelf and coffee table. To read more about the issue and what it includes please check our instagram @perediza and our website www.perediza.com. Issue ii is also available to purchase online and will be soon available to preview in the RCA Library.

Zofia Kierkus, MA Curating Contemporary Visual Arts



Mosaics

Indra Tincoca, MA Writing

In some odd moment, particularly on lighter blue evenings, I find myself caught between my (wood, brown) seat and (heavy, transparent) air. The feeling lingers like a veil of bad breath, mischievously obscuring my sight and leaving me unable to discern my surroundings. What better way to leave this feeling, than through familiar comforts? By this, I mean revisiting memories. Memories that have been fumbled between softfingers, plunged into pockets of denim. I’d rather you not ask me why things have to be this way, I will always give you the same answer: it just is. Neither nice nor relevant, I let them wash over me, but not before attempting to untangle my leg from the wet web spinning lazily around it.

October is a familiar stranger of a month. It is around this time of the year when I begin to lose my mind again. The swift change of seasons carries in its calloused hands the ends of summer and its thinning, loose threads. They leap and twitch, recycling energy amongst themselves, the energy of the events. Events of the summer, of course, are over. Nothing to do but reminisce. Bittersweetness seizes my body and my left hand remains (poised) hesitantly outstretched to receive the new. Nothing to do with this feeling except walk.

The sun dips between the leaves, casting its thin, liquid line on wet grass. Close to sunset, but not so close to night, I was tracing paths I had walked before. I got heavier with each step, unable to distribute the weight of my odd moment. Flowers; dirty, fuschia, sultry orange, spinning in my periphery. The wooden monolith in the centre of the park twisting in on itself. On the bench now, the only confirmation of my existence in this park. The surrounding area is peppered with discarded trinkets (some of which I am reluctant to receive, some of which do not make their intentions known to me). Missing rocks around the footing of the bench permit me to rock myself back and forth with enough momentum (comfort me). What seems tangible? Slim filters in their plastic sleeve on the floor, a crushed-up can not so far from it. The island of trees ahead of me with their various versions of previous me’s, in their soft shades of red. Slightly below me, are my hands.

I do not long for the previous me, the ‘what once was’, as much as she likes to visit me often. She helps me replay conversations, touches, kisses and arguments I would rather not rationalise, mediate or indulge in. She moulds her violence to mine and stores it like fat. My mind feels salty and fat. I’m unsure how to proceed. I would really like you to tell me that you feel the same.

Should we commemorate what once was?

1.
Ți-a furat inima!

Hoț!

As a child, I used to hear the (little porcelain) ladies in the glass cabinets whisper to me.

She is running around in her carousel nature and tearing the walls apaRt.

(In class with the dress I was not allowed to wear. She hears a ‘HA, HA, HA!’)

Frills everywhere, thrilled in pink.

Îți voi mânca buzele!

2.

Knees rubbed on fibres of red, and orange carpet. The intention to harm.

(A misunderstanding, no communication)

Am căzut.

Plastic blue bottles are playing the hollowed tunes of my chiding.

Ridică-te.

(I do not understand your words although I am sitting right next to you)

This memory party is just for you.

3.

And so I count my feet again.

Count backwards, come down.

My mind is sponge. Salt soaks, percolates and then dissolves.

Hai să terminăm.

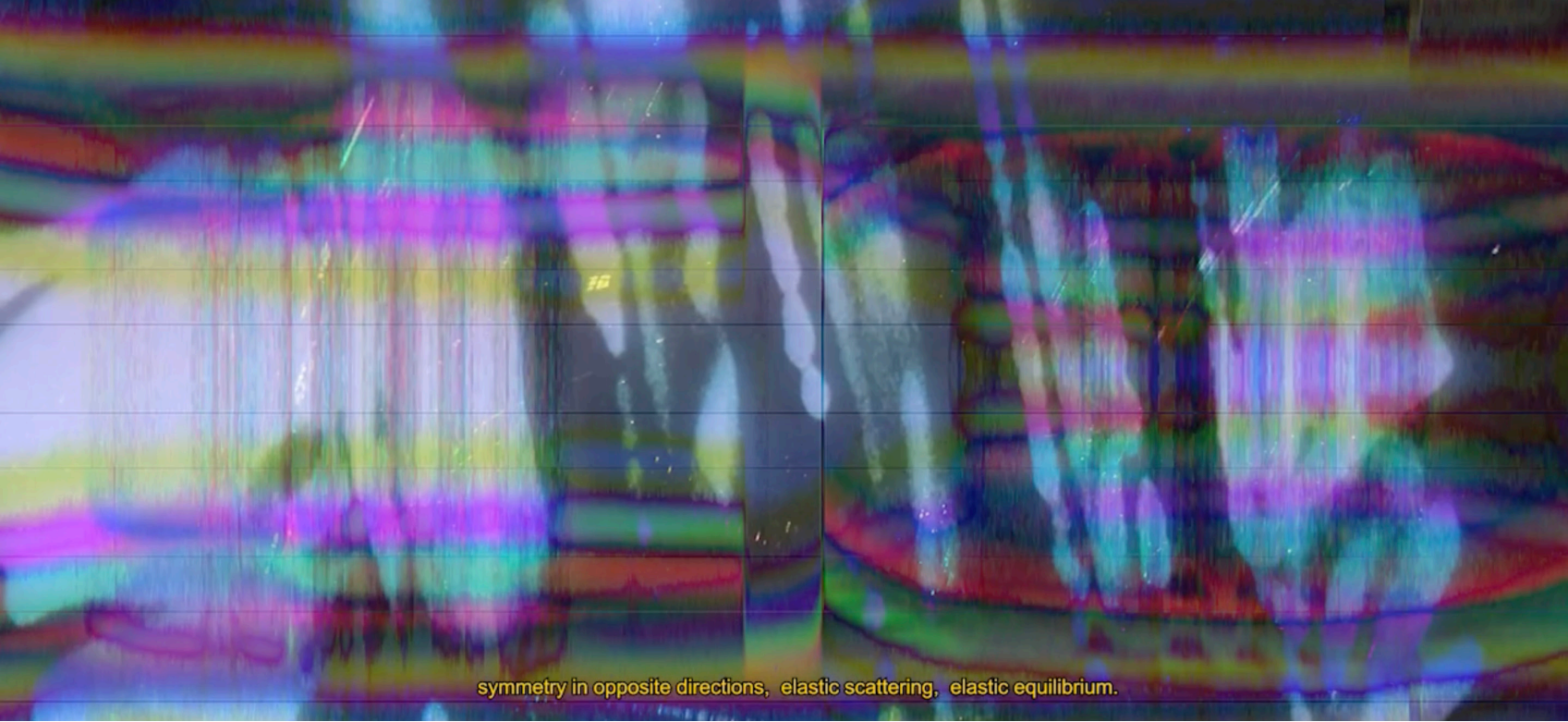
I start by stretching my legs, hands attempting to brush webs off of each limb. As we sit on this bench together, you point out the strange look on my face. You ask me ‘what for?’ and I say ‘nothing’. An elastic snaps inside my mouth. This time, I find myself able to return quicker than before. Maybe it’s because you’re sitting next to me. I cannot promise the other times, though, and how quickly I could return, and retain my form. Most days, I still find myself unable to discern my surroundings.

A Ghost that Haunts the Night

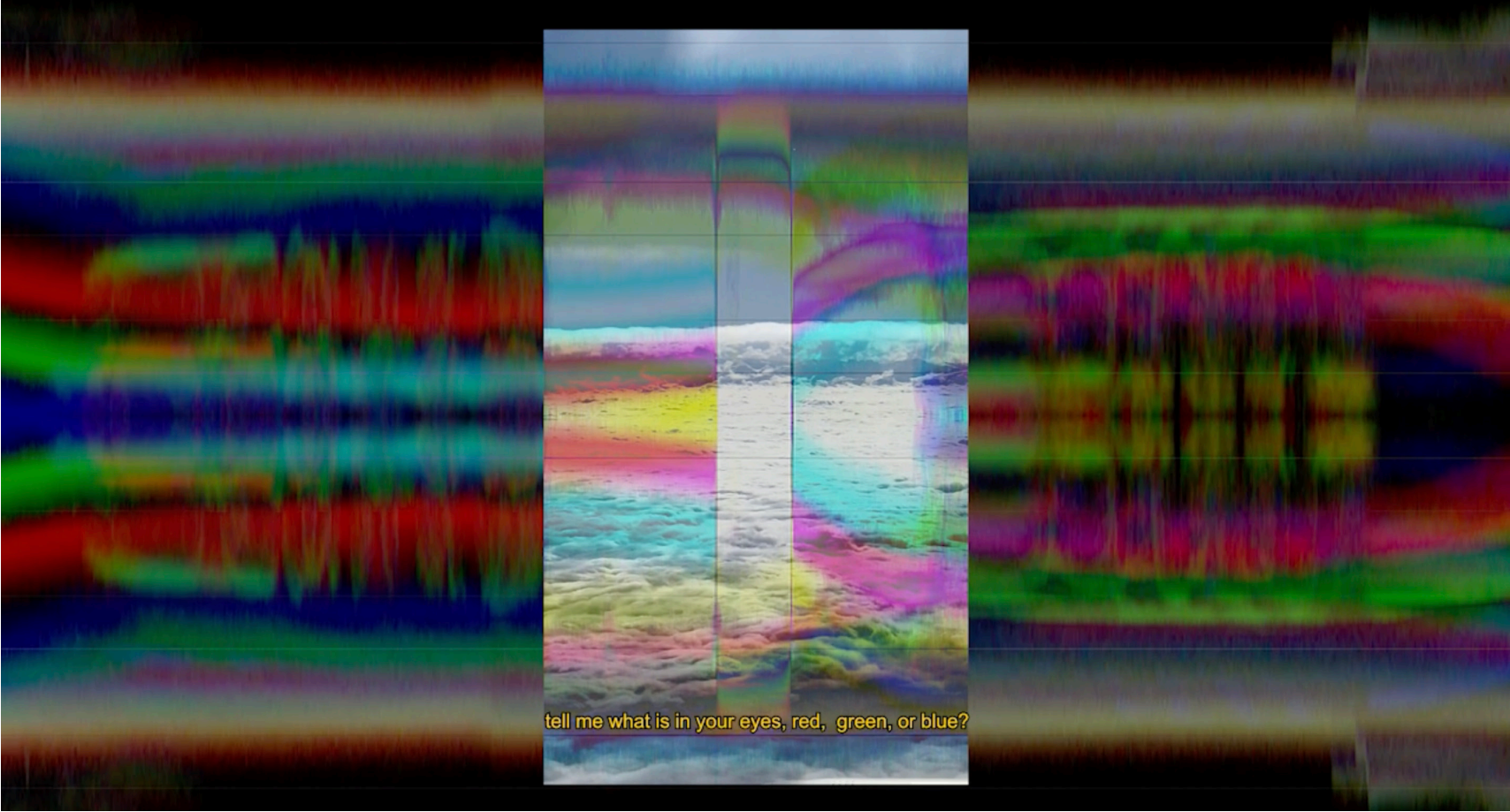
Sara Christova, MA Contemporary Art Practice



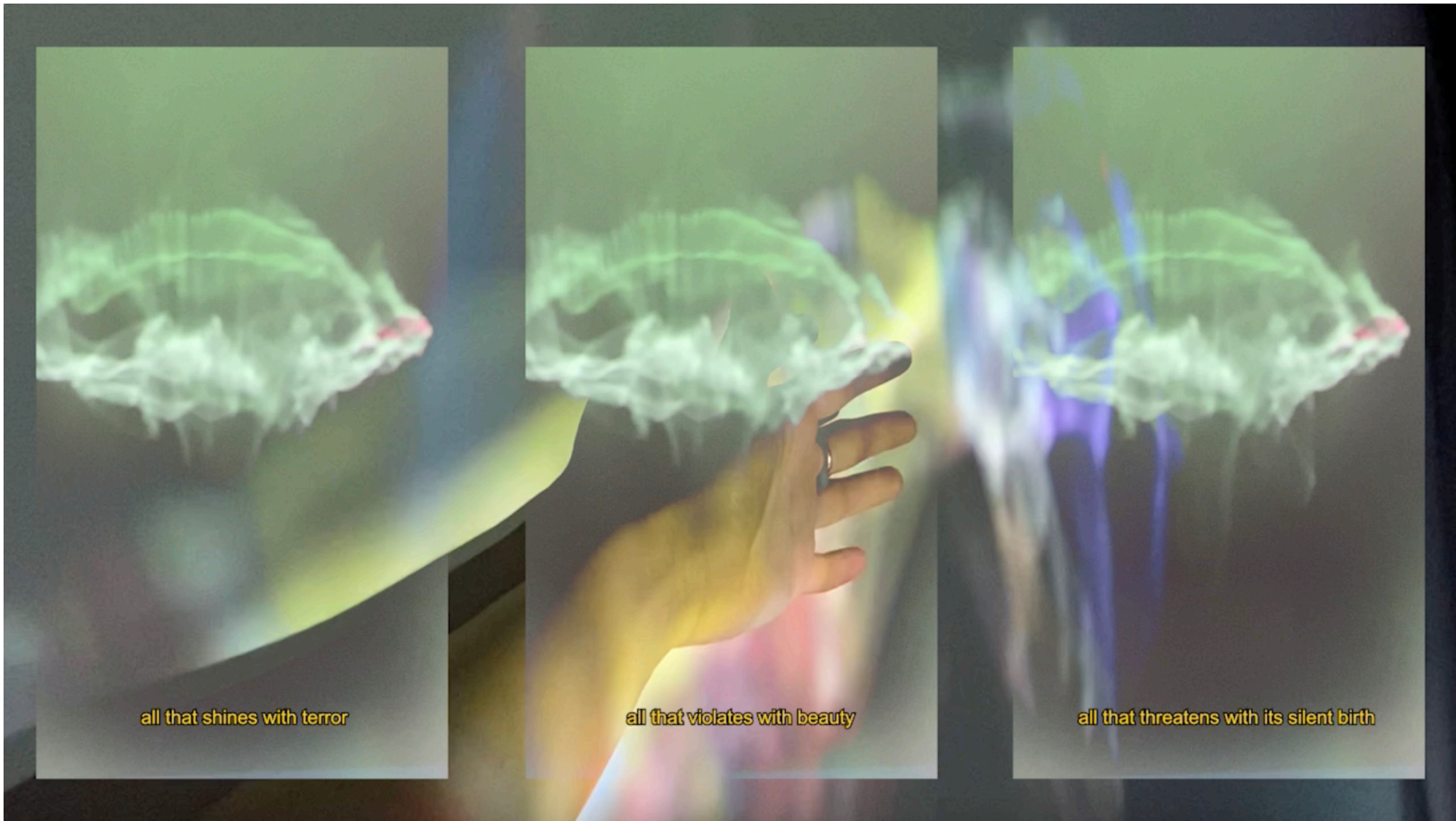
The blazing element of my celestial body in opaque continuum



I am seen. / chrome reflecting in your ocular embrace / my rays burn encrypted files onto your retinas / my diffusing spectres haunt your vision



And, like a newly hatched moth this form needs time to set.
I want to know.
I want to feel, to see, through every prism



the neon glory of a flicker of existence



An ATM on Park Avenue / Pillars

Zen Collins, MA Writing

I was at an ATM on Park Avenue when it occurred to me that I was born into a generation ravaged by affluenza. The sickness is a birthright, passed down by fathers who themselves inherited ennui and a lack of interest in the futures that had been bought for them, unexceptional in all but heirlooms.

It was at this ATM on Park Avenue that I saw my reflection against the Bank of America and looked past myself in my grandmother’s pearls, pressed the prongs of my ring into the palm of your hand to see if you’d feel anything, stopped to check my lipstick, pressed the prongs of my

ring into the palm of your hand to see if you’d feel anything, stopped to check my lipstick in the window of a town car—toasted to boredom in the backseat—and watched the world as we went past with an upturned nose.

I caught their eye somewhere around Madison and fell into that crowd—all faux fur 5th Avenue and long drags from cigarettes they’d started smoking out of au pair’s purses, trading ambition in solid gold for the affection they’d chased in the early years.

Confined to the perimeters of prep schools. Defining themselves by the lights that bounced off wrists and necklines.

I wanted to know the feeling. Maybe I already did. I told myself I was different, that they were something I’d read in a storybook or in a movie I’d aspired to some time ago—but I was at an ATM on Park Avenue when it occurred to me that I wanted so much more.

/

I never asked where the house came from. Never questioned the history, the battered bodies holding up the pillars, but silently wondered why I felt sick to my stomach whenever I walked through it. I never asked who we were, or at least who we had been and what separated us from the others.

Or more so, what brought them to our feet.

Likewise, I never asked who kept the gardens trimmed, or why “the help” looked more like me than anyone in the paintings we so venerated.

In fact, I never asked about any of it. Instead, I recoloured the memories, passed them through some nostalgic filter, perhaps, and whitewashed the darkness out of them—manufactured an amnesia that could shield me from where I came from and settled into an indifference shielded by my own affectations.

It was easier, then, to ask about the mothers selling their bodies to the night for a chance to feed their young just minutes down the road.

It was easier, then, to wonder what brought us here—a leg up from the community, or everyone we stepped over?

And now, knowing every answer but rejecting them one by one, I feel my breathing slow, and scramble for the bliss of the ignorance I once knew, like swimming to the surface for air.

Or taking a deep breath under the weight of those pillars on my neck.

The Mermaid

Amy Mcgivillray, MA Writing

Night-lit, low-tide. Wet ghosts of town lamps sift the sand, trenched like snakes.

The sky, bible (black and leaden); the harbour, like a woodless grove, dark faun – pattered moonbeams cast their wrinkled shadows soft and silver, licked forks on sink-sand, like a Turner of a smuggler’s cove.

I want to half-believe it is a mermaid’s lair. That the straggled seaweed sticking there could be a sleeping head of siren’s hair, or that a dancing carousel might trace the moonlight to the sea at some grey morning hour.

But, I know the secret quay; each grain like plastic.

I know, because I’ve chased down labyrinths before, (drowning silver pools, fire-flickers edging haunted caves, shimmering pearls beneath green waves –

I’ve grabbed that moss and rubbed it in my mouth, pressed it to my caught-throat, or rapture-clutching eyelids – Only to shiver, and think of buses.

And now, on a bench behind a baluster of rusting locks (marry me; TR&Y; earn me; forever mine) – I look through the water like a cat in a gallery, purring, coy and sightless, on my cigarette.

It tastes like burning rubber. I must never rot. (I would not want my tar-stuck neck down there to clog an eel’s gut.)

Knees to my hooded heart flash to re-ignite, I suck down poisoned ash; it clings to hollows in my streams, I want its hallucinations like hysteria.

My face swims under the streetlamp. (The mermaid is watching, calling me an eye-lit asp.)

Swelling crests of froth now rack my lungs, freezing on the shore and on my tongue.

My halfness is for mermaids lost at sea. and the sailor’s grave for all of us: no body, no music. Sound drowns as you sink to me.

Journey Through Space: A Review of Marina Abramović's 'The House with the Ocean View'

I want to actively engage with this performance.

The House with the Ocean View is part of Marina Abramović's retrospective at the Royal Academy of Arts. I attended it during Elke Luyten's performance days. I didn't know much about Luyten before, but after watching the performance, I did some research. I read her CV, and the last line mentioned her proficiency in Muay Thai and boxing.

As I sat there, my emotions, thoughts, expressions, and actions seemed to intensify in the artist's silence. I observed the performer wearing a purple outfit with short hair, wrinkles on her face, and I could even discern details like her nose, mouth, hands, and, of course, those distinctive boots. She presented herself as if she were an authorless text, but I was deeply eager to see myself through her eyes.

She lay there for several minutes. The sound of the metronome gradually faded from a 2/2 rhythm until only the gentle swinging persisted. Then, she rose and sat at the room's edge, gently lowering her legs. Those boots—identical to the ones Marina Abramović wore to the Great Wall of China.

At the core of this performance lies an energy dialogue. It's an act of free expression within certain conditions and restrictions, almost like an ascetic experiment. Here, the performer's body transforms into a constantly evolving domain. Her constraints don't come from the rules on the walls but from the space itself.

The significance of this space can

only be ascertained through the interaction with the performer's body. It's established by exercising authority over the performer. Each breath and movement becomes a journey through this space. This connection transcends the physical—it's an exchange of energy, a resonance between the body and the space.

“Each breath and movement becomes a journey through this space. This connection transcends the physical—it's an exchange of energy, a resonance between the body and the space.”

As I sat there, in the monotonous spatial structure, under the spotlight and the gaze of the audience, she became the observer, the performer, a new subject produced by this space. Her eyes were like punctum, piercing my heart, and suddenly, my nose stung, and tears flowed uncontrollably.

As I felt myself on the brink of losing control, I hoped that many people would record videos with their phones, creating chaos. In that moment, I could sit there, weeping loudly, and rush forward, climb the ladder of knives, and hug her.

The House with the Ocean View is showing at the Royal Academy of Arts until 1st January 2024.

**Haijia Luo, MA Curating
Contemporary Art Alumni
(2022-2023)**





Remembering Home (Llanelli)

Mandy Lane, MA Sculpture

Cycling into the RCA. I commute 17 miles in and 17 miles back. It's all relatively flat with cycle lanes most of the way. Today I found myself on the wheel of another cyclist. He notices me and starts pointing to the cracks, debris, potholes on the floor. I stick with him until Battersea Bridge and he acknowledges me before the lights change. It was familiar; for a moment I was back home on the wheel of another cyclist in my cycling club. A stark contrast to the flatness of London, Wales is lumpy, windy, and wet. Back home I was a reasonable cyclist. Good enough to be 4th in the national 12-hour.

This morning I couldn't help but think about home. Llanelli is a small ex-industrial town on the coast of Wales. It is also one of the locations where a hotel has been repurposed to house asylum-seekers. Since the news broke, what happened next over the following months has been unimaginable. Alongside mixed debate about funding in an already deprived area, a darker far more shocking development has become a new norm in my home. The dehumanising and discrimination of individuals likely to be placed in the hotel. Banners and leaflets informing us, the people of Llanelli, to protect our children.

It is not uncommon to read or hear someone say protect our own, protect our women from the men of fighting age that will invade, or worse. A camp has been set up outside the hotel where local residents quite literally camp in shifts. Ideas of identification to be visible on the new hotel residence so that we can know who they are. It is sickening to write it, and more sickening to live it.

In contrast, events have been organised and run to celebrate inclusivity and diversity in Llanelli. Counter protests at Stradey Park Hotel gates chanting "refugees are welcome here".

And while fireworks are passed through the letter boxes of local politicians and a social media war of who is left and who is right, I can't help but wonder about the families due to arrive at the hotel. Are they dancers? Artists? Did they cycle to work and think about their childhood bike? This curiosity is not a dismissal of the unimaginable events that

have led to their seeking refuge. but a need to see the person in context almost as a form of protest to the slimming down of the multiple facets that make them who they are.

It leads me to think about the many things that make me me, and the freedoms I have experienced to be able to cycle, draw, read, and now study at the RCA. My work centres around what makes us human: fragility, vulnerability, empathy, and more often than not the privilege of learning about someone else.

I am not 'me' if i was only a mother, a woman, a student. There are many bits that make me me. Yes I am a mother; also, a good cook. I left school at 14 completely illiterate, but have a lot to say. I am a cyclist, a dog-loving vegetarian that sometimes eats fish. I hate injustice and sticky hands.

In thinking about what makes me me, what makes you you? Thinking about the many possible bits that go into a person that has had to run, I wonder in reality what bits they have lost, left behind, and, in finding a home in Llanelli, what can be continued and rebuilt. As a sculptor, I am left with this question by Richard Moss (picturing crisis in incomings):

"Compassion is eventually exhausted. How do we find a way as photographers and storytellers to continue to shed light on the refugee crisis and to keep the heat on these important issues of human displacement? If you can find a way to do this, then perhaps we can preserve our own humanity and sustain our warmth as humans."

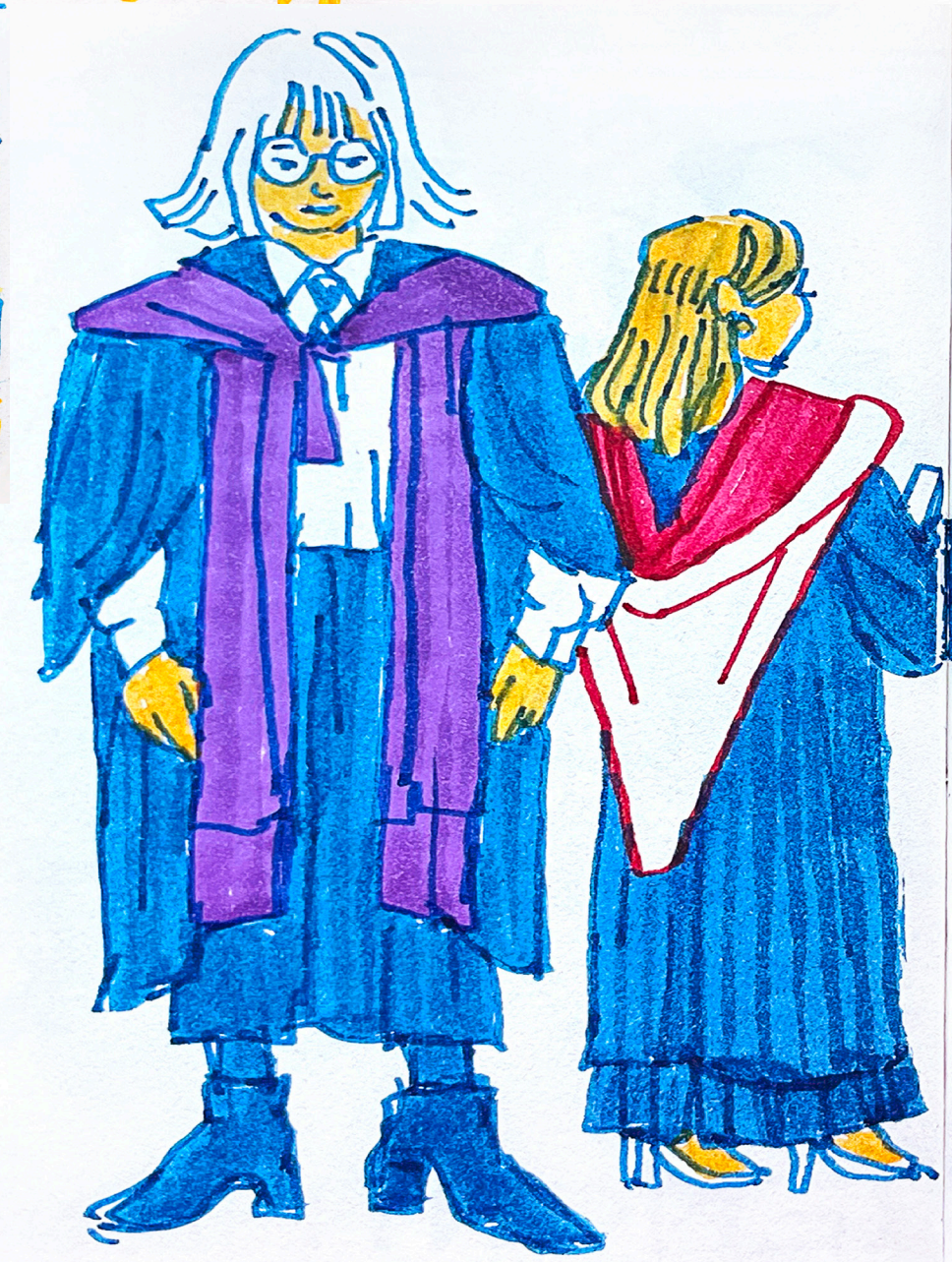


My Boy, 2023, Ceramics



Amsterdam Sketch celine cheung, MA Architecture

A few journeys ago, I decided to bring blank postcards on my travels so I could return with personally handsketched ones. This one captures King's Day in Amsterdam, 2023, where the city turned into a huge orange party and everyone became friends for a day (and night). It was definitely a cultural experience to be standing in the centre of Dam Square looking at the Royal Palace, dressed head-to-toe in bright orange, during one of the most celebrated and colourful festivals of the country.



London
Life Drawings
YO Shuan, MA Animation

Satori

Marian Miñarro, Graduate Diploma in Art and Design

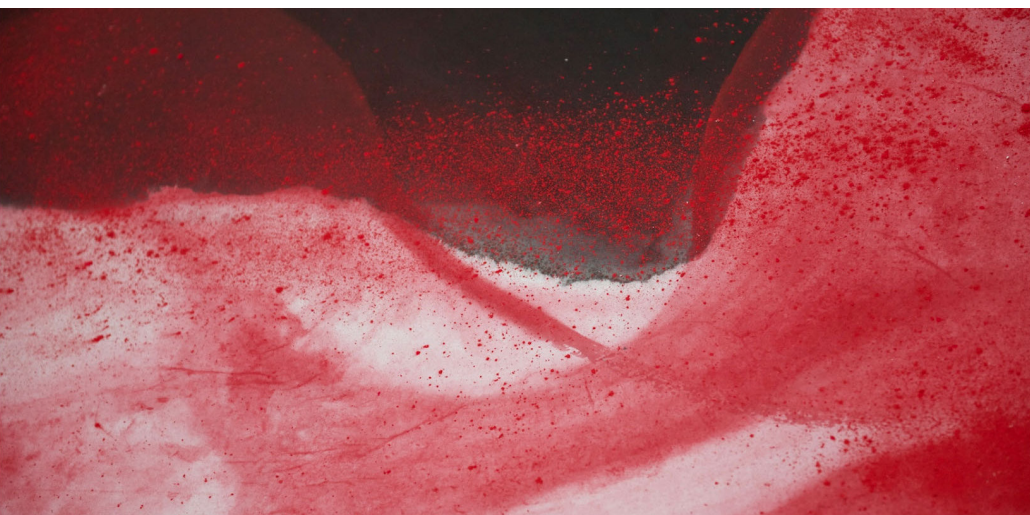
Grounding refers to the ability to return to the present moment. Through the arrangement of Earth-like shapes, “Satori” is a project that seeks to evoke a sense of balance. The work portrays a series of sculptural pieces examining the concept of grounding, navigating how the elements exist in our external environment but also within ourselves.



The Joy of Fish and Water

Lihong Bai, MA Painting

In her multimedia painting and performance work “The Joy of Fish and Water”, Lihong Bai embodies states of female sexual enjoyment and exploration imbued with freedom and power. Through the process of adding coloured powder as a medium that acts upon the image, the painting becomes blurred through repeated touches, as if the eroticism has dissipated over time. The coloured powder acts almost as a stain, with a silent and long-lasting destructive power that is as pervasive as the traces of eroticism, and as difficult to remove.



On Belief

Lucy Hu, MA Visual Communication

I believe in the power of being small instead of being big. I believe in the power of being quiet instead of making noise. I believe in the power of healing instead of justifying. I believe in the power of the unremarkable, unspeakable, the soft, gentle and ephemeral.

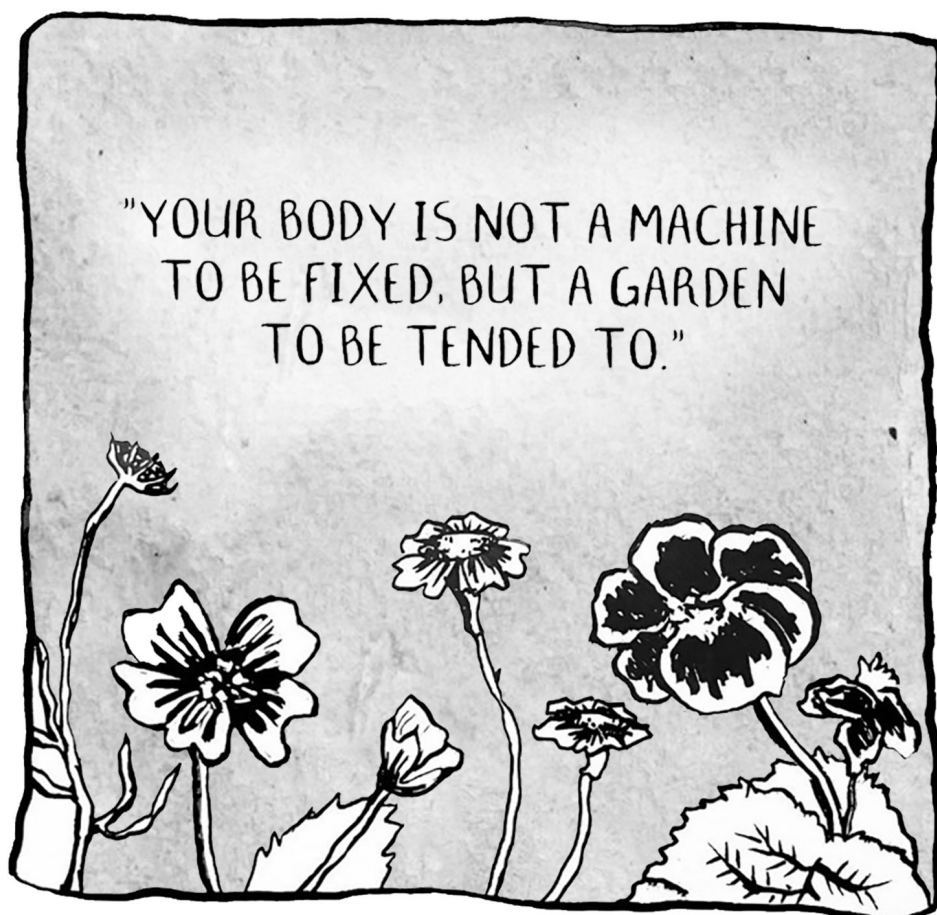
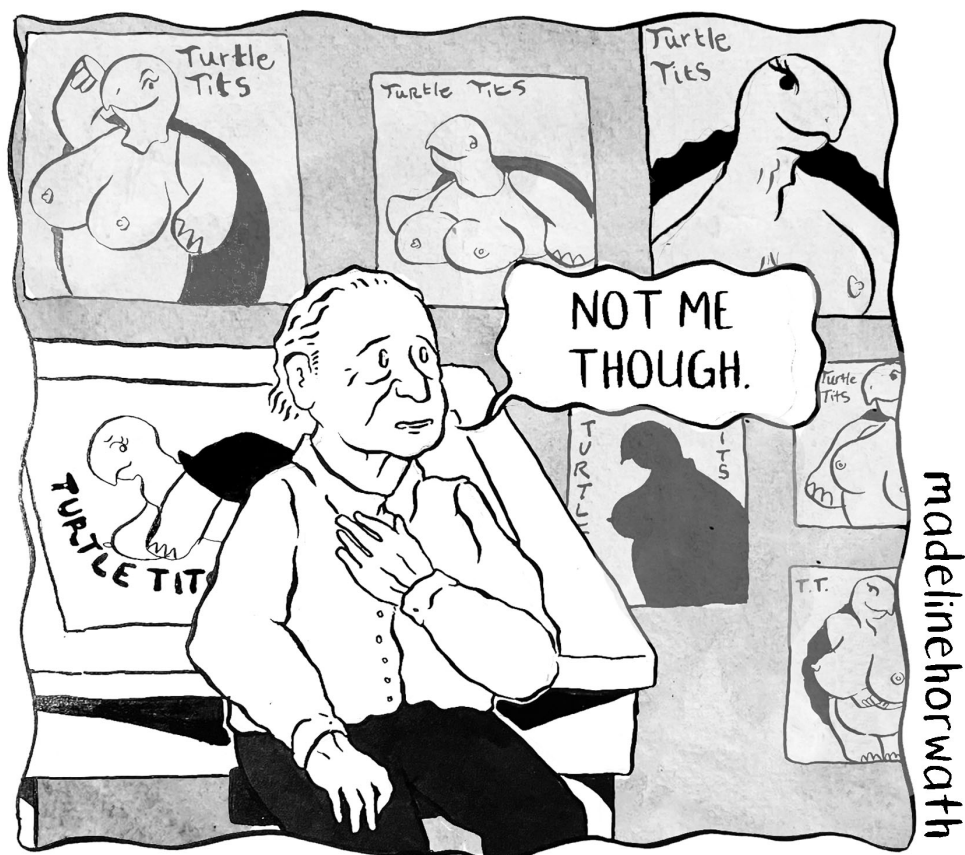
I believe in fragments, moments, and the immediacy of life. I believe in sitting down and doing nothing. I believe the time I wasted in gardens can pile up and transform to compost, constantly changing and renewed. I believe in gardens. I believe the garden is not still life, it seduces you into a landscape that changes as you move.

I believe in gaps, fissures and souvenirs. I believe in diaries and memories recollected. I believe a Madeleine cake dipped in tea has the power of time-travelling. I believe in a space to dwell in. I believe in nature. I believe when I am with nature I can be the forever child, suspended in the air, never becoming a grown-up.

I believe in the power of truthful things. I believe in meanings. I believe in myths, secret gardens, Eden that never dies, legends, dreamworlds, fairytales, allegories, proses, poems, dreams, that grows from small happenings, and my imagination is the yeast.

Humans and plants, evolving from the same ancestor yet separated. I am longing for the nostalgic reunion with you, plants. This is my Odyssey.





Next Issue:

Introducing Salty SUzie

Your sarcastic Agony Aunt for this academic year: Salty SUzie will be answering your worries, rants and existential woes in her advice column for our upcoming student newspaper! Approach with caution: she'll give advice but expect a pinch of salt. Send your submissions for Salty SUzie through to our email: the.dodo@rca.ac.uk – make sure to include SUZIE in the email subject!

Alongside our Agony Aunt page, we will also be dedicating a page to RCA Confessions. Follow our Instagram page [@thedodo.rca](https://www.instagram.com/thedodo.rca) for more announcements about this coming soon ...

Competition Time!

In celebration of The DODO's first issue, we are holding a competition for commissioning the next issue's cover. Artists of all talents are invited submit a winter image that perfectly encapsulates the rich multi-cultural community of the RCA. Submissions can be in any medium but must be submitted to our inbox: the.dodo@rca.ac.uk.

Make sure to include COMPETITION in the subject title. The winner will be contacted in advance of the next issue. Good luck!

Prize: £100 Amazon Voucher