

“ Try being in the shores
of another before telling
them *good vibes only* ”
- Jean Altidor

MDC NORTH

AXIS Creative Arts Magazine

VOLUME 17

AXIS

Creative Arts Magazine



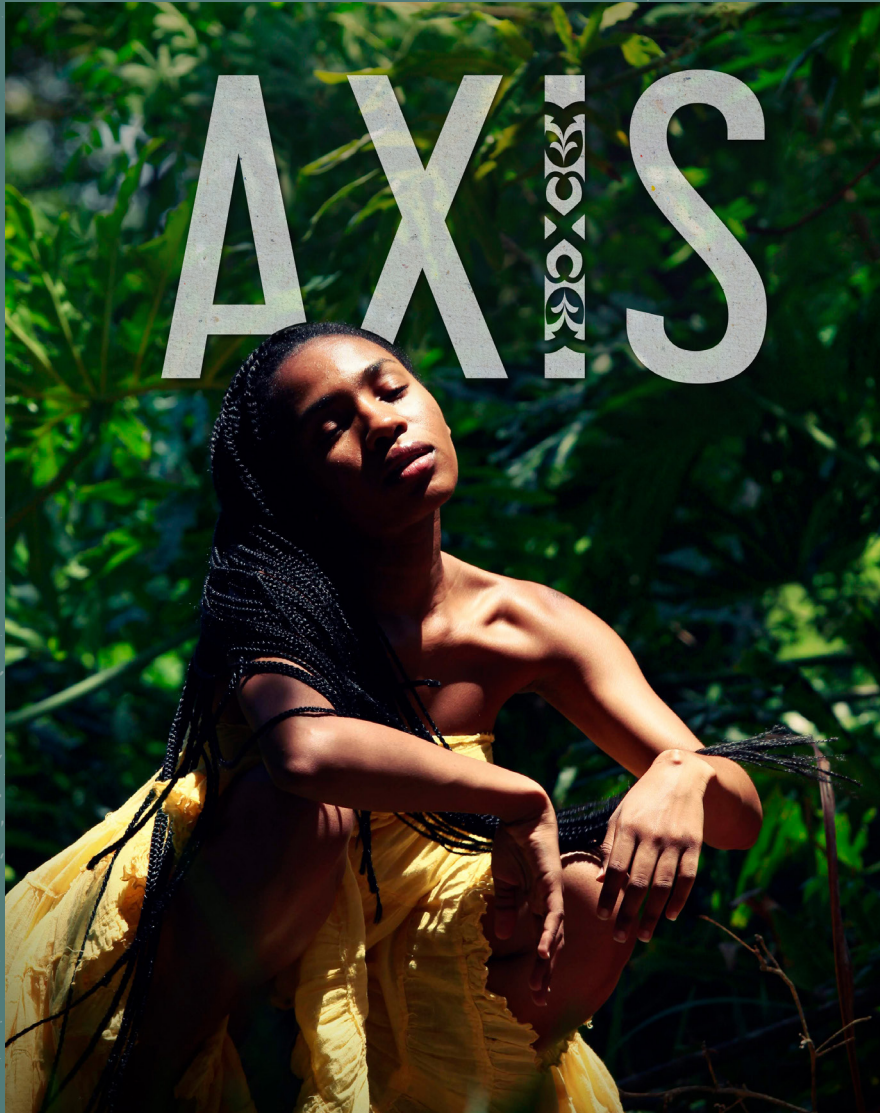


AXIS [AK-SIS]

A line connecting an origin and an ending.



About the Cover



The inspiration for *Pray You Catch Me* came from capturing the image of sunlight splitting through the trees above, gleaming in one perfect spot down onto the skin. There's nothing like the feeling of being exposed to the star in the sky and to the nature surrounding Genesis Johnson. The cover's design reveals what is to be found inside. Time, love, and a tribal essence. Photograph credit goes to Vladimir Mompremier (p.21). Design credit, the AXIS Design Team: Maria Mastrocristino, Sara Salgado, Gabriel Herrera, and Tristan Cuenca.

Editor's Note

To our readers,

The fact that this magazine was created is itself an achievement. Amidst production, we were forced into quarantine and entered the era of caged birds. As members of a creative arts magazine, we were dependent upon in-person meetings, not virtual sessions. Weekly group calls are not the ideal way to make a magazine. Yet, this creative anthology was produced despite the series of plights that challenged our typical method of production.

Volume 17 showcases the vulnerability of human expression in its purest form— the first page to every tale. The start of one's journey at times is derived from dire circumstances, while others begin with more pleasurable moments. However, we are foolish to remain incognizant; origin stories are not clear cut. Many are rough around the edges and hard to pinpoint exactly where they begin and end. Origin stories are the final reaction to an unprecedented event, similar to the origin story of Volume 17.

Many place too much significance on the origins of the individual. It is understood that we mustn't lose ourselves in our history, or bind ourselves to a narrative long past. It is important to acknowledge our origin, but understand that it isn't our entire being, only a subunit of it. Although we dedicate this issue to a coming of age narrative, we also wish to remind everyone that there are a vast array of endings we may encounter. Endings that are the catalyst to the beginnings we experience.

Remember, Good Vibes Only



Natalie Aguilar
Editor-in-Chief



Angel Diaz
Managing Editor

Maria G. Mastrocristino.L

Maria Mastrocristino
Lead Designer

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A silhouette of a pine tree against a sunset sky over a body of water. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, and the water reflects the colors. The tree is on the right side of the frame, with its branches extending towards the center.

Young Peach Tree

Elena Torrens

“You once were so happy.”

Mom speaks. I sit.

By chance, I stare right at the jar of peach pits.

“Do you remember the peaches?”

I remember the tree.

I remember the way that it all used to be.

It took years to grow tall,

Years longer to fruit.



Thank You for the Sunset

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography

Only gave in the winter with chills in her roots.
Nice while it lasted, I remember the most,
how my parents ate the very last fruit she produced.
“I’ll plant another. Just wait and see.
I think we’re all missing our happy peach tree.”
I stare at the jar.
I look at her face.
All things in the kitchen remain in their place.



Abuela

Raquel Sherman

My tongue trips around a language
Filled with history, with taste
My lips stumble trying to form words,
measurements

That she took to her grave
Buried under dirt
It felt like I had it in my mouth
—dirt stole my words, paralyzed my throat

Abuela

She was cane-sugar
Wrinkled hands
Protected in butter
That worked molding dough
Agile hands
That diced blinding-red flesh of garden tomatoes
Their juice would bleed onto the tips of her fingers
Who'd find their way onto my lips
Letting me lap on sweet red nectar

Abuela

She held cookbooks in her brain
She Knew recipes long after she forgot my name
Knew the smell of sizzling butter and thyme
long after she forgot my face
Knew the taste of ajo, of goya
long after she forgot who I was

Abuela

She sewed warmth into the hemming of my jeans
Into the patches of my shirts
Into the holes in my socks

Abuela

She walked with three legs
Her arm clutching her cane
The other, clutching my arm
Then, she walked on two wheels,
Her hands on armrests
My hands pushing her

Abuela

She was the warmth of a stovetop
Buzzing red
I hated my mouth
For not being able to sing her song of recipes
Her medley of spices
with dirt still in my mouth,
in my throat, on my tongue
I touched my nose against the wet ground
The smell of
bubbling butter,
dancing thyme,
sizzling oil

Abuela

Living in my head



Neon Smile Rain

Elena Torrens | Digital Illustration

Middle of the Pond

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography



Mankind: Origins

Shalala Leny

On the 6th day, God made woman
and They said let us make a being in our image, our likeness
She will give life to a race that will hold dominion over all the earth
We shall call her Woman
Forth her womb, mankind shall arrive.
And God said to her
Now I know you are smart enough to not eat of this tree, which bears the fruit of
good and evil
And when She was sleeping
They took her member
And molded a man
Although She did not need one
They had forgotten they made her in their image
With Their compassion and might, and strength and love, and jealousy and understanding
And They brought him unto the woman
She called him Man
because from woman he came, for he was missing breasts and made up for it in length
Soon Man started to take over the garden
Getting too close to that red fruit of which
If he was smart enough, he would not eat
And the woman sought counsel with God
To voice her concerns
But they ignored her and She didn't want to make it a "thing"
Because this was the new order

Let Man do what he wants.

Woman feared what God hath created
Turned her eyes away
And walked West of Eden alone
Understanding man's ambition



Fish

Benjamin Germani | Digital Illustration



Hanahaki

Ashley Alfred

Some would call it romantic,
the way petals wrap themselves around breathless lungs.
Stems sprouting up in a physical manifestation
of heartbreak.

It's almost poetic,
the ability to love so deep that the body expels bouquets
to cope with the pain.
Producing trails of delicate buds that would be beautiful if they
weren't stained with rejection.

It is the nature of unrequited feelings to hurt,
just as it is the nature of humans
to want what they can't have.
To ache and pine until flowers remind us that we are not
invincible- not even when it comes to love.


You grew flowers in my lungs and while they were beautiful
I couldn't breathe.

Lioness's Den
Elena Torrens | Digital Illustration



Identity Politics

Shalala Leny



I am not African American
because I am not American.
American is for people with pale skin and white knuckles,
for blue-eyed devourers,
for wire-haired conquistadors.

Am I African

My ascendants are African,
I think?
They were taken away from that Mainland all those years ago.
There are pieces of me missing the size of slave ships,
when my ascendants fought for freedom a couple years ago
I was with them.
My battle cry would be heard for centuries
In the form of a girl.

I am black

I found more solace in a
five letter word than
gilded five-pointed stars
and stripes made from scars.



Article Six

K' deja Correa | Acrylic on Canvas

Blossom

Natasha Calle

I think I met the right one this time. She's incredible, I feel like I can breathe better whenever she's around. I don't know how she does it. I – I really don't. She's amazing. She has this solid black hair that always smells like she came straight out of a flower shop. Her smile is contagious and everyone in the room catches whatever she's spreading. Rhea, Ray-EE-ah. She has eyes that just pierce your soul – a chilling blue glance. Rhea, my love, the only love.

Every time I see her, I feel like I become a better person. Last time I saw her, I called my mom. I hadn't spoken to her in a few years after a silly fall out. It was over my lack of ambition, she thought I wouldn't amount to anything. She loved my brother who's a lawyer, and not just a typical lawyer but a lawyer for some non-profit that cares about people that nobody else cares for. My mom talks about how he's going to change the world and how proud she is of him and how I'm just a loser gas station attendant. But I think I'm going to be able to prove her wrong and repair our relationship this time. I just need to come up with \$1,500 and I'll be able to do it! I know I can raise that money, it'll be difficult, but I know I can, and I know Rhea believes in me too. She's talking now, Rhea, she, her, my love... I better listen... I stare in awe. Everyone around me stares in awe. Her words fill up my mind, they're all I need. My friends don't understand her, Rhea or anything from BlossomFlower. BlossomFlower, the place where my life changed. Did life even exist before I became a seedling? I was just dirt, pure dirt. Untouched, unsowed, unfertilized, unwatered. That's why my mom never loved me; I was dirt. Now I'm a seedling. Rhea's seedling.

I need to come up with the \$1,500 soon. BlossomFlower is having a retreat and I need to attend. I can't fix my relationship with my mom if I don't go. I need to blossom, it's time. I now work at Whole Foods making \$15 an hour instead of the measly \$8 an hour at the gas station. I think if I sell my TV, I can raise another portion of the money. I worked a lot of overtime this month so I'm close. So close. So close I can smell it, I feel it, I taste it. I'm ready. Tomorrow is Friday. Pay day.

It's almost time but I didn't make enough money with my overtime and selling my TV, but I found some odd jobs on Craigslist. I've been skipping meals, so I'm saving money at the grocery store. Rhea asks at our meetings, what's more important? Changing your life or having worldly desires? I need to change my life and fulfil my destiny, I can no longer be dirt, I have to blossom. The Craigslist job is a little gross, I have to massage this old lady's feet. They smell like wet socks and the stench lingers on my hands, once even for two days. But sometimes she tips extra on top of the regular pay and she gave me dinner twice. Luckily, I have a vile full of Rhea's rosy shampoo, and this way, she's here with me, pushing me through these tough and disgusting times. Every second is worth it because I know I'm doing it for Rhea. She wants to see me blossom!

The retreat is a little difficult to get to, but me and two other BlossomFlower members get together to make the four hour hike up the mountain. It's a little strenuous and Rhea said we didn't need a lot of gear for the retreat because everything we'll need is there, but I wish I brought some water, I'm so thirsty. It's okay though, because the second my nose touches that vile and the scent fills my nose, my heart, everything is fine. Rhea is with me. She's cheering me on. I know she is. Bill and Alex keep talking about her, they too are excited to blossom. They don't know this, but Rhea loves me more than

she loves them. I know all about their life stories, that's all we do at BlossomFlower, we talk about how we became seedlings. Bill used to cheat on all his girlfriends and was a drunk, but now he's sober and his one love is Rhea. Alex on the other hand, worked in finance but said he felt dead inside and never felt love until he met Rhea. We get to the retreat and go into our assigned cabins; in just a few hours we get to hear Rhea talk but we have a lot of work to do first. We have to sow all these seeds into the ground, we're told this is to represent us, but it's just so many seeds. Even with all of us together, it'll take all day. We can't use tools because our hands need to feel the natural experience. I still haven't seen Rhea and it's been two days, there's so many seeds, but it's us. It represents us, our struggles and our transformation from dirt to seedlings. We've been instructed to use equine and bovine excrements to fertilize the grounds. It smells so bad and I forgot my vile, but I know it's a test. I need her to see that I can survive, the smell is so putrid, Bill even threw up, he's weak. That's why I know Rhea loves me more, I'd never throw up.

I think it's been two days, at least, maybe it's been three, no, i – it's been three. Definitely three, three. I – I think I remember seeing the moon twice while we've been working. It's so much work, sowing, watering, creating the fertilizer, fertilizing the seedlings. But the night, oh the beautiful night, it rewards me with speakers playing Rhea's voice singing me a lullaby all night, I get to stay awake all night hearing her songs. Her majestic songs, oh how I can never get tired of her voice. I know she does this for me, I just know it. I'm so tired, so tired, is today day four? No, it's still day three. It has to be, I haven't heard my lullaby yet. Alex passed out on the field today; I don't think Rhea is going to be very happy about that! After all there's so much work to be done, but it's my chance to show her that I'm not weak. I'm strong. I'm a seedling, her seedling! I'm so tired but it's worth it. It's all going to be worth it; I'm doing this for she, her, my love, my Rhea.

I saw her today, she talked for hours, it was heavenly. She praises us for our hard work as seedlings, her seedlings. We are fulfilling our life's purpose. We no longer feel the temptation of this dirty world, the horrible desires; we are now better than our past selves. She's going to teach us the secret, the secret to it all. The way I can fix the relationship with my mom, the way Bill can stop being a drunk– oh who cares about Bill. Rhea loves me anyway.

She grabs my hand. Our first touch. Rhea touched me. She, Her, Rhea, my love, the light of my life. The reason I breathe, the reason I can exist, the meaning of my life. She touched me. I – I feel myself sprouting, unfolding, blossoming. It's happening. I'm here. She's here. I'm here. I'm here.

She hands me a pink drink, it smells like roses, it's her. She's the drink. She is all. I'm scared, but exhilarated. My lungs can't breathe, but my soul flourishes.

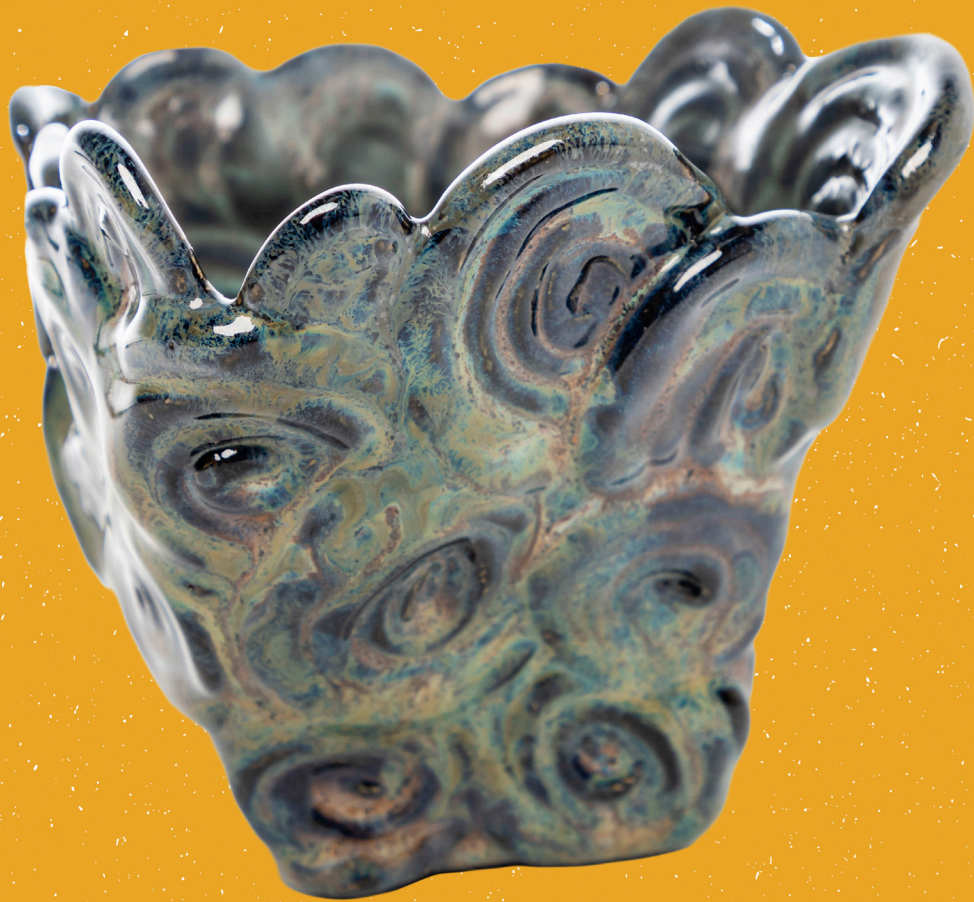
She whispers to me. The wind transporting her airy, delicate voice.

“My seedling, join me and blossom.”

Her voice. The sweet voice of a true angel.

I hold the goblet to my nose, then my lips, filling every atom of my being with the scent of roses. I look up, her eyes freeze my flourished soul, I'm motionless. She smiles, I smile. She tilts my drink.

I consume it all. My eyes close, my breath softens, I'm on the ground, my chest is warm, it's hot, burning, burning, burning. My chest. It's cold, it's cold. Freezing. It's dark, there's nothing but I still see her smile. The smell of roses, roses, roses. Rhea, Ray-EE-ah. Rhea...



Argo's Cup

Liza Guillen | Ceramics



Faster Than Light

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography



Linguistics

Amadi


You are five years old and can't understand why your brother doesn't understand the way you speak because he once spoke like this. But he's older now and has left childish things behind him like red and blue flags and broken languages.

You are in the second grade. Your mind struggles as the Americans take the creole from your tongue. A language that contains the dead and the living, the culture, the struggle of your people for freedom from slavery. You say "aah" and lift your tongue up so they can see that you have no more of it. You can become one of them. Well, at least something a little closer to them.

You and your mother share tears when they name you "best ESOL student." Your certificate of Americanness. Your mother recognizes you a little less.

Your new gifted class looks like a sea of salt, homogenized milk. You have to believe they see beyond the layers or else you won't survive here. Because they talk in privilege and affluence and whatever they speak seems to be a dead Latin that you can't even hear.

You stutter when you read aloud in class. You can't help it. Big lips weren't meant to speak thin letters. You stress over the right words to use so you become a dictionary hidden



in vanilla pages and 10-letter words. So you read and read silently, absorbing a language and oozing a lost culture.

The pastor's words start to make less sense than they did before. Your brows furrow at the words in the hymn books with their aigus and graves that look like an ancient dialect, a weird English. Your mother obliges you, telling you the meanings of such words, but she is tired and continues singing in the language you lost. The one you were proud of.

Your mother languishes over her lost culture. Her two children can't understand her when she rambles on about this stuff. It sounds like dead tongues and spells. It sounds like home. Although you can't understand it, you understand her pain. You understand that she doesn't want descendants she'll have to translate to. She understands that the Americans kill broken languages and assimilate them into their own. They kill a part of her. She mourns three deaths.

On bus rides home, you remember your old school where you danced in red and blue flags and long braids and the language rejoiced on your tongue like a welcomed friend. Now the words feel slightly blocky in your mouth as you turn to speak in the language they forced down your throat like brussels sprouts. You always remember what they fought for: liberté, égalité, fraternité. Something about freedom and brotherhood. You wonder what that's all about. You fall into a wistful sleep.

You get even older now that English revises itself into marbled poetry. You didn't know languages could do that. You learn twist to those blocky letters into Latin cur-sive and twirl that creole and that English into one.

You learn of s-words and f-words and a-words because you forgot sendika and fanmi and amou. You learn them because they're the closest things to that language you lost. The fire in it sings your pink tongue. English becomes slightly different.



You find dark solace in these flint and stone words.

You traded the language of your brothers and sisters for those of the assimilators.

When you visit family, it's hard to communicate past the commonalities: bonjou, bonswa, mwen byen. Well, at least you're better than your brother, who can't understand a thing. Who eats white rice kon sa.

You bite your tongue when they ask you how many languages you speak. You do it to make it bleed so at least you remember something. You say three. You say I know how to speak it kinda. You don't say how you only understand half of what your mom says in the language she spoke to you since you were born. That your family calls you too ameriken or that you can't understand the people in the pews nor can you understand your grandfather's praises. It burns like nothing you ever felt. More than the dancing oil that stung from the pan and more than when pumpkin soup spilled into your lap. It burns something in you. Bruises that can be covered in Stars and Stripes - they don't sell any with French mottos and freedom.

You are 16 years old. You think that all those years must have taught you something. You find others who speak the same broken language you did, but it sounds much more fluid in their mouths like the way rice flows into a pot. You think you have something to learn from them. You get closer to dancing a kompa with the language who once loved you. Your mother is surprised when you say you want to learn her mother tongue and her mother's mother tongue. Your mother welcomes you in her arms, with the same hands she caressed you with when you were a child, labored with love, lakay.



Article Two

Emily Mir | Mixed Media






Wildfires


Natalie Aguilar

The infection spread rapidly,
contaminating every surface
endlessly multiplying and devastating,
slowly
destroying her body.

A fever is a natural response to illness,
to foreign invaders ravaging the body.
The heightened temperatures incinerate them.
Then,
balance is restored.

So, she set herself ablaze.
The ever-growing inferno
devoured all in its path,
until
humans were eliminated.







What Remains

Liza Guillen | Acrylic on Canvas

Emerging Artists

Emerging Artists is dedicated to showcasing some of the artistic talent that Miami Dade College North Campus has to offer. In previous volumes AXIS has paid homage to one individual with exceptional talent in the arts; however, North Campus has too many artistically gifted students that made it impossible to choose just one. Thus, AXIS Creative Arts Magazine is pleased to illustrate the works of these emerging artists:



Vladimir Mompremier

After discovering my dad's camera, I said to myself, "This looks interesting." Fast forward 4 years and I've been shooting almost every day and taking the camera with me almost everywhere: high school, college, all around Miami, different states, and even different countries. I've had the amazing opportunity to work with different organizations, companies, and even the MDC newspaper, "The Reporter". This has been a nonstop ride with photography, and I enjoy every part of it. It's given me a ticket in different places or even a hall passes in tricky spots. Capturing beautiful places, faces, and ideas keep the spark alive. Have I put the camera down since? NOPE!!



Liza Guillen

My works are spontaneous. The synchronicity between melody and my hand is everything. Music. It is my inspiration. Works of art for me are both a statement of my perception and a dialogue with my inner self. My work is the result of little thought and a lot of emotion. That's just me. My golden rule: Strive to convey nothing.



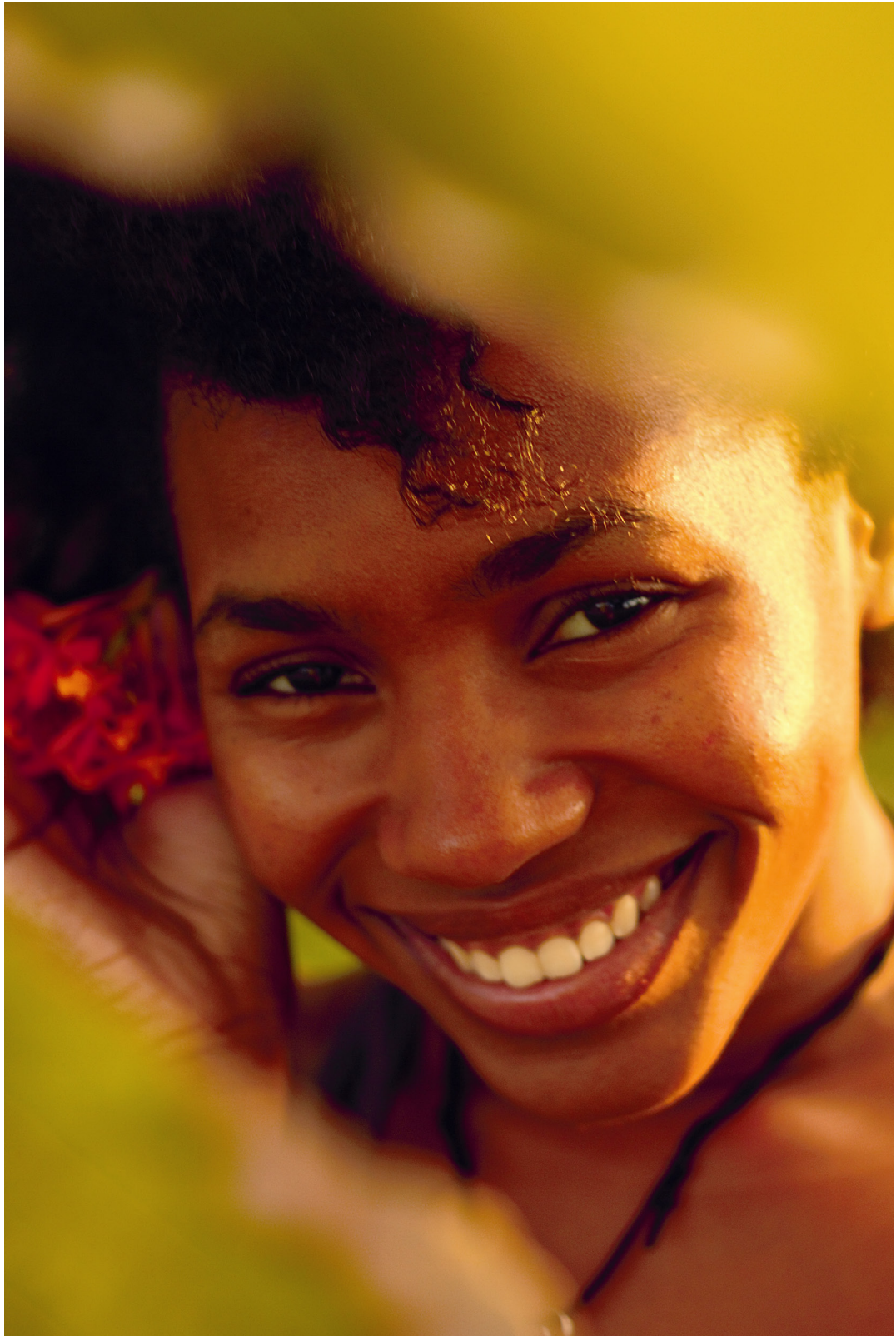
Angel Diaz

In my first two years of college, I took intense writing and literature courses and realized that writing (of all sorts) is a form of expression. I think I gravitated to the written form of communication because unlike verbal communication, the written word is something more permanent. Once you vocalize a thought it's out there, but it also faces the chance of being forgotten – that's my fear. I used storytelling to help me feel permanent in this world and to help me understand the emotions I was feeling within myself. Although there is not a long list of work under my name, my stories are written when I'm in my deepest pits – I write from my emotions and aspirations. They represent real experiences that people and myself go through.



Maximiliano Mundaca

While in high school, I studied the Arts with the intention of continuing my drawing career at one of the prestigious universities in my country. Upon entering college, I studied graphic design for a while but dropped that study when I discovered one of my biggest passions in life: illustration. I found myself immersed in this world, I loved it more, and even incorporated new original knowledge in the discipline, such as pen calligraphy. It was what I needed in my life since I draw at every moment. I love that in each drawing I make I have the ability to tell a story. Also, that I can make each one with different techniques. I came to this country to professionalize my talent, get more opportunities, share my drawings with others and mark myself as a professional, and demonstrate to others that this is not a hobby. This is a line of work that one can live off, a passion that I love.



Sunstruck

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography

Portfolio

Vladimir Mompremier



Middle of the Pond II | Photography



Pray You Catch Me II

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography



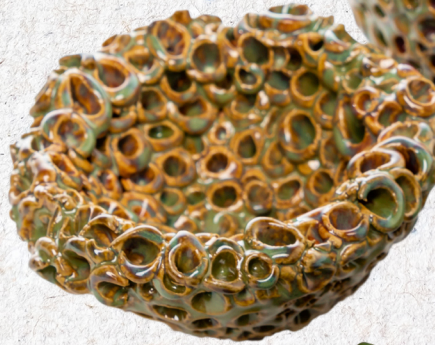
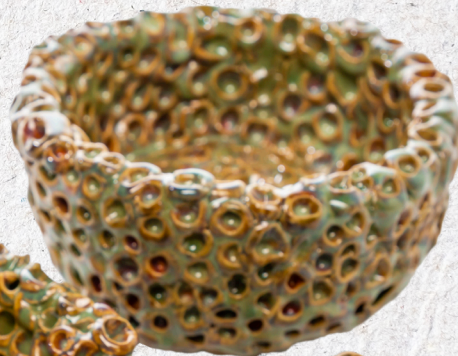


Swedish Trinkets

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography

Remnants of the World Below Us

Liza Guillen | Ceramics



Portfolio

Liza Guillen



Wanderer's Cave
Ceramics

Maneater

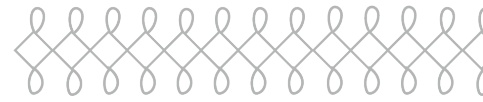
Liza Guillen | Ceramics



Portfolio

Angel Diaz

When We Didn't Meet Again



You were in upstate New York when I didn't know you. Where the cold air probably frosted that warm heart of yours. I was in South Florida when you didn't know me. Quite ironically my heart has only chilled despite the constant heat.

My thumb began to hurt, the constant motions to the left only triggered my disappointment for not swiping the other direction. Yet, even one swift motion to the right would lead to nothing life altering. Perhaps, just one simple conversation containing no true deep meaning to it will come out of this. My thumb skating on the cracked screen of my phone only instigated the shaving of the outer layer of my skin. More left swipes. My screen now red, the only accurate depiction that this black mirror has ever gotten of my love life. Eyeing how the blood oozes out of me, I am reminded that the noises of calm agony come from my sister in the bathroom. I'll have to wait to grab a band aid; placing the edge of my thumb to my mouth I bite down and squeeze out more of the blood. A small cut, but the blood flows out profusely like my feelings for the strangers I meet on this platform. Unknowingly, I continue the night with hints of blood on my lip only for it to be discovered in the morning. More left swipes. Slowly clotting, less and less carmine-colored blood seeps out, however, like restless teenage girl banter during a high school scandal my thumb continues to dance on the screen, the wound reopens, I accidentally swipe right.

“...Shit”

It's not that I don't carry the confidence in swiping right and hoping to be validated with a match, I'd just rather not deal with a waste of hope. Yet, here I am swiping.

Shaved ice is still ice.

Now back home you thawed out, but deep inside you're still chilled. When we met, you were back home and I didn't know. I may be ice, but rooted inside I'm just desensitized. I began to entertain you. And you, I.

Rubbing alcohol calms the bleeding and makes it possible for me to seal the cut with a band aid. Indigo, my thumb now surrounded by hues of royalty. Fit for someone like me where a color like indigo will only be tainted with such a flaw. I head back to my room, delicately gracing the floor with my weight. Almost walking on air, I dare not make a noise and wake up my mother. She is a lovely woman. False dirty blond hair rejuvenated her by decades, but close glances of her would reveal the wear and tear of blue-collar jobs. The rivers of blue veins streamed across her legs at times causing her immense pain, but none could equate to the pain I could cause her.

Before entering my room, I notice my sister dissecting my movements and actions, she stares at my phone poorly attempting to catch me and my routines. Although cracked, my privacy screen keeps everything intact and out of sight.

“What do you want?”

“Nothing, just curious as to why are you up at this time?”

“I was bleeding, and I needed a band aid. Why are you up at this time?”

“Cramps.”


“Oh, okay.”

I lay on my bed and study this guy, Bryce. Fuscous colored hair, and with a trimmed beard following far down his neck and stomach, he most likely grooms himself. With his light birch wood complexion and suited attire, he exemplifies how sophisticated he presents himself. At 5’5 I find myself taller, not ideal, but the possibilities with him ranges. His soft skin jumps out of the screen and I feel it on my face as I place my head on pillows. Slowly I can feel myself falling into a deep sleep, only to begin a downward spiral of letting myself go to him.

When we met you were kind and so was I, but you knew what you wanted, I didn't. We talked in spirals and switched to numbers. You called me because I was shy, but it was I guiding you. Soon enough I became one of your numbers.

The sun's rays greeted me as my eyes slowly adjusted to the light. I could start to see the droplets of water brought to me by the heavy rain that everyone in Miami endured last night. Again, I had no dream just a blank thought all night long.





I had forgotten to check my phone before getting ready. Finding it in my drawer, a series of notifications about the news, my friends, and one message from a freshly new tinder match which caught my eye bombed my lock screen. I had planned not to open the message immediately in order to avoid signs of desperation, but by 9am Bryce and I had fully gone underway in conversation. Like broken cables sparking up a puddle our energies collided and only brought danger to those around us. We spoke of our lives, how he attended a college in upstate New York and was back for the summer only to then leave me in this superficial city. And I? I was in a program preparing to transfer in some months, still bound to this mask. Oblivious to the real world I ignored the realities of our situation, his bushy brows and brindled eyes kept me optimistic.

As the sun said hello and goodbye several times, Bryce and I developed our own sense of time. When he wasn't at work we spoke, when I wasn't occupied, we spoke, when we both were busy, I made sure to think of him and I for the both of us. He had assured me that it was okay to feel emotions towards him. I have been involved before, but never quite like this. His grace and welcoming demeanor eased me into this. His use of the word "wholesome" made us "wholesome." Conversations with him carried no weight, it was no longer necessary for me to walk on air.

Most of the time I sat in my room, dimly light blue hues were just enough to set the mood of serenity. Flat on my bed I studied recent news articles and watched films pirated off illegal websites. Occasionally I would get up to stretch and get some work done, but my room was a place for my mind to decompress. It was also a place for me to talk to Bryce without nerves of getting discovered. I didn't mind the idea of having people know I am talking to someone, I just personally preferred to keep it away from family.

The sun had gone to sleep and the moon had woken up by the time Bryce and I ended our conversation. Plans had been set; it was time to actually meet.



When we first spoke were strangers. When we spoke again, we were acquaintances. When we met, we didn't meet again.

Friday night is full of lies. It was quite simple to tell my mother I was heading to a party and would be spending the night. No suspicion, I grabbed my keys and went out. A two-hour drive, time for me to think of how he had not wrapped my mind full of lies. In just one week and I was spending the night. In just one night we were coupling in the night. In just two days he was out of sight. In just two weeks he had come and gone, leaving me with a new identity. Now, I sit here as I explain to my family the reasons for my drinking. Long nights in disguise and privacy screens slicing me. Your brother, your son, is not how you imagined him to be. Conversations with Bryce opened my eyes and that night with him unmasked my lies, I'm over living this masked life.



It's Cold Where I Sit

Angel Diaz

Diana, Taurus:

It's cold where they placed me, and I've been waiting for what has felt like eons. This delicate viridian gown I have on does little to hide away my body from the nurse as she walks into the room. Maybe your favorite color would have been viridian. However, I will never get the chance to know. They're forced to tell me what life you would have lived, and apparently you have lived a much more notable life than mine. Accomplishments that are as nonexistent as the "I Love you's" I've gotten from the guys I given myself to blurt out of the nurse's mouth. I don't care to hear them. It's not that I don't care for you, I just never got a chance to understand you and see you as a person. Her words blend into mush, the type of food you would've eaten for the first portion of your life. Listen Diana, the name that would've been yours, I wasn't ready and you must've known that it was best if we never met.

Liam, Leo:

The room feels much colder. Its arctic blasts piercing my skin, I can now feel my lips crumbling like icebergs. And my viridian gown? Well Liam, it has also felt the rough times of the economy. Its hue now pale and resembling the young nervous girl in the room next to mine. Like the gown, she will be rinsed off of her filth and renew herself. As for me, I'm just waiting for the nurse to enter the room. Again, I am greeted with your future. This time, you would've become a lawyer. Maybe a Stanford Graduate, or was it a Duke graduate? I don't know, I don't remember what the nurse said, I just know that it wasn't real. What was real was the fact that I was not frightened and was ready to say goodbye before I can say hello to you. It was quite easier this time, as if I had pressed a button and you were just some nightmare that vanished as I woke up. I am sorry my little lion, I didn't mean to create you only to hunt you down.

Rus, Sagittarius:

I came well prepared in coats, the room now warm and filling me with comfort. I sat back and asked for a magazine, this time I would not sit in silence waiting to hear the tale of woe coming from the nurse's script. My robe, now tailored to my frame, was much brighter in tinge. They must've invested in buying newer ones to make the patients feel more at ease. Something was different – the aroma of the room. The hair of my nostrils danced as whiffs of lavender flushed into me. I won't lie, I do wish this was different Rus, but just like your siblings I must halt your arrow from continuing its journey. This time, I was saved from hearing the ridiculous narrative of what would've been an astronaut. Instead all I got was "again? Really?" Now ashamed, I was in a hurry and wanted to get you out of me. And in two-to-three hours I was back home. The winter was always somber, but today it was encouraging. I had done what was right. This isn't easy for me Rus, I don't want to have the option of getting rid of you, but it makes my life easier if I can.

Madison, Aries:

I'll spare you the details of my dress and my new room at the clinic. You won't read this, so there is no point in continuing an entry for no one. However, I always wanted the name Madison, it was my mother's. She had died of Alzheimer's two years ago, and I saw fit to name you as her, being that you too will follow her. The nurse had entered the room much quicker than before, no longer did I need to read the Vogue Magazine. Instead, she told me that Madison was a lovely name and that she felt for you. To be given a name and to never hear it was a punishment that she could not forgive me for. I agree, I should have saved the name for my child, but you reminded me of how my mother had me. Just at twenty-four years old my mother, Madison, met a man who snatched her from her home and brought her to the city of concrete jungles. There they would elope and conceive me after a rock concert. I'm sorry that you won't hear this story, but I know that you understand my pain right now.

Ramy, Capricorn:

The new year has started and no longer do I head to the same hospital. Instead I head over to another one to reinvent the story that your siblings could not experience. It's much colder here, but the hours I would spend in this freezer would send me home with you. The white gown I was given does not fulfill me like the one I have always had. I will miss that viridian clinic gown; its flowyness and its willowness that made me feel like a Disney princess. Nonetheless, viridian will not be your favorite color, it would be yellow, the color of freshness, happiness, positivity, clarity, energy, optimism, enlightenment, remembrance, intellect, honor, loyalty, and joy. You will grow up to be whatever it is that makes you happy, no script will keep you in a box. Your eyes will match your father's, Andrew. Unlike your siblings Diana, Liam, Rus, and Madison you will have no significant characteristics of my dad. The only correlation you will ever have to him is his blood through mine. I apologize in advance because you will never meet him. I'm sorry you're an only child, I couldn't keep your brothers and sisters because of how they were conceived, and for that you can thank your grandfather.

Uber Girl

Angel Diaz

Platinum blonde, you'll make good for my show.
Those wide eyes of yours, this isn't your first.
Exuding confidence, I can see it in the way you don't check if I'm yours.
Those skimpy shorts you wear, you know how to have fun.
Hop in my car, your parents don't mind.
What's trendier than driving with strangers?
You should know we all aren't friendly,
Just know you got in my car without checking.

I'm not yours.

Your thighs invite, maybe I'll visit.
Silly uber, girl I'll grope and I'll snatch you.
So, put on the seatbelt and close that door.
The child safety lock will keep you secure.
Platinum blonde, you'll make me money.
Don't worry about living, you'll earn that by giving.
Thank you for riding, you've earned five stars.
Relax in the back seat because you're the star.





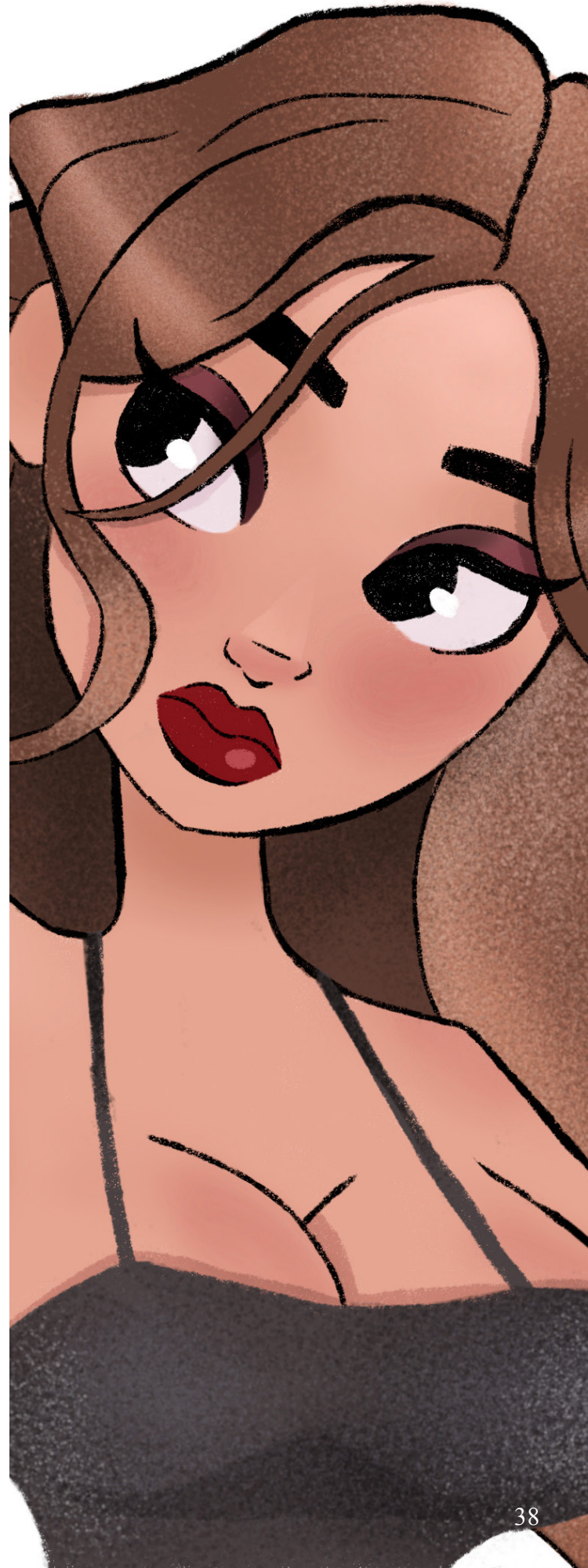
Moon in the Sea

Maximiliano Mundaca | Ink on Paper

Portfolio

Maximiliano Mundaca

Latin Girl
Digital Illustration





Princess Mononoke Creature

Maximiliano Mundaca | Ink on Paper

Forest Spirit

Maximiliano Mundaca | Watercolor on Paper



Centaur King

Maximiliano Mundaca | Ink on Paper



“Have I put the camera down since? Nope!”

- Vlad

“Strive to convey nothing.”

- Liza

“[Art] represent[s] real experiences that people and myself go through.”

- Angel

“This is a line of work one can live off, a passion that I love.”

- Max

Warrior of the Amazon

Emily Gonzalez | Photography





Blue Angel

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography

Poison

Raquel Sherman

Wine glasses lined up
Filled her gaze
Filled with sultry red waves sloshing behind dilated irises
Disconnected
Disengaged
There was too much darkness
Shadows danced on her chest
The taste of Dionysus's poison kept them away
Away from her chest
of light,
Shadow-free skin
Every day she'd take out a crystal glass
Gently cradle it for a brief moment
shaking hands
Addicted to the light that came
As opaque poison glided into her veins
And sip, and sip, and sip away.
Until there were just echoes, jumbles of words
Just movement, shadows dancing on the walls
Nothing on her skin
—nothing but a mute buzz
Sounds strung incoherently together
As perennial poison bewitched her brain
Entangled her veins
Her fingers became—
A little less stiff
No force left to cradle her dear clear glass
Little less to grasp my outstretched hand
She seemed to sway to an invisible force
That taints the heart
Tricks the brain
Dampening darkness with white-noise flashes
Blurring her away



Breath of Life

Elena Torres | Digital Illustration

Glistening Like Pearls

Davina Dyer

Eyes wet in pain,

Glistening,

Like pearls.

Her frozen sorrows melt in tears,

Once again.



Treasure of the Sea

Liza Guillen | Ceramics

Once an Island

Davina Dyer

I am no longer an island,
isolation has departed to another resting place,
far away from me.

Breathing life into my existence.
Coming to peace with my own triggers.

Retreat, rest, be held,
by the angels above.
I will no longer force anything,
for a completed cycle brings forth new energy.

Deep replenishments,
vibrational spaces,
energetic communications,
causing no fear of distractions in the midst.

I choose me.

The divine,
the one transformed to fit in this new reality
of mine.



Cold Drops

Juan Romero



“What if it never stopped raining?”

Your question hung in the air as you looked up to the sky and watched the raindrops pelt you. No one seemed capable of answering it. The empty bottles littered around the campsite told you that perhaps their minds weren't able to process the idea at the moment. The amber liquid, you consumed just a few moments ago, left them speechless.

Instead, your mind has never felt more alive as you took in all of the surroundings. You could feel the ice-cold drops soaking through your shirt, sticking to your skin, and causing your body to shiver reflexively. The biting chill of the wind that sporadically blew through the campsite ate away at the warmth radiating from the fire you started. It made the coming onslaught of rain feel like slivers of ice.

As the water starts to puddle around your feet, you don't feel the silent thrill of fear in your bones. The usual sound of your heart hammering in your chest is nowhere to be heard. For once, you're no longer like a deer caught in headlights unsure of what to do next, what to say next, what's the right moment to take that breath of air you forgot about. No. Instead, you find yourself embracing the hard coldness that comes along with the darkness pooling around you. Freezing cold isn't the worst that life has handed to you, as a result, you take it in stride.

Your thoughts drift to the cries of desperation from your friends, you can see them trying to find shelter in the branches of the trees. Both your legs begin to tremble, your body's solution to the plummeting temperature. Usually, you would wrap yourself in a jacket, basking in the comfortable warmth it radiates. But out here, there are no jackets and you figure they wouldn't do much against the cold you're facing now. You see some of your friends slipping and falling only to lose themselves in the somber waters. Yet, there you stand.

Knowing there's nowhere to run, that nowhere is safe, you feel the relief in your soul. Suddenly the threat of a couple drops of water seems meaningless, you understand what they mean by lifting a weight off your shoulders.

Take it all in. That's all you can really do—bask in the water's ability to relieve. All your troubles, every unwanted emotion, every unshed tear, the type that drown someone from the inside out, every unsaid I love you that caused you heartache down the road, every person you lost on society's ordained road to happiness, all of it will be swallowed in the liquid darkness. Like an ethereal concoction they'll blend together and offer you the bliss you've been seeking when they finally reach your lungs.

In those last moments when the water reaches your nose and you finally let the water in. You just look up to the sky.

“The rain wasn't the reason we drowned.”

Falling

Elena Torrens | Digital Illustration





Blurred

Sidney Peralta

In the middle of the woods, a large white center sits. Cold rooms and only enough chairs for what could be used for group sessions fill the facility. Corrupted identities are put here with aspirations of being saved. Proper clothing for respectable young men and women, along with socially acceptable behaviors between patients are mandatory. The sunlight shining through fractured window panes joins our daily seminars and prayers, but as time passes, the hours of the day become unknown to us, no longer are we able to keep track of days passing by.

Soon enough, I had left the open rooms filled with light for obscure dark rooms where my urges were tested. The pain taught my body to stop its senses. I reasoned that suppression was more effective than changing. What began as the hopeful light to a clean lifestyle, soon turned into the blurred, dark days that erased every feeling I could have.

And unexpectedly, a boy entered the center claiming to be my roommate. After only seven sleeping shifts, I knew he was not like the others. He was the only one able to look up with a hopeful smile on his face. His skin was so white that I could swear I saw him shining like a vampire from those movies I am not supposed to watch. His hair was as dark as the Physical Sessions' room, but it was not blurred, my eyes could see the softness of it. Only his pale pink lips could take my eyes off of his piercing, black, almond-shape eyes that looked down disappointed every time I didn't reply to what he was saying.

Once again, I was guided to have another session. Aware of the returning deviated ideas in my mind, I reminded myself of my previous learning teachings on how not to react, not to feel. It was just another test and what I felt was just the anxiety anyone would have before a final exam. But as I was shown the pictures that I was familiar with, I could not help picture my roommate as the pale boy shown in the image and myself as the other one, holding his hand. Soon, the freezing blocks touched my hands, burning and then, as expected, the electricity blurred my sight even more.

Numb, I was dragged to my room, where he soon placed my arms on his shoulders, guiding me from the door to my bed. He talked to me with more interest than usual. This time I responded.

A few hours after bedtime passed, I couldn't sleep, still in shock. He then told me it was time. I knew he was guiding me towards some exit, but I couldn't recognize anything. All I could see were some shapes that an unfocused image would perceive. Then, I was out, completely exposed in the woods. As we ran, I realized that tears of happiness was wiping away the blur in my vision, but as the salty water on my cheeks evaporated, I could now clearly see that also did my boy.





Into the Garden, I guess?

Elena Torrens | Digital Illustration

Baptism


Shalala Leny

When you drown, it will be slow, but all at once. You'll know when you feel that blue pulling you in like a siren's call: it will kill you. Your reaction won't be immediate like a reflex, but it will be the gradual realization that you might just die. You'll splash around like graceless fowl or a fallen angel, writhing and squirming anyway you can to reach the light. The same way you did when you were born and the same way you did when you twisted away from the unwanted milky touch. You'll miss the way the sun kissed your skin and made it glow like heated gold. You won't miss the way it turned your skin into a fast black, warranted not to rub nor run.

As your eyes sting from the chlorine, you'll fall even more slowly into that blackened blue. It burns the same way slurs do and the same way onions sting your eyes when your mother cooks. Usually, you would put your face in the sink for relief, but you can't do that here because this is the sink and you're the ant.

As the water seeps into your bones, in places it's not supposed to be, you'll find that your body feels heavier the same way rewritten history does and the same way unwanted thoughts did. Goodluck.

At this point, you'll want to breathe in and gasp for air. Do not. It is a trap. The water will just kill you faster and it will be torture. Unless that's what you want. The water will clog your throat the same way words did when you needed to stand up for yourself or tell off the slurs in front of you, but you either couldn't or wouldn't. I guess now we'll never know. By now, the oxygen will have oozed out of your lips and what used to be filled with air and blood is now filled with water. Just water.



You are now a husk. You can now shed the skin society gave you. No more hard stares and *Identity Politics*, no more scratching at hard skin that you hate, no more backhanded compliments, no more unwanted violence or silence.

No more.

The memories you hoarded will dissipate into hard bubbles of laughter and sobs. You'll forget your mom and her cooking, your dad's toolbox and sketches that lined your notebooks and birthday cards, your friends that were there for you but aren't now, and all those bullies. You'll forget the things you loved and the hate they gave. You will forget them.

You will stare into nothingness as you slowly realize that no one has come to save you from yourself. It will be devastating.

You can now become someone else; you can now leave this realm and join your midnight people in that midnight sky.

Congratulations.

Your baptism is now complete.



A Spot of Yellow

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography



Sunstruck II

Vladimir Mompremier | Photography

Good Vibes Only

Jean Altidor

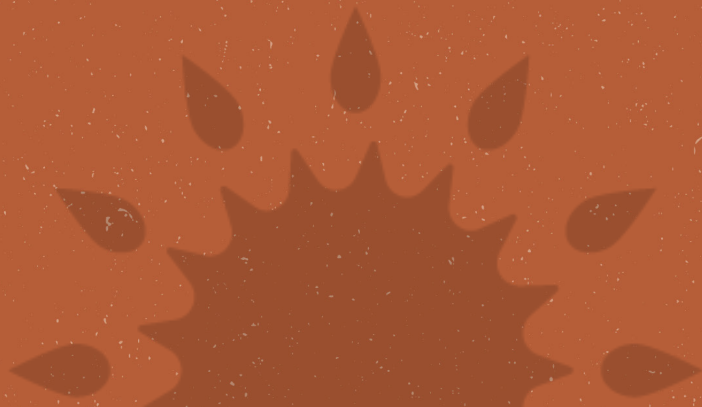
Being positive all the time is tiring, no? Emotions are waves coming in and out of the shore yet, some bar themselves from the other side of the shore under the guise of “positive thoughts only.” People you don’t know look at your struggles and say, “be happy with what you have.” You’re like a scarecrow standing stiff in the sunset when the birds come picking at your brain.

Yet, some bar themselves from the other side of the shore under the guise of “positive thoughts only.” I can’t click my heels and expect my problems to go away, you’re like a scarecrow standing stiff in the sunset when the birds come picking at your brain. Click, click, we’re still in Kansas.

I can’t click my heels and expect my problems to go away. I’m no tin man, I do have a heart, but I would rather not have my feelings be red seas apart. Click, click, we’re still in Kansas. You, however, are a lion without roar, cowering in the corner singing “no time for negativity.”

I’m no tin man, I do have a heart, but I would rather not have my feelings be red seas apart. When we are faced with the hardships of life, and shadows loom over us, a single tear is king. You, however, are a lion without roar, cowering in the corner singing “no time for negativity.”

Try being in the shores of another before telling them “good vibes only.”





Thinking of Us

Kelly Mayol | Photography



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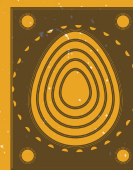
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AXIS Awards

2018 - 2019

We are very pleased to announce AXIS Magazine Volume 16 from North Campus won several national and state awards. Congratulations to all the students who contributed, edited and designed work for this issue.



Community College Humanities
Association Literary Magazine Competition,
Best Magazine Award, Southern Region, Large Colleges



College Media Association,
Pinnacle Awards, Honorable Mention



Associated Collegiate Press,
Pacemaker Finalist



Columbia Scholastic Press Association,
**Gold Circle: Second Place, Single illustration, Hand-drawn
"I Am," Quentin Gibson Mays**

AXIS Awards

FCSPA

First Place

General Excellence

First Place Editing

AXIS Staff

First Place, Poetry

Kathy Fernandez “My Flowers Grow, Too”

Dannah Ray “Up On Stage”

Arianna Cruz “A Galaxy Within A Town”

First Place Art

Quentin Gibson Mays “I Am”

First Place Two Page Spread

Ines Alvarez | Design

Ethan Toth “Black Center Stage In” | Poem

Quentin Gibson Mays “I Am” | Painting

First Place Photography

Alejo Storni “7 AM At North Campus”

Benjamin Germain “Cassette”

Andy Garcia “Wise”

Second Place Fiction

Arianna Cruz “Roasting Hour”

Second Place Cover

Ines Alvarez | Design

Yanaira Rosa “Out of the Concrete” | Art

Second Place Contents Page

AXIS Staff | Designers

A Special Thanks

To our incredible advisors, Carmen Bucher and Kathleen Noonan, thank you. This volume would not exist without you. The hard work and passion you have poured into AXIS for so many years is inspiring and we could not be any more grateful for your efforts. Thank you for keeping this rambunctious group in check and for always having your office doors open.

To Eric Cornish and the Design Team, thank you for bringing our vision to life. You joined our team in a time of great need so thank you for enduring the initial chaos and being so understanding.

To Angel, Juan, Rebekka, and Izamara thank you for being the best E-Board AXIS has ever had. You kept this magazine alive, working tirelessly under even the worst of circumstances. Thank you for never giving up. To the editors, thank you all for your feedback. You guys are the foundation of this magazine. The future of AXIS is bright.

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English & Communications Department,
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Dr. Fernando Lopez
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and Communications

Kathleen Noonan
Associate Professor,
English & Communications Department,
AXIS Advisor

Eric Cornish
Professor, Computer Animation
Faculty, School of
Entertainment & Design Technology
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Department

Alena Fresquet
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Thank you for your unwavering support for the AXIS Creative Arts Magazine

Editorial Policy

AXIS is Miami Dade College, North Campus' creative arts magazine. It is published once every year during the spring semester and released in the following fall, distributed free of charge. Only students from Miami Dade College, North Campus are allowed to submit their pieces to the magazine. We accept pieces of prose—both fiction and non-fiction—essays and poetry. We also accept pieces of art, photography, short films and music. All submissions must include an accompanying form, which is available in the AXIS office located in the English Department in room 7321. This form is also available through our email posted in the English Department in room 7321. Copyright for individual's work, both audio and print, returns to the artist one year from the date of publication. All rights are reserved. Content and opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or general staff.

Design Notes

Axis Creative Arts Magazine was made possible through the countless hours consisting of discussing edits, design elements, and the general direction in which to organize the pieces in order to tell the story of finding oneself. The cover was a major inspiration for the contents of the magazine, using the various elements of it through the pages. When thinking about the theme origins for issue, we took into consideration what our origins meant to all of us. Where do we come from? How does our biology turn us into who we are today? Why does our past hold such a strong semblance of our future? Asking these questions helped to build the illustrations seen throughout the spreads, adding detail to the pages while maintaining the integrity of the original artwork. We wanted the theme to relate back to all of us, creating unity from the big bang to our tribal ancestors and to our blood. The feeling of the design throughout this magazine is nothing but warmth. We introduced bold colors complimentary to the artwork and illustrations that enhanced the meaning of the written works. We worked together to create something that might invite you to your past.

Colophon

Created on ASUS Q325UA, 13.3" 60 Hz Glare Touchscreen, Windows 10 Home. Created using Adobe InDesign CC 2018 for drafting, Adobe Illustrator CC 2018 for graphic elements and final motif illustration. Adobe Photoshop CC 2018 was utilized for all image adjustments, cropping and final unification. The following fonts were used: Times New Roman and Libel Suit.



Miami Dade College, North Campus
11380 NW 27th Avenue
Miami, FL 33167-3418

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