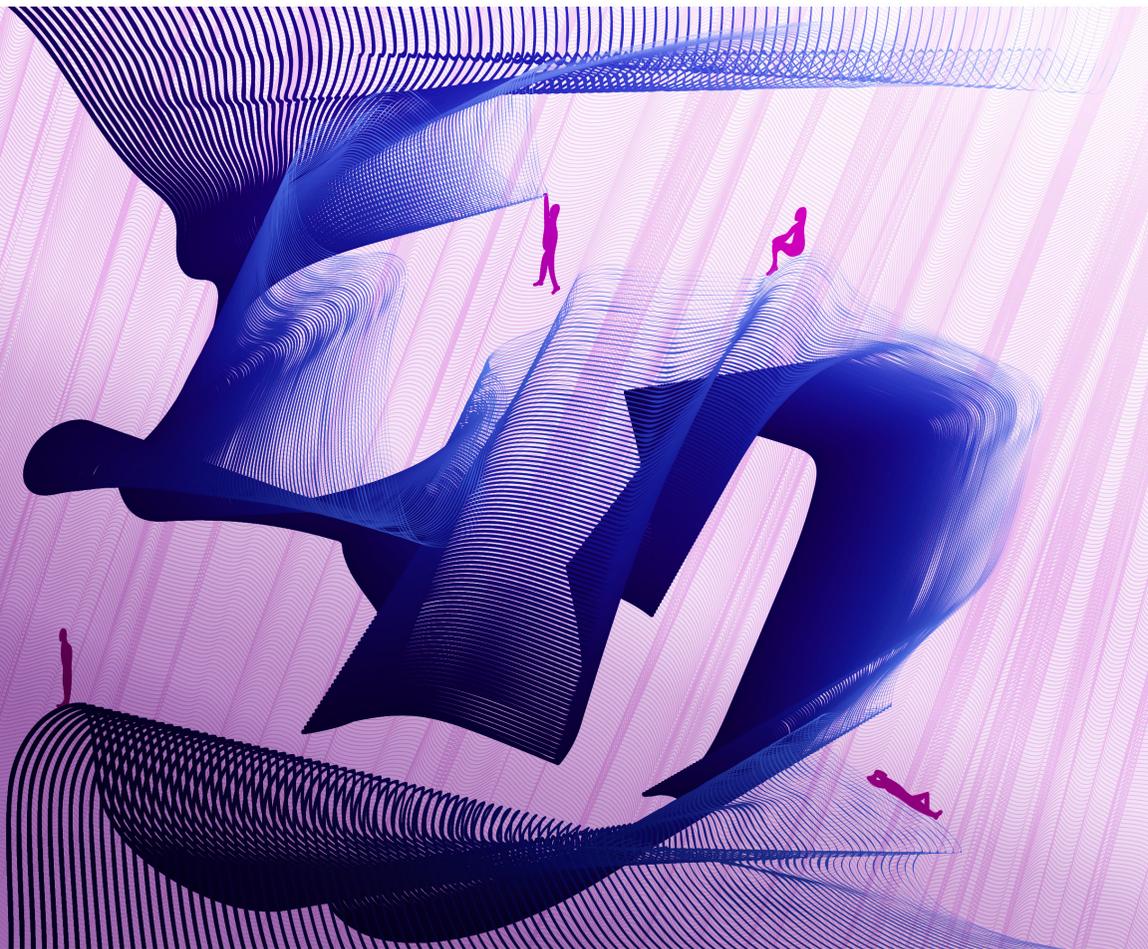


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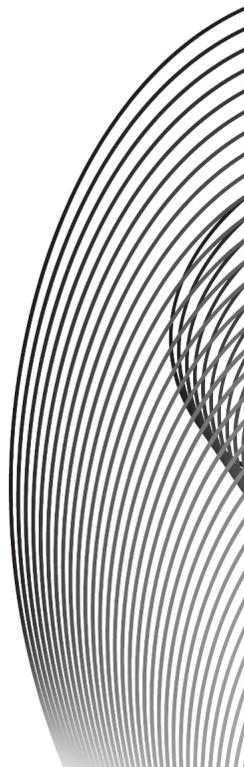


vol.1

PRACTICE



WITHINTENSIONS



WITHIN TENSIONS

January 2020
vol. 1

PRACTICE



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We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the **Skwxwú7mesh** (Squamish), **xwməθkwəyəm** (Musqueam), and **Səlílwətał** (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous peoples who have lived here far before the arrival of settlers. We also want to push beyond land acknowledgements to further encourage acts of reconciliation. Recognition is great but it is nowhere near where we need to be. Reconciliation is comprehensive and takes more than an acknowledgment for occupying land.

What the hell is practice and why do we care?

Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, and Opal Mclean

We practice how to look again, how to understand.

We practice how to observe, how to respond.
We practice intermingling our ideas, we practice how to express our own thoughts.

We began to break beyond the boundaries that the institution laid before us.

We began to bring our ideas beyond the walls we had come to call home.

But where do we go once we are abandoned by the institution? For the last four years, our art practices had developed exclusively around projects, deadlines, and grades. Left without aim, yet still filled with the desire to create and consume art, what else could we do but take up a new form of practice? Our practice has changed in response to our needs, and as we develop this publication we will change along with it. We know that we are not the only ones who experienced a disillusion with art making when school ended but hopefully this publication reinvigorates our practice and can help others in a similar place.

We invite you to connect, to practice alongside us.

We invite you to take part of the uncomfortable and unknowns.

We invite you into a practice that seeks to conceptualize, to develop, to challenge.

We are beginning to take initiative in the void of institution.

We are beginning to bring our ideas to you, creating a new space to call home.

We are here. We are practicing.

We are on an endless journey to push beyond what we are taught, how we are taught.

We still struggle to understand the depths that only art knows, the depth that exists within all of us

Our practice is bigger than us. We nurture it, care for it, and it even outgrows us. We spend our days consumed by topics we only hope to better understand as a means of continuing our own creation. We move forward by investing time in ourselves and in art, self-equipping the necessary tools to facilitate the development of our own practice. But our practice, much like us, rebels against the limits of its own creation. Its ever-shifting quality allows us to deeply know and revere in its form for only but a period of time, before it eludes us once more to become a stranger we must get to know all over again.

Like a Good Muslim

Aynaz Parkas

I often ask myself what it means to practice a religion? If I say I am a Muslim or Christian or Buddhist, does it mean I practice it properly? And what is that proper way?

I was born a Muslim. At school, we were told that we were Muslims. We were forced to pray, to wear a hijab, to read the Quran and to memories the history and everything about Islam. I and Most of the people I know rejected them. We ended up going the opposite direction, and now we are left with no religious beliefs. I remember standing in line for Salat in elementary school and I would mumble other stuff pretending to pray. I remember studying principles of Islam and practicing how to read Quorum out loud with the right Arabic accent for oral exams.

All of those memories are full of frustration. Being forced to practice a religion is not like being forced to do math. It is asking you to follow a certain lifestyle and to act according to certain principles that you may or may not like. I find this collective experience of myself and the people around me very influential on what kind of a person we are. Although it affected us differently, it had major impacts that cannot be denied.



Text by Shelby Lu (2020)

[How to be] an Artist

Opal Mclean

prac-tice
/'praktəs/
noun

1. the customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something.

My practice comes from the literal definition. Each project I create or engage with becomes a form of practice in being creative as a whole. The practice I need in order to develop further as an artist. Practice becomes the pivotal part of my art. Practice in creation, practice in motivation, practice in performance. I spend the in between of each project creating almost nothing in preparation for the real gesture brought to life through whatever means necessary. With materialization, like photography or painting, practice comes from looking. Practice to achieve a creative way of thinking that differs from my everyday point of view. When I am void of function, my own ways of seeing become activated. I see beyond the mundane and I begin to see as an artist.

I was not born an artist. My creative ways of thinking had to be nurtured, refined, and encouraged in order to reach any potential. This comes in the form of practice. The more I push myself to create, the more I break beyond

the barriers of my own abilities, the more I learn how to be an artist. I continue to learn how to engage beyond my ways of seeing as I become a part of community. A community of people who expand their own practice in their own modes of the literal definition. This interaction further drives my own practice. Shared philosophies, shared dreams, and shared visions become the driving point for my own ideas. The community I placemyself in shows me that art truly has no bounds. Art exists in ways I never saw until I began forming my own practice.

Art seeps into everything I do. My practice goes beyond an artistic practice to become a life. A life I live every day in order to create the images inside my head. My practice and my life fight for the spotlight. I am forced to find a balance between production and creation. One may argue these are one and the same but, in my world, creation has different intentions than production. I work, I produce, I fight for the simple things in life. When I am making art, I create, I dream, I push beyond my limits to understand the world beyond productivity. I understand the world in a limitless way that mirrors that of art. My practice becomes my life because, now, I know no other way to see. My artistic practice has unlocked parts of myself I never had the chance to know so my practice becomes another form of learning. My practice is encountering myself and my world again for the first time.

“practice“

Sasha Cerino

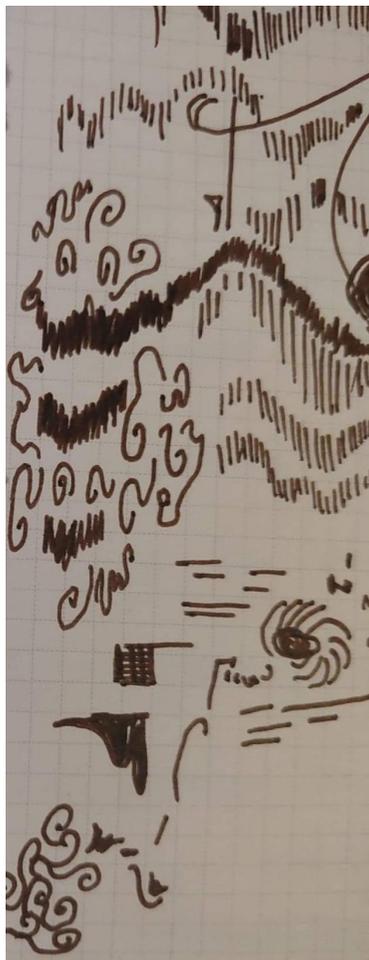
intuition is a tricky thing
for it is simply following how you feel
this liberation from saying “no”
letting [DISCIPLINE] s l iiiiiiiiii de

control we place on ourselves
the boundaries we create
as our way to get through our
mundane lives
our learned gestures and habits that
we(‘ve) internalize(d)
to navigate the world
for the sake of ourselves

and/or
for others

restrictions and rules that shouldn’t
be broken

this makes listening to our intuition
seems invalid
quieting a voice within us
there is a disagreement with
what we’ve deemed as logic and
reasoning





and an instinctual, visceral feeling
fear of causing a rift
---tension----
between the external and internal
conflict

however as I've learned to trust and
use it
many connections have aligned
lessons have been learned
(and it still continues)

opening past traumas
healing from deep wounds
tears and late nights
screams of anger and hurt

overall
working through what has been
casted out
untouched until now

finding my identity

I see my intuition in the doodles
making its way
from the front to the back
cover to cover
lining my page wherever space is
unoccupied





a juxtaposition of freeflow onto a structured task of note-taking

drawing with a pen and paper has the property of permanence a documentation of where your mind was going

a retracing of steps when you look back

a revealing of oneself nuisances that would have not been found

making an intangible abstraction into a physical manifestation of lines

shapes

patterns

representations

letting ideas gliiiiiiiiide and interact with each other

a back and forth motion

non-linear

sometimes it feels mindless other it times it's feels heavily charged with nothing but emotion

painting is another path way

it provides a different variation of texture

materiality

context

I'm more drawn to the colours here
enticed by the visibility of layer
no matter how much I add
blending
blurring
a decision of depicting "the real" or
showing the strokes that have made
the visual

whether it be paint or ink
paper or canvas

there is no
solid

finished
picture

before I start

it's a matter of just letting things
happen

a reoccurring theme in my art
practice.



On Practice: A Conversation Between Kathy Slade and Opal Mclean

Kathy Slade is an artist currently working in Vancouver, B.C. Her practice involves textile, publication, literature, music, and performance. She is heavily influenced by historical female authors engaging in feminist analytic theory. Her work also takes on a relational aspect through collaboration with other artists/students. Slade is involved with and showcases work at several galleries including Mónica Reyes Gallery¹, the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery², ArtSpeak Gallery³, and Publication Studio Vancouver⁴. Her practice also involves teaching at Emily Carr University and Simon Fraser University.

1 Mónica Reyes Gallery
(Vancouver, B.C.: 1997)
<https://www.monicareyesgallery.com/>

2 The Morris and Helen
Belkin Art Gallery
(Vancouver, B.C.: 1948)
<https://belkin.ubc.ca/>

3 ArtSpeak Gallery
(Vancouver, B.C.: 1986)
<http://artspeak.ca/>

4 Publication Studio
Vancouver (Vancouver, B.C.:
2010)
<https://www.publicationstudio.biz/studios/vancouver/>

5 Brett Yang and Eddy Chen,
TwoSet Violin, (2014)
<https://www.twosetviolin.com/>

6 Johann Pachelbel,
Pachelbel's Canon (1680)

OM: What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of practice?

KS: The first thing I think of is TwoSet Violin⁵, those two funny Australian concert violinists that are big on Reddit. Do you know them? I follow them on Instagram. They do things like perform *Pachelbel's Canon*⁶ with rubber chickens, they sell merch that says "practice" all over it.

OM: How has your practice evolved?

KS: When I started as an SFU student, I made straight-up drawings, paintings, and sculptures. They weren't all terrible but I was mostly bored by them. At some point while in school, I began to work in photography and experimented with trying to blur the boundaries between photography and sculpture, and between photography and painting. So, I was printing photos on things like marble and canvas. I also studied English literature and

it was around the same time I took up photography that I began to blend these two disciplines in my practice. I was reading a lot of feminist and psychoanalytic theory alongside contemporary and historical novels and poems written by women. I also became involved with Artspeak Gallery⁷—where I exhibited my photo-collages on marble while in fourth year—and I attended poetry readings and talks at the Kootenay School of Writing. This led to a perfect storm of art, text, and the question of feminine sexuality and its representation that held my attention and still does. Out of my reading of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Shirley*⁸, I began to work in textiles and machine embroidery. Shirley, first published under her male (or at least androgynous) pen name Currer Bell, is set in West Yorkshire in the North of England in the early days of the first textile mills and the Luddite uprisings. I focused in on the etymological link between text and textile and I took Brontë's dismissal of young women who embroider as being dim-witted as a kind of gauntlet. I then produced many works over several years that I called embroidery samplers. A sampler is, of course, an embroidered work where young women would practice their craft, learn their alphabets and stitches, so here we are again at an idea of practice.

I feel I should move this along, so I'll say that over time my practice evolved to include silkscreen printing, sculpture, publication (artists' books, artists' records, prints, and posters—of my own work and as an editor of the work of others), relational projects, performance, sound, film, and video. While I was a student, I made a few

⁷ ArtSpeak Gallery
(Vancouver, B.C.: 1986)
<http://artspeak.ca/>

⁸ Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*
(Smith, Elder & Co., 1849)

videos and through them I was exposed to working collaboratively. This was formative and much of my practice involves working collaboratively. Most notably I've collaborated with poet Lisa Robertson on video and print projects, artist and musician Brady Cranfield on music, sound, performance, video, and writing projects, and artist and publisher Kay Higgins who I am married to and is also my partner in our ongoing project Publication Studio Vancouver⁹. Most recently I have been collaborating with artist Amber Frid-Jimenez and art historian T'ai Smith. Amber and I had an exhibition last summer where we made, among other things, a remake of Gustave Flaubert's 1856 novel *Madame Bovary*¹⁰ that we rewrote using an artificial neural network.

OM: What continues to inspire or drive your practice?

KS: Many things! Books, literature, music, pop culture, art history, philosophy, moments in history, other artists—both historical and contemporary... I am working now on a project that is inspired by a rock. It's a special rock for sure but it is a rock.

OM: Does your practice change with each medium you engage with? How so?

KS: For some projects, I just use my laptop and then deliver a file to a fabricator while for others I need a space to work in. I do learn new skills with each new type of thing I do so the actual activity I'm doing changes.

9 Publication Studio
Vancouver (Vancouver, B.C.:
2010)
[https://www.
publicationstudio.biz/
studios/vancouver/](https://www.publicationstudio.biz/studios/vancouver/)

10 Gustave Flaubert,
Madame Bovary (Revue de
Paris, 1856)

Also, sometimes I work in a group and other times I work alone. But it is the nature of my practice to work in different mediums, to adapt to the needs of whatever the thing is that I'm doing so, ultimately, I think the answer is no. For me, my practice is more about an approach than anything else.

OM: How has teaching become part of (or changed) your artistic practice?

KS: I see teaching as part of my practice and not something that is separate from it. So, as much as possible, and where it's appropriate, I bring my artistic concerns into the classroom. One might argue that my concerns are always present, and I wouldn't disagree, but on one occasion the course was designed to be an artwork in and of itself and, another time, a course I taught led to an artwork, after the fact, that former students participated in. Part of what I do in my work is to remake, translate, reimagine, or produce cover versions of things. I once ran a class that was a remake of The Projects Class, a class taught at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in the late 1960s by the conceptual artist David Askevoid. For his version, Askevoid invited artists such as Robert Barry, Mel Bochner, Jan Dibbets, Sol Lewitt, N E Thing Company, James Lee Byars, Robert Smithson, Doug Huebler, Dan Graham, Lucy Lippard, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner to send him short texts to act as prompts for his students who would then use them to make the artist's works. Askevoid published the texts as a series of cards in an envelope.

The last time I was at Printed Matter in New York they had a copy that they were selling for \$900. I remade this class by inviting contemporary artists, curators, writers, and poets such as David Platzker, Rita McBride, Alejandro Cesarco, Kota Ezawa, Lisa Robertson, Maria Fusco, Cullinan and Richards, Eileen Myles, Matthew Buckingham, and Gerard Byrne. I also thought it would be cool to invite a couple of the original contributors to revisit the project and so I asked Dan Graham and Lawrence Weiner to be part of it. Some projects were done in groups, some individually, and in one instance the entire class worked on a single project. The class was a relational project in which 18 students, 12 artists from afar, and I collaborated. Traces of it exist now as a series of unpublished documentary photographs and also as an artists' publication: I remade Askeveld's 1968 cards with our new 2015 texts. The other example I will mention is a 3-channel video installation called *Ulises Carrión: The New Art of Making Books*¹¹. For many years, students in my artists' publishing class read Carrión's essay "The New Art of Making Books"¹² which is more like a manifesto in the form of a poem. Because of the nature of the language we would read the text out loud together, which somehow brought it to life. While Carrión's text was in a way quite weird, many students found ways that it resonated for them. This became evident to me as it was repeatedly cited in diverse ways in their essays. It is a text that is important in the history of artists books and Carrión is an important figure. It was exciting for me to see how the students responded to it. Eventually, I decided to translate it from text to video and invited 15

former students to read it for the camera.

OM: Where do you see yourself taking your practice in the future?

KS: I don't know what the future holds. But, in the next couple of years I have several large-ish solo exhibitions coming up and I'm making new work, yes about a rock, but also other things. I've tried to simplify my life in order to focus more on my practice so I hope I can stick to that and not get sidetracked.

OM: What is your advice for those looking to further develop their practice?

KS: I think it is important to always be working in one way or another, even if it's in a small way. It is important to be resilient and to be able to adapt your practice to your life. Maybe you need a studio and maybe you don't. It's difficult in a city like Vancouver to find studio space so find your people and work with them to secure shared spaces. Get together with your friends and start things. Most artist-run-centres in our city began with groups of friends getting together with their ideas. Start a bookshop, start a gallery, start a collective—just like you are doing starting this online magazine with your artist friends. You've identified something that is needed in our community and are doing something about it. This is now part of your practice.

11 Kathy Slade, Ulises Carrión:
The New Art of Making
Books (2015)
Three channel video
installation

12 Ulises Carrión, The New
Art of Making Books (Centre
for Book Arts, 1975)

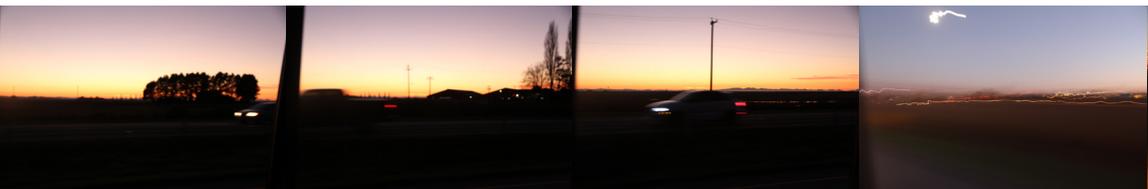


Josie Dawson, *Metamorphosis* (2020)





Practice, to me, is about the continued use and exploration of a process or medium. When looking across a collection of my work, the repeated use of collage is something that is highly apparent and is an activity I personally really enjoy. Although my approach is usually quite intuitive, I strive to base my content off my passion for nature and challenges our earth faces. My aim, as I pursue my practice, is to explore different ways to rearrange and re-contextualize visual material, and to expand the types of materials that collage can encompass. My recent endeavours play with the framing and preservation of collage by gluing material onto canvas and coating it with a resin epoxy.



Opal Mclean, *JumpSpace* (2018)

This work addresses the artists perspective as a commuter. Growing up in Surrey, Opal Mclean always had an odd connection to Vancouver. Her life did not exist entirely within the suburbs but she also could not relate to the city life. She found herself relating to the highways as her means of understanding her own position in the world.



JumpSpace uses the movement of the highway to create chaotic landscapes of light that mimic her own perspective while travelling to and from Vancouver. Mclean sees the in between as something beautiful to be captured. Many days are spent driving the highway to reach a destination but, through this project, she takes the chance to see the highway as a destination in itself.

Practical Thought

Francisco Berlanga

By definition, practice is preparing for something. It exists to be done in a previous time and place away from view which is rendered meaningless when the finished product is created. However, this moment prior to creation is where my art dwells. I try to maintain the feeling of anticipation that practice holds. My practice is creating works in the advent of art, trying to maintain my ability to keep developing by never creating what I consider a finished work.

Practice is anticipation.

Within my art, my practice has become trying to dwell in my culture through the creation and re-enacting of artifacts, traditions, and memories. I choose moments that help me to understand my culture and restage them in my work. By using these moments, and placing them in an art context, I can adjust them and mold them towards a deeper understanding of my own experiences.

Practice is reliving.

Through this, my practice becomes sentimental for me. My art becomes permanently attached to memories. It allows me to revisit moments that otherwise are lost to me. Through it, I can hear my -recently non verbal-grandfather speak again and I can learn to make a piñata for the first time with my mother. My practice speaks to an inaccessibility of memory, by taking a memory and recontextualizing it through my art it becomes slightly less obscured.

Practice is nostalgia.

Despite this, my memories are still distant, blurred by language, space, and time. I can only rely on a faith that my art is able to fill in the gaps between what I remember and reality. My practice confronts the inconsistency of my own experiences and works to develop my understanding of my place within my culture through my identity.

Practice is idealistic.



Annie Chan, *I actually woke up* (2020)

I recently went through a period with long, insomniatic nights. As the sun rose each morning, I would still be watching Netflix on the sofa. My east-facing windows would let in the most beautiful light from the sunrise. These were the days when I learned to appreciate the beauty of mornings. It was a feeling I never experienced before. During my school years, my daily goal was to get as much sleep as possible. Waking up early meant nothing but stress and responsibility.

Now, waking up early could become a choice rather than a necessity. I could take control of my routine and no longer be a slave to my sleeping habits. I wanted to be able to experience that sunrise by choice. I needed to know what it felt like to be a fully functioning human.

Eventually, I came to the realisation that if I could control my sleep --the one aspect of my life that I thought was impossible to control-- what other aspects of my life could I take back control?

These paintings mark a transition in both my daily habits and my practice. I now aim to make conscious decisions that are beneficial to my well-being.

Francisco Berlanga, *Leave that One it Touched the Ground* (2018)

A piñata sits in an empty garage hanging from a tattered rope and teetering in the absent wind as it awaits the moment of collision that bridges and ruptures narratives of tradition. Through this work, I want to look at the remnants of a piñata.





The candies and wrappers that are abandoned, stepped on, and spit out. For me, these candies are inaccessible despite their visual appeal they are rendered useless. They were meant to be eaten but instead they will be swept up and thrown out. These photos seek to document the beauty of the candy we are not allowed to eat.

Slipping Into the Subconscious

Natalie Chan

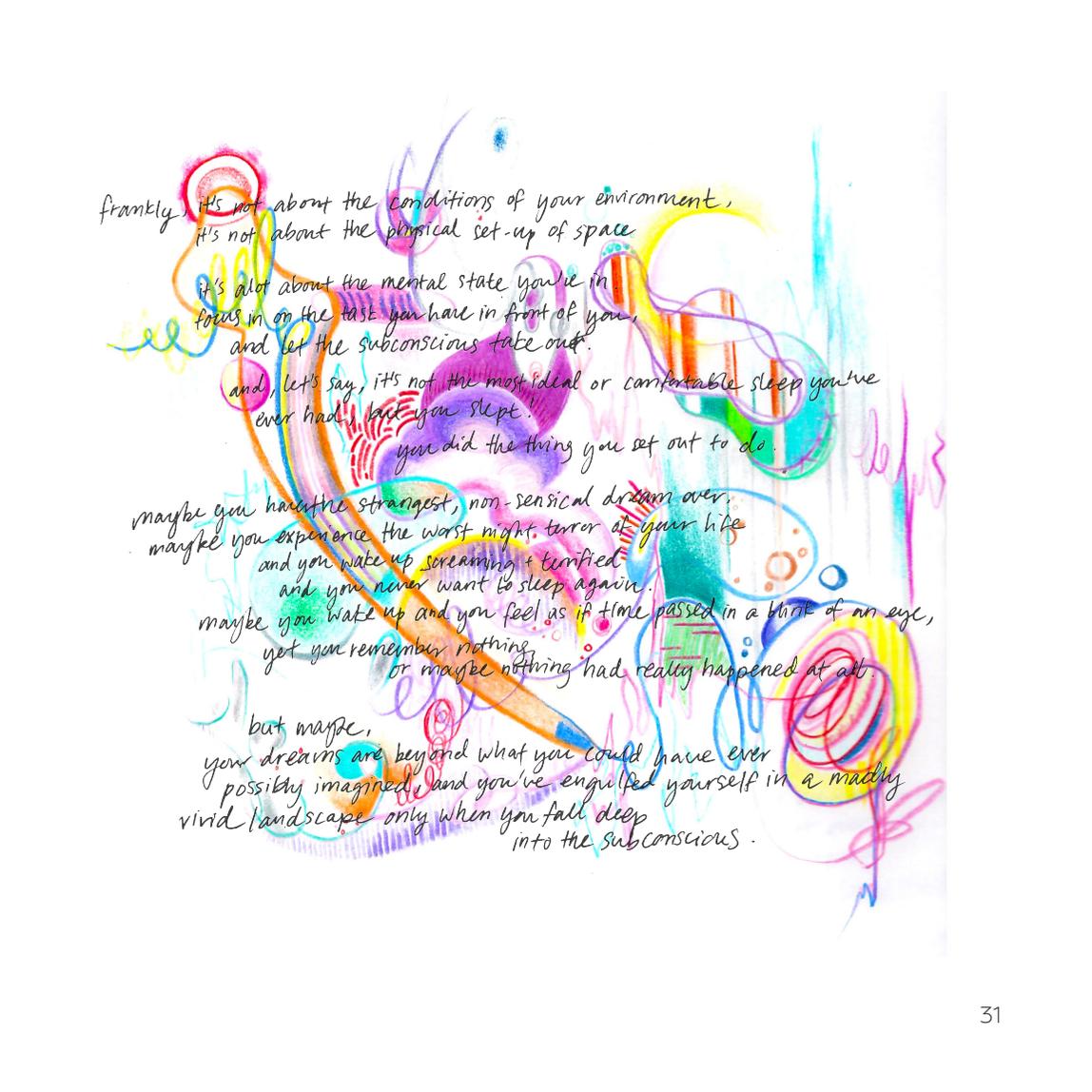
practice reminds me of the way you fall asleep
you toss and turn, trying to adjust every little thing just to find
that sweet sleep-inducing spot.

flipping your pillow to its cold side,
leaving one leg sticking out from under the covers,
(retracting it because the blanket is your only protection from monsters + murderers)
getting up to drink a glass of water,
playing soft music in the background as white noise,
getting up again to empty your bladder because you drank
too much water...

you do this every night, how could it be so hard to fall asleep?
what is that magic switch that clicks everything into place,
whisking you away to dream?

(everyone seems to fall asleep in a matter of minutes...)





frankly, it's not about the conditions of your environment,
it's not about the physical set-up of space

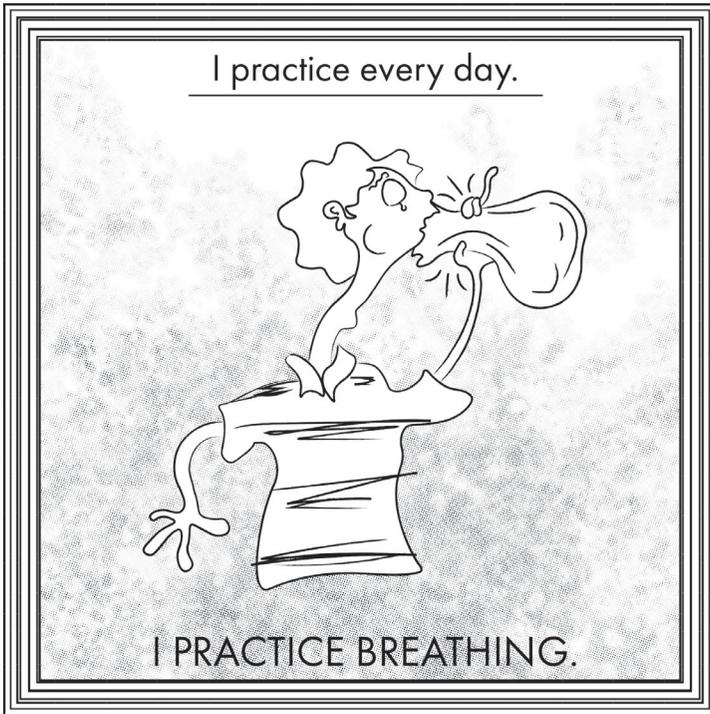
it's alot about the mental state you're in
focus in on the task you have in front of you,
and let the subconscious take over.

and, let's say, it's not the most ideal or comfortable sleep you've
ever had, but you slept!
you did the thing you set out to do.

maybe you have the strangest, non-sensical dream ever,
maybe you experience the worst night terror of your life
and you wake up screaming + terrified
and you never want to sleep again.

maybe you wake up and you feel as if time passed in a blink of an eye,
yet you remember nothing,
or maybe nothing had really happened at all.

but maybe,
your dreams are beyond what you could have ever
possibly imagined, and you've engulfed yourself in a madly
vivid landscape only when you fall deep
into the subconscious.



Kitty Walker, *Daily Practice* (2020)



Alexis Jonston, *Untitled* (2020)

In general, my practice is a creative outlet and space of curiosity. I do not like to overthink a project before starting. These paintings are examples of that spontaneous and easy going attitude. I enjoy experimenting with colour and finding nice ones that go together. Displayed in these paintings are some of the ones that I've found so far.

Meet the Team



Francisco
Berlanga

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other



Annie
Chan

Annie Chan was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Toronto as a child. She returned to China for her teenage years, before moving to Vancouver for university. Annie is a recent graduate of SFU and currently works to promote arts-related events in Vancouver.

Unable to establish herself as either Cantonese or Canadian, she examines how identities are constructed regardless of such titles through situational means. Her work questions the possibility of existing without these titles. In her current practice, she aims to piece together a hybrid identity based on her lived experiences in Asia and Canada.



Natalie
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that lends to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:
@withintensions

or email us at:
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “humour” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Francisco Berlanga, Sasha Cerino, Annie Chan, Natalie Chan, Josie Dawson, Alexis Johnston, Shelby Lu, Opal Mclean, Aynaz Parkas, Kathy Slade, and Kitty Walker.

We would also like to thank Francisco Berlanga for his design and social media contributions, Opal Mclean for her editorial work, and Natalie Chan for her assistance in coordinating.

A special shout out to Kathy Slade for allowing us to interview her on her practice.

We are excited to share our future works with you and we hope to provide more opportunities for artists alike.

