

REFRAME

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REFRAME

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Dear Readers,

It's hard to believe that this magazine was born from a meal shared at brunch. It was last December, both of us being recent graduates and having to face an uncertain future. There was truly only one thing certain for us. It was that we wanted to keep creating.

Our friendship bloomed when we met at NC State University and through our school's fashion and culture magazine. It was here that we found a diverse community of other creative artists, all who carry their own stories, but together in one space to share the same passion for the arts. A space we once believed was rare in the South.

Having both grown up in North Carolina as POC women and the children of immigrant parents, the feeling of not quite belonging is something we know all too well. To walk into a room and be acutely aware that you are different, and that there will be many obstacles ahead to overcome, just to ensure that you have a place. This and that desire to leave to go "somewhere better." Where can we find more people like us? It was easy to dream of those big, farther-away cities where it seemed like we would belong and find more of that creative community we were craving.

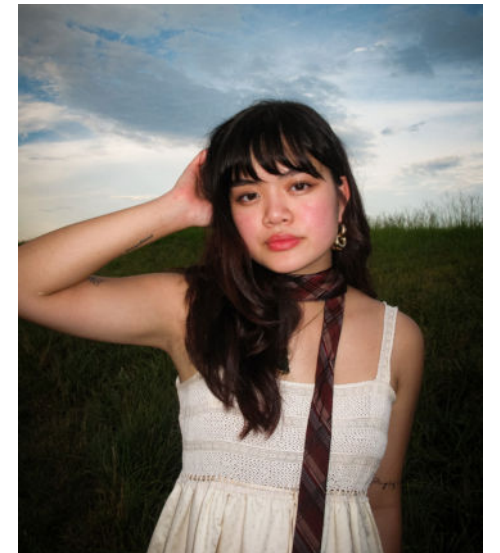
However, through spending our undergraduate years working together on that magazine, we pleasantly realized that the community we were longing for was not far away at all. It was all here and had always been. Whether it was in that small local coffee shop down the street, in the backyard of someone's sacrificed house now being a music venue, or even the person sitting next to you wearing a sick outfit, there was an abundance of diversity, of shared interests, and of amazing ideas waiting to be made. This isn't a new movement—it has always existed in the corners of our hometowns and been the very thing to shape us as people and artists. We can't forget that the South has always been the pinnacle of any cultural and artistic movement that has become nationwide—largely thanks to the BIPOC and queer communities that were driven to push forward a different narrative and future for not just their homes but for all of us.

This magazine was our attempt to shine a light on this history, where it meets us now in this artistic landscape and how the next generation is shaping it today. We want to give young creatives a chance to showcase their work in their own home, show stories and visions of the South that are rarely ever shown in mainstream media. And we want to bring this community together in this one shared space to not only create but to enjoy the things we all appreciate: art, love, and culture.

Thanks to the amazing work and dedication of our directors, stylists, photographers, writers, models, graphic designers, and for the support of many friends and family who allowed us to use their time and resources to carry out our visions—this vision has come to life with our very first issue.

We hope that no matter where you are from and the stories you carry, that you find yourself in this issue, enjoy getting to know more about the stories behind the art and the artists, and take inspiration from each other.

With love and excitement,
Leah & Bri



BREAKAWAY

Photographer - Sophie Dickerson Stylist - Elle Newkirk Makeup - Joseph Solodar Layout Design - Ellie Bruno

The Breakaway shoot's main focus is to rebel against the stereotypical narrative of the South. I pitched this idea in order to hit the ground running on what Reframe is about, as well as to showcase the innovation and joy of Southern youth culture. Breakaway is about going against the grain of Southern culture in a way that still holds love and pride for where we come from. I focused on movement and dancing as part of this theme, as well as the "parking lot hangout" that is so often a part of Southern youth's everyday life. With much of my vision coming from club culture and my passion to go out dancing with my friends, a parking lot hangout turned dance party was the perfect opportunity to explore these themes.

Joy is a rebellious act in the face of our current administration, as well as North Carolina's status as a swing state, and Southerners should not be seen as a monolith in our current political climate.

- Sophie Dickerson





Models - AK Stipanov Immanuel Jackson Jackson Burns

Models - Anthony Harper Teal Woodward



Model - Vy Hoang



Model - Madison Moore





Model - Nicole Harris





Model - Myles Syms

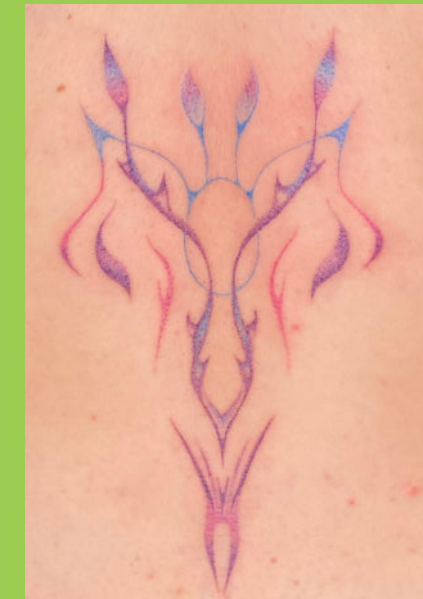


Model - Audrey Graham

handpoked with love

by *isabella broccolo*

layout design by *ellie bruno*



“Tattoo artists NC” was a frequent google search for me in 2024. I spent many afternoons just sifting through instagram profiles and websites, trying to find artists that would be able to replicate the style of tattoos that I wanted. Eventually, I found Ween: a tattoo artist in Durham who exclusively did handpoked tattoos. I reached out to them and made an appointment.

I drove from Cary to meet them. They greeted me wearing a bralette safety pinned to a crochet top. Their short hair was dyed green and there was a smile on their face. I knew I was in for a good time. We walked up a few flights of stairs to get to their studio. As we did, I noticed how gracefully they were able to ascend them while wearing platform cowboy boots. I followed behind, certainly less gracefully.

The preparation for the tattoo began. Ween showed me the

design they had drawn up for me. It was an orchid, with two spiraling vines and some leaves. It was going to go on my chest, right under my breasts.

“I drew up this rough sketch for you,” Ween said, as they handed me their ipad so I could better inspect the design. “But we can of course modify the design to make sure it flows with your body better.”

A few months later, when I interviewed Ween over a zoom call, they explained in detail what they meant.

“The tattoo process starts of course with someone reaching out to me with interest in getting a tattoo. I really like to get to know the inspiration behind the piece so I know how to proceed. One time, I actually had a friend write a poem and I translated that poem into a tattoo, that was really special,” Ween said.

“Anyways, after that I draw up the design but I don’t normally send them to clients. I actually prefer to make changes to the tattoo designs in person. I really like to make sure that the tattoos flow and connect well with the body of the person I’m tattooing.”

Ween got the design of my tattoo right on the first try. The vines wrapped my underbust perfectly.

Satisfied with the placement, I laid down on the cot. Ween put on gloves and poured ink into containers. They pulled a fresh needle out of the sterile packaging and began to stipple my flesh. Indigo de Souza played and rain drenched the trees outside. String lights on the walls and ceiling twinkled. Even though I had never met Ween before this, I felt completely safe and comfortable in their hands and the space they had curated.

I stared at the ceiling, perplexed that I could barely feel the needle's repeated pokes. I asked Ween what made them decide to become a tattoo artist.

"So I started just by getting tattooed by other queer handpokers in the area and I had really personal and positive experiences with them that really impacted me. The experiences were just super intimate. When you get a handpoke tattoo you have to sit with your artist for hours at a time, so you just kind of have to make conversation with the person. All you can really do is talk, so you talk. But there is already so much trust between you and your artist. The person who is getting tattooed is already being open and vulnerable with their body and the artist is being open and vulnerable with their art and their space."

They laughed and continued. "Because handpoked tattoos are usually done at someone's house."

I nodded "Oh okay," I said "I guess that immediate level of trust makes it easy for you to connect with your artist, because you're immediately past the bullshit small talk formalities."

Ween nodded in agreement.

"Yeah and when you are a queer person getting tattooed by a queer artist you can kind of have an immediate trust because you know they're queer and they know you're queer"

"Right, yeah," I added. "And queerness is kind of a medium that connects you to people but spans multiple other connections, like its safe to

assume that the queer person tattooing you has similar political beliefs and stuff like that"

"Yes exactly," Ween said. "So I kind of found this community with queer handpoke artists and then they encouraged me to start handpoking because I had done art my whole life. So I started handpoking on myself and then my friends let me do art on their bodies and I just kept doing it and now I have this studio and I'm lucky enough to make my money and my livelihood doing this."

We continued talking about ourselves, politics, and what was going on in the world. I learned that Ween was originally from upstate New York and that they moved to North Carolina to go to school at NC State. Why did they choose to continue living here after finishing school?

"I've found a really good community here. Weirdly, I think people in the North are actually more close minded than the people I've met living down here in the south. I just feel more of a sense of community here, all across the state, like I love to travel to Asheville and Boone and when Hurricane Helene hit the outpouring of love from the southern community was really lovely and helpful. People don't realize that the North is full of problematic people too."

I nodded. I knew that to be true.

We continued, maintaining the rhythm of conversation, silence and needle pokes until the tattoo was finished. I thanked Ween, paid them and then we parted ways.

I saw Ween two months later. This time, instead of being bent over my body holding a needle, they were sitting opposite me on a Zoom call. We discussed various different things until we came to the topic of being an artist.

"I think that a lot of people in the queer and neurodivergent community struggle with intense self critique. It's hard to reach a point where you can say your art is good enough. I really feel that, especially as someone who initially did art as a side gig, I don't always have a ton of confidence in my art. One thing I really try to remember is something one of my

friends told me: ***You make art, therefore you are an artist.***"

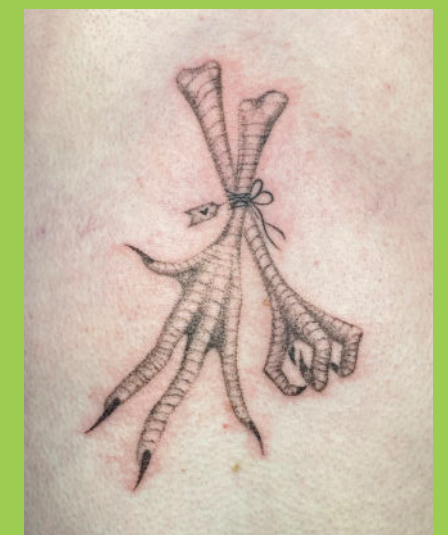
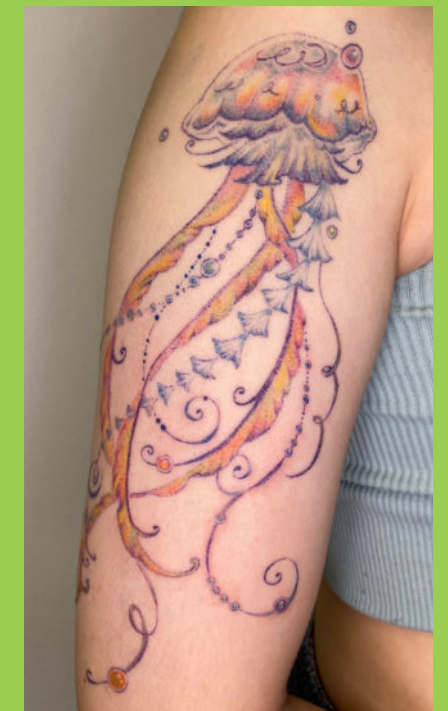
Ween paused, then added thoughtfully:

"I think the imposter syndrome I feel is kind of exasperated because I'm a handpoke artist. I really hate when people refer to what I do as stick and poke, because that has the connotation of something that is not done professionally. Stick and pokes are something you do in your bedroom at night without proper sterile equipment, something that you do on a whim. Meanwhile, handpoking is something I have poured my heart and soul and bank account into. There is so much integrity present for me in what I do. I approach handpoking with such a big emphasis on consent, respect and integrity that handpoking feels really sacred to me, it's more like a ritual. I really try to make my practice a safe space for me and others like me."

We talked a little more. The interview became less of an interview and more of a conversation. I started to feel like I was back in Ween's chair.

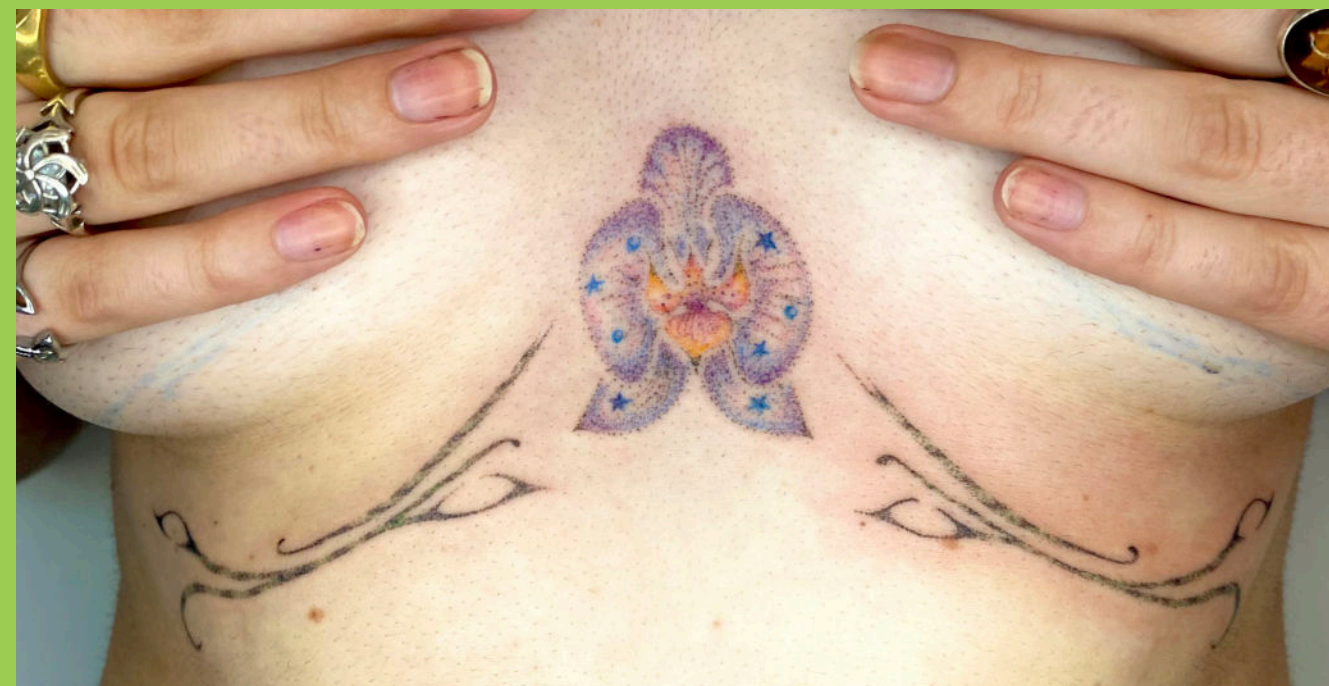
I concluded the interview by asking Ween if there was anything they wanted people to know. They smiled and said

"Get tattooed by queer people and AFAB people, the experience will be much safer.



Get tattoos by artists who have styles that you like, you will like the outcome more. Remember that the body is sacred and that tattooing it is a huge responsibility. Find an artist who knows that."

You don't really have to look hard to find one if you live in NC. I can point you to them. Their name is Ween.





Art History, Animal Bones, and the Intimate Nature of Tattoos

by Shaere Delgiudice

Layout Design by Vy Hoang

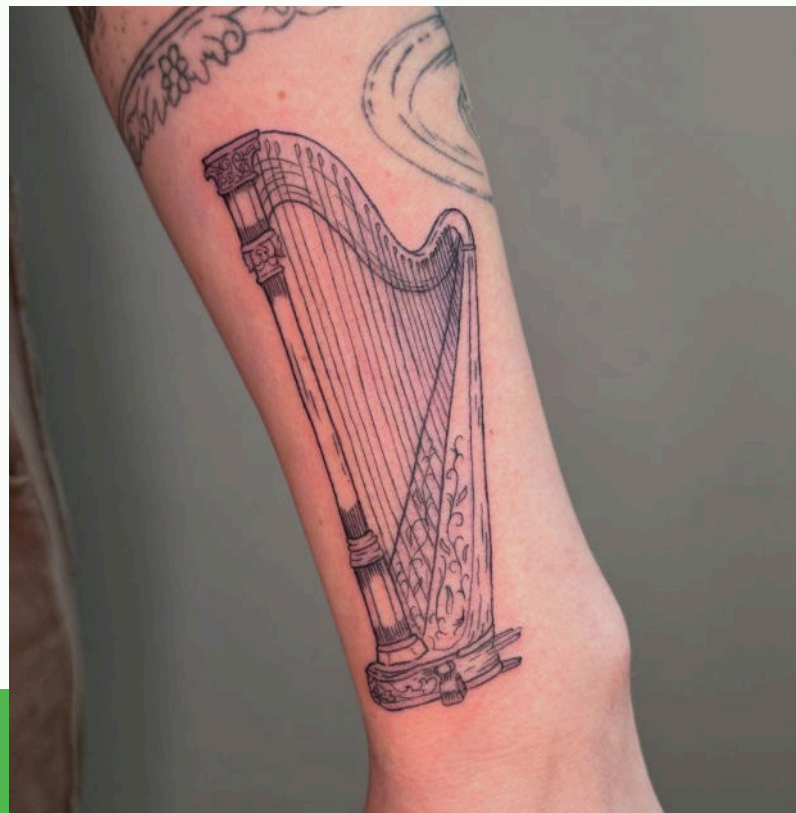
Wren Mangum, @Wren_m_art, says, “I’ve been artistic since as long as I can remember.” The tattoo artist, who grew up in Virginia Beach, VA and moved to the Charlotte, NC area right before starting high school shared, “I recently had a conversation with my mom about that and she said I was drawing before I could speak.”

Though Mangum has always loved art, he had a bit of an unconventional journey to tattooing, saying, “I always knew I wanted to do something with art and ended up pursuing it in college. I did interdisciplinary studies, at first doing art history and writing, and then ended up kind of pursuing a little more digital art and things like that, as well as painting, so kind of over the place.” However, he was unable to finish his degree as he, “actually got sick in 2022 and had some autoimmune things pop up.”

Mangum had recently moved in with his then partner at

the time and said he “wasn’t sure what to do,” saying that he “loved getting tattoos—I had several at that point—and I ended up talking to my artist at the time, who has now become one of my good friends, and kind of asked her about the process of how she got into tattooing, and she advised me to pursue it if it’s something I loved. And so I did.” He ended up getting an apprenticeship that same year and says, “I love it. I’ve been doing it ever since.” Starting off based in Winston-Salem, NC, he is now in the midst of a move to Lynchburg, VA.

Many of Mangum’s tattoos relate to historic art, the human form, and sculptures, as well as nature, with things such as mushrooms, flowers, birds, and animal bones. When asked where his interest in nature in particular comes from, Mangum said, “I have always loved nature. I grew up camping and hiking, and really it’s just kind of always been a part of me. So I think that was also just kind of a natural progression,” he continued, “I feel like there’s a sort of, I don’t know,



“it’s a very intimate sort of a job to be working with someone’s body like that, and I try very hard to never lose how special that is.”



unifying sort of spiritual vibe we all get from nature. It kind of brings everyone together,” adding, “I’m a firm believer that we’re all a part of the planet as much as we are living in it.”

“I started doing that early on in my career as a tattoo artist, and trying to kind of incorporate those things. And it kind of just took off. A lot of my clients started bringing me those sorts of ideas, and it was fun to kind of run with it,” adding “Those are always the pieces, like the flash designs that are the first to get snatched up.”

When asked about one piece in particular, a cardinal with dogwoods, Mangum shared that it was created to honor a client’s loved ones and said, “it’s cool to see how other people kind of connect plants and animals and things like that with important parts of their life, and so it’s become baked into my style, and I think it kind of took me by surprise. I didn’t expect that to happen as much as it did, but it’s been fun to see that develop.”

Mangum later expanded on the impact of tattoos in general and the different meanings they can hold, saying, “that is probably the coolest part of my job: being able to connect with people through the art that I do.”

“Whether I’m doing the silly, fun tattoo for a bunch of friends who just want matching tattoos, or something that’s very intimate, something that someone has had planned for years, or whatever it’s just a cool way to meet people.”

“It’s kind of an odd and unique way to connect with your clients. And I think there are very few jobs like that, where you’re sitting with somebody that you often don’t know well,” or they might be a regular, “I have several regulars that have come in to get five, six tattoos by me,” and “I’m sitting with this person for several hours, and naturally conversations come up, and we just get

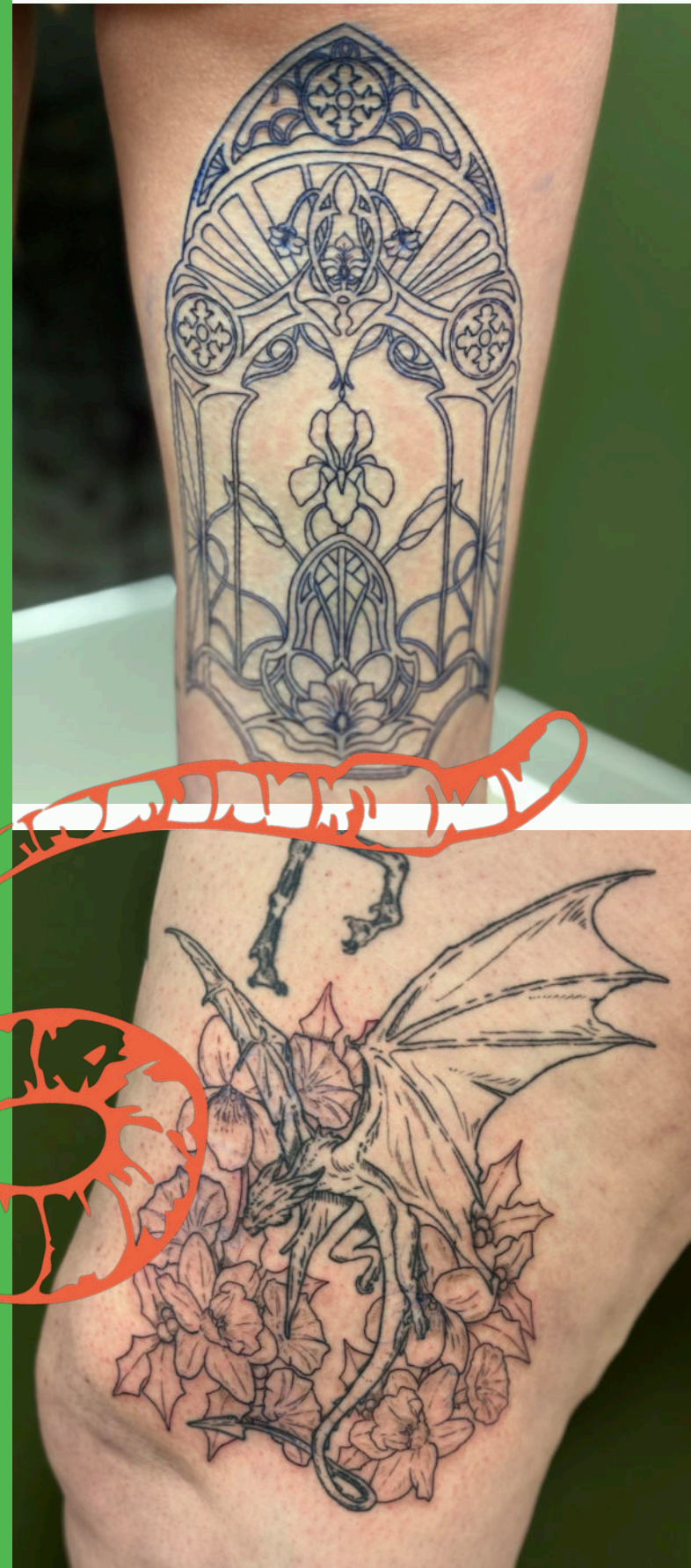
to talking. And it’s really cool, because I’ve gotten to connect with people about their life stories and about partners who have passed away, who they miss very much, and family members that they love.”

Mangum added that he works with a lot of queer people as well, as a queer artist himself, and this allows for some “niche and unique sort of conversations.” He also shared that he has “done pieces that cover scars from surgery, or self-harm, or whatever other reason,” and said “it’s a very intimate sort of a job to be working with someone’s body like that, and I try very hard to never lose how special that is.”

Mangum expanded on what makes the career so fulfilling, saying, “I guess I knew going into it, that it was going to be a very social job. But I don’t think I ever appreciated, until I started tattooing, just how much of a privilege it has been to really connect to those people.”

“I’ve had many, many clients come to me specifically because they wanted another queer person to do their tattoo, or even like the disabilities that I have, I have a lot of autoimmune conditions that have hypermobility issues as well as nerve damage and some crazy stuff going on. And so even that has been a cool platform and opportunity because I learned to tattoo on myself, as most artists do. And so I learned to tattoo on very difficult skin. I’m very stretchy. My skin just kind of takes ink weird and and it was cool because it inadvertently taught me how to work with bodies that that would otherwise be pretty difficult to work with, and so I feel like it’s been a privilege to then be able to turn around and like, continue to offer that kind of one safe space for queer folks and people with disabilities who might need non-conventional sort of accommodations and stuff, but then also just to, like, have the skills and the supplies and the resources to then tattoo those people in a safe and effective way so that they’re not getting screwed over, which has been really cool.”

“loving people,
loving nature,
and making
cool, cool art...”



Mangum also spoke about the experience of doing art in the South and their relationship with the region, saying, “I love the South, I don’t think I always did as a younger kid, especially in high school, I was always like, ‘I’m gonna get out of here. I’m gonna move out West. I’m gonna go,’ you know, I just always wanted to get out of the south.” But, “I think COVID, in a lot of ways, changed that for me and I really reconnected with it a lot in late high school through college into my 20s,” he said. “I realized that I love it here. I love the nature in the South, I have a very strong connection to the Appalachian Mountains since I grew up camping there and have family there.”

“I think also being a queer person in the South is a really weird sort of relationship. Being in the Bible Belt is an interesting sort of culture to grow up in, but I think the South, a lot of times, gets a bad rap,” often described as small-minded by many outside of the region.

Through his work, Mangum is able to see more of the beauty of the South, “I think that my clientele is great proof that there are just some really wonderful, colorful, amazing people here.”

“There’s a whole colorful, you know, kind of subculture, even, going on in the South, that doesn’t get a lot of time in the light. And a lot of attention.” While the region has a complicated history “especially for people of color” Mangum highlighted the diversity and vibrancy that can be found here as well, encouraging people to “take the time to really talk to and meet Southern people.”

He spoke to how the region’s culture is “focused on, just like, kindness and hospitality and taking care of each other,” leaving the artist, who once dreamed of moving away from the region, to contend that now, “I’ve fallen in love with the South,” adding that he thinks, “If I ever had to leave, it would be very, very difficult.”

“I think art in the South is a very niche sort of experience. You think all the way back to just the history behind like quilting and the music here, and there’s so many different kinds of creative outlets here,” said Mangum, who recalled how he was, “in a tiny little bluegrass band in early middle school.”

“I think that that’s [stayed] very dormant for a long time, and I reached adulthood, and finally had this space and the knowledge and maturity, I think, to peel back some of the more complicated layers and reconnect to the part that’s just loving people, loving nature, and making cool, cool art and connecting with those things.”

Floridian Nostalgia



PHOTOGRAPHY BY EWAN ABERCROMBIE
LAYOUT DESIGN BY RYANN HORN



Most of my life has been spent in Tampa, Florida. I lived there for a full 18 years until I left for college, though I still visit during winter and summer breaks. Four generations of my family chose to stay, but I don't think it's where I'll end up.

There are parts of home that make it hard to live there. It's summer for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year, it's too humid, there are mosquitoes everywhere, the politics are rough, and we have a hurricane season. All the issues can add up. More than anything, though, I feel like a child when I visit. It's a weird, stifling nostalgia, where I both long for my childhood, but also feel trapped in the past.

Even then, I still miss being a kid. I remember how it felt to wake up early on Saturday and make my parents watch Pokémon with me. I remember playing in the sand at the beach before going out and eating a giant bowl of penne sorrentina with extra burrata for lunch, then afterwards, meandering to the toy store where I would beg my parents to buy every UglyDoll I could find. When it stormed, I would curl up into the corner of the couch with a fantasy book in hand and read for hours. And then once it cleared up, I'd go pick up all the worms in the street and carry them to the safety of the grass. I used to fill entire buckets with snails and slugs to torture my mom with by making her hold them. I miss putting lizards on my ears, the sea slugs at the aquarium touch tank, hunting for ghost crabs with my cousins, sea urchins, starfish, baby pufferfish, and sand fleas. I miss the idiotic sayings my grandad came up with, I miss eating a stack of waffles and pancakes in a pillow fort at my grandma's.

There are so many parts of my childhood I look back on fondly. I love my family and my friends there. I love Tampa, and the beach, and all the coffee shops and thrift stores and old memorabilia. I love being home, and I miss Florida, but I think I love it most in my memory.











“I love the process of thinking of something, having this idea, and then bringing it

to life and making it real. That process for me is so satisfying and so fulfilling—I really do just love making things.” - Elle Newkirk.

Designer - Elle Newkirk Photographer - Tae Park Makeup - Lauren Tran

CONNECTING THREADS

How Fashion and Architecture
Shaped Elle Newkirk's Artistry

by Shaere Delgiudice

Layout Design by Ryann Horn

Newkirk has always had a love for drawing, fashion, and design, and is currently pursuing her Bachelor's in Architecture at North Carolina State University. She said, "I just always remember really loving art class and loving to do crafts and stuff. And I was really, really obsessed with clothes when I was a kid—and I still am! But especially as a little kid, my mom had a really nice closet, so I loved going in her clothes and trying on her stuff, but I also was always interested in designing clothes too."

This past April, Newkirk was able to design for Art2Wear, an event where students create remarkable pieces of wearable art, pushing the boundaries of traditional art forms and telling stories through their pieces. This year's show was titled: Revive, hosted at the NC State Gregg Museum of Art & Design, and Newkirk's collection was called Palingenesis, "dedicated to the little deaths and rebirths every individual undergoes during their time on Earth."

"The main message of this was that the human experience is a constant cycle of different lives lived, there's so many different versions of yourself that you go through in your lifetime. There's so many things you learn. There's so many different things that you're feeling. And it was kind of about the duality of life and how it can be so beautiful, and how you should cherish being here, but also how difficult it can be sometimes, and the trauma that everyone endures in their lifetime. So it was kind of just exploring, that ambiguity and like this almost undecided nature of what life is."



Beyond exploring the ideas of reincarnation and the cycle of the human experience, Newkirk said her collection also explored traditional Korean fashion, "as a way to explore one half of my heritage in a way that I hadn't really before."

She further described the collection as "kind of a reflection of me and the emotional journeys that I have gone through in my lifetime," adding that it was cathartic to look at "these different aspects of myself and kind of work it out through these looks."

The first look in her collection, called "Maiden," "is like girlhood, essentially, she is like that phase of your life when nothing bad ever really happens, and you're just a little kid, and everything you see around you is beautiful and perfect, and nothing has hurt you yet." For this look, "her set was a garden, and her role was just picking flowers, enjoying a beautiful spring day."

The second look in Palingenesis was called "Han," Newkirk said, "she kind of represented death and depression," and for her performance, the model acted lost, as though "she was searching for something that she couldn't really name, and she was kind of weaving through this forest."



"Maiden"

Model - Samantha Shue



"Han"



Model - Nicole Harris



"Atlas"

The final look in the collection was called "Atlas," representing rebirth and inspired by "Paradise Lost." Newkirk says this set and performance was meant to showcase "The last of the night before she is reborn completely into a new day, into a new life. So she's like, really restless, she's tired, and she can't really stay in place for too long, but she doesn't want to leave the room just yet, and it's really just her hoping that the dawn will bring something good, and that in the daylight she might find some semblance of the joy that life used to give her, or at least like some sort of peace of mind that this new life that she's been born into is going to be one worth living.

This year's Art2Wear show taking place in a museum, also allowed Newkirk to do some set design—using her experience in the NC State Craft Center's wood shop—and experiment with choreography, developing a "35-40 minute performance" for each of her models. For her collection, she specifically chose models who had a dance or performance background and said seeing the emotion they were able to translate through their performances was "really cathartic," adding that "It was also cool getting to see the audience interact with the models as well," and calling this the most fun aspect of the show for her.

Model - AK Stipanov

Newkirk shared a sweet anecdote from these interactions, describing how one of her professors had brought their kid to see the show, who approached the model for “Han” wanting one of the flowers that was part of her set. The designer said she motioned for her to hand one over, “And it was really cute, getting to just see how people interact with [the pieces].”

Another special moment occurred for Newkirk that evening, as she learned from a friend on the team that she had won her first architecture competition that same day, and later celebrated, “jumping up and down” with them at the show’s second time slot.

“It was cool getting to celebrate that while also getting to have art to wear in the background too.”



Architecture has long been woven into the foreground of Newkirk’s life, as she shared that her late grandfather was actually a modernist architect who attended NC State as well, with her childhood home being the last house he ever designed.

She says because of this, she’s grown up always being aware of architecture and how it affects people, recalling how her dad would drive around her hometown of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, and point out all of the different houses her grandfather had designed in their town, adding that, “getting to see the impact that a single person could kind of have on a community was really cool.”

“Growing up, especially in my house, and seeing the way that my grandpa really lovingly crafted this space for my family, like looking back on that, that’s something

that I really admire about his work. He actually used to meditate on the sites and with all of his structures, he really cared about preserving the trees, and the directionality of the house, and shading it correctly to make it energy efficient, but also pleasant for the users. My house is actually angled towards where his old boat used to be parked, and the house itself is supposed to kind of resemble a boat, but even where our rooms are placed—me and my sister, like our bedrooms are in the back of the house, but the way the house is angled, we still have, like, a nice view out—and that was something that was really important to him. So just kind of growing up in a space that was designed for my family in a way that was so loving and careful, I think that’s definitely affected my own perspective on how I approach design, especially architecture-wise, but also like how I would approach, working with a client, or also a model, or styling for Art2Wear.”



One way this care came through was with Newkirk's design of the wooden shoes for "Han's" look. She had made three iterations of the shoes in order to find the most ideal fit for the model, to not only ensure that she would be able to walk in them but that she would also feel great in them. Only showing further how much importance Newkirk puts on creating something with love and intentionality.

While one motivating factor behind her designs, "at least with clothes and fashion," comes from simply wanting to make things that she would like for herself, particularly as she may not be able to find certain pieces she would like in North Carolina, and she also says that, "My ultimate dream, I think, as an architect, is to design my own house." Newkirk also says that she really loves "getting to make something for other people, and getting to make what they want come to life too, and getting to share that creative journey with them."



She continued, "In the future, I think, what I want to go into eventually is doing more residential stuff, like more custom stuff, and kind of getting to share that process of making this ideal space for someone. That's something that I'm really driven by, and just making sure that what I make—whether it is clothes or a structure—that it adequately, efficiently, and just overall positively serves the people that are going to be using it.

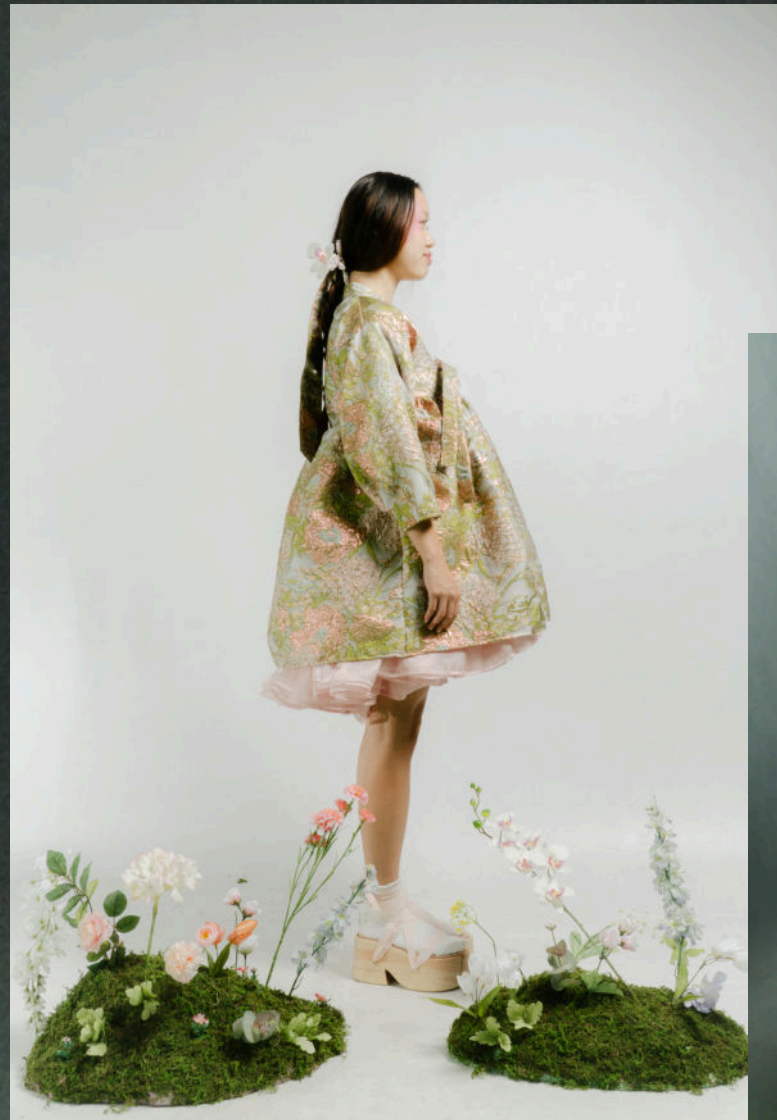
When asked about how she's seen her education in architecture influence outside projects, she shared, "I had never sewed at that level, but I think through the way that the college of design kind of taught me about like design thinking and that process, that really allowed me to think through how I was going to accomplish this thing that I'd never really done before, and be confident that I could get to where I wanted to be."

“With architecture, one part that I wasn't expecting to really like in the translation from architecture to fashion was I really enjoyed making patterns for the clothes. There's two different ways to begin to design a piece of clothing—two types of construction: you can either do it through draping, which is on a mannequin, or you do it through pattern making. And I really, really enjoyed pattern making. And I saw a lot of similarities between pattern making and what I do in architecture.”

Newkirk also shared what it is that pushes her to keep creating and exploring more avenues of expression and design.

She said, “For [Art2Wear, it was really fulfilling for my younger self, because when I was little, when people would ask: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” I was like, “I want to be a fashion designer!” and along the way, that dream kind of became a little unrealistic, and I kind of pivoted away from that. But by being able to do Art2wear, that really fulfilled an aspect of myself that I kind of pushed to the side.”

Looking ahead to her senior year, the designer said she has “a full roster of architecture coming up” and is excited to get to be a studio assistant for sophomores in her program, but hopes she'll have time to continue sewing as well, adding that she already has projects in mind that she wants to pursue.



FROM GREENSBORO TO THE GARMENT DISTRICT

by Tevin Keobouala

Photography by Yeongwoo Jung

Layout Design by AK Stipanov

The energy was already warm when I walked into Timothy Glass's apartment in Sunset Park. He and his friend and photographer, Yeongwoo, were parked on the couch watching *No Reservations*, an old Anthony Bourdain episode humming low in the background. Makes sense. Timothy told me he loves Bourdain, not just for the food, but for how he moved through life in a curious, grounded, and human manner. We were sitting there in the calm of Sunset Park, one of the quieter neighborhoods in Brooklyn. It felt like the right kind of starting point. We ended up talking for an hour before we even hit record—about moving from NC to NYC, fumbling through jobs and rent, how the hustle still feels worth it, and what it means to slowly settle in.

Timothy's originally from Greensboro, North Carolina. He moved to New York a little over a year ago to pursue NOVEMBER, his clothing brand—though "brand" feels like a small word for something that's more of an ongoing self-portrait. "If I had to describe November," he told me, "it would literally just be me."

The name itself, November, comes from a short film he made when he was 13. The full phrase—November I Still Love You—appears in some corners of his marketing and is quietly tucked into the about page on his site. "It started with that film," he said. "A kid meets a girl in November, they have a great time together, and never see each other again." That story came from real life, and even though he laughed calling it cheesy, it's stayed with him. "Now it plays into everything."

He used to stamp "November" on his paintings when he was a kid. He started painting seriously around 14, sewing even earlier. But the brand itself—cut-and-sew, wearable, fully-formed—didn't arrive until much later, around February 2024. That first drop was the Black Bull Denim trousers, wide-fitting and rugged. Since then, the line has slowly built out. His process is hands-on, deeply personal, and often sparked by necessity—like the HOBUCKIN trousers, made with pinstriped front pockets placed outward to avoid ripping while skating, or the JACQUARD-CYCLER pants with adjustable ankle straps for biking.

PICTURED - TEVIN KEO AND TIMOTHY GLASS

By the time commissions started coming in last summer, he was doing everything—from marketing NOVEMBER territory throughout the city to making full video campaigns. “Sometimes I want the clothes to be secondary,” he told me. “I love making the videos more.” The campaign for his pleated poplin shorts, for instance—a promo titled Another Sport featuring his brother and mother—is probably his favorite thing he’s made under the November name. “My grandma watched it and said, ‘I liked it, but I couldn’t see the shorts,’ and I was like, ‘Yeah, but it’s still cool.’”

November releases now live both online and in-person through Free Agency, a Lower East Side curatory that carries

a small circle of emerging designers. Timothy told me his relationship with Free Agency’s founder, Shaul, gave him the chance to see his clothes in a physical space among likeminded creators, which felt like a big milestone for himself and NOVEMBER.

But it wasn’t always so clear. He talked a lot about the time he spent at App State, where he first studied studio art, then switched to apparel design. “Watching the senior showcase... I realized I shouldn’t be here.” He had never planned on college—only applied because everyone else was. He didn’t feel connected to the work, and that disconnection chipped away at his passion. But leaving school sparked something. “Out of that self-

hatred,” he said, “I found a new love for being Black.”

A lot of his work is rooted in that love, and in healing. “Growing up, I’d been taught things that made me hate myself—my lips, my nose, the way I spoke. College broke me down. I had no one there, away from my family.” November became a rebuild. A place to hold all the things he loved: photography, music, clothing, identity. A space to process and share.

“I don’t really pull from other fashion brands,” he told me, when I asked about design influences. “More from film, authors, music.” He name-dropped Grace Wales Bonner, Martine Rose, and McQueen, but also talked about how books like Giovanni’s Room and

films like Portrait of a Lady on Fire have affected him more. “Seeing people talk passionately about what inspires them makes me want to do the same.”

That shows up in how the brand feels—loose and specific at once. The stickers, phrases, worldbuilding. I asked him about “Southern Disco,” a recurring anecdote that personally sticks out to me when thinking NOVEMBER. “A lot of people don’t notice that,” he said, smiling. “It came from my love for electronic music. I used to DJ drag shows full-time.” That space, he said, let him feel like himself. “I realized I wasn’t running from the South—I loved it. Southern Disco was the perfect blend.” The ‘k’ in disko, by the way, is a nod to Stereolab.





Jacquard-Cyclor Denim
(February 2025)



Pleated Poplin Shorts
(June 2025)



Krackerjak Trousers
(January 2025)



Hobuckin Trousers

Right now, Timothy's portfolio for NOVEMBER stands:

- Custom pants commissions (June 2024)
- Caps & pins drop (September 2024)
- SOUTHERNTANK Jacket (December 2024)
- KRACKERJAK Trousers (January 2025)
- JACQUARD-CYCLER Denim (February 2025)
- Pleated Poplin Shorts (June 2025)

But he's not necessarily trying to run a clothing brand forever. "Clothing might be the first thing to go," he admitted. "I hate the feeling of being worth whatever people are willing to buy that month. Painting doesn't feel like that. Neither does video. If I paint or shoot something I love, I don't care if anyone sees it."

Even still, he's not planning on slowing down. "Long-term, I want a flagship store. A real fashion show, full production. I want to make a movie, an album—so much. But day to day, I'm content. Even if no one sees me, I'd still be doing this." Before we wrapped, I asked him what he'd tell someone trying to start their own thing. His answer was simple: "Just don't stop. Find something you're passionate about and run with it." Then he paused and repeated something his friend Yeongwoo once said—"It's like a warm place on the chest that spreads through your body. Like walking outside on the first warm day after winter." That's what it feels like for him to create.

And that's what November is, at least for now.

Designer - Henry Tran Photographer - Brianna Pierce Makeup - Roshni Ammanamanchi Assistant - Owen James

Playing Dress-Up with Henry Tran

by Leah K. Tran

Layout Design by Vy Hoang

For Henry, playing dress up with dolls was all they wanted to do as a kid. Walking around the shopping malls of Charlotte, North Carolina, they would stop and stare at the window displays and the dressed mannequins with a longing as their mom would head straight towards the department stores. It wasn't just a longing to wear those clothes—it was something deeper and complex. A longing that would develop into an idea, and then eventually a passion for design.

This spark for fashion designing hadn't just randomly appeared in Henry. Their parents were artistic themselves, skilled in the visual arts but ultimately had never chosen to pursue that as their careers. Instead, they opened up their own Vietnamese restaurants in the South once they immigrated here.

"You know, the arts are taboo for the Vietnamese, immigrant parent.

It's not the ideal career choice," Henry said.

This is a sentiment common amongst the immigrant community: art doesn't sell. Practicality was often applied and pressured upon first or second generation children when it comes to their career. But Henry remained steadfast in their artistic pursuit. Whether they realized it or not, fashion would be deeply a part of their sense of who they are. Whenever their mom dressed them, they would say what they didn't like and what hadn't felt like them. Clothing was more than pieces of fabrics—it was their way of discovering their identity.

"I struggled with doubts about my gender identity and femininity. When your parents are looking for this older brother persona that I don't fit in—it made me have angst towards fashion. Like it couldn't be for me...but I wanted to play with dolls. I didn't want to be a doctor."

Models - Joshua Bermudez Colin Tran Jady Mclean



Model - Rachel Harkin



Model - Joseph Smith

“...but I wanted to play with dolls. I didn’t want to be a doctor.”

And Henry followed this desire—leading them to NC State University, where they had studied Fashion and Textile Design. It was here where they learned the foundations of design and strengthened their values in fashion. They even had learned how to sew their first year at State for the first time.

“My first time sewing a shirt made me feel ecstatic. I remember going home that night after that studio and I cried over that shirt. It was monumental for me. It was the first time I was given reassurance that I could do it.”

They didn’t just learn how to sew, but discovered that there were other Asian Americans in the same program, pursuing the same dream as them. It was a diversity they encountered that was often rarely found in public spaces but was pleasantly surprised to be found in the classroom.

“We don’t get to choose where we were born, but we exist here in the same place. We are here for the same thing, and learning that same thing, and there are other POC who are pursuing this dream with me. I’m just glad I am not the only one.”

As someone who has always been living within restrictions and finding ways to break through, Henry wanted to take the idea of a “work uniform” and make it fun and enjoyable for their last collection, Adaptation Influx. It’s evident how “play” is a consistent

theme in this collection. With oversized sleeves, flowing and layered silhouettes, and the addition of personal trinkets and buttons, their designs push the boundaries of what it means to be who you are at work and challenges the idea that there must be a division of self in your professional life. It’s about finding the whimsy and joy in the everyday, monotonous routine. Completing this collection was a full circle moment from where they started.

“It started with a simple shirt

and now I am here with this final collection. I feel so proud of everything. About the show, the collection, the models. I feel like I executed it perfectly. But this collection also made me realize keeping good people around you is essential. I have so much appreciation for my photographer, models, and makeup artists. It takes more than one person to complete this vision.”

It’s Henry’s plans to continue to expand and grow in their sewing capabilities and to eventually become a creative director for a

brand. They want to think about the bigger picture, not just the design but how it looks—print and digital. But for now, Henry feels a deep pride for where they are at now.

“Even if I am not in the industry yet, I am still living my childhood dream. It came true when I sewed my first shirt. I can see my younger self clapping for me.”

And in a way, you can’t help but clap for them as well.

The air of professionalism that surrounds him at all times cannot be overstated. He speaks with a deep voice and answers questions thoughtfully, with an easy, lax confidence and a charming smile. Though his passion for his craft is immediately evident, he approaches conversation about it with a seriousness that communicates a deep respect for all of the labor involved in the fashion industry.

Mark is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina. He attended North Carolina State University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science in Fashion and Textile Design from the Wilson College of textiles. During this time, he honed his technical skills and narrowed down and refined the way he thought about design and fashion.

“Before coming to NC State I had a much more broad understanding of fashion. I was kind of captivated by avant garde images and I would very much get lost in textures. NC State, and kind of Raleigh in general, taught me a lot about the more mechanical aspects of fashion.”

EUROPEAN STYLE

with southern sensibilities

MODEL - Minta Brice



MODEL - Minta Brice

Despite growing up in North Carolina, Mark is far from a typical country bumpkin. He is quite the world traveler, frequently taking trips overseas to visit family in Paris and Lebanon. Mark has also studied abroad in Florence and completed an internship in Paris with Rabih Kayrouz, a fellow Lebanese designer. Having fallen in love with working in France, he plans to move there to attend The Institut Français de la Mode, an institution that specializes in postgraduate programs in the fashion and textile industry.

“There is definitely European and Asian influence in my designs and my collections. My senior capstone had a very broad theme that was inspired by Lebanese folklore and fashion history. Since Lebanon was ruled by France at one point, there is also naturally a French influence there. I think it’s really special that I’m able to kind of connect with my heritage and family through my designs. And through sewing, my grandma sews, my dad sews and I sew.”

So why would a person as cultured and talented as Mark decide to go to fashion school in North Carolina?

“I always knew that I wanted to work in the luxury fashion industry,” Mark says “I came to fashion school to learn what I could but I always knew my aspirations were big and high-fashion. Honestly, the price was a major reason I chose to go to State. Weirdly though, I never felt limited by being in Raleigh. It really inspired me to think outside the box more. I had to do a lot of self-exploration because I wasn’t in the center of the industry.”

“I am also very inspired by Western American influences and cultures,” he adds, “I am very much attracted to typical silhouettes that we commonly see in America. I really love that North Carolina luxury fashion in particular has this timeless sophistication to it. I will always carry a piece of that suburban style in my work.”

He follows up with a laugh, saying “I think my work very much gives European style but with southern sensibilities.”

by Isabella Broccolo

Photography by Anders Ljung

Layout Design by AK Stipanov


SUMMERTIME

Style



Photographer - Tae Park Stylists - Elle Newkirk + Gracie Owens Layout Design - Ellie Bruno Illustrations - Jordan Ramsey





The concept aims to take the familiar southern garments and redirect our perspective through the lens of editorial presentation. Some garments may be a target of stereotyping, some may be a commonly worn color palette of the South, some may reflect common settings and activities of the South, and some may be less diversely represented and worn. In many ways, like many other garments or so-called “styles”, these garments have been presented and chosen to be worn and styled monolithically by an exclusive group, in an exclusive setting. Regardless, it was an experiment to blend these garments that carry such symbols with a more polished look through styling and photographing. There is no intention to be suggestive. A new presentation of familiar materials can create a redirection of perspective, and that is the sole purpose of the photoshoot.

- Tae Park





Model - Caleb Purdie





Model - Olivia Laizure





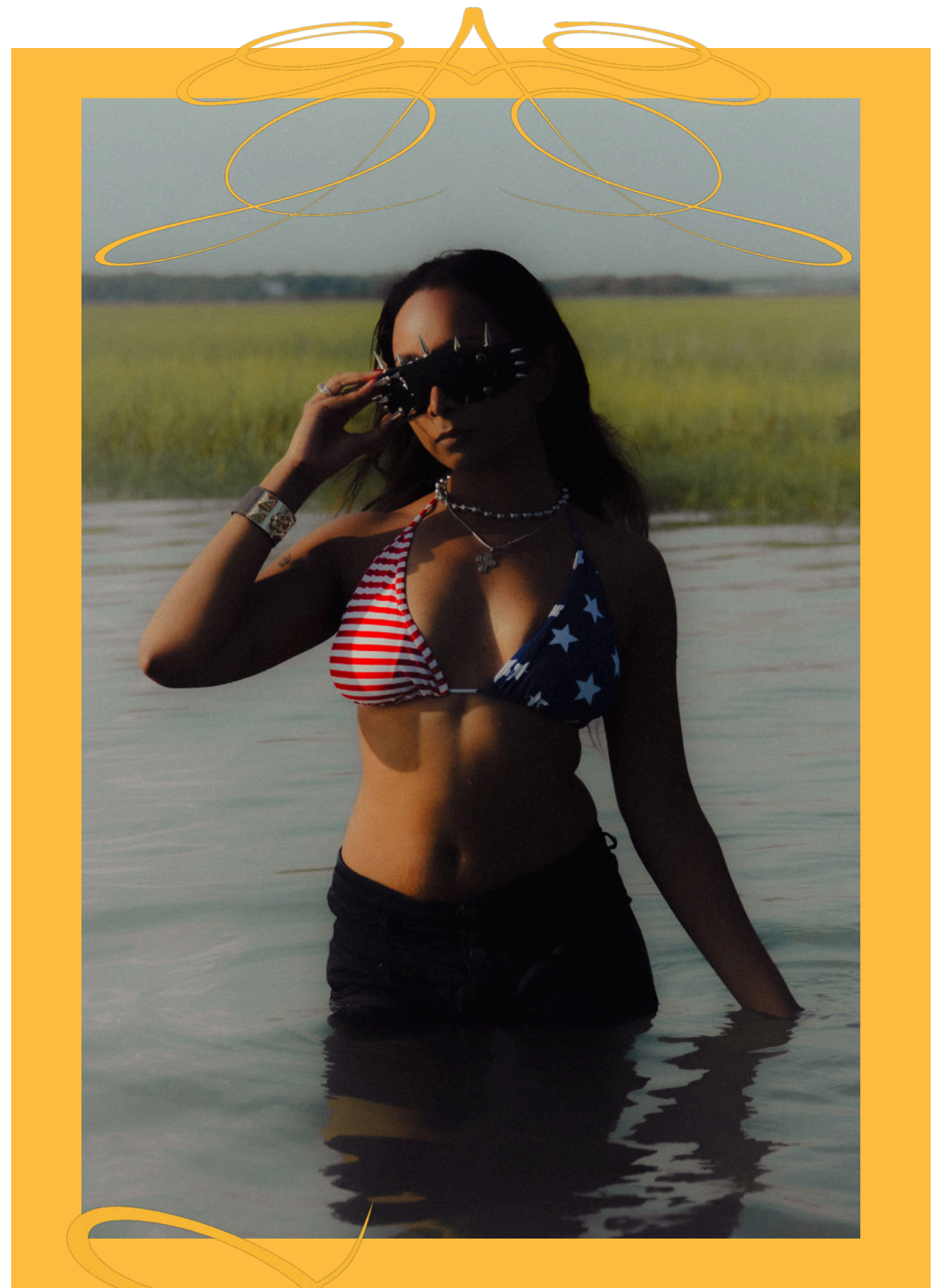




Model - Jarib Sanderson



Model - Anushna Saha





CONVERSATIONS

ReF System Msg: Chloe - Instant Message



WITH CHLOE

BY ISABELLA BROCCOLO

ILLUSTRATION BY CHLOE DAVIS

LAYOUT + GRAPHICS BY ELLIE BRUNO

On a rainy day, sometime in the hours of the evening twilight, two girls sit opposite their computers, connected by the fragile link of a zoom call. One of them, the interviewer, has dark eyes decorated with dark makeup. She wears red lipstick and tosses her hair behind her shoulders frequently, seemingly unable to get it into the position she wants it in. The girl opposite her has long hazel hair that rests just above her shoulders. It parts on her foreheads and slopes down the sides of her face, caressing the clear frames of her glasses. Her smile is gentle and beautiful.

ReF Instant Message



The girl with dark eyes speaks

Isabella

Hey Chloe, thank you so much for agreeing to this interview!

The girl with hazel hair, Chloe, replies with a smile

Chloe

Oh yeah of course, thank you so much for the opportunity! I'm excited!

The two girls don't know each other. They are connected loosely by a friend-of-a-friend. Their Instagram DMs have revealed only that Chloe is an artist who lives in Wilmington, North Carolina and that this girl opposite her is interested in interviewing her for an article in the REFRAME magazine

The interviewer kicks things off

Isabella

So I don't want to take up too much of your time, so if you're ready we can just jump into it! Tell me a little about yourself, what kind of art do you make?

Chloe rests her head on her hands and answers with a faint laugh

Chloe

Oh, I do all kinds of art, ut I just graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design for animation. I was a story and content development major. I like to do a lot of digital art too, I try to lean heavily into bright, colorful and whimsical stuff, like a kind of a children's animation aesthetic. I also write and make music

Isabella

Ah okay, can you tell me a little more about the things you like to design or make?

Chloe

Yeah, um, most of the characters I create are gender neutral, I really feel like when you design characters, part of your job is to represent more than yourself. I also like to explore the way humans interact with each other, that's a big part of my work too. What about you? You do art as well right?



The interviewee replies with a smile,

Isabella

Oh yeah, I do all kinds of art, lately I've really been into fiber art. I knit and crochet a lot, but I paint and draw too. How about you? I know that you knit, full disclosure, I stalked your knitting Instagram

Chloe smiles

Chloe

Oh yeah I love to knit

Isabella

What are you working on now?

Chloe

I have it right here actually, it's a boatneck sweater made entirely out of ribbing

Isabella

Oh wow it's so beautiful! And I bet it'll be so comfy when it's on

The conversation about knitting continues for a few more minutes. At the end of it, both girls appear to be much more at ease with each other and with this interview

Isabella

Okay Chloe so what would you say are the biggest sources of inspiration for you and your work?

Chloe considers this question thoughtfully before she responds.

Chloe

Honestly I'd say I'm most heavily inspired by my peers and the people around me. The people I know in person and the people on social media who are around my age but who I don't know personally. My sister Sophie too

Chloe's eyes light up and she smiles, continuing



Chloe

Okay so you know when someone who is new to art or when a kid is doing art and they're just kind of coloring all crazy and outside the lines and they don't really care how their art looks they're just creating to create and they're confident in that? That's something I really try to emulate. That kind of break in reality. My sister Sophie just started doing art and she's never really been a creative before. The way she just creates without getting lost in the world of critique, that's really inspiring to me

Chloe

I also take visual inspiration from people like Sylvain Marc, he worked on Luca, and I LOVE Luca. I also love looking at any and all concept art for animated films. I really love Big Hero 6 and Brave as well. But yeah, most of my inspiration comes from my peers, I think collaboration is just the best thing ever

Chloe pauses. The interviewer asks her another question

Isabella

Can you elaborate on that a little? What exactly do you love about collaboration?

Chloe

Oh yeah. So I did a lot of collaborating with other artists when I was at SCAD. Being surrounded by so many artists, you see everyone working so hard, and you feel this drive to support them. That kind of cohesion and collaboration is the best thing ever

Isabella

What exactly does collaboration in the animation world look like?

Chloe

So you usually want a team where everyone has a different skill set. There's preproduction, production and then post-production and you need a lot of people for each part. There's people who are going to write, do character design, animating, compositing, and all of these people are working with each other to create something greater than what they could make individually. My personal favorite part is pre-production. During this stage, you have a bunch of people come together, all from different backgrounds, and you basically bounce ideas off of each other for what you want the characters to look like, what their stories might be, how they interact with other characters, stuff like that

ReF Instant Message



Chloe

You really take the time to go in-depth and give these characters life by giving them details that nobody on screen is ever even going to see, but that make them feel human. That's what makes me so sad that companies now are cutting writers, cutting designers, trimming down the creative process, because when you do that, what you get rid of is the humanity of the work, of the characters, and you can't just cut out that human connection

Isabella

Oh my god that WOW that's beautiful

Chloe laughs

Chloe

It's true!

Isabella

So are you working on any projects right now?

Chloe

Not really at the moment, but there's so much that I'm interested in I could see myself doing a lot. Like I minored in music production, I'm also very interested in that. But it's a massive beast, it's its own thing

She says with a laugh

Chloe

I'm really excited to do projects that incorporate sound, I find music to be very inspiring. I play the piano, bass, drums, and guitar-

Isabella

WHAT?? That's AMAZING!

She laughs and continues

Chloe

Yeah, I play a lot of instruments

ReF Instant Message



Isabella

I love that. That's so cool. Ya know, I really love how artists are never really artists when it comes to just one thing. They always do multiple forms of art, and have multiple ways of creating.

Chloe nods in agreement

Chloe

That's a good point. I mean I feel like I only get this one life, if I wanna do something I might as well pursue it.

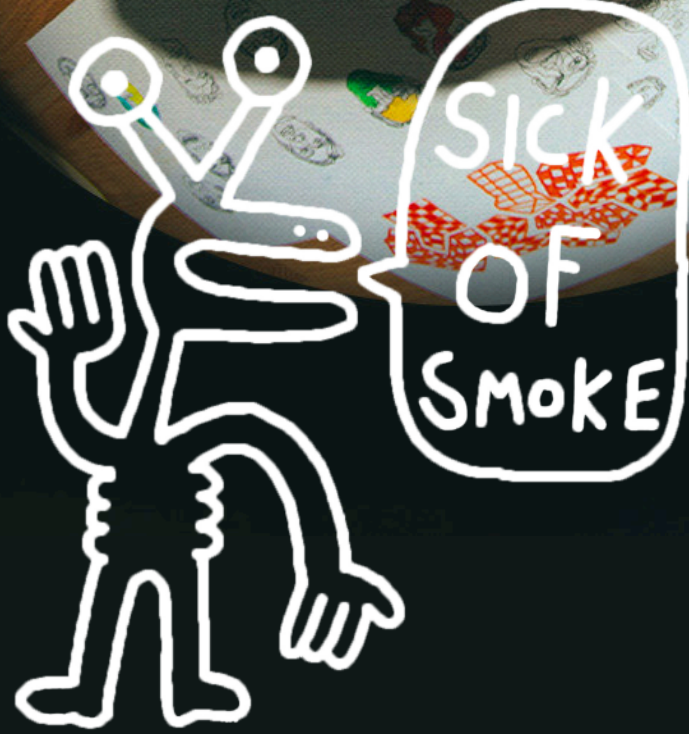
The girls laugh. A few pleasantries and expressions of gratitude for taking the time to do the interview are exchanged. Goodbyes are said and the interview ends. As the laptops close, Chloe's words hang in the hazy air.

I only get this one life, if I wanna do something, I might as well pursue it.

ReF_File_BWINKY+BEAU



The World of



Creatures, Collage, and Community

by Shaere Delgiudice

Photography by Rory Sullivan
Layout Design by Ellie Bruno

Michael O'Neill, also known by their handle: @sickofsmoke, has "always been interested in creatures and life."

O'Neill was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and raised in the town of Garner, though they also spent lots of time in Raleigh—where they're currently based—growing up.

Well known in and around the NC State University community in particular, O'Neill has become a familiar face for many and can be seen selling creature-filled collages in art markets at the Gregg Museum, hosting their own exhibit at The Portal, working on another quick portraiture piece at Cup A Joe, or running their free art stand.

Observers of their art can spend a countless amount of time noticing the differences in various faces and patterns contained within a singular piece and even more time noting which distinct characters continue on in other works, particularly as they often hide creatures from their childhood "cast of characters" in their work today.

While they find inspiration from a multitude of sources, O'Neill emphasized the most influential, saying, "If there's one thing I think should be expressed for people to understand my work and where it came from, it's definitely just [that] a lot of my work really came from my childhood and pop culture around me."

Some of these influences include children's media such as the classic puzzles of, Where's Waldo?, as well as the diverse worlds of

Pokemon and Adventure Time, but the visual artist was influenced by a more unexpected source as well.



In high school, "I would go to the Village District library, and before that, when I was younger, I would go to the Garner Public Library. I think that's something that influenced me is I would spend just hours and hours being at the library."

Whether it was time spent using the computer—which was otherwise limited at home—or simply time spent hanging around and waiting to be picked up after closing, O'Neill developed a sort of connection to spaces like this, in addition to "becoming friends with a lot of the librarians there."

"The librarians were so sweet, I remember when I was kid I was like 'I wanna be a librarian,' like 'this is gonna be my job when I grow up; I've since drifted away from that but I always thought it was really cool, and my uncle was a librarian!"

While their career path didn't involve getting a Master's in Library Science, it did still connect to these spaces. They recalled seeing displays of Keith Norville's art, "these interesting works that are kind of like character-based, similar to mine," inside of the Village District library, saying, "it was definitely something that spoke to my work and influenced me," and sharing that later on, "I ended up creating my work and getting deeper into that and deeper into high school, and I ended up getting to have some of my work displayed" in the same library for a while.

"It was cool cause I kind of had my influences on the wall and then I could walk to a different part of the library and see my work there as well."

"I was just letting out my emotions onto the page!"

Another major influence for O'Neill is toys, with one of their most prized possessions being their cubby-style shelf containing everything from jazz-playing and skateboarding California Raisins to Trolls, Grimace, Oscar the Grouch, and an array of animals—99 figures in total. The larger toys, such as Beanie Babies, have a designated overflow space.

They recalled their dad buying them their first ever Beanie Baby, named Stretch, at the flea market as a kid, as well as their grandmas, who had homes and baskets filled with toys growing up. The raisins, now sitting in their shelf, were a style that especially stood out to them from one grandma's collection, and after a long search, they finally found some for their own collection at Father & Son Vintage and Cheshire Cat Antique Gallery.

In addition to their shelf and basket filled with toys, O'Neill also has a window sill covered end-to-end in their rubber duck collection, with some of the colorful creatures coming from the vending machines at Boxcar Bar + Arcade and Tobacco Road Sports Cafe & Brewery.

O'Neill spoke more about their connection to local spaces when asked about their favorite day they could remember from their time spent in Raleigh.

"It was quite recent," said O'Neill, "Actually, on March 1, this year, I had the opportunity to do my first ever solo exhibition, which I did at the Portal, which is a venue/gallery space downtown."

"That was kind of like a full circle moment for me because it was like I was within the space I've lived or hung out in my whole life— like it was on Hillsborough street, I've been down this street a bunch of times—and then it was so many people, and a majority of them from the area, from so many different parts of my life coming together."



O'Neill said it was really special "being able to put all the cards on the table and show them pretty much all the work I have," even taking down "all the work I had hanging up in my apartment" to put on display.

"I think having the opportunity to do that within a space that I was very familiar with— like The Portal

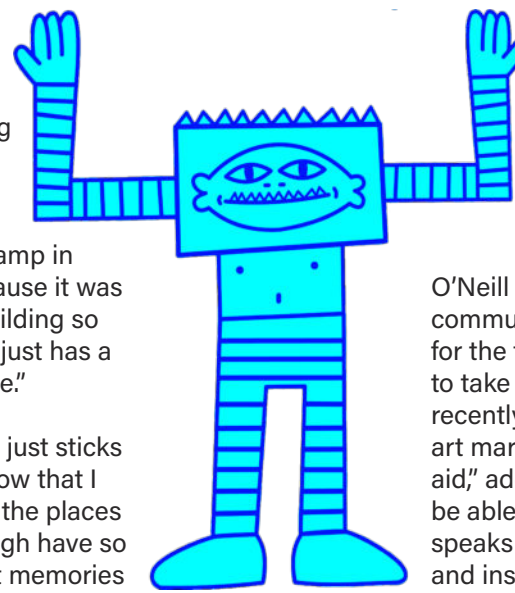
is in the same shopping center that the Ben & Jerry's used to be in [and] my little sister used to do an acting camp in there—it was cool because it was like I've been in this building so many times but now it just has a different meaning to me."

"That's something that just sticks out to me in general, now that I think about it, the places I go to in Raleigh have so many different memories and meanings attached to them. I might go to the art museum with my friend but it's like 'oh this is the same art museum I went to in like middle school or high school! I have these memories of different people in my life from different time periods of my life and they're all in the same places," said O'Neill.

That sort of reflection and observance likely lends itself to O'Neill's love of portraiture.

When speaking about the people they draw, they said, "I'll ask what their name is and write it under and sometimes people will give me fake names, and sometimes people will give me nicknames, and I don't know there's just something about being able to capture that space and everyone in it that is very appealing to me," they like the idea of having a space "frozen in time, in a way," and added "It's also how I met a lot of my friends."

Many of these friends are artists as well, O'Neill said, "I love meeting other artists at markets and stuff



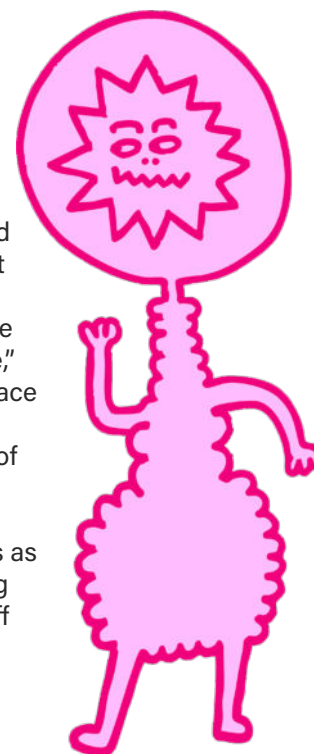
like that because one of my favorite things to do is buy art," as well as do art trades.

O'Neill also appreciates having a community of like-minded artists for the things they are able to take part in, saying, "I've recently been apart of a lot of art markets that are raising aid," adding, "It's amazing to be able to make work that speaks about those things and inspires, but another thing that's beautiful is just through the love of art in general you can raise money for something you care about."

O'Neill's parents instilled this care for others in them at a young age, "I've been around the united states a lot, my dad is a social activist and he would take us to a lot of retreats and stuff when we were younger where we would meet a lot of like-minded people."

"My dad is extremely anti-capitalist in a lot of ways," said O'Neill, and growing up their parents attended many protests and would sometimes "go to jail for civil disobedience." While they explained that it, "usually it wouldn't be for super long" they also added that they, "guess that informed some of my work just because it led me to being able to think about the different kinds of exploitation" and "made it easier for me to, early on, want to speak about these things or include them in my work."

While much of the artist's work is more fun, large, puzzle style



pieces, they also have much more personal work, such as some of their collage pieces.

"I'll draw a lot of creatures and monsters but I'll also do a lot of written word. I've created pieces in



the past before where it's just kind of like a huge collage of creatures and different mediums and then I would just write on it, and I would write kind of just like viciously

and fast—and I wouldn't be too concerned if people could read them—I was just letting out my emotions onto the page."

"I have this one piece that I started creating while I was in the mental hospital [and] you don't have a ton of access to materials there like you would on your own, but I would just take the paper I had and the markers they allowed us to use and I was creating this work" that they ended up finishing when they got out.

O'Neill explained that this piece, "tackled first and foremost mental health and OCD, and I kind of talked about my identity as a queer person and the cycle of abuse and capitalism, and just a lot of personal relationships, and that ended up being my favorite piece I ever made." They said this collage, "was kind of something that I felt like I didn't even have to be motivated to work on, because it was so easy to create it," explaining, "I wanted and needed to say those things and get them out," and adding "with a piece like that, I really want people to be able to look at it and read the parts that are available to read and hear part of my story and my perspective."

The inspiration behind O'Neill's work, much like their pieces themselves, are a collage of a great many things throughout their life, from childhood toys and travel, to local libraries, social justice, life experiences, and snapshots of strangers, reminding readers and viewers alike of the all-too-important art of noticing, caring, and creating.

OUTER BANKS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIERRA RITCHIE
LAYOUT DESIGN BY ELLIE BRUNO



My name is Sierra Ritchie, and I'm from the Outer Banks of North Carolina. People don't always think of where I'm from when they think of "the South," and that's why I believe it ties so beautifully into the tapestry of Southern culture. You'll still encounter the typical Southern stereotypes: hardworking and patriotic people, comfort food, and country music. However, within the OBX, you'll also find a community of surfers, fishermen, and your average joe with flip flop tanlines. I only hope I can do my home justice by highlighting the parts that might surprise people about the South.









REFRAME

Home is

an empty

dream.

A

spent hope.



Yet here, I am free.



Free to melt into the embrace



of who I used to be.

And all

the

love

that has

made

me.

And I wonder if those same old planted seeds, are still growing, reaching—



for a new meaning.



