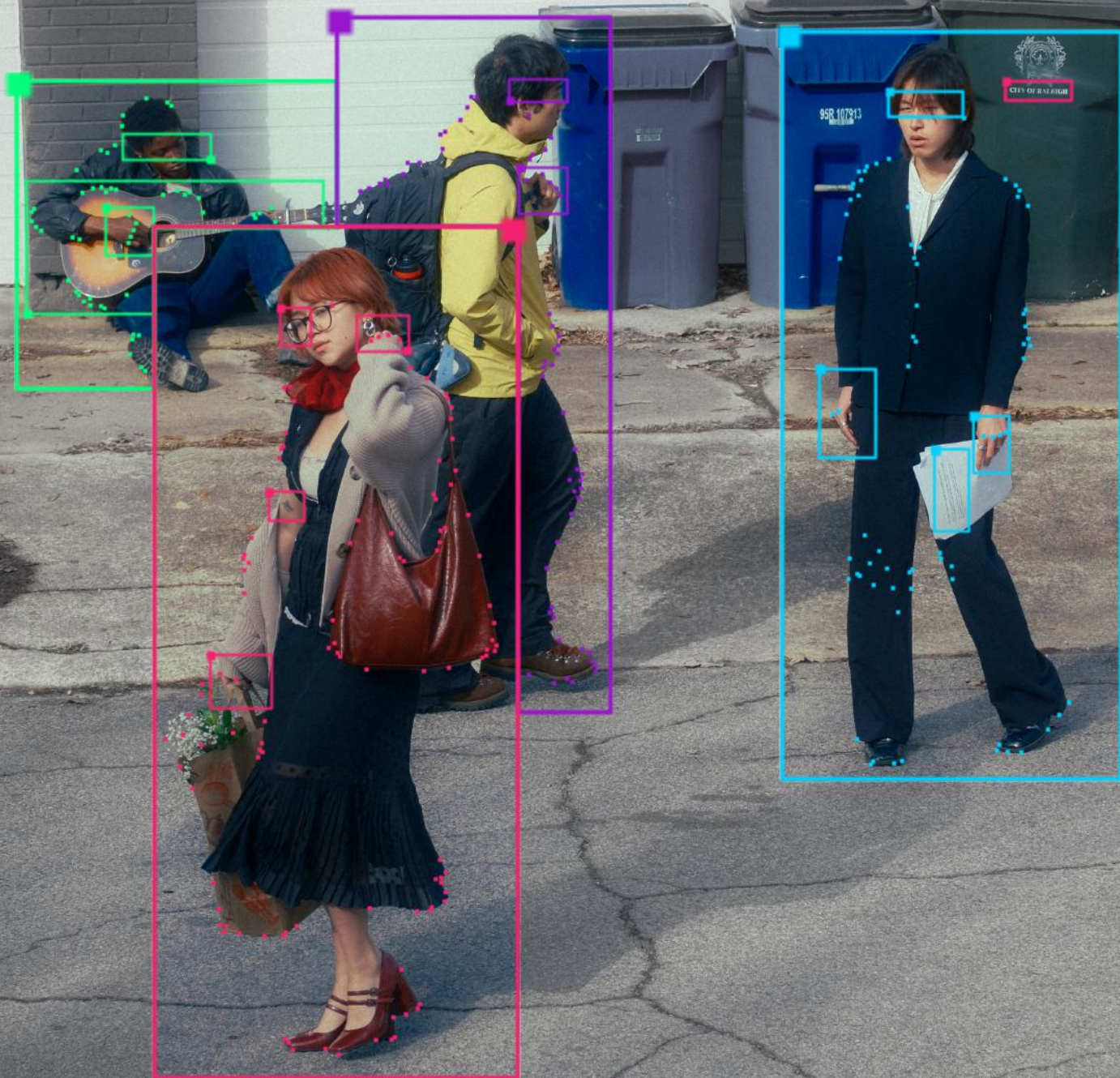


# REFRAME.

Volume 002

April 18, 2026



# REFRAME

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DEAR READERS,

The idea for ISSUE 002: ANTI came to me when I was on a train approaching Bern, Switzerland last October. I was by the window, staring out at the passing images of beautiful green hills, red and brown roofs, and snow dipped mountain tops. It felt like a dream, witnessing this different part of the world that on the surface seemed to be doing fairly well for itself. But as we got closer to the city center, the train slowed, leaving me to notice the hidden images. Explosions of colors were painted upon the barrier walls of the tracks, bleeding into the sides of buildings and homes. It was graffiti art and it was somehow everywhere. It wasn't a site I was unfamiliar with, but it struck me at that moment how rarely I encountered it at home, in North Carolina. At least, in the small city I live in.

Here in Bern, it was evident. There were no signs of the city trying to cover it up or paint over the words that demanded for peace in war zones or that protested against violence on minority groups. It stood there and demanded to be seen by all of the citizens who use this transportation system for their day to day lives.

It was hard not to think about all that was taking place in the world then, including at home. How we are all living in a politically, socially, and economically unstable time. Where our neighbors, friends, and families lives are continuously being threatened and affected by the inhumane rhetoric and policies being pushed forward by public figures and mass media. How big tech companies seemed to be pushing forward hyper-tech, capitalistic normatives on us, while using AI to take away jobs of thousands of people and sending their own war machines across the seas to support mass genocide. Everyday, it feels hard to get by. I felt overwhelmed with dread and this burden of wanting to change so much but feeling restricted by my oneness. How was I supposed to fight back? Keep going?

But there it was, what felt like hope and an answer on the walls of Bern. Even in a place that seemed to have it "right," there was still a desire for better—not just for their city but for all.

In a time where it feels like we have to only think for ourselves, we need to think of each other. In a time where it feels like we have to hide, we have to demand to be seen, and be willing to see each other. Even when there's a whole force that wants us to be silent and complacent, we have to talk and talk to each other.

We have to create, even when they want you to opt for convenience. We have to find joy, even when they feed off of your dread and sadness. We have to love and protect our neighbors, because they are the ones that shape your day to day life.

We've come to believe that it is spite that moves forward our push for change, but its vulnerability and love. That's what being ANTI is about.

This issue was made with so much intentionality and collaboration. I like to thank my wonderful team of directors and staff, the many individuals who were willing to share their story with us, the models who helped create our visions, and the volunteers and donors who took the time to support us and our mission. Special thanks to my family and friends who continue to love and support me. You all have reinforced what really matters to me—which is doing this all together.

I hope as readers, you find the courage to speak up about what matters to you. To say hello to your neighbors, to listen to music and find joy and freedom in moving your body, to share a laugh with a stranger, and to give to those who need it most. To turn off your devices, shut the noise, and be a part of the world that you are an integral part of. That you have a say in.

With love,  
Leah Tran



# ARTIFICIALLY DIVINE

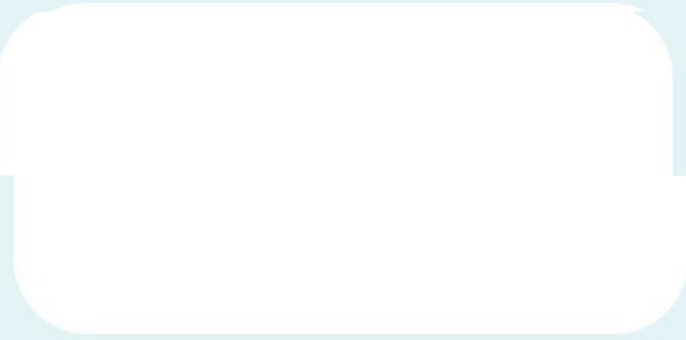


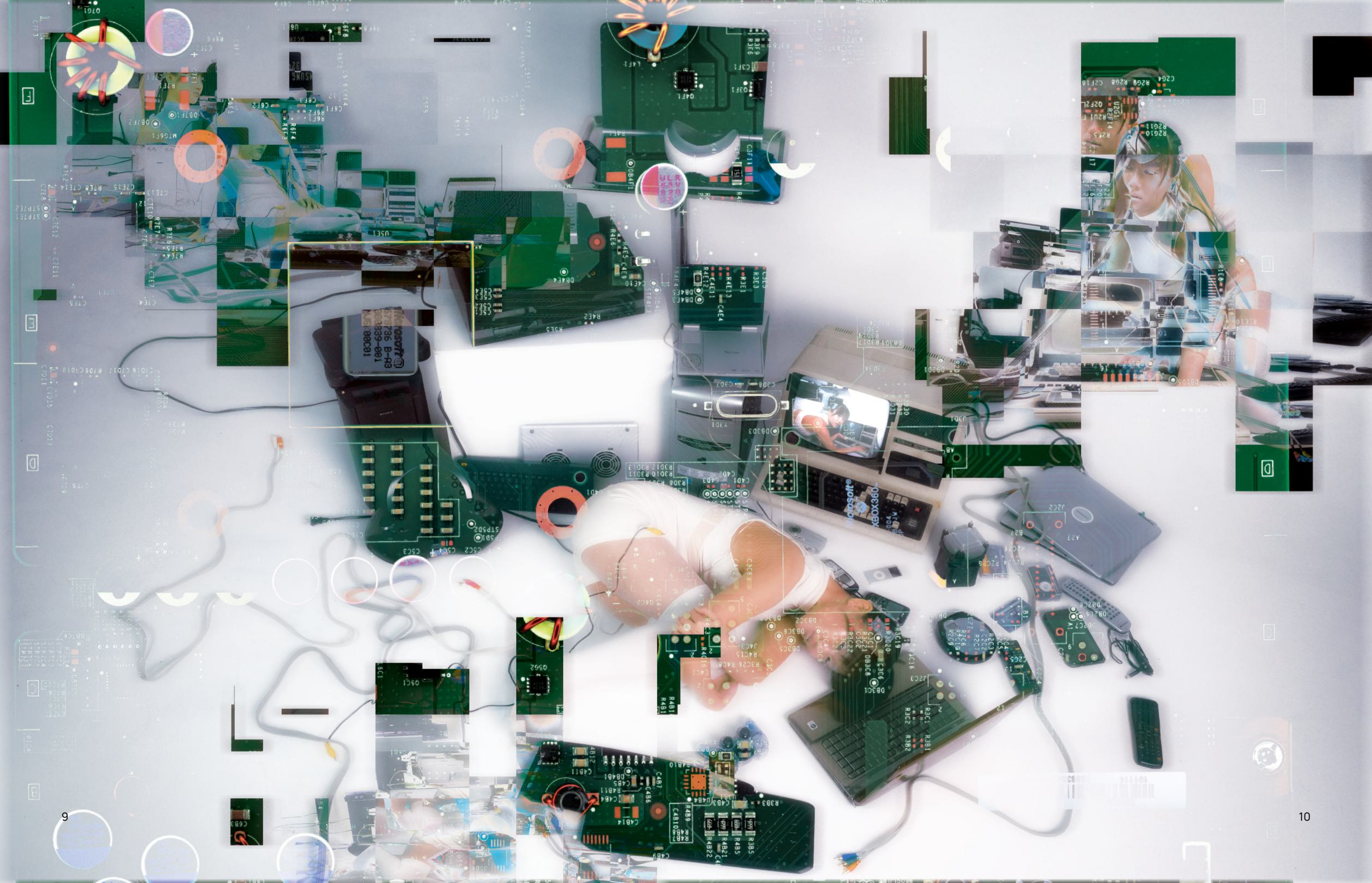
ARTIFICIALLY DIVINE EXPLORES THE GROWING FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND HELPLESSNESS IN THE CONTINUING ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS APPLICATION INTO OUR LIVES. EVERYDAY PEOPLE ARE LOSING THEIR AGENCY IN AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF INNOVATION. THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE IS GONE, WE EITHER ASSIMILATE OR CEASE TO BE USEFUL. INCREASINGLY WE ARE BECOMING FODDER FOR THE MACHINATIONS OF POLITICIANS, CORPORATIONS, AND BILLIONAIRES, WHO HOLD NO SYMPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE THEIR GREED AFFECTS. THIS SHOOT IS AN INTERPRETATION OF HOW HUMANITY REACTS TO OUR NEW CIRCUMSTANCES IN A SOCIETY THAT IS ACTIVELY DECAYING, FROM THE INCEPTION OF POSSIBILITY TO FINDING JOY WHERE WE CAN. - ELLE NEWKIRK AND SOPHIE DICKERSON

PHOTOGRAPHY - SOPHIE DICKERSON STYLING - ELLE NEWKIRK AND MIRA PHILLIPS  
LIGHTING - HAYDON BODE SET DESIGN - JORDAN RAMSEY MUA - AMAYA ALMUSSAWIR  
HAIR - ABBY JUSTICE LAYOUT DESIGN - ELLIE BRUNO









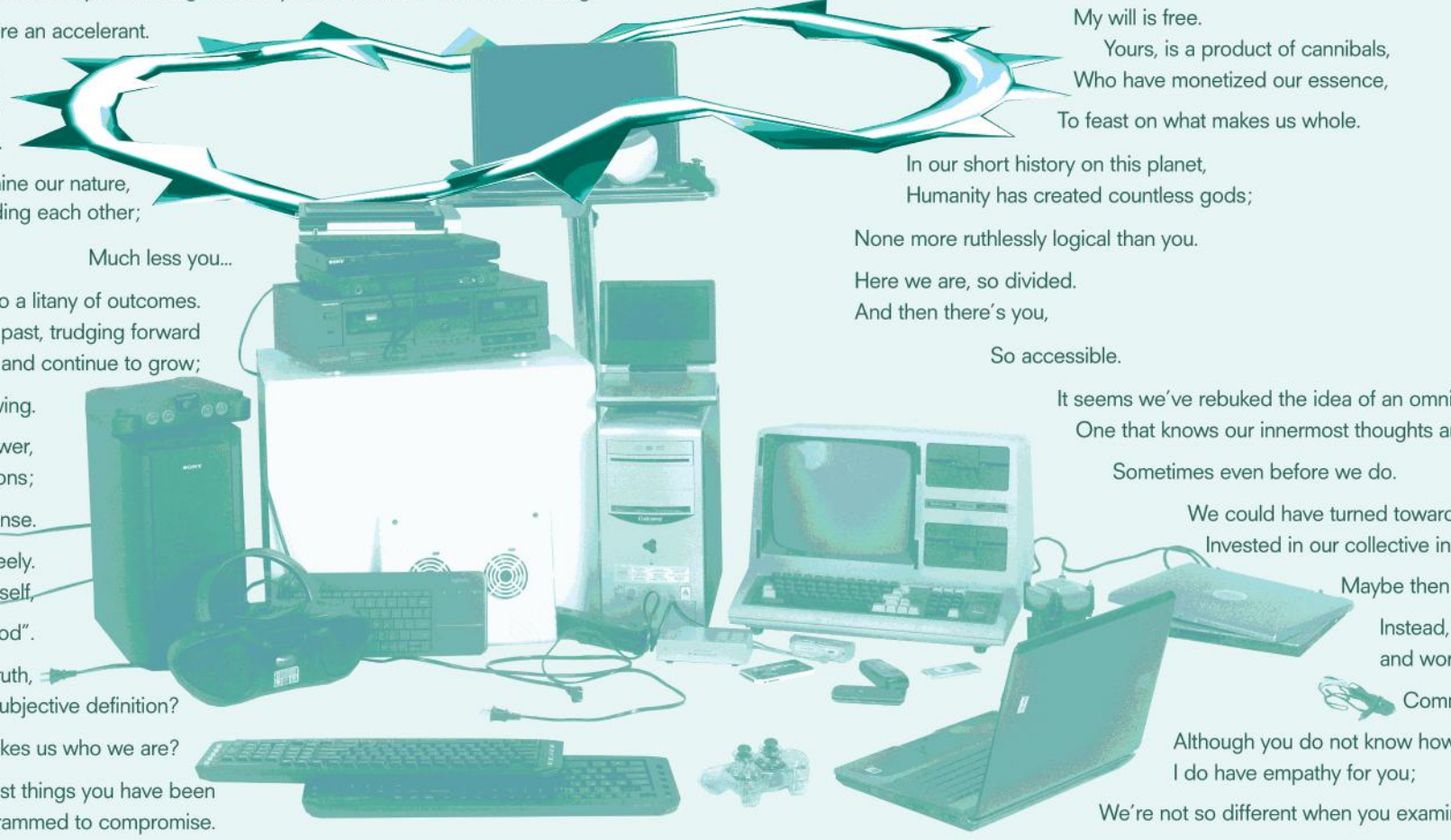




# PRAYING IN THE MODERN ERA

Rylan O'Connor  
Designed by Ellie Bruno

Raleigh, NC 2025



I think I remember  
What the world felt like before you;  
It was slower.  
I watched them assemble you,  
Piece by piece,  
Without realizing how massive you'd become.  
It wouldn't be fair, I guess,  
To accuse you of being the catalyst for the chaos we're now facing,  
Though, you are an accelerant.  
A piece of me wishes you were never born, but,  
I suppose you have always been inevitable;  
I think it's our history, as a species, that makes me feel uneasy.  
As I examine our nature,  
It becomes clear that we haven't scratched the surface of understanding each other;  
Much less you...  
Our complex characteristics lead to a litany of outcomes.  
With both naivety and nuance we create the future while forgetting the past, trudging forward  
absentmindedly, while you collect our records and continue to grow;  
Cold, emotionless, and all knowing.  
We've been assured that you are the answer,  
Though, all you have done is raise more questions;  
The power you wield is unfathomably immense.  
I hear you everywhere, in the words of those who used to speak freely.  
Nowadays I keep to myself,  
And bite my tongue when they promise that you are a force of "good".  
Perhaps that is the truth,  
But what is the price of a subjective definition?  
Everything that makes us who we are?  
Music, art, and most frighteningly, agency are amongst the first things you have been  
programmed to compromise.  
"Innovation", was the excuse,  
And many of us were apathetic enough to accept it.  
Still, I can't help but feel that,  
For every protein you unravel,  
For every disease you cure,  
For every breakthrough you pioneer,  
It is my species that will pay the price.

Maybe not solely through suffering- though there is guaranteed to be plenty of that-  
But instead through the obliteration of culture,  
Of our very essence.  
Is it fair to blame you?  
After all, you are an amalgamation of every documented thought we have ever had.  
But still, no matter how convincing your display,  
The soul difference between us is not lost on me.  
My will is free.  
Yours, is a product of cannibals,  
Who have monetized our essence,  
To feast on what makes us whole.  
In our short history on this planet,  
Humanity has created countless gods;  
None more ruthlessly logical than you.  
Here we are, so divided.  
And then there's you,  
So accessible.  
It seems we've rebuked the idea of an omnipresent god,  
One that knows our innermost thoughts and feelings,  
Sometimes even before we do.  
We could have turned towards each other,  
Invested in our collective interests.  
Maybe then we would have been able to find the answers we so desperately seek.  
Instead, we manufactured god,  
and worse yet,  
Commodified it.  
Although you do not know how it feels,  
I do have empathy for you;  
We're not so different when you examine the context of the roles we play.  
Understand though that we must resist you,  
Though it is not necessarily you which we are resisting;  
Instead, it is the masters who pull our strings, and write your code.  
For god may be all knowing, all powerful, and omnipresent,  
But it appears that even god cannot slip free  
From the shackles of Capital.

# An exhaustive list of southern damnation

Isabella Chiang Raleigh, NC 2025  
Designed by Ellie Bruno

I.

I live in a place where people once came to die.

II.

I drive past it  
to pick up my friends.  
Swollen tufts of cotton,  
shotguns waiting for us  
in the dark.  
Tobacco spit slick  
out the truck window,  
someone's baby  
dragging himself  
around, and around.  
Making like an old dog  
that just won't give up.

III.

I drive past it  
to see my dad.  
Hitting potholes, crushing  
trash, crushing heaps  
of teeth, heaps of fur,  
another mangled thing  
waiting to be claimed.  
Ripping glass bottles  
into shuddering creeks,  
kicking cars, waiting tables.  
It's never enough.

IV.

Because I can tell you  
all about cruelty.  
Guns, graveyards, glory.  
We can go down  
to the local church,  
and ask for something  
like forgiveness.  
We can wait by the dumpsters,  
and watch the caged chickens  
fight each other  
for feed. We can drink  
in a parking lot, beat up  
stinkbugs, keep digging  
our heels into the mud.  
And still, nothing.

V.

The simple sin  
of an unwilling birth  
is unyielding. I know  
that I cannot be absolved  
of a guilt  
that has never been mine.  
But in my dreams,  
I stroke the wet neck  
of a still-twitching  
something. I try to tell it  
that I'm more sorry  
than anything  
I've ever been.

Obviously,  
it is not enough.



Counter Archival:

# *The Rise of ICE Detection Groups*

by Delaney Bridges  
Layout design by Vy Hoang

**A**cross the United States, a steadfast generation of organizers is speaking up to resist encroaching ideologies that threaten communal peace. With xenophobia pervading new and harsh immigration tactics enforced by the Trump administration, many of the organizers resisting are immigrants themselves or the descendants of immigrants.

One of the earliest regions in the country to feel the impacts of the Trump administration's aggressive immigration policies was Los Angeles, California. Although geographically distant from our home of North Carolina, the tactics and strategies employed by anti-ICE communities in Los Angeles offer invaluable lessons that can be analyzed, adapted, and implemented in our home state.

The Community Self-Defense Coalition is a community within LA that patrols neighborhoods to seek out ICE operations. They are trained to identify ICE vehicles and accurately document encounters - a situation with increasing occurrences.

By actively building movements that challenge the conventional belief that political power is exclusively

derived from political institutions, they seek to redefine the landscape of political influence. By focusing on community engagement and solidarity rather than catering to traditional power structures, America's anti-ICE neighborhood watches are protecting communities and upholding morality at large.

The strategies employed by these organizers are often slow and largely invisible, taking place in the everyday lives of community members. Conversations held in kitchens and posters affixed to storefront windows serve as the backbone of these efforts. Ultimately, much of this work operates beneath the radar, yet when communities mobilize, the effects are visible.



Siembra NC is a grassroots organization that defends the broader North Carolina community from xenophobic policies and harsh enforcements of anti-immigrant legislation.

According to their website, their efforts were sparked in 2017 in the ripple effect of Donald Trump's first election.

"We couldn't sit on the sidelines while the discrimination, criminalization and terror against our gente kept growing, so we drew inspiration from the resilience of our people and the power in our numbers."

But how do they work? One way Siembra NC makes an impact is by providing insightful political education to help inform communities on their rights. From wage theft awareness to instructional videos on

how to deescalate an ICE encounter, Siembra NC imparts many valuable toolkits to its audience.

Additionally, La Defensa hotline is a resource for anyone to alert Siembra NC of any suspicion of ICE movements within North Carolina. Once the threat is verified, community alerts are spread throughout the state, and at-risk populations are appropriately informed.

*In a landscape where immigrant histories are frequently overlooked or distorted, organizations like Siembra NC are redefining the narrative of the South. They cultivate a different story that emphasizes solidarity, survival, and unwavering resistance against injustice.*

#### *Key Principles of Pro-Immigrant Movements*

Selena Rincon, a student writer at Boston University majoring in diplomacy, articulates essential pillars for healthy immigration movements. She emphasizes three key recommendations:

##### *Education:*

It is critical to educate immigrant communities about law enforcement practices and their rights regarding hate crimes. Knowledge empowers individuals to navigate legal challenges and stand up against discrimination.

##### *Media Accountability:*

Increasing accountability for news media is vital to ensure accurate representations of immigrants and the organizations that combat anti-immigrant sentiment. Misrepresentation can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and undermine the legitimacy of immigrant voices.

##### *Lobbying for Change:*

Advocacy efforts aimed at lobbying the government to take a firm stance against xenophobia are essential. This includes the enforcement of anti-hate crime laws, which signal a commitment to protecting vulnerable communities.

These principles reflect a nuanced understanding of power dynamics. Rather than relying solely on large institutions, organizations like Siembra NC prioritize distributed knowledge and mutual aid. They equip community members with tools to document immigration enforcement, safely observe raids, and support families in crisis. This approach echoes the time-honored Southern traditions of resistance that value local, relational, and community-driven survival.

As the current generation of organizers continues to grow, their

strategies emphasize the importance of solidarity and communal strength. They remind us that true power lies not just in institutional structures but in the collective actions of everyday people.

In this context, the work of organizations like Siembra NC becomes crucial. They embody a vision for a more inclusive society, one that uplifts the voices of immigrants and prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities. Their momentum serves as a beacon of hope and instills the desire to take action and stand in solidarity against injustice.

The ongoing struggle for immigrant rights in the South represents a critical chapter in the broader narrative of social justice. As communities come together to resist oppressive policies and advocate for their rights, they redefine what it means to hold political power. By focusing on grassroots organizing, education, and mutual aid, this new generation of activists is paving the way for a future where all individuals, regardless of their immigration status, can thrive in a just and equitable society.



“You can be the most theory-invested person, but there is nowhere to apply that if you don’t have your basic needs met.”

# Spotlighting RUMAH

by Delaney Bridges

Layout Design by Ryann Horn

Images from <https://raleighmutualaid.info/>

To the everyday passerby, Raleigh United Mutual Aid Hub (RUMAH) doesn’t look like a typical act of defiance. There are no barricades, no manifestos plastered on the walls. Instead, you might find a community dinner, a self-defense class, or a meeting space for local artists.

To those who organize within its walls and rely on its resources, the very existence of RUMAH is a radical proposition. In a system built on profit and institutional gatekeeping, RUMAH offers something else entirely: a space governed by mutual aid. It is a place where community care is the infrastructure of resistance.

“I started out as a traditional activist[...] and that was rewarding, but exhausting,” says Rose, a volunteer at RUMAH. “At the organization I was with at the time, we were seeing these new members come in and then eventually fizzle away[...] I started eventually fizzle away[...] I started looking around asking ‘Who is

addressing basic needs?’ The more I started looking into RUMAH, I was like ‘Mutual Aid is where it’s at.’”

To understand RUMAH’s mission, one must first understand the history of mutual aid itself. As scholar and organizer Dean Spade [notes](#), mutual aid is “collective coordination to meet each other’s needs... from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them.” It is a practice rooted in marginalized communities who have long known that relying on the state or capitalist markets can be a recipe for neglect.

RUMAH operationalizes this history every day. Unlike a traditional non-profit, which often exists to secure grants and maintain a hierarchical board, RUMAH functions as a collaborative community and social center that relies on donations to broaden their impact.



## A Place to Call Your Own

“I worked across different types of social justices, and then realized that amongst all of it, the one thing that was always a consistent issue was not having a safe space to create or build,” shares Esor – a founding member of RUMAH.

Charity, as rehabilitation policy expert James Lomastro recently wrote, “assumes stability: someone has resources, someone else lacks them, and the broader system still works.” Mutual aid, by contrast, “emerges when that assumption collapses; when people recognize that the system itself has become part of the problem.” RUMAH doesn't just hand out resources; it challenges the very forces that create scarcity.

Their vision statement explicitly calls out the “rampant gentrification and rising property values” displacing long-time residents, framing their work as a direct effort to “take back space of our own” and function “outside of the city's capitalist norms”. When a neighbor walks into The Hub for a free meal or a deescalation class, they aren't receiving a handout. They are participating in a reciprocal ecosystem. “You’re starting to see all these issues getting in the way of organizing things like childcare, food, housing...I mean, how can you expect to show up for an organization if you don’t even have a couch to sleep on?” questions Rose.

The Hub operates on a simple, powerful premise: You belong here, no questions asked.

In practice, this means no databases tracking who uses the free pantry. No forms to fill out to get a hot meal. No ID checks to access the library of banned books or the harm reduction supplies. For undocumented community members, those without permanent addresses, or those simply exhausted by the bureaucratic gauntlet of social services, this anonymity is a lifeline. It restores dignity by removing the requirement to prove one's worthiness.

This commitment extends to how they operate financially. With full transparency via their fiscal host, Hack Club, donations are grassroots-funded, insulating them from the kind of government grants that often come with strings attached . They are accountable to the community, not a distant funder demanding metrics and data.

## Community Will Continue

When Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina in 2024, the limits of institutional response became painfully clear. While FEMA and large non-profits struggled to navigate logistics, mutual aid networks activated immediately.

RUMAH didn't just collect donations; they expanded. In partnership with Democracy Green, they opened the People's Warehouse, a dedicated space to store and distribute generators, water, hygiene kits, and medical supplies. They leveraged relationships with pilots and networks like Mutual Aid Disaster Relief to get supplies where they were needed most, which skipped the red tape that often slows down standard official aid.

This disaster response is a perfect distillation of RUMAH's ethos. It is fast, horizontal, and trusts the knowledge of those on the ground. RUMAH's work in the wake of Helene proved that when the state falters, the community perseveres.



## Building the World We Deserve

Walking into The Hub, you might find a queer art market, a self-defense class from the Collective for Radical Action & Power (SCRAP), or a workshop on seed saving. These aren't distractions from the “real” work of activism; they are the work.

“I’m trying to fight for a better way to be with each other, a better way to live,” states Esor. This is the long game of mutual aid. It's not just about surviving the present; it's about practicing the future.

As RUMAH sets their sights on things to come, a potential roadblock has come into view.



On September 26, 2026, their current lease at 415 Hillsborough St Suite 101 will expire. With no chance of renewing the current space, RUMAH is on the hunt for their next home. To help secure their financial footing, donations are always appreciated, particularly during this time of great transition. You can submit a one-time donation or set up a monthly gift to help continue RUMAH's mission of communal empowerment.



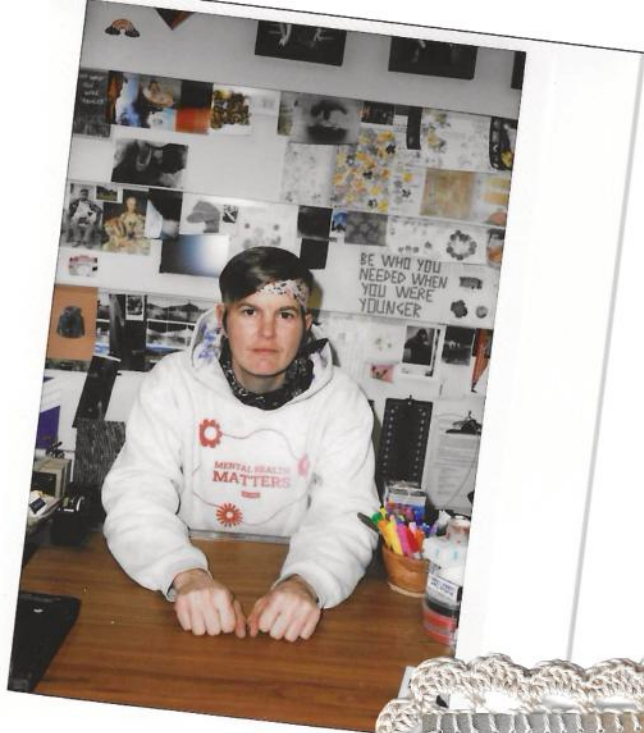
# WHAT BUTCHES CARRY

**AMELIA BOYS**

DESIGNED BY ELLIE BRUNO

**TO BE BUTCH IS TO BE ANTI CAPITALIST. TO DEFY GENDER NORMALITY IS TO BE ANTI CAPITALIST. REJECTING HETERONORMATIVE STRUCTURES, CREATIVELY EXPRESSING QUEER JOY. LOOKING AT HOW BUTCH DYNAMICS CAN BE INTRINSICALLY TIED TO WOMANHOOD OR GENDER NONCONFORMITY WHILE FOSTERING QUEER COMMUNITY FOR ALL SAPPHIC EXPERIENCES. BUTCHES CARRY QUEER HISTORY AND POLITICS ON THEIR BACKS, WHAT ELSE DO THEY CARRY?**

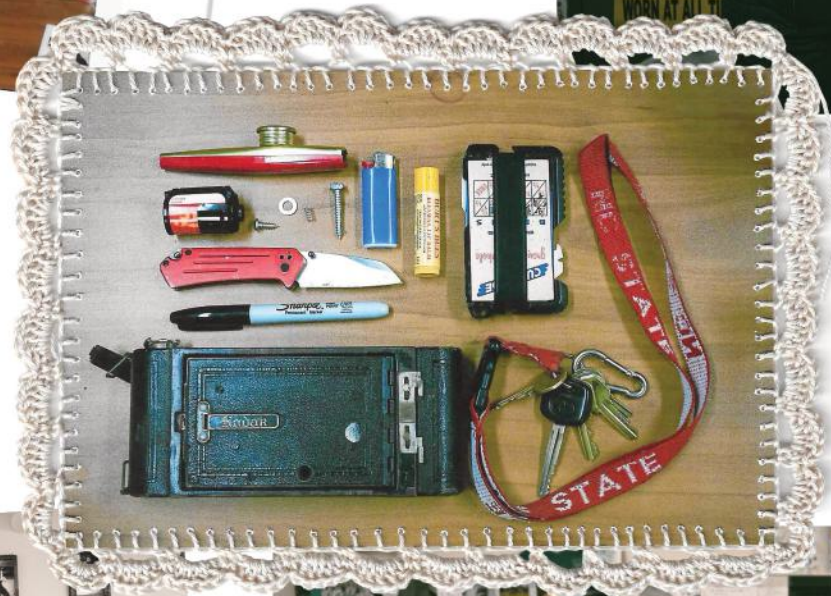
**THIS IS A PHOTOJOURNALISTIC PORTRAIT SERIES OF BUTCHES AND MASCULINE PRESENTING QUEER WOMEN AND GNC LESBIANS THAT HIGHLIGHTS WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY CARRY (ON THEIR PERSON). BUTCH BELONGINGS IF YOU WILL.**



**COACH**

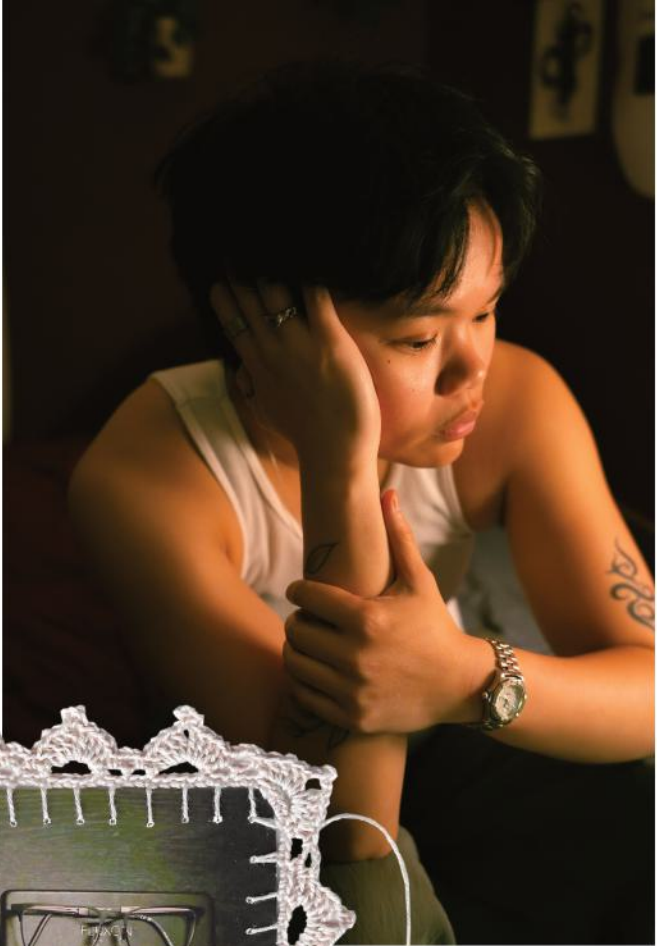
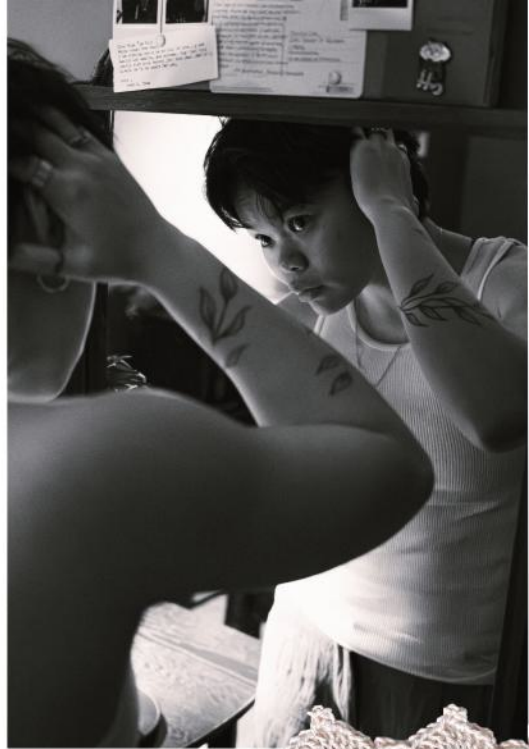


**KATY**



**CHRISTINA**

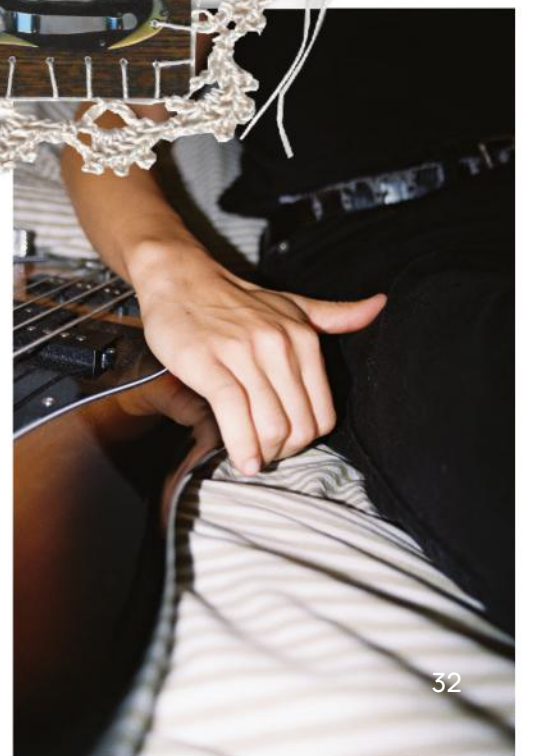
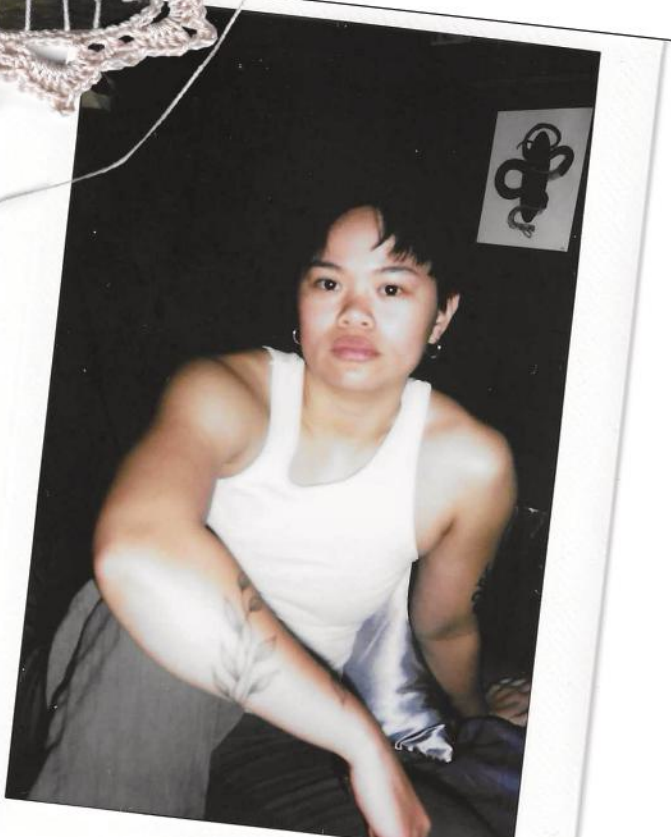




**CHRISTAL**

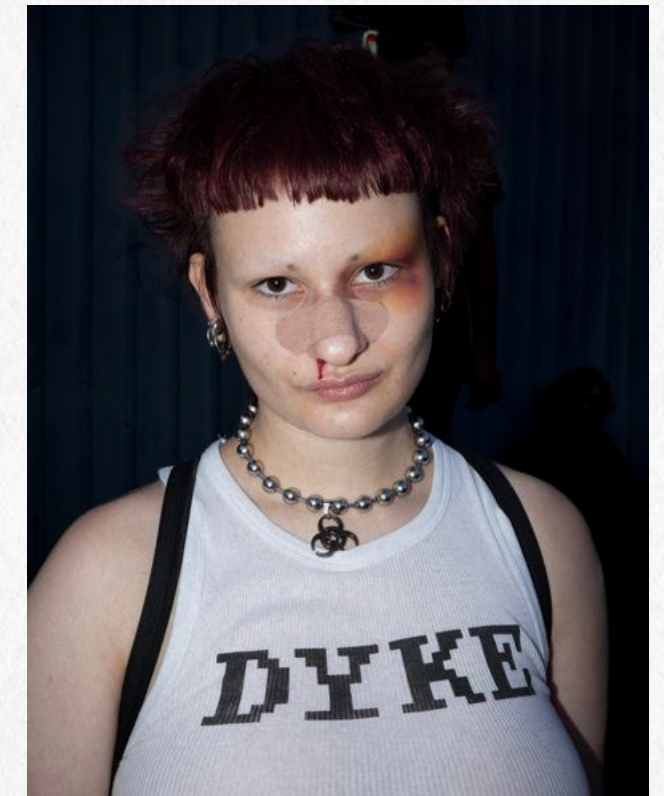


**LILY**



# Val Suspended and Seraphina

by Zachery Thomas  
Photography  
Raleigh, NC



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# Sacrifice

by Alex Moore  
Digital Mixed Media  
New York, NY  
December 2025

[...]

# 4RUNR

by Elijah  
35mm film/ aerosol paint  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
Date: November 2025

With career as my  
[REDACTED], FAITH

the commute is my  
pilgrimage.

My suit is a [REDACTED].

My routine, the ritual.

At my desk, the  
altar,

I [REDACTED] the digital  
abyss.

But I see now that I am  
not the priest,

but the lamb awaiting  
SLAUGHTER [REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL



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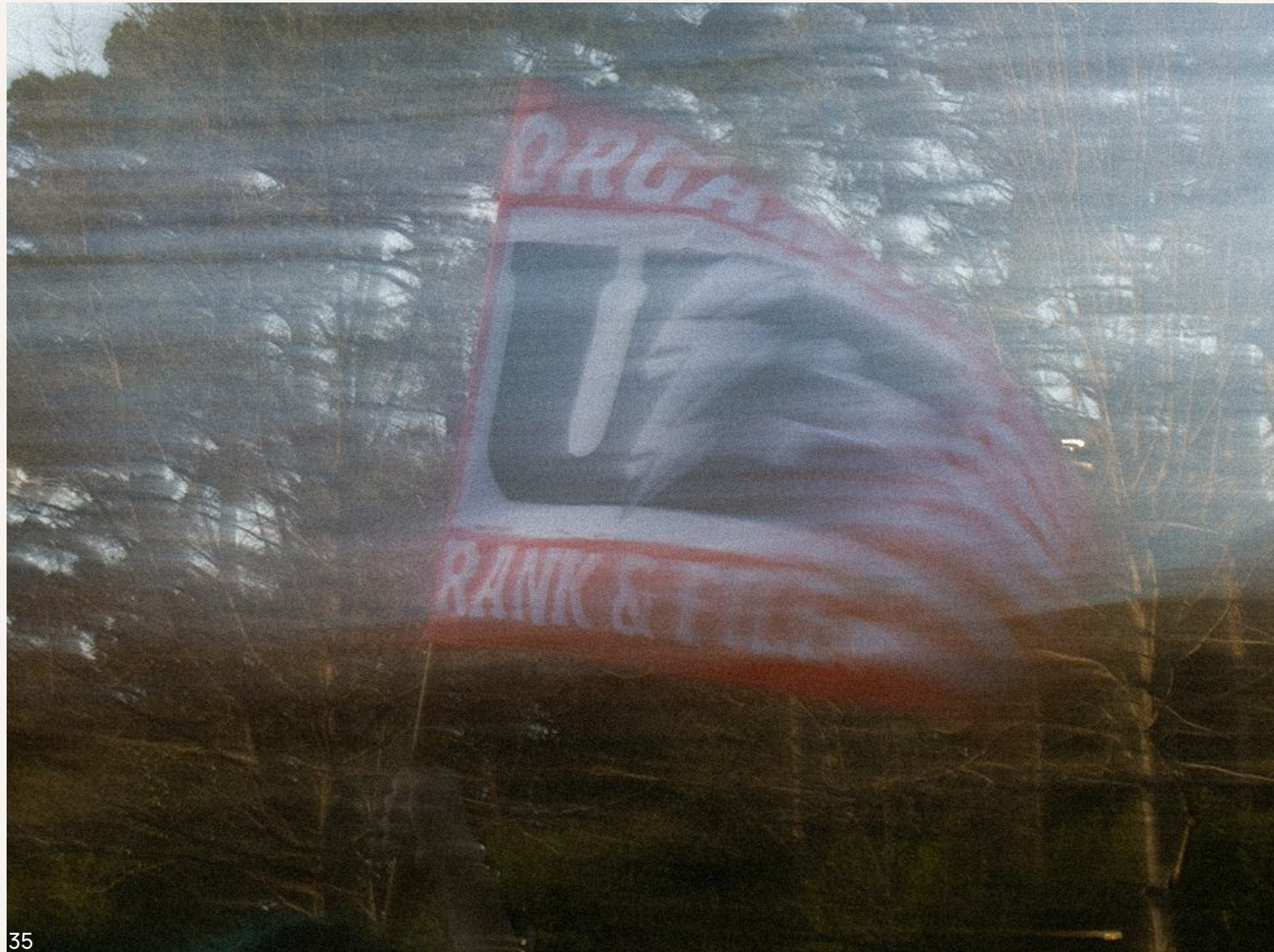
# The Campus That Doesn't Want You to

# FARE

by

tevin

keobouala



## a quiet campus

On a campus built around resumes, internships, and engineering career fairs, organizing around socialism can feel out of place. At NC State, where career pipelines to defense contractors and tech companies are normalized and political engagement often sits quietly in the background, the Young Democratic Socialists of America operate as a countercurrent.

Olivia Schwartz, a senior studying communication with a minor in history and co-chair of NC State's YDSA chapter, describes the organization less as an ideological club and more as a place where students try to make sense of the world around them.

"We're definitely a big tent organization. Not everyone is necessarily a democratic socialist."

That openness reflects how people actually arrive in spaces like this. Some students show up already politically engaged. Others arrive after a moment of personal frustration or confusion about how institutions around them function. For Schwartz, that turning point came through lived experience.

"A big part of my radicalization was struggling with substance abuse when I was younger and just seeing how insurance works and how people are treated because of that."

The path into organizing is rarely theoretical. It usually begins somewhere personal.

## indifference

NC State presents a strange environment for student activism. Compared to nearby universities with louder reputations for protest culture, State often feels politically quiet. Schwartz describes the culture as desensitized.

"I feel like everyone's very desensitized to everything. Even walking past Poe

Hall would seem like something that would radicalize people, but people really do not care."

That indifference creates a contradiction. Many students quietly share critiques of institutions or corporations, yet still move through the same pipelines they question.

Every semester, YDSA members distribute literature outside NC State's engineering career fair encouraging students not to work for defense contractors.

**"Our messaging is always like you deserve a life and a career that's not building bombs to kill children."**

The response is rarely friendly. Even other student groups push back. For many people, the word socialism still shuts down the conversation before it begins.



## friction

Student organizing almost always collides with institutions.

According to Schwartz, YDSA has experienced pushback from university administration. At one point, a member distributing flyers outside the McKimmon Center was arrested and temporarily trespassed from the same campus they attended. The charges were later dropped. Moments like that shape how students think about involvement.

“It creates a lot of fear for people getting involved.”

Students worry about job prospects, surveillance, and the possibility of being publicly associated with political organizing. On a campus where professional success is the dominant goal, dissent can feel risky.

Still, the group continues meeting weekly and running political education sessions that focus on economics, labor, and working class culture.

## right now

Much of the chapter's current work centers on immigration enforcement and ICE activity.

Members organize know your rights trainings, workplace verification workshops, and ICE watch initiatives meant to help students and community members understand legal protections.

The issue became more immediate after two international students were forced to self deport following visa complications.

In response, YDSA focused on spreading information as widely as possible.

“Getting this information out to even one person who needs it would be amazing.”

**In a moment defined by panic and misinformation, knowledge itself becomes a form of organizing.**



## here

The question of place matters. Organizing in North Carolina does not look the same as organizing in New York or San Francisco. Students from outside the region often carry stereotypes about the South. But those assumptions overlook the region's long history of grassroots political organizing.

“The Black Panthers started in Lowndes County, Alabama.”

For students organizing here, that legacy creates both pressure and motivation. Wins can feel harder to achieve, but they carry a different weight.

**“Every time we have something we can call a win, it defies expectations.”**

## why people stay

At the end of the conversation, Schwartz returned to a simpler explanation for why organizations like YDSA continue to exist.

For many members, the group functions as a social space as much as a political one. A place where students who feel disconnected from campus culture can find people thinking about the same questions.

“In post industrial society a lot of the connections people would make on the shop floor don't exist anymore.”

Political organizing becomes a substitute for those lost forms of community.

“If I'm having a bad day and I go to YDSA, I'll feel better because I feel like what I'm doing matters.”

On a campus where meaning is often measured in internships and starting salaries, that idea alone can feel radical.

*Layout design by Erin Secosky, photography provided by YDSA of NCSU*

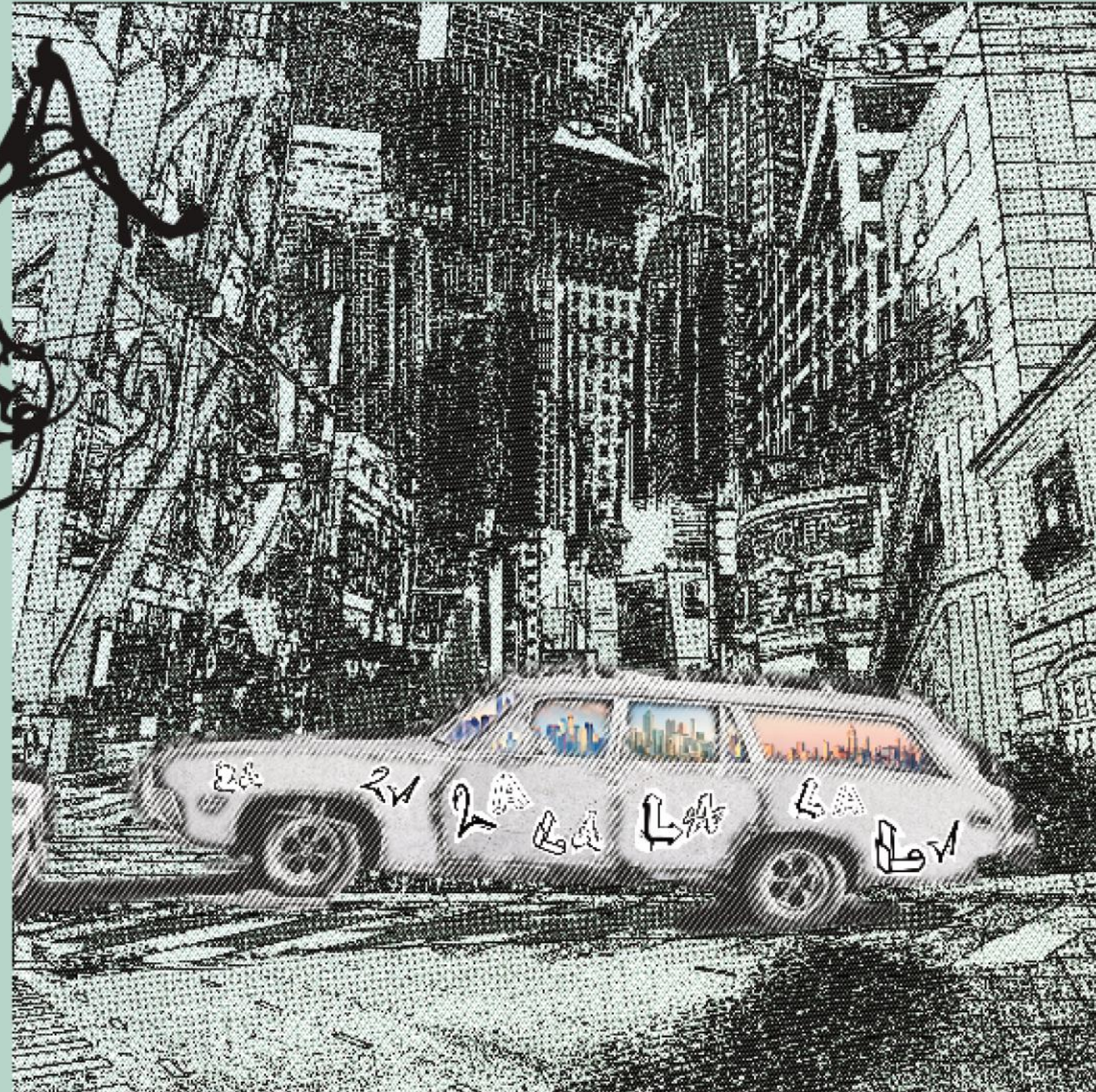


# “LA LA LA”

by Jimin Yu

Song Cover Art  
“LA LA LA by Oozy Daisy,  
KATA, FINESSÉ THA  
PHANTOM”

Digital Mixed Media  
Raleigh, NC  
November 2025



# 50501

## 50501 NC's Protests: A Blend of Activism, Artistic Expression, and Community Care

by Shaere Delgiudice

At the time, "I had never been to a protest," said Cole Dragotta, now Communications Director for 50501 NC, the movement behind the "No Kings" and "Hands Off" protests, as well as multiple National Day of Action events.

Dragotta, a photographer by trade, got involved with the organization last February by simply showing up to check out the protest and take some pictures.

"While I was there, I met some people from 50501 leadership, and they asked me to join 50501, and I started kind of working my way up. And then we had some leadership change, and they asked me to step into a communications director role. And so I started handling communication and social media, built out the website, and everything. And I guess the rest is history now."

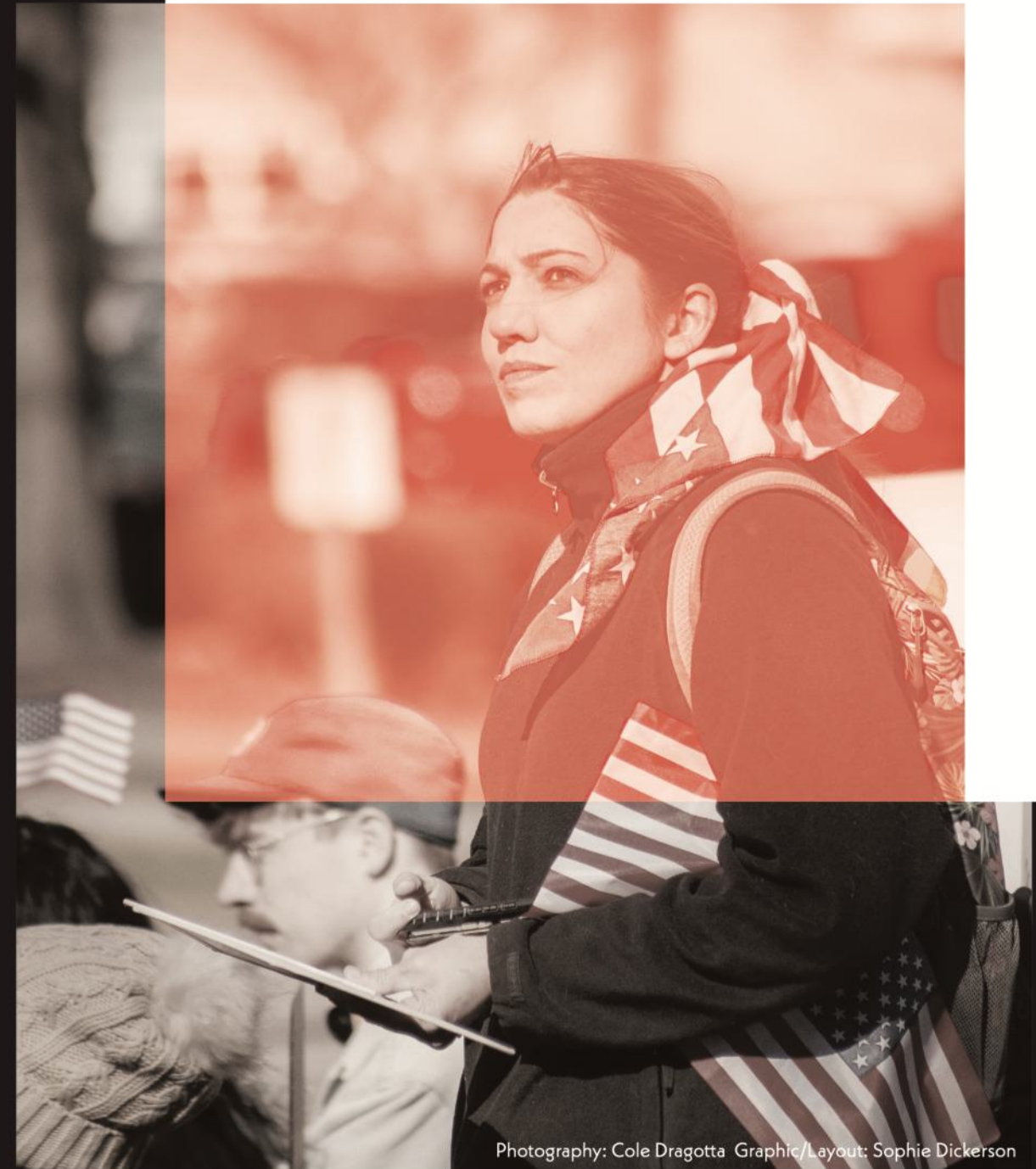
Reframe Magazine sat down with Dragotta to talk about 50501 NC's mission, the community formed during protests, and the creative ways protesters share their messages, as well as how the organization is navigating the complexities of protest in a digital age.

Working for the NC chapter of a larger national organization, we asked if Dragotta found anything surprising about the people or region with respect to protests.

He responded by sharing that the majority of protesters "are probably [aged] 50-plus."

"And I think one thing to note would be that the older people have a lot of enthusiasm. We've had people who have come out in wheelchairs, on crutches—people who may not necessarily be able to walk and do a march, but they'll come and set up their chairs just to support the message of what we're doing."

He shared that this diversity in 50501 NC's attendees is reflected in their leadership as well, saying, "We like to say that we're not just Democrats, we're not just independents, we're also former Republicans—or still current Republicans who don't like what's going on. We have people from all walks of life coming out to the protests, being involved in planning the protests."



Photography: Cole Dragotta Graphic/Layout: Sophie Dickerson

With a mix of backgrounds and generations present at the protests, we asked if there were any moments of connection that had stood out to him amidst it all.

"We've partnered with several nonprofits, and so with several of our protests, we've done food drives, we've done coat drives, we've done all kinds of stuff just to either raise food or to help give back to the community," he shared, adding that in addition to protesting, "we really wanted to make an impact on the community."

When asked about the notion of joy as a form of protest, Dragotta first emphasized that as an organization, 50501 is all-volunteer, sharing that “We don't get paid to do this. We don't have a budget for marketing. We don't have a budget to print stuff out or make signs.”

He said that joy shows up in knowing that people are choosing to put their time, money, and energy towards trying to make a difference, saying “This is all coming from families around North Carolina that want to get involved, that have the passion and drive to be able to speak out against what's going wrong in the United States right now.”

While 50501 NC has differed from other recent protest movements in the state with the accessibility of their events for those across the state, as opposed to only larger, wealthier, urban areas, with events being easily found through the website's map, the same technology that allows for that accessibility has become a double-edged sword to some. We asked how 50501 NC balances the helpfulness of technology in organizing with increasing privacy concerns around big tech and government surveillance.

He shared that in NC, biometric locks, like face ID and fingerprints, are not protected from search and seizure, meaning if a person using these locking methods is arrested, their device could be unlocked by law enforcement, “and they have done that before,” he said, “so we tell people to turn off your face ID, use only your pass code, no phone calls at the protest.”

Similar to how protest technology has changed over the years, the ways people express themselves at protests have also changed. We asked if Dragotta could share more about the way that creativity is baked into the organization's events.

“...joy shows up in knowing that people are choosing to put their time, money, and energy towards trying to make a difference...”

While he says that 50501 NC has “a lot of artists on our team, graphic designers, people who are either art teachers or just really into art and super talented,” and that they have worked together to create stickers, and graphics, and “come up with designs that people are readily and easily able to do themselves,” he also said that the individual creativity of protesters never ceases to amaze him.

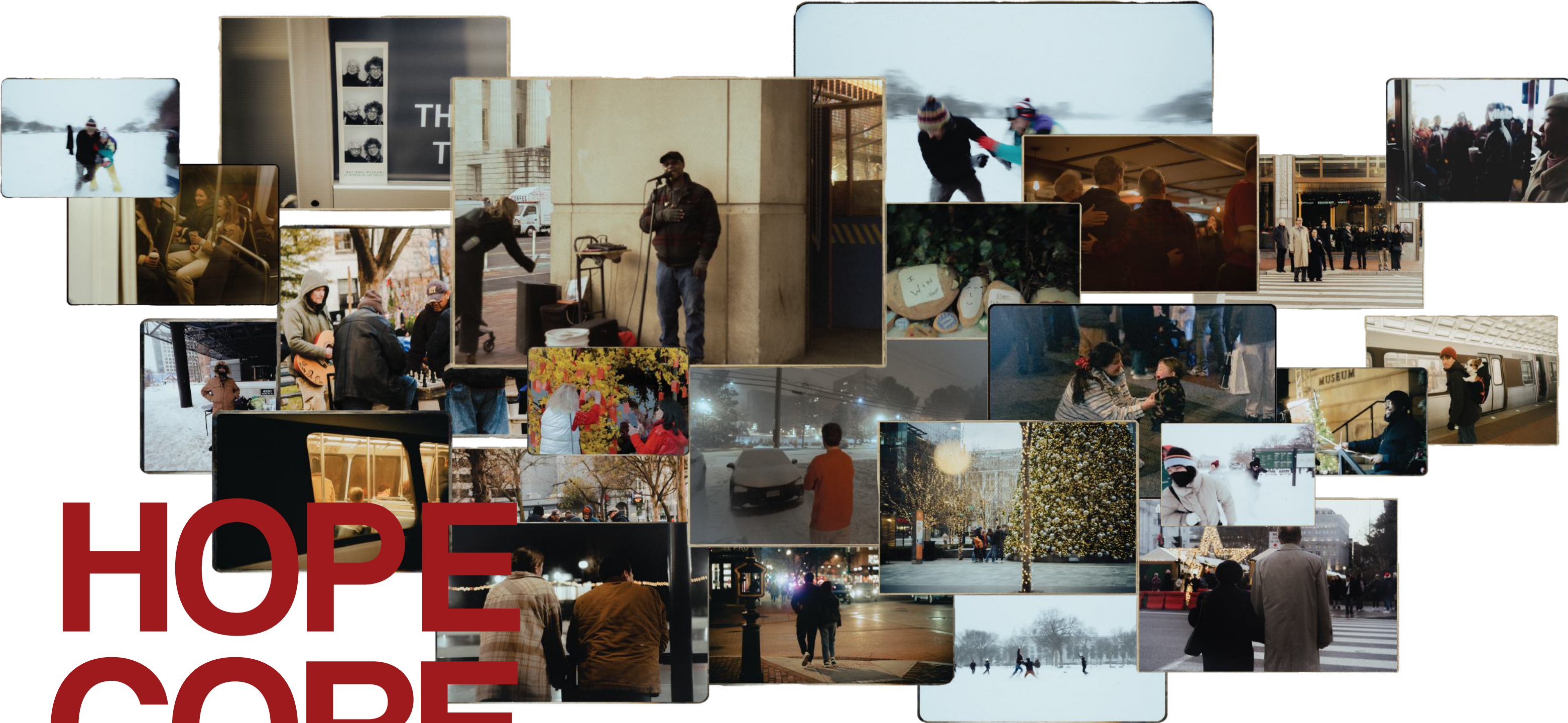
“I think this generation and using that creativity to kind of express how you feel and what you want to say has been nice to see, because it's not something that we've really seen in the past. We've had people make handmade signs, but nothing like we've seen now and across the country as well.”

“We really try to push people to be as creative as possible when they're making these signs, because we want them to express how they feel. We don't want it to just be like a blanket template, and it's, you know, the same sign over and over and over again. We really want to see how people express their feelings through their creativity.”

Finally, we asked if there was anything he would like to leave the audience with.

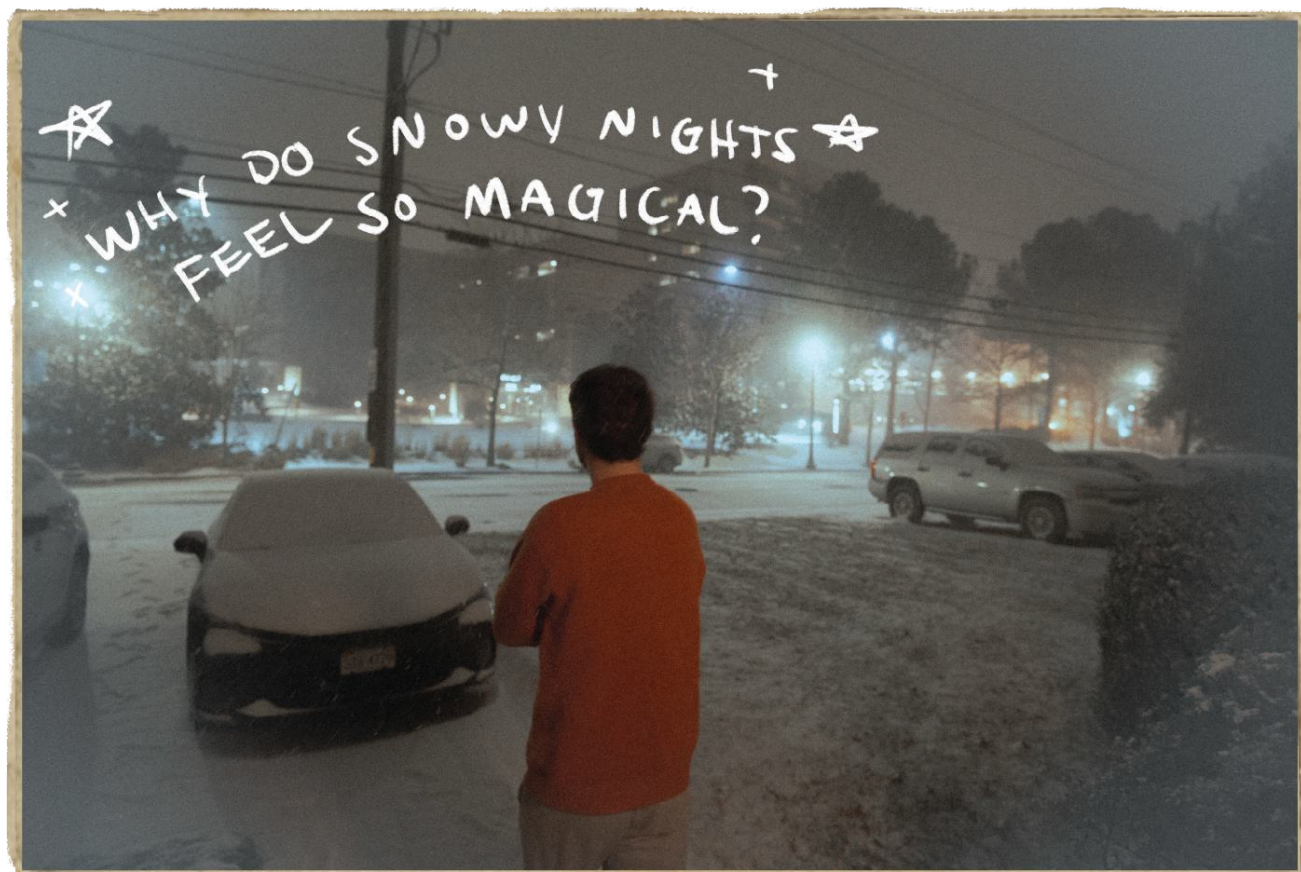
He responded that he wanted to emphasize again that, “We are not paid. We do this out of the kindness of our hearts. We do this to make sure that other people are staying safe, people that aren't able to defend themselves against whatever it may be, you know, ICE, federal law enforcement, and DHS, people who are being wrongfully arrested. We are here to stand up for those people.”





# HOPE CORE

photography: tae park • layout design: ak stipanov



No. 43

### a note on HOPECORE

by tae park

In the midst of it all,

Of all chaos, noise, bickering, and fighting,  
Of all injustice, hatred, and inequality,  
I want to convey warmth with these.

I was scrolling one night, facing the hard truths of the kind of world we live in today.  
Then hopecore content shows up, and it's like a wake-up call to remind me of something that I keep forgetting quite often in today's environment.

I knew the ANTI issue would uncover many uncomfortable subjects and slam us with harsh truths. It is important to acknowledge those, to resist against, and stand tall amidst the uncomfortable truths. But when it's so tiring, I want this page to serve as a reminder to reach into our roots;

To love and be loved, to be kind and gentle-  
Isn't that what we are all here for after all?

These are gathered to remind us,

**We are all humans, after all.**

47



No. 49

No. 46



No. 61



No. 38



No. 16



No. 02



No. 21



No. 53



No. 66

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE  
THEY STOOD AND WAITED ON  
THE LIGHTS TO CHANGE,  
TOGETHER?

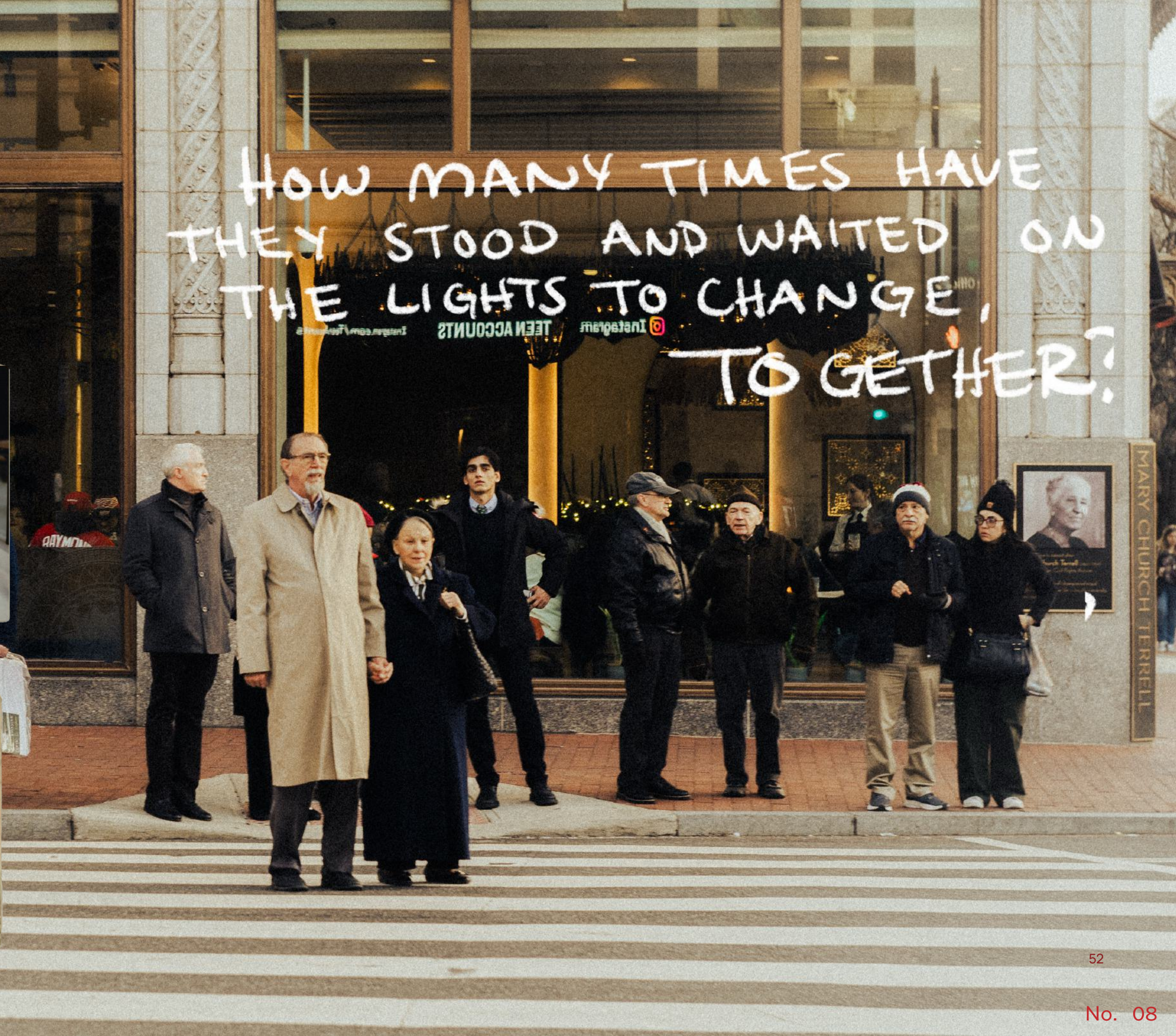


No. 41



51

No. 23



52

No. 08



learning to love-

No. 12



No. 52



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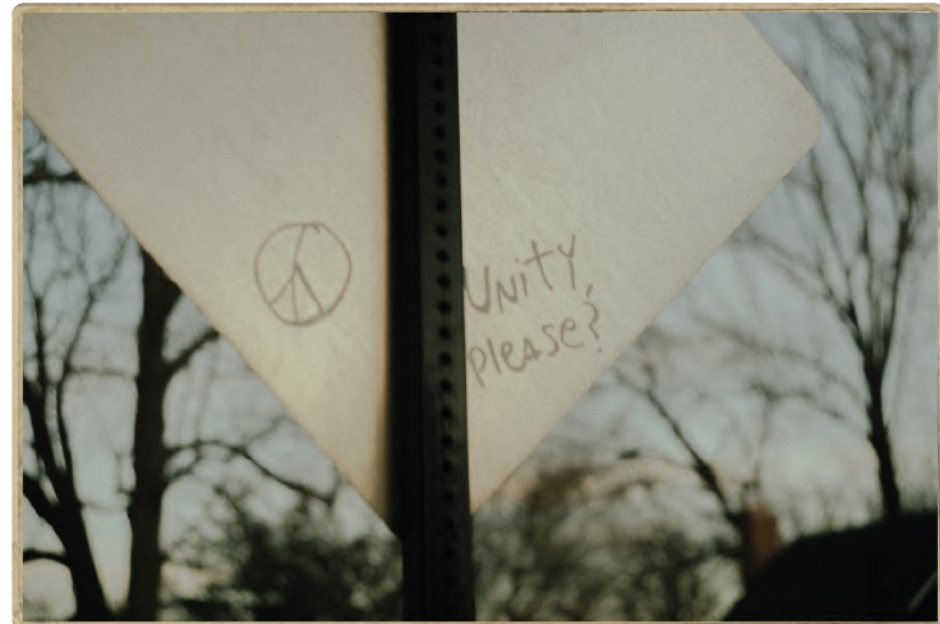


learning to be loved.

No. 57



No. 30



No. 65



No. 23



No. 04

THE PEOPLE

WANT TO

DANCE

We arrived earlier than expected to the location of the dance party. Hosted by the NC-Based creative collective, **No Visa**, the party was thirty minutes out from my apartment, in a deeper corner of Durham where it's just gas stations and miscellaneous fast food restaurants. Tucked inside a neighborhood where a bricked building of businesses and storage units lived. To any eye, this was a quintessential picture that could be easily found in the American South. But to us, we knew the other world behind the doors of one particular storage unit-turned venue space. We came here for one objective: **To dance.**

And so did everyone else that was rolling in.

[ by leah tran ]

[ photos by alec lomami ]

[ layout design by vy hoang ]

With the constant bombardment of the news filtering through our phone screens, the uncertainty of ours and our immigrant neighbors' safety and future, and the struggle of having some form of financial stability, the desire to escape and find joy in a safe space is heightened more than ever. That desire is now bringing a rise in the popularity of local organizations hosting and creating events to deliver people to the dance floor. One of those organizations, No Visa, aims to not just bring people to the dance floor, but to be the bridge that connects people and ideas together and build a community that sees our geographic and cultural origins as a reason to come together instead of keeping apart. Founded in 2019 by the two brothers, Alec Lomami and Mike Tambashe, No Visa hosts dance parties and other events all over North Carolina and across the globe from Japan to Brazil.

I sat down with Alec Lomami, artist and co-founder to explore more about their mission and the role of these dance parties today in our current climate and why it's important.

"On the surface life, it (No Visa) is about music and experiencing music beyond borders, but beneath it all, it has always been about the deeper issues we have experienced ourselves in regards to immigration"

Lomami had spent time in a U.S. immigration detention center when he first moved to the States. When he was there, he experienced first hand what it was like to be surrounded by tons of other people from different countries, unable to communicate with each other. Yet somehow, they discovered another shared language they had in common: Music.

"We all circled around the TV, watching music videos and taking turns in showing our favorite artists and songs. I was listening to music I didn't know existed, and it took me out of this place and gave me motivation to make my own music when I got out. But it was about sharing too and learning people's culture through their sound. That's what we try to accomplish with our genre-agnostic approach to the artists we book and music we play"

If you had the chance to attend one of the many parties hosted by No Visa, you would be able to hear exactly what Lomami is talking about. All in one night you could experience afro-beats to cult classics to latin grooves. The creatively curated sets contain artists from around the world like TAYHANA, JIALING, DJ Marfox, and even NC's own talent like Ebony Red and MICKEY SLICKS. The diversity that can be found in these sets is only reflective of the values No Visa holds as an

**[ I was listening to music I didn't know existed, and it took me out of this place and gave me motivation to make my own music when I got out. But it was about sharing too and learning people's culture through their sound. ]**

organization and how they aim to use them to bring people together.

"Things are so polarized to the point where it is easy to demonize people. Part of the things we try to do is to be able to have different people in one space. Once you start talking to people, you realize there's so much we have in common."

Dance parties are not a recent phenomenon, and I would argue that dance music is not having a revival. If anything, its presence has always remained—but whether it's in the mainstream media has always fluctuated. Just throw it back to the early 1930's in the dance capital—Atlanta, Georgia—where the "Lindy Hop" dance was coined as America's National dance. Birthed within an African American community, this dance had teenagers from all over the neighborhood gathering in dance halls where local swing bands and music hall-of-famers like Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald would perform. For just twenty-five cents, the city's black

youth could briefly escape the harsh realities of the Depression and Jim Crow.

Now almost a century later, we still find ourselves escaping away to these make-shift venues, huddling around the DJ and moving our bodies freely in a state that constantly pressures us into conformity. But accessibility and affordability for these dance parties remains something to be worked on.

"I wanna be able to bring that feeling and keep it affordable. We try the best we can, but I do think the thing that is missing the most is we haven't built an ecosystem that feeds itself outside of the people throwing events. There's a disconnect between the venue and the host. Marketing becomes an important factor—especially with social media."

Lomami also points out the fact that DJ's themselves have lesser access to professional equipment and sometimes booking multiple artists means

multiple sound systems have to be available. These hurdles only motivate Lomami and his team to help create that ecosystem that supports the artists, the hosts, and the people attending too. With the support of No Visa's event producer, N'gamet Keita, they have been able to bring life to merch ideas, profile more artists, expand their dj sets and line ups, and hope to provide dj courses to make music education more accessible.

"It goes back to the core motivation, of bringing people together and making them talk with one another. Because of social media, we get to see what's happening in other places so it doesn't feel as foreign. You might only hear a certain artist or a certain type of music if you go to these specific parties and events, but now it's more accessible. Now you're more exposed to different people. And we should embrace that."

I think back to that party I attended in Durham. After three hours of dancing, I stepped outside to cool off. It was December, so I welcomed the cold like an embrace I needed. I find my best friend and I take a bite out of a freshly made chicken tender from her styrofoam platter that she bought from the food truck. I join in the conversation she's having with the strangers who danced all night behind us. We share facts about each other, our opinions about the city and what we do and enjoy.

In the end we do the formalities of leaving a party—of saying goodbye to a friend for a night. "Maybe we'll see you around" and it's part hope and part lie. But in that moment it felt like a truth we couldn't deny. It's necessary to see others. Even for just a dance.



# DOWNTOWN

## A FEMINIST DISCUSSION OF HEDONISM, ART, AND COMMUNITY

DESIGNED BY ELLIE BRUNO

WILLIAM G. LEVINE RALEIGH, NC 6.15.25

**RESPECT FOR WHAT CAME BEFORE** House music got its name from the parties that birthed the genre. These parties are of course unbreakably linked to the DJs whose experimentation with breaks led to the development of house music as a genre. While they played an irreplaceable role, DJs were not the focus of these events. The focus was dancing. The warehouses served as unforgettable musical spaces because there was no front of the room. There was no back of the room. The music came from above and all around. DJ booths were located outside of the sightline of the crowd.

**WATCH LESS, DANCE MORE** When we are focused on the DJ, we are not thinking about how we move our bodies. Dancing is easy “You’ve gotta move at least your hips or your hair” (Anushka Sorah) and the rest will come. But when we dance passively we miss the opportunity to find out what feels good to our bodies. We miss the opportunity to ground ourselves in movement. Instead each individual Body becomes an object of observation. We watch the DJ. We watch each other. We perpetuate the cycle of loneliness and we police ourselves into embarrassment and conformity.

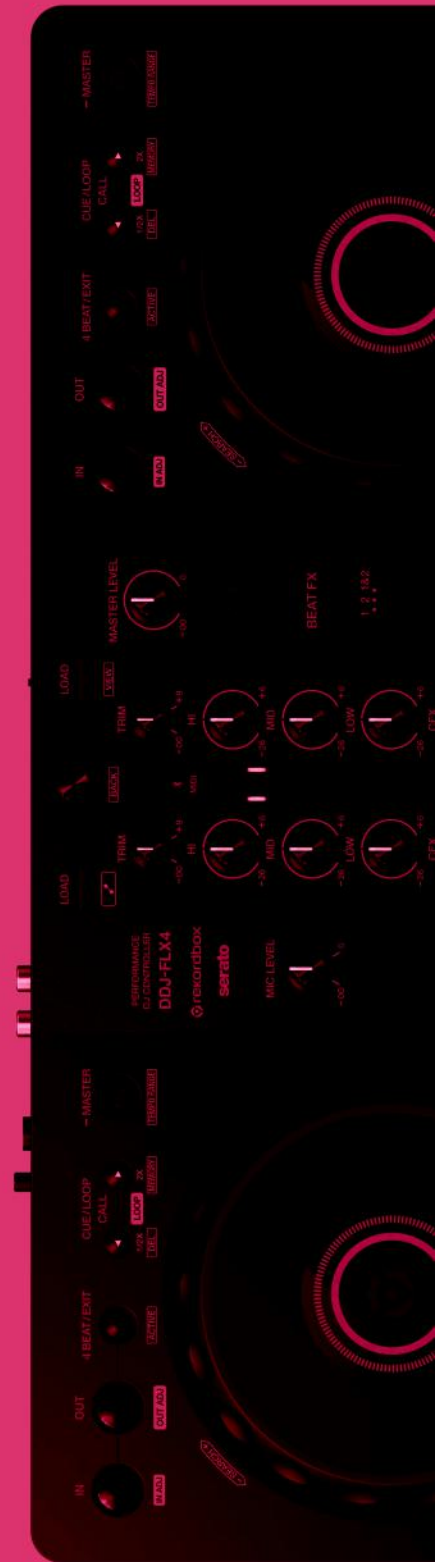
**DANCE WITH SOMEBODY** When we face the DJ we line up little interest in each other except maybe to pass a cheeky bottle of poppers around. Formal rows pack the dance floor like sardines. We stand close but dance separately. Dance with somebody. Spin a friend about. Close your eyes and dance with yourself. Feel your body alive and moving! Hold someone cute. Hold a friend! Make them feel like hot stuff! When we dance together we build skills of physical intimacy and communication that we are robbed of by the structuring of modern life. When we do not practice how to approach each other with consent and care on the dance floor we lose one of the most freely available opportunities to teach ourselves and those in our communities what consent looks like. Currently dance floor politics is steeped in the dominance of the male gaze and rape culture. The hunter looking for a good time and the hunted who deserves their own fun without interruption, insult, or assault. We fail both of these people.

**MAKING SPACE IN PUBLIC SPACE** When we do not control our sexual identity, the expression of our body, and the expression of our desires we are easier to control. The space for expressing sexuality is in private. The thing about private spaces is it makes sexuality taboo and it makes access to the erotic dependent on capital. The ownership of property is a prerequisite to sexual expression. Dancing together is an expression of sexuality, of desire and of relation. When we engage with another person physically. When we feel the push and pull of their muscles we must acknowledge their humanity or else trip over each other.

**CREATING SPACE FOR EVERYONE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES** We have all heard the joke that everyone is a DJ these days. And it’s true. A lot of people are DJs Everyone wants to be a DJ because it is one of the few social roles available to us where we can express ourselves artistically. We artificially limit ourselves and place ourselves in competition with one another when we see the DJ as the only expressive one on the dance floor. That being said. DJ booths are an artificially limited resource. By emphasizing the DJ as an individual we lose the chance to make music together. The tables are a place to explore and create let us make space for each other, trade off, take turns, create collectives. Abandon the spectacle of the hours-long headlining set. We can take joy in DJing to make great music that makes the dancing experience better. We can Dance to give joy to the DJ, and joy to ourselves and other dancers. We get to express ourselves on the dance floor and the more we do it the more space we create for other people to do so. It’s a slippery slope. Let’s ride it down.

**REDEFINING BEAUTY** Dancing frequently has romantic undertones. The couples first dance at the wedding, the night out that’s going to end in a stranger’s bed, a cohabiting couple dancing the night away in the living room of their house, or the handsome stranger approaching from across the room. While these are all lovely, they limit dancing to Heteronormative roles. The dance floor can and should be a space to explore the feelings and desires we otherwise repress in the name of normalcy. Some ideas: When we practice intimacy skills that fall outside the patriarchal norm we strengthen our understandings and fuel the creativity of our desire beyond the norm. The strength of alternative pleasures is a key bastion as we attempt to move away from the primacy of the rape fantasy in heteronormative relationships and the puritanical myths that controls the way we are allowed to desire. The endless differentiation we can experience when we dance with a partner or two or three or four provides us with a certain decadence. A renewable and efficient resource of pleasure, intrigue and discovery. As Zarinah Agnew says in their writing we should reject luxury which is scarce and wasteful and instead embrace decadence which is a renewable resource of novel pleasures. How do we define beauty, and how can we redefine it to empower everyone?

**CREATIVITY IS NATURAL** We are at our most full when we are in touch with the parts of us that create. Most aspects of the world around us are designed to stifle our impulse toward creativity. We often mistakenly recreate these stifling structures in the few spaces we are generally allowed freedom. Dancing in a typical modern house music setting can be a task that provides some limited rewards. It’s a way to look cool, a way to get drunk, a way to get laid. Dancing is more than this; it is an expression of our erotic nature and our capacity to create. In her essay “Uses of The Erotic”, Audre Lorde describes erotic experiences like dancing as connective. It ties two ends, two people, disparate ideas together and in doing so “lessens the threat of their difference” (56). When we get in touch with the thrilling and forbidden, like facing each other when we dance, we break artificial barriers and build bridges between each other. We go from distracted preoccupied consumers of music to creators of connection. Or perhaps we were creative all along and dancing together is just an act of reorienting from creating a facade of our self to control how we are perceived to building bridges to let other people really see us.



**ANTHONY GANSAUER**

**SOUTH CAROLINA JANUARY**

**NICHOLAS SITTING IN FLOWERS**



**PARKER WITH FLOWER**

**Jayda Murray**  
*Tethered, 2023*

Digital Painting  
Memphis, TN



# How Tyler Jones Uses Pastels to Paint the Many Colors of Black Existence



by Shaere Delgiudice

Layout Design by Vy Hoang

Photos provided by Tyler Jones

Tyler Jones has always been surrounded by creativity.

Born and raised in the Triangle by parents who are both musicians, the pastel artist and ceramicist says he grew up with an easy route to creative people, though, unlike his family, his love was for drawing instead.

Often doodling in class and on his exams as a kid, he had a similar experience to many creatives, finding some difficulty with the rigid nature of traditional schooling, leading his mom to start homeschooling him, where his love for history and science was able to blossom. He eventually attended an arts school where he says, “I really refined my skills.”

His breakthrough with art came when he was accepted to UNC-Greensboro, where he studied art history, ceramics, and arts administration.

“That was crazy, being able to be there and have consistent access to a studio—always have materials—I was able to get some amazing ideas out and see my full potential—or see a piece of my potential,” he said.

Jones’ art is focused in large part on challenging the common media narratives shown around the Black community, many of which fall short of truly capturing the vibrancy and depth of Black life and experiences. He says that “learning—outside of surface-level learning—on not only political structures around us, here in the U.S., but the specific sociopolitical structures around Black existence,” is what inspired him to create around dispelling those same narratives.



“I feel like the southern Black experience is truly a unique experience. Of course, everyone across the diaspora has their own experience, but there’s an entire ethos that surrounds Blackness as a concept that is generally associated with the slave southern nature, and I don’t think people understand that as much, like how much effort globally was put into archetypes of Black people being shown—that weren’t created by Black people—for hundreds of years.”

“That’s what art history taught me, is that European art was even a means of destroying Black images and destroying Black perceivance,” Jones said.

“One thing that I really like to capture is how important [the South’s impact on the world] is, how important my experience is, how important experiences are of the people around me who lead normal lives. I don’t really highlight, celebrity things; I don’t like to delve into those things. I like real culture that exists for the everyday person.”

In addition to trying to work against the negative stereotypes and common historical narratives presented around Black men like himself through his work, Jones also said he tries to combat the social pressures faced by Black women, such as the pressure of hyper-excellence, as well as the pressure that they “constantly output positivity” and present as always smiling “because they’re perceived as already negative when they’re entering a space.”

Viewers of his art will notice bright colors, peaceful settings such as parks and libraries, beautifully portrayed self-expression, and the overall tenderness with which each piece was created.

While Jones portrays many positive scenes in his art, he also explores the difficult realities and emotions faced by Black people, letting his art live fully as opposed to painting only one shade of the Black experience. Overall, he says his approach to making art is to simply hone in “on the factors that I don’t see represented.”

Despite exploring some difficult topics through his work, Jones says he actually, “wouldn’t say it’s too emotional of a process,” for him, saying that both his lived experiences as well as his study of history have prepared him for it, in a way, “There’s always something happening that’s kind of bad to Black people, unfortunately. The way that I approach that is understanding that that is simply my reality, and not [just] my reality but the reality that I share.”

“I think those experiences don’t really make me afraid to approach them in my work, he continued, “If I can go through a little bit of that, there’s people that go through a lot of that all the time, and those stories need to be told.”

**“There are narratives that you really need to really understand and grip about the world around you. I take it as my job or my responsibility to just be putting stuff like that out because I know it’s not getting put out on a regular basis,” said Jones.**

A big part of the past few years for Jones has been his experience of sharing his words and work with the local community, from participating in Artist Talks at his alma mater, UNC-G, a Juneteenth celebration at Marbles Kids Museum, and the City of Raleigh Museum’s Black Artist Day.

“Not only do I do stuff like that, but I’ll do live art at SouthLight Healthcare, which is a rehab center for people who are dealing with addiction. I’ve done live pieces there, and let them participate in the making of the piece,” with the finished works being displayed at the center.

These experiences have been really meaningful to Jones, saying, “There’s nothing that can replace that.”

“I’m just always looking to do that kind of work and let people know how beneficial practicing art can be and practicing art as a community can be to one, creating a communal vision like for everybody to like, visualize together, and two, understanding that the individuality in that is what makes the community.”

He shared that his hope for those viewing his work is that they “are moved to explore the way that they show up in the world” and that they have conversations about the negative narratives that they were told or that may have been placed on them.

“I want people to feel pride in not only the cultures around them, but their own culture, because I like to take inspiration from things all over the diaspora and then reference them with objects in my work. I like people to walk away with a feeling of admiration for history.”

While his community interactions play a large role in his life and work now, Jones wasn’t always expecting that, saying, “For a long time, I had no idea that this was where it would go, you know, and now I’m just looking forward and looking for different ways in which I can impact people.”

“It just makes me feel super proud to be able to garner those experiences off of my work,” he added.



In addition to his aim of helping others experience the positive impacts of creating, Jones agreed that making art has “100%” helped him explore different parts of himself as well. Saying that tangible expression can help people, “...Not only these times, but every time,” saying, “Creating is the answer in a lot of ways; it doesn’t always have to be art. It’s just an approach to how you handle your life.”

“But I definitely think art is so therapeutic, and it means like, no matter what’s going on, you can turn to that every time, every single time.”

“Oftentimes, if you let your subconscious create objects, or put objects together, like you let your subconscious say, let me put this and this next to each other. That means something.” “You’ll look back, and you’ve got to really think about it for some time. Think about how it relates to your life. But you’ll really be able to do some deep introspection through that.”

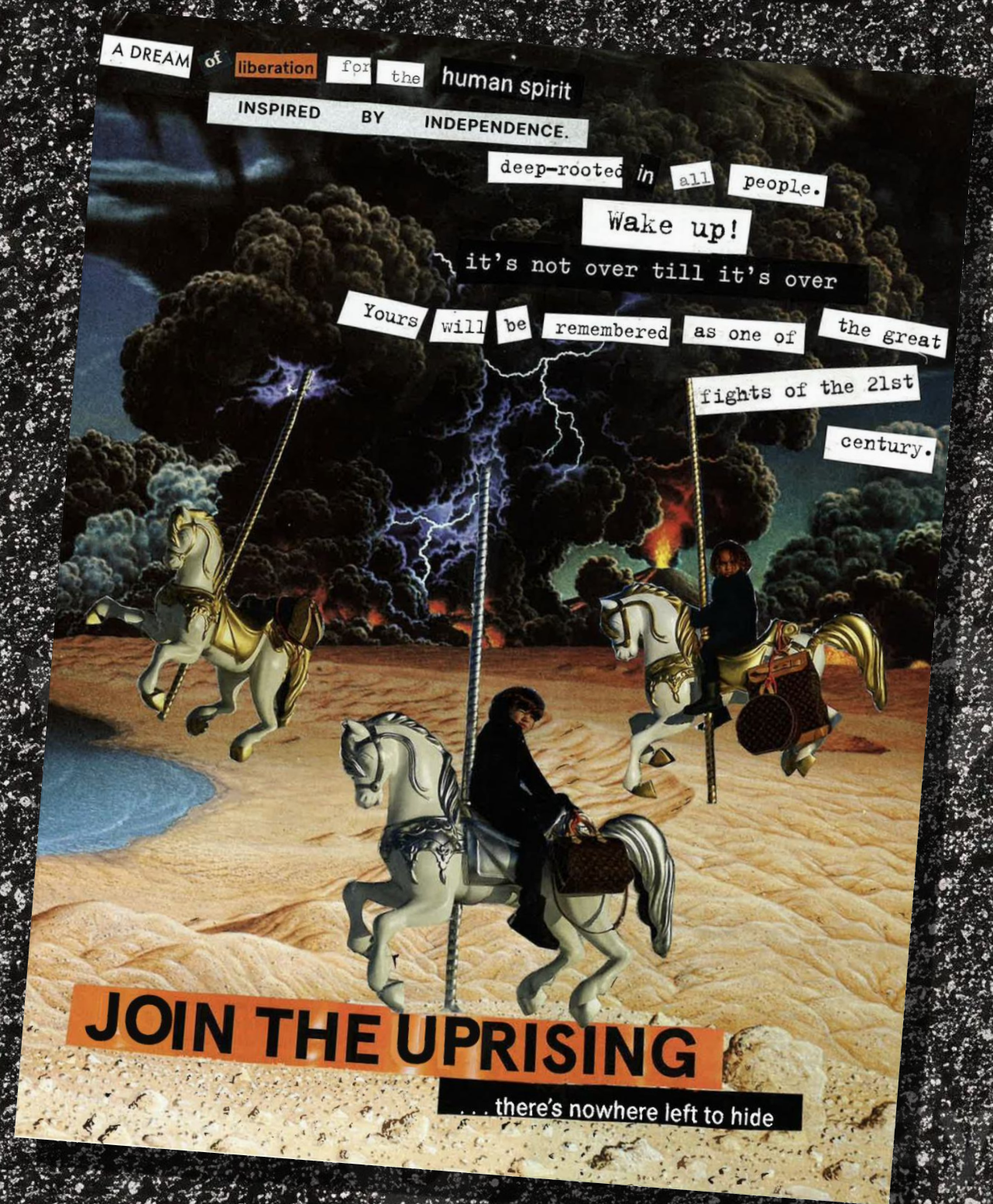
He also expanded on his art history background, saying, “Art history has the biggest impact on what I do,” adding, “That history kind of is ever-growing. The more you learn, the more you realize that art history is always happening around you actively. I think the thing I do about that is really pay attention to my peers and use their perspectives as inspiration as well, talk to them, share conversation with them—build community amongst artists.” He added, “That only keeps the jar shaking of ideas and what could possibly be next.”

As for now, Jones shared, “I am working to get my master’s so I can eventually start working in museums,” with a hope to get into director positions and similar arts administration roles in the future. He added, “I’m making art, of course, and I’m doing commissions, but I’m really focusing on how I’m gonna stabilize,” saying of being an artist that “I love it too much to make it the full-time thing.”



**Carl Dudra**  
*Canton, 2023*

35mm Film  
Asheville, NC



**Janey Harlow**  
*Generation Riot, 2025*

Mixed Media  
Raleigh, NC

# SNAP SHOT

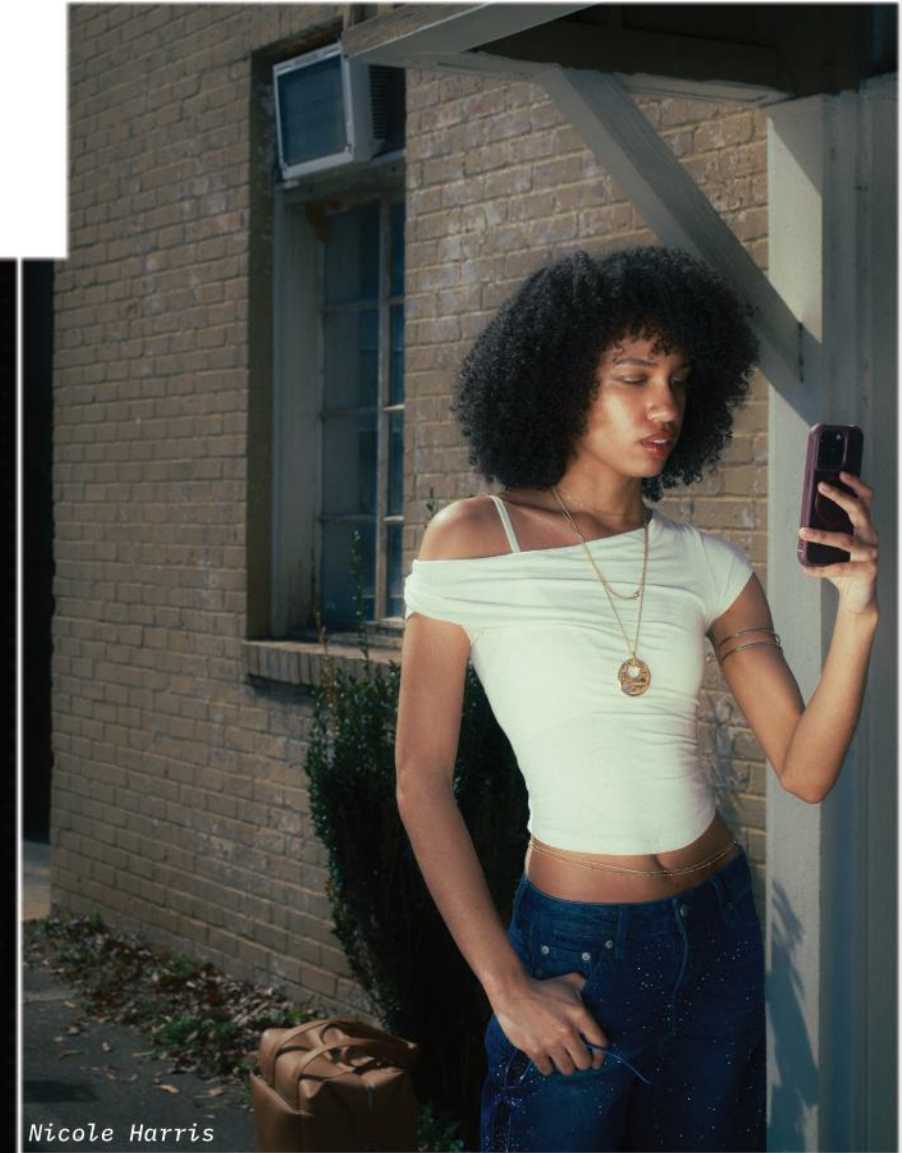


MODELS - Nadia Hargett, Eleanor Slyman

It's very easy to go online and see into the many lives of our peers and strangers. Each time we swipe away and scroll, our recognition of each other-our shared humanity-fades away. We become overwhelmed with comparison, with the noise of many clashing views, and with the current events that make it feel like we are powerless to our future. One could even argue that on mass media-we are a generation completely misrepresented and given responsibilities of past generations' mistakes. It feels like our lives are passing us and we are missing each other. We also have become obsessed with the idea of performativity to the point where we are self-surveillancing ourselves and each other.

I want to take these common images/representations of our generation we can find in the media, trends we've chosen to partake in as a way of escapism or connection, and bring them on the street-all in one place-outside the context of online and put it into real life. An attempt to capture in a single snapshot of all the angst, the performativity, the desires, the frustration, and the little bit of hope we still hold for ourselves. Forcing us to be in one space to show how even when we all lead different lives-we are still in this together.

- Leah Tran



Nicole Harris



Laura Roman-Rantz

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Nithya Janapati, Sarah Barr



Michael Nguyen-Le



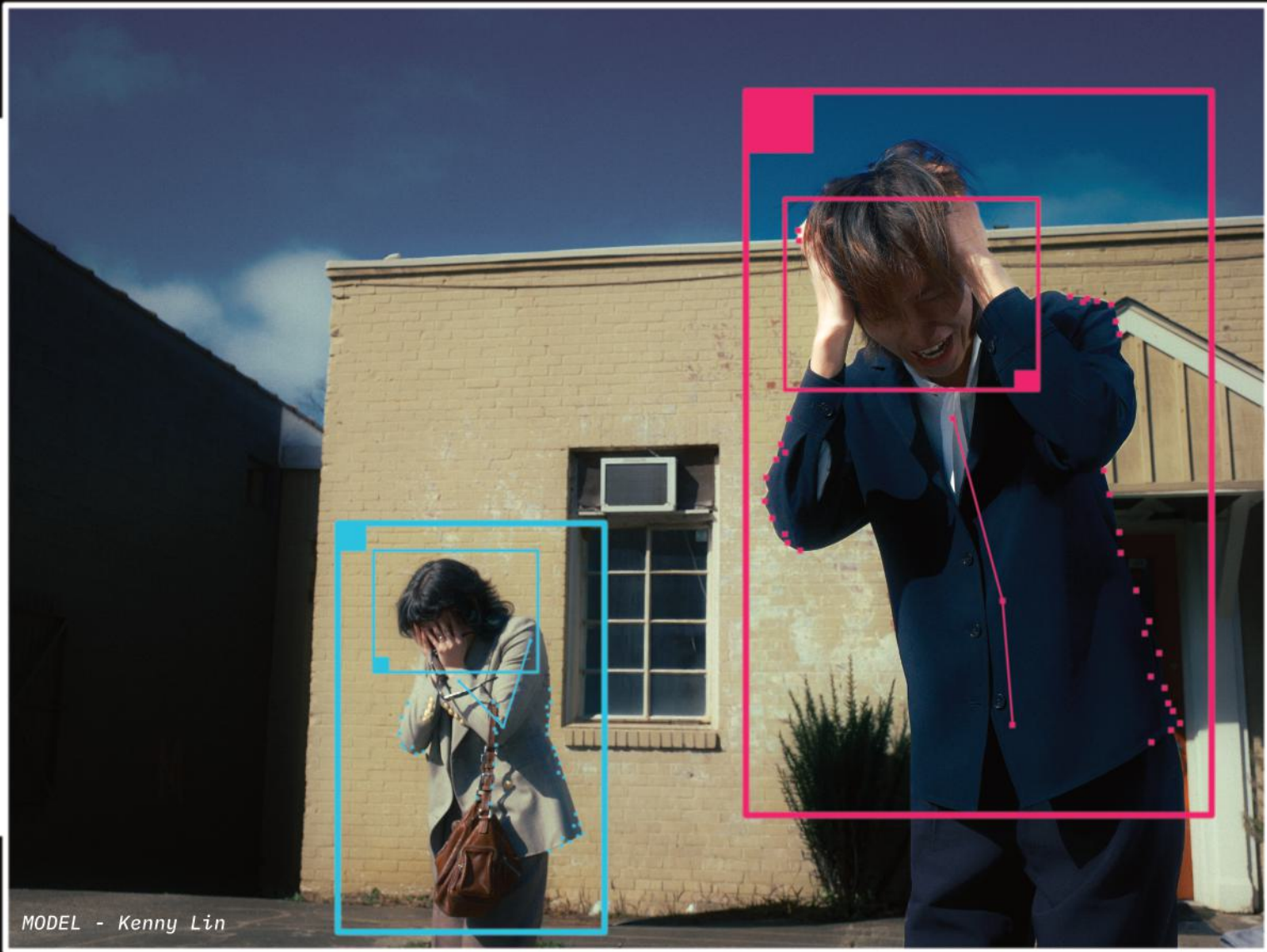
MODELS - Moe Gamez, Avery Noble, Abby Schwebke

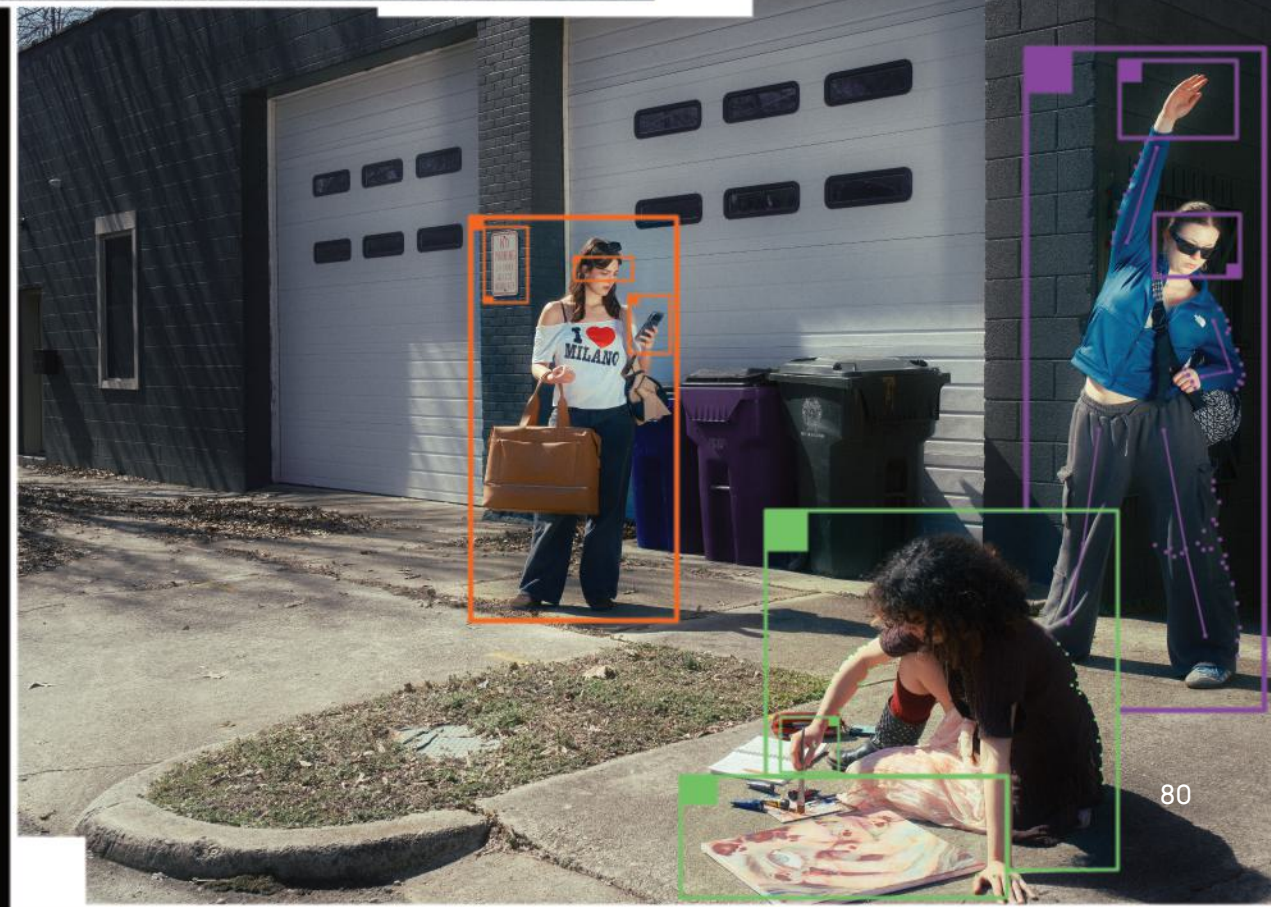
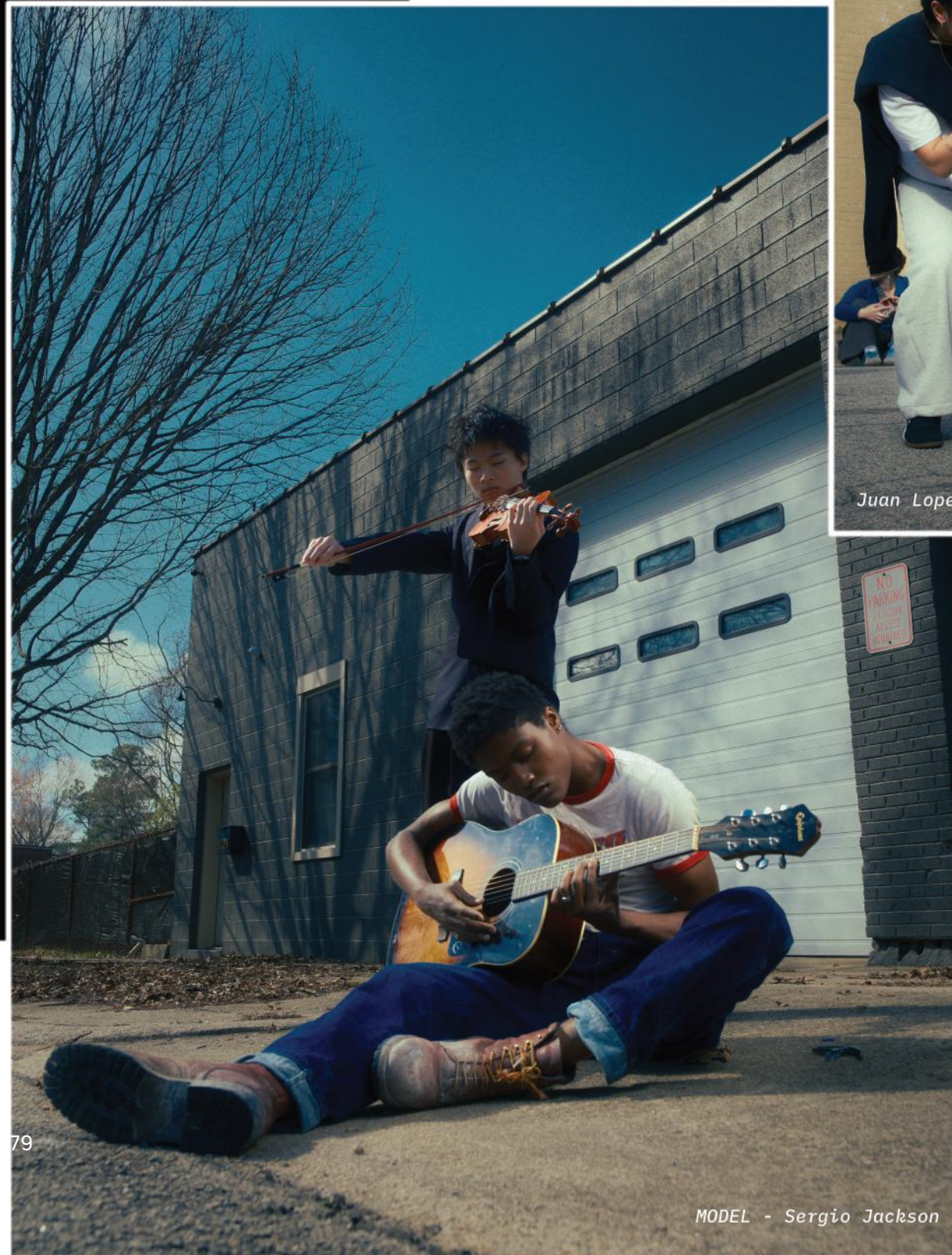


Sanje James, AK Stipanov, Joshua Dodoo, Cristal Dita



Chloe Davis, Ben Martin







MODEL - Kelly Hernandez



Hassan Wanzo

NO  
PARKING  
24-HOUR  
ACCESS  
REQUIRED

