A SLOW UNFOLDING

2019 Anthology

edited by

Haratonik
Martin
Mash

CONNECT
- to the -
PRESENT

nourish

OUT
of myself

the spirit

BINGE-
RESTING

BACK
to the
senses

feeling
DEEP
comfort

EARTHY
ENDEAVORS

let it be done

GET INTO
nature

creative restoration

Just BE

CLEAR
MY
HEAD

a slow unfolding

SENSE
OF
UNWIND
-ING

The opposite page can be removed and planted.

(((SHAKE off
the EXCESS)))

A Slow Unfolding

Anthology is annually published by United States Artists and produced entirely by our intern team. Each issue highlights the breadth of perspectives found in each year's class of USA Fellows in efforts to deepen the connections between them and expand the way their work connects to the world around us.

This inaugural issue, *A Slow Unfolding*, was produced by Tess Haratonik, Isabelle Martin, and Whitney Mash featuring the 2019 USA Fellows.

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Letter From the Editors

We invite you to engage in *A Slow Unfolding*, a publication exploring nourishment and the many ways in which the 2019 USA Fellows seek care and inspiration in their daily lives. Our title, which came to us from Janice Lessman-Moss's submission, expresses how presence and discovery were central to our process in producing this publication. We were interested in exploring how artists take care of themselves, make peace, express love, and be still at a moment in history that seems evermore to demand that we take up arms, stand up for what we believe in, and be brave. The question we asked the Fellows was, "How do you connect back to yourself and foster creativity when you need to unwind?"

As we asked the Fellows to consider how they cultivate presence, we were able to discover a place beyond their artistic outputs and see them in a more intimate light. Focusing on these moments of life shows us the many ways in which artists must care for themselves and tend to their practices, allowing us to also see beyond ourselves. To believe in artists is at the core of United States Artists' mission, and we constantly strive to illuminate the maker.

In thinking about the significance of balancing work and responsibility with presence and self-care, we turned to healing justice practitioner Jacqulyn Hamilton for a conversation that gave us a framework to think about what it means to practice nourishment in one's daily life. Her work with the Chicago Freedom School equips young people with the skills to become social and political leaders while also cultivating love and sensitivity. Our conversation produced new ways of thinking about how caring for oneself, being "self-full," as she says, is key to establishing social change and healthy communities.

Through the Fellows' submissions, we discovered that "nourishment" takes on many meanings—it can be a bottle of wine, a snuggle with your dog, a walk through the woods on a brisk day, a letter to a friend, a solo dance party, or driving through the mountains. But the beautiful thing about putting together this publication was that as we got to know the Fellows in unique and personal ways, we came together as a team. We bonded while listening to the music of Chris Stapleton as we read Arthur Lopez's submission. We gushed about how satisfying it was to see the clean lines and organized arrangement in the photograph of Erin and Ian Besler's tool wall. A Google image search transported us to Carole Frances Lung's beloved Long Beach pool. Following Jen Shyu's submission, each member of our staff took the Enneagram personality test. We soaked in the words of legendary musician Roscoe Mitchell as he told us over the phone that it would take him more than a lifetime to learn everything he would love to know. *A Slow Unfolding* is made up of not only the many ways the Fellows find nourishment. It is also made up of moments when the three of us felt deeply connected to the Fellows, to each other, and to ourselves.

Because expressing gratitude is an important practice of nourishment, we would like to thank a few people without whom this book would not be possible. To the USA staff, thank you for your patience and guidance. We've loved working with and learning from you every step of the way. Abby, Nadine, and Jacqulyn, thank you for making this book beautiful and rich, and for breathing life into it. To the USA Board, thank you for your support and trust as we embarked into uncharted territory with this project. We save our final thanks for the 2019 Fellows. We're so grateful to you for participating and giving us the chance to get to know you in this way. Thank you for the work that you do to nourish minds, bodies, and spirits.

With love,

Tess Haratonik
Isabelle Martin
Whitney Mash
2018-19 Interns

How do you nourish yourself?

I
drop
into

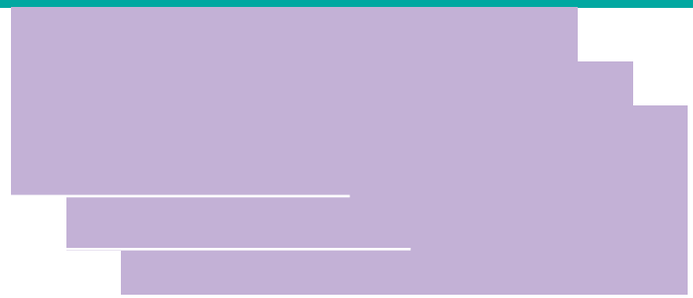
meditation

or
immerse
myself
in
a
pool
of
water
and
swim
.

LENORA LEE

DANCER & CHOREOGRAPHER | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

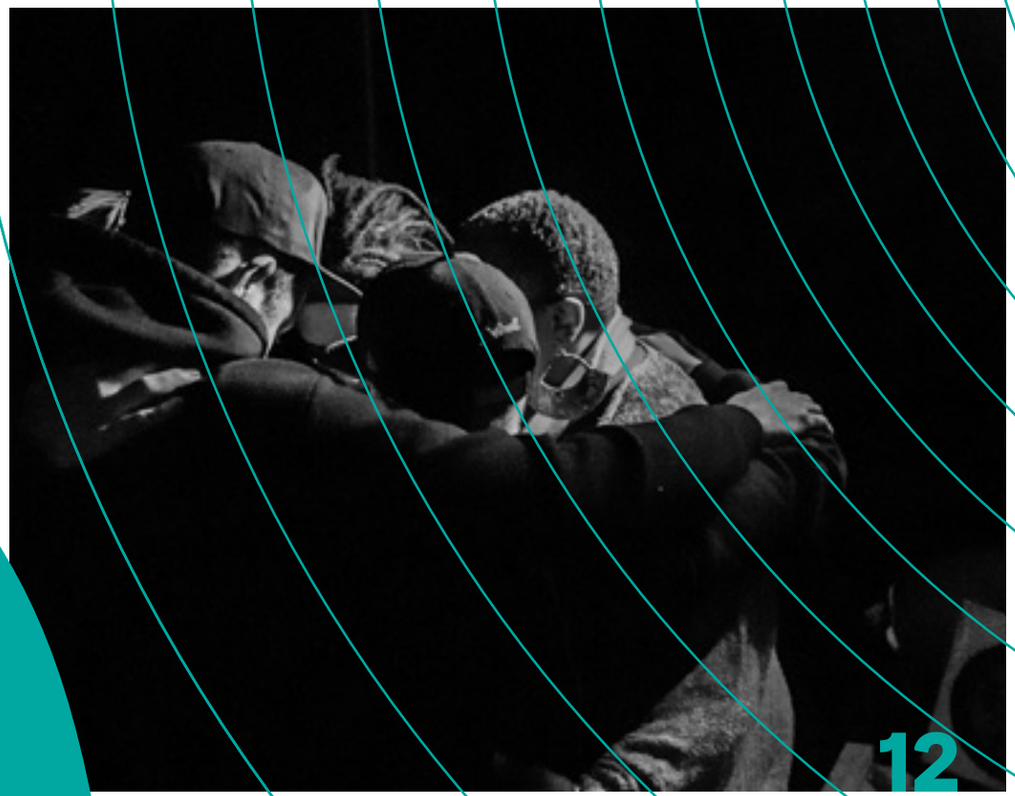
I'm not perfect about it, but I give myself three hours post-waking to attend to what I woke up thinking about and/or needing. It feels wonderful to think loosely and cohesively, to be responding rather than reacting. I take my phone off of airplane mode once I feel ready to approach the day.



I'm also finally understanding the value of taking breaks. I took my first ever actual vacation this year (a solo trip to Hong Kong, where I grew up) & haven't looked back. Those two weeks of (mostly) solitude felt necessary to process and reconfigure and check-in and adjust.

NUOTAMA FRANCES BODOMO

FILMMAKER | QUEENS, NY



Photograph: Doug Coombe

Before
performances,
Sage sages the space.
This provides clean energy
for the collective and for
participants. Circle up in a huddle.
One of us offers wise, centering
words. Sage leads us in the phrase:
Ashé, Ajo, and Ameen.
Let it be done. We end with
chanting: *Wage Love.*

Then we go out and do it!

I cultivate generosity toward myself and others by growing food. The sensory concentration of wood-carving demands a balance, which I find in abundance in the outward attention of nurturing plants. Every day in the garden is different, and elicits different strategies: recycle trimmings into compost, research on rainy days, sowing seeds when the soil is ready and harvesting when ripe berries fall into my hands. With more than enough to share, I integrate this work into the lives and bodies of family, friends, neighbors and myself.

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16

17

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Before an AACM* performance, we used to turn to the east for a moment to collect our thoughts.

I still face the east today before a show. It allows me to take an extra moment to clear my head.

* the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians

ROSCOE MITCHELL

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST & COMPOSER | OAKLAND, CA

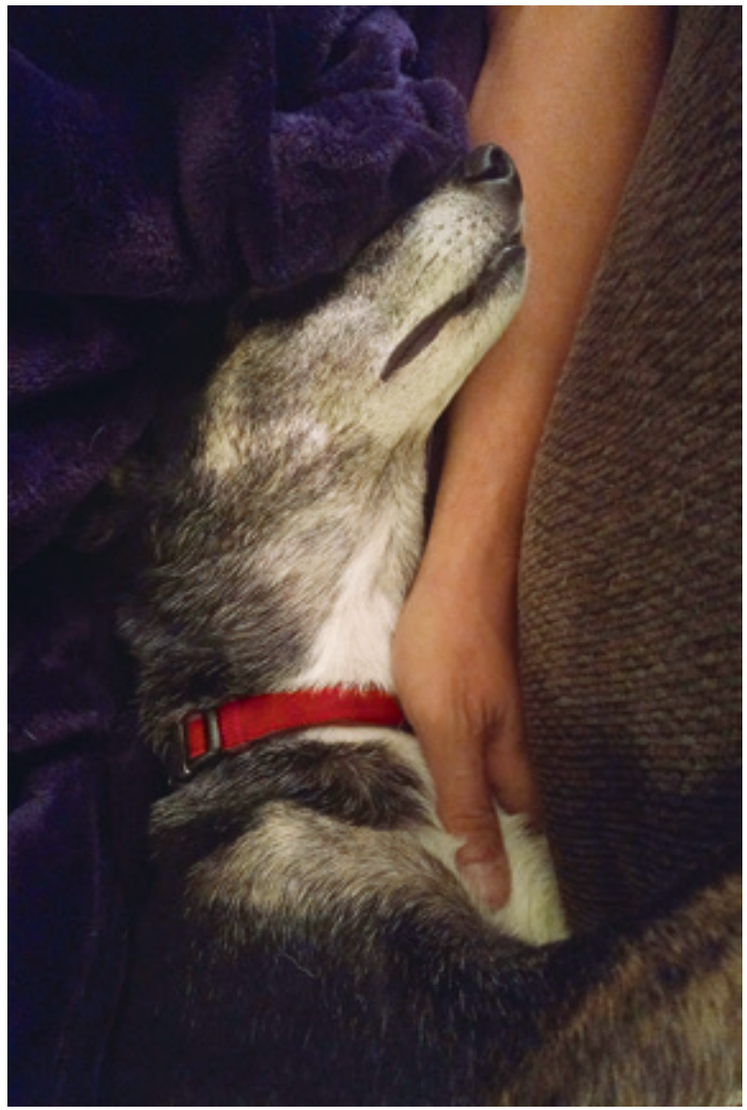
- [ ] Make a list
- [ ] A salad, tart and salty like dad does
- [ ] Clean clothes
- [ ] Clean desk
- [ ] Go for a walk
- [ ] Text a friend
- [ ] They will come over
- [ ] They will bring wine
- [ ] Crispy chicken skin

MITRA KABOLI

MULTIMEDIA ARTIST & PODCASTER | BROOKLYN, NY

Snuggling with my dog-daughter Delilah gets me out of my head and back into my senses. She is a whippet-mix who loves to hurtle down the beach, paddle through murky lagoons, chase crows, and roll belly-up in duck poop and various deliciously dead things. When I'm feeling exhausted, I tent a comforter over us, scratch her ears, rub her belly and relax, think and dream. When I'm feeling spiritually depleted, I chase her down the sand and imagine, as she hurtles towards me along the shoreline, that my heart is racing back to me.

She
is
my
ambassador
of
presence
.

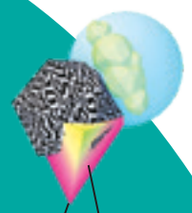


The three of us talk every day but sometimes months go by before we are physically in the same space. We're all connected so a lot of the things we do to unwind and tap into our creativity overlap with each other.

A list of the things we do to unwind, create and connect back to ourselves:

Meditation

Get lost in the desert



Exercise

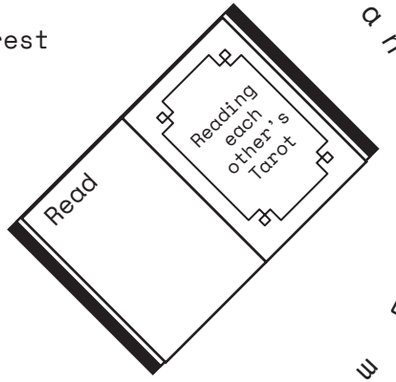
Walking around with healing crystals in our bags

Get into NATURE

Travel together

Find mushishi in the forest

Listening and making music



Creating impossible worlds in

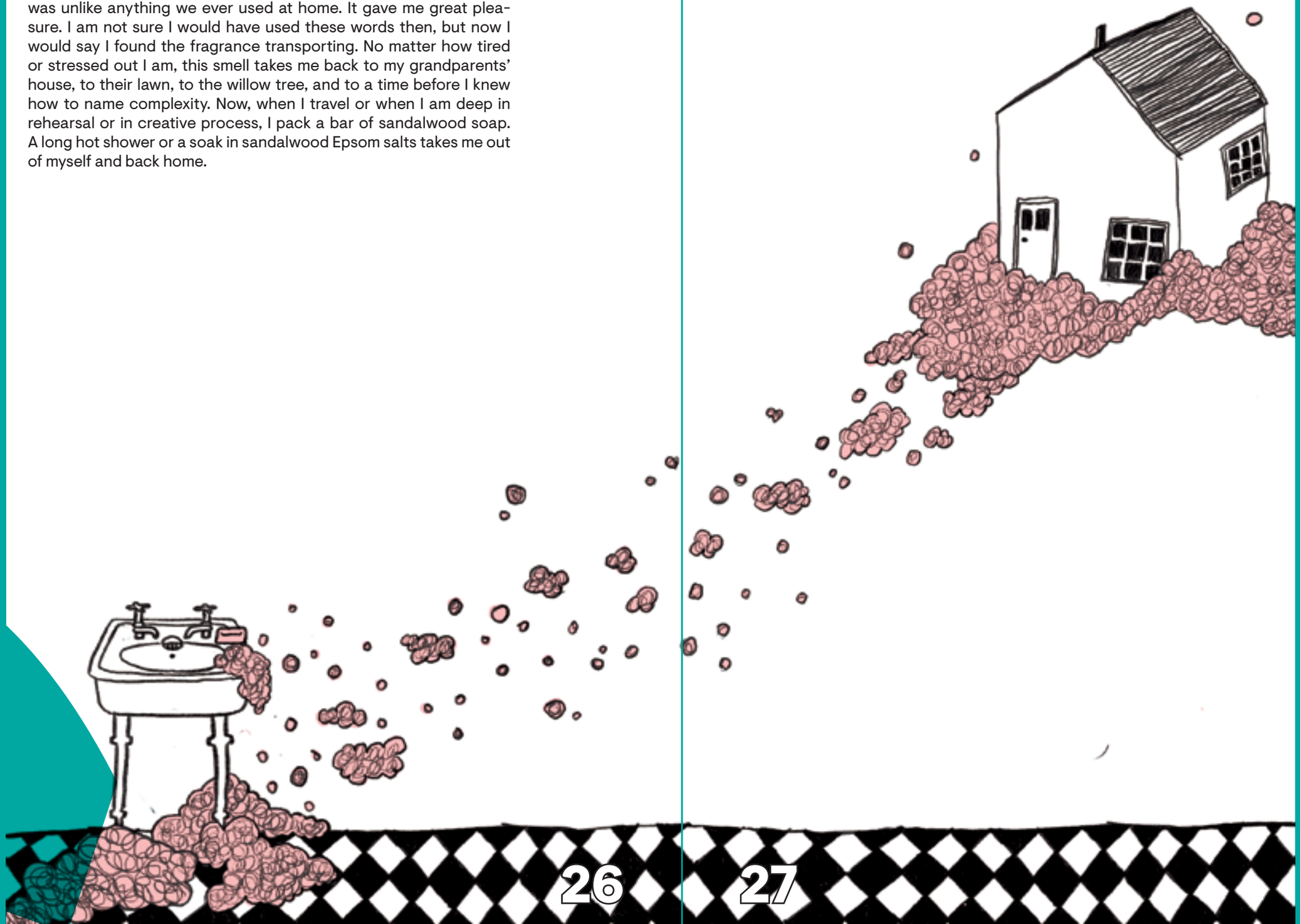
Swim in the ocean

There are many ways I take care of myself which all support productive and efficient studio time. Physical activity is necessary. I've learned when I ignore this need the fatigue I'm met with can be suffocating. I can always feel the benefits of endorphins when I am taking care of my body and it does wonders for fighting off anxiety.

I like yoga, playing takapsičapi (or Creator's Game), which is the original indigenous version of lacrosse, gym time, walking and running, all depending on what life supports at the moment. I also pause and do lots of stretching during work days so that my body can continue. I do my best to maintain at least seven hours of sleep on weekdays and grant myself a little extra on the weekends.

Prayer, time to myself, time with my kids, my husband, family, friends, time for travel, cultural practices and dancing all nourish my spirit. Without these, I am not in balance.

When I was a child, I use to revel in washing my hands at my grandparents' house. There was something special to me about their soap. I did not know how to name the smell, but I knew it was unlike anything we ever used at home. It gave me great pleasure. I am not sure I would have used these words then, but now I would say I found the fragrance transporting. No matter how tired or stressed out I am, this smell takes me back to my grandparents' house, to their lawn, to the willow tree, and to a time before I knew how to name complexity. Now, when I travel or when I am deep in rehearsal or in creative process, I pack a bar of sandalwood soap. A long hot shower or a soak in sandalwood Epsom salts takes me out of myself and back home.



My first instinct is always
to
w a l k

briskly and for
l o n g

otherwise I clean, cook,
d[a]n[c]e, read, and write...

distances...

JULIANA HUXTABLE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST & WRITER | BROOKLYN, NY

SINGING KARAOKE.

Salsa dancing.

READING/WATCHING SCI-FI.

Walking around the neighborhood.

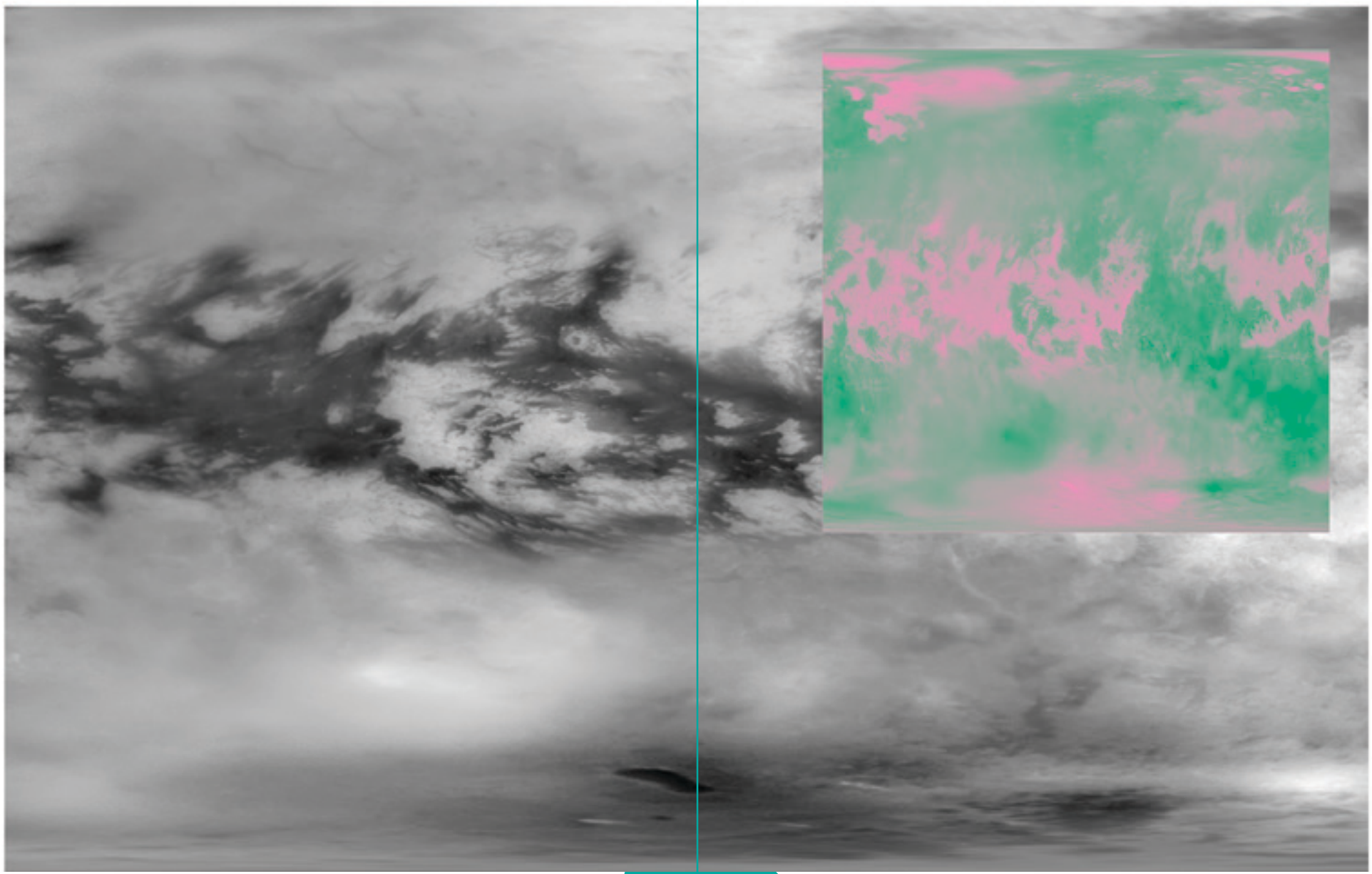
Meditation first thing in the morning.

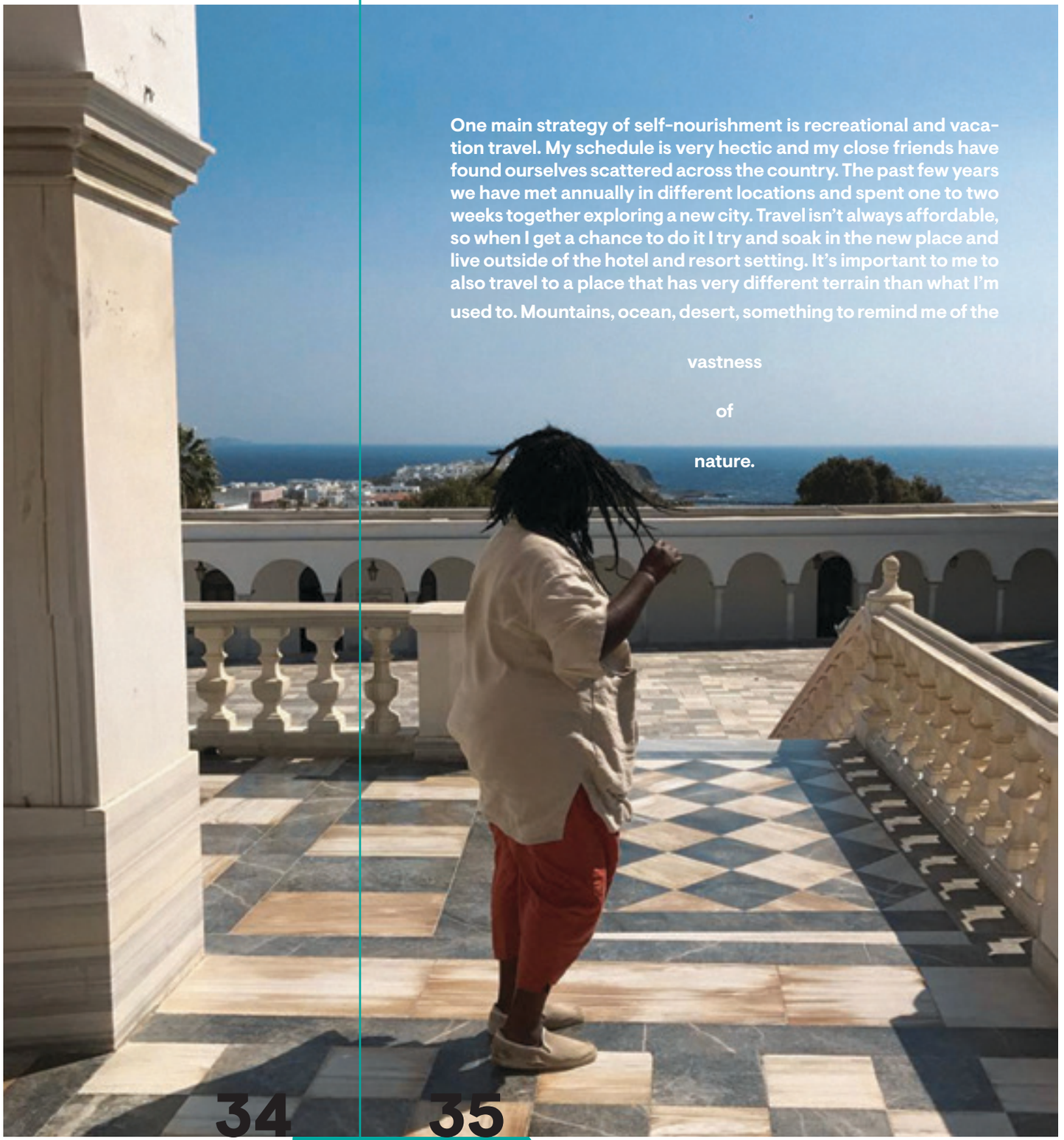
Writing/Doodling in notebook.

YARA TRAVIESO

DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER, & FILMMAKER | BROOKLYN, NY

I spend lots of time on airplanes. A good friend once told me that God hears the prayers of the traveler. I think of my time on airplanes as sacred—I can read, journal, vision, listen to music and cry at movies—all in relative privacy. I've developed some of my best ideas this way.





One main strategy of self-nourishment is recreational and vacation travel. My schedule is very hectic and my close friends have found ourselves scattered across the country. The past few years we have met annually in different locations and spent one to two weeks together exploring a new city. Travel isn't always affordable, so when I get a chance to do it I try and soak in the new place and live outside of the hotel and resort setting. It's important to me to also travel to a place that has very different terrain than what I'm used to. Mountains, ocean, desert, something to remind me of the

vastness

of

nature.

I send myself postcards. When I am away, working, playing, learning something new. I send myself postcards to remember the questions, or the feeling, the triumphs, the challenges. I love receiving an idea, a memory, a reminder to myself. Holding it in my hand. It's a forward investment on future nourishment.

Rejuvenation and renewal during and after intense film projects comes via earthy endeavors.

For Julia,

digging in the dirt, planting, cultivating and harvesting her garden takes her hands away from technology and back into soil. The feeling of loamy dirt showering through open fingers is transporting. The sunlight, the sweat, the bugs—it's all therapy. And then cooking food from the garden—nothing like fresh Ohio tomatoes or red peppers in the summer.

For Steven,

building things from wood is a deep comfort. No glowing screens, no mouse, no internet. Just the smell of poplar or pine, the feel of a saw in hand, sawdust coating on pants and shoes.

For both of us,

traveling to be near a big, expansive body of water is nurturing.

Wine & Chile: To unwind and clear my head from a hectic day, I enjoy cooking with a glass of wine and some Chris Stapleton playing in the background. I enjoy all types of food but especially if it includes New Mexico chile.

I take dance breaks! Writing can be so cerebral that I crave something physical to restore me to my other traits. I'm a faithful attendant of the Solo Living Room PJ Dance Party, but I love that dancing is also a group activity I get to do with my good friends. That helps ground the solitary artist in me who loves being alone but sometimes gets lonely. I often have revelations about a project mid-twerk; i.e., it can get deep with a strong bass line at the helm! Dancing connects back to the playful and wild child in me who loves to whirl with the world. To be part of the dance restores my observer self's ability to regard it with more focus, which always reunites me with the formal work.

We're often surprised by the extent to which mundane routines can be an incredibly reliable source of creative restoration, a way to resolve our workspace as a sort of method for clearing-up conceptual space: Tidying-up the studio, sweeping and vacuuming, reorganizing the book-shelves. Particularly after we wrap-up a big project, there's such a nice recuperative value in putting a few days aside to bring our office back to an ordered state.

Photograph: Hannah Kelly and Kyra Odi

As we've moved studios a few times, one ritual that we've maintained in each new space has been laying out a really extensive tool and material wall in the studio. In the interest of efficiency, and to avoid reacquiring supplies that we already have, we try to fit everything that we regularly use onto as small of a vertical space as possible, which means a lot of fitting and fussiness in how we get every single X-ACTO knife, OLFA knife, roll of tape, paint brush, t-square, ruler, tape measure, broom, and every-thing else up on the wall. While most people use peg-boards or shelving and rack systems to organize their workshops, we prefer the more ersatz method of nails and drywall.

There's a bit of a fussy showiness to a nicely laid-out tool wall, and it's become a sort of project of its own. As creative practitioners, we're often a bit burdened by feeling like every project and image that we put out into the world has to stand as a comprehensive repre-sentation of ourselves as creators. There's something really liberating about putting a lot of time and consideration into something that doesn't circulate as a project—it's a kind of "self-care" for really boring people, haha! Maybe you go to the spa or get a massage when you want to treat yourself; we reorganize our tool wall!

I started doing two things when I was about 3—writing and playing the piano—that to this day are what ground me and connect me to who I am.

As much as I hated practicing the piano as a child, there still would come a point where I'd master a piece and then could lose myself in the music. I don't play anywhere near as well as I used to, but when I do sit down to play—at the same piano I've had since I was 15, that has traveled from Kingston, Jamaica to Maryland to Brooklyn—I still feel that same bliss. It's part nostalgia, because the books I play from are ones I've had for decades, now worn and in some cases barely held together with tape, and I can remember where I was and what I was doing when I learnt the pieces in them. It's also a connection to my present and my past. The piano is marred by tiny pieces of tape that my son stuck to the keys and bench when he was 3, and I was teaching him to play. And, I have my maternal grandmother's piano books. Since she died when my mother was a child, these books are the only things I have that connect me to her.

But as much joy as I get from playing the piano, I am not really a pianist, I am a writer. I write when I am overwhelmed and need to figure things out. I write when I am angry. I write to document my days, even the most mundane ones. Writing has never just been a thing that I do, it's always been who I am.

An
empty
page
is
my
safe
space,
a
place
where
I
can
just
be
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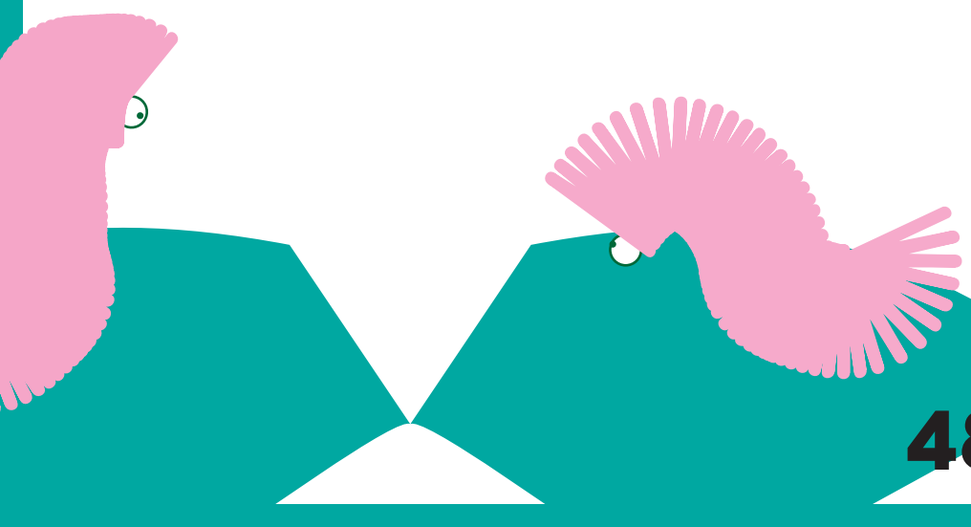
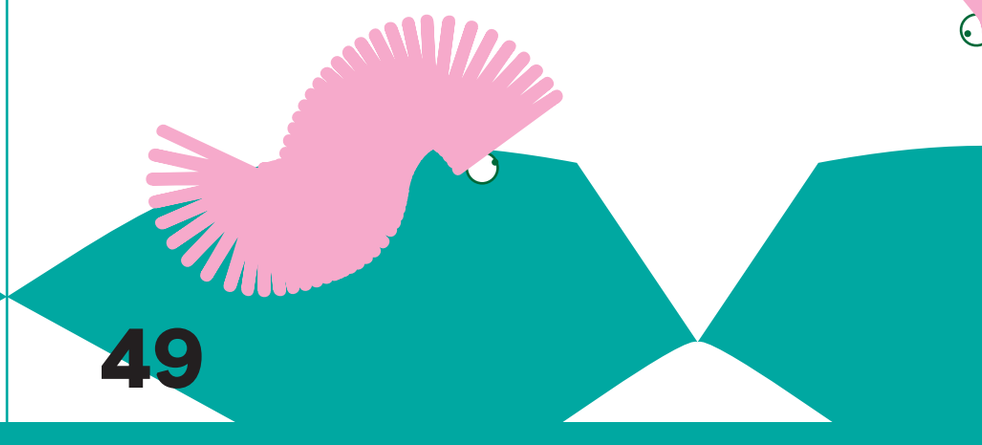
I learned to draw by copying other people's work, and when I'm stuck or feeling like my work has gone stale, I give myself the task of reproducing someone else's drawing as exactly as I'm able to. Most recently I copied a full page drawing by Malaysian cartoonist "Lat" of a street scene in Kuala Lumpur. Copying allows me to see so much that my eye might not otherwise take in and I learn new ways of making something. I think of it as kind of music, doing a 'cover' of Lat's work, by 'singing' along with it. I often write a letter to a friend on the back of these copies, and send the whole thing off.





Meditate.

Just sit.

Watch the breath.

Time yourself.

MERIÁN SOTO

DANCER & CHOREOGRAPHER | PHILADELPHIA, PA

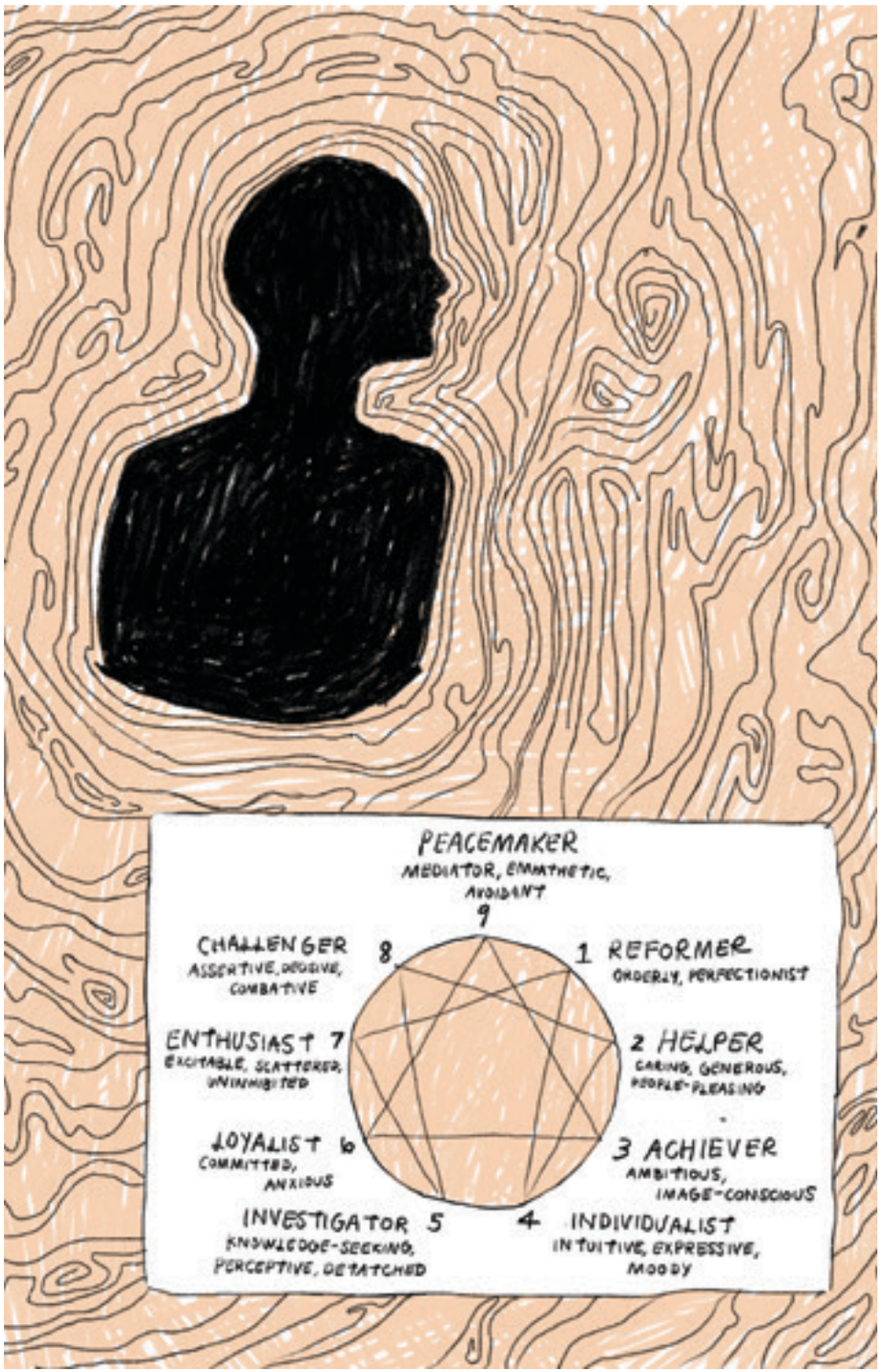
The challenge of being an independent "artrepreneur" in this day and age where you are the creative source as well as the "CEO" of yourself as that creative source is indeed time management and allowing yourself the consistent rituals that I think are necessary for a healthy, balanced creative life. I have found that there are no shortage of rituals and ways that I love to do to unwind—it's just making the time to do them, no matter how busy I am.

The best way I unwind is to schedule a residency at least once a year at one of many great places. It's best when you are immersed in nature and also where you have no or very little access to the internet.

I recently moved to a new apartment with more space in which I was able to design some new built-in shelves with a meditation nook and cushion in my bedroom, and I vowed that I would meditate every morning upon waking up, and was even consistently using the great app Insight Timer...it is wonderful, but even with this convenient place, I can go days without making the time to meditate if there are too many performances, appointments, rehearsals and deadlines, etc. Sometimes you are choosing between more sleep and meditation or between eating and sleeping, even. I think one has to be disciplined about not over-scheduling and knowing one's limits, which is very hard for a stubborn Aries and #Three personality (if you are into Enneagrams) like I am. I have not perfectly succeeded in perfect time management, or else I wouldn't be skipping my sought-after meditation sessions, but as long as you find what works best for you, whether it be "binge-resting" (which is scheduling a time for focused relaxation and vacation and unplugging and then not worrying about it outside of that time) or if it's a daily practice that works best for you.

I got the term "binge resting" from Cheryl Strayed who said in an interview that she sets aside time for "binge writing" whereby she arranges with her family a time far off in the future which they can plan around where she will go away on her own and write and not be bothered, which relieves her from feeling guilty about not writing when she is being a mom or doing everything else outside of this special, carved-out time. I think I'm more toward this way of focusing the alone or away time, just in terms of my schedule where I'm so often on the road performing or if I'm just in another country doing intensive research where oftentimes a daily routine of quiet meditation time is not easily attainable.

I think the key is to live creatively and think creatively and be meditative whenever possible and at all times possible, even in one's actions in transit and in one's busy life. For instance, why not take a bit of time on the plane to do a timed meditation or some timed writing? But then if you feel like watching that mediocre movie, just feel free! I believe it's about being forgiving of oneself and to induce relaxation and enjoying of the moment amidst the craziness. As an acupuncturist once said to me, "Relaxation is the first step to healing." He couldn't be more right.



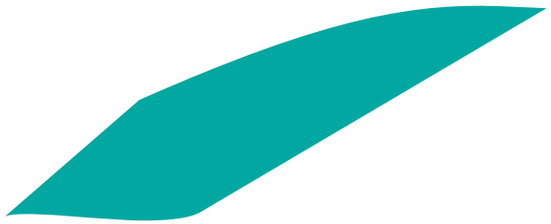
Walking

allows me to experience the natural world and built environment in a direct way.

The progressive movement of my body through air reveals a slow unfolding of the world around me, enabling me to connect with something beyond myself. I enjoy discovering details and observing the spectacles exposed through this engagement with the topography of place.

Walking

allows me to focus on the present, to put my ideas into a larger context, to provide perspective on my role as an artist through experiencing the immensity of the external environment.



Walking

gives me space to think, allowing my mind to wonder and dream.

Walking

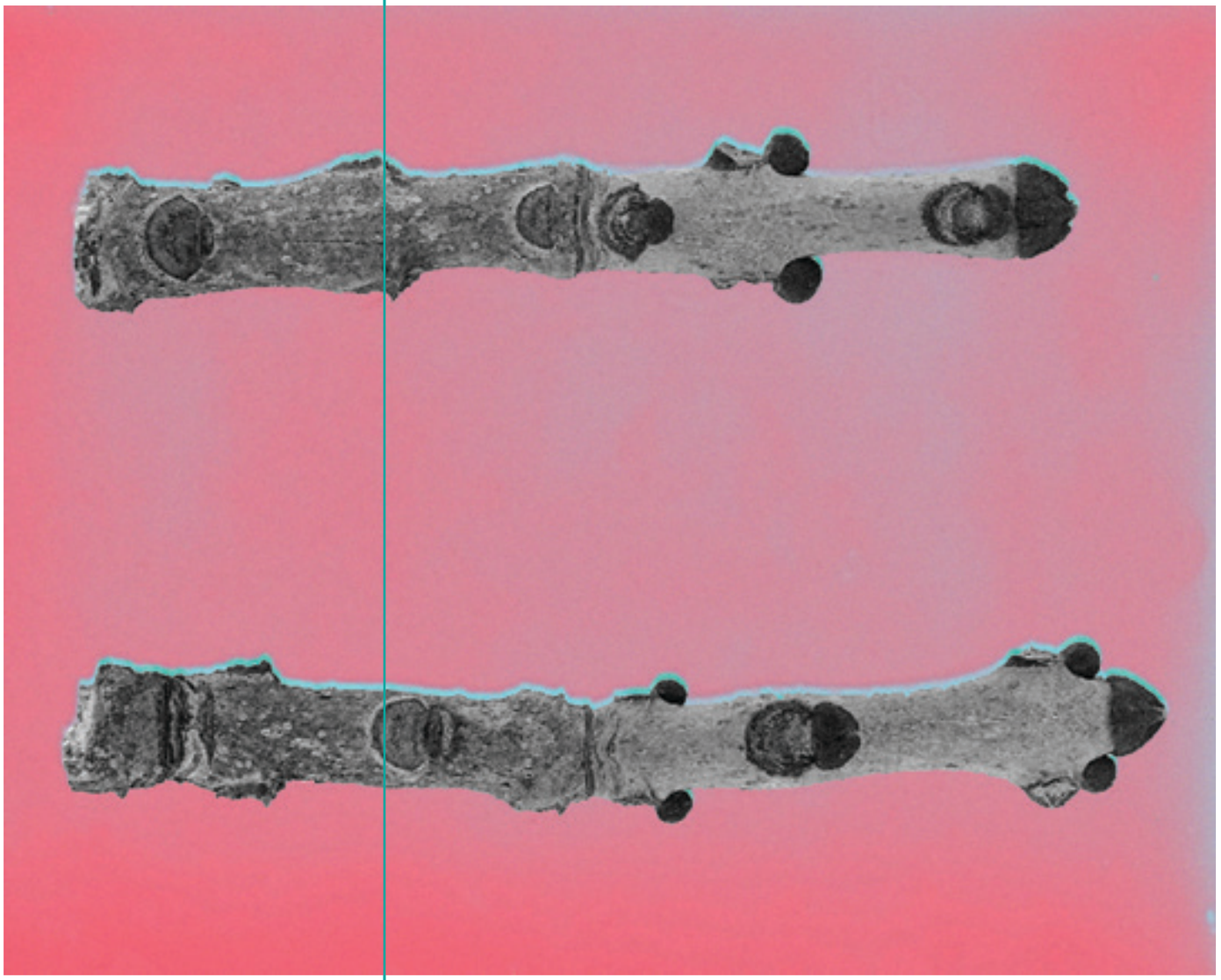
activates my body and stimulates my mind and senses, as it makes me more receptive to new ideas and relationships, informed by my surroundings; observed, absorbed, or imagined.

JANICE LESSMAN-MOSS

DIGITAL WEAVER | KENT, OH

The work that I do is intrinsically connected with nature. I foster creativity by reconnecting with the land that the ash tree grows in.

I do this by harvesting medicinal plants, collecting ash for baskets, or gathering fiddle-head ferns for food. All of this keeps me grounded in the work that I do and connects me to my roots as a Passamaquoddy.



Source: Black Ash, W.D. Brush, hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

After my daily work in the imaginary, I connect back thanks to my dog, Key—who is part Great Dane, part Malinois. The dog that found Osama bin Laden was a Malinois, which is to say how brutally smart they can be. And Danes, of course, are patient. So, Key is patient, but only to a certain point. When I've worked too long, too obsessively, she will come get me, ask if we can take a long walk, learn something new, together. Because she needs this, I'm willing to see how much I need it, too. She teaches me how to be in now-mind, as all dogs can teach us, and she teaches me that a good life—in truth a good poem—includes play, as well as work.

REBECCA GAYLE HOWELL

POET | LEXINGTON, KY

When I'm working on creative work, my voice is the loudest and all I can hear are the things I want to do. A way I seek nourishment is to create micro-moments of listening.

I find surprise and revelation in the synchronicity between sound and image. There is a parallel sound world you can create to this other visual world. It gives you a chance to listen to all the sounds that accumulate in one moment but explode in nuance as you see them with a new visual.

Example exercises for creating a micro moment of nourishment:

1. **Mute a movie and watch it with an alternative audio track.**

2. **Use your iPhone's recorder and record yourself in transit. For example, walking through a lobby to a train or a car on your way home. Include the micro details of your keys in the door and shoes being taken off and hitting the floor.**

One of the things that helps me a lot, and I've had a lot of practice at it lately, is driving. I find that I've come up with some key ideas for dances and overall theatrical projects when I'm in the car. And although not good for the environment, I tend to drive by myself a lot. I live on the East Coast, which has windy roads and some different kinds of hillsides and the ocean. And I love that because it lets me just dream and feel that anything is possible when you're on the road—and that I'm either getting away or going towards something that is a goal or a destiny. I do extensive, extensive thinking while I drive, and that kind of relaxes and refuels me for thinking about projects.

And it's funny, on the train I can do it similarly, but not as well. I think I love seeing people on the train, like the subway or Amtrak or something, but I think that stimulation of so many different people does not allow me to concentrate—so if I'm by myself, and it's me and the road and scenery, I think more clearly. Sometimes I listen to a lot of different music to inspire me. But I have driven for five hours straight without a single piece of music on, which for some people sounds crazy. But I actually love just the sound of the road, and nothing else. Maybe birds, and my thoughts.

I don't have a whole lot of room for unwinding but when I do I like to go running. Athleticism, in whatever shape or form, sorts jumbled ideas and energy by shaking off the excess. The best stay, the rest fall away. I think this is a thing other artists have experienced, as well. It also helps to leave the studio for a while and come back with fresh eyes. For me, this happens through a run or even a waitress shift. Either way, I need to physically move. Because I have to hustle quilts for a living (not easy), I don't have the time or leeway to slow down. But ultimately, I don't feel the need to unwind anyway. I love to work. I don't have enough hands or hours for the things I want to sew.

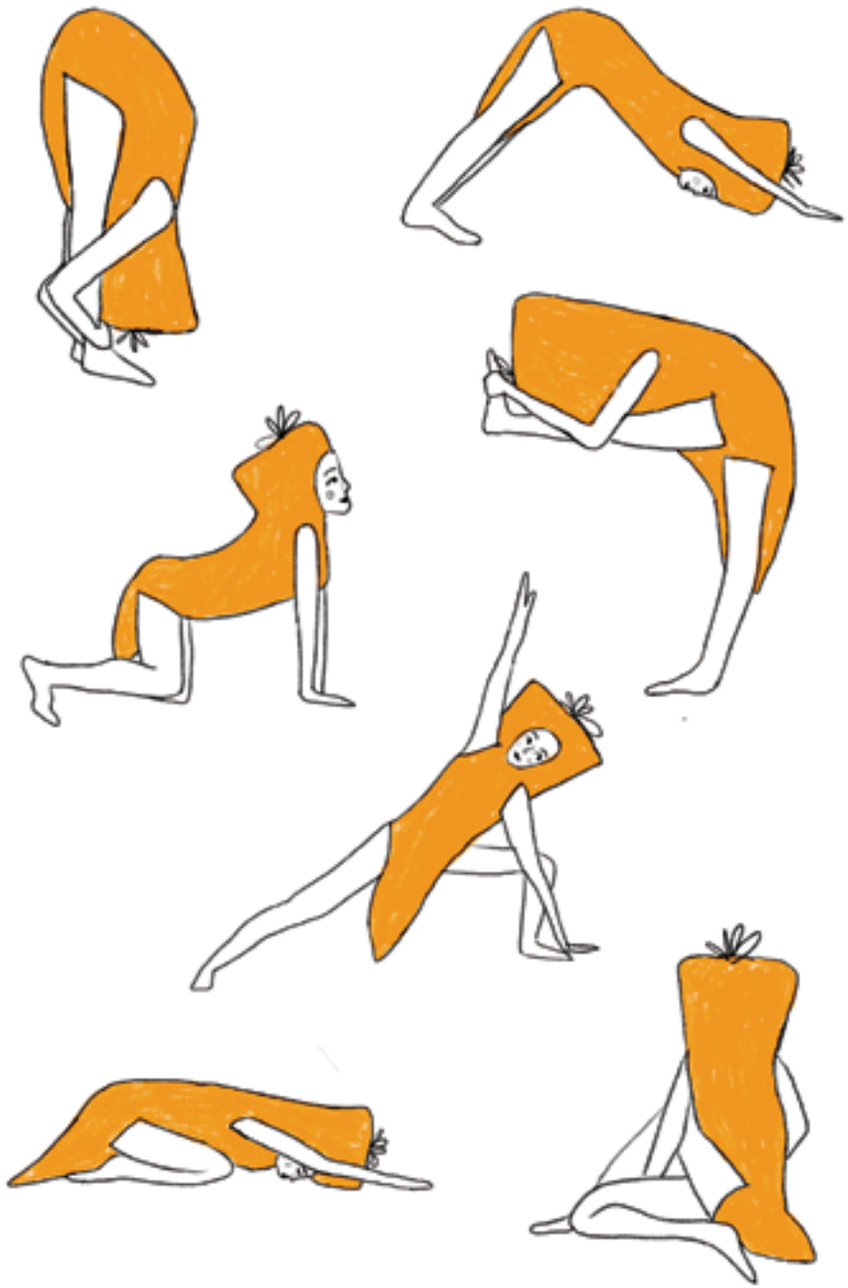
When I want to get back to that playful and fearless place where every move you make becomes artistic, where there is no right or wrong, and where the only limit is the sky. I turn off my phone, I listen to old records, and I play my guitar freestyle for at least an hour without an audience. Then I do something silly, or I call a friend, or both. This is the happy place where new ideas come to me. The hard work comes later, bringing this kernel to life. It can take years.

Photograph: Ricardo Oropa

Bikram yoga is by far one space where I can feel a great sense of unwinding, both mentally and physically. Yes, I need the extreme heat, the 26 postures and the full 90 minutes.

In 2015, I was dealing with a strong creative and physical block in my life, while moving from different countries and just a few months after giving birth and becoming a mother. My body and mind were strongly feeling the need to go to a Bikram session, and the only class I could have time to go to was on Halloween morning. I went dressed-up as a carrot, didn't faint, won a costume-effort contest and felt not only more connected, but empowered!

I don't dress-up for Bikram sessions anymore, but I still believe that is one way that helps me reconnect with myself. Regardless of what place I am at, it has become a special zone for unwinding.



A friend recently shared the poem *A Litany for Survival* by Audre Lorde with me. It has become a reminder that my self-care ritual requires that I let my voice be free. That may require me to speak up for myself or for someone else, or just giving myself the permission to stay quiet when I need to reset and refocus my energies. Being quiet in the presence of nature, specifically near water is deeply healing. Barbados is a place where I can reconnect to my ancestors physically and spiritually, and have the most complete self-care I can.

CHARLOTTE BRATHWAITE

DIRECTOR | NEW YORK, NY

Yoga and meditation are a constant six days a week for me. My personal practice is Zen meditation. One of the Zen arts is gardening. Communing with nature is an important part of my creativity as well as my personal wellbeing. Humans are not separate from nature. The way we treat this planet is as if we were not spurned from the ocean, as if trees, don't take our carbon dioxide and feed us back oxygen, not to mention fill our bellies with nourishment. I continue to commune with and cultivate nature. I have created a Zen garden fully equipped with bamboo, pond, stones and a hammock! This garden is not only an expression of creativity, it is a living work of art, a refuge and a sanctuary. It took me three years to finish it, about as long as a new theater piece takes me to premiere. And like that theater piece, the garden continues to grow and transform, and I continue to nurture and shape it.

Our big puppy reminds me there's always a moment for taking naps and relaxing :)

After a particularly tough deadline I'll
do my best to reconnect with my family,

whom I love more than **life**
itself.

Long FaceTime sessions with my nephew or baby
niece, and short trips with my sisters to countries
we have never been to.

I'll watch all the **good** and bad films

I missed, and read all the good and **bad** articles and
books I set aside.
Most importantly, I carve out time to make

messy, **silly**,
risky experiments in the studio

just
for
myself
.

Here are three of my favorite mantras that I say to myself when I need to connect back into my own creativity:

❶ Not Everything Has To Be Everything.

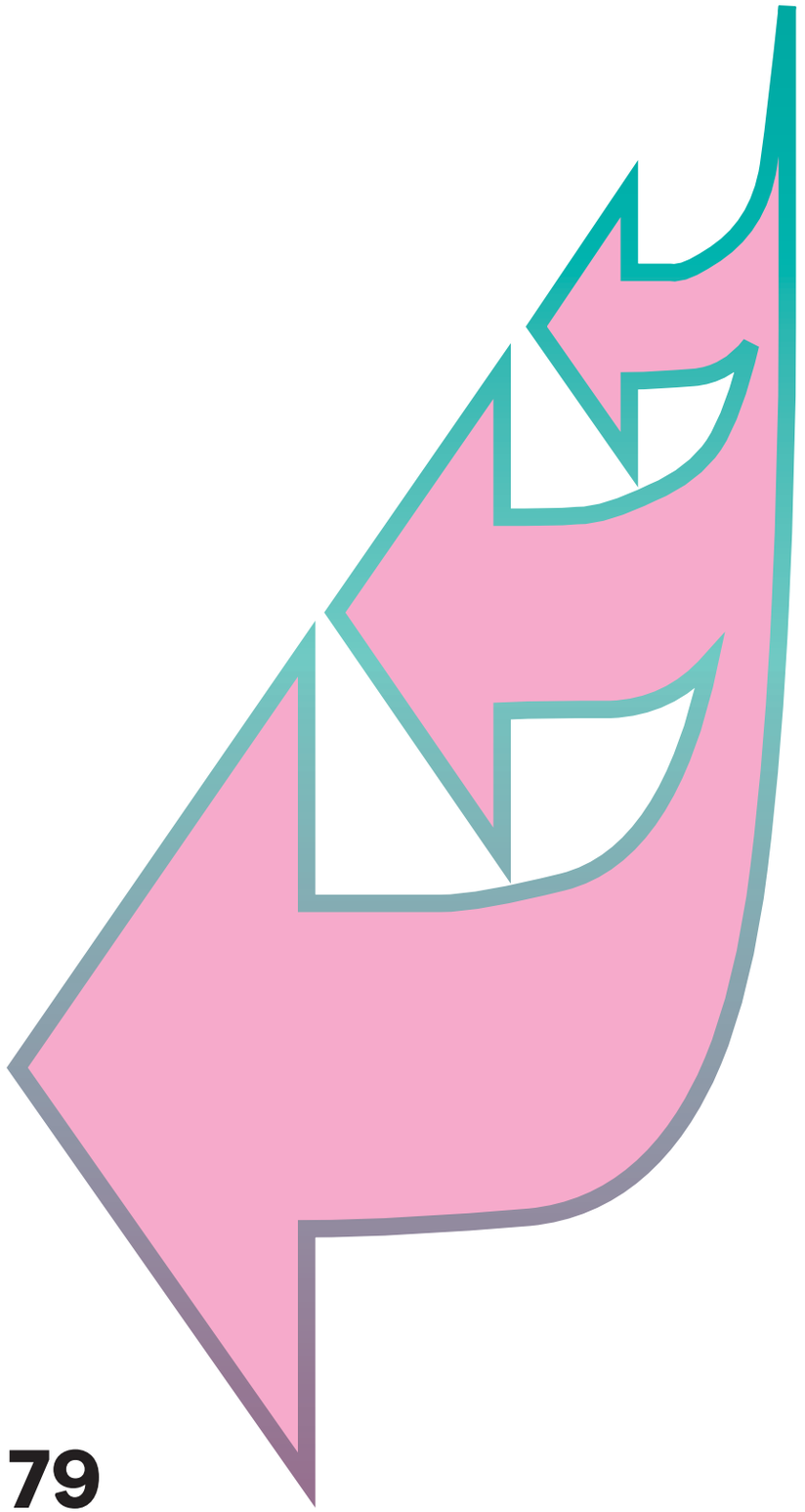
Whether I'm trying to stuff every single idea I have into the piece I'm writing at the moment, or trying to make a single conversation with a friend into our entire support system for one another, I have to remind myself every day that 'not everything has to be everything'. A piece can just be about one idea. A conversation can just be about being present to whatever happens in that moment.

❷ This Is Not A Game of 'How Clever Are You'

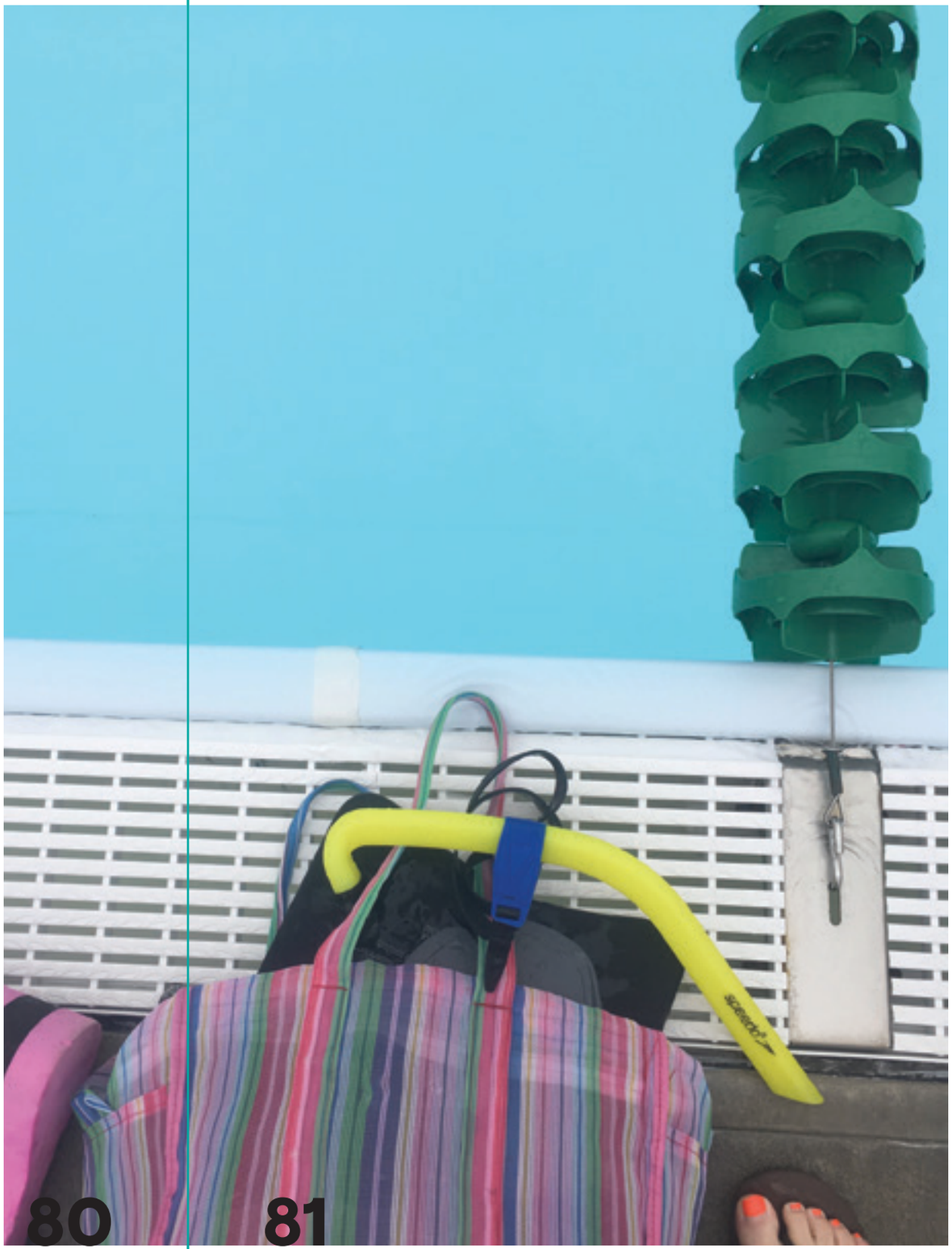
The most detrimental thing to my creativity is thinking about how 'clever' my work will sound when it's being described. Ultimately, the best way to appreciate music is simply to listen to it. To let my art be what it is, however simple and direct, is one of the most vulnerable acts for me. But that is where my most honest work comes from.

❸ You Cannot Create in Negatives

Often my first thoughts about a piece are about how I *don't* want it to go, what we don't want to sound like or look like. And while that is valuable information, it ultimately leaves me with nothing on the page. The creation process, for me, is ultimately about affirming what I *do* want something to be. I try to start creating by looking for something I can affirm.



When I turned fifty, I started swimming one hour a day, five days a week at the Belmont Pool in Long Beach. I have enjoyed swimming as recreation my entire life. I love the weightlessness of being in the water. When I turned fifty, I decided I needed a physical activity I could age into, and was inspired by my first art mentor Catherine Mulligan. Catherine was my sculpture and drawing professor at North Dakota State University and she taught me to be observant and transform those observations into objects. We stayed in communication after I graduated. I have made many a visit to Boulder, Colorado, where Catherine lives, to hike in Rocky Mountain National Park, cook a meal, make artist books, and get up at 5:30 in the morning for a swim and sauna at the YMCA. The time I spend with Catherine (she is a spry 80 something) are some of the greatest relaxing moments of my life and she is a poster woman to keep making and moving. With Catherine in mind, I get into the pool those five days a week. I love the solitary time in the water. It is a space for thinking through the to-do list and solving any problems on my mind. The Belmont Pool is a glorious temporary pool, which has been in use for five years, located in a parking lot on the beach. I've been swimming as long as it's been temporary, 25- or 50-meter laps for an hour. I range between 1800 and 2000 meters in an hour, and it's taken me about a year to build up to this. At the end of each swim, I take note of the number of container ships in the harbor, some full, some empty, and report back to Frau Fiber with the morning's statistics.



I visit the graves of my Ancestors, on my Ancestral homelands. I talk to the photos of my Ancestors, when I am unable to visit in person. I touch the ground, tell them news of this future world that they have heard about long long ago.

shavasana

,

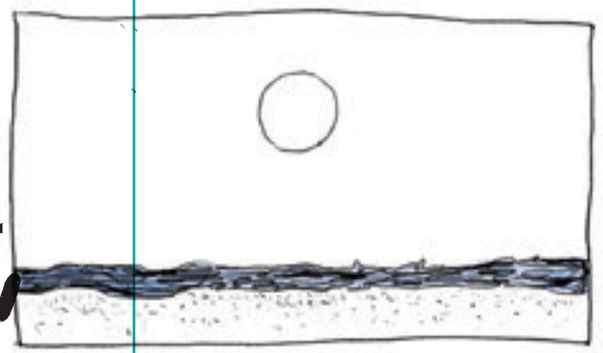
.

the corpse

CECILIA VICUÑA

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST & POET | NEW YORK, NY

Swimming has,
for me,
a narcotic effect.



KELLER EASTERLING
WRITER & DESIGNER | NEW HAVEN, CT & NEW YORK, NY

Cultivating Presence: A Conversation with Jacqulyn Hamilton

Jacqulyn Hamilton works as the Wellness Coordinator for the Chicago Freedom School (CFS), where she guides young folks to become compassionate social justice leaders and advocates. We are inspired by her emphasis on self-care in healing justice work, so we invited her to our Chicago office for a conversation exploring the concept of nourishment, the role of the artist, and how we can all be better participants of a larger community.

Jacqulyn Hamilton: We have this trope, or archetype, of the struggling, starving artist as the only person that can create great art. But how do we celebrate that person? How do we make sure that they are fed, that they are nourished? And that all art isn't a product of torture but is a product of liberation, nourishment, and community support? When I think about what it means to nourish, I immediately think of food and then think about what it means to be fed in all these other ways. When you are nourished, you feel full. It feels like fall food, warm root vegetables. So what is the root vegetable equivalent of my work? Especially in this moment, when we need vegetables. We need whatever the political, spiritual, emotional, and social version of hearty soup is.

Whitney Mash: That's a beautiful way to think about the work that we need to do. Can you talk about your work as Wellness Coordinator at the Chicago Freedom School?

JH: CFS serves as a place for young people to explore power, oppression, and agency and figure out how can they be change agents in their communities. My specific role there is to help young people of color figure out how to live those politics. We can have some clear ideologies, but when it comes to actually practicing them, who are we? A great deal of the work is unpacking all of the internalizations of oppression. How do I make sure that I can give myself space to continuously grow and change my mind? How do we make sure, if all the politics and structures suddenly became exactly what we wanted them to be, that we don't inadvertently re-create the oppressions?

Tess Haratonik: I like that model of learning; it forces young people to be open to weakness and questions and to think about the different ways in which people work. It's about putting practice into action and to question what traditional really is. It allows young thinkers to ask ourselves, why do we structure things the way that we do?

Isabelle Martin: Yes, and I wonder if you could unpack what it means to be a healing justice practitioner, as you self-identify, and how that might relate to this notion Tess brings up of restructuring.

JH: For me, being a healing justice practitioner means creating ways to make sure that the humanity stays in our political movements. When you are doing social justice work, there is a sense of urgency, and it can be easy to feel like the movement needs me, the people need me, and it can lead you to depletion. But I can't be effective if I am running on nothing. At one point, I was doing food justice work and creating this pathway for people to get fresh organic veggies. I created this whole educational program, and we were giving away food, and I literally never had food in my house. Farmers would give me food, and I would give it away. That was not sustainable and was, ultimately, dangerous. I've come to understand that when you are doing this work, it's not just for other people; you are doing this because you are invested.

I like to think of the social justice legends that we have. Dr. King was not just out here organizing people to integrate because he thought it would be great for other people; it was because he also wanted it for himself. Malcolm X was not out here working just for other people, but he was also working for himself. Ella Baker supported young people, not only because she believed in the ability of young people but because that was also in her best interest. They are not these benevolent, divorced sources of inspiration. They are living in a community and they want more for others, but they also want more for themselves. Some folks say, "Well, I don't want to be selfish." But as somebody once said to me, it's not selfish, it's "self-full."

TH: I think we romanticize being selfless. There's this idea that you shouldn't have anything for yourself, but that's when we get into detrimental spaces. Everything we do can be seen as inherently selfish. But I want to remember the concept of "self-full."

JH: Because it's self-worth! And when you can see, acknowledge, practice, and feed your own sense of self-worth, you can also do that with the people you are sharing the world with.

WM: I think it's interesting that when you were doing food justice work, you were nourishing others but not nourishing yourself. I think this correlates to our artists' practices as well, because we find that it's so emotionally, mentally, and physically intensive. They are often making work that can or will be seen by the public,

but at the same time it is an individual practice. So they have to deal with both of these. Is self-care selfish? How we can reframe that for artists, especially when oftentimes their practice is their self-care? It gets complicated.

JH: I think that now that self-care is a buzzword, we have this very specific vision of what self-care is. For example, that self-care is a luxury massage.

TH: Or putting on a face mask!

JH: Right, right! And, you know, it can be that! I have this joke with my friends that clean underwear is liberation because it encourages me. It makes me feel like my life is not falling apart. When I don't have anything, how do I get to a place of feeling like I have something to hold onto? I am a massage therapist, so if that's your self-care, go and get a massage, but it can also be three breaths. It can be recognizing that literally you have your breath in every moment, even when you don't have anything else, and that can be caring for yourself.

IM: I think one of the beautiful things about putting together this publication is breaking out of the buzzword idea of self-care and understanding how people really get in touch with themselves. That is so representative of the diverse personalities of our Fellows.

WM: We had one Fellow that talked about the scent of the soap in her grandmother's house, and that was really moving because it was this idea of something nostalgic that you can return to as a form of healing.

TH: The range in responses really made us think about moments that happen in our own lives. You could say, "Well, that makes me feel good, but is that really self-care? Is that nourishing?" And yes! That can be! It can be a memory or a moment. I never imagined that in thinking about the definition of nourishment, it would open up all of these doors.

IM: Right! Especially for the three of us, also being students, working through this process, and just even checking something off a to-do list can make you feel...

JH: Triumphant! Yes, I use one of the easel-size sticky notes and write what I need to get done, and when I cross one off...

WM: Ugh, it is the best! We've been using a whiteboard in the office, and we just love erasing things and rewriting and erasing.

JH: I mean, those things are self-care, too! It's giving yourself moments of just being, supporting, celebrating, and sharpening yourself, in whatever way you need to do that.

WM: You were talking before about community. Many of our Fellows are socially engaged, and their work is involved in community. They might identify as being community organizers in the work that they do. So could you elaborate on what a nourished community looks like?

JH: I've been thinking a lot about where my definition or sense of community comes from. My father and I were going for a drive (my parents are from rural Mississippi) and he was talking about how they used to have animals. They would tend to the animals, and they would hunt for food. He said, "Whenever we slaughtered a hog, everybody got some." He talked about going to everyone's home, even if they were further away, to make sure that everyone got some of this hog. It's funny because I am a vegetarian, but this is still how I understand community. We take care of each other. There is enough for us all.

TH: It relates to the idea that there are roles in every community and different responsibilities that you hold as a community member.

JH: Roles are all important. I have a huge family, and at every family gathering, people bring food. And I never bring food. Someone once asked me, "What do you bring here?" and I said, "I bring joy." A couple of cousins and uncles were teasing me, and they asked a cousin who had just come in, "What does Jacqie bring?" And he said, "She brings joy!" And I said, "Look! See, somebody brings the mac and cheese, and somebody will bring joy, and there is still enough space for us all here. We can still enjoy one another." So when I think of community, I think of that: we all have different roles, and we can utilize all of our strengths in that way.

WM: I love how your sentiments about community have to do with this idea of food, because we started out with the idea of food.

TH: We joked at the beginning that we wanted to have this entire book be a book of recipes.

JH: That would be awesome! But it doesn't have to be a recipe for food.

WM: It could be a recipe for making the perfect bed or having a great Sunday afternoon with your dogs.

TH: We all have to eat to survive, and that kind of model of giving equity is really poetic. A dinner table is a good metaphor for how we should all think about community.

IM: This publication grew out of asking, "What is just as important as food in our daily lives?"

JH: In many ways, art is that. We need to be fed, which can be done in a multitude of ways, but it is important. Being fed is not just necessarily about feeding yourself but about how we are feeding one another.

TH: You are a healing justice practitioner, and you also have a massage therapy practice. Oftentimes we hear from our Fellows that they're having to move through these various spaces of putting on different hats. And a lot of our Fellows have to work other jobs. So thinking about moving between those spaces can be really tough on you, mentally, physically, and emotionally. Are there any strategies you use to find a balance?

JH: I think presence is perhaps the most important piece of that for me: Can I be where I am when I'm there? When you have a life where you're moving through different worlds, it is hard to figure out, What does it mean for me to continue to be myself? What does it mean for me to have integrity in every moment? I think it's figuring out what it means for you to be whole all the time, even while it feels like you are in these situations where you are expected to be in pieces.

TH: It's hard to be present all the time. Going back to a mind and body divide, we always have that struggle. We're in this physical body, but there's so much input and output.

IM: The temptation to multitask is constant.

JH: You have to reel it back and say, "This is who I am." Even if I'm not exactly sure where I'm supposed to be, I can be clear about who I am and where I want to be. From there, we can get a little bit more clarity about each of the steps.

WM: You have to think about what values you have in your life, and that's how you figure out how to nourish yourself.

JH: I'm a fan of easy self-care—how do I put something in my way so that in order to not do this thing, I have to intentionally avoid it? If I want to drink more water, then I should stumble over water at every point throughout my day. Whatever it is, putting it in your way is my suggestion. How do you create opportunities to practice it? It's called practice for a reason. You get stronger at it. Give yourself ways to figure it out, and you can be as creative as you wanna get.

WM: I love how you frame it as a practice. One of our Fellows told us in his submission that he built a Zen garden for himself, and

he said that it took about three years, as long as it takes him to work on a performance. They take the same amount of time. He is someone who has found a balance between his practice of nourishment and his artistic practice.

TH: He also tends to the garden in the same way that he works.

JH: The thing about practice is that sometimes we forget that how we work, how we move, how we behave—even, sometimes, the things that we believe—are just about how well practiced we are at one thing versus another. Our lives are full of practices. Often when I'm working with young folks and they're struggling with anger, they say, "I don't really know how to not be in this space." It's because they are more well practiced at rage. And it doesn't mean that that's negative. There is use for rage. But we can also be more well practiced at peace.

So what does it mean to start figuring out how to become more practiced in the areas where we want to grow? If we can think about it as something you can work toward, you're actually building muscle, you're building strength around a particular idea. It'll be clunky at first, because anytime you start something new, you feel clumsy. But if you think about it as a practice, you can at least give yourself more space.

TH: It's been an interesting process... trying to navigate our own feelings. So hearing you today was a nice culmination of our thoughts and gave us a time to think through these moments that gave us confidence. At the beginning of making this book, we thought, "How are we gonna do this?" But we figured it out, step by step.

IM: This has been such a beautiful conversation. Thank you.

JH: Thank you! My mother always told me, "Nothing beats a failure more than a try." If you try it, then it might work. If it doesn't, then you can try something else. Giving yourself the energy to say, "I can do this." ✿

Afterword

The conception of *Anthology* and release of this inaugural issue, *A Slow Unfolding*, stems from the core idea that drives our work at United States Artists—we believe in artists. Specifically, we champion the person behind the practice, striving daily to bring them to the fore. This shows up in a number of ways, most notably in the form of an unrestricted cash award. From our inception, we hoped to establish a fund that allowed artists to take care of themselves in whatever way they needed. We wanted artists to nurture their lives free from the expectations of a traditional grant and to be realistic about what it takes to care for oneself entirely (and, in turn, one's practice).

Each year we identify up to 50 of the country's most compelling practitioners to recognize them individually while also articulating them as a collective moment in our cultural history. We love existing at the intersection of these two poles. On one end, we deepen our relationship with each and every artist and hold space for everything they've offered our field. On the other, we get to unite dozens of distinct voices flexing both their rich differences and overflowing similarities.

In 2019, we celebrate 45 artists and collectives who have moved this country with both their art and their spirit, and through them, we have learned what nourishment looks like in practice. Taking a cue from these artists, our editors Tess Haratonik, Isabelle Martin, and Whitney Mash embody this spirit in *A Slow Unfolding*, creating another opportunity to center the artist and better understand what it takes to live a whole and fulfilling life. I am so proud of how they quickly encapsulated the sheer force of the 2019 USA Fellows. It is not easy to make a project that exists simultaneously as a moment of rest and call to action, but they did just that and we are so proud of them!

I want to thank the contributors of this inaugural issue. First and foremost, major gratitude to the 2019 USA Fellows, whose insight, enthusiasm, and willingness to participate kept us consistently awed. Profound appreciation goes to healing justice practitioner Jacqulyn Hamilton, who reminded us to be "self-full" and to look around and help others. And a major hat tip to illustrator Abigail St. Claire for illuminating the stories found in these pages. Thank you all for inspiring us.

I salute our Board of Trustees for their generosity and vision. Thank you for supporting a robust internship program that prioritizes the viewpoints and voices of young people. *Anthology* was a collaborative effort on behalf of our small but mighty staff, who all pitched in to hear ideas, review drafts, and cheerlead as needed, although no one dedicated themselves more than our Designer-in-Residence, Nadine Nakanishi, who acted as Project Manager, Lead Designer, and Hype-Woman-in-Chief. I speak on behalf of our entire team when I say that this project would not be possible without Nadine's generosity of spirit, sharp editorial eye, and immeasurable grace. Cheers to you!

And, finally, my deepest thanks go to Isabelle, Tess, and Whitney for setting the bar high. They are the kind of compassionate producers and deep listeners that our world really needs right now. Thank you for nourishing us and filling our office with so much joy. Bravo!

Deana Haggag
President & CEO

Contributors

Tess Haratonik
Editor & 2018-19 Intern

Tess is in her second year of pursuing Dual Master of Arts degrees in Arts Administration & Policy and Art History, Theory, & Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and holds a BA in Art History from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She is a Graduate Curatorial Assistant at the Sullivan Galleries in the Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies and a Graduate Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Curatorial Research and Practice at SAIC. Having previously worked at Monique Meloche Gallery and as a Research Assistant for Art Historian David Getsy, she now focuses her studies and work in exhibition coordination and management and in philanthropic organizations. In her free time, she enjoys being in the company of her beloved house plants, watching every and any cooking show, and making dinner from recipes.

Isabelle Martin
Editor & 2018-19 Intern

Isabelle is currently pursuing her MA in Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with research focusing on contemporary art that addresses themes of race, representation, and visibility. New to Chicago, she received her BA in Art History & Visual Studies, with a minor in Cello Performance, from the University of Kentucky. In her spare time, she enjoys reading personal essays and graphic novels, attending CSO concerts, and creating small (but usually not funny) comics.

Whitney Mash
Editor & 2018-19 Intern

After living on the east coast for seven years, Whitney is ecstatic to be back in her hometown of Chicago. After receiving a BA in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania, she worked at Christie's in New York City, coordinating sales for its Handbags & Accessories division. She is currently working towards Dual Master of Arts degrees in Arts Administration & Policy and Art History, Theory, & Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. At SAIC, she is a Graduate Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Curatorial Research and Practice. When she's not in class or interning, Whitney enjoys a bikram yoga session, attending theater performances, and exploring new restaurants in the city.

Jacqulyn Hamilton
Contributor

Jacqulyn Hamilton is a Healing Justice Practitioner based in Chicago, Illinois. Rooted in social justice and liberatory praxis, she supports individuals, communities and institutions as they work to integrate wellness practices. She works heavily with Chicago Freedom School where she co-created and coordinates Project HealUs, a youth centered reproductive justice learning and organizing intensive. Jacqulyn is the creator of #civicallyengaged: Electoral Politics for Everyday People. She is a founding member of Ujima Medics, a Black Community Medic Collective that offers first responder training for gunshot wounds and asthma attacks. She is a birthworker and a massage therapist/bodyworker.

Nadine Nakanishi
Designer-in-Residence

Nadine fancies herself to be a proud print nerd. Born in Santa Monica, California to immigrant parents, she spent her youth in Switzerland, where her Swiss/American/Japanese background has shaped her understanding of the modern world. Her passion for art started as a young adult following all things music and exploring the graphic arts that eventually led her to study both type and graphic design in Switzerland. In 2006, she established Sonnenzimmer, a collaborative graphic arts practice with her partner, Nick Butcher. Without a doubt, she believes graphics serve as a cornerstone for understanding the arts and our times.

Abigail St. Claire
Illustrator

Abigail St. Claire is an artist living and working in Chicago, IL. Having studied many different art forms over the years, she is deeply inspired by many facets of creativity. She can usually be found with headphones in her ears and when she isn't working or studying, she's traveling, cooking meals with friends, or relaxing in her apartment with her three-legged cat.

2019 USA Fellows

Architecture & Design

Erin Besler & Ian Besler
Architects & Designers
Princeton, NJ & Brooklyn, NY

Lucia Cuba
Designer & Textile Artist
New York, NY

Keller Easterling
Writer & Designer
New Haven, CT & New York, NY

Craft

Coulter Fussell
Quilter
Water Valley, MS

Samuel Harvey
Ceramicist
Aspen, CO

Michelle Holzapfel
Wood Carver
Marlboro, VT

Janice Lessman-Moss
Digital Weaver
Kent, OH

Carole Frances Lung
Social Practice & Performance Artist
Long Beach, CA

Dance

David Dorfman
Choreographer
New London, CT

Lenora Lee
Dancer & Choreographer
San Francisco, CA

Alice Sheppard
Dancer & Choreographer
Los Altos, CA

Merián Soto
Dancer & Choreographer
Philadelphia, PA

Yara Travieso
Director, Choreographer, & Filmmaker
Brooklyn, NY

Film

Nuotama Frances Bodomo
Filmmaker
Queens, NY

Ramona S. Diaz
Documentary Filmmaker
Baltimore, MD

Julia Reichert & Steven Bognar
Documentary Filmmakers
Yellow Springs, OH

Media

Hyphen-Labs
Designers
New York, NY

Mitra Kaboli
Multimedia Artist & Podcaster
Brooklyn, NY

Music

Reena Esmail
Composer
Pasadena, CA

Susie Ibarra
Percussionist & Composer
New Paltz, NY

Roscoe Mitchell
Multi-Instrumentalist & Composer
Oakland, CA

Helado Negro
Avant-Pop Musician & Performer
Brooklyn, NY

Tunde Olaniran
Pop Musician & Performer
Flint, MI

Jen Shyu
Vocalist & Composer
Brooklyn, NY

Theater & Performance

Charlotte Brathwaite
Director
New York, NY

Rashida Bumbray
Choreographer & Performer
Brooklyn, NY

Teo Castellanos
Theater Artist
Miami, FL

Complex Movements
Installation & Performance Collective
Detroit, MI

Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig
Dramatist
Santa Barbara, CA

Kaneza Schaal
Theater Artist
Brooklyn, NY

Traditional Arts

Juan Díes
Mexican Folk Musician
Chicago, IL

Gabriel Frey
Traditional Basketmaker
Orono, ME

Arthur López
Wood Sculptor
Santa Fe, NM

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Anchorage, AK

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Multidisciplinary Artist
New York, NY

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Multidisciplinary Artist & Writer
Brooklyn, NY

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Multidisciplinary Artist
New York, NY

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Filmmaker & Artist
Los Angeles, CA

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Painter & Multimedia Artist
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About the endpaper in this book: The two sheets facing the cover are paper hand-made in Nepal. All of the water used in this production is reclaimed and used. You can recycle, compost or plant the endpapers by cutting them out. The seeds found in this paper include 10 perennial species who tolerate partial shade, need 4 hours of direct sunlight a day, and grow to about 3 inches. Seeds include Snapdragon, Petunia, Beardtongue, Daisy, Thyme, Poppy, Foxglove, Catchfly, Maiden Pinks, Chamomile. If planted in a pot, cover with 1/8" soil and keep moist until establishing germination.

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they will bring WINE

WATCH the breath

BLISS

LIBERATING

face the EAST

take a WALK

walk briskly

EXPANSIVE

narcotic EFFECT

MEDITATION

CULTIVATE generosity

nostalgia

UNWIND

SOAK IT IN

transporting

Communicating WITH nature

BEYOND myself

IMMERSE

The opposite page can be removed and planted.

A SLOW FOLD-IN C

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