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A full-page background image of a bright blue sky with soft, wispy white clouds. The clouds are more concentrated in the lower right corner, while the upper left is a clearer blue.

Created, designed, and edited by Lane Dreslin

Special thanks to Lynne Weinstein and the artists that  
took part in this project

Stuck in quarantine during the COVID-19 crisis, I was left at my house all day, every day, bored out of my mind. One day, I was scrolling through TikTok per usual, and one video caught my eye. A girl had completely designed a magazine all by herself. Photos, writing, design, everything. I immediately thought to myself: “I want to do that too.”

Thus, the idea for *Athena* was born. *Athena* -- goddess of wisdom and craft -- is a zine that I created and designed to show the impact of COVID-19 in the art community across the nation. From my home of Stowe, Vermont, I reached out to artists around the country, and received responses from a sculpture artist in Oakland, CA, an illustrator from NYC, and a painter from Princeton, NJ. Through interviews, I learned what it means to be an artist in our country's current climate, and what steps they are taking moving forward. But more importantly, I learned that art is a connection necessary in a community. Art is not just a hobby or a pastime, but part of the glue that holds us together as people.

Keep doing what you love!

<3 Lane



Melame



Joe Melamed is a unique type of sculptor. Based in Oakland, CA, he typically creates his sculptures out of chicken wire, paper, and plastic. Most recently, Melamed finished a project designed to reinvigorate a public space that is currently deserted due to the coronavirus: his local basketball court. Titled *Hoop Dreams*, this sculpture was created with a base of chicken wire, and given life with merely paper and tape. I reached out to him via email to talk about his experience during the pandemic and what it means for his future projects.



Describe the process of Hoop Dreams.

The process was pretty simple. I made the sculpture a while ago as part of a collaborative installation with a CSU East Bay sculpture class. I knew I wanted to put it out in a public place after that but I didn't want to occupy a functioning basketball court. Then, COVID-19 hit and all the courts here closed, the perfect time to share this work. So one night I loaded up the basketball players in my truck and gave myself a little pep talk and went over to the courts and installed the work, as quickly and sneakily as I could. The whole process was pretty nerve racking and I went to sleep pretty unhappy and anxious. I did it alone and it wasn't really fun, mostly just stressful. Then friends in the neighborhood started texting/emailing/calling me to tell me they recognized my work and loved it, and then the community started sharing it on social media and then it was on the news. The whole progression has been pretty interesting.

Has there been a level of restriction put on your work because of quarantine?

No, I usually use a lot of recycled/repurposed materials that I collect gradually so I didn't have any material needs I couldn't meet. As far as subject matter, I haven't felt any pressure to work on anything I don't want to.

Has the amount of time given to or taken away from you during quarantine influenced your creative process?

I've had more time for my art practice, thinking about art, deciding what I make, why I make at all. The additional time has been great.

What has been your biggest influence during quarantine?

COVID-19 and its repercussions have affected my work the most. My work usually revolves around my everyday experiences so quarantine and COVID made sense to talk about because it was so immediately present.

What has been your favorite part of creating during quarantine?

Having an art practice has been a great way to stay busy and active while so much of regular life has slowed or stopped.





What was the most important thing you wanted to convey when creating your public sculpture(s)?

The basketball players are there to memorialize life before social distancing. They're surrogates for us doing the things we love to do that we can't do until the pandemic is under control.

Do you have any more public projects in mind?

Yes, I'm working on an installation of paper birds that is a collaboration with an elementary school in east Oakland. We're going to install birds on the playground while the school is closed. It should be pretty cool. I'm making common local birds but who knows what the students will come up with.

Photo credits: Pete Belkin





# JESS Johnson



Born in New Zealand, Jess Johnson moved to New York City five years ago to continue her drawing practice. Her drawings are detailed, fantastical creations with a mix of sci-fi, language, and otherworldly elements. Currently, her collaborated installation project titled *TERMINUS* is on a tour through Australasia. I found her work through an article on Artsy.net and decided to reach out to her to hear about her process during COVID-19.

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How has the amount of time given to or taken away from you during quarantine influenced your creative process?

The greatest challenge for me over the last few years is dealing with the administrative or non-creative aspects of being an artist: the time taken up with emailing and organising, planning exhibitions, writing grant proposals. That all takes time away from actually drawing, which is what I prefer doing over anything else in the world. So many artists (myself included), produce artwork with an outcome in mind such as an exhibition or career step. And removing that outcome can perhaps free us to experiment and create art that connects us to the universalities of being human, as opposed to 'professional artists' operating within the structures of a commercial artworld.

Has there been a level of restriction put on your work because of quarantine?

I have found it hard to focus, but I deliberately use my routine and drawing to try and quiet my mind. There's only so much anxiety you can manifest about things you have absolutely no control over. But I do have complete control over the world in my drawings and that's always been important to the psychology of why I do it.

One aspect I've noticed is simply the absence of all the mental noise that had occupied me prior. And in its place is a slightly uncomfortable void. It's like we are all having to get acquainted with ourselves again. Initially I was compulsively trying to fill it with consuming lots of bad reality TV which I would stream while drawing. And now I've started to integrate periods of just nothing. Like being alone on walks without your phone. Staring into space. Just starting to listen to your own voice inside your head without all the other voices in the culture clamouring for attention.





How has the current climate of New York City impacted your work/creativity?

I had moved out of my Chinatown studio and into this new apartment only a month before lockdown. Fortunately I had turned my front room into a home studio that I could use to draw. So I was very prepared when all this happened. On the whole my life doesn't look much different from it did before. I keep to the regular work schedule that I'm accustomed to. I break up my days with walks and cooking and telly like everyone else. It's just that my days have taken on a strange air of unreality. Although I'm trying hard to just focus on the small world around me over everything I can't control beyond it.

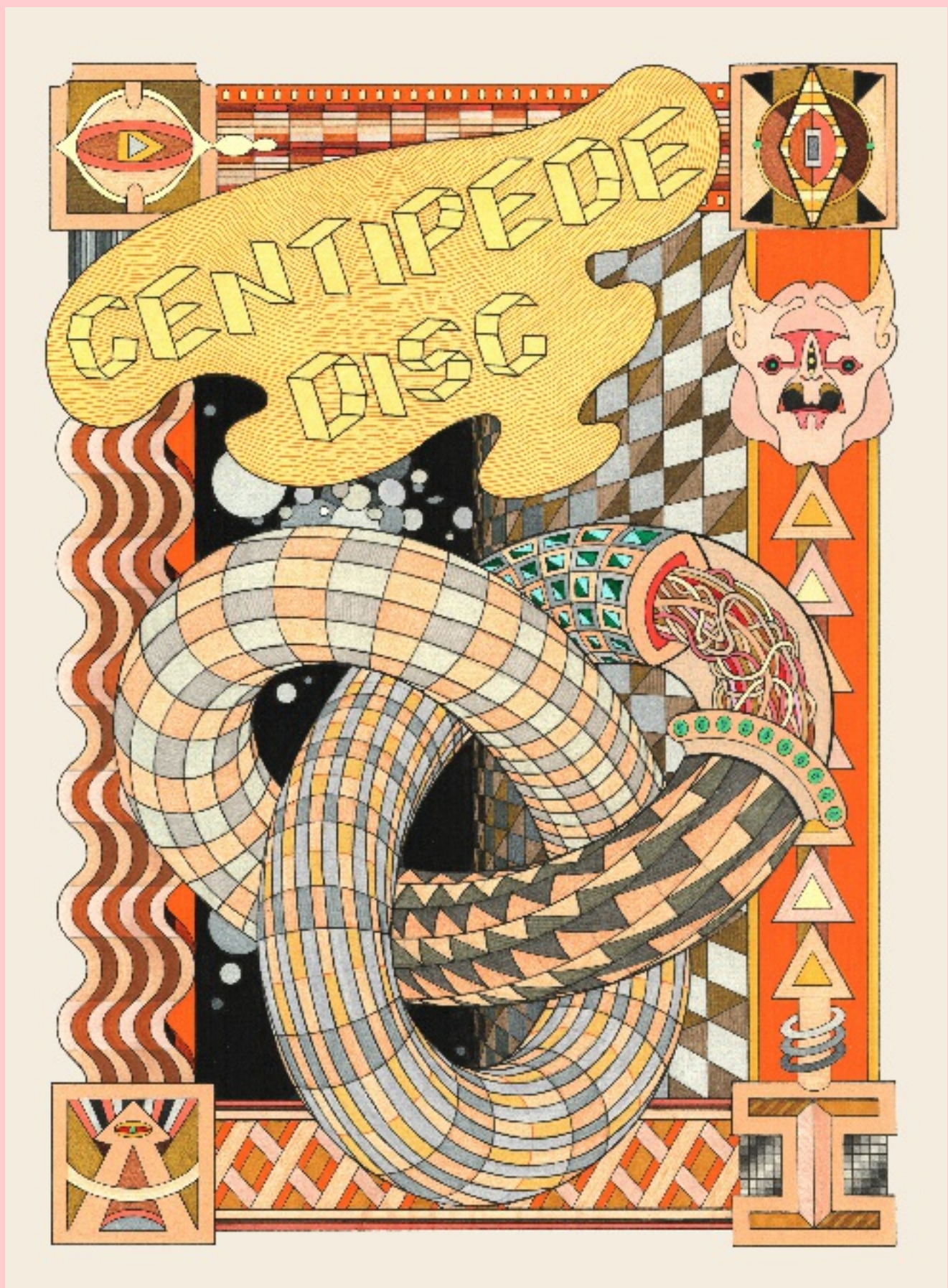
Are you still in New York City?

I'm quarantined in Red Hook, a sleepy little peninsula of Brooklyn. The neighbourhood is full of industrial shipyards, automotive garages and feral cat colonies so the lockdown has been less visually jarring here than say Manhattan. Initially I was shut in with my New Zealand based video collaborator Simon Ward who came to the US so we could present our artwork at the SXSW festival which was cancelled. The day after he arrived everything started to get crazy, and he got very nervous about being able to get back to NZ before the borders shut. We spent a week cooped up together before he managed to get a flight back. Now I am quarantined with my friend Bobby, who moved in to give his housemates some more space, and we both wanted the company through it all.

Are there other new projects that have come out of quarantining, or are you mainly spending time on your ongoing collaborations?

The main difference between now and before is that all of my future exhibitions, projects and commissions got wiped out in one fell swoop. The irony is that for the last few years I'd been complaining about how all the administrative tasks of being an artist were taking up all my time, so it has been a case of 'be careful what you wish for'. All I had been desiring was more time to draw, and now I have all the time in the world. It does mean a lot of backburner projects can get done, such as the playing cards that I'm making with my friend Bobby who I am quarantining with. I'm also aware that all the ways I used to make income may no longer be viable in the future. So I'm keen to make more affordably priced merchandise that I can sell directly to people, as that's something that I can control myself and I don't have to depend on the commercial gallery system for that. All I need is Instagram.





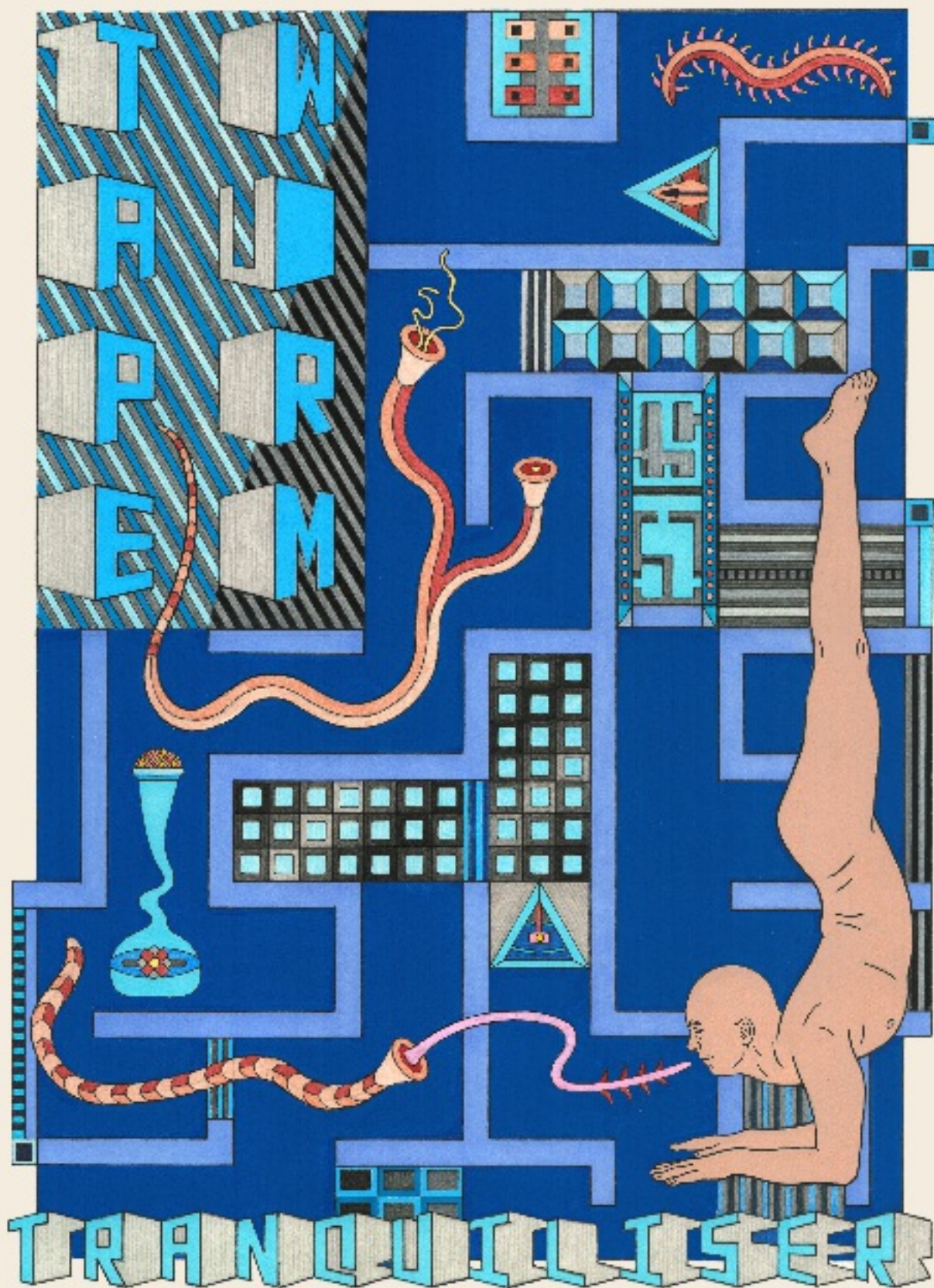
*Centipede Disc*

2020

9

Pen, fibre tipped markers, acrylic paint, and gouache on paper





*Tapeworm Tranquiliser*

2020

Pen, fibre tipped markers, acrylic paint, and gouache on paper



# KATHLEEN Hurley Liao



Kathleen Hurley Liao is a mixed media abstract artist who incorporates automatism, rhythm, and expressionism in her work. A graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University with a degree in Anthropology, her appreciation of multicultural art forms and practices influences her art. Hurley Liao's passion for jazz music, with its harmonies, dissonances, and resolutions, also shapes her compositions. Most recently, I saw her work in her town's online newspaper and decided she was someone I would like to reach out to.

Photo credit: Steve Schilling



How has the amount of time given to or taken away from you during quarantine influenced your creative process?

This is such an interesting question, as everything I do, can no longer do, or that changes what I do, influences the creative process. Perhaps an echo of lost personal and studio time is reflected in my recent works. Being confined to home and local environs has put a denser energy in the art, as I can no longer expend that creative energy by communing with other artists or by attending live jazz gigs. All art forms feed, support, and inspire each other.

What has been your biggest influence during quarantine?

My biggest influence has been the rebound of the visual art and jazz music scene in the Philadelphia, NYC, and Trenton, NJ. Before I could blink an eye, musicians were broadcasting from their living rooms, galleries had gone virtual. The calling of the artist to create, connect, and forge conversation never diminished. It simply switched gears. This sustained energy keeps us all going.

Has there been a level of restriction put on your work because of quarantine?

I would say there has been both a a level of mental and physical restriction put on my work. Mentally, the whole phenomenon of COVID-19, the fatalities, random severity of the illness, and the way in which our country handled the crisis, required a time of processing, if not grieving, and temporarily paralyzed my work. Physically speaking, I had both a solo and group exhibit canceled.

Have you been experimenting in different mediums because of the pandemic?

As I mentioned above, there was a period of paralysis. I had to dip my toe back in....and I did so with watercolors, a medium I rarely use. It was a gentle way to re-enter art making. But soon I was back to digging in vigorously with more durable material and implements. I'm a mixed media artist so anything goes.

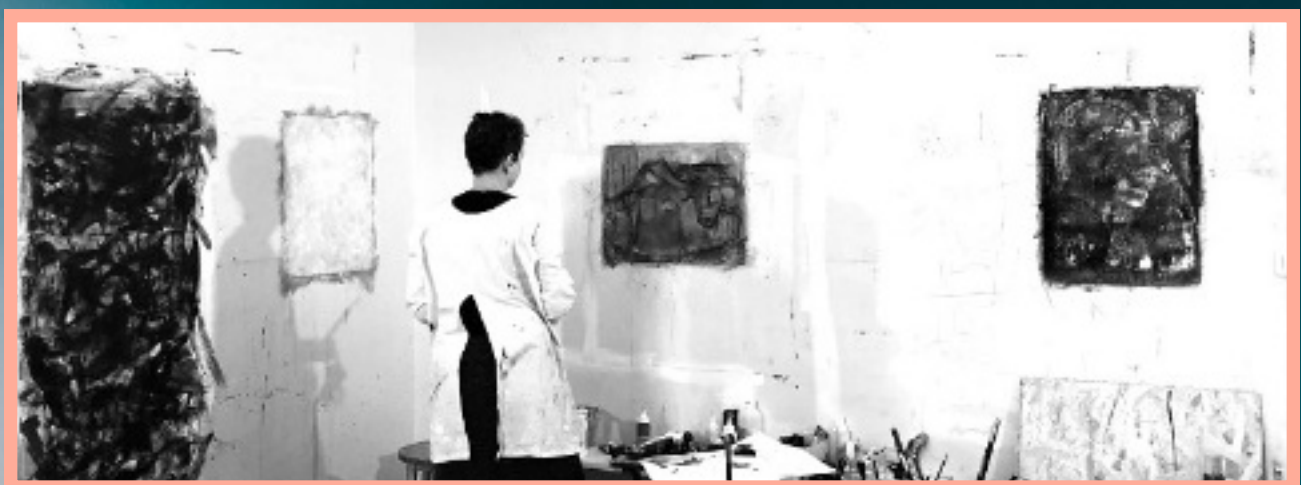


Photo credit: Serena Merry





*Escape Route*  
2020  
Acrylic, wax and colored pencil, cut and torn canvas.



*ISO-litude*  
2020  
Monotype collage, acrylic, and mixed media on Yupo

How has the pandemic been reflected in your recent works, if at all?

Yes, the pandemic has most definitely been reflected in recent works, and I believe an elemental energy of the present enters all artists' work. My pieces suddenly took on a much smaller scale, forced into more confined spaces. I hadn't realized this until I addressed your question. My process begins with automatism, and then I work more consciously after the initial gestures. "Reverso" is, for me, about a free fall and backtracking to home life. The title of "ISO-litude" refers to unusual imbalance, as exists in isotopes, that carries through to isolation. "Escape Route" seems self explanatory, but is that small figure on the bottom right a security guard or a person on their way to freedom? Lastly, "Tude" is a combination of attitude and fortitude, a depiction of strength. This is what I see once I step back, but I leave all my work open to interpretation so a viewer may connect from his or her own frame of reference.

Has quarantine been beneficial to you in terms of your creativity?

I wouldn't say that quarantine has been beneficial in terms of my creativity, but that it has made me more aware of creative process and of art's place in society. It has taught me, once again, that art can transcend its media and become a voice. Quarantine speaks of uncertainty, solitude, and resilience. And in light of the recent murder of George Floyd by police officers, and recent demonstrations, there remains much more to be said about injustice through art and action.

# R E F L E

My main inspiration for this project was found in my own community of Stowe, VT, after an anonymous artist created art for the whole town seemingly overnight. While I am lucky to live in such a small community with almost no cases of COVID-19, it still has deeply affected the community, along with many, many others. The only corporate businesses in my town is a single grocery store, which means that every other business typically relies on tourism and the general support of residents to keep their business going.

One day, hopeful, colorful signs decorated with multicolored hearts and rainbows appeared at each street corner, intersection, and neighborhood. Soon, it became talk around the town to figure out who the mystery artist was (particularly impressive since there are only ~4,000 people in my town!). What I also found important, however, was that there are still people out there that could find inspiration to make artwork despite being stuck inside their homes.

Researching and reaching out to these artists during this project gave me insight to how a job that seems so portable can still be impacted by a global pandemic. It also gave me insight to how artists all around the world are using these difficult times to strengthen their skills, improvise, and give back to their community. In Italy, people are playing instruments together from balcony to balcony. In China, artists which have been on lockdown since February produced a collaboration of artworks despite the social distancing. While quarantine is definitely a hardship for us all, it certainly isn't a limitation for creativity.



# C T I O N



