



POETRY EN PLEIN AIR

THE STRIP AT AGE 20 GENE KNIGHT

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I am on a New York Strip.

I laugh at the line above,
For I am referencing a street
Of bars.

"It's fresh tonight!" Says someone.

(Everyone is dressed real nice,
And everyone
Is dressed to sell themselves.
Who is to say that some are
Dressed for relation
And others exhilaration?
Not the men. Not I.)

The lights are dim lit
Like a roller rink.

Women move like spinning tops
Which dip and dive when they slow.
They are as fluid as drapery
Swinging to-and-fro—
And their eyes light the room
As if moons. All the while I am a telescope.
I am a starry-eyed observer.

I eye my love to my right,
Who dances like a ribbon,
While I dance like the stick.

Her eyes are a marble game.
Big brown marbles shooting along
Her drunken movements.
She's enthralling
to look at. Simply put.

Then I am reminded,
Suddenly, fearfully,
That the men are not dancing and that
They are eyeing through

The bottoms of their cheap
Plastic cups, with eyes
Which belong in tall grass.

Are my eyes any different? I wonder.



IN THE ZONE

Saving Escape

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GRETA TEBBE
SECONDARY PHOTOGRAPHY

ROMOND DUVAL
WRITING

RYAN DETTMAN
SECONDARY WRITING

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STYLING

FEATURING SAVING ESCAPE

KALA ROSE
CHARLOTTE GRAHAM
ALEX MUCCINO
LEE SULLIVAN
JACOB BOLDMAN
HUNTER BROOKBANK

The universal urge to become a bad bitch performer in a band is something that we've all felt at some point in time. But only a few of us turn that daydream into a passionate reality. Saving Escape did just that. After meeting each other in their small town music school, they knew they had to join forces to create the ultimate Cincinnati rock band. I was lucky enough to meet with this dynamic group in the space where all the fucking magic happens: their creepy-ass, incredibly desolate, abandoned (but not really abandoned) practice space that also serves as a super grungy hangout spot in downtown Cincinnati. It's where they rock out, double hit dabs and nicotine, and display found treasures that feel both weird and revolutionary. It can be said that the space you spend the most time in influences the work that you create. And shit, it's pretty much because of the aforementioned statement that we've coined this series *In The Zone*. Because when dope artists like the folks of Saving Escape let us in their zone, we're presented with a world of unique perspectives that inspire us to reach towards the stars of our creative orbit.

First thing's first, we gotta know Your Top Spotify Wrapped Artists

Charlie - Turnstile. And I started listening in October. That's how much I've been listening to them.

Alex - Mine has always been King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard (my cat is named after him)

Kala - My number one was Prince. Can't go wrong. Three of my top songs were Prince, soooo...

Jacob - Mine was this electronic artist called Sewerslvt. I got really in the thick of listening to noisy, screechy, electronic music and it's an adventure for me.

Lee - Grateful Dead is always there because it's my dad's favorite band so we listen to it on road trips and stuff. It's also childhood comfort for me too.

Do you find all of these different artists influencing the work you all produce?

Alex - Oh yeah. I think that's what kind of makes our sound differ from what other bands are doing right now. Because we have so many different influences and sort of change-ups in songs that are like... you know it'll be a punk song one second, and then a Boss Nova song one second, and a rock song one second.

Jacob - What we're listening to is always changing. It's like we keep just adding spices to this big pot. Our sound grows more and more - we're never taking anything out. But it's always good. I'm worried that one day we would spoil it *laughter*.

Why did you choose to chat here today? What's it about this space that makes you feel so comfortable?

Alex - It's just the spot, man.

Kala - It's constantly set up for us. We have no curfew... and we can play here until four in the morning and it doesn't matter.

Charlie - Yes for sure, but to tell what this space is, it's a warehouse - a collective space for artists. You can rent out different spaces in the warehouse. It's technically Lee's space he owns it -

Lee - I don't own it. If I owned it, that'd be a craazy asset. But no, me and my friend Liam (who has his own project called Fat Sal) both rent out this space... They used to make leather for baseball gloves [here] back in the early 1900s up until the 50s when the highway system got built and then it got abandoned and now they kinda rent it to whoever. You can't really live here, but we've got lots of friends here. And lots of rats.

Kala - The other day we were giving a friend a tour here and found a random terrifying baby doll. I took him home with me.

How do you think this space affects your music?

Jacob - We get shit done here... There's a difference in rehearsing at a space that also happens to be your buddy's house because we can rehearse for a little bit and then do literally anything else. When we're here, it's like we're here for a specific reason.

Charlie - It's like leaving to go to work versus the work being in your home.

Kala - One thing that I will say is a true testament to the warehouse is that we would've never met Lee here [either] if it wasn't for the jams we had here. It was great, people would just drink and take turns jamming and it was just a really cool place to meet artists. And I remember one time Charlotte and I went and all of the sudden we saw this tall lanky dude just blowing some amazing shit out of this horn and we were like what the fuck?! Next thing we know, he's a core member of the band. And even our keys player Hunter.

So... this definitely isn't going to turn into a COVID conversation, but how do you feel like the pandemic has affected that work that ya'll have been doing lately.

Lee - When lockdown happened, the music scene just kind of evaporated but we got the opportunity to write an entire album during that time. And I remember, right after things started to open up a little more, we booked a show. And we went and played the show and were immediately freaked out. We were like this is WEIRD. Honestly, at that point in time, playing a show again was not in the foreseeable future for me. Like this was an event that was allowed to happen, but it just felt so weird to be in a space full of people. So [COVID] ended up becoming a refinement time for us and gave us the chance to sharpen our individual skills. So, [besides the weirdness] the difference between us playing shows pre and post covid shows real growth.





Kala - Yeah and I feel like it did us more good than harm. A lot of people would assume that it made things more difficult as a band, and yeah, we weren't going out and making money, but we had an opportunity to hone our craft. To just sit and write an album for eight months was nice.

We've recently changed the title of this series from Artist Perspectives to In the Zone to focus on the environments of artists a bit more and that's why we're here today. This space is insane. But, aside from this place, what's your favorite spot you've gotten to perform at?

Charlie - House shows. Without a doubt, it's a different energy.

Lee - I like being on the same level as the people I'm playing to. Being on a stage there's a certain level of disconnection — there are lights in your face and you don't see anyone you're playing to. Everybody could be just standing there or they could be fucking moshing but you have no clue. But at house shows you can feel and see the energy. If someone's like "oh shit" we can see that oh shit moment.

Charlie - And these are shows that we just put together. There's no bullshit or tickets or set times. You just get to hang out and play with other musicians your same age.

Kala - And nobody's expecting anything of you. You can just go out and do whatever you want. If we're at a house show I don't have to worry about censoring myself or what I'm wearing or if I get too drunk. I'm just going to be myself.

So you already know how much we want to talk about Inkarceration. Any notable memories?

Kala - That shit was great. They asked me to sing the national anthem in front of 25,000 people, which in my history, I have messed up before. So, I'm like shitting my pants and I thought I was going to cry, but it was incredible. People were looking at me in the crowd like,

"You can do it, sweetie." It was the most humbling experience. It also showed me that, since playing with these guys for so long, I don't think I could ever play by myself again. Because being alone was the biggest ego death I've ever had. I was like, I can't do this without my people. So having that experience one day and then playing with these guys the next day at the crazy festival and getting tattoos was the coolest thing in the world.

Alex - And you get treated like royalty at festivals. Need a golf cart? It's there. It's great.

So you went from performing at, what 14 years old, on the back of a trailer to doing amazing shows today. Closing things out, what would you say to your fourteen-year-old selves about the future?

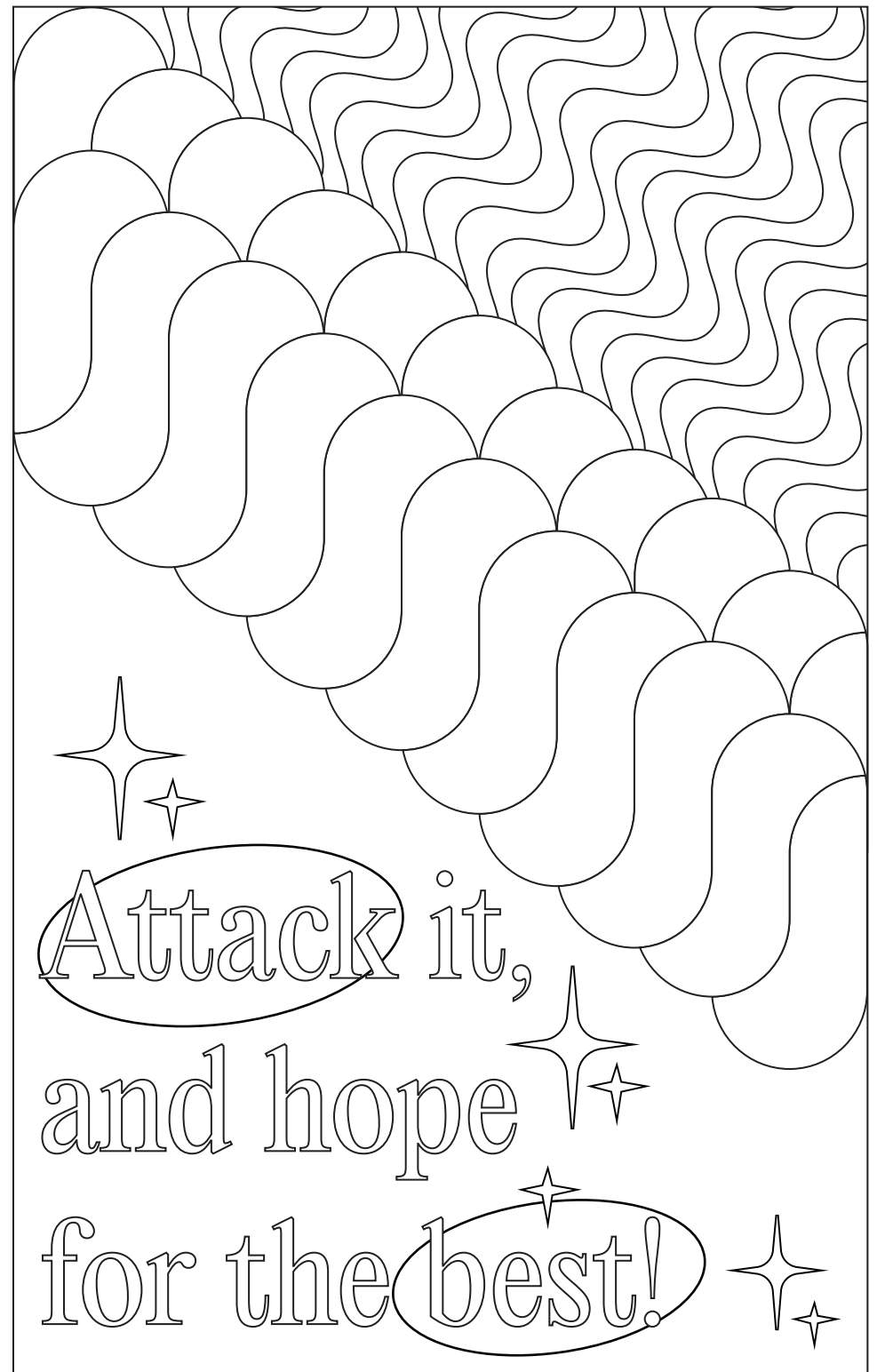
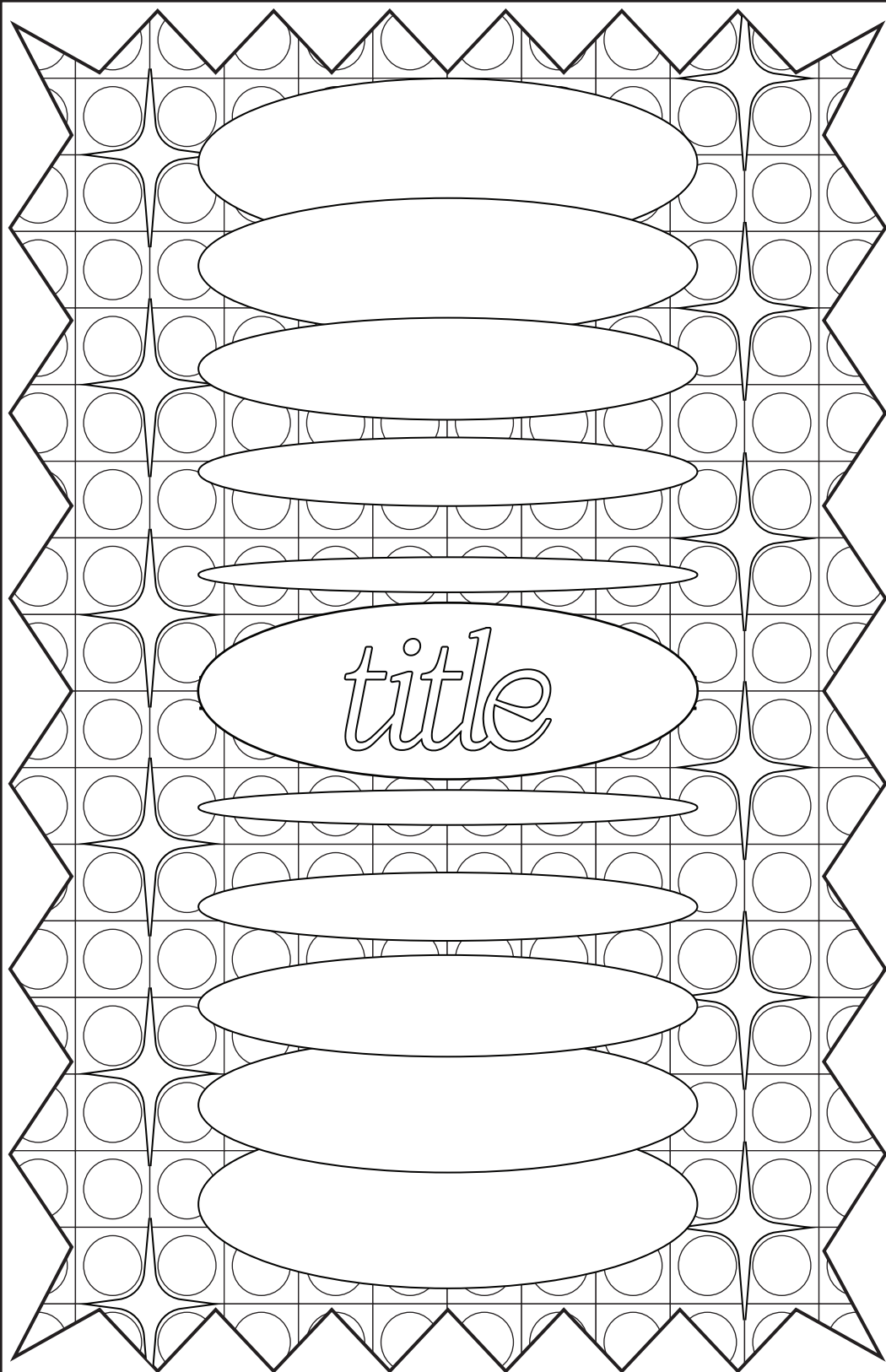
Alex - To not dress the way we did. *laughter*

Kala - No, but something positive would probably be to just keep doing it. I never thought I'd be the musician I am today. I was so self-conscious about my art and just what I was doing. So, I'd say keep doing what you're doing and just be happy and have fun because I feel like... as a kid who was super self-conscious, knowing that things would be okay would be great advice.

Charlie - I would tell our fourteen-year-old selves to not fucking fight over text messages. We just recently started not fighting over text. I feel like we almost broke up like four times. But we learned that being in a band is like a group project.

Anything else?
Stream "Get Mine!"







IN THE ZONE

Meghan Curran

With neutral tones being an increasingly popular trend coming into the 20s, Meghan Curran (@meghan_curran), who wears a Betty Boop graphic tee, a blue checkered cardigan, and a red plaid skirt – reminiscent of a classic picnic blanket – politely disagrees.

She says so simply.

“I want to be in neon. I want someone to spot me across the room. I want to look like my work.” And she does.

Inspired from the Pop Art movement of the 1980s, her work focuses on similar themes, that is, the inclusivity of art and the experimental usage of color. As of recent, she’s focused on body positivity and liberation. Her subjects, nudes with diverse sizes and shades, move along her apartment walls with a whimsical nature.

Meghan is a 24-year-old alum from Herron School of Art and Design with a bachelor’s in drawing and illustration. Since her graduation, she’s been featured in The New York Times, several galleries, and a recent installation

for the NCAA’s 2021 March Madness exhibition titled “Swish.” Along with this, she has also established “Big Gay Market,” a space in downtown Indianapolis which embraces over 50 LGBT+ vendors.

Meanwhile, thanks to the leisurely decline of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people around the country still remain restricted in some manner. Meghan, however, works diligently in her studio. How does she manage this? In a decorated room in a decorated fashion. Around her room are prints, patterns, plushies, and her cat who strides around where he pleases. Meghan continues to remain optimistic, “Thank you COVID. Now I have time with my cat.” She goes on to say her point, “I don’t want it to feel like I’m working. I want it to feel like I’m playing.”

Our conversation has been edited and condensed in the following Q&A.

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SECONDARY PHOTOGRAPHY

RYAN DETTMAN
WRITING

FEATURING
MEGHAN CURRAN

What are your creative rituals?

I think, especially, since I'm working in a studio by myself, seeing other artists working is really motivating to me. I'm either going to someone's show, as in going to a local show, or watching TikToks of other artists. Just seeing other people working is really motivational to me – even someone into oil painting as a medium is still motivating to me. It's not at all what I'm doing and it's not like, "Oh, I should do something like that." That's not the way that I think about it. I'm more like, "Oh-my-God this artist is working and inspired and they're killing it and I also want to do that."

Do you think you work better outside the home or here in the studio?

Both. I mean, a lot of times I'll work on my bed, or I'll work on the rug, or in front of my bed. I think that depends on how comfortable I feel like I need to be. I screen print here, too (she gestures to the room), like a lot of this is me molding my entire apartment to make it as comfortable as possible for me to make art here. Turning my bedroom into my studio is important for that. Having a door for my studio so he [my cat] can't come in and eat everything is important, too. He will – and yeah – he's really nosey.

I think you did a great job. You really can't tell where your studio starts and where your bedroom begins.

Any living space I have I want it to feel like this.

What's it been like for you working in the pandemic?

When the pandemic started, I was in my second semester of school, and it was the semester where I was writing and working on my thesis and so we got kicked out of our studios. So, I did my whole thesis here and we didn't

get the opportunity to do a show. Everything was in my bathtub. That was the way that I presented it and I really had to think outside of the box in order to do what I was planning on doing originally. But I don't think it's that bad. I think it made me adapt. This is my studio now. I was able to be like, "Oh well I can work at home" like "it's okay that I don't have to be in a large studio. I don't have to pay for studio space, I can just like be at home and work," which is also comfortable.

How has your style changed and evolved over the course of college and personal life?

I feel more confident. I think it's a lot gayer now. Good. Gayer. I think I'm more confident so I'm a little bit more willing to take a little bit of risk. I'm willing to try things that I don't see other people doing. Um, it was just a lot of confidence. I think a lot of growth and confidence.

How do you think your queerness has changed your art over the course of the years and how do you convey that in your work?

As you get more comfortable and as you're exploring other things it's like, "yeah everything is gonna get a little gayer." I also think I like the queer community here. I got really into it. And so I'm taking inspiration from other people that I'm meeting. Not not only is my like identity important in all this, but my community's identities also are important – and my friends and my partner and all of them, I think, give me a lot of inspiration. I'm feeling very great right now. I set up a market last summer. I started the "Big Gay Market" here.





So, yeah, I'm very ingrained and I'm trying to be further ingrained in the queer community while uplifting other artists and getting inspiration from them – and inspiring them. Form a little community and like a little network and... I think that's just very important to me. Even if I'm in a slump, I want to be able to mesh in with them and uplift everyone else.

Can you talk a little bit more about the big gay market and establishing it?

Yeah. I had a gallery show that was given a space for a month and the owners were like, "Yeah you can do whatever you want with the space" and I was like, "Oh cool, like, I'll have an art show." That's what you do with a space, so I did that, and then, after that, I hosted a pop-up with my friend. A little thrift store. After the pop-up with them, I was like, "This went so well. We should post up a market – a market for a bunch of queer people." Looking back, I was like, "Maybe five of my friends will sign up." It would be really cute – just a cute little bit for me and my friends to be on the last day that I have with the studio.

Then nearly 60 people signed up and so I was overwhelmed at this. The person who owns the space next door was like, "Oh my God I saw this market! Do you need more space?" and I said, "Please I really need this space. People just keep signing up." In reflection, I didn't realize this is what Indianapolis wanted. And so we had two venues and it was indoors and outdoors and we're thinking over 3000 people were there. People were like, "Oh yeah we're here from Kentucky for this," or, "I came from northern Indiana," or, "I came from Ohio" – people drove here for the day. We shut down the block. 3 DJs and, I

think, over 55 vendors ended up being there. It was insane, literally, not at all what I thought. As soon as it was 8:00 PM and we were agreed "[the] market's over" I turned around and sobbed. So many people were saying "Indianapolis needed this," like, "this is the biggest queer event since Pride two years ago," and it was one of the biggest markets I think in Indiana.

Where do you pull inspiration from?

Past queer artists, always, like Keith Haring. I loved it. I love the accessibility of his work. I think that's really important to me and that's something that I am trying to have at a show. I want that to be accessible and I want the things that I'm doing to be accessible to all levels of artists and all levels of people. Those who are into queer art or those who aren't into queer art. I want people to be accessible. Anyone can feel drawn to my artwork. Yeah, I think this ability is probably the most important thing and I think that's something he did really well. That's something I admire a lot.



ROMAIN

ROMAIN

MAYAMBI

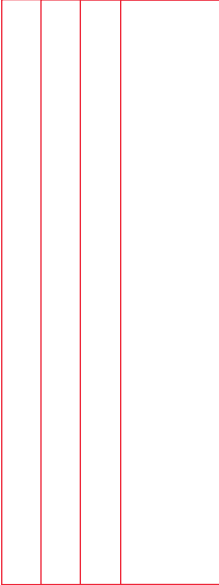
MAYAMBI



FEATURING
VINEISHA JONES

FEATURING
LIV KNECHT







IN THE ZONE

Not Work Related

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SARAH HUSSAINI

Most people like to look at the world of creating through an overly idyllic lens — one that praises the sexiness of art through shit like shirtless wheel throwing tiktoks and a fallaciously optimistic POV. Sarah Hussaini, also known as Not Work Related implies that we should burn those people at the stake. Okay, she didn't say that, but I did. What she did say was, "A lot of people do ceramics for fun and dream of this — to get out of an office and live a similar career — but they have no clue what it takes to actually do it." It's pretty much in spite of this that Hussaini keeps it real as fuck through both her online presence and her conversation with TITLÉ. She acknowledges that she has the best job in the world: making cool shit that cool people buy. But it's her acknowledgment of the gloomier side of this industry that makes her nothing like these other bitches — her emphasis on transparency is unparalleled. Through our conversation, we touch on some good shit. Good shit like the importance of identity in the ceramics industry, struggling with those immense feelings of burnout that we all know too well, and, through it all, keeping it 100 on social media. Ladies and gentlemen... Sarah Hussaini.

Tell me a little about how you fell into making ceramics?

I got my undergrad in architecture and then my Master's from Columbia, so that threw me out in New York. And then I worked for maybe two years and I felt so restless — like I was going crazy. I don't know I just felt like I couldn't sit still and the whole job was just "sit still." So, I went back and started taking some classes and did random things like making stools, but the ceramic stuff really hit because I had done it in the past. I did it casually for about a year while I was working at an architecture studio (it was the type of place where they wore dress pants all day and you said "Good morning!" and they would just nod) and that's why it's called Not Work Related .

So then, I started selling stuff I made in 2017 and I ~and this was real dumb~ quit my job. You know, once things started picking up I said "fuck this place, I don't want anything to do with it" and I left very prematurely.

Wait wtf did your parents say when you quit your job?

Hell nah, I didn't tell them. I didn't tell them until I felt stable. I've always been like that though. When I moved to New York, I told my parents a couple of weeks before I did it. Plus, I don't think they get my job. They know I make pottery, but they don't know how I make any money. They know that I'm fine, but they don't know how it works.

Some say being a full-time creative feels like you're not just selling your work, but pieces of yourself. Have you felt like that? Has social media played a role in that?

If you had asked me this like two years ago I'd be like "nooo no one's here for me, they're here because they want to buy shit". But I think I realized that a lot of people are following and taking a part in this journey because of me. And that's super weird, but I think a lot of it has been because I'm pretty honest and transparent on social media. I'm not necessarily giving 5 steps to make this piece yourself but more the logistics, time, and money that it takes to make this into a business.

A lot of people do ceramics for fun and dream of this — to get out of an office and live a similar career — but they have no clue what it takes to actually do it. Just a week ago, I put out numbers for the last year and my expenses were like 50 grand. People don't know that shit, they just think it's fun.

They probably think it's all just that shirtless dude on TikTok who throws clay and looks good.

No, yeah — I wonder who's letting him in with no shirt on. These places look like they're at community studios. Where are your clothes at?? But yeah, it is fun. It's totally fun, but there are things that people just don't know. My rent last year alone was 13 grand. And nobody thinks about that. So I try to be pretty exposed about that stuff. I like to think people who follow me are really here for me and my experiences.

Have you always been outgoing and present on social media or did Not Work Related urge you to unlock a part of yourself that you didn't really visit that often?

I definitely got pushed more out of my comfort zone than expected, but it feels more normal now. It's a lot of work, but it's worth it because this is the first time in history where you can make a totally independent living just by making your stuff. Before this, people sold to a store or a gallery and lost half their money. This is the first time where people can make an independent living by doing stuff on their own. I know people don't like social media, there's a lot of times when I don't either, but it's been pivotal for my self-sufficiency.

What do you feel like the most difficult thing about this gig is?

Self-direction. I used to work with a lot more stores that told you what was coming up, but at the end of 2020, I cut off my wholesale because I couldn't survive. I couldn't afford to lose half my income or make more work than I was physically capable of making.

And it gets really boring. You just do the same thing every day. It's obviously not bad like an office, but it beats you up in a way that I never expected. It's make stuff. Drop. ship it. Start again. So I've kinda learned how to make my own fun. I went on a road trip in the fall, so we went out to Philly, DC, Baltimore, and did pop-ups at three different stores. There were lines to the door and it was so fun. We just did the pop-up, ate, and hung out all day. I think that's when I realized I need to be excited about what I'm doing. Because if I'm not excited they won't be excited.

Favorite part?

Being able to make your own paycheck. I don't know how to explain it, but when I worked at an office job, I felt like my check was something I couldn't control. Now? It feels like I'm making money out of thin air — which is not the case. I'm working my a\$\$ off — but it just feels so different.





Seeing where you are right now, do you have any regrets about going to architecture school?

No man, no. I spent 7 years in design school and got a really good education. That's what makes my work so unique. So whatever it is that got me here — no regrets from me.

How are you managing to combat creative burnout (again) when you're cranking out new pieces left and right?

I'm also looking for that answer. The big thing about architecture was that you're working, but you don't really get any of the credit for it. And that sucks! But with this. I'm the only one benefiting from this. Sometimes I still feel that burnout, but at the end of the day, I get credit for it. When everyone is so nice and I get to talk to people and do interviews, it's a lot easier to work hard.

What are you doing outside of the studio when you're not Not Work Related and just Sarah?

I don't do shit.

Okay, so not be all "new year, new beginnings" and all the corny shit — but what do you have in the works for 2022?

There are going to be a couple of one-off drops like the all-black one from back in October.

I also want to do a road trip home and hit up Ohio, Indiana, Detroit, and finish in Chicago.

Andddd, there's a tentative plan to go out to Italy in the spring and make some stuff there that I'd ship only to Europe.

What advice would you give to other young creative girls who look like you that are hoping to merge their passion with their career?

Keep your part-time job. Having my freelance job was the biggest thing that helped me build Not Work Related. Keeping some source of consistency is helpful because it takes a really long time to run a business and do it successfully. It's so hard though because when I grew up there was no one creating that really looked like me.

Being creative was a luxury you know what I mean? You learned that you work, you get a job, and maybe you don't care about it but it pays the bills and that's what's important.

But, if you have kids, expose them to that stuff because it was so hard for me to find it on my own and it's my whole life now. And it's so rare to have someone who looks like me or you find success in their creative endeavors.

No for sure, it's a problem that persists in the creative community, but we gotta do something to make being black and brown creatives not some sort of earth-shattering surprise to the world.

Yeah, it makes you feel so good to go into a space and see that you're not the only one. And you'd think it'd be the total opposite, you'd think it's like, "I want to be the only one so I can be at the top," but you want the total opposite. You want people to not even notice what you look like because everyone looks so different. When you grow up a part of these underrepresented groups, you don't see enough people like you doing cool shit. So, I try super hard to put my face on my Instagram because it's important to see someone you'd normally not see creating and doing it well. Sorry for the ramble, that's something I think about a lot.

Nah, that was good. I think that's the perfect note to leave off on. A little glimmer of inspo. Do you have anything else that you'd want to add before we sign off?

I just want to emphasize that everything looks really glamorous on Instagram, but I'm trying to share the real side of this industry. There's no one talking about health insurance and 401k and stability when you're starting off. You don't have the security blanket of a corporate job. And it's crazy to not have a rubric when you're starting off. And people don't talk about that — the scary part. But we gotta think about that shit!

We proceed to take a cute ass selfie before parting ways. Follow @titlemag if you want to see it



MY UTOPIA



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XIYANNA KELLOGG

MODELING
SARAH SNYDER

MODELING
CALEB OWEN





Free of boundaries

Full of *expression*

Free of hatred

Full of *trust*

Free of tradition

Full of *us*

Free of judgement

Full of *love*



2

Conversation with Narisa Khamvanthong and Dani Delaney – photographed by Amanda Casey.

FROM HER
WORKSPACE:

THE *Nari* PERSPECTIVE

After her first major heartbreak in August of 2018, Nari-born Narisa Khamvanthong – picked up a guitar and started using Garage- Band, an app that allows users to create music and podcasts. Her indie pop sound and sweet, dreamlike vocals have increased her popularity on music sharing platforms like Spotify and Soundcloud. After moving from her hometown of the Bay Area in California, Nari now resides in Lexington, Kentucky as a senior design student. She has been singing and songwriting ever since.





Although 2020 did stop opportunities and put songwriting on hold for Nari, she still dropped two singles while in quarantine. “Dan” in April and “Pony” in October. In an Instagram post for her spring single, she revealed that “Dan” has been in the works for a while saying, **“It feels good to put out something I’ve been sitting on for a year.”**

Similarly, on October 28th, Nari posted about her single, “Pony”, saying, “This is the first song I wrote two years ago when I began writing music...” The two songs are pretty much black and white compared to each other. “Dan” is about having a

friend that she thinks is cool, but she cannot decide if she likes the person or not. “Pony” was written about Nari’s ex-boyfriend who broke up with her. She released a music video for “Pony” in October as well. The comical, low production video follows three TV channels as we channel surf from each one. The video starts out on channel 361 with an episode of the dating show titled “Pony”. Then we go up to channel 360 airing “Booty Bounce News” where the weather is being reported on by Nari herself. Finally, we land on channel 362 with another riveting episode of “Keeping Up With The Khamvanthong’s”.

Whether she was breathing life into old projects or directing her own silly music video, **Nari enjoys taking risks and avoiding the cookie cutter approach to working.** Her creative space is characterized by comfort and colors. Quite literally, Nari finds her comfort at home in her bed. She surrounds herself with colors like peachy tones, pinks, corals, and greens.

While perusing through Nari’s Instagram feed, her life seems to be mapped out in phases based on the color of her bangs. It’s hard to not take notice of her very notable and recognizable middle part with her ever changing colored

bangs. She started off the year with lilac and then went from red to hot pink to a very light grey. Each color seems to correlate with a time or event. Her single “Pony” is told through what she calls “shittily dyed purple” hair, but what is really reddish pink. The single cover art features Nari in front of lots of green foliage, she’s midair above a classic, wooden child’s rocking horse. She wears a long, white, off the shoulder dress with frills at the neckline and layers. Nari experiments with fashion and finds new ways to represent herself through her hair color and clothing.



WHILE SONGWRITING, WHERE DO YOU DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

I usually draw it from my own life and my own struggles with love, loss, and addiction. Therapy was stigmatized in my household and I was told my whole life I didn't need it and never learned any coping skills. Music was one of the first ways I've learned to cope and is still one of the only ways I know how to talk about hard realities and feelings that come with growing.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS?

Phoebe Bridgers, Julia Jacklin, Faye Webster, Cut Worms are all great songwriters!

WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO DO MOST OF YOUR WRITING/WORKING? AT HOME? IN A STUDIO?

I do most of my work at home in bed usually after a big crying fit or mental break.

WHAT DOES YOUR CREATIVE SPACE LOOK LIKE? HOW DO YOU UTILIZE YOUR SPACE?

My space is cluttered and messy. None of my wires are untangled and are usually all interlocked but that's just how I've always worked.

HAS COVID HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR SONGWRITING AND CREATING?

It's been tough to really experience things and add that into my songwriting. I feel like all my days blend together and it's become monotonous.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL? HOW DO YOU BALANCE BEING IN SCHOOL AND SINGING AND SONGWRITING?

I go to school for design right now and I usually only do music in my spare time or time I allot for "breaks" which are not breaks anymore.





DO YOU CREATE OR EXPRESS YOURSELF IN OTHER WAYS? THROUGH ART, FASHION, ETC.

I love to express myself in the ways that I dress. I love to play around with the way I dress and have always loved playing dress up.

HOW HAVE YOU SPENT YOUR TIME IN QUARANTINE?

Hiking and songwriting and perfecting my latte art!

HOW ARE YOU TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING THIS TIME? SELF-CARE? NEW HOBBIES?

I'm very much in foraging, I used to study biology and have a very big interest in mycology (the study of fungi) so often times you can find me in the woods rummaging around in the first looking for mushrooms!

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THE YEAR SO FAR?

I do not need anyone to make me happy. There is nothing that someone else can give me or add to my life that I haven't already done or can provide for myself.

2

Conversation with Joseph Rovegno and Dani Delaney – photographed by Noah Falge.

FROM HIS
WORKSPACE:

THE *Joe Ro* PERSPECTIVE

Joseph Rovegno, commonly known as Joe Ro, stands in LAAMS – an apparel, art, and bookstore retail space with a screen-printing workshop – dressed in all black. The wood floor and black rubber steps leading to the upstairs, loft-like area is covered in colorful, whimsical doodles done with paint. A contrast to the collage of black and white photographs hung up throughout the space. The walls are full of framed photos and artwork.





LAAMS recently opened its doors in the Lower East Side this past summer. The space was founded by Scott Selvin and is a collection of vintage clothing, artwork, and books. There are three floors and even a workshop where LAAMS offers screen-printing services. LAAMS is incredibly community based and utilizes the aesthetics of the space to invite people in. Rovegno is the creative director for LAAMS.

Rovegno is known for his photography, particularly his black and white photographs. He has been photographing people and places around New York for years and decided to use his newfound free time in 2020 to take to the streets.

At the start of quarantine and societal panic, Rovegno took his Yashica MAT camera to places

like Target and BJ's to capture the chaos that took place in essential retail stores. **Empty shelves, carts overflowing with groceries, and signs limiting the number of sanitary products that can be bought by one person are showcased in his photos.** His imagery precisely depicts what every person was going through in March. There's no denying COVID changed every person's life when it hit, and quarantine was put in place. New York City, a usually very populous, lively, and loud city with thousands of visitors each day, is now the complete opposite. To capture the absolute ghost town that New York had become, Rovegno walked the streets, snapping pictures of empty roads and side-walks. He photographed the Washington Square Arch completely empty with zero tourists snapping pictures and admiring its marble beauty. This

sort of stillness was uncharted territory for native New Yorkers. Rovegno captured this new way of life through both color and black and white photographs.

Months later in September Rovegno held an exhibition and book release at LAAMS. This exhibition was a compilation of photographs he had taken during the Black Lives Matter and George Floyd protests in New York. The photobook is titled "003: Between Madness". His photos captured crowds of people marching in the streets, smashed NYPD police cars, and police brutality. He was outside every day, photographing the people and events taking place around him.

"I shot countless rolls of film throughout the

protest, sometimes 15-20 per day."

One of his photos is another picture of the Washington Square Arch. Only this time there is hundreds of masked people holding signs, protesting and fighting for the inequality and injustice that takes place against Black people every day in America. Another photo looks as if it was taken in haste. The people are blurry but can still be identified as police officers with face shields and a sort of stick-like weapon. The photo is chaotic, similar to many videos and witness accounts of police brutality happening at protests throughout the country. In a video with Populist Magazine, Rovegno says, "The cops were fucking people up. They were tossing people around and—that's one of my favorite photos." His photo captures the pure force and

DETERMINATION & DRIVE

rowdiness that ensued when the police arrived at these protests. In the photo, one cop has their arm around the back of a person's neck. Another looks to be holding a blunt weapon. On the left-hand side, more protestors can be seen standing by. Every photo in his exhibition was printed in black and white which created a serious, heavy tone for the exhibition and book. The photographs taken during the protests are timely and exemplify historical moments that could only be captured because of his determination and drive to tell these stories.



WHERE DO YOU DO MOST OF YOUR WORK AND HOW DO YOU UTILIZE YOUR WORKSPACE TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY?

A majority of my creative work starts out in the world and ends in my home darkroom. I try to cater my work around the type of mind state I'm in at the stage of whatever it is I'm making. In the darkroom, I am pretty bad about keeping all my negatives organized and archiving, but I have two areas that are split up into things I'm going to print and things that I'm storing away. When I make prints, I usually end up writing on them or stitching them together, but I like that my practice doesn't have two of the same things. I prefer to be experimental; it keeps things interesting to me and I don't get stuck in a rut of doing the same things over and over again. Then when something works it excites me and inspires me to move forward with that idea more. To promote creativity and productivity, things being clean and organized just enough to not feel like the world is stressing me out, but not sterile enough to feel like I shouldn't just start ripping out pages and pouring bleach on things.

HOW DO YOU GET YOURSELF IN THE MOOD TO START CREATING? WHAT KINDS OF PHOTOGRAPHS DO YOU ENJOY TAKING?

That's a good question. And I wish I had a good answer. I'm very fortunate to be able to keep my professional work and creative work separately... When it comes to the first half of my process – going out and shooting – **it's more of an insatiable itch that I NEED to be outside taking photos.** Well it's less about taking photos, it's more of a compulsion that I have a hard time being outside in the world without having a camera. I used to say that I thought the world was too harsh, so I needed to see it with a camera in the way. Almost as a way to shield myself from being more present than I would like to be. But I realized that was a cop out. It turns out I had to accept that **I compulsively need to document the world around me.** I used to be hard on myself and try to NOT bring a camera with me because I felt like it took away from my genuine experience of being present in the moment. I felt like I was cheating by being able to handle life by solely having this crutch with me to go outside. At some points in my life it was really hard for me to go outside at





FIGURING OUT THE *Cheat Codes* **FOR MYSELF**

all... Now I've just accepted that is the way I am inherently, and I shouldn't beat myself up over it. I do wish I had a better answer and hopefully in the future I can figure out cheat codes for myself to be better.

WITH THE WAY 2020 HAS PANNED OUT, DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE ON MORE PROJECTS AND CREATE MORE THAN USUAL?

The lockdown was an interesting time for creatives. I think a lot of us felt pressure to create things, which I think is unfair and it made a lot of my friends feel bad [that] they weren't doing as much as they "should be". I was fortunate to make new subject matter out of the world events going on. I was just getting into really engulfing myself in making prints in the darkroom and I was lucky enough to get an enlarger [projection printer used for producing prints] for making prints and setting up a makeshift darkroom in my parent's basement. This led to making a photo

series called "Moment In Between Madness" which was a homemade photo book of photos and prints I made during that first initial stage of lockdown. This was a challenge to take photos at first because I was used to being on the streets of NYC and capturing moments I saw. **With everything shut down, the streets were empty and I kind of had to change the way I saw things...** Then, of course, the George Floyd protests happened in New York (and around the country and world), so I was out documenting and dealing with a crazy amount of photos I made during that time... So, 2020 was kind to me in the sense I naturally got into projects I would have never gotten into before. But it did put other projects I have in my head marinating on the total back burner and I need to start being alone again and working towards making those ideas into reality (which is a lot of experimenting at first).

KEEP ON *Creating*

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE CAMERAS TO WORK WITH?

I work primarily with analog [cameras] for my photo work. I like keeping my options open, and not to be fixated to one camera or type of cameras. Different scenarios call for different formats. I like using my rangefinder for its low profile and how discreet it is. I like using 6X6 medium format film; the aspect ratio (square) is a limitation that forces me to approach things in new ways. I'm not limited to any camera and I really have no loyalty to one or another.

HOW ARE YOU MAINTAINING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? PICKING UP ANY NEW HOBBIES?

Mental health and mental illness is a big part of my story—as long as I can keep creating and staying sane, I'm good.



2

Conversation with Joshua Maupin and Dani Delaney - photographed by Noah Falge.

**FROM HIS
WORKSPACE:**

THE *Lil Kool* **PERSPECTIVE**

Joshua Maupin, more popularly known as "LIL KOOL", has been creating original characters for his cartoonish style of paintings since 2014. His characters are a mix of childhood cartoons meets modern day pop culture. His use of vibrant, flat color and black outlines is reminiscent of classic cartoons, while each character is recognizably a product of Maupin's mind.





DRESS ² IMPRESS

Originally from a small town outside of Dallas, Maupin grew up with a lot of freedom and found interest in graffiti art in his late teenage years. Like many other young people, he was ready to move on from his hometown, so he moved to New York City when he was 23 years old, 14 years ago. Ever since, he has been spreading his artwork all around the city. Literally. Maupin started out his work on the streets as a graffiti artist. Eventually, that led to his professional work. While having never taken a painting class and being completely self-taught, he has amassed over 15 thousand followers on Instagram (@lilkool) and has worked with brands

like Apple, Nike, and Converse. He currently resides in Bedford-Stuyvesant (Bed Stuy), Brooklyn and has a shared studio in South Brooklyn near the Gowanus Canal.

In the midst of 2020, Maupin has been able to continue his work and find new ways to keep himself motivated. With new projects and portfolios in the works, he has branched out to new mediums and started experimenting with other ways to address his creative process.

His popular artist name, LIL KOOL, is the product of an overdressed 23-year-old looking for a job.

It was 2008 and Maupin had recently moved to New York City to pursue a career in photography. He was struggling while trying to find work as a photo assistant. With limited social media, a flip phone, and his slim NYC contact list, Maupin had to figure out where photographers would hang out or how to get an email in order to get his name out there. He remembered a photographer he really liked and wanted to work with. Surprisingly, they both had a contact in common: Maupin's father. His dad was a schoolteacher in Texas and had taught this photographer when he was younger.

The photographer agreed to help Maupin find some part-time gigs, but they unfortunately did not lead to anything. Finally, one day, the photographer asked Maupin to come by his studio. Maupin was extremely excited and eager because he thought he was going to get hired. I'm sure you're familiar with the phrase "dress to impress". Maupin did just that. He's always been interested in fashion and

dressing well, so he put together his look and headed to the photographer's studio.

When he got there, the photographer asked him, "What do you ideally want to do?" To which he said, "Well, obviously, I want to essentially be a photographer. But I would like to work for you or work for somebody like you in that world, because I definitely want to do more fashion, editorial based stuff to get better."

He kind of laughed, and then he looked at Maupin and said, "Man, I would never hire you." "What? Why?"

He just casually said, "Dude, you look too cool. More people would ask about you on set than me. And people would automatically think that you're the photographer."

Imagine losing out on a job because you're too stylish. Hey, at least he got a KOOL name out of it.

BEING A FULL-TIME ARTIST, WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU LOOK LIKE?

I have a little routine of doing some activities. I find time to do some sketches in the morning, or lately it's been a lot of emails. Since I've been doing so much commercial work lately, I have to do a lot of design revisions. So, it's kind of boring. But I'll try to get that done as soon as I get up. I kind of think about my art on the execution side. Like a production. I try to keep it where it's like this painting is due on this date. Even if I don't have a solid deadline, I still try to keep it like that just so it maintains a flow. Then I come in [to my studio] and try to juggle maybe three to four paintings, working on them simultaneously especially if there's a show coming up, or if I'm pushing for my clients to buy stuff, or portfolio stuff. **With the pandemic, I've probably been a little looser this year. It's been kind of nice actually, because I've looked at this as an experimental year. So, I can try out new things.** I don't have to sit there and work in one medium like I used to in the past. It's been kind of nice to be able to have the extra free time.





HOW DO YOU UTILIZE YOUR WORKSPACE TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY?

So, my space is usually mostly white. Every time I'm moving to a new space, I paint everything white. It's like a fresh start. I allow myself to not have very many distractions. When I'm in here, usually what's hanging up is canvases that I've recently stretched that are about middle to almost done. Then, I'll have a couple paintings that are done. But most of the time I have a pretty strict discipline where when a painting is done, I make sure it's put away because it's easier to manage. Also, I don't want to get any work dirty from other painting projects. For the most part **I try to keep my mind pretty open when I come here, and try to get in the right mood,** especially when you're creating a new painting. I think my work is becoming more pure because [of] the fact that things have been allowed to slow down. I keep kind of imagining myself or other painters in the community that we're kind of living in like the

1950s of New York. Where things were really dead and there wasn't a lot going on. So, a lot of painters were either in their studio or putting their heart and soul into everything they did, because there was nothing else to do. In a sense, I'm kind of thinking of myself like that right now like, 'Oh, I have nothing to do today, but paint this painting.' It's really been fun because to be able to live in New York City, and also not give yourself too much responsibility is kind of the best outcome about living here. I can give myself so much to do, and it's so exciting that I actually have time to do it.

HOW DO YOU GET YOURSELF IN THE MOOD TO START CREATING?

Ah, so that's kind of funny. I listen to like really obnoxious, loud techno music or I'll listen to a book. When I'm in the zone, I'm probably a little ADD – I mean I definitely am, they told me when I was a kid. So, I definitely noticed me playing certain fast paced music that has a beat [that] allows me to stay on track sometimes because my brain will think about it as a kind of rhythm. That helps to keep me going. But same time, I definitely got into a lot of like, Kurt Vonnegut books. Got into Malcolm Gladwell. Some authors who I have forgotten about. I definitely went down the wormhole on some communism and anarchy theory. I do like to learn while I'm painting, because there is a lot of simple tasks that I'm doing. It's nice to have a book playing in the background that I can listen to. It's cool, because **I feel like painting is such a meditation that it's cool that you can be extremely focused on what you're listening to, while you're doing it [painting].**

WHAT KINDS OF NEW MEDIUMS ARE YOU WORKING WITH?

This year, I've been working with a lot of fashion stuff. Which I've always wanted to get into, but it was just hard to build a budget for it, because getting stuff made can get really expensive. I started to do some more graphics on T-shirts and hoodies and limited edition run[s] of certain things. I started to do some oil paintings, which I've never done before. That's been exciting to explore. I build all my own canvases and stretch them myself in my studio. I have a little fabrication studio that's attached to it. That allows me to design the actual painting and get a sense of what it looks like, how the canvases will lay. It's allowed me to slow down in a way to rethink a process and to execute it in a different way. I've been taking drop cloth canvas and laying it down on the table and when I dye – I've been dyeing the clothing for some of these T-shirt projects and hoodie projects – the canvas gets dye all over. It comes out with this cool, natural,

inherently flawed, kind of intentional error, pattern with all these different color bursts and washed out colors, and some of its really faded, some of its dark. Then, I've been painting on top of that, so it gives it an extra depth and more organic feel to it, because it was naturally done. My whole goal was thinking an execution would be less is more, like doing more with less steps. To know that I can finish a painting now in half the time, rather than before having to sit there and paint all the color in. It's like mind blowing for me right now.

WITH THE WAY 2020 HAS PANNED OUT, DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE ON MORE PROJECTS AND CREATE MORE THAN USUAL?

I'm creating more because I just have more time. Like, in 2019, some months were slower than others on my commercial side. And if I wasn't selling paintings, like all the time, it would be hard to catch up. I'd work like odd jobs, or I would just do art handling more or less. So that it would take up some of my time. And, in 2018, I sold a lot of work. I was doing so much in 2018, that I didn't have time to keep creating that same year. So, by the end of the year, I was pretty spent. And then 2019 I just had a hard start on like my concepts for the following year. I think until I was 19, I mostly felt like I was just trying to catch up, keeping my head out of water. And this year, it was like real nice to be able to sit back, not having to really worry about it too much. Since I'm not going out as often, I'm actually saving money and keeping simplified. **But it actually has been nice to kind of just slow down a bit.**

HOW ARE YOU MAINTAINING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? PICKING UP ANY NEW HOBBIES?

I think [doing] the things I didn't have time to do, that I'm doing now. I definitely took the time and refined a lot of things. Like drawing. I think drawing is such a good thing. **I believe drawing is like the most control you'll ever have in your life, just you and the pencil on the paper.** You can do whatever you want. To let your brain fully relax and create solid progress in drawing that can lead to other projects for yourself is a very exciting thing. I was doing so much, and I really didn't have time to just draw. I picked it back up and I was like, 'Oh my god, this is amazing.' I forgot how much I enjoyed it. And at the same time, **I was allowing myself to try things and be experimental.** That was exciting. From a day to day perspective, I probably play video games more than I should be. Been cooking a lot, which has been fun. I baked a chocolate cake the other day. I baked some banana bread. We're gonna take a pecan pie for Thanksgiving. Like simple little things. During the summer, it was fun. I went to the park and went on bike rides. Just walking around [was] actually so fun. I was walking from my house to the lower east side of the city and it was such a nice walk. Or I would meet up at the park with a group of friends. And we would be socially responsible and hang out outside. It was really kind of nice.



Conversation with Kaytlen Lindsey and Dani Delaney – photographed by Amanda Casey.

FROM HIS
WORKSPACE:

THE *Suicide Rascal* PERSPECTIVE

In a white bathtub with about a dozen packs of Newport cigarettes on his lap, Suicide Rascal (@suiciderascal) – born Kaytlen Lindsey – pulls one out and lights it. A\$AP Ferg and Brockhampton can be heard throughout the apartment. Lindsey wears a cream colored, 90s sweater with black pants, high top white converse, and a Cleveland Indians hat.



**START EACH
DAY FEELING
LIKE A**

Bad Bitch

He has been interested in music since his teens and in 2019 had his first album release titled "The Damned Don't Cry". Despite 2020 being quite possibly one of the hardest years to be positive and productive, Lindsey dropped six singles before he "ran out of shit to say". His music is heavily influenced by his favorite rap artists and 70s music. His spontaneous attitude plays into his creative process and he finds himself writing whenever inspiration comes. Sometimes a cigarette break in the front lawn is the best place for creating.

Lindsey's love of clothing and thrifting also contributes to his self-expression. His style is inspired by y2k fashion, the 60s and 70s, and androgyny. Along with his music career, he runs a Depop: (@suiciderascalfoundation) on the side where he sells vintage clothing. Although this past year was a shitshow to say the least, Lindsey found that getting dressed in a look that makes him feel "like a bad bitch" was a good way to start each day. He says most quarantine days were spent thrifting, smoking weed, and hanging out with his dog.





Q&A

WHEN DID YOU FIRST START MAKING MUSIC?

Around the age of 15, but I quit for a few years and started back up when I was 19.

WHILE SONGWRITING, WHERE DO YOU DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

I partake in reckless behavior such as taking drugs and unprotected sex hahaha. But music wise mostly oldies and songs from like the 70s and 80s. I try not to listen to too much rap, so I don't sound like those people. But my main rap inspirations are Gucci Mane and Danny Brown.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS?

King Krule, Virna Lindt, The Gorillaz, Gary Wilson, I could go on for days.

WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO DO MOST OF YOUR WRITING/WORKING? AT HOME? IN A STUDIO?

Mostly at home and I kinda just pace around my front yard while smoking or I sit on the floor in my living room.

WHAT DOES YOUR CREATIVE SPACE LOOK LIKE? HOW DO YOU UTILIZE YOUR SPACE?

My creative space looks like my brain cause my thoughts are scattered. But I utilize my space mostly by just existing in the moment of it all.

HAS COVID HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR SONGWRITING AND CREATING?

Hell yeah it has, I can't go outside and do anything now so I have nothing to talk about. I already wrote as many songs as I could about just sitting inside.





DO YOU CREATE OR EXPRESS YOURSELF IN OTHER WAYS? THROUGH ART, FASHION, ETC.

I have a passion for fashion! I love to look like a **bhadd bitch on the regular** and that also helps me with my confidence and writing. I wanna dabble in painting one of these days.

HOW HAVE YOU SPENT YOUR TIME IN QUARANTINE?

Getting high and selling clothes on Depop. I've also been learning more about myself and I've cut a lot of people off cause when people get bored, they show how crazy they are.

HOW ARE YOU TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING THIS TIME? SELF-CARE? NEW HOBBIES?

I'm not really taking care of my mental health at all hahaha, but I do my skin care almost every day and I try to always get dressed. I have clinical depression so the least I can always make myself do is shower and dressed every morning.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THE YEAR SO FAR?

Don't take things for granted and always go with the flow. **Keep good people around you and save your fucking money.**