

FRUIT BLEND

OCTOBER 2019

ISSUE TEN: THE UNDERTAKING

FREE



ALICIA PILLER



THE UNDERTAKING

Each issue of FULL BLEDE invites artists and writers to respond to a theme. For the tenth issue the broadsheet's contributors tackle tasks we create for ourselves, goals, responsibility, and markers of success. For some process may be the focus, as one takes on the task or oath, while for others it may be the results that drives the work. The term also describes the role of a funeral director, a position that may conjure feelings of solemnity and morbidity. In all cases, The Undertaking describes a form of labor and an expectation of accountability.

Enjoy this collection of poetry, essays, prose, and visual artworks. As always, thank you for your support and long looks.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

This is Issue Ten, which feels like a big number. As I was plotting it out, I had an idea of creating a grid of all the pages from past issues, a tribute to the project and the incredible contributors. But I wasn't sure exactly how to do it, technically.

I create the layout using InDesign and then convert it to a press quality .pdf. How would I get the pages from the last nine .pdfs converted to images and uniformly resized to fit into a visually balanced grid? I dunno. Maybe math would be involved. And some Googling. But I did neither, I decided to jump in and start plotting it out. First up, I determined that the images of the pages should be one inch high, because that seemed like a nice number for an orderly grid. Then I eyeballed how much spacing should be between the pages and guessed how much space it

would take up overall. I estimated the page numbers from each issue, instead of doing the math. I converted the giant .pdf files to images, resized them, and then placed each into a skeleton layout. By the time I got to the last row of images, I was shocked that my eyeballing and guessing was exactly right. By the end of the day I had created a grid that made me smile so big. It's this issue's centerfold.

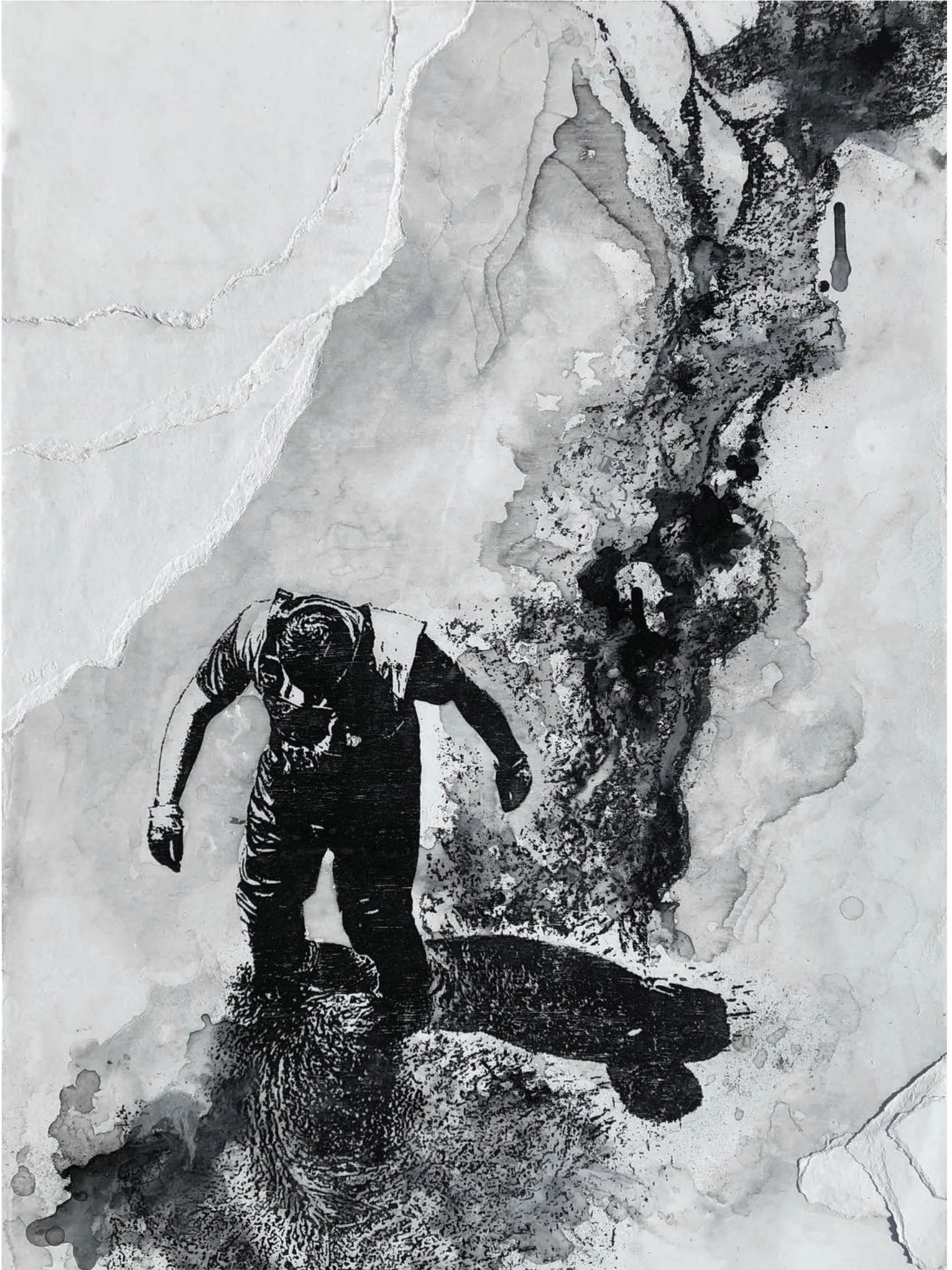
I'm sharing this process because it explains Issue Ten's theme: The Undertaking. I'm a person who makes work for myself, roughs out a plan, and then jumps in. It's my way. And often at some point I shake my head and think, "What am I doing? What is this job I created?". As a whole, the newspaper comes from a DIY impetus, a love of labor, and determination.

The artists and writers included in Issue Ten: The Undertaking get it. They do it too. Reading the statements about their work in relation to the theme (turn to page 46) moved me. There is frustration, meditation, wonder, rejection, sadness, joy—the process of undertaking is intense, and wholly felt.

Yes, I am a person who creates work for myself and also makes space for myself. But I don't necessarily want to go at it alone—I like to collaborate and facilitate. I am full of gratitude for the nearly 300 contributors who have participated in this undertaking thus far with me.

Sacha







**GARY
CANNONE
HAS GONE**

00124

**DAYS
WITHOUT
A FALL**

Hush, Hush, Hush

I arrive at USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) at 3:00 P.M., Friday, August, 2019. It's the first appointment that initiates my US Naturalization (Citizenship). The area is desolate, located on a strip mall building, lacking in signage and parking. I make my way to the entrance on the second floor and it feels like walking into a scene in *Being John Malkovich*. As I go up the stairs I think about the day I encountered the real Malkovich at an upscale restaurant in Hollywood a few years back; crossing eyes with him over the shoulders of his very beautiful companion. I think about how I wished to have asked him about his role in *Being John Malkovich* and how I also crossed paths with him once before at a Vintage Flea Market in Boston, on a Summer afternoon, where I worked as a salesgirl for an antique shop. He came into my booth that Summer, but he didn't buy anything. Our exchange ended at "Hello."

I get to the end of the hallway-Malkovich-moment on the second floor and open the door that had the letter Q on it and walk in. I'm immediately facing a short and skinny man who is dressed as a security guard. He looks like he needs a day off. I hear him say:

"Green Card please!"

How welcoming.

I say nothing and reach inside my purse. I pull out my card along with my letter of appointment. He orders me to turn off my phone and hands me a clipboard, a sheet of paper and a pencil. He then asks me to fill out the paper with my information and walk over to the officer behind a desk ahead of us. His tone has calmed down a bit. I do as I'm told and walk to the officer behind the desk, now a woman in her 40s with very long nails and a New York accent. She asks to see my Green Card and the letter of appointment. She promptly hands me a piece of paper with the number 3 on it. She points to a chair in the middle of the room that has the number 3 printed on the back and tells me to take a sit and wait to be called. I look towards the middle of the room and I see three chairs numbered: 1, 2 and 3. The chairs are facing the opposite wall with their backs to the entrance. I feel nauseous. I think how oppressive and intimidating is this room layout. Has anyone seen this? Our inadequate society of immigrants have.

I do as I'm told. The room is small. I observe a couple of families sitting against the wall to the left, a grouping of chairs that seemed a bit more appropriate for the space. I hear the officer continue with what seemed like an interrupted conversation with the security guard.

He goes: "These days you can get guns anywhere, you know, or just drive to Ne-

vada." The woman agrees and loudly says "Yes, we are doomed..." I'm reminded, as if I needed to be, that this week there have been three mass shootings in America and that they are probably discussing this moment in the news and our lives. But why would they talk about it with blankness to a room full of terrified and tired immigrants waiting and hoping for a positive outcome in their uncertain lives. As they carry on this gun-control-apparent-discussion I look up to the far right side of the room and I see a wooden framed picture of Donald Trump, the president, looking grim.

I stare at his eyebrows dismissing me, a very serious frown. I think about how much I loathe him and how my body goes to immediate perturbation at the sight of him. I question their choice for this particular portrait. He clearly looks evil in it. Was this on purpose? I decide I'm not going to make assumptions. I think about my defensiveness and hate for being tempted in ways I dare not mention. And the feeling that brings me to that moment in my life. The feeling I can't shake it off. I would rather not be signing a deal with the devil so I can fight said devil.

I look around a bit more, I see a young couple sitting against the left wall and a couple of other officers sitting behind their desks, and there's one other woman sitting on chair number 1, in the middle of the room, where I have to make myself wait. I take my seat and look at her in quiet acknowledgment for our chosen paths. I look down at a small table in front of us and pick up a pocket study guide for the Naturalization Test. I quickly unfold the guide and the first question I read:

"What is one promise that you make when you become a United States citizen?"

I don't know if I'm constricted or liberated by that question. I wonder how Americans can answer that now. I get anxious and feel vulnerable with my back to the door so I sit sideways looking over my shoulder. I wish for this moment to go fast. And about five minutes later I hear my number being called... "3!!!"

I follow my socially compatible instinct and walk towards the room in front of me where another female officer waves her arms to be followed. She's blonde and short and has a Slavic accent (which I have a crush on). She says:

"Prepare to have your photo taken and sit on this chair facing the camera."

I wanted to ask how her day was going but I say nothing and take a sit, now wondering why I didn't wash my hair before coming in. A photo is snapped, and she takes a minute to pull up my data on her computer and tells me to put my fingers on a designated electronic pad so my fingerprints can be digitized. I look down at my

fingers and think about how my mother would be cross if she saw the condition of my nails. She used to tell me: "Your nails are someone's first impression of you, so take care of them."

I look at the formations my fingerprints make on the computer screen and how inconsistent they are. And my appreciation for that image calms me down.

Shortly after, she stamps my letter of appointment with red ink. She says that's all they need from me now and that another letter would come in the mail for my next appointment. I ask her about how long does that normally take. "It's a case by case scenario. They will do a background check on you first. Get access online for updates. You can exit through this door on the back."

I don't argue, even though that answer was completely unsatisfying, in the best Slavic tone. I think about how glad I am for having succeeded so far without a criminal record. I decide that I don't want to stay there any more than I have to. I walk towards the door with an EXIT sign that leads me to the other side of the building.

It's hot outside. Bright and blinding LA sunshine reminds me that I left my sunglasses in the car. I hurry past a couple of people (seemingly lost) outside and follow my way down the underground parking lot. I get in my car and turn my phone back on. Before driving away I play a song by Alice Coltrane called *Journey in Satchidanda*. I wish I was high right then. Only because maybe if I was I could have justified what had just happened. I get a text from an Argentinian friend I was on a text thread earlier that day:

"Good Luck! Yes, we share a very dehumanized and anxiety-creating 'zeitgeist'... and I call it that apprehensively."

I begin my drive home. During the drive I'm strained, on the verge of crying.

I think about where I am and the faces of the people in that office, and how I wish to have a drink at a bar and a decent meal with them and how I should have washed my hair but felt too indolent. I think about how morality informs experience and not the other way around. I think about the friends and family I have made in this decade long time in the U.S. My rights and privileges, or lack thereof, and the moment that led me to apply for my Naturalization. I think about the number "3" and how that number has had a significant appearance in my life in the last few years. My anxiety exacerbates my thoughts, playing a movie in my head. I decide I need to watch a beautiful film to snap out of this. I go through my notes on the phone where I write down film recommendations and I read the words *An Angel At My Table* by Jane Campion. I



think that it sounds lovely and naturally, I should watch it.

I get home and rent the film immediately, not really knowing what to expect. In bed, I put my headphones on and begin my journey with the protagonist, Janet Frame. Frame is a New Zealand author played by actress Kerry Fox. The movie is auto-biographical and depicts the author in various stages of her life, from growing up in an impoverished family to living multiple tragedies in her youth, from being diagnosed with schizophrenia and to finding acclaim for her writing, which served her as an alternate reality from her life. A story that discerns “madness” from “the artist”, awkwardness and anxiety, and the feminine psyche, and the honest path towards creativity that often

borders on insanity. She is not enviable, but she doesn’t lose herself; instead, she incorporates the world.

I think about the parallels of my life and Frame’s; and my own upbringing in an impoverished and oppressive village in rural Brazil. I think about how far I’ve come as the granddaughter of an illiterate generation. And how much I had to learn on my own, once I moved to a city that spoke in a foreign language. How being an expat has influenced me and how the horrible treatment I have had to receive from “well-meaning” others, in experiences throughout my life, in poverty and as an immigrant, had sealed my desire to create beauty for my own salvation. I think about how stories like these (and in moments like these) of beautiful disor-

der that confronts and surprises during our assessment of being alive, feel like absolute. Because otherwise, I’m not sure what purpose my work serves. Her story, clearly, was an unconscious reflection of my own identification.

The movie ends two and half hours later and leaves me wanting more. I look up her poetry online. And the first thing I read:

“Hush-hush-hush, the grass and the wind and the fir and the sea are saying; hush-hush-hush, the graves of the sailors, of the soldiers home from the war, of the baronets, of the little birds, of farmers, of sheep, of shadows; hush-sh-sh, the bagpipes on the shore, the ocean’s roar...”











THE UNDERTAKING

Nancy wants to launch herself off the back porch and head for the hills. She's turning thirty tomorrow; she's got a husband, a son (Robbie), and another kid, as her mother says, in the oven. How did this come to pass? she asks herself. She's asked herself a version of this question ever since puberty jumped on her back. I'm fucked, Nancy says.

What'd you say, honey? Jack presses his nose against the screen door.

Nancy hates it when he does this, thinks about all the flies she's squished against it every summer, and that only necessary because Jack never closes it.

That's unsanitary, Jack.

That's what you said?

That's what I know. Before, I was taking to myself.

Well you should talk to me, instead.

Let's rob a bank tomorrow.

Jack kicks open the screen door. He has a cold brewski in each hand. But you're preggy, he says, handing her one of the beers.

Nancy looks at the label—Near Beer, non-alcoholic. This is gonna shift the universe, she thinks. She takes a swig.

Before this marriage thing thing kicked in, Nancy worked under the radar of the law. She loved the gangster-feel rush. It'd dash through her, good as any slam, the moment between lifting a wallet or slipping out a window and knowing she'd made a clean get away. Now when her fingers itch it's down to Home Depot for a nail gun or swiping a Made in Paris five hundred dollar bra from some boutique. Not the same—not the same at all as making off with an Etruscan vase and pulling down some cash. One time she and her then squeeze happened upon some real green, U.S. minted bills featuring a three quarter view of Grover Cleveland. She and Paul (a boy from New York, said his grandfather came over from Sicily) had been camping off in the National Forest somewhere near Kirkwood in California and out on a hike one day they happened upon this estate is the only word Nancy can come up with to describe it, out in the middle of nowhere—a finely crafted contemporary wooden home with all the whistles: three bedrooms, four baths, screening room, dining room, high-end kitchen, etcetera. And then there were the out buildings: tent platforms, bathrooms, boathouse, garage for four vehicles, storage sheds. All of these structures spread over a kidney shaped, creek side parcel of pristine forested bottom land that had to be four or five acres in total. And there was no one around for miles; they could go anywhere.

"We can pop these locks," Paulie said, standing on the front porch, trying to sound like he himself came over from Sicily.

"Slow down, cowboy," Nancy said—she was no virgin at this game. "Let's look the hell around before we go busting locks." Nancy got her fingers into the folds of Paul's hoodie and gave a tug—Paulie couldn't have weighed more than a hundred and thirty pounds—and when Paul tried to shrug her off and she

grabbed on tighter—Nancy had three inches on him and twenty pounds—they almost got into a fist fight. Finally Paul acquiesced, looking at her sidelong as he undid his belt and tucked his tee shirt back into the top of his jeans.

"Don't treat me like some kind of punk."

"Then try not acting like one," Nancy said as she headed around the side of the house, looking first for the electrical panel.

That night Nancy and Paul, having spent most of the day disabling the not so sophisticated alarm system, slipped into the house and got to work looking for goodies, stopping only once to gaze out one of the many huge sheets of plate glass to admire the full and cratered moon.

Fuck me, Nancy thought, when she opened the envelope her fingers had found under the mattress of a bunk bed in the kids' room and saw three beat up thousand dollar bills. Greed, that rapacious desire, released a flood of dopamine. Then she thought, monopolily money, tender designed to teach children America's finest art. Nancy carefully tucked the wrapped bills into her backpack and Nancy carefully considered, if they turned out to be real, the ramifications of keeping the find a secret.

Around the campfire the following night—three hundred miles north of Kirkwood—Nancy, fearing bad karma, shared Cleveland, sort of, as she gave Paul one of the bills. By then she had convinced herself they were real, which proved to be true, as she flipped her two Clevelands for thirty Ben Franklins. That she did in NYC, having ditched Paulie somewhere around Chicago.

Before Breaking and Entering:

Nancy digs into the pocket of her bell-bottom jeans and wraps her sweaty adolescent fingers around the twenty dollar bill and hands it to the man who, in turn, straightens the rumpled bill before handing her a little piece of paper with four dots on it. The man says, "There's your window pane, girlie."

The man disappears back up the dark driveway and Nancy scampers back to her two girlfriends who wait in the red, soft-top Camaro. Nancy glides into the front seat, high already, with only the idea, the prospect, of finally dropping acid swimming through her mind.

Nancy doesn't drop that night with her friends, though. She stows half the sheet into the coin pocket, and despite their pleas, hops out at the bus stop.

In school the next day Nancy aces the history test, participates in French conversation, much to Mr. Bruno's amazement, waves her hand frantically in English (she knows the ins and outs of The Orchard) and has an overall A plus twelfth grade day. Her two friends don't even show.

That night, Friday night, as planned, George, her brother, who graduated high school in June and started Berkley in September, stumbles through the front door in time for dinner. Her mom, bubbly happy to have each

place at the family table occupied, dutifully ignores George's Fu Manchu and carries on like Margaret Anderson: (Milk or water?) Dad never wavers, he's the same, always the same, bite after bite, glasses crooked and dusty, what hair he has sticking out from his head at contrary angles.

The kids slip outside as soon as the last cup finds a place in the dishwasher.

George tells her, the old pro, that they must retreat to the remains of the tree house in the ancient and fruitful avocado tree behind Mr. Jackson's place down the block from the family home. He tells her to grab two sleeping bags. He'll get a big bottle of water. They should meet in five behind the garage.

It's religious—the whole fucking trip couldn't have been better: sky sparkling, leaves whispering, hoot owls hooting, mice snurfulling. Even the occasional car-horn reaching its tentacle wave up the block from Sunset Boulevard and into these four particularly attuned audio organs sounds like a secret transmission meant to assure them that the rest of the world continues even though Nancy and George have stepped through a door and into a different dimension.

They braid each others hair, redesign the night sky: *loxodonta borealis*, *okapi major*, *macropus rufus minor* and come to understand with every stitch of their beings that they are at one with all that is.

Jack's going to bed.

Thank goodness, thinks Nancy.

Don't be unhappy, Nan, he whispers in her ear.

I'm confused is all.

We're in this together, honey—all four of us, together. Jack rests his warm, big hand on her still-flat belly.

She knows his talk is meant to reassure her, but this is exactly what troubles her.

It's harsh; no one Nancy knows will approve; and maybe she will lie, say instead that she 'lost' the baby.

Early the next morning Nancy calls the clinic. Two days later she's baby free. Four days later Nancy tells Jack she'll be taking a sick day as she feels under the weather. That night she describes, in lurid detail, the spontaneous abortion, the mid day visit to the hospital and the doctor's assurance that they can try again in a couple of months. "I didn't call you, honey, because there was nothing you could do."

I could have, I could have..., Jack stutters.

We're blessed, honey. She pats him on the back when he throws his arms around her and stifles a sob. Nancy says, It's nature's way.

I wanted to teach him baseball, Jack chokes out.

And I wanted to teach her to make a pipe bomb, thinks Nancy.

I wanted our Robbie to have a brother.

Undertaking the Crown

There She sits
Bestowed like a crown
A tightly coiled nest
Spun like precious
Threads of wool
Woven from a fertile
Ground of scalp

She rests
Worn out
Overcropped
Disheveled
A well endowed burden

She holds her own
Strong willed
Our relationship is
A negotiation
Wrought in a past
Filled with pain, shame
Pride and
Glory

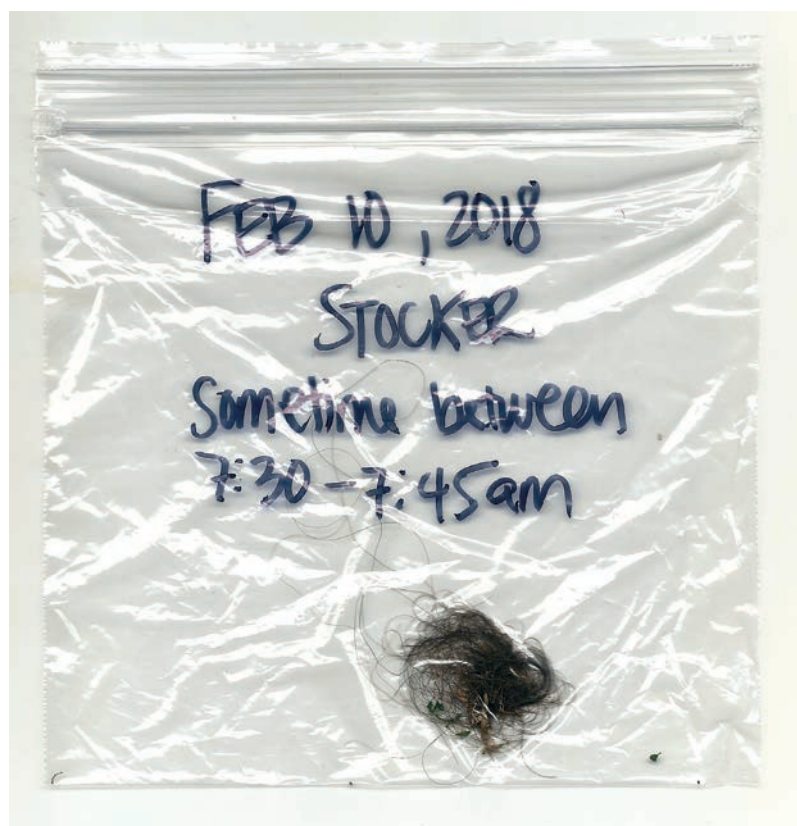
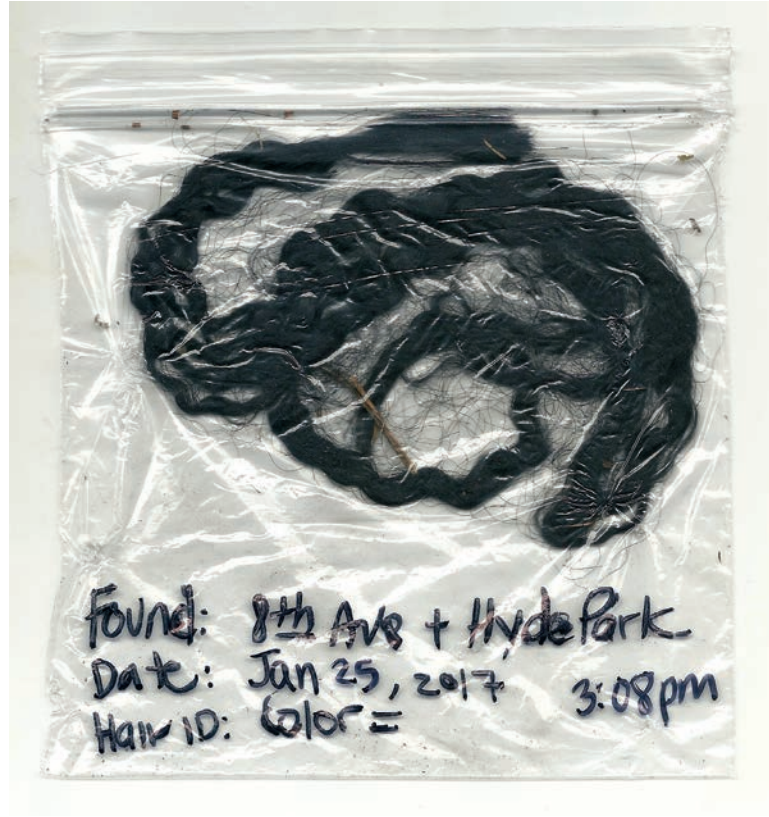
Pain combed
A ravenous and torrid
Unrequited love affair
Between shame and pride
She refused to hide

Glory was an army of them
Sprouted
Salty grey strands
They came to mentor
Coax the hidden fray
Brittle from neglect

Emancipated only to be covered
Nurtured through fabric
Red cotton
Blue silk
White linen
And
Black

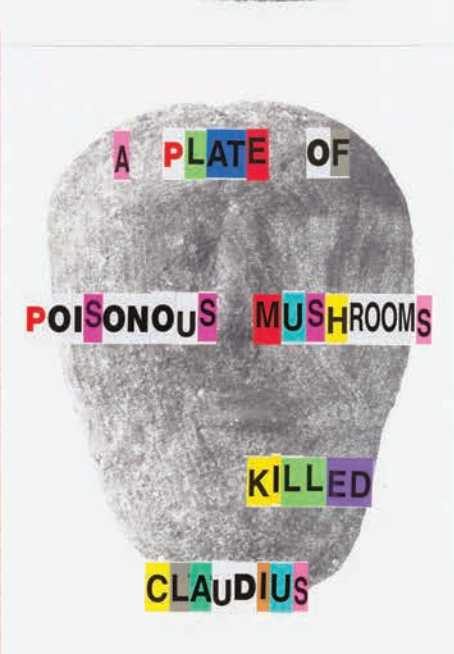
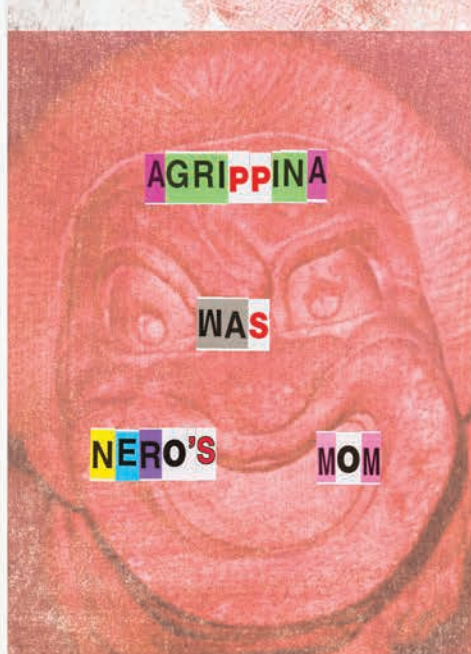
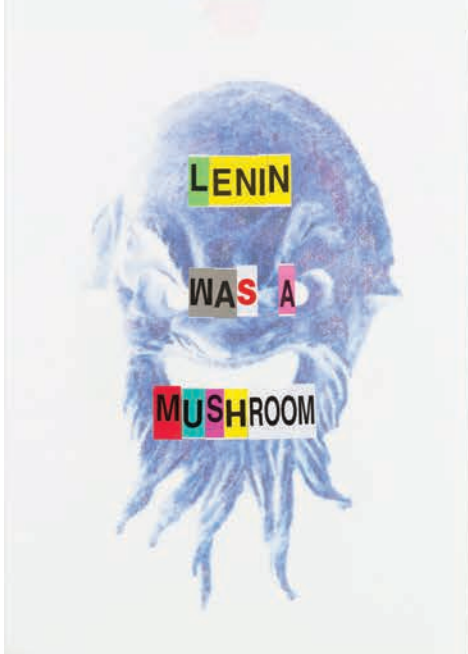
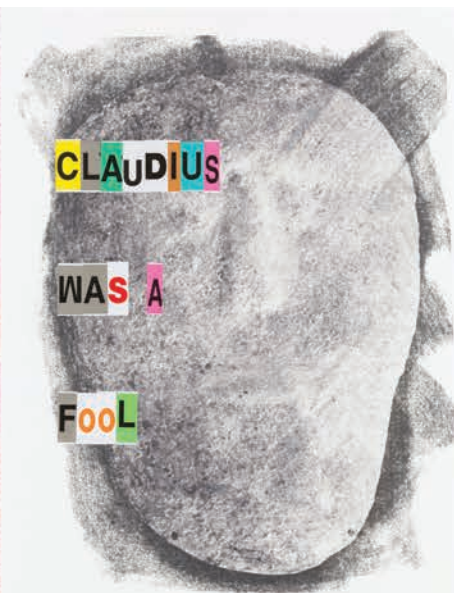
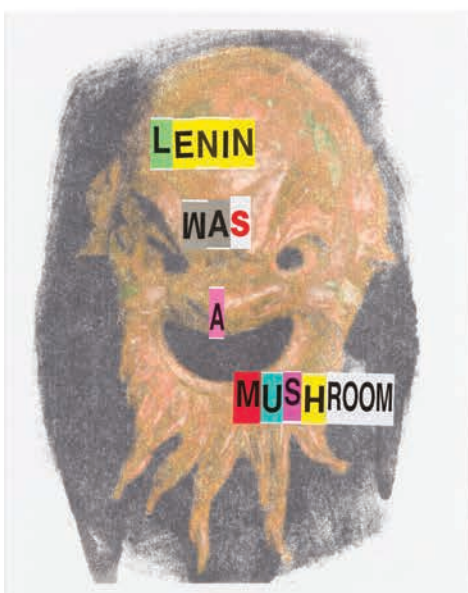
Rue me
A veiled moment
Of sorrow
Mourning what was
Always there
Through tears
Of knotted terrain
Mitochondrial ancestors cry
An infinite litany
Of forgiveness

New growth no longer
Stretched and flattened
With bristles
Twisted and locked
A symbiotic contortion
Of tangles
Adorns
Me
With grace and
Gratitude









LENIN WAS A TIME-TRAVELING MUSHROOM WHO IN CAHOOTS WITH AGRIPPINA MURDERED CLAUDIUS TO ADVANCE NERO TO THE THRONE IN A PLOT TO DESTROY THE ROMAN EMPIRE



COLOPHON

A free broadsheet featuring contemporary writing and art, FULL BLEDE is independently published, designed, edited, and curated by Sacha Baumann. Each issue features collaborators responding to a theme and launches in conjunction with an exhibition reception at a Los Angeles gallery. The first issue launched in June 2017.

MASTHEAD The masthead is a nod to the newspaper terms “full bleed” (edge-to-edge printing) and “lede” (the introductory section of a news story that entices the reader to keep reading). Combined, FULL BLEDE expresses the newspaper’s intent to publish content that is intriguing, unadulterated, and beyond the edge of standardized borders of convention.

TYPOGRAPHY / PRODUCTION The logo was created by manipulating the typeface Lust Display, a serif font designed by Neil Summerour and released through Positype in 2012. The text below the logo and the body type is Din Regular, a typeface originally created in 1931 for engineers and updated in 1995 by Dutch designer Albert-Jan Pool and released through Font-

Font. Subheads use Din Black Alternate. Titles and headlines use Museo Slab, designed by Jos Buivenga in 2008 and independently released on his blog: exljbris.wordpress.com. The broadsheet is created using Adobe Creative Cloud: Photoshop for images, Illustrator for graphics, + InDesign for the layout.

DISTRIBUTION The newspaper launches at a select Los Angeles gallery and is distributed thereafter at a few galleries and shops around town as well as being available via mail, while supplies last. Check fullblede.com for details.

ARCHIVE Issues One through Nine are available as free downloads on the website. A few hardcopies are also available of recent issues, for a small fee.

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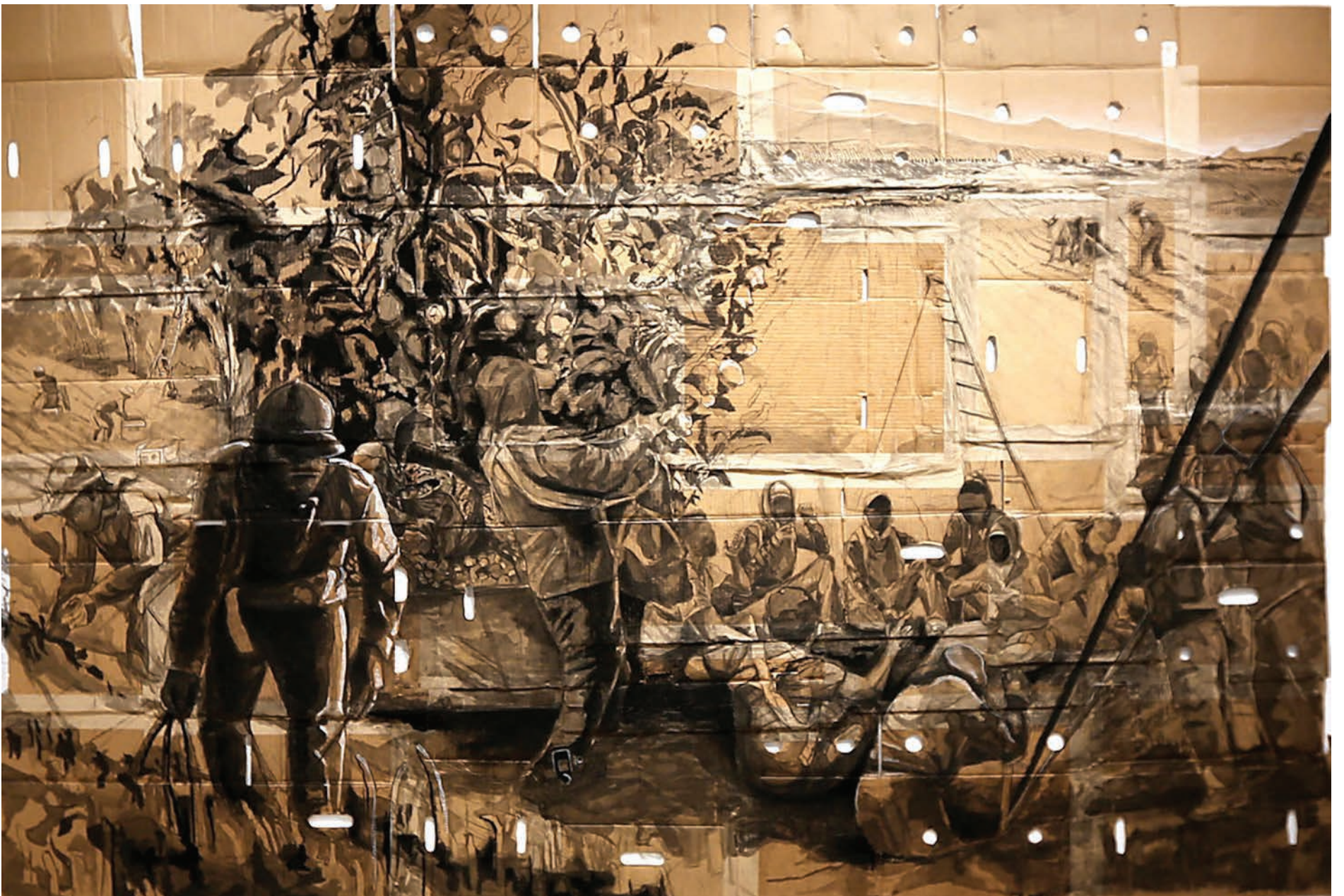
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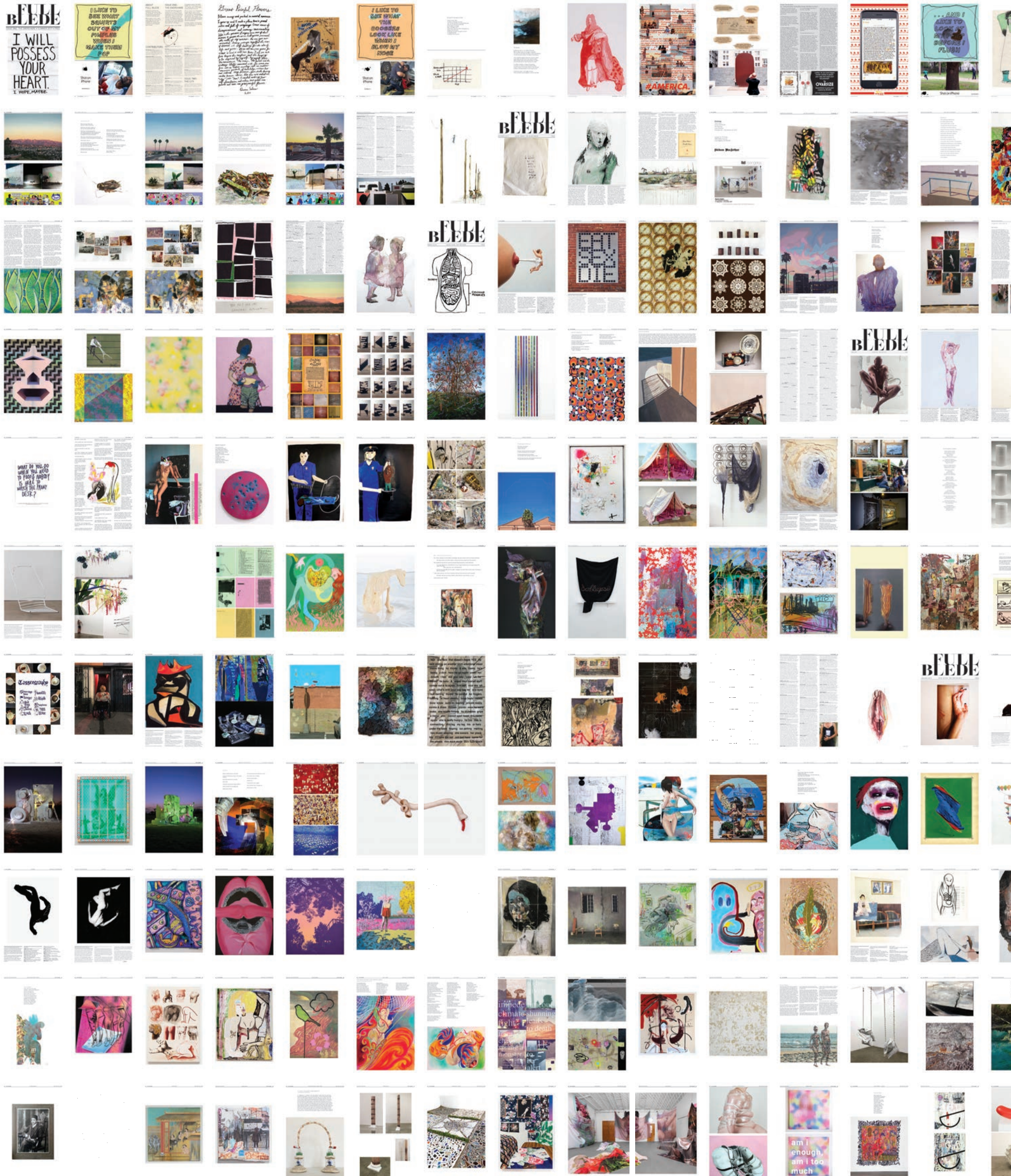
THANK YOU PATREON PATRONS! A special shout-out to the newspaper’s [Super Angel Subscribers](#): Michael Greenslade and Jana Baumann. Your incredibly generous, continuing support makes FULL BLEDE possible!

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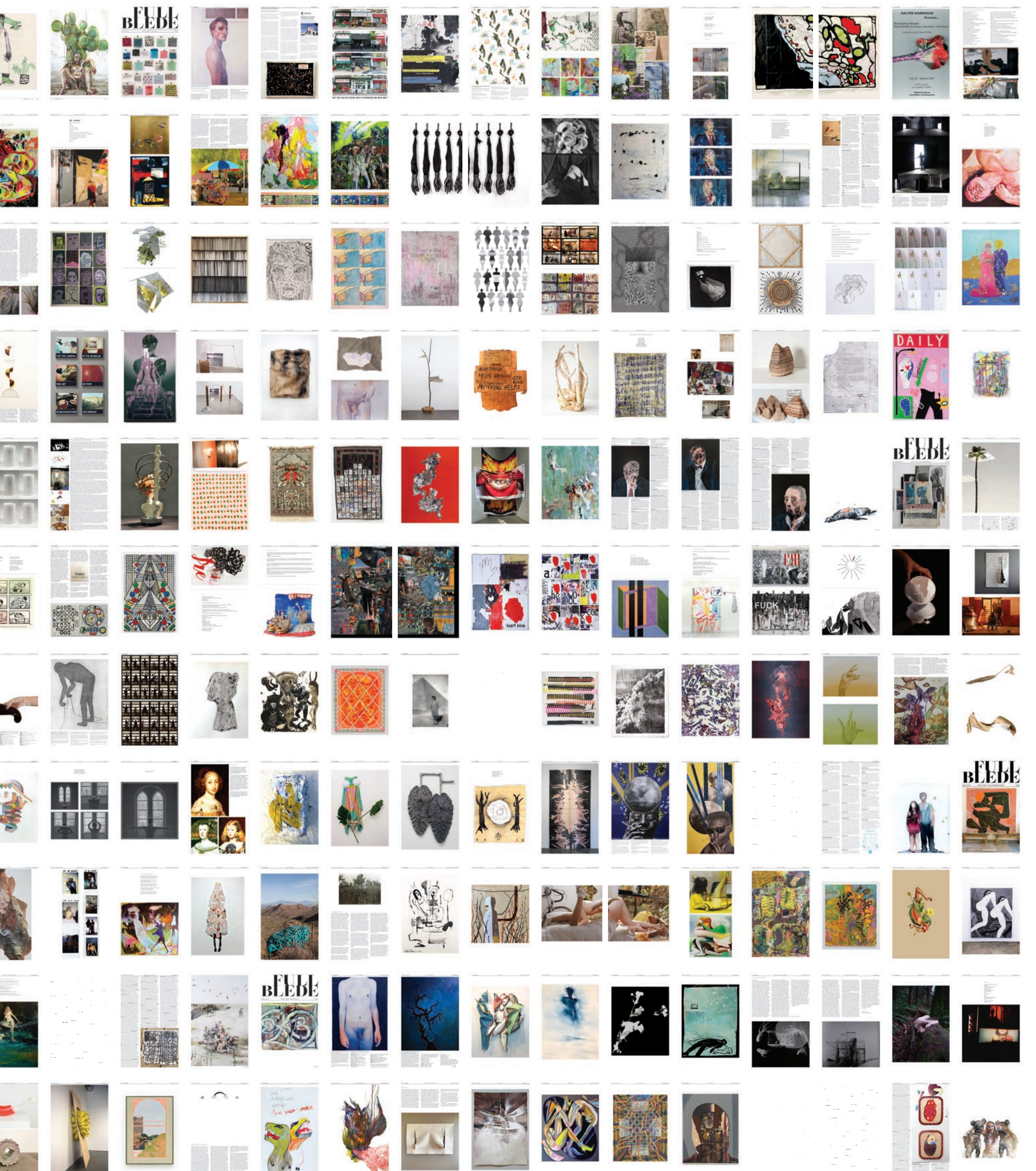


BLEBE



A chronological grid of all of the pages and an alphabetical list of all of the contributors, Issues One–Nine

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 Gentry | Daniel Gibson | Ludovica Gioscia | Wendell Gladstone | Glenn Goldberg | Sarah Gonsalves | Alfonso Gonzalez | Makenzie Goodman | Ryan Gould | Tm Gratkowski | Scott Greenwalt
 Coleman Griffith | Megan Van Groll | Elmer Guevara | Nathan Gulick | Owen Guthrie-Jones | Joshua Hagler | Patrick Earl Hammie | Ting Ying Han | Eric Hancock | Kyla Hansen | Wes
 Hardesty | Joshua Hart | Mark Harvey | Scott Hazard | Kristi Head | Lorraine Heitzman | Ric Heitzman | Peter Hess | Harold Hollingsworth | Mona Houghton | Denae Howard | Elliott
 Hundley | Nick Hunt | Phung Huynh | Raymie Iadevaia | Inkwelder | February James | Nova Jiang | Owen Guthrie Jones | Rachel Jones | Kim Kei | Kibum Kim | Lauren Kim | Jason
 King Kathleen King | Forrest Kirk | Katie Kirk | Diana Kohne | Christopher Kuhn | JP Kunst | Susan Kurland | Francesca Lalanne | Heidi Lanino | Traci Larson | Ye-kyu Lee | Elizabeth
 Leister Mary Little | Karen Lofgren | Tahnee Lonsdale | Aubrey Ingmar Manson | Aline Mare | Liz Markus | Joseph Masotta | Abdul Mazid | Sara McAuliffe | Sheila McMullin | Nick
 McPhail Chandler McWilliams | Joshua Miller | Sydney Mills | Maysha Mohamedi | Dee Balson Mollett | Michael Mollett | Peter Moriarty | Diletta Moricca | Megan Mueller | Jaime Muñoz
 | Stephen Neidich | Aliza Zelin Neidich | B. Neimeth | Lindsey Nobel | Dakota Noot | Sean Noyce | Laurie Nye | Katherina Olschbaur | Harvey Opgenorth | Yemisi Oyeniya | Dylan Palmer
 Kottie Paloma | Justin Pape | Carolie Parker | Laura H. Parker | Kenton Parker | Daisy Patton | Adrian Paules | Lydia Maria Pfeffer | Loren Philip | Nicholas Phillips | Kirsteen Pieterse
 Max Presneill | Hayley Quentin | Lauren Quin | Aide Quirarte | Jason Ramos | Cindy Rehm | Silvia Rigon | Steven Rivera | Colin Roberts | Jaklin Romine | Gabby Rosenberg | Matthew
 Ross | Ammon Rost | Maja Ruznic | Quinn Salazar | Gabriella Sanchez | Maria Sanchez | Joshua Schaedel | Camille Scheffer | Esteban Schimpf | Marty Schnapf | Kristine Schomaker
 Daniel Schubert | Molly Schulman | Elspeth Schulze | Julia Schwartz | Molly Segal | Nicolas Shake | Gou Shibata | Amy Shimshon-Santo | Kerrie Smith | Geoffrey Todd Smith | Joshua
 West Smith Robert Soffian | Adam Stacey | Frank J. Stockton | Jennifer Sullivan | Arine Sulukdjian | David Sutherland | Bonita Tanaka | Jenn Tang | Camilla Taylor | Gabrielle Teschner
 Toshee | Joseph Turek | Katya Usvitsky | Michelle Vaughan | Adam Void | Lisa Wahlander | Kellesimone Waits | Lindsey Warren | Joan Weinzettle | Naomi Westlake | Isaac Whitlatch | Luke
 Barton Macdonald Whitlatch | Tessie Salcido Whitmore | Heather Williamson | Ximón Wood | Isabel Yellin | Maliheh Zafarnezhad | Nelly Zagury | Aaron Zaima | Jody Zellen | Alexis Zoto







A Haiku

take upon the heart
weight of mountains, light from stars,
all the grief and love



The Work

The task is joyful
The task is wry
The task is sincere
The task acknowledges what has come before
The work is poetic
Pieces are symbolic
And the work is strange







Time Capsule

My mother told us stories from the point of view of a child. They grew smoother with each telling, their rough edges and contradictions gradually cooked down.

Once, she was almost kidnapped. A strange man followed her home from school through the underpass near the Mahmoudiyah Canal. He was tall and wore a dark grey suit and hat. He offered her sweets, but she ran away, or maybe a passerby interrupted. She told it in different ways and I don't know which rescue I prefer. Maybe the version where she runs away.

More often, her stories were mundane. She described the chewy texture of Groppi's ice cream and the turquoise water at Stanley Beach. Snapshots show her and her siblings playing in the backyard, or posing near ancient monuments. It was cold, she said, when they visited the Sphinx.

They had to wrap up in overcoats. An old guide wearing a galebeyah led her around the site on a donkey. She caught fleas from the donkey, and for weeks her mother rubbed a greasy ointment on her arms and legs to keep her from scratching. I looked at her round, frowning face and pictured myself cold and unhappy, and bitten by fleas.

In another snapshot, my mother is a chubby-cheeked child in a sunbonnet, standing and smiling beside a white beehive. She liked to brag that she helped her father with his beekeeping. In the picture she holds an

object I first mistook for a watering can. It's a smoker beekeepers use to lull their bees to sleep before a hive inspection. She said the reason their bees never stung her was because they knew her and had taken a liking to her. This could very well be true. "The bees loved me," she would say.

found in libraries. Sometimes, I thought I saw a through-line where the story I cobbled together appeared clean and logical, but that illusion never lasted for long. There were surprises, lost information that appeared and changed the story. For years I tried to weave the parts together to make a whole. For a long time, I didn't have enough material, but at some point I realized I had too much.

I found a photo of my grandmother with a small child, probably my aunt, standing near the giant obelisk in Matarayah, Heliopolis. They face the camera, with the obelisk and some scrub behind them. I wonder if my grandmother was taking the child out for a walk and fresh air, or if this outing was the beginning of a history lesson. It was one of nine obelisks commissioned by an Egyptian pharaoh nearly 3,500 years ago. The Romans moved one of the obelisks to Alexandria, and in 1880, it made its way to New York on a steam ship (a gift from Egypt's Khedive), stopping for a breather in Staten Island before floating up the Hudson on pontoons. Thirty-two horses dragged it cross-town to Central Park. I saw the obelisk for the first time when I was ten years old on a school trip to the Metropolitan Museum. I thought the towering granite monolith covered in hieroglyphs looked out of place among the magnolia blossoms and crabapple trees. "Cleopatra's Needle" said the plaque. Apparently, a time capsule is buried underneath it.



My aunt provided a counterpoint to my mother's storytelling. She was the eldest and knew more about the past, but she also held things back. They'd sit across from each other at our kitchen table with their Nescafe and bicker endlessly. "That's not how it happened," my aunt would say. "Don't be ridiculous, of course that's what happened," my mother would say.

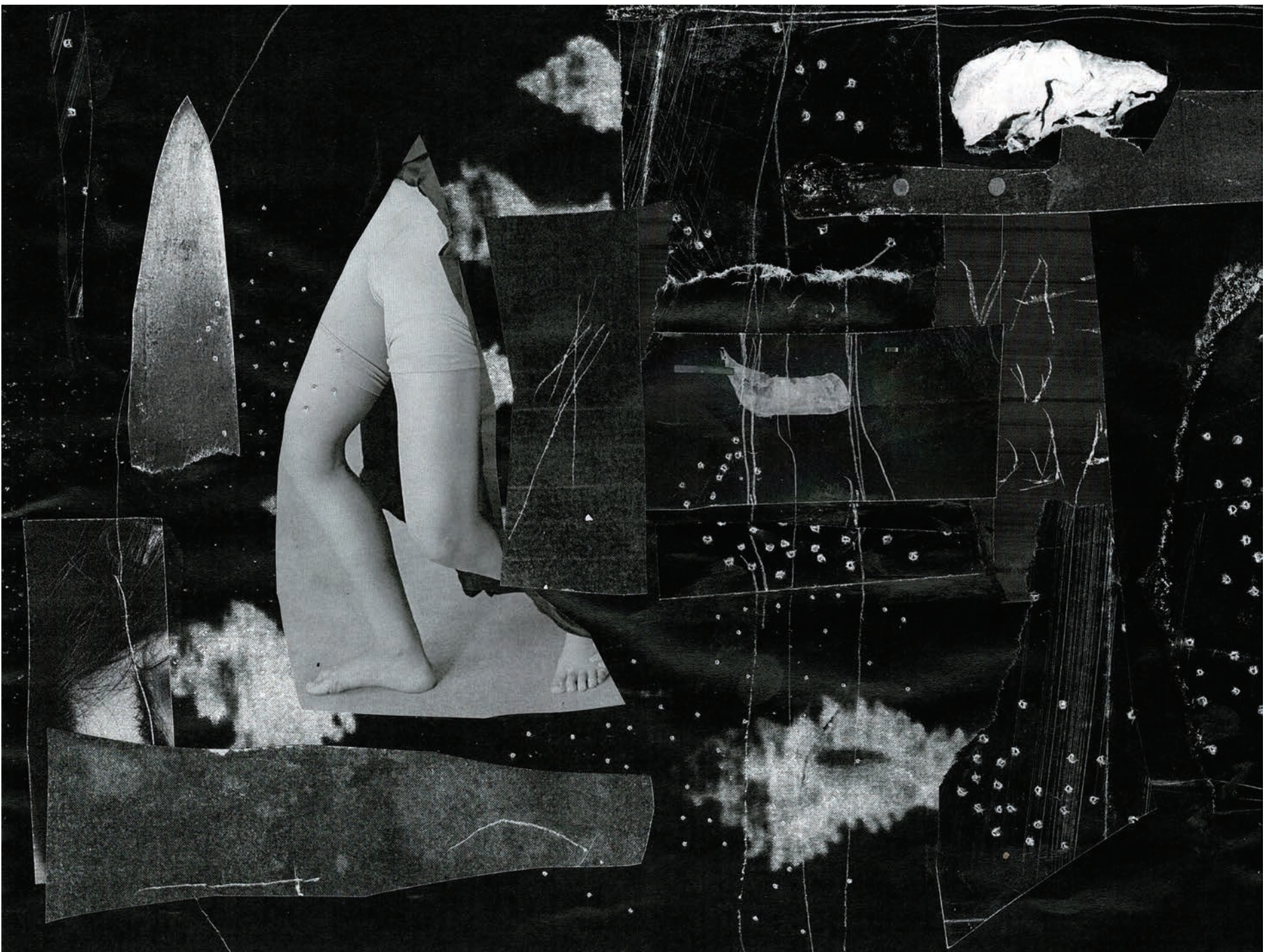
My grandfather was more than a hobbyist, he was an important bee scientist and inventor. When I grew up, I began to connect the family anecdotes with information I





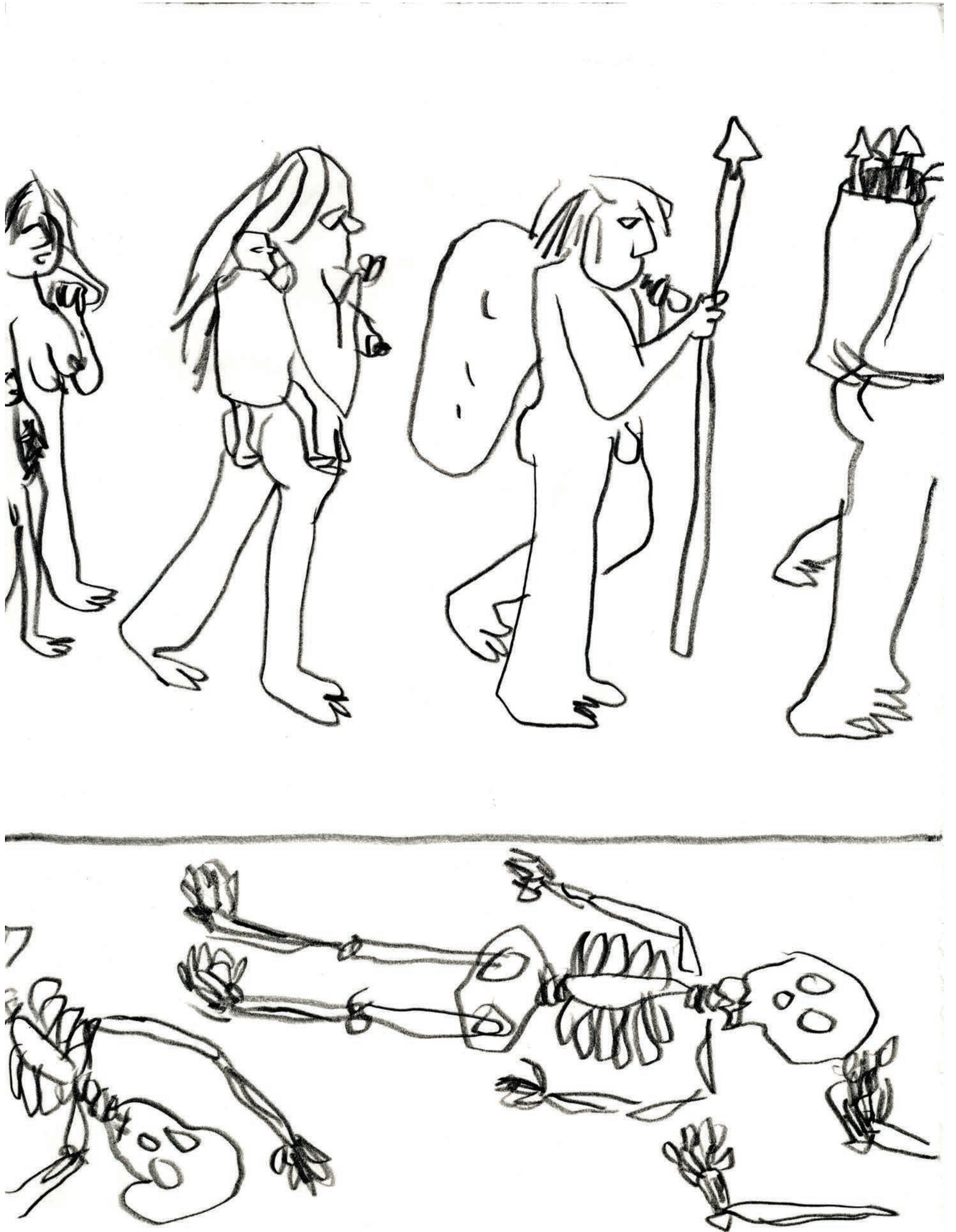












The Great Undertaking

you are not the Drive
the Drive is outside you
you are inside and above
you are below and to the side
the Drive calls and moves
you do not have to answer and go
but when you go you go separate and alone
together with yourself
then the Drive changes
that is the Great Undertaking

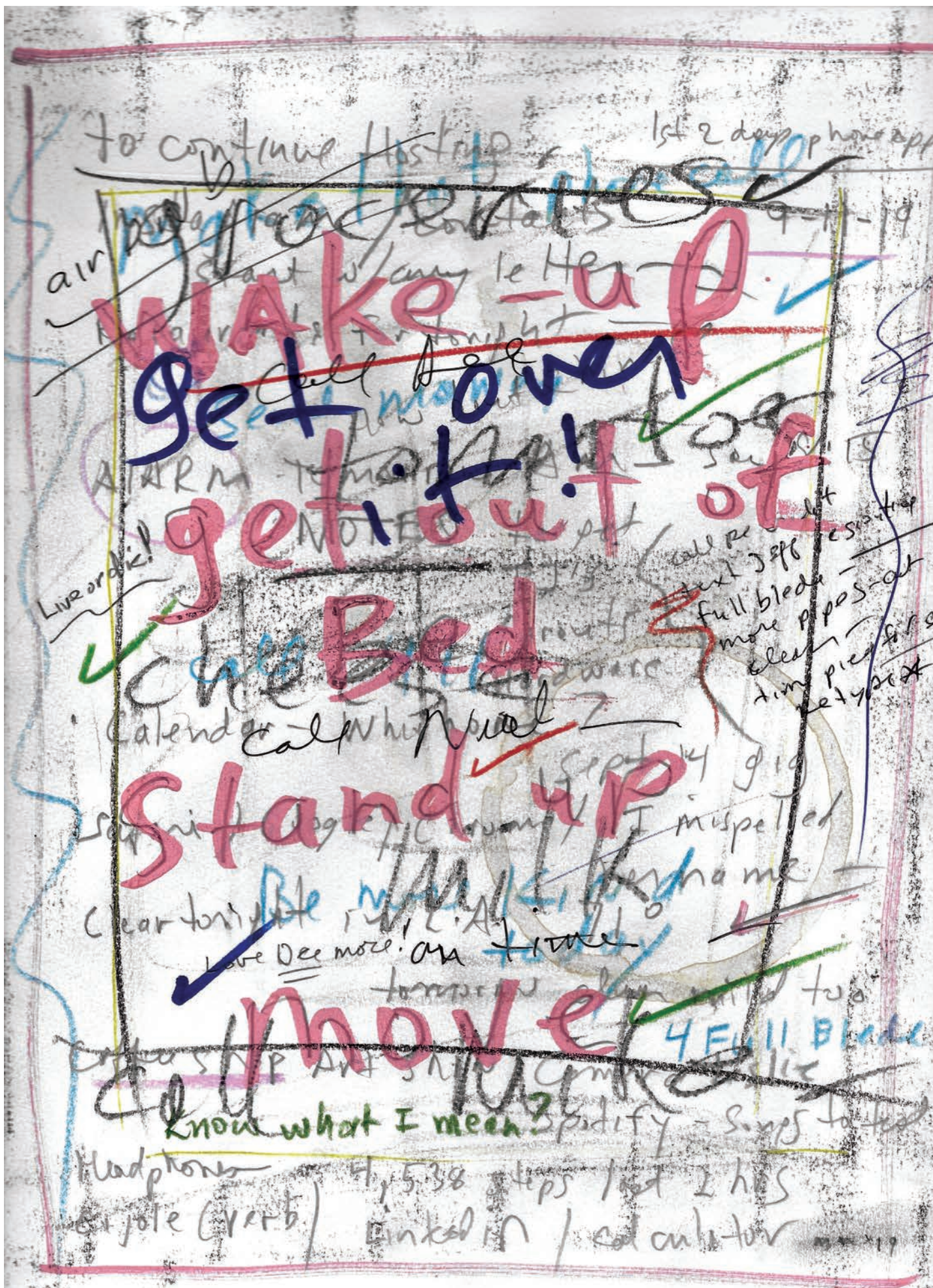


live like a clock with no hands

lay the groundwork
above & below
our days ticking
common as dust.
Let me name the ways
our history tunes in

some things add up to
so much is enough

sleep on it. regale the tale.
live like a monster, a monk...
step into step with all that conversation
build imaginary beings
our face renewed
into the future of who
we will be...
now. & you know what?
to be continued...











CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors elaborate on their work in relation to the theme: The Undertaking.

AMANDA MACIEL ANTUNES *Hush Hush Hush*, 2019. Essay. This was written coming out of an act of absolution. After my first appointment at USCIS during her Citizenship and Naturalization Process. This is about the observations that unfold. This is about a promise we have to make. And about a wish, once made. And the sparks that might be set off in the coming together of these two very different realities. **CODY BAYNE** *Primum non nocere*, 2017. Digital print, dimensions variable. This montage, a stop motion video, I did in contemplation of a critical meditation upon a singular transformative date in my life. It connects directly to the most intimate and private notions of my personage, yet I am continually challenged to find moments and ways to discuss it with my most intimate of relations. The specific undertaking of which always switches the dynamic of the relationship as if always at the precipice of a divergent path knowing there is never a return to the moment before the conversation. *Primum non nocere*: "first, to do no harm." **ANDREA BILLER COLLINS** *Fading*, 2019. Digital print on paper, 7 x 5 inches. After reading a biography of the German artist Paula Modersohn-Becker this past summer I decided to plant a garden using flowers that appeared in her paintings or that she mentioned in her writing, then document it. So, in preparation I spent a lot of time looking at her work. It wasn't always easy to identify the plants but the "Old Woman in the Garden" was most certainly holding a foxglove, so I planted it, among many others, sometimes just guessing what the flower depicted might be. As a gardener, I should have anticipated the difficulty of using nature as a collaborator. Almost nothing turned out as I expected. Unpredictable weather, rampant weeds, and hungry insects all insisted on altering my attempts. But the distinctive shape of the foxglove has started to find its way into my drawings. **PHIL ANDERSON BLYTHE** *Forever*, 2019. Acrylic & pastel on raw canvas, 39 x 42 inches. Promising to keep one's self away from intimacy through taught behavior and past trauma. As human beings, we flirt with the emotional spectrum's highs and lows on a daily basis. Navigating one's self through its demise or overcoming its avoidant nature is a promise we all make to ourselves. Will we choose to repeat the patterns of our ancestors or reach a new level of undertaking? **GARY CANNONE** *Gary Cannone Has Not Fallen*, 2017. LED-embedded sign, 28 x 20 inches. I have Multiple Sclerosis. I have trouble with balance, leg weakness, and a gait abnormality that sometimes prevents me from lifting my left leg. I fall often. This scares me as a harbinger of growing disability, of one day losing my ability to walk. My undertaking, simply put, is to fall less. In 2017 I started counting the days between falls. One day I noticed the "days without an accident" sign at the shop at work. That inspired the "Gary Cannone Has Not Fallen" sign. The LED counter automatically increases the number by one daily, all I really need to do everyday is not fall. When I do fall, I push a button that sets the sign back to zero. If I sell the sign the new owner will be tasked with resetting the counter to zero after I communicate to them that I've fallen. **FRANCO CASTILLA** *Lina celebrating her fifteenth birthday in 1961 in Managua, Nicaragua painted by Enrique Felix*, 2019, 36 x 30 inches. *Franco celebrating his second birthday in Managua, Nicaragua in 1976 painted by Enrique Felix*, 2018, 36 x 24 inches. *Osmundo at the age of 28 in a yearbook photo at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas in 1965 painted by Enrique Felix*, 2019, 36 x 30 inches. *Carlo, Franco, and Sussy in Managua, Nicaragua in 1978(?) painted by Zenon Jimenez*, 2019, 36 x 36 inches. *Franco as faculty at the Art Institute in North Hollywood, CA in 2012 painted by Zenon Matias Jimenez*, 2018, 48 x 36 inches. *The Castilla family in Maryland in 1991 painted by Zenon Matias Jimenez*, 2018, 48 x 36 inches. *Lina, Carlo, and Osmundo at Carlo's graduation from William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA in 1996 painted by Arturo Ramirez*, 2019, 30 x 30 inches. All oil on black velvet. My project *Familia Castilla* examines my family's displacement away from Nicaragua and our subsequent undertaking of life as immigrants. It consists of black velvet paintings created by artists working in Tijuana, Mexico based on photographs and snapshots from family photo albums spanning over 50 years. Depicted are instances from my parent's life in 1960s Nicaragua, scenes with three kids in 1970s Managua, life in Costa Rica in the 1980s after fleeing the Sandinista revolution, and moments after arriving in the United States in 1989. Throughout my family's deterritorialization, photography served to affirm our identity as individuals, as immigrants, and as a family. This is further reified by commissioning paintings that take a metaphorical migration journey from Tijuana, where they are assembled and painted, then cross the Mexican-American border and arrive in Los Angeles. Moreover, the project highlights artists who practice black velvet painting which is generally considered kitsch. **MIKE COCKRILL** *Drawing From Life*, 2017. Acrylic, oil, fabric, charcoal, on canvas, 64 x 42 inches. The figures are engaged in tasks: Repairing and preparing. Washing and dressing. Some figures work on the painting they inhabit: Holding a brush or spackle blade. It becomes a metaphor for the artistic process: the work ends up making itself. The painting took 25 days. Time has no meaning in art. Sometimes the job is quickly done. Sometimes the task involves waiting. Waiting until you suddenly know the answer. Either know or get the message of what needs to be done. In the end the paintings tell you what they want and, ultimately, the viewer tells you what the work means — subject to discussion and debate. Everyone has a role to play. **NATALIE CRUZ** *Daily Offering*, 2019. Oil on canvas over panel, 14 x 10 inches. I grew up with the saying "time waits for no one" on my mind as I rushed to school or soccer practice. When I create work I'm always looking to those timestamps around me. It could be the clouds overhead, the color of the sky, the glimmer from the sun on my mirror, or the peculiar shadows in my studio. Those anomalous moments in life that stir our thoughts with confusion while we walk ourselves through the laws of physics or even metaphysics to comprehend the phenomenon. It could be a self-analytical revelation or a memorial for a loved-one lost. A way of giving back to them or myself; being able to share love through painting. A ritualistic journey uncovering the new with the old or the individual with the self. Returning to my palette day in and day out, I seek the fate of my mysteries wholeheartedly. **RAKEEM CUNNINGHAM** *I'm not Fine*, 2019. Archival pigment print, size variable. This series of por-

traits explore the ramifications of the physical, mental, and psychological effects of my personal struggle with depression and anxiety. Depression often is an undertaking in an of itself, often manifesting through intrusive and suicidal thoughts, isolation, the inability to work and panic attacks. I often say that photography saved my life and these photos were taken at two such moments of 2017 & 2019. **RAMSEY DAU** *Untitled*, 2016 (incomplete). Acrylic on wood panel, 60 x 60 inches. I started this painting in 2016 with the intention of finishing it for a solo show later that year. I often make choices in my work that I know will push me beyond where I think my limits are, and I get a real rush seeing progress as a difficult painting comes together. But with this piece, it became clear that I would not finish it for the show. So I put it aside. Every now and then, I'll dive back into it for a few days. It's difficult to notice any progress though, as so much of the painting is this undifferentiated gravel image — I can work for a week and not tell I've done anything. It's been in my studio now for three years. I won't give up on it, but I might need a collector to say, "finish it and I'll buy it." **CHLOE DIAZ** *The Sunset Reflection in Body*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches. Carrying to the horizon the weight of your own desire until it yearns no more—but a yearn is a yearn no matter where you take it. The weight remains even outside the dream. My work grapples with weight as the tension between inner and outer, lying at the surface of the skin, on the outside of knowing and understanding. The existential weight must be confronted and embodied as we grow. The undertaking is the nature of all things, of all lives, of all art making, because it is the space between desire and reality. **JACK FELICE** *Cherry Fascinated*, 2018. Collage, 8 x 10 inches. This opening marks a constellation of fabric erupting and driven. Archipelago, a monument dedicated to substance and acute angles. Machinery under desk lights. Exploratory knowledge. **FAUSTO FERNANDEZ** *Dust and Memories*, 2019. Collage, acrylic, and image transfer on canvas, 37 x 96 inches. My experience growing up at the border is considered ordinary. It might be regarded unusual that I was born in the U.S. but was raised in Mexico. My undertaking as an artist occurred when the media considered Juarez as one the most "dangerous city in the world". These scenarios were imposed on us as artists in the border...and I question if we need to advocate for them? An art critic once wrote on my art show, "A Mexican American who spent his first 25 years in Mexico, the artist attended high school in the cartel-ravaged city of Juarez. Fernandez seems to have eschewed the notion of incorporating any traces of his cultural or idiosyncratic history into his most recent work". I resist assigning my artwork to this restrictive category. With my large-scale abstract compositions I question influence, human interaction, complex routines and rituals for daily living. This, too, will change. **KAYE FREEMAN** *This Mortal Coil*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 86 x 55 inches. *This Mortal Coil* was a painting I first thought of when I saw the title for this issue. Undertakers make a commitment to assist the soul of a person to move on, and to comfort the family during a time of death. I have personally overseen the funerals of my entire family and I've come to understand a little bit about death and the taboos surrounding it in Western culture. In a way, death is only the first step in a long undertaking of transformation for the deceased and the family. **JOY AMINA GARNETT** *Obelisk*, 2019, digital collage, dimensions variable. *Time Capsule*, 2019. Excerpt from a family memoir-in-progress. And so it continues, this art and memoir undertaking: first, I had to rescue and organize my family's archive. Now I can tease out parts of it to write stories and make art. It took years to put the archive to bed so I could direct my energies to creating something new. The question remains: how to calibrate pulling away from the historical context in order to transform these materials and narratives? Should I leave breadcrumbs to lead the reader or viewer back to the source? On one hand, I have a responsibility to the past and to history; on the other hand, art demands its own space. **MICHELLE CARLA HANDEL** *Peel*, 2018. Mixed media, 12 x 14 x 11 inches. An undertaking is so superficially simple. You set about a task, make a promise do something. Commit. As an artist, in action, this is pretty much the whole enterprise. Mostly between you and you. Beginning a project, following through, finding the soft area in the psyche from which it all can emerge, and then letting it be an offering, imperfect, vulnerable, out in the world. Every project is like this for me. I do get better at it each time—each undertaking, the continued undertaking—my ability to dig deeper, double down, put up with the discomfort, even when it feels absurd to do so. **S. P. HARPER** *Fornax' Miners-cut Oval Diamond*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas curtain, 54 x 42 inches. To remember my diamantaire (diamond cutter) late grandfather, I paint and construct images of gemstones and jewels adopting recycled and reclaimed material. Part of Ecocentric Art (aka Neo Materialism) my undertaking consists of honor, recognition and reincarnation. I synthesize historical and contemporary styles by mixing the classical tradition of still-life painting and sculpture with modernism. By reforming and re-employing materials, the task reduces, reuses and up-cycles. Background recycled patterns disappear behind opaque oil paint rendering and reappear through transparent acrylic wash. Eternal flames re-emerge in the facets of jewels which reflect and transfix. I use diverse media such as discarded wallpaper, curtain, painting, tablecloth, building bits, franked postal stamps, maps, newspapers, metal scraps, lath and plaster. What begins as refuse is repurposed by transforming base materials into noble objects. **KATHERINE HARVATH** *Untitled*, 2018. Oil, paper pulp, latex, thread, and tassels on canvas, 16 x 13 inches. Accompanying poem elaborates. **MICHAEL HENTZ** *Empty Promises*, 2019, found paper, paper cement, 11 x 14 inches. Collage work usually leaves a fair amount of waste and unused pieces left on the cutting room floor. I've always wanted to experiment with some of those pieces that are left and rearrange them again. The gesture that accompanies the grey negative-space pieces left over from photo shoots of ruins and sculptures brings back the human element of why these pieces were created in the first place. **MONA HOUGHTON** *The Undertaking*, 2019. Short story. Here the undertaking involves the battling between what one was and what one is. How does one realize and respect the self when standing in the headlights of expectation from others? **DENAE HOWARD** *Consume U Series (Untitled)*, 2015. Mixed media collage, 6 x 4 inches. As a person who looks like me and identifies as I do the undertaking is something that is (trusted) upon you once you have been pushed out of your Mother's womb. Promises and guarantees can be met—but are definitely conditional. The only true promise is that the only soul looking out for you—if it is not your mother—is most likely someone

who identifies with you. Who sees your struggle in them. The undertaking of constant education of what it is to be you <the survival of your kin > followed by creative diligence to rescue human existence as a whole is an unwarranted obligation / for the attacked, brutalized and capitalized mules of this earth. **SELF-IMPOSED AND CHARGED BY OTHERS RAYMIE IADEVAIA** *City of the Sun*, 2019. Acrylic gouache, ink, and colored pencil on paper mounted on canvas, 4 x 6 inches. Tiny small little paintings they are tchotchkes that dangle in my mind that dangle off my hand. They have a handedness to them. They are handheld. Like the phone or the postcard or snapshot before, it holds and contains immensities like a vessel or decanter of some forgotten vintage. Sipping the view of a secret seashell night, it's song long and eerie, the tiny painting shrinks me to a new country. I collect them like trinkets or talismans. They are necessary to accumulate, they feel like food to keep the furnace burning. Tiny small little paintings are my undertaking to build a bridge between spaces in myself and the world. **EMILY JOYCE** *Lenin Was A Mushroom*, 2019. Collage on Xerox-transfer print, 7 pages, each 12 x 9 inches (one visual poem composed of 7 pages). A conspiracy maybe, but Agrippina's murderous act is also a woman seizing power in the only way she can, through trickery and violence. A plot. What an undertaking! Cooking up those poisonous mushrooms for a naïve and incompetent Emperor to ingest. What if time is elliptical? Can the discovery of a media hoax in 1991's barely-post-Soviet Russia reveal a stunning truth? A time machine driven by Vladimir Lenin (who was indeed a mushroom) back to ancient Rome to collaborate with the fearless Agrippina so together they can change the course of history for their individual reasons. Did it go according to plan? Forget about Nero. And Claudius — don't pity him for a second. **NARSISO MARTINEZ** *A Family Portrait*, 2017. Ink, charcoal gouache on unfolded produce cardboard boxes, 72 x 108 inches. *Philosophy in the Fields*, 2016. Ink, charcoal on unfolded produce cardboard boxes, 72 x 108 inches. My large drawings and mix media installations include multi figure compositions in agricultural landscapes. Experienced as a farmworker, I am determined to shine a light to the plight of the farmworker who toil in the fields picking the produce we consume. To highlight their overlooked contribution to the nation, I add context to the figures by portraying them on discarded produce boxes often collected from grocery stores. Through the juxtaposition of produce labels from these boxes and the drawings of agricultural workers, I strive to create compositions that allow me to reflect upon the themes of peasantry, the landscapes, and of the current social economic inequity. **JOSEPH MASOTTA** *Battle Flag*, 2019, encaustic on collage mounted to board, 60 x 36 inches. Some paintings arrive in a flash, others slowly take shape. The series *American Tempest* consists of a gradually evolving group of black-and-white paintings. *Battle Flag* embodies the attributes of the American timber rattlesnake. This reptile is identified with the "Don't Tread on Me" banner. The message of a battle flag embraces defiance against all comers; it is at once a warning and a creed. The aim of *American Tempest* is to present issues of tyranny, ethnic conflict and climate crisis in their uniquely American form. Paintings are modified week-by-week as current events unfold. Clarity derives from the constancy of the mission to document the tenor of the times. **SARANA MEHRA** *Vigil*, 2019. Chalk pastel on cotton paper, 30 x 22 inches. In the past five years we have created more images of ourselves than all the preceding millennia in recorded human history. "We are here", we say, "we are here to stay!" The images of ourselves, our sex organs, our pets, our offspring, our treasured moments hover for posterity in a cloud of zeros and ones. Yet there is a collective understanding humanity is now at a tipping point, a moment before dissolution, and an acknowledgement that despite our advancements nothing will stop us from turning once again to clay. The drawings in this series use eastern and western mythology and iconography to examine the current reframing of our bodies and stories by the contemporary ubiquity of technology. In this exploration of ancient myth and extant desire to continuously record our existence, I find we stand no different from our prehistoric ancestors who first placed their painted hands upon the walls of the cave. **MM MOLLETT** *some things just are: not even 2 days*, 2019. Acrylic marker, graphite, colored pencil, ink pen, 9 x 12 inches. *Live like a clock with no hands*, 2019. Poem. I've shifted back & forth between spoken words & text, 2D, 3D work, & performance for decades. Often 2-3 media mixed. This has been a problem for many minds. It's their problem. Artists do what we must to be alive & vital, experimental, iconoclastic. & so it is here, in process. Some of each layered, indicating the life below the surface, the spaces between the words. Possibilities. **NANCY MUNGAL** *Untitled*, 2019. Watercolor, ink, graphite on paper, 7.25 x 10 inches. *A Haiku*, 2019. Poem. Haiku on page 28 elaborates. **YEMISI OYENIYI** *Undertaking the Crown*, September 2019. Poem. Hair and caring for hair has been a mixed bag of burdens and blessings for me. Undertaking the Crown is a poem about my relationship with my hair and explores self imposed ideas I formed about my hair which were shaped by broader societal expectations of hair and its care. It has been a lifelong process of responsibilities, challenges and triumphs. The poem begins with a journey rife with early struggles and moves towards acceptance and finally gratitude for all which my hair has shown me. **HILARY PECIS** *Harper's Game*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches. As a representational painter I feel obligation to express the energy and vibe of the space I see, as honestly and most sincerely as to my ability. This allows me the freedom in the undertaking to use abstraction, or to hyper focus on specific aspects, and to take liberties in general and as needed. Each painting feels like a new opportunity to show my best effort in making a vibrant, joy-filled painting. **JOEL DANIEL PHILLIPS** *Towards the End of All Things*, 2018. Charcoal, graphite, ink on paper, 60 x 47 1/2 inches. "View is looking towards the Hancock Oil Refinery. Flames spout from a tank at the center which is surrounded by billows of blackened smoke from various spots. Fire hoses lie in the street leading up to the fire scene."—Courtesy of the Herald Examiner Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, dated May 23, 1958. Since oil was discovered in Los Angeles in 1892, more than nine billion barrels of oil have been produced in the Los Angeles area. This still active and present history is deeply at odds with many Californians ideas of sustainability and the identity of the state. These drawings walk the line between describing a shared, forgotten history and prophesying a terrifying, Orwellian future. While each of the drawings comes directly from an actual, recorded moment, together they create a dizzying sense of dreamlike dislocation—

are the images real? A dream? It is this tension between imagination and reality; actual past and possible future that I wish to explore. Simultaneously beautiful and terrifying, these drawings are my attempt to capture the contradictory and ever-shifting relationship humans have with the elusive promise of progress through industry and technology. **ALICIA PILLER** *Reconfigurations 4*, 2019. Sycamore seeds, rubber, vinyl, leather, latex balloons, and resin, 12 x 11 x 8 inches. I am envisioning historical traumas, both political and environmental, as if through the lens of a microscope. I use sprawling and knotted fields of latex, vinyl, photographs, and news clippings to form large-scale sculptures that act as a fragmented mirror of America at this point in time. My work asks how humanity got to this point. The sculptures reference the trials and tribulations of our history, but also give optimistic glimpses of a possible future with bright colors that show signs of life and proliferating forms that show signs of growth. Throughout you'll see references to nature, family, capitalism, colonialism and industrial production. My work uses images and text of death and destruction, but also conception, birth and transformation. **MEGAN REED** *Untitled*, 2018. Digital print of sculpture on banner vinyl, stuffed with fiber fill, sewn with thread, satin. 44 x 25 inches. I began creating these vinyl sculptures as a form of memento after completing a large installation at a corporate office. The installation was lifelike in scale, the physical toll of making the work and installing it, palpable. I returned home with a sense of loss and mourning for work I would likely never see again, as if I had abandoned it. I printed one at scale on plastic banner material, a flattened version of its former self. It felt comforting to have it back. I kept going: undertaking to actually make it alive again by my own hand, pushing it back into three-dimensionality with a long needle and thread designed to poke through upholstery. The act of sewing was slow, brutal on the eyes, endurance-testing, and deeply meditative. Though resembling their referents, these soft, stuffed versions emerged with their own character and purpose; wearable, huggable, tangible presences. **CLAUDIA REGA** *Girls18*, 2019. Oil, acrylic on canvas, 49 x 39 inches. Painting the *Girls* started with a hope. The hope of overcoming fear of getting things right; managing a task, first seemed unmanageable and at the same time feeling obliged to do so. The "thing" was close, it's about girls—like I've been one, my observations and mostly my feelings about it. Since I was a girl, I felt helpless being described by others. The attributions (German: "Zuschreibungen") made me feel constricted to fit into the description and so into the world of others in a certain way, not knowing how to deal with the rest of me. Painting the girls, I'm looking for a way to dig deeper, to discover and show what's all there, in one human being. Not sweet, girly, bossy or bitchy but sassy, brave, scared and thoughtful. All at once but not at the same time. **CINDY REHM** *Sympathetic Magic 7 + 1*, 2019. Collage, 8.25 x 11 inches. My series *Sympathetic Magic* references the form of the Greco-Roman defixione or curse tablet commonly associated with female practitioners and witchcraft. These ancient thin metal tablets were inscribed with secret vows and spells, and were often pierced with nails to ritualize the binding intention of the talisman. Often the curse tablets were buried underground or placed within tombs. My curse tablets, made from punctured and torn paper and fragmentary collaged images contain a binding spell against the patriarchy. The hidden directive "leave us alone" is intended as a protective charm against all forms of misogyny and sexual violence. **RAYMUNDO T. REYNOSO** *Brutalism*, 2019. Acrylic, ink, toner, collage on basswood, 24 x 18 inches. Calling something an 'undertaking' often places an unexpected layer of foreboding and pessimism in my mind. It does not sound as positive as the word 'challenge' or as optimistic as embarking on an 'endeavor.' [Perhaps fittingly, the term is used for funereal labor.] My work often focuses on alienation and the crushing effects of late-stage capitalism on people living in hyper-urban environments like Los Angeles. I document people undertaking a myriad of tasks just to survive in our city. From the person that crosses an insurmountable river to the vendor traversing the streets - perhaps ironically - employing commerce to fend off the contradictions of living in poverty surrounded by wealth inequality. Existence under these conditions sometimes seems to be daunting,

but through my practice, I also explore the possibility of persevering and searching for that other world that - as the Zapatistas of southeast Mexico have demonstrated - is possible. **BRYAN RICCI** *BMCBE3*, 2019. Pigment, sand, polymer resin on linen. 42 x 72 inches. My work explores both painting medium and ground. It is a continual experiment of formal compositional attitudes of space within contemporary approaches to material to create work which is both painterly and abstract. The experimental process of creating non objective work is engaging, intuitive, sometimes uncomfortable, and gratifying. Within my process the not knowing is essential and an undertaking. **LOUIS M. SCHMIDT** *Straight Line Becoming a Circle: The First Diasporas*, 2019. Graphite on paper, 15 x 11.25 inches. This is part of an ongoing series about the infinite undertakings of our great human endeavor. Rhythms of the journeys, ideas and cycles that describe our efforts through time. Patterns of thought and behavior, from our highest notions of ourselves to the most base realities of the unending damage we cultivate for the sake of GAIN. I embrace the tension that arises when the conversation between elegance and discomfort is tuned to a very exacting degree. The works are tactical—each drawn with my non-dominant hand, representing my personal, poetic and political motivations. I'm canceling the over-calculated, endlessly inane formalisms, the inaccessibly obtuse and utterly ineffectual intellectual posturing, and most egregiously the "dollars per square inch," direct to market attitudes that dominate "the art world." We've built our personal, spiritual and political systems on the fundamental notions of UP and MORE and TOMORROW, and I stand imperfectly opposed to all. Undertaking the overtaking. A part and apart. **MOLLY SEGAL** *Shoot Out The Sun*, 2019 (detail). Mixed media on paper. There is an oil field along Route 46 in Lost Hills, CA. Tucked out of view from the major highways, hundreds of pastel-colored pumps bob in the middle of nowhere as far as the eye can see. These pumps speak to the act of penetration and the compromises we make for comfort. Each extraction they make contributes to a comfortable first-world existence. This undertaking simultaneously makes the ground beneath us less stable. The things that give us strength often leave us vulnerable. Our connections are fragile and our reserves are finite. **ROBERT SOFFIAN** *The Great Undertaking*, 2019. Dye, ink, oil, cyanotype, charcoal, liquid graphite, mixed media on paper, 38 x 50 inches. Accompanying poem elaborates. **CAMILLA TAYLOR** *Your Name on My Throat*, 2019. Installation view, size variable. As a child, I had permanent amnesia from an untreated head injury. It was at a young enough age, 7, that it wasn't noticeable beyond my family, but my personality completely changed. I changed the name I was referred to with (from Anna to Camilla), because a vegetarian, among other shifts. I think of the person that I was and wonder who she might have been if things had gone differently, who I might have become instead. The repetition of the heads in the pool are attempts to repeat a face precisely without a mold, attempts to reconstruct and remember someone who I am not, attempts to create who this young stranger might have become. **ERIN TREFRY** *A phrase fragment in the axial*, 2018. Glazed stoneware and purse handles, 16 x 16 x 8 inches. Nonacceptance over decades complicated with an innate desire to honor the life of my beloved mother drives my expectation of self and holds me accountable to my impulses as an artist. My pursuit seeks to embrace many forms of success. Excellence rooted in ancestral behavior —tendency and practice drive my aspirations. Realization of this promise is incumbent upon each undertaking and each undertaking holds a responsibility to every outcome. This cycle is echoed throughout the body of my work—its materiality and within the elements themselves. **TRINA TURTURICI** *Falling But Not Failing*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 inches. This series of paintings are conversations between states of mind. I set myself up by consciously asking a question and answering it intuitively using a series of marks, shapes, and color combinations that serve as my own visual language. I use a process that invites surprises and unexpected results in which I cover parts of my canvas with cut pieces of paper. I can't see the entire canvas as I paint layer by layer so I can only surmise the final result. Each layer contains its own set of rules based on what colors and marks are exposed. In the end,

the combination of layers reveals hidden imagery and messages within the painting that are both purposeful and accidental. **JESSICA VALICE** *Women by the Fountain*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 48 x 52 inches. I use self-portrait as iconography—completely visualizing myself as an object maintaining some kind of homeostasis on various environments. Images of myself slightly modified—to fit the genotype of a sheriff, woman on the run, statue, fairy godmother, etc.—are used as a motif of disassociation with one preset, preconditioned, or axiomatic idea of the self. I invite the viewer to imagine the world around that emotionless character and to consider their environment and perspective with the slightest use of gaze. Lacking emotional expression within my own vicariously lived self-portraits, I forgo the burden of expression. **SARAH ANN WEBER** *The Plot*, 2019. Colored pencil on Arches, 22 x 30 inches. I see it spilling underneath the closed gray door. Once again, it has beaten me to work. I unlock the door and am instantly warmed by its presence. It is coming in from the metal grated windows, and for a few hours I am happy to be blinded from seeing out. We get along amiably enough— I am content to work at the table, and the light seems happy hitting the wall to my left. But then we both get restless. **LISA DIANE WEDGEWORTH** *She Left Evidence of Her Existence Yet No One Claimed To Have Seen Her [8th Ave + Hyde Park/ La Brea @ Exposition / Stocker Sometime Between 7:30-7:45am]*, 2017 -19. Found synthetic hair, baggie, Sharpie, 6 1/2 x 6 7/8 inches. She leaves evidence of her existence in busy intersections and on concrete sidewalks littered with decade-old gum, now aged and spotted black and gray like the stray that sniffs near the You Buy We Fry. Did this slender braid fall from her edges? It's baby-hairs too short and fragile to hold onto its weight? She leaves evidence of her existence on airport ramps, in hospital corridors and just outside liquor store doors where neighborhood men get lost in inebriated daydreams and compliment under-aged girls. Did this weft get yanked out 'cause somebody heard you was talkin' to they man and they had to let you know they wasn't nobody to fuck wit? I collect her abandoned tendrils n' tumble-weaves (a self-imposed undertaking because I dig storytelling and artifacts but mostly...) because I understand the value in being seen, the value in being acknowledged and the importance of telling your story. **EVE WOOD** *The Undertaking (Missed Opportunity)*, 2019. Gouache and graphite on paper, 20 x 30 inches. Historically, vultures are aligned with images of death and are considered harbingers of dread, yet they are also symbols of transformation and rebirth. Vultures are large, unwieldy creatures - not clumsy as lore would have it, but powerful and agile. Because of their size and the fact they are opportunistic creatures, we fear them, but what if your human "spirit guide" was a vulture and you lived your life as a marked man, your every undertaking, a sinister portent of darker days to come? All that would be left for you to do would be to sit together and stare out into space. **ELLEN JING XU** *We are here*, 2015. Clothes, wig, bubble bags, life-sized. Undertaking exists in the process of recognizing self-identity, especially for those who don't fit in the major categories. It is a process of bearing confusions and difficulties over and over. I create two bodies of myself, being a "normal" person and a "unique" person at the same time. **DEBORAH ZLOTSKY** *Love child*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches. I connect visual fragments, accumulating and connecting parts that don't necessarily go together. From the logical illogic of my decision-making, a top-sided system eventually develops in each work that refers more broadly to the way systems might evolve through the accumulation of actions and reactions—in the way complexities of power are built over time through accidents that get baked in. The activity of processing and attempting to create order is an undertaking that begins with dozens, sometimes hundreds, of cycles. As I work, resolving one set of relationships leads to the undoing of another. Eventually, the provisional nature of connecting fragments leads to something equally convergence and non-sequitur. The friction between my intention to build relationships and the coincidences that occur as I make sense of unexpected interactions and proximities mirror the daily processing required to be in the world. In the paintings, the drips, abrasions, and stains reveal the months, and sometimes years, the process takes.



