

THE NAUGHTY ISSUE FEATURING: VANDA THE PANDA • MIRANDA JOON • NOEL STEVENS

Issue No. 6

DECUSSATE

Fall 2022



It's a cool place and they say it gets colder
You're bundled up now, wait 'til you get older
But the meteor men beg to differ
Judging by the hole in the satellite picture
The ice we skate is getting pretty thin
The water's getting warm so you might as well swim
My world's on fire, how about yours?
That's the way I like it and I'll never get bored







ISSUE NO. 6

NAUGHTY

Do you ever have a theme runaway from you? Well I did. I was so sure that this theme was going to be on some nasty and naughty type shit. I imagined chains and whips and maybe even a crucifex? But life has a way of really getting in the way or sometimes people get in the way of blocking your blessings. Believe it or not that detour is exactly what I needed all a long.

So here we are with issue number six I genuinely never thought we would get this far but I'm glad we are here. I dedicated this issue to all the naughty hotties fighting for reproductive rights. The light is dim but we are keeping it burning.

MONICA VALENZUELA
FOUNDER & ART DIRECTOR

ON THE COVER : We went through a bunch of ideas for the cover and nothing seemed to be "naughty enough" until one day at one of our meetings we joked around for awhile and somehow convinced our editor to tattoo her booty checks. The rest is history. I asked Natalie how she felt about having her almost bare ass exposed and published; "I developed this beautiful juicy round ass early on in life playing soccer and lifting weights during my formative years, and I have always known it to be one of my best features. I now share it gleefully with all of you in its peak form, freshly tattooed as of April 2022 by world class artist Katja Ramirez at Rock of Ages. Tattoos have been a huge part of my journey to loving my body and feeling empowered in it, and made all the more enjoyable by great experiences with talented artists. You can read about one of my favorite tattooers, Miranda Joon Fermin, in this issue on page 26!"



MEAN GIRL PAGE 8 • ROMANCELANDIA PAGE 10 • VANDA PAGE 16 • NFTS PAGE 22 • MIRANDA JOON PAGE 26 •

KEY: How do you navigate our magazine? Find the icons at the top of the page to give you a preview about what will be in the article. Find the content you want or skip it in case it's not your vibe.



Find the kitty



Spicy Content



Interview



Page not numbered



NFTs



Filler



Romance



Opinion



Tattoo



End of Article

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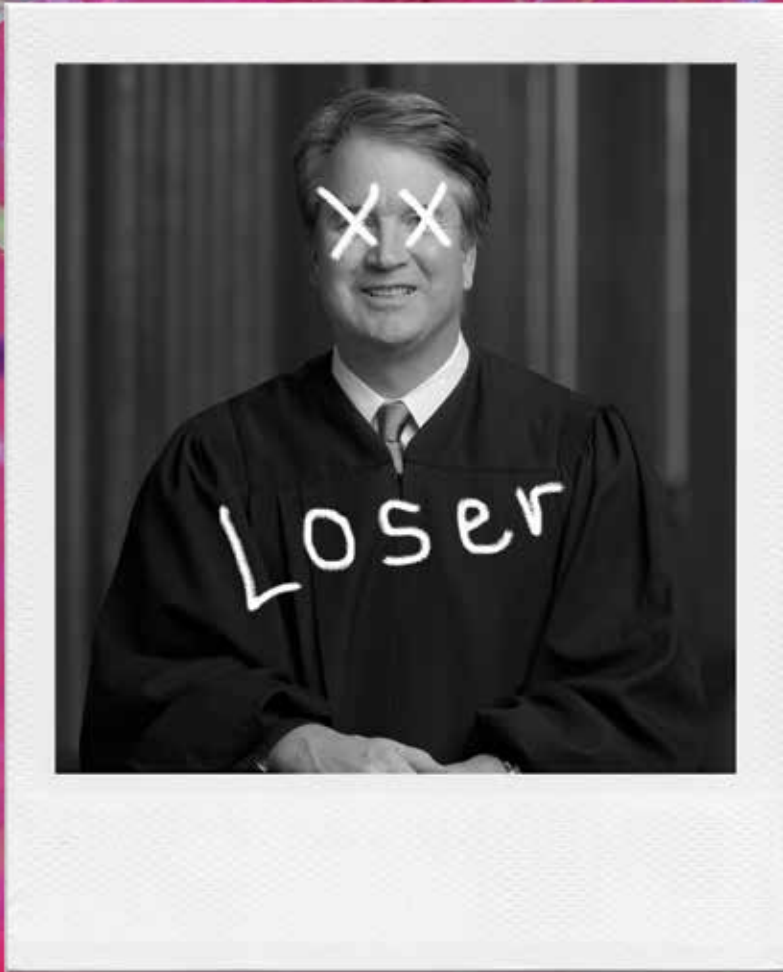
Natalie Stevens By Franceska Carbajal

Meet the magazine 's Mascot: Willow the cat

Our muse Willow is a tortie cat with a nasty attitude. Imagine existing in your home and all of a sudden a small furry creature attacks you for breathing. You did absolutely nothing wrong. Maybe you did, but you will never know. The majority of the staff of this magazine has at one point lived with this demogorgon. Her tail acts like no other cat. We are convinced that's where the demon in her resides. We hope she is in a constant battle in keeping it at bay. That's why she's so mean. The inner turmoil is almost too much to take on.

No matter what, we love her dearly. She's the naughtiest thing we have ever met so it's fitting that we dedicate this magazine to her, as an offering. Hoping this will please the beast. Willow is scattered in the pages watching you. Be careful. She pounces quickly and it hurts. Keep your eyes open.





LET YOUR INNER MEAN GIRL FREE

By Monica
Valenzuela

I blame popular media for its attempt to paint the mean girl as a villain, when at the very least mean girls are just fashionable bullies. Sweet at the core, they just have a hard-candied exterior. I would know since I've always been the mean girl. Friends and family would disagree with that statement but my sworn enemies (and a few ex boyfriends) would only know it as the truth. So I'm here to set the record straight, mean girls get a bad wrap. I'm here to champion for the sassy stallions who are just slightly misunderstood. If my elective course in college psychology taught me anything, it's that meanness is just the armor hot girls put on to hide their insecurities, and there's no shame in that. I mean, I think all of us have a little mean girl deep down inside, it's my job to see if she's ready to come out.

2022 has proven that everyone should be a mean girl. I don't know why we aren't bullying and harassing more politicians. Why are we just letting Karens* (*Karens aren't mean girls BTW, they are highly evolved versions of the prehistoric Heterodontosaur) blow up in public without making fun of their 2014 Michael Kors purse? Now more than ever we should be mean-girling constantly. It's our civic duty to fight evil with feistiness.

In reality, being a mean girl isn't bad, or even slightly negative. It's being the big sister who doesn't give a shit. The type of sister who would defend their younger siblings at school for being picked on, but then also throw them down stairs because they watched an episode of Friends without them.

As a mean girl, I always ask myself the real question: Why be a Regina George when you can be Ouiser Boudreaux from "Steel Magnolias"? Which we all know as the ultimate mean girl. Being a mean girl isn't about being catty or manipulative, it's about being THAT bitch and telling it like it is.

It also doesn't mean a lack of kindness. I think mean girls have all the understanding of genuine warmth for the human race, I just don't think their actions have to be portrayed in hugs and kisses. Not all of us know how to properly show our feelings, and we are still learning. Sometimes our "I love you" is a carefully planned roast on your personality.

I don't think my mean girl formed over time, I was born this way. I accept who I am because I know who I am. But if I come across another mean girl who is still new to the mean girl ways, I respect their angst. If she's hurtful, I understand where that hurt comes from. It's not easy being a modern woman, and it's not easy for a lot of minority groups who just want to live, laugh, love their way to equality. The hurt can be hard to deal with, but it doesn't define us. To anyone who is having a tough time right now and maybe your mean girl is coming out, that's okay. It's a lifestyle, babe: now put on your lip gloss and get in, because we're going to bully Brett Kavanaugh at another restaurant. ✕

Happily Ever After in Romancelandia

By Tess Williams

I have reached a time in my life where I'm trying to explore things I would have previously eschewed (often because I worried they might be so frivolous as to make me less appealing to a man), and I have recently been more open to things like romance novels than I've ever been before. With this new, unencumbered perspective, I approached romance aficionado Noel Stevens for her take on why she finds romance so appealing. Her first lesson? The romance genre is anything but frivolous.

Noel Stevens works as a Public Defender—she is a full-time attorney, fighting for the rights of the most vulnerable members of our society in the often-unjust world of the American criminal “justice” system. She is also a social media figure who reviews romance novels, and is active in the online romance community which she refers to as “Romancelandia”. She has also contributed to “Romancelandia” as an author with several of her own short stories.

I spoke to Noel about how she got her start in romance, how she uses reading and writing romance as self-care, and how others who want to join “Romancelandia” can find their way in.

NOEL, HOW DID YOU GET INTO ROMANCE WRITING?

I think the start of being a romance writer is being a romance reader. [Being a reader] is a whole other thing we could get into, but specifically with writing, what urged me to finally give myself the time to try it—because I had an idea of a story kind of kicking around in my head for a few years—was a National Association of Public Defense Defender Wellness Course. It was a six-week virtual course that I did early-pandemic, when things were rough, and one of the things we were supposed to do in this course was to try to pick up a hobby. I was like “I’m going to try to finally go back to this story and see if I can do it,” and the first thing I wrote was my novelette called “A Brief Romance”.

At that same time, there was a small indie press (that doesn’t exist anymore) that had a submission call. They were looking for short stories, 10,000-15,000 words, that were enemies-to-lovers trope. That trope happened to be in the story that I had been working on all these years. So, I basically just sat myself down and was like, “This is going to be your escape from work”. I sat down and wrote it and submitted it, and it got accepted. It originally got published as part of an anthology, and I’m now rereleasing it as a standalone. I just kind of went from there, and I’ve been working on writing other novelettes as I work up towards, you know, hopefully full-length novels.

YOU MENTIONED THAT A BIG PART OF WHY YOU GOT INTO ROMANCE WRITING IS BECAUSE YOU READ ROMANCE NOVELS. SO WHEN DID THAT START?

I trace it back to growing up reading a lot of chick lit. That was the term at the time.

It’s not really used anymore.

CAN I ASK WHY?

Chick lit was really a term for a very ‘90s and 2000s moment in time. So think a lot of Meg Cabot’s stuff, Sophie Kinsella’s Shopaholic series. It was thought to be, “Oh, it’s light and fluffy and it’s not serious literature,” and it typically had some sort of love interest, but maybe the love interest wasn’t the main plot of the story.

Meanwhile, separate from chick lit, there had been the long-running romance genre. Chick lit is kind of an offshoot of romance and women’s fiction—it’s kind of women’s fiction-lite. So even if you’re not familiar with some of the books that are in chick lit, movies of the era that are very chick lit-esque are, like, “Legally Blonde”. Which is amazing! It’s not to say that “Legally Blonde” is light and fluffy and powder puffy, Elle Woods kicks ass! It’s all empowerment and all of that. But romance is very clear that the novel and story has to end in an HEA (a Happily Ever After), with the actual romantic relationship as the key component to the story. I grew up reading a lot of chick lit, but had not merged over into true romance until a few years ago.

[Author’s note: Noel wants to clarify that there are romance novels that do not have a happily ever after, such as those by Nicholas Sparks. Just another facet of this expansive genre!]

I am a huge, huge, huge Meg Cabot fan. A die-hard Meg Cabot fan. A few years after I graduated law school, I was finally able to say, “I’m not in school anymore. I can read again for fun! I can read fiction as a way to unwind from work.” I avidly follow Meg Cabot on all her social media, and she had promoted this book called “A Princess in Theory” by Alyssa Cole. Meg Cabot basically said, “This is one of the best royal romances I’ve read,” and obviously Meg Cabot [the author of “The Princess Diaries”] is the queen of royal romances.

So, I got “A Princess in Theory” out from the library, and it just completely captivated me. I felt like I had never read anything like it. It’s a contemporary romance with a super diverse, multicultural cast of characters. Alyssa Cole is a Black female romance author. She also writes some other genres, but that’s where she got her start. I read that, and I read the rest of the books in her “Reluctant Royals” series, and to this day it’s probably my absolute favorite romance series. It just completely got me hooked on the genre. There’s just something about it.

Romance as a genre is just so hopeful and so joyful. It’s very therapeutic, because you know it’s going to have a happy ending, and it’s just a matter of how you’re going to get there. That was something I needed.

YEAH, I WAS GOING TO SAY! TELL ME HOW THAT RELATES TO YOUR WORK.

I am a Public Defender. Being a Public Defender is... a lot. In 1963, there was a case that came out of the United States Supreme Court called *Gideon v. Wainwright* that ensured that everybody is entitled to a lawyer, whether they can afford one or not. That basically created a nationwide mandate that there had to be Public Defenders to defend people even when they couldn’t afford to hire an attorney. So that is what I do. I am a Public Defender in the Southwest United States.

I’m very proud to be a Public Defender. It is what I went to law school for. Basically, all I’ve ever wanted to be was a Public Defender. Day in and day out,

I represent indigent people who can't afford a private attorney. I serve people who are charged with any manner of crimes, and I love my job.

Still, it is hard. It's very draining because the criminal justice system in the United States is really not meant to serve criminal defendants, especially poor criminal defendants. It takes a lot out of you. I started using reading, and especially reading romance, to deal with the stressors and the burnout of my job, and it's given me something light and joyful and happy in my life that helps me escape the stressful, depressing, and heavy parts of my work.

YOU MENTIONED YOUR NOVELLETTE "A BRIEF ROMANCE". WAS THAT YOUR FIRST PUBLISHED WORK?

Yes, it was published as part of an enemies-to-lovers anthology.

AN ENEMIES-TO-LOVERS TROPE-YOU MENTIONED THAT EARLIER. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Romance is a genre. There are tons of other genres: mysteries, thrillers, etc. Within genres there are these subgenres, or tropes, that create a format for a particular type of story. Enemies-to-lovers, friends-to-lovers, second-chance romance, mistaken-identity romance (which is oddly one of my favorites, but is not typically people's favorite) are just a few of the many different romance tropes. In enemies-to-lovers, people start out hating each other, and something about their hatred forces them into proximity. Eventually their feelings develop over time.

AND THAT'S WHAT A BRIEF ROMANCE IS? AN ENEMIES-TO-LOVERS TROPE?

Yeah, "A Brief Romance" is about a criminal defense solicitor in London. In law school, I spent a year studying there while working at a criminal defense solicitor's office. That's when I first got the idea for this story. In the UK, criminal defense solicitors always act as defense attorneys, but there are also barristers, who are people who actually argue the case in court. So they're both lawyers, they're just different types of lawyers that work on different parts of a case. Barristers can represent defendants, or they could represent the government, which could, at times, make them prosecutors. They switch back and forth. It's very different from how it works in the United States.

SO BARRISTERS ARE ONLY DOING THE TRIAL PORTION OF THE CASE.

They only do the trial portion, yes. The solicitors are the people who are actually investigating, doing motions, and providing all of the write-up. They create a brief — aha! — and then they consult the barrister on the case, who then argues it at trial. So I had this idea of, what if a solicitor has to be paired with—has to brief—a

barrister she really hates for... reasons. My book explores those reasons, and it forces them together to work out their issues, learn about each other, and it goes from there. No spoilers!

WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU WRITTEN, AND/OR PUBLISHED?

After that, I answered another submission call for a friends-to-lovers trope. It's people who are friends that eventually become lovers. That one was a little different for me. It's a WLW called "Don't Forget World Peace".

Women Love Women, sometimes referred to as sapphic. It's not a lesbian romance, because both characters are not lesbians, but there is one character who identifies as a lesbian, and one character who identifies as bisexual. They are best friends on a pageant circuit, and it's their last pageant together, their feelings are flying all over the place, and they have to deal with it before the circuit ends. One of them is in law school, because I do like to incorporate some sort of criminal justice element into each of my stories, and the other heroine is in school to be an epidemiologist. It's a very nice, no angst, very fluffy, happy story, I like to think.

I have another novelette which is a little weirder than those. It's also a WLW. It's called "Into the Horizon". It's a historical monster romance between pirates Anne Bonny and Davy Jones. Anne Bonny was a real queer female pirate who we know had relationships with both men and women, but she went missing in the historical record after disappearing from prison. No one knows what happened to the real Anne Bonny, but my story reimagines what happens to her after her disappearance. In the book, she meets a female version of Davy Jones, the fictional monster, who was inspired by another real-life woman pirate from a different historical era.

I have a few other things in the works, both sequels, and some other ideas I'm working on.

I'm working on a sequel to "A Brief Romance" for some side characters in that story, and I have a few other ideas kicking around!

IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S VERY SPECIFIC NAMES AND CATEGORIES FOR EVERYTHING. WHERE ARE YOU LEARNING ALL THIS? IS THERE SOME SORT OF COMMUNITY YOU'RE PLUGGED INTO?

I like to call it "Romancelandia"—not everybody calls it that. When I was starting to get into the romance reading community, I started following a lot of different accounts on Instagram. There's a lot of romance-only Instagram accounts. I ended up making my own, and I put a little spin on it.

My account name is Romancelandia Criminal Justice Reform or @romancelandiacjr. When I really started getting into the "Romancestagram" community, I made an account.

Something I saw that was missing from the community, where I could provide kind of a unique lens, was a criminal justice angle. I thought,



“What if I reviewed romance novels through a criminal justice reform perspective?” So that’s kind of how I got my start. I posted reviews of books that I had read. It was really nice—people were recommending books, like, “You need to read this,” introducing me to books that had some sort of criminal justice spin on them.

I will say, in the past, there’s been a lot of romance novels with cop heroes, and a lot of books with prosecutor heroes. There are especially, even in the past decade or so, a lot of heroines who are prosecutors, but they’re liberal “progressive” prosecutors. I wanted to see what else is out there. I’ve been trying to seek out books with a more progressive, criminal justice reform angle to them, and I found some very interesting ones.

Anything written by Mia Hopkins is absolutely amazing. She actually worked at Homeboy Industries, a gang rehabilitation non-profit in L.A. She has this series that’s really well-respected and beloved by a lot of readers and authors called the “Eastside Brewery” series, where all of the heroes are former gang members. Most of them have served some kind of custodial sentence.

My absolute favorite Public Defender Romance of all time is “Flirting with Forever” by Cara Bastone. Cara Bastone is fascinating. I posted about her book and then she reached out to me on Instagram saying she really appreciated the feedback. She was inspired to write this book because she served on a jury. She was so impressed with the Public Defender after the case, she interviewed them afterwards to learn everything about their job. It really shows in her work. She put so much care into the book, and it was really wonderful to see. I have read and reviewed other books on my Instagram where there are Public Defender characters, and you can tell when the research is not done. But I won’t name those books!

ONLY THE GOOD ONES! HAVE YOU FOUND ANY OTHER SUB-GENRES THAT YOU ENJOY?

I’ve enjoyed discovering historical romance. That’s the sub-genre a lot of people think of when they think of romance, especially as more people are getting more interested in romance through “Bridgerton”. Historical stories are a huge driver of the romance economy. I was never a huge historical reader, but I’ve gotten way more into it over the years. Specifically, and I do a lot of reviews of her books, there’s an author named Joanna Shupe who writes, like, *Gilded Age Manhattan*. It’s a lot of well-to-do society women who are volunteering within more impoverished communities in New York and falling in love with these crime-involved men with interesting backgrounds. She has one book where it’s literally about the founding of the Legal Aid Society of New York, and it’s really good!

THAT’S REALLY COOL. WHAT KIND OF FACTORS ARE YOU LOOKING AT WHEN YOU’RE DOING A REVIEW OF ROMANCE NOVELS WITH A CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM LENS?

I do also review books that don’t have a criminal justice lens. I call them my self-care reads. That just means the book blew me out of the water; I absolutely loved it, and I just really want to tell other people about it

because I think they should be reading it.

For the books that do have a criminal justice reform element, in terms of my review, I’m just kind of looking for accuracy—did it seem like there was research done?

ACCURACY AS FAR AS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

Yes, not in terms of the sex scenes, right?

I’ll have reviews where it’s like, “Hey, they gave it a try on the criminal justice stuff.” They’re maybe not the most accurate, but the book made me happy. The other elements, the rest of the story, the characters: it was delightful and it was sexy. It’s a very subjective review. You’ll see it in the rest of “Romancelandia” and “Romancestagram”, but most people are reviewing in all sorts of different ways. Everyone has different rating scales and heat levels.

I FEEL LIKE A BIG PART OF ROMANCE NOVELS IS THE SEX, WHICH WE HAVEN’T REALLY TOUCHED ON. DOES THAT ELEMENT OF IT PLAY INTO WHY IT’S SUCH A BIG SELF-CARE THING FOR YOU, OR IS IT JUST KIND OF A HAPPENSTANCE OF THE GENRE?

A lot of people have this idea of the genre that it’s all about sex. People call it things like “mommy porn” or “smut”. I think when “50 Shades of Grey” came out, people thought that’s what all romance novels were. In reality, just like there’s all these different sub-genres and tropes in romance novels, the amount of physical intimacy and sex can totally vary. All that is needed for a Romance novel to be a romance is the HEA, and that the romance exists as a central plot point.

Within that, you can have any level of heat.

There are Romance novels with asexual characters.

There are—they call them inspirational romances—religious and Amish romances. Then you’ll have, as a next step, like, Hallmark channel-level; maybe there’s a kiss in it. Then you have closed-door or fade-to-black romances, where basically it’s implied that intimacy happened, but it’s not written on the page. There are books where there’s going to be one sex scene and there are some where there are many. Books where sex is a defining plot point are eroticas. You can have polyamorous couples, throuples, anything you can imagine.

That’s the really great thing about romance. It’s really got something for everyone.

YOU MENTIONED EARLIER THAT MISTAKEN IDENTITY IS YOUR FAVORITE TROPE. TELL ME ABOUT THAT!

I think it’s so interesting! How did I figure this out? I was reading this book by Olivia Dade, who is amazing. Olivia Dade focuses on heroines who are plus size and fat. She is just an amazing writer. She has this series that is a reimagining of the “Game of Thrones” cast.

WOULD THAT BE WHAT YOU’D CALL FANFICTION?

Well, I guess it’s fanfiction-within-fanfiction, because in this book [spoiler alert], the heroine is a geologist by day, and by night she is a very well-known fanfiction author for a fictionalized “Game of Thrones”-





“A lot of people have this idea of the genre that it’s all about sex. People call it things like “mommy porn” or “smut”. I think when “50 Shades of Grey” came out, people thought that’s what all romance novels were.”



type series. She collaborates on her fanfiction with an anonymous online friend, but it turns out her friend is actually the star of the show inspiring her fanfiction. He also writes fanfiction anonymously, using it as an outlet for his frustration with the direction the writers take his show in its final season—just like the real-life fan reactions to “Game of Thrones” final season and how some felt it went off. The two characters end up meeting in real life through a Twitter thing, and he realizes who she is, but doesn’t reveal his identity as her online collaborator. That’s the conflict of the mistaken identity trope. There’s something about that random conflict that I love. I am working on my own mistaken identity story now!

IF PEOPLE WANT TO GET INTO “ROMANCELANDIA”, DO YOU HAVE IDEAS OF SOME FIRST FEW BOOKS TO READ, OR PEOPLE TO FOLLOW ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

My three favorite accounts on “Romancestagram” are @bisexual_booknerd, @talk_about_swoon, and @feminist_romance.

There are so, so many, but those are the first three I started following, and they’re all such lovely, nice people!

Before I started writing, especially in the early parts of the pandemic, following a lot of “Romancelandia” “Bookstagram” online was just such a nice reprieve. I think that’s what pushed me to create my own separate romance account. The rest of my social media was so dark and heavy, especially in those early days. I wanted a space on the internet to put my mind somewhere else and just be away from the news and people fighting about things. “Romancelandia” and “Romancestagram”, as I was introduced to it through those three accounts, was just a really happy, lovely place of people taking pictures of themselves with books with some, “Oh, let me squeal about how good this book was!” thrown in. It’s just a happy place, though not without its drama sometimes.

If you get a lot of people together in any sort of community, there’s going to be disagreements about literally anything. The weekend that “Bridgerton” season two came out, there were some hot takes in “Romancelandia” across Twitter and Instagram.

DID YOU LIKE BRIDGERTON SEASON TWO?

I really did! And a lot of “Romancelandia” has problems with “Bridgerton” season two, but I really loved it.

Some people are just like, “There’s not enough sex compared to season one.” I’m actually just in the process of reading the “Bridgerton” books now, but these books have been around for 20 years. People are huge fans and have huge expectations, and the show is not living up to it for some. Book two is very different from season two, but I loved season two.

I DID TOO.

The angst was good.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL PEOPLE WHO WANT TO START WRITING ROMANCE, OR ANY

GENRE, BUT HAVE THE ISSUE THAT YOU HAD, WHERE YOU GOT AWAY FROM IT FOR A WHILE?

It’s hard. I’ve had stuff come up in my life in the past year where I’ve set writing aside, and it’s still hard to get back into it. I’ve definitely gone through spurts. I’ve become friends with a lot of other authors online, and I see them posting about this all the time, where once you start writing, sometimes you feel a lot of guilt about when you can’t write. It’s hard for anybody to get themselves to sit down, especially when they have a fulltime job. How to actually overcome that difficulty is super different for everybody.

For me, I think I have to try to put away the thought that my writing has to be perfect. I have to get myself situated toward, “This is supposed to be fun. You are doing this as an outlet. This is not as serious as your day-to-day job. You need to not take it so seriously. You can’t stress yourself out about it.” I love stressing myself out about things!

My advice is to just write something fun and enjoy it, and you can go back and edit it later. Let yourself sit down and put words to paper. I would encourage people, whatever their genre is, to try to find their community. There’s a lot of different writing communities out there online and on social media. Through my indie publisher, I found some really great writing communities for support and advice when I started. Once that press went out of existence, I was like, “How am I ever going to do this? How am I going to learn to self-publish?” It seemed impossible, but there were so many resources online. I found a really great online community that gave me a ton of advice on how to figure out self-publishing through Amazon. It’s doable. I make my three cents a month! And I hate Amazon! But I guess thank you, Amazon, for this opportunity?

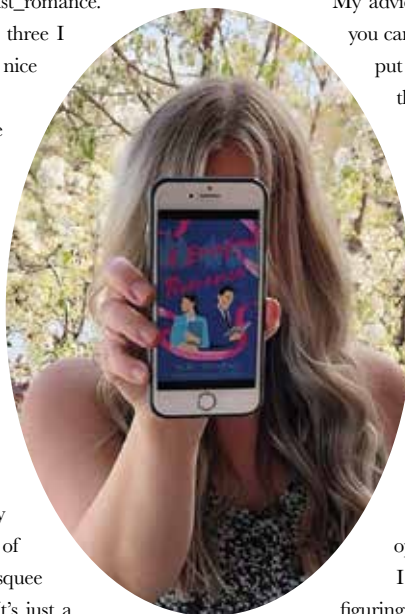
I figured it out, and there’s a ton of people out here figuring out this self-publishing gig. This has actually been a really big topic on Romance Twitter this week. There’s a lot of published authors who are with traditional publishing houses who do both traditional and self-publishing. It is accessible and available to all people!

WHERE CAN PEOPLE FIND YOUR STORIES?

My stories are all on Kindle right now. Come on board to “Romancelandia”. It’s really for everyone. It’s for men, it’s for women, it’s for anyone along the gender spectrum. There’s romance for people who are transgender, non-binary, poly, and asexual. There’s anything you can imagine. I would especially encourage people to check out the indie author scene, because indie self-publishing is where you find stories for everyone. If you start hanging out on Romance “Bookstagram” and Twitter, you’ll start to be directed to different authors, and all sorts of different books. You’ll have too much to read! Your TBR is going to be too long!

WHAT’S TBR?

To-Be-Read. Your to-be-read list is going to be too long. You’re going to be mad that you ever read this article. You’ll never get through it all! ✕



*Read "A Brief Romance" Available now on
Amazon Kindle.*



Other works by Noel Stevens:

Dont Forget World Peace
Into the Horizon



Donna

Interview By
Raenesha Rooze

Donna

Photography By
Francesca Carbajal

Donna

Hair and Makeup By
Aoife McCarthy



Vanda The Panda is an Austin resident and a woman of many talents: a businesswoman working at a startup, a Lagree Fitness instructor, and a dick-sucking enthusiast. Host of the Blowjob 101 Workshop, Vanda wants to make sure that people not only enjoy the blowjobs they receive, but that those performing feel confident doing it.

OBVIOUSLY, EVERYONE KNOWS THE GRAPEFRUIT VIDEO THING. THAT IS AS MUCH OF A BLOW JOB LESSON AS I'VE EVER SEEN, WHICH IS JUST LIKE A MEME AT THIS POINT. SO HOW DID YOU GET INTO THAT?

How did I get into blowjob classes?
I know it's crazy. I tell people, these are the things I do, and I also teach my blowjob workshop. Three or four years ago, I danced at a studio called Minx + Muse. It's this amazing kind of very feminine energy. It's like half sexy dance studio, half witch coven, people do magic there.

I love it so much, just an empowering place to be. I love taking sexy dance classes there, and I had been taking them for a while. Before every class, the instructor and owner, Crimson, would always ask a question.

"What's one thing you did this week that made you feel sexy?", or something to that extent.

I would always be like, "I sucked so many dicks this week, it was insane."

And Crimson asked, "Have you ever thought about teaching a workshop on giving blow jobs?" And I was like, "Man, no, I haven't. But you know what? Maybe I will!"

I just always really liked giving oral, it was my jam. Guys would tell me, "Oh my god, you're so amazing."





and I just thought guys have to say that, because this girl just put her mouth on their dick. Like, "I've got to tell her it was really good." But no, it was this thing where people kept saying that.

Then, unfortunately, one of the startups I was working at kind of ran out of money, and I got laid off all of sudden. This was the first time I was without a job after college, so I used that time to be like, "Alright, let's explore some stuff that I've always been interested in doing."

And that was the foundation of the class called Blow Him Away 101 with Vanda the Panda. The tagline is "You may be on your knees, but you still have him by the balls." I just want to empower men, women, whoever out there to suck the best dick that they possibly can, and to feel confident as they do it!

NESHA: GREAT TAGLINE! LOVE THAT, SO HOW WAS THE FIRST WORKSHOP?

Vanda: Having been laid off from the startup, I was just kind of playing, building, and organizing it a bit, but not fully committing to it. Because I was also like, "Oh, I need health insurance." So I got a new job at a new startup, and then I kind of put the blowjob workshop on the back burner.

Fast forward to that summer, and I had just come back from Thailand, where my family lives. My brother got married, and I came back and was kind just like, "I'm going to be 30 in three months." I had fallen into habits of not working out or moving my body and just being lazy. I was just like, "Fuck, I need to get my ass in gear."

I started working out again, and then eventually I realized I just needed to do this workshop. I knew if I told Crimson to schedule a date for the workshop and start selling tickets, that would force me to be get my fucking act together.

I remember I wanted to do it on September 11th, which was a Friday and a full moon, and it was the day before my 30th birthday. I wanted to do this before I was 30. I wanted this to be something that I created on my own and I was like, so nervous. My biggest fear was what if people hate it? What if people leave the class thinking that wasn't worth the \$35 or whatever. Obviously, I wanted it to be good.

I did a slide presentation, being the business student I was. I had graphs. I put a lot of thought and effort into it because I wanted it to be interesting. I wanted it to be worthwhile. I also wanted them to leave there going, oh wow, and feel a little bit more confident giving blow jobs with these different tips.

I think the biggest thing everyone always asks me is, "What gives you the right to teach other people how to suck dick?" I didn't go get a degree on sucking dick. But if I did, I think I would've been the top of the class. But I'm such an open person, like when it comes to most things in my life, especially sex. At that point when I taught the first workshop three years ago, I had given blow jobs to over 500 guys from when I was aged 18 to 29.

NESHA: WOW! HOW DID YOU CALCULATE THAT?

Vanda: I used to keep track, and then eventually I just did the average of each month. I ended up having to put it in some sort of formula, like, let's average it out.

But what makes me such an authority on giving blow jobs? I went

and created a type of form survey, and I sent it to a bunch of guys that I had given blow jobs to in the past. I had them fill it out and basically give me a review on my blow job. So, I've gotten reviews from over 50 guys of my blow jobs. I share that in the workshop because it is such a great icebreaker. Like, I'm just going to read these hilarious reviews from these men from all around the world.

I also sent out a survey for guys to rank the top three things that they love most from a blow, and I got over 150 responses. I wanted to know from their perspective what really makes the blow job great for them. I compiled it into a bar graph.

NESHA: IT SOUNDS LIKE THE MOST INTERESTING VENN DIAGRAM OF BUSINESS AND LIKE A DIFFERENT FORM OF SEX WORK. SO WHAT'S A CLASS LIKE? YOU SAID THERE'S A SLIDESHOW?

Vanda: When class starts, everyone gets a drink. For my last one at Minx + Muse in the studio, I had a bartender, and I made all these penis-shaped treats too. Gets everyone to go have some drinks, get to talking; I always like to encourage that. And then we all kind of sit around in a circle. I have everyone go around and introduce themselves, and if they want to, share anything about why they were in the class. Honestly, I love those moments of people feeling safe enough to say those things to a room full of strangers.

Then I do my introduction, and I break everyone up into groups. They work together, and I ask them to come up with the three things that they think guys want from a blowjob, or even like the number one thing. It's great, they get to talk and work with each other, and then they give me all these little sticky notes and we put them all up. I cut to the graph of the 150 guys' survey responses.

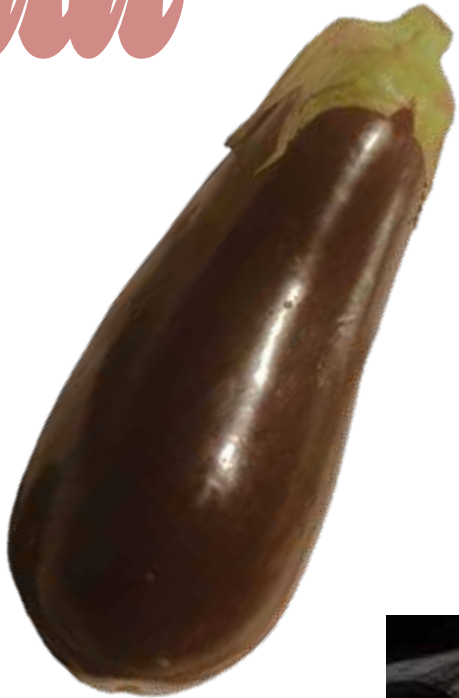
And you get some that seem obvious, but there is always a reaction of surprise by some of the answers. After that I give a few little last tips, and then we just go around and share different blowjob stories. It's like such a great time, I love it. Everybody sharing a story, and then you see three other people being like, "Yes! That happened to me. I thought I was the only one!"

NESHA: THAT DOES SOUND LIKE A LOT OF FUN. THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE BIGGEST SLUMBER PARTY. OBVIOUSLY, YOU ENJOY SUCKING DICK, AND YOU TEACH THESE CLASSES. IS IT MORE SO THAT WOMEN FEEL CONFIDENT, OR SO THAT GUYS ARE OUT THERE GETTING MORE SATISFACTION? WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION BEHIND IT?

Vanda: My thing about my classes is changing people's perspective on giving blow jobs. I think a lot of times, people think of it as a very subservient thing, like this is the precursor to sex. You've got to view it as one of the very few times during sex that women have 100% control. I think changing that perspective just a little bit, and not seeing it as a chore, but as this thing that I get to do and I get to be in charge of it. "You are going to do the things I want because of the way I'm using my mouth and my hand."

That's what I want you to walk out with, hopefully leaning more towards that perspective rather than, like, "Oh, I have to do it because he goes down on me." You can make it fun, you can play games. You can time each other, like if they can hold out for five minutes, then they

Vanda



Vanda

Vanda

win; but if you make them cum in five minutes, then you win.

NESHA: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A WOMAN WHO'S NERVOUS TO TAKE YOUR CLASS?

Vanda: The range of women that come in! I was expecting all these kinds of youngish girls coming in and having just a fun girls night out. But no, these are just real women. Some are 20, some are as old as 60. Those are all different stories. Like, "I grew up in a conservative town. I never learned how to do it," to "I just got out of a 20-year marriage and it was my first time back into the dating scene. I don't know what I'm doing."

If you are nervous, trust me, you are going to be so welcome and safe in that space. No one's coming in with any judgment, it's just absolute openness and feeling safe to share stories.

I did a private class once, and said to make sure you don't eat tons before, or else you throw up on his dick. And then literally, in this party of five women, three of them go, "Yeah, that happened to me. I drank too much. So awkward. Oh my god." So know that this is the space you're coming into.

When people ask me about my superpower, I think it's making people feel comfortable in any situation, whether it's at work, the fitness studio, or the dance studio. I want people to feel like that I'm going to really listen and take it to heart versus just brush it off. ✕



Vanda

Vanda

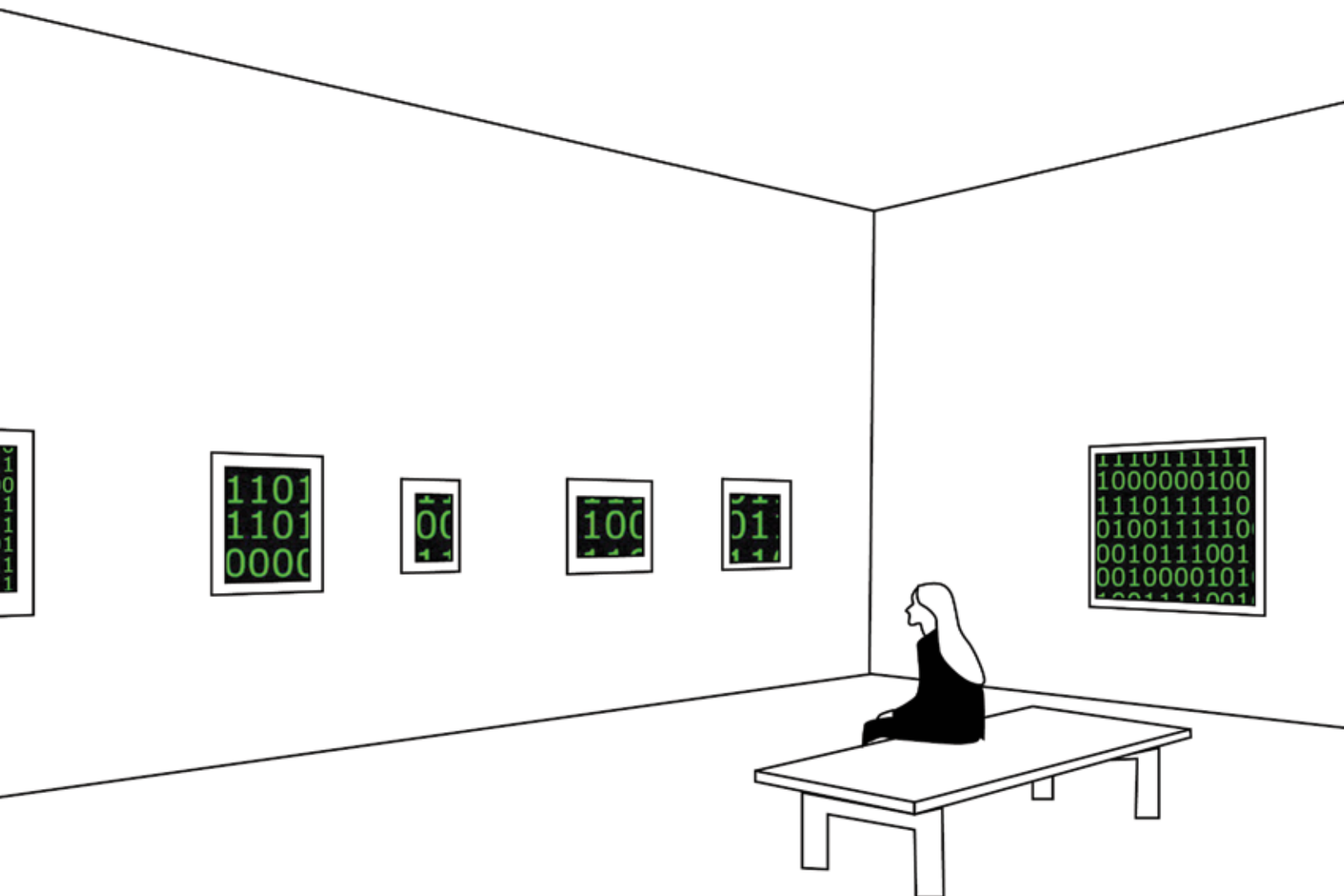
Vanda





NFTS 2022: A RETROSPECTIVE AND AN EVALUATION.

By Alyssa Dillard



As an artist, my relationship to technology, capitalism, and the speed at which trends evolve, is contentious at best. The rate that art is considered, evaluated, changed, discussed, and finally presented to the world exists at a speed incompatible with capitalist ventures.

Enter the blockchain, which for many of us is just too far out of the realm of accessibility—at least for me, and other artists I work with. We intentionally inhabit a medium between anachronism, analog, and the modern, but now we have the potential to authenticate our artistic content with NFTs.

Clearly the answer to any artist's problems.

Cryptocurrency supposedly rejects the current capitalist society, providing a better opportunity for wealth and success in the metaverse. Artists on TikTok have told me to get in on the NFT trend or miss out, that I'm losing money each day if I don't join the NFT craze. Snoo Dog is in on it. It's where the world is heading. I better get into the future and get rich.

And as a huge fan of investment scams, I was sold from the beginning. Totally ready to sign up. Time to throw out my grant applications, my proposals, my desire to create opportunities for others to interact with and participate in my work. Time to join the blockchain metaverse and get rich.

Right? Right?

I'll be honest, I took this opportunity to write about NFTs because I was so confused, and I wanted to challenge myself to learn more. For me, the existence of and conversation around NFTs means we have truly entered a state of post-capitalism, where the already underfunded and underpaid arts community has another hurdle to cross to have work that is seen and valued.

Previously, my only understanding of the cryptocurrency world stemmed from online horse race betting, but I had to block that out of my mind, because it made no sense to me. And before all my research, there were several NFT accounts following me on Instagram, including an NFT Instagram-slash-Opensea profile featuring a cat edited into classic paintings with small animations. It's a cute idea.

So I continued trying, and failing, to understand the world of NFTs. I made a post on social media informing friends and fellow creatives that I was writing an article, and received responses of such disgust as stating that I am "morally depraved", and "giving a negative platform". I still stand by wanting to take the opportunity to explore this more and understand it past my own personal cynicism.

The artists who responded to me mainly felt:

Intrigued and open-minded, albeit skeptical

Deeply confused

Convinced of the post-capitalist hell we are all doomed to

Jaded by the resilient and ever evolving nature of the crypto scam

Extremely angry

My goal was to host a discussion with a handful of creatives about crypto, and then develop my own conclusion at the end of it. Unfortunately, this became derailed after Putin invaded Ukraine, and the country where I currently reside (Czech Republic) entered into a large-scale panic and chaos of solidarity. Even in this difficult-to-navigate sociopolitical climate, NFTs were still a part of the conversation, being positioned in galleries and as fundraisers in solidarity with Ukrainians.

In lieu of my intended roundtable of creatives discussing NFTs, I was guided to a video called "Line Goes Up—The Problem With NFTs" from YouTube channel Folding Ideas. Armed with this video, and supplemented by articles and texts, I began my deepdive into the world of cryptocurrency.

An arts university where I live in Prague called The Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design (Umprum (Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová)) recently had an end-of-semester project about NFTs, which was very thought provoking. The two students of the university whom I spoke to, Julie Ditětová and Jan Vu Nam, described each of their projects to me.

They both challenged the current format of NFTs and how they're perceived, raising important questions for purchasers of NFTs. Julie and Jan's projects forced those engaging to think about how we all interact with content as human beings, and how our new reality merges with our larger existing environment.

"I made a website called Secret Owner, where I have experimented with the idea of trading people's secrets using blockchain," says Julie. "Stories are recorded as audio tracks and then sold as NFTs. The buyer has two options – listen to the story and reveal the content, or keep the purchased mystery as an investment. Audio tracks can be played only once—then 'smart contract' overwrites, meaning the story becomes unavailable both for listening and trading."

Jan's project brings attention to the ecological issues of cryptocurrency and the blockchain, as the processors used to mine crypto take a lot of energy.

"My project, called NFT Infrastructure, is a video-sculpture consisting of a holographic display on top of a black monolithic column that spins a flashy 3D ether logo," says Jan. "The twist is that the display is powered by a diesel-engine running nearby, making noise, and fuming the toxic air waste. My project casts a light on big corporations that are cashing out on NFTs, and asks if NFTs aren't another way to drag more of us to a new world of digital economy."

Both students' projects challenge our own culture of consumption and how we think, from the ironic eco-friendly façade of the cryptoverse to the social value of art versus investment. It is crucial to question what the real value of a piece of digital art really is, not only for the artist, but also the audience/collector. Can it serve a deeper purpose? Or is it just for profit and investment?

The commodification of artworks without interaction is one of my

largest concerns about the world of crypto, and in this case, I'm not sure it's worth it.

The problem with NFTs and the arts is that it's a decent idea in theory. However, it has been utilized by the tech industry and its supporters for capitalistic gains, and those gains do not benefit the arts culture. The blockchain is designed to lure people into the world of the blockchain, because it doesn't work if no one uses it. Luring in artists for this purpose, especially fringe artists, serves this end goal of gains only for the tech industry. Artists are historically easy to exploit due to our tolerance for being underpaid and our desire to overachieve when it comes to sharing our artistic perspective.

For many of us, our desire to share our work with a wider audience can lead to being complicit in a series of scams, designed to bring gullible people into a reality where the desire is to be rich, but the goal posts always shift out of reach. The wealthy groups that thrived before bitcoin, are the loudest promoters and supporters of the blockchain for the benefit of their own greed.

How can something benefit artists when the whole point is to create scarcity to generate more profit? The whole thing is a late-stage capitalism nightmare. And what is one thing that capitalism has never truly served or benefitted? The independent arts world.

Alternative artists (myself included) don't do well in capitalism. I vehemently stand by the fact that the art world needs to exist outside of capitalism to maintain a sense of truth. When art is just being made in the hopes that people will consume it, because it's what they want, you end up with a whole lot of trash. Why do we live in a world with constant Spiderman remakes? No one invests in it because it's a financial risk. No one wants to take a risk. Risks are for poor people (AKA artists). But it is so important for us to take that risk. We shouldn't have to care about the capitalist value of what is being made and who wants to buy in.

I personally don't like NFTs because I don't enjoy feeling pressured to capitalize on a trend that doesn't suit my work or my medium. NFTs can work great for those trained in animation and graphic design. Could I turn my performances into short NFT clips? Yes. Will I? I'm not sure. But if I do, it won't be to try and cash in on a false promise of wealth.

If the world of NFTs and the blockchain really cared about the arts, there would be protections in place to ensure that artists can safely share their work, but that is not the case. The blockchain doesn't allow for proper protections or security.

One case is the deceased artist Qing Han, better known as Qjinni: a fraudster stole her identity to make NFTs less than a year after her death. And it doesn't stop with this. Anyone could put work up under an artist's name with no protections for the artist.

It's true that less imaginative people with bigger capital have always profited off exploiting artists' works, often posthumously. But now, with the unregulated wild west nightmare land of the blockchain, we can experience that exploitation without any promise of true consequences for the exploiters. Important to note that you can't remove anything from the blockchain, so it would be impossible to give proper legal recourse or consequences, and you also can't rectify this kind of behavior by just removing the content. So, it's just trapped there.

Why wouldn't an artist want their work to be uploaded into this reality? It sounds like the dream. Right? This is exactly what I got two arts degrees for.

NFTs and the blockchain are intentionally hard to grasp. It all misleads people to feel that joining the community gives access to the riches that are available. Outsiders don't know anything and can't critique the system. The only way to critique the system is to join the system. By the time you join it's too late, and you must convince yourself that you're not the victim of a massive scam. How do you do that? Convince more people to join. If other people think it's a good idea, then you probably haven't made a huge mistake. It's classic cult logic.

There's also the aspect of financial embarrassment. If you enter with the aim of being rich, but you've only ended up the victim of a virtual pump and dump scheme, why would you want to tell anyone? That's embarrassing. But it sounds a lot better to say, "Hey! I just sold all my tokens for x amount of dollars, and now I'm rich!" So long as you don't mention that you had to run the same pump and dump scam on someone else to get out of the system.

Using ponzi schemes in the metaverse like a cryptocurrency Tinder Swindler (which, if I had to pick a name, would be either Discord Daddy or Blockchain Babe). In any case, I wouldn't want to be scammed by any of them.

The hype around NFTs poses it as an appealing potential solution to a lot of artists' problems, but that's all it is: good advertisement. Artists are the perfect marketing tools, creating work for other companies to make profits with a low cost of labor (i.e., underpaying the artist). And the digital sphere is rife with people looking for artists to join the blockchain or create pieces of art that are "boutique" NFTs, "distinguished" NFTs that bigger spenders might want to put more money into.

Does this truly benefit the artists? Is there where we should head for our bright futures? No.

But one bright side is that many artists (myself included) are too slow moving to keep up with trends in real time, which saves us from being scammed into investing large amounts into the world of the blockchain. The trait that makes us horrible at capitalism can also be our saving grace. Finally, our greatest weakness has become our greatest strength.

I love being an artist. It keeps me sane and grounded. The more digital society pushes me into the Metaverse, the more I see what my responsibility as an artist is. No matter how we choose to engage, we have to stay grounded. What will remind us of who we are and where we come from? Art connects us, reminds us we're human, encourages us to live in the moment. After my time delving into the world of NFTs, I know that for now, I will keep my distance.

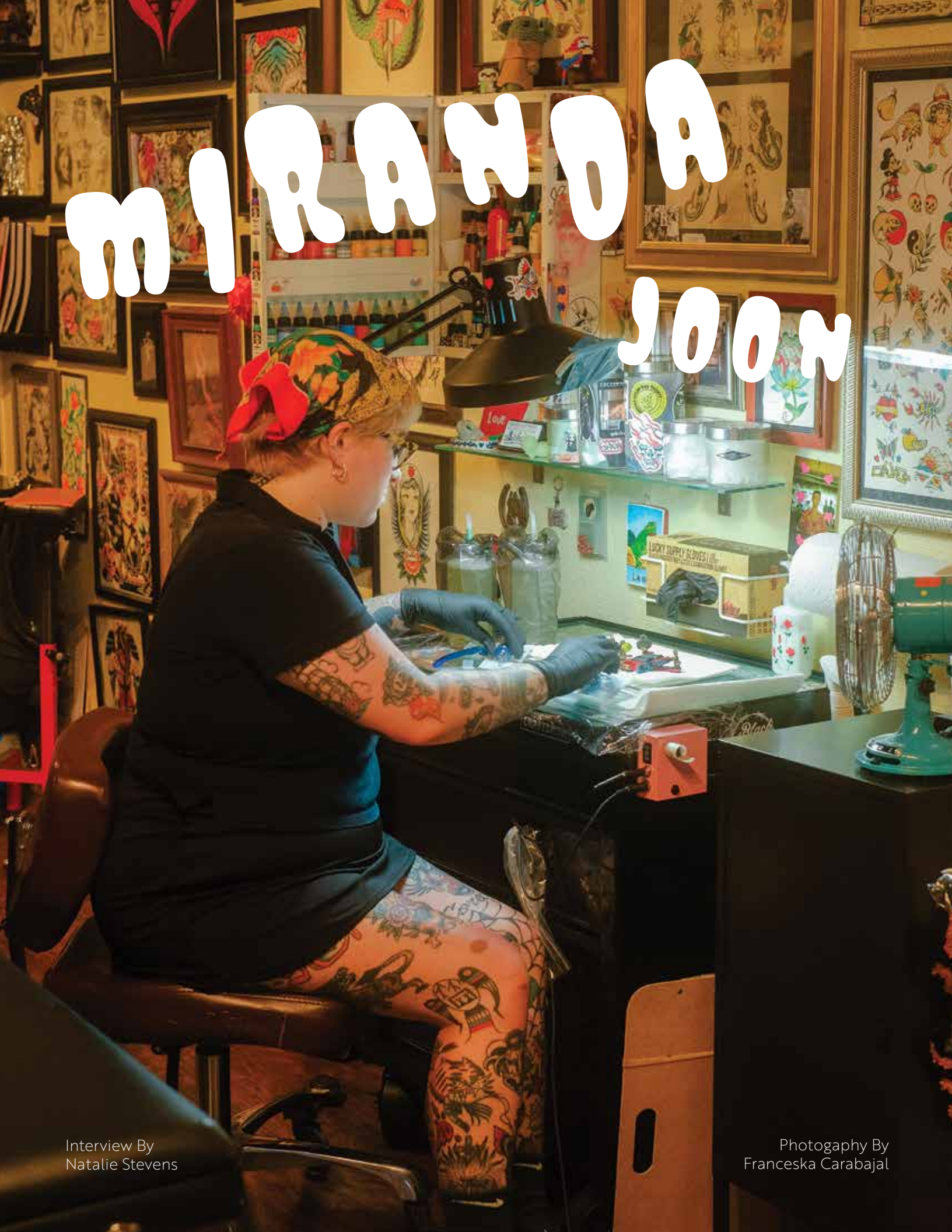
The worst part of all of this, though, is that my algorithm is so horrendous now that I have a growing number of hidden messages on Instagram asking me to follow various NFT communities, submit NFT art, or join a channel, because if I do, I might make \$650.

Looks like I'll have to block the blockchain. ✘

Julie Dítětová's website: <https://juliediteto.cz/Webdesign>
Jan Vu Nam's Instagram: @vucek

“THE HYPE
AROUND NFTS
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LOT OF ARTISTS’
PROBLEMS,
BUT THAT’S
ALL IT IS: GOOD
ADVERTISEMENT.”

MIRANDA JOON



Interview By
Natalie Stevens

Photography By
Francesca Carabajal



iranda Joon Fermin (she/her) is a tattoo artist at Black Dagger Tattoo in Austin, Texas. She lives with her fiancé Christian and their dog Nori. Miranda studied art history and Japanese language in college, and she feels that had a huge impact on the art she likes to create. Her mom and older brother are also artists, and she grew up obsessed with Japanese animation, so there was a natural progression in her interests as she got older towards fun and colorful imagery. She loves drawing and tattooing bold and cute designs that make people smile or laugh.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY FOR US (WORK, OUTSIDE OF WORK, WHAT FILLS MOST OF YOUR TIME THESE DAYS?)

A: Walking my dog before it gets too hot, going to the gym (this is a new habit I'm trying to stick with lol), making breakfast and finishing up drawings for appointments before I go to the shop around 11:00am. I typically try to book 2-5 clients per day depending on the size of the tattoos and try to take walk-ins if we can. Chatting with my clients is definitely one of my favorite parts of the day—I get to meet all different types of people at my job and I love that. Our shop closes at 8:00pm, we pack up and head home. Depending on the day, my fiancé will be at work bartending and I usually will go visit him, or we'll make dinner and watch some TV, or I'll draw for the next day. I'm a real homebody so being at home with him and my dog is my favorite way to end a day.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT YOUR WORK/WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE MOST?

A: My favorite part is definitely when my clients are stoked about their tattoo and how it makes them feel. When I was 18/19 and started getting tattooed, I quickly realized how it made me feel so much more comfortable in my own skin and that feeling is priceless. I never thought I'd like my stretch marks or tummy until I got them tattooed and started to feel so much more like myself. And now that I can provide that sense of comfort for other people, I can't describe how much joy it brings. Tattooing rules!

WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU STRUGGLE WITH OR WISH COULD BE DIFFERENT?

A: I really want tattoos and tattooing to be more accessible to everyone. I talk to so many people who are scared to go into shops, and I've been there too, and would love for that to change. The tattoo industry is slowly changing from being less male-dominated and more filled with incredible femme, queer and non-white artists. I hope that the industry continues to welcome and facilitate a wider scope of artists and clients.

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT YOU/YOUR WORK?

A: I love tattooing American traditional style tattoos and my dream is to incorporate themes/images from anime, video games, books or films into these designs! I am so new to tattooing and am certainly still developing my style—I really want to develop my style to include elements of science fiction and fantasy.

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE STORIES ABOUT TATTOOING? (HAVE YOU TATTOOED SOME BUTT CHEEKS RECENTLY? MY (NATALIE'S) BUTT CHEEKS WILL BE ON THE COVER HAHA.)

I did some matching tattoos for these two women from San Antonio last year. When they first reached out, they started the message with "Call us crazy but..." and then asked if I'd tattoo the Chili's logo on their ass cheeks. It was their favorite restaurant as kids and apparently a few other artists turned them down but I thought it was hilarious. We were cracking up during the whole appointment and they were super excited for the next swimsuit season LOL.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON MOTIFS IN YOUR TATTOOS (I SEE STRAWBERRIES!) AND WHICH ILLUSTRATIONS DO YOU LIKE WORKING WITH THE MOST LATELY? WHAT ARE SOME IMAGES/ARTISTS YOU FEEL INSPIRED BY?

I love tattooing cute, bright and bold designs! Fruits (strawberries in particular), florals,

animals, cartoon characters reimagined in a traditional style. I feel really inspired by Japanese art in the latter half of the 20th century. There was a boom of pop culture in that time period that produced some of the coolest art and media. I really love mascots called “yuru-chara”, they are described as being drawn in a goofy, cute, mild, awkward and kinda funky style. They are just so accessible and cute and I hope my designs can give off a similar vibe one day.

Q: ANY MOVIES/SHOWS/BOOKS/MUSIC THAT YOU'VE BEEN ENJOYING OR PULLING INSPIRATION FROM A LOT?

I've been reading a lot of sci-fi books lately, particularly short stories! I really love the writing of Ursula K. Le Guin, Haruki Murakami and Ken Liu. I'm about to finish “The Paper Menagerie” by Liu and can't recommend it enough. It has inspired me to draw some space and extraterrestrial themed flash, stay tuned!

Q: HOW DO YOU LIKE TO SPEND YOUR TIME OUTSIDE OF TATTOOING? WHAT KEEPS YOU GROUNDED AND FEELING GOOD THESE DAYS?

I spend a lot of time reading and watching anime or movies—I love escaping into works of fiction and often find some inspiration there. My favorite thing to do though is cooking, it is really grounding and cathartic for me to cook a fun meal. I love prepping out all the ingredients and watching it all come together by my hands. And you get to eat something tasty at the end, couldn't ask for more!

Q: DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY IN AUSTIN LONG TERM? DO YOU HAVE ANY TRAVEL PLANS, WORK-RELATED OR OTHERWISE? WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE AUSTIN HANGOUTS THESE DAYS?

I'm from San Antonio and have lived in Austin for about eight years. I'm definitely a Texas girl at heart but I don't want to stay here long term. My fiancé and I have plans to move to a different state or country one day but are still trying to figure out where and we're not in a huge rush.

I'm going to Portland, Maine, to visit my best friend in August and I'm really excited for that.

My fiancé works at Pool Burger and the entire staff there has become dear friends to me—if I'm going to hangout, there is a really good chance you'll find me there.

IF YOU WERE A TYPE OF DOG BREED, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU BE?

This one was probably the hardest question to answer haha! I think I would have to say a Rottweiler. I grew up with Rotts and am most familiar with them. I feel like all my tattoos might make me look tough but in reality I'm a total softie.

AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL ME/THE READERS!

I couldn't be the artist I am today without all my amazing clients, each person I tattoo helps me improve and grow and I'm forever grateful. I really appreciate y'all trusting me with your skin and can't wait to make more tattoos for y'all. Much love! ✕

You can find Miranda on Instagram at @mirandajointattoo or on the Black Dagger Tattoo website, <https://blackdaggertattoo.net/>, and you can contact her by email to set up a tattoo appointment mirandajointattoo@gmail.com.



BLACK EYE
SPECIALIST

Mail

AS A STRANGER



AS A FRIEND



BLACK DA
TATTOO

OPEN 7 D
2 till 8

OME O

J MALONE

ERIC SOLIS

JEREMY COO

MES SHEPH

MAX KLAPP

ROYCE WILLIA

MIRANDA FERR

BTS : On a hot sticky day in May we rented a hotel room at Hotel San Jose for a photoshoot. With a bag of phallic fruits in one hand and amika hair spray in the other, we got to work. By far the best part of having a magazine is the photoshoots. Especially when you have an amazing photographer like Francesca behind the lens. The vibes were high and the girls were girling. Aoife McCarthy did hair and makeup for Vanda. The photos came out great. WE DID THAT!





NEXT ISSUE

MISEDUCATION

- Miseducation will be focusing on the the age of misinformation. With the internet at our disposal we seem to be so ill informed on almost any topic. We tend to beleive in everything we see or doubt it entirely. A new generation of polarizing ideas causing a deeper divide more than ever before.

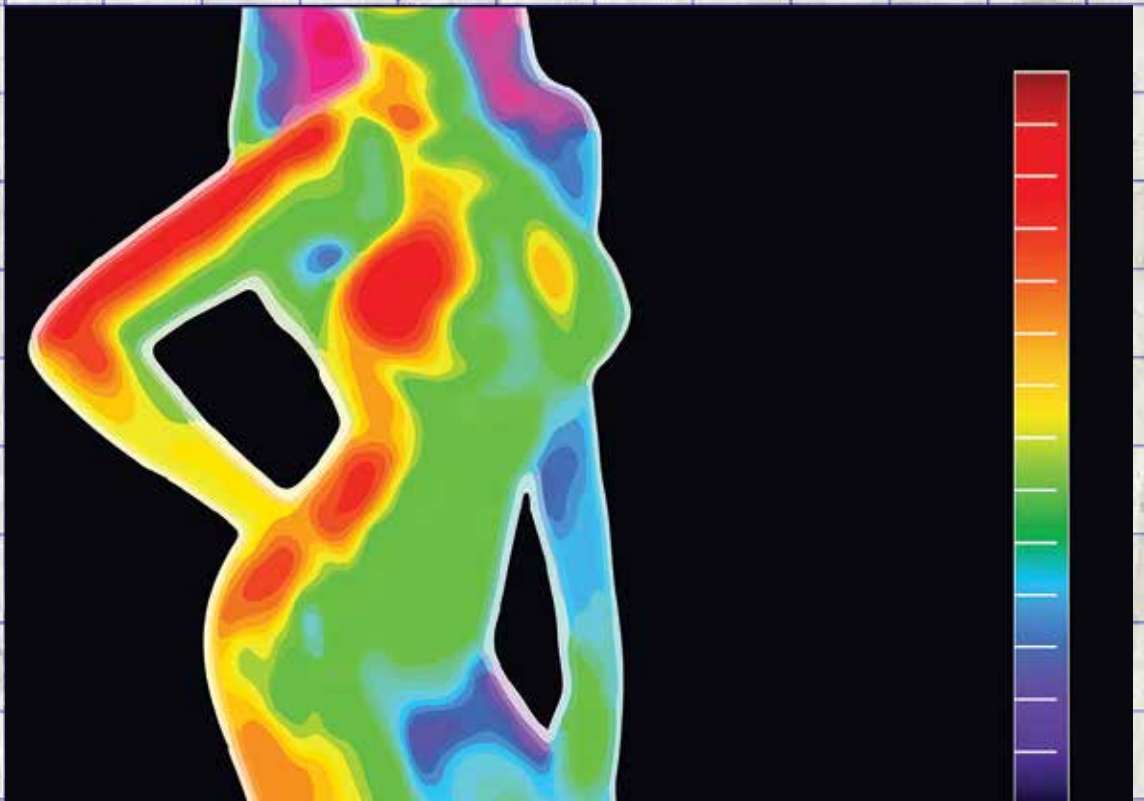
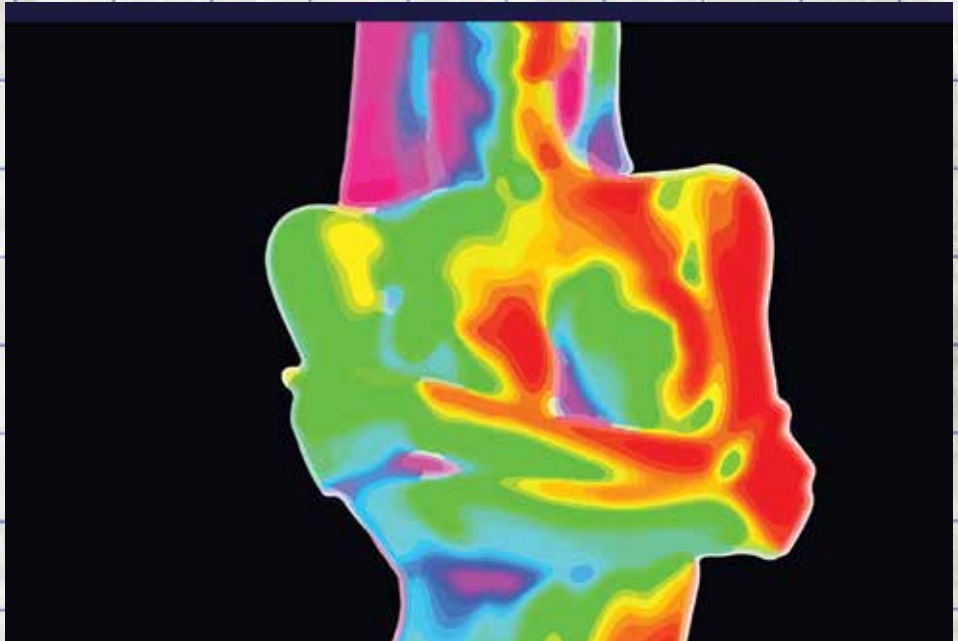
- If you like the theme of the next issue and would like to be a part of it please DM us at our instagram @decussatmag. Pitch us an idea or concept. You can also join us by letting us know your interest in the magazine. Writer? Photographer? Illustrator? We are always looking for friends to join our team.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The best part of working with your friends on a publication like this, is that you get to make excuses to hangout with them and label it a “meeting”. Most of the time a brainstorming session leads to a gossiping session but thats most likely why it takes half a year to create one issue.

Behind the scenes is a fun look at how we do what we do. Being a creative can be draining but when you surround your self with like minds, it becomes a recharge. The best part of the process is always bouncing ideas off eachother. We end up loving what happens and it never feels forced. Who ever is reading this, we hope you loved what we created for you.





I'm not sick but I'm not well
And I'm so hot 'cause I'm in Hell
I'm not sick but I'm not well
And it's a sin to live so well
I wanna publish 'zines
And rage against machines
I wanna pierce my tongue
It doesn't hurt, it feels fine
The trivial sublime
I'd like to turn off time
And kill my mind
You kill my mind, mind



Issue No. 5

DECUSSATE

Summer 2021

