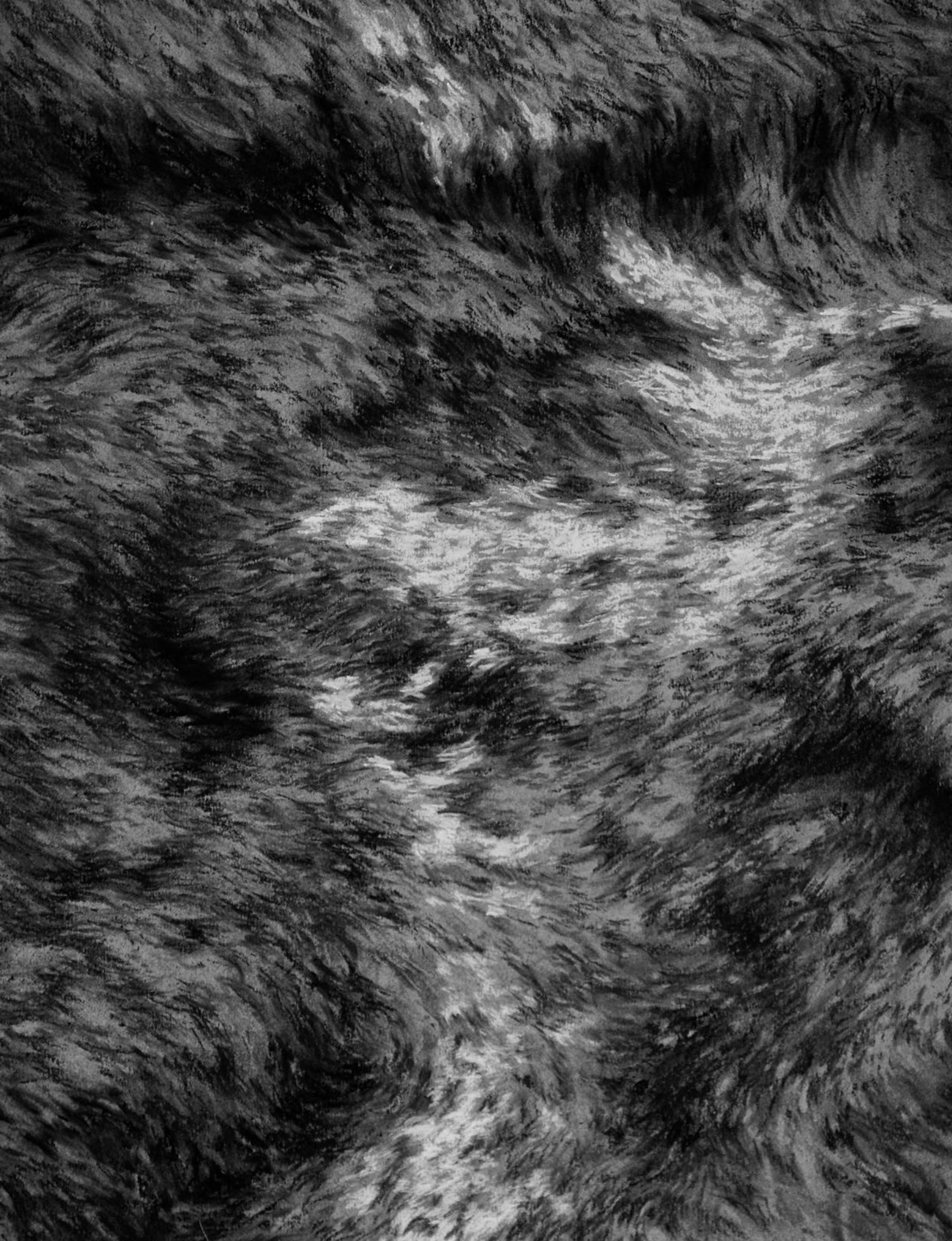
MEDIA WRITING 2018



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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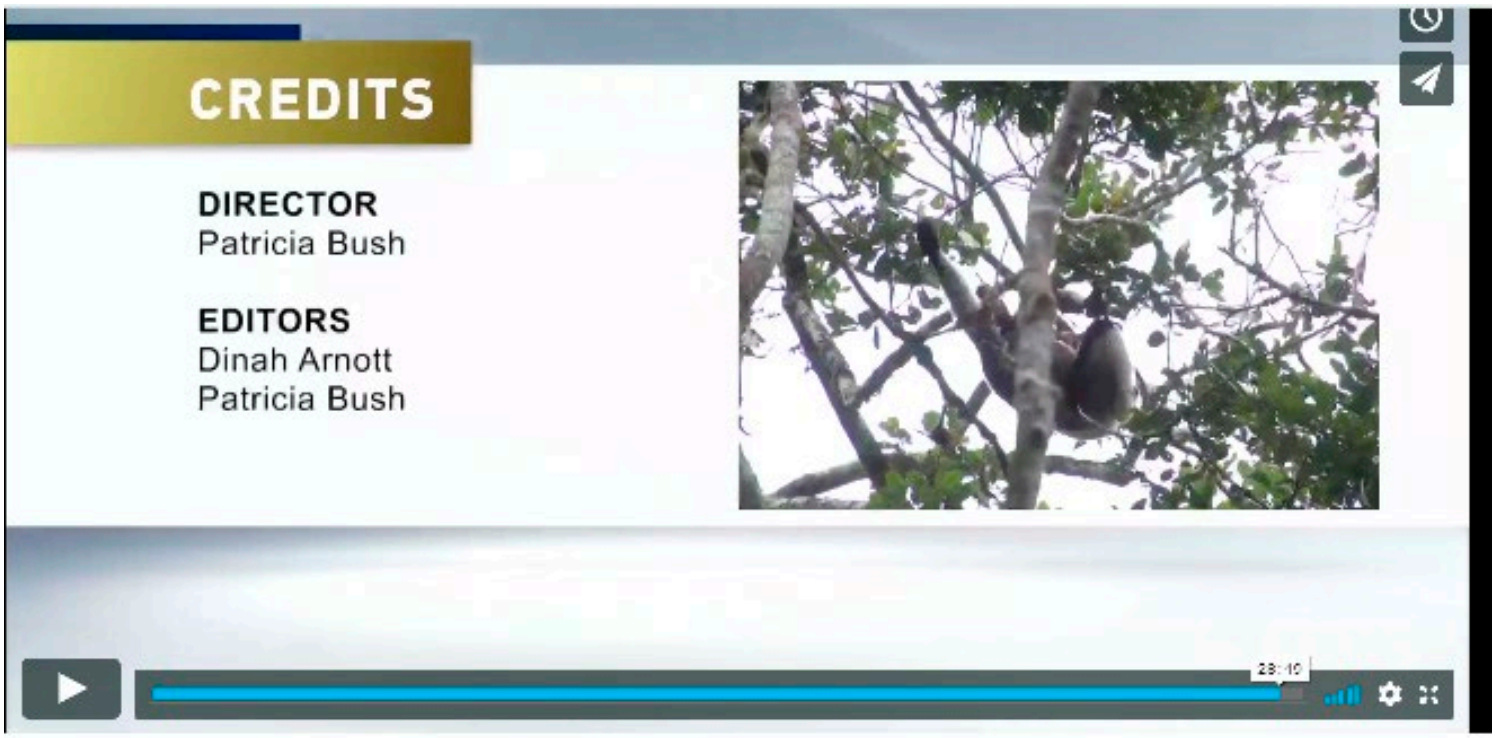
Artist Statement

I struggle with writing an artist statement. That could be because I'm not an artist.

I cringe at calling myself a filmmaker too. And while I've always wanted to be a writer, I'm never feel quite 'there' yet.

But I do earn a living in these fields: writing, creating and producing stories for print, radio and TV; pitching ideas to inform and entertain specific audiences. I also get hired to help shape stories for others from heaps of footage and, often, incoherent notes. I get on-screen credits like "director," "story producer," "development executive," "consultant."

So what's my problem? Fraud syndrome? Maybe. That would explain why I find trying to describe myself, my work and my process so difficult.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28:10

Artist Statement

I feel like an accidental tourist… living my life by default as much as by design. This is a symptom of fraud syndrome. But maybe most of us spend the majority of our lives simply trying to find and then define ourselves. Does that mean we're all frauds?

How many truly know their calling from the get-go?

As a child, law, journalism and acting were the fields I fantasized about: being on stage or set, making a great closing statement in court, living on the edge as a foreign correspondent.

I guess I've always fantasized about being a storyteller… even though accidents continued to shape the paths my storytelling would take.

At seventeen, I was accepted to the National Theatre School. Then my parents decided to run away from home. I was left with a choice: fully-financed university attendance or fending for myself as student of the thea-tor. That was a no-brainer.

University was OK. It was paid for. I was financially supported for another four years. And I turned out to be a natural (fraud)… graduating magna cum laude in Political Science. I even got graduate scholarships. Academic researching and writing almost became my fate. Only I hated it.

I wanted to write for more than an audience of two. I wanted to experience more than the inside of textbooks and to explore beyond the safety of an ivory tower. I loved being a student. I just needed to be a student of life.

I ran away to Mexico, to write for an English-language daily paper where friends had helped me find work.

Thus began my accidental career, tripping from print into radio and finally TV: moving from "serious" journalism to terribly unserious "factual entertainment" and finally to documentary. The only continuity was being a storyteller.

I don't have a signature documentary style and approach like a Frederick Wiseman or a Michael Moore. I always needed to find pre-sales to get any documentary off the ground and those came from TV.

Broadcasters know what sells for them and to sell to them you need to follow their style guides. So, I sold documentary stories of interest to me but not about me, shot and edited in ways to suit network audiences rather than to develop a signature approach. More journalistic than artistic. I've done that for 10 years, sold to four networks, done OK and

satiated creative impulses, to an extent.

Quite by accident again though, my career is on a new trajectory. This time, life is taking over my ability to work on other people's stories; to tell any other stories than my own. I have become the subject I need to research and explore.

Parents, professors and commissioning editors will not steer my next story. This documentary won't follow the format or style of an existing broadcast strand. And it won't just be about me, it's success or failure will be all on me.

Hence the fraud syndrome trigger. What if I can't do it? What if I can't tell this personal story in an engaging, compelling, edge of your seat sort of way? What if I fail to elicit empathy in my audience? What if ... I really have been a fraud all along?

Critical Review
Chasing Coral

Jeff Orlowski's Chasing Coral represents everything I hate about social impact documentaries, and yet, I found myself loving it anyway. The film starts with former ad man (and the film's executive producer) Richard Vevere defining dying coral as an advertising challenge. So… I skeptically took my seat, thinking I just paid to watch a 90-minute ad.

It's true that Chasing Coral features a slew of scientists delivering a tsunami of facts, figures and doomsday predictions about reefs, the interdependence of ecosystems and the threat of global warming. A two-degree rise in water temperature equals death to reefs. Infomercial received.

And yet, Chasing Coral won the Sundance Audience Award for documentary in 2017. It won another 40-odd awards at subsequent screenings around the world. Netflix picked it up. And most importantly (to me), it won my vote. The question is: how?

Are we all just suckers for beautiful cinematography—especially of a natural world we don't normally get to see? The careers of Richard Attenborough or Jacques Cousteau, and the programming of Nat Geo, Animal Planet, some PBS strands and BBC Nature suggest as much.

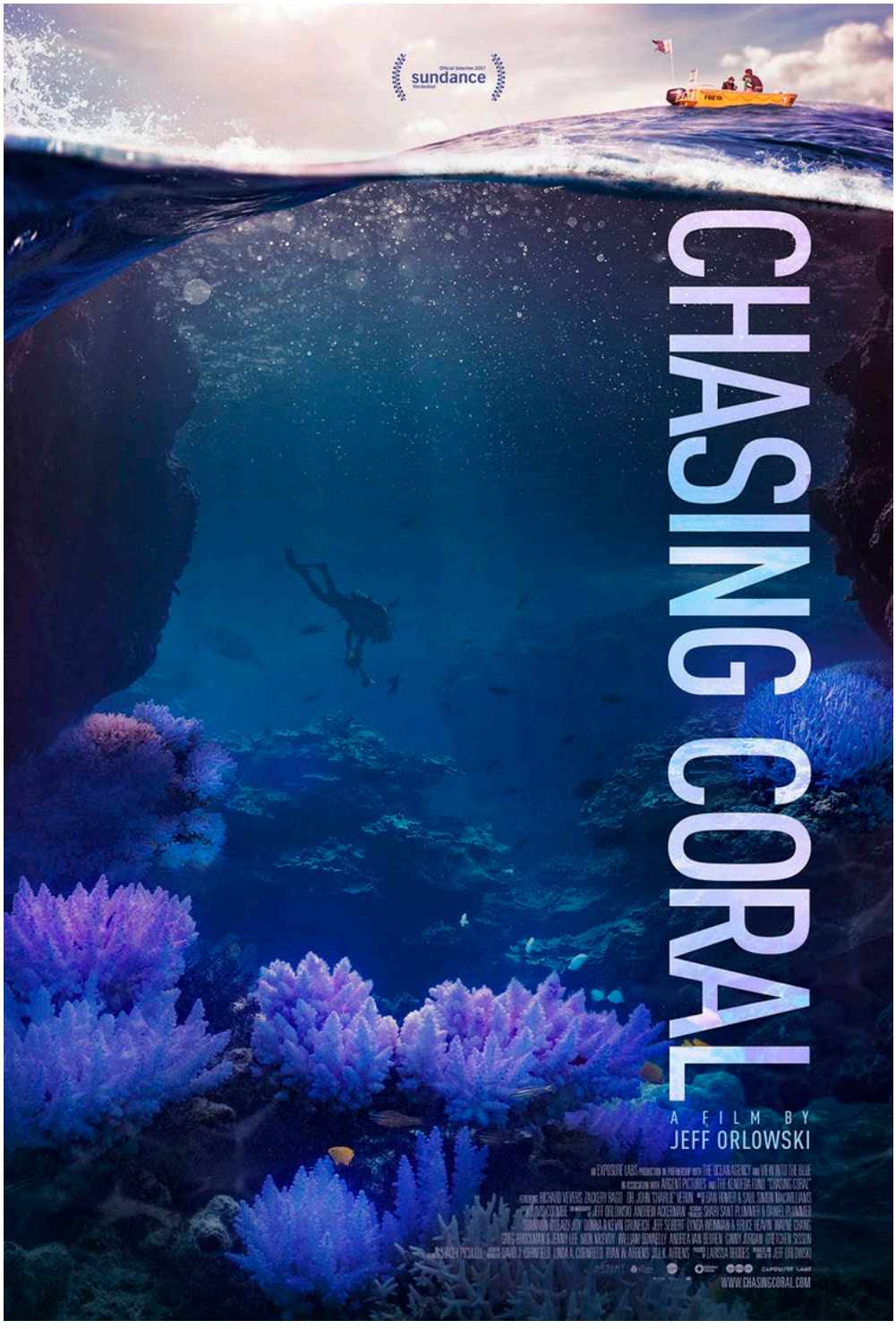
And no doubt, Chasing Coral features some vivid and otherworldly underwater photography. The film lingers on images of mesmerizing, seductive sea life, choreographed by Orlowski and set to music by Dan Romer and the voice of Richard Vevere explaining his life-long obsession with ocean life:

"I've always been drawn to the magic of the ocean. It feels like time slows down… Most people stare up into space with wonder. Yet we have this almost alien world on our own planet just teeming with life."

There is a lot of 'wow' factor footage in this film, but I'm not sure that's enough to explain Chasing Coral 's success. Pretty pictures alone don't seem adequate to distract audiences from realizing this is an advertisement… an altruistic one for sure, but a self-professed ad, nonetheless.

Maybe it's the timing of its release that makes us all so amenable to the message. Environmental films in general and global warming films in particular certainly hit on a hot-button issue, one which is getting hotter and hotter every year whether we want to wake up to this fact or not.

But audiences weren't generally receptive to the genre in 2017. Several global warming films flopped at the box office. Al Gore's follow-up to An Inconvenient


Official Selection 2021
sundance
CHASING CORAL
A FILM BY
JEFF ORLOWSKI
WWW.CHASINGCORAL.COM

Truth, An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power, attracted $3 million in box office sales, compared with $24 million for the original. Where Netflix viewers give Chasing Coral a solid thumbs up, Gore's film met with a cold reception.

For me, the key to Chasing Coral's success—despite its being a slick sermon for greener living—is that Orlowski doesn't let the message get in the way of telling a good story, even if the story is the making of the ad campaign.

He starts with Richard Vevere setting up the challenge: how to "advertise" the threat of coral bleaching to an otherwise oblivious audience. Then Vevere brings on Trevor, an underwater camera designer, and Zack, his employee and a self-professed coral geek. It's Zack's passion that pulls us into what comes next: a romp around the world with Richard, Zack, film crew and scientists all working to overcome weather, technological challenges and fatigue to capture time-lapse images that will for the first time reveal how long coral bleaching has been going on, and how it looks 'live' as it progresses.

By the end of their mission, the once-enthusiastic Zack is visibly depressed. Swimming in a massive dead swath of Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Zack's puppy- dog eyes look teary beneath his dive goggles as he writes in his underwater notebook:

"This is the hardest dive I've ever had to do."

As a viewer you're held in suspense several times by the team's setbacks, moved by Zack's and Richard's passion for this ecosystem, wowed by a bounty of colorful coral life—and ultimately hit by the urgency of the issue when the team finally succeeds in capturing coral bleaching in progress. What follows on screen is symphony of before and after shots, showing the death of region after region of the Great Barrier Reef.

As a viewer, I'm on the verge of tears. But of course, this is a Hollywood story, driven by an American adman. There has to be a happy ending… right?

Extended Narrative

What the F&*K is Wrong with my Kid?

Do you ever stare at your child in disbelief and ask questions like:

Why does he screw up in school?
Why can't he be more like Jay or Jonah or Jade?
Should I have given him a name starting with J?
Why does he hate sports? And tying his shoes?
How come he hates a hug?
Is it me? Does he just hate a hug from me?
Where did I go wrong? How did I fail him?
OK. Deep breath...
What the f#$& is wrong with my kid?

"Typical teen," I hear you say… "It's just an attitude"... "He'll grow out of it." Or, the opposite: "Maybe he's on drugs"... "He looks tired".... "He looks stoned… often."

Well. Yeah. Sigh. Maybe. Similar scenarios sound all too familiar for parents of many teens. But I know for certain that my son barely ever smokes pot or drinks alcohol; that whatever attitude problems he does have are defense mechanisms; and that other parents, about one in 20 parents, are walking around with similarly vexing questions.

I first put these questions to paper when my son is thirteen, 3.5 months before he turns fourteen, in the winter term of Grade 9, five months before his private high school in Johannesburg "suggests" their institution may not be the best place for him:

May 30th, 2013
Dear Mrs. Bush,
As we approach the end of the year it becomes ever more critical that we reach some agreement and understanding about Zak and the best… (blah blah blah). He is certainly intellectually capable of good achievement… I believe that we are at the limit of our capacity to serve Zak productively.

Wait. What????

... we highly recommend you do everything possible to find an alternative educational setting for Zak for the coming school year.

Oh! My! God!!!

I'm in his principal's office not able to hold back the tears, while we discuss Zak's future–or lack thereof–at the school. I'm still in shock. I can't really hear: tinnitus. Or speak: choked. Or stop shaking: panic attack.

This is the most expensive school in the country, known for providing fabulous learning support for students with any mental or physical challenges.


BEER

If this school isn't equipped to help my son graduate from high school, what institution is?

It's August 2012 and we've just moved to South Africa. I choose the American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ) because of its academic accommodation and support services. I don't know that Zak has a disability, I just know he left middle school in Toronto behind, having struggled to complete homework despite being enthusiastic and having really complex and complete ideas that he articulates well. He attended an academically challenging alternative school called Horizon, where class projects require students to organize work-back schedules. The second term assignment,"Town," incorporated curriculum for math, humanities, English and art, where some elements were "group" and some "solo". Zak kept updating me on what he was doing and it all sounded so sorted. I assumed it was, until the night before the deadline, when I found out it wasn't. It was all in his head. I pulled my first all-nighter in more than a decade, sitting at my desktop with Zak behind me dictating his essay, directing the design of his website and logo, and putting together his business and marketing plan, complete with a five-year projection. He didn't finish everything on the Town project's to-do list, even with me as his scribe, but he did enough to get a good grade. And I knew then: he (or should I say we) would have really big challenges to face in the planning, organizing and execution departments come Grade Nine.

AISJ seems perfect. Knowing the difficulties, he endured in middle school, we register for Resource, as the academic support and accommodation services are called here. It's even considered a course, for which he'll be graded and get credit. Resource has its own chill, lounge-like learning support centre with its equally chill and ever so helpful staff. Zak is assigned Des Maree and they hit it off right away.

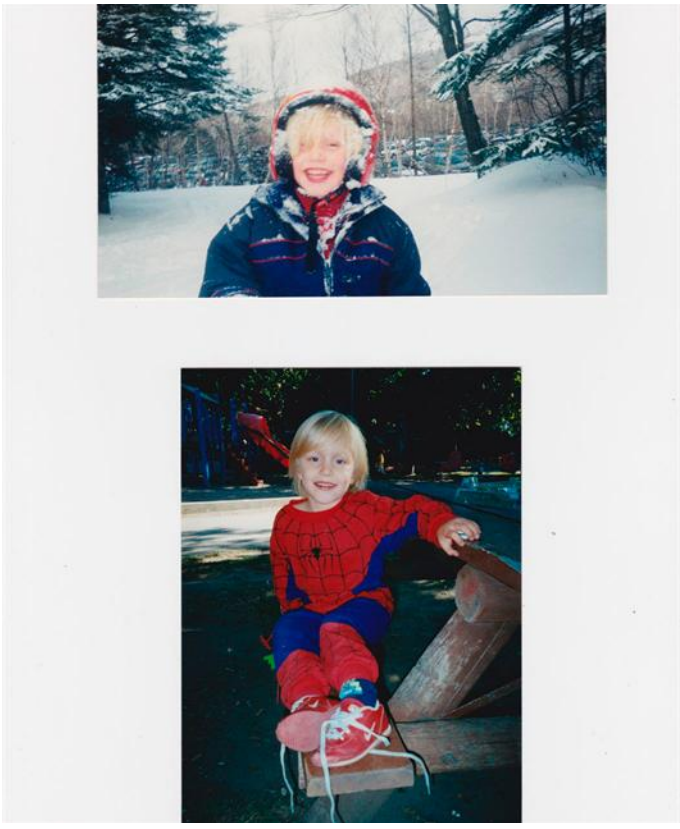
Another early sign Zak may perform well at AISJ is an elaborate, globally recognized, aptitude test, in which he scores above average in most subject areas. So, we know the ability is there, now we just have to ingrain good study and homework habits.

Everything looks great, until it swiftly doesn't. Zak starts the term a bit late but has Resource to help him catch up, and Des hit the ground running to do her best with him and for him.

From: Des Maree
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2012 10:59
To: Edwidge S; Janice J; Peter D; Kurt D
Subject: Zak Malins-Bush

Hi All
I am working with Zak and would appreciate any feedback as to how he is settling in your class. He is not writing down his homework, except for Science. Does he need to catch up any of the work he missed, as he only started at AISJ in his second week?
kind regards,
Des

Zak's trajectory at AISJ goes from promising to challenging to problematic to: "We are at the limit of our capacity to serve Zak," all within one academic year.



He's not happy with the move to South Africa, which doesn't help with settling into a new school. Socially, he's disengaged, despite my befriending parents with kids from his grade. I can't get him interested in trying out for a team, or even joining a club. He'd rather sit alone during his spares and sink his head into his iPad. He left behind his gang of Horizon friends, most of whom went on to different high schools and drifted apart anyway… but still, that was their fault, not mine.

Academically, I don't remember all the details and have lost some records in long-dead laptops and damaged drives. What I do know is that his September to December progress report shows he's passed everything, but barely, and by end of that fall term, the school is insisting he have a psychoeducational assessment. So, things are obviously not going as well as I'd hoped, on any front.

So off Zak and I go to the Gantry Assessment Centre at the corner of The Straight Road and Witkoppen in Pineslopes, Johannesburg. Zak spends several hours with a psychometrist by the name of Grant Allen, and emerges looking tired but otherwise fine. Using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV), his IQ results are as follows: high-average verbal comprehension; mid-average perceptual reasoning; high-average working memory. He's not a genius but key is, there are no apparent clues here to explain his struggles at school. Except, perhaps, that his writing is slow and strained and messy, so it's recommended he be allowed to type tests and exams, which the school accommodates.

Complementing the IQ report is an Achievement Motivation Profile, also conducted by Grant, where you begin to see why the school will respectfully absolve themselves of responsibility for Zak's academic lack of achievement six months later:

Such students are often prone to perform below their potential. It is common for such students to appear tense, worried and concerned about meeting the expectations of others. Their motivation or inner drive may be low. They may not have clear goals and objectives. They usually do not make use of efficient planning and

organizing skills or related work habits.

The school suspects Zak has ADD or ADHD, but the official assessment says otherwise. So we're back to psychological explanations and I decide Zak should talk to a therapist about his anger toward me, and toward the man I married three years previously, whom he hates and who doesn't show any love back. He reluctantly agrees as long as I agree to be bribed: every session must be followed by a trip to a restaurant of his choice.

Hate is a strong word. And an appropriate one here. There is no love lost between my husband and my son. Even though I constantly remind one of them who the adult is in the room, Colin barely ever bothers trying to relate to Zak about anything. In fact, he pushes me to look into boarding school options again and again, claiming it's because he thinks it will "build character." Colin went to a boarding school. Colin's boarding school stories are traumatizing to me, even as a mere listener. Zak is never going to boarding school. Colin pushes for Zak to live in London with his dad, where he says he might be happier. I actually entertain this idea. Anything at this point to make Zak happy and "motivated." But his father Steve's new wife Isabel won't have it. Zak is not moving to London. Colin just wants Zak to go away. But Colin is in Angola for work most of the time. Zak is staying with me in Johannesburg, hopefully getting the help he so clearly needs.

A psychiatrist recommended by Zak's first therapist prescribes an antidepressant, which he takes for a few months, but it does absolutely nothing. And given some of the current reports linking SSRIs with teen suicide, I'm not sad to see the drug go, but the lack of pharmaceuticals just leaves us right back where we started; worse even. Zak is getting sick a lot and missing a lot of days at school:

Course	Absences
English	11
French	14
Health	13
Integrated Math	10
Mission	5
Resource	17
Science	20

His term two, January to June, performance is plummeting and time is running out.

We try a second therapist, a younger one, with whom Zak might be able to relate better. He's nice enough and Zak likes him but aside from seeming somewhat less angry toward me, there's little change. Maybe I'm too impatient but we're on a schedule. I'm desperate for results, which just aren't coming.

By late March, I reach a breaking point. My beautiful, formerly bright and enthusiastic boy appears defeated and deflated.

Following the psychoeducational evaluation, he's allowed to use computers to write tests and exams. And he has the same academic coaching and assistance from the Learning Support Centre (Resource) he's had all year. But we've only got two months to turn his year around and no sign of how that's going to happen.

I feel like we're all missing something. This isn't just anger, bad attitude and a bit of messy writing. I'm convinced there's more to it. So, I do what I do when I'm faced with a medical mystery affecting friends or family: research. I was the first to "diagnose" a girlfriend's tubular pregnancy after two doctors failed to find anything wrong with her. I was also first to "diagnose" my mother's hydrocephalus. Doctors kept suggesting she was showing signs of dementia or senility, but I knew her brain was fine. No memory issues evident at all for anyone who bothered to sit and chat. She was dizzy, and disoriented, and walked like Charlie Chaplin. All this, plus a few other symptoms we don't need to mention, was very distressing. So, upon finding a fit in a diagnosis of "water on the brain" -a condition more commonly associated with newborns-I found the specialist surgeon in the University College Hospital Network in Toronto who could check and, if correct, do something about it. I emailed him and got his go-ahead to ask my mom's GP to send him a referral. Two months, an MRI, an operation and one shunt later, my mother was good as new.

Now it's Zak's turn. And just as in these previous cases, it does not take a whole lot of Googling to get to my eureka moment, even if it falls heavy on my heart, immediately makes me feel I have failed my child, and quickly thereafter leads me to ask a whole new set of questions:

Why have I never heard of this condition?
Why aren't GPs trained to test for this?
Why aren't schools screening for it, as with hearing and dyslexia?
Why aren't celebrities jumping on the cause?

I'm incensed at the world, and at myself. One in 20 people are likely walking around with a disability without even knowing it. That's one in 20 children

starting life full of beans and enthusiasm as parents watch them slowly lose all motivation and self-esteem with age, completely at a loss to understand what is happening and why.

My son gets a diagnosis of a permanent disability at age 15 because I stumble across a checklist of symptoms put together by some underfunded, non-profit organization out of the United Kingdom which is doing its best to get the message out but which isn't likely to be found, except by the odd, obsessed Googler like me. Why didn't I Google earlier? How long has this information been available online? And what the f#$% is dyspraxia?

The Dyspraxia Foundation is a country wide charity, founded in 1987 as the Dyspraxia Trust by two mothers...after being told that their children had dyspraxia they were astonished and dismayed to discover that no facilities existed to help or inform parents and children with the condition.

Some information is available, but only if you know what to look for. This is March, 2013—and a UK website. Who knows what the site looked like when Zak was born? And there is barely more awareness now, five years later. Type the symptoms into WebMD's Symptom Checker and you get nothing. In Canada, my September 2018 online hunt uncovers one small Canadian organization, a community-based one in Lethbridge, Alberta, started by two frustrated moms. That's about it. Dyspraxia is just not part of public discourse in any meaningful way, in any way that affects how it is screened for medically, or addressed scholastically, or how public policy is shaped, or how the condition is treated. But it is a recognized permanent disability in the US, UK, Canada and South Africa, and possibly other countries.

Guilt mounts with each line I read from the Dyspraxia Foundation:

Symptoms are evident from an early age. Babies are usually irritable from birth and may exhibit significant feeding problems.

If dyspraxia is not identified by age 5, problems can persist and affect the child's life at school. Increasing frustration and lowering of self-esteem can result.

By age 9, children with dyspraxia may have become disaffected with the education system. Handwriting is often a particular difficulty. By the time they reach secondary education their attendance record is often poor.

I have to hand it to Zak: despite displaying just about every one of the symptoms on a checklist found elsewhere on the foundation site, he remains self-confident and motivated for another four years, until age 13, at AISJ. Meanwhile, my head and heart are swimming in a sea of symptoms and now guilt-ridden memories. If only I'd known—because, of course, the most effective interventions are early ones.

Zak is born at 32 weeks. Eight weeks early. But he's in good hands at the Whittington Hospital in the Tuffnel Park area of North London, UK. It is renowned for having the best (or is it second best?) neo-natal care facilities in the country. He's just under four pounds and jaundiced and incubated, but not intubated, thankfully. I go into premature labour because I'm busy directing some show for some cable TV startup and on location and in edit and not thinking about dehydration... until it's too late. Zak is born early because I don't drink enough water. Not that there's some proven causal relationship, but most dyspraxics are premature males. Hint number one, and it's all my fault. And he doesn't latch… readily, naturally or easily: hint number two. But no one at the hospital mentions anything about looking into this, so I assume that one pound heavier and five weeks later, we've got a clean bill of health when he's discharged. He continues to get all the regular milestone check-ups too, from our GP in London, and his weight, height and other developmental markers all fall within "normal" range. Great. After the trauma of having a premature baby, things are looking up.

In fact, Zak's father and I think we've won the lottery. He is such a sweet and happy little thing, with just a touch of over-cautiousness, which, in retrospect, was hint number three.Once mobile, from about 8 months onward, he stood at the top of the stairs and screamed instead of trying to attempt the descent himself. He never needed baby gates or safety latches.

It takes two of us to get him into his pushchair. He hates swings and kiddie rides and flies off the handle at loud, noisy fairgrounds. Hint number four: sensory sensitivity.

In daycares, he plays well with others and staff love him but he is forever losing things and no matter how many times you show him, he never quite seems able to put his stuff away. That makes five, at age four: organizationally challenged. But he's smiley and sweet and attracts an early entourage. The parent of one friend calls him a "rock star" because his buddies are forever picking up the hats and mitts he drops and carrying his stuff for him.

By age five, he still isn't tying his shoes. Hint number six, and it's a big one: fine motor skills deficiency.

He walks around with food all over his face, not even noticing it. Hint seven, also a big one: sensory processing issues. I feel so guilty now about getting so mad at him for getting that ice cream

seat... and for the countless glasses he broke…and the possessions he lost. Dyspraxia is a "fine and gross motor coordination disability," and here I am getting mad about ice cream. As Zak would say before he lost his Britishness: "naughty naughty mommy."

It never makes sense to me why his first Toronto daycare (from ages three to five) adores him, but then he is expelled from Kindergarten. At the time, I blame the suburban, blond-haired, blue-eyed, pale white teacher parachuted in from Oakville for expecting more from the only other blond-haired, blue-eyed white kid in this inner-city classroom. Instead, Zak takes a long time to tie his shoes and might get flustered and eventually angry if hurried, or pushed too hard. He still avoids laces whenever possible and if he can't, he still doesn't loop one lace under the other but rather starts with two "bunny ears".

I figure Zak has his father's less adventurous, less sporty, slightly clumsy genes. He was the opposite of the fearless nutcase I was as a child. And the more I push him to try new things, the more he objects. Hints number eight and nine: belligerence and resistance to change. But, he does love karate and whenever I do get him out to hike or ski he always has a good time, despite initial pushback.

There is always enough positive to balance any negative and to leave me feeling everything is fine and that we all have our strengths and weaknesses and that everyone is different and that we celebrate difference. So what if Zak loves football (soccer) but just can't seem to bend the ball like Beckham? So what if he needs remedial reading in Grade One? In Grades Two and Three, he's at the top of the class. So what if he bombs again when transferred to French Immersion in Grade Four? Languages aren't everyone's forté. And he's back on track in Grades Five and Six. There never seems to be anything seriously wrong with him, until there does.

Looking back at the first 14 years, now with 20/20 hindsight, is like seeing puzzle pieces you couldn't quite place all of a sudden fly around your head and hands and then land, one by one, to create a perfect dyspraxic picture.

In April 2013, Zak and I drive the 50 minutes it takes to go 17 kilometers in Johannesburg traffic to the closest clinic equipped to test for dyspraxia. My diagnosis is confirmed by the Addnova Center's official one. They also determine he wakes up with a stress-load that's about forty percent higher than the average Jay, Jonah or Jade. His anxiety levels are always on high. No wonder he's tired all the time. Finally, an explanation and some prescribed occupational therapy and re-focused counselling.

But back at AISJ, we already know it's too late. We already know most of the story from there, but neither an 11th hour diagnosis nor even further additions to his academic accommodation are going to help him make the grades or change the principal's May 30th recommendation.

I end up registering him in the British International School of Johannesburg, a Cambridge International School. Maybe it's the right call. Maybe AISJ are just happy to be absolved of responsibility.

Date: July 30, 2013 at 4:55:32 AM EDT
Subject: RE: Zak Malins-Bush

Dear Patricia,
I just got back and got your email. You are making a smart decision, I think, and I hope that Zak has a good year and is able to cope with the "system"...

All best wishes,
Tony Mock,
High School Principal

The Cambridge International School "system" is an internationally recognized high school program with standardized coursework, exams and grading. It allows students to choose 100% exam-based grading, which skirts around Zak's planning, organizing and high- anxiety, low-energy issues, which makes it easier to help him manage. He still faces all the same challenges and all the therapies aren't doing much because "the patient has to buy in," and Zak has decided he doesn't have a disability, it's just a "made-up disorder designed by and for health experts to make a living." But on the positive side of the ledger: his self-esteem is way up; he's smiley and less contrary and has a good gang of friends again, just like middle school; he aces most courses through his O and A levels and enters Bishop's University in Sherbrooke Quebec in January 2017 with the equivalent of three full (or six half) course credits for first year.

Maybe it's the right call. Or, maybe Zak should have stayed at AiSJ, a school with a fabulous support system that just needed time to get things right. With high school behind him, faced with the challenge of University and its term assignments, Zak's attendance record and grades once again plummet. His father and I do everything possible to help. We have access to his online university accounts to monitor the course load and assignments. We create a calendar for him and message him before every class and deadline. But we're not there. Steve is in London. I'm in Toronto. And Zak once again languishes, academically, socially, psychologically. Anxiety levels are up. Self-esteem is down. Motivation is eviscerated.

Zak blames being at Bishop's. He wants to return to Toronto. He romanticizes his childhood city. We know his belligerence will ensure failure if we insist he stay imprisoned in Sherbrooke, Quebec, so we transfer him to Ryerson. They have great academic accommodation services too... not that he manages to use them.

Two more terrible terms and I call a time-out on further funding from me, for now, until I can get some answers to a whole new set of questions, even though I'm still waiting for answers to the last round. The biggest one on my current list is simple, and simply obvious: What now?

And, also, how do I make friends and family understand a disability nobody knows about, so that neither Zak nor I have to face their judgmental (or possibly concerned, albeit unhelpful) set of questions like:
How's Zak?
Does he have a job?
Is he going back to school?

I get it. Zak looks normal. Maybe just little tired, and possibly stoned. But I know for a fact he's not. He has a disability. It's called dyspraxia. In 2013, the UK Dyspraxia Foundation said it affected up to 10 percent of the population. This estimate has been revised to five percent in their current literature, with two percent having severe and debilitating symptoms like Zak.

That's still a huge number. It might even explain what's "wrong," or what's going on, with your kid. That, or dyscalculia, dysgraphia, a sensory processing disorder (SPD) or a whole host of other "neuro-diverse" conditions you've never heard of before.

ANYA CHIBISOVA
Artist Statement

Had my parents known that an artist's life is full of self-doubt, insecurity, torment and the never-ending search for the inexplicable, they would not have taken me to art school at age four.

Being an artist has always been part of my identity. In many art schools that I attended in my native Ukraine, that meant a practice of observation, reflection, inner focus, and self-expression through the repetitive processes of painting and drawing. Although at times satisfying, it was an overwhelmingly lonely and depressing existence, where the ego grows large to fill the void on the inside. At times my drawings were so odd and disturbing that once my parents, who were scientists, took me to a medium—a middle-aged man who claimed to be a mathematician and spiritualist in one. I remember feeling particularly special as he, in a circular motion, burned rolled-up Soviet newspapers over my head in order to stop the "drainage" of my energy into the "cosmos."

Artist Statement

My family immigrated to Canada when I was sixteen. That's when I discovered photography. I remember taking one of my first photographs of my dad with his old light-leaking Zenit. For the first time, I saw him as an individual, and not my father. It was an unfamiliar and overwhelming feeling. The camera gave me the ability to see not merely objects and people, but the connections between them. It also granted me the courage to step outside of my head by directing my gaze at other people's lives.

At the end of art college, I began shooting the longest-running photographic project of my life. It was about something very familiar to me - artists in their studios. At the time, I was influenced by Diane Arbus' unsettling black-and-white square portraits. The people in her photographs were acutely aware of being photographed yet seemed entirely at ease. They appeared to say to the viewer silently: this is who I am, take it or leave it.

Later, while living in Russia, I found unexpected success as an editorial photographer. Initially, it was because magazines loved my square photographs of these artists. But inevitably I had to adapt to a more glamorized, premeditated and quick style of shooting, which did not produce the same results. I felt like I sold out by accommodating someone else's tastes, which did not align with mine.

To break the cycle, I decided to leave Russia after ten years of living there and move back to North America. I quickly found work and new clients, but at the time it felt like downshifting because I was not shooting all the rich and famous for the leading magazine brands any longer. The process of taking pictures of those whom I had previously called ordinary men and women—bartenders, restaurant owners, businesspeople, entrepreneurs—was not as creative and at times seemed almost too easy. On the upside, the lightness and informal setting of the projects allowed me to focus on getting to know my subjects better, often discovering extraordinary stories behind seemingly common people.

Soon after, I began to feel as I had touched the limits of photography as a storytelling medium. The accounts of people I've met were often impossible to define in a few images of a limited magazine format. Also, I have come to realize that although more objective than a painting, a photograph is still a projection of the creator's own reality. When I took upon a personal documentary project about a female skipper from Alaska a few years ago, I started to feel that I needed to record a more complete story. While on her boat, surrounded by rough seas, striking

scenery of the Pacific Northwest and rugged fishermen, I began to shoot moving images and record sound. The shift into the world of the documentary film has become the next step.

Living at a time when the whole world is changing, seemingly on a sure path of unsustainability and self-destruction, I find myself being torn between a desire to retreat into the woods, literally and metaphorically speaking, and a need to find new hope and a reason for continued existence. For a long time, I have been interested in the economy and geography of people. Our environment and community shape us profoundly, and in a way, we are all indebted to those things. Although feeling displaced myself for most of my life due to early-life immigration and constant relocation on a world-wide scale thereafter, I now more frequently look up to people who have a strong sense of belonging to a place. The stories that now move me most deeply are of those of individuals who can imagine a way of living more harmoniously with nature while at the same time serving their community. By focusing on small, tangible issues close to home and the heart, they are the ones who can change the world for the better. And as I enter the next chapter of my life, I sense that for me, documenting their stories and providing them an opportunity to share their voice with other people is more crucial than anything else.

Critical Review
Keep the Change

I was contemplating for a long time whether seeing a romantic comedy about an autistic couple in love was a sensible thing to do on a second date.

There were so many things that could go wrong. What if the actors can't pull off the roles and we end up cringing for the entire film? What if the director exploits the couple's disabilities in service of the jokes? I remember that an acute sense of shame of my own privilege washes over me on the rare occasions when I interact with people with special needs. It put a wall between myself and the person. Selfishly, I did not want to feel that way during the film.

The film follows the story of an aspiring filmmaker, David, a man in his early 30s, who is mandated to attend a social program for autistic individuals. David is sure of one thing: he doesn't belong there. At the group meetings, David meets and subsequently develops a relationship with Sarah, who is also autistic. Together they navigate the complex world of dating, falling in love and breaking up.

The film utilized documentary film techniques such as handheld camera and use of available light. But there was something else that made the film feel like a documentary — the acting. It was so real that I felt goosebumps creeping over me more than once. There were none of the usual clichés when it came to the portrayal of the characters. Every single one had their own unique personality and quirkiness. David, who on the surface seemed to be less "weird" than the other autists in the film, desperately wanted to fit in and associate with "normal" people. In the end, it was Sarah, who only knew how to get home by taking the same bus from the same bus stop, who turned out to be more independent and "functional". I could not wait to get home and do research into the film's creative process.

The first-time director and writer Rachel Israel based the story on a real autistic man, Brandon Polansky, whom she met at an art college 16 years ago. At the time he had just broken up with his first love and was asking every woman in her class for a date. She declined, but they became friends nonetheless. Later Brandon's life and dating experiences became the basis for the story. Rachel Israel could not picture anyone else playing his character, so Brandon became the lead in the film playing himself.

The search for Sarah, his love interest in the film, proved to be much more difficult as the director initially looked at professional actors. Eventually, she decided to turn to a Jewish community centre that had a support group for adults on the spectrum. There, Rachel found her Sarah, as well as several other non-ac-

tors to play supporting roles. “Authentic casting was a huge controlling factor in how the film came out,” Israel said. “I’m not an expert on autism, so my way into the story was knowing this cast and keeping them involved from the beginning. I didn’t trust myself to go off and write something without the involvement of the cast. I don’t think it would have been good or felt real.”

During the last year, audiences have seen more social diversity on screen than ever before. One of the issues that still remains is the unreadiness of producers and directors to actually cast people from these same diverse social groups. Rachel Israel’s film is absolutely groundbreaking in this regard. She shatters preconceptions about people with autism by telling their stories and by including them in the creative process as well as achieving a high level of realism.

In the safety of darkness, overtaken by emotions my date and I shed discreet tears while holding hands. The real shock came after the screening, when he confessed that he considers himself to be on the autism spectrum.

Extended Narrative
Solar Eclipse

I was desperately trying to cling onto the grimy dashboard of an ancient but mighty Russian UAZ truck as it was plowing its way across a mountain river. This indestructible military-green vehicle was nicknamed "bukhanka" or "a loaf of bread" for its elongated, smooth around the edges but virtually brick-like form. There were no luxuries such as seatbelts or handgrips in it, but there was a built-in ash-trey full of foul-smelling cigarette butts. The engine roared like a machine gun occasionally choking on bullets, and its radiator heat diverted into the cabin was piping blazing air up my shorts. This old design feature made perfect sense for at least nine months of the year here in Southern Siberia. Except for the end of July, when temperatures frequently hit +40C.

At the wheel, a local driver with a face of broken red stone was drenched in sweat yet utterly unfazed. I was nauseous and ready to plead for a stop. At the start of the mountain pass crossing, about three and a half hours ago, I was quick to jump into the only passenger seat. Riding off-road out in the open back of the truck with eight other passengers—including three of my friends, heaps of gear and provisions—seemed less appealing at the time. Now, as the front wheel jumped on a log and my head slammed into the roof, I could not hold back and cursed. The driver grinned to himself with absolute satisfaction, acknowledging my presence for the first and only time.

At last, the wall of centuries-old forest broke, and we entered a vast and pristine plateau where three glacier-fed rivers merged. For millennia, this remote valley has seen only the native Altai people who came here with their herds of reindeer in search of pastures, and more recently, occasional tourists rafting down the rivers. Now it was invaded by several thousand Rastafaris, Indo-Buddhists, or simply techno music and drug-loving hippies, all of whom were here to witness the full solar eclipse, as its path of totality was to cross through this region on August 1st of 2008 at 10:59 AM.

The mastermind behind our trip of a life-time was Zoe, one of my closest friends and my producer. The logistics of getting to an obscure valley in Siberia were complex and involved a five-hour flight and several days of driving, partially in off-road conditions. We'd need to buy camping gear and carry enough food for the two-week trip. The adventure was going to be insanely expensive if we were to do it on our own. At the time I lived in Moscow and worked as a commercial photographer and Zoe was a photo editor/producer at a city magazine. In all fairness, we could afford to pay for the trip ourselves, but we were resourceful,

well-connected and shameless. We immediately pitched an idea for a fashion shoot to a local travel magazine, and after initial hesitation, they agreed to cover all our expenses.

For me, this was a welcome opportunity to release some long-accumulated professional frustration. I was caught in a spinning wheel of the glamour industry with all its superficial attitudes, high-maintenance celebrities, and fashion stylists who ran the entire show. I longed to get away from that scene and shoot a visual story out in the wilderness, one that would be authentic and spontaneous. I also wanted to be in complete control of the process. Zoe and I had to keep our team small because of the tight budget. On our journey, we'd bring our old friend and occasional model Michael, with whom we had worked many times before, and a fresh-faced female model named Volga. We did not have time to meet her in person, but on the pictures on her modeling agency website she had big melancholy eyes, and a relatively large bust—an unusual feature for a model, which caught our attention. Volga seemed a bit too young, but we had little chance of finding someone more accomplished on such short notice. With lots of gear and a full case of fashion garments in our hands, we were off.

From above, the plateau appeared mostly flat and void of trees. The river snaked under a primitive cable bridge, the only gateway into the valley which could be accessed by vehicle. It rattled, swung and shook under the wheels of a truck full of hippies ahead of us. Suddenly our way was blocked by a dozen camouflaged men with machine guns in hand. Before we realized what was going on, we were commanded to get out of the truck and split into groups. The soldiers in front of us were immense, which meant they likely belonged to the elite forces. Several military-style tents were set up along the road. In the distance, a helicopter was sending waves across the grass, getting ready for take-off. These lads came from afar and were here not to intimidate but to act according to someone's invisible command. A mean-looking lieutenant with a massive scar across his face—as if he walked off straight out of an American B-movie about evil Russians—asked if any of us were in possession of narcotics. I knew I wasn't. Back home, Zoe smoked pot every single day, but I hoped that she was wise enough not bring her stash all the way here. Volga seemed a bit young for drugs, but I would not vouch for her. Michael experimented with all sorts of substances, from what I heard... But at that moment, for some reason, I was mostly worried about our abundant supplies of vodka. It was entirely legal to carry and transport any amount of alcohol, unlike the drugs. Still, there was always a chance of it being confiscated if the militia decided they wanted it for themselves. A leashed German Shepherd was escorted past us. It hesitated for a second by me, taking a passing interest in my backpack. I was ordered to open it. One of the first things I pulled out was an oversized plastic vitamin jar: it contained a colorful array of vitamins, herbal supplements, painkillers, antibi-

otics, antidiarrheal, anti-nausea, anti-allergy and other medications in pill form, all of which I sensibly took out of their packages and jammed into a single container to save space. Even though I could recognize each pill and knew when I should take it, for the life of me, I could not remember the name of a single tablet. The narrow cracks of the soldier's eyes widened as he twisted the cap off and glanced inside. In silence, he passed it to his mate who quickly retreated with the container into the tent. My legs started to give in, and I felt sick to my stomach again.

Meanwhile, K-9 dog had a made a semi-circle around our group and moved towards the back of the truck where the rest of our luggage remained. It made several clumsy attempts to jump onto the back of the truck. To everyone's surprise, Michael rushed towards the dog and tried to give it a push and a lift up its butt. The dog squealed, turned around and launched at him, narrowly missing his arm with its teeth. The soldier growled at Michael and pulled the dog away from us. After a thorough hand-search of all of our gear and belongings, we were told we were free to go. Luckily, we kept our supply of alcohol, and I even got my suspicious-looking vitamin jar back. Dazed and relieved, we all climbed onto the back of the truck and headed for the bridge.

As we finally entered the valley, we saw dozens of half-naked dreadlocked youth who had arrived hours before us. They were roaming through the vast fields of tall, luscious plants. They plucked the buds and hurriedly filled their plastic grocery bags. The whole plateau was covered with wild marijuana.

A few bushes by the river provided some precious shade. We awkwardly set up our tents on a fairly steep and rocky riverbank to avoid the scorching sun. I rushed to the water as fast as I could. With a primal scream, already butt-naked, Michael charged past me and plunged right in, sending a myriad of tiny stars into the air. He startled a group of malnourished-looking nymphs, peacefully sunbathing in the nude on the half-submerged rocks. I wished I had the camera in my hand, but felt too tired to reach for it.

The water, barely above the freezing point, was too cold for me. I splashed it on my face and neck and sat exhausted on the shore, looking at Michael tumbling in the river with the enthusiasm of a little child. Such contagious joy was radiating from him that I could not hold back, and I laughed. He turned towards me and started splashing. Wet and cold, for a brief moment, I was happy and carefree, something I had not been in a very long time.

For me and for some other artists I knew, Michael was something of a muse. He had the body of Michelangelo's David: powerful, chiseled and disproportionately short-legged. When I first met him, I could not decide if he was hideous or handsome. Large-featured, with a thick nose, low-hanging eyebrows, fat lips, broad cheekbones, unruly black curls and

a deep scar on the forehead, he reminded me of an ape. He frequently, but not all the time, was missing a front tooth. His deep-seated eyes and penetrating gaze at first made me uncomfortable. But as we got to know each other, I became braver and began to return the stare. It became our strange game. Often we would locate each other at a crowded party and from a safe distance shamelessly lock our eyes. This peculiar act of intimacy always sent shivers down my spine. I knew I could easily reach out and touch him, but as with burning coal, I wouldn't be able to hold him for too long.

To my knowledge, Michael never worked a regular job in his life. Sometimes he performed as a fire-thrower, DJ, modeled for artists or helped anyone with anything for a meal. Always loud and happy, he seemed to be free from most preconceptions and conventions. Essentially homeless and at times living in squats, Michael frequently migrated from women to men, making lovers out of his friends and always remaining friends with his lovers. Everyone seemed to love him, as much as one could love the wind, the sun, or another force of nature—irrationally and immensely, but without the slightest possibility of seizing, possessing or controlling him.

Thumping techno music from the festival stage subsided by the early morning. Inside our tent, pinned between Zoe and Volga, I twisted and turned, feeling every rock under my matt. I had barely slept since the day of our arrival in Siberia, when I first got a strange rash on my back that kept on spreading. It felt as if someone had driven dozens of needles and twisted them simultaneously deep into my flesh. I was beginning to worry if I was contagious.

In the dark, I crawled out of the tent and sat on a log staring at a dying campfire with a pot of slowly boiling marijuana "porridge" on it. The native plants were not as potent as cultivated ones. Many people here collected the buds, then mushed them up with condensed milk and cooked them down overnight to get stoned the next day. There were plenty of other drugs around that made it past the roadblock. As it turned out, Michael brought some as well, hiding them in spice containers which luckily were overlooked by the narcotics police on the way here. Their dog would have surely found them, but Michael decided to take a risk and forcefully grabbed K-9 dog by the balls when "helping" it get onto the back of the truck. After such an assault, the dog was too distraught to continue the search.

Judging by the glassy, wandering eyes of people at the rave, it seemed like everyone was high on something. I did not have the stamina to drink enough vodka to catch up with any of them, and therefore felt miserable and alienated.

The stars were fading fast. Over the dark edge of the mountains, the sky was beginning to blush. It was the last day of the shoot. I had to wake up my crew. I decided to let Zoe sleep, as she was notoriously difficult to wake up and use-

less during the early morning hours. She almost never showed her face before noon and claimed that she had a life-long sleeping disorder, which I thought was a joke. I pulled on Volga's leg. Sour-faced and tired, she nonetheless obediently poked her head out of the tent. She just turned seventeen and got her first job as a model with us. A city girl, who had never camped in her life, she was miserable and fussy about the whole outdoor experience. Her agent neglected to tell her that she was going to sleep in a tent with at least two other people in it, eat canned sardines, bathe in freezing water, deal with breaking heat, vicious mosquitos and horse-flies every day for the entire journey. There was no cell phone reception here, so she could not complain to anyone back home, and could not change her flight ticket. Volga might as well have been our hostage. Naturally shy and inexperienced, she seemed petrified of me because I got frustrated with her a few times during the shoot. The only person she confided in was Zoe, even revealing to her a plan of breast reduction surgery upon her return to the city (Volga's agent insisted that it would boost her modeling career).

Unfortunately for me, Volga was also wary of Michael, who was, despite his youthful temperament, twice her age. Michael did not care for her either, although generally he was not picky with women, frequently getting romantic in the middle of a work trip with anyone who was open to it. I was hoping that there would be a sparkle of attraction or at least some chemistry between them for the sake of the photo shoot. Instead of the wild and sexy road-trip story I imagined I would photograph with the two of them, it was as if I was witnessing an alienated couple on the verge of a break-up. No matter how intricately I planned out the scenes, the separation between them was too noticeable to dismiss. But today was the last shoot day, and I was determined to make them lust for each other in front of the camera no matter what.

The morning was fresh. Despite wrenchingly hot days, the nights were getting chilly. From the locals, we learned that first frost could strike as early as mid-August. The sun was already peeking over the horizon as Volga, Michael and I hurried through the tall dew-covered grass to a scenic rocky river bend. When we got to the spot, without much ado I ordered my shivering models to strip to their bathing suits. Soft and mythical low-angle light penetrated misty air, creating a rare mood which was short-lived and available only to the early riser. I had always chased the fleeting morning light, trying to persuade spoilt Russian celebrities to get up before dawn during my commercial shoots. But they could not care less about the mood and light of the image, even though they were to star in it. They always wanted to sleep in, have an extended breakfast, and show up on set around noon, when the sun cast deep unflattering shadows on their well-rested faces.

Finally in control of eager-to-please Michael and frightened Volga, I was about to fulfill my obsessive vision. Standing in the water, I needed them to be locked in an embrace, better yet in a kiss while being enveloped by the piercing sun-rays. But the kiss was clearly too much to ask for, as they self-consciously turned away from each other while removing their clothes. I directed Michael to pick Volga up, drag her into the water, spin her, splash her with the myriad of stars that he had sent in my direction a few days earlier. He obliged, gently, as if she was a porcelain sack of potatoes, put Volga over his shoulder and carried her into the freezing depth. Splash her! Throw her! Push him away! I yelled as they made pathetic attempts at love wrestling in the water. I shot endlessly, pushing the shutter button into overdrive of 5 frames a second, hoping by sheer accident to catch a genuine moment that was not there. This went on for too long. Finally, I budged. Michael and Volga were frozen, miserable and confused. I told them to put on their clothes. Volga quickly pulled on her skimpy tank top, military style shorts, and ridiculous red rubber boots. She was nearly in tears and was ready to run back to the camping ground. I felt defeated and angry: at Volga for being shy and awkward, at Michael for not seducing her, and at myself for making it all the way here, nearly 4000 km away from Moscow, and not seizing the unique opportunity, the light and the moment. I could not walk away just yet. I came up to Michael, asked him to remove his shorts and chase Volga along the shore naked. If I could not get an authentic image, the least I could do is try to get a shocking one. Volga! Smile! Laugh! Run! Michael, with a desperate roar of a wild animal, rushed after her. Back and forth, up and down the shore. Twenty times or maybe more, until I got tired of running after them with my camera.

Volga had fulfilled her function as a model and was free to go home. One of the trucks that made daily runs bringing food and water to the festival would take her to the nearest town. From there she get a ride to Novosibirsk and jump on a flight back to Moscow. She was thrilled to be leaving and did not care that she was going to miss the eclipse. Zoe, when she wasn’t sleeping, spent most of the time hanging out with her friends who organized the festival. Michael had disappeared right after the last shoot. He was nowhere to be seen during the day and did not sleep in the tent next to us anymore. Zoe caught a glimpse of him once. He migrated around the valley, partying with other people and enjoying the music scene. Everyone around me seemed exhilarated and happy. I was getting more ill, as the rash kept spreading from the back of my body to the front, locking me in a red circle of agony. I could not sleep, lie down or even lean on a rock. Wandering away from the crowds and the noise, I kept to myself, alternating between swimming and baking in the sun. One more day, the eclipse would pass, and we’d start making our journey back home, where I could finally see a doctor.

At night I wondered throughout the festival with its illuminated structures, tents, and crowds of youth, searching for Michael. Was he avoiding me? I needed to clear the air. An enormous 10-meter-wide inflated balloon was slowly rising above the human masses into the black sky. A giant image of Michael spinning a fire staff was being projected on its white surface in real time. His naked torso was glistening from sweat and kerosene as he was spitting balls of fire into the void. Under the balloon, dancing to the beat of the tribal music, Michael resembled a primal deity, powerful and free, yet terrifying and explicitly sexual. I sat at his feet joining a group of people who like myself were mesmerized by his performance. Caught in the moment, Michael was utterly oblivious to his surroundings. Something inside my chest squeezed hard and tight, and it was suddenly painful to breathe. At that moment, I wanted to become him much more than I wanted to have him. When he stopped to catch his breath, he lowered his gaze and with atypically dilated pupils looked right through me. He was far on the other side where I could never reach him.

The day of the eclipse, the sweltering heat finally let up, and voluptuous white clouds rolled into the valley. Colorful, soiled and loud parties of people scattered around the plateau. No one seemed to notice or care how out of place this traveling circus looked in this austere and rugged landscape. I joined Zoe and her group of friends on a hillside, from where the entire valley unrolled before our eyes.

My head was splitting, and I had the chills. A few curious souls gathered around me to look at my back which was covered in patches of red blisters. No one had seen anything like this before, and they cautiously moved away from me just in case. I longed to lie down on the prickly dry grass and pass out. Unfortunately, I could not even recline because of the deep pain which shot through me every time something or someone touched my body. I felt fatigued and delirious at the same time. Everything around me seemed to be moving in slow motion.

It looked like the clouds would never clear, and everyone was worried that they would miss the cosmic event in its full glory. Suddenly the bird songs and steady noise of the crickets subsided and several minutes of deep silence ensued. Everyone paused, engulfed by a collective sense of premonition. The fading sun had finally glimpsed through the clouds, coating the landscape in a delicate silvery light. It had an airy and opaque quality to it which I had never seen before, except perhaps during cold December days in St. Petersburg, where the sun barely rose above the horizon for a mere few hours. I looked to the far end of the valley and saw a dark shadow that stretched across the entire field of vision moving at me with the speed of over 2,657 km/h—slow enough for a human mind to recognize the unfolding of a catastrophic event.

And then in a matter of a split second, the sun turned into a black speck enveloped by a thin ring of light. The darkness ensued. Sever-

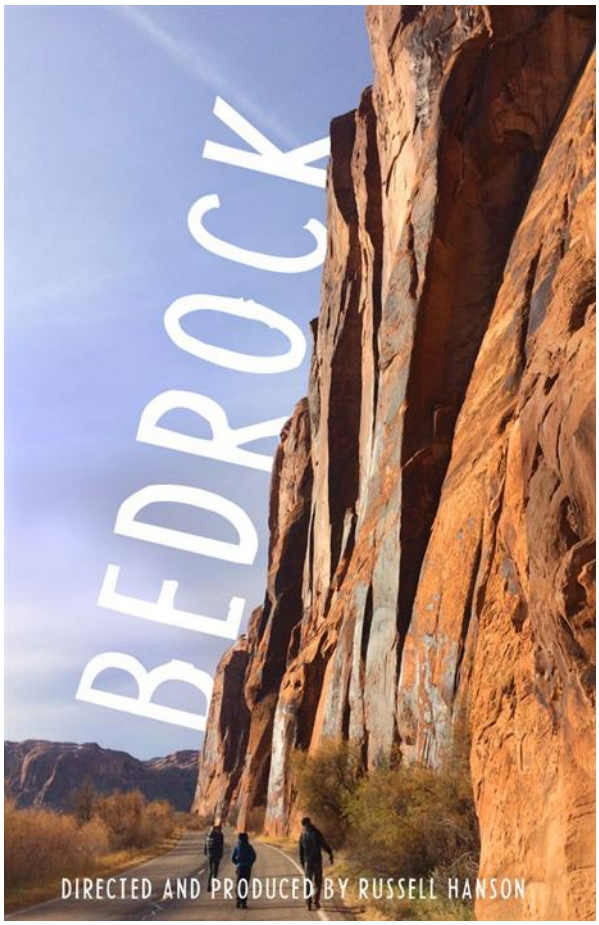
al stars shone brightly alongside the brilliant band, dimly illuminating thousands of figures with their heads raised to the sky. Everyone gasped. The next 2 minutes and 26 seconds seemed like an eternity. I had the time to consider a possibility that the world had indeed ended and we were all caught in a state of perpetual limbo. The wall of blinding light followed the umbral shadow with the same blistering speed. My apocalyptic thoughts turned into nothing more than a glitch of my sleep-deprived mind.

I tried to numb the pain and get the fever to subside by resting in the icy water by the shore when Zoe came rolling down the hill a few hours later. She yelled for me to get out of the river as she frantically gathered our scattered belongings. She had heard that a drug bust was in progress by the main stage, where a sizeable group of militia was deployed into the valley to search and arrest unruly stoners. Zoe wanted to catch the last truck which was leaving shortly. If we missed it, we would have to stay till the next day and risk being search and detained. I was thrilled to get out of here a day early, so I sprang to my feet. For a second I paused in front of Michael's tent that had been empty for days, unsure of what to do with his stuff. Running around the valley looking for him now was not an option. Zoe and I, like a pair of desperate exiles weighted down by our countless bags, ran stumbling towards the dusty road which led out of the valley. Hundreds of people around us were packing, loading the trucks and getting ready to flee. We hailed one of the last vehicles on the way out. The driver stuck his head out of the cabin and shouted out a price for taking us back to civilization. If it were any other day, I would have preferred to walk 45 km back over the mountain pass instead of parting with such a sum of money. But then we eagerly climbed into the open back already full of people. As I was catching my breath, I looked at the harsh landscape lying before me one last time. Shaped by the ice, water, and wind, over the millions of years it withered but endured. Undoubtedly it will recover from the assault that it suffered from the unwitting strangers who came here in a pitiful attempt to bond with it. As we were about to turn around the cliff and leave it all behind, I saw Michael, who staggered out of the bushes looking completely disoriented. As always, he was half-naked and barefoot. Fresh scratches, bruises, and a bloody scrape lay across his forehead. He looked like a shellshocked soldier trying to make it from the battlefield. I yelled and swung my arms at him thinking that he'd jump in the truck with us. He was not that far away and should have heard me. To my bewilderment, he continued to limp and sway down the road looking into oblivion as our truck kept on rattling away, turned towards the cable bridge and disappeared around the corner.

RUSSELL HANSON
Artist Statement

I never used to think of myself as an artist.

Sport has always been my main area of interest: hockey, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and baseball are what I love most. But in a broad sense, playing competitive sports is an art form. The preparation and execution of an activity at the highest level possible is an achievement worthy of recognition. Though I do still love playing all these sports, I lacked the commitment and dedication required to become an artist through sport.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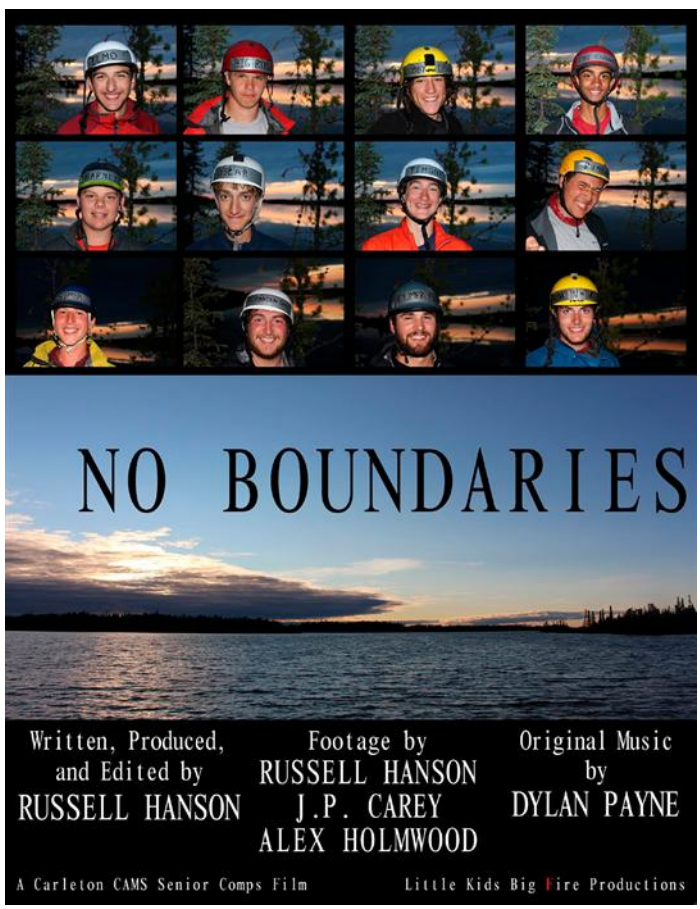
NO BOUNDARIES
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Little Kids Big Fire Productions

Artist Statement

During my summers I went to a canoe camp, spent lots of time outdoors, and fell in love with the landscape: I found myself perceiving the world as an artist. Photography was the first medium that I would practice, always in my spare time. I was primarily taking landscape photographs, but after a while I found that still photographs didn't show everything I wanted. The photographs lacked an explicit human emotion. Everything was up for interpretation and I wanted a more definitive form of expression.

What I now find most interesting is that I have discovered art for myself, as if I was always meant to be on this path. Finding this perspective was a result of following my passion.

In 2012 I went on a 27-day canoe trip down the Albany River in Northern Ontario. I brought a small waterproof Canon point-and-shoot camera that also recorded video. I was finding that just a photo wouldn't suffice: video was the only way to capture the speed of water flowing through a rapid, the flickering light of a campfire, or the excitement of catching a fish in the middle of the lake. While photography was still able to capture the beauty of the natural landscape, video became the way to memorialize the trip.

After going on several more of these canoe expeditions in the North I became fascinated with wanting to share these experiences. Photos of sunsets and waterfalls can only do so much: there was a definitive aspect that was missing from a photograph. I found that video conveyed the human emotion of any moment better than a still frame. In order for people to understand what my passion is, they must see the experience over time.

Stepping back, I've realized that documenting the human experience incorporates so much of what I love and find interesting. While I was only taking photographs, there was never a sense of creating art: I was merely trying to capture moments of significance. The transition to video as a means to capture experience prompted me to look more critically at my subjects. Exploring remote wilderness locations and capturing the human interaction and experience is now at the center of my art. Presenting my work to people who don't explore offers them an insight into the reality of outdoor exploration.

During the final year of my undergraduate studies, I made my first adventure documentary, No Boundaries (2016). A compilation of footage recorded by various members of the trip, it was meant to show the beauty of the land and the growth of the individuals who explored it. I learned a lot from this process and have started looking more closely at professional films in the same genre. My goal

is to evoke emotion in an audience member who might have no knowledge of the outdoors, to take every moment of the film and create some response in the viewer. What makes this difficult is that I am so in tune with what I am trying to show that I can make assumptions that would go unnoticed to my audience.

In my second film, Bedrock (2016), I faced a different challenge all together. This was about rock-climbing, intercutting between three individuals climbing, their preparations on a bouldering wall, and interviews conducted on scene. This film had good interaction with the climbers as people, but where it suffered was in the actual production. Without being able to rock climb, my shot selection was limited and lacked both close-up action and the minute details of the climber's craft. The human aspect was able to come across, but I wasn't satisfied with the film overall.

I am still learning what it means to be an artist, and what it means to work with film. Studying segments of my films that are effective in each and learning from my mistakes are both part of the creative process. Being able to improve each step is the goal of artistic creation, and I hope to continue to learn and expand my capabilities.

Critical Review

To watch someone on the edge of death is one of the most terrifying things imaginable. Last spring Alex Honnold successfully climbed El Capitan, a 3,000-foot rock wall in Yosemite National Park, with no safety measures. No rope or harness, just a film crew. Free Solo reveals the incredible detail and preparation a rock climber faces when undergoing a challenge of this scale.

The filmmaker, Jimmy Chin, is a world-renowned rock climber and outdoor photographer who has photographed and recorded friends and colleagues climbing and skiing mountains. Chin watched Honnold climb for nearly four hours and filmed his accomplishment in a situation where a single mistake would be his last.

Getting stronger and more comfortable doing his route is imperative to Honnnold's success. In many ways, he prepares like an Olympian with each practice climb, but without another chance in four years. For Honnold, only one chance for success meant perfection was the only option. And the detail involved with his craft would not be as noticeable without Chin's cinematography. Extreme close-up shots of hands gripping the smallest outcrop, or of feet standing on what looks like nothing: without these shots the actuality of what Honnold is doing can go unseen.

There is a moment in the film that I found especially powerful. The team is all geared up and Honnold starts to climb. But in an early stage of the ascent, he makes a move that didn't feel completely in control, so he stopped climbing. Despite the film crew stationed along the route and all the built-up anticipation of the climb, he called it quits on that day. Regardless of his different outlook on life and death, Honnold is not trying to die and he is taking the risk of this climb very seriously.

However, it isn't just the climbing that makes this film special. Director Chai Vasarhelyi made an effort to not only show us Alex Honnold: the death-defying rock climber, but also portray him as a person. His girlfriend, Sanni McCandless, likewise plays a vital role in the film: having someone in the film that truly cares for Honnold brings to light the emotional and ethical conflicts that come hand in hand with such a dangerous sport.

Climbing is Honnold's sole passion, and in the film he makes it clear to his girlfriend that at this time in his life he doesn't feel like there is anything tying him down. He knows there is a risk he could die, and that he would be leaving family and friends devastated; but if he dies free solo climbing, he feels he could be at peace with that. He has a unique perspective on life; that you could die anywhere doing anything, so

live pursuing your passion.

Chin faces an incredible ethical challenge. Honnold has done all of his previous free solo climbs on his own, so that if something went wrong, no one would be around to see it. There is an increased risk with a film crew. What if a cameraman or his rope gets in his way? What if a camera is distracting him on a crucial move? Chin filmed this climb knowing that he could potentially record Honnold falling to his death.

Trust is a major component in outdoor sports. Both Chin and Honnold have made careers out of rock climbing because they take risk seriously and they work with people they trust. Risk management and trust can go a long way for these athletes, helping them accomplish things not previously thought possible.

Free Solo
Directed by Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin

TIFF 2018 People’s Choice Documentary Award

Extended Narrative

It was typical sub-Arctic weather: overcast skies and a cool western wind. We were dropped off on a reservoir right next to a break wall. Three hundred kilometres along hydro-electric maintenance roads (and many branches off the main road), our group started a 6-week canoe trip across Northern Quebec, just south of the Ungava Peninsula. For the past few years I have been preparing myself for the role of being a head guide, and this year I am privileged with the opportunity. For months prior I researched and planned the trip for an all-boys summer camp in the summer of 2017. I had three other camp staff assisting me to lead eight 15-year old boys on this expedition. The route would follow three rivers, and end at the shared Inuit and Cree community of Kuujjuarapik-Whapmagoostui. The rivers we traveled were the Neret, Coats, and the Great Whale.

The first six days were spent navigating the Laforge Reservoir, located on a tributary of Quebec's La Grande River, part of Hydro-Quebec's James Bay Project, commissioned in 1994. Many rivers in the James Bay region were dammed for the project, the largest hydroelectric system in the world, making the more northern rivers appropriate for long canoe trips. Long, winding bodies of water within a vast wilderness meet a cool breeze passing through mountains: it is hard to find this kind of place, or this sense of freedom, on our Earth today.

This reservoir system was massive: it involved two days of paddling a single body of water and battling winds seemingly around every corner. Frigid water made capsizing the canoe dangerous and any rescue attempt would be challenging. We paddled the final stretch of this section at dusk, water smooth as glass, and celebrated in the beauty and sense of triumph. The next day we found ourselves staring at a 100-foot dam. What a sight! Over three hundred days of canoe tripping and the day I saw a concrete slab in the middle of the woods will remain with me forever. A three-kilometer portage, seventy-kilometer flatwater section, and two days later, we were staring at the end of the reservoir and the beginning of the river system.

The effects of the reservoir on the river were subtle. The next 12 days were spent on the Neret River, on a series of lakes with sections of river and rapids between each. As we moved down the river and started getting closer to the larger river system of the Great Whale, it was clear that the river's water level was increasing as we were moving further from the dam and hydroelectric project. During this trip I recorded notes about the river and route; here is a section of an entry from one of the early days on the Neret River.


PATHFINDER

At the next narrows there is a set of consecutive falls. Portage is on the right 300m starting on the rocks, we flagged a portage and followed a trail for most of it. Lac Vilmorin is also beautiful, pretty sure all of these lakes will keep me in awe....We paddled to the right side of the big island and camped on a big rock in a narrow channel with a small rapid. When we were able to paddle the sets they were super fun, just slow going and we didn't get to where we wanted. Also caught my first ever brook trout, such a beautiful fish, and Sam was on fire catching fish all day. It was sunny and beautiful, might not be the trip the kids were expecting but I am having a blast. Tomorrow we get back at it right away.

This section of the trip was the least-commonly traveled part of the route and it was noticeable. Lots of time and energy in the first three weeks of the trip went towards blazing trails to walk short distances and paddling big lakes. The repetition is transfixing: one paddle stroke after another, a constant propeller operated by man. The daily routine became a part of our unconscious. We were working as parts of a whole, and the relationships built were tested at the highest degree, and with the greatest stakes. On many occasions we were dealing with fatigue and having to overcome consecutive long days of canoe tripping. The glare of light from the setting sun would reflect off the waves in a rapid. Safely manoeuvring down the river is the ultimate goal and risks such as these were never taken without considerable thought. Trusting the group and knowing what they were capable of was how decisions were made. At the bottom of the rapid we were welcomed by a clearing sky and a massive stretch of river. We paddled west, lost in a mind of wandering thoughts, and when darkness fell we would set up camp for the night.

Quebec is Canada's second-largest province or territory at over 1.5 million km2. Our route covered almost 900km, more than the distance from Toronto to Chicago.

The end of the Neret is marked by a massive lake, Lac Bienville. Travelling east to west we have to cross 110 kilometres of open water scattered with islands making navigation difficult. Nineteen days into the trip we reached Bienville, and with all the weather possibilities imaginable, and considering the luck we were having with weather so far, it was completely inconceivable that there was not a single wave on the surface nor a cloud in the sky. We ate dinner while sitting in the canoes in the middle of the lake,

watching the sunset, and paddled into the darkness. With our northern location we would have close to fifteen hours of sunlight a day and we were trying to use every minute of it. Most of the trip we were averaging 12 hours on the trail, and we used this opportunity to paddle the largest lake on our trip while it was calm, during the night.

The last three weeks of the trip were on the Coats and Great Whale Rivers. As we moved along these, the water volume increased and the drops in elevation became larger and more frequent. From maneuverable rapids to 25-foot waterfalls, these rivers provided a vast range of strategies for approaching the rapids marked on the map. The beauty and stark isolation of the landscape enhanced our experience as a group and made us appreciate nature in its most raw form. A full excerpt from the trip journal follows. To provide some context, we had received our resupply of food, by an airdrop from a bush plane, and crossed a height of land to the Coats River. We then headed straight north along the river, eventually reaching a series of lakes leading us south again:

Day 30: August 4th | Upper Coats Canyon to Lac de Gannes

Beautiful paddle on our way to the first set of hash marks on the map. Pulled over on the left and decided to portage right away. The big change in elevation on the map indicated it wasn't even worth scouting. This portage had two parts making it a pretty long one. The first part is easy along the plateau, the second part starts at the end of the plateau and crossing the rocks and enters the bush on the other side. We followed a trail for a while to get back uphill. The last part is walking down the hill and making your way back to the river via a dried up creek bed. We have figured that there is flat, easy walking terrain on the tops of all the hills so the portages are pretty much going up and down big mountains. From where we put back in we ran the bottom of the set which was easy. The paddle to the next hash marks was breathtaking. I've never seen scenery like this. Cliffs and mountains everywhere. The next hash marks are a big falls, we portaged on the right and this was more of a straight up bush than any other portage. We went up the hill to the easy walking area, made sure we went far enough to pass all the rapids, than made our way down to the river trudging through trees and muskeg. Was kind of tough but was short and the kids absolutely rocked it. Lac de Gannes is also stunning. We are at an awesome campsite on the southwest side of the first island with a huge cliff. It is so beautiful here, most amazing campsite I've ever been on.

Exploring these rivers involved considerable hardship. The majority of the trip we were behind schedule, and the number of factors that were beyond our control kept us from making up any significant time. For the last 20 days of the trip we had to move an average of 30 kilometers a day in order to make it to Hudson Bay at the time our itinerary required. What I was asking from the members of the trip

was obscene. Think of the weight we carried: with one resupply we had two and a half weeks of food at a time, and along with tents and cook sets there are individual sleeping bags and clothing and equipment for sub-Arctic weather, plus four canoes outfitted for white water paddling and helmets, lifejackets and paddles for the twelve members of the trip.

Everything was rewarded in the end. This landscape was a sight to behold, and as we travelled along the Coats towards the Great Whale everything seemed to get better. Though our days were still long they became simpler, uniting the group in a collective mindset: Go. Part of me wished this didn't have to be the case. In a remote place such as this there is the thrill of being on land so few have been on before, and a nostalgia for it once the moment passes. But having to move at the pace we needed to for success was fun, and I have no regrets from the canoe trip. It was a matter of completing the trip we had set out to do. Even though from start to finish this trip was challenging, we were adaptable and this meant that we were using every day to the fullest.

The sensation of being in a town after a 40-day journey in remote wilderness with no human contact other than the members of the trip is a strange experience. It is difficult to anticipate what to expect when ending a trip in a Native American community. Even though I had been to native communities before, many on the trip had not and everyone had different expectations. The town has schools, research centers and offices for both the Cree and Inuit sections, and a shared health clinic. The Cree section, called Whapmagoostui, was where we first landed and they insisted we spend the night at their cultural grounds on a hill overlooking the town and Hudson Bay.

We approached Whapmagoostui at the freighter canoe landing. 24-foot canoes with outboard motors on the back, these boats were meant for locals to travel upriver or onto Hudson Bay itself. The group sat tight as I explored the community, searching for the local Cree band office. It was amazing the excitement the community showed at our arrival. They were so warm and welcoming, even with no prior contact, and graciously welcomed us; they were familiar with having canoeists and allowed us to stay at their cultural grounds. In fact, just two weeks before us another trip came through the town. They arrived from a different direction than the Great Whale, proving the range of route possibilities in this region.

In March 2017 I began my research on rivers in the Northern Quebec region, rivers that flow west into Hudson Bay. One of the most remote wilderness regions on Earth, the abundance of routes makes it a canoe tripper's playground. For the majority of these routes, the toughest logistical issue for a canoe trip is travel to get there. The only means to leave the coastal communities is by plane to Moosonee, then via train to Cochrane where there is road transportation. To limit costs, the camp decided to donate the canoes from

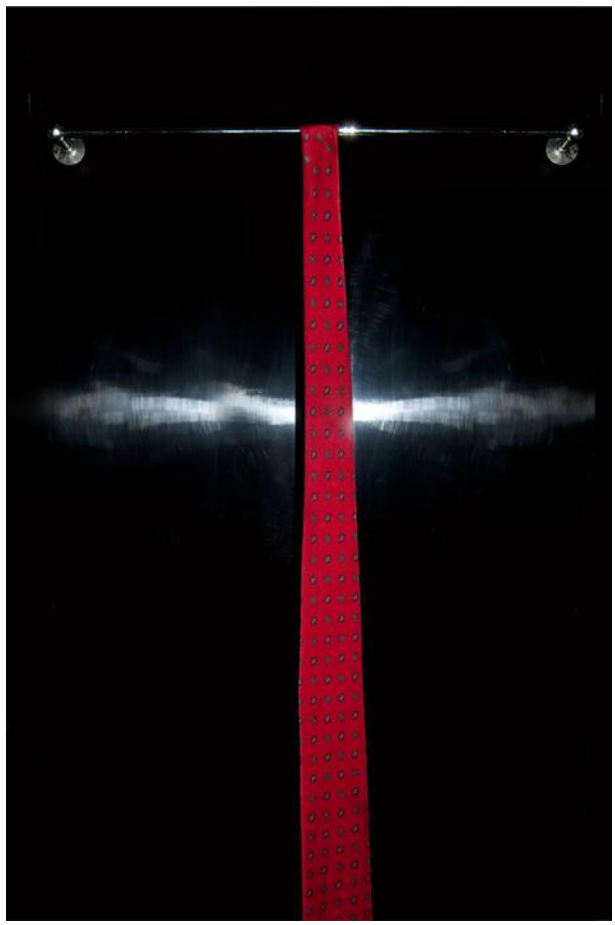
the trip to the Hudson Bay community as a gesture to build an ongoing relationship.

One night is not enough time to spend in such an intriguing place as Whapmagoostui. The people were genuinely interested in our trip with many of them having never been on the Great Whale, even though the community is at the mouth of the river. The 15-year old boys on the trip couldn't comprehend their experience. Here they were after 40 days in the wilderness and in a foreign community for the first time, and they were surrounded by locals answering questions about the trip and the river. Randy was the first man I ran into; he was the chief's brother and was originally hesitant about accepting our canoes as a donation. It was a response I hadn't anticipated. His immediate reservation was because he was worried that they wouldn't be used. Though the community does practice many cultural traditions, canoeing has become a pastime practiced by only a few.

Our stay was highlighted by a showing of the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis. Flares of green light lit the sky and danced among the stars. The glow and movement were mesmerizing and seemed like a perfect backdrop to reflect, reminisce and recount the trip. After travelling almost 900 kilometers across rivers, lakes, and land, the locals thought we were insane, and we felt exhausted. Though we knew how fortunate we were to embark on a trip of this scale, it wasn't just completing the trip that made this a memorable adventure. The tolerance of adversity and the accomplishment that came with overcoming obstacles, seeing and experiencing natural beauty in remote wilderness, and traveling with a group of people that you trust and care for are what makes this a fortunate and memorable experience. Although the trip may last for only a few weeks, the importance of one can last a lifetime.

NOA IM
Artist Statement

I am a time traveler who takes journeys into the past, which for me continues to exist in the present. I feel as if I am walking into the future, even when I move backwards. Ahead of me, around the corner, lies history. Perceptions and memories of the past, our own histories, are like blurry images on the edge of vision, distorted. They have a life of their own, changing and evolving through the passage of time or via shifting emotions. Examining stories is one of the means I use to ruminate, reflect and foresee our futures, and who we are.



Artist Statement

What if I could strip myself of my racial identity, ethnicity, culture, and gender? I might feel naked, a ghost in the void, but manifested as a simple "living being" in universal sense. Would I be less, or more? Perhaps it would be hard to define what I am as a simple "being," but rather as "being" itself, the act of existence. This question is part of a personal context.

When I was young, I hated being identified as coming from a specific race and nationality, and longed for something more transcendent. But, especially now, without this social and ethnic label, I no longer know how to describe myself. Even when I try to deny this reality-imposed social status, my cultural history and racial identity are deeply embedded in my DNA, and I'm forced to carry this throughout my life.

Layers of long-forgotten history render my identity, even the history I was born into but never myself experienced. In Japanese Zen master Eihei Dogen's perspective, I am myself a 'time-being', the result of history's convergence into this point, this consciousness. I am specific, and not general; I am me, and am defined by the processes that generated me. Dogen's teaching underlines the present time, each moment containing a past and a future. Everything happens in this moment, and he emphasizes that "through time, which unfolds all moments, all times, we realize who we are."

In contrast, Henri Bergson was interested in how people experience time, what he called 'duration.' My work is particularly absorbed in this concept: the idea that each person experiences time differently, and that history is laid down as memory traces. Bergson sees memory not only as a mechanical way of acting and interacting with the present, but also as images, processed by now-perception.

One evening, shortly after my father's death, my family gathered around a table, enjoying dinner, talking and laughing. It didn't seem like a group of people who had just lost a loved one. My sister-in-law broke the conversation by saying: "Is it ok that we talk like this?" A moment of solemnity descended upon us. In that moment, like the moment Proust magically described the experience of tasting a madeleine, we slipped into the past and met different versions of my father: a drunkard, a patient authority, a lenient man, a strict man, a cheater, a confident man, a grump, and more. Each of us had different memories of him, swirling about and merging, all of us on our own time-trajectories, landing in our own unique time zone.

This changed my perception of memory and time and steered my work away from sexu-

ality and gender issues. I started a series called Going Back Home, photographing my father's albums, his collection of taxidermied animals, his clothing, and his other relics. Most of his belongings existed in my own memory as well. But to others, these objects were nothing but lifeless clutter. My journey investigating and rearranging his life and his history, but from inside the boundaries of my own perspective, made me realize that I wasn't just looking into my father's life, but looking at his life through my own, and therefore seeing a reflection of myself. His belongings acquired new life as I started to photograph them, and as I reinvigorated them with new meaning. They became part of my life and my own memory; his past became part of my own present, within me. The recording process ultimately became my attempt to embrace continuity and to incorporate myself into the flow of time, ensuring that its meaning, like a living force, didn't die.

Memory and time are tricky. We don't just remember a singular instance, but assemble memories into works of conscious art, melded together. Because individuals process memory differently, often without reference to any objective reality, I am interested in how each individual's memories shape and recreate them as individuals. As a time-based artist, I put history into a timeline, dissecting and reassembling it as unfolding layers of each moment. I create an alternate timeline that constantly redefines and relocates who and where we are.

Critical Review
Manifesto

The surrealistic recitations by Cate Blanchett in Julian Rosefeldt's 2015 film, Manifesto, showcase the literary force of the texts of artists and philosophers in the past. The thirteen different roles that Blanchett plays and the stereotypical contemporary settings might be both viewed as clichés, but Rosefeldt offers a chance to rediscover both familiar and forgotten artistic and political writings from 1848 to 2004. And while Blanchett seems to represent the film's characters, in fact she is secondary, because the artistic manifestos have become anthropomorphized; in some way, these become the characters in the film. Blanchett's characters simply incarnate the statements and the ideas they contain.

This film challenges artistic limits through performance, script, and presentation. First, Blanchett's performances are captivating, so that viewers easily fall under the spell of each character. Even though she is an accomplished actress, playing thirteen distinct roles must have been a great challenge, shifting from accent to accent and taking on various archetypal roles: a Russian choreographer, a news reporter, a factory worker, a puppeteer, a school teacher, an architect, a broker, a CEO, a tattooed punk teen, a scientist, a funeral speaker, a conservative mother, and a homeless person.

Though the film is complex and involved, viewers have no time to be bored by the selected tracts (actually more than thirteen) from the European avant-garde. The occasionally dry works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, such as the Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848), or Tristan Tzara's Dada Manifesto (1918), and other texts like Sturtevant's Man is Double Man is Copy Man is Clone (2004) are all brought vividly to life thanks to Blanchett's on-screen versatility.

There are problems, of course. Not all of the texts and their settings have been chosen for equal effectiveness, and the script seems entirely too ambitious. It is certainly a cerebral work of art, and apparently, Rosefeldt has set himself the goal of trying to compile an intellectually challenging assembly of texts from various manifestos into a single oeuvre. He seems to be doing this to raise questions about the role of the artist. According to his statement about the film, most texts in the early twentieth century were written by people in fits of youthful rage, and they reflect a passion to change the world. Clearly, Rosefeldt is interested in how these voices have influenced our society and still affect the present.

The voices have been brought to life by harnessing Blanchett's ability to deliver compelling presentations. The texts are served to viewers through a thir-

teen-screen projection, creating a spatial installation with large-scale impact. However, while part of a whole, each screen also plays against the others, generating “noise” and conflicting voices, as if the whole operates with internal conflict. After the installation, Rosefeldt restructured these thirteen episodes in a linear fashion, allowing viewers to better focus on the words in the texts and de-emphasizing the spatial effect of the gallery installation. However, this re-working lacks the power and punch of the original assembly. The linear film, with all its parts sewn together, fails to convey the same depth as the art installation, which invited people in and induced a “manifesto trance”. Ultimately, these limitations make us think about the conditions imposed on artistic visions by the media that represent them— in this case, the same material presented in very different ways, to different effects.

Rosefeldt shows two kinds of presentation in order to deliver a rebuke to society—that these voices shouldn’t be buried in archives and behind old bookshelves, even though some of their ideas seem obsolete today. He pays homage to the artists and philosophers who struggled to enlighten and redesign the world. Once, these ideas changed us, and we have since evolved with and beyond them. Despite Blanchett delivering a eulogy for Dada at a funeral scene, seemingly more of a general declaration of the death of art than a reference to Dada, the thirteen manifestos still find ways to resonate and speak to us today.

Extended Narrative

The Yalu River

I arrived in Dalian, China at noon. Zhoushuizi International Airport was relatively modern and much cleaner than I expected. It took only an hour and fifteen minutes to get from Seoul to Dalian, a short and pleasant trip to China. But when I looked around the airport, it was empty. All the other passengers got out fast and didn't linger in the terminal. It felt like my friend and I were left all alone. We had come all the way to China without an itinerary, a plan or a guide. And now, with our destination on the Sino-North Korean border beckoning to us, there was no one to ask how to get to Dandong.

I more fully realized that we had landed in a small city in China when it turned out that we couldn't even access Google because of the Chinese government blocks on the internet. Without the usual Internet access that we relied on, it was hard to do even basic tasks in a strange city. "What was I thinking?" In retrospect, I realized I should have remembered that this would happen, and prepared by downloading all of the information I needed. It was reckless arriving with nothing, and we blamed each other. A sense of foreboding that this trip wouldn't be easy settled on us right from the start.

It was late spring, in 2016. Breaking news in South Korea was that 12 female North Korean waitresses working in a restaurant in Ningbo, China had left their jobs, along with their North Korean

government minder, and fled to South Korea. For North Koreans, working abroad—in any kind of job, even as a waitress—means that they must have come from the upper levels of North Korean society. Most of those who defect to South Korea are poor and have no social status, so this was big news. That such a large number of high-status people fled at the same time suggested to many that there was trouble in North Korea.

Since Kim Jong-un took power in North Korea, the border between North Korea and China has been reinforced. He has strengthened border policies to stop people from crossing and migrating to China and South Korea. In order to secure his power and position, Kim Jong-un played the politics of terror, purging many people, including his own relatives and half-brother. Even missionaries and aid workers, people who helped North Korean escapees in the borderlands, had vanished into thin air or had been killed by the North Korean government. All the media were reporting about how bad the situation was in North Korea, especially according to those North Koreans who had recently escaped. In 2016, the South Korean conservative party was in control and it convinced people that if we kept sanctions running, despite their nuclear threats, the North Korean regime would be close to collapsing.

Since before the Korean War ended, the South Korean government's political slogans have revolved around anti-communism. Anyone who saw North Koreans in South Korea was obliged to report them to the government. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the narrative about North Koreans was that they were involved in "evil communist espionage". Later, when a famine hit in North Korea during the 1990s and drove many to flee, an increasing number of North Koreans escaped to South Korea and other countries. More than 32,000 North Korean escapees have settled in South Korea. Some of them became political activists, working against the North Korean regime. Gradually, the negative perception of North Korean exiles in South Korea has changed to a more positive understanding. Of course, it's entirely likely that among them, there must have been North Korean intelligence agents. It is very difficult to filter them out, but even with this risk, we cannot discard the people who fled from that country, who have no place to go, and who are seeking shelter.

North Korea is divided from China by two rivers. On the western half of the border is the Yalu River, and on the eastern portion the Tumen River. The Yalu River flows right by the Chinese city of Dandong, in southeastern Liaoning province, opposite Sinuiju, in North Korea. This part of the land used to be called Manchuria, the place where Manchurians rose under Nurhachi, conquered China and founded the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), China's last imperial kingdom. But once, prior to this, this land was part of Korea's history, ruled by the Korean kingdom of Goguryeo. Since the late 19thcentury, many wars have taken place over the Yalu River: the Chinese-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Korean War.

However, the melting pot of history and culture evolving around the Yalu River has been forgotten by South Koreans, who have no direct access to it. For them, it has become a distant border between two foreign countries. But for North Korean refugees, their narratives start from this militarily sensitive borderland. The region is home to smuggling and illicit trade of all kinds, and for "illegal" North Koreans, it is a site of human trafficking, abuse and a total lack of human rights. When they are caught by the Chinese border guards, North Korean escapees are sent back to North Korea, where the government sends them straight to prison camps. Against all global covenants and international rules, the Chinese government doesn't recognize them as refugees, but only as criminals or illegal migrants, and also political embarrassments, to be sent back to whatever fate awaits them in North Korea. Many journalists, including foreign media, report on these issues around this border. In spite of the UN sanctions on North Korea, this is the place to be to see North Korea interacting most openly with the outside world.

This drew my attention and called me to come see this borderland. But on the way, my friend and I were stranded at the airport. We had wanted to explore on our own, but when we got out of the airport, there was nothing but a huge empty parking lot. Spotting some men standing and smoking, we approached them to ask for directions to the Yalu River. We could not speak Chinese, so we had a hard time communicating with them. They didn't seem to be licensed taxi drivers, but one of them offered to drive us to Dandong. It was an expensive trip, but there was no choice but to accept the extortion he offered us.

We finally relaxed in the back of the car, enjoying the view of the concrete and trees and rundown buildings flashing by. It was a long, quiet drive, and our anxiety ebbed and we dozed. Without our realizing exactly how many hours passed, the driver woke us for a toilet break. One small block of a concrete building was giving us a blank stare, in the middle of nowhere. It felt so empty, and I felt uncomfortable as a stranger in a distant place. It was impossible not to wonder what we would do if the driver was, say, a "human trafficker". If I was kidnapped here, no one would have noticed or been able to do anything about it. All the horrible stories that I had heard from the North Korean escapees, sold by Chinese human traffickers, rushed back into my mind. There was no more sleep when we got back to the car. My phone remained in my hands, just in case.

But this flight of fancy let my imagination roam. I started to imagine myself being kidnapped, and how I would escape if I could. One shocking story a North Korean female escapee told me was about her being sold and forced to marry a Chinese farmer in a remote rural area. She couldn't handle hard labor and an unwanted marriage, so she attempted to escape several times. In the end, the man cut one of her legs off in order to prevent her from escaping. That was just one

of the horrible stories from escapees; the concept of human rights doesn't exist for North Korean escapees.

With all sorts of horrific possibilities haunting me, we arrived at a hotel on the Yalu River. It was already dark, but we wasted no time in an anonymous room. We went outside and started to explore the city. There were many Korean restaurants and souvenir shops along the river, targeting curious South Korean and Chinese tourists. Chinese red lanterns lit the street. It was quite beautiful at night. I could hear old South Korean pop music playing on the streets, mixed with North Korean patriotic ballads. It felt more like a boardwalk Disneyland than a dangerous border.

The next day, as soon as I got up, I was excited to be able to film, even hoping that I could encounter some North Koreans. I walked in the near-North Korean sunshine, following a new boardwalk along a quiet river, while others strolled and enjoyed the morning. It was peaceful. People were looking over at the North Korean side. I couldn't detect any activity there, but I was able to see trucks and military cars picking their way across the Sino-North Korean Friendship Bridge.

The Yalu Broken Bridge was built by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1911. This bridge had been supposedly built for the Eurasian rail network, meant to link Calais, in France, to Japan. The grand ambition of Japanese imperialism ended in 1945 in the glare of American atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and with the conveniently late Soviet declaration of war against Japan. But almost without delay, the Korean War broke out, and the Yalu was the scene of more fighting. The new Chinese Communist government sent hundreds of soldiers to defend the river in this battle between communism and capitalism that ravaged Korea. Amidst constant reversals, it was actually the American air force that bombed the Yalu Bridge. The bombing left a broken ruin, declared by one side as hard evidence of colonial American brutality, but as a symbol of victory and freedom by South Koreans.

The bridge is now a major tourist site. Walking to the end of it, looking out at North Korea, I could almost touch the one place forbidden for South Koreans, separated by history, ideology, and politics. Reality has been transformed again and again by the vagaries of fate. Is there a final, all-encompassing truth? Finding truth is a never-ending journey. Soon, I was engulfed by a crowd of tourists and had to make my way onwards.

The following day, I stopped being a tourist. At a remote locale, we started filming the other side of the river. With my camera tripod set up, a small, thin,

wiry man appeared, as if from nowhere. Looking disheveled and unkempt, he spoke Chinese to us, and demanded to see our passports. When we responded, "No Chinese!" he started gesticulating and said, "No film! No tripod! Passport!" He looked harmless, but as we packed he scurried away and we began to make haste. When he returned, he seemed to want us away from the riverside. The man had summoned a police officer, and looking more annoyed than alarmed, the officer checked our documents, thanked the informant, and then asked us not to cause any trouble. While we were clearly not seen as spies, one thing was clear: this wasn't just any border. We slipped back to the entertainment district.

There were many Korean restaurants. When I paid close attention, I could see differences: Chinese-Korean owned restaurants, South Korean restaurants, and lastly a good number of North Korean restaurants. At the time, there was a panic, and most North Korean restaurants were shut to South Koreans or Korean-speaking people because of the Ningbo waitress incident. With only one open, we felt obligated to enter. But as soon as a waitress recognized me as a South Korean person, she gave us the cold shoulder and told us, "We are closed and please, you have to leave." We had come here without any plans for engaging with actual North Koreans that we might meet; and North Koreans have none of the freedoms we enjoy. There was zero chance we could speak freely to people and interview them.

We decided to go to a famous cafe run by an expatriate Canadian and his family, called "Peter's Café". What we both knew was that secretly, the owner of the café was cautiously helping North Koreans flee from the borderland and China. The café wasn't where it was supposed to be. The reason was that his activities weren't as secret as they'd been made out to be. He and his wife had been caught by the Chinese authorities and had to shut down their business. Detained in China and accused of being spies, they would both eventually be released, but not for years. Nothing seemed to be going our way; we were blocked from engaging anyone at all, at every point. At night, staring at the river, tempted to cross it, I thought perhaps we should just see if the border is as closed as we've been led to believe. For me, it was a barrier, but my friend wasn't South Korean. It would be possible to go to the North and film, so long as I remained behind.

The next day my friend went on a short trip to North Korea, bringing back footage for me from the Yalu Bridge all the way to Pyongyang. While he was on the train, he filmed the crossing of the bridge. I was curious as to what would be there when we arrived to the North Korean side. There was an empty amusement park by the river, without people. I guessed it was a stage. After that, there was an almost endless series of desolate fields. Most photos and footage weren't useful. Under heavy surveillance, he had no opportunity to set up good shots. He had to take photos and film surreptitiouly when he slipped away from the North Korean tour guide, who accompanied him and

kept eyes on my friend every minute. But he was able to get some great shots of North Korean soldiers and children on the train. He passed by a small market, called a 'Jangmadang' where locals trade and buy and sell goods. What he saw was worse than I had imagined. Laid out for me was an impoverished, undeveloped, closely-policed country. What infrastructure existed was dedicated to the repetition of political slogans and the worship of the Great Leaders, and barefoot children were sitting idle in barren fields. Pyongyang was indeed a substantial city, of course, but it was sterile as well, with a forced façade, and all too obviously artificial.

The power of film was such that though I could not venture across the border, instead, North Korea was brought to me. It was through the transportation of media that I was able to travel; I may have been rooted in one place, but my perspective was allowed to roam. Media technology, such as satellite communications, surveillance cameras, motion tracking on mobile phones, and many other innovations creates eyes where none previously existed. I have become accustomed to experiencing the world through these remote moving images. While these technologies have expanded viewers' worlds, they also serve other purposes, even military ones. The modern South Korean and American armies can monitor North Korean activities using satellite technology. In North Korea, too, media and art have always served as propaganda tools, and now, the regime's power over its people can expand. The ability to manipulate truth and reality has emerged as a real force, and even the remote images I collected were given to me without their full context—because I could not myself be present when they were taken. So this technology is both boon and threat.

As it turned out, the purpose of my trip wasn't to interview escaping North Koreans or to explore a dangerous border zone. Instead, the contradictions built into the creation of media by even my own hands, directly and indirectly, made me re-evaluate the role of media in our lives today. Just one year after I got back from this trip, a new South Korean president from a left-leaning party has again changed the dominant narrative about North Korean defectors. Now, instead of being refugees from an enslaved country, they're inconvenient traitors bent on disrupting a sacred path to unification. The same images of refugees play

a new role—that of threat to the new government's plans—and instead of being the master of a slave state, Kim Jong-un has become a partner in peace and a, or even "the", Great Leader. The North Korean escapees are at risk from both the North Korean regime and the South Korean government. If they are not recognized as legitimate refugees, their fates are likely not going to be good. The Chinese government sends them back to North Korea if it captures them. A new South Korean government is completely silent about the abuses they suffer, both inside North Korea and outside. So with a few taps of a video editor's finger, the news media landscape bends and contorts itself to serve new masters in new ways, and the media cycle starts fresh, reworking reality into new forms, as if it were a living thing to be commanded by those with the will to do so.

MARIA MARKINA
Artist Statement

When I was seven, my parents sentenced me to five evenings of art classes a week.

I protested. Roaming the streets with the neighbourhood kids seemed more enjoyable. My argument was overruled. They were working long hours, babysitting services were expensive, art school was free. My mother, however, still insisted they were guided by the desire to help me express my unique identity. The truth is, many years later, art helped me reclaim my true identity and, finally, keep it safe.

Artist Statement

I was five when we left our one-bedroom apartment in a concrete-paneled, decaying Krushchyovka in Kamchatka, Russia, for a small cottage in rural Belarus. At that time, I could not comprehend why Boris Yeltsin's resignation was so alarming to my parents, or why my mother was cursing a lot on that New Year's Eve. I just wanted to see the fireworks and open up a brand-new doll house waiting for me under a Christmas tree.

In less than a year, my doll house was put in a cardboard box with the word "fragile" on the top, and loaded into a freight container filled with our modest possessions. We ended up in Lida, a small city in western Belarus where people pray in Polish and speak in a wild mix of Russian and Belarusian. I was fascinated by their ability to juggle the three languages without being fluent in any of them. My neighbours were eager to teach me a few soft-sounding words that I quickly picked up. One day I shared them with my mother, thinking she would be amused by my pathetic attempts to copy the accent. She was not impressed, "You are Russian, you understand? Learn to speak your own language properly first!"

I could not comprehend why my attempts to assimilate seemed so outrageous to her, but, as years went by, I saw that my mother was doing everything in her power to make sure I did not forget my "true identity".

What was coming for me was a grueling problem of belonging. I do not know whether it was triggered by my own desire to find a niche for myself, or whether it was inflicted on me by the people who always seemed to know better than me who and what I was. It is still a mystery to me whether my rediscovered patriotism is my own conscious choice or the product of my mother's discipline.

What I do know is that whenever I have to face a multitude of "but..."s fired at me by friends, neighbours, and fellow students, an unbearable chill overwhelms my entire body as I am trying to form a counter-argument and fail. These often start with: "But you grew up in Belarus," just to warm me up. Then they attempt to wear me down and strike with: "But you chose to leave!" Once I am trapped in the corner, wiping my bleeding nose, they like to finish with: "But are you ever coming back?" Every time I get stripped of my identity like that, I imagine how, one day, through documentary film, I can claim it back, and become a legitimate, undisputable Russian.

I am ashamed of the fact that I was given a chance for a better life outside. Ex-posing in my future work the reasons why we went seeking a better life in the first place is the only way for me to overcome

the feeling of guilt in front of the ones who chose to stay inside. Do I have the right to sympathise with the grievances of the Russian population, complain about the crooked government and claim that I am in on the fight? What if I am simply a spectator, occasionally overcome by the feeling of nostalgia?

Russian politics have always been the hot topic at the family table. Watching my parents fiercely condemn the rotten core of the Russian political apparatus, I could see that it was their own way to deal with their guilt, and justify their decision to run away from the hopelessness of the situation. As years went by, my parents would discuss the growing unemployment rate while dipping a graham cracker into a morning coffee, complain about ruthless pension reforms while trying to get rid of leftover grease on the frying pan, and watch territories get annexed doing the obligatory after-work shot of vodka. As years went by, I got weary of the kitchen talks.

Documentary film is my way to do something for the country we chose to abandon. I want to dedicate my thesis project to the stories of the people who chose to exchange their life in Russia for a new one elsewhere. I want to document the reasons that brought them to this decision. I want to talk about the tragedy of emigration that often gets neglected – the depression and anxiety that desolates you once you realize you are too foreign for any other country.

Critical Review

Leviathan by Andrey Zvyagintsev

When the government has its hands on your throat, will you be fierce enough to resist or will you beg for air?

In Leviathan, a crime drama by Andrey Zvyagintsev released in 2014, an ordinary working-class man, Kolya, stands against a corrupt mayor set to demolish Kolya's family house. Little did he know that the monster is not a crooked bureaucrat in a leather chair but the Russian political apparatus itself.

As the mayor's fat fingers tighten their grip on Kolya's emaciated body, Kolya finds himself watching his life get shattered, as if his soul is trapped in some in-between realm, where both God and Satan rejected him. But who is God in 21st Century Russia? The one with an anguished gaze crowning the altar of the church? Or, the one whose portraits adorn the offices of clerks and politicians in every corner of this immense country?

In an attempt to find answers, Zvyagintsev takes us all the way to the Kola peninsula, a place so remote it seems to be devoid of human presence. The film opens with the shots of the foaming waves of the Barents Sea breaking against the rocky shore. The cold breeze that they bring bears in it the impenetrable despair Kolya is about to go through.

A few minutes into the film, we see Kolya's family house, a secluded untouched by time stronghold. Built by Kolya's ancestors, it had been passed on from one generation to another, the symbol of unbreakable family ties and multiple years of hard work. For years the walls of this house had been Kolya's fortress, until one day the local mayor, guided by his insatiable greed and unlimited power, decided to lay his hands on it. And just the way he was taught to defend his motherland in the military, Kolya picks up the fight, blindly hoping for a fair battle. Viktor, his former army friend, now a successful lawyer in Moscow, comes to the rescue with a binder of incriminating evidence that will make the mayor tremble and surrender. What we see, however, is not a battle but an execution. Kolya is in court, his ghost of a wife is squeezing his veiny arm as the clerk speed-reads the verdict and announces how many days Kolya has to pack his possessions. The only questions left are:

Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook
or tie down its tongue with a rope?
…
Will it keep begging you for mercy?
Will it speak to you with gentle words?

The more persistent Kolya gets in his fight, the more adept and relentless the enemy becomes. His wife, who gets overshadowed by the battle she does not have faith in, finds comfort in Viktor's em-

brace. Ashamed and abandoned in her despair, she finds salvation in the cold waters of the Barents Sea, the only way to escape the peninsula. Viktor, threatened by the mayor's racketeers and betrayed by the judiciary system he served so devotedly, goes back to Moscow. And Kolya, drowning his soul in vodka, ends up in jail convicted of murdering his own wife. When they came for him, Kolya was already more of a shell of a man; he could hardly be any threat to the mayor. But letting him go free would mean relinquishing control over the land that belongs to the Leviathan and every little man that walks on this land.

The fact that the film shares its title with the work by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, published in 1651, is not coincidental. However, whereas Hobbes saw a social contract and rule by an absolute monarch as the only way to avert "the war of all against all," Zvyagintsev exposes the dark side of the contract. The director shows us the usurper who lives in a constant state of war for unlimited power, feeds off of the fear of the citizens, and controls everything they believe in. Multiple scenes in the film show us the mayor's private meetings with the head of the local church, who gives his blessing to every new endeavour of the voracious monster.

The only thing that the corrupted political apparatus could not subdue was the sea. That is why Kolya's wife went looking for redemption in its waters. That is why Kolya's son would run to its shore after every heated argument as the family started falling apart. Does this mean that as long as the tide comes in and goes out, there will be hope? We cannot know.

In 1866, Russian poet Fyodor Tyutchev wrote:

"No, Russia can't be understood
With mind or held to common standard:
Her stature is unique for good -
Just faith in her is all we're granted."

In 2014, Andrey Zvyaginstev's Leviathan made us question whether there is any faith left in the Russian state.

Extended Narrative

When I look at the remains of what used to be my joyful family, I wonder whether it was the futile pursuit of happiness that made us so deeply unhappy. They say Russia does not have a middle class, so I guess you can place us somewhere near the bottom. I have always been taught that life is a fight. But for the past few years, we have been fighting ourselves. Was it the collective struggle that made us one? Was it the naive hope to build something of substance on multiple years of trauma that tore us apart?

It seems that the first crack in the foundation happened two years ago. On that November day, as per usual, my mother probably woke up, looked in the mirror to check how much older she had gotten since the previous evening, made a cup of coffee (black, no sugar), and let the dogs out. She probably lit her morning cigarette and smoked only half, because after thirty years quitting cold turkey would be "traumatizing for the organism." Then she likely noticed the dogs digging in her rose bushes, a little too late, and finished the other half. She did not pay attention because she was too busy trying to maintain life in her old Samsung. It refused to charge and she would crouch on the floor watching the green light go on and off, her eyes fixed on the device as if it would die the second she looked away. She had been waiting for the call for five months and would not tolerate any technical issues.

That day my brother Yan was coming back from his annual fishing season in the valley of the Zhupanovo River, where he spent five months without any internet connection or cell-phone reception, surrounded by the pristine, sparse forests of Kamchatka. Curious tourists come here seeking adventures in the remote wilderness. They come for sport, for adrenaline. Back home they are CEOs dressed in ultra-skinny fit suits; here, knee-deep in water, armed with fishing rods, separated from civilization by a sublime volcanic massif, they become vulnerable again: barbaric, defenseless against the colossal volcanoes tearing the surface and gushing with ashes, gases, and rocks. This land, guarded by the waters of the Pacific Ocean, bleeding with hot lava, trembling with rage, the land my mother escaped from fifteen years ago, became a safe haven for my brother.

My mother lit another cigarette. She thought about the picture Yan sent last time—he looked about five kilos skinner, and his beard had gotten too long and needed trimming. She added it to the list of the things to discuss. On that November day, two years ago, my brother announced his return with the message,

"Hi Mom. The season was great, the money is alright. Also, I know it should have

been a longer conversation, but I'm getting married and moving to Kamchatka… for good."

It took him about half an hour to type up these two sentences. So far, two years has not been enough to stop the train of arguments, misunderstandings, and heartbreaks it set in motion.

My mother is a kind-hearted person, but do not expect her to send you a Christmas card or a birthday package, because the stamps went up in price a few weeks ago. She is not a tyrant, but she did make me swear that, whatever it takes, I would not return to the country that it took her so long to get me out of, the country my brother decided to start his own family in. My mother comes from the last generation of Soviet children who were brought up behind the Iron Curtain and who witnessed the world of their childhood change beyond recognition. She likes to say she knew the ship was built to wreck, but she refuses to admit that she failed to adjust to the post-Soviet reality.

Back in 1991, when the whole country was busy rebuilding itself from scratch, my mother was standing in line at a grocery store trying to get some cottage cheese for her three-year old son. By the time her turn would come, she was usually left with a choice between a jar of pickles and a bag of bagels. Those were the times of Perestroika for my mother, the last memories of the place she was once taught to love and fight for zealously.

Back in 1991, it was not the destructive power of nature that made my mother tremble with fear. It was the dismal post-Soviet reality, inescapable poverty and a crying three-year old son. Crying because he was hungry, crying because the heating was down again, because the bottles filled with hot water that my mother placed around him for the night got cold even before she could finish the bedtime story. In 1991, the whole country was writing its history anew. Remote areas like Kamchatka were forgotten in the past, starving and decaying.

Back in 1991, fishing was not a sport or a weekend family activity, it was a means of survival. The first time my brother held a fishing rod in his hands was when my mother had spent the last few rubles in his piggy bank on a loaf of bread. A three-year old, he was charmingly naive in his excitement, so genuinely proud of his first catch. Back in 1991, the empire collapsed, the ideology failed, somebody's faith was betrayed, somebody else's spirits got lifted. But as my mother watched her three-year old catch his first fish, she was oblivious to the passage of time, to the shifts in power, to the birth of new ideologies. The only faith she had, she placed fully and unconditionally in this pure little life, the life too innocent and too beautiful for the time it was born in. Would this frozen, forgotten, abandoned-by-everyone land ever let it blossom?

Yan was fourteen when my mother decided it was time to leave Kamchatka. Back then, a little ski resort fifteen minutes

away from our apartment was his second home. He would run up there for a few hours before school and that's where you could always find him at the end of the day, with his bib pants hastily pulled on over a neatly ironed school uniform. A nightmare for a parent, one would think, but it was the best scenario my mother could hope for at the time. A single parent, she was working two jobs to make a living and often saw him only late at night. Every day, at 6 am, she would go to her stand at the local street market. (Read "street market" as 10 hours of shivering convulsively in the dank wind, as frozen to the bone, as cracked, bleeding knuckles, as starving, despaired crowds.)

Skiing kept her child occupied, untroubled by the absence of his parents. Soon, he became one of the most promising athletes in the club. Even his father, who had been out of the picture for years, got interested in his son's budding career as a mountain skier.

At the age of fourteen my brother was told he would have to continue his skiing practices in Belarus, a country with an average elevation of 160 meters. At the age of seventeen, he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee and his career was over.

From the most promising athlete on the Youth Olympic team he turned into a sportsman whose highest potential was to become a coach. It was nobody's fault, but the grievance that had put down its roots three years earlier finally sprouted. He found the enemy in his mother, for it was the decision she had made three years ago, out of despair, out of fear, out of weakness, that led to this outcome.

In times of calamity we all need somebody to blame. Somebody has to bear responsibility for our misfortunes. Somebody has to suffer as much as we suffer, hurt as much as we hurt: this was the first crack in the foundation, now fifteen years ago.

My brother said he was struck by love when he saw Olga. He said she felt the same. At the age of twenty-seven she was the deputy headmistress at the local sports school. She found it captivating and oddly charming when Yan spoke at length about the green mountains, the snow-covered volcanoes, the boundless waters of the Pacific Ocean. He promised her a family and a peaceful life on the edge of the world. She was young, ambitious, and highly successful. When she said "yes" to my brother her career was over. "She will follow me anywhere," Yan said. Love is blinding, but can one build something of substance on the delusions of young love?

My mother met Olga a day before they flew to Kamchatka. My mother is not a cynic, but do not expect her to believe that a metropolitan woman will give up her evening gowns, high heels, and a shining career to cook borscht for her husband from the ripe tomatoes she planted last spring. My mother had about five hours to communicate everything she found abhorrent about life in Kamchatka and

about Russian politics, five hours to find the proper words to make them stay.

As she served appetizers, she talked about the enslaved population, dehumanized and exploited by the authoritarian ruler. By the time the stuffed snapper was ready, she was already talking about the dreadful quality of education and medical services, dying-in-poverty pensioners and unemployed youth. She made chocolate lava cakes for dessert. She loves her personal recipe and that was the only time she changed the topic of discussion from politics to Olga's cooking skills. Olga did not cook.

My brother used the awkward silence to stop the suffering. He said they just wanted to pick up the rest of his stuff from the attic, and that they would not change their political convictions. My mother asked them to wait with the kids until they had a house and a stable job. My brother wiped dust off his skiing gear, threw it in the back seat of his Ford Explorer, and gave her a kiss good bye. As they drove down the dirt road washed out by the rain, she probably lit another cigarette, she probably stood there thinking about everything she should have said instead, she probably struggled again with the rusty gate and had to kick it a few times before it finally gave in. She probably wiped her tears and left a dirty mark on her cheek. She would notice it only later when she went to look at herself in the mirror to check how much older she had gotten in those past five hours. Then she took her phone and recorded the voice message that I received right after my brother's text. He was aggravated and she was desperate. I said everything would be fine.

Everything will be fine. In the past two years, I have repeated this phrase so many times, I feel nauseous every time I say it. I hate the word fine. Mainly because nothing is ever fine. When I say "fine," it always masks despair, pain, deep love for both of them, and deep hatred for my own powerlessness. Every time I look for words that would bring about a reconciliation, I fail. Every time I try to pick a side, I get confused in the arguments, facts, and multiple versions of truth. Tolstoy wrote, "Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." I wonder how many volumes he would need to complete a novel about ours.

My mother is a kind-hearted person, but do not expect her to stay quiet when you raise taxes and lower the minimum wage. In the past few years, politics have become her outlet for anger, stress, and loneliness. She signs petitions, boycotts elections, diligently shares every article produced by the opposition media. Many find it annoying and pathetic. Many compliment her on her strong political stance. Not many know that it is not a battle with the crooked government, it is a battle with her excruciating feeling of guilt. Guilt for the wrong decisions she made fifteen years ago: what would it be like had she not decided to leave back then, had she fought for her constitutional rights alongside all those

young people when the wall fell down? Would we be happy? When everybody was choosing a new president trying to escape the communist past, she was fighting for groceries for her three-year-old son. Was she picking all the wrong fights this entire time? Should she start fighting now? When her every attempt to be a caring mother is met with resentment, can she make my brother's future a little bit brighter by marching down the streets with banners and slogans? Would he be a little bit happier?

On March 24, 2017, my mother was getting ready for a peaceful protest the opposition was organizing in the center of Minsk. (Read "peaceful" as bloody, agonizing, hectic. Read peaceful as "dozens in jail," "dozens in hospitals," "dozens missing.") I begged her not to go. I told her about her age and how imprudent it was to risk her life for something that would result in nothing but failure. She refused to listen. That day my brother messaged her for the first time in months, "Mom, don't go. You will be a grandma soon."

The next day she marched, she held on to that banner as tight as she could, fought through the impenetrable wall of armoured militia, and ran, and fought back when they tried to put her into the bulletproof avtozak, a prisoner transport vehicle. She got a second chance. This time she could pick the right battle. She could still make the future of her grandson a little bit better.

Mark was born at the beginning of October. Pure little life, too innocent and too beautiful for the time he was born in. When I look him in the eyes, I often wonder whether we can justify our actions with our good intentions. Will he ever blame my brother for the decisions he made, for fighting the wrong battles? But can a battle be wrong if it's fought in the name of happiness?

BRAD MCLEOD
Artist Statement

I had a conversation with death, and we talked at length about what to do with the time that is given to you. It told me that I shouldn’t live my life completely for myself anymore, but also for others, and with goodness. My philosophy of living, and as a result, my artwork, changed with the goal of inspiring and educating people, specifically kids, to go forward valiantly and be the best person they can be. This, to me, is the formula to living a fulfilled life.


BIFFS

Artist Statement

In a wicked span of two years, I lost my spouse and had a back alley scuffle with cancer. For so long I had been in a mindset of survival. My goals in life were to make money and be a provider of better living for my mother and father, but I never stopped to listen to the person I am today. The man I am now learned that life is richer when you are building something that someone else can be held up by, and so my work is now facilitating this design.

What I found in all I had experienced was that if a person is to see all the beauty and greatness in the world, they must first see the beauty and greatness in themselves. Though fun, beautiful, and wondrous, life can be equally frightening, terrible, and unfair if it starts without confidence and happy experiences. My artwork is built with a goal to inspire young people to imagine greatness in themselves. I found that if a young person builds a strong sense of imagination for their own life and can draw parallels between themselves and stories they read, they can see a brighter future and are more apt to reach for it. Keeping this in mind, I try to start my narratives with as relatable a situation as possible; maybe a lost friend, a frightening height, or missing a snow day. I then carry the situation to a positive resolution with exciting action sequences, moral ideals, and wondrous cultures. Children have extremely short attention spans, so coming up with action sequences that kids find fun is paramount. One of my books for example has a group of animals in the woods that always partied day and night. They ate cake and danced, and always make the best of every day. I named them the “party animals”. This method of storytelling prompts children to be curious about the world around them, and catalyzes a hunger to broaden personal horizons.

My actual workflow involves a detailed process. I start with storyboarding out the entire visual narrative once I have a basic story outlined. Most people like to start with the writing but I strongly believe that children are visual learners, so getting the visual narrative right comes first. You don’t have to have the script locked down to produce the final drawings. You can plot out action beats with visuals as long as you have the general idea of the action beats written down in point form. After the action beats are drawn I then start color scripts to plan out the flow of the emotional tones throughout the book and roughly block in basic shapes. Once the colors and base compositions are in, I then final each painting and write out a more detailed script.

The scripts I write involve using action words, rythmic flow, and inspirational diction that accompany the illustrations. I will usually go through at least ten drafts before solidifying the manuscript and bounce the story off of focus groups for feedback so I can get a feel for how kids like the story. Some might say that ten drafts is too many, but children's narratives are quite short, so it's really not a lot of writing. Proofs are always a necessity as well. I find that you can never really get the feel of how a book is shaping up before holding it in your hands and seeing the final project as a whole.

My workflow is extensive, but each stage is meant to facilitate building a story that will drive young people forward inside. When trying to change the world, you can't start things expecting not to be engaged in a labor of love. I don't plan on changing the world tomorrow. Maybe I'll have put a dent in things by the time I'm fifty, but I've made my peace with that and I'm actually quite excited for it. It gives me something to hold on to and makes me feel content in my everyday life knowing that I've chosen to help kids with my work until my time is up. Death and I will talk again, I'm sure, and when we do, it won't be a social call.

Critical Review
Interstellar

The moment Matthew McConaughey's character slid beyond the event horizon of a black hole in Christopher Nolan's Interstellar (2014), I started to ponder the workings of time and space: If God really existed, did he or she ever intend for humans to ask such questions of the Universe?

Opening the film with a documentary style interview shot of an elderly woman telling about a blight that has destroyed the Earth's ecosystem, Nolan sets the stage for a reflective narrative, introducing us to the themes of survival, time, and humanity, to which the film will return throughout the story.

In rural North America sometime in the future, Joseph Cooper (Matthew McConaughey), a widowed engineer and former NASA pilot, stumbles across the now top-secret facility. There, he is recruited by Dr Brand, an astrophysicist played by Michael Caine, to pilot a mission along with Amelia Brand (Anne Hathaway) and others to save humankind from extinction. Right from the start of the mission we are confronted with the idea of humanity's passion for life and survival; a the shuttle lifts off, Caine reads a passage from Dylan Thomas's villanelle "Do not go gentle into that good night":

"Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

The passage poetically sets the tone of the film; There is also a strong sense of mystery in the early stages of the story, which I will find later is a predominant theme throughout. The question of "what will the crew discover next?" is always apparent, and helps the film's subject of "the final frontier" stay with the audience.

Throughout the expedition there is a constant reference to time as a commodity, a candle with a dying flame, which is symbolically presented to both the characters and the audience. The crew must position itself near a black hole to retrieve data from nearby habitable worlds, and because of Einstein's law of relativity, one hour spent on this particular planet amounts to a loved one dying of a broken heart from separation, or someone growing old and grey back on Earth. The situation forces the audience to reflect on how one might spend their moments in life more carefully. This solidifies Nolan's portrayal of time as a precious resource, and ties it into another theme of human connection.

When characters in a narrative are isolated from humanity, a natural sense

of empathy develops in the audience, and Interstellar never fails to demonstrate this effect. McConaughey's and Hathaway's characters are repeatedly torn apart with grief and loss at the sight of their loved ones relaying messages of condolences and sorrow from Earth, and mortality confronts us as Dr. Romelly (David Gyasi), is greeted by Brand and Cooper after their short trip onto a planet, actually amounting to 23 years back on board the Endurance where the physicist had been waiting. I hadn't felt such a sense of sacrifice and loneliness since watching the wife of William Wallace in Braveheart be executed. The same portrayal of desperate separation can be seen by the character of Dr. Mann (Matt Damon), as the paranoid and savage astronaut attempts to maroon Brand and Cooper in order to get back home.

Not since The Road (John Hillcoat 2009) has a film connected with me on such a primal level. The concepts of exploration, time, survival, and human connection are all ideas that audiences anywhere can relate to, and in an age of technological innovation and advancement, this film made its debut at just the right time. Human-kind, at least in its imagination, will not go gentle into that good night.

Extended Narrative
Colombia 2016

When you are human, there are just some things you can never run away from. You may think you're a lot different from someone somewhere far away, but take away your wealth or poverty, your oppression or power, all your upbringing, and all the running in the world won't change the fact that you are just the same as everyone else. Sooner or later, your humanity will catch up with you, and you'll realize that life should be a wonderful experience no matter where you come from. My human experience is a particular and special one. It's special because it's the first of the many adventures of my new life mission of helping people.

Four years ago, I lost my spouse to a rare cardiac episode called adult SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Faced with my own mortality, I decided that I wanted the work I do to amount to more than just making myself a paycheck, and I started writing and illustrating children's media that would educate and inspire kids around the world. I wanted to find people who could help me work with youth, so I traveled to the notoriously touristy city of Cartagena, Colombia in search of foreign contacts to help me.

I chose Cartagena because after doing some research, I found that it would provide a rich environment of varying life perspectives of the average Colombian. On any of my adventures for these books I'm creating, I want to know that I will be able to learn about a culture and the life of the location I'm in, with as broad a capacity as possible. Everything from the food, to the economy, lifestyles and livelihoods of the people: I want an education on all of these. So, to me, Cartagena had the right stuff.

When I arrived there, I immediately got the impression of small and slow. The ride from the airport into the city was short, but long enough to get a sense of what I was in for. Javier, my cab driver, like 95 percent of Cartagenians, spoke no English, and I very quickly found myself getting a crash course in Spanish while he and I conversed over the weather back in Canada and the beautiful landmarks of the Colombian city. He asked me why I had come all the way from my home in the Great White North, and I told him in broken Spanish that I was an artist looking to read my books to children to make them happy. When I finally pieced together how to say it his face lit up and he smiled, nodding in approval, grabbing my hand and excitedly shaking it. The car swerved a bit, but I didn't mind.

Finally, I reached my place of residence, the Hotel Carib, Cartagena's most historical hotel. Javier left me in the kind supervision of the hotel staff.


GREAT LAKES
ONTARIO HARDCORE

I tipped him generously and gave him a warm Canadian-style bear hug before he got back into his little yellow cab and drove away. I was happy to have arrived, but I would be lying if I said I wasn't a bit sad to have parted ways. I almost wanted him to be my tour guide for the rest of my time there. In the thirty minutes we spent together, Javier gave me a feeling as if I had inherited a sweet uncle I never had, a man who seemed wise enough to keep me safe but had no parental axe to grind. I brought my bags up to my room, and immediately grabbed a Corona from the mini fridge. I sat down and took a large gulp beside the open window. "I made it," I thought as I took another sip of cold beer. I thought about how far I had really traveled in the three days I had been in transit and wondered what Angela would have said if she could see me now on my new life path. After twenty minutes of self-reflection and decompression, I felt a sense of pride wash over me and smiled as I realized that the beginning of the rest of my life had arrived. I decided to get out my camera and document my arrival. I wasn't filming for more than a few minutes when suddenly there was the sound of a turning door handle, and in walked my friend and contact, Michael Watters.

My relationship with Mike started back in school at Sheridan College when he was teaching me how to sweat over an animation light table. Being introduced to Mike as an instructor was like being told that Bob Marley was going to be teaching you animation. He had the temperament of a Golden Retriever and the patience of a nurse working in a retirement facility for holocaust survivors. He was perfect. It's amazing how much the sight of a familiar friend will make you realize how unfamiliar a place can feel. But you take comfort in the hope that if you get lost, you'll get lost together.

Mike was crucial to my visit to Colombia. Apart from the fact that his Spanish vocabulary was vastly richer than mine, we had discussed the possibility of meeting with one of his colleagues. Prior to my flying out, Mike had informed me that a good friend of his would be my best bet for getting the real inside scoop on South American culture, and that he would have him rendezvous with us in Cartagena so I could spend some time interviewing him. But alas, it was not to be. Mike broke the bad news and informed me that his friend would not be joining us. I decided that the day was young and that I would leave the problem for later, and spent the course of the next few days getting familiar with the city. Due to his time spent in South America, Mike had developed an ability of being conveniently adaptable to any place.
By day three we had established a few spots to frequent. One in particular, a beachside bar called "El Muelle", or "The

Dock", became the go-to spot for food and relaxation.

The story of how we came to find the place is long, but important to a key turning point in my journey. Mike and I were walking along a back cove of one of the busier beaches in the city when we came across a man sitting on the rocks near the water having a cigarette and smiling. We glanced over at him and nodded in a silent gesture of hello before he called over to us. "You guys here on vacation?" he asked. Mark was his name. Mark had been deported from theUnited States after thirty-eight years of residency due to a citizenship issue. Apparently, Mark's adopted parents had never registered him as a United States citizen, and while going through a lengthy divorce, somehow this was revealed, and he was forced to leave America and return to his country of birth, Colombia. This was a man who had literally been on both sides of the cultural fence and had a broader perspective of what life was like for the average Westerner and, as well, the humble South American. I set up an interview immediately, and we agreed to meet back at the beach outside El Muelle that evening around sunset for a civilized discussion over food and drink.

We went up and Mark joined us shortly after. We ordered a plethora of the best dishes the place had to offer, and what came out of the kitchen was some of the most incredible food I've ever had. It was colorful, plentiful, and best of all, flavorful. Unlike this restaurant, most of Colombian cuisine was bland; it was food for a humble person, a direct reflection of a South American people's healthy ideology of being happy with less. Typical breakfast was eggs with fries and a slice of ham. Lunch usually consisted of fried potato with pork or beef, usually in an empanada type sandwich, and dinner was some combination of rice and egg and cornmeal style bread. If you were wealthier, you could afford meats and cheeses, and most of the same foods any Canadian or American would eat. But most people stuck to the cheaper staples. Corn, flour, and rice are a big "go-to" since they are what is most readily available. "In Colombia, people eat to make their resources last, and use everything when they cook. Even the leftovers of the leftovers are made into small snacks." said Mark. "As a poor person here, you aren't going to be eating a lot of meat when you can go down to the local markets and buy a bag of rice or corn and some eggs for a fraction of the price. It's not like in Canada, Europe or the US where people will buy what they crave without even thinking twice about it. Here, people eat based on what is cheap. It's a matter of survival."

The rest of the night, we touched on topics of social needs. I asked him about education and how readily available it was to kids, and learned that education was a difficult issue for some people. "Education here isn't paid for by the government, so it's tough for some people to send their children to school." he said. "Some people with kids are still trying to get their University degrees,

let alone pay for their children's education." Better access to education, it seemed, was a need worth looking into in South American society. The night went on and we nursed our beers until the wee hours and finally said goodnight.

I felt the next best thing to do was delve into the rich history of the city and get a sense of what shaped its beginnings. During my evening with Mark, he told me that the real Cartagena lay deep in the center of the city, a place called Central, or "Centro" as the locals called it in Spanish. The place was unreal. It's by far the most beautiful, romantic, and magical place I've ever been in. The architecture was so ornate, yet clean and restored that I didn't even believe that it was a real town. Buildings were so well preserved that I had this weird surreal feeling of being at a theme park. But I knew not to be fooled.

Centro was home to some of the most dangerous and corrupt people of Colombia, and I knew that at the right time of day, one wrong turn down the wrong street could have meant never going home, or never being seen again. But although it can be dangerous, I found that most people were very friendly and everyone I met could see and appreciate that I was doing my best to speak the language. For the most part, roughing up a tourist, even in a place like Old Cartagena, is bad for business. So, most vendors tended to be nice and frowned upon any thuggery.

Street vendors greeted me with smiles and were happy to chat with me about my questions on how they made their goods and where they came from. Many of the street merchants working in Centro traveled hours from far outside of the city by bus, hoping to earn enough to go home and keep food on the table. For a street vendor, Centro is the golden ticket. It's the mecca of tourism in Cartagena and if you want a good shot at making a decent income as a merchant, it's where you want to be selling. I picked up a couple of items from a lovely woman who sold me a hand-made wooden beaded necklace and a woven bracelet. We exchanged some small talk and I asked her if she would be around the next day. She said yes, and I shook her hand before we left to go and find something to eat.

The food in Centro is better than other parts of the city, and you'll be surprised to know that you can find yourself closer to home than you might think. Mike and I were walking into the central square when we suddenly found ourselves standing outside an old style Irish pub. It was surreal, funny, and kind of a trip. We were having a blast, but there was one weird thing that happened while at the pub, and I learned a particularly valuable lesson about South American culture because of it. In South America, street vendors aren't as polite as here in Canada, and the unspoken do's and don'ts are much different. Mike and I were sitting and chatting when suddenly a pair of young fellows approached us on the other side

of the restaurant patio fence and started rapping in Spanish along to a boombox beat they played through a stereo. They were very good, and put on a real show, but when they had gotten through their song and held out their hand in expectation of payment, they weren't very happy when I shook my head and told them in Spanish "No, thank you". One of the fellows gave me stink eye and exclaimed "veinte!", which in Spanish means "twenty". After an awkward moment, they just went on their way and kept doing their act. I wish I had filmed it all, but honestly, I was afraid of the guys taking my camera, so I kept it mostly hidden, although I did manage to get one quick photo of one of the fellows just as he stormed off. After this incident, I just couldn't help myself. I also managed to get a shot of Mike after the guy walked off. They were being asses, and Mike just wasn't having it.

The lesson I learned is that street vendors will do anything to make a living. If they don't sell, they don't eat. So politeness, or asking if you want a service provided before they start their act doesn't apply here. If you are walking down the street or perusing the markets for interesting items, never let anyone put anything on your head or in your hands. Street vendors will, on a regular basis, place a hat on your head or a pair of cheap sunglasses in your hands and entice you to buy, and if you try to give the item back to them, they won't take it until you begrudgingly cave. In the world of street vending, there are no rules. And in Colombia, it's not just business, it's survival.

The next day was a bit of a write-off for exploring, but at the same time it was one a crucial turning point of my journey to start helping kids. I was at the pool doing some planning as to my next move for making connections when suddenly a jolly, kind-faced fellow who had just climbed out of the pool nodded at me. "How are ya?" I said, raising my hand in a gesture of hello. "Hey, good. And you?" he replied. We introduced ourselves and struck up a conversation. Jonathan Devia was his name.

Jonathan was a Colombian-American who was on vacation with his soon-to-be husband, Patrick. I told Jonathan what I was planning and as it happened, he told me that Patrick worked in the education system in Manhattan, and was well-connected in the scholastic community. It wasn't long before I was introduced to Jonathan's family and able to give my first signed copy of my book to him and his family. What at first looked like a write-off had now become a day that made for one of the most memorable moments of my life. The following day, Jonathan agreed to talk on camera about what he thought of my mission and the book, after he had the chance to read it to his family that first night. We set up and had a chat for a few minutes and then packed up to meet Patrick so I could connect with him and tell him about my mission. As I had hoped, my meeting with Patrick was great. He loved what I was trying to do and gave me a lot of

helpful tips on how to get my book into the school system. Naturally, we exchanged information and made plans to get together in New York as soon as I was able.

Cartagena was checking off all the boxes in my list of the most interesting places of the world, but there was one thing I had been hoping for which was, in my opinion, still lacking: beaches. Although my primary reason for going was to make contacts and to do research on where the needs of kids were, it was now day six of my journey, so Mike and I decided to take a trip to the Islands and see some tropical paradise. It was wonderful.

The Islands were sandy and had tree huts wrapped in vines and palm leaf. There were people selling handmade necklaces (the fellow I photographed didn't look to happy with me filming him), and lunch was served to everyone at noon. I admit, it was probably the most touristy operation I had ever witnessed, but I didn't care. It was nice to be pampered. I was tired; maybe it was the whole experience that had made me feel fatigued. I had never flown so far away from home before and stuck myself in a country where I had nearly no way to communicate. Either way, I needed rest.

The day on the islands ended with a short boat ride back to the ports of Cartagena and a cab to our hotel. We decided that to end the trip we would spend our last night at our safe spot, El Muelle. We joined up with Mark, and celebrated a successful trip over food and drink. Other friends of the bar staff we met days earlier joined us after the bar closed, and I spent some time talking with them about how much I appreciated the helpful information people had offered during my time in Colombia. We laughed, made loose promises about seeing each other again and shared stories of our most crazy and intimate life events. When it was my turn to speak, something magical happened.

I told the story about losing my spouse. I recalled coming home and seeing my girlfriend on the couch covered with a blanket, still and silent in the dark, before going into my office to work for an hour, and the sinking feeling when I felt her cold skin while shaking her leg to wake her up for dinner. The flashing lights, the ambulance, the paramedics, fire crew… Everything. Unlike most Cartagenians, this group spoke English fairly well, so naturally people listened intently while offering their condolences and asking questions on what the whole experience was like. I answered genuinely, and took the opportunity to talk about what I had learned from my time healing. In that moment we were family. We were equals. It was eye-opening.

We left the bar that night after bidding our friends farewell, and got a good night's sleep so I could be rested for my flight. The following morning was spent at the pool resting. My fatigue was still present, and I figured I was just tired and that my traveling was

just catching up with me, so I napped before packing up and checking out to head off to the airport for my ten o'clock flight to Bogota. When I got to the airport and settled in, I ordered a coffee and took out a magazine to try to relax. This was the end.

I thought about what I had learned from the whole experience and realized that although we were much different people with very different stories, my story was one that resonated with anyone with a beating heart, and in the moment that I shared my story with people, all of us became brother and sister. The lines between us, of cultural and economic division, had dissolved, and all of our preconceptions of each other ceased to exist. In that moment, I learned that no matter how tall the wall is that separates us, the human experience will always tear it down.

We all run from who we are sometimes. I ran from my humanity for a long time, but I got tired of trying to convince myself that Angela was gone, and accepted that my time in life has its limit. It felt good to realize that I wanted to do more with my time on earth, and I could finally rest and take a breath.

Unfortunately for me, my rest would be short lived. For a week after returning home, I would be diagnosed with cancer.

Death, it seems, will always be the great equalizer.

NEIL RATHBONE
Artist Statement

I find that work which comes from a place of deep inspiration is the best kind of work: the kind of project that has been stuck in your head, developing itself over time. Unfortunately, this is not where the majority of my creative work comes from. The bulk of work I create comes out of an impulse to make, which sounds nice on the surface, but is more like a nagging curse that cannot be broken. This curse creates constant anxiety about the work that isn't getting done, and a cloud of doubt encircling the work that does get done.

As I get older, I have been trying to get a better handle on my mental health, and along with this comes attempting to control this impulsiveness, and refocus what has slowly become a meandering creative career.

Most of my life, my personal and romantic relationships have suffered because of the feverish way in which I approach my craft. My finances have always been in a shamble, and I am rarely present in the moment. My mind is always grinding away at something I think I should have done or should be doing.

Two years ago, I was struck by a pick-up truck and my leg snapped in two. At the time I was looking for a subject for a film—so on the one hand, the subject of my next film had just presented itself in a bold and unignorable way. On the downside, I had just been hit by a truck, and my life was never going to be the same again.

My anxiety about my art is usually roaring away even when I am able-bodied and capable of picking my own distractions. This was a new experience: I had a film manifesting itself in my mind, yet I was physically unable to act on it. A cruel experience.

Over the last couple of years, I have been putting myself back together physically and mentally. I am not and will never be back to where I was before the accident, but I am ready to tell my story. My story is also now the story of many others in this city: being hit by a vehicle.

I have made films about an old man seeing a UFO, a kid sneaking into a strip club, and a school dance chaperone knocking out a biker gang single-handedly. Telling interesting stories is essential, but stories can also be told that will make a difference: stories like the Jung sisters, three sisters living in North York. All three have been struck by a vehicle, resulting in injury, at the same intersection by their home, on three separate occasions. It is stories like this that reinforce the fact that this isn't just a coincidence, it's a problem.

As I refocus myself on the documentary medium, my work is less for myself, and more for my audience. It has always been for the audience in the sense that my goal was to make them laugh or keep them entertained. This hasn't changed, but what has changed is the goal of carrying an effective message with the film — trying to put a potentialy life-changing idea into the mind of the viewer, making them rethink how they drive or walk Toronto's streets.

Critical Review

The Arbor by Clio Barnard

The Arbor is not a play, it really isn't a drama, and I'd hesitate to call it a documentary, but it's one of the most interesting British films made in the last decade.

Clio Barnard's 2010 film tells the story of alcoholic playwright Andrea Dunbar and her autobiographical work, Rita, Sue, and Bob Too. The play made its debut at London's Royal Court Theatre and was adapted into a film in 1987; it's a tale of sex, poverty, and racism set on a council estate in the north of England during the 1970's. In The Arbor, Dunbar's play is acted out by professional actors in the open courtyard that sits in the center of today's Butttershaw council estate. The setting is the very estate that Andrea wrote of; and groups of residents come to watch.

The film's vignettes are juxtaposed with interviews with Andrea's children, or more precisely, the words of Andrea's children. Barnard transcribes her interviews, and has the children's words performed in soliloquy by actors walking the halls of the old buildings. It is a practice in verbatim theatre, actors speaking the words, and one that you can only imagine was all too difficult when first spoken by Dunbar's children. Her daughter Lorraine recounts her mother's passing away, from a brain hemorrhage in a local pub in 1990. She also details her own struggles: being raised by a woman like Andrea, and growing up half-Pakistani in a place like Buttershaw.

The Arbor is beautifully shot. Ostensibly a stage play unfolding in a parking lot, on paper it sounds like a cinematographic nightmare. However, it just works. Director Clio Barnard has referred to the film as a comment on the constructed nature of documentary, and states that the film could stand alone on its audio, as a work of oral history. The soundscape serves as the soul of the film, and the source of its storytelling structure.

The film hits a personal chord for me, both in its manifestation of an earlier era and its portrayal of racism. My mother and her sister grew up on a council estate not far from Buttershaw. This is a part of my family's history, and one that has recently come to a head during the Brexit vote. My aunt was for Brexit, my mother strongly opposed. The Brexit vote, much like the election of Trump in America, forced a political wedge between the left and the right and deleted any previous common political ground. More than anything, it brought out the racists: my aunt was one of them.

Having to deal with racism within your family is incredibly sad, and is

nearly impossible to move past, even with a loved one. Seeing racism and its effect on the filmmaker's family portrayed so honestly, particularly in the larger context of this period in England, gave me some insight into how my mother and her sister grew up. This doesn't justify the beliefs of Brexiteers, but provides me with a previously missing element of understanding the history of these beliefs, and the role poverty played in their formation.

The Arbor establishes a sense that these people are angry, trapped in a life of cyclical poverty, without any way out. Being poor comes with its own set of stressors, which only seem to serve as tools of amplification for anger. Racism is inexcusable, but understanding the anger behind it is something I have found helpful.

Extended Narrative

The way my psychologist tries to put it in perspective for me is through explaining our lizard brain. Two hundred million years ago the planet was overrun by lizards, and they had to fight to survive. They were constantly under threat and as a result were always prepared to fight for survival. This part of the brain is still with us today. It expects the worst in any given situation, constantly whispering in your ear, "they are all trying to kill you." Most people have a fairly decent handle on their lizard brain: after enough years of existing and no wooly mammoths trying to step on you, and no saber-tooth tigers attempting to take a bite out of you, the lizard brain will relax.

The problem is, when someone runs you over with their full-sized Dodge Ram pickup, it validates these instincts. It's the unpredictability of the universe reaching into your life, and the lizard brain chiming in to say, "see, I was right all along, they want you dead." I now I live with this 200-million-year-old part of my brain every day.

It was a weird day. On my way to work some guys assaulted the driver of the streetcar I was on. They were drunk and from out of town. They were in his face and roughed him up a bit, nothing horrific. The driver stopped the car and radioed for help. The assailants fled, and the driver got on the radio and said to everyone on the streetcar over the loudspeaker, "I have been assaulted, the police are on their way. This car is now out of service, the car behind me will continue eastbound. Anyone that is able to stay as a witness, please remain on the car." To my amazement the entire streetcar cleared out. A young girl from my neighborhood and I were the only ones who stayed.

When I left work, I headed north as I always do, to catch the streetcar home. I walked to King Street, listening to Lil' Wayne on my headphones. I accidentally walked one street too far; I had passed King and was now standing at Pearl. My phone died. Lil' Wayne is now gone; this day is just too weird. I head back to King, the light changes, and I begin to cross the street. I get two-thirds of my way through the intersection, and immediately, it's the sound of a large block engine next to my head. This is a big engine, and it is accelerating. I turn my head to see where this sound is coming from, and as fast as I see the shiny Dodge Ram logo looking back at me, I go over the hood of a pickup truck.

I know it's a cliché, but it felt like time stopped. I think this cliché is so often used because it's really the only way of describing the way you feel in these situations. It felt like I was hovering in the air over the hood of this truck, and there was a dice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roll being made: am I going to die? Am I going to be paralyzed? A brain injury? I land on my right foot. Everything is fine! Not a scratch on me! It's a Miracle! And then I put my left foot down.

I don't watch the UFC, but there is a video on the internet most people who waste time online have seen. It is a fighter by the name of Anderson Silva. He kicks his opponent's shin, with his own shin. The two shins meet, and Anderson Silva's leg is instantly broken. You don't notice it necessarily in the moment that the men's legs come in contact, you notice it when Silva tries to stand on the leg. It buckles under him, essentially snapped like a twig above the ankle. With Silva's full weight on the leg, it makes the shape of an "L". The palm of his foot faces outward, and the 90-degree breaking point of his leg is now being planted into the ground.

So there I am, standing in the middle of University Avenue, and my left leg is in a full-blown Anderson Silva. I immediately drop to the ground. I didn't know you could feel that much pain. I thought you would just black out at a certain point, or you would go into a state of shock that would allow you to block out the pain. It didn't happen. I was laying there in the street, a bone sticking out the side of my leg, it felt like that scene in Saving Private Ryan.

A woman who was crossing the street behind me immediately takes control of the situation. She begins calling out tasks like a quarterback. Stop the driver, call 911, keep him calm. I hand the change I still had in my hand for the streetcar to the poor soul who had been tasked with keeping me calm. I could tell by the look on his face he wasn't prepared for this either and didn't seem to be handling the sight of my leg any better than I was. I remember at this point someone on the sidewalk yelling out "Holy fuck! look at that guy's leg!"

I could hear the ambulance sirens in the distance, it felt like hours passed as I lay in the street looking at my leg and waiting for help. When the paramedics arrived, they made it clear that getting from the ground to the stretcher wasn't going to be fun. The one second it took to lift me from the ground to the stretcher was the most pain I have ever felt in my life. It was in that moment it became very clear exactly how horrific this injury was. I could feel that the lower third of my leg was essentially detached from my body, the skin being the only thing keeping it there.

We sat on the side of University Ave in the ambulance for over a half-hour as the paramedics pumped me full of morphine. The paramedics explained that any bump on the road would be excruciating, so they couldn't move until I was under the drug's spell. I used this time to get to know my new paramedic companions. I asked them if it was the worst ankle injury they had ever seen. After a few moments of them exchanging stories, they arrived at the verdict that my ankle was on par with a

few similar injuries they had seen, which they would also classify as "the worst".

Assuming they had these morphine conversations with most people, I start explaining the insane amount of pain I was experiencing. I asked them why I wasn't in shock, why I was able to feel the pain. As he gently cut the shoe off my foot, the paramedic explains to me that I have been making jokes with them since the moment they saw me. I was in shock, everyone handles it in different ways. He said that just because I was in shock, the pain wasn't going to be magically erased. My leg was snapped in half, it was going to hurt.

I didn't know my girlfriend's phone number. I would like to chalk it up to being coddled by technology most of my life, but I couldn't immediately let her know what was going on. I had to call my parents, who had recently moved 150 km away from the city, get them completely freaked out, so that they could call her in a panic, and completely freak her out for me.

My girlfriend, Caitlin, and my uncle, who lives very close to the hospital, meet me in the emergency room at St. Michael's. By time I am given a hospital bed Caitlin finds an injury lawyer's business card in my shirt pocket. I had officially become a road safety statistic. It would be 24 hours before doctors perform surgery on my leg, and 6 incredibly horrific days before I leave St Michael's.

The big concern when a bone exits your body like that is infection. The bone itself can become infected, something I wasn't even aware was possible. I guess it's the kind of thing you only learn in this situation. I was told about the horrors of bone infection by the nurse who was tasked with waking me up every night, and physically draining my bladder into a bed pan by pressing on my abdomen. Afterwards he would give me a variety of injections, and that's when he would tell me about the bone infections.

I had two neighbors. The bed across from me was a kid a few years younger than me; he had also been hit by a car. His story was a little different; he was drunk and running in the street. He said it was his fault he was hit, but his situation was terrible. He had injured his back and wasn't sure if he was going to be able to walk again. He was a constant reminder of how my situation could have very easily been so much worse. The surgeons echoed this sentiment. As did the nurses. And the physio-therapists. Even the psychologists. "You should be thankful you are alive". This is another cliché, but this one isn't for those who experience horrific injuries. This one is reserved for those who have the near-impossible job of explaining these injuries to those who endure them. These are injuries they wish to never experience themselves. I respect that there is very little you can say to someone in a situation like mine to make sense of it for them, but I never found that line helpful.

People came to visit. It was nice that

they visited, but every guest was a reminder that you weren't going to be leaving that day. I had one priority, and one priority only: getting out of that fucking hospital. My second neighbor was an older gentleman. He was using the hospital like a hotel. I don't mean that in a judgmental way; that's literally something he said on the phone one night to a friend. "I'm using it like a hotel, they give me a bed, they give me meals." He had just gone through a divorce and didn't really have anywhere to go. He was another incredibly depressing figure. He was running a bit of a con on the nurses. The nurses had a shift change every afternoon at three. There were morning nurses, and there were night nurses. I saw that when the new nurses showed up, they would tell him that he had to leave, and he would simply tell them that the nurse from the previous shift that "they" said he was staying. The other nurse was gone, and they had no way of checking these facts. They shrugged it off and passed problem off to the other nurse. This cycle would go on and on.

I decided all I had to do was reverse this guy's process. Just tell every nurse that "they" said I was leaving. I told everyone I was leaving. I called my girlfriend, I called my parents, I told them to be there at 10 AM the next morning, because I was leaving. I had no basis to think this, I just figured if everyone was convinced of this narrative, I was going to leave. Next thing I know, the physiotherapist is at the foot of my bed, "I hear you are leaving today." I sped through a quick tutorial of how to use crutches, having no idea that over the next year, I would spend more time on them than my own two feet. The surgeons came and had a look at me, they reviewed notes, and said it would be ok for me to leave.

I had convinced myself that once I got home things would be ok. Things were cleaner and quieter than at St. Mike's, but it was beginning to set in exactly how far from ok I was. I had never broken a bone prior to this. The worst injuries that come to mind are a chipped tooth, a really bad sunburn, and a wasp sting. I really didn't have much experience in recovering from something of this magnitude. But who does?

The surgeons had told me it would be a month in the cast with my foot elevated. All I could really do was sit around. After that, I would have a few months in an air cast, I would walk in the air cast for a few months, and start to finish, I should be up and walking in 4 months. If everything went well, I could be back to normal in 6 months. The idea of not being able to walk for a quarter of a year quickly sent me into a deep depression. It was just this incredible feeling of uselessness. If you are using crutches, you can't use your hands. If you are using your hands, you can't be standing. You are incredibly limited in your abilities. I would like to say I used this time productively, writing, reading, painting, drawing. This just wasn't the case. There wasn't a fraction of my being that felt any sense of hope, inspira-

tion, or desire.

I think if I had suffered this injury snowboarding, racing a car, or even like Anderson Silva, UFC fighting, I might have used that time to reflect and think about how I could have done things differently to not be in that situation. What about my cage fighting techniques, and the decisions I made in my fights and my career that led me to this injury? How can I train differently to ensure this type of thing doesn't happen again? But I had done nothing wrong. I crossed an intersection, paying full attention to my surroundings, with a white 'Walk' sign. I did everything right, the driver was the one who made the mistake, but I was the one who had to lay there thinking about it.

There were a dozen bolts and two large metal plates put into my leg to rebuild the tibia and fibula bones above the ankle joint. There were several bolts going through the ankle joint itself. One ran straight into the ball of the joint from the left and stuck out the ball of the joint on the other side. The screws that sat under my skin were tightly pressing against the hard plaster of the cast that had been crafted around them. It was endless agony, it felt like my foot was stuck in a bear trap day and night.
Six months until normal. I keep telling myself that. After the first month they take the plaster cast off and replace it with the air cast. Along with the air cast comes the unimaginable step of putting weight on the leg. One month ago, my left foot was barely attached to my body, and now they want me standing on it. I would begin by standing on a scale to get a sense of how many pounds of pressure I was putting on my foot. I would start with 5, move on to 10, then 20, then 30 slowly building the ankle's tolerance for weight on the air cast.
I eventually reached half of my body weight, and was able to stand on my feet again, with the help of an air cast. Two months down, four to go.

During this time my parents had lent me their car, and I had a handicapped parking pass. It was my only real way of doing anything. I would get drive-thru a lot, it was really my only way of eating. There was one incident when I parked in a handicapped parking spot, and a woman pulled up beside me honking her horn and pointing at the handicapped sign. As she rolled down her window to yell at me, I began to get out of my car, with my crutches and my air cast. The look on the woman's face made the discomfort of the situation worthwhile.

After the fourth month I took the air cast off and began to walk in normal shoes. This is when I noticed something was terribly wrong. There was so much metal jammed into my scrawny ankle that the joint wasn't moving properly. There were giant screws and plates visible under the skin, and one plate sat directly on top of the ankle joint. The surgeon decided this needed to go, as it was impeding my recovery.

I had to start all over again. Back to the hospital, back to the plaster

cast, back to no walking, painkillers, and sleepless nights. The process was smoother the time along, but psychologically it was a huge blow. Not only was my timeline of recovery completely thrown out the window, but it started to become clear how different my ankle was going to be from now on. I knew my ankle would never get back to 100%, but I thought 80% was an obtainable goal. By time I was back on my feet I was nowhere near that, maybe 30% if we are using a percentage system. However, that system quickly became difficult and incredibly depressing to use. It was at this point the surgeons decided they would have to operate again. My third surgery in under a year.

This final surgery was to remove all remaining nuts and bolts from my ankle. After this, there would be no more plates to obstruct my movement: it would just be me and the ankle I would have to deal with for the rest of my life. The second surgery was a psychological blow, this third surgery was complete nuclear meltdown. All I had been doing with a full year of my life was trying to walk, and I was barely able to. The future didn't look much better. It's times like this, sitting in various specialists' offices, with an injury that is moving from "slowly improving" to "permanent", that you hear a lot of "You should be thankful you are alive."

Trying to quantify where my ankle is now in terms of recovery is difficult. I don't even know how to express it in words. I could list the activities and sports I used to enjoy that I can no longer do. I could try to come up with a numerical figure, a percentage, a dollar amount. The concepts of "recovery" and "improvement" are implemented less and less, and words like "disability" and "impairment" slowly take their place. I usually just say "I have a shitty ankle" or "I need to sit down for a bit". I can only spend a couple of hours on my feet before it becomes painful. The countdown to that ending is no longer in effect; in fact, the ankle is the best it is going to be right now. It's only getting worse with arthritis as I age. Eventually the pain will become unbearable and I will have what is called fusion surgery. This is the sci-fi name they give to bolting your ankle in place, so it doesn't move anymore. The logic is if it doesn't move, it doesn't hurt. It's the antithesis of all the surgeries I had endured trying to improve my ankle movement.

The other part of the brain I discuss with my psychologist is the mammalian brain. The mammalian part of the brain is reserved for learning and emotional reasoning. It is this part of my mind that is tasked with letting go of the idea of getting better. Instead I begin to focus on what can be done to improve the odds for other pedestrians. How can we—in this city—improve the likelihood of arriving at our destinations alive, even when travelling on foot? Vision Zero is a twenty-two-million-dollar initiative that has been started by the city since I was struck. It has failed to achieve any of the results it has been designed to achieve. What is wrong with this city that makes pedestrians so suscepti-

to change? These are the questions that occupy my mind now: the concerns for my recovery are now concerns for the city's recovery. It's Toronto's problem, but unfortunately, it's now my problem too.

PEARSON RIPLEY
Artist Statement

The means justify the ends. It just sounds better that way. My process is always more valuable to me than its product. I believe that process covers my entire lifetime.

I was born in San Francisco and lived there until I was eight. There were four of us in a one-bedroom apartment. It was tight but we loved it. We were downtown; between the front door and the city there was no buffer.

“Be aware of your surroundings.”

I heard this every day. Presence in the moment was mandatory. I still hear the phrase in a blend of both my parents’ voices. I still live by these words. I consider them more than a command to be observant—they remind me to connect with all that is near.

When I photograph I am aware of all that surrounds me. When I photograph I am fully present, a rare occurrence in my life. When I photograph I am a more open person; to properly feel moments as they occur requires this. My process is a meditation. The message I intend to send becomes a mantra, repeated subconsciously. I am most aware of people and I connect with them more readily. Even in dark spaces there is comfort in these moments of connection.

To me, photography is everything that goes into the creation of images. In any day of photography, listening accounts for more time than composing. The sounds and voices of a space will yield a more clear comprehension than the light. Listening to those who I am working with guides the outcome of the images.

Instead of a photographer, I'd rather think of myself a human with a camera. And a human that feels the weight and accepts the responsibility of being a storyteller. This may seem like an empty distinction but it reminds me of my priorities. People are why I still take pictures. What they teach me is invaluable and the bonds that outlive a project are greater rewards than its product.
Looking at an image is akin to seeing the ordinary matter in the universe. I contemplate the dark matter, the means, the invisible structure that holds it together. It supports the image's existence and is of greater gravity than the picture itself.
The means are everything to me.

I see the camera as an avenue to explore the complexities I am concerned or intrigued by. Photography has taught me very little directly. It has, though, delivered me to spaces and moments of great illumination. My images are a visual representation of what I've learned in my life, of the stories I've been told and the meals I've shared. When I view my work, I'm aware that I was more concerned with the relationships than the images and I'm thankful for that. I'm grateful that the medium delivered me to those moments and that the images are here to remind me.

In the end the images are always in service of the means.

Critical Review

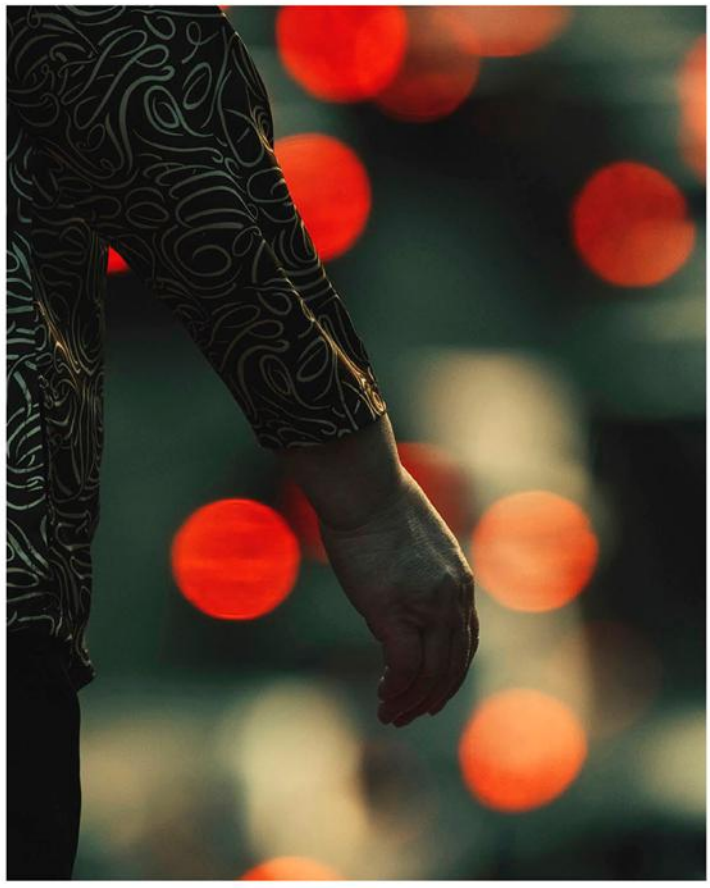
Approximate Joy by Christopher Anderson

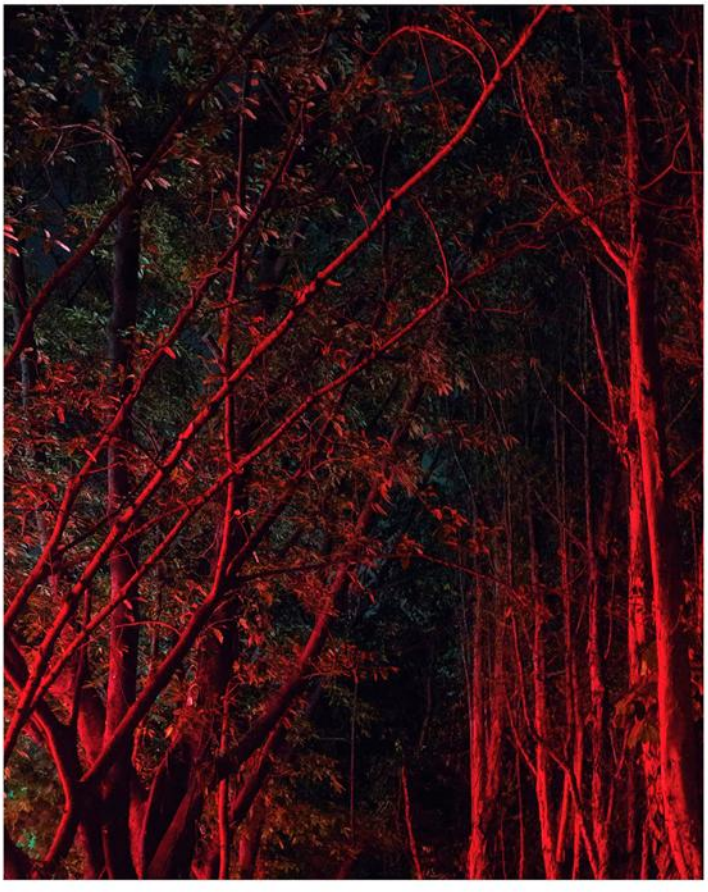
Street photography was once considered the medium's purest form. With the dramatic shift of the past decade it has become its most diluted. In Christopher Anderson's images from China, a collection titled Approximate Joy, he has accomplished the feat of making street imagery appear uniquely fresh and profound. But behind the seductive aesthetic I am left to wonder: does street photography have a future? If it does, I can see that future on the pages of Approximate Joy.

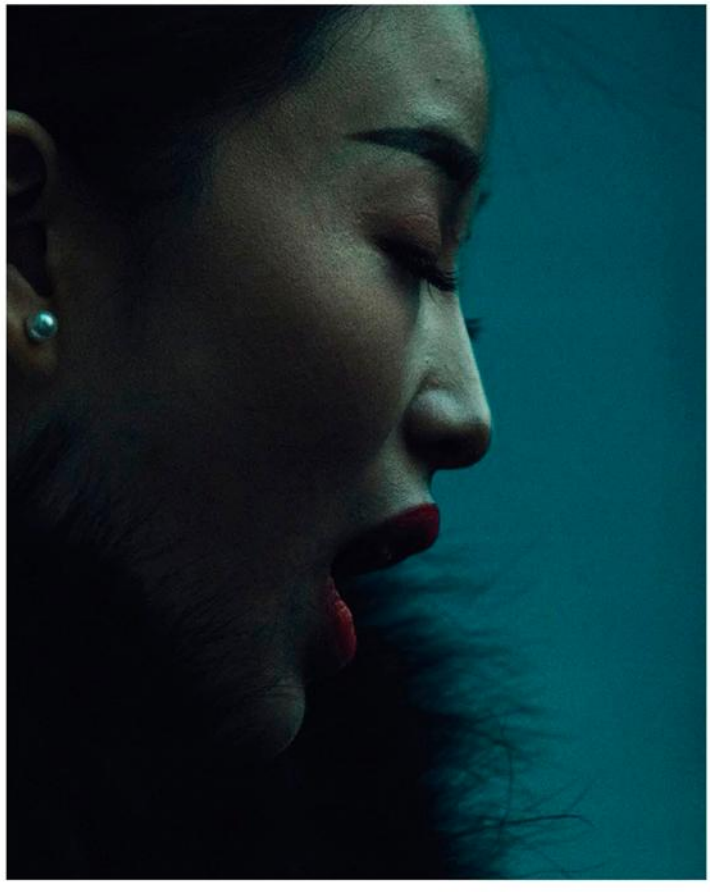
The accessibility of street photography, with a camera on every phone and phones in every pocket, leads to a surplus of such images on social media. The camera phone image has left many photographers jaded by its omnipresence. I have heard more than one professional photographer say they no longer take images on the street for this reason. Many budding image-makers, deeply inspired by their first experience with The Decisive Moment, yearn for the era of photography it represents.

It was that school of photography which taught me that a good street image has some of everything: diversity of textures, shapes, and actions all in compositional harmony, and also a touch of the peculiar. It's a perfect moment plucked from the chaos of urban existence, stimulating and digestible. Approximate Joy is street photography. It is imagery of strangers shot on city streets, but it contains none of the aforementioned characteristics. The images show little and tell even less. This simplicity leaves room for the imagination to wander.

Since Anderson's first recognition in the photo world nearly twenty years ago, his portfolio has shown commendable variety. His work shifts broadly in place, topic, and aesthetic, yet I can always promptly recognize it. That first acknowledgement was for images taken on a handmade boat full of Haitian refugees making the dangerous journey to the United States. The boat sank, and the resulting images earned Anderson the Robert Capa Gold Medal. He spent the following years in the Middle East during the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Anderson then shifted his focus to Venezuela. This resulted in his first photo book, Capitolio, a gritty and cinematic take on the spirit of Venezuelan society. He has since published three more. All of his monographs are social critiques, studies of a people and a place at a specific moment. Each of these critiques uses a visual language perfectly adapted to the subject but steeped in Anderson's aesthetic. More importantly, they each seem to possess both comprehension and humility. They are outsider's visions that don't claim to know, but still manage to understand.







The first image I saw from Approximate Joy was unquestionably Anderson's. As more trickled out I realized that they were perhaps the most engaging photographs I had ever seen. The tightly cropped faces of Shenzhen youth were inexplicably satisfying. Initially, I believed it was the color, so distinct the images could be stills shot on a film set. Consistent, cold blues and greens have the feel of an enduring dusk. A subtle golden glow hints at the possibility of warmth in the world, until radiant scarlet flora sets it afire. Maybe it was the subject matter: similar faces that are covered with blank stares, downcast eyes; or the transition between expressions. Punctuating them are environmental details as dramatic yet unrevealing as the portraits. But it turned out to be neither.

In these faces there is a thread of secrecy so substantial that my imagination cannot rest. It causes a story so hypnotizing to develop in my mind that a certainty of understanding accompanies it. That quickly fades, but my next experience brings a new narrative just as passionately felt. This imagery is the raw material of which reverie is made. Within these small fictions live personal truths, and this work may have been their only point of access.

Approximate Joy impressed one other thing upon me. Even in the weariest of genres, originality will always remain possible. The beauty of the imagery is self-evident, and the subject matter sufficiently interesting. But it is the space to roam freely that is so satisfying. I was left on the back cover with more questions and no answers. To me, that is a sign of great photography. I had slipped with ease into the cold mystery of these images, but still ponder whether truth can be found in the faces of strangers.

Extended Narrative

Shut Away

In late 1979, a dictator was deposed. What followed was twelve years of devastation in Central America's smallest nation. José Heriberto Chicas was fourteen years old when the coup occurred and for the next six years, he lived amid chaos in his home country. But in 1985, fearing for his life, his mother sought help to get him to safety. He joined a half-million other Salvadorans and fled. He headed north. Like many of his counterparts, he aimed for a country whose government had played a key role in the escalation of the violence that he was fleeing.

In the weeks that followed, he moved by bus and foot. Thousands of miles later, José found himself in South Texas at dawn, in the back of a truck. Surrounding him were the flashlights of border agents. He was detained in the border town of Brownsville. He refused the repeated attempts to coerce him into signing off on his own deportation. He was released on bail after thirty days. He spent three years in Houston, before heading for his new home in North Carolina.

In 1992, Juana Luz Tobar Ortega was heading for California. Behind her, in Guatemala, was the rest of her family—and strife. She had left home and journeyed for weeks across Mexico. She hoped to achieve political asylum in the United States. This would begin the many-year process that would help her family find a new home. Guatemala had fluctuated between political instability and civil war for decades, Juana's entire life. The country's affairs had been meddled in endlessly by multiple regional and world powers, particularly the United States. It was that country she was attempting to access through a canal, hundreds of feet wide, along the Mexican border. She didn't know how to swim, yet she carried a young girl in her arms. Upon reaching the bank, US Immigration officials appeared. They carried clubs. After being threatened with beatings, the group of migrants turned back towards Mexico. Days later, Juana would make it into the United States. She would spend several years in California before moving across the country to North Carolina. In the years that followed, her husband and children would join her there.

In 2010, Samuel Oliver-Bruno sat in a detention center in El Paso, Texas. He had just been transferred to a new location after being detained for a month. He would spend another month there, but was feeling a sense of relief. He had finally been able to contact his wife upon arrival at the new facility. They hadn't spoken since his apprehension. She had thought he was dead. After living in the United States for sixteen years, Samuel had recently returned to Veracruz, Mexico to be with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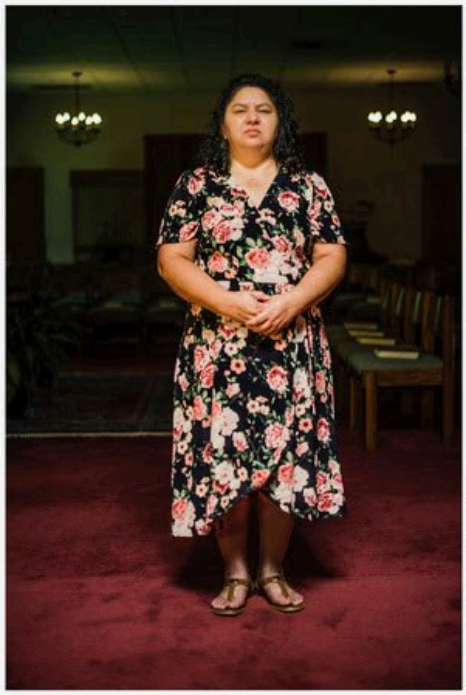


his ailing parents. But his wife, who herself suffers from a chronic illness, needed sudden open-heart surgery. It was in an effort to be with her after the operation that he fell into the hands of US Immigration agents. After nine weeks in purgatory between sick family members, he was released. While detained, his only child graduated from middle school. Upon his release, Samuel returned to his home in Eastern North Carolina.

II

I had arrived a half-hour early. The door was locked and the bell was broken, so I walked over to a wooden picnic bench under a towering willow oak. The sun was barely out, and still hidden behind the humble, red-brick church. There was dew on the ground and a gentle breeze. The air was almost cool. These are the hours one lives for in August. I sat on a picnic bench writing in my notebook. Slowly the bench filled with people. I folded my pen between the pages and spoke with the newcomers. When the door was unlocked, we filed into the basement.

The church was in Durham, North Carolina. I greeted Samuel and his wife. Samuel had been living at this church for eight months at this point. I had spent some nights on the floor myself. He hadn't left the property even once during that time. A local woman had made breakfast for the group at her home and the styrofoam containers were passed out to all who had arrived. The contents reminded me of my own time in Central America: eggs, beans, fried plantains, pickles, tortillas. I hugged José when he arrived. After the whole group was together, we introduced ourselves as you might on the first day of school: name, where you're from, favorite music. Juana was one of the last in the room to introduce herself. Her oldest daughter followed her. This was the only time I saw José, Juana and Samuel together.

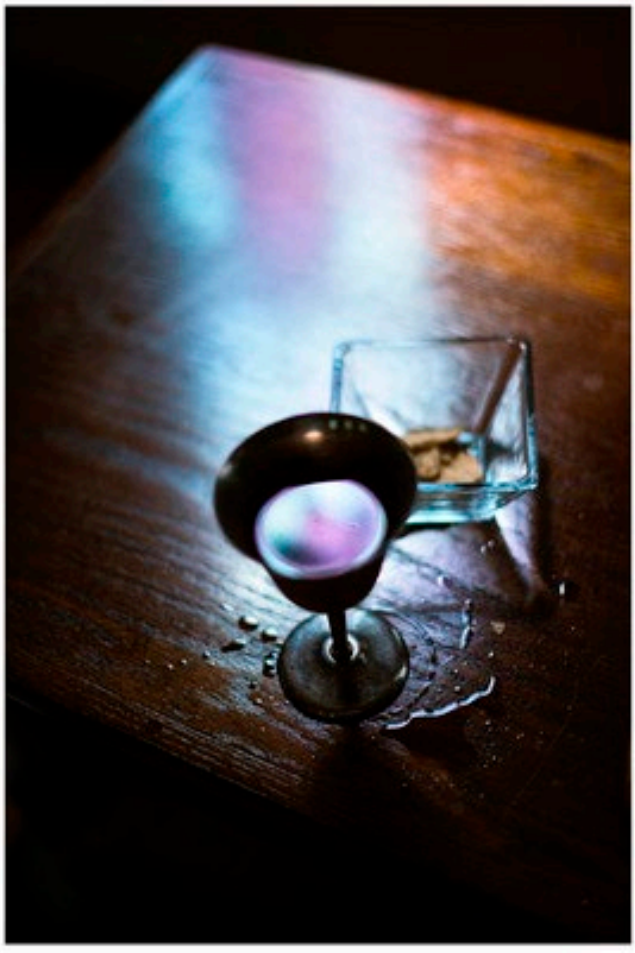
After living in the United States for 25 to 35 years, all three of them were issued deportation orders in 2017. Instead of leaving the country, they chose to resist. They each sought sanctuary in nearby churches. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement,or ICE, as it is widely called, maintains a strategy of not executing deportation raids at "sensitive locations." Houses of worship fall into this category. Everyone here had left their churches in secret in order to gather for a summit of sorts. Three days of immigration activism training was to follow. It was the only time that either Juana, Samuel or José had been out of their churches since they first entered them.

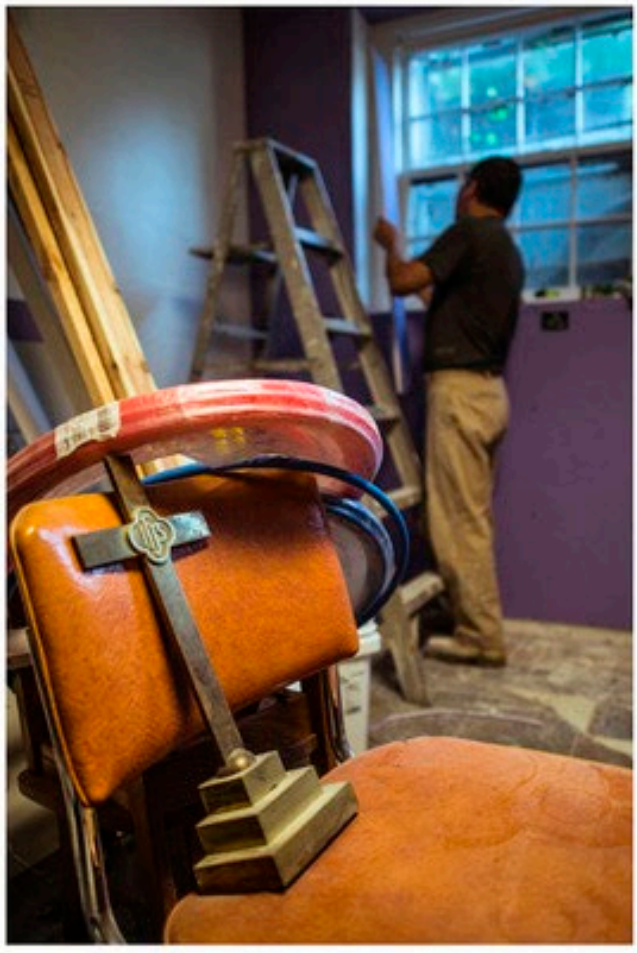
The day began with people's stories. These were told with a fervor that ran throughUnder their names and triple underlined, was Poder or Power. We all filed back out of the basement. It was sweltering. Outside, I sat in the driver's seat of my '93 Volvo station wagon. José was in the passenger seat. "Lo siento José, el aire no anda." He didn't care. A lack of air conditioning wasn't going to faze him. He was out in the world.

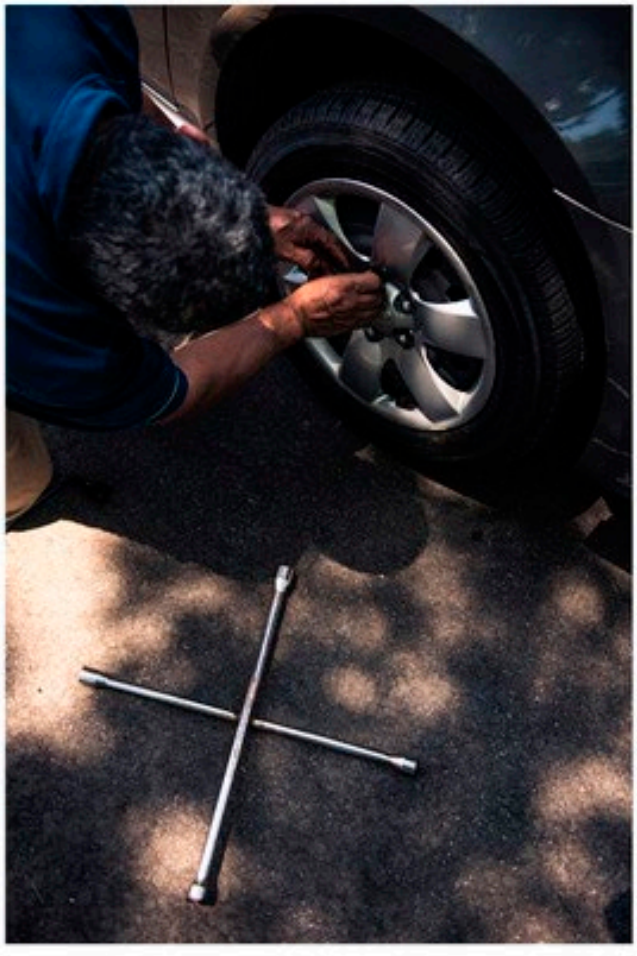
The purpose of the weekend was to train. The legal and political quagmires these individuals find themselves in are complex and difficult to resolve. There were immigration lawyers, journalists, and two documentarians present. The organizers were activists for the undocumented, and DACA recipients themselves. There were also six people who had left sanctuary to be there from states as far away as Ohio, Texas and Colorado. The focus was on getting out of sanctuary. Strategies for tailored campaigns were developed and legal consultations were provided. It seemed to me, though, that the most valuable part of the weekend was the escape from the confines of sanctuary. It was a brief respite from detention and one enjoyed only with ample risk.

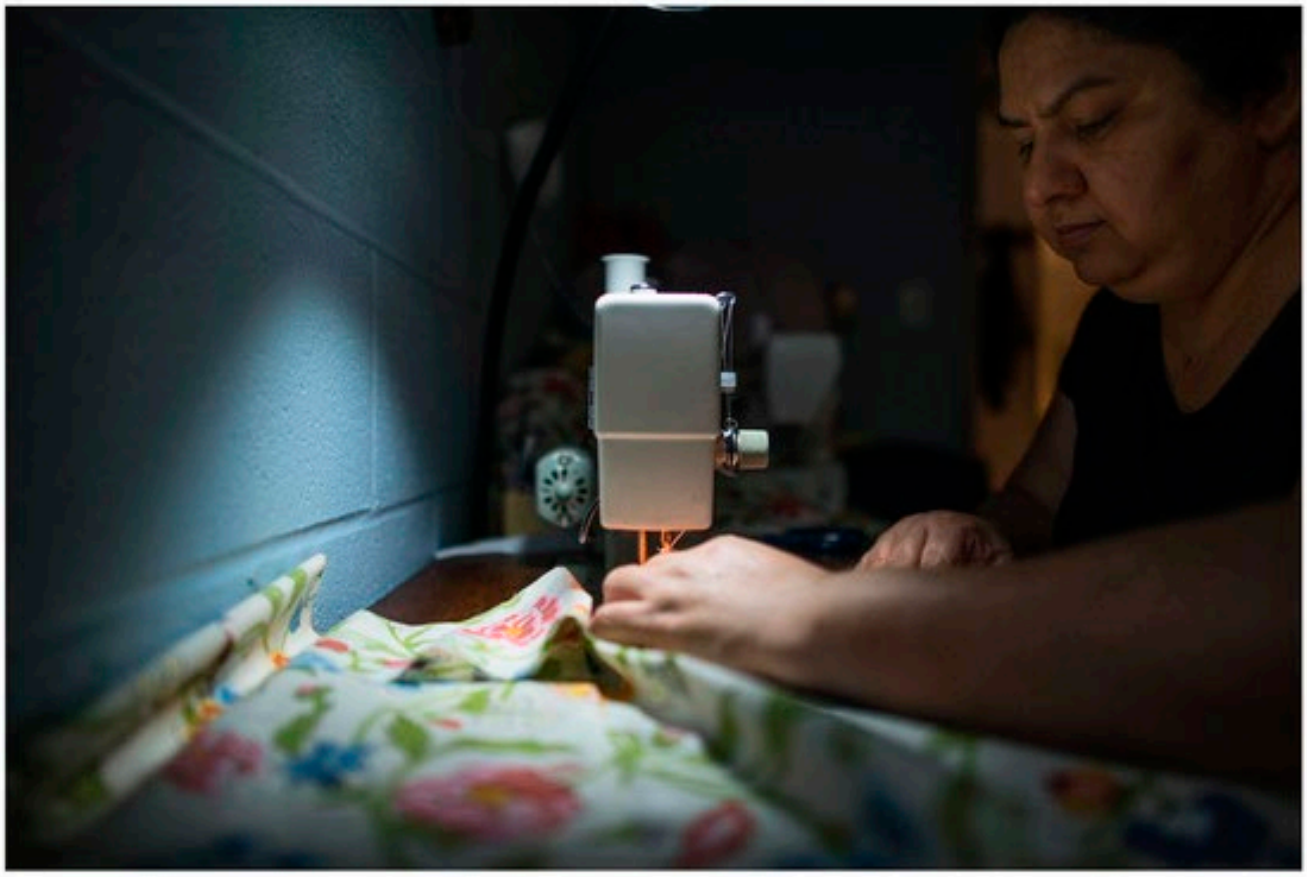
The first time I met José in person had been six weeks prior, at the end of June. We had talked by phone several times, about his predicament and my planned project. I parked across the street from the Baptist church in Durham and walked towards the small house on the corner of the property. It was a mill house, a style common to this part of the state. It was shabby and painted in a pale yellowish-green. I walked up onto the porch, pulled open the wrought-iron and glass storm door and knocked. José greeted me in a clean t-shirt and khakis. José is a stout man, with a deep voice and a great smile. I sat down at the table and he told me his story, the same one I would hear weeks later at the meeting of sanctuary organizers. The house had been converted into a small religious school on the property of a Baptist church. The school teaches social justice through faith to youth in the community. On the wall were posters reading “Our organizing starts in Jail!” and “Stop Separating Families.” They were wrinkled by the southern humidity. Their corners hung off of the single coat of thin paint covering the walls. In the middle room was an aged computer amidst a tangle of cords, and a dining room table flanked on two sides by walls covered in newspaper clippings. The articles, mostly from local Spanish-language news publications, all referred to various sanctuary cases in the state. Each case was unresolved. Each article ended in an expression of uncertainty.

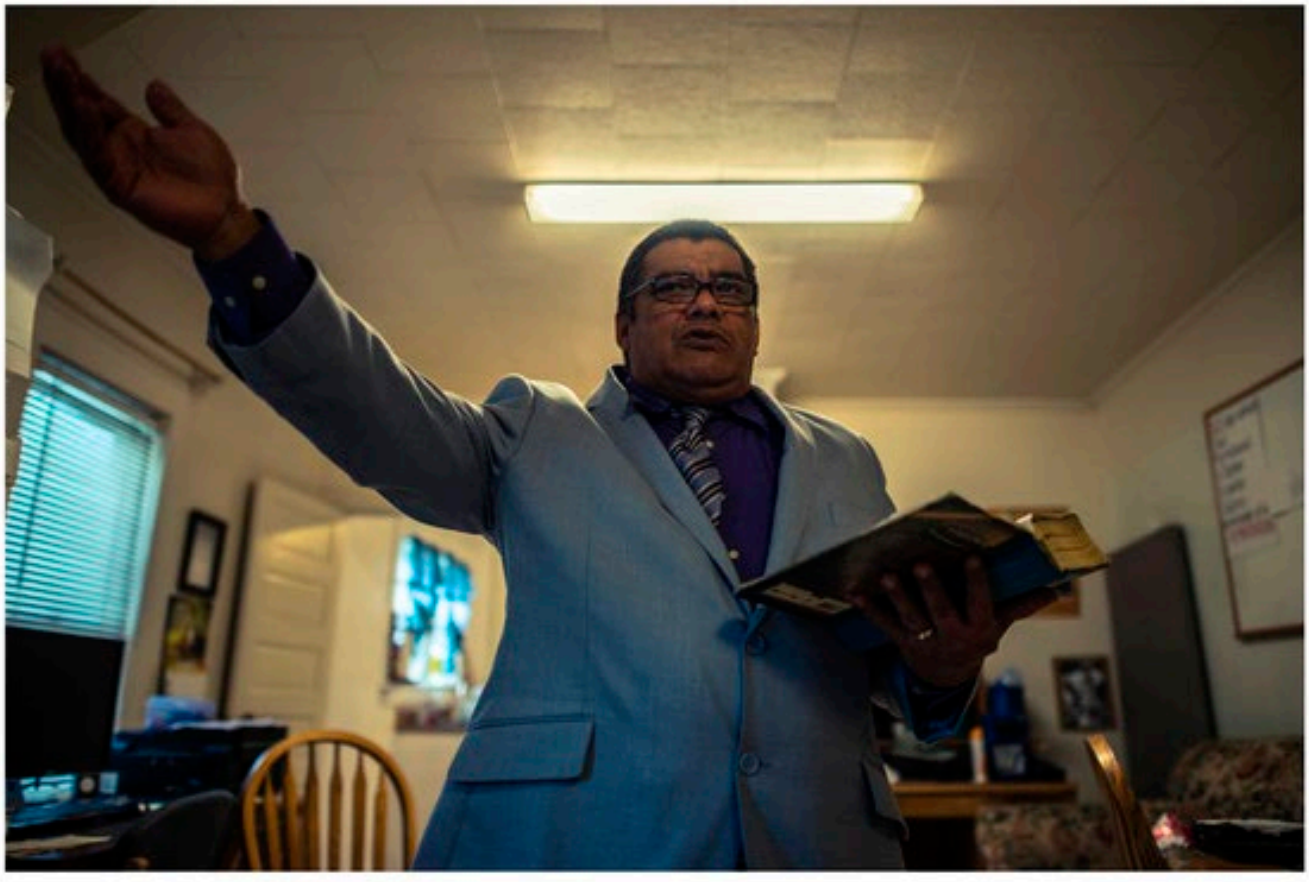
The next time I came to José’s sanctuary he was marking one year since he entered the building for the first time. Twelve months of being detached from his family. I would visit this home dozens of times in the months to follow. We would sit and eat lunch under fluorescent overhead lights. Sometimes we spoke and laughed all day. Other times, we would watch shadows move slowly across the floor and crawl up the wall until their edges lost all definition. Some days we would sit on the porch and talk, eyes heavy with the oppressive heat of summer. One day we painted the wheels of a churchgoer’s Honda. He approached the task with the urgency of a man who was allowed no errands, no schedule, no employment. Time feels different in these spaces, even to me.











My time with Samuel felt the same. I would wake up at 6am on the floor of the basement. After packing up my bed-roll I would read my book, waiting for Samuel to appear from his room. When he did, he would have coffee and crackers. We would look at each other across the table, our paper plates sitting empty in front of us as we sipped out of styrofoam cups. My camera was usually part of the table setting, and mostly sat unmoving.
Samuel was turning an old storage room in the basement where he lived into a kitchen. The items one might expect from a church basement were crowded into the center of the room: a podium adorned with a golden plaque in someone's honor, a brass cross emblazoned with a Christogram on an orange, vinyl chair from the 50's and a kerosene heater, all faded by the layer of drywall dust. I would chat with Samuel while he worked. His iPhone sat on the podium with the volume all the way up, playing Latin Christian music. When I could tell he just wanted to work and sing, a desire I'm familiar with, I would wander around the church.

I searched for details that interested me.

The leftovers from Communion sat on the altar. A ring stain of Christ's blood, half-hidden under the pewter goblet, and a glass dish filled with the uneaten crumbles of his body were lit, almost divinely, by a modest teal-and-purple stained-glass window. A ceramic pair of ghostly white hands hovered above a refrigerator, pressed together in prayer next to a coffee mug with a halo of powdered grounds around its convex bottom. Sunday's flowers stood in turbid water on the following Friday, surrounded by their own fallen petals and a box of Kleenex on the wooden sill.

These are the decorations that remain after the spectacle of mass has concluded and the church is empty, save for Samuel. Back downstairs, I walked back towards the storage room. Dusty footprints crowded the doorway. At the end of the day, a volunteer from the neighborhood would bring dinner to Samuel, and by happenstance, to me. Sometimes it would be one neighbor, or a whole family. Sometimes they would sit and eat with us, other times they would drop off a Pyrex dish and be on their way. We would end our days as they started, sitting on tiny, wooden Sunday school chairs with our knees hitting the table top. With our empty paper plates in front of us, we would talk, or sit in silence, until the high basement windows sank from blue to black and Samuel disappeared into his bedroom.

Juana's room in the church where she resides has all the characteristics befitting a lifelong seamstress. One side of the room has two sewing machines set in their tables. Corners of the room are stacked high with patterned fabrics. I was fortunate enough to walk away with a jaguar-print pillow myself one day.
In front of her sewing machine, leaning against the window is a framed picture of her two granddaughters. She makes a pillow from scratch as I make photographs of her process. Across the hallway, in

the community area of the church, a member of the congregation sits in a lazy chair. “You have to try this chair”, she says in a slight southern accent, “it puts me right to sleep every time.” On one of the tables sits a sheet of paper titled “St. Barnabas Sanctuary Emergency Plan”. Line one reads, “If ICE or Police come to the door.” They haven’t yet.

Every day I spent with Juana was a joy. She was the first person to enter sanctuary in North Carolina. She has been at the church since May 2017. This is a strong woman, but she laughs and cracks jokes all day. And she’s over being shut up in a church. “At times I’ve wanted to throw in the towel” she laughed. She hasn’t, though. Between Thursday and Sunday, one of her four children, two grandchildren, or her husband are at the church with her. Two of her children are citizens, two are DACA recipients, and her husband’s political asylum request was granted years ago. He eventually obtained citizenship. They are all working or in school, so it is nearly impossible for them to all be together.

The church is tucked away off the road through a tunnel of trees. It is quiet besides the low rumble of the nearby highway. During my last day with Juana I experienced more activity than I am used to at a sanctuary church. The vicar buzzes by on his riding mower. Juana’s husband vacuums the crimson carpet in the sanctum. She is outside making Caldo de Puerco, a delicious soup of pork back, chayote, potato and chile, over a propane burner. It’s Saturday after all. It would be my fourth meal of the day, as was customary in Juana’s company.

When the soup was finished, we sat and ate. And we talked. Mostly we talked politics. I was sitting blowing the steam off of a scalding potato and listening to her summarize the irony of American politics. “She totally gets it,” I remember thinking. She gets it better than nine out of ten citizens. I am invested in US politics to an unhealthy degree and I was learning a great deal from her. I wasn’t surprised by this. Her perspective, the undocumented perspective, is invaluable. And it is unattainable without lived experience. It can be explained, but never fully understood.

The next day was my last in North Carolina working on the project, at least for the time being. At noon, I put on my Sunday best, and drove to José’s sanctuary. When I arrived, José was on the porch. He wore what we would call a Carolina blue suit with a purple shirt and striped purple tie. Most of his family was there. His eldest son, Darwin, was in Houston visiting family. We had gone out for a couple beers a few nights previous. He told me how excited he was to get out of town. “It’s tough on us, with all the news and everything. It’s hard to live a normal life.” José is the pastor of the church, Iglesia Evangélica Jesús el Pan de Vida. He found God in 2002 and in 2015 he became an evangelical Pastor and started a church.

He can no longer preach there. His wife now preaches in his absence, a solution which caused some members to leave the church.

One Sunday a month though, many members of José's congregation crowd into the small front room of the Durham mill house to hear his sermon. José preaches with an ardor bordering on fanaticism that is common to those of the evangelical denomination. He reads from Apocalipsis, (the Book of Revelation). Standing under the moulding of the dividing wall, José waves his right hand and clenches it into a fist. His left hand stays occupied with a large, edge-worn bible with gilded pages. His handkerchief makes regular appearances, wiping the sweat off his brow before it reaches his eyes. He had worked me into his sermon, praying for my safe return to Canada and for my project. At the end, he dropped to his knees. His blue suit pants rubbed against the peeling linoleum and his elbows rested on the dining room chair. The rest of his congregation joined him and the room filled with the murmur of prayer. Kids chased each other through the plastic folding chairs between their parents. Slowly, the congregation rose, the chairs were cleared and tamales and hot pineapple chicha were served.

After I ate, I wished everyone goodbye. José's wife hugged me and told a member of the congregation I was returning to Canada. The woman reacted with surprise, and José's wife responded with a faint bitterness, "he's an American citizen, he can go wherever he wants." On the porch, I thanked José for his sermon, for dinner and for everything. He thanked me in return and said, "We'll be waiting here for you."

III

José, Juana and Samuel all have a unique and complex set of life experiences leading up to the present. Now, all three live in churches.
They are separated from their families, their homes, and their communities. My visits to these sanctuaries were illuminating and humbling. And at the end of the day, or the end of a few days, I would carry my camera bag out to my car, start it, and drive away. The act of leaving was a certainty, and it was thought-provoking.

I would be driving home with my windows down on southern back roads. At dusk, broad green leaves would blur turquoise in my peripheral vision at sixty miles an hour. Damp air would swirl around the interior of my station wagon. I would feel myself moving freely through the world.

Movement is freedom.

This privilege is not lost on me. Solely based on the geographic conditions of my birth, I am granted this right. When people in sanctuary were describing their situation, I would always hear the same adjective: encerrada or encerrado, shut away, locked up. These folks aren't in prison, but they are in detention spaces. Unjust policy

situated them there. Fear of separation from family is the lock and key. The physical barriers are passable but the psychological barriers are not. They are trapped.

Senator Bernie Sanders once stopped by José's sanctuary on the way to speak at nearby Duke University. He told José and his family that the only way for him to achieve freedom was for Democrats to take power in 2020. This may be true. But it raises a fundamental question that all Americans need to consider. Are we going to continue to allow our country to move predictably through partisan cycles of war, environmental deregulation and human rights violations? We have allowed our policy opinions to be shaped by the distorted, fearmongering and misinformation campaigns of politicians and partisan media: policies that affect fellow human beings, and their families. Citizens of the United States have been casting ballots out of fright. They should be cast instead with empathy and courage, qualities one can learn from the people I met, shut away in churches.

I can never know what it is like to be undocumented in the United States. I have never known what it is like to be incarcerated. But I will continue to listen to those who do. Uncertainty seems to be the prevailing sentiment in the world today. A sentiment I share, and one shared by José, Juana and Samuel. They haven't lost faith. Their future, though, is as uncertain as the ends of the newspaper articles tacked to José's walls.

RACHEL ROZANSKI
Artist Statement

For years I have been drawn to remote areas, in search of something that I know doesn't exist. In Nunavut I found microplastics in the ocean, in Grasslands the bones of deer lay with tags still attached. In Iceland, seabirds would disintegrate into pools of plastic and organic material from all over the world. These places are some of the furthest away from any cities, but our imprint covers the planet. As we enter the Anthropocene, my practice always comes back to the transformations—biological, geological and material—that are emerging in this period.

Documenting the complete integration of human-made things into the environment is my way of wrapping my head around what it means to be living in the Anthropocene era, when human activity is the single biggest influence on climate and the environment. The more I learn from working with scientists, the more I realise that we can still only make an educated guess about possible outcomes, as plastics and other pollutants become a part of every ecosystem.

Since this is such an unknown, I have been trying to piece together my own research through travels: first in cities, and then moving outwards to more and more remote areas. The artworks I have accumulated are my collection of artifacts and evidence, documenting changes I don't understand and may not in my lifetime. I have travelled around Canada and focused on northern shorelines here and in Iceland. Artist residencies in these places have informed my personal research and given me access to resources and connections with experts in fields I am drawn to, with a focus on subarctic environments.

I began to explore different ways of making documentary images but abstracting them. My drawings are mainly of small, or even microscopic objects that are blown up to large six-foot human sized things.

I have worked on different projects that are all variations of the same theme, cataloging unidentifiable objects born of or transformed by human civilization. I have been inspired by the study of local ecology, pollutants, adaptations and extinctions as we are entering a period with unpredictable environmental timelines and drastic changes to come. All my drawings contain objects that seem abstract, but actually are not. These are my interpretation of the research I have followed, and how I look at the lifespans and agency of these different remnants.

Through additional residencies and independent research in Nunavut, B.C. and Newfoundland I have begun to focus on the challenges facing Canadian shoreline environments. I have collaborated with researchers in each of these places, learning from and assisting in their fieldwork. With existing research into environmental changes as a point of departure, I have been piecing together my own observations while collecting an image database showing objects that comprise various combinations of organic and inorganic material.

I started by printing and layering the hundreds of images I had collected, using semi-transparent papers, separating objects to photograph them and reassemble them, resizing their microscopic components, sometimes to life-size, as a form of abstraction.

From these, I began to draw objects from my photographs, to document them and to imagine a new class of things created or altered by human civilization. I would find objects that are already unrecognizable and replicate them. These grew to drawings between 4x4 and 8x11 feet, in charcoal or graphite. I was inspired

partly by scientific illustration, whose history of idealised representation makes a strange pairing with the content I am working with. It was originally expected that scientific drawings would document things in their most “perfect’ form, which is how I would attempt to draw these conglomerates, which look surreal but are entirely representational.

These are studies of mutations, alterations and adaptations caused by human-made materials from around the world washing up on Canadian shorelines. These include shipping spills, non-disposable remnants of military sites, and invasive species or environmentally altered ones.

Critical Review
Charles Stankievech

The first snow came in August, and the radar station was masked by sheets of white.

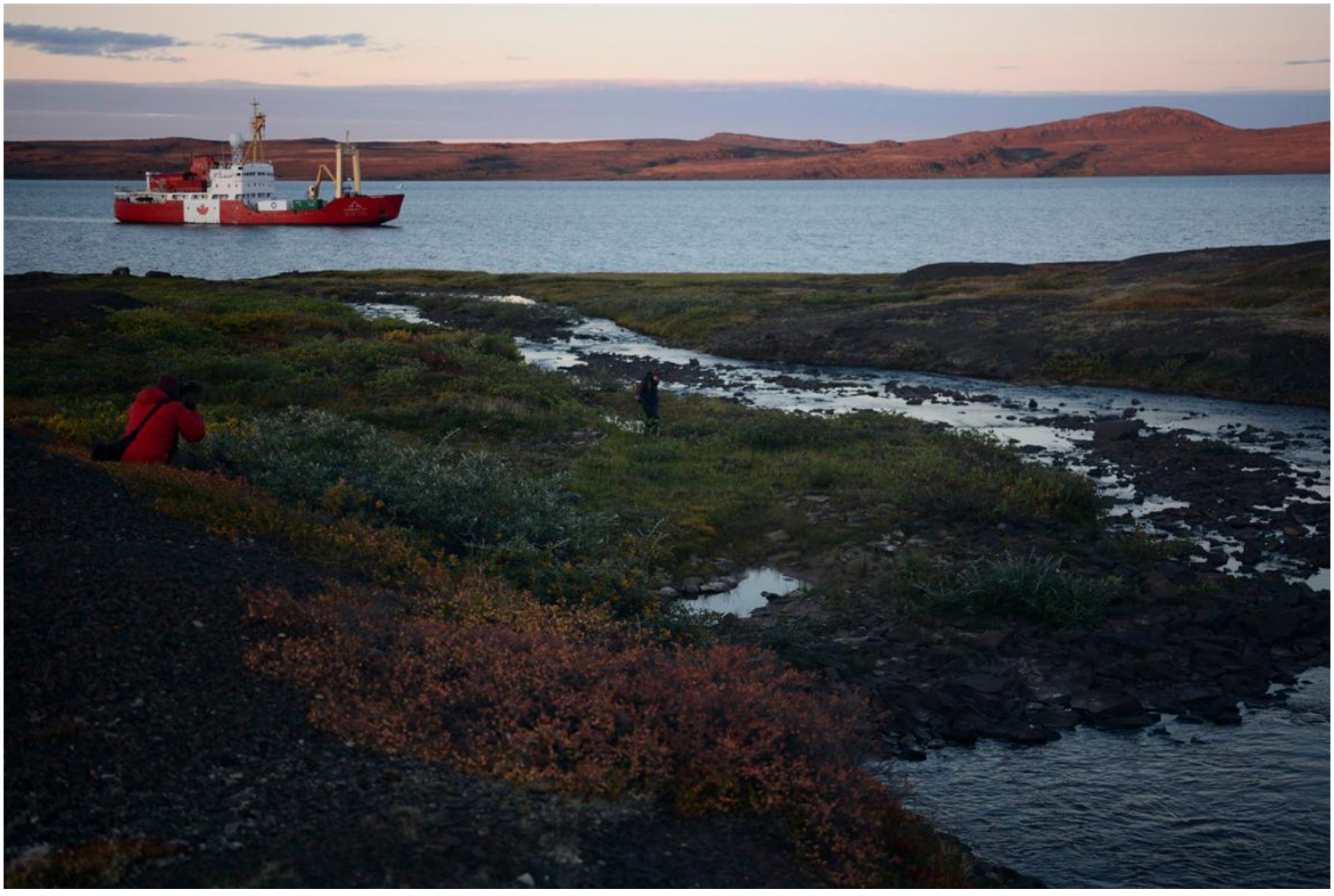
I didn't know I was looking at a still-active DEW Line site in Cambridge Bay, but the graveyard of asbestos and radioactive material was clearly marked. As I came to learn, military infrastructure and its toxic remnants are spread throughout Northern Canada, hidden in plain view across a landscape that is typically portrayed as vast, empty and pristine.

By the time the DEW Line project was completed, it had already become nearly obsolete, and the materials used to build it were found to be extremely hazardous. The cost of building or removing anything in the north is astronomical, and so the majority of these installations were not cleaned up properly. Most DEW Line sites were abandoned around 1963, but some, including the one in Cambridge Bay, were upgraded and now act as surveillance sites. The ones left behind were difficult to dispose of, and left chemical contamination still leaking into the environment. This has made it extremely difficult for people to live off the land in several locations where this can be essential for survival.

One artist who has focused on issues of surveillance and military presence in the North is Charles Stankievech. His recent installation, The Soniferous Æther of The Land Beyond The Land Beyond, provides an otherworldly portrayal of the Canadian Forces ALERT Signals Intelligence Station. He travelled to the northernmost settlement on earth to document this military outpost on 35mm film, in the complete darkness of winter months. This work was overlaid with sound combining electromagnetic recordings from the station and a portion of the soundtrack used in the CBC radio documentary The Idea of North. Altogether, this work conveys an extremely inhuman, extra-terrestrial feeling.

First, Stankievech takes the viewer on a journey north, flying over ice and across mounds of snow. Then we see the outside of the military outpost before going inside and through it. He uses a computer-controlled time-lapse tracking camera to slide smoothly through both environments. Paired with the eerie black and white visuals, this work is reminiscent of a science fiction movie, but one where we remain very aware that the subject is an operational military site. Through his work, Stankievech focuses on northern surveillance as a reminder of its militarized past and potential future military use.

Stankievech has made several other works inspired by Arctic Cold War relics. The



DEW Project was one of these, a multimedia piece installed in Dawson City, Yukon. He built a geodesic dome with an LED light system, lighting up the frozen Yukon River in the darkness of winter. It is meant to imitate the DEW Line network of radar stations. The installation also includes an audio component through the use of underwater microphones that record the river and breaking ice. The project includes archival material as well as elements relating to the history of remote communications. Stankievech and researcher David Neufeld created a public database of material related to the Dew Line called the BAR-1 DEW Line Archive (http://www.stankievech.net/projects/DEW/BAR-1/).

On my last day in Cambridge Bay, the Crystal Serenity cast anchor. A cruise ship holding 1600 people, its passengers outnumbered the townspeople 3 to 1. Hordes of neon orange - clad tourists started to spill out of it, slowly making their way through the small town, snapping photos of sled dogs and lining up outside the small community centre, which was turned into a gift shop.

This year was the first time that a cruise ship so large could get through the Northwest Passage. Melting sea ice has allowed new access, and with it, the possibilities of further resource extraction and industrialization. Currently, Russia and Canada are both drastically increasing their military presence in the North. It was clear to me in Cambridge Bay that the questions around sovereignty, open passage, and resource exploitation were becoming significant issues faced by small communities. Although Nunavut is self-governed, there are pressures from the Canadian government and potential threats from other countries. Because of its previous inaccessibility, many concerns are about lack of legal definition. How are the borders defined? Where does Canada’s coast end? Who should have authority to control marine traffic? The North is in the spotlight again, now more than ever.

Extended Narrative

Land in Transition

I live on a mass of land built entirely out of Toronto's waste, at the edge of Lake Ontario. I don't know how far down I would have to dig to find native soil, but I have not yet seen it—on the land, at the lakeshore or in the parks. Over the course of 130 years, Ontario's largest wetland has been transformed, re-shaped several times by human design. Now it is in transition again, and its abandoned factories and lots have been reclaimed by wildlife. It is not somewhere anyone should be living, but we do. Every time I go out, I am reminded of that by the number of decaying animals lying almost everywhere.

This place is heavily contaminated, and while it now has foreign greenery covering much of it, the foundation is still toxic landfill and manufactured materials, although this was never admitted until it needed to be redeveloped for human use. Years' worth of oil, gas, coal ash and heavy metal residue will eventually go to a hazardous materials landfill. "Over the next decade, Waterfront Toronto expects to excavate two million cubic metres of contaminated soil and bring in another million of clean fill as the agency and its developers begin to revitalize the Port Lands. It's a process that will continue for decades…" Land is removed, replaced, and replaced again. It travels but never goes away.

This chemical and heavy-metal laden earth can be recycled to some extent at a hazardous waste facility, but the pollution from it leaks into the water and atmosphere in irreversible ways. Its imprint on the ecosystem goes well beyond the death I can see immediately under my feet. Humans are not allowed to live on this land, and even breathing the air over it is likely toxic.

When I walk to the shore in any direction, I find what looks from a distance like pebble beaches, but is an assortment of manufactured material broken down and smoothed out into beach stones. The beach sand is made up of scrap metal, ceramic kitchenware, concrete, bones and plastics. We don't actually know how long many of these will take to disintegrate. Living here, it is easy to imagine there is already nothing untouched by humans, even on a geological scale. It may be too early to say that, but it is slowly becoming a reality. The plastics that are currently coating the sea floor could eventually show in the striations of new mountains. These future fossils are present in almost everything—every ecosystem, our food, our drinking water. But still we can only estimate their lifespans. The story of this small piece of land is remarkably surreal, but remarkably un-unique. The evolution of this manufactured ecosystem now represents landscapes around the earth.

I grew up spending half my time on the Gulf Islands in British Columbia, where I still return every year. My parents took me there in hopes that I would experience "nature" the way they had growing up. For 22 years I got to observe the swarms, the blights, the spills, erosion and deposits. Over that time, I saw a huge increase in manufactured materials building up on different beaches. Although this is happening everywhere, it is most noticeable by the sea. There, the ocean transports and deposits materials in daily, monthly and annual cycles. For my entire life I have documented and collected objects. I continue to do this everywhere I go, creating a database of sorts. The visible and invisible remains of these objects have unknown lifespans, but their effects show in every environment, every day. How many people know where their waste ends up? And where can objects that cannot be disposed of be put? Once I started to wonder about these things, I started to find these were difficult questions to answer. There is very little public information about our non-recycled waste.

Curious if I could find signs of human-made objects everywhere, I started to look for these patterns in the Arctic. I travelled to Northern Iceland in December of 2017, arriving to a wind storm so powerful rocks would fly off the ground and ocean spray would hit my face, carried from seven blocks away. Skagastrond was so small that it didn't have a working gas station, restaurant, or full grocery store. I thought in a place this isolated, I would not find what I was looking for. But I quickly realised the windstorm I experienced on the first day was a regular occurrence, and these brought new things ashore every day. During the three hours of daylight and after, I would scan the beaches and grassy fields through town. I kept finding waste that seemed like it had not originated in Iceland, and began looking into tide charts that track where plastics flow. There are active maps showing the general travel routes of waste that ends up in the ocean. Following these, I could theorize where garbage had come from carried by the sea—but anything further north than my location in Iceland was uncharted. After a week, the winds calmed down and I was able to explore further past the black sand beaches and grassy hills. I saw rock cliffs jutting out of the ocean covered in bird colonies. I started to climb them, and started to find tidepools full of dead birds and other animals. Some of these were new, and others were only a pool of bones with candy wrappers, fishing wire, styrofoam and microplastics. Over days, I would watch them each disintegrate into similar collections of remains with plastics showing through. I never saw any one species of bird without plastics inside of or attached to it.

Northern Fulmars made up most of these, which was a surprise to me since they often do not migrate far from where they were born. It is very possible the fulmars I found had never left Iceland, or even Skagastrond, yet they still collected all those objects. I later

learned almost all studies of Northern Fulmars have found similar results from locations across the Arctic. Mixtures of manufactured and organic material made up obscure conglomerates that I would draw, objects which represent the fact that at this point, plastics are inside all of us and deeply embedded into the ecosystem.

The following summer, I travelled by boat on the Canada C3 expedition from Cambridge Bay to Kugluktuk, Nunavut. Along the way, we stopped in completely isolated environments, places that had never been lived in post-industrialization. I helped the team of scientists on this expedition to collect samples of water and biomatter. Even in the most remote parts of the Arctic, microplastics were in the water. Every ocean in the world has been found to contain fragments of manufactured material. There is no official data yet tracking waste into the Arctic, but it was clear from our studies that they existed there, likely arriving from rivers, from overseas, and from local communities. This waste is carried north by currents, some of it becoming frozen in sea ice.

One morning, my group was riding along in a zodiac with Cambridge Bay Rangers (a sub-component of the Canadian Armed Forces) as they did test runs for water emergencies. We landed on a beach across the bay, attached to a small uninhabited island. Nothing but stone beaches coming out of the sea with tufts of grass blowing on top, this island was a nearly empty landscape. But as we landed, I started to see fragments of ships, piles of shored garbage, and the dead birds that were starting to show up everywhere in my life. White feathers lay everywhere, Snow Geese were disintegrating. The rangers mentioned a disease passing through them, which is happening more and more. They were also full of plastics, same as the ones in Iceland.

Locals I met from Cambridge Bay and across the North were eager to talk about the effects of pollution and environmental change. It is so obvious to the people I met through their knowledge of the land and its history, that northern land is changing the most dramatically. Being able to read the land, weather, and ice is so important in such a potentially dangerous place. I was told that signs and markers of these things that people have relied on for hundreds of years are suddenly changing, making it increasingly dangerous to go out on the land.

Many challenges faced by Northern communities are present because of both their isolation and the impact of globalized pollution affecting them more than in any other part of the world. It reaches these seemingly remote places, but the communities there have a particularly difficult time dealing with waste. The ground is permafrost, It can’t be dug out for landfill. It is far too expensive to ship away waste, so often it ends up on the land, and eventually, in the ocean. This problem is magnified even more because of military and industrial

waste that I have seen along the Arctic coast. There is an enormous military presence in the Arctic, both physically and in the structured displacement of communities. Military and industrial waste makes up a significant portion of our waste, but is often extremely unpredictable in effect and lifespans. This information was not easily available until the discovery of its effects became apparent much later in time. Most of our waste at this point has unknowable outcomes and life spans, but military waste pushes boundaries and testing times.

I saw one example of this in the DEW line dome in Cambridge Bay. There is extremely limited access to any military information, which includes its waste. The likely reason we focus on residential waste is that we see it every day, whereas the larger picture is hidden. The lack of available data means that we have no idea what it is producing now, but the DEW line remains a symbol of what can be left behind. In Canada, these sites are still standing, falling apart, or strewn across "graveyards" of hazardous materials. This is one of the world's better-known examples of this neglect, and still we are only gradually learning, years later, about the severity of contamination DEW line sites have left. It took 20 years to gather the materials into dumps, and still they haven't been cleaned up. In the Arctic, this is often excused by considerations of national security and Canadian sovereignty. Resources are extracted and structures are built in a rush, without adequate time to test the materials used. But often it takes up to 50 years to begin to understand the potential effects of new materials.

Part of the problem is that many of the contaminants cannot be disposed of. What we are often not aware of is that people have not found a way to deal with the things we have manufactured. Whether it be asbestos, radioactive material or plastics, these are things we keep producing without a way to deal with their remains. These are fossils of the future, ones that will be embedded in everything. I have been most interested in coastlines because we have absolutely no way of cleaning the water. At least on land material can be transported, and I can imagine that at some point it could be dealt with in a better way. But we can only see less than 1% of water pollution—which means that the vast majority of the polluting material is on the seafloor, disintegrating into particles, eaten… we don't actually know.

My particular interest in the Arctic began with a curiosity about an under-examined environment, and how it is portrayed as the symbol of climate change. Based on my sources, we don't really know what is happening in the North, but based on my experiences it is obvious that these issues have reached every region of the world. The only constant in my research is that the harder we look, the more we learn how much we don't know. We see the melt of icebergs and the permafrost melt turning land into swamps, but I never expected to

find as much visible pollution and waste there as on any other shorelines. These situations I have observed, from coast to coast to coast in Canada, and beyond, are a metaphor for what is happening everywhere else.

The land my home is built on is soon going to be removed, or "washed". I wonder where it will end up, and who will live on this land next, because something or someone will. We do not really have the tools to clean, recycle, or "dispose" of this toxic industrial and residential waste. It is here in the water, land and air. When the wind picks up here, I can always smell rot in the air. Walking through fields of wildflowers across land reclaimed by wildlife, I look up to trees and smokestacks, and down to decay. If I stand still for long enough anywhere it seems, I find it. I wondered at first if I was imagining all this, but I am starting to learn how toxic this land is. My home will be demolished, the land underneath it will probably be removed to a few feet down, and new soil dumped on top of waste fossils to make a green band-aid of plant life to cover it up. It will still be toxic, but it will be considered safe to live on. How it exists at this moment is the manifestation of land reworked many times over. In a constant state of reformation, this landscape seems so unique, but it is a remarkably un-unique story. This is what it means to be living in the Anthropocene.

WAYNE SALMON
Artist Statement

When I was four or five years old my mother left home to work in a foreign country. It would be several years before I would see her again. One image remained in my mother's absence: a passport photograph. It was black and white, solemn in every way, showing a woman looking out into the world. This photograph, the only one in our household, was counted among the few artifacts my grandmother deemed invaluable. It was through this image that I came to know the woman who brought me into the world, and who, to keep me in it, had journeyed a thousand miles away, in search of life.

There is something sacred about an image from which the subject's eyes look back at you. The space between you becomes a fiction. You want to know more from an image than it is prepared to give. What was my mother thinking, that moment her image was cemented into eternity? How was she feeling then?

Photographs are important. They are a way of documenting a time, a place, a face, or even abstract ideas. As well, they offer us a way of feeling. And so, they ought to elicit a visceral response from those who encounter them. A photograph is a doorway. A portrait, for example, can and should be an experience shared between human beings. It should operate in such a way that the viewer will share the perspective of the photographer, particularly the moment the shutter was released.

I'm not interested in photography as an academic exercise of secret codings, inaccessible to the uninitiated. I want an aesthetic of honesty and simplicity, a haiku of visual sensations. Making photographs became a serious preoccupation once I discovered the work of Roy DeCarava. I became interested in representing my own community in ways similar to him. I wanted to capture and print images that celebrate black life. Images rich and lush in black tones. Melanin odes.

For me colour photographs are casual encounters, like one-night stands. Black and white images are the complete Opposite. Like a lover or a friend, they are comforting, and though familiar on the surface, they carry an unfathomable depth.

I am also interested in the lives of the everyday folk. Women like my mother, whose lives of struggle and of triumphs go quietly back to dust. Throughout my schooling, I grew increasingly aware of my absence in the curriculum. An image in my likeness is more commonly exhibited as something to be feared on the evening news than as an object of beauty on a museum or a gallery wall. We are all aware of the importance of art on the human psyche.

There has been much talk about the democratization of photography. A great many people are still without the means to create or consume the kind of art that reflects who they know themselves to be. I want the people I grew up with, and their children too, to see themselves celebrated in images of beauty. I want to give to someone else what artists like DeCarava have given to me.

My photographs are about my feelings. They are also about absences — historical absences — memory and remembering. I print using historical processes to signify these omissions. Gum Bichromate and Platinum Palladium were common printing processes in the past, and that is where my work is still situated. The past, even if unknown, is not altogether unknowable. Photography as a practice is an inventory of light that has passed, made visible for future contemplation.

If writing is fighting, as Ishmael Reid suggests, then photographing must be a way of loving. After all, I fell in love with the image of my mother before I knew her, before I loved her. My engagement with photography has been a fascination with my mother's gaze. I've grown accustomed to always looking for the soul of an image. In the passport photograph, my absent mother was most present in her gaze. Through my long engagement with her image, I've learned how to see. My hope, now, is to make images in the spirit of those eyes I first saw looking back at me through a photograph.

Critical Review
13th

For the majority of her darker citizens, America is, and has always been, something akin to a war zone, an occupied territory, or a prison. Ava DuVernay's film, 13th, surveys the ways in which the state has historically denied freedom to its African-American citizens. The film, made in 2016 and distributed on Netflix, centers on the world's largest prison-industrial complex, which disproportionately incarcerates black folk. America is home to five percent of the world's population and twenty-five percent of the world's prisons. Moreover, as statistics show, one in every three young black males is expected to go to jail at some point in his lifetime.

13th is DuVernay's second documentary film. It cleverly borrows its title from the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which outlawed slavery and indentured servitude. The film asks us to consider the possibility that America did not so much end slavery as reimagine the plantocracy as a forced labour camp hidden within its prisons.

America was built on the oppression and exploitation of poor and racialized peoples. It continued to develop and enrich itself through the forced labour of millions of African captives. After the Civil War, slavery ended and so did a most significant source of free labour, which generated the economic wealth of the nation. But even with emancipation, no room was made for freed blacks as equals in the American landscape.

As the film suggests, the 13th Amendment brought with it a clause that gave slavery a new face and a new name. The white American's psyche was seduced with the idea that the newly-freed blacks were a dangerous lot, and that they, white people, specifically white women, had every reason to fear black people, specifically black men. D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation (1915) did much to publicize the idea that white citizens needed to fear their black neighbours. Griffith's film had such a profound impact on the white imagination that it led to the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. The black body needed to be kept under surveillance, controlled, and sometimes obliterated.

Black bodies (and particularly black men's bodies) became a symbol of criminality, danger itself personified. And nowhere was the symbol more readily exploited than in the arena of politics. Each time the system of exploitation was identified and challenged, a new series of laws were put in place that, rather than erase the source of the oppression, simply disguised it. The same system would operate under a different name, a different guise, while garnering the same results.

Once blacks gained civil rights, and

were deemed equal and free, crime became framed as a byproduct of black liberation. And by attacking this wave in crime, it was understood by whites, particularly in the south, that the freedom of black bodies would be restrained. Safety then becomes dependent on black incarceration. The Republicans and the Democrats for decades, in codified language aimed at white voters, exploited this narrative of the dangerous other, to solicit votes and win elections.

From Nixon in the 1960s and ’70s and the wars waged against black people and their leaders, right through to Donald Trump in our own time, the idea of an alien presence infecting the American body politic is recycled and used to propel one political part or another into the White House. Bill Clinton reframed the criminal as a “super predator” and in his war on poor blacks, expanded the prison system and militarized police forces across the country. This is the system America still has in place.

The film features interviews from politicians, activists, an ex-prisoner, and several academics. We cannot hear from those who are behind bars. But we hear the stories of young black men from the streets, by way of hip-hop poets like Public Enemy, Common, Nas and others. Du-Vernay inserts these subaltern voices along with the physical print-out of their spoken words, and it is as if their voices are given body and life and the power to physically transform reality.

The interviewees are stationary and speak directly into the camera. Michelle Wallace reminds us that the number of black people tied up in the criminal justice system today is greater than the number of the enslaved in the antebellum south. Activist and professor Angela Davis calls for the abolishment of the prison-industrial system, and the reasons are worth considering. Ninety-seven percent of those incarcerated did not stand before a judge or a jury of their peers (if this process were to be employed, the entire court system would collapse).

When corporations and politicians meet in secret to make and pass laws that further enrich shareholders of industry at the expense of the most vulnerable citizens, how can we have justice? The poor are kept in prison—and consequently have their labour stolen from them—not because they are guilty of any crime, but simply because they are poor. What kind of crime does one commit, and what kind of danger does one really pose to society, if one’s freedom can be purchased, and one’s status as a criminal be erased?

13th is an investigation into the prison-industrial complex, and, in order to understand the system, needed to look at its historical roots—hence the arc from slavery to the present. These strategies of criminalization and imprisonment are calculated and deliberate. The politicians frame the discourse and the media spreads it. Those who control technology are able to tell

their stories, real or imagined, that they wish others to experience.

It is only in recent times, with technology being readily available to the masses, that we have counter-narratives from the less fortunate in society. The killing of black men by police caught on cell phone recorders and spread through social media, is beginning to make others aware of what is happening, and has been happening, in poor communities across America.

North of the 49th parallel we enter another country where the prisons are also reserved for the poor. That the prison population in Canada is composed of marginalized individuals is not surprising. Canada was built on the exploitation of first nations peoples, whose oppression continues, a fact which would explain why a quarter of Canada's prison population is indigenous. As for the number of blacks in prisons that number over the past ten years has increased by 69 percent (3 percent of the country's population accounts for 10 per cent of the prison population on the federal level).

Sometime in the late 1980's a Toronto newspaper ran an article about how a North York High School expelled two hundred of its students, permanently. One needn't wonder what would become of these students if they should find themselves in the middle of their adult lives without a high school education. The system creates desperate men, and then locks them up for acting as desperate men do. Instead of directing its resources toward the elimination of poverty, the state is invested in building an economy on the backs of those who are likely to suffer from it the most.

Equally as troubling was a Toronto Star article from the 1990's, which outlined the province's plans to open a new super jail. When you take into account the prison's date of completion, and the time the article was penned, it is clear that the prisoners who would occupy such a facility had not yet been conceived. It was quite possible that their parents had not yet even been introduced. Whose children were these institutions being built to house, and why? An understanding of police practices may lead to answers. In Ontario, the practice of carding, which is similar to American style stop and frisk, disproportionately targeted black men.

Slavery. Emancipation. Jim Crow. Segregation. Carding. Stop and frisk. Three Strikes. Minimum Sentences. The prison-industrial complex is not new, it has only matured over time. 13th does more than provide historical context for us to understand and consider the nature of the prison-industrial complex in America—and other societies. The hope is, that once the citizenry become fully aware of what is going on, they will organize and through action transform society. One can only hope, especially in America's case, that it is not too late.

Extended Narrative

I am the last of my mother's five children. In our household each child was asked, usually in the order in which they were born, if they wished to perform one chore or another. After each one refused, my mother simply moved on down the line. When it was my turn to excuse myself from whatever task she had planned, the question would morph into something resembling an agreement between my mother and me.

It was in this curious way that I discovered Kensington Market. I was eleven years old. Having survived my first winter in Toronto, I was longing for the summer sun to arrive. It was spring. The snow had already begun to melt. The sidewalks lay out in rows of waffle-like squares glistening as if glazed with maple syrup. Mounds of snow skirted the edges of the lawns, so many blades of grass still and sleeping under the stubborn weight of winter.

In 1975, my mother left her home, all her friends and her family, everything she was certain of, to live and work in Canada. She left in search of economic prospects, in need of opportunities the island could not provide. She arrived alone. With all the privilege a new and fresh start promised, she saw no advantage in forsaking even one of her children—something I am told others had done. My brother Roy and my sister Jacqueline, the oldest two, were the first to join her. Roy was already nearing that age of recklessness that would have given my grandmother reasons to worry, or to fear for him. Jacqueline was becoming a woman, and young men were already gathering at the gate.

Mother's first job was with a family in Montreal. She did not speak a word of French, and what little English they spoke was reserved for giving directions. One evening while out shopping at a grocery store, she managed to find out from a stranger the way to the train station. That night she packed her bags. When she was certain her employers were asleep, my mother went ÅWOL. This is how she found herself in Toronto.

It was in the middle of winter when I arrived with my two sisters, Antoinette and Georgia. It was cold. Nothing could have prepared us for such a brutal display of wind, rain and snow. My mother was at the airport, waiting. She had brought with her everything she thought we would need to protect us from the bitter gales that cut through our skin and gnawed at our bones. Winter was a season of blasphemy, and it still is. My mother tried to convince us that it was a season of great fun, that there were so many new and exciting games for us to discover. I must have thought it a cruel joke. Before getting on the plane my grandfather had already warned me against going out in the freezing air. He swore

he had a friend who went out in the iciness and immediately the man's nose froze and fell off.

Within the first few months after arriving, I had already experienced the great sites the city had to offer: Ontario Place, the CNE, the CN Tower, and the Metro Zoo. It was with great pride that these marvels were introduced, and I had awaited each with great anticipation. And here was Kensington Market, with no allure whatsoever.

It was a Saturday and just as you prepared for church on a Sunday morning, we got ourselves ready for the market. You begin with a shower. Then a good breakfast: fried dumplings, salted cod mixed with ackee or callaloo, or sometimes the codfish alone or just the callaloo. There was cocoa to drink, steaming and sweet. All the treats we'd forgo throughout the weekdays of cereal and milk, or toasted bread with butter and jam, were laid out before us as if it was our first breakfast, or the last.

Once into our good clothes we then put on our good shoes. We were living in the Junction then, in a rented house of smoked-herring blue. It was nestled between other houses, an equal distance east of Runnymede Avenue and west of Keele Street. Out front, across the two lanes of traffic, there was a Maltese bakery and a Maltese church: both sat like brackets around a TTC bus stop. From here we hopped on the bus going east. From the station we caught the streetcar that rocked, rumbled and jostled its way across College Street through Little Italy until we reached the gates of Kensington Market, then known as Jew Town.

It was not only we five she had left behind. There was her mother too; there were uncles and aunties. There were cousins—first cousins, second cousins, and perhaps third cousins. Long after we had joined her, my mother continued to visit and support those whom she called her people. And when she didn't visit, barrels would be filled and sent back home. She might have been the most resourceful person in the history of this country. How she managed to get through so much, with so very little, remains a great mystery.

We made our rounds, from the spice trader to the Caribbean Corner to the fruit stand and lastly, to the fish shop, and then we would make our way home. The market was all at once new and familiar. It didn't occur to me then how similar it was to the markets I'd visited with my grandmother back home. Mornings she would rise before the sun, and before daybreak she would have her stall of fresh fruits, vegetables and spices ready for sale. It wasn't until I witnessed my mother bartering with the Portuguese fishmonger that I remembered this. They used language in such a lyrical and playful way that, at first, I had assumed they were old friends. But there was something in my mother's bearing that suggested otherwise.

A line had been drawn. Still the

fishmonger insisted on calling her mama. She did not object to this. But she was not prepared to pay the amount he wanted. He made no objections. She had been happy to have the fish and the lemons for a lesser price. And he was happy to let her have them for the amount she gave him. There was a sense of authenticity about the place – it offered no illusions. The people who came to buy and the people who stayed to sell each recognized something in the other, knew something about the other that, no matter their differences, instantly granted them citizenship.

She had kept her diagnosis a secret for more than a decade. When she could no longer hide the fact, my mother revealed to us that she had cancer. It should not have surprised any of us that she had kept her illness hidden for so long. We had convinced ourselves that the sudden drop in weight had been the result of a change in eating habits. She would not give up her job and stay home and rest. You don't have to worry about me, she said, I can still manage. She worked as a support worker. She had gotten the job from a close friend who had to give it up because she needed her strength. She too, had been found to have cancer, and the prescribed chemo treatments had not been going well.

She had continued the ritual of attending the market to buy what she called her little things. I had abandoned her to experience life as an adolescent and later a young man, moving into and out of days and nights of trouble, and then more trouble. One evening over the phone she invited me to resume our Saturday morning ritual. She was afraid, she said, of the intersection at Bathurst and College. It was much too wide. Making a left turn there was the most frightening thing she could imagine. I laughed.

It must have been spring. I remember that first breeze that greeted me as I set out to visit her on that day. It carried a feeling that touched you, warm and full of promise, of excitement just to be in the world. There is a time in every child's life when their parents, regardless of how they see them, can no longer treat them as a child. I'm not sure when this moment had occurred for me. I came to realize this on one of our grown-up trips to Kensington. Our market excursions provided the greatest opportunities for me to get to know her. It comes as a great shock when you discover that, before having any children, your mother had a life. Who knew? With time, I had acquired some sense, my mother said, and also, some understanding. It was around this time that she began to treat me as an adult, most of the time, and in these moments she shared with me stories of her life. It was not an easy life.

During the first of what turned out to be many stays in the hospital, I'd brought her a bouquet of flowers. She was lying in bed, all covered in white, and her dark face glowing. She watched me with that cool gaze of hers, a prologue of sorts. And then she asked me what I intended to

do with the bundle of dead colors. In my defense I let it be known that the flowers were the freshest of the day, they had been taken directly from the flower truck and straight into my hands. My mother smiled, but you already know, she said, that nothing can live without roots. This simple truth went beyond roses and tulips. It applied to women and men. And to demonstrate, perhaps unconsciously, she spent the day recounting our family's history. She knew the names and the lives of every relative, the living and the dead.

She traced our line back to our great-great grandmother, Juba, the woman who had come on a ship from the west coast of Africa, speaking a language few remembered, carrying an ancient ancestry, concealed, to her grave. As she revealed their names my mother seemed to grow stronger, become larger. Her remembering was a kind of pruning and stimulating of her roots. She was secure in the knowledge of who she was, which I was not. She knew from whence she came, and not in the vague academic sense of historical knowledge, abstract and impersonal. I hadn't even considered it a possibility until that moment, that my mother could have had some memory, even if it was second hand, of the days of bondage. I asked if Juba and the elders had ever told stories about slavery and what that time was like. She paused. Nobody talked about things like that, she said, especially around children.

We traveled together, not like parent and child, but like old friends who knew each other well. We left the car in the public lot on Baldwin. We stopped in the Caribbean Corner, a West Indian grocery store that contained the best memories of childhood. There were Julie mangoes, their skins boasting the colours and the light of a setting sun. The smell of neesberries and sweetsop newly opened blossomed in my nostrils. There were hills of June plums and star-apples soft and silky to the touch. All the sweetness you want to remember the taste of; the Shirley biscuits and the sodas I'd remembered always craving as a boy in primary school. Who can forget the texture of coconut drops or grapenut ice cream dissolving on the tongue? While engaging the world in her own language, my mother seemed to be experiencing life at a higher frequency, conversations were effortless. Here she was a provocateur, an investigator.

She had questions about the quality of the fruits. She carried out investigations to determine the colour and the flavour of the papaya's insides. There are still secrets only country folk can teach you, like how to tell the number of days a green plum needs for ripening, or how to touch an avocado to determine its state of readiness without leaving a single blemish. The mangos removed from the tree too soon will never ripen to their full sweetness. You know this by the curve and the line. If the catch is fresh you will know by the way the light is written in the eyes.

I had not only been moving through the space with my mother; we had also been moving back and forth through time. I began to make photographs of the market during our weekly pilgrimages. I don't know if it was something long passed that I was trying to remember, or something new, unfolding, that I wanted to hold on to, that informed the images. There were memories we agreed upon, and some we did not. Only half of some memories turned up at times, with parts eaten away by time. She did not remember at all, for example, that afternoon she taught me how to catch birds with a cage and a clothes peg.

I reminded her also, of another memory she'd misplaced somewhere. It was of her telling me that not having a man in the house didn't mean I was any less because of this. It's me alone, she said, but I'm your mother and your father.
Whatever you need, I will provide. She did not remember saying any of this. Nor did she remember the night I came home at two in the morning, and with a friend at that. She had been waiting for me with the broom. And after I had pried the broomstick from her fingers, she folded them into fists. With each swing she asked the same question, her voice trembling. The next day at school the word was she had come at me like Mike Tyson and had taken me out with an upper cut.

I come to the market to sit and to think and sometimes just to see, sometimes to remember. Things have indeed changed, and things are changing still.
Everywhere there are coffee shops, new bars, and places offering prepared foods. The grocery stores are disappearing—some have taken on the façade of a strip mall. Soon there will be no specialty shops from which one can barter for a pound of fish. It is not good to buy everything from one shop. You have to make the rounds. Communities are less about the people than the relationships that bind them. The beauty is in seeing the relationships at play, in all their variety.

Death, ever present, cannot be separated from life. Perhaps death enters us with that first breath when we are introduced into the world, the imperceptible gasp preceding our first cry. Yet there is nothing that can prepare you for it, that last breath exhaled from the bosom of your beloved, the final sigh on which that life rides into that unknowable, impenetrable place. There is nothing that can be said to prepare you, there is no embrace strong enough to shield you. Death surprises us, breaks into our stronghold, leaves us weary and broken. We were all gathered around her bed the night she died, when with a final sigh, the weight of the world had been lifted from her.

It has taken a long time for me realize how lucky we were to have her. It amazed me that all my life I had been walking in the shadow of one who had always been so strong and so fearless, yet so gentle and so generous. There was nothing I was in need of that she did not give. She provided for all of us in so many ways, and without fail.

It was on a winter's evening that she

died. It was a Saturday, December 13th, 2008, at a quarter past ten. There were whispers floating across the room. The undertaker entered just as I was leaving. I watched as he carried the body that was once my mother's out the front door, down the driveway and into the waiting automobile. The world was dark and cold. The winds were silent. I watched him drive away down the street and disappear into the coming storm.

The day before her funeral, an old friend of hers who would be leaving to return home the next day stopped by the house to pay her respects. She told us of a time when she had gotten so ill she couldn't take care of herself. "Ione" she said, would come to her every day for two whole weeks. Ione would bathe her and feed her. Ione carried her back to health. Our mother had never mentioned this to any of us. To her it must have been an ordinary thing one human being was compelled to do for another.

Helen Keller noted, "the best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." I have known her with my heart, but not nearly enough. I wonder what would have become of us, her five children, if we never had her, one who loved us so completely. She taught us by her example. And what she taught us was that a meaningful life must be lived with purpose, that the best life is lived, not for oneself alone, but for others too, that life is beautiful and sometimes terrible too, but we must rise to live it with dignity, with courage and with love.

ADRIANA SANCHEZ-SANFACON
Artist Statement

I have a very short concentration capacity—either I'm hooked or I'm not. It is with this dualistic reasoning that I view and create my art.

I have always been a dualistic person: an embarrassed child, but if I regain confidence I explode with all my energy. From a very young age, when I am confident I talk a lot, but otherwise, I do not say a word and I lose myself in my thoughts. I think this embarrassment has stopped me from being myself.

I often felt the eyes of people judging me. In this embarrassment and frustration, not able to express myself, I locked up both myself and my emotions. My embarrassment surely came from this feeling of not being understood: I felt that I was in contradiction with myself. I did not even understand myself.

It’s certainly visual art, dance, music and drawing that helped me overcome this feeling of misunderstanding. I loved school but at the same time I hated school, I needed to move and needed my brain to be stimulated. During class I was always drawing in my notebooks or talking with my friends.

CEGEP was a very hard time for me, I had never been so lost, so stressed, anxious and depressed. It was at that time that I had a diagnosis of ADD. This diagnosis helped me understand myself, but it was also a challenge: I shut down even more. I did not know where to turn, what to do, where to go, and life did not make sense anymore.

It was during my recovery that I remembered that I had been dancing since I was young, and that I used to put on shows for friends, family and school, just because I wanted to. One day in elementary school I found the analog camera of my father’s youth, and I also began to explore with it. In my days of most profound sadness, music and drawing were what saved me. I was interested in the visual, but more than that, it was my way of expressing myself.

Inevitably I felt too old to start again or to continue my art, and I compared myself unfavorably to everyone else. But for my mental health, I restarted dance, I bought a camera, I affiliated with CUTV (Concordia TV); I took life by the handle to regain a taste for life through art.

This part of my life and my ADD will always be part of who I am, and even today, my ability to concentrate and my way of doing things are very particular to my diagnosis: I remain as simple as the reasoning of a child, it is either I like something or I do not like it, it is very intuitive. Today in my art I want to give a voice to those who do not have it, to tell their story through images. Visual art was and still is in my daily pursuit to believe in myself: it is my vocabulary and my language.

Critical Review

TORONTO’. TRIALOGUE EXHIBITION BY | UNE EXPOSITION DE : SIMON M. BENEDICT, SONIA ROBERTSON CURATOR | COMMISSAIRE : GUY SIOUI-DURAND

TORONTO’. TRIALOGUE EXHIBITION, where the trees grow a history that is defined by the water that submerges us into another reality.

I was invited to the opening of the Toronto Trialogue Exhibition presented by Guy Sioui-Durand, a Wendat artist. An invitation that happened by chance when I arrived in this new city. It was during a hot summer evening that I headed for the opening. As I learned that night, YYZ’s intent is to exhibit work which is not being shown by commercial galleries. The room was filled by guests from LABO, Toronto’s francophone media arts center. I had the chance to meet the artist and talk with him about his exhibition and his ideas. I learned that in the Wendat language Toronto means “where the trees grow in the water”. He tells me about the meaning of water, as the city of Toronto is built on the history of flooding, and is crisscrossed by three major rivers (Humber, Don and Red).

In the small room where the exhibition is mounted, we find two elements: the images filmed in Lake Ontario and an archival work. For the first, we see the lake through a screen that is surrounded by a beaver skin, which comes from the Inu family of his wife. Not only are we submerged in the lake by the images, but also by the sound of the water. A sound that forges positive memories because it is a very peaceful sound of a calm lake, but which hides a great power. Then, the artist took me to see the archival work he did. Images that show us the history of Toronto, from the first inhabitants to today. The common thread are the flood images and the tradition of making beaver skin furs.

The artist asked me to put on the headphones. The music streamed in my mind. Traditional music of his community, percussion music. The images are punctuated with the music on another screen in the room. The song ends with a boom, created by a drum, and accompanied by a picture of a flooded tree. We can perceive the movement of the water that sneaks between the tree. A beautiful effect, which is worth watching.

This exhibition gives a voice to the history of these Canadian First Nations, which is sometimes forgotten by their own society. This is an exhibition on Toronto’s history that reminds us of Canadian roots, both in nature and in society. An exhibition that makes you think.

Extended Narrative

I.
I started to get into the world of dance at a very young age; when I was around 5 years old my parents signed me up for ballet. Being the kid that I was, ballet was not for me, so I stopped. Ironically, ballet is one of my favorite dances now, and I certainly enjoyed practicing it later on in my life.

II.
It was when I was in high school that I got involved with a dance troupe, a troupe that did Peruvian dances. The presentation of those dances was my favorite part: we would rent the typical costumes for the specific dances that we would perform. Getting ready for a show—the costume, the makeup, the stress—it was all so much fun for me.

It is never easy to put on traditional costumes, they are heavy and you have to tighten them up, you can barely breathe and you still have to dance like you are the most comfortable human being in the world at that time. For some reason I really enjoyed the pre-show rituals, knowing that behind the stage it is a mess, however the public is just there to enjoy a show, unaware.

III.
While I was in this troupe, I started going to a dance academy that had been opened by Vania Masias, a prima ballerina who was renowned in the ballet world. Her school, Los Angeles de D1, in Lima, Peru, had a great concept and I really admired it. You could take classes, as I did, in hip hop and jazz (and other dances) and you could also be part of the official troupe of the school.

The people in the troupe were mostly from shanty towns in Peru that did not have many resources. The troupe would give them an opportunity to do something with their lives, and have better opportunities, instead of getting into gangs or drugs. It is important to situate us in the reality of Peru, a very hierarchical country. The social classes are very divided and the only ones that have any opportunity to have a career are the ones at the higher end of Peruvian society.

There is a lot of racism and classism in the country, and it is rare that people from different social classes come together. Vania Masias, being herself from the upper class and educated in New York and Paris, brought to her school people from this same social level. If you could pay to go to this school, it probably meant that you had the money for it. But the people from the D1 troupe, the ones that did not pay, were also included as part of the program.

This is a private program, she started it on her own. I was there at the beginning, when the classrooms were in the backyard of her personal home. Now D1 is a very well-known institution and a very well-known program that has opened more local classrooms in other neighbourhoods in Peru. Of course, the neighbourhoods that they are in are the wealthier neighborhoods; otherwise people would not go to the school. It is easier to make people

from shanty towns come to the “rich neighborhoods”.

Again, this speaks a lot about Peruvian society. I know that her approach was to give more modern dance classes—as I mentioned, hip-hop, jazz, ballet— because this attracts a larger group of people. However, lately they have mixed modern dances with Peruvian dances to create a new flavour, which is great. Students in the program were always taking on our Peruvian heritage (and starting to have a feeling of being proud of our roots), but now are mixing in other types of dances, because that way we will not isolate ourselves from other forms of cultural expression.

It is hard to explain, but when you live in a country like Peru, that has such rich cultural background, sometimes it is easy to judge if you don’t embrace this culture. However, there is an ongoing discourse about the fact that just because I am Peruvian does not mean I only want to portray “Peru”. I think Vania Masias found a great balance, and at the end sharing and mixing different types of dances can only give people richer experience, and broaden the expressive range of their dance.

It was the first time, in this small space that people from all backgrounds came together, to dance, and perform. It was great to be able to have this experience. I got the chance to dance with very talented people and to share with amazing people that I know still dance in Peru and have made a career out of it.

From one part I was doing typical Peruvian dances, and from the other part I was doing more modern dances such as hip hop and jazz.

IV.

It was really at that time in high school that I fell in love with dance, and really every type of dance would trigger me in a positive way. This was also when I started doing ballet again, on my own, because I wanted to. There is no better form of dance than ballet in terms of the way it shapes the body and the posture. And I really think that a dancer looks better if they have had that practice. So I was really busy doing extracurricular dance lessons apart from school.

I honestly needed to move and be active, so I am very grateful that I could do this. I wanted to pursue dance as a career, so when my family decided to move back to Canada, we moved to Montreal and I applied for the dance program in a CEGEP, did the audition, got accepted and started a new stage in my life.

My family and I moved back to Canada because the education level and the opportunities here are better and cheaper than in Peru. Unfortunately, while Peru is such a rich and interesting country, like many other countries, people there have the idea that they need to go out of the country to have a better education.

So we did move, taking with me the most I could learn from this country; knowing that in a way my experience was that of

an upper society person with a foreign dad, which has such a positive prejudice in the country. And like everything in my life, there was this dichotomy of having the other reality coming from my mom, who herself comes from a shanty town, where my extended family still lives. It is considered a shanty town but they still have great conditions, they do not move out because they are comfortable, they are proud of where they come from and they believe in making their own country and neighborhood better.

In CEGEP we had a complete training; however, the main focus was contemporary dance, and for the first time I did not feel positive about this form of dance. It was too experimental, it did not go along with me. It felt a little too theatrical; I did not find my place. I started feeling bad, getting depressed, overly anxious and stressed, and I cracked. Oftentimes in life people talk about the pursuit of dreams, but maybe the breakup of dreams is not so much in people's discourse. But this is important, because it is part of life.

Maybe you had a dream sometime and later you realize it is not "that" anymore, you need to find something else. It was really then when I realized the importance of so-called dreams: maybe not as much the fulfillment of them, but the path to them.

When I did not have dance anymore, I lost my identity. Who am I? What do I do? and most importantly why did I fall? It was a hard moment for my self-esteem. Not to mention that I had a reverse culture shock, coming back to Canada after all those years away, in the country where I was born. It was hard: not to find myself with people, to feel alone, to be without a dream. I just felt like I did not make it. And the worst part is when you see your colleagues succeeding. Jealousy is not a nice feeling.

If my family decided to move back to Canada it was to have better opportunity for us; however, I feel like it backfired on me. I know it was hard also because it was hard seeing my mom struggling as an immigrant. Both of my parents made a lot of sacrifices for the family to make possible what they consider the best for us; so how unfair it was for me not to feel good. I know for a fact that I would not have had this identity crisis and this depression staying in Peru; however it was necessary to find my strength and to grow as a person. Even if everyday I miss Peru and I miss the richness of the culture, to hear music everywhere and be dancing all the time, I had to adapt to a new reality.

V.

After finishing my CEGEP degree I stopped dancing and started university. It was some time later, in my time of recovery, that I really felt the urge to dance again: I did consider Peruvian dances, but I turned to pole dance. Pole dance for me was a good way of getting in shape, because it takes a lot of strength. I really think it can take beautiful shapes and it is also a way of being sexy, letting that alter ego

of mine come out.

I really fell in love with this dance; even if I miss the typical Peruvian dances, pole dance really gives space to the imagination, and builds strength. You get to master the moves and you can create whatever you want.

Pole dance is a way of accepting your body and accepting a process of letting go. When you first come in a pole dance studio you realize that all the girls are not wearing a lot of clothing, and they are comfortable with it: you see every shape of body, and being comfortable enough with showing your body is a first step to take. Pole dance takes a level of mastering the body, as I said it can take beautiful shapes, but it also distorts the body in sometimes weird ways, and you have to accept that this is normal, and it is not less sexy. I have honestly seen every type of body up in a pole and it is great seeing how women and men gather courage to have confidence in their own bodies. It was a great step towards a new confidence. Letting the sexiness out is another step—it is inside of me, but this does not mean that if I have all the attention, I will be comfortable. The motto in my new pole dance studio is "strong is sexy", so it is empowering.

VI.

Starting any type of dance can be difficult, but because of all this dance training it is easy to adapt. All the kinesiology knowledge, the space the body takes, the concept of movement in the space and the rhythm, all of those years of practice, the tears, the pain, the frustration. make it easy to adapt to new ways of dancing. You create a muscle memory and new parts of the brain are working. It is really a dance where you can create.

It is not as a Peruvian dance, for example, where the movements are already set and what changes is the formation in space of the dancers. In pole dance you can play with the pole, with the floor, with a chair or just everything. It can be fast, slow, smiling or even not smiling. There can be a lot of power in a look or in a smile.

VII.

When I moved to Toronto, I had to find a new place to live, a new job and start a new school, and up there with my priorities was a pole dance studio. I found one, and my plan is to join one of the dance troupes. Right now, I have to go through a period of adaptation, new poles, new people, but for next year I am going to join the performing troupe. I am going to create some solos, just to prove to myself that I can do it.

VIII.

I really have an obsession with dance. It takes me to another place in my head, I love to imagine choreographies in my head. In CEGEP my favorite class was the one where you get to create a choreographed routine for your classmates. You choose the music, the

costume, everything. My choreography was selected for the final show, which was very rewarding. In this visual world that I've been exploring, this dance obsession cannot go away.

I think there are a lot of stories behind what dance can tell you about people. Some of these stories I know from people that I have danced with. What music, body and costume can do is just amazing. I feel like recording this, along with the stories of each person—this is really something I want to do.

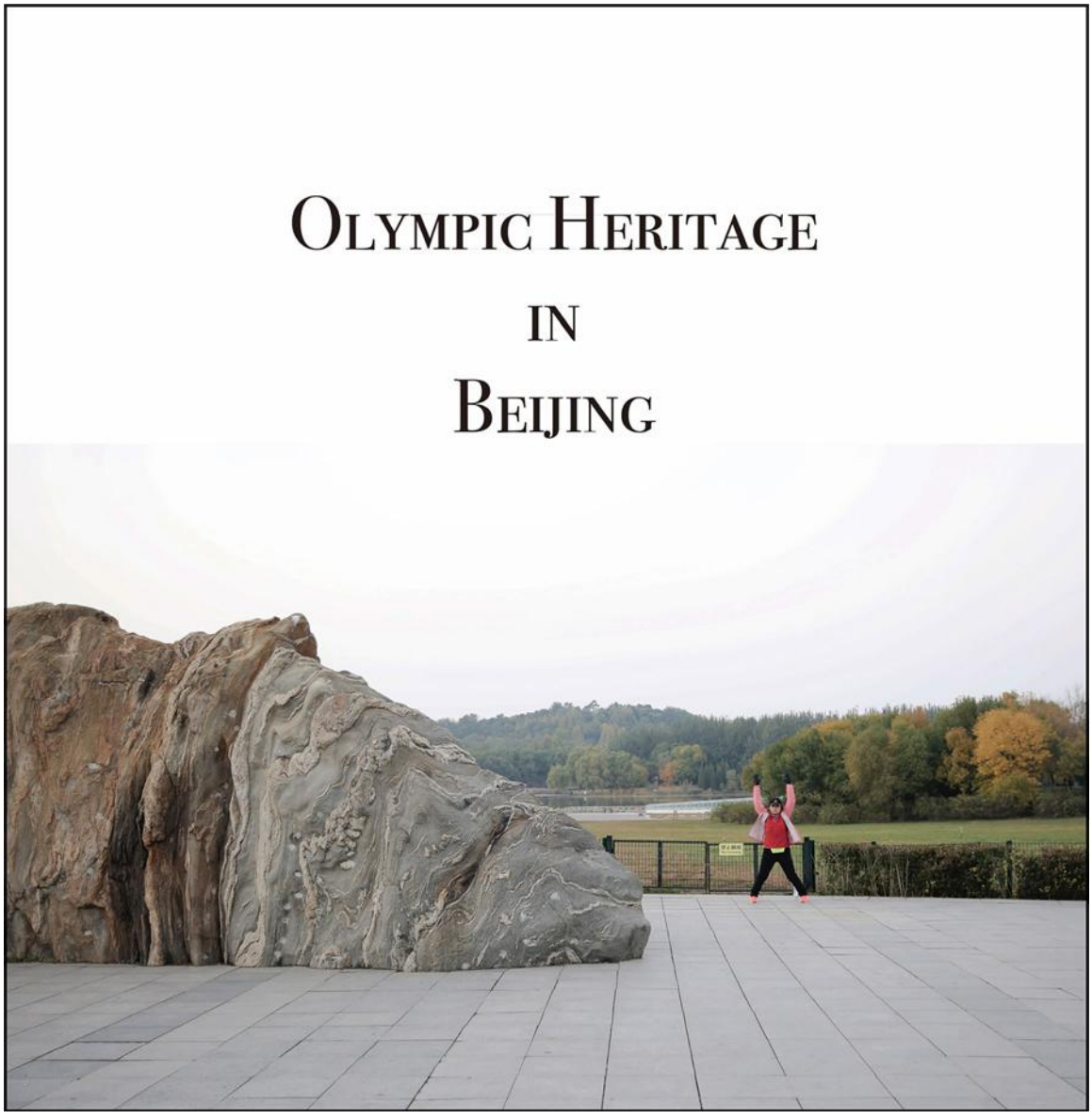
I do know the reason why I have not done it yet. Mostly because I have been working with other people, learning the visual world. But I enter this master's program with this in mind: I really want to tell some of those dancers' stories. I want to document the person behind the dance, then the story of the country, the story of the music, the story of the costumes. I honestly feel like this is also related to fashion. There is a whole world to be explored, and having explored it in one way, being the dancer, I want to explore it the other way, being its voice.

The project that I am thinking of doing is an installation in a gallery where I will have some pictures, both portrait and landscape, and I want a projection of the dance with the music. The dances in Peru are mostly outside during a festivity, there is a lot of room for beautiful shots. Within that, the thread of the story will be told by people, about what the dance means to them and how they got into it.

LINGYAN SONG
Artist Statement

The year 2018 is especially meaningful to me. Ten years after I became an adult, I made a decision that might affect my whole life: I left Beijing, where I have lived for ten years, and came to Canada to learn documentary.

During this period of living alone in Toronto, I have had the opportunity to ponder about my past. I realized that many important moments in my life have occurred in Beijing, and my views on the city have been changing. I used to yearn to stay there, but now I love it, and I hate it. Beijing is a highly complicated place, crowded and prosperous, unfriendly and warm, fashionable and conservative—all these seemingly contradictory words can be used to describe it. When I learned that I needed to make a photo book in the Fundamentals of Media class, it occurred to me that I wanted to do a book about Beijing.



The cover of Olympic Heritage in Beijing.

This is not an easy job. A more specific theme may be better, I thought of the Beijing Olympics. The 2008 Olympic Games were undoubtedly a significant event in Beijing. I still remember that when I went to Beijing to go to university in 2008, the entire city exuded vitality. China has invested a lot of money, manpower and resources in the Olympics, and the 16-day event was definitely a success.

Then what happened? I have witnessed the changes in Beijing during the decade after the Olympics. I believe that after ten years, the changes brought about by the Olympics are still evolving. They remain a legacy of Beijing and continue to influence the future of the city.

How is the Olympic Village today? What happened to the Olympic stadiums after the Olympics? What is the current condition of them? What influence did the Olympics have on Beijing? These were my concerns at the beginning of my book project. Since it was impractical for me to go back to Beijing, I decided to collaborate with Yin Xiyuan, a photographer who was also interested in this project. We made an agreement that I would make a shooting plan and be responsible for writing the text, and he would take the photos.

A multinational collaborative project then started, which is an entirely new experience for me. It is the first time for me to plan a photo book independently, while the photos in the book are not taken by me. I am more like an editor, researching, making shooting plans, choosing photos, writing text, editing, organizing, sequencing.

Soon, a problem arose. Yin Xiyuan took many beautiful architectural photographs of the Olympic venues, which were perfectly composed. But after a discussion in class, I felt that these photos were not enough for the book because of the lack of human stories.

After doing some research, I dug out the stories about Wali Town, a place demolished in 2003 to make way for the Olympic Village, forcing its residents to move. A person called Yang Delu built the Wali Museum to commemorate their lost community. I tried to get in touch with the director of Wali Museum and some of the people who used to live in the town; their stories have given me a new understanding of the Olympics.

The Olympics is not simply a sporting event. In the Olympic Games, athletes fight on behalf of their countries. At the same time, being able to host the Olympic Games can demonstrate the competence of a country and a city. At 10:10 p.m., on the evening of July 13, 2001, the 29th Olympic Games were awarded to Beijing. Instantly, Tiananmen Square was awash with red flags and the din of thousands of cheers. In the meantime, Wali Town, which was planned to be the site of the Olympic Village, had to prepare for total demolition.

The demolition work in Wali Town was very

The World of Dinosaurs Scientific Art Exhibition was held in the Bird's Nest. Beijing, China, 2018. Photograph / Yin Xiyuan

Before moving away. Beijing, China, circa 2003. Photographer Unknown, courtesy of the Wali Museum Collection.

efficient, and there was almost no resistance. Wali people had no choice, although no one would willingly leave the place where they have lived for generations. People who were used to being obedient just moved to other areas in tears, saying that they could sacrifice themselves for the country's honour. At that time, the idea of subordinating personal interests to national ones still dominated.

However, the people of Wali Town did not lose everything. Each household received a demolition payment according to the housing area which was enough for them to afford an apartment nearby. People in Wali Town were also given priority to work in the Olympic Village, so many peasants became employees of state-owned enterprises. With pensions and insurance, they have lived a more secure life. Their feelings about the Olympics, which have completely changed their destiny, are complicated: they have obtained some economic benefits, but lost their hometown and identity. No one knows if this is good or bad.

I thought about how to show this complexity in the book for a long time. Finally, I chose to use pictures and text to explain these stories, and the book was divided into four different chapters. The first chapter, New City Landmark, focuses on the most famous venues of the Beijing Olympics: Bird's Nest and Water Cube, describing their current conditions. After seeing these magnificent but cold buildings, the second chapter, Disappearing Wali Town, tells the story of this area. I was lucky enough to receive the help from Zheng Wei, who works for the Wali Museum; he generously provided some old photos, so that my book could show what the town used to look like. The third chapter is Wali Museum, containing some photos taken by Yin Xiyuan about this amazing personal museum. The fourth chapter, People and the Olympics, tells some personal stories related to the Olympics. I hoped this arrangement could give the whole book a sense of narrative.

Ten years later, average house prices in Beijing have risen about five times. The city is changing fast. More than 40 million people live there, looking for opportunities, chasing wealth, and realizing their dreams. By contrast, the experience of the people of Wali Town is insignificant. I hope this book might bring some comfort to them.

Na Heli stood in the position of his home where he used to live in Wali Town. Beijing, China, 2018. Photograph / Yin Xiyuan

Critical Review

Twenty Two: plain life, hidden pain

Last August, after I watched the documentary film Twenty Two at Jinyi cinema, I sat still in my seat with tears streaming down my face. I realized that I knew nothing about war, I knew nothing about pain.

During Japan's eight-year occupation of China (1937-1945) before and during World War II, around 200,000 Chinese women were forced into sexual slavery and designated as 'Comfort Women' by the Japanese military. Most of them were tortured to death or committed suicide due to the unbearable humiliation. Only very few survived.

As the film mentioned, according to the statistics of the China 'Comfort Women' Issue Research Centre, only 22 'Comfort Women' were still alive in mainland China by 2014, when the film started shooting. This is also why the film was named Twenty Two.

When the film began, I was prepared to experience twenty-two tragic stories, but half an hour later I knew I was wrong. There are no painful cries, no angry protests, no lyrical music in this film. It just presented the calm, ordinary lives of these old ladies, but I was still deeply moved.

The beginning of the film showed a traditional Chinese funeral in Shanxi Province, held to memorialize Chen Lintao (1921-2014), one of the 'Comfort Women' in World War II. Then the funeral host, Zhang Shuangbing, a retired teacher, who has helped these female victims in Shanxi province since 1982, told of the women's situation:

"Having endured unbearable pain and distress, they long to pour it all out. But obviously, no one can share this kind of pain. One would be relieved if she could speak out, but then there are those around her; she bears such a heavy burden in her heart. She is concerned for her children, so she dares not speak out."

From then on, other stories of these old ladies followed. Most of the time, their ordinary life was presented to the audience: they sat around, waiting in silence; they ate, fed cats, played with grandchildren. It was difficult for them to talk about sufferings in the past; once recalling the terrible experience, they seemed extremely pained by the memories.

One old woman said: "I have not mentioned anything to my kids, they are all grown up, I'll say no more. I'll take it to my grave." Another, living with her second son and daughter-in-law, chose not to appear in this film, fearing her past encounter would bring more trouble upon her current life.

中国幸存"慰安妇"生活现状纪录电影

二十二

TWENTY TWO

2017年8月14日 深情凝视

特别鸣谢：

张歆艺

29135位为本片公映众筹的民众

The film ended with the funeral of a 'Comfort Woman'. When the camera took a panoramic view of the snow-covered village, the picture froze. It was quiet and beautiful, just as if nothing had happened.

Twenty Two has quite a slow rhythm, using a lot of medium-distance and long shots, and in most of the time the audience could only hear ambient sound. Some people argued that it was too flat, that the story of 'Comfort Women' survivors should be more powerful. However, I prefer the film as it was.

Of course, the interviewers could have captured some "dramatic" moments by making a detailed inquiry about the inhuman treatments that those old ladies suffered. Had they taken that approach, I believe their painful expressions, trembling voices and frightened eyes could easily be shocking to people. The director knew this as well, but he didn't do that.

I appreciated the director's gentle, restrained way of telling these old women's stories. Since the victims were not willing to talk too much about their past, interviewers and recorders should not push them to recall any more than they wished to say. What's more, it is not meaningless to record how they spend each day. Once a person has experienced such tragedy and survived, her everyday life can also provide a perspective for us to watch history.

After Twenty Two was released in China last year, people asked Guo Ke, the director of the film, what his operating principle was when he interviewed these old ladies. He said: "I just treat each of them as my grandmother."

Twenty Two has had great influence in China: it eventually earned box office receipts of 170 million yuan. More importantly, many people began to pay attention to this issue and to try to help these old ladies. It is reported that the film was released in South Korea on August 14th.

Even now, I still recall this movie from time to time. I particularly remember what Wei Shaolan (a survivor from Guangxi Province) said:

"The world is so good, sustain your life to be witness to it, even if that means eating only wild vegetables."

I also remember what Chen Lintao said:

"I hope China and Japan can make peace with each other. No more wars. Once the war began, a lot of people would die."

As of November 2018, only six women in this film still survive, and it seems that they will never receive an apology.

A movie still-Wang Zhifeng, Fu Meiju, Li Meijin.

Extended Narrative

Anxious Mothers

——What have the Chinese middle class done for their children's education?

"Children can't afford to lose at the starting line." This saying profoundly affects Chinese parents. The idea of never falling behind has put a heavy burden on many parents and children. The pressure is more evident after the children go to school, and the current education system in China has made things worse.

Anxious mothers.

No Chinese mother I know is not anxious.

Wu Meng, whose baby was born 100 days ago, finds that her child's education is already a big headache for her family. She lives in Shunyi, a suburb of Beijing, with relatively backward public education resources, but a group of good private international schools. Wu Meng has carefully counted the expenses of two different kinds of schools, but then realized that her family can only choose public schools.

She is more worried about how to choose a kindergarten. At the end of 2017, two kindergarten child abuse incidents in China shocked the whole society. The two kindergartens involved were in Shanghai and Beijing, and they were all private kindergartens with relatively high prices. Children in Ctrip's day care center in Shanghai—the day care center looked after more than 110 children under the age of 3 and was affiliated with China's largest online travel company Ctrip, which is among a handful of companies in China that offer day care facilities for employees' children—were mistreated or abused by teachers according to the CCTV footage, including being slapped on the face, kicked and fed with wasabi. Some parents of children who attend the Red Yellow Blue kindergarten in Beijing's Chaoyang district said that they found needle marks on their children, and the children said they had been given unidentified pills and were sometimes forced to stand still or locked inside a dark room as punishment.

These two incidents have sparked outrage in China. The result is that many parents, including Wu Meng, have a sense of distrust of all kindergartens.

Wu Meng told me that in the future, she would send her child to a kindergarten with acquaintances, and try to develop a good relationship with the teachers in advance: "The only thing I can do is to ensure that my girl is not abused." Many kindergartens are now equipped with security cameras, and parents can watch surveillance at home. "My mother says she plans to watch the monitor when the child is in school."

Because her child is still young, Wu Meng only feels anxious occasionally, when she thinks about education issues. But my

cousin, Gloria Gao, with a daughter in the third grade of elementary school, is extremely anxious every day. This anxiety stems from the parents and children around her who are desperately running forward, and it also comes from her inner contradictions and struggles: she knows that children may be over-stressed, but she doesn't have other choices.

For most Chinese middle-class children, their duty before the age of 18 is taking the college entrance examination and gaining admission to a university. Graduating from a good university means that it is easier to find a good job and to ensure a better life in the future. Moving to a particular neighbourhood in order to land a seat at a sought-after public school has long been middle-class parents' choice for obtaining a high-quality education, because placement in many elementary schools is determined by home address. If the children can receive education in good primary schools and middle schools, their chances of being admitted to a prestigious university will be much higher. For example, Haidian District in Beijing, which is home to the best high schools and universities in China, is one of the most popular education districts in Beijing.

However, moving to houses in good school districts, which are the highest-priced houses in Beijing, is not a breeze. The price of some is close to 100,000 yuan ($20,000 Canadian) per square meter, and unfortunately, most of these houses are old, with adverse living conditions. But parents are willing to do whatever it takes to get their children into a good school, so many families squeeze into smaller apartments. My former colleague Zeng Xuemei is an example: her family of three moved to an old, 60-square-meter apartment near a good school. The result is that their living conditions are getting worse, but the pressure on mortgages is even higher.

In this aspect, Gloria had good foresight. In 2012, when Wendy was about 2 years old, she chose a school district with good corresponding elementary and junior high schools. They spent 5.1 million yuan ($0.97 million Canadian) on a 280-square-meter loft apartment, which is now worth 15 million yuan ($2.85 million Canadian). This means that if the house price remains stable, they can sell the house and get a considerable sum of money when Wendy goes to college in the future; the price may be higher than the lifetime salary of the couple themselves.

But this does not bring much comfort to Gloria at present. She is now in a state of high anxiety because of her daughter's current academic performance. Wendy is still too young and ignorant to have a strong sense of competition. In last week's math test, she got a score of 63, which made Gloria quite worried, because she heard that some children in the same class had achieved a score of 90 or more. She was so anxious that she could not sleep at night.

Wendy. Photograph by Gloria

Gloria notices that when Wendy is doing her homework, she always makes repeated small mistakes in either mathematical calculation or the spelling of English words, so there is a gap between her and other children with good grades in the same class. Gloria told me that sometimes she even wondered if there is something wrong with Wendy's intelligence. This idea really shocked me because in my mind Wendy is a lively and smart little girl. I think maybe she is just not good at exams.

Gloria's anxiety makes her often unable to control herself, and she can get angry with Wendy when tutoring her. But each time after she loses her temper she will calm down, and she realizes that the learning burden of children is too heavy now. In addition to school homework, almost every child has to go to extracurricular tutoring classes. The knowledge is sometimes too challenging for them. These poor children have no time to play or to do outdoor sports, they are so occupied in schoolwork.

Sometimes, Gloria thinks that she should not push her girl so much, but she will soon deny this idea. Gloria knows that if she spoils Wendy, she will quickly fall behind, and it is impossible to catch up with others in the future, because other children are running forward with 120% effort every day.

Therefore, even if she knows the exam-oriented education may kill children's creativity, Gloria feels she has no choice: "I dare not fall behind too much, and I dare not stop."

Powerful tutoring classes.

Sending children to extracurricular tutoring classes has become a mainstream practice for many parents because the knowledge children acquire at school is not enough for them to cope with exams. It has become a competition for parents to find a good tutoring class for their children, and this causes mounting anxiety among parents.

As a chemistry teacher in middle school, Kan Yanxia has witnessed the education reform and the rise of Chinese education companies. It is her impression that student textbooks changed a lot after the textbook reform in 2008. From then on, if students only study textbooks, they can't cope with the exams. They have to turn to companies that offer tutoring services for help. So, Kan Yanxia even suspects that the institution that led the textbook reform has secretly colluded with these companies.

TAL Education Group is a holding company for a group of companies engaged in the provision of after-school tutoring programs for primary and secondary school students in China, and the Xueersi Peiyou small-classes course is one of the most popular programs of the company. Kan Yanxia observed that in Guangzhou, Xueersi Peiyou is able to predict the type of question that will be most difficult on the middle school entrance exam every year. This makes the students

flock to the company.

Some tutoring programs in Beijing can even directly guarantee that children with outstanding academic performances will be admitted early into a good middle school. In 1998, Beijing announced that the middle school entrance exam was cancelled and students would be assigned through random computer allocation. However, in order to stay ahead, good schools try to enroll in advance students with good performance. They cooperate secretly with some tutoring institutions and pick students from there. Parents also realize that children can be assigned to schools with poor quality education if they choose to take a chance, so many of them go to tutoring companies to win places. This is definitely a violation of regulations and is a complicity between tutoring companies and schools, as well as parents.

Zeng Xuemei told me that when the children were about to attend middle schools, their parents behaved like spies: they exchanged whispers with each other. For example, tutoring companies have different kinds of classes, some called dragon classes and tiger classes; if a student is admitted into such classes, it means that there is a greater chance of being selected by good schools in advance. If a child is lucky enough to be admitted by a school, the parent will receive a phone call. The teacher on the phone will say: "Welcome to our school." Then the parents know they have come ashore, which means they won the competition this time.

An essential standard for tutoring companies to select good students is their performance in the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), which is often seen as the best evidence of a student's academic capabilities. It is ridiculous that almost all children in the Haidian District of Beijing go to the IMO course, even though people know that it is not suitable for everyone.

In the IMO class, parents and students need to attend classes together because the teacher will talk a lot, and parents must concentrate on taking down notes. After class, parents have to continue to tutor their children, for they are not able to understand everything that was presented. In some families of working couples, grandparents take this responsibility. Gloria knows an elderly lady in her 60s who has been attending an IMO course for three years with her granddaughter.

The IMO question has its own unique way of thinking and solving problems, but many children are too young to understand the principles. They have to deal with the questions by applying formulas by rote. However, solving the problem is the ultimate goal of tutoring companies and some parents. Kan Yanxia attended the IMO class in Guangzhou with her daughter twice, and she dropped out without hesitation.

"I went crazy after experiencing the class. The teacher just demonstrated all

A selfie taken by Kan Yanxia and Guo Yan

the knowledge without detailed explanations. I noticed that some children could understand but some couldn't. I then asked other parents what if their children were still puzzled after class, and their solution is — sending them to other tutoring classes. Each IMO lasts three hours, and I can't stand it, not to mention the children." As Kan Yanxia mentioned, children in the IMO classes have become machines for solving math problems. "This is a very clumsy learning style, it not only wastes time but can also destroy children's interest in learning."

As a teacher, Kan Yanxia has a natural vigilance about tutoring companies. "School teachers have a mission to impart knowledge, but those institutions are profit-oriented. Tutoring companies are aimed at improving students' exam grades in a short time; this kind of desire for quick success and instant benefits is not in line with the natural laws of education. Also, the companies have a purpose of making parents keep paying fees."

Kan Yanxia's only daughter, Guo Yan, is a second-year student in the Affiliated High School of South China Normal University, the best high school in Guangdong Province. She is a promising student with outstanding academic performance, but Kan Yanxia is getting stressed out as the college entrance examination approaches. She has not let her daughter attend any tutoring companies, and no parent around her does this either. She is taking risks, worried that this will have an adverse influence on Guo Yan's exam results. Kan Yanxia has to keep an eye on her daughter's learning situation at all times, and once the child encounters a problem that cannot be solved, she must help her find a solution; but sometimes she fails, and she says, "I feel so desperate, thinking about giving up."

If the children study in public schools, few middle-class parents can make the same choice as Kan Yanxia. Most of them are not able to fight against group pressure, even if they know the hazards of the tutoring companies. "In fact, some parents are spending money to buy psychological comfort, they keep doing useless things, like Sisyphus," Zeng Xuemei says.

Another way.

Some parents choose to abandon public education, send their children to international schools or help them apply to study abroad.

Wang Fang, who used to live in Taiyuan, the capital city of Shanxi Province, planned to send her daughter to study abroad when the child was in elementary school. After years of consideration and preparation, she came to Canada with her 14-year-old daughter Emily last year. Wang Fang quit her job and became a study mother in Toronto to take care of her daughter.

Leaving home, separating from her husband and not good at English, Wang

Fang countered many difficulties when she first came. But she did not regret it, believing it is a better choice for Emily to leave China.

As a teacher of Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, Wang Fang's husband knows the situation of Chinese universities very well. He observes a lot of students in college neglecting their studies because they want to relax after 9 years of hard work. Some students without self-control even indulge themselves in the Internet or computer games. He does not want his daughter to follow this path, and insists on sending her to study abroad.

To his relief, Emily adapted well to the new school in Canada. She is currently studying at White Oaks Secondary School in Oakville, preparing to apply for the school's International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme and hoping to go to college in the USA. She keeps in touch with some friends in China and finds that her English has improved rapidly, although she is unable to keep up with the mathematics. Wang Fang finds that the mathematics questions Emily is dealing with here are almost as difficult as those of the primary school in China.

Wang Fang remembered that when she was in China, many mothers around her had the idea of sending their children to study abroad, but most of them were puzzled about how to choose the right time and place. Some children are too young to separate from their parents, and they may suffer a lot.

A friend of my husband, Jun, has recently started thinking about sending his 11-year-old son to study abroad. On the one hand, he can't tolerate the smog: it seems that China's air pollution could not be improved in the short term. On the other hand, he is very disgusted with the political propaganda at school. I can understand him because I remember that when I was in elementary school, we were instilled with the idea that "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China". The education in patriotism has continued throughout high school. Until I went to college, and I learned a lot about the historical truth by reading books searching the Internet, I realized that what I was taught before was maybe one-sided or even wrong.

My husband and I don't want our child to repeat our experience. So, this year, I came to Canada to study and take the first step to challenge myself. I hope I can stay and my son can grow up here. I don't know whether this is right or wrong. We are faced with many challenges: my son may not be willing to learn Chinese in the future, there may be a cultural gap between us, and he may experience an identity crisis. But if I stay in China, I have seen my future from the mothers I mentioned. I don't want to be like that, so I choose an unknown future.

FRANK STARK
Artist Statement

One day in class, my Grade five teacher, Miss Robinson, asked me: “Frank, you are a good artist. Which of these two drawings is better?” I chose one. “You are wrong,” she said. It was many years until I considered art again, except to hang on my wall or to appreciate my children’s work.

In the meantime, I became a university professor. As a teacher and scholar, I approached the issues I taught and wrote about African politics, Canadian politics and communications, and more recently, social policy-from an intellectual perspective. My approach has been descriptive and analytical. The academic audience, using the medium of the pen or word processor is a small one. Book length and article length text is the form my work has taken.

It might be noted that text alone does not serve intellectual purposes. As poetry, literature or theatre, textual forms can elicit intellectual and emotional responses to varying degrees and in varying proportions, but for the most part, apart from a bit of poetry, my text has been used in an intellectual way.

After many years of academic life, two things occurred almost simultaneously. In the first place, I became a photographer, not having touched a camera for a long time. The second occurrence was that I began to acknowledge the emotional part of my character. When I linked the two together, I became an "artist" again. I also had a way of communicating with a wider audience using my camera than I ever did in academic journals.
This did not mean that I lost my mind. My continuing education has been to balance mind and emotion relating to subjects that engage me, both with images and text.

This effort has been given a structure and a label. I call it Action and Images, and have gone so far as to register its name in a legal way. By Action and Images: first, text itself about a given subject; second, the combination of text and photography; and third, photography on this topic that can stand by itself as "art" photography. The model can apply to different social issues that particularly engage me.

I am still learning about this framework, and embracing photography, including practical questions. What kind of photography needs written commentary? What kind of photography can stand by itself, with what benefits and what sacrifices? Not least, how can this "Ideas and Images" model be used to communicate or advocate about issues in ways that could have some positive social benefit?

To use a combination of text and images for eliciting both intellectual and emotional response to social issues is not new. Documentary photographers speak of emotion. For example, in 2009 David DuChemin wrote in Within the Frame: The Journey of Photographic Vision that "we shoot things that move us in ways that will move others, and W. Eugene Smith said: "What's the use of having a great depth of field if there is not an adequate depth of feeling?" Having and eliciting emotion is part of the photographers' daily activity. For my intended use, however, it does not mean "pushing buttons" in such a way that intelligence and reflection are overwhelmed. To quote Kenneth Burke from his 1969 A Rhetoric of Motives:

Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man [or woman] only insofar as he [she] is free. This is good to remember, in these days of dictatorship and near-dictatorship. Only insofar as men are potentially free, must the spellbinder seek to persuade them.

Yes, Miss Robinson, I am an artist. As a documentary photographer, I am also a truth teller. My primary role is to share thoughts and feelings with my fellow men and women, and try to persuade them about the issues that may concern us both.

Critical Review
Fantasyland by Kurt Andersen

Introduction

What is truth? What is reality? These old questions have taken on new meaning in the age of Trump. As Kurt Andersen tells us in his book Fantasyland: How America Went Haywire, A 500 Year History, these questions are important in a broader social, political and cultural sense for both the contemporary United States, and for all of us. This review will consider Andersen's argument, and then apply questions of truth and reality in relation to documentary photography.

Andersen's Argument

Andersen sees both religious and secular factors affecting the balance between fantasy and reason in American history. First, he makes two basic points about American religion. The United States has been a refuge for more radical sects, including the Puritans. Andersen traces the development of Christian "fundamentalism," and its evolution into "evangelicalism." From his personal perspective, the Bible is a book of stories and fables that is not to be taken seriously as fact. He sees a dichotomy; a reasonable position about the supernatural on the one hand, and ingrained religious fantasy on the other.

An important secular influence on the balance between fantasy and reason stems from the importance of show business in the United States, including early examples such as the showmen, Buffalo Bill Cody and P.T. Barnum. As media of communications changed, news became less thoughtful, more fragmented, and more oriented to entertainment. Andersen refers to Neil Postman's 1985 book, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business to support his argument.

While he sees a period of greater reason after the Second World War, Andersen argues that new kinds of secular irrationality in the 1960s and '70s. These include what Andersen considers intellectual relativism. Andersen points out that academic arguments such as Thomas Kuhn's description of competing paradigms in his 1967 book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, and the idea that reality is socially constructed, seem to encourage fantasy thinking, and undermine the notion of scientific truth. These positions vis a vis social science epistemology pull Andersen into epistemological debates. In this context, his reality-fantasy dichotomy resembles Cartesian dualism (mind over body, rational over irrational) and his faith in rationality and science seems a variety of "positivism" (the application of the methods of natural science to the human and social sciences and history).

Lastly, Andersen deals with the notion of "alternative facts," in the Trump administration and the growing notion that feeling or wanting something legitimizes

its reality. For Andersen, the balance has been tipped towards fantasy.

Truth and Reality in photography

Debates about Cartesian dualism and positivism are also an important part of the discussion of truth and reality in photography, as argued by A. Sekula, in her 1986 article "Photography Between Labour and Capital":

The hidden imperatives of photographic culture drag us in two contradictory directions, toward "science" and a myth of "objective truth" on the one hand, and towards 'art" and a cult of "subjective experience" on the other. This dualism haunts photography, lending a certain goofy inconsistency to most commonplace assertions about the medium.

In this dichotomy, "realists" suggest that truth in photography has two characteristics. First, it is based on a mechanical and chemical technology which eliminates cultural influence and intentions. Second, digital techniques are synonymous with subjective artificiality.

Sarah Kember objects, arguing that this position represents technological determinism. Second, both she and Martin Lister see the realist position as not without its own cultural background in the scientific method of the Enlightenment, including Cartesian dualism. It also "resonates with positivistic beliefs about the facts of a situation being transparently clear to us when open to inspection by vision," as argued by Martin Lister in a 2003 article: "Extracts From Introduction to the Photographic Image in Digital Culture". Before digital there was also photography as art, and as advertising and corporate publicity. Further, both Kember and Lister suggest that photography as a broader medium contains a range of technological, social, and historical influences.

With respect to contemporary documentary photographers, Erika Balsom asserts in her 2017 Eflux article "The Reality Based Community," an aim to create documentary films in the context of a "reality-based community."

Have you heard that reality has collapsed? Post-truth politics, the death of facts, fake news, deep-state conspiracies, paranoia on the rise.... Against this rhetoric, a different proclamation: I want to live in the reality-based community. It is an imagined community founded in a practice of care for this most fragile of concepts.

Conclusions

One learns that good storytelling can demand dichotomies between good and evil, one end of a continuum against another. This method is effective in the dramatic depiction; in Andersen's case, of the danger of an increasing dominance of an irrational discourse in the United States. The risk for Andersen is taking refuge in an epistemological extreme.

Extended Narrative

Photographic Options and Choices

There are many choices that affect our lives and "careers." in his famous poem, Robert Frost said that he took "the path less travelled by, and that has made all the difference." Sometimes we take one path or another, and they do indeed lead to different places and different opportunities.

The Documentary Media Program has an emphasis on video and film making. As a photographer who shoots still images, I am confronted with the possible choice of leaving still photography and becoming a film maker, or continuing to focus on still photography. This essay is an attempt to reason this question through, partly in the contexts of choices made in the past.

I am going to label the first set of choices as academic and intellectual choices taken at the university level, both undergraduate and graduate. These choices are outlined first, then the choice to be a photographer, and then the choice posed as a question whether to be a still photographer or a filmmaker. A framework for discussion of this choice is proposed; and then the question of time in still photography and in film making is outlined using this framework. Finally, a conclusion is attempted.

I. Academic and intellectual choices

I graduated from university in Modern History, and then was admitted to the Department of History at Northwestern University in Chicago (Evanston Campus) for an M.A. programme leading to a Ph.D. with a special interest in African Studies. Because there were no courses available in contemporary African history, I switched to the programme in Political Science on the strength of my GRE scores. This was a first important choice.
I enjoyed my first year, and went to Nigeria in the summer afterwards the first year of the M.A.-Ph.D. programme, where I travelled in Biafra during the civil war there, and travelled widely in Nigeria as a whole. I changed my focus from Nigeria to its geographical neighbor Cameroon for my dissertation research, and ultimately spent a year in that country.

There were, however, tensions in the Political Science programme. One was that twice as many American students had been admitted as expected because those exposed to the draft enrolled in universities to try to avoid it. That meant, as one professor put it, "you or the person next to you will be here next year."

The other tension was an epistemological one. In brief, "behavioralism," (the application of the statistical models and positivist assumptions to the study of social and political life) was the dominant approach, and it bordered on religious orthodoxy. Those students who embraced projects using these approaches became a favoured "in" group.

Although I learned this perspective, there were aspects of it that bothered me. The structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons and others upon which it was based, is an inherently conservative one, concerned with the cohesion of society through integrative institutional norms. It was, I considered, a model consistent with American empire. Perhaps also it was my background in the philosophy of history, and exposure to alternative to positivist notions of explanation that led me away from positivist orthodoxy. Whatever the reasons, I decided to follow a different epistemological route.

The University of Chicago had been the home of what came to be known as the Chicago School of Sociology in the 30s and early 40s. With Park and others as its spokesmen, it was reform- oriented, and admitted the notion of conflict. Part of the intellectual foundation of this group was built on the work of George Herbert Mead, including a compilation of his lectures published in 1934 after his death titled Mind, Self, and Society. This approach partly focused on "significant" symbols in "communicative interaction." In short, I decided to do my doctoral research on symbols in social and political communication in Cameroon. This was a new and distinctly minority approach. This division based on epistemology was to last into my Canadian academic life, as Americans avoiding the draft, and others trained in American universities were hired by Canadian universities keen to adapt the "new" quantitative approaches.

I taught for many years in departments of Political Science and Sociology, switching from African politics to Canadian politics and social policy issues as my focus, and continuing my interest in political communication and qualitative research methodology. I wrote articles on not only on African politics, but also Harold Innis' relationship to the Chicago School of Sociology - he had little, in spite of what some have claimed - and a 1966 book entitled Communicative Interaction, Power and the State: A Method.

In my work on symbols of political communication, I became interested in the concept of rhetoric. There has been something of a revival of the concept of rhetoric in a more contemporary setting than strict rules of discourse, a literature sometimes called "New Rhetoric," which includes Kenneth Burke. Functionally, rhetoric is described by Burke as the use of words to change the actions and attitudes of others. I would add symbols and images here. Rhetoric might also be considered as a continuum with persuasion at one end and propaganda at the other, based on the degree of reflection encouraged. To quote Burke's A Rhetoric of Motives again, "Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man [or woman] only insofar as he [she] is free" This is good to remember, in these days of dictatorship and near-dictatorship. Only insofar as men are potentially free, must the spellbinder seek to persuade them."

I have studied, and been involved with, political rhetoric, defined in Burke's terms. I have been concerned with questions of "national unity" in both Africa

(Nigeria and Cameroon) and Canada; countries divided by ethnic and linguistic groupings. I have also studied the political symbols attached to the various aspects of poverty, including "Access to Justice", and "Social Determinants of Health."

My anti-poverty activism has also involved me with rhetoric in various ways through campaigns and publications, and as an advocate for organizations that deal with poverty issues in the face of neo -conservative government cuts. Linking activism and teaching, my last teaching position was in the School of Social Work at Laurentian University in Sudbury. After this position was cut by administrative financial retrenchment, I stayed in Sudbury for several years, doing social and economic research.

Kenneth Burke's notion of the drama as a humanist metaphor for social life and activity serves as a context or platform for rhetoric. Dramas often contain rhetoric, when actors try to persuade others in various ways.

Shakespeare's lines,

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. (As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII)

may be applied in a more abstract and academic way. Burke's "dramatistic" model (his term) carries with it some terminology that includes the elements of a drama: actors, agency, purposes, attitudes setting, and action. It also refers to aspects of time in the drama, acts and scenes in the action as a whole. In short, a drama can be broadly defined as action when its elements are present: there are actors who have purposes and attitudes, that use some kind of agency to achieve their purposes, and do so in some identifiable activities that we can call "action." I see it as a contest of symbols used as means to actors' ends.

There is a last subject, one that I will call "practicalities."' This is the form of the academic work that I have done, and its real or potential audience. I wrote books and articles for a small academic audience. It was nice to have publications, but in the academic world they tend to mean more on your CV than they do to many people.

Before addressing my personal choice between "still photography" and "film making" - these are inexact descriptors - l would like to beg the indulgence of the reader while I consider some of the concepts noted above; namely symbols, rhetoric, and drama, in relation to both still photography and film making. But first I it is necessary to introduce the topic of affect or emotion.

II. Photographic life and options

It was in Sudbury that I was introduced to photography by a friend. I bought a point- and- shoot camera, and started to photograph northern Ontario subjects, in-

photograph northern Ontario subjects, inspired by Harold Innis' work, especially Settlement on the Mining Frontier, a little- known study that he wrote in 1936.

My photography has been influenced by a book that my daughter gave me on a recent Christmas. In Within the Frame: The Journey of Photographic Vision (2009), the Canadian photographer David duChemin wrote,

Shooting from the heart and telling the visual stories you love and care about is the first step in making your viewers care. If we do not tell stories in a way that people care about, we've failed. We've failed to create an image that connects on some level, failed to pull the viewer into the frame, and show them something new. That doesn't mean we shoot only those things that others want to see. It means we shoot the things that move us in ways that move others.

Shooting the things we care about is not an academic point. Not only is it a question of learning how to shoot what we care about, but it also involves knowing what we care about in the first place. That requisite understanding and learning experience means admitting, and even exploring, the reality of caring itself, and how that applies to the photographic projects we undertake. For me, this exploration has been part of an exercise in emotional awareness that has been an important part of an effort to balance mind and emotion, intellect and affect. This applies to whatever kind of photography one chooses.

Symbols and photography

In my academic work, I used notions of symbols in communicative action adapted from George Mead, and a perspective that admits the social construction of reality though the use of language use. However, I have not embraced the kind of semiology advocated by Roland Barthes. This is a more "structuralist" approach than I prefer. Nor am I going to adapt a semiological approach to symbols in photography either in still photography or film making - except to say that there is a symbolic language that can be applied to photography, even if I don't treat it in the same way that Barthes does.

Rhetoric and photography

Considering documentary film making in relation to rhetoric, we only need to remember Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will, or Grierson's documentary movement in the Britain of the thirties, or his influence on the National Film Board, and the NFB's Challenge for Change series to help to expose and alleviate poverty between 1967 and 1979. Grierson used the word "propaganda" to describe his work and the work of the NFB to foster social improvement. Just considering whether Grierson's rhetoric was "propaganda" or "persuasion" as discussed in the section above, the important question is whether it encouraged reflection. It is fair to say that was an intention, evident in the Challenge for Change series with its emphasis on film with the people as well as to and for the people, conversation, and community self expression; partly through video camera use.

What about rhetoric and still photography? In her book, Photography and Society, published in 1980, the photographer Gisele Freund has a chapter entitled "Photography as a political tool." In it, she lists a range of ways that a photography taken for non-political reasons can be re-labeled in various places for different political purposes, or a photograph with one intention may be portrayed as exhibiting the opposite point of view. She talks about calculated juxtaposition of photographs for contrast - perhaps one of the rich beside one of the poor. There are photographic advertising campaigns for political purposes, and the glorification of diminution of political figures through photographs that can make them look capable or ridiculous, depending on camera angle. There are fake photographs that construct scenes that did not exist or remove people from scenes in which they are present. With respect to war photography, there are other techniques. These include self- censorship of, and efforts not to make a war unpopular for the general public. This latter effort that ultimately failed in Vietnam, leading to some politicians blaming the media for the American failure there.

How can a still photographer make a positive effect on social and political life? "Few photojournalists can impose their points of view, Freund notes. She uses the interesting example, of the refusal of Magnum photographers to allow the character and intentions of a photographic project entitled World Youth to be altered by one publisher, by selling the project to another who would not change it.

As useful as Freund's book might be for outlining the obvious ways of using photographs politically, she does not deal with how photographers can encourage reflection about social and political change in a contemporary age of digital media.

Time in photography:
Drama, story, narrative

When we are beginning at photography, most of us, myself included, take still pictures of things: buildings, sunsets, trains, pretty things, ugly things; things. (Some of us still do.) It is also possible to take photos of people as objects. I have noticed, however, that both film makers and still photographers also take photographs in relation to time. Theses images tell stories, create dramas, or offer narratives about time.

Almost by definition, a film or video deals with time. Documentary films generally use drama as a model. They have actors who do something that is recorded by the camera, perhaps with a purpose, and in the context of some kind of background or setting, be it economic, geographic, or political; but inevitably temporal. In fact, the "dramatic" is considered an important kind of narrative for documentary films, certainly by Grierson.

For Grierson this word 'treatment' or dramatisation (also sometimes referenced as 'interpretation') "reflects the documentarist's desire and willingness to use the material of actuality to create a dramatic narrative. Grierson knew that

the 'actual world of our observation' could be filmed and structured to be dramatic along such lines," says Brian Winston in his 1986 The Documentary Film Book. Winston also speaks of chrono-logic in documentary films, constructing the film to run apparently for the direction of a period of time, most commonly a day, sometimes with the model of a journey, ending with a "well- defined cultural ending." He concludes that "Narrative is never absent in documentary film.' It is the essential factor demarking documentary from surveillance; it is a crucial determinant of documentary creativity."

If we use the drama to shape such a narrative in documentary film, we can utilize the concepts of acts and scenes as subdivisions in the internal movement of the action. Considering film making through the lens of a model based on the drama, film making seems to capture every moment of every scene. Even if the scene to scene, act to scene, or scene to act relationships do not have to be linear, the whole narrative often tends to follow a path that builds to a climax, even in documentary film.

The drama's portrayed in photography are influenced by self expression or subjective judgement, but may also be an attempt at truth telling; to portray a drama that actually exists in society. Social problems or issues are not shown in an abstract way, but with reference to people in time and space.

Can we consider notions of narrative and drama to be relevant in still photography, and can we consider still photography and film making from a perspective that uses drama as a model? First, we might consider if still photography captures "time," before considering whether this can be seen in dramatic terms.

To me, the remarkable thing about Cartier-Bresson's photography is that does consider both the subject photographed, and also action of subjects "in time." He is photographing action that concerns the subject in an instant; an event in a moment.

There is a difference between the titles of Cartier-Bresson's book in French and in English. The book was published concurrently in both languages, but let us deal with the French title first, Images à la Sauvette. I consulted with Bruno Lessard, Director of the program, about the meaning of the expression, "à la sauvette." He described the meaning of this title as follows:

In French, the emphasis is on "sauvette" - a noun deriving from the reflexive verb "se sauver", which means to flee the scene, to leave a scene hastily, that kind of thing. So the title means "images that were made extremely quickly, while the photographer was leaving the scene", so to speak. The French title has to be read as "Images [faites/made] à la sauvette..." The original emphasizes the photographer in motion.

In relation to time, the focus is on the photographer's time, the time it takes to make the image.

When we consider the title of the book in English, The Decisive Moment, given to the book by the American publisher, the emphasis is on the moment the image is taken, which is said to be "decisive. "This refers to the photographer's ability to press the shutter at the right - decisive - moment." in what I see as the "action" being photographed. The subject becomes an "actor," in an ongoing event rather than just a passive participant.

Two kinds of time are implied, the time of the photographer taking the photo, and the decisive time that the action of the photograph is captured. Cartier-Bresson's photography seems to be dealing with events, some short- term, such as his photo of the man reflected in the water that he attempts to jump over; others medium- range, perhaps the photo of people having lunch by the Seine; and some as part of longer drama of distress or war.

If Cartier-Bresson is associated with "the decisive moment," Robert Frank writes about the "humanity" of the moment. In his book The Americans he portrays people in the context of more than their individual lives, as part of American society. This is a moment in American culture, but it is explicitly a moment.

Using the drama as a model for still photography, perhaps still photographers capture scenes or bits of scenes in "snapshots," with previous scenes or parts of scenes as temporal setting.

Many photographers do not like the term "snapshot." For them, it speaks to the casual photos that people take of their children at birthday parties or at the beach. It must be admitted, however, that these are family dramas being captured. Is a war photo a snapshot? Is a photograph of a sunset a snapshot of time as the sun descends behind the horizon? Is a photo of the execution of a Viet Cong prisoner a snapshot?

This raises a question of the opposition of beauty and truth telling. In her 1973 book On Photography Susan Sontag on describes these opposing concepts as:

beautification, which comes from the fine arts, and truth telling, which is measured not only by a notion of value-free truth, a legacy from the sciences, but a moralized ideal of truth telling, adapted from nineteenth-century literary models and from the (then) new profession of independent journalism. Like the post-romantic novelist and reporter, the photographer was supposed to unmask hypocrisy and combat ignorance.

Perhaps we can speak of a "continuum" in photography, both still and moving, between photography that situates beautiful "artistic" scenes for their own aesthetic sake at one end, and photography that captures ongoing social and political life in the name of truth telling at the other. At the "truth telling" end, the concept of time is part of the context because the photographer is concerned with capturing an aspect or moment of an event or story. This can be social, political or personal. Between the extremes is a middle ground; photography that

attempts to be artistic, while dealing with social activity (broadly conceived) at the same time. This essay focuses mostly on this end of the continuum concerned with social activity without denying that it can also produce "art."

Lastly, to deal with practical issues, there are two kinds of subjects to consider. One is the technology in use for still photography and film making. The other mirrors the issue mentioned at the end of the section on academic life: - the audience to which photographs and films are addressed. In short, cameras for film making have evolved from 16mm without sound synchronization to 16 and 35 mm film cameras with sound synchronism. It has also moved from Portapack video cameras with half inch tape capturing black and white images to smaller dedicated digital video cameras, and more recently, hybrid still and video cameras capable of 4K footage, although professional videographers use dedicated equipment.

Cameras for still photography have moved from film cameras of various sizes, most notably over the past 75 years, to 35mm cameras for street photography. In the digital age, a range of sensor formats has appeared, including 35mm equivalent DSLRs, and more recently mirrorless cameras with video capabilities.

I bought a point and shoot camera about 10 years ago. When it died of water damage, I had a choice whether to buy another camera, and what kind of camera to select if I did. I chose a Panasonic G1, the first mirrorless camera on the market, with a micro four-thirds sensor format that allows for smaller and lighter - and more unobtrusive - lenses and camera bodies than traditional DSLRs from Canon or Nikon. This format permits cameras about the same size as the classic Leicas that Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank used, with better dynamic range and image quality than their 35mm film cameras.

The other practical issue is audience. Both film making and still photography provide wider audiences than academic books and papers have. It is also potentially a more varied audience, from different walks of life.

III. Choosing between still photography and film making.

All of this background - my personal academic history; my photographic life; and application of some of the notions I have carried over from my intellectual life to photography -has been provided as a context to assist me to articulate an argument for deciding on whether to continue my focus on still photography, or to switch to film making. While this background provides a setting, I will approach the choice from the perspective of what I want to do as a photographer, rather than contrasting abstract notions of kinds of photography. Hopefully, spelling these goals out will make the choice clearer. There may be others, For now, however, in no particular order, I want to:

1. shoot "inside-out," that is, engaged myself in the shoot in ways that will engage my audience;
2. tell the truth, from my understanding

of what that is, in the documentary tradition;
3. shoot fellow human beings with empathy and understanding;
4. observe interactions in time, sometimes thinking of them as a "drama," curiously, and thoughtfully;
6. shoot the "contest of symbols" as they are used by actors to achieve their ends in the "action";
5. be unobtrusive as possible in equipment and demeanor.
6. shoot artfully, with truth telling coming before art.
7. reach a wide, general audience, as well as specialists in the action I might be shooting.

Does still photography achieve these goals better than filmmaking? Does filmmaking? This might be a long debate. I could go down the list of goals one by one, but I would argue that there is very little difference in abstract terms.

Perhaps the comfortable photographer is a better photographer - comfortable with his or her role, comfortable with his or her equipment, relatively comfortable in the midst of the action she or he is shooting, although it may cause some emotional upheaval. From this perspective, and a practical one, I think that I prefer a small unobtrusive still camera to a video camera with accompanying equipment. Small mirrorless still cameras are capable of excellent video, and there may be more acceptance of them by professional filmmakers in the future, but that day has not arrived.

A related practical factor is the question of audience. Still photography may have a greater potential audience than video, in spite of the avalanche of photos being taken for social media. This might be especially true if those images combine artistic appeal with truth telling. This is no small ambition, but one can only keep shooting.

Most importantly perhaps I feel more comfortable being able, to pause the "action," in a thoughtful way, even in the midst of an emotional reaction to it. Perhaps this my perspective on what documentary photography is about. As Dorothea Lange points out, however, the documentary photographer is trying to speak to not only his or her own emotional reaction, but everyone's experience.

In 1978 in *Dorothea Lange: A Photographer's Life*, Lange writes about capturing what she calls an episode in a way that seems compatible with my intention to capture a "drama," but with the wisdom of experience. Her quotation, which also deals in an emphatic way with the relationship of art and truth telling, seems an appropriate way of ending this essay.

The documentary photograph is not a factual photograph per se.....[It] carries with it another thing, a quality that the artist responds to. It is a photograph which carries the full meaning of the episode or the circumstances or the situation that can only be revealed - because you can't really

recapture it - by this other quality.
There is no real warfare between the
artist and the documentary photographer.
He has to be both.

SARA WYLIE
Artist Statement

We are quick to forget our past, failing to acknowledge the complex and often murky histories that have forged our existence. We too often assume we are self-made beings, singularly full of original ideas and beliefs. We overlook the fact that we must tend to our roots before we can even hope to grow in some way anew.

About two years ago, in a passing comment made by my aunt, I found out that my father had been incarcerated for a period of time in his twenties. I have never been close to my father and he has never disclosed much of his life to me, so this was the first I had heard of it. I brought it up with my mom later and she confessed she had never learned this either, and she had known him for more than half her life.

Counselors and therapists have tried to get me to spend time sorting through my father's absence and its significance in my life, convinced it is some key to unlock my psyche's characteristic sadness, a commonplace kind of sadness which I've had all my adult life. I've persistently told them there was no latent 'daddy issue' to decipher; he was simply not there, and my mother was. She supplied me with an enormous amount of love, friendship and radical understanding – the extraordinary nature of which I only comprehended later, when hearing about my friends' experiences with their parents.

My father was a stranger to me, and I thought his absence did not impact me. There was not much I needed to know about him or from him that I could not glean from my mom or the extended family she surrounded me with in my youth. Among the many things I was attuned to at a young age was her deep empathy. My mom is the type of person who stops to make eye contact with every homeless person she passes, the kind that will hurriedly roll down her car window and offer a toonie to every person she sees precariously sitting on a cement divider in the middle of a highway. Her compassion is beyond charity; she'd tell me, "I don't care if they use that money for food or drugs, as long as it provides them with some relief." Her justice is beyond judgement; it transpires in her ability to offer some small recognition of the pain in others.

My upbringing shaped my interest in social justice and an early pursuit in activism: first anti-poverty activism in high school, and later environmentalism in university, which then grew into an interest in making documentary films as tools for social change. I'd like to credit my mom for starting this long journey that led to me researching prison justice for my latest project, and taking up an eager interest in the carceral problems of the Canadian state. She had planted a seed that would one day inspire me to cold-call a group of women who had been incarcerated in Kingston, Ontario, after reading about them in a newspaper.

At the same time, as I find myself deeper and deeper in the issue, visiting sites of prisons and interviewing incarcerated people, I have recently begun to entertain the idea that both parents have somehow led me here. It's a hard idea to grasp and one I've been hesitant to articulate, but it's been suggested to me by some of the formerly incarcerated women I've met that I might be seeking some type of self-knowledge in this project. Perhaps my father's influence was closer than I thought, and in addition to exploring ideas of prison justice, I've been searching for something else in wanting to understand the carceral experience and its related effects.

The Canadian social memory is troubling-ly quick to forget our social injustices, whether past or present. *Remembering*

Prison for Women is a short film that explores memorialization of the site of the former Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario, closed since 2000. The institution was Canada's first federal women's prison; built in 1934, it was shut down following the release of an inquiry by Justice Louise Arbour that condemned its infamous "cruel, inhumane and degrading" treatment of prisoners. This treatment, which included LSD and shock therapy experiments conducted on patients, culminated in an unusually high prisoner suicide rate, and a much-publicized riot in 1994. The report also found that prisoners suffered from being isolated from their families and children, and especially in the case of Indigenous women, their culture and spiritual community.

Following the prison closure, the eight-acre property of P4W was purchased by Queen's University in 2008, and sat untouched until it was recently sold to an undisclosed buyer. A local P4W Memorial Collective is working to establish a small memorial to the women that died in the prison. The Collective, composed of former prisoners, academics, lawyers and activists, has been quick to point out Queen's complicit history in the experiments that took place on prisoners and in some cases, on their unclaimed bodies after their deaths.

Since the recent sale, the university has been refusing to acknowledge any responsibility to the former prisoners or their families. Through interviews with former prisoners, prison justice activists, and former P4W employees, this film will offer insight into prisoners' experiences and an awareness of past injustices, while also providing an opportunity to discuss how the prison ought to be situated in Canadian social memory.

Critical Review

Two women, with bell-bottom jeans and feathered hair, laugh affectionately in front of a bathroom mirror as they take turns doing each other's make-up, carefully applying eyeshadow and lipstick before their daily walk around the prison yard. On-screen explorations of the prison system often rely heavily on images of cell bars, bright orange jumpsuits, and hardened, tattooed men; rarely do they visualize the lives of women in prison. In 1980, filmmakers Holly Dale and Janis Cole began their landmark documentary P*4W: Prison for Women*, completed the following year. *P4W* documented the stories of inmates in the federal women's prison in Kingston, Ontario, interviewing women serving sentences ranging from two years to life. While bringing attention to the abuse and negligence that occurred within P4W's walls, Dale and Cole, in the style of direct cinema, captured the women's supportive relationships, romantic or otherwise, that helped them endure.

The first section of the film introduces the viewer to the prison and the women within it. The camera travels down the prison range, which at first glance looks like a dorm: music plays loudly, a TV blares in the corner, and clothes and furniture crowd the floor. We see women in their cells, surrounded by posters on the walls and stuffed animals on the beds, suggesting a more benign space than the prison, as they open up about their crimes and sentences. The second act explores the relationships among the women, as friends, mothers and also lovers. *P4W* is now considered part of the Canadian queer film canon because of its pioneering documentation of the queer relationships of the women. In the film, we see Janise and Debbie, two glamorous-looking women who have formed a close romantic relationship. Janise, serving a twenty-five-year sentence for being party to a robbery and murder committed by her husband, shares her fears over being left behind in prison with Debbie's imminent release. Cole and Dale's portrayal of these young and beautiful women easily engenders sympathy for their ill-fated love story, whose representation on screen was revolutionary at that time.

The final section of the film is a clear-eyed indictment by the prisoners themselves of the conditions within P4W. Women share their scars from repetitive self-harming and detail the negligence of the matrons that has led to at least three recent suicides. One woman shares, "rehabilitation… they don't understand what that word means." Another predicts a riot in the prison, which did in fact take place in a high-profile incident in 1994 that eventually led to a federal inquiry and the prison's closure in 2000. Cole and Dale's damning portrait of the prison urgently and effectively demands

better treatment for these women.

At the same time, the silence of women of colour in the film, seen in the background on the range and in the cafeteria, is noticeable. Rates of incarceration for racialized women are drastically disproportionate to white women, and even more so today. The whiteness of P4W's subjects leaves us wondering about the racialized women's experiences. Were their stories not as sympathetic? Or were they more wary of participating in the documentary?

Beyond these traces of white feminism, P4W is a landmark film in the Canadian documentary canon. The obviously trusting relationships that Cole and Dale built and maintained with their subjects enabled the film to represent positive queer relationships on screen, while also providing a biting systemic critique of the Canadian prison system. The film's explicit focus on sharing the women's stories gives voice to those who are often unheard; in doing this, Cole and Dale created a document of lasting significance. Incarceration of women in Canada is on the rise, particularly among Indigenous women, and the intolerable conditions of federal institutions regularly make headlines. P4W is a call for prisoner justice that echoes to this day.

Extended Narrative

Joe Wallace, the Canadian Worker Poet

Carceral spaces are increasingly out-of-sight and out-of-mind in Canada. At one point in time, jails were a part of our biggest cities: for example, the Don Jail in downtown Toronto. They slowly moved out of our urban environment as space was needed. In the not-so-distant past, Canadian internment camps were established outside of cities in order to incarcerate prisoners of war and anyone deemed an 'enemy alien' of the state. In World War II, these camps, such as the Petawawa Camp in southern Ontario, housed Canadians of German, Italian, and Japanese descent, among others. In the Hull Jail internment camp in Hull, Quebec, the state rounded up and interned Canadian radicals and labour leaders. One of these radicals, housed in all three institutions, was named Joe Wallace.

A quick Google search for the Canadian Communist poet Joe Wallace will bring up descriptions of his work like: "usually bad, but sometimes totally inspired" (Milton Acorn), "open to severe criticism" due to the "derivative quality of his writing" and lacking in "innovative techniques and ideological subtleties" (James Doyle). He was criticized for his simple 'everyman' lyrics and for incorporating his Roman Catholic faith into his poems. And yet, it was said he "was probably the most famous Canadian poet in Eastern Europe and China from the 1950s until well into the 1980s." Esteemed critic Northrop Frye found most of his poetry unremarkable, but noted it drew "much of its strength from the sheer intensity of the Marxist view of the capitalist world." Wallace was mostly unknown in Canada, and after his death in 1975, his publications sit unread in the deep archives of Canadian Communist history.

Joseph Sylvester Wallace was born in Toronto on October 29, 1890, and grew up in Halifax with his father, a travelling salesman, and a stepmother, who brutally abused him. He showed an early interest in poetry, particularly inspired by Longfellow's "The Song of Hiawatha". After being expelled from St. Francis-Xavier University for "immature behaviour" in 1912, he started to get involved in local politics and earned a reputation as a political voice at the Young Men's Liberal Club of Nova Scotia. As he began to read more radical material, partly encouraged by the Russian Revolution of 1917, he left the Liberals to join the Canadian Labour Party, which later became the Canadian Communist Party, of which he would be a lifelong member.

In the Toronto political community, he became well-known for his spirited anti-capitalist save-the-proletariat verses, published in the Labour Party's weekly paper "Worker". He would go on to

write an immense number of articles in the left-wing and Communist press, and author party documents with titles such as “Class Justice and Mass Defense”. “Not that he was a great genius,” wrote artist and writer Barker Fairley, who painted Wallace’s portrait, “but he stood for something, which is not a bad thing in a poet.”

His fiery political dedication led to his being surveilled by the RCMP alongside other members of the Canadian Communist Party. During the Second World War, he and other visible Communists were sent to internment camps under the Defense of Canada regulations, despite that fact that Russia was fighting alongside the Allies. Wallace was imprisoned for two years, first sent to the Don Jail in 1941, then to the army base at Petawawa, and finally to a disused jail in Hull for another year. He did not go quietly, and upon a visit from a British official in the Hull internment camp, he was reported to have said: “We are not enemy aliens—we are Canadian anti-fascists.” He was subsequently put in solitary confinement for a month, and a strike broke out among the prisoners in protest. After his release in 1943, his published his martial poems based on his carceral experience, which earned him a reputation among the Communist community, although not the literary elite.

I am my mother’s daughter. I was raised by her and wasn’t close with my dad’s family growing up. For a long time, I felt the only visible evidence that connected me to them was the angle of my thumb, affectionally called ‘the Wallace flip’ by that side of the family. But I have an aunt with whom I’m quite close. She knew I had an interest in social activism and that I was working on researching a film about women incarcerated in Canada. She had mentioned to me that I had a great-great uncle who had also spent some time in prison, whom she remembered meeting as a child. The Wallace family didn’t seem to know too much about Uncle Joe, although my aunt had heard it rumoured that there was a statue of him somewhere in Moscow.

As it turned out, some of Joe’s publications were kept at the University of Toronto, in the Rare Book archives. The building is stark and brutalist, and from certain angles, is meant to look like a peacock. I am not a student there, and so in order to access them, I was asked to submit the requisite paperwork, and return in an hour while my books would be retrieved. I sat in the nearby cafeteria for an hour watching the students and wondered if they could tell I wasn’t one of them.

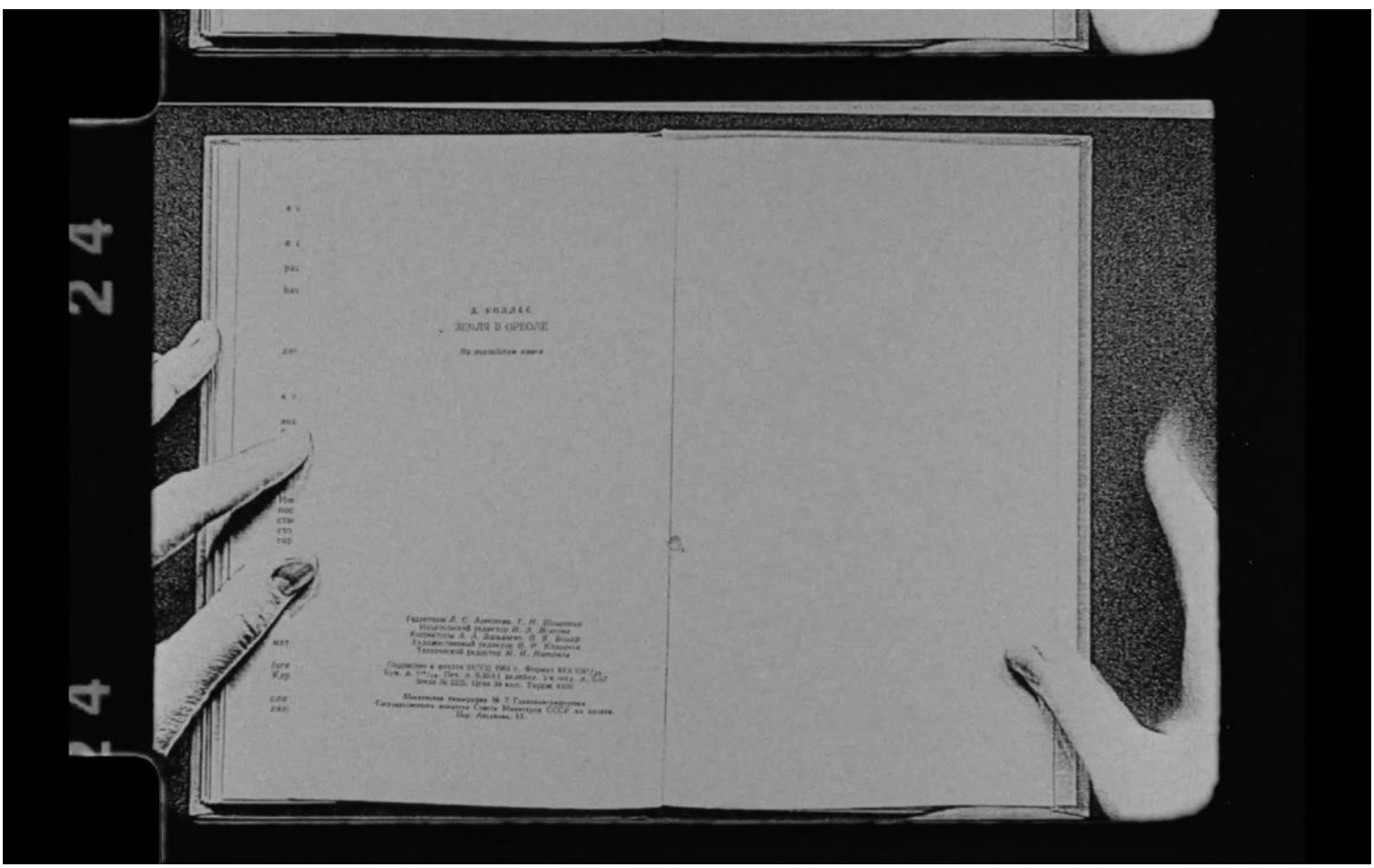
When I returned, I entered a closely-supervised room in the basement of the archives. I showed my identification and request cards, and was handed a pile of books. No personal images were allowed. I discovered his pamphlet on labour organizing, an anthology of poems, a book of poetry called *The Golden Legend*, a carefully printed chapbook called *All My*

Brothers, and a poetry book called The Radiant Sphere, in which I found this poem from Joe Wallace's time in prison:

My prison window is not large,
Five inches high, six inches wide,
Perhaps seven.
Yet it is large enough to show
The whole unfettered to and fro
Of heaven.
How high, how wide, is heaven?
Five inches high, six inches wide,
Perhaps seven.

- Written in solitary confinement at Petawawa in 1941

After Wallace's release, he promised to renounce his Communist writing, and worked for the duration of the war as a lathe operator at the Ferranti Electric plant in Toronto. He was eventually laid off; he then worked as a janitor in a hospital, where he said "I felt, and still feel, that a poet should do manual labor. He must live and work with the masses if he is to be a poet at all."



In the 1950s he wrote "All my Brothers are Beautiful", which ends:

One has the beauty of night and stars
One has the beauty of golden bars
Varying skins but the very same scars
White or red whatever the shade
All my brothers are beautiful

I am the rainbow's radiant prism
I am its beauty and symbolism
I am the builder of socialism.
The whole world blossoms as I grow tall
Blooms for my beautiful brothers and all.

I also learned that my aunt was right—there was a bust of him in Russia. His likeness was sculpted by Soviet artist Lev Kerbel of the USSR Academy of Arts, who had also sculpted Marx and Lenin. I tried to picture the dusty museum basement in Moscow in which this version of Joe was probably located.

By the 1950s, Joe Wallace was arguably the most prominent Communist writer in Canada. He went on to travel across Russia, Eastern Europe and China, where his work was translated and well received. He soon returned to Canada and stopped writing poetry but lived with the recognition that he was famous outside of the nation that had incarcerated him, his writings known in Marxist revolutionary circles all over the world. He died at the age of 85 in Vancouver, the same city I would be born in, 25 years later.

I wondered about the archives I couldn't access, perhaps in Russian and Chinese, and what they might have revealed about Joe Wallace. What did other people have to say about this 'sometimes mediocre, sometimes inspired' poet? Had his words connected with them, and made them feel part of some worldwide struggle? I also wondered about the pieces of this story that did not make it into the archive, about the other people interned alongside him whose names were not in Canadian history books.

In my research, a brief phone call with my nonagenarian great aunt revealed the fact that he had a wife and children. His wife was institutionalized for a period of time, and during that period she briefly lost custody of their children. No one seemed to know why she was institutionalized or in which "women's home" in Toronto or Halifax she was placed.

The traces of the Canadian radical left have been carefully locked away in institutional basements, where they will remain for the indefinite future. Joe Wallace was not completely forgotten—he was saved by the official archive and his words preserved—out of sight, sitting dormant in boxes, until a descendant could find them. There she could discover a familial bond in poetry and politics; a connective thread, a cyclical pattern, a radiant sphere, unearthed in the archives.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THANKS

FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO HELPED MAKE THIS POSSIBLE!

The support of Ryerson University, the School of Image Arts, and the Documentary Media program is gratefully acknowledged.

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