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PANDEMIC ARTIFACTS

Pandemic Time Capsule 2020–2021

RIAH TREVINO
ANNALEAH GREGOIRE
LEVI JIANG
EMAN ORDONEZ
JILLIAN IKEHARA
J KOPTIC
ALIA MOUSSA
NIV RAJENDRA
EMILY MARKERT
JOSEPH HURTADO
NEHASHREE TATAVARTHI

NIELSEN ARENAS
KENNA ELLIOTT
SCOTT UNDERWOOD
DAVID BURNS MARCHETTI
SOPHIE HILTNER
MEGAN CHEN
ACE MATKIN
TONY BERNARDO
ANGIE CHAPARRO
EMILY TRAUB

I don't really know what I expected college to be like.

All I remember from my first semester of freshman year was trying to figure out if this experience would be like a race or marathon—like everyone else, I floundered to see what was up while trying to produce some worthwhile work. It wasn't the easiest hustle, but it was a universal experience and most of all, it was fine. We figured it to be more like a track game: Some days we were vaulting, or racing, or just throwing a discus to see if anything landed at all.

It was weird and new, but at least I knew it was a track game. That is, until a giant rock fell from the sky and landed onto the track. Let's give this boulder a random name, something like...COVID.

Those who were just learning to set their own winning pace suddenly had their path blocked.

I mean, I know our generation is known for our denial and desensitization, but no amount could hide the humongous universal change we were facing. It's hard to forget those first startling months where we artists were met with the notion that our creativity could have a dead end, that maybe this could really do serious damage to our passions.

When the world wasn't limited, art felt limitless—we could interact with so many things in so many creative ways, express ideas that were out of this world. But with the challenge of isolation, coping with loss, and the lack of connection, those means of making felt out of reach.

Looking back, I still can't comprehend everything we were feeling at the time. Still, over the last year...something was discovered.

No, I couldn't make films in person with a giant team. But we realized we had no choice but to look to ourselves for inspiration. Once-in-a-lifetime feelings were metastasizing inside us, and those who were able to break through the chaos sought to express that. Other pathways for creative outlets had to be unlocked, like how I decided to focus on writing instead of making actual films, which isn't my favorite but at least it's *something*.

In a global pandemic, student work during the lockdown and beyond demonstrated that they could ram through this rock, or haul themselves over it, or dig under the damn thing.

Even when the world was ending, students were able to dig their heels in and pave the way for a new type of creativity. We had to reassess the situation—we were given a whole list of things we couldn't do, and we had to find what was actually possible. In isolation, challenge after challenge made itself known. We lost connections and people, encountered distractions and overwhelming technology...but some students were able to find a silver lining and use that to generate their art.

This zine is a collection of artists who channeled their vulnerability into work and gave us a glimpse into their pandemic lived experience, touching on their mindset in isolation to anything else we felt needed to be said. From the super odd passage of time, to the injustices happening around us, to the childhood books we all suddenly had time to read, there is a lot of real estate to cover in the last year. The outbursts of creativity were rare and unique, and this zine immortalizes that and allows us to reflect on our good, our bad, and our ugly...no mirror necessary.

This zine captures our resilience, and how the CCA community managed to break down a rock that fell out of the sky.

Introduction

Sound recording, 2021



Stock Up

Oil on canvas, 20 x 30 inches, 2020

Stock Up is a reflection on the hoarding mentality that surfaced during the first few weeks of the shelter-in-place mandate. The painting addresses the discomfort and uncertainty of adjusting to the extreme conditions of the pandemic. Shelves were emptied entirely in most grocery stores. Those who were quick and could afford to stock up did so in mass quantities. Those who weren't quick enough to get there or could not afford to stock up were out of luck. Material limitations quickly became a serious consideration for my practice. I shifted suddenly from casting bronze and playing with laser printers to working exclusively with the tools and materials in my small apartment. This piece was created using scraps of recycled canvas from a previous painting addressing COVID-19 as well as oil paint.





COVID-19 Memorial

Sculpey, bronze paint, 13 x 4 x 6 inches, 2021

This is a grim memorial to the millions who died as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and were unable to see their families at the end of their lives for fear that their loved ones would catch the virus. It also embodies the feeling of the lack of certainty as to when this all will end, and my personal fear of living in masks being a reality for the majority of my future.



Quarantine
Digital image, 2020



Cultural Differences

Digital image, 2020



Stock Up!

Digital image, 2020

These are works I had done during 2020 since the pandemic started. I illustrated my experience during that period in New York. The experience of being isolated; the experience of being seen as a weirdo wearing a mask on streets when nobody was wearing masks at the beginning; the experience of shopping during the pandemic. My arts reflect on my new normal. From these, we could know everyone is the same, and lives the same, even if we have different cultural backgrounds.





Come Home

Digital video, 2019



This film, ironically, was shot the same week CCA closed down but was edited and released during the pandemic. The concept revolved around what home was to us. Home was being back with my closest friends ever from high school. This film explores coming back to our childhood and spending time together in ways we did as children (playing basketball, getting ice cream, playing at a playground). It's a look into coming home to the people you love and reminiscing on our friendship. Looking at it now during a pandemic that's unforeseen, it feels much more nostalgic that it was intended, showing what life was like pre-pandemic.





Nikes

Digital video, 2020



A collaboration with other film students filming our own cities and developing a product that demonstrated life in the city during a pandemic. I'm very attracted to the concept of nostalgia, and I wanted to create something that brought the viewer in as if they were taking a walk/drive through the city and taking in the nightlife, lights, and sounds.





2020 Self Portrait

Digital illustration, Procreate and Photoshop,
1200 x 1800 pixels, 2020

Love and Summer Skies are the Same Color!

JILLIAN
IKEHARA



Love and Summer Skies Are the Same Color!

Digital illustration, Procreate,
1668 x 2388 pixels, 2020

The pandemic allowed me to finally devote some time to pursue and work on the many comic ideas and stories I want to do in the future, this mock cover being an example. My love for comics and comic making really grew and I'm glad to have had that time to create something I love.



Maui Nō Ka 'Ōi

Gouache and Color Pencil, 6 x 10 inches, 2020

I went back home to Maui, Hawai'i as the pandemic began to worsen in San Francisco. When I got back home, I realized how much, well, I missed home. I love being in Hawai'i, and I feel as though I was truly comfortable doing classes and work at home. I got closer with my family and virtually connected with my friends from home that I had not seen in a while. I am truly grateful for that aspect of the pandemic.



A Bitter Pill to Swallow

Digital rendering, 24 x 24 inches, 2020

This piece addresses the emanating aspect of hate which has come about by the onslaught of COVID-19, and is presented in the form of a bitter pill which is often hard to swallow. The current uptick in hate crimes against the Asian and Pacific Islander communities bearing the brunt of accusations for creating and proliferating COVID-19. Due to this generated climate of hate toward this particular group, they have come to experience an even greater sense of despair due to the ensuing violence and degradation being thrust upon them. This creation hopes to bring focus to the equality of all people.

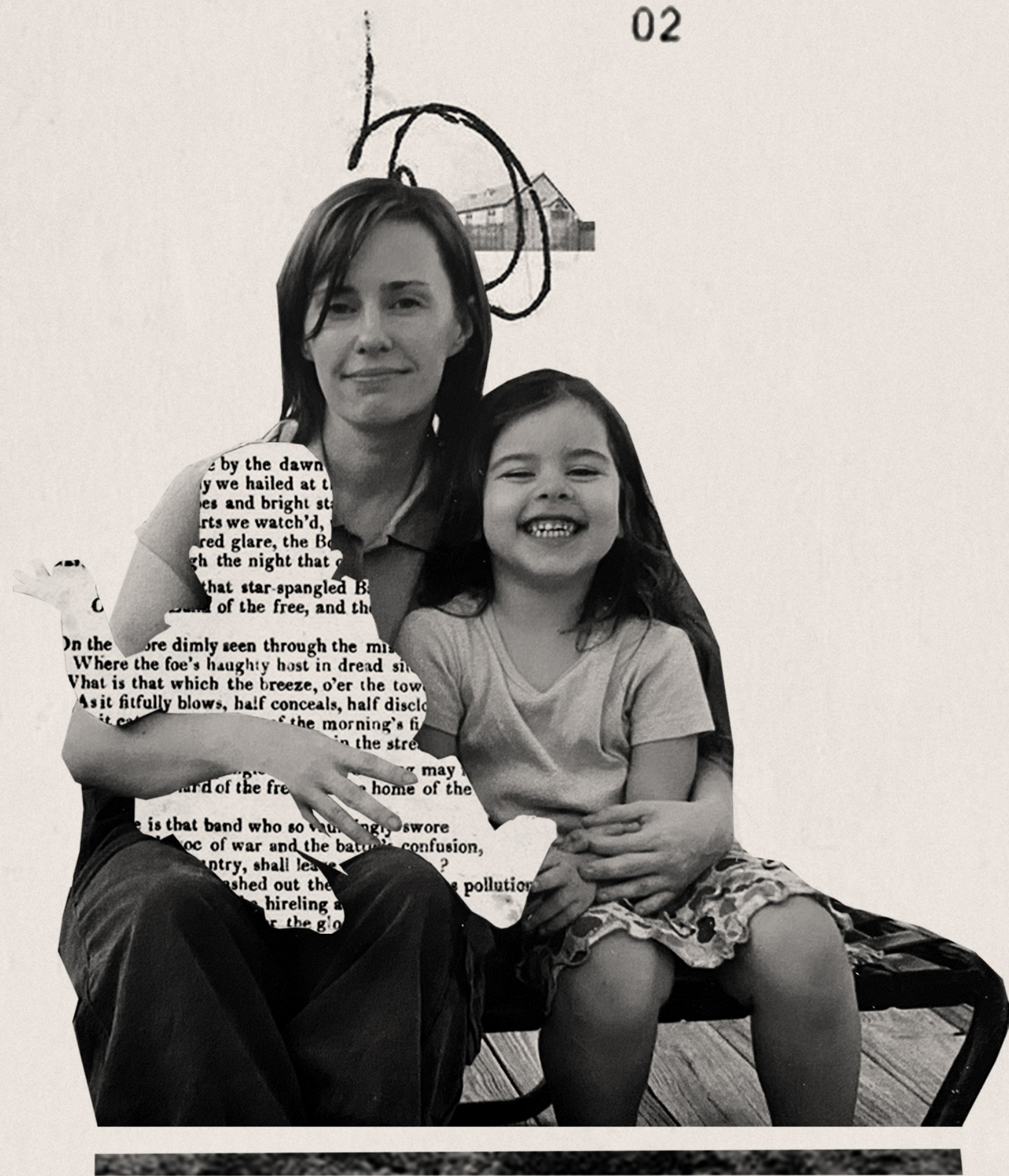




Home

Digital collage (first of three), 8 x 8 inches, 2020

I made this set of collages for the CCA Center for Arts and Public Life (@cca.center) to raise awareness on the difficulties that immigrants/ DACA recipients—like myself—face.





Home

Digital collage (second of three),
8 x 8 inches, 2020





Home

Digital collage (third of three),
8 x 8 inches, 2020





Within the Rock Pools

Digital video, 2020



Within the Rock Pools (2020) is situated within and around the rock pools of North Bondi (close to my home) in Sydney, Australia. Birthed from WE'ave THE PEOPLE, a synchronized performance piece that had 12 artists perform and record site-specific rituals across the world on November 3, 2020.

The ritual asks: Who and what do our lives touch daily? How do we honor these ever-changing interdependencies and reframe our roles? Let us begin by naming the nameless, peering into the cracks, listening closely and moving in response. Allowing for repetition, stillness, and release.

The pandemic opened up a pause that had me forming deeper intimacies with the land around me. The lack of physical human connectivity led to me filling the gaps with much deeper and broader forms of togetherness. Even though life is now returning back to normal, my socially engaged art practice continues to resonate with the ecological and spiritual care that I tuned into during the last year.

The video is directed, shot, performed, and edited by Niv Rajendra. It weaves together performative gestures, spoken word, found image and music. Collaborators include artist Ella Yolande, music producer Esteban Beltran, composer Genji Peter Siraisi, and videographers Bill Newsinger and Kevin Lewis. Also included is text from the author Octavia Butler.



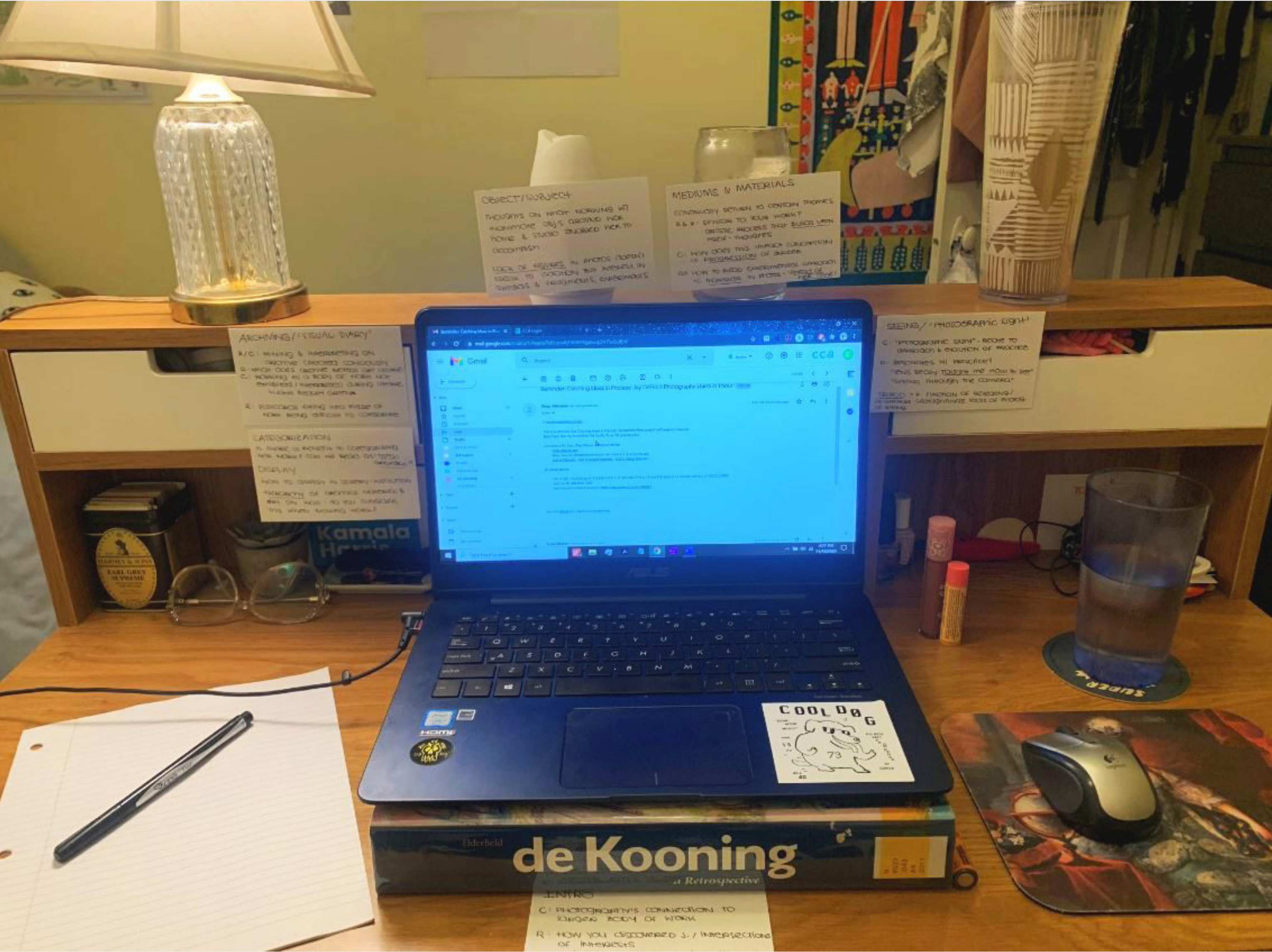
A Publication

Playing with Scale: A Publication

Digital cover, 2020

Due to the pandemic, *Playing with Scale* at the CCA PLAYSPACE Gallery was forced to close less than three weeks after opening. Fortunately, the art world's shift to the digital world enabled us to continue thinking about and engaging with the show's themes and the works included long past the exhibition's original end date. In August 2020 we released this expanded exhibition publication online, available to download for free, featuring contributions from and interviews with the curators and artists, as well as members of the wider CCA community.

Playing with Scale: A Publication is edited by Emily Markert and designed by Youyou Ma with major contributions from Katherine J. Hamilton and Shaelyn Hanes, as well as Santino Gonzales, Katie Hector, Jordan Kantor, Hannah Lee, Courtney Odell, Emmaline Payette, John Roy, Ebtihal Shedid, Sonya Thorne, and wei wang.



Zoom Stage

Digital image, 2020

This is a screenshot of how I had to set up my desk to host a major panel discussion in November 2020 for the CCA Wattis Institute and The Jay DeFeo Foundation called *Catching Ideas in Progress: Jay DeFeo's Photography*, which was forced to happen virtually.

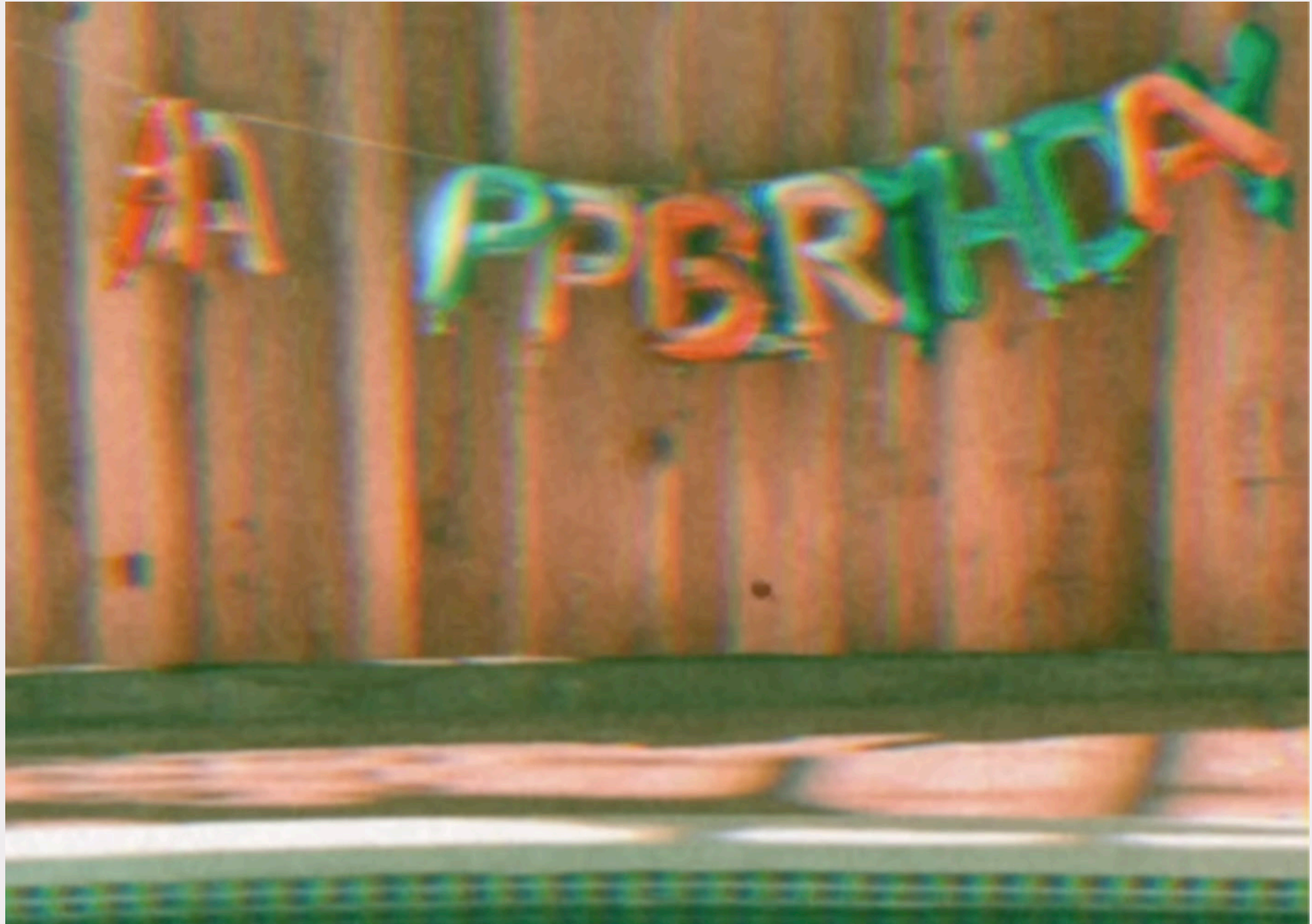
JOSEPH HURTADO

Balloons

Digital video, 2020



Visual representation of displacement.





Vacationing Within the Four Walls

Digital illustration, Adobe Illustrator,
1080 x 1080 pixels, 2020

Made at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, I started thinking of ways to engage my boredom while quarantining at home. The mask becomes a hammock, while the room I live in turns into my little island as I imagine vacationing outside once again.



The already stressful circumstances became more frustrating. Schools shifted further from a confined digital space. Isolation was the key to unlock the safe route, however, it wasn't the correct access in reality.



3D Mask

Digital media, 1800 x 2400 pixels, 2020

The “wear a mask” campaign that started in early March 2020 was a significant pandemic change. People hated it because it was hard to breathe, making the skin irritated, just weird to use. It was three-dimensional wearable protection that became a regular part of your daily life.



I Am in Color

Pen and marker on recycled paper,
7 x 4 inches, 2021

SCOTT UNDERWOOD



Chronic Isolation

Digital video, 2020



Made in response to the overwhelmingly crippling weight of living through several major historical events late in the year 2020. Done in one night, October 27, 2020. Very loud.





Self-Portrait
Photography, 7 x 7 inches, 2021



Untitled (Brothers)

Photography, 5 x 7 inches, 2021



Linda

Photography, 5 x 7.4 inches, 2021



Business Casual

Digital illustration, Procreate and iPad Pro,
10 x 14 inches, 2021

One pandemic perk is definitely that loungewear
is the new luxe and high maintenance is hoey.
Pajamas are the hot new day-to-night look.



Hello?

Digital image, 8.5 x 11 inches, 2020

Inspired by the feeling of social disconnect during COVID quarantine. Song: Two Weeks by Grizzly Bear.



Quarantine-while

Digital video, 2020



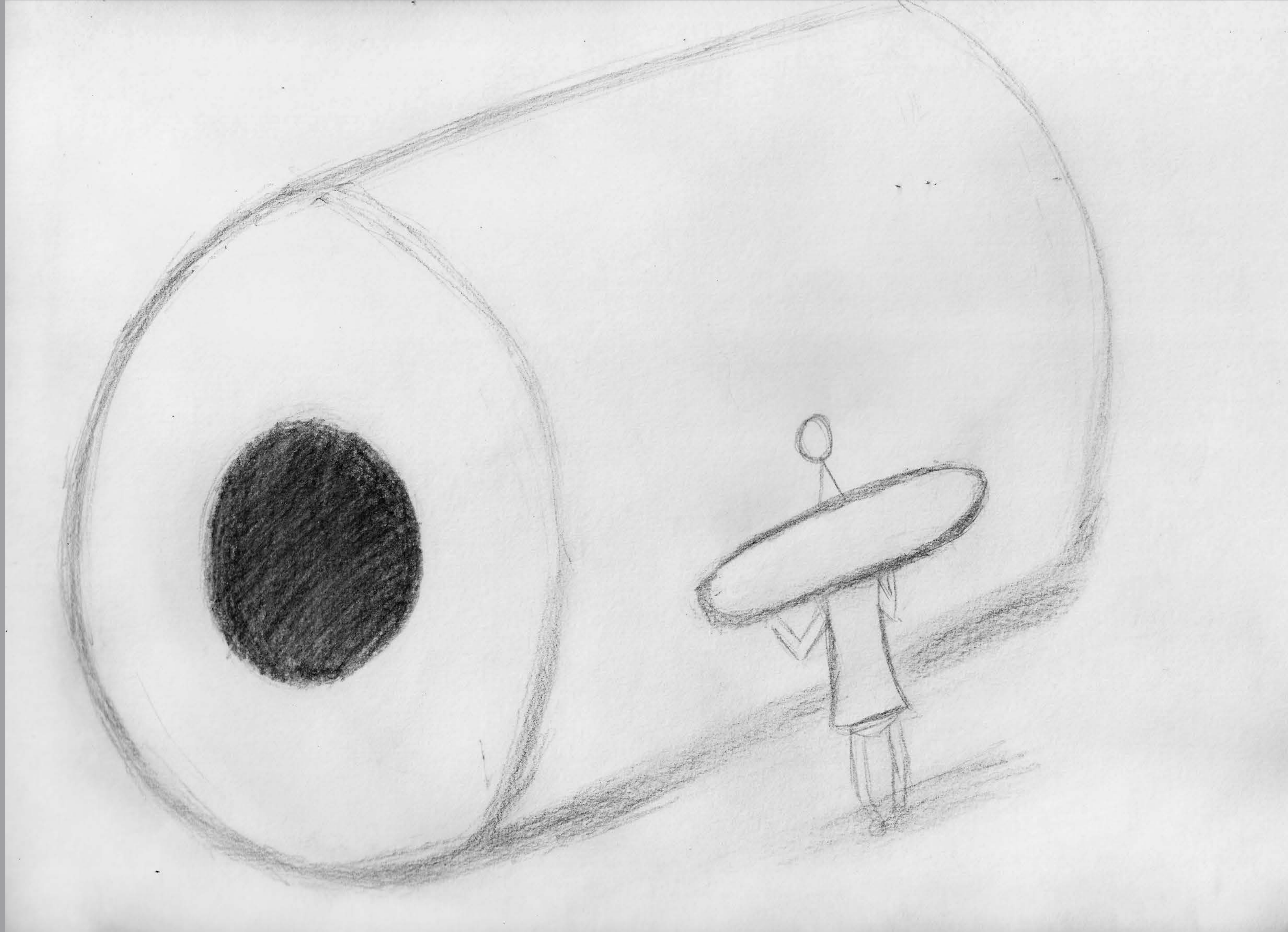
The nonlogical passing of time when quarantined.

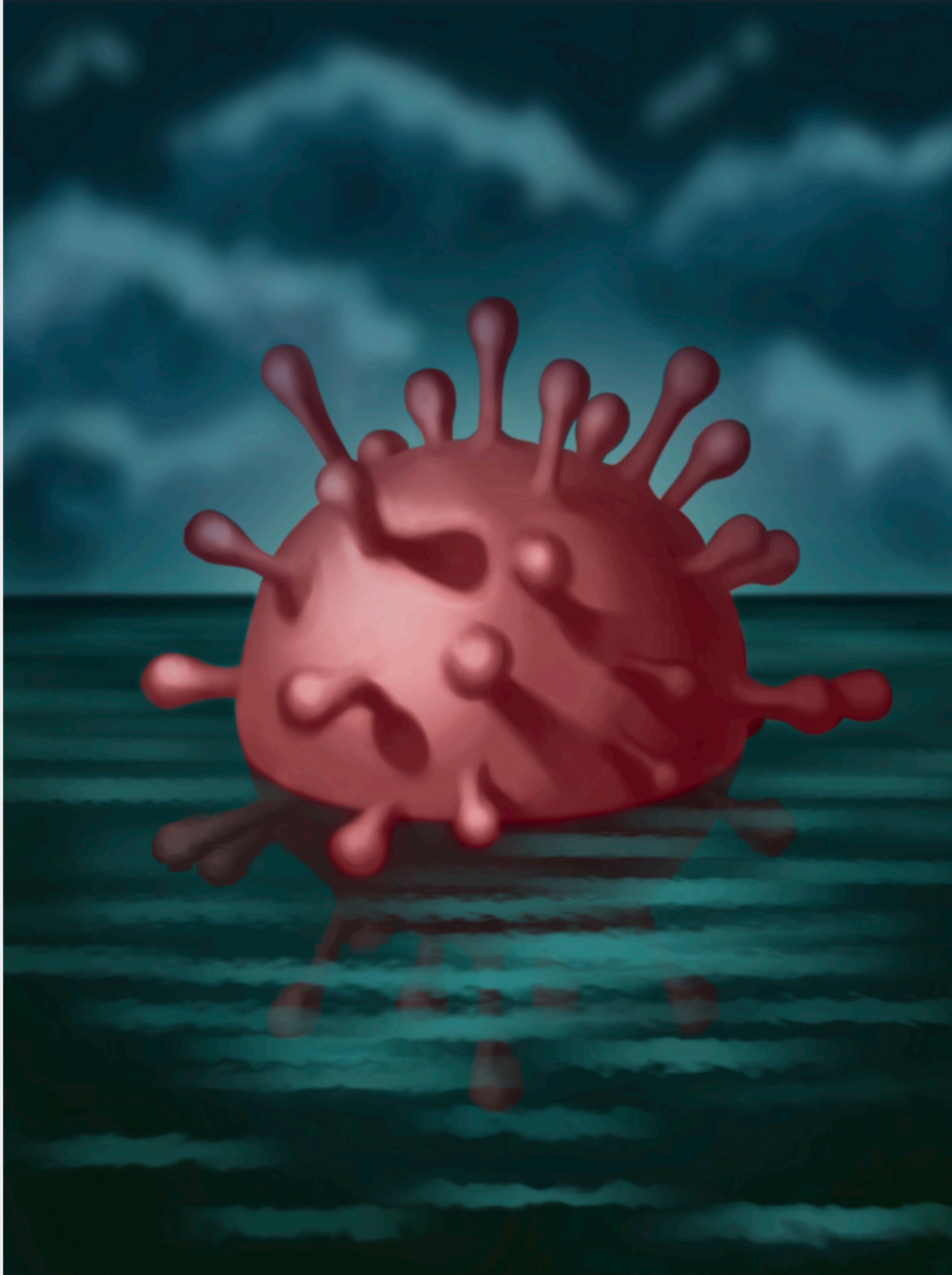


ACE MATKIN

Toilet Paper Katamari

Pencil on mixed media paper,
9 x 11.4 inches, 2020





Viral Storm
Digital painting, 2020





Apocalyptic Skull

Digital painting, 2020





Unidad Y Expresión

Unidad y Expresión

Digital illustration, 2021

Finding safe spaces for healing and self growth have been so important during this pandemic where so many of us feel alone and desperate for an inch of normalcy. For us queer people who are quarantined in unsafe households and isolated from a community that has made us feel validated in who we are, it's freaking tough. I wanted to make a piece that gave a sense of comfort, but also showed our strength. I'm quarantined in Colombia and resources for the lgbtq+ community is severely lacking, not to mention any art or media that is meant for us. I'm hoping that by posting this art around my city, along with whatever resources I can find, and making this into a bigger project, I'll be able to form relationships with other queers who are feeling just as alone, and give them a safe space, even if for just a moment. The title means "unity and expression", something that we need now more than ever. Like origami, we can help build each other up and continue to be proud of our identity and strength, and continue to comfort each other through these tough times.

EMILY TRAUB

Soundings for the Future

Sound piece, 2020



This sound piece was created for Lauren Wooley’s Sound and Space class during the Summer 2020 semester at CCA. It was made by combining soundbites that were both recorded by members of the class and borrowed from outside sources.



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Special thanks to our CCA@CCA Zine Selection Team and staff advisors:

Nielsen Arenas, Graphic Design

Riah Trevino, Film

Matt Silady, MFA Comics

Noki Seekao, Student Life

Connie Jeung-Mills, Marketing and Communications

Jaime Austin, Exhibitions and Public Programs

Bryndis Hafthorsdottir, Exhibitions and Public Programs

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