

No. 6

THE FRAGMENT ISSUE

THALIA



# THALIA

**Founders & Creative Direction**

Amelia and Julia Haney

**Editor of Creative Writing & Poetry**

Julia Haney

**Editor of Arts & Design**

Amelia Haney

**Illustration**

Morgane Richer La Flèche

**Subscribe**

Thalia is published quarterly,  
to subscribe visit

*thaliamagazine.com*

**Cover**

Kirsten Brehmer's *Preservation Tactics*

*Page 76-87*

*contact@thaliamagazine.com*

## The Fragment Issue

This issue, we looked to our submitters for theme inspiration—a through line emerged. The contributors featured discuss fragment as splintering, as connection and memory, as what is discarded and remade.

As we collected the work to feature, we were curious to know what our contributors collect, as markers of how they construct lives and find points of inspiration for creative work. The collections discussed are wide-ranging—rocks, stories, smells, feathers. These fragments, and their collectors' intentions, ask us to reconsider the concept of “the whole”, and its relationship with its parts.

The Fragment Issue is a series of short stories celebrating creativity, which can exist on their own or as an interwoven whole. Fragment is the way things come apart, and the way we put them back together.





# C e l e b r a t i n g

Beatriz Guzman Catena

Megan Peak

Izidora LETHE

Laurel Salinas-Nakanishi

Gal Schindler

Kelly Inouye

Kirsten Brehmer

Adelaide Shalhope

Saba Farhoudnia

Anna Mielniczuk

Cindy Williams Gutierrez

Kit Porter

Laura Grothaus





*Memory, Fictions and Playing for Time*

Everything is contained in a given space. The links between spaces provide the starting points for my paintings. In this way, narrative sequences are born or reconstructed, newly connected to each other.

Every picture is a collage that I piece together to rebuild an everyday scene of my life. What has survived in memory is ranked and categorized. Maps, blueprints, any cartography or visual reference from the real world are the basis for

my preliminary notes and sketches. However, I deliberately introduce a sense of doubt about the events, simply by replacing a character with an allusion, a historical element that takes his or her place.

My work is about playing with a set of different stories. I work at the notion of instability. I visit the past and represent its uncertainty through new interpretations. The resulting narratives are an unending re-transcription.

“My work is about  
playing with a set of  
different stories.”







*What do you collect? Why?*

I am the daughter of an herbalist pharmacist and grew up among the scents of magisterial preparations and medicinal plants. I collect naturally scented objects. They bring me directly to places, spaces, and experiences—they complete my visual memories. They are like notebooks with intangible archives.

The painting, with its mixtures and meanders, is a composition that the eye tries to tame as a whole. On the other hand, as we look closely, we find the fragments—the top notes, the bottom notes, and the contrasts that form the structure.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

It depends on the inspiration. I like to flush out small, banal, or singular objects in preparatory sketches. My collections then form very talkative groups on large, improvised, observation boards.

Images are slow to enter a category. And I am slow to put them away. They react with light, their scents mingle. My memory is in a back and forth movement between the visual and the olfactory sense. Taking advantage of the disorder, I photograph these assemblages to compose the starting points for my works.

*Do you value the part or the whole?*

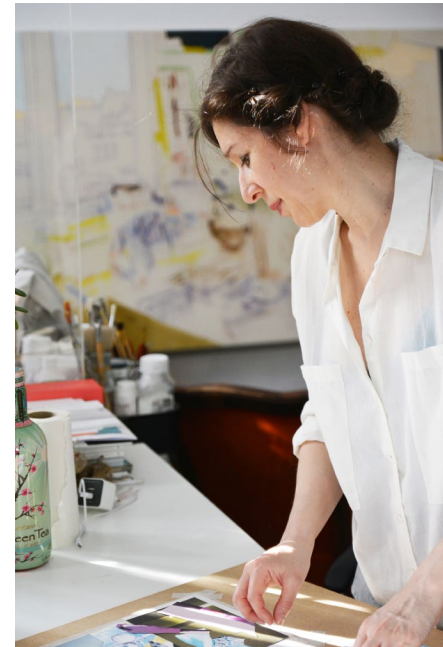
I'm happy every time I come across a new note, a nuance, or a word that allows me to recreate a single image, to paint it as an entire entity, but there is always a breach that opens. The whole is transformed into a fragment, and each fragment should become a whole: it is a question of scale.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

Fortunately, it does not happen often, just by accident! I prefer to repair fragments.

*What makes you feel whole?*

When I feel able to be the Other. This Other, fragmented and singular, looks at me and is able to be more entwined with the world.

























To say the scope of my work has changed since the birth of my son would be an understatement. Before him, my work and ultimately my first collection (*Girldom*, Perugia Press) centered on the self, on the ways girls and women experience the worlds of trauma and desire, violence and tenderness. That work was so important to me, so vital, and it still is, but I am such a different person, a different woman and writer since his birth.

What surprises me, though, is how trauma and grief, the ferocity and delicacy of the natural world, remain woven through these new poems. My son was born three

and a half months early and spent a great deal of his early life in the NICU, so this new work tackles that experience. This particular piece, “Tracing my Son’s Origin Through the Kingdom Animalia,” originated after downloading an app that classified fetal growth by seed, vegetable, fruit, as in your baby is as big as a grape this week. I could never relate to these comparisons since carrying him always felt so animalistic to me, so wild. The poem, then, aims to chronicle his growth, and my own as a mother, with a stronger connection to the natural world, with a bodily portrait of originator and offspring.

“I have  
potential poem lines  
stored everywhere”

*What do you collect? Why?*

I collect stories to tell my son. I collect poetry books to learn more about the world. My son and I collect leaves and stones and flowers from our street to indulge our senses. He helps me remember the joy of collecting that which is simple and remembering loveliness.

*How do store little bits of inspiration?*

I have potential poem lines stored everywhere: in my phone, on napkins, in drawers and nightstands, on pages of books, in journals. It’s always such a delight to stumble upon them after a while and be surprised all over again.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

I don’t think you can have one without the other. I love the small parts that make up a poem—the intricate images, the intentional line breaks, the choice of a pause or full stop. However, the big picture is just as interesting to me—the arc of a poem or manuscript, the connecting images and themes, the music of it all.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

I’m not sure if I always know when, rather, I feel when. Perhaps, the poem’s music isn’t just right or the manuscript’s pace needs tweaking. It’s always an experiment for me.

*What makes you feel whole?*

My son.



Megan Peak

**Tracing My Son's Origin Through the Kingdom Animalia**

First you were a jellyfish that bloomed  
in me darkly, a slight sting. The days were warm,  
the dogs making messes of their water bowls.

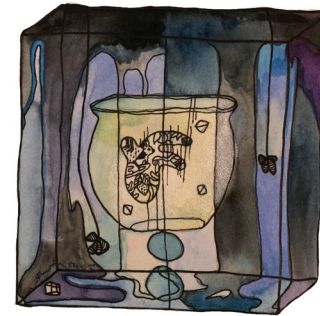
I ate ice cream after, gorged on the cold.  
Soon, I walked through the house a goddess of forests  
and fields, belly vigorous, crowned in dew.

Animal within animal, you grew. You,  
my velvet moth, awake at twilight, a shiver under  
my skin. You, my house sparrow, fluttering

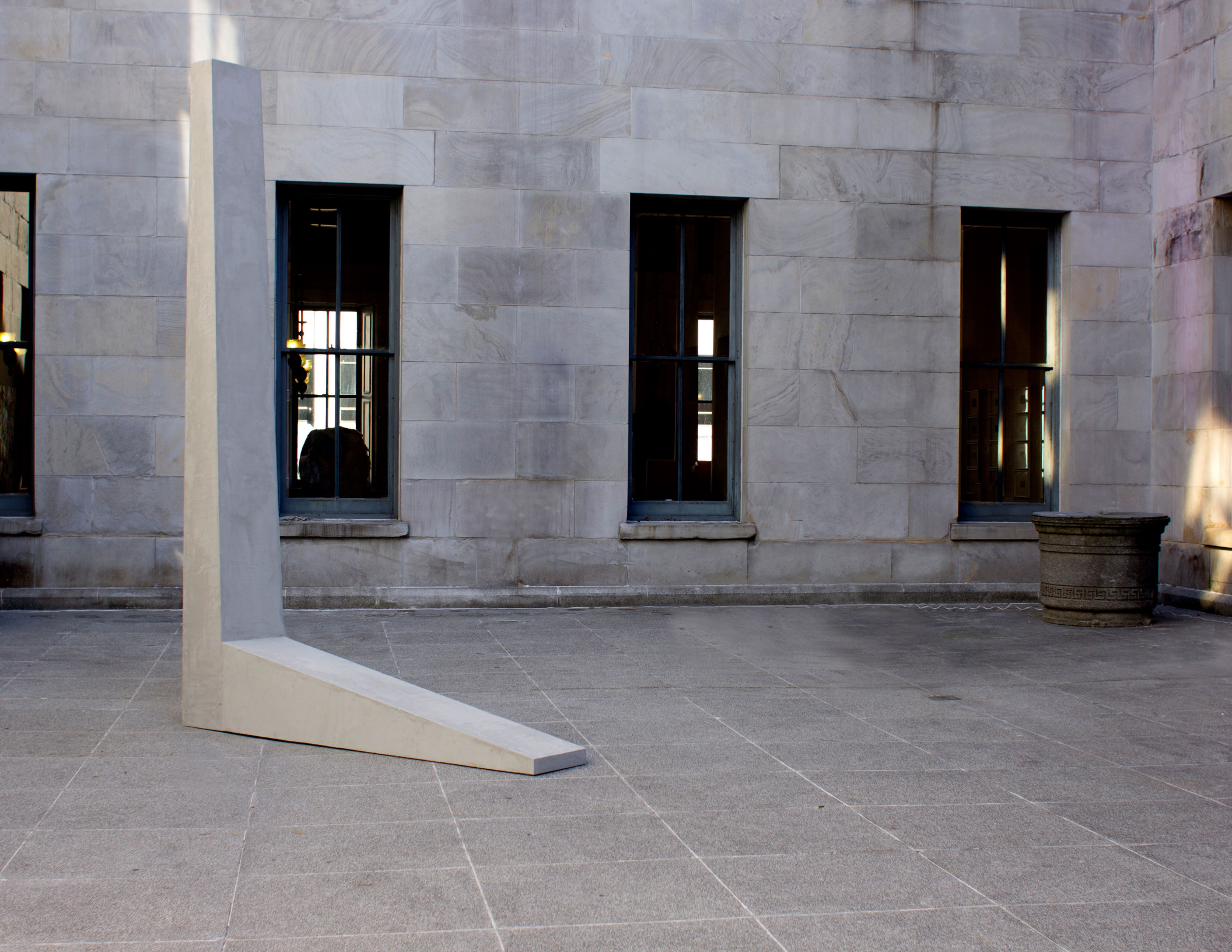
down from your eave. You, my wood mouse,  
scamper-light among the trees. After it all—blood  
in the snow, cups of ice, the final pang—

there was the quietness of you: smallest  
rabbit, fur black and blue. Thank you my sweet  
boy cowlicked and constant in the morning

perennial, my snow-born babe in the downiest  
of nests. Thank you for the wolf you made me,  
for the milk.









## Izidora LETHE

My artistic practice is conceptual and research-based. I find expression in a variety of media: sculpture installations, choreographed performances, and time-based works. Lethe is the name of the Ancient Greek river of oblivion. I adapt that myth performatively in my name. It is my home base. I am interested in migration, history, memory, and place.

My intention is to establish a contemporary lexicon, in which traditional representations are confused, polluted, and invaded. With a critical and historical attention to form and matter, I trace traditional representations back to their symbolic and material etymologies. The collapse that happens when time is re-configured is what thrills my work.

I reproduce the clean-cut edges of modernist artworks. Then, I form these structures to be more intimate, feel closer, warmer, by tweaking size, dimension, and an abstraction that hints at the émigré's\* secret knowledge.

My practice comes to life when something opens between my works—like lovers completing each other's sentences in a time deprived of love.

\*An émigré is a term for a French person who has departed their native land.

Izidora's solo exhibition, *Izidora Leber LETHE: Peristyle*, is on view at The Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco from July 25, 2019-January 19, 2020.









*What do you collect? Why?*

I collect ancient forms. I collect images of Ancient Greek and Roman art and artifacts. They built our conception of culture, beauty, philosophy, political systems, citizenship, and ultimately dominated notions of the “ideal” or “natural” state. They are a fundamental component of my research and work.

Through a process that I call *tracing* (drawing), I trace these forms back to what I think of as their etymological forms. Then I transfer the forms onto the skins of three dimensional or performance-based work. I do so with the intention to understand them *through the body*. When tattooing, the image is first traced (with carbon paper) and then transferred onto the skin—as a kind of blueprint — before being inscribed as an eternal mark. The process is similar but reversed in my work. After all, these forms have eternally marked us all.

I also have a small but significant collection of books about and from the Balkans, specifically Yugoslavia. They are books on artists, history, architecture, critical cultural theory, poetry, and fiction—a fundamental basis for some of my research.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

In hundreds of notebooks and through the proliferation/performative practice of oral (hi)stories.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

There are only parts. There is never a whole. The idea of a whole has always felt like a lie to me.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

This is a quite pragmatic concern and cyclical process. Things are broken apart regularly (on their own, circumstantially, due to their lifespan). Pieces of my work, for example, often must be broken before they can be stored.

*What makes you feel whole?*

The question implies that we aim to be whole or even are whole—I’m more interested in the question of how to live with the fractures. Our neo-liberal and post-postmodern markets thrive by promising to mend brokenness (imperfection, insufficiency, etc.). What if there is no “healing” and no striving toward it? What if Michaelangelo’s *David*’s heel that was imperfectly built was allowed to collapse instead of being restored ad infinitum? Could there be space made for something new?





“There are only parts.  
There is never a whole.”







Five Facts That Are True For Now

1. I live in Hawai'i, on the island of O'ahu, in the city of Honolulu, in the ahupua'a of Kapālama, in a house that my great-grandfather built.
2. Because I am dyslexic and because my mom is amazing, the first writing that I undertook were journal entries dictated to my mom. She wrote my thoughts down in neat letters in the pages of a rose-bound journal.
3. That I am a writer at all is thanks to many teachers and the social-economic-racial privilege of my family.
4. I love pie.
5. My writing process is not like a stingray or box of knives, but a lilikoi vine growing and twining from the earth.

*What do you collect? Why?*

When I was younger, I would collect little bits of time. Visiting somewhere beautiful—a desert in New Mexico or Waimanalo beach at sunrise—I would think, “This moment, this light, this desolation, I will never experience anything quite like this again.” And so I would file it away in my mind. In the end, it was a fruitless effort and it turned my attention away from the beautifully mundane and ugly things of the world that also warrant collection.

*How do store little bits of inspiration?*

Although the first place I always turn is writing, I also love talking out ideas with my partner. Sometimes he is my sounding board. Sometimes I ask him to help me “co-remember” things. Sometimes the disparate bits and pieces of my life connect into a whole behind his gaze.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

Both.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

I am never sure about my revision moves until I make them. Sometimes a piece comes in fragments and my job is to weave them together. Sometimes a piece that feels stagnant needs to be broken apart. Most times, I don't know what works until I try it and then wait (sometimes years) to see the result.

*What makes you feel whole?*

The ocean. My family. Movement. Mountains. This conversation. You.



**WILDERNESS CATALOG**

No. 1: Grizzly

She has the heavy grace of a tsunami. She moves  
as if pushing the earth out in front of her - setting down  
huge paws and then placing upon them a massive weight.  
We watched her walk through the trees until she disappeared  
in the undergrowth. She has moved into the hollow place  
our awe carved out. We carry her with us; we populate each forest  
with the memory of her mass.

No. 2: Human

She is dressed in a second skin, dark blue,  
and booted. She has climbed the high stump  
of a fallen Tamarack, still frilled in lichen.  
Another girl stands before her, leaning in,  
the tips of their fingers just touch.

No. 3: Buffalo

Such unlikely faces, wooly-horned  
and huge, suspended by dark cords of muscle.  
They are kneeling in the meadows.  
They are standing in the road, gazing out at us  
from the deep caves of their eyes.

No. 4: Black Bear

Awake and hungry for berries, for field mice,  
for the soft greens of spring.  
She walks rolling the new flesh  
over her bones, a coat full of cinnamon.  
She lassos the sweet grass with her tongue,  
heavy with seed.

No. 5: Wolf

The brazen white of her, seen then unseen.

“My writing process  
is not like a stingray  
or box of knives, but a  
lilikoi vine growing and  
twining from the earth.”





Laurel Salinas-Nakanishi

## LAGUNA TRYPTYCH

1.

Wind tide  
    waves break from the top  
    colors casting  
            with the lake's reach  
            The volcano at its core  
sending up bubbles   thermals  
There is a boat   a rower   I like to imagine  
                    it is you after all  
The silver of your prow glinting  
    with the water skin   The crater  
circles  
    bowl or cup or held just so

2.

Words are one fabric   the dark another  
    cut and bound  
        as shadow verb  
    We raise our half moon and eat  
from its craters   like beggars  
            Everything stills  
sea and passage and starry sky  
I don't know my hands   one from the other  
    I place them on my knees  
        and wait

3.

There is very little to see underwater  
The lake grainy  
    obtuse   too deep  
            for knowing  
We throw in our feet   Let the wind  
    tousle our hair  
waves lace our ankles   See  
            there is the moon  
at mid-day setting itself on the volcano lip  
and the caldera holding its watery eye

**A DREAM**

I see myself  
years from now  
in the square

I am  
holding up your arm  
The frills on your dress  
are songs clouded over  
and you spin beneath me

We pass into Spanish  
At the market  
I am balancing papayas in my arms

It is preposterous  
to hold them all

A woman calls for exact change  
and I drop them  
split yellow gut

At least we are attentive  
at least the seeds are black planets  
constellating the wet floor

The sidewalk dwindles out  
I hop a bus  
and in the narrow space

between my arm and the woman next to me  
we share ions

I feel the soft hair of her body prickle my own

Nerve cells launch through the abyss –  
each a dragon-tailed star





**READING FITZGERALD IN NICARAGUA**

I made you syllables    halved for your mouth  
small and capable of treason

It's as simple  
as working the thorns from your sleeves    I tell my students:  
Now I want you to listen  
really listen

Betting on nostalgia    on no place at all  
Hewed  
from thought    gnarls    waves bygone  
You say: I'll think it over  
shifting the light on the sea floor  
You say:

It is incredible how this breathing consumes  
I have no excuse for it    I can't seem to keep the loss in

My eyes  
flinging open in the half morning

You set the table with harvest  
but the mouths have fled  
What glitters    what chokes  
We dine eloquently  
as it leaves us  
growing colder  
nothing points it back

The lock  
the key in the lock    the courage to turn

Laurel Salinas-Nakanishi

## VALEDICTION

*La soledad es cada vez mayor y más bella en el río.*

- José Coronel Urtecho

Dear Río,

I knew when the time had come,  
it grew hard to pay attention.  
The yellow-breasted kiskadee would visit,  
pick off tadpoles. The beetles all slept  
with grains of rice in their mouths.  
Staring into your currents,  
I knew a handful of words, they became dear to me.

But the mornings came with their daylight crying  
“look! look!”  
picking up each thing shamelessly.  
The bird fished its shadow, cursing.

Dear Río,

The wind spares us, you wave  
until the hand blurs.  
I’ve heard the howling you carry below your skin,  
dear Río.

Do the clouds moving upstream, do the flowers  
with their dropsical faces, do the hummingbirds  
frantically, does the child, his head and heel,  
do they make right by you?





My work depicts mostly women and questions of the representation of the female body within the history of Fine Art and Painting. There is a certain tension about the different scales I use—small scale of just a few cm or as large as 3 meters tall.

The figures in my paintings retain an ‘unfinished’ look—the idea of subtraction and negative space play a significant role within the way I approach the canvas and start making work.

*What do you collect? Why?*

I like to collect images that feed me in some way. They can sometimes help me to understand where I want to go. I keep an archive of images that include pictures of my family, my friends, random pictures I find online mostly of animals and creatures, nature, films screenshots, old master’s paintings and ancient art or places I haven’t been to (yet).

*How do store little bits of inspiration?*

On my iPhone and in my notebook. Whichever is available.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

I value both equally; many times, I find it hard to tell what is whole and what is just a fragment.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

Sometimes a painting can look too confident of itself. That requires a fresh start.

*What makes you feel whole?*

My two black cats, the warm rays of the sun and young, juicy blackberries.









“Sometimes a painting can look too confident of itself. That requires a fresh start.”





*An interview with*

# Kelly Inouye

*Interview by Julia and Amelia Haney  
with words by Julia and photos by Amelia*





*We met Kelly at Irving Street Projects, the visual arts residency and exhibition space that she runs in San Francisco's Outer Sunset neighborhood. Initially hunting for a personal studio, Kelly has dedicated half of her space to be a resource for artists in the Bay Area.*

*Kelly is a painter—a watercolor artist who has never taken a watercolor class. She remains infatuated with the medium after 15 years, finding and reformatting fragments collected from television and applying her academic and painterly eye. Kelly is equal parts imaginative and practical. In her studio in the back of the storefront space, Kelly has developed work for three solo exhibitions and completed projects for the San Francisco Arts Commission, all while encouraging her resident artists to make the work that will sustain them.*

*Over the past five years, Kelly has supported thirteen residencies at ISP. The work developed at here has gone on to show at the Oakland Museum of California, The Museum of Capitalism, ProArts, The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and many Bay Area art galleries. Works have been acquired by SFMoMA, The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, and private collectors.*

*On this day, her work lines the walls and spreads across the floor, drawing curious glances from passersby. Her daughter reads in the corner of the room. During our time together, Kelly speaks with the confidence of a person who has considered and re-considered her path, yet remains open to what lies ahead.*

I used to do interviews, mostly with artists and with people in the Bay Area starting alternative spaces. Every space has an amazing story. It was so inspiring and valuable to hear first-hand about the long

history of contemporary artists supporting each other and showing each other's work.

*J & A: That's a fantastic segue to our first few questions about the beginning of this space. How did you get started with Irving Street Projects and the idea to integrate studio and gallery spaces?*

The space really came out of a couple strokes of luck. I had also just been awarded a project by the San Francisco Arts Commission (guaranteeing steady income for a while), and I was looking for a studio in this neighborhood because my daughter goes to school nearby. After months of looking, I saw an ad on craigslist. The space was run down but it was bigger than any studio I've ever worked in—and I could tell the problems were just cosmetic so I went for it.

Simultaneously, I was feeling the massive sadness of galleries shutting down in SF and artist friends leaving in droves. It seemed like opportunity was dwindling. So, I thought, "What can I do to help? How can I make the most of this 600 square feet space?" The light at ISP is amazing, it's a bit off the beaten path, and we have this unique public/private space close to Ocean Beach and Golden Gate Park.

I wanted to create the most valuable experience I could for artists, to provide the freedom to develop new work, have an exhibition and give them some positive publicity. I started writing grants so I could pay larger stipends to the resident artists here. I've received grants to fund projects through Southern Exposure, The Zellerbach

Foundation, Intersection for the Arts, and The San Francisco Arts Commission. These organizations have been so supportive of the work going on here.

*J & A: Tell us about your goals for ISP.*

My goal starting the space had four parts: First, to give myself a place to work. Second, to provide meaningful career opportunities to other Bay Area artists. Third, to expand my creative community. And fourth, to explore sustainability.

I programmed the first year by inviting artists I met through various creative endeavors. As time went on, I decided I wanted to support the creative community here, hyper-locally, like within these few blocks. I did that for a little over a year. I look for work that engages the community in some way—it's a really loose guideline. Because this is a small alternative space, I can give artists more freedom than other venues. Artists can experiment here, which has led to some really great work.

In terms of sustainability, however, I would be lying if I told you this was sustainable in the form it's taken over the past five years. I paused the residency program so I could focus on my own work, which I was neglecting. But we're starting back up this fall and I'm so excited. Going forward, projects will be less frequent. I can't afford to neglect my work because not only does it sustain me personally, it pays the rent. It makes the residency program possible.

*J & A: Can you talk to us briefly about creating community here. Did you have an*

*ideal scenario of what community would look like?*

While I didn't have a concrete idea of what community would look like, I based it on some nostalgia for what I had experienced before, and what I wished things were like now.

I benefited from the economics of late 90s cities, where there were still affordable places to occupy as an artist. I could move to New York and find a job and an apartment without going into debt. I paid my way through working various (and numerous!) jobs and still found time to focus on my work. I don't see that type of experience as being possible for many young artists today, and that changes the fabric of our cities and of contemporary art. Cities today are hyper-gentrified and hyper-capitalist and people lose sight of the fact that art and culture are made by *artists* who often aren't prioritizing making a ton of money. I wanted this space to be about ideas and experience, involving the community, and valuing the work of artists. It's also important as artists to let people into our practices even though it's not always comfortable. That's the purpose of ISP, and the community evolves from that concept.

I worried about how the space would be received in the beginning before realizing that I needed to focus on the work: show work I believe in, make work I believe in, and let everything else work itself out. Feeling that freedom is not always natural. My inner critic is loud. It screams, "This is never going to work. This is crazy"; but you have to push those voices aside if





you feel strongly about what you're doing. The past five years have been a gift—not always easy but absolutely worth the effort.

*J & A: Can you tell us a little bit about your work in watercolor? Where does your inspiration come from?*

When I moved to New York twenty years ago, I didn't have the space to make big oil paintings. I went to Pearl Paint on Canal Street and bought some watercolors and paper. That's when I fell in love with watercolor.

At that time, I was working in footwear product design, and I had some very smart, hilarious coworkers. We would always laugh about how we could forget important things—deadlines, our social security numbers—but we could *always* sing the theme song to *The Facts of Life*, or remember an absurd amount of detail about shows we watched as kids. Then, because it was the early days of the internet, I started to find these fan websites that were dedicated to shows like *Pee Wee's Playhouse* or *The Dukes of Hazzard*. I would paint very loose watercolors of the characters and show them to my friends at work and we would laugh when they recognized the characters in the loose paint. Part of what we were laughing about was the intense emotional connection we felt to these stories, to the shows that we watched as kids after school. My work is about that emotional connection. It's about the way the viewer finishes the story.

We all bring our own experiences to a work of art—it makes us feel a certain way that is different for ev-

eryone. Stories (even the lowbrow televised kind) are important for the same reason: they help us cope with life. Whether they give us a mental break, take our minds in a different direction, demonstrate something important, terrify us, or make us feel awful, we learn from them.

And television is fertile ground for painting. We spend so many hours watching it and yet dismiss it as a waste of time—and of course, sometimes it is—but it provides this wealth of iconic images and shared personal experience. It creates a common language with people, an iconography that can provide a point of reflection and insight into today. I feel like I'm just observing and commenting on the cultural shifts happening over the course of my life.

*J & A: And you don't always know what's playing in the back of your mind, influenced by your connection to an image—*

Exactly. I made this piece (*she points to the piece over our heads*) because I was watching the *GLOW* Netflix series and wondering why I felt so strongly about these female wrestlers, playing out all these dramas in a ring. Eventually I realized that it was this *rage*, this rage that is just below the surface in a lot of us today. I was responding to that rage. There is a lot of brilliant feminist writing on the topic of suppression of female rage—about how we as women are not encouraged to show a full breadth of emotion, and the effect that has on our roles in society. I started thinking about these images of wrestling in that context.



I still feel angry, but I feel empowered to have a full range of emotions and take a productive direction from it. We need to let ourselves feel angry. We are so overwhelmingly encouraged to, 'take a bubble bath, put on a face-mask, meditate, you'll feel better!' Basically, don't feel angry, don't do anything to change the status quo, just do more *work to calm yourself down*. And here are these professional wrestlers performing our rage. I feel like they're giving us this gift that we are not receiving!

The paintings show images of female professional wrestlers, they are allegorical and are titled after works of feminist writing. Intersectional feminism is all about how we should internalize our own role in patriarchy before we can truly be supportive of all women's equality. Those conversations can be rough, but I find intersectional feminism to be incredibly grounding and helpful in processing all that goes on in the world today. Everyone needs to read more bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Soraya Chemaly, and Rebecca Traister.

*J & A: Can you tell us about this piece? (pictured below)*



This piece was from a recent match. In the history of women's wrestling, one of the founders was named The Fabulous Moolah and she was very exploitative of her wrestlers. When The Wrestling Federation wanted to celebrate her as an icon of women's wrestling, other female wrestlers rebelled. They staged a match where someone dressed up as Moolah and was thrown out of the ring.

That struck me as an amazing feminist moment right in the middle of the hyper-masculine world of professional wrestling. The message I want to convey by painting this moment is "It's working—keep going." It's wonderful to see feminist ideals being applied outside of academia, and apart from all the merchandising and sloganeering that passes for feminism on social media. So many radical, transformational feminist ideals remain cloistered in academia, so I found it hopeful and inspiring to see that scenario played out in the ring.

*J & A: Can you tell us a bit about your process working with watercolor?*

Watercolor really does its own work. The pigments have this beautiful way of mixing organically, or repelling each other. It's an amazing experiment to watch happen on paper. What I love about watercolor is that I have to focus on it completely. I can't be thinking about day-to-day stuff when I'm working, I have to be tuned in to whatever puddle is spreading, to make sure it's going in the right direction. I do the draft and then the painting in succession.

I can't draft a full painting and then go back and start at the beginning—my hand and my mind forget. Recently I've been making some of my own paint and that gives the work new colors and qualities.

*J & A: You've had 13 residencies here. We are curious about the relationship between your work and the residency program. How have artists impacted your work?*

I've learned so much from every artist who has worked here. Each has brought some aspect of their practice that I really admire. Some former resident artists have become good friends and we've ended up working together on other projects. Whether we're talking about intellectual rigor, social media savvy, or recommendations on where to find certain materials, the conversations that happen during each residency are always valuable.

In terms of my studio work, my painting—I'm very settled in that. The work has a direction of its own at this point. If I were still searching for my own voice, or if I were working with people who were still searching, none of this would work. This is a place for experienced and accomplished artists who understand how the opportunity can benefit their work. I want everyone to leave here feeling like it was an inspiring and impactful time in their practice, and in their career. The experience of connecting and building something with other people keeps my work moving forward.

*J & A: Being self-advocating, patient, and persistent are all crucial to success as*

*a working creative writer or artist, do you have any advice for creative professionals trying to make it?*

Art has always been a need for me. I still don't consider myself a full-time artist and I'm not sure if I can fully embrace the term 'curator'.

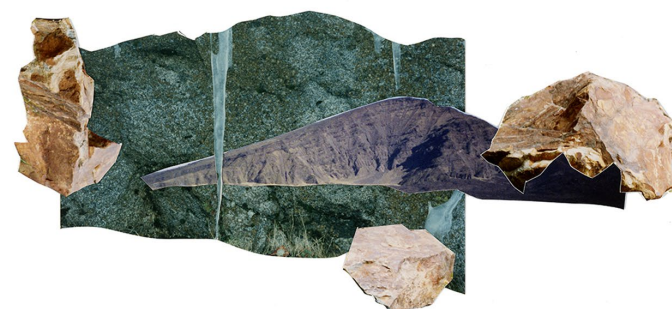
When I lived in New York, if you worked a full-time job you weren't a "real artist", so I let go of that label. I was supporting myself with my day job and I would come home and have this little studio practice, with the light box on my dining table. I just felt great when I sat down and struggled with paintings until I got somewhere I was happy with. I didn't feel like I was achieving ambitious goals in the time frame I wanted to, but I felt like I was on a road.

My advice to someone starting out and/or wondering how much to prioritize a creative practice is have compassion for yourself, and make sure the work itself is nourishing you. The *process* of creating the work has to nourish you. People will connect with that eventually.

*Against the Ropes: Artist Kelly Inouye Explores Women's Rage and Wrestling* is on view at Marrow Gallery in San Francisco from August 30, 2019 to September 28, 2019.

[www.irvingstreetprojects.org](http://www.irvingstreetprojects.org)





## Kirsten Brehmer

I primarily work with images, both static and still. I also have quite an interest in the objects that we surround ourselves with, and so sometimes I'll find myself working sculpturally as well.

I think a lot about the ways in which different lived experiences and social constructs shape our individual perspectives. Specifically, I am curious about how lineages of emotional trauma in women have trickled down through generations to influence emotions and neurotic tendencies, and ultimately impact one's action within a place.

My work explores various sites of intimacy and how humans attribute meaning to them through individual experiences and perceptions in/of those spaces. Two sites I am specifically drawn towards are the natural world and the interiors of homes.

By making work within the landscape, I challenge my own learned perceptions of space and create new connections. Things that catch my attention are the sheer scale of the natural world, landmarks to guide my way, and an awareness of how I navigate the land. I ap-

proach the studio in a similar way, with a lot of questions and traversing—exploring what it means to hold photographs of (giant) mountains and to cut them up, to turn them into my own small plots of land that mimic the mountain horizons of my childhood.

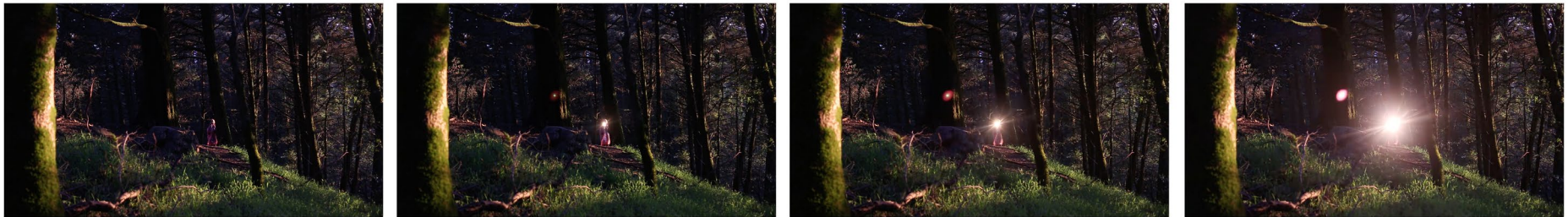
Similarly, to me the home is a familiar scene. I love that people surround themselves with objects, and am interested in turn with how those objects are built with people in mind. For instance, a loveseat is designed to hold two bodies. It is a record of intimate interaction between humans sharing space within the home. What does it mean to dismantle it? To put it back together? The truth is that the object will never be as it was, its existence hinges on our experiences and memories associated with the piece. It all comes back to perception.

It is my goal to devise systems of arrangement, measurement, and exploration of these sites to make sense of the relationships formed between the self and the other (whether that be an object, a place, or another human).





*searching video still sequence as part of I Couldn't Show You Any Other Way*  
“*I Couldn't Show You Any Other Way* is an exploration of passive actions within the landscape. These are acts deemed unimportant by a productive-based society. *Rolling, Searching, Watching, and Waiting*; these task based actions address romanticism and longing, and by extension concepts of the sublime and what it means to be visible, to position oneself in the world, and even disappear into a surrounding.”



“Collecting to me is an act of love and preservation.”

*What do you collect? Why?*

Collecting to me is an act of love and preservation. We all have complicated relationships with objects in general, and often I attach quite a bit of sentiment to them. I am interested in the ways we surround ourselves with objects to make ourselves feel comfortable, and in how we nest. I collect all my ticket stubs, coasters, and small sentimental objects which then get placed into a tin for the year. I have a tin for every year since my 21st birthday. I also collect rocks from special places, trips, or significant experiences, sometimes corresponding to days and moon cycles. Growing up in Colorado, we had a ‘rock garden’ in our back yard where we would keep rocks, geodes, and other treasures from travels and hikes.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

For me inspiration often comes when I’m not expecting it. Being out in the world is essential for me to keep learning and finding more inspiration for my images and in my practice. I carry around a notebook with me everywhere I go and write down ideas, and things I notice or think of that are often spurred by interactions or surprises. Just today I met a man whose father made 16mm instructional films for the railroads in the 1930’s. It was the best part of my day.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

I have doubts that a whole actually exists, as it is always made up of smaller pieces. But I suppose I would say that you must value both. Nothing is whole without the individual pieces that are part of it.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

For me it is less about breaking a piece apart and more about putting it back together. It often hurts my heart to have to dismantle or destroy something—it can give me real anxiety. For instance, the couch I deconstructed was my studio couch for two years. I deeply loved and appreciated it, but perhaps that is what made breaking it apart so necessary and poignant. I am more interested in the ways we attempt to fix things or piece them back together.

*What makes you feel whole?*

I think wholeness comes in waves and in moments. The moments that I feel most whole are often when I am making work, or learning something new, or when I spend time with someone that allows me to feel visible and heard. Coffee shops and positive interactions with strangers feed my soul; and I love things that remind me that the world is bigger than I will ever know.







Previous and below: *Preservation Tactics*  
“*Preservation Tactics* is a project in which a couch was dismantled by hand. Each and every piece of this intimate domestic object was then carefully folded, catalogued, and sealed in plastic.”









## Adelaide Shalhope

How do we as adults deny or push away what children are able to see? Why are we so often unable to integrate experiences that cause us to hide, express, repress, awaken and then retreat, again? Isn't this how we grow? What is growth?

Like my paintings and collage, sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't. Sometimes things are in complete conflict and yet somehow manage to hang together. Issues are often left unresolved. Questions may have no answer. This is the process: to somehow manage to be in the deep end of what is not being seen. It's here

where we experience the creative disordering necessary to use our imagination to see potential. Isn't this growth?

My works are formed by creating expressive paintings, most of which are deconstructed and then reconstructed. They are cut and re-cut, painted and re-painted, cut again, simplified, elaborated, reduced, and re-introduced. They are not conceived individually but as portions of an ongoing tale. Each, an artefact within an installation of a growing multi-dimensional neighbourhood.





“This is the process: to somehow manage to be in the deep end of what is not being seen.”

*What do you collect? Why?*

I'm an avid beach comber and for years have collected driftwood and various bits of flotsam that have washed ashore. I love the treasure hunt aspect of quietly walking along the sand and then noticing something—a piece of wood, a bit of rubber, a worn fragment of ceramic or glass. I collect them because there's something captivating about how the energy of the sea over time has transformed what they were, creating small sculptures—new pieces in their own right.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

I'm very fond of vessels and containers—baskets, boxes, ceramic bowls that I've usually found at flea markets or antique shops. I set them on window sills and arrange them on tables or shelves in my studio. I go for periods of time without really noticing that they are there, and then something compels me to look through them. I'm engaged in a new treasure hunt, captivated once more.

*Do you value the part or the whole?*

I value them both, equally. I believe they are inseparable. The same, even.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

Well, to be honest, the piece will let me know. I may think it's finished, but I will have a slightly unsettled feeling about it. It could remain on my studio wall for a few days, a few weeks, months, or perhaps years. And then all of a sudden, I'll look over at it and it will give me the signal to pull it apart, to somehow set it free.

*What makes you feel whole?*

Spending time in silence, usually in nature, where I am reminded to listen deeply to myself being breathed by the universe.







## Saba Farhoudnia

I've come to understand my artistic process because of a chronic back problem. My images changed completely following months of extreme body pain. During this time, I was unable to produce any art. When I could no longer remember how I felt before my back pain was when I understood the real meaning of needing, suffering, and wishing. When I felt like I was in a shell like a turtle, is when I began to realize that I could create images from these feelings. I began to paint a world of pain outside of myself, including my wishes and regrets.

Pain is meant as a reminder of joy, and un-pleasance as a reminder of ever-present beauty. Pain is

pervasive in my paintings and it includes everything that needs to be relieved. However, with every description of pain, there is a speck of hope.

My paintings are particularly related to a balance between my brushstrokes, geometric forms, gestural marks which suggest figuration and sometimes are fragmented into abstract compositions. I am interested in creating unknown spaces with narratives that represent pain, dark comedy or even the grotesque. In my process, I explore the possibilities of merging the language of drawing and painting. My compositions are created in pursuit of complex visual situations.

















*What do you collect? Why?*

Growing up, my parents collected things that they were passionate about. My mom collects books and my dad collects coins, gramophone disks, and stamps. Based on this experience, I learned to collect bizarre objects that make me happy: stones and natural leaves. I like the drastic contrast that my collections create—hard stones beside fragile dry leaves. Recently, I have become interested in collecting postcards and bookmarks, which I acquire mostly when I go to a remarkable museum show or bookstore. As an immigrant artist, I always take care to consider the size and number of things I collect living in NYC, so that I am always ready to live in a tiny house in Tokyo.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

I always carry my sketchbook around. For a feeling or a moment, I try to write it down or find a poem or text that give me a similar sense, and take some notes. I am a painter and I like to make images of my sufferings and pains, dark moments. For this reason, I cannot store all my inspiration only in my mind.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

I have played the Tombak, a Persian drum, since I was twelve years old. When I started, I was obsessed with music. I was going to Persian traditional concerts and listening to songs. I found the parts and the whole relationship, exactly in that time. I was amazed to learn an instrument that keeps the rhythm for the whole group of instruments. Making a sound with one finger with my instrument, and then making that same sound with all my fingers at once, gave me the sense that part and whole are both valuable. This belief came to my visual practice as well.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

This is something that I have been always confused about, it in terms of choosing the best time for it. I break a piece apart when a part is not communicating with other parts in a related connection. This can be an element in my painting process, in my social relationships, or in my daily habits.

*What makes you feel whole?*

It varies in time and place. For now, I feel complete when I am happy about what I am doing, when my day has been productive, when I can truly have empathy for people around me, when I can change things for the better, when I can be fully honest with myself regardless of societal labels, and when I am creating or looking at art.

“I am interested in  
creating unknown  
spaces”







I am interested in art history and use painting to explore line, color, and form. I am intrigued by the power of the organic shape and its relationship to color.

My work is also inspired by my collecting practice. I collect seashells,

comics books, books on nature, and vintage stuffed animals. Within my body of work, I have created a visual vocabulary that celebrates mark marking. My practice can be described as an evolving mythology of line, color, and form.

*What do you collect? Why?*

Other than being passionate about art, I am deeply passionate about collecting. I collect art, vintage stuffed animals, mugs, rocks, and whatever else I am able to find that sparks joy in my life.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

I love taking photographs and going for walks. If something grabs my attention, then I take a picture of it. I also journal frequently, so if something can't be completely explained in a photograph, then I depend on words.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

It usually depends on the day. Some days I'm more interested in the smaller things, but other days I value the sum of all the parts.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

I am usually guided by intuition when I create work. My work is very process based, so it usually happens in the moment I am working. If a piece is asking to be broken, then I break it apart.

*What makes you feel whole?*

Easy. Family, poetry, nature, music.





“If a piece is asking  
to be broken,  
then I break it apart.”



To the Aztecs, prayer is “word and breath.” For me, poetry is “word on breath,” an experience to be shared viscerally—breathed through the body—as well as communally in the oral tradition of the ancients. I am inspired by the silent and silenced voices of history and herstory. As an artist, I approach my work through two lenses: a cultural lens and a feminist lens. Through my major bodies of work, I have explored and claimed my cultural roots, juxtaposed contrasting experiences imposed by war

and irrepressible choices of liberation, as well as delved into and raised awareness of the oppression and resilience of women. With an eye to beauty and an unflinching gaze on the truths of our inhumanity, I have begun to approach a question I once asked in a poem: “Why can’t the horror of living be beautiful?” I am poem-maker, wielding each syllable as music, each line as brushstroke, and form as sculptural shape. The page is my canvas, the voice my instrument: I aim to see and to sing.

*What do you collect? Why?*

As a child, I collected matchbooks. I asked friends and family to bring me these travel souvenirs and kept the match covers in scrapbooks and the intact matchbooks in plastic knitting bags. The unlit matchbooks were my promise to myself that someday I would see the world. Now my altars collect a myriad of offerings: seashells, pebbles and stones, bits of fur, feathers, sage, candles, books of prayer and wisdom. These are gifts offered to me by my beloved, my spirit sister, and Gaia. I do not set out to collect them. They find me.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

I would like to say I build “a memory palace” and frame each bit of inspiration, then hang it on the wall of a gallery housing an artistic project in my mind. This fabulous notion from Debra Dean’s novel, *The Madonnas of Lenin-grad*, enchants me. But keeping notes on my phone and in file folders on my laptop for new poem, book, and play ideas appears to be more practical and reliable (so far).

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

I value both. Though I am often awed by the miracle of the whole—the whole manifests qualities the parts cannot realize on their own. In poetry, a poem must stand alone and possess its own power. And yet, based on its placement in a collection, a poem deepens its resonance. There may be echoes or contradictions that ricochet off the poem, inviting the reader to linger, to ponder, even to wrestle with the angles of hard and luminous truths.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

In poetry, I am looking for the effect of bas-relief: a coherence of image, sound, and shape that “pops.” No distractions, nothing extraneous, and nothing expected—a precisely sculpted poem that pops off the page and surprises us. If there is anything in the poem that does not contribute to this dual sense of clarity and vitality, it must be “broken off” and saved for another poem—or enter fragment limbo. Perhaps these fragments will coalesce into their own poem.

In most everything else in life, you break a piece apart when you want to share.

*What makes you feel whole?*

Breath, breathing mindfully, meditating on my breath, on my ocean of breath, on the ocean itself, the pounding surf matching my breath, my heartbeat. Being fully present in my body—during yoga, an engaging conversation, a warm swim as if I were back in the womb, a walk on the beach with the wind in my hair, a lingering embrace—this dwelling place—with a beloved.

I feel most wholly myself when I embody my poems through my word on breath.



“I am inspired by the  
silent and silenced voices  
of history and herstory.”

Cindy Williams Gutierrez

**In Brazil’s Defense**

*In this kind of crime what is defended is not honor, but vanity,  
and the pride of the lord who sees a woman as his personal property.*  
—Brazilian Supreme Court decision, 1991

*Before.* (In defense of honor)

Husbands red-eyed  
lovers killed  
with impunity  
Lawyers won  
acquittals homicide  
legally  
Women’s bodies  
murdered  
for cuckoldry

*After.* (In defense of economics)

Men Brazil’s wild heart-  
land  
refused to abide  
Expensive  
to divorce  
cheaper  
save face Hire  
a gunslinger  
kill your wife

**A Note Sor Juana Dreams of Sending to the Bishop of Puebla**

*So in my case, it is not seemly  
that I be viewed as feminine,  
as I will never be a woman  
who may as woman serve a man.*

—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, poet-nun of New Spain  
and the first feminist of the Americas, 1648?-1695

First, I dream. Then I write  
between the lines for fools  
to abide by patriarchy's rules.  
Make no mistake: I incite  
The Most Reverend's tongue to spite.  
Then, I recant, forswear:  
No nun's desire will lay bare  
in noble works of art.  
Ban or burn my books. I take heart:  
To confess your envy is my prayer.





**Eugenics Rant**

A “feeble-minded” taxonomy  
for females in the early twentieth century  
spelled compulsory  
sterility;  
and for Native American women in the ‘60s,  
“feeble” equaled unmarried pregnancy  
or a white coat’s verdict  
of promiscuity;  
and for 60% of black women in Sunflower County—  
victims of “Mississippi appendectomies”—  
and 1/3 of Puertorriqueñas in our pulsing territory  
of bomba dances—due to their “hyper-fertility”

and their booming poverty—the US polity  
decreed these ladies of the south  
and commonwealth  
failed to see their burden on society’s health  
and must tender their tubes  
or wombs as the toll,  
as the means to minority birth-control;  
but if they were to rise to a higher station  
and if they had a voice in this chosen nation,  
they would certainly vote  
for sterilization.





## Kit Porter

After relocating to Houston, I was working on a series of aerial landscape paintings of the Gulf coast. I have always enjoyed working with mixed media, so I went to the beach to collect materials for my work. My intention was to use a bit of sand, maybe some scraps of rope, wood, etc., textures I associated with the coastal environment. However, upon arriving to the beach I found a beach simply littered. As I poked my way through the debris, searching for the perfect texture to add into my paintings, I could not help but turn my artistic search into a full-blown beach cleanup. Filling buckets with plastic bottles, grocery bags, straws, cigarettes, and innumerable fragments of plastic, I left feeling frustrated, discouraged, and quite frankly disgusted.

As the weeks passed, I made some lovely landscapes utilizing some of the debris. They evoked both the beauty and destruction of the coastal landscape, however upon each return to the studio, I began to question why I was incorporat-

ing these pieces of debris back into the landscape from which they had just been removed. I did not want to paint littered landscapes, and I did not want to simply paint landscapes. The process of removing marine debris had become instrumental to my work, but I wasn't sure how to translate it artistically.

One day, during a cleanup, I found what looked like a piece of a broken record. There was something about this single item that intrigued me and immediately shifted my mindset. I had been focused on thinking about the future of these items, whether they could be reused in my art, or recycled, however, finding this record made me wonder about its past. Where did it come from? Who did it belong to? Was it intentionally thrown out? Did someone lose it? And perhaps most curious of all: what was it when it was complete? As these questions ran through my head, I realized that each of the items I was collecting had a story—each had a past I would never fully know.

It is estimated that between 5.3 million and 14 million tons of unrecycled plastic waste ends up in the ocean *each year* and plastics can take 450 to 1,000 years to decompose. A recent article in *National Geographic* quotes Ted Siegler, a Vermont resource economist, “We know how to pick up garbage. Anyone can do it. We know how to dispose of it. We know how to recycle.” I am a visual artist, and so my work serves as my voice, offering significance to the broken, lost, discarded and forgotten fragments I have found, physical and conceptual. And so, the process of collecting debris has become instrumental in my work.

My process begins with removing environmentally destructive debris from the coast by conducting regular beach cleanup—sometimes with large groups of volunteers, sometimes with family, and sometimes on my own. During each cleanup, I put fragments aside to take back to the studio. As I sort and thoughtfully compose the fragments into unique arrangements,

I focus on the simplified shapes, colors and arrangements, devoid of landscape. The fragments in my paintings represent our possessions, our memories, what is significant one moment and forgotten the next. They represent what we wanted, what we received, what we possessed, what we loved, what we used, what we discarded, what we broke, what we lost, and what we forgot. They are what is left over, all that remains.

In addition to offering a statement about how we choose to treat the environment, I hope my paintings will serve as a reminder to be grateful of what we have, mindful of how we treat it, and aware of what we will leave behind in *all* areas of our lives.







*What do you collect? Why?*

I have always been a collector + creator. The curiosity in creating something new from something found is a prominent theme in my body of work. My process begins with removing environmentally destructive debris from the coast through regular beach cleanups. After recycling what I can, I always take some fragments back to the studio. By rendering each fragment in paint on a simple white background, removed from its origin, it takes on new meaning. Each fragment is physically and conceptually the remnant of a possession, an experience, a moment in time that has passed. By rendering them visually in my art, I seek to honor and prolong the lifetime of these fragments.

*How do you store little bits of inspiration?*

I photograph and sketch a lot, but I also keep physical fragments in my studio. Some are kept in glass jars, sorted by color, others are incorporated into mixed media assemblage works so I can reference them in larger paintings. Each of them has been used by someone other than me, and each of them is reused in my work over and over.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

The big concepts are what drive my work, but I am a firm believer that small actions can lead to big change.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

The underpainting of each work I produce is an expression of an object or experience. I value the complete underpainting, but I also enjoy dissecting it into pieces, creating something completely new and unexpected. By breaking each expression into smaller pieces, I am honoring the object/experience as it was once whole, while finding beauty in the fact that it will never remain physically, or in memory, in a complete state. I find so much beauty in these remnants.

*What makes you feel whole?*

When I am so completely engaged in something or with someone that my mind does not wander away from the present moment—these are the moments, the fragments of my life—that make me feel whole.

“The fragments in my paintings represent our possessions, our memories, what is significant one moment and forgotten the next.”





My current projects explore queer-ness and childhood, folklore and histories of language, and family and loss. They pull from places: forested summers in Virginia, a few grey days in Budapest, and most of a life in a conservative, working class neighborhood in Cincinnati. They burrow into memories and speculative alternatives: bats flocking my chimney, dead gulls on the Oregon shore, dead horse heads hung on ramparts, my mother's mind calcified with speech, paintings in a college art museum, houses walking on chicken's legs, and red cloaked girls.

Growing up steeped in Catholicism, holy ghosts and sly demons were sewn into the everyday. These textures of lush and lingering threats find their way into my poems, even those not explicitly about hauntings. The pieces that directly

address monsters and hauntings seek them as sites of queerness, absurdity, subversion, and malice. Western philosophy traditionally separates body and mind, portraying the body as feminine, non-white, queer, emotional, sexual, irrational, and otherwise othered. Monsters are entirely body (even when disembodied), forms of over-indulgence, taboo, and transgression. What alternatives exist that we haven't imagined through the spiritual world of ghosts and chimeras? My poems present re-imaginings, tender or toothsome. They hope to trouble our understanding of bodies, while also celebrating sensation and touch.

I'm dedicated to both the girdle and the maelstrom, to tight forms with impeccable technique and to the wild excess of lush language.

# “My poems present re-imaginings, tender or toothsome.”

*What do you collect? Why?*

I'm very sentimental so I hold onto piles of letters, drawings, dead flowers, old toys, and so on. What do I actively seek out and accrue? I love asking the same questions over and over and seeing how the answers change. I do this with people as I'm getting to know them and with myself. Bhanu Kapil's *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers* has been a great inspiration to me. It's centered around a set of questions.

*How do you store bits of inspiration?*

On my bedside table.

*Do you value the parts or the whole?*

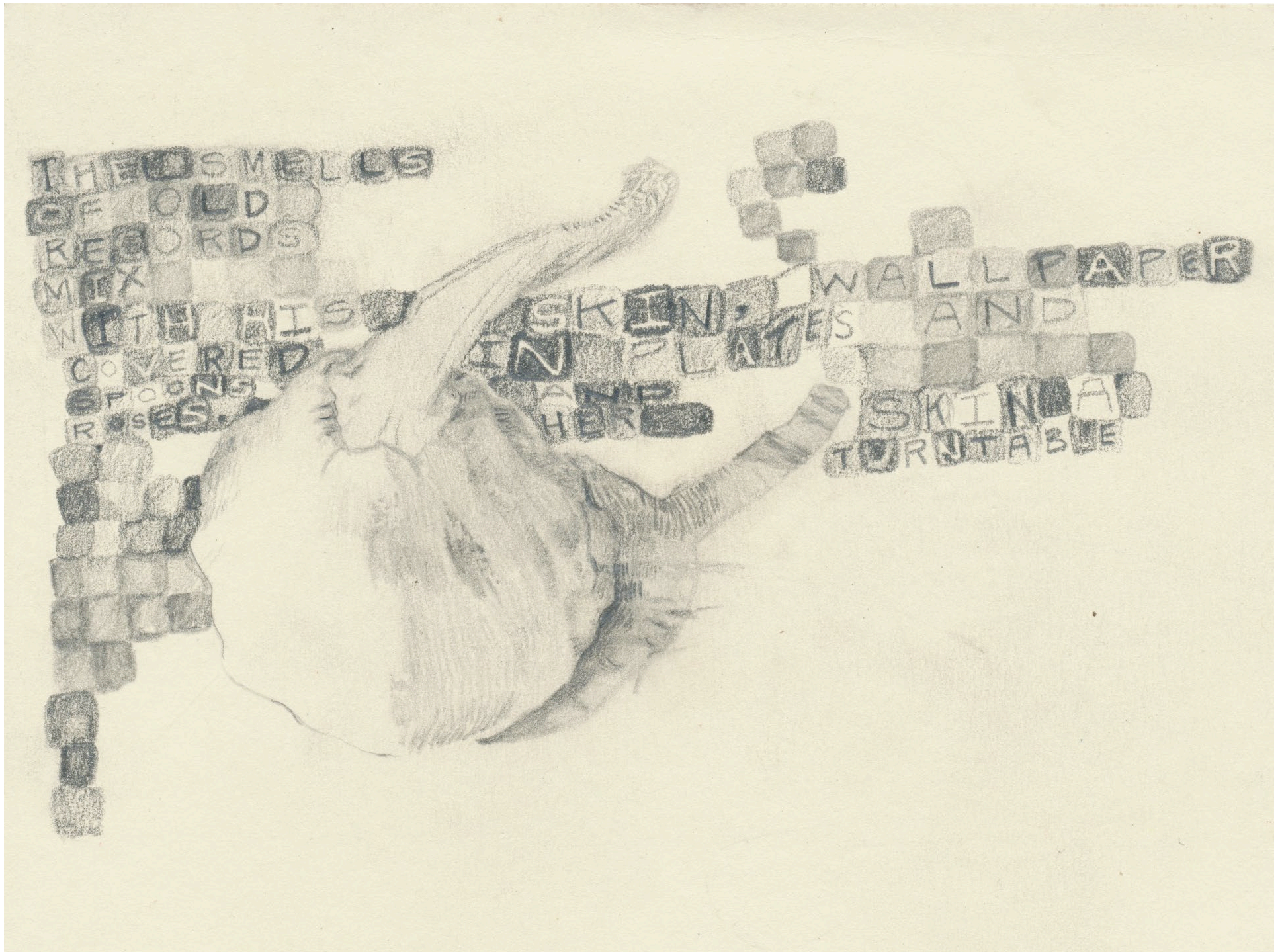
There's no binary between parts and whole. I think of the emergent properties of bodies, how gut and brain interact to create personality and instinct, how our minds and bodies are not separate at all, but made of pieces that are changed by their relationships with other pieces. In my work, I hope to trouble binaries and to reimagine how parts and wholeness coalesce. The world, as we change it, is in conversation with the one that already exists.

*How do you know when to break a piece apart?*

It's like checking a raspberry for ripeness. If it comes off easily into your hands, it's ready to eat. If it sticks on the bush, you should pull out your scalpel and begin to ask it a lot of questions.

*What makes you feel whole?*

I love this question! Boxing with femmes in my friend's basement. That moment after crying in front of someone who loves me. Being in between places. Finishing something very hard, having worked my hardest at it. Long conversations with someone I'm just beginning to know. Laughing. Community organizing. Gross, weird, absurd, vulnerable art.





Laura Grothaus  
**Red Shoes**

*after Dancing Mania on a Pilgrimage to the Church at Sint-Jans-Molenbeek  
engraved by Hendrick Hondius based a drawing by Pieter Brueghel, the Elder.*

I.

There is a story about a pair of red shoes and a girl  
who puts her feet in them. She cannot stop dancing.

The melon of her heel bursts open like an old star.  
Blisters congeal, sores ooze tar. Her toes

cramp. A hero priest slices off the slippers and feet too.  
The girl is footless with the sin of vanity.

Moral of the story: don't angle your praise  
towards the heretic gravel. Be suspicious of beauty.<sup>1</sup>

II.

Hive-minded bees dance to recall  
nectar, hauling memory from muscle— sharing

food and phlegm and home.  
The more the red shoes danced,

the more the girl remembered.  
A glissade is a controlled fall.<sup>2</sup>



III.

In 1518, Hundreds of people infected  
by their feet's in ection, danced days, weeks,

months in Aix-la-Chapelle then Flanders,  
Metz, Utrecht, Strasbourg. Parades of children,

sweaty women, and men with sore thighs  
dancing speechless. Skin blasphemously sore.<sup>3</sup>

IV.

A linguist wrote that language is our most powerful  
instinct, the one that lead us to resurrect

cathedrals and adorn elds with owers, to kill deer and desire  
to kill deer for each other. So if bees and dancers

cannot be given to language at least they can be given  
to the instinct towards language and the rebellion from it.<sup>4</sup>



V.

The blasphemously plagued dancers were prescribed more dancing,  
doors of guildhalls and markets thrown open, rostrum floors

groaned with feet churning wood,  
stomping, writhing, legs glancing off

the gills of houses. Remember, sweet ones,  
a fall can be a dance.<sup>5</sup>

VI.

There was pollen on the breath of the red-shoed dancer.  
Her steps traced a map to what

could become honey if choked back up.  
The steps were thick and sweet.

Those who wished to end it,  
would have to cut her at her feet.

6

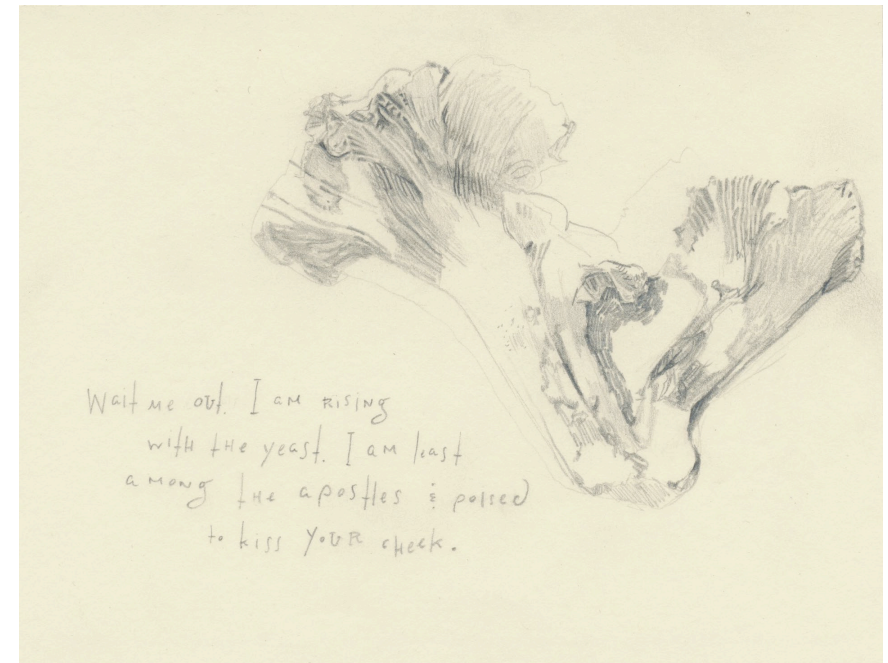
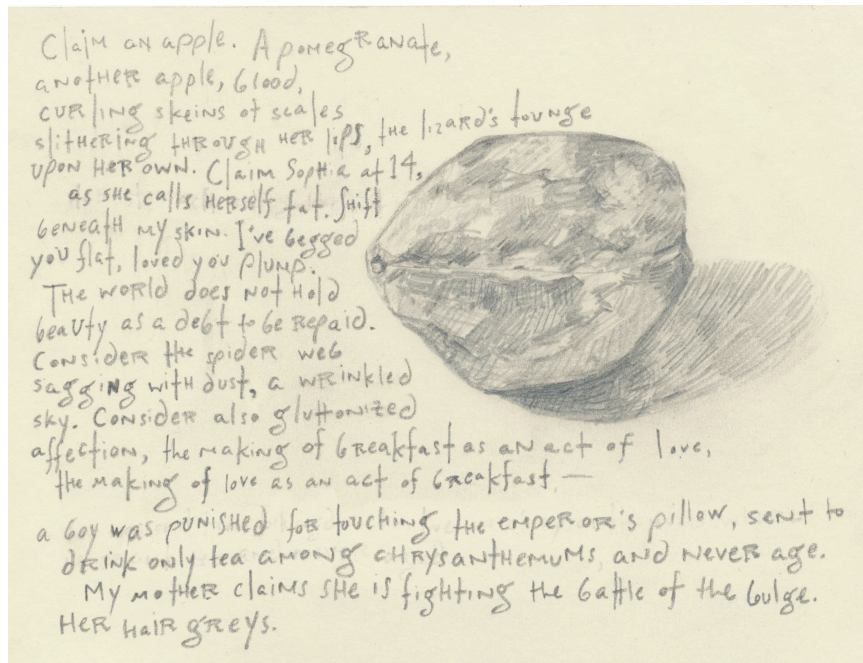
6

6

5

1 1 (

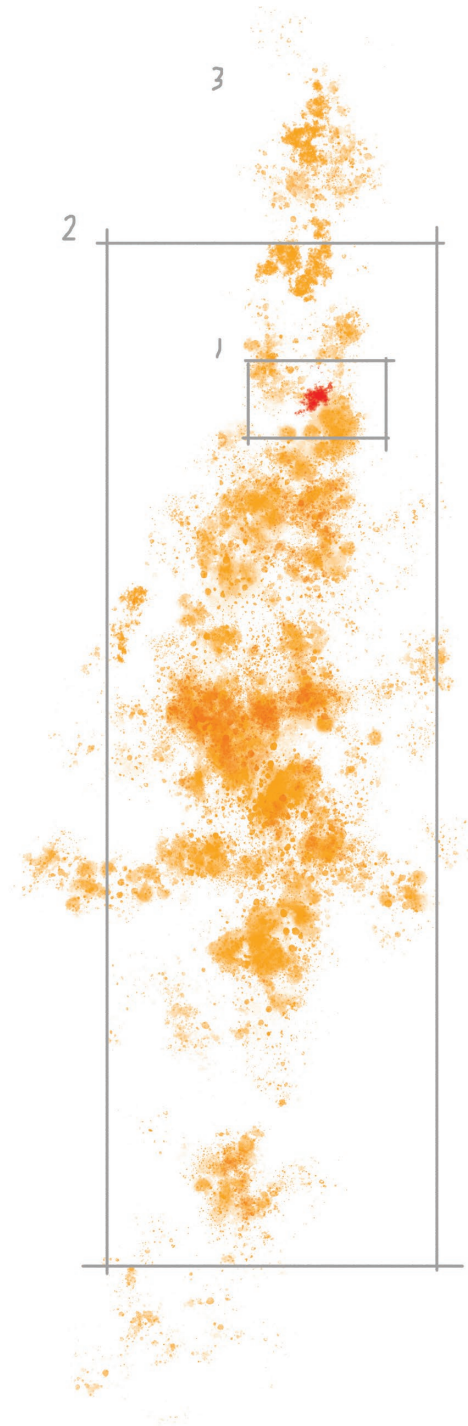




Laura Grothaus  
**Mother Tongue**

*Next I'll speak about the celestial gift of honey from the air.*  
—Virgil *Georgic Book IV* l. 1

Because the swarm settled  
briefly above the front door,  
threw their bodies  
against the glass  
high enough that I  
could see sun dimly  
through the dark bulbs  
of their tails, I was not  
afraid, not even  
surprised when I awoke  
to bees hiving  
my throat, speaking  
of the body in its  
winged parts. Virgil  
should have known  
bees are sunflowers' sweat,  
shivers of wheat, liver spots  
on the face of hollyhocks.  
To kill a queen, her children  
coat and crush her.  
They guzzled, gilded,  
nuzzled hills of clover;  
waxed eloquent, hummed  
*We make honey in mouths.*  
Some mouths are better for this —  
politicians and priests  
and mothers who are both.





## THALIA submissions

Thalia is a community and magazine dedicated to fostering collaboration and celebrating creatives who identify with womanhood.

t h a l i a m a g a z i n e . c o m  
*c o n t a c t @ t h a l i a m a g a z i n e . c o m*