ISSUE 6 / INTERSECT

SAVAGE JOURNAL

Cover Art by LOUISE CAMU

An outsider in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, John the Savage observes the world around him with eyes informed by the works of Shakespeare. Like John, SAVAGE Journal looks to art, literature and philosophy to enrich our perception of modern life.

'Listen, I beg of you,' cried the SAVAGE... 'Lend me your ears.'

EDITORS' NOTE

Winter 2017

Intersect is a testament to the fact that ideas and issues converge and overlap – that they cannot be filed away into neat, distinct categories, and that we can get a more enriching, more nuanced picture of the world of arts and culture when we remove the boundaries we have been programmed to construct.

Critically, we also get a more complete picture of our societies – the identities that exist and the injustices that occur within them – when we look at the socio-political world through an intersectional lens. When legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw first discussed 'Intersectionality theory' in 1989, she applied the principle to Black Feminism, arguing that what it meant to be Black and what it meant to be a woman were not mutually exclusive – the experiences and oppressions of Black women were unique, and had to be looked at as interconnected. In 2017, it is clearer than ever that we need to consider the ways in which different social categorisations – such as race, class and gender – all overlap to shape people's experiences. In the sixth issue of SAVAGE Journal, we set out to channel this lens of plurality, questioning the binary categorisation of intellectual disciplines and personal identities alike.

Many of the articles discuss specific intersections in and of themselves. In her photo-series 'AFRYKA.POLSKA.', Sonti Ramirez documents the ways in which Black culture and Polish identity have influenced each other in the city of Warsaw; Chris Jones examines the role of literature in politics, via the music of PJ Harvey and Al Wilson, and Kay Ean Leong looks at the role science can play in dance through the work of choreographer Wayne McGregor. In Our Journal, Hena Sharma's highly personal piece 'Recounting 7/16' exposes the often problematic relationship between universal human experience and the Western media agenda.

But throughout the issue as a whole, themes and topics overlap in ways that are sometimes obvious and sometimes more subtle. Ava Davies' piece 'Gweilo' spans both the READ and Theatre sections, while the theme of intersection has been reflected stylistically through the design choices of Elliot Nash and Joanna Hobbs.

We hope this issue inspires meaningful conversations. It is the first step in a long-term process as we try to make SAVAGE Journal more inclusive and representative. We are still learning and would appreciate any feedback. Thank you for reading SAVAGE Journal.

Bella, Sophie and Flossie



CONTENTS

INTER-DISSECTING VEGANISM

SAILEE KHURJEKAR examines Intersectional Veganism and where it stands in relation to conventional animal-rights based arguments

Veganism is growing – fast. London is an exciting prospect for up-and-coming vegans, with an abundance of quinoa salads and tofu scramble scattered across shelves, providing an incentive to splurge money on the newest food trends. As a vegetarian myself, I know I'd struggle to give up dairy products, but it often perplexes me that there is still a stigma associated with adopting a vegan lifestyle. Sure, the idea of stopping my consumption of brie or fried eggs is frightening, but so long as you're maintaining a balanced diet, what's the issue? I don't think the problem is with the food itself – eating seitan pizza or cocoa avocado brownies for the rest of your life sounds more than manageable, and equally enticing vegan dishes can be made on a budget. Perhaps, then, the misconceptions are rather due to the nature of arguments for veganism, and the way they are framed.

One particular argument comes through the idea of 'Intersectional Veganism'. IV, as it's more commonly known, is more than a fad, it is a way of life. It is a school of thought that promotes the union of vegans across the world, fighting for social justice. The concept takes inspiration from Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality – simply put, the idea that different types of discrimination are mutually dependent on one another. IV is not really about the animals themselves and their rights. Instead, it focuses on human rights, and how vegans ought to live their lives in a way conducive to helping other humans. If all forms of oppression are as interconnected as these followers claim, why are we neglecting animal rights as part of the grand scheme of things? It seems almost counter-intuitive to do so.

Within this bubble of interconnection, a link can be made between the present-

day oppression of women and the oppression of animals, in that both groups are often objectified and deprived of their basic rights. Furthermore, factory farming revolves around the idea of breeding: female animals are repeatedly and forcefully impregnated, and 'rape racks' (a genuine industry term) are used to restrain them throughout this process. Feminists are to women what vegans should be to animals – defenders – and there is a valid argument to be made for a level of intersection within what they're defending.

The reasoning behind IV does, however, have its flaws: while we might argue that any narrative suggesting a 'moral hierarchy' of beings should be dismantled, women and animals are exploited by the patriarchy in different ways, with the former group exercising a far higher level of subjectivity and experiencing a more complex struggle.

Maybe true justification for veganism lies beyond IV. Intersectionality is perhaps most relevant when it deals with human on human oppression, and the majority of vegans actually opt not to eat animal products for environmental and ethical reasons. I personally have used the latter reason to continue with my vegetarian diet – living in a world where animals are victimised is not particularly appealing. To silence their critics, vegans should really be placing animal rights in and of themselves at the forefront. IV promotes a necessary form of human empowerment, but it's one within which animals are a bit of an afterthought.

Ethical theories such as Utilitarianism can be used to discuss whether the amount of pain caused to the animals in question is greater than the amount of pleasure the consumer will gain. The philosopher Peter Singer, a strong proponent of animal rights, expands on the premise that we should seek 'the greatest good for the greatest number', through making a case that animals are sentient. He affirms that 'all the arguments to prove man's superiority cannot shatter this hard fact: in suffering, the animals are our equals', essentially suggesting that the boundary between human and animal is arbitrary and outdated when it comes to how we experience pain. Certainly, going vegan has it difficulties: restrictions in food choice, misconceptions that vegans are elitist snobs, and having to work harder to obtain the correct vitamins and nutrients, are just a few examples. But maybe it's worth it to know that you've saved an animal from unnecessary harm.

IV doesn't have it completely wrong – there is certainly a relationship between feeling oppressed as a person and wanting to help others who are oppressed – but animals and their rights should be at the heart of a vegan theory. It is up to the individual to educate themselves about the benefits of pursuing a vegan lifestyle, to see past the fear of alienation that deters so many, and focusing on animal rights is, I feel, the best place to start. In the meantime, veganism – we're rooting (pun intended) for you.

Artwork by BILLY PARKER

ASHISH: POLITICAL FORCE AND FASHION FUSION

ALICE DEVOY looks at Indian fashion designer Ashish Gupta, whose provocative designs focus on themes of race and identity

If fashion designer Ashish Gupta is anything, he is intensely unafraid, or perhaps more fittingly, intensely afraid of conformity. A self-proclaimed sequin-addict, Ashish's clothes are little rays of sunshine. In a recent interview with *The Guardian*, Ashish explained that sequins are his 'protest against the shittiness of life, the banality of the everyday.' He pictures sequins as a way of magnifying the world's positivity; hanging up in his studio is a quote by Leigh Bowery: 'the reason I use sequins at the moment is because if I cannot cast the light at least I can reflect it.' Indeed, based both on the aesthetic value and the pioneering politics of his work, Ashish seems to be casting plenty of rainbow-tinted light of his own.

His non-conformity comes in part from the unusual way he started his career. After graduating from Central Saint Martins, he was on his way to an interview with a fashion house in Paris, hoping to break into the thriving industry in the French capital. In a sudden turn of events, however, he had his portfolio stolen at Gare du Nord, after which he just picked himself back up, got on a train back to London and started to design clothes tout seul.

Ashish uses slogans as an agent for change, employing them to challenge taboos and encourage empathy. 'It's okay to be gentle and it's okay to be sensitive', one t-shirt reads. Another of his past men's graphic t-shirts proclaimed: 'Fall in love. Be more tender.' And then there is the sheer rainbow joy of 'As often as possible be gentle and kind.' For Ashish, 'Being gentle does not mean being weak': his sequins and slogans challenge traditional conceptions of masculinity and breathe a certain kindness into our sometimes-toxic political climate.

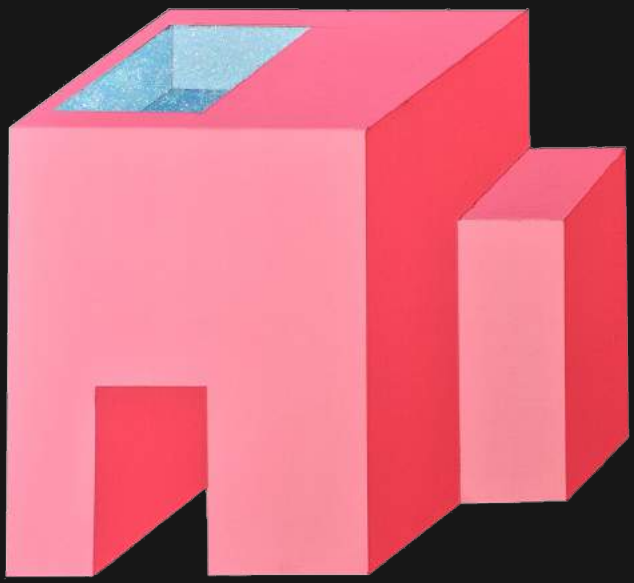
Ashish's designs are multi-faceted; his clothes are not just visually provocative but also politically charged. His unique approach is predicated on the political power of fashion, as can be seen in his recent use of the structure of American baseball garments at London Fashion Week, showcasing his A/W17 collection. Classic jockey outfits were taken by Ashish and transformed into his signature sparkly, rebellious designs. One such jacket, with 'USA' on the front, subversively had 'unfinished' and 'business' written on each arm; this was worn on the catwalk by models of diverse ethnicities as Ashish's statement against Trump's politics and the rise of the white-supremacy movement. Ashish has very little time for tokenism: questions of identity are central to both his designs and the ways in which they are showcased. When asked why he chose purely Black models at another show, he neatly retorted "Have you asked any of the designers who used all white models why they did that?"

Having moved from India himself, he has perhaps been his most vocal on the topic of immigration; for example, he wore a t-shirt emblazoned with the word 'Immigrant' to his 2017 show at London Fashion Week, as a means of simultaneously expressing disgust and pride, and taking ownership of a word he sees as negatively charged. The fashion designer questions why British people abroad are referred to as 'expats' while others like him are labelled as 'immigrants', and ultimately believes immigration is not a political issue, but a very human one. Although immigration is unavoidably political, and a systematic issue, it is deeply personal. It is easy to view it through a detached lens, but Ashish encourages us to be aware of the individuals among the statistics and percentages. As a result, the politics of the issue slowly become more humanised.

Ashish's Indian identity and an interest in Indian garments inspired his Spring Summer 2017 collection, which included paisley embroidered kaftans and saris, sometimes styled with his staple slogan t-shirts or with a tikka headpiece. Not that he is ever far from his roots: all his clothes are hand-sewn, sequin by sequin, in his country of birth. Accusations of cultural appropriation have bemused him: "I can't appropriate my own culture?" On the matter of fashion bindis, Ashish questions whether people really understand what they are wearing. He believes this is a matter of sensitivity, or as he comments 'about understanding where something has come from.' There is a thin line between appreciation and appropriation and it's vital that the value and meaning of something culturally significant isn't demeaned or diminished by a society that doesn't wholly understand it.

Ashish's fashion reminds me of the children's book *The Rainbow Fish*. The shiny scales on the Rainbow Fish provoke jealousy among the other normal-scaled fish. It is only when the Rainbow Fish decides to share his sparkles rather than keep them all to himself that he, and everyone else, becomes happy. Like the reformed Rainbow Fish, Ashish uses sparkles and shares them in an attempt to spread love and positivity. If we all took a little leaf out of his unique book, the world would be a more accepting, joyous and fabulous place.

Artwork by BILLY PARKER



Artwork by BILLY PARKER

RECOUNTING 7/16

HENA SHARMA relates her experience of last year's terror attack in Dhaka

The day began at a friend's house. I was messaging my sister and suggested we have breakfast at Holey Artisan Bakery; the best place in town which had grown from a little place selling cake and fresh bread, to a bustling café, drenched in sunlight during the day and lit elegantly during the night. Holey was the place to be. It wasn't a birthday unless you and your friends had brunch there together, sitting around a white marbled table in the Bangladeshi sun, with families enjoying their food, and dogs enjoying the grassy field. The walls had a distinctive blue watercolour art, walls I admired when I was there due to their uniqueness. It was rather beautiful witnessing the growth of Holey, which made it all the more tragic when it eventually fell.

On 1st July 2016, just that happened. I had just arrived back from the cinema with my friends and sister. My sister and I got onto a cycle rickshaw a few roads behind

Holey Artisan Bakery and were on the way back home from my friend's house, a 15-minute ride, during which I ironically expressed to my sister how safe I felt in Dhaka. Before leaving we heard a few popping sounds in the background and simply attributed it to building work, as there's guaranteed to be something under construction on every road.

15 minutes later we were back home. The second we entered however we were greeted by my semi-worried dad. "Something's happening at that Holey Bakery", he said, rather nonchalantly. He would typically be alerted by the British High Commission on threats to safety, but this alert felt different. Piece by piece more information sieved through. There was a bomb… there is a hostage situation but it's taken care of… they have guns, and then, worst of all, they have Abinta, Tarishi and Faraaz.

As time went on, the news only got more horrifying. In the initial hours of the hostage situation, I simply thought that the affair would be over in a few hours - surely the perpetrators just wanted money. I was certain that in a few months I'd be laughing about the whole thing with Abinta and the others. My hopes for the outcome of the event, unfortunately, were quite optimistic now I think about it.

Just a few months before this, my dad talked to me about being more careful in Dhaka. He had warned me about intelligence he had received regarding ISIS's presence in Bangladesh. At the time, I knew of ISIS but not in great detail, and when he talked of a potential attack I laughed. It was simply unfathomable to me. When I researched ISIS further, and by research, I mean Google Images, I remember feeling sick to my stomach at how they photographed and proudly displayed each one of their murders.

When CNN announced that the men were ISIS supporters, I began to understand the seriousness of the situation, and the possibility that I would never see my friends again. My friends and I stayed up extremely late, constantly waiting for more information. I kept on checking Abinta's activity on Facebook Messenger to see if maybe, maybe she was out and safe. My mind was racing with ideas of what was happening in this restaurant just across the lake that we all knew so well. What was she going through? When would she get out? By 2am, I was exhausted. I fell asleep in front of the sofa, with CNN's coverage of the terrorist attack blazing in the background.

By the time I woke up, messages had collected from the night. Some of my friends had been awake the whole night, simply waiting for more and more information to come out about our friends. I was greeted in the morning by the image of three people lying on the floor, the unique blue walls in the background. I couldn't work out who they were. I stared at the image, posted by many Bangladeshi newspapers online, shocked by the blood. The brutality. And later on, the fact that it was Abinta, Tarishi and Faraaz. Friends were able to recognise them because Faraaz was wearing the same shoes at Holey as the ones in Facebook profile picture.

Though I saw this picture, I still tried to tell myself that they were alive. Of course, they weren't. I later had to accept it but I didn't just want a photo to confirm it. Whilst messaging my friend, she confirmed they had all passed away, which I communicated to my family and others. It was bizarre to say "Yes, Abinta is dead". These were words I never possibly imagined I would have to say. When you watch movies, it's always so intense, but

I simply articulated her death like stating what I wanted for dinner. I felt nothing, but I felt everything.

It was hard to understand how to grieve as I had never experienced it before. Abinta was like an elder sister, she was one year older, and really guided me through our International Baccalaureate exams. We enjoyed many days swimming at her house, going to Nando's or watching school plays together, as Tarishi was always the main actress. She was a truly kind-hearted soul. I simply did not know how to react to this loss of life. My mind darted continuously to all the times I had hung out with her, and the fact that I rode in a rickshaw past her house a few days before, intending to meet up with her when she got back to Dhaka from America.

Overnight, everything had changed. The freedom to take rickshaws and eat out quickly disappeared. The High Commission tightened regulations meaning I could not attend any funerals of the victims – 29 in total. I was only allowed to sit at the High Commission café or at home, continuously on my phone, reading the latest articles about what happened… victims tortured… those who could read the Quran were set free… Faraaz chose to stay when he was allowed to leave… this is what happened during the attack. The list went on, and so did my eyes. I read them all.

Being homebound only added to the tension further. I became stressed and bored. University was starting in September and summer had only just begun. I tried to look forward to university, but at the back of my mind was always Holey, Holey. I suppose still it's on my mind at random points in time – when I'm clubbing, shopping, or just doing nothing. The grieving of Holey and its victims continued into my first year; I wasn't particularly motivated to jump on board with all the university fun because I still felt the shock of their deaths, especially seeing the images of their bodies and reading their autopsy reports. It felt like I could not escape reading about it. The *Daily Mail* posted a few, mainly inaccurate, articles about the situation. It was odd to see the faces of school friends in these, and to see their mothers crying at their funerals.

When I told people at university about the attack, their knowledge of what had happened was non-existent. This motivated me to write this piece really. The contrast between the reporting of terrorist attacks in the East and the West is huge. I remember someone at university actually saying, "ell, at the end of the day, unless the attack happened here, no one cares. I would not actively click on an article like that, because attacks there are so common". Though that sounds tough, I suppose it's true, perpetuating further my belief that Western lives are considered more valuable – the quote itself coming from a British person.

This article is just me trying to show you that attacks are not the norm in the Eastern world either – the 1st of July was by far the worst in contemporary Bangladesh's history. Although the city and the families affected are slowly recovering, it was an occurrence that transformed lives dramatically, even though that may not show.

THE DIRTY WATER IN MY BLOOD

WAFIA ZIA

The blood of Quaid-I Azam flows in me.
It flows in the Gilgit River,
and in the filtered water machines;
it makes the dirt of Lahore's slums seem holy.
Perfection in this case, is imperfection. And I revel in it.

The cultural divide is unification;
saris floating in the Cambridge rain.
There's an absence of parathas in the hot sun,
replaced only, by the breaking of fasts in late sunsets,
we taste water as if it was from Makah itself.

Mutual exclusivity does not mean isolation -
a different kind of happiness, raw and bittersweet, lusted within.
Warm smiles and sugary chai come and go day by day,
rhythmic and pounding against my short term identity.
My chappals splash under a muddy puddle,
even my reflection is happy, unburdened.

But something darker seeps into my skin,
messy lines of home and mismatched words
more blurred than ever before.

Take off my handcuffs and give me a flag.
No longer is there peace in the mountains I once trudged;
hazel hues shake at the sight of bloody red on a pixelated screen,
this is a dip, an entrapment of guilt.
I break into a cold sweat, eyes downcast —
gentle waves can always be violent.
Am I on the side of the oppressor in this injustice?

A youth collapsing at the start of a revolution.
Where I once touched the clouds in Murree,
I now only see the ground when walking home.
The feeling of nothingness is parallel, still years apart.
The girl's skirt rides higher as I pull my jeans lower,
the Adhan being overwhelmed by top of the pops.
I stare blankly at the Pepsi ad outside – focus, focus.
The scarf shifts around my neck as it's rapidly tugged from my worn shoulders,
THAT WEIGHT WAS NOT A BURDEN.
It was a weapon I was forced to reject.

The blood of Quaid-I Azam flows in me,
breathing under the beatings of colonialism
under a bus shelter at 7.20pm next to a dull lit Tesco's.
Left only with whitewashed memories and no apology.
The colour of my skin did not define my youth,
but it consumes me now.

So Quaid-I Azam, I spite you for what you did to me,
made me afraid and hateful
— bitter and ashamed.
Please, dear Pakistan, I hate you,
I miss you, but I cannot let you go.

(The Ghaghara and the Thames, which polluted which?)

MUSIC MEETS POLITICS: THE LENINGRAD SYMPHONY

ISOBEL THOMPSON considers the cultural importance of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony

The marriage of politics and music has at no time been more erratic than it was in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Nor were the difficulties faced by composers as grave as they were for the illustrious Shostakovich, Russia's foremost cultural export.

By the end of the 1930s Shostakovich's career was on the brink. For a composer in the West, a negative review could, at the very worst, mean lower ticket sales or fewer commissions. But to a composer in Soviet Russia, a denunciation in the State controlled news, Pravda, could result in an abrupt end to their career, perhaps even their life. Common grounds for denunciation could be the accusation that a composer's music was formalist – a deliberately vague expression that was used to describe music which was excessively experimental, and not easily accessible to a mass audience. For example, when Shostakovich's opera, Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District, was condemned by Pravda as 'coarse, primitive and vulgar', even publications that had previously praised the work were forced to admit that they had been mistaken and had failed to miss its shortcomings. It was a terrifying time, where composers' lives were at stake if they did not conform to the party line.

In 1941, Leningrad was plunged into Siege. The German strategy was to surround the City and prevent food or medicine from reaching its inhabitants, with the hope that it would eventually fall. The Siege lasted almost 900 days and claimed the lives of over six hundred thousand, making it the longest and most destructive blockade in history.

It was during this time that Stalin asked Shostakovich to write his Seventh Symphony for the besieged Leningraders, to provide them with necessary spiritual

sustenance during this dismal time. The result was 78-minutes of anguish and torment, requiring over eighty players to create the sound of national defiance against Germany.

But who remained to play the Symphony in Leningrad? The resident professional orchestra, the Leningrad Philharmonic, had long since been evacuated with the City's prized cultural elite, including Shostakovich himself. The only orchestra that remained was the depleted Leningrad Radio Orchestra with a paltry fifteen players; the rest had either gone to fight or had died from starvation. A note in the Orchestra's log book shortly before taking on the task of performing Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony gives a sense of the extreme desperation: 'Rehearsal did not take place. Srabian is dead. Petrov is sick. Borishev is dead. Orchestra not working'.

Weakened by disease, ravaged by hunger, conductor Karl Eliasberg endeavoured to prepare the orchestra for the Symphony's highly anticipated premiere in Leningrad. Ksenia Matus, an oboist in the orchestra, recalled getting her instrument repaired before rehearsals started. When she enquired how much the repair would cost, she was asked instead of money to bring a cat to feed the technician and his family.

The Symphony's premiere, on 9 August 1942, is entrenched in Russian memory as a cultural event of unparalleled significance. Prior to the concert, the Soviet army bombed the surrounding German army lines to silence their guns while the performance took place. Electric light was turned on in the Grand Philharmonia Hall for the first time in months, and Leningraders flocked to the concert in their best dress. Eliasberg was in a state of such physical weakness that he could not support himself to walk onto the stage. Instead, he was dragged to his podium on a sledge before proceeding to conduct this monumental work in its entirety. The performance received an hour-long standing ovation, and was broadcast live on Russian radio and played out on speakers towards the German army lines. And thus, the Symphony became a symbol of national resilience against Germany, of defiance and strength in seemingly impossible circumstances.

I have often wondered whether this Symphony, like so many of his others, seems insincere in light of the enormous pressure Shostakovich faced as a composer – whether the sentiment behind the music is merely the product of a coercive totalitarian regime. I also find this difficult to reconcile with the fact that his symphonies are, to me, enigmatic and indisputably brilliant. The intersection of politics and music here is a complex one. The Leningrad Symphony in particular is not easily divorced from the circumstances of its conception. Whether it is the march-like drum beat which repeats incessantly and with increasing intensity for almost half an hour in the first movement, or the tormented wailing of the violins over this theme, it is difficult to listen to this music without considering its symbolism. Perhaps in an effort to reconcile the Symphony with himself, Shostakovich posited that 'music, real music, can never be literally tied to a theme. National Socialism is not the only form of fascism; this music is about all forms of terror, slavery, the bondage of the spirit'. In retrospect, he might have been hinting at his own experiences as a composer in Soviet Russia.

Artwork by LAUREN MAXEY

ELECTRONIC LADYLAND

SAM PRYCE reflects on the significance of women in the electronic music world

From its very inception, women have always played a crucial role in the creation and development of electronic music. As early as 1928, the beguiling performances of Clara Rockmore on the theremin helped to establish the potential of this early electronic instrument. In 1958, composer Daphne Oram co-founded the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, which was pivotal in the evolution of electronic sound. Indeed, perhaps the most iconic synth-driven theme tune, Doctor Who, is credited to the BBC Radiophonic Workshop's chief experimentalist and arranger Delia Derbyshire.

Despite the legacy of these women, who pioneered the genre in its very beginnings and explored the outer limits of sound, female DJs and electronic artists continue to be marginalised and outnumbered. Festivals and mainstream clubs remain male-dominated in their chosen headline acts. According to research carried out by female:pressure (a global database and network for female, transgender and non-binary artists and producers working in electronic music and digital arts) on over 200 music festivals, from 2015 to mid-2017, an overwhelming 78% of those festival line-ups were comprised of male artists.

What makes these statistics particularly frustrating is the fact that, historically, dance music has always articulated the voices of the marginalised, the queer and the other. The best clubs provided a space for the dispossessed; they served a social purpose, representing a community of solidarity and resistance. When it spread to the UK in the late 1980s, acid house and rave culture rebelled against an unfeeling Tory government. Today's club-goers are more socially conscious than ever, and while issues of sexism, diversity and gender equality in education and the workplace are undoubtedly still

problems, they are finally being addressed. It's time we did the same for music.

The last decade has seen an unstoppable rise in collectives and communities connecting female, transgender and non-binary DJs, artists and producers, both online and on the dance-floor.

Musician, composer and DJ Electric Indigo (Susanne Kirchmayr), who began her music career in 1989 in Vienna, founded female:pressure in 1998. In a recent interview, the artist detailed what initiated the project:

> I started it because, whilst touring, I was confronted with remarks regarding the exceptionality of being a woman DJ. In the beginning, I found this quite astonishing, because when I started as a DJ, I did not think about my sex or my gender. […] For more than 25 years, people have been asking me about other female artists in electronic music and club culture. female:pressure is my systematized answer.

Thanks to the work of female:pressure and other individuals or initiatives such as Ikonika and Discwoman, a host of new collaborations, club nights and projects have been established and continue to be created.

One notable example was The Ada Project in 2014, which brought together four renowned female musicians (including Holly Herndon and Mira Calix) to create compositions in dialogue with a robot, inspired by the life and work of a pioneering Victorian mathematician called Ada Lovelace, the daughter of Lord Byron.

Between 1842 and 1843, the mathematician and writer translated and annotated a book on Charles Babbage's design for the Analytical Engine — a proposed mechanical general-purpose computer, not built until the 1940s. An algorithm found in her notes, which was to be carried out by the machine, is regarded as the first example of a theory demonstrating the creative potential of a computer beyond mere calculation. Lovelace is now heralded as the world's first computer programmer, and may well just be the first to have conceived of 'electronic' or 'computer music'. She saw a possibility in Babbage's design that he had missed, writing that the engine might be able to compose 'elaborate or scientific pieces of music.'

In 2016, Charlotte Lucy Cijffers edited and published a 'Women in Dance Music' issue of top music magazine DJ Mag, in order to start a dialogue about this subject. But the work of journalists and writers can only go so far. The action needs to happen on the battlefield: the sticky dance-floor. Here's her challenge to you:

> If you see a female DJ in a club, find out her name and follow her on Facebook, support her music and pay for her productions. If your favourite label doesn't release enough/any music by women, ask them why on social media. If your female mate wants to learn to DJ, encourage her, support her and make her feel welcome — because sometimes it's tough to be bold in a room full of men.
>
> But most of all, reach out to women in dance music who you find inspiring, and tell them so.

Artwork by LAUREN MAXEY

3PEACE INTERVIEW

JAMES DUTTON interviews UCL jazz-fusion band, 3Peace

How would you guys introduce 3Peace to someone who'd never heard of you before?

We tend to say 'jazz-fusion-cum-electronic-music' these days, but we've always struggled with that neat little summary people often expect from a band! We always stress the dance element to it though, that being really one of the main motives for this project.

You've only been performing since the summer, and your first show was the new 3WD festival. How was that for you? And how does the festival compare to more recent shows you've played?

Well first of all, thank you to 3WD for having us! It's an amazing new festival for anyone that hasn't heard of it and it was a really big deal for us in getting this group off the ground. We'd only been playing together for just under 2 months, so we had no idea how it'd go down. We'd done a lot of rehearsals in my bedroom and there was this big question of 'Is anyone going to like this, or is this some total nonsense dream attempt to throw together a bunch of random shit we like?!' It went down really well though, and it was a massive confidence boost that drove us to really pursue more gigs in London… It was also where we met the 12th Isle boys (Glaswegian record label/DJ collective) which spawned our trip up to play in Glasgow the other week - so I guess as a first gig it couldn't have gone much better!

You've been described as Placebo fused with Drexciya – do you agree with this comparison? What elements of genre and influences do you find most important to the project? Or do you prefer not to focus on these things?

Yeah we see it! Or at least we want to see it… Both of those groups are legendary in their own rights to us, so It was a great

compliment. We want to clarify that they were not talking about 90's alt-rock Placebo though, it's 70's jazz-fusion Placebo! And to be likened to Drexciya, as opposed to more typical jazzy house/electronic fusions is really awesome, since we do love more esoteric sounds and genres within electronic music. In a way what I think defines our way of making music is that it's a 'jazz approach', but the materials approached and worked on range from breakbeat-based jungle to electro, techno, hip-hop and ambient music. All played live, all structured and improvised on in a jazz manner, but broad-based in where we're taking the influence from.

You organised and sold out your own show at Club Makossa in September – how important do you consider creating your own immersive nights, rather than just playing a 30-minute set?

We're big fans of the independent party, the DIY approach to music promotion and events. For us at least it allows you to create an overall vibe throughout the night, a vibe that fits our sound and compliments it, drawing from that same pool of influences but creating coherence within that. The reason, for instance, we booked DJ Whaleshark is because he knows us and our music well and he responds to that – the musical response is what it's all about. Whether it's the dialogue within the band or the dialogue between bands and DJs, that's really what makes music and putting on shows great. Dialogue is central to how we create music – it all comes out of sitting down and jamming out a musical conversation with different vocabularies.

What drew you to your eclectic instrumentation and sound?

It was partly a sitting down and making what we could with the gear we had (few synths, drums, percussion and sax). We took the approach of jamming it out with those elements and seeing what came of it – so the sound is partly shaped by the abilities and limitations of each of those bits of gear. From a stylistic point of view though each of us brings a personal leaning and aesthetic into the mix – our own particular flavour. That's what makes it interesting for us in a way: the tunes feel like they're being dragged in different directions – part jazz, part techno, part whatever really, but they make some kind of sense too.

You also recently played in Glasgow – how did this compare to your London shows? Was there a difference in audience and their reception of your music?

Glasgow was amazing. The crowd was great and the whole night was a really good vibe. It felt different to London, less self-aware and stand-offish. It was the biggest gig we've played and a very different event to our other gigs – with us being the only live act playing alongside the 12th Isle DJs, and playing peak time around 1-2AM. It gave us more of an opportunity to really approach it from a dance perspective – trying our best to maintain that kind of momentum and energy that keeps dancefloors moving.

As 2017 is coming to an end, what are your plans for the next year of 3Peace?

Gigs! We're only 6 gigs deep so far so right now we're just trying to get out there and get word about. That said, we're also thinking more carefully about the kind of gigs we're playing, since like we said the club setting is one we want to be tapping into more as well. Recording ideas are ticking over, but that isn't something we're rushing into… And we're thinking about hosting more nights like the one at Makossa, looking to get other performers involved and potentially create some collaborative work out of those evenings. We are looking to get some other elements to drop into the dialogue!

SILK

HAMSS H. DAWOOD

Brown girl, this is for you:
hair on your face,
fur on your neck,
silk on your finger tips.

This is a call to your brown arms.

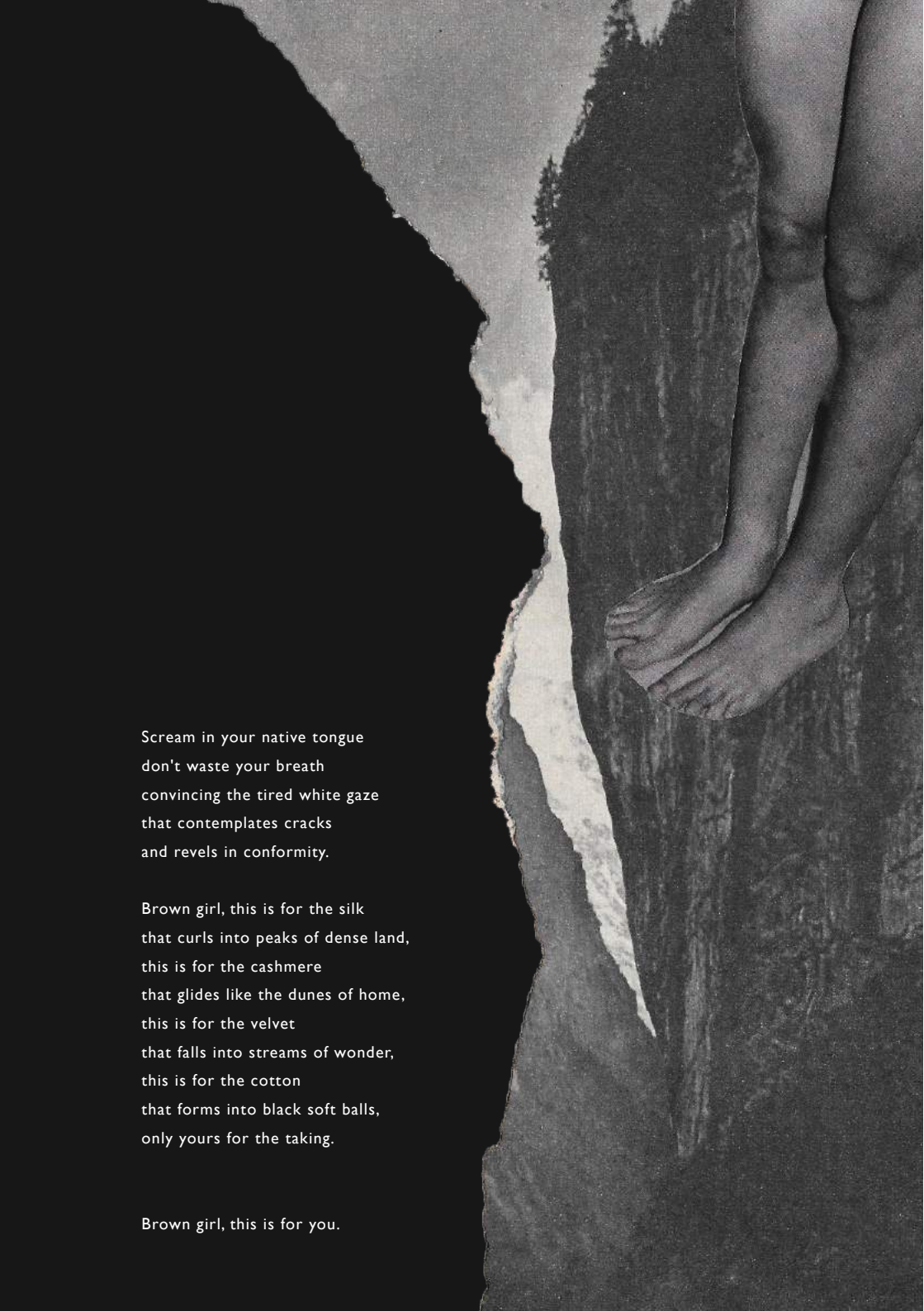
For the liberation that doesn't need you
that forgets you
that pushes you aside.

This is a call from the tabblah.

Begging you to braid your hair
from your upper lip to the
pits of their disgust,
your legs and your unapologetic
furry toes.

An armour stronger than the metal
they manipulated
than the walls they built
than the lines they stabbed
and the minds they snapped.

Artwork by MARTA PARSZENIEW



Scream in your native tongue
don't waste your breath
convincing the tired white gaze
that contemplates cracks
and revels in conformity.

Brown girl, this is for the silk
that curls into peaks of dense land,
this is for the cashmere
that glides like the dunes of home,
this is for the velvet
that falls into streams of wonder,
this is for the cotton
that forms into black soft balls,
only yours for the taking.

Brown girl, this is for you.

TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

KAY EAN LEONG explores the intersection between dance and science in the choreography of Wayne McGregor

Artwork by SARAH POSTLETHWAITE

It is not unusual for choreographers to look beyond dance and take inspiration from art, literature or history – but few have pushed these boundaries further than contemporary dance choreographer Wayne McGregor. Reviving the conceptual philosophies of Merce Cunningham (known for using the fatalistic idea of chance to determine his choreographic sequences), McGregor continually transgresses the limits of movement-making by engaging with neuropsychology and genetics in his pieces. Awarded a CBE in 2011 for his contributions to the field, he is best known for Chroma, a progressive work for The Royal Ballet. McGregor provocatively brings new ideas to the fore by combining the two apparently disparate worlds of dance and science, which both benefit from this mutual collaboration.

McGregor's latest interdisciplinary foray is Autobiography, a production which ran at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in early October. In it, he tackles ideas related to genes and algorithms – not palatable concepts for a non-scientific community – and reconfigures them through his choreographic process. Reflecting the 23 pairs of genes which encode the human genome, McGregor and his dancers created 23 dance sequences inspired by his memories and experiences to form a movement library. Over the summer, his entire genome was sequenced as part of a research study titled The Genetic Clinic of the Future. McGregor sought to capture his personal history and translate it into movement. The genetic code was then converted into an algorithm to dictate the sequence in which dancers would perform the different fragments of the 'movement library'. Akin to complex system theories derived from simple modifications to a system, every iteration of the performance changed, as it was governed by chance. Even in the

creative process, scientific conceptions of replication, mutation and variation evinced themselves as McGregor endlessly reworked and transformed his work.

That is not the first time McGregor has boldly delved into science. 2004's AtaXia for instance, investigated the possibility of merging neuropsychology and dance as part of a joint research project Choreography and Cognition with arts researcher Scott deLahunta. AtaXia navigates ideas of physicality and the loss of control associated the condition it draws its name from, in which the sufferer lacks voluntary coordination of muscular movements. The joint research project itself, which involved experimental psychologists from Cambridge observing and experimenting with McGregor and his dancers, yielded several positive findings for the latter. For example, an experiment with cognitive scientists Tony Marcel and Phil Barnard from the Cognition and Brain Science Unit, Cambridge, studied how dancers 'parse' long dance sequences into smaller, bite-size ones, demonstrating how this parsing process affects dancers' perceptions and thus how it shapes the final choreography. Another fascinating experiment with psychologist Rosaleen McCarthy examined how aspects of the cognitive experience of dancers could be influenced by the dislocation of memory. How do the instructions and stimuli given by McGregor, and the order in which he gives them, shape how they are processed by those dancing? Such questions, when answered, provide an insight into the general choreographic process.

Likewise, in 2013, McGregor worked alongside the Wellcome Collection for an exhibition entitled Thinking with The Body: Mind and Movement in the work of the body, which offered glimpses into the cross-disciplinary roots of his practice.

For instance, in a partnership with Phil Barnard, McGregor implemented PACT, a method of process and concept tracking, to chart the growth and evolution of his choreographic ideas. McGregor explained that such rigorous experimentation allowed him to understand how dance routines can grow, coalesce or retreat in relation to other past or future ideas. He also realised how a shift to the studio can change a choreographic idea: the studio or performance space can present constraints or liberate the work creatively.

In a talk, Wayne McGregor: Neuroscience and Dance, McGregor reveals how these scientific methodologies have enabled him and his dancers to discover the hidden kinaesthetic biases embedded in their movement vocabularies. Every dancer has a physical signature, with tendencies towards certain motions. Movement tracking activities like PACT thus allowed dancers to recognize and break these kinaesthetic habits and to subsequently establish new forms. By making dancers conscious of the decision-making process behind choreography, McGregor's interdisciplinary collaborations have expanded the opportunities for experimentation in dance-making.

Science and dance are not at odds: McGregor's provocative attempts to subvert traditional choreographic conventions attest to that. Rather than using overly-exploited artistic tropes, science can provide a conduit for dance to innovate and reinvent itself. We must invite these two seemingly incompatible worlds to intersect and revel in the beauty and insight their fusion can provide.

A QUEER SPACE FROM SCRATCH

ISABEL WEBB interviews architect-cum-filmmaker and UCL alumnus Samuel Douek about his travelling queer arts venue, CAMPerVAN

What makes a queer space? This is the question to which Samuel Douek dedicated his Architecture MA thesis, and one to which his final project, CAMPerVAN, offers an answer.

Filmmaking had always piqued Samuel's interest, but he had maintained a cautious distance, convinced that he was lacking the fundamental skillset to take part. When he enrolled for Part II of his architecture training at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in 2014, he finally took the plunge. Disillusioned with architecture as a career, he immersed himself in every extra class and workshop possible, from film to ceramics. 'I appreciated being a student a lot more the second time round,' he says.

His final year thesis provided the opportunity for architecture and film to intersect. 'The first films I made were some really terrible documentaries about a couple of gay pubs I used to go to a lot. I was really interested in queer spaces and how they operate architecturally.' Just after Samuel finished filming, both pubs at the centre of his films closed down. The films themselves never amounted to much more than Samuel's architectural thesis research, but they did consolidate his passion for filmmaking. They also lead Samuel to his realisation that a successful queer space has four key attributes. 'It's quite a crude analysis; there's obviously a big difference between a gay male sauna and a popular pub. I'm only talking about successful, accessible queer spaces. Lots of gay pubs close down, but only ones with these attributes had campaigns to save them.'

The first characteristic he identified was architectural: queer spaces often appropriated existing physical structures. Secondly, they offered some kind of social support. This could be through workshops, community news or even just having an area for people to meet up. Once open, the queer space should be a source of diversity. 'Most typical queer spaces don't offer this – a lot of club nights, for example, are targeted at butch lesbians, or gay males. What makes a space diverse is accessibility. That could be through cheap drinks, early opening hours, functioning as a restaurant as well as a pub – like Dalston Superstore.' And finally, a queer space should offer some form of entertainment, be it DJs, club nights or, more typically, drag shows and performance art.

On a recent trip to New York, Samuel visited The Center, the custom-built queer venue with bathrooms adorned by Keith Haring's most explicit mural. Here, Douek

Images from SAMUEL DOUEK

Images from SAMUEL DOUEK

saw the potential that queer spaces hold. 'Old, re-appropriated buildings don't follow modern building standards. So queer spaces which ought to be pioneering accessibility and inclusivity just can't. But The Center functions as a very legitimate LGBTQ centre, which is fully accessible in every sense of the word - something that London is lacking.'

Nevertheless, his own venture followed the trend of existing London spaces. What he created was CAMPerVAN, a travelling, DIY, queer venue. By purchasing the caravan himself, Samuel immunised his venture against the threat of gentrification so many queer venues face. He then set about queering the CAMPerVAN, taking something that had been rejected by mainstream culture and modifying it into a new, subversive mould. Step by step, Samuel injected his queer space design principles into his caravan.

When it came to creating his own queer space, the third point - diversity - was particularly important to Douek, and facilitated the social support element. 'London's queer scene is so defined by categories. Somewhere like Heaven, which used to be where a load of subcultural groups met, is now like a white-wash of people. If you don't fit into their categories, it can feel quite exclusive. I didn't want to create an environment which was in any way aggressive, male-centric, drug-centric, ageist or racist.' Maintaining a diverse programme of entertainment helped CAMPerVAN to foster an inclusive and dynamic audience. Here, Samuel drew inspiration from cabaret and variety shows like Bar Wotever. 'Not everyone wants to see drag performances,' laughs Samuel. 'We have everything from drag queens to spoken word, to hip hop and film screenings. We also do more group focused workshops, panels and events with Urban Lab at UCL.'

'Filling the programme was as much of a learning curve as creating the space - learning how to be a curator and producer. I think studying architecture helped there. It taught me that if you don't know how to do something, you just teach yourself.'

CAMPerVAN debuted at the RCA Summer Show in 2016, to huge acclaim. Since then, Samuel has staged regular shows in London, including one at the Tate Modern, and toured Europe. Two shows stand out as particular highlights. CAMPerVAN's second appearance at Peckham Festival ended with hundreds of people taking part in a vogue-ing battle – this was the moment when Douek realised it had become so much more than a student project. The second highlight was when he realised it had become international. 'London's performance art scene has a lot going on, in different establishments, but even major European cities lack that. We held an event outside one of the biggest gay clubs in Milan and it felt really legitimised.'

Now, Samuel considers CAMPerVAN a 'well-oiled machine.' He'll be putting it away for winter, whilst he focuses on other projects and freelance film work. In the meantime, CAMPerVAN will be parked in his friend's garage. It used to live in his mum's driveway, but had to be moved after a Facebook group was set up to discuss the mysterious crystal meth caravan and the police turned up at his parents' door. After his mum accused them of a hate crime, he moved it to avoid further controversy.

The after-film of this summer's tour is on Samuel's website now:
http://www.samueldouek.com/work/#/campervan-europe/

‘OUTCASTE’ ART

ESHITHA VAZ explores the protest art of Savinder Sawarkar within the Dalit community in India

For artists whose voices are ignored, whose fundamental human rights are negated, whose platforms of power have crumbled, artistry becomes both a lantern and a mirror: a mechanism of visibility and a reflection of political, social, and economic inequality. For those who still feebly cling to the notion that art is created only for art’s sake, look to the Dalit community of India. Historically marginalized and oppressed, the Dalit have been plagued for generations by the country’s brutal caste-system, one that deems Dalit individuals to be society’s ‘pollutants’. Representing a community who are mostly confined to hard labour, bereft of land ownership, and who are often prohibited from walking beside an ‘upper-caste’ individual, Savinder Sawarkar – a pioneering ‘Dalit’ artist – uses the canvas as a space for protest, defying the cultural Brahmanical hegemony of visual representation in India.

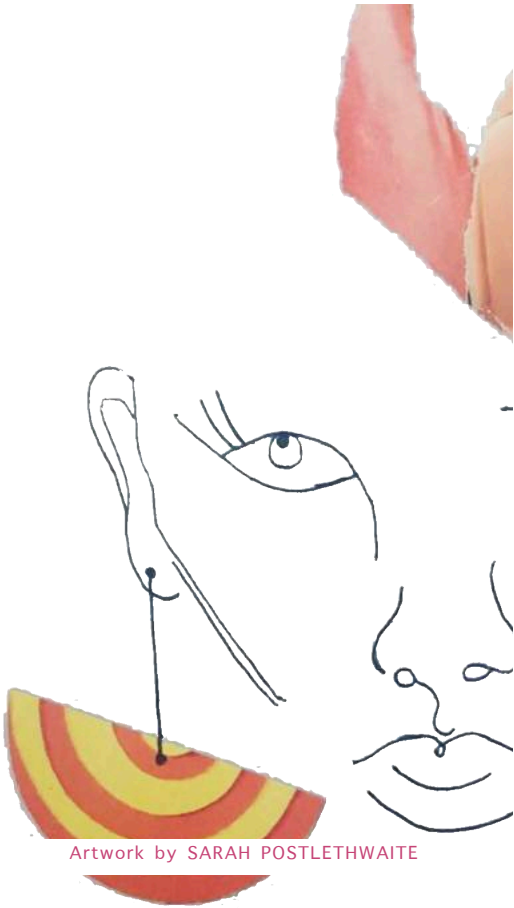
Sawarkar’s oil paintings and sketches pierce through the political vacuum of India’s mainstream elite art culture. By drenching the background of many of his oil paintings in swathes of dark red, his bold and bright expressionism assures an unavoidable visual platform for Dalit exposure. Simultaneously, Sawarkar’s paintings convey a tangible rage at the physical violence directed upon the Dalit community. Indeed, Sawarkar’s figures, which often act as the focal point of his paintings, express their own narratives in revealing that, contrary to rooted class beliefs, Dalit poverty and social disadvantage are not consequences of their own actions. Rather, it is a result of institutionalized degradation and systemic dogmas that trickle down through every caste on India’s social ladder.

These ideas are particularly evident in his pencilled sketch ‘Untitled 175’, which depicts a hunched Dalit man: skeletal in

an almost foetal position, with only hands raised towards a vast blank emptiness. the drawing indicts a social structure that has intentionally masked and distorted the lives of Dalit communities. With nothing to reach for and nowhere to fall to except the ground, the drooping, defeated figure is a poignant metaphor for India's inadequate legislation protecting Dalit rights, which fails to be implemented in communities with stringent caste beliefs. Importantly, considering that the prejudice against Dalit communities is attitudinal, another of Sawarkar's untitled oil paintings presents the brain of a figure enveloped in red clustered lines – a stark contrast from the darkness of the dull, less chaotic background. The sentiment that art is representative of life is important here: just as the mind is the only source of brightness in the painting, the prevention of caste reinforcement in the psyche is the most powerful factor in alleviating the oppression of Dalit peoples.

Not only does Sawarkar's painting 'Revolution' provide an insight into Dalit subjugation, it also fuses ideas of deity with freedom. The figure of Christ acts as the focal point of the painting: he acts as a mark of hope and liberty, raising his hand high amongst soft shades of blue and dark reds. The painting's hues of colour hold a softer blue, and a darker red than in many of Sawarkar's other sketches. Arguably, the figure of Christ in this painting may be symbolic of social reformer Ambedkar, who was hugely supported by many Dalits for championing a popular movement against Dalit deprivation and discrimination. Sawarkar uses art as an ethnographic portrayal of the Dalit community: a visual vein into its struggles as well as its historical leaders.

Despite being one of only a few Dalit artists who have gained visibility within the national and global sphere of art, Sawarkar has helped to champion a new wave of art that is unapologetically political. His art aims to catalyse the breakdown of oppressive social norms and beliefs – in this case, dogmas within India which have subjugated the Dalit community for generations. Sawarkar's art is a boldly loud and impassioned rally cry; if art dwells only on stylistic form and glosses over social content, it will only serve to exacerbate the pain of the world's marginalised. His transformation of Dalit art acts as a megaphone to amplify the voices of the community: without such visual magnification, thousands of oppressed men and women would be silenced and pushed even further into the background.



Artwork by SARAH POSTLETHWAITE

MUSINGS OF AN ASEXUAL PROSTITUTE

DANIEL PINCUS

It's really a lot of thrusting, isn't it? And to think, people will sell their mothers for this experience. Never once is it an earth-shattering experience. Maybe I need some of that special stuff, the bottled stuff, like chilli-sauce for your vagina. Lather it liberally on the labia, and who knows? I might sell your mother for it too.

***

Toys R' Us sell a small arena, about the size of a frying pan, that is meant to house battles between spinning tops. The premise of that game being whoever's top stops spinning first, loses. It's what every little Jewish kid dreams of at Hanukkah: dreidels on acid.

I recently bought one of these arenas with my hard-earned sex money, and erected posts in each corner and tied three bits of string between them, creating a tiny boxing ring with a concave centre. It's where I like to stage hamster fights every summer, a real neighbourhood treat. I do like to give back to the children.

***

I can't wait to be an old woman. I'm not harbouring some sick fetish for tired cellulite and raisin tits (no matter how appealing "Raisin Tits" sounds as a breakfast cereal), then masquerading as an asexual instead of facing my shame head-on. The old women I'm referring to are way past the point that they held any sort of value on the sexual marketplace.

But there's a certain grace about old women that excites me, deep in my gut. Sure, it seems like a tough life having an aging body and still having to be alive, but let me argue my case. At an early point in their lives, women are like aeroplanes. I'm not talking about the little putt-putt biplanes that rich actors deep in their mid-life crisis learn to pilot. Women at the beginning of their adult lives are like jumbo-jets, colossal feats of engineering and the personification of human endeavour. They fly at hundreds of miles an hour, stopping for nothing except maybe a particularly adventurous seagull, impromptu hijacking, or if enough white people are spooked by the Arab man in 23F. Time passes, and after thousands of people manage to vomit back up their boxed lunches, any trace of its former glory is gone. That plane chugs out the days until it dies unceremoniously.

Women must undergo the same transformation, as horrible as it is. At the beginning of our careers as women, we are watched in awe by men and watched suspiciously by each other. It's something that men never have to think about unless they're hopped up on shrooms and riding the subway. Women must carefully cultivate their image every waking moment, and for the most part we succeed in keeping up appearances (bar any natural disaster like a bad hair day or a walk of shame).

Finally, the time comes. Soon after menopause, a switch flips in our minds that tells us to "FUCK IT ALL" in big neon red letters. Old women know exactly what they want in life, and they don't give two fucks about who sees them doing it. How many tiny Korean grandmothers have you seen quietly eating grapes on the bus, on the way to practice some ancient shit in the park with all the other local Korean grandma's (and one Chinese grandma; the tension there is its own drama). Is there a Senile Vagina Council that decides that all old ladies must change into their swimsuits in full view of every man, woman, and unsuspecting child on the beach? Was it a unanimous decision that every changing room was much too far to travel to?

In addition to that, old women have had the odds stacked against them their entire lives. The kind of wisdom that must instil in you must be boundless; you can see the endless indifference toward other people peer out from behind beady eyes. They've seen all this shit before; they no longer indulge in any fantasies about reality. They could walk by a million Barack Obamas' and still not really give a fuck unless the Obamas' were in her way. Only then would she bother to look up, tell him to move aside, and continue her journey to buy berries and Aloe Vera. It is what it is, so put up or shut up. If I die young, my only regret will be that I never lived to become an old woman.

***

You can back out of sex at any point. But you must never, ever back out of washing a plate.

***

There's an immensely large man who lives across the street from me. It so happens that our windows align perfectly, so that we can see directly into each other's flats. I've started to change my clothes with the windows open at the same time every night after I've showered, just to see if I could get him into a routine. For a while, it wasn't clear that he was going to follow through for me, but that all changed after the binoculars I sent him in the mail finally arrived. Tomorrow I'm going to plaster my asshole against the window for a full minute.

THE EYES OF THE ENEMY

EMMA DESHPANDE illustrates what we can and can't learn from examining post-colonialism through colonist perspectives

"I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

With these words, Chief Joseph, the leader of a band of Nez Perce people, surrendered his land in Oregon's Imnaha River Valley to the U.S. Government. Indigenous people lost control of their land and their culture when Europeans began to colonise other countries, and the violence and bigotry against them has continued for centuries. In Australia for example, Aboriginal people only gained recognition on the census in 1967, with Prime Minister John Howard stalling progress further in 2000 by refusing to make a treaty with them. Many like Mr. Howard prefer to ignore the ongoing struggles of indigenous people, but the writers Elizabeth Bishop and Katherine Mansfield, who lived in the colonised countries Brazil and New Zealand respectively, both discuss silenced cultures in their work. Mansfield provides representation of Maori cultures in her early stories, but her youth and immersion in a colonial consciousness prevent her from describing indigenous cultures with the same awareness of their suffering as Bishop, who first arrived in Brazil at the age of 40.

Mansfield was born into the colonial setting of Wellington, New Zealand, and therefore grew up among both white descendants of British settlers and indigenous Maori people. Her immediate community of white New Zealanders idealised England and she did later choose to move to Europe permanently at the age of 20, but her earliest writings reflect the dual culture she experienced during childhood. The images of Maori people she includes are subdued, however; in the story 'How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped', she writes from the perspective of a small child who cannot describe Maori culture

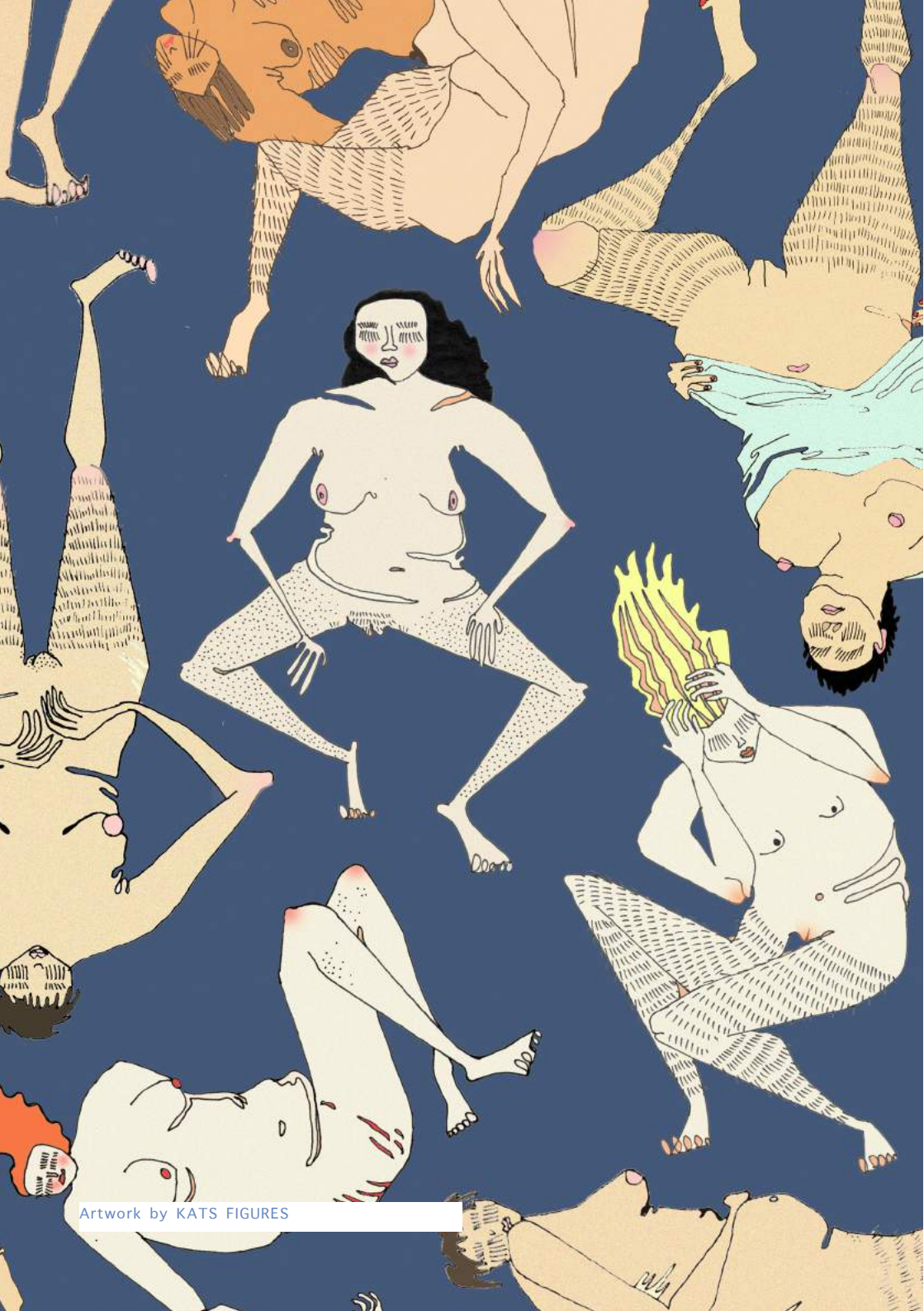
beyond its appearance. Pearl Button idealises the lifestyle of the Maoris, asking "Aren't there any nasty things?", but even her innocence betrays an implicit dehumanisation. She describes the woman who picks her up first as 'softer than a bed' and then as 'warm as a cat', rather than with more explicitly maternal references. The contrast between Maori life and the colonist life Pearl Button knows is so great that she sees the Maoris not as a reflection of her family but as a unique 'other'.

Bishop visited Brazil in 1951, and lived in Petrópolis with her partner Lota de Macedo Soares for 15 years. She read and translated the work of Brazilian poets João Cabral de Melo Neto and Carlos Drummond de Andrade, and set many her of own poems in Brazil, as well; notably, in 'Brazil, January 1, 1502', she writes from the perspective of the Portuguese as they first landed. From the poem's first lines, Bishop exposes the indigenous population's marginalised presence in their own country. She writes that 'Nature greets our eyes / exactly as she must have greeted theirs', creating a sense of innocence that reflects the false idealisation of non-European cultures as existing in pure and pre-civilised states. In the last stanza, she reveals the colonists' moral hypocrisy by describing the natural progression to hunt for women to rape 'directly after Mass', and she ends with the image of women hiding from the soldiers behind the fabric of their doorways, symbolising the enduring concealment of indigenous people from public consciousness in Brazil.

The contrast between Mansfield's shallow descriptions of Maori culture and Bishop's awareness of the injustices committed against indigenous people in Brazil shows invaluable progress, but to move past Chief Joseph's defeatism and towards authentic representation, the criticism must come from indigenous communities themselves. There are still appalling acts of cultural silencing in the 21st century, in multiple colonised countries. Indigenous people in Brazil continue to face persecution and seizure of their land as the government develops industry in the Amazon region. No treaty has been written yet in Australia, despite renewed calls for one this past May, and in June, the U.S. Supreme Court denied Native Americans the right to demand a less offensive name for Washington Redskins football team. Among this persistence of marginalisation, protesting is one of the few platforms available to indigenous voices – expressing themselves through their own original art is a less accessible avenue.

Some indigenous artists have, however, gained the recognition they deserve in recent years: Sherman Alexie, an American poet with ancestry from the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene tribes, won the National Book Award in 2007 and the PEN/Faulkner Award in 2010. New Zealand filmmaker Taika Waititi, who is Maori on his father's side, wrote the first draft of the screenplay for Disney's 2016 hit *Moana* and gained acclaim this year for directing *Thor: Ragnarok*.

These successes are a testament to the quality and importance of the work of indigenous artists hoping to overcome the history of cruelty against their people. Seeing their work in the mainstream, receiving the attention it deserves, validates their place in the world of art in a way that a silenced or ventriloquised voice cannot.



Artwork by KATS FIGURES

POETIC POLITICS AND POLITICAL POETRY

CHRIS JONES looks at where literature fits into the world of politics

In December 1623, English poet John Donne wrote his renowned poem, 'No Man is an Island'. In June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. These two apparently disparate events, just shy of 400 years apart from each other, have more in common than we might think. Just three days after the Brexit vote, English musician PJ Harvey read Donne's poem aloud to a crowd of 60,000 on the Other Stage at Glastonbury. Many would question the relevance of a 17th century metaphysical poet to one of the biggest political events of the 21st century to date. The answer perhaps lies in how striking his poem becomes in the context of post-referendum uncertainty:

'No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less […]
any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.'

When Harvey recited these phrases, a crowd of typically rowdy music-lovers fell silent. Her reading became more than a performance of poetry at a music festival, it became an act of rebellion, a refashioning of a Renaissance poem as a mark of resistance against the Leave vote, which many of the traditionally left-leaning crowd connected with.

Harvey's reading fits into a wider historical tradition in which poetry coincides with moments of political significance. The written word has often been used as a means of lending emotional support in times of political crisis. Through reading poetry aloud, we can comment on current affairs in a way that makes crowds suddenly hush under the weight of metaphor and the force of poetic diction. Perhaps this experience has something to do with the perception of poets as a source of authority. Figures like Harvey are concerned also with the idea that history repeats itself, often finding that poems from the past can be re-contextualised, and have a strangely satisfying - albeit often unnerving - resonance with the present.

We see this phenomenon everywhere. Benedict Cumberbatch read 'Home', by Somali-

British poet Warsan Shire, following productions of 'Hamlet' at the Barbican in 2015, drawing parallels between the poem and the ongoing refugee crisis. Cumberbatch came on stage after the performance, and his oration left the audience as stunned as those who witnessed Harvey's reading. The same goes for Tony Walsh's performance of 'This Is The Place' in the vigil for the victims of the Manchester attack earlier this year. Ditto the outburst of poetic tributes in the aftermath of the shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in 2016.

This pattern reveals much about the enduring connection between poems and events of political consequence throughout history. The intensity of emotion associated with poetic form makes it fit to accompany these moments of unrest, as too does poetry's ability to articulate what otherwise could not have been said, and its power to capture the essence of distress. It connects with people's suffering, validates their feelings, and lets them know that they are not alone in what they are experiencing.

We can see then why American presidents have often chosen to commission poets to perform at their formal inaugurations. John F. Kennedy's ceremony in January 1961 was the first instance of this in US history, and the President set the standard high with Robert Frost's 'The Gift Outright'. The practice continued: from Maya Angelou and Miller Williams for Bill Clinton, to Elizabeth Alexander and Richard Blanco for Barack Obama.

Donald Trump's crude interruption of this tradition in 2017 is therefore glaringly obvious. We can infer a lot from the ways in which politicians use, or don't use, literature. Trump may not have had an inaugural poet, but he has in the past tried to reframe Al Wilson's 1968 song, 'The Snake', in the context of his anti-immigration views and rhetoric. Trump read the lyrics of the soul hit at numerous campaign rallies and also as he commemorated his 100th day as President, but used its central metaphor as a means of revealing his dislike for US-Mexico border policies. 'While I think that he would've had at least some sort of appreciation for the fact that his music is appreciated by Trump to the effect that he would utilise the song', Wilson's daughter commented recently, 'there are some things in my father's life that may have been an interesting perspective for him to have to grapple with in light of how [the song] was used.'

Trump's misrepresentation and misuse of literature reveals an unwillingness to engage with the principles we associate with it – the power of empathy, the value of introspection, or even at its most basic level, the capacity of language to rouse any form of emotion. It is important to engage with literary culture - whatever form this takes (songs, poems, novels, and so on can all have the same value and power in eliciting emotion) - but it can be done in lazy, misguided ways: alluding to cultural heritage does not automatically score you points – it has to be done correctly.

He might spout his own brand of absurdist poetry in 140-character-long instalments, but Trump will ultimately be remembered as the embodiment of Coleridge's unwanted 'person from Porlock' - an indelicate intruder, barging in and interrupting the nuanced use of literature in the realm of politics.


Artwork by KATS FIGURES

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

AURELIE DU PERSEVAL investigates how literary prizes bring readers and writers together

Most of us have read at least one book in our lives simply because it won an award or was part of a shortlist. The way literary prizes affect readership is widely known: we are aware that reading prized works will make us sound well-read, and so, whether intentionally or not, we are drawn to this canon. We also have an idea of how these prizes affect the author. Sales of their work will increase exponentially, and in turn they will achieve fame and a certain standing within the literary world. However, author and reader are not separate, and literary prizes bring the two together in a manner that is fascinating – yet also slightly worrying, since it becomes apparent just how influential prizes are to the way in which novels are written.

Back in October, the six shortlisted authors of the 2017 Man Booker prize were present at the Royal Festival Hall to read extracts from their novels and take part in a panel discussion. The Man Booker is one of the most recognised literary prizes in the world, and claims to reward the 'best novel of the year written in English.' Though there are no guidelines for what 'type' of novel this is, there tends to be an obvious trend within the shortlisted works: most of them test the limits of what a 'novel' is. This year alone, the host noted multiple times the highly unusual structure of most of the books on the shortlist. Whether this be Paul Auster's *4321*, which presents four versions of one life, or George Saunders's *Lincoln in the Bardo* which plays with form and even introduces the format of a play within its narrative, there is definitely innovation. Last year's winner, *The Sellout*, was a never-before seen form of racial satire, crammed with allusions and originality. Such literary prizes cater to uniqueness in writing, demonstrating how readers constantly crave that 'something new' from literature. This drives literary evolution, as authors strive to meet such

demands, for themselves – and also for their public.

And just like that, literary prizes become the bridge between reader and author. The author creates something enjoyed by the reader, and with prizes, readers get to reward authors – to thank them, essentially. Although only a handful of judges decide who receives such rewards (the Man Booker delivers a hefty £50,000), the public is drawn to the selected works and thus there is a continued demand for prizes. Each year, the selected novels act as the 'indispensable literary thermometer with which to take the temperature of contemporary fiction,' as Robert McCrum so aptly puts it.

In essence, we judge other books based on those that win the Booker and other similar prizes. The winner becomes the new standard. Such things are decided by readers, not writers – authors can write what they like, but we determine what will be read. Us readers have more influence than we often realise. It might seem out of place bringing economics into a literary discussion, but essentially what we follow is the law of supply and demand. We can't help but wonder: does this at all affect what authors are going to write? Do they subconsciously supply us with what we ask for?

Saunders doesn't hesitate to affirm that yes, he thinks about his readers as he writes. He doesn't cater to them, as any good writer should avoid - after all, novels are a pleasure to read when they surprise us and allow us to experience something in ways we couldn't have imagined, not when they simply tick off a list of our demands - but he does keep readership in mind. At the Royal Festival Hall readings, Saunders readily disclosed that when writing *Lincoln in the Bardo*, he re-drafted several parts because 'the reader would've thought 'there are too many ghosts'' in certain sections.

Ali Smith, on the other hand, doesn't seem to think at all about her readers' opinions. When asked what she thought about her novel, *Autumn*, becoming known as 'the Brexit novel,' she plainly said, 'I don't care,' and went on to elaborate how Brexit became part of the book 'by accident': she had started writing it long before the referendum anyway. Yet one can't help but wonder, considering that Brexit is what makes *Autumn* so well-known, where Smith subconsciously included it in her novel because she knew her readership would be drawn towards such a topic.

The relationship between author and reader is, of course, sustained by far more than the author's desire for a higher readership or more sales. Smith also affirmed she hoped her book would help 'heal' people, because it 'opened up dialogue' after a difficult time for many British citizens. So, yes, perhaps *Autumn* was therefore written with the reader in mind, not as a way of increasing sales, but as an attempt to help people – a much lovelier intention. It is easy to to emphasise the materialistic aspect of the world of literary prizes, but it's important to remember that prizes, as the bridge between readers and writers, offer much more than this. They reward those people who seek to bring stories and words into others' lives – to inspire, help, educate, motivate, or simply entertain. As the ones who benefit, isn't it our duty to thank those who create?

AFRYKA.POLSKA.

SONTI RAMIREZ documents the fusion of black culture and Polish identity in Warsaw

I first came to Warsaw in 2014, as part of my UCL History degree year abroad. I was curious to know what life was like for minorities living in modern-day Poland; I had learnt about the country's 123-year history under occupation, and brutal experience of being the central setting of the Nazi orchestrated Holocaust of Jews and many other groups in World War Two. The erasure of minority presence in the Polish landscape and collective memory as a result of the war and subsequent decades under Communism has been the subject of much discussion about Polish national memory, tolerance and inclusion since independence. While initially working on projects to do with Polish-Jewish heritage, I soon met a small community of African migrants, Poles and international refugees who were cultivating pockets of black culture across the city.

My consequent photography series 'Afryka. Polska.' explored the fusion of black culture and intersectional Polish identity that was becoming increasingly prevalent. There had been extensive reporting on Poland's shift to the far right since the Ultra-Nationalist Law and Justice Party came into power; foreign minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski infamously described migrants as 'carriers of parasites and protozoa'. Many of the young Poles I spoke to were tapping into music and dance trends coming from West Africa and creating their own subcultures, almost in direct resistance to the rigid homogeneity of the mainstream. For others, like James Omolo from the Afryka Direct network, raising awareness around everyday racism and violent attacks against African migrants was as important as providing spaces of interaction between Poles and outsiders. Many of my encounters came as a result of being approached in public by passers-by and hearing stories about their experiences of living in the city. It was fascinating to learn about the online Facebook groups, which young Black and mixed race Poles were creating to discover each other and create community networks where they could express their own identities. Whilst not everyone had experienced discrimination or racism, all had something to say about being on the cultural frontline. They were testament to the complex nature of Polish identity today, much of which goes under-reported in mainstream media.

Parking Lot, Park Club, Warsaw Central, 2014

Dancehall Competition, Park Club 2014

Centre for Refugees and Migrants, Praga

MIXING MEDIUMS

CLARISSA SIU explores the intersection between painting and cinema in *Loving Vincent*

Film and painting initially seem incompatible. Painting is static, frozen in time; film is fluid in both space and time. Though animation has converted line drawings into moving images for nigh on a century, oil-on-canvas painting is not something most people would think of as a cinematic medium. *Loving Vincent* is a beautifully rich and groundbreaking tribute to Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. It is entirely animated in the style of his paintings, making it the world's first fully-painted feature film.

Writer-director Dorota Kobiela and co-writer, director, and producer Hugh Welchman first conceived the film with an intention to illustrate the painter's ill-fated life and mysterious death. The attempt to transpose oil-painting on canvas into animation meant that each actor worked on sets constructed in the style of van Gogh paintings or against green-screens, where his paintings would later be composited in.

The eclectic cast consists of Polish theatre actor Robert Gulaczyk, (making his film debut) as Vincent van Gogh, Douglas Booth as protagonist Armand Roulin, Jerome Flynn as Doctor Gachet, Saoirse Ronan as his daughter Marguerite Gachet, and Eleanor Tomlinson as Adeline Ravoux, amongst others. Each actor retained their own facial features in the film, mediated through van Gogh's painting style in terms of brush strokes and the use of colours.

Loving Vincent is set in France, in the summer of 1891, a year after van Gogh's mysterious death. It centres around Armand Roulin, a young man tasked by his postmaster father to hand-deliver a letter to Theo van Gogh, brother of the late Vincent. He is not pleased with this errand and finds his father's association with the mentally unstable painter tedious. Nonetheless, Armand sets off, and the audience follows his journey as he first travels to Paris, where he fails to

track down Theo but encounters paint supplier Père Tanguy (John Sessions).

A short conversation with Père leads Armand to realise that he has misjudged van Gogh; he travels to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, an hour outside Paris, in hopes of learning the truth about the painter's demise through conversing with local villagers. As he delves deeper into his search, Armand becomes entangled in the minor brawls and petty feuds that shroud the quiet village. Flashbacks propel the plot forwards, depicted in black and white. This is created through the painters' reimagining of dramatic situations in van Gogh's life, with old photographs as their point of reference.

65,000 works in total were painted on canvas in the style of van Gogh, created by a team of 125 professional oil-painters who travelled from across Europe to work on the film; the design team spent a whole year re-imaging the paintings into the medium of film. Kobiela revealed that it took up to 10 days of paintings to produce a second in animation, as not one moment of the film is static, with ever-changing lighting and an undulating background.

Technical hurdles were encountered mixing the two mediums. Van Gogh's original paintings came in different shapes and sizes, and proportions had to be readjusted to fit the frame of the film, which is contained by the cinema screen. The design painters thus came up with the solution to 'break outside' the frames of his paintings while retaining his authentic style. They also had to recreate paintings entirely to fit the film's narrative arc. This ranged from changing backgrounds from daytime to night-time, to recreating paintings done in Autumn or Winter for a Summer setting.

This meticulous attention to detail is evident. Each brush stroke is purposeful, and each scene inhabits van Gogh's impasto technique, creating a tactual feel. Throughout the film, the paint appears to be coming out of the screen in colourful swirls, and it is illuminated by a lightness that transfigures and balances the looming darkness in van Gogh's life.

The title of the film, *Loving Vincent* has a double meaning. 'Loving' can be interpreted as an adjective, as it is well-known that van Gogh was a man with kindness and tenderness in his heart: this is reflected in his paintings, which seem to view the world in awe-struck wonder.

On the other hand, *Loving Vincent* can be read as a tribute to van Gogh from both the characters in the film and their creators, who love the tortured painter in their own ways. Each character van Gogh interacts with loves him because of the fond memories they have shared with him, while the 125 painters translate their love and admiration into the film in the style of his art.

Loving Vincent is tactile, powerful, and immerses viewers entirely in the world of Vincent van Gogh. We are able to see the world through his eyes, each scene reflecting his personality and individualism through the precise imitation of his work. We are transplanted seamlessly into his mental landscape under the stern (yet loving) command of one of the world's greatest painters.

Artwork by NATALIE NEWSOME

’TIL DEATH DO US PART

BEATRICE KANIKA TECHAWATANASUK examines the mystery of love in *Call Me by Your Name* and *A Single Man*

Call Me by Your Name (2017) and *A Single Man* (2009) are films found in the slim intersection between political examples of queer cinema, and the heteronormative and personal. *Call Me by Your Name* is a coming-of-age love story, fraught with the tension of first relationships; *A Single Man* is a tragic self-reflection, told from the perspective of a man who has lost his lover. Both films speak volumes about two stages of love – conception and death. The fact that the main characters in both films are homosexual does not act as a bar on audience sympathy: viewers are able to empathise with the protagonists regardless of their sexuality.

Call Me by Your Name is a dizzying summer romance, saturated with poetic sensuality. Elio (Timothée Chalamet), is the sophisticated 17-year-old son of an archaeology professor, who falls for Oliver (Armie Hammer), the American graduate student interning with his father at their Italian summer home. Contrastingly, in *A Single Man*, George (Colin Firth) is an exasperated professor. George’s ex-partner has been dead for eight months, and the film depicts his subsequent anguish and suicidal grief over the course of a single 24 hours. George has lived through his own version of that initial summer romance and the months and years which followed, making *A Single Man* an illuminating watch when compared to *Call Me by Your Name*.

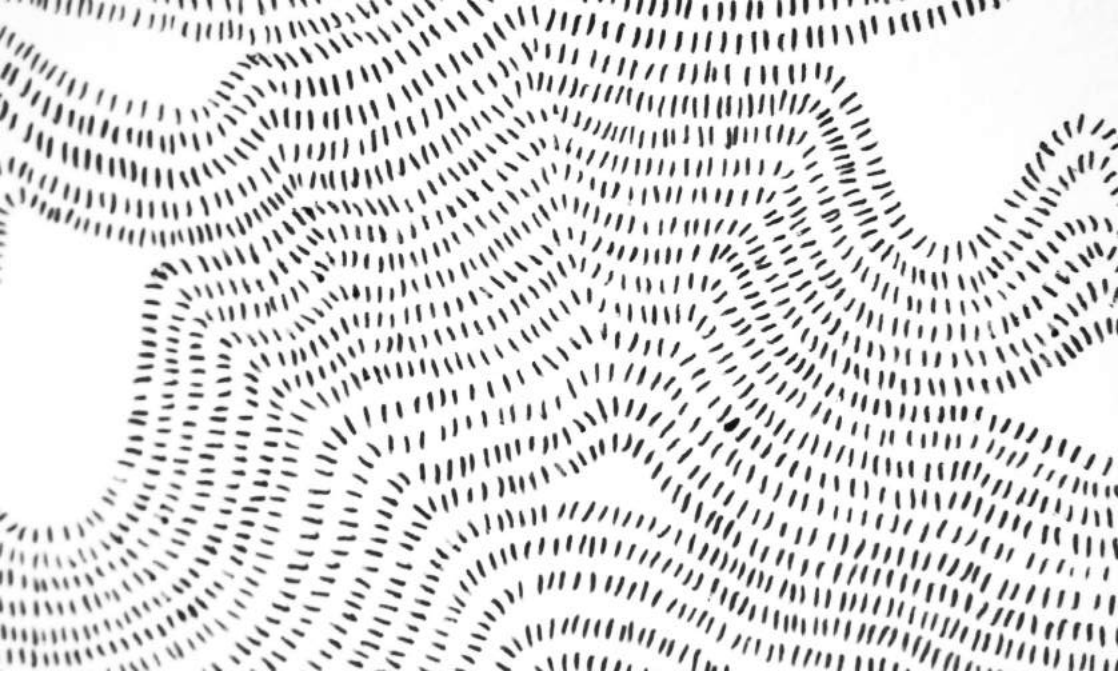
Call Me by Your Name reminds us of the sheer pleasure of falling in love for the very first time. Oliver unsettles Elio through his commanding stature - always cracking eggs too hard, sauntering around in short shorts, or dancing uninhibitedly to ‘Love My Way’. Elio,

Artwork by NATALIE NEWSOME

meanwhile, intrigues Oliver with his angelic looks, outstanding intellect and command of any instrument he plays. They steal glances at each other whilst changing into swimming costumes; when Oliver holds the arm of a sculpture that has just washed up on shore, extending it out to shake Elio's hand, they both laugh gleefully, entertained by their shared love of artefacts and their tentative proximity.

On the other hand, *A Single Man* depicts devotion rather than mere flirtation; it centres on an established relationship rather than one in its initial stages. George is dedicated to the forensic details of his relationship with Jim; such lasting love is patient and steadfast, but also debilitating. Throughout the film, colour seeps into grayscale whenever George is reminded of Jim. Perhaps director Tom Ford suggests that the more entrenched love is, the more likely we are to crumble when that root is unexpectedly plucked out.

Luca Guadagnino fills his film with images throbbing with romantic symbolism. The boys' two bicycles lean against a wall, intertwined, one handlebar hooked through the frame of the other; juicy peaches in the orchard are the camera's focus, foreshadowing the steamy peach scene later in the film; cigarettes are passed, from mouth to mouth. Conversely, Ford inundates *A Single Man* with ominous imagery: George drowning in a blur of deep blue; slanted clocks ticking until they stop abruptly. The beginning of love brims with vitality; the end of love is slow, painful torture.



Both films address the struggle of maintaining a same-sex relationship, despite the vastly different contexts in which the relationships take place. *A Single Man* explores the externally imposed isolation of gay men in 20th Century American society, but the internal struggle within Oliver to accept his sexuality is a rarer sight. His struggle manifests itself in his need for his lover to 'Call me by your name and I'll call you by mine': for a young man insecure in his sexuality, saying his own name in a loving way emboldens him. Oliver wants to be 'good' by refraining from sex: having acted upon his impulses, he needs a way to feel 'good' again, and to channel some of the intense love he feels for another person back into himself.

In the final scene, when Elio stares into the fire, his face is illuminated by the flames while tears well up in his eyes. He is seventeen and vulnerable; it seems likely that he wants his pain to end, just as George does in *A Single Man*. Instead, Elio embraces his emotions, defying the standards set by conventional masculinity - his whirlwind of emotions is more chaotic, but perhaps less unsettling than George's controlled, quiet, suicidal grief in *A Single Man*.

It is too easy to forget about beginnings, indulging instead in self-pity about our romantic failures. *Call Me by Your Name* is an ultimately optimistic film: we hungrily contemplate love's genesis because the future of Elio and Oliver is a big question mark, and thus exciting for the viewer. On the other hand, *A Single Man* is a despondent take on the end of a relationship, which leaves one feeling exhausted. The films replicate these sensations of initial anticipation and eventual despair in the viewer: *Call Me by Your Name* feels like a new romance; *A Single Man* is the equivalent of a drawn out, painful divorce, which only ends in frustrated resolution.

I AM WOMAN, I AM SUN: CORPORALITY AND NEONS

SOPHIE CUNDALL explores the portrayal of Grace Jones on screen in the recent biopic, *Bloodlight and Bami*

Perhaps the most striking feature of Sophie Fiennes's not-quite-biopic *Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami* is the relationships formed between Jones's towering body and the landscape which shaped it, her homeland Jamaica, the scars left upon her body and her reclamation of that body. In Jones's physical form, spirituality and the self intersect. For me, this film is a viscerally lived, creatively infectious experience, and Fiennes achieves a powerful sense of intersection between the bodies and beings of Jones and those of the viewer.

The film fluctuates between two antithetic aspects of Jones's life: the private and the public. This comprises footage of Jones in her native Jamaica, surrounded by the family who raised her, and a highly choreographed, curated version of her body, inhabiting a space that she owns in a contrasting way. Shots of lush, rolling Jamaican sunsets are overlaid with Jones's characteristically rich, undulating notes which seem to trace the contours of the landscape. Thus we see the extent to which Jones's heritage has shaped her artistic practice, and understand the power of her music in a new way. Every quaver quivers with infinite nuances of her young life in Jamaica: the landscape, the food, the people, and the bitter stabs of hardship that peppered her youth. Her body in the space of her family home is relaxed, nonchalant, her makeup-free face matching her tender physicality. The loose-fitting sarongs she wears at home contrast with the representations of Jones to which we are usually subjected in performance.

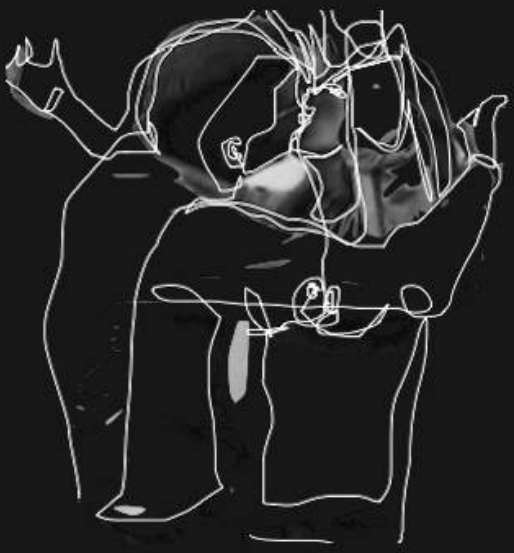
The relationship between this natural, unadorned version of herself and the performance we witness is poignant. Her movements about the man-made space of the stage are as angular and pointed as the beams of lighting and geometric staging that surrounds her. She owns

the space: her movements are as tightly choreographed as the corsets into which we have the enchanting, if somewhat sadistic, pleasure of watching her be laced into. This is a space she truly owns; this is power, as opposed to comfort that she finds in Jamaica. If it were not for the intimate shots of Jones layering on makeup as she layers on the alter-ego she inhabits on stage, we would have no notion of an intersection between these two bodies - they could not appear more different. She fights to inhabit and own the stage when performing, to convince an audience that, paraphrasing Jones herself, the lights could go off and her body in that space would be enough to provide a compelling performance. At home, little effort is required to convince us that she owns the space - it almost owns her, so embedded is it in every particle of her being. Jones's various personas are revealed to the viewer, and these personas change depending upon the space in which she finds herself.

Car journeys in the film present both literal and metaphorical spatial metamorphoses, and Jones's multilingual abilities also place an additional factor into the mix. As Jones travels from city to city, her most candid disclosures emerge. The journeys act as a key to unlock the zones between each city and space, and the persona Jones inhabits in each one. In motion, without a locational grounding and context, Jones's conversations tackle deeply spiritual and personal subjects, that come purely from the landscape of her own body and experience. Specifically, a car journey is the only time Jones thinks about her own death, culminating in the haunting admission that she would like to die 'holding the hand of a ghost I love.' Such a remark could only emerge in this transitional space, where her personality takes on its rawest form.

One of the most tender, heart-wrenching subjects explored in the film is the vile beatings to which the young Jones was subjected by her stepfather. Jones's past and present selves carve themselves onto her physical form, her youth having left both physical and emotional scars. Her unabashed, impressive and unselfconscious stage performances perhaps expose her healing method – she does not allow past physical abuse to emotionally limit her body in the present. Her naked body is frequently featured in Fiennes's conscious scenarios, but is never sexualised unless by Jones's own choosing; we never become unwitting objectifiers or possessors of her body, as we too frequently do in cinema. This is partially the fruit of the female gaze Fiennes provides. Her presentation of Jones's body creates an intersection between her past, abused body, and the evolved, healed version of it she inhabits today.

Jones's famous lyric 'This is my voice, my weapon of choice' becomes all the more poignant here: she has reclaimed her body as a 'weapon' after it was used as a weapon against her. *Bloodlight and Bami* is a voyeuristically intimate exploration of Jones's psyche and body, in the spaces which define her performative and personal self.



Artwork by FLEUR ELKERTON

GWEILO

An extract by AVA DAVIES

I am standing in a corner shop at 2pm on a Wednesday. I am wearing my pyjamas and flip flops. I am clutching a bottle of Diet Coke and a packet of Quavers. The guy behind the counter is staring at me. He's waiting for me to answer his question.

"I'm from London," I reply, finally. I pick at the bloody cuticle on my thumb.

"You don't look – I mean – your name isn't British." He looks down at the card reader and rips off the receipt.

"My mum is Chinese," I say. "And my dad is white."

He squints at me.

"So it's a Chinese name?"

"It's Burmese."

"Huh."

He looks at me, hard.

"So you're a half-caste?"

A pause.

I cough. "I mean – I prefer mixed race but yeah."

His face breaks out into a grin. "Oh okay yeah I see it now. You've got those slanty Chinese eyes. Yeah. I love Chinese girls."

GWEILO – OR – FOREIGNER

AVA DAVIES introduces her new one-woman show about mixed race identity

I've written a play.
I have written a play and it is going to be on at an actual theatre in London in December. It's called *GWEILO* and it's about being mixed race. Or biracial. Dual-heritage. Whatever you want to call it.

It's a one-woman show and I think I'm going to end up performing it, which is an alienating concept because I'm not a performer in any sense of the word. But there's something about the idea of a non-performer performing a personal piece that could add an interesting layer to the show. It's not autobiographical, but it is personal, which is an awkward thing to navigate, but I'm looking forward to trying to muddle my way through it.

This is obviously not a play that's trying to cover the entirety of all mixed race experience ever – I'm not speaking for anyone apart from myself because clearly I don't have that right. Being half white means I'm hugely privileged in ways that women of colour are not: I'm often white-passing and I go through nowhere near the amount of harassment they endure everyday. Nonetheless, I'm trying to cover a lot of stuff: *GWEILO* explores colonial hangovers, attitudes towards queerness in East Asian culture, and exoticism. More broadly, it considers identity and performance and home. It probably tries to cover too much. But since I've only seen one other play that explores the mixed race experience, I want to cram as much as possible into my one hour slot. Maybe it won't be a good piece of theatre. I'm a little worried it'll end up being polemical and shouty, but then again I would probably enjoy that quite a lot.

There's a lot of performative diversity in theatre programming, a trend which I think can start in student drama circles. It's totally infuriating. Your 'BAME-only' season means absolutely nothing if the rest of your programme is taken up with white plays and production teams, and your race-blind casting of 400-year-old scripts isn't good enough. It's the minimum you could be doing. Instead, put on plays that actively centre BAME characters and experiences, not ones that treat them as an afterthought but have them onstage anyway because, you know, we need 'diversity points'.

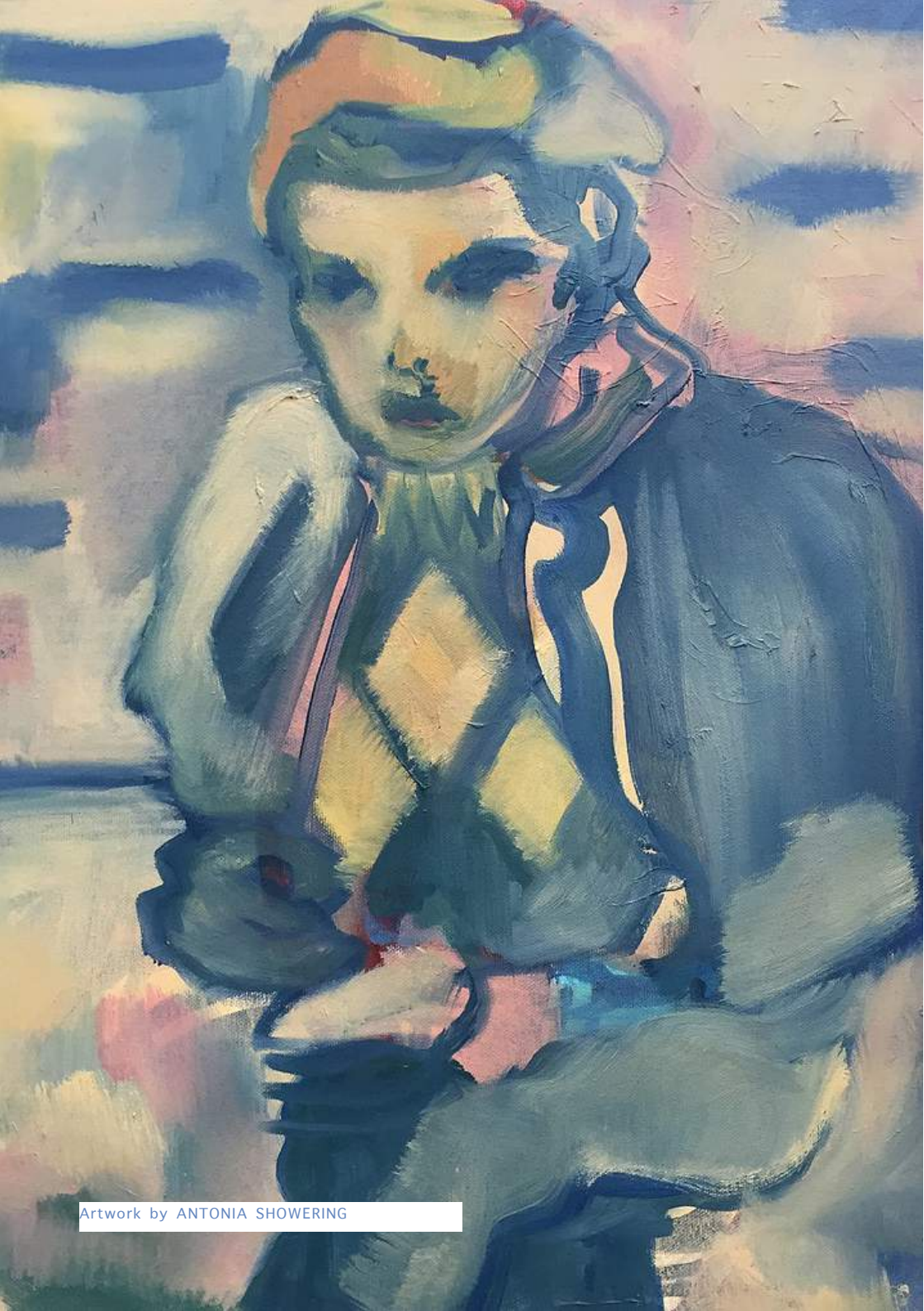
The obvious fact is that the people at the top of the food chain are inevitably white men, with a few white women dotted throughout. The appointment of Kwame Kwei-Armah to the Young Vic as incoming artistic director is great news, but I'd expect nothing less from a theatre that has consistently championed diversity and is notable because of and despite the bullish homogeneity of its neighbours.

You simply cannot be what you cannot see. I'm writing this play because I want to see some version of myself onstage and I've spent the last six years waiting for someone else to put it there for me. I've been in the room too many times while an old white audience has guffawed at a joke I am not privy to and I'm bored of it. White audiences are spoilt for choice, and I want to see more things being commissioned that don't pander to their wants. Case in point: Natasha Marshall's astonishing *Half Breed*, which is clearly written for herself, the black women who make up the majority of the audience, and no-one else.

I wanted to write something that I could point to as a 15-year- old girl just getting interested in theatre and say loudly and proudly: 'That's me. That's what I look like. That's exactly how I feel. It's messy and it's difficult and it's strange but at least it's me up there.' I am proof that representation matters.

Part of me wants the white members of the audience to feel alienated during the performance of *GWEILO*. Because this is not for them. It's not about explaining the mixed race experience to a white audience: making it palatable and easy to swallow. It was never about that. It is about me and I will not apologise for it.

GWEILO is part of The Yard's First Drafts festival and was first performed on 9th December.



Artwork by ANTONIA SHOWERING

‘MAKE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS YOUR PRISONS’

FINN BURGE on the work of the London Shakespeare Workout’s Prison Project and what it teaches us about the unitary power of theatre

The London Shakespeare Workout (LSW) - this year celebrating its 20th birthday - has run its Prison Project, taking professional actors and drama students into prisons to collaborate with the inmates, not just up and down the UK but all over the world. Led by Dr Bruce Wall, Shakespearean extraordinaire and co-founder of the LSW charity, the workouts involve a mixture of drama games, vocal exercises and exploration of Shakespeare’s language, with the founding motto ‘to promote confidence through the Will to Dream for ALL’. Under these auspices, along with 10 other students from UCL, I was lucky enough to be invited by Bruce to take part in a session inside HMP Pentonville in Islington.

As we were led further and further inside, deep within the building, it felt physically heavy around and on top, like being underwater. It is a testament to the human need for drama, the reflex to play in the multiple senses of the word, that that weight completely lifted once the workout got underway.

The two hour workout saw a plethora of creative forces come together in one place: the guru talent of Bruce himself, the organisational efforts of Educational Consultant Jose Aguiar, the enthusiasm and talent of both the inmates and the students, and of course the genius of William Shakespeare himself, all combined to make something new and special. Also present was artist Gareth Morgan who, because of the prison’s rule against photography, produced a series of sketches and drawings over the course of the session, adding another circle to the multimedia Venn diagram that the Prison Project sits in the middle of.

The LSW also runs the Linked-UP or LUP initiative in prisons, which is even more diversely interdisciplinary: for example,

inmates are encouraged to write pieces as well as rehearse performances, and training in filming and editing techniques is also integrated into the programme. Bruce elaborates: "There are few things any performing artist can do where they can immediately sense that what they do is of socially critical importance. Participation in LSW's LUP initiative – an adventure we've been privileged to begin to share with gifted UCL students – is just such a beast. It is the very fulfillment of meaningful intersection. Indeed, the only reason I feel the charity I had the great good fortune to co-found in 1997 aside Dame Dorothy Tutin has survived for 20 years is because we've consistently sought - and still avidly seek - to celebrate the vital sense of community Shakespeare always engenders."

This experience of community and of collaboration is surely what theatre is inherently about, and what is in many ways unique about it as a medium. When Peter Brook said that at its most basic level, all that is needed to create the act of theatre is for someone to walk across an empty space whilst someone else watches, he described an act of intersection. Theatre is the connection made in one physical place, there and then, in that meeting of minds. Of course, convening also entails the inevitability of separation, but if it's good drama, we have been changed once we part ways. This is certainly true of the work the LSW does. As Bruce affirms: "The very word 'LUP', an active verb, means 'to bring disparate bodies together in hope''. That lives at the very intersection of breath itself. Its dynamic must work both ways of course. I believe it does.' Theatre is not a one-way transaction, but a mutual exchange of talent, experience and perspective.

In that ephemeral theatrical meeting that will never happen in quite the same way again, every separate element gels and fits together seamlessly, and feels like it was always meant to be that way. There is something about Shakespeare in particular that is able to unite us, something about it that we find naturally easy to bond over. It is as if it's always there on a subconscious level, a language we all speak, which just has to be accessed. It is the perfect kind of crossroad to meet at.

I left wondering whether theatre without this dynamic and this social intersection is really theatre at all. This speaks a wider truth about diversity in the drama world as a whole. When we are not making a connection with as many different people as possible - when it's the same person, walking across the same empty space, whilst the same someone watches - what's the point? Prison is often regarded as a place where people are kept separate from society – criminal, other, severed connection – but here, because of the nature of theatre, the community Shakespeare creates, and specifically the continued efforts of Dr Bruce Wall and the London Shakespeare Workout, paths and lives cross where they would otherwise have remained shut apart from each other. Bruce recalls: 'At the end of the LUP1 Tranche at HMP Pentonville one young inmate tapped me on the shoulder saying: 'I know why I was sent to prison now. It was to do this."

Artwork by ANTONIA SHOWERING

WARRIOR WOMEN: FEMALE POWER IN ANCIENT GREEK COMEDY

CHLOE TYE discusses the contemporary relevance of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*

A woman with a plan to save Greece, and with the odds stacked against her, wins the peace treaty she wants – by convincing every woman in Greece to renounce sex.

Is the society in which this plan was hatched inconceivable for audiences today? Is the plan itself still relevant in our world of fourth-wave feminism?

Can we laugh at it? Can we learn from it?

Judging by the fact that, in 2018, UCL will stage its fourth production of *Lysistrata* since 1999, I'd say that it is definitely still relevant, and even funny. Despite having been first performed around 2,400 years ago, the issues Aristophanes' comedy discusses – primarily, the place of women in a man's world – still resonate today and remain somewhat controversial for audiences.

Lysistrata deals with the clashing of the two greatest city-states of the Ancient Greek world – Athens and Sparta – in the Peloponnesian War, which started in 431 BC. This conflict impacted the whole of Greece: alliances were formed, islands were used as treasuries, and polemic division ensued for 27 years. Aristophanes, only 15 years old when it began, was hugely influenced by this event; many of his plays deal with the theme of war and ways of achieving peace. In *Lysistrata*, he proposes that women are the solution: the eponymous protagonist creates a pact with the women of Greece to renounce sex until the men arrange a peace treaty with Sparta, therefore taking control of political decisions from which they were usually eschewed.

However feminist this may seem to us, Aristophanes can also be seen as entirely mocking of women's civic involvement.

When considering his other plays, such as *The Birds* and *The Frogs*, in which fantastical worlds are brought to life and used to satirise contemporary Athens, *Lysistrata* is perhaps another ridiculous vision – an absurd voyage into imagination and the supernatural. Aristophanes does, however, also make a laughing stock of his male characters. They are displayed with engorged phalluses, and are easily manipulated by women in matters of war, which is in itself ironically referred to as the 'business of men'. In short, although the message of the play is nuanced, a feminist reading of it is not only legitimate, but also illuminating.

Gender roles were entrenched in Ancient Greek society, and dictated that women's place was the oikos, the home, and men's was the polis, the city. This idea, which pervades even today although less resolutely, is undercut and satirised in *Lysistrata*, by the women's takeover of the polis by going on a sex strike. They use what influence they have in the oikos to dictate matters in the polis. This idea is comical, but also has incredibly strong implications. It challenges accepted views on women and their roles in Ancient Greece, and begins to break down one of the most fundamental barriers between men and women.

Discussion of 'toxic masculinity' might feel like a contemporary phenomenon, but its destructive tendencies are already clear in *Lysistrata*. The male population, intent on pursuing military glory, harm their own people. The feminine is shown as an opposing force, creating a sense of balance and ultimately achieving peace. By depriving men of a certain power, they are able to dismantle the systemic patriarchy that governs their society, gaining influence themselves. This isn't a play of men versus women, but rather harmful masculinity versus egalitarianism.

UCL's 2018 production of *Lysistrata* - the Classics Society Play - will be set in Renaissance England, where challenges to male supremacy started to make it into the mainstream. It will also heavily reference Club Kid culture in London, 2017, as representative of a gender-fluid collective who believe in a world free of any divisive societal codes. By using these historical checkpoints, we will mark the development of proto-feminist theory in Europe from Aristophanes' time, attempting to answer some of the ancient text's questions about what the consequences of a gender-egalitarian society might be. In the production, conceptions of gender-fluidity will serve to ridicule the 'battle of the sexes' in much the same way as would have been done - albeit with an all male cast and a different range of intentions - in Aristophanes's day.

Given the age of the play, the fact that the warrior women of *Lysistrata* are still able to empower women today is both an extraordinary feat and a horrible testament to the constancy of societal oppression. They also serve to remind us that, in our societies, the female experience is different to the male experience, so the female response will likewise be different. In terms of war, such difference is clear in tactics of toxic masculinity, which serve only to destroy and conquer, unlike the choices made by the peace-seeking women. The play's undermining of gender roles calls into question the legitimacy of binding societal distinctions between men and women, between 'masculinity' and 'femininity', and, I think, parodies these to the extent that they must be seen as laughable, as material perfect for comedy.

Lysistrata will be performed from 7th-9th February 2018 at the Shaw Theatre, King's Cross. Chloe Tye is Assistant Producer.

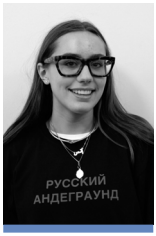








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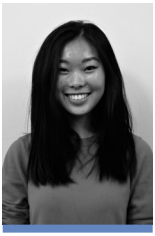










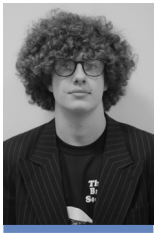

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This issue is part of a renewed commitment to diversity within SAVAGE Journal as a society. We will be consciously channelling this intersectional approach into our editorial stance and decision making process from now on. We want to not only acknowledge but celebrate the diversity of UCL's student population, to provide a platform for discussion of issues that have previously been overlooked and to amplify under-represented voices. With this in mind, we are launching a new section – Our Voices – where students can anonymously share their experiences of prejudice and discrimination at UCL. To share your story, email ourvoices@savageonline.co.uk.