

# Accordion

Issue 2

What  
can't  
you  
say?



## **Artists**

Ben Aron

Cydney Gottlieb

Maggie Jensen

Henry Kunkel

CL Mannarino

Daisy Novoa Vásquez

Rosie Ranauro

Robert Rossoff

Sarah Rushford

Lenny Schnier

Kate Wildman

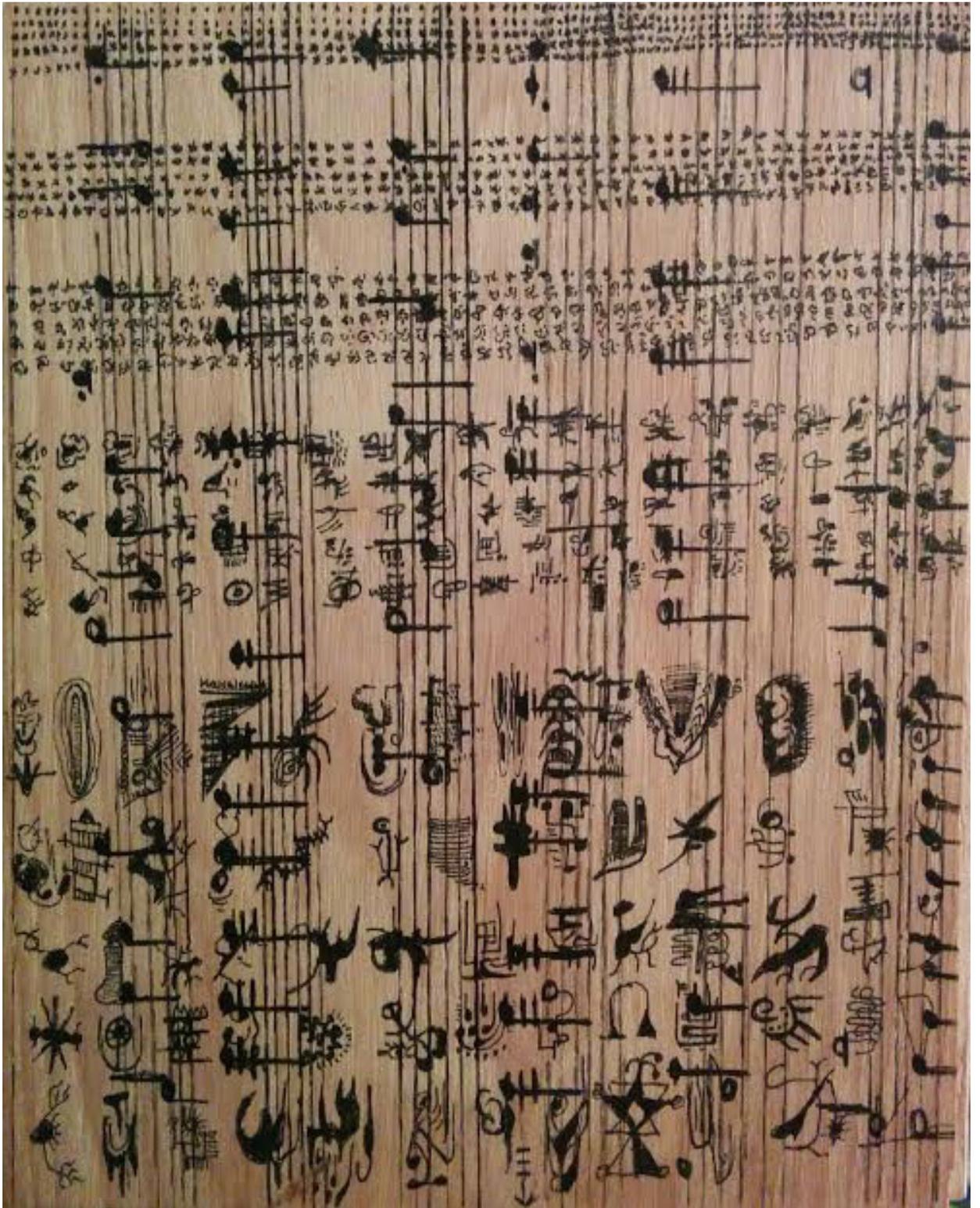
## **Produced and edited by**

Maggie Jensen

Luke Mannarino

## **Cover and design by**

Michelle Garcia



Henry Kunkel  
Untitled  
ink on wood panel  
2014

*“Everything now happens in two places”*

-Anne Carson

## **An issue on translation**

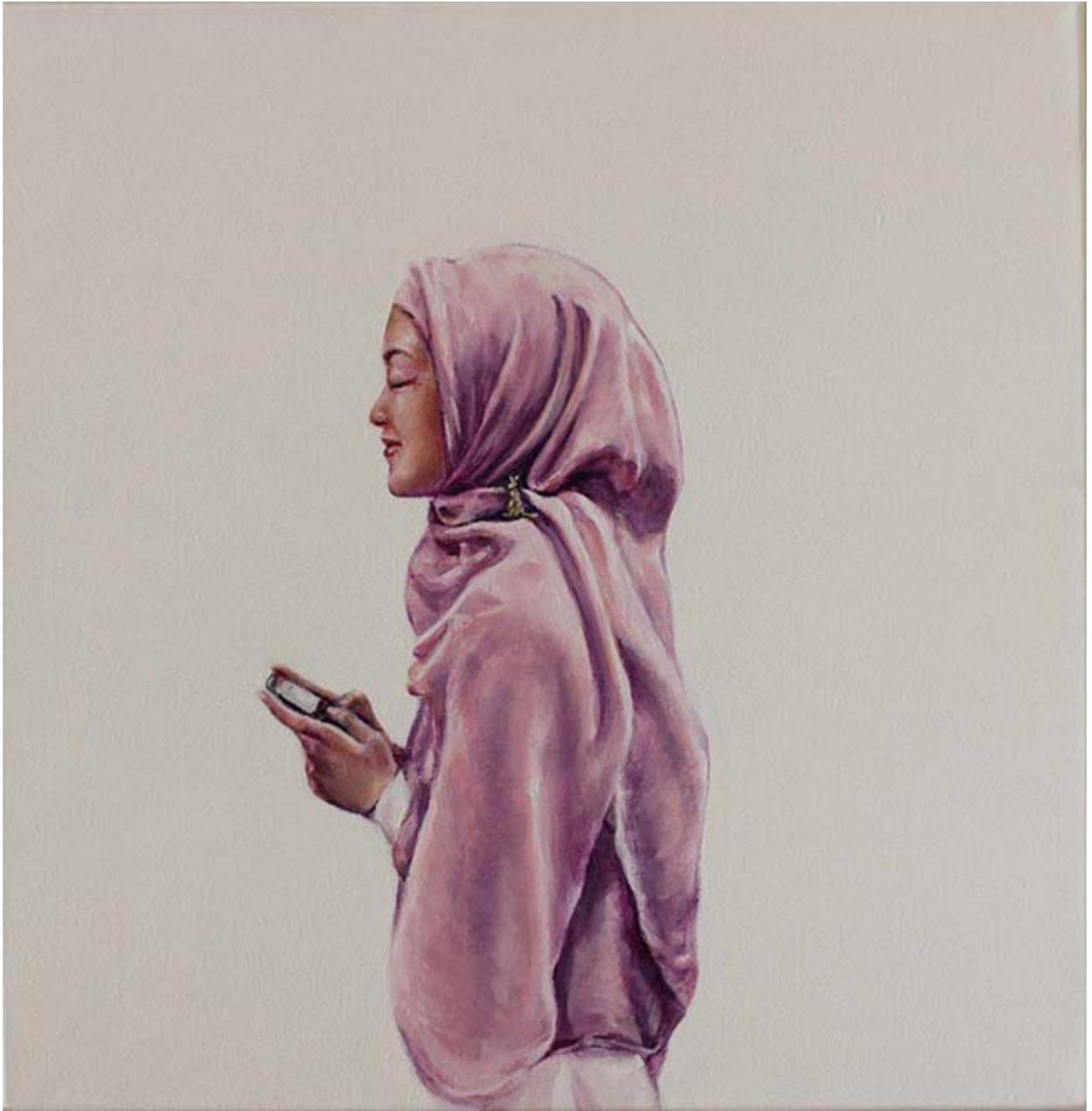
*What Can't You Say* is a collection of work dealing with the complexities that arise from the creative practice of translating one's own work or the work of another into a different form, location, or language. Communication gaps are still vast despite our ever-evolving understanding of the barriers that separate each from the other in this world. The artists in this issue consider how reconfiguring the subject and selfhood can bridge such distances, however briefly. The translator should no longer be seen as a mediator of information, but rather as another kind of producer, one who calls for alternate spaces of encounter and new intersections of meaning and purposes. In this new space, creative practice is often one of assemblage and of collaboration through the marrying of multiple means of expression, some personal, some appropriated.

Robert Rossoff

*Head + Scarf \* Hand + Phone, numbers 7 and 3*

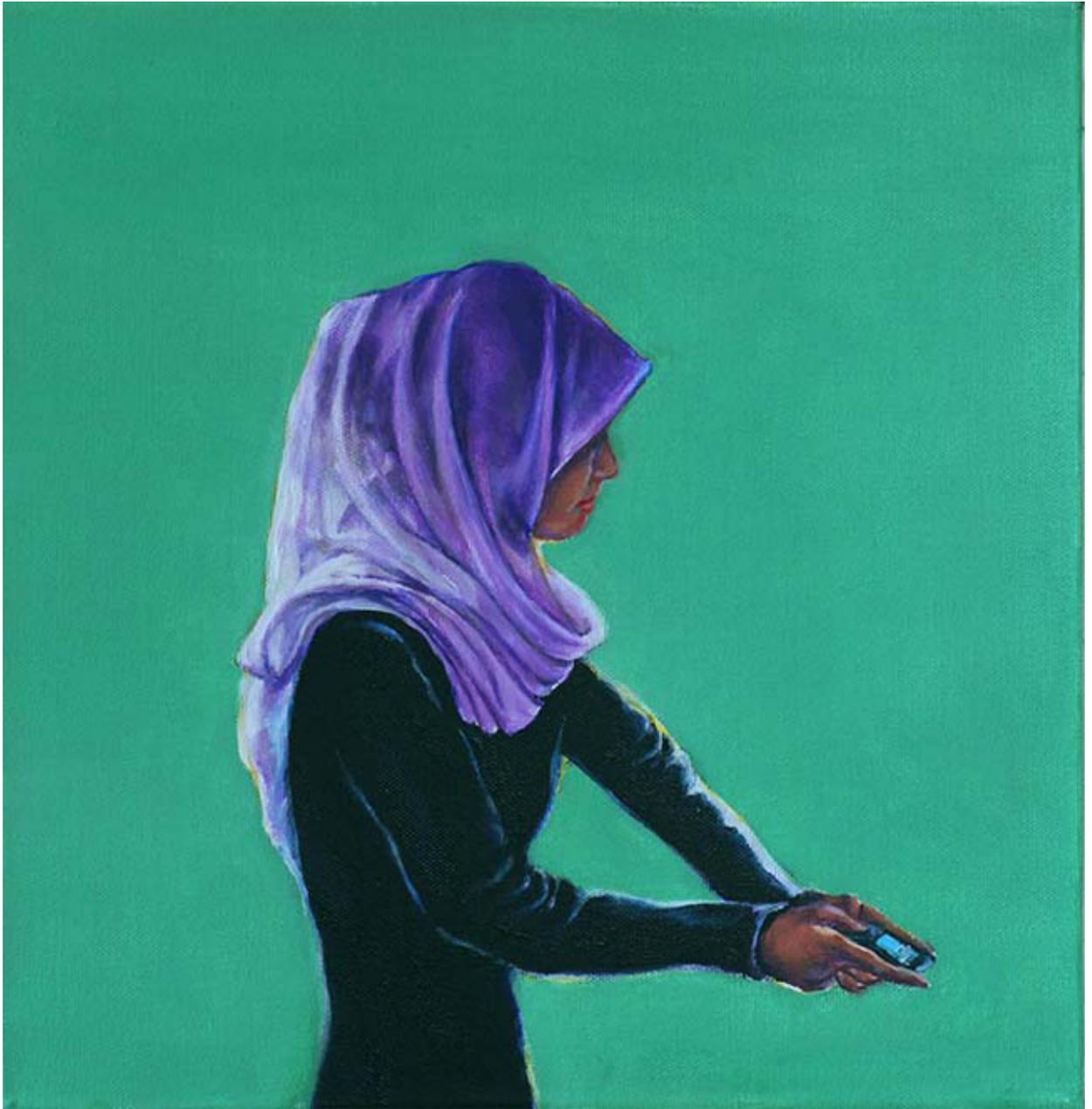
oil on canvas

2013 - 2014



10/8/14

To the chagrin of humanists, theocracies and patriarchal societies in too many parts of the world enforce sexual oppression. As we've all learned in the last 20 years, especially with the phenomenal results of microfinancing to women, the female half of the population is generally critical to raising the entire cultural and economic hopes of a country. This is largely because of their focus on the children and their insistence on food, education, and health before personal desires. So what happens when the government doesn't change but the options open to oppressed women do? Enter the cell phone; the hand sized device facilitating private and instantaneous exchange of information and ideas. A more potent cancer to the logistics of oppression is difficult to imagine.



Because I was so involved myself with the use of technology in new areas of communication, as an animator in Hollywood, I often tried to describe the contradiction and tension inherent in the rapid changes in technology and the many wars being fought, especially in the Islamic world, for control of minds. But it wasn't until I arrived in Indonesia a year ago to teach English that I inadvertently happened upon the "picture worth a thousand words:" Young women swaddled in hijab with their necks bent over cell phones and their minds all over the world.

Head + Scarf \* Hand + Phone = Hope

What a Race!

1

Tom and Father went  
to Cherry Street Hill.  
Tom's sled was .....

old and brown  
new and red  
new and pretty

2

The boys were at the hill.  
They wanted .....

~~to race~~  
to run  
to stop

3

All the boys went fast.  
They all wanted .....

to see Father  
to win the race  
to come up the hill

4

The blue sled went fast.  
But the brown sled went .....

faster and faster  
over and over  
up and down

5

Father called to the boys.  
He looked .....

at the tree  
at the race  
at the snowman

6

"The brown sled wins,"  
called Jack.  
"It is ....."

a good sled  
a new sled  
a red sled

boys

win

faster

boys

win

faster

C

22

All the boys race.  
They all race.

They race  
to see Father  
come up the hill.

All the boys  
want is  
to see Father  
come up the hill .

Father calls to the boys  
to stop  
and to run faster .

faster

Sarah Rushford

Previous page:

*Boys Win Faster*

2014

digital collage

Boys Win Faster is a digital collage that shows what appear to be two pages from an elementary school reading comprehension workbook, presented side by side. On the left is the unaltered page, and on the right is a page with identical tatters, tears, and marks as the original, but the text is a poem that appropriates, edits, and rearranges content from the original page. The poem is an interpretation of the sociocultural subtext of the content of the workbook page.

Boys Win Faster is a nod to the ubiquitous, ironic recontextualization of Dick and Jane.

Left:

*The vast went bang*

2012

collage with found text and images from typing tutorial I and graphite on paper

The vast went bang is a small collage made with found text and images from a 1950's typing tutorial with graphite on paper. The phrase the vast gun went bang appeared in the tutorial and it immediately struck me as grammatically awful, unexpected, and eerie. It was a reaction to the shocking, unchecked, frequency of gun violence. I pictured the whole country being shot simultaneously by one vast gun.

The decision to crudely cross out the word gun made the other strange phrase the vast went bang emerge, as if describing a revelation, one gigantic ideological bang that would change the vastly empty hearts of gun rights advocates.

The vast ~~gun~~ went bang.  
went bang.

The vast ~~gun~~  
The vast ~~gun~~ went bang.



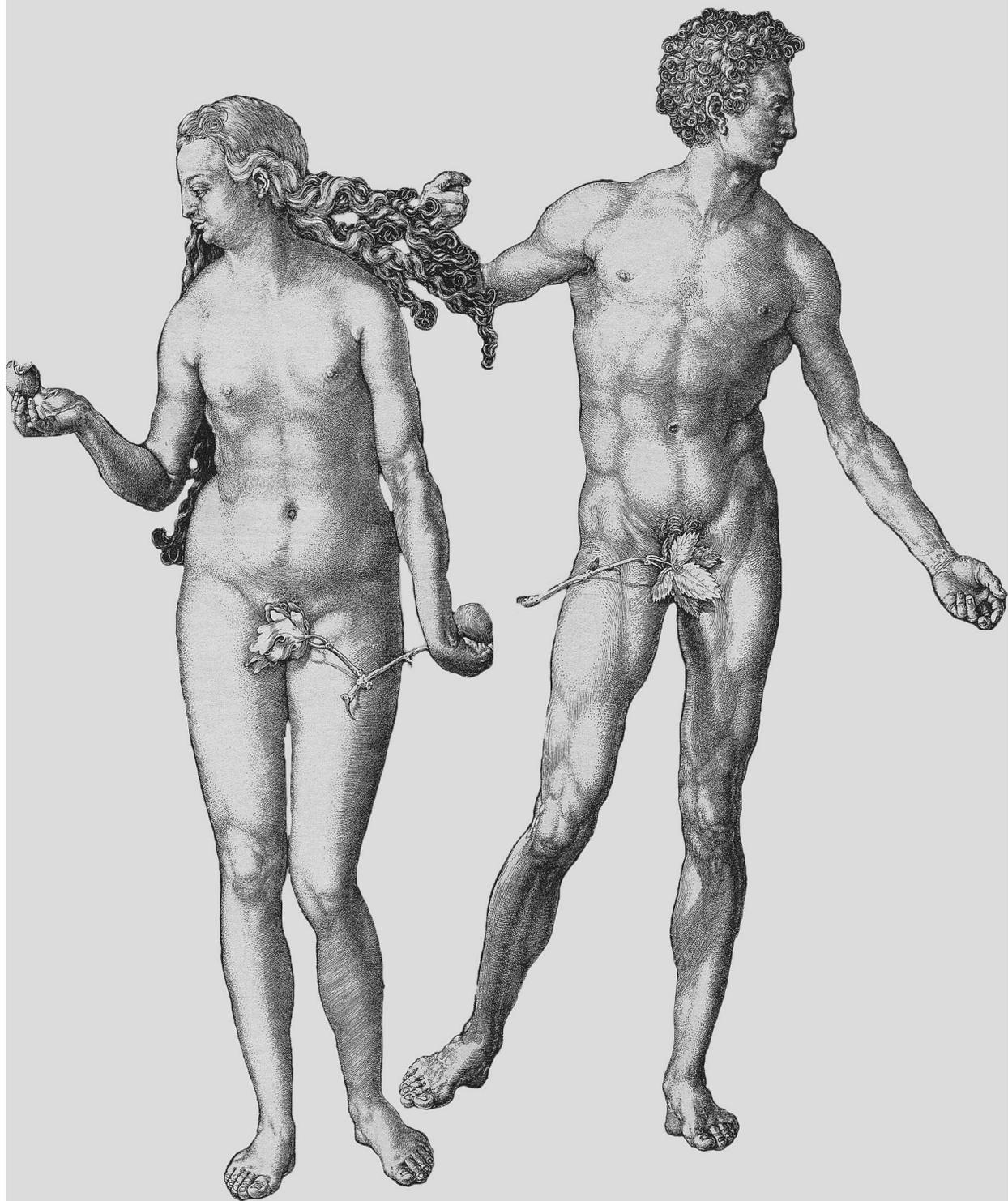
Maggie Jensen  
Untitled  
2014  
digital collages

These images are edits of iconic portraits I selected from a standard Western art history textbook's canon. Here the position of the couple has been switched from the original composition so that the man who first appeared on the left is now replaced by the female figure.

As the reader is conditioned in Western culture to read from left to right, it follows that we most naturally process an image in this manner as well. Moving the woman to the left side we consider how such a reversal affects our understanding of where authority and power is intended to be located within the works, pre and post edit.

I am interested not in any sort of surgical reversal of roles, but rather an opening of space. A space for new intersections of meaning that breaks from the linear trajectory of what I have observed to be a common trend in portraiture from across history.





## En Tránsito

Somos estrellas fugaces,  
aves migratorias, espejismos...

Y nuestros pensamientos  
son como un atlas  
donde ubicamos  
todo lo querido.

Transitorias las tierras,  
las memorias,  
nuestra euforia,  
las raíces...

Nuestros cuerpos  
y sus sombras.

Transitorias  
todas las palabras  
que se dicen.

Mas somos  
polvo estelar,  
esencialmente divinos.  
Inmortal entre lo mortal,  
en tránsito continuo...

## In Transit

We are shooting stars,  
migratory birds, mirages ...

And our thoughts  
are an atlas  
where we place all  
that is cherished.

Transitory the land,  
the memories,  
our euphoria,  
all origins...

Our bodies  
and their shadows.

Ephemeral,  
all words  
that are spoken.

Yet we are  
stardust,  
essentially divine.  
Immortal among the mortal,  
in constant flux  
through time...

- Daisy Novoa Vásquez

## In transient transit, a transitory translation

Cydney Gottlieb

2014

Daisy Novoa Vásquez and I combine our preferred practices of poetry and the visual arts, respectively, with our primary and secondary languages of Spanish and English to create multimedia experiences that address issues of translation—a now prevalent concern among today’s multilingual and multicultural millennial generation. Our multidisciplinary approach allows us to explore and directly experience a shared struggle to express similar ideas with different tools. We challenge ourselves to process information through both text and imagery in order to reach a common emotional understanding, with each of us rooted in different creative and native foundations.

By communicating with each other in both Spanish and English, Daisy and I acknowledge that neither language carries more weight over the other in our relationship; however, external social or academic situations might call for the dominance of one personality, language, or creative outlet within our day-to-day lives. Artistry and challenge lie in the ability to fluidly switch from one medium to another, both in conversation and in identity, without losing information, ideas, or attributes that exist within the metaphysical space of this transitional process. How does a person effectively communicate the connotation of an experience? How can language—a systematized medium with concrete rules and forms—translate abstract, intimate, or indefinable feelings? In an attempt to “fill in the cracks” when switching between modes of expression, Daisy uses a vocal recording to explain how her poetry and my visuals thrive off of each other, while I hope to describe with written words why linguistics is essential for my painting practice. In this particular study for *Accordion*, we attempt to address problems stemming from rhetoric and discourse between languages by translating original works that highlight shared perspectives garnered from skydiving. Although our jumps occurred as different events and each of our inspired works developed independently, we merge our individualized viewpoints and disciplines into one composite artistic package that aims to unite its audience through feelings and energies rather than literal explanations.

On a most ephemeral level, the significance of our works may be confined to an analysis of semantics, exploring how the interworking of language affects our creative messages. Morphologically, my painting combines a Latin American personality (Chilean poet Pablo Neruda) and his philosophy with a North American place (Barnstable, Mass.) in hopes of establishing a setting that differs in both cultural and geographical landscapes. Equivocally, I wrestle with self-concocted definitions that are chan-

neled and exhibited through my work, and *Las Esmeraldas Partidas (por Neruda si fuera de Barnstable)* illustrates a split in my artistic identity by first introducing a general experience and then personalizing the subject matter through colors, lines, layers, and depth. Using visual tools to establish content, I mimic the way in which I process and construct written and oral communication—creating visual parallels with language, as if I were an architect building upon concepts, confirming that all materials agree with each other, and ensuring that all parts connect to successfully explain multisensory concepts. Constantly battling a compulsive affinity for linguistic and visual guidelines, I work through thoughts, experiences, assumptions, and opinions with my mark-making to create conceptual landscapes. By altering artistic techniques to reflect my subconscious, I embrace fluidity and use my linework to mirror inner emotional dialogues. Within my studies, I find that playfulness with words and visuals encourages growth, and sometimes, it is necessary to step backwards in order to move forward. By giving myself permission to unearth discarded or unfinished concepts often found within myself, I can attempt to expand upon past thoughts or premeditated ideas and translate them into current, relevant projects. Eventually, these visuals merge and blend into new situations, changing and restructuring the internal conversation into an external one. By studying the psychology of my creations, I am able to apply visual and linguistic theories to everyday public interactions and exercise such lessons within my personal relationships. In *Las Esmeraldas Partidas (por Neruda si fuera de Barnstable)*, I attempt to create with a gentle touch rather than an aggressive force, no longer overworking or over-explaining boundaries within my artwork. As a visual conversation, the image itself represents an intimate experience of growth and ascribes conceptual meaning to the landscape’s rivers and pathways. These channels signify an avenue to relief, caressing the natural terrain while carving through its bedrock to uncover intrinsic truths—wearing down layers of thought to make way for free, flowing ideas and opportunities.

By washing away loose grains of sand and clarifying doubt, these winding streams act definitively, as if agents of indicative grammar. In the Spanish language, moods, which are reinforced by the use of certain grammatical tenses, reflect how a speaker feels about a situation. Indicative moods possess facts and solid statements, while the subjunctive mood expresses doubts, desires, and the unknown through the way in which the speaker conjugates verbs. In an attempt to better communicate my feelings, I employ Spanish to say what I cannot in English by offering my audience tidbits of an intended message through a carefully selected title. In addition to describing subject matter, each linguistic element provides insight into my creative thought process. By titling or prefacing

my work in Spanish, I feel free to reveal additional components of my personality as well as play with grammatical rules and my ever-fluctuating relationship with structure—be it organizational or thematic. For example, the first half of the title, *Las Esmeraldas Partidas*, confronts rules of capitalization. Latin-based orthography dictates that only the first word of a title should be capitalized; yet here it varies. The second half, (*por Neruda si fuera de Barnstable*), subscribes to traditional rules but crosses cultural borders, so to speak. *Si fuera* introduces the subjunctive form, presenting questions of belonging. To me, the subjunctive form represents the space in between convictions and conversations—the inconsistencies of life that cannot be defined by a rulebook of lexicology. Spanish communicates parts of me that only those who *entender* will understand—awakening another dimension of personality and allowing myself options in the same way that Spanish definitions might depend on context or how rules of grammar permit infinitives to evolve into new forms.

Furthermore, each verb tense depends on its agreement with a subject pronoun, but gray areas exist with regards to salutations and the speaker's overall journey to arrive at these pronouns. In Spanish, there are formal (e.g. *Usted fuera; Vosotros fuerais*) and informal (e.g. *tú fueras; vos fueras*) indicators to distinguish relationships between speakers and their level of shared intimacy, whereas in English, there is only one form (e.g. you were) to describe the formal, informal, singular, or collective, as we see with the second person narrative. Within literature, the author crafts a careful dance with her reader that takes shape as the story develops, yet when body language or nonverbal communication is removed, the writer must also clarify degrees of familiarity through precise linguistic choices. In a casual conversation, speakers might wait to acknowledge one another with subject pronouns, allowing space in time to help develop such definitions; however, almost immediately on paper, a writer is forced to finitely and publically establish a dialogue with her audience or relationships between characters.

From a creative standpoint, it might be difficult for the writer to decide on initial ideas and commit to a specific topic or poetic structure to ensure continuity throughout the remainder of her work. However, once the creator is able to relent and trust her audience, the full story takes shape naturally. An artistic endeavor is only successful if it resonates with others, and language—be it spoken, written, or visual—is a shifting responsibility, dependent upon how it is transferred and received. As a nonnative Spanish speaker, I study Daisy's work with hesitation, anxiously wondering whether or not her words will guide me to the right interpretation since translation from Spanish to English is often more complicated than the reverse due to variants in vocabulary. For example, in English, one verb (e.g. to love) may claim multiple defini-

tions using the same root word, whereas in Spanish, those definitions can be subcategorized by separate verbs with similar meanings (e.g. *gustar, encantar, querer, amar*). Often, clarification between languages depends on the writer's ability to identify, process, and convey underlying feelings in order to accurately express ranges of emotion and shifting intentions. Proportionately, the reader's skillset and comprehension is crucial for the success of a literary work, which also invokes questions of confidence for the reader, perhaps on par with those related to the creator's artistic, personal struggle.

When I read *En Tránsito*, I scan for subtle hints that Daisy might offer me to better understand Latin culture, her language, and our friendship. I know that once her analysis is scripted and formatted, it now becomes my project to process, so I must trust my own skills to connect her concepts. This undertaking employs confidence and strategy because in Romance languages, in this case Spanish, it is essential to perceive subtle intentions and the moods of your peers. Because poetry and literature rely on the reader's interpersonal skills in order to understand more nuanced details of grammar, Daisy's intended message is only received if my vocabulary is able to compliment or match hers. With Italic languages, interactions are situation-to-situation, person-to-person, and language can either create barriers or invite participants to step into a new realm full of insecurities, excitement, and the unknown, which also suggests an accepted possibility for mistakes and misunderstandings. Comparable to a gust of wind, the Spanish language fluctuates according to the temperature of its surroundings, which determines social climate. In order to land safely, both the writer and the reader must move in step with each other and their environment, taking cues from whichever current catches the breeze and whichever mood dominates. If successful, this fluency in syntax extends to gender awareness, degrees of formality, and plurality, which facilitates comprehension of characters and relationships, both literary and in real life, regardless of genre, culture or language of origin.

In literature, poetry, or conversation, a Romance language may also soften an inherent need to categorize, simply because its composition evokes feeling and encourages potential development and understanding. If ever paralyzed mid-conversation or stagnant in between verb tenses or formalities, the speaker must make split-second decisions in order to stay afloat, maintaining elasticity and accepting that some interactions might be left open-ended. If invited into a more intimate or specialized discussion, the speaker now learns to navigate an entirely new sublanguage full of colloquialisms, prosody, and personal preferences, thus continuing this cyclical game of relationships. Social interplay depends on language, which acts as a vehicle that moves us across physical, political, emotional, pragmatic, and idiosyncratic boundaries, with rooms to



Cydney Gottlieb  
*Esmeraldas Partidas*  
acrylic, ink, charcoal, galkyd lite, and graphite on cardboard



detail of: *Esmeraldas Partidas*

travel if maneuvered strategically. Synchronously, language offers a creative structure in which we can dissect and play with relationships through grammar, orchestrating a romance between how we identify ourselves and how we recognize others.

Despite possessing an undergraduate degree in Hispanic Language and Literatures, I feel as though I have only just uncovered poetry's infrastructure through working with Daisy and anatomizing her words. She often says that I am "Latin at heart" because I care to understand the nuances of her background; however, I would argue that if I am, it is more so because Hispanic language and culture permits me to shed a good portion of North American constraints as they pertain to expression. In the same way that a performance artist takes on new characters to communicate fractions of an overarching message, a multilingual person might perform deviations in identity through language—a writer through construction of content, or an artist through multimedia. Sometimes it is more manageable to control complexities in personality by assigning certain traits or personae to different tools of expression. When we compartmentalize parts of ourselves, we are able to "pick and choose", therefore gaining more control over the release of thoughts and actions.

Similarly, we must choose when to absorb ideas and energies from others and when to trust our own skills. With any medium, it is important to use distance a complementary tool, learning from the unexpected or the

uncalculated oddities that surface, which is why it is so important to step away from comfortable habits in order to gain greater insight. The writer needs to see, the artist needs to read, and the individual needs to jump into new languages, cultures, and experiences in order to find answers in plasticity. Although the creative might feel obligated to honor or adhere to customary methods, she needs to experiment with flexibility in order to find her artistic purpose. If motivated or inspired to transcend traditional techniques, the poet or the artist is often equipped to create a new style or visual culture, respectively, while combining or translating ideas in the same way that people blend, flow, and work together in progressive societies. After venturing outward and observing others' practices, the creative can feel secure in her choices and personal direction, continuing to tweak and alter her preferences accordingly, infusing her work with new predictions, and perpetuating the internal-external creative cycle.

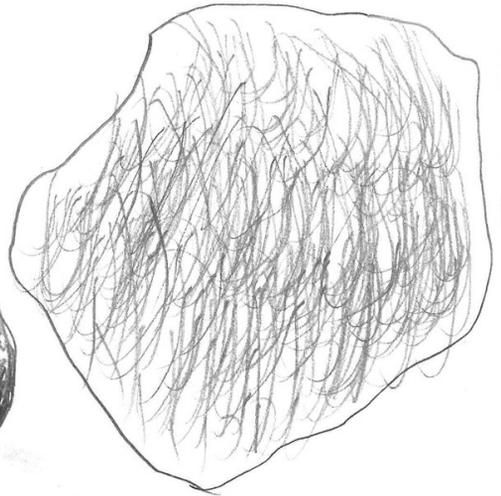
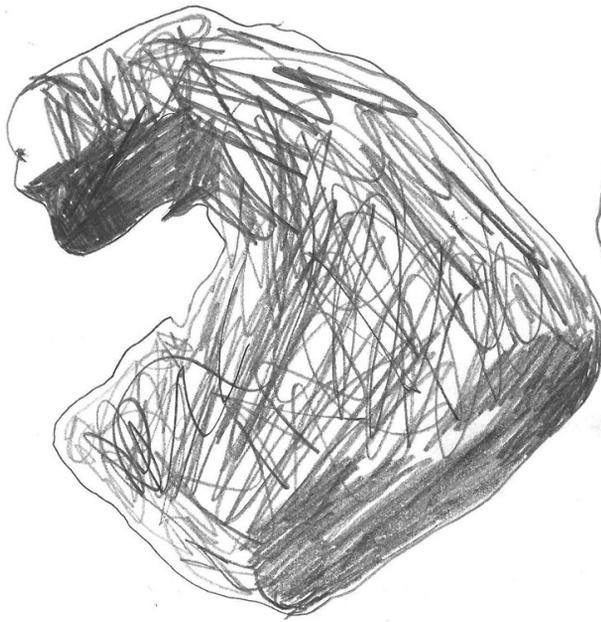
By editing, erasing, or expanding upon formats and ideas, each decision leads Daisy and me to a new method, down a different avenue, connecting us to pools of emotion—arteries that link us to the heart and the essential energies of each creative, communicative work. Interestingly, each of our personal statements about this project exists outside of our habitual medium. Daisy, a poet, chooses to verbally dictate her thoughts through a recording rather than write them down, perhaps out of the need to speak more casually in a language that is not her

own—without written precision, allowing room for orated error. Alternatively, although I identify as a visual artist, I feel a subsequential need to explain myself and create guidelines through written language. Even so, it is important to integrate distance and recollect principles of space. Without textual commentary, my work is open for interpretation, with each conclusion dependent on the viewer; therefore, I try to trust that the message will translate by relinquishing some degree of control and asking my audience to complete the picture with their own inherent guidelines rather than my dictation. Daisy's poetry ushers her reader to do the same—to participate and process her words with space. Perhaps Daisy, also an art collector, looks to images with the same transitory understanding with which she and I approach the Spanish language.

In the same way that skydiving requires trusting others with responsibilities, personal safety, and the unknown, the creative arts encourages the mastery of new tactics, unfamiliar methods, and varied materials, styles, or voices. Within both our disciplines and multi-everything friendship, Daisy and I must infuse conversance with patience and awareness, knowing that reaching comfortable cognizance takes time and that answers do not appear from one correct source, nor will they take shape in only one form. By listening to our gut instincts and considering transitory elements of language, personality, and creativity, Daisy and I construct our identities with heterogeneous ingredients. Both she and I come from culturally strong backgrounds, and in today's dynamic, multidimensional, multi-everything world, we struggle to live between realms of language, today's culture, and a world in which we value the teachings and rituals of our upbringings. Simultaneously, many of our peers also battle to retain components of language and culture that comprise individuality within a generation that caters to a nonpartisan culture with its own vernacular language. It seems as though we millennials feel pressure from each other to neutralize traditions while explaining and translating portions of us that might not align with conditioned societal norms, professional patterns, or linguistic codes, but we also hope to preserve our frameworks while inviting slight modifications. By exploring and learning about alternative lifestyles, cultures, and languages in a contemporary, liberal city that is not natively ours, Daisy and I allow ourselves to develop and consider conflicting desires by wielding our creative weapons as an emotional outlet. In my professional and artistic development, I now try to "pick and choose" when it comes to structure, deciding when to deviate from a fixed path or when to follow cultural blueprints while also embracing amplitude and new perspectives. With awareness of the bigger picture, we see that rivers act as passageways, eventually guiding us through mucky marshlands to reach the ocean—an outlet and another opportunity to cleanse the self and redefine significance. We may delineate, but

we will get there, sculpting truths, reawakening context, and chiseling out stability within ourselves. Neither language nor identity is fixed, as communicated through our practices, and through translation projects such as this one, Daisy and I navigate both cultures together.

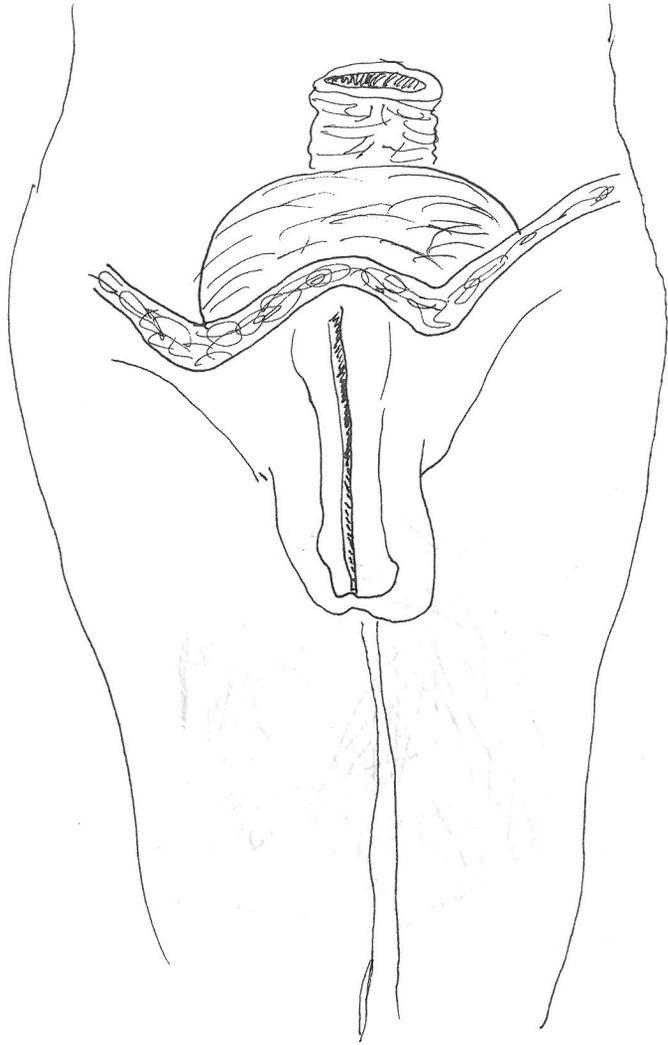
**audio piece by Daisy Novoa Vásquez**  
**@ [accordionzine.tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/accordionzine)**



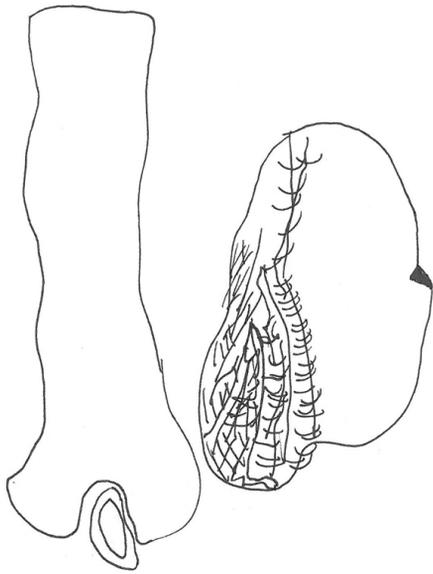
Lenny Schnier

Left:  
Untitled  
scanned pencil on paper  
2014

Right:  
Untitled  
scanned pen on paper  
2014



lumpy flesh squeezed between tight fabrics  
so that I fit  
between  
amongst  
around  
my parts



Above:  
Untitled  
scanned pen and pencil on paper  
2014

I have an interest in transitional experiences with regards to the intersections of identity and aesthetics / internal and external. My artistic practice is multidisciplinary and incorporates elements of drawing, painting, sculpture, performance, photography and video, though I prefer the term versatile.

- Lenny Schnier

What can't I say?  
I can say anything,  
Disregarding  
Truth

What can you say?  
You can say anything,  
Believing  
Utterly

I can't speak now  
My words taste bad,  
Artificially  
Consequent

You talk too much  
It'll only be suitable,  
Reflecting  
Caverns

We sense not for  
But innately because of,  
Chaotic  
Indifference

Use your bones, sequester  
What you're history has  
Unkindly  
Purloined

Strip bare your nudity  
And illustrate what  
Belief  
Hides

- Henry Kunkel



Rosie Ranauro  
*The Rock*  
stills from GIF, ink on paper  
2013-2014  
<http://tinyurl.com/redladybluelady>

## What Can't I Say

Rosie Ranauro

I make work about movement. The movement of sound, the movement of energy within my body, and the movement of energy as it relates to pain. It has always felt natural to me to document my ideas about energy via drawings. The irony (or stupidity) of making static, stubbornly flat and graphic drawings about kinetic energy is not lost on me. I have always been telling, not showing.

This prompt raises an even more daunting question: what am I trying to say? Who do I make this work for, and what is it important to get across. For a long time I've been talking about my work as 'diagrams'. This feels like an important distinction as far as who my intended audience is. I am not interested in explaining to anyone what my experience in my body is like. That is something I can't say. I am interested in documenting my experience for myself, claiming ownership of a body that feels at times out of my control by repeatedly rendering it, explaining my body to myself. I am also interested in encouraging others to speak about their experiences in their body.

All of that said, because a large part of what I am interested in relates to movement, animation has been on my mind this year. A collaboration with a tech savvy friend led to a touch screen version of one of my drawings. Since that collaboration, I've been experimenting with animation a little, though I don't feel they are fully realized pieces. I think as I continue to explore exactly what I want to say, how I go about saying it will follow suit.



that is rich with something that is lacking from our main medium. Straying from painting allowed me to reevaluate my work. I now return to it with a fresh pair of eyes and more determination to push beyond the invisible constraints I've unknowingly placed upon myself based on my routine approach.

We all possess an inherent desire to touch, to explore, to pretend, and to place things in a context that is relevant to ourselves, and our experiences. Through handbuilding in porcelain I had an avenue to express these desires to the fullest. I found importance in the anonymity of the figures' identities, feeling as though I created a world that invited the viewer's touch and created a hypersensitivity to their scale. Though the figures may seem rudimentary in the eyes of a skilled sculptor and ceramic artist, they have opened up a world for me in which I have yet to navigate or even discover in the 2 dimensional world of painting. Perhaps other artists feel differently, but I am confident that in my own practice one medium will never be enough.

- Kate Wildman

I began working in 3D (remaining small in scale) with porcelain. The satisfaction of manipulating such a malleable substance that hardened quickly (providing a much desired resistance) was overwhelming. The possibilities for emotional and mental expression seemed endless. The figures I sculpted warrant more attention and interaction from the viewer because they solidly exist in space. They become an important alternate medium from my paintings because they demand to be addressed by the viewer without coming off as abrasive and retaining their preciousness.

Artists are experimental creatures by nature, and certain mediums captivate us more than others, as they provide us with experience

## Writer-Editor

CL Mannarino

### Writer-Editor

By night, a creator, a hopeful, a visionary.

By day, a gatekeeper to the publishing world, a judge of what's marketable, a red pen to mistakes.

On the one hand, a personal expression;

A desire to talk to the world, to add another story to the sea of voices.

To contribute something new. To reiterate the continuity of something old.

To provoke change. To be heard.

On the other hand, a bank account;

An electric vault that fills and empties every two weeks.

Money: a necessary evil to purchase notebooks and

Filler paper, pens and pencils and Post-It notes,

Editorial feedback and cover designers' art.

To pay loans: car, college. To pay insurance.

To buy room, board, food, and keep on living.

### Writer-Editor.

By night, lost in silence and imagination.

By day, lost in Bostonian crowds and incorrect punctuation.

On the one hand, one job fulfills the other.

You cannot have the latter without the former.

Nobody can edit a blank page.

On the other hand, each requires separate parts of the brain.

One to imagine, the other to refine.

One to reach until there's nowhere left to go...for now;

The other to scrutinize, to question, to improve the results

That come with from said reaching.

Try to do the latter after the former.

Let the work speak before you try to more beautifully

Contain it, make it palatable to a wide audience.

### Writer-Editor.

By night, taking on the voices of a thousand possible souls.

By day, keeping the world safe from bad sentence structure, one comma at a time.

On the one hand, both jobs seek to bring understanding

Of universal subjects

To a variety of people.

On the other hand, both jobs allow a greater form of communication.

Both are different in every culture

For every language.

But both unite cultures because

The world needs stories.

It can always use one more.

Ben Aron  
*Before the Law*  
2014

Before the Law is a digitally composited work which imagines “Before the Law”, perhaps Franz Kafka’s most well known parable, as a petition submission to the We The People section of the White House website.

The piece is a reflection on the growing image gap in the American political system. In an era in which it is proclaimed that the “administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in government,”<sup>1</sup> a joint Northwestern - Princeton study can find that the nation is essentially an oligarchy.<sup>2</sup> Absurdity and illusion collide in the never ending struggle for just governance, a process, as Kafka seem to suggest, we do not understand as well as we exhibit.

1. We The People: Your Voice in Our Government. <<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/>>. President Barack Obama

2. Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (2014): 564-81.

WE PETITION THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO:

### Before The Law by F. Kafka

Before the law sits a gatekeeper. To this gatekeeper comes a man from the country who asks to gain entry into the law. But the gatekeeper says that he cannot grant him entry at the moment. The man thinks about it and then asks if he will be allowed to come in later on. "It is possible," says the gatekeeper, "but not now." At the moment the gate to the law stands open, as always, and the gatekeeper walks to the side, so the man bends over in order to see through the gate into the inside. When the gatekeeper notices that, he laughs and says: "If it tempts you so much, try it in spite of my prohibition. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the most lowly gatekeeper. But from room to room stand gatekeepers, each more powerful than the other. I can't endure even one glimpse of the third." The man from the country has not expected such difficulties: the law should always be accessible for everyone, he thinks, but as he now looks more closely at the gatekeeper in his fur coat, at his large pointed nose and his long, thin, black Tartar's beard, he decides that it would be better to wait until he gets permission to go inside. The gatekeeper gives him a stool and allows him to sit down at the side in front of the gate. There he sits for days and years. He makes many attempts to be let in, and he wears the gatekeeper out with his requests. The gatekeeper often interrogates him briefly, questioning him about his homeland and many other things, but they are indifferent questions, the kind great men put, and at the end he always tells him once more that he cannot let him inside yet. The man, who has equipped himself with many things for his journey, spends everything, no matter how valuable, to win over the gatekeeper. The latter takes it all but, as he does so, says, "I am taking this only so that you do not think you have failed to do anything." During the many years the man observes the gatekeeper almost continuously. He forgets the other gatekeepers, and this one seems to him the only obstacle for entry into the law. He curses the unlucky circumstance, in the first years thoughtlessly and out loud, later, as he grows old, he still mumbles to himself. He becomes childish and, since in the long years studying the gatekeeper he has come to know the fleas in his fur collar, he even asks the fleas to help him persuade the gatekeeper. Finally his eyesight grows weak, and he does not know whether things are really darker around him or whether his eyes are merely deceiving him. But he recognizes now in the darkness an illumination which breaks inextinguishably out of the gateway to the law. Now he no longer has much time to live. Before his death he gathers in his head all his experiences of the entire time up into one question which he has not yet put to the gatekeeper. He waves to him, since he can no longer lift up his stiffening body. The gatekeeper has to bend way down to him, for the great difference has changed things to the disadvantage of the man. "What do you still want to know, then?" asks the gatekeeper. "You are insatiable." "Everyone strives after the law," says the man, "so how is it that in these many years no one except me has requested entry?" The gatekeeper sees that the man is already dying and, in order to reach his diminishing sense of hearing, he shouts at him, "Here no one else can gain entry, since this entrance was assigned only to you. I'm going now to close it."

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**ACCORDION...** Mirroring the act of accumulation of air within its bellows, our Accordion collects the individual breath, layering, and building upon its fragmented nature.

The intent of this zine is to bring together many different creative voices in an open dialogue fostered within the community of its pages. Promoting a casual atmosphere in which to present and explore both finished and in progress ideas, Accordion is a place where images and text can exist outside of the potential pressures of the exhibition space, or academic publication. Here any hierarchical attitude towards image over text or vice versa is opposed. Instead each can express the possibility of resonance one has with the other, but never subordinate to.

Existing in print medium Accordion is aware of the importance of growing in a community that relies on the possibilities an online presence allows artists to work together. However, it also realizes a need for the alternative tactile platform. As we have become more and more accustomed to scrolling through a stream of online images it is easy to ignore the unique experience that flipping back and forth through pages at random, and holding together different combinations of image and text, offers to the viewing experience.

Accordion hopes to find a voice somewhere in the space between studio to gallery, notebook to novel, or blog to magazine.

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