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This publication was designed and printed where the Bow and Elbow river meet, traditionally known by the Blackfoot name, **Mohkínstsis** and often referred to as the City of Calgary, Alberta.

The Alberta University of the Arts (AUArts) similarly rests on the traditional territories of the **Blackfoot Confederacy** and the First Peoples of Treaty 7, including the **Siksika, Kainai, Piikani**, the **Tsuut'ina** and the **Îyâxe Nakoda First Nations**, including the **Chiniki, Bearspaw**, and **Goodstoney First Nations**. This region is also home to the **Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III**. We would like to acknowledge all the Nations and the original stewards of Treaty 7 who continue to care and advocate for the lands where we reside and create.



Emerging Art Writers Program

4: Magic & Ritual

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Introduction

Lyndl Hall &
Shazia Hafiz Ramji

This is the fourth iteration of the Emerging Art Writer's Program (*EAWP*), offered through the Illingworth Kerr Gallery for AUArts students. The program connects a group of students with instructors and professional writers to expand their approach to writing about contemporary art and to experience the process of turning a first draft into a finished, published piece.

This year's edition focuses on the role of magical or ritual practices in relation to art and art writing, providing students with a framework to think through their own topics of interest. Students in the program worked closely with Sessional Instructor Lyndl Hall and mentor Shazia Hafiz Ramji in order to develop their ideas and form a text. Over the course of the program we explored such topics as the use of divination as a tool to generate questions about an art work, structuring a narrative in response to Tarot card spreads, career development for art writers, and the conventions of pitching an article for publication. Students were additionally able to attend presentations by Maandeeq Mohamed, *C Magazine* Reviews Editor, and Joy Xiang, *C Magazine* Editor. Students, faculty, and the mentor were all paid for their time and labour.

The seven students who produced new writing for *EAWP 4* are:

Jillian Cote
Elizabeth Fox
Emily Pickering
Marsel Reddick
Andy Rubio
Nicole Anne "Tapirot" Santangelo
Vivian Smith

This year's participants engage with the core ideas of magic and ritual from a wide variety of angles: drawing from the palimpsests of history, problems in contemporary art, and personal positions. It was exciting to see the expansiveness of approaches, with each writer bringing measured nuance and intuition to their creative and critical work to respond both to, through, and with a text. We embraced translation and transformation with the hope of imagining our worlds differently.

Student designer Mantis Huynh worked closely with writer's and facilitator's to bring a cohesive vision to these individual texts, and we are grateful for their time, flexibility, and creative input.

With special thanks to *C Magazine* for working with students and distributing this issue of *EAWP*.

We have so appreciated the creativity, hard work, focus, and dedication of this year's writers, and hope these words continue to inspire magic.

* * * * *

Lyndl Hall
Shazia Hafiz Ramji



Lyndl Hall is a visual artist who has had solo exhibitions at the Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver; the Burnaby Art Gallery; the Reach Gallery Museum, Abbotsford; CSA Space, Vancouver; as well as participating in group exhibitions at the Sanatorium Project Space, Istanbul; the Western Front, Vancouver; and Access Artist Run Centre, Vancouver. Hall has a BFA from Concordia University, Montreal and a MAA in Visual Arts from Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Vancouver.



Shazia Hafiz Ramji's writing has recently appeared in *Momus*, *C Magazine*, *The Capilano Review*, and is forthcoming in the 2022 Montreal International Poetry Prize anthology. She is the author of *Port of Being*, a book of poems drawn from field recordings, overheard conversations, and the performance art of Vito Acconci to reclaim her experience of being stalked. She lives in western Canada and London, England, where she teaches creative writing and is at work on a novel and some sounds. Shazia reads the Tarot every day.

The Golden Portal

Nicole Anne "Tapirot"
Santangelo

It has been eight years since I immigrated to Canada from the Philippines. In these years, I have been unable to visit home because of how expensive it is to travel, so I have slowly planted my roots here, on Treaty 7 land. I have become different: I can sometimes no longer fully translate words into my native language of Bisaya despite arriving in Canada as an adult. As I walk through the cold dry winds of Calgary, I often wonder if I am experiencing the loss of my culture. As the snow squeaks under my shoes, I question if I am still Filipino if I forget my language and have no concept of my country's current situation. I board the train and find myself

among a diverse crowd, but the guilt of not visiting my home country weighs heavier with each passing moment. When I enter the busy halls of Contemporary Calgary, my heart is filled with homesickness until I feel a warm atmosphere from a room featuring the work of Marigold Santos.

I step into the space and glimpse the source of a familiar warmth emanating from an enormous painting by the Canadian-Filipino artist, Marigold Santos: *Re-Grounding* (2011). Santos' work is bigger than a human body, suspended against an entire wall –from floor to ceiling. The painting's proportions welcome the audience to stay and observe the piece as if it is a gateway, a portal for us to set foot in. The background is filled by a golden void. A supine, fragmented figure at the bottom is surrounded by tree stumps and subtle greenery as the golden background pushes through the porousness of the watercolour streaks, which sets the scene of the painting. As I take a closer look at the figure's separated body, it seems hollow despite being filled with gold leaves. The void's warmth affects the colour of the leaves, making the foliage look murky despite being made of gold. Bright neon orange bones contrast the earthy tones of the corpse and the vegetation but does not take my attention away from the warm golden space. I cannot get over how mesmerizing the golden void is. The use of negative space is prevalent in Santos' work, but the golden void is far from empty. It draws me in, evoking the vivid light of a familiar place, as though I have been transported through a portal.

"We're closing soon!"

A sudden voice from the gallery attendant interrupted my crossing. I reluctantly extract myself from the portal, but the magnetic pull of the void still beckons me to return.

on its body, combined with woven patterns reminiscent of a banig—a traditional handwoven mat from the Philippines. I remember my friend's silky hair texture. I would give them braids on the banig inside their home, as we watched poorly dubbed cartoons in Bisaya. Each strand connects with the rest of the body's pieces, like the Santan flowers that I wove into my friend's hair. Despite the golden void giving off warmth, the ground feels wet like a swamp. Is the body a source of nourishment for the new growth visible in the work, the new growth happening to me, to all of us?

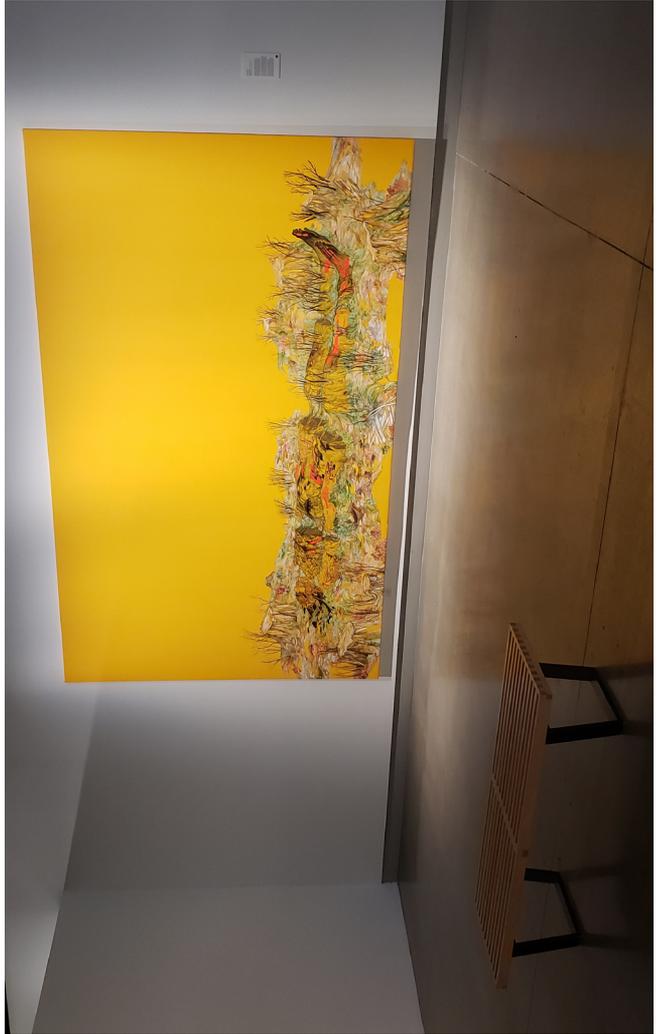
The body can represent a source in many ways, it can be a source of service for the new society that a displaced individual has to offer to survive in that new ecosystem. Service that brings new fruits and wisdom to one's identity. This is the growth of a new self; an acceptance of one's multiplicity. It is a connection between the past and the present, a symbol of the slow and natural process of time, and yet when I consider Santos' collection of works and its infusion of Philippine folklore, I am drawn to a quote about how Eritrean women in Canada provided a space for people in their community to contain some of the sensory resonance of home:

"These sensory experiences became important symbols of identity and helped people to briefly embrace the elusive phantoms of their past experiences in their homeland."¹

Re-Grounding, therefore, is exactly what its title implies. The body is a place where we can attune or re-ground to our roots. The body offers us a place of safe familiarity. It offers us a sensory experience from which we can return to our community and reflect on our experiences, because so often we feel displaced

1 Matsuoka, Atsuko and John Sorenson. "Ghosts and Shadows: Memory and Resilience among the Eritrean Diaspora." *Diaspora, Memory, and Identity: A Search for Home*. Edited by Vijay Agnew, University of Toronto Press, 2018, p. 162.

Marigold Santos, *Re—Grounding*, 2011
Watercolour, acrylic, phosphorescent paint,
pigment, gold leaf on canvas. 108 x 179 inches
Courtesy of Norberg Hall Gallery and the artist.
Photo by Nicole Anne Santangelo.



elsewhere. Our bodies and the land offer a symbiotic relationship. We transplant our culture as uprooted beings into the new land, and it nourishes us while we enrich the soil. This fragmentation of identity is a painful experience, but despite the pain, we can still grow. Ultimately, within the chaos of fragmentation and the multiplicity of self—especially in diaspora—*Re-Grounding* grants us a space to reconnect, reminisce, understand, and to embrace the interconnectedness of identity.



Nicole Anne "Tapirot" Santangelo (she/her) is an emerging interdisciplinary artist from the Philippines who is currently residing in Mohkinstsis/Calgary graduating with a BFA in Media Arts. She finds fascination in the fleeting nature of digital media, drawing parallels between its ephemerality with ghosts, memories, and the human experience. Through performance, installation, and video, she delves into the complex nature of the self in a world that is constantly changing due to globalized capitalism and distant spiritualism. In her spare time, Tapirot walks around downtown to see the lights reflecting on the glass buildings to alleviate her concerns about the rapid advancement of technology.



Magician
Imagery
& Meanings:
a non-binary
manifestation

Marsel Reddick

In 1909, Pamela Colman Smith finished illustrating what would become the most well-known Tarot deck available today.¹ In selecting Smith to design the deck, the publishers invited a symbolic enrichment of what was already deeply esoteric content. Smith was commissioned to illustrate angels, crosses, patriarchal figures, and other Christian symbolism in the form of 78 Tarot cards. The traditional ideals contained within these symbols, however, were doomed to be made over the moment Smith was given the opportunity to author them. Smith's identity was highly ambiguous, and to this day it remains unclear how she identified in terms

¹ This deck is most often called the *Rider-Waite* deck, but is sometimes called the *Rider-Waite-Smith* deck or the *Waite-Smith* deck.

² Kaplan, Stuart R. *Pamela Colman Smith: The Untold Story*, U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 2018.

of race, gender, and sexuality. She is present in every card, not only through the insertion of her signature, but in the ambiguity painted into conventionally Christian environments. I will focus on Smith's Magician card and its queer symbolism. Like many of the male characters in her deck, Smith based The Magician on a feminist friend; in this case, actress and notorious gender-fluid lesbian Edy Craig.² Through the insertion of a real-life feminist into the supposedly masculine Magician, Smith broadened the card's implications into the terrain of resistance, resilience, and social justice. The Magician locates itself in our world as a constellation of drag personas, a star-cluster of emotion, wisdom, and creativity. The Magician is a manifestation of the person each of us can be when we are celebrated, and our needs are fulfilled beyond the bare minimum. It asks us to transform work into play, and to turn play into the expansion of collective vitality. Most importantly, this archetype represents a transformative queer power that is always within us regardless of where or who we are.

Edy Craig as a child. Pamela Colman Smith the Untold Story images used with permission of U.S. Games Systems. c. by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.





The Magician: Pamela Colman Smith the Untold Story: images used with permission of U.S. Games Systems, c. by U.S. Games Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.

The Magician Imagery and Meanings: a non-binary manifestation

A yellow inkiness floods the sky and earth until they become a single field. There appears a wand, a coin, a blade, a goblet, a table. Garlands of roses and lilies spring forth from all four corners of this vibrant realm—symbols of growth, transformation, beauty, love, and deities of all genders. An androgynous figure stands erect, at home in this world, their left-hand signalling towards the below, while their right, invoking the above, firmly holds a “double ended phallic wand of creativity.”³ Hovering above their head is the symbol of infinity and around their waist there is a snake devouring its tale—both symbols of eternity, cycles, life/death, sub/consciousness, and oneness. The Magician wears a white robe, representing chastity/singularity,⁴ underneath a red outer garment which signifies desire.⁵ This is an erotic entity, a figure of possibility, with all of the means to create and be created in a world that is boundlessly real.



The universe is an infinitude of ellipses. It begins and ends with 0, the first and last card of the Tarot: The Fool. The Magician, sequentially second but numbered “1,” follows as both first and second, teetering upon the binary, caressing each number with an outstretched hand while finding equilibrium in the center. The Magician represents a dichotomous singularity: for something to be distinct, there must be something else to distinguish it from. Where there is true oneness there is nothing/everything, and we find this represented by the eternally

³ Kaplan, Stuart Ronald. *Tarot Classic*. Grosset & Dunlap, 1975, p. 87.

⁴ Tea, Michelle. “The Magician.” *Modern Tarot*. HarperElixir, New York, NY, 2017, pp. 24–31.

⁵ “This red robe has no binding girdle. It may be slipped on or off, at the Magician’s pleasure.” Case, Paul Foster. “The Magician (Beth).” *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages: The Classic Guide*. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, New York, NY, 2006, pp. 39–46.



exploding star that is The Fool. The Magician is non-binary, a host body for both Adam and Eve, the first person to sleep and wake in a world devoid of impositions.



Yellow is an ambiguous colour. Its primary siblings, red and blue, favour one another in their dichotomy visually (in their ability to create depth when contrasted) and in what they represent (add white to both and we have the gender binary). Yellow signifies the in-between; when used in traffic language it delineates the middle of the road and the slowness between moving and stopping. It symbolizes radiance, joy, warmth, spirituality, but also bile, disease, urine, aging, cowardice, betrayal, and the dissipation of summer.⁶

⁶ Ronnberg, Ami, and Kathleen Martin. "Yellow." *The Book of Symbols*. Taschen, Cologne, Germany, 2010, p. 644.



Yellow is the easiest colour to see from afar, and examining the massively yellow Magician card up close we are faced with a colour so vibrational it can almost be heard. It spans from every corner of the card, denying the diviner the ability to locate The Magician on solid ground. The flowers at the bottom of the card could imply the presence of earth, if not for the same flowers sprouting down from the sky. The table as a symbol has a vast history in philosophy, literature, and religion, and implies a variety of ontological understandings which complicates it as a purely physical object and destabilizes its location on the ground. Like

the footless body of The Magician, the flowers, and the yellow plane, the table hovers somewhere in the in-between. The Magician is in state of continuous coming into constitution after their previous experience as the ephemeral Fool. They are unfolding into real life but with more unfolding to come. Their unoriented body can be read as a dissolution of a previous self, a necessary part of the metamorphic “coming out” moment.

Keywords for The Magician

Concentration, consciousness, identity, realization, coming out. Manifestation, willpower, resourcefulness, skill, communication. Awareness. Touch. Sexuality, sexual liberty, creativity. Androgyny. Continuum. Flourishing; unfolding; undressing. Transformation, transparency, transition, translation, transference, transposition, transience, transmutation.⁷

A Ritual

The Magician can be embodied through spontaneous transformation of the mundane. To begin this ritual, tidy, sweep, and dust. Open windows, invite sunlight and air into your space. Sit comfortably, focus on breathing, and meditate on the implications of The Magician. Afterwards, make something to eat using ingredients that have been in your pantry/fridge for a long time. Practice this ritual every day and continue to use up all the ingredients in your kitchen, doing minimal groceries for one to two weeks.

7 Anonymous, and Robert Powell. “Letter I The Magician.” *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism*. Angelico Press, Brooklyn, NY, 2020, pp. 3–26. Esselmont, Brigit.

“The Magician Tarot Card Meanings.” *Biddy Tarot*, 7 June 2022, www.biddytarot.com/tarot-card-meanings/major-arcana/magician/.

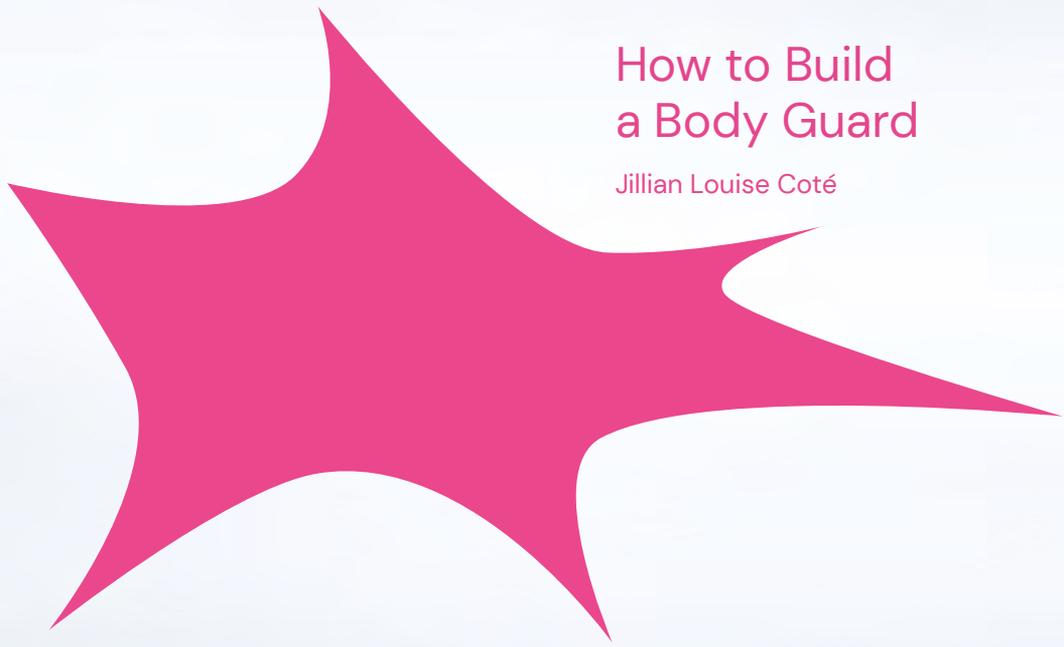
“The Magician Meaning —Major Arcana Tarot Card Meanings.” *Labyrinthos*, 21 Nov. 2022, labyrinthos.co/blogs/tarot-card-meanings-list/the-magician-meaning-major-arcana-tarot-card-meanings. Waite, Arthur Edward. “The Magician.” *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*. Barnes & Noble, New York, NY, 1959, pp. 72–75.



Marsel Reddick is an artist and writer whose research focuses on the constitution and dissolution of the self. In their practice, they consider the ongoing entanglements of self and otherness through a variety of media such as claymation, spatialized sound, comics, and interactive performance/installation.

How to Build a Body Guard

Jillian Louise Coté



When I was seventeen I forged myself a magic amulet.

It was my final semester of high school. Trauma and depression were consuming what I had been told should have been the best year of my life. In the daily struggle to keep my grades and my chin up, my one solace was time spent in the art room. My art teacher was a wonderfully eccentric woman named Judy Nelson who loved Supertramp and Mantracker, and she was the first person who recognized something was wrong. She gave me art therapy worksheets and had me pull an oracle card whenever I arrived at her classroom. She handed me a book on magical symbols and told

me to design one for myself, to bring me strength. With her gentle guidance I carefully crafted my symbol, pouring my intentions for strength and courage into it, leaving me with a wearable artifact of my own resilience.

Author Desmond Morris refers to items like this as “Body Guards,” objects and symbols that are worn or carried on the body to bring prosperity or ward off misfortune. These objects “[make] their owner feel a little safer when facing the hazards of daily life.” Body Guards can be sorted into three categories: “the personal and particular, the ancient and historical, and the modern and active.”¹ The personal examples are wholly unique and develop organically, like lucky charms held by athletes and gamblers alike. Many historical talismans eventually lost their relevance as magical belief was replaced with belief in science. However, some of those symbols survived into the modern day and remain active, such as the nazar (“evil eye”) beads prominent in the Middle East, or the Western lucky rabbit’s foot. Even religious symbols such as the Christian cross function as modern Body Guards.

My previously mentioned amulet resembles an elephant, a common lucky symbol in Western New Age spirituality, but it was crafted with my own personal experiences in mind. When I was very young one of my uncles was an elephant-keeper at the Calgary Zoo, and some of my earliest memories are of getting to be up close with the elephants. They have always been my favourite animal, and I remember that they were so strong yet so gentle. These were qualities I wanted to carry forward through my amulet. More than a representation of an elephant, it is a personal sigil—a symbol with magical power and weight.

When used in magical rituals, sigils are often carved into a ritual object or burned away on a piece of paper. In the early 20th century, artist and occultist Austin

¹ Morris, Desmond. *Body Guards: Protective Amulets & Charms*. Element Books, 1999, p. 8.



Jillian Louise Coté, Amulet, 2015.

² Spare, Austin Osman. "Sigils: Belief with Protection." *Documents of Contemporary Art: Magic*. Edited by Jamie Sutcliffe, The Whitechapel Gallery, MIT Press, 2021, p. 79.

³ Morris, Desmond. *Body Guards: Protective Amulets & Charms*. Element Books, 1999, p. 152.

Osman Spare developed a system of magic based around sigils. He believed sigils should be crafted by the individual, with intention, to create something personally meaningful. Spare provided a practical method that he used, involving the fusion of certain letters from a sentence that describes a desired outcome, "the idea being to obtain a simple form which can be easily visualized at will, and has not too much pictorial relation to the desire."²

Language is a powerful tool in magic, able to conjure scenes and imagery from nothing. The recitation of verbal spells is one of the most common forms magic takes in popular culture. Likewise, many examples of amulets include verbal inscriptions, often prayers or words from a holy book, but sometimes more ancient phrases, such as "ABRACADABRA," which was historically used in charms to protect against disease.³ These inscriptions are often altered or obscured in some way, turning them into sigils. Using a simplified form of Spare's language-based sigil-crafting method, I have developed a guide for creating simple and personalized Body Guards.



Write a single sentence in capital letters that declares your intention for the amulet.

Think about what you want your amulet to do. This depends on your needs: it could be for patience, confidence, good luck, or anything you desire. Keep it concise. Frame your intent in positive terms, for example, instead of "I will not lose my glasses," use "I will keep track of my glasses."

RESILIENT THROUGH THE STORM

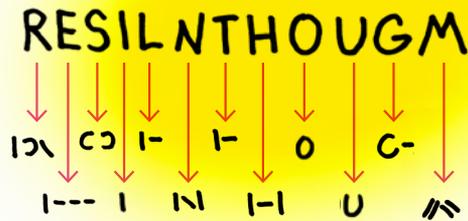
Cross out any letter that repeats so that only one of each letter remains. These remaining letters will be the building blocks of the sigil.

RESILIENT THROUGH THE STORM



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Break the remaining letters into their basic marks. This frees up the process and eliminates the concern that the letters must remain readable.



Combine these marks into a unified image. The marks can be layered or linked together however you see fit, so follow what instinctively feels right and choose the design that feels the most satisfying.

An example process of making a sigil from a sentence or phrase





Once you have your sigil, the final step is fixing it onto a wearable object. This can be as simple as drawing or engraving the sigil onto an existing piece of jewellery, embroidering it on an article of clothing, or as complex as molding a new object in the shape of your sigil.

Do whatever feels appropriate for your intentions. By creating this object with intention, you give it a purpose and meaning beyond its literal function as a wearable object. The magic is powered by the relationship between owner and amulet; the object's personal meanings bring a sense of comfort and peace to its wearer, and over time that feeling charges the amulet's magic. This relationship is what forms the Body Guard, and it is only strengthened as time passes.

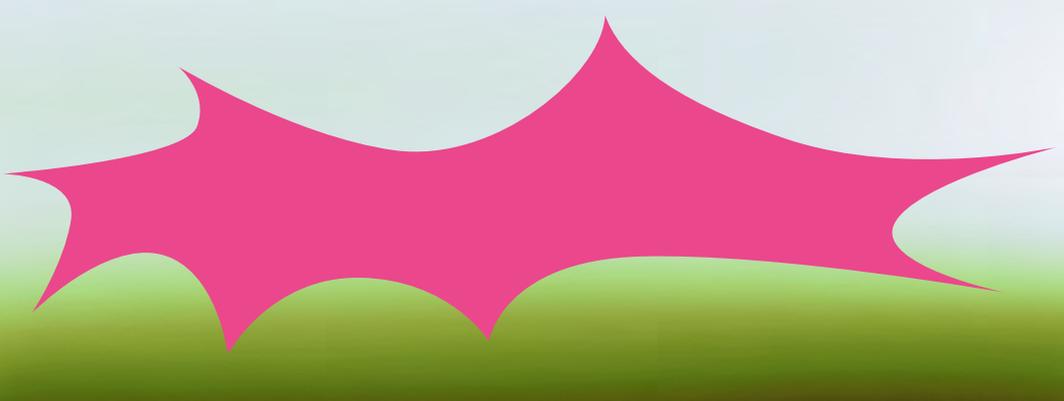
Eight years on and my little amulet still hangs around my neck, its texture worn from my touch. It serves both as a source of strength and as a reminder to be gentle with myself when I am struggling. It is a Body Guard, my Body Guard, and it represents everything I have already overcome.



Jillian Louise Coté (she/they) is an emerging interdisciplinary artist and writer interested in all things weird. Jillian's work utilizes monsters and fantasy creatures as subjects to bring some whimsy and joy into the mundane. Like all weird things, her practice defies strict labels or definitions.

Canva-Curse: an angry rant on popular trans- aesthetics

Elizabeth Fox



Forgive my crassness throughout this writing. I began my first draft following the acceleration of political violence against my community and my resulting depression. My words are filled with venom and puke after this point. I hope you choke on it just a little.

Trans liberation has an aesthetics problem today. I mean it primarily within the popular image discourse, but broadly some of this can be levied at those who adorn their work upon the white wall. Much of the popular imagery which points towards our support is consumptive and plasticine, devoid of action beyond the recognition of symbols. The trans flag which hangs

in my room has become nothing more than an artifice, a casual reminder of “we exist!” which feels pathetic in the face of what we are looking toward. An ex-friend from high school posted an image made with the popular design app Canva, which states “Trans Women are Women!” upon a beige background with pink flowers curtained away in the corners as framing. All I could think is how our supposed supporters pat themselves on the back while our community dies, particularly in the southern and midwestern United States. It is as though this energy has followed into the protests and counter-protests I arrive at, allies screaming “you are on the wrong side of history!” and my kin proclaiming “We were always here!” If I am being frank, I don’t understand the purpose and point of these semantic games when they are trying to kill us.

Drawing of the sort of cliché
I’m referring to



The frustration that I feel right now has nothing to do with the people saying these things, all the statements said are words I agree with and acknowledge as true within my community and the greater world. However, genocide is not rebuked through facts, and the fact of the matter is that the greatest threat to our community is being consumed and digested. This is a bipartisan issue. The side which fetishizes the ways in which we present as sexual beings for their desire while chanting “Pedos get the rope.” As well as those who seem, at first glance, to be on our side, but whose predominant aesthetic categorization of transness is one used for their own plastic ends in material, as well as political, terms.

So much of the language of the popular transgender depiction is based on what amounts to Western ideas of a curse: where one is born or given a discomfort that they must carry. More popularly, many trans people conceptualize (to cis people) that we are “born in the wrong body,” as if karmically punished by a lack between soul and body. The optics of such a curse turns us into pitiful creatures, souls that need to be saved through medicine. This has been, until now, useful in terms of our political output, whereby if we are pitied surely, we will have the opportunity to be saved by the well-meaning allies. Yet, what if the curse we carry –that which extends the limits of the self through popularly grotesque imaginations of procedures –is precisely the means by which we carry the torch towards the end of our current genocidal happening?

* * * * *

Abjection has recurred within trans-aesthetics since the dawn of *transgression* in the work of Genesis P-Orridge: pioneer of electronic dance music, industrial, as well as contemporary chaos magick. COUM Transmissions, one of Genesis P-Orridge's first groups, would swallow nails, vomit them up while scratching their throats, only to begin the process again in the disquieting pre-industrial noise of their experiments.

Very good and great drawing of the absolute legend Genesis P-Orridge



One of their performances was enough to set off Chris Burden (infamous bro), who proclaimed while leaving one of their performances: "This is not art, this is the most disgusting thing I've ever seen, and these people are sick."¹ The point is that it *is* sick. It is excrement, the

¹ P-Orridge, Genesis. "COUM TRANSMISSIONS." *Brainwashed*, www.brainwashed.com/tg/coum.html.

limits of the body overtaken. Not just in the literal sense of the word, but also in the spiritual limit experience of putting oneself in the transformative process of destruction, aging, and decay. The cisnormative world is one which is terrified of aging, as well as the sheer amount of free will that the body can practice in self-alchemy. I bring all of this up because I fear that we are not utilizing this sort of transgressive and abject aesthetic enough today and it needs to return.

The Canva aesthetic acts as a curse retainer. The curse which we are given through our transness, our queerness, what have you, confines transness within this curse-dichotomy which society has placed upon our wretched bodies. This plasticine, this consumption, is precisely what prevents us from our agency and the blessings we have to bestow unto the world.

I want to propose a reversal into blessing for this supposed curse. When we are acknowledged without being consumable and appealing, we present the opportunity, for all people of the world, as well as ourselves, to know that the self is limitless. Surgery, style, hormones, and all the things which have been derided for taking away the purity of our supposed "normal body," can imbue knowledge into the nature of **all** selves that frees us from the constraints of colonization, capitalism, and fascism.

Much like how shit exposes the blurry limits of the body, transness does so with the self. The aesthetics of today's trans liberation must move beyond our easy-to-consume slogans, and towards blood, puke, spit, and venom. I ask of you to question those who consume us on our side and ask them through your aesthetic powers: are you willing to fight with us for the reversal of this curse into abject beauty? It is only together that we can convert the energy of disgust in the public arena into a transgressive act of reclamation.



I am **Elizabeth Fox** (she/her if ur cis. she/they if ur cool). I am an interdisciplinary artist who works in painting, drawing, performance, and social-practice to create works which confront and pick apart the nature of the gaze/gays. I also like to play chess and fuck-around/find-out. You can often find me taking violent transgender walks on the beach.



Breadcrumbs

Emily Pickering

Between the shifting shadows of trees, I find the paths to the huts and homes of the hags and witches that fill up the stories told about the forest. I follow trails of breadcrumbs left behind in the books of my Slavic ancestors, searching for home. They take me deep into the heart of the forest, into its knotted roots and rich soils, beckoning me further into the familiar unknown. The deep forest exists as a liminal space, a bridge between worlds, where life, death, lost, found, real, and imagined unite in singular meaning. Even as a child, I was called to this path, intrigued and drawn in by the archetype and mysterious practises of the witch.

It wasn't until my adulthood, that I began to learn that the traditions of divination, healing, and kitchen magic passed down through the stories told to me as a child, were also practiced by my great grandmother and the many generations that came before her. As I sit still and breathe deep, the sounds of grass and sweet smells of decay give glimpses into the worlds and pasts that are just out of reach of my full perception. There is peace in this place, but there is also fear of what lays in its darkness.

I move through the trees and see reflections of myself in the land around me. As an artist and witch of Russian and German descent living on Treaty 7 land, I have begun to navigate the complex histories of my heritage. The boreal forests found in Alberta have many trees in common with those found in the Russian Taiga. In these trees, I find both comfort and longing for connection to an ancestral home. Reclaiming and learning my ancestral histories has allowed me to navigate my sense of identity and belonging in this land. It is important for me to be able to define the edges of my identity, so I can better understand how I relate to the space I take up as a settler and magical practitioner on Indigenous land. Fellow artist and witch, Jess Richter, explores her own German and British heritage through the practice and documentation of ritualistic work. Heavily influenced by her own histories, she combines folklore and magic with performance and installation. This work is informed by the rural and rural-domestic spaces of the prairies and forests found in her home province of Saskatchewan. Her work exists where the forest meets the edge of a wheat field, and I stand at its threshold: "It is an in-between space that is neither prairie nor forest, real nor mythical, safe nor dangerous, and neither German nor Canadian – a space that is stuck in between identities."¹

1 Richter, Jess. "The Haus Project: Einwanderin." *Jess Richter Prints*, 2019, www.jessrichterprints.com/pages/the-haus-project-einwanderin.



Jess Richter, *Remembrances*,
site specific ritual, documented
by Alex Tackx, 2020.

At the boundary of forest and prairie, I find myself at the door to the witch's home. Inside, Jess Richter performs *Remembrances* (2020). Braided loaves of bread are set with black candles, anointed and circled with salt. A wreath of wheat is worn by the artist as she is documented in this ritual performance. Black candles and salt are common tools used by many witches and pagans for spiritual and physical purification and protection. The wheat, both refined into loafs and adorning the head of the artist un-milled, draws from histories of European rituals performed to bring protection and abundance to body and land. Wheat, a now ubiquitous crop grown across the Prairies, is a settler of its own on this land. Its use recalls histories of immigration and settlement, where the landscape was changed to reflect Eurocentric ideas of land use and food production. This ritual transforms the bodies of bread into the bodies of ancestors, allowing for communion and re-negotiation to take place between past and present histories and selves. In this space, I find I am able to question myself about my pursuit of practises passed down within my own ancestry. What are the things that I choose to keep? What are the things better left behind? Sometimes I feel like I am close to the answer, but I can see there is still a long path ahead of me. It twists again and leads me back into the shade of the trees.

In Jess Richter's 2023 installation, *The Forest is a Doorway*, she explores the forest and its power to connect us to ancestral place and practice:

"Tree sloughs and windbreaks dot and break up the fields of Saskatchewan, small patches of the wild within the carefully cultivated field. When I drive past them or hike through them, I think of these little tree breaks as a liminal space: a portal



Jess Richter, *A forest is an island: roots in England (shroud & witch ladders)*, mixed foraged materials, silkscreened fabric, and beeswax, 2023.

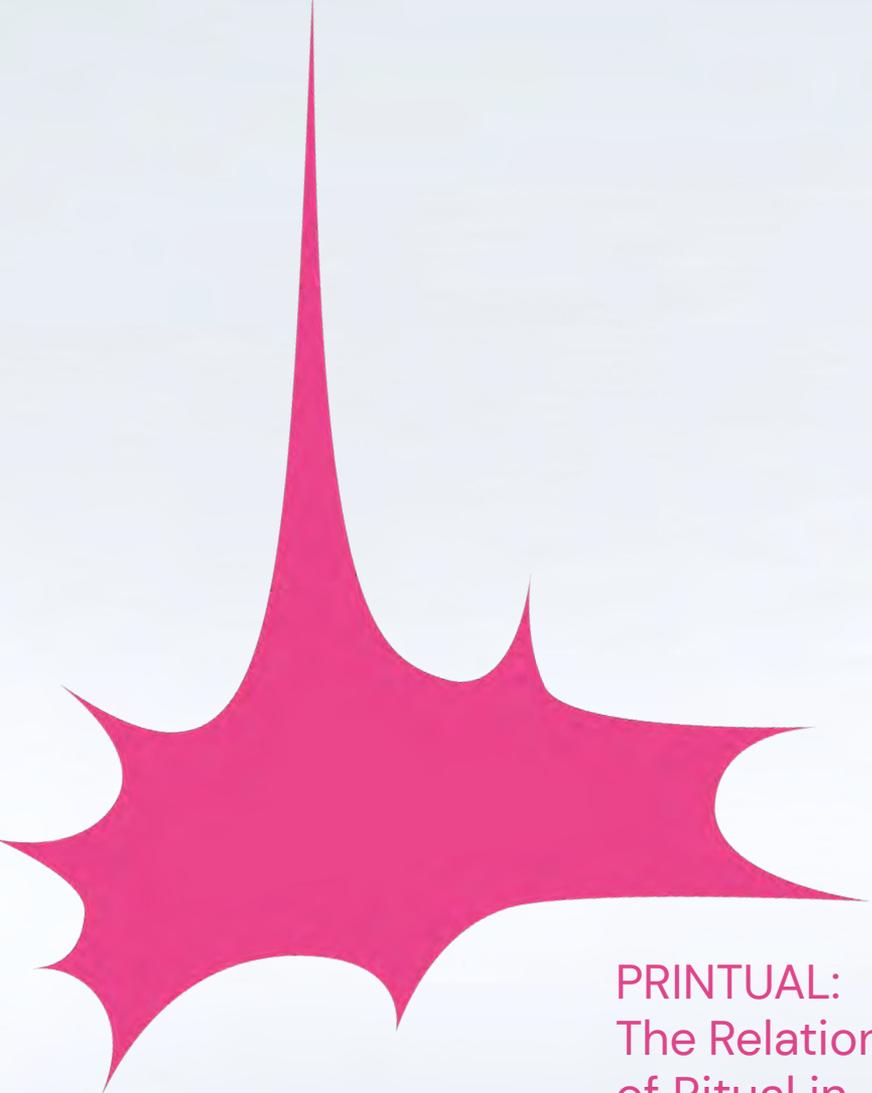
² Richter, Jess.
"The Forest Is a Doorway,"
Instagram, Estevan Art Gallery
and Museum, 24 Feb. 2023,
[www.instagram.com/p/
CpBqJoMtJHU/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CpBqJoMtJHU/)

that takes me back to the places my ancestors are from and a spiritual place that might be used as a sacred area to reconnect with earth honouring folk practices long-lost by settlers."²

Witch's ladders made from poplar and citrus hang in the space around a shrouded figure laid to rest on a bed of bramble and decay. These forms simultaneously conjure the tree groves of Richter's surroundings and ancestral lands, evoking rituals and natural cycles of death and renewal. This place between death and regrowth is a powerful site of transformation and carries great potential for the reimagining and remembering of language we used to share with the land. I imagine who or what has been laid to rest and what will be regrown from its body. I sit and watch as the body decays, feeding the forest with its flesh and belly full of bread. There is potential in this transitional state, potential to cultivate something new from the in-between of identities and states of being. A way of being in the land that recognises a shared language and experience of ancestral disconnect while acknowledging the potential harm that was perpetuated by the same bodies we long to connect with. We get to choose what is grown from their bodies; we get to choose what we carry with us through the forest.



Emily Pickering is a fiber artist and witch of settler decent, born and currently living in Mohkinstsis, Calgary, Alberta. In 2021 she graduated from the AUArts Drawing program and is currently working to finish her second BFA in Fiber. Her multidisciplinary practice heavily focuses on her spiritual and bodily relationship to the land. Much of this work has been explored through the combined use of fiber, witchcraft, and animation and is often accompanied by spell-like poems that invite the viewer to participate in the work through ritual acts. These focuses and processes are heavily influenced by radical self-care as a method of working with and undoing the trauma held in the mind, body, and spirit.



PRINTUAL:
The Relationship
of Ritual in
Printmaking
with James
Boychuk-Hunter

Andy Rubio

I am curious about the role of ritual in practices of printmaking, I think about it often when I work. The actions of printing can be somatic and, as a whole, the process can become a practice of meditation. To explore these repetitions as ritual, I spoke with Printmaker and former Alberta University of the Arts Sessional Instructor, James Boychuk-Hunter.¹ I have been a student in several of his courses. In his Introduction to Lithography course he mentioned that printmaking, within print community discourses, is known as a superstitious practice centered around rituals. There is a set order of actions to be completed and attended

¹ James currently works as the Technical Coordinator in the Visual Resource Centre, a facility in the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta. More information on his work can be found on his Instagram: @jamespbhunter and here: MacKinnon, Rachel. "Topographical Printmaking." *Emerging Art Writer's Program*, No. 2, Illingworth Kerr Gallery, 2021, pp. 46–49.

² This interview is an edited and condensed version of our discussion.

to before and during a printing session in order to ensure the completion of a good edition. Each individual artist has a set of beliefs for best methods. Tools are laid out, guiding texts are opened, the environment is set.²



James Boychuk Hunter:

I think part of it [feeling like a ritual] is because each part of the process affects the outcomes of the next part of the process, and there is translation. If you approach it in a scientific way, you can figure out what specifically is impacting the progression in terms of humidity or temperature or blah blah blah. But, if you're just working in practical terms, if things work out one way and you're not 100% sure why, you might just replicate that exactly to try to have some type of consistency. And then when there's desperation relative to the outcomes because there's a lot of time invested –you can become a little bit obsessive about doing things the exact same way, every time. Which over time can start to feel like a ritual.

Andy Rubio:

It's like an obsession with perfection, is it?

I don't know about perfection, but just having outcomes you envision, like "you made the plate this way, therefore it should print this way." And when it does, that's great, and when it doesn't, why not? What do I have to do to make it happen that way? And it's not always super obvious what are the different causes.³

Within the history of print there's a lot of connection with practices of divinity, especially within the ways that print was being used in Chinese history.⁴ I'll start with the element of sacredness with print. [Prints are] treated that way when there's archival practices involved, and it gets into ideas of honoring too. I wanted to hear if you have practices of archiving, and your thoughts on prints as sacred objects?

I don't think of them in terms of being sacred, but paper is so absorbent and that's one of the virtues of it. That's why it's used in print making, it's so fragile. A portfolio box as a vessel can be casual, or it can be specifically designed and constructed. It does become a ritual to open it and the glassine, and all of these things that are unnecessary, but serve a function in terms of protecting the work.

There's care there I think, and an awareness that you can preserve a piece of paper indefinitely if you can maintain control over how it's stored. Or it can deteriorate in no time at all. And then, if you think about some of those practices— well, you were talking about spiritual practices—a lot of them have to do with preserving or maintenance or purity. I don't know a lot about religion, but I feel like those are themes that show up repeatedly. I've seen different types of ceremonies where the steps are very specific— there's a form to it,

³ I entered this conversation with the interest to perhaps uncover an unconsidered spiritual relationship in contemporary print practices. In discussion with James, it appears print is much more practical, secular, tactical. Print has a kind of cynical humor, an honest practicality.

⁴ "The Asian Contribution." *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*. Edited by Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis, Sixth ed., John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2016, pp. 35–48.

Though I disagree with its generalizing title, this chapter gives a detailed brief on the development of calligraphy, paper, and relief printing in Chinese history. Their innovation was motivated by practices of divinity, with, for example, relief print excelling in the production and dissemination of Buddhist Dharani and the Diamond Sutra.

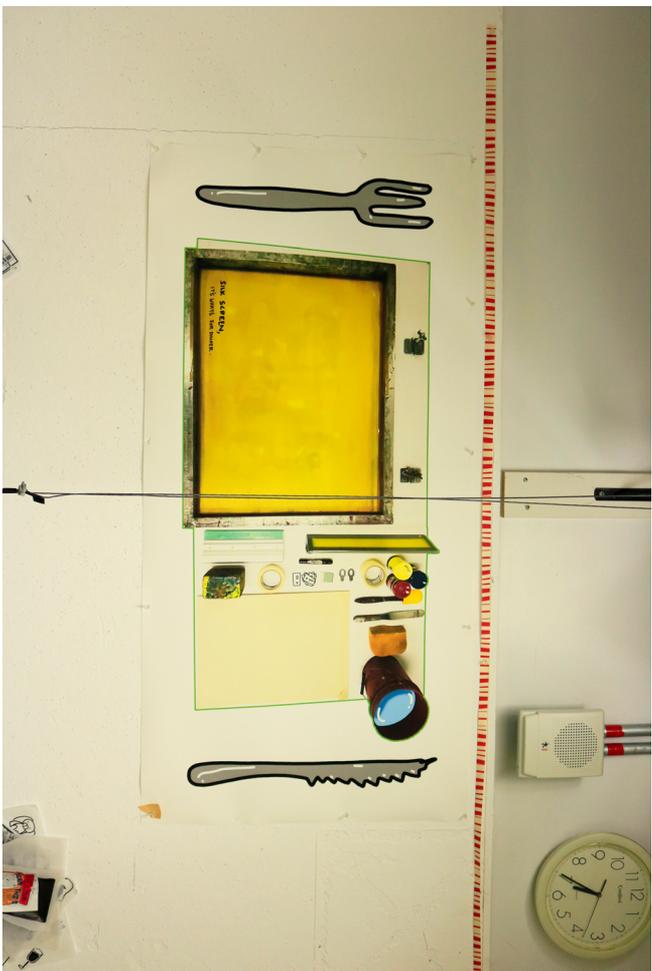
and an order and sequence –that it’s not casual. Same with printmaking. And part of it is, again, to maintain that consistency and have some control.



I asked James over email what his personal studio rituals look like, he replied, “My print shop rituals are quite strongly related to cleaning and organizing prior to getting the ink out.” We work the same in this way, cleansing rituals bookend my printing sessions. In my work as a Silkscreen Technician and my practice in the studio, before I start printing I clean and tidy, freeing the space of containers of ink left open with spatulas sitting in them from previous jobs, wiping any smudges of wet uncured ink. I refresh the printing palettes on a t-shirt press, wiping with a wet cloth the accumulation of fuzz, and apply a new layer of slick glue to hold materials down while printing. Printing for up to seven hours provides a lot of time to practice my form, to perfect the balance between most prints produced and the least localized repetitive strain to my body. After all is done and I finish my workday, I wash my hands of the ink grime, scrubbing diligently with a soft plastic nail brush. I watch the brown and grey tinged water circle down the drain. I blow my nose relieving all the airborne fuzz caught there, reminding me of Julietta Singh’s No Archive Will Restore You.⁵ My porous body becomes one with the work, communing with the materials.

⁵ Singh, Julietta. “The Body Archive.” *No Archive Will Restore You*. Punctum Books, 2018, pp. 30–32, 35–36.

Here in these moments of pages, Singh expresses how bodies molecularly entangle in the air, in the flesh, in and out of each other as a form of intimate connection. To quote what has stuck with me, “Each orifice an entry where we palpably open, where other bodies have been, and by leaving their traces in us have, in a molecular sense, become us.” Singh, p. 32.



This exemplary graphic likens the printmakers table to laying the table for dinner, encouraging familiarity with a daily ritual we all engage in. Everything has a function and a place.

Megan Kirk, *Silkscreen Table Setting*, 2019, digital print on rag paper, studio view in the 377 Silkscreen Studio at AUArts (photograph by Andy Rubio).

Photograph by Levin Ifko



Andy Rubio (they/them) is a Queer, Trans*, and mixed-race artist practicing in Mohkinstsis, Treaty 7 Land Territory. They are a printmaker, writer, and gallery technician in training, with this edition of *EAWP* marking the beginning of their journey realizing a newly developed love of reading and writing. They have completed a BFA majoring in Print Media at AUArts just before this publication has rolled to you, the reader! Through processes of printmaking, primarily silkscreen, they enjoy exploring themes of Queer visibility, liminal space, representation, commodification, and nostalgia, along with imagery related to automobiles, dead animals, and anthropomorphic taxis.



Kitchen—
Location—
Transformation

Vivian Smith

For over two decades, I have turned to cookbooks, magazines, and Pinterest to seek inspiration and compile a list of dishes that will nourish my family. The kitchen allows me to create something new from seemingly ordinary elements. When I cook, my movements throughout the kitchen space echo the circular rhythms of a sacred ritual. I start by carefully arranging everything on the counter to be within easy reach. As I begin to chop, stir, and mix, I am reminded of the power of repetition, the importance of daily practice, and the meditative effects it can provide. In many ways, my art practice is an extension of this ritual. Through my work, I explore

the labour that is often associated with the female body. Cooking, cleaning, and caring for others are all essential components of this labour, and I strive to elevate these activities to the status they deserve. Leonora Carrington's artwork resonates deeply with my exploration of the connection between domestic labour and the female body. Through her art, Carrington challenges traditional gender roles and societal expectations by celebrating the magic of the everyday. Her work inspires me to continue exploring these themes in my own art practice.

Leonora Carrington was a British-born, Mexico-based surrealist artist whose work spans almost eight decades. Her Irish mother raised her with a combined belief in Catholicism and Celtic mythology, which was reinforced by her grandmother who told her she was descended from the indigenous Celtic Sidhe. According to Irish folklore, the Sidhe were a mythological group of people, small in stature, who dedicated themselves to magic and created gold through alchemy. Despite her privileged upbringing, Carrington felt limited by her family's expectations, and at the age of twenty she left England to live with the surrealist painter Max Ernst in France. After Ernst's arrest by the French police and the outbreak of World War II, Carrington had a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized for a period in an asylum. She eventually put down roots in Mexico, where she married and had two children.

As a strong supporter of feminism, Carrington rejected the conventional practises related to domesticity and the restrictions it placed on women during her youth. After she read a book about the occult and the central position women occupied in pagan rituals and magic, her vision of the kitchen and the activities performed in that space changed. Carrington tied information from this book back to her Celtic roots



Grandmother Moorhead's Aromatic Kitchen,
1975 © Leonora Carrington (Copyright Visual
Arts-CARCC, 2023)

as well as the folklore her grandmother had told her about the Irish people and her lineage. Carrington began to fuse these concepts together with imagery from both English and Mexican cultures to represent the kitchen as a location of ritual, magic, and transformation. *Grandmother Moorhead's Aromatic Kitchen* (1975) is one of Carrington's works that exemplifies her ability to combine seemingly disparate elements into a cohesive overarching vision. Within this artwork, she imbues everyday items in the kitchen, such as an oven, table, and pot, into magically charged elements fundamental to concocting potions by creating a sense of ritual within the scene. At the centre of the painting is a Mexican grill, bearing a similarity to a table; in many of Carrington's works, the table acts as a portal between the physical world and a spiritual world of dreams, the unconscious, or death. True to her surrealist roots, Carrington's dreams were also important sources of inspiration, and this is reflected in the dream-like strangeness of her paintings. In the painting, three cloaked figures stand around the grill opposite a large white goose. The goose is suggestive of Mother Goose from childhood fairy tales, or perhaps a white goddess. The figures and goose stand inside a magical circle with Celtic and English words written around the perimeter, some in backwards writing, alluding to a secret ritual. Placed around the circle are three heads of garlic (one of the shrouded figures also holds garlic). Garlic is used both in cooking, to add flavour, and for spells to increase the potency of the incantation. The figure on the left is grinding corn, a daily ritual at the time for Mexican cooks. Although it is unclear what the figure is, it appears to have human and crow-like characteristics—a hybrid animal, or perhaps one caught transforming into something new. Another figure is standing at the oven stirring a yellow liquid in a curved pot or cauldron.

Both this figure and the one grinding corn are wearing sunglasses, as if their actions are resulting in the intense light of an alchemical reaction. A black figure on the right is holding a broom, which is often associated with witches and witchcraft. The entire scene feels charged with ritual and incantations. This is not a location of banal domestic labour, but one of an alchemist's lab with great gravitas; one of empowerment and self-determination.

For Carrington, painting was very similar to cooking, and she once said, "Painting is like making strawberry jam— really carefully and well."¹ Many of Carrington's paintings are egg tempera painted on board. Before painting, she prepared the tempera herself in a ritualistic manner, concocting a recipe of egg yolk and pigment to make paint, much like an alchemist or cook. Carrington also drew parallels between the transformative power of the female body and the kitchen. Female figures appear again and again in her works and are often in a state of transition from one being to another. In the kitchen, a housewife is transformed into a power priestess; a site of isolation becomes one of communion; everyday objects are magical tools; raw ingredients are transformed into edible dishes or multicoloured paints. In many ways, Carrington herself underwent many identity transformations as she moved from England to France, was admitted into an asylum, then settled in Mexico where she became a mother. In each of these spaces, her identity continued to evolve.

Through her paintings, Carrington elevated the otherwise everyday domestic space of the kitchen into an otherworldly mythical sphere where radical transformation happens. In my artistic practice, I strive to highlight the dedication, effort, and time required for the domestic task of cooking, which is an invisible

¹ Conley, Katharine. "Carrington's Kitchen." *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 10, 2013, p. 4.

and undervalued activity. Carrington's view of the kitchen— not as a place of female suppression, but one of female empowerment —is inspirational. She portrays women engaged in the labour of cooking as participating in a creative and empowering act. Carrington's art reflects not only her own personal experiences, but also an ongoing struggle for respect and recognition.

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Vivian Smith is a 4th year AUArts student living in Mohkinstsis (Calgary). She is a mixed-media artist majoring in drawing and minoring in ceramics with a background in engineering. Her current practice and research are focused on daily domestic labour activities that exist somewhere between routine and ritual. She explores these concepts starting with the body and utilizing traditional materials such as paint, fibre, and ceramics. Vivian serves on the board of the Elephant Artist Relief Society and is a member of the Clematis Collective. She has recently completed an artist residency with the AUArts Student Association Hear/d Residency program. Vivian is the recipient of the 2022 Emerging Artist ASA scholarship.

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