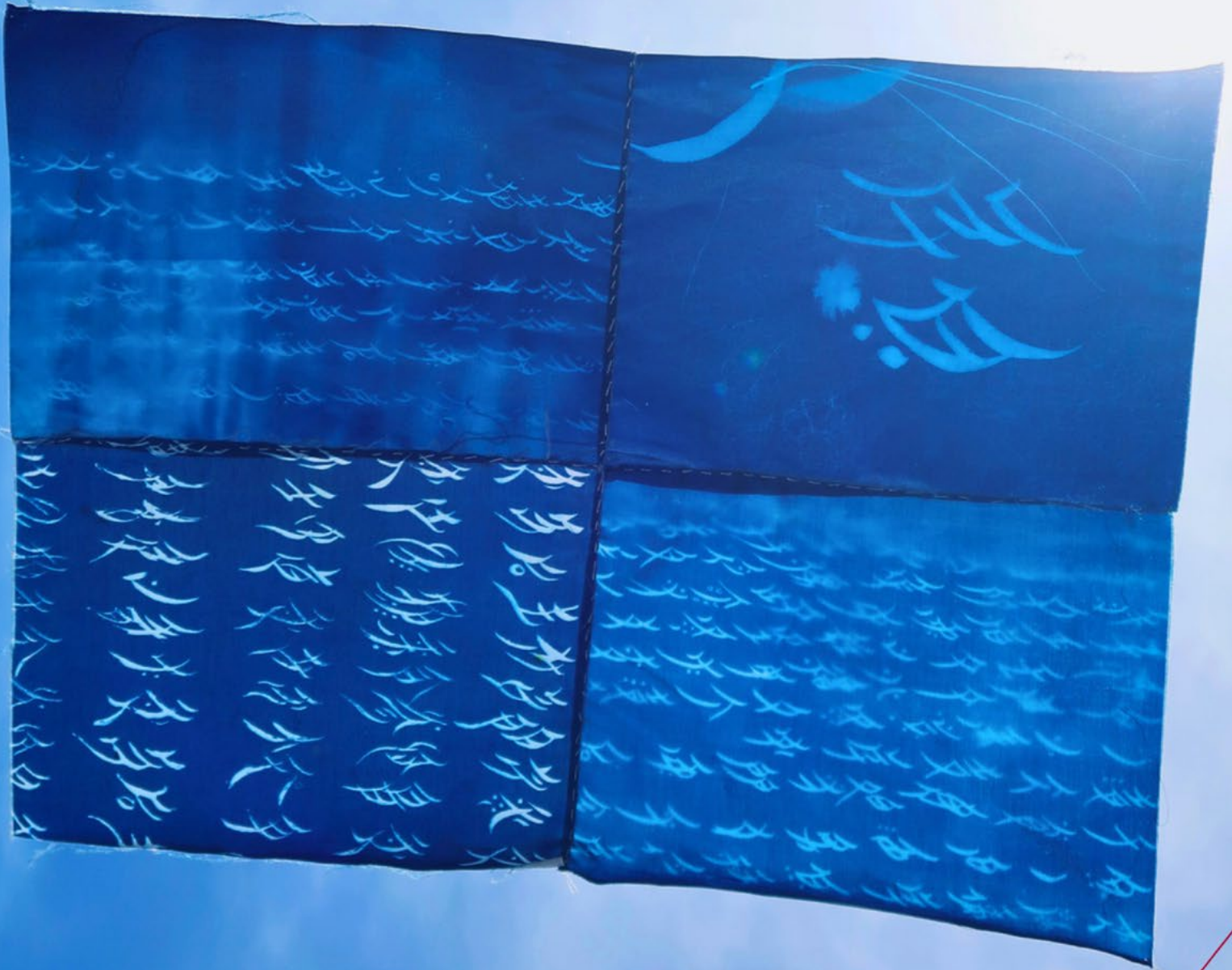


# ENVELOPE

DASHEW CENTER'S ART AND WRITING MAGAZINE



CONNECTING  
A CROSS CULTURES

2025 EDITION

UCLA Dashew Center



# About Envelope

# Disclaimer - Content Advisory

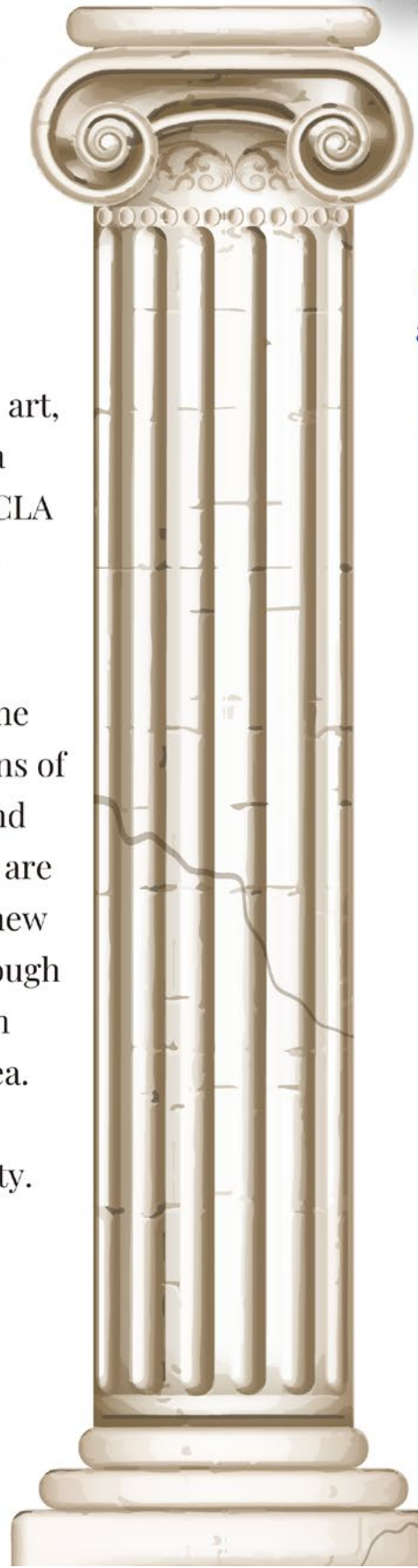


Dear readers,

This is our eighth edition of **Envelope, Dashew Center's Art & Writing Magazine**. When you open Envelope, you find poems, creative fiction, digital art, drawings, paintings, and photography. We hope this magazine provides a platform for international students, scholars, and staff, both at UCLA and UCLA Extension to share their unique perspectives with the extended campus community and beyond.

For this issue, participants were asked to submit art & writing related to the theme "*Connecting Across Cultures*." We hope that these artistic representations of "connection" help our magazine readers feel further connected to UCLA and other International Bruins. We left this theme open to interpretation! There are pieces that highlight unique cultural traditions, reflections on adjusting to new cultures, spaces where multiple cultures coexist, and more! As you page through Envelope 2025, you'll find an explanation written by each participant from different cultures, countries, and experiences that reflects more on this idea.

We hope you enjoy taking in the creative work from this talented community. This year's editorial team included *Andrea Giraldo, Caroline Thrailkill, Gracie Dixon, Hillary Thomas, Jamie Hayduk-Jones, Jenna Bustamante, and Rose Merida*.



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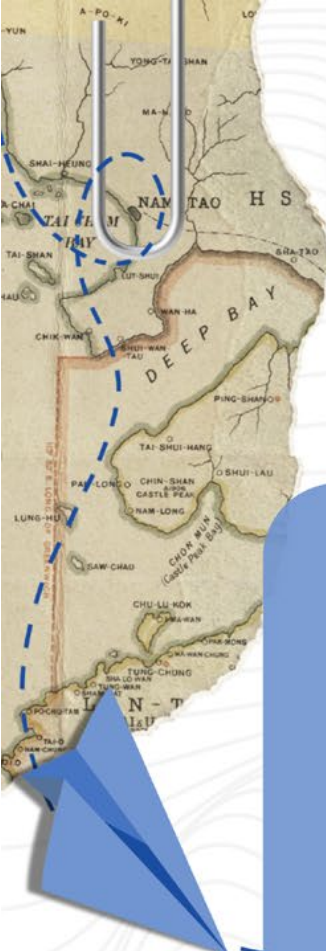
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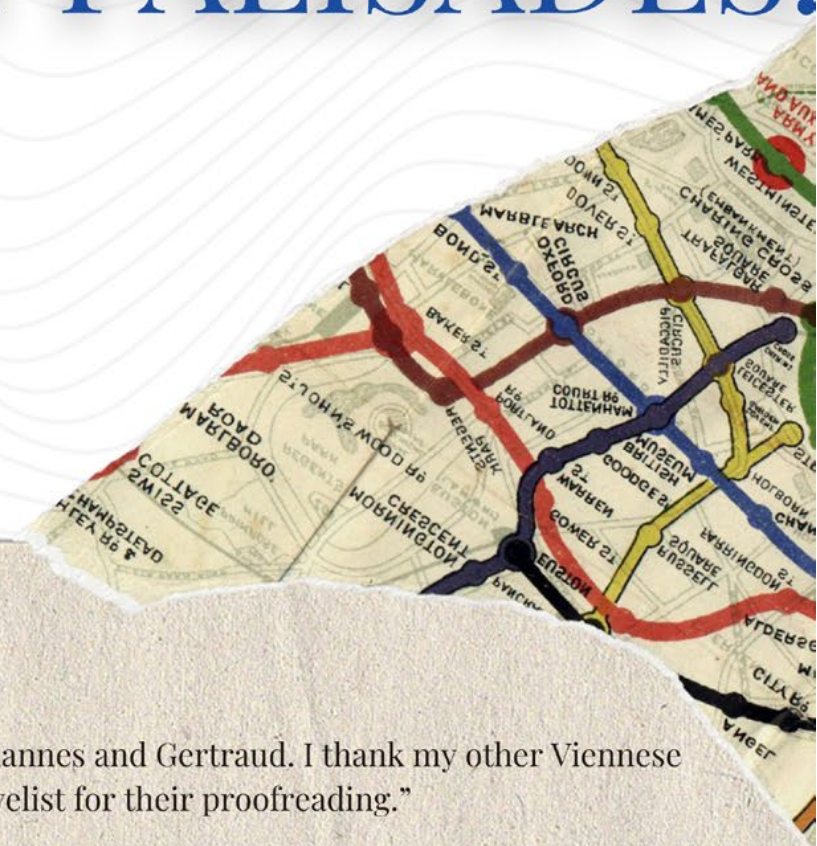
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# PACIFIC PARADISE, PURGATORY PALISADES.

Pacific coast, transverse ranges trees.  
The sound of the sea, the whisper of the storm.  
Calm hibernation, furious acceleration.  
Life in paradise, Lucifer's sparks.  
Endless breadth, breathtaking enclosure.  
No grounds for purification, purgatory.  
What a nice surprise, the devil dances.  
Heaven on earth, inferno on earth.  
Many marvelous memories, gone.  
Patient L.A., enduring the world's morbid changes.  
Home of the brave, needed all the more.  
Palisades of honesty, will you weather the storm?



"I dedicate this poem to Johannes and Gertraud. I thank my other Viennese friend and an American novelist for their proofreading."

The wildfires in 2025 ravaged Southern California and were devastating to many L.A. Communities including UCLA ones. Both the wealthier and less wealthy neighborhoods were affected. Even though this was a terrible experience, it had a certain connecting element, as the forces of nature did not differentiate between the different cultural environments. This difficult time was also characterized by great help and support across communities and beyond cultural boundaries. Beyond the aspects of climate change, this poem can be read as a metaphorical testimony to political change in the US, epitomized by the presidential inauguration taking place in the same month as the wildfires.

*Adrien Holzgreve*



# SAN DIEGO HEAT

There are no cowboys in Hong Kong, so one can only imagine the surprise I felt at hearing a real Southern accent. I don't think the Texan accent is native to San Diego, but this was good enough. The San Diego Old Town was my final stop in my weekend trip to a "South-er" California, and after leaving my friends back at the hotel for my early train I decided to spend some time in this eclectic cultural park.

I perused the old-timey shops, with their creaky wood floors and the musk of tobacco and linen filling my lungs. One shop caught my eye with a sign that advertised root beer floats, a drink that I thought would complete my experience of San Diego's own simulacra of 18th century America. I entered the store, and after scanning the various beef jerky assortments that the store had I paced towards the counter to ask about this root beer float that I so craved.

*"Do you guys have root beer floats?"*

Deciding that \$12 was worth shelling out to complete my San Diego experience, I coughed up the money and watched as she took out two cups of ice cream from the fridge and a large bottle of American-made old-fashioned root beer. Turns out the \$12 was for two cups of root beer floats meant for two people, with the rest of the bottle being included in that fee. Perhaps it was more worth it now, but then a sad realization came upon me: I didn't have another person to share it with.

I finished one of the cups at the store, but since my train was coming soon I had to carry the remainder of the root beer in my bag and the second cup in my hand. Sitting in the train, my predicament did not change. This root cup of root beer was technically not meant for me, as whoever decided on the returns of my \$12 transaction probably meant for the root beer to be shared, not selfishly inhaled by a Chinese tourist. But who could I possibly have shared it with?

If only there were someone I could have indulged in this all-American experience with! Perhaps I was disappointed in not realizing what I expected upon purchasing this drink, which was a good time with a friend playing as cowboys enjoying a sweet refreshing soda. Instead, a different sensation ran through me, one with the same excitement of being in a different world but this time alone.



I was a lone ranger, walking through a town that was the polar opposite of my skyscraper-lined concrete jungle, drinking a symbol of this new world I find myself in. In a weird way, I was a Wild West pioneer, coming from a foreign land to this gravel-laden town with only me to keep myself company and drink root beer floats with.

Culture by definition needs other people to experience with, but there is a magic in the contrary where culture is experienced in solitude, where a new world is painted in front of you and you are the sole witness. There is also an emptiness that comes with this, but is emptiness always bad? Now we have all the more reason to share! When I left San Diego and arrived back in Los Angeles, I stumbled upon a memorial concert for Antonio Aguilar, a Mexican singer. There is no mariachi in Hong Kong, but in LA I find myself frequenting mariachi concerts as the sole chino in the crowd. A mere 10 minute walk from the concert, I found myself in the heart of Little Tokyo where I embarrassed myself trying to buy a bracelet in mumbly Japanese as the cashier accommodated me by speaking English back to me.

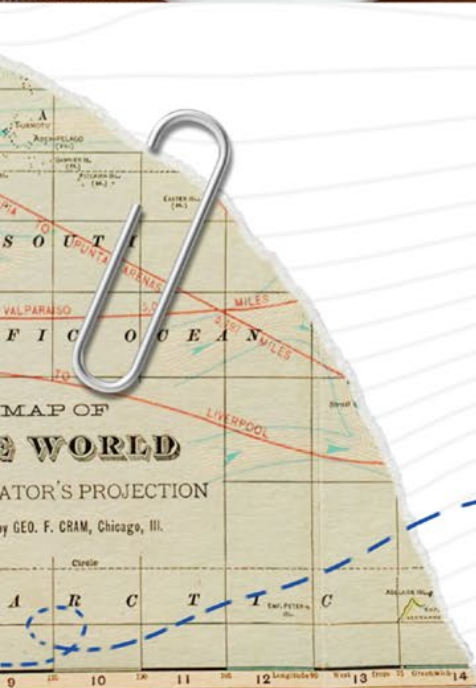
Some things are better shared like root beer floats, a mariachi concert, and matching bracelets, but it isn't so bad to have them alone sometimes. Cultural beauty yearns to be shared, but it takes one person to start. Here in LA people seem to be so scared to be alone, but maybe we should be scared a couple times in our life. We don't need friends to feel the warmth of Mexican music, the kindness of the Japanese, the taste of Persian food, or the beauty of European art, though it would be so much better if we had them! Culture is the art, this world is the canvas, and we are its spectators, so maybe we should keep each other company in our admiration.

This is an essay about my brief solo trip across San Diego and Los Angeles, where I experienced the rich cultures here in Southern California and reflected on the nature of appreciating this culture.

*Toshua Shu Ah Wan*



# UN POCO DE GUATEMALA



Being the product of two beautiful cultures, I am appreciative of how nature and food can connect people from different cultures and experiences of life. The two images are of a cafe with amazing food and volcanoes in San Felipe, Guatemala that I took.

*Rose Merida*

# LAKE ATITLAN



Rimmed by volcanoes, Lake Atitlan hides beneath its waters the sunken Mayan city of Samabaj. It's a serene place to reflect on existence, contemplate nature, and connect with the enduring richness of Mayan culture.

*Marlon Morales*



ENTRYWAY / SYMMETRY / LAMPPOST



Architecture is far more than the design of buildings—it is a physical manifestation of cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. Every building, from ancient temples to modern skyscrapers, reflects the culture of the people who created it.

*Lynnda St.*



Libraries connect cultures through documents and interaction. Powell Library, built in 1929, underwent renovations. On the left is August 2024, when I arrived at UCLA; on the right, May 2025, ready for its centennial—reminding us that culture needs care.

*Marlon Morales*

POWELL  
LIBRARY



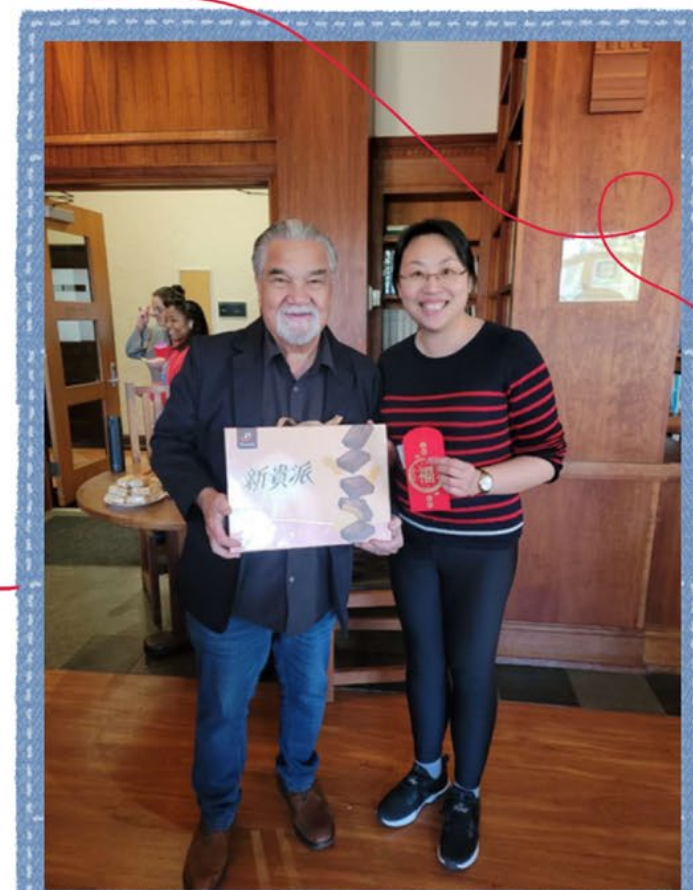
# NYC



*Caroline Thrailkill*

New York is perfect example of what connecting across cultures is: it is by far the city where you walk around and hear the most amount of languages, enjoy the best food from anywhere in the world and has the most amount of people by square footage. It is a perfect melting pot!

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



*Kathy Li*

On the first day of lunar new year, this cultural event is to celebrate with faculty members, colleagues, and friends from diverse cultural backgrounds. They experienced the culture of having red envelopes and writing spring couplets for good luck!

# THE WORLD WE SHARE



# ATRANGI RE

These pictures capture a unique blend of cultures where a group of Mexicans/Chinese/Americans celebrate the Indian festival of colors (Holi).



*Srinath Naik Ajmeera*



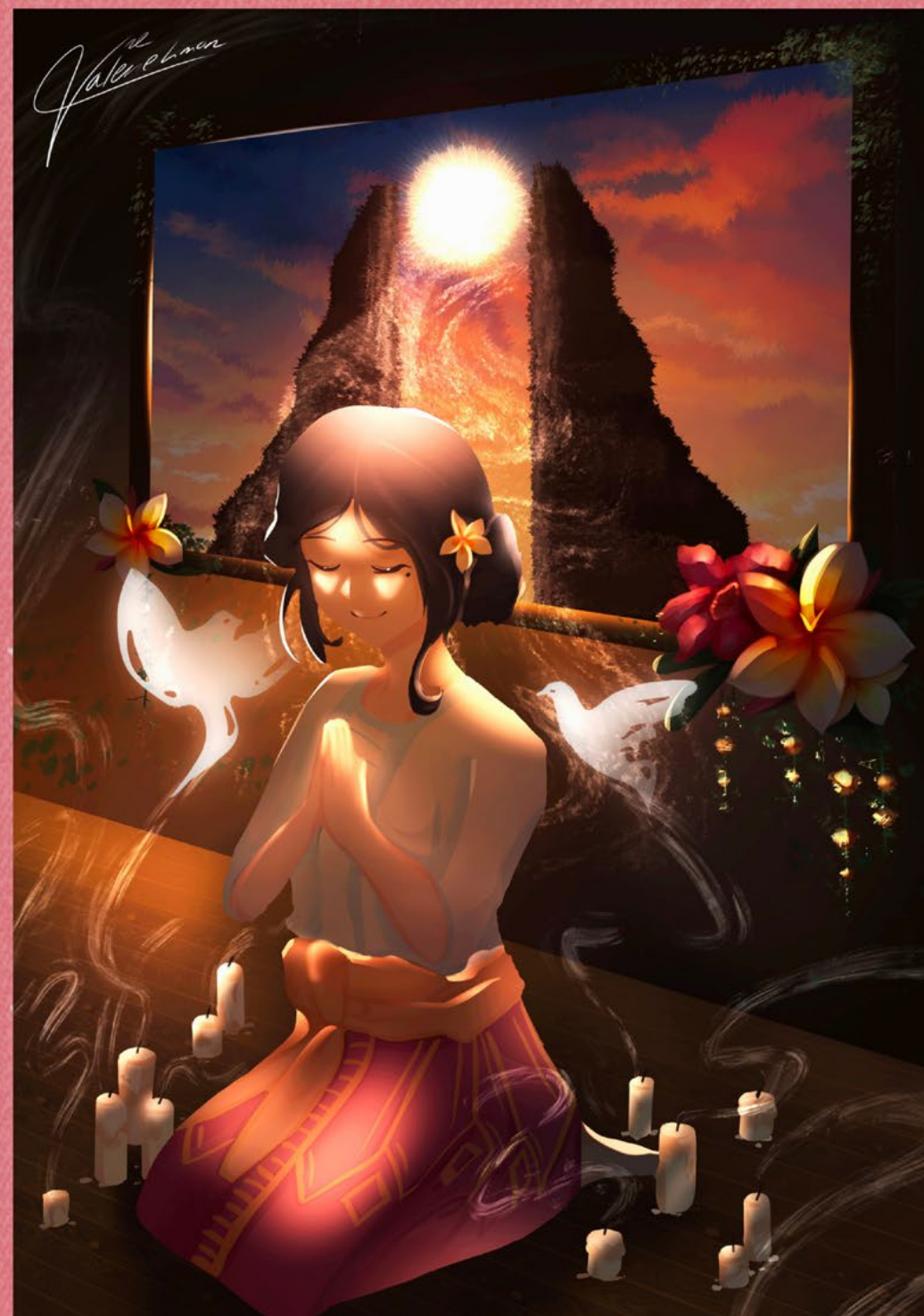




## PAREA AT TAVERNAS IN GREECE

*Eugenia S. Vasileiadou*

Tavernas in Greece bring together people from all ages/backgrounds, creating a *parea*, a group of friends who regularly gather together to share their experiences about life, their philosophies, and values. Here are a *parea* of cats joining their human *parea*.



## HARI NYEPI

*Valerie Liman*

A girl kneeling in prayer during Hari Nyepi is surrounded by extinguished candles with the smoke taking form of pigeons, symbols of peace and silence. Above her, a temple painting that reflects the sacred essence of the Hari Nyepi. By highlighting the stillness of this Balinese tradition from Indonesia, the artwork invites viewers from all cultures to reflect on the values of peace, faith, and inner connection.



# ALL THE LOVE THAT I FOUND

There was a time where I felt like all my love was gone. The first time I felt truly alone in my life was when I first landed in this country, and the second time was after my last final exam when I planted my face in my chair and cried in not just sadness, but agony. Departure, disappointment, and destruction had strewn its webs across my mind, emptying out my spirit into the parched California soil beneath me.

*Why did they need to leave? Could I have done more? Could I have been more?* These thoughts raced through my mind as I recalled all that I lost or left behind. Thoughts of my grandmother pale in the hospice last year, the jargon-filled job rejections, the last goodbye to my best friend leaving for God-knows-how-long, and the soft brown eyes of a lover who walked away flooded my being like I had released the levee of my heart that was only sealed because of incessant schoolwork. When all the equations were gone, all the circuits were solved, and all the meetings passed, the thin dermis of my heart finally gave in and it all came spilling out onto the carpet. Perhaps solace can be found in the wisps of smoke from a cigarette, or the bottom of my Taiwanese whiskey, but those things only made the colors of my heart in the carpet more vibrant.

It was exactly a week later that me and my friend were in Taiwan, drinking Alishan oolong in a tea house behind a mining cave while rain drenched the stone stairs of Jiufen old street. Hot water boiled in a kettle next to us, and we talked for hours while continuously steeping the tea, filtering it, and pouring it out ad nauseum. Tea is bitter, not unlike heavily diluted bleach or drain cleaner, but why do we like it? Why does bitterness taste so... *good*?

Time flies, doesn't it? One day I'm crying in my dorm, the next I'm in Taiwan drinking tea, and now I'm back in LA sitting on a bench listening to Sublime while the sun sets. Halfway through the quarter, a friend from Japan that used to attend UCLA visited me and my friends, and after a week of nostalgic and music-filled revelry we finally had to say goodbye again. The emotion that filled me was hard to (if not impossible) to describe. Was I sad that he was leaving or happy I got to spend time with him? Was I at peace with the transience, or was I angry that things could not be the way I wanted them to be?

This is a reflective essay about the sorrow and loneliness felt by me in the last 3 months. As a student from a different country it is not hard to feel lost, and this is my navigation of this feeling and the hope that one day I will find my way back.

What I felt was indescribable, not because it was unique but because English does not seem to dwell in contradictions. A happy sadness, a sad happiness, angry peace, peaceful anger. Bittersweetness, perhaps sweet bitterness, like the tea me and my friend slowly sipped on in Taiwan. As someone who thrives on contradictions, it took a long time for me to realize that nothing is really contradictory but rather everything is a realization of the same thing: *life*.

The bitterness I felt could only be tasted when I knew sweetness, and the sweetness I now feel only came after bitterness. Isn't it ironic that it takes saying goodbye to your friends to realize how much they warm your heart? Or saying goodbye to a family member to cherish their presence? Or watching a lover leave to realize the love you had or still have? Contradictions breed the truth, and the truth is life in its fullest glory: a life that holds black and white, light and dark, sweet and bitter, happy and sad.

Maybe one day the seemingly dense web of contradictions will straighten themselves out into a beautiful tapestry that narrates our life. Every clashing color will blend seamlessly, and every incongruent shape will form wonderful architectures. In the midst of the realization of how much I lost, I cannot help but ponder on the possibility of it all coming back. Perhaps in the afterlife I can eat my grandmother's braised pig feet again, or one summer I can have a drink with my friends outside the Korean military base, or when the right time comes me and the girl I loved will serendipitously brush shoulders, or perhaps none of these will ever happen in the near future if in any future. In the midst of all the contradictions of life, I was able to piece together all the love that I found to make up for what I felt I had lost. This is life.

If you only knew all the love that I found, it's hard to keep my soul on the ground.

Joshua Shu Ah Wan





# SEPARATED BY SEAS

Separated by Seas captures two figures divided by the ocean, symbolizing the distance and longing felt by those far from home. The water between them becomes both a barrier and a bond, reflecting the emotional journey of connecting across cultures.

Ink (Natane) Chantima

# FINDING YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME, EH?

The first image that pops into most minds when one thinks of Canada perhaps includes maple syrup, plaid, cold winters and poutine. While we do get lots of snow and have delicious maple syrup, there is more to our stereotypes than meets the eye. Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, I only visited California once before being accepted into UCLA. Moving approximately 3500 kilometers away from home (yes, I use kilometers) is daunting, to say the least. My initial perspective of what life would be like as a UCLA student consisted of an early morning surf at Santa Monica Beach, an açai bowl for lunch, class in the afternoon and the occasional celebrity spotting at night. I quickly came to realize that this would be slightly different from reality, which actually consists of late nights studying in Powell Library and, instead of surfing, morning jogs down Sunset Boulevard.

Regardless, my time at UCLA continues to feel like a dream.

I will never forget entering my first lecture hall at UCLA and walking through the rows as I apologized to all the students who were moving their bags and laptops for me to get through. Someone asked, “Are you Canadian?” I distinctly remember the immediate fear that flooded inside me. Apparently, the word “sorry” makes my accent come out quite strongly, and all I wanted on that first day of class was to fit in among the other equally-as-terrified freshmen. A lecture hall with 300 other students was not my idea of an ideal first spot to have my Canadian accent pointed out.

Before moving to Los Angeles, I had thought living in the two cities would be like living in two different worlds. We use kilometers, they use miles. Toronto has snow, LA has sand. Nonetheless, I quickly learned that I am part of the massive UCLA undergraduate community that is filled with students belonging to several other diverse communities as well. At UCLA, there are several ways in which I can embrace my Canadian background while still learning about the American country around me.

At some point, looming questions of identity are undoubtedly bound to go through every international student’s head.

I will always be a Canadian, but am I also starting to become an American? When people ask me where I live, do I say Toronto or LA? Who am I right now? Who will I become by the time I graduate?

The truth is, at this point, I don’t have all the answers.

However, my time at UCLA has shown me that it is possible to find the familiar within the foreign – communities can be found wherever you go. I can be a Canadian citizen studying at an American university with a biological family in Toronto and a Bruin family in LA. In fact, I have found that at UCLA, this is encouraged.

Keep traveling. Keep exploring. Keep being proud of where you are from and where you are going. After all, we all need a home away from home, eh?

Sierra Benayon-Abraham

Finding one’s home away from home is crucial to connecting across cultures, and UCLA encourages international students to do so.



# SHAKTI AWAKENING



Shakti Awakening is a tribute to the collective feminine energy that transcends borders, language, and lineage. This piece explores how my personal healing and spiritual awakening have been made possible through the presence and power of women from diverse cultural backgrounds, reminding us that awakening is not a solitary path, but a communal one. Rooted in the concept of Kundalini, it honors sacred sisterhood, sharing how women connect across cultures to heal, remember, and transform.

Nishi Khodaria

BETWEEN HOME AND THE HORIZON

Becoming a lawyer has been a long and winding journey—one that a began in Berlin in 2014, took me to Paris for a master's in international law, and led me through two challenging bar exams in Germany. Along the way, I gained professional experience in Brussels and Bogotá. But amid academic pressure and career-building, I began to lose sight of *why* I chose this path to begin with.

For many years, I pictured myself as a diplomat, serving as a link between diverse cultures and legal systems. My German-Nicaraguan identity has always been central to this vision. Yet, I often struggled with the fact that, despite being Nicaraguan, I had no formal legal background there. Unlike other disciplines, law is frequently grounded in national borders—a reality I hadn't fully grasped at 18 when I began my studies. I did not understand how this choice, at times, would become difficult to reconcile with my identity and limit my geographical stance. That tension led me to question where I truly "belonged" in the legal world.

My time at UCLA School of Law, and particularly my work with the Inter-American human rights system, offered a different perspective. Studying at UCLA School of Law was an opportunity to connect with Latin American human rights issues differently—not just academically but personally. It was a chance to explore how legal frameworks operate within a region to which I feel deeply connected, but also to confront the realities of human rights advocacy there.

Through Law School, I engaged with Indigenous and agrarian land struggles in Honduras and supported the efforts of COPINH in the fight for justice for Berta Cáceres. This experience was transformative. It was through this work that I realized I do not need to hold a Nicaraguan law degree to make a meaningful impact. It reminded me that impact isn't defined by where your degree comes from, but by how and where you choose to apply your knowledge and voice.

For me, being a lawyer has never just been a profession—it's a responsibility. I believe in challenging unjust structures and speaking up for those who are often unheard. UCLA helped me reconnect with that purpose: using my voice to create tangible change. It also reaffirmed the kind of lawyer I strive to be: one who bridges legal systems rather than being confined by them.



Vanessa Aurora Vanegas Müller

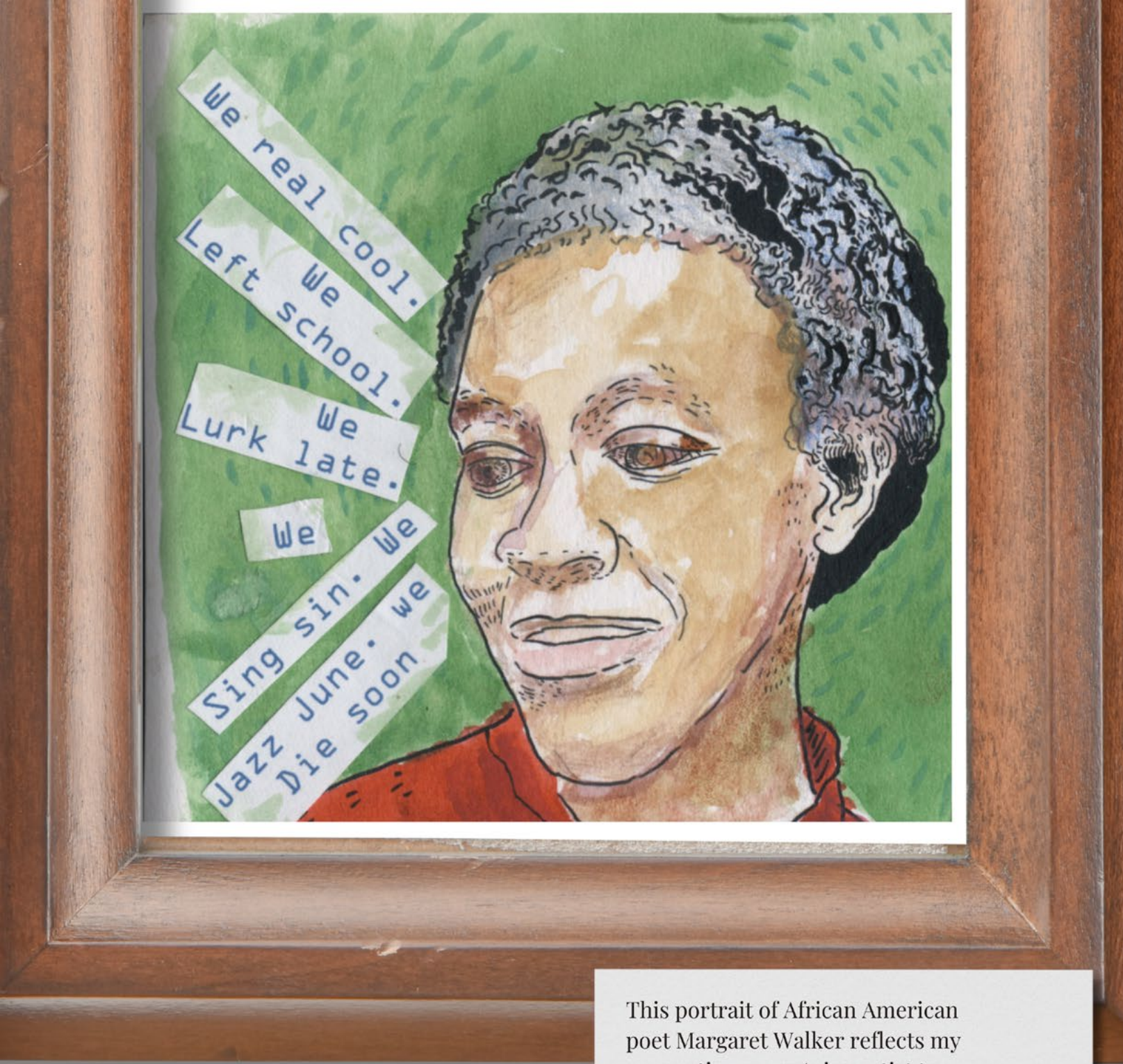
# BRIDGING LEGAL SYSTEMS

BETWEEN HOME AND THE HORIZON

This reflection explores how my German-Nicaraguan identity and transnational legal journey—from Europe to Latin America—have shaped my view of law as a bridge across cultures. It connects to the theme by showing how global experiences can inspire advocacy.







## Margaret Walker

This portrait of African American poet Margaret Walker reflects my connection as an Asian artist to voices that transcend cultural boundaries. By featuring her powerful words—calling for peace and a new world—I honor her vision of collective liberation and hope.

– Conrad Haberland

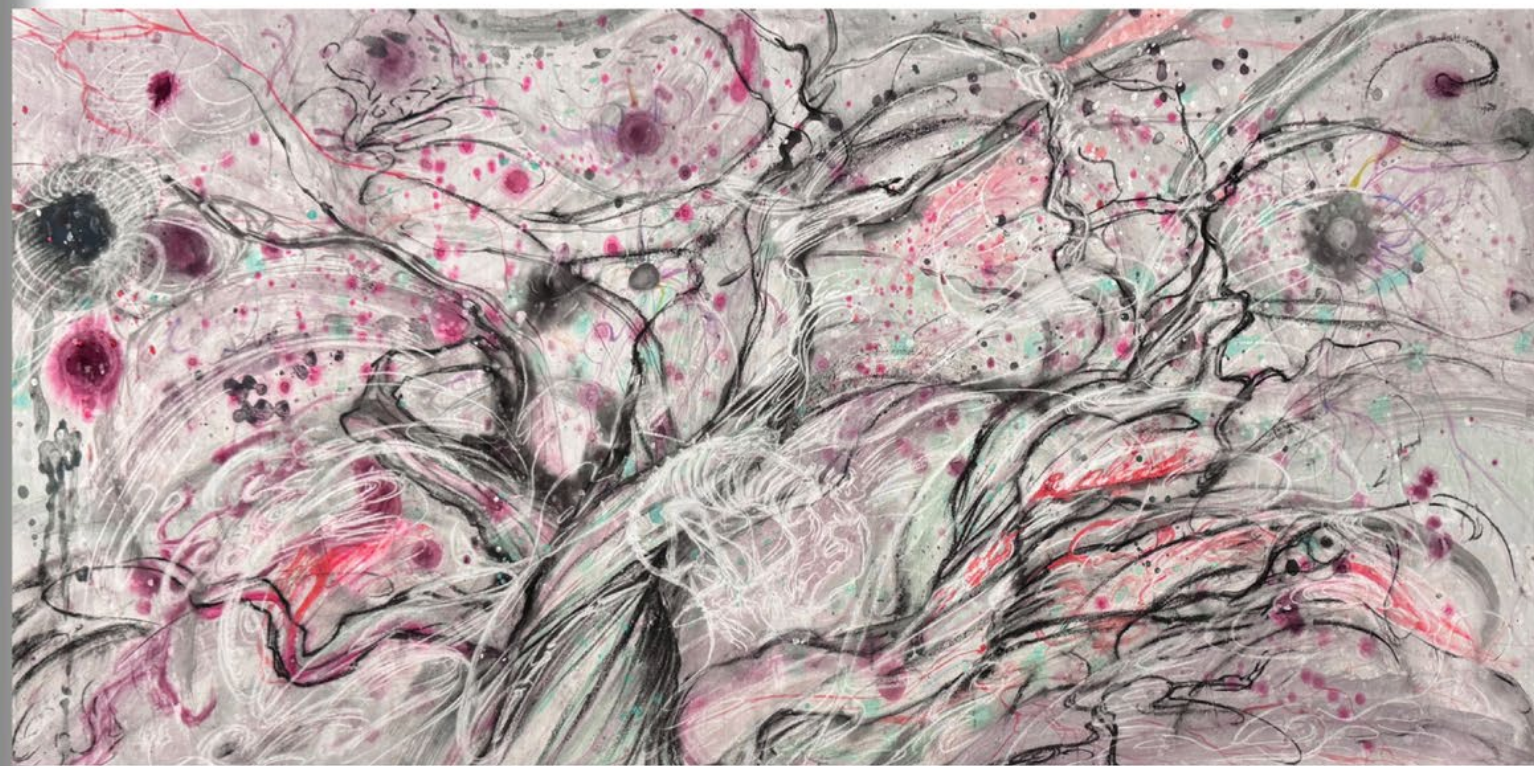
This watercolor and ink portrait honors the legendary poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Through visual storytelling and text, this piece bridges generations and backgrounds, reflecting Brook's enduring impact on American literature and culture.

– Conrad Haberland

## Gwendolyn Brooks







## Genesis

Genesis draws from traditional Chinese painting techniques and aesthetics to explore Buddhist philosophy on the duality of spirit and flesh, the two fundamental components of human existence. By employing red and green as visual and metaphorical contrasts, I express the tension and interdependence between the spiritual and the corporeal. This work bridges cultural and philosophical traditions, inviting cross-cultural reflection on how inner and outer selves coexist in constant negotiation.

– Yifei Wu



## Half the Sky

By reactivating Nüshu— a syllabic script historically invented and used by Yao women in southern China, I trace lineage of feminine expression that once existed outside dominant patriarchal discourse. Transposing this endangered script onto sewn cyanotype fabrics, my work reclaims a silenced cultural voice while forging a cross-temporal and cross-cultural dialogue on ethnicity, femininity, and resistance. In doing so, I seek not only to honor the women who came before me but to connect their quiet resilience with contemporary forms of identity and artistic expression.

– Yifei Wu



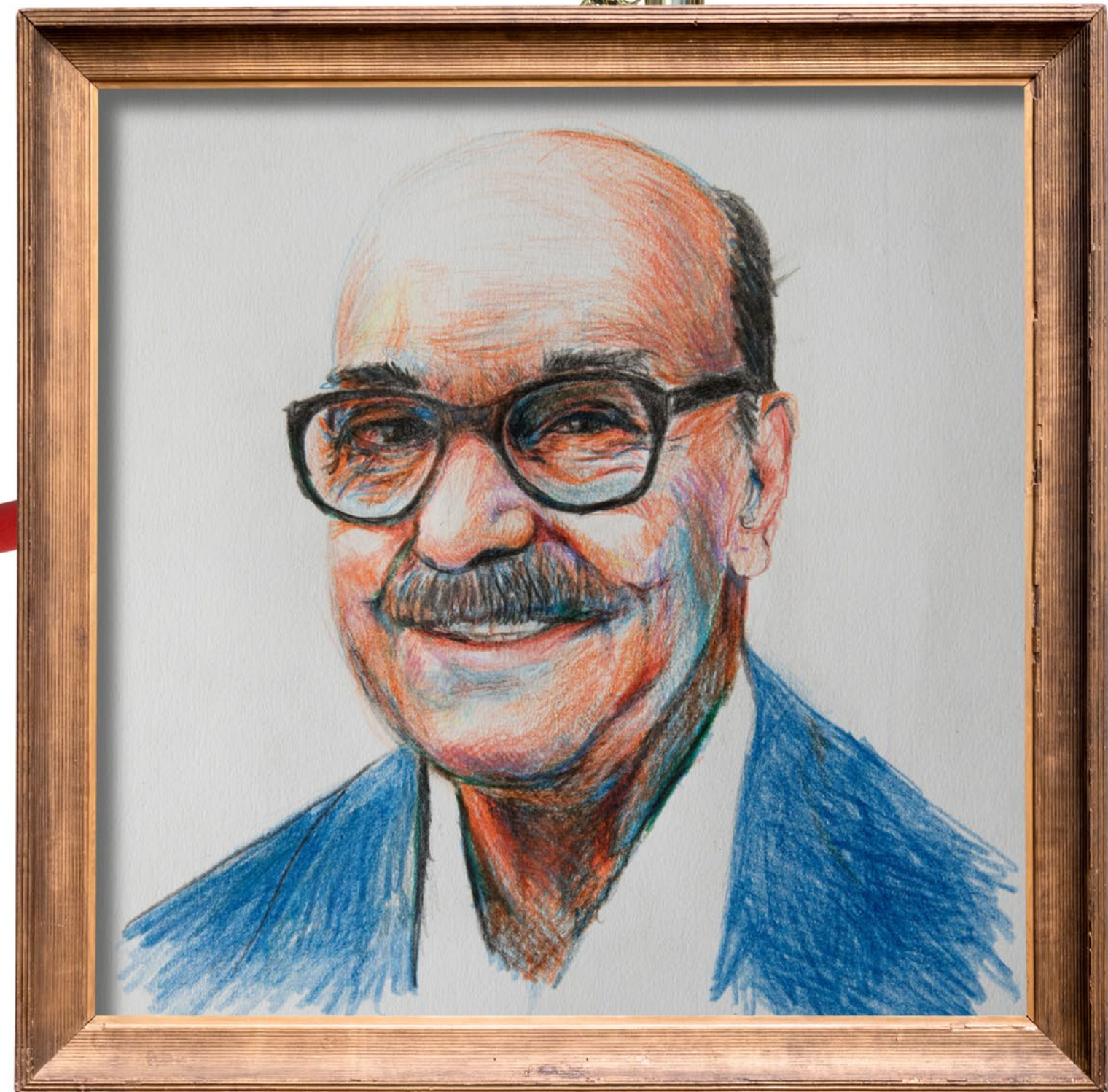
## Flowers of Unconsciousness



This work visualizes the unconscious through surreal forms— where language fails. Across cultures, the unconscious emerges through similar dream symbols like hybrid creatures, organic mutations, and natural cycles. These recurring motifs reveal how different societies, despite unique beliefs or histories, tap into their scared inner landscapes. By weaving together fungi, sea life and flowers into new forms, the work embodies a collective subconscious that transcends cultural boundaries.

– Shin Hee Park

## Desenho Tio Murillo



This piece connects cultures by bringing together art and literature and linking different countries of the Americas, reflecting my family's experience of migration and artistic expression. It portrays my great-uncle, Brazilian magical realist writer Murilo Rubião, whose stories helped shape my sense of identity as a migrant in the United States. One of his stories tells of kind dragons arriving in a city, only to be mistreated for their unusual habits—a poetic metaphor for migration and prejudice. This drawing also appeared inside a Spanish translation of Murilo's works, edited by my brother in Colombia, who migrated to Bogotá years ago. He brought our culture there, and I am, in my own way, trying to do the same here.

– Rafael Macedo Rubiao



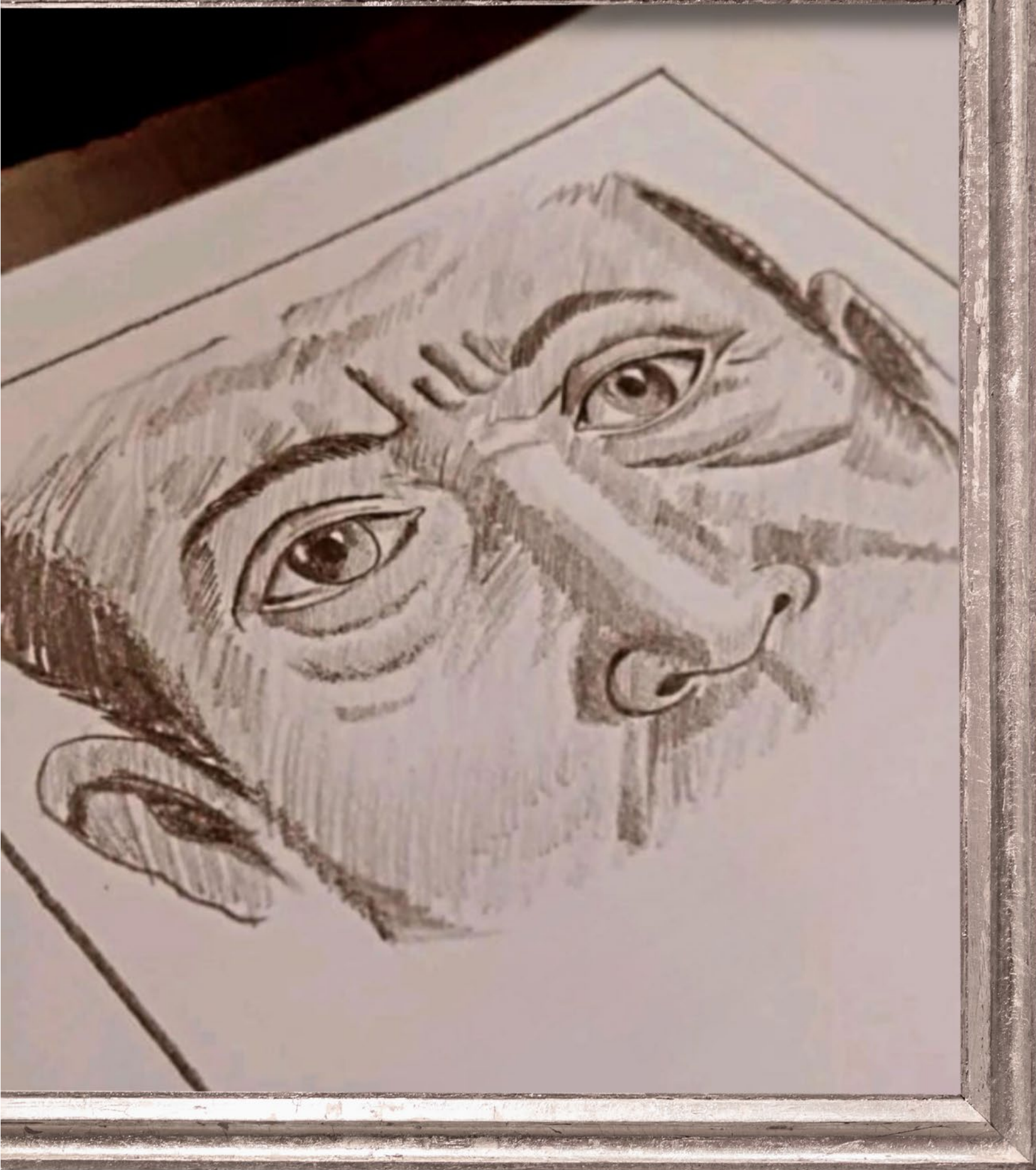
## Ada's Tree

This illustration was inspired by the film *Atlantics*. The tree growing inside house symbolizes Ada's growth. As she challenges her parents' rigid, patriarchal views, the restricted plant becomes a thriving tree—reflecting transformation across generations.

– Shin Hee Park







## Unfinished

This intentionally unfinished sketch of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, an Indian freedom fighter, honors the beauty in stories across cultures left incomplete. It is an ode to celebrate unsung voices worldwide who never saw the change they fought for.

– Smruthi Swaminathan







## Starlight Hoppers

In Starlight Hoppers, glowing lambs gleefully run across a starry sky, signifying play, innocence, and cross-border friendship. Every leap spans far-off planets, mirroring the ways in which dreams, feelings, and stories cut across cultural barriers. The common awe of the night sky turns into a subdued metaphor for our connection—not via similarity, but through curiosity and imagination.

– Zora (Xiangzi) Xu



## Zodiac Tiger

Inspired by my own Chinese zodiac, tiger explores the contrasts and connections between Eastern and Western zodiac traditions. It reflects a personal and cultural identity shaped by both systems, merging strength with introspection across symbolic worlds.

– Zora (Xiangzi) Xu







# Birddog



Down the dirt road carved by heavy rain, the neighborhood bus stop looms out of a thicket of weeds. Green runes and signatures as indecipherable as the dense forest behind the stop adorn the concrete structure, which itself is faded by sun, rain, and the backsides of commuters. Before daily travel, before embarking on the leg of a longer journey, people have to rest and wait. If not running late, travelers and commuters will sit tight in these spaces, at once public and liminal, before moving on. There is always plenty to see at my neighborhood bus stop. Each passerby raises dust in the dry season. Butterflies swarm around road apples. Some of the bar-goers next door to the stop park their old stick shifts or horses in the dappled light beneath an avocado tree. I've gone in the dead of night to collect fallen fruit.

One late afternoon as my family and I rounded the bend, an unexpected pair tore down the road. A street dog, one of the many living on no man's land, chased a low-flying macaw. The bird's feathers trailed just out of the dog's reach, leaving the pursuer foaming at the mouth. Dogs have dichromatic vision, meaning that they possess two types of color-sensing receptors, called cones, in their retinas. They primarily see shades of blue and yellow. We were captivated by the same vision, then: an ombré of sky blue to deep cobalt cutting through the air. The bird's yellow belly peeked over the top of the bus stop when he landed.

People leaned out of the bar to watch the spectacle. The dog jumped onto the bench, seething and salivating, and I sat down next to him for no better reason than wanting to get closer to the pair and their shenanigans. The bird peered down from the overhead. If I mimicked the dog and licked my chops, I would taste both mischief and anxiety in the air, though I couldn't discern which belonged to whom.

Sitting there, I felt simultaneously held by the cool concrete and alert to the fact that the bus stop ceased to be public human territory. Whining, the dog fidgeted beside me as the bird continued to peek down at us in a flirtatious manner. Being in proximity to this spirited exchange reminded me of all the instances of teasing I'd witnessed, received, and taken part in since coming to Brazil. Every time I participate (willingly or unwillingly) in playful banter, there's an edge running parallel to the exchange that drops off into hurtful misunderstanding. I've both fallen and unwittingly pushed others while traversing this brink; if anything, I believe more strongly now in the power of words.

With a sudden colorful whoosh, the macaw took flight. Shouts laced the air as the bird strafed my mother standing a few feet from the stop. With his sickle-shaped beak and curved talons, I imagined the worst: tender skin broken open like a palm nut. But the bird just flew close enough to raise her hair before settling in a nearby tree, the dog in hot pursuit.

"Arara! Arara!" A lilting voice called behind us.

My mother, bristling with the awed awareness that only close encounters with wild beings bring, scanned the road and attempted to locate the speaker.

"Arara! Arara!" Said the disembodied voice again.

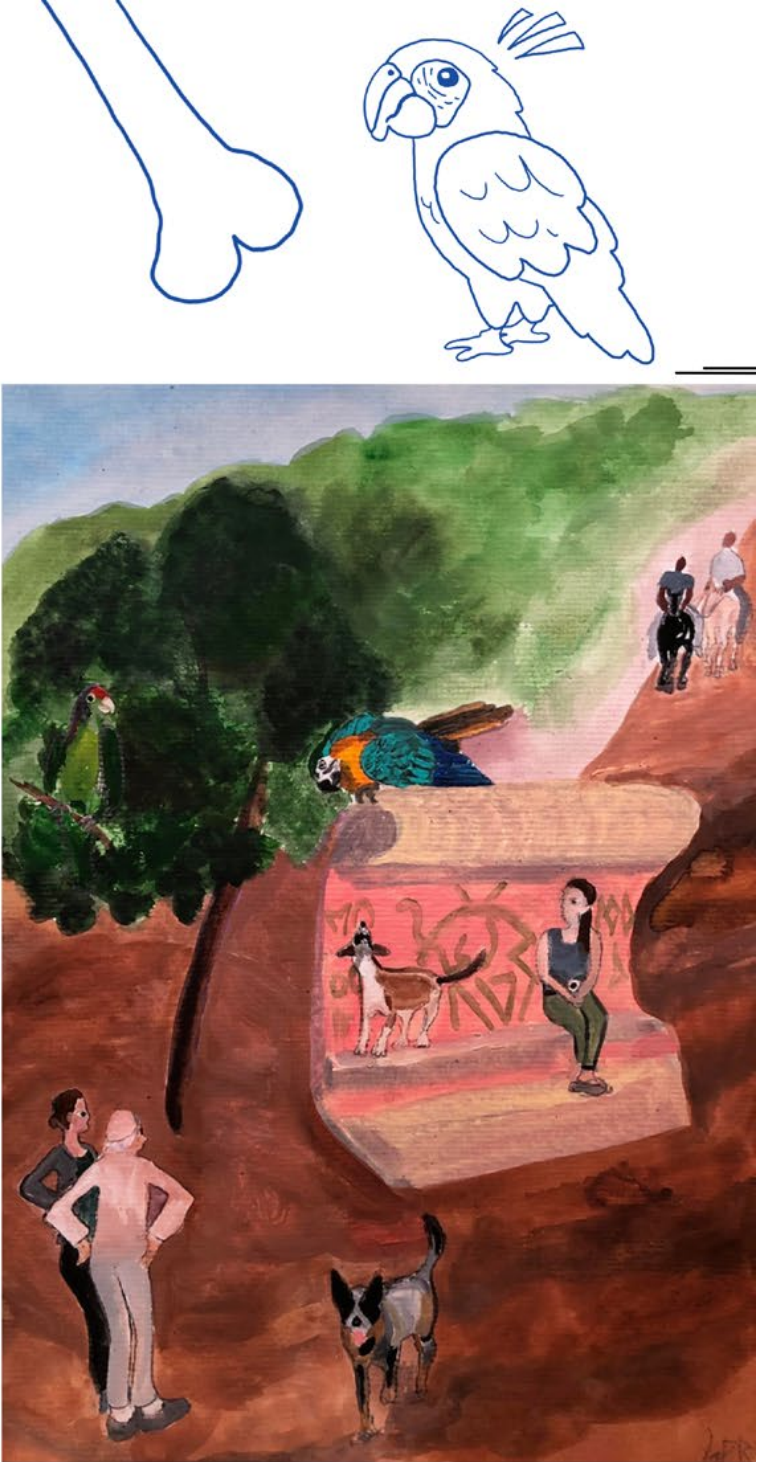
We turned around in time to watch the macaw dive-bomb the dog. In a ludicrous reversal, the macaw chased the terrified dog back up the road they came, and before the dust could settle, the mysterious speaker revealed himself. A green parrot took wing after the pair, calling out to his friend with the same playful rhythm in his voice.



If I could guess the macaw's intention, it would be something like this: "I was just going to fly by and tickle you. Feathers, not claws."

The brush of something soft, of a jest made in passing. Like all memories, my recollection of the macaw, the parrot, and the street dog at the bus stop will resurface from a triggering gesture, or a vivid shade of blue. Or a feather. Or from ribbing. I'll superimpose this memory onto all my brincadeiras, since the gulf of possible misunderstanding lies between humans and non humans alike.

In that brief moment of contact, our boundaries vibrate until I am no longer just bird and you are no longer just dog. What shall we make, then, before our departure? Where do we go from here?



Beside streams of humor lies a gulf of potential misunderstanding. Not only is this apparent in different cultures, but also between species. I witnessed a spirited exchange between a dog and a macaw that led me to reflect on the possibilities of humor.

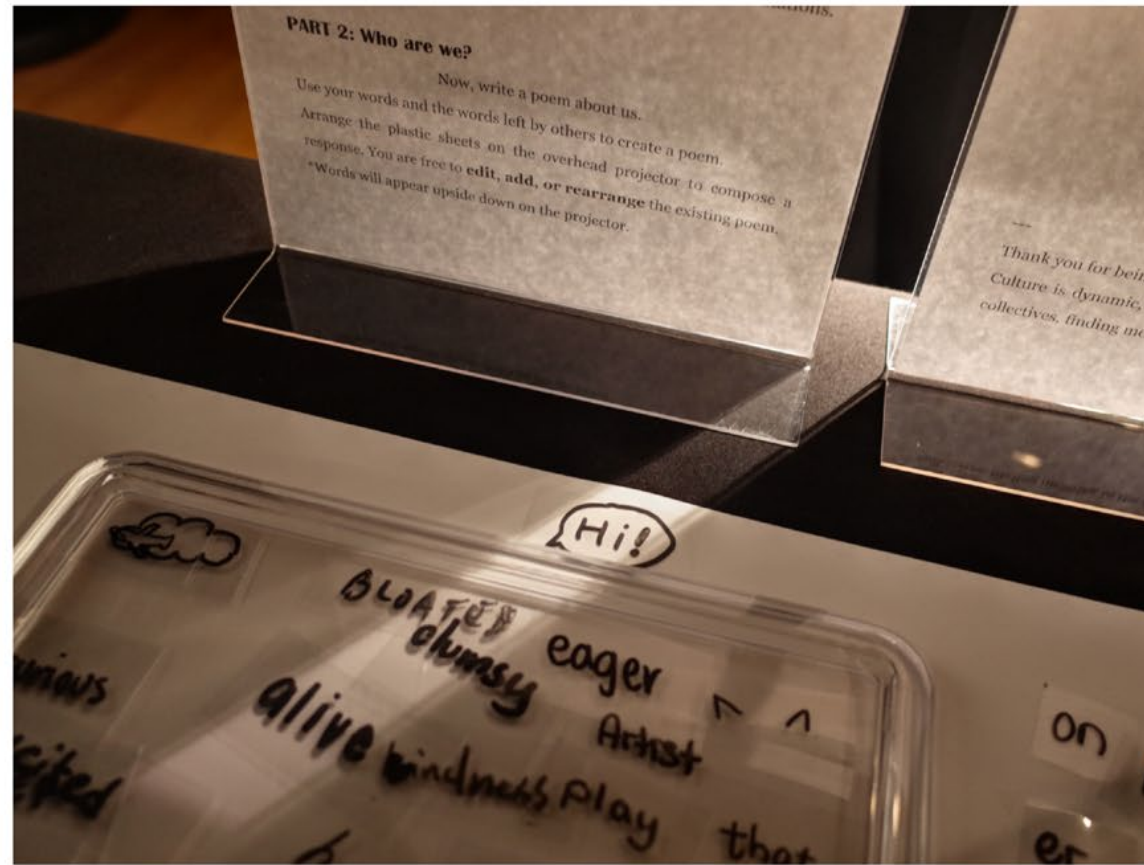
*Grace Freedson Aibeiro*

# WHEN PATHS CROSS



# In-Between

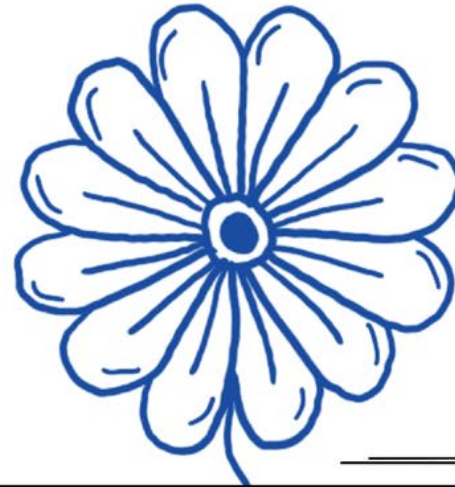
Hello!



Hi!

This installation, In-Between, was exhibited at WACsmash 2025. I invited participants to answer the question "Who are you?" by writing words or phrases on small transparent plastic sheets. Using these words, they then responded to "Who are we?" by collaboratively creating a poem on an overhead projector. The work transforms individual expressions into a collective creation, revealing the shared threads, the frictions, the stumbles and zips, and the beautiful chaos of being human, all echoing the connections that bridge across cultures.

Kexuan (Kayla) Cao





# ARTIST & AUTHOR BIOS



**Srinath Naik Ajmeera | India**

13-14

I am a UCLA graduate student in Computer Science, and I come from India. I explore outdoor games, photography and hikes during my free time.

**Sierra Benayon-Abraham | Canada**

20

I am a third-year Public Health Major. My home country is Canada. In my free time, I enjoy running, reading and playing my guitar.



**Kexuan (Kayla) Cao | China**

39-40

I am a first-year World Arts and Cultures and Cognitive Science major. My home country is China. I am a multimedia artist interested in exploring the relationship between individual and collective.

**Ink (Natane) Chantima | Thailand**

19

I am a first year neuroscience major. My home country is Thailand. I enjoy going to the gym, guitar, baking, and trying new foods!



**Grace Freedson-Ribeiro | Brazil**

37-38

I graduated from UCLA in 2022 and have since been living between São Paulo and Los Angeles. In my free time I enjoy painting, reading, and writing.

**Conrad Haberland | The Netherlands & United States**

23-24

I work at the Luskin Conference Center. I was born in The Netherlands of Indonesian descent. I enjoy painting, reading poetry and hanging out with my wife and cat.



**Adrien Holzgreve | Germany**

03-04

I grew up in Berlin, Germany. I am currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Ahmanson Translational Theranostics Division at UCLA.

**Nishi Khodaria | India & United States**

21

I am a first-year MSW student. I love to paint, write and read, they make me feel most at home with myself. I also think Nutella is the greatest human invention.



**Kathy Li | Taiwan**

12

I am a 4-year PhD Student at the UCLA School of Education. My hometown is Taiwan. I love to explore the multicultural/multilingual world!

**Valerie Liman | Indonesia**

16

I am a first year Biochemistry major. I am from Indonesia and I love to binge watch series and draw during my spare time.



**Rafael Macedo Rubiao | Brazil**

28

I am a second-year PhD student at Anderson (Global Economics and Management). I am Brazilian. In my free time I enjoy drawing, playing bossa nova, and reading.

**Rose Merida | Guatemala & United States**

07

The countries I call my home are the United States and Guatemala. Being first generation, I have a deep appreciation for unity, celebration, and respect for all cultures- and I enjoy trying new foods, places, and adventures!



**Marlon Morales | Guatemala**

08, 10

I come from Guatemala — the Land of Eternal Spring and the heart of the Mayan Civilization. In my free time, I am passionate about photography and enjoy exploring the world of literature.



# ARTIST & AUTHOR BIOS

Vanessa Aurora Vanegas Müller | Germany & Nicaragua 22

I'm a German-Nicaraguan lawyer and LL.M. student at UCLA, passionate about public international law and human rights in Latin America. Outside of that, I love playing soccer and reading a good dystopian novel.



Shin Hee Park | South Korea 27, 30

I am a first-year MFA student in Scenic/Production Design. I'm from Seoul, South Korea, and I enjoy coffee, vintage furniture, and flowers.



Joshua Shu Ah Wan | Hong Kong 05-06, 17-18

I am a junior in electrical engineering from Hong Kong. I love to dabble in music, visual art, and writing. I love thinking about how love operates in this world and maybe that is what everything I do stems from.



Lynna Si | Canada 09

I am a third year neuroscience major with a minor in brain and behavioral health. My home country is Canada. In my free time, I enjoy photography, knitting, and crocheting.



Smruthi Swaminathan | India 31-32

I am a first-year MBA student at UCLA Anderson from India. In my free time, I enjoy sketching and pottery. I've had the honor of speaking at the United Nations and World Economic Forum in Geneva for my work in social impact.



Caroline Thrailkill | Brazil 11

I have been working in higher education for about 9 years. I love interacting with people who are different from me, and learning from them. I also enjoy sharing my culture and my passion for travel with others around me!



Eugenia S. Vasileiadou | Greece 15

I am a postdoc in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. My home country is Greece. I love attending theater plays, traveling to learn about different cultures and languages, running and cooking Greek cuisine.



Yifei Wu | China 25-26

I am currently pursuing a B.A. in Art with a minor in Digital Humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles. My art and practices explore themes of diaspora, cultural hybridity, genealogical memory, and femininity.



Zora (Xiangzi) Xu | China 33-36

I am a second-year MFA Animation student at UCLA, originally from China. I enjoy trying out different painting styles, working in digital and traditional media, and telling stories through illustration and animation.



*Thank you Note*

**An enthusiastic thank you to all of our artists and authors who submitted to this 2025 edition of Envelope. We are so inspired by your creativity! We are glad that Dashew Center can continue to support an outlet for the international student, staff, and scholar voice.**

**Read more about Envelope & see our previous Envelope editions here:**





