

# SCAN

SCAD ATLANTA'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

FALL 2021 | VOL. 13 NO. 3





The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of pink and white diamonds. Each diamond is outlined with a dashed pink line. The pattern is consistent across the entire surface.

**SCAN** is the quarterly print magazine of the Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta. All editorial is determined by the student editors. Opinions expressed in **SCAN** are not necessarily those of the college. ©2021 **SCAN Magazine**. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher. Visit us at **scadscan.com** for all previous issues and more.

Cover design by **Don Tang**  
Staff illustration by **Iman Gadalla**



# Letter from the Editor



There was a painter with glasses  
Who built a man out of canvas.  
Where one has a brain  
It has glasses, engraved,  
"Behold: my Method of Madness."

– Juile Tran



**1. Julie Tran**

Editor-in-Chief

**2. Sonali Suresh Mestri**

Art Director

**3. Zipporah Dorsey**

Mangaging Editor

**4. Anokhi Dodhia**

Assistant Mangaging Editor and PR Director

**5. Daniella Almona**

Creative Director

**6. Rai Mukherjee**

Features Editor

**7. Alejandro Bastidas**

Features Editor

**8. Benjamin Greennagel**

Copy Editor

**9. John Warner**

Photo Editor

**10. Iman Gadalla**

Multimedia Editor

**11. Elijah Johnson**

Arts and Entertainment Editor





# Table of Contents

06

## **STUDENT SHOWCASE**

Cherry Chandra and Aviance Whitman explain their creative processes.

10

## **CHARTING CREATION**

Mapping out the journey from ideation to the final draft.

12

## **POETRY CORNER**

A collection of brutally honest poems.

16

## **ETERNAL GARDEN**

Transporting you to a curious, magical reality.

22

## **THE ENDS OF THE EARTH**

God visits Satan in his realm of madness to find answers.

26

## **EX NIHILO NIHIL FIT**

How one's mind decays in toxicity.

30

## **THE AMERICAN METHOD TO MADNESS**

The formula behind the world's woes, U.S. edition.

34

## **THE SECRET TO UNVEILING SECRETS**

An interview with SCAD alumni behind Emmy-winning series "Secrets of the Whales."

40

## **STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

Raphael Behindwa.

42

## **ART CORNER**

Chaotic creations.





Interviewed by **Julie Tran**  
Portrait by **Regina Vera**

## What inspires your graphic design and UX design work?

I have worked as an illustrator/mural artist most of my life and I realized I needed structure, something I found very ubiquitous in graphic design. Last year, before I registered as a graphic design major, I attended a free intro class for UX design at the general assembly. After learning about the psychology behind it, I instantly fell in love. I found out from my friend who has taken MFA GDVX that we have an awesome course regarding UI UX, and that's how I decided to jump full force into UX design.

## What sets user experience design apart from your other work?

In illustration, you sort of go with the flow. Yes, there's a little research here and there, but you mostly draw your inspiration from what you like. When it comes to user

experience, you have to reach out to actual human beings, understand what they need and find that balance between their needs and aesthetics. It's not as subjective as when you're doing an illustration and definitely has a more layered process. User experience is definitely outside my comfort zone, but I keep surprising myself how much I enjoy it.

## What does your process usually look like?

I'm still figuring it out, but usually, I put 50-60 percent of my time into research by doing a questionnaire or conducting secondary research. From this, I will draw a conclusion of the features I want to put in my work. My favorite part is when I have to start sketching and creating the wireframe. To me, this is probably where I put most of my time because I want to make sure that when it gets to the actual designing, I will have a strong enough foundation.





# CHERRY CHANDRA

Graduate student, illustration, graphic design and user experience



## What do you think people often misunderstand about your major?

Where I come from, Indonesia, a lot of people think that graphic design is only about making marketing material such as posters, packaging and logos. When I came to America, I realized it is so much more than that. If I took a graphic design major back home, I wouldn't study how to make a website, let alone user experience designs.

## What project are you currently working on and what are your goals for it?

I am currently working on refining my portfolio including my latest UX project about an astrology-based dating app called Juno. It is by far my favorite project and I had a lot of fun doing the research: from conducting questionnaires to actually reading books about astrology. My goal is to work with a developer to make it into an actual app. ■







Interviewed by **John Warner**  
Portrait by **Regina Vera**

### Why did you choose to pursue a career in 2D animation?

I chose to pursue a career in animation because drawing cartoons and telling stories has been my passion since I was a little kid. You would always see me either reading a book or drawing a character, but I never knew it was something I could professionally do for the rest of my life. When I did discover this knowledge at SCAD, I felt like I finally figured out the missing puzzle piece in my life, and I knew animation/story and concept development was the career for me. Literally nothing makes me happier than achieving the look I had in mind after hours of sketching.



### Do your designs carry any cultural context?

Definitely. Growing up, I didn't see a lot of people that looked like me on TV, especially in cartoons, and that has shaped my artistic narrative a lot, driving me to draw a lot of characters that are people of color. Pop culture also influences my art. You'll often find a character of mine wearing a pair of popular sneakers or rocking a hairstyle that many people know and love. I try to create characters that are relevant to the things going on around us today, ranging from fashion and comedy to financial freedom and Black pride.



## If you had to animate any teacher/professor you've had, who would you choose?

If I had to design a character of one of my teachers/professors, I would hands down choose my old DIGI 130 professor, Dennis Robinson. During my first year at SCAD, I attended the Savannah campus and it was daunting for me not having any Black professors and little to no Black classmates, but Professor Robinson changed that by being my first Black professor at SCAD. It was so comforting having someone else that could better relate to me. Not only that, Professor Robinson was insanely talented and has influenced the direction of my art with his expert advice and knowledge. He also has very beautiful, kinky hair that would be so fun to draw and exaggerate on a character.

## What limitations do you find to be challenging during your creative process?

Overcoming art block and finding inspiration. After producing a lot of work on a weekly basis, it's very easy to hit a road bump and become clueless as to what your next piece should be. That's when it's time to either introspect and remind yourself of the things you love to create and or branch out and try something new.

# AVIANCE WHITMAN

Second year, animation

## What project are you currently working on and do you hope to achieve with it?

I'm currently working on a few different character design commissions right now. With these commissions, I hope to create a combined space in both the art community and the Black community. In middle and high school, I didn't know a lot of other people that were interested in or appreciated art, but with my growing platform, I'm hoping to show others how fun and relatable art really is. ■





## MAJORS

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Advertising & Branding

2

Fashion Design

1

Graphic Design

1

Industrial Design

1

Interior Design

1

Photography

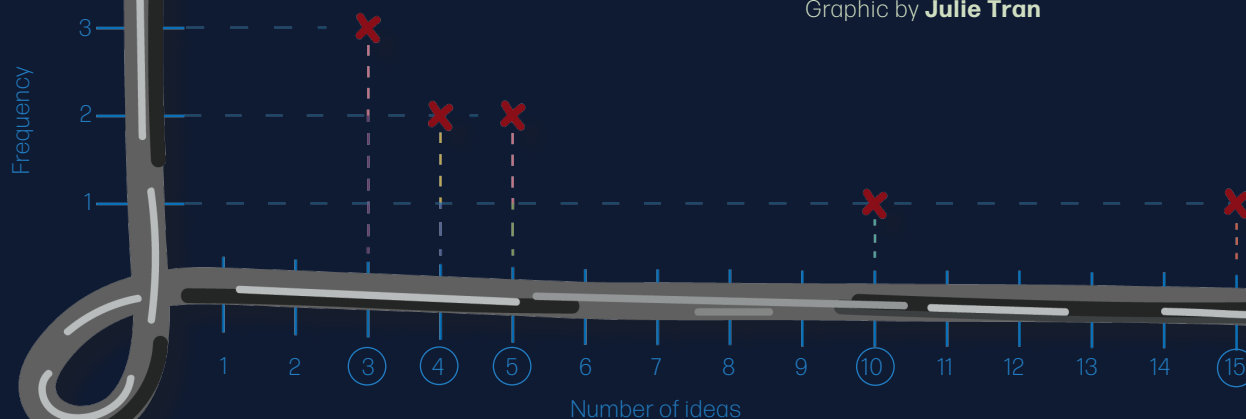
1

Writing

2

# Charting CREAT

Number of **IDEAS** before  
**FINAL IDEAS**



To shed the mystique behind the birth of an artwork, SCAN interviewed nine students across majors to map out their creative processes. ■

Researched and illustrated by **Anokhi Dodhia**

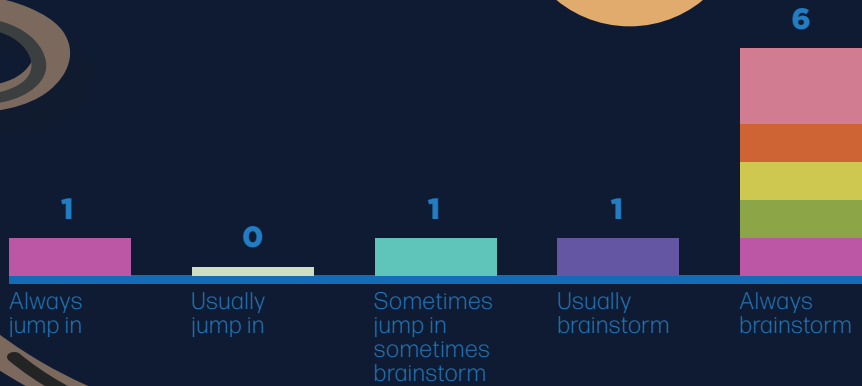
Graphic by **Julie Tran**

Adjectives to describe your  
**CREATIVE  
PROCESS**



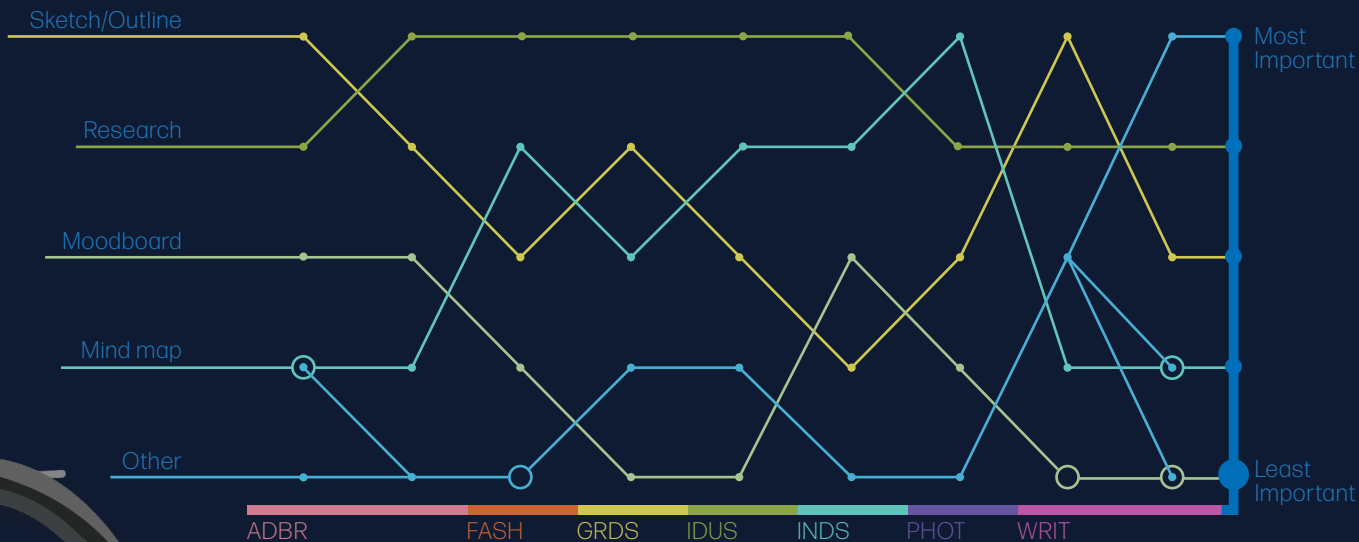
experimental, fast, adaptive,  
**bold** frantic, innovative, inspired,  
engaging, FUN, **over**whelming,  
logical, stubborn, elaborate,  
erratic, arbitrary, **exuberant**,  
intricate, lively, moving, sharp,  
chaotic, exhausting, **fulfilling**.

Always **JUMP IN** or  
**ALWAYS BRAINSTORM**



# ATION

Most important steps of creating,  
**RANKED**





I am an angry

# BLACK WOMAN

Written by **Mandie Rivera**

Illustrated by **Victoria Decembert**

I am the dirt that won't come out of your t-shirt.  
The more detergent you use,  
the more I will resist your white wash.

And as much as you try to get rid of me,  
you act as a parrot that won't stop mocking me.  
By taking my culture,  
wringing it out,  
you make it dry for your own liking.

You try to break the racial tension with your hands:  
touching my hair,  
ruining my fro,  
as you tell me how deserving you are for my beautiful hair texture.

You made things worse with the picture you painted of me:  
angry with a dash of wild animal.

And you always claim that I need to calm down  
as if I'm riled up with my kids in the car listening to Kidz Bop.

You sit here and cry wolf every chance you get for attention.  
Is it because God cooked me well done and you medium rare?  
Or are you scared of the strength that the generations before me  
passed down  
causing me to be stronger than you'll ever be in your life?

Now, I'm letting you know that I'm not angry.

I am as confident as I am powerful.

So wipe off the stamp you smashed on my forehead, labeled:

This is an angry Black woman. ♡



## Poem for ageing

# DEPRESSION

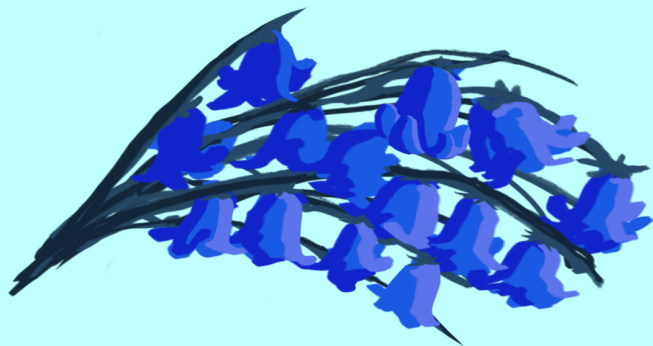
Written by **Chloé Allyn**

Illustrated by **Victoria Decembert**

I am the color today of an unmade bed and no, my actual bed is not left soiled, its hospital corners tucked away but today I am let go in spirit, let down in capacity, slider halfway



I am a sink full of dishes, no not dishes with bloated rice and rotting swampy water, I am not a feast for drain flies no not tombstones but rinsed after dining and left for later



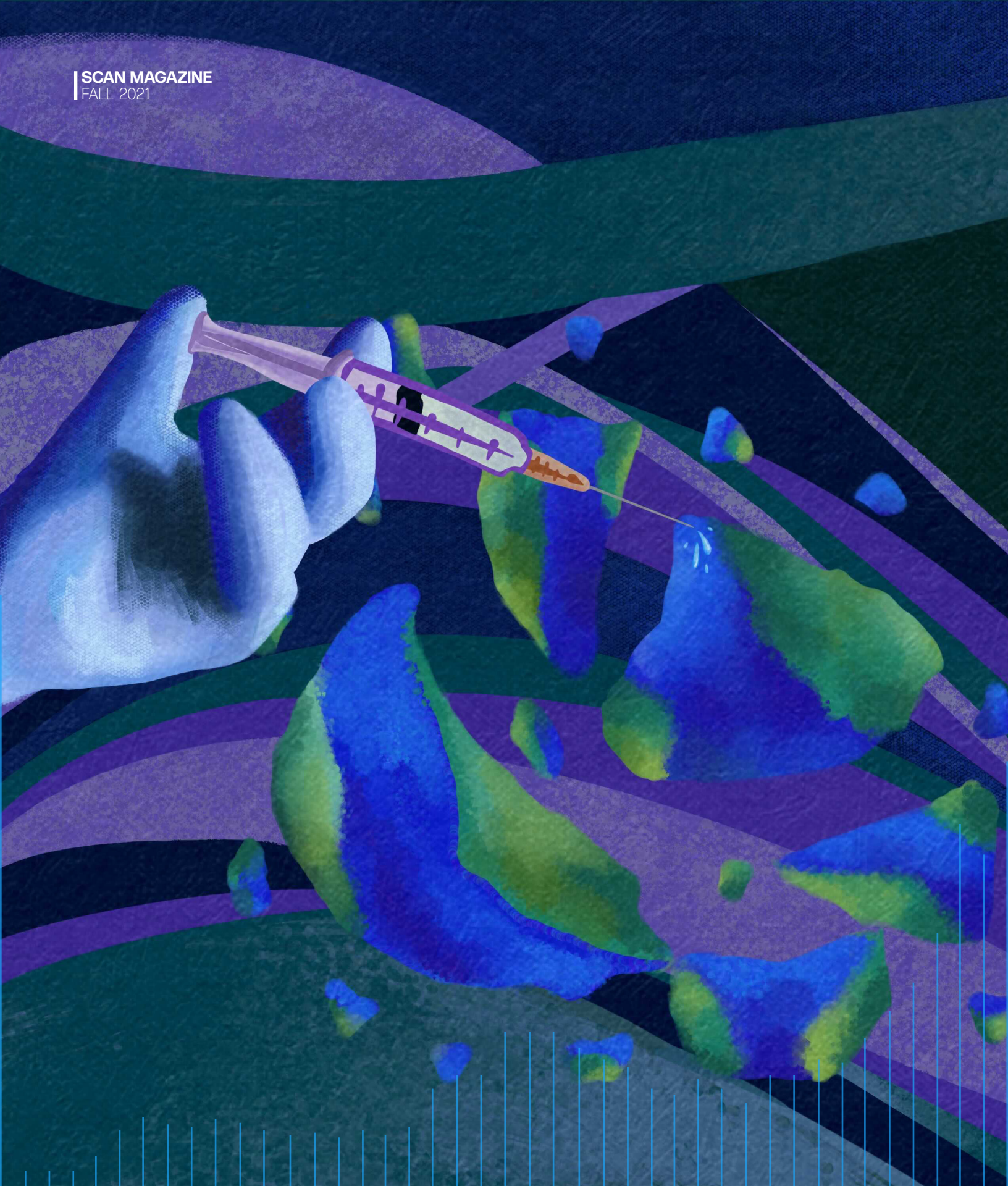
I am today a sewn-up rip, no not just a hole and not a mistake where perfection was, no, today I am the aftermath, the thread of a different shade, not lost or ruined or thrown away



I am the gray through the window, the pallid winter sun, I am the attempt to rise and the audacity to try, I am depression getting older, I am healing, day one by one. ■









This is

# Pfizer's

# HAMERICA

Written by **Chloé Allyn**  
Illustrated by **Victoria Decembert**

This is Pfizer's America  
and I lied a little to get my vaccine,  
This life – no, reality? Society? World  
Asks: can you take care of yourself? Can you  
Stop worrying about black (light, dark) brown (red, yellow)  
white?!

If anyone at the back of the line wants to  
Complain  
Remind them Daddy America says  
"It's your fault f\*\*\*\*\*, it's the color of your skin  
It's the sin of your bed, the circling bluebirds around  
your head, not my clobber, not my police baton  
The red color of your blood doesn't look like  
Mine  
Your liberal heart beats and mine  
Does not, get back in the dirt, go back to the barn."

So, then we argue, and a mural is done, a Twain book is burned  
And another mother loses a son another son is lunch  
Truncheons and AI and the dial on the stove is  
Stuck, Daddy's coastlines are receding like high-stakes hair  
Pound the Gulf like a storied ass  
Listen! inside and outside are riddled with his touch  
If I were a plant I'd've lost my limbs by now,  
Is it my fault that my mind is radioactive when I've grown  
In bloody soil? I'm not long gone  
Or gone gone but  
I've already Eaten the cancer while watching cartoons

Remember. Daddy hates it when you break  
The chain. Daddy hates it when his grandbabies  
Come out with a new taste for the truth. ■



The Eternal Garden series focuses on emotion, dreams and curiosity. It oscillates between reality and fantasy. The familiar forms of the flowers, the lightning, the visual depth and the mysterious imagery intrigue, entice and invite you, drawing you into another realm, into the Eternal Garden. ■

- Xavier Thompson

# Eternal Garden

Photographer: **Xavier Thompson**  
Model: **Emani Bush, Tashae Denise**







SCAN MAGAZINE  
FALL 2021

















SCAN MAGAZINE  
FALL 2021

# THE ENOS OF THE

# WORTH





Written by **Alejandro Bastidas**  
Illustrated by **Chandana Ramesh**

**W**hen Satan sat down to meditate, his tail coiled upwards and scratched the back of his head as if to say, "good boy." He smiled and thanked himself for sparing a few moments from his busy day to pause and live, only for a moment, in a present that was untouchable by the raging fires of Hell. He felt beautiful with his horns polished, matching the black of his nine-inch nails, while a crop-top that read, "Lucifer in the Sky with Diamonds" hung loosely down his abdomen. A burning sensation prickled the back of his neck. Someone watched him from above. The same Almighty Eye that had witnessed his descent into the darkness now brushed over his vulnerability, like an obsessive voyeur, perverted and jealous, but excited by the knowledge of his wrongdoing. "Naughty," Satan said. "Fancy a little sin? Will you visit me once and for all?"

The Heavenly Father appeared before him in his blue velvet bathrobe, barefoot but still two heads taller than Lucifer, boasting a twirling beard made of clouds.

"You're not supposed to be free," God said.

"And you're supposed to be nicer," Satan said. "Still not over my little uprising?"

"Uprising? That's what you call all these years of poisoning mankind with sin?"

"Listen, buddy...I had nothing to do with that. You think I had the time or the power to influence those little bugs while I served my sentence burning in the lake of fire you created to torture all the damned?"



"You are the ultimate sinner and your presence lingers in the mortal world. You drive humans away from me."

Satan clapped his hands. The flames around Hell dimmed on command. "Never been to the mortal world. But my demons have and they say it's a dreadful place. A pity. I remember it looked beautiful from Eden."

"Earth is dreadful because of your growing power. From what I see, you are no longer burning in the lake of agony and eternal flame. Only a vicious creature could tolerate the fire and take control of Hell." God hesitated. For a second, his righteous anger wavered. "How did you do it?"

Satan smiled. "I learned from your beloved humans, who've also taken control over their own version of Hell. Ingenious and despicable, they are. I realized that fire no longer tortured me, and I transcended all physical suffering, like one does after greeting Saint Peter, but my punishment was transferred here." Satan gestured around his temple with his black nail. "Then my influence spread to all the damned souls as quickly as faith in times of famine. We formed a sort of bond, you see, after all those eons suffering and screaming together and tasting each other's sweat and memorizing the stench of our bad breath. They transcended their suffering. But I knew our revolt wouldn't last long and your archangels would eventually notice something was amiss ... unless the suffering returned. If I became the master of Hell, the power to decide the punishment of the damned would be mine, not yours. I can fiddle with the levels of torture. I can make the lake of fire seem like a kiss from the Holy Spirit. Though I must admit, these new powers have cost me my clean conscience."

God straightened up, disgusted. "You expect me to believe you've developed an ounce of empathy?"

"I thought you were a faithful being, old friend. You know all sinners have the power to change. It was only natural for me to develop empathy after watching hours of footage from the suffering of

humans. The damned are forced to memorize those vile videos for eternity, instead of enjoying their postmortem peace." The corners of Satan's mouth were downturned, bitter and vicious. "I suppose that would make you happy."

"Make me happy!"

"Yes, make you happy! You enjoy chaos. Knowing humans were capable of sin, you banished them to Earth and let them reproduce. You allowed the most destructive and violent species to take over a planet, and at the same time convinced them that I was to blame for their nature! If by one way or another they end up here, they are forced to suffer forever, even when their crimes and their names and your name lose all meaning! What kind of God punishes mortals' crimes with immortals' punishments?"

Hell was silent. God's glowing light flickered in Celestial rage, and Satan's light flickered in Infernal indignation. It would be a strange sight to see, had anyone been around to see it. But alas, mortal eyes around this place were only ever gray with cataracts and fiery with unending pain. God looked around, a reflex he had developed since the humans started building churches and praising his names. But the churches in Hell were only ever built in the name of resentment.

Finally, God returned his eyes to Satan. Four milleniums since their great Abrahamic spat, seventeen centuries since their power rolled over the Roman domain of myths and legends. Some things never change.

"How would you fix humanity, then?"

If Satan was surprised that God had asked him this question, he couldn't be more surprised than God himself. "Well," he began politely, his tail twirling like a hand, "I'd start by blowing up their planet. Start over. Wipe them all out. They will do it themselves eventually. So snap your fingers, dispatch every human to Heaven, where they'll be far happier, and let them fade away into oblivion."





God shook his head slowly. "When they haven't earned entry to heaven? Ridiculous."

"Now, that's petty. If you see a drowning man at sea, and you're safe in the comfort of your own boat, would you make him earn his lifeline?"

"I work in mysterious ways."

"Alright. You know what would really mystify the humans? Moving Judgment Day ahead of schedule and be done with it. Weather's going to be nice tomorrow. That's your chance. Start over. Do better! If you refuse, then you're not benevolent. If you say you cannot do it, then you are not omnipotent. So what are you?"

God's face hardened, unappreciative of the challenge. "I'm a God whose forgiveness is beyond you. But only you. There is still hope for everyone else."

Satan spread his hands, sweeping over his miserable sovereignty. 'A part of everyone else' is banished to this place every second. Do you see any hope for them?"

The ghosts had no voices to moan in pain. They thrashed like worms trapped in the mud, unaware of their own helplessness, of Heaven and Hell and God and the Devil, of even their own selves. It was a cruelty comparable to that of humans. It was all Satan ever saw.

"We have become like the beings we judge, my friend," Satan said sadly. "It's an occupational hazard that comes with worship. Yet you are the only one who has the power to atone. What do you say?"

God looked down at his calloused hands and took one deep breath. ■






Written by **Ana Carrow**  
Illustrated by **Khushboo Uday Nayak**

**Editor's note:**

*This piece contains depictions of domestic violence and may be disturbing or triggering to some readers. If you are experiencing domestic violence or know someone who is experiencing domestic violence, you can call the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence hotline: 1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836) or visit [gcadv.org](http://gcadv.org) for more information.*





 You kept your mouth shut while he put you in your place, didn't you? Hands behind your back, skirt grazing your scraped knees, eyes trained on the floor. Keeping quiet, like good girls do. But you'll never be good enough, will you? F\*\*\*\*\* up every chance he gives you – look me in the eyes, he says, as he spits in your face. You hit the floor – sticky and wet. He's finished with you now, and you should be grateful. Grateful for all he's done for your poor, sorry self. Someone like you doesn't deserve someone like him. Do better. Try harder. Ask for less, hide away, shrink into nothing. From nothing can become nothing.

He did that to you, didn't he? Your coworker reaches up, her fingers brushing broken skin. But it's nothing, just an accident. You fell down some stairs – what a

klutz you are! If only you had been looking where you were going, maybe you could've prevented the trip before the fall. Yes, she says, everything seems clearer in retrospect. Although, hindsight doesn't help us much in the present. Do you need help? No, never – the only person you need protection from is yourself. Because everything is your fault in the end, isn't it?

You forgot to call him back on purpose, didn't you? You must have been with another man. Don't give him that bulls\*\*\* about your phone being dead. Even if it was, even if you were stuck in traffic – you should've found a way to contact him. Then you wouldn't have caused him all this worry, all this stress. You brought this on yourself, you know. He doesn't want to have to do this to you. This brings me no pleasure, he says. But he laughs as you cry.



Don't be such a baby. What are you crying for? What did you expect, sneaking around like that? It will never happen again. Next time, when he calls, you answer – immediately. Understood? Here he pauses, a solution forming. Maybe you shouldn't even be working at all. Maybe you should keep to the house, so he can keep an eye on you better. So he knows you'll be safe.

He's always looking out for your wellbeing, isn't he? Of course you don't need a job. It's too much responsibility for your pretty little head. Too much pressure – that's what must be making you so anxious lately. Quit, take a break, focus on your marriage. You can be a model wife, greeting him when he gets home with a pot roast on the table and the smile on your face. Never mind those two missing teeth, they're hardly noticeable. This is what you want, isn't it? he asks. To be there for me? He promises that he's always been there for you. And he always will be, if you'll just listen to him. You want to listen to him, don't you? His voice is so reassuring, swearing that everything will be alright. In the end, at least. The two of you are just going through a bit of a rough patch right now. For better or for worse, isn't that right? His arm around your shoulder, busted knuckles passing over your cheek.

To love, cherish and obey, weren't those the vows you took? Well, then, why is it so hard for you to follow simple commands? He woke up in a bad mood this morning – you could tell as much from the fresh hole in the drywall. But you were probably to blame for it, somehow. Better the drywall than your head. Cancel your plans, that's what he wants. He specifically told you he doesn't like your friends. They're bad influences, they can't possibly know what's right for you like he does. How could you have forgotten? Why didn't you tell him you were meeting them? What other secrets are you hiding? You have nothing to hide; you're an open book to him, unfavorable chapters ripped out and burned. He burns the pages of this one, too, standing over your shoulder as you make excuses over the phone. No,

you can't make it for coffee. A family emergency has come up. Yes, thank you, goodbye. And then he insists on buying you a new phone, with a new number. He's the one paying for your phone plan anyway – doesn't that mean he has the right to make such decisions?

You made the decision to marry him, didn't you? But how could you stay with him, your sister asks, when he treats you like this? He treats you fine, you're well taken care of. Plenty of people have it worse, don't they? Your sister shakes her head. You're hurting. He hurts you. We all lose our tempers sometimes. Did he ever have one in the first place? He loves you, though. He wasn't always like this, not in the beginning. He was sweet to you, doting. The gentlest touches, the warmest embraces.

And then you started disappointing him. It's hard to be patient with someone like you – someone who constantly lets him down. Your sister grabs your arm, noticing the way you flinch. She tells you you're being crazy – hasn't he said the same thing before? and that you're staying at her place tonight. No, he wouldn't like that at all. He'd come after you, wouldn't he? You're not allowed to just leave like that, without permission. What do you mean, permission? He doesn't own you.

I own you, he growls in your ear, dragging you through the apartment you both share. No, he owns it. The apartment is his. You're just another possession, like a piece of furniture, stood up in a room and locked inside. You thought you could get away with this, with no repercussions? No punishments? You broke his trust. You lying, cheating, ungrateful little b\*\*\*\*. What did your sister fill your head with? What did you tell her? What did you say? Speak up, he can't hear you.

Shut the f\*\*\* up – a crack to the jaw. How dare you talk to him like that? After all he's done – the sacrifices he's made, the lengths he's gone, and now you want to fuck him over like this?



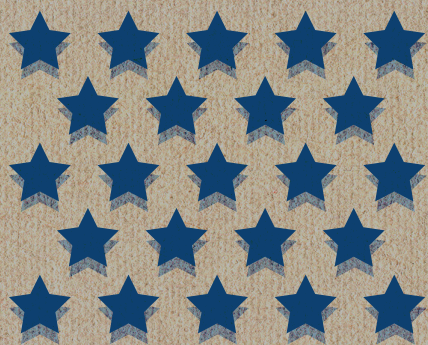
You've been using him this whole time, haven't you? Leeching off his money, his protection, his love, like the traitorous pest you are. Go ahead, leave if you want. You're nothing but a poison, a cancer. Pack your bags – shit, he'll pack them for you. A suitcase thrown across the room, a lightbulb shatters. Sparks fly, darkness settles.

\*\*\*\*\*

You're not really leaving me, are you? His voice nudges its way through the black, softer now, more childlike. You're not really leaving him, are you? But you say yes, and your teeth ache. You taste blood. He promises to be better. His hands reach for yours, trembling. They travel up your body, touching the side of your face. He won't do that to you again. He never wanted to hurt you, he's sorry, he just wasn't thinking right, you see? His head is clear now – it really is, he'll treat you proper from now on, like a princess. Don't you want to be pampered like a princess? Like his princess? There, there, that's a good girl. Come to bed now. He'll clean up that glass in the morning. Careful not to step in it. His hands are ginger, tentative. The lights stay off. He says he doesn't want to see the bruises on your face. He hates seeing you so banged up. He loves you very much, you know.

You love him, too. Don't you? ■





# THE AMERICAN METHOD OF MADNESS



Written by **Benjamin Greennagel**  
Illustrated by **Ernest Brants**

In the collective memories of many nations, the United States takes the role of the top cop, the mega-entrepreneur, the manifestation of military might. In the collective memories of its citizens, the U.S. is the bane of fascism, the heroes of the World War and the loudest advocate for civil rights in what it calls “third-world countries” —that is, up until now.

The U.S. cloaks its age-old push for power in performative policies and an utter lack of action. We know that now. The federal government’s intervention in foreign and domestic affairs exhibits at best the neglect of marginalized voices and at worst the violent oppression of its own people. “What’s going on?” is a question we often hear, often in times of social upheavals, or, to the uninformed observers, times of utter madness. The media circus rarely helps, what with their tangled knots of esoteric explanations. But take a step back and one could see the patterns, the motives and, most importantly, the beneficiaries

—which oftentimes inevitably turns out to be the U.S. government. The U.S. government has time and again claimed to uphold a set of morals that values peace and independent democracies, but through methodical involvement in other nations’ conflicts, the federal government contributes to a global sense of unrest and mayhem.

A classic example can be traced back to the 1800s, during Cuba’s fight for independence from Spain. On paper, the U.S. claimed to support Cuban independence. The outcome of the war suggests that it did not. When President William McKinley made his declaration of war with Spain, he named two reasons: defense of the U.S. economy and support of Cuban independence. However, once the U.S. was officially involved in the war, it used the conflict as an excuse to annex Hawaii. As a state, Hawaii would be used to export profitable resources like sugar as well as host a major naval base in Pearl Harbor.





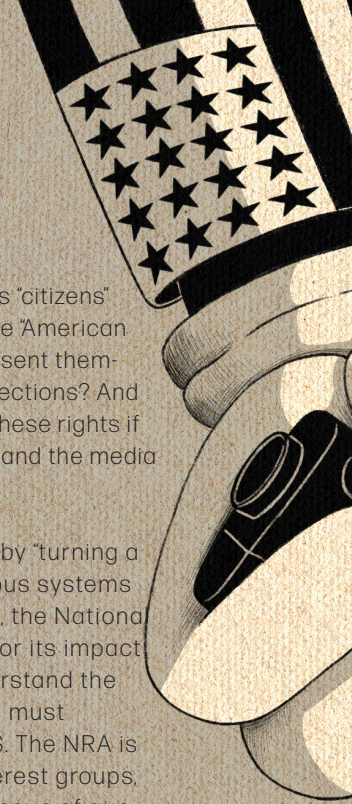


After the US sank a Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay, the US took the Philippines as well, which would eventually result in another war. Finally, the Spanish left Cuba—but the U.S. did not. It established more military bases there, and the true objective became apparent: the US wanted to expand its empire and claim new territories by profiting off of another country's fight for freedom. Over a century later, American politicians would shamelessly campaign against the anti-American sentiment of the Cuban Communist revolution. This same genre of politicians would go on to joyfully impose an economic blockade that, as of 2021, is still choking the Cuban economy and contributing to the Cuban humanitarian crises. What mind-boggling chaos, caused in large parts by such a good friend of Cuban independence, or, more appropriately, Cuban isolation.


Moving closer to home, one could see the designs in domestic mayhem, too. Take the U.S. government's response to crises in its territories, for example. In 2017, Americans were affected by three different category-four hurricanes. The first two, Harvey and Irma, respectively made landfall in Texas and Florida. Hurricane Maria was the last to hit, making land fall in Puerto Rico on September 20. This makes the insufficient disaster relief in Puerto Rico quantifiable, as it can be compared to the aid Texas and Florida received. Puerto Rico, which was already dealing with a dated power grid and a debt crisis, received around 10 percent of the amount of food distributed to Florida and 40 percent of the amount of water. Seven months later, more than 100,000 individuals were still living without power on the island. As a territory, Puerto Rico is ineligible to receive certain aid, like food stamp programs. Negligence fuels ignorance, and ignorance fuels negligence. In 2017, a poll by Morning Consultant found that nearly half of Americans didn't know that Puerto Rico is a part of the U.S. or

that Puerto Ricans are citizens. Perhaps "citizens" is a big word. How can Puerto Ricans be "American citizens" if they are not allowed to represent themselves in Congress or vote in federal elections? And how can they effectively advocate for these rights if the government, the education system and the media continue to ignore them?

Allowing individuals to suffer like this by "turning a blind eye" enables more subtle, insidious systems of violent imperialism. In recent years, the National Rifle Association has faced scrutiny for its impact on crime in foreign countries. To understand the international influence of the NRA, we must acknowledge its impact within the U.S. The NRA is among the most powerful special interest groups, influencing elections over the single issue of gun control. It endorses candidates based on their stance on this issue, and it gives candidates who are not staunchly opposed to gun control a poor "rating" and notifies its massive membership, which is suspected to have surpassed 3 million people. But the problem is not only domestic. The NRA has been lobbying in Brazil and other countries that have stricter gun control laws than the US, utilizing fear and rights to self defense as sales tactics. Meanwhile, U.S. citizens have been arrested for illegally selling guns to individuals in Latin American countries. Many of these firearms have been linked to criminal activities and rising crime rates. These rising crime rates, in turn, compel immigration to the U.S. where immigrants are detained, punished and told to go back to their own country, which the U.S. had allowed its special interest group to destabilize. American TV would solemnly broadcast about the utter mess that is the "immigration crisis," followed just as solemnly by footage of congressmen bringing rifles to the border, advocating for violence against refugees in the name of patriotism.







It has always been this obvious. The hands that weave the tangled nets are connected to the faces smiling at the chaos. Look away from these speeches written under governmental letterheads and one can see the bona fide American pattern of strategically maintaining control over another country or group of people under the guise of diplomacy.

The safety and human rights of other individuals are excuses, pawns and trade-offs for economic benefits. Through the calculated mismanagement of international as well as interracial relations, the U.S. ensures its economic superiority, and the American ruling class preserves its social superiority.

But maybe, now that we see it, we can also see those who stand against it. And maybe, we can turn our attention their way.



The secret to

# Unveiling

---

## SECRETS

Interviewed and illustrated by **Julie Tran**

**Shannon Malone-deBenedictis** is a SCAD alumna (class of 1992) and the Senior Vice President of Development and Production at Red Rock Films — one of North America's leading production companies in natural history programming. Their recent Disney+ limited series, "Secrets of the Whales" has won a Primetime Emmys for Best Documentary or Nonfiction Series.

**Jay Danner-McDonald** is a SCAD alumnus (class of 1993) and an editor for "Secrets of the Whales." He regularly works with National Geographic, Discovery Channel, History Channel, The Learning Channel and more.



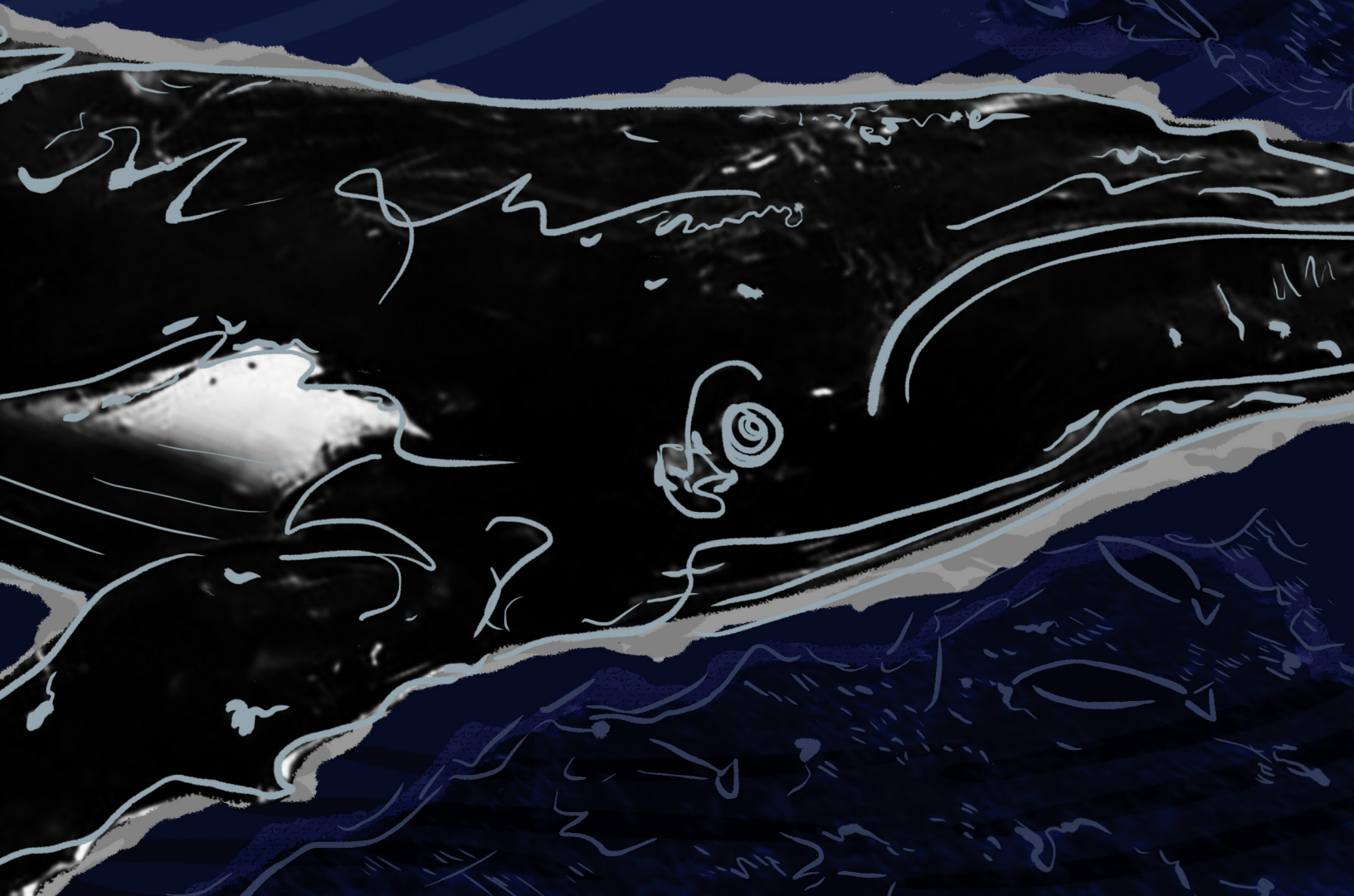
## How do you even begin to put together such a Big Project?

**Malone-deBenedictis:** Red Rock Films — we've been in existence for over 10 years now, and we have a reputation with our clients in networks as being collaborators on ideas. Janet Vissering, the SVP of Program Development and Production at NatGeo WILD, called us into her office and said, "We'd like you to meet a National Geographic photographer, Brian Skerry. He has an idea about whales and the culture of whales. We think this could be a documentary."

So I spent a lot of time with Brian, and we looked at what he had and all the different things where we could film and said, "You know, we think we can

actually get four episodes out of this. We think we can do a limited series and profile different whales." So I worked with him, came up with a very long proposal, went back to the executives at National Geographic, who have known me for years as a producer and developer, then said, "You know we can do this," and they said, "OK, let's go for it."

So we started filming, and gradually it became clear that the project was bigger. We were coming back with rushes from the field of just extraordinary behavior and we saw the story more clearly. We were lucky the whales cooperated. Our directors of photography were phenomenal. It was a really big collaborative effort to get it up off the ground, and then recognizing while we were filming that something big was happening.





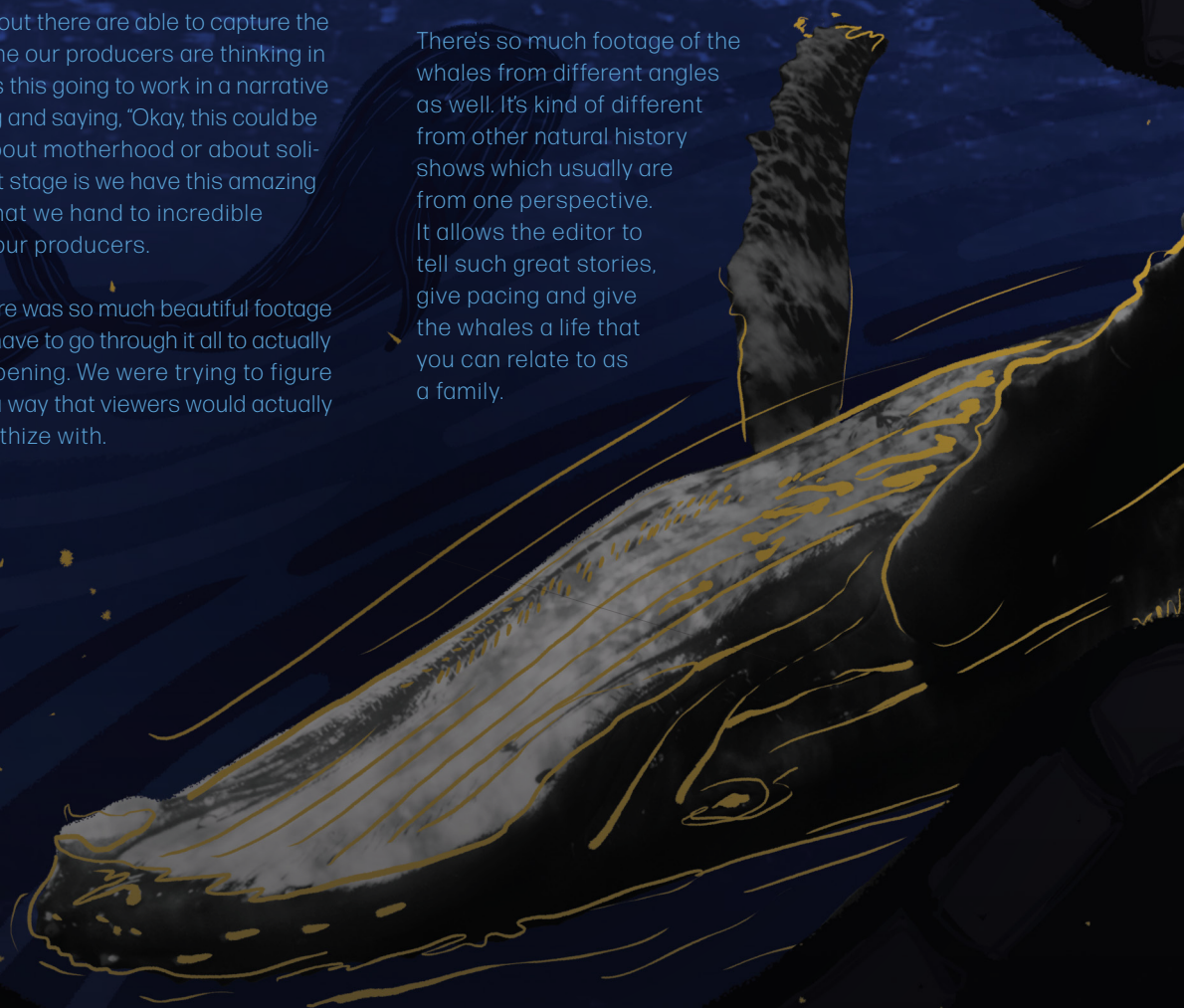
**What was your creative process like, as to deciding how to film while learning more about the whales?**

**Malone-deBenedictis:** I think it's a two-part process. We start in the field, and we work with local scientists and experts on where it's going to be the best place to capture the whales in their natural environment. We make sure that our DPs out there are able to capture the action, but the entire time our producers are thinking in their heads, "Okay, how is this going to work in a narrative structure?" We're looking and saying, "Okay, this could be a 12-minute segment about motherhood or about solidarity." And then the next stage is we have this amazing footage from the DPs that we hand to incredible editors who work with our producers.


**Danner-McDonald:** There was so much beautiful footage that was coming in. You have to go through it all to actually understand what's happening. We were trying to figure out how to show this in a way that viewers would actually understand and sympathize with.

Beluga whales, for instance, migrate. They go from living under ice and migrating through deadly waters with killer whales, to getting to this beautiful warm beach where they exfoliate themselves. So we then tried to build from the footage: we set up a family unit when it's traveling. The whales are not sitting down for interviews, so you have to meld it together frame-by-frame to really tell a story and convey movements.

There's so much footage of the whales from different angles as well. It's kind of different from other natural history shows which usually are from one perspective. It allows the editor to tell such great stories, give pacing and give the whales a life that you can relate to as a family.







### What was your favorite moment of the whole process?

**Malone-deBenedictis:** I developed this series. I had a vision of what each show would look like and what emotional beats I wanted to hit, what I wanted to do, what I hoped that we would capture in the field and have those \*gasp\* moments. It was in the beluga episode, when we were in the “summer vacation pool” area where they all come to, and there is the baby beluga, newly born, and there’s footage of it looking right in the camera and smiling. That kind of summed up my joy of the whole series because it all came together and I was like, “It all hit! That’s great! We did it!”

**Danner-McDonald:** At a certain point, I needed to find this shot and I had to dig through the footage. It’s 45 minutes of watching the raw footage they’d just sent back because it’s just gorgeous, and I was getting lost in just following these whales in real-time—no music, no nothing, just raw footage of these whales moving and being there, stuff you’ve never really seen before. Especially – I think it was a sperm whale – it was the only time ever filmed where a mother was feeding her young. There was a marine biologist on the boat with the crew saying, “We didn’t even know how this actually occurs.” That was amazing stuff that just sticks with me. Being able to sit there in my little dark room and going, “Oh, God, I’m seeing this. I’m one of the few people to have ever seen it”



## Do you feel a special attraction to wildlife documentaries and the nonfiction genre as opposed to films and fictional stories?

**Malone-deBenedictis:** Well, I think I've been drawn to documentaries in the same way I'm drawn to any other film or any other narrative structure: it's all about the story. Whether you're telling the migration patterns of beluga whales or you're watching the Marvel's Avengers fight off Thanos, it's still a great story that you're putting together. What are those elements that really pull you in emotionally, that make you happy, make you sad, make you angry, make you want to do something? When I look at the documentaries, I'm drawn to the real elements in the world. What are the real things that are happening that have those touchpoints that really connect to me?

I also love learning. I'm so thankful that I have a job that allows me to go and dive into a space, do all this research, absorb it and become an expert. That's one of the really wonderful things about doing documentaries – learning about our world and then finding stories to tell.

**Danner-McDonald:** It's the same for me. It's taking the science and putting it into a box that every viewer will understand. It's making the viewer go, "Oh my God, that mother has to raise a child on her own, and now there's a killer whale coming!" That's drama. And what's great about nature documentaries is that you have to learn how it works in nature so that you're able to convey a sense of story, of worry, of fear, of what the animals are going through. There are a little more layers to natural history documentaries than some other genres.

## So both of you have been in this industry for a long time. How have you seen the wildlife documentary genre change over the years?

**Malone-deBenedictis:** I've seen the industry change in two ways. One is that the technology has just improved dramatically. We're able to capture things that, 20 years ago, we never would have imagined. It's evolved the industry to be able to reveal more behaviors, more insights, and I hope it's allowed the audience to connect more to nature. The more we're able to see, the more we care.

The second evolution is that there's been a real shift in the appreciation of documentaries. Before it was limited to maybe just PBS and the occasional independent documentary. But with more outlets out there, documentaries have found a place, and people are watching them a lot more.

**Danner-McDonald:** From an editor's perspective, the industry has been transported. Back when I started in the booth, edit suites cost \$300,000 to \$500,000 with all the machines you needed. Today, applications are free, you just need to buy a \$1,500 laptop.

I think the past 15 years of reality TV has a few things that can go back to documentaries, where we're trying to tell stories that are factual, but with a rapport – a relationship of how animals relate to us.

But one thing that really hasn't changed is that you still have small shops dedicated to innovations, science and stories that need to be told. What I love about working with Red Rock is that they're always doing small shops with great core people who are really committed to a culture of learning and presenting epic stories. It can be a small digital product or an Emmy-nominated series. If you can dream it, tell it to Shannon and she'll develop it.



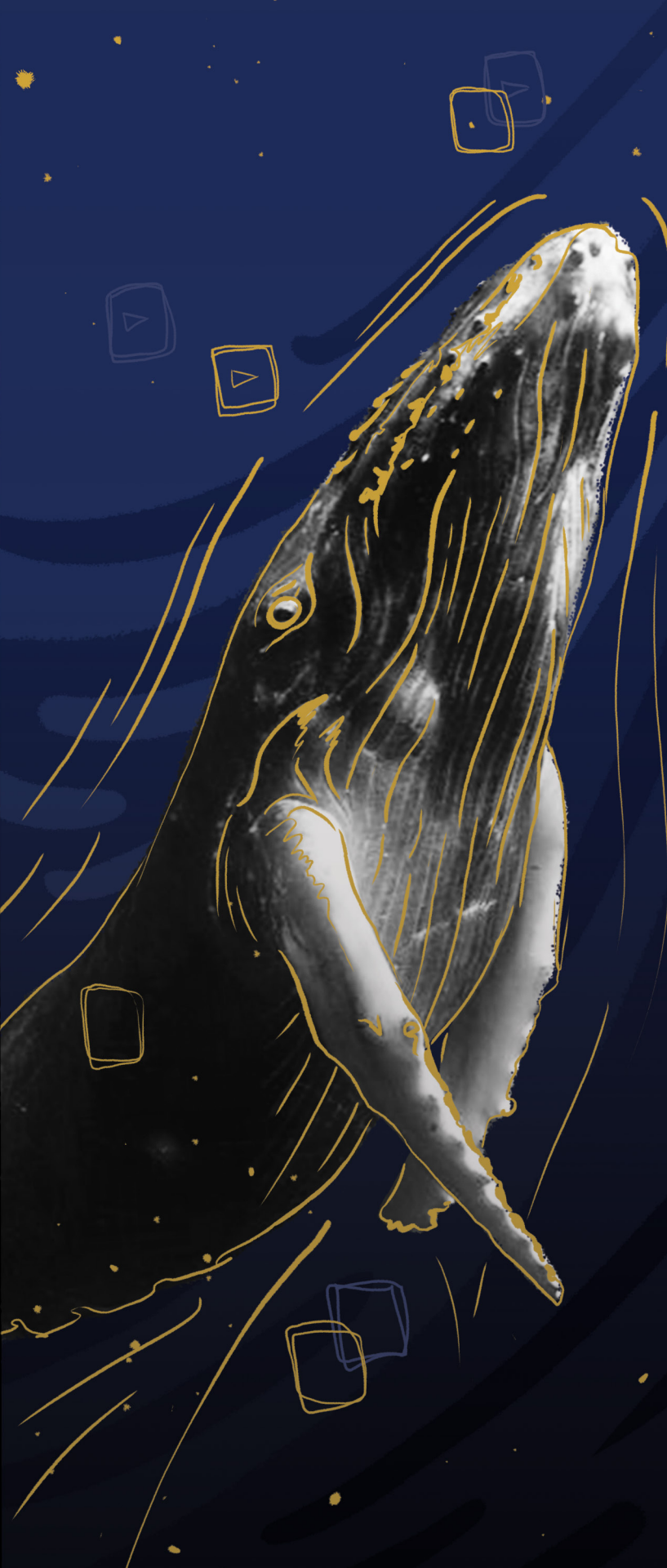
## How was your experience working with big corporations like Disney?

**Malone-deBenedictis:** We've been really fortunate. Red Rock has had relationships and has produced for Disney, Netflix, Discovery, Smithsonian's, WebMD, etc. One of the things that have been successful for us is we invest a lot of time in understanding what our clientele is looking for.

It's also really important with any corporation to be collaborative. It's understanding what they want and shaping the editorial vision around what we can provide. I think it's actually good from a creative standpoint because if you have a very siloed creative vision on what you want to do, it can hurt you as a creative. I read a great article about documentary filmmaking that said, "You aren't making this documentary yourself, you are making this documentary for everyone but yourself."

**Danner-McDonald:** If I could answer from the independent contractor's position, for the SCAD students who are graduating and going into the workforce as freelancers: Unless you have a lot of money in your background that you can pull from, you're going to have to work with some clients that you might think is the "corporate enemy." The truth of it comes down to: you're working with people. They might work for a big conglomerate, but there's just one person you're communicating with, and they're probably great and they just want to make this story great. And you have to be able to understand where other people are coming from, work with them, and be able to adjust.

**"Secrets of the Whales" is now streaming on Disney+.**







# RAPHAEL BAHINDWA

B.F.A Painting

Growing up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, art was exposed to me from an early age through my culture. My father spoke to me in detail about my lineage. He showed me imagery of my ancestors who were warriors, who wore traditional masks, and who did a lot of arts and crafts.

I draw a lot of inspiration from Congolese arrows, masks and other artifacts emblematic of my country, but also from the turmoil that is happening there, namely the foreign exploitation of the DRC's resources. I feel it's important as an artist representing the Congo to give a voice to our struggles. ■









SCAN MAGAZINE  
FALL 2021

# ART CORNER

CHAOTIC CREATIONS



**Riley Lucero**

Third-year, animation



**Roxy Urquiza Flores**  
Alumna, illustration







**Kahil Zais bin Nazrin**  
Fourth-year, sculpture





**Ernest Brants**

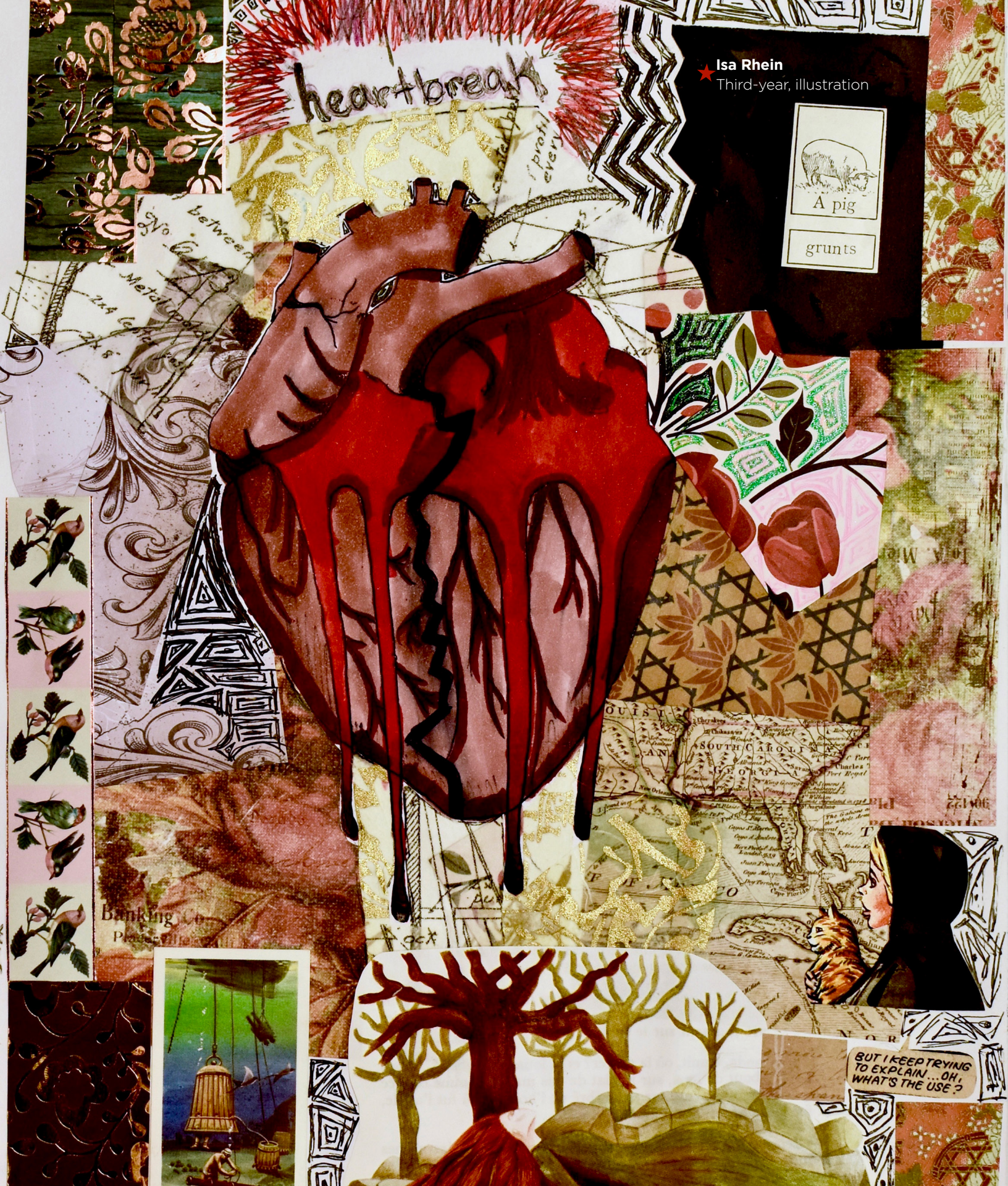
Fourth-year, illustration



**Candance Stewart**

Third-year, illustration





★ Isa Rhein  
Third-year, illustration



BUT I KEEP TRYING TO EXPLAIN... OH, WHAT'S THE USE?









SCAN