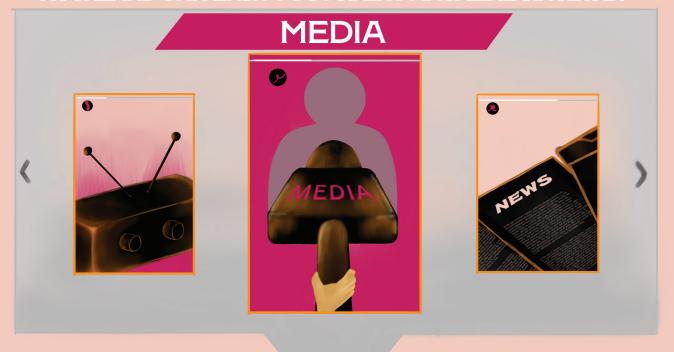
**AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927** 





'A CENTURY OF MODERN ART' EXHIBITION INTERVIEW

Judy Zhang

UBIQ LIQUIDATION: PRINT MEDIA DOWN THE DRAIN

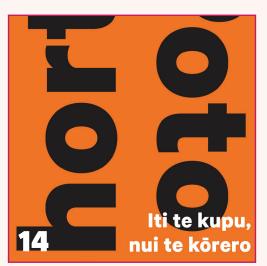
Azzurra Snelgrove-Douch INTERVIEW ON SHORT / POTO: A DUAL-LANGUAGE ANTHOLOGY

Viviene Bunquin

AUSA PRESENTS KARAOKE CHICANIA S LIVE MUSIC 118 21-23 JULY 10AM-8PM STUDENT QUAD











# STUBLINOU

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#### Join the Craccum Crew

Did you know 92% of this issue of Craccum was made by our team of volunteer artists and writers?





Ka pai everyone! We smashed our contribution goal for Issue 6!

Scan the QR code to get your writing or art featured in the next issue of Craccum!



#### **OUR STAFF**

#### **Harry Sutton**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

editorinchief@craccum.co.nz

#### Lewis Matheson Creed (HE/HIM)

MANAGING EDITOR

managingeditor@craccum.co.nz

#### Lee Li (SHE/HER)

**DIGITAL MANAGER** 

@leeiloveeeeu

digitalmanager@craccum.co.nz

Cindy Limanto VISUAL ARTS CO-EDITOR

#### **Inara Ray**

**VISUAL ARTS CO-EDITOR** 

@inararay\_art

visualarts@craccum.co.nz

#### Irene Parsaei

**NEWS EDITOR** 

news@craccum.co.nz

#### **Nick Withers (HE/THEY)**

**DESIGNER** design@ausa.org.nz ADVERTISING advertising@ausa.org.nz

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous, Auckland University Chess Association | @uoachessassociation, Azzurra Snelgrove-Douch, Arshita Bhardwaj, Glenn McConnell, Trevor Pronoso | Film Editor & Archivist, @rics. racket | Archivist, Maisarah Madawi | @ maimaisaraaah, Judy Zhang, Viviene Bunquin, @y.an\_huang2, Chanelle Frank, Angelina Prem | Enigmatologist @\_angelic.hooman, Bailey Larkin (She/They), Bennieandthejetts | Horoscopes, Ignacio Javier Van Looy, Cameron Burton, Ben Luo, Phoebe Turner, Rose Taylor-Meade, Anthony Fleming, Toby Tomkinson, Zainah Merani, Foxley, Ariel Kalman, Pia | @pianormous, @ **ESTA\_EATS** 

Cover by Maisarah Madawi | @maimaisaraaah

Centrefold by @rics.racket

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**TOP LEVEL STUDENT UNION BUILDING** 34 PRINCES STREET



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#### EDITORIAL



HARRY SUTTON

ell, hello everyone! It's been a minute since the last CRACCUM, and wow, a lot has happened! We had the interfaculty tournament, which featured many memorable moments, including a buzzer-beating game winner in the basketball final, which sent the crowd into chaos. It truly was a moment to remember!

AUSA hosted end-of-semester events such as the movie night, and also various live student music nights hosted at your very own, Shadows bar!

We had thousands of students graduate from this very university during our May graduation, and plenty of other major events that can't all be covered in this one editorial. And the most important thing, we retained our status as a top 100 university globally! Which I'm sure was so important to you all lol.

But what else happened outside of the university? Donald Trump continues, for whatever reason, to hit every single country in the world with tariffs.

Earth had the shortest day ever due to an unexpected acceleration in Earth's rotation, just another thing to worry about, oh, and we thought the world might enter a nuclear war! Just a very active few months on planet Earth.

In my personal sports news, my Crusaders won Super Rugby! As I'm sure all of Auckland is happy about that, too? No? Yeah, that makes a little sense.

Continuing with sport, the All Blacks and Black Ferns started their years right with wins against France and Australia, and OKC won the NBA championship anddd PSG won the Champions League.

Moving on to the theme of this CRACCUM, which is media! In this modern age of technology and AI and deepfakes, and everything else in between, the media landscape and journalism itself have never been so diverse and honestly crazy. Although CRACCUM may have won Best Al Usage at the 2024 Aotearoa Student Press Awards (in absentia), we realise the need for the urgent need for the appropriate application of ethics in this landscape. News outlets are trying their best to combat misinformation and AI, but with how easy and simple it is to use AI to spread and create stories that are falsified, it's becoming a real challenge. I mean, I get sent videos of interviews with celebrities or world leaders saying just the most outrageous stuff, and even I, a GEN Zer, struggle sometimes to see that it is AI or faked. They can change even the background of a shot and manipulate it to make it seem so real, I couldn't even tell.

That is where media looks like it's heading, but at least One News hasn't started doing that yet or have they...

# NEWS

## UBIQ LIQUIDATION: PRINT MEDIA DOWN THE DRAIN

AS UOA'S ONLY BOOKSTORE BEGINS THE PROCESS OF LIQUIDATION, WE ASK: IS OUR PRINT MEDIA DOWN THE DRAIN?

**AZZURRA SNELGROVE-DOUCH** 

BIQ, our campus bookstore since 1966, went into liquidation on July 2nd, following significant financial struggle. The store will remain open until the end of August, six weeks into Semester 2, thanks to rent-free occupancy provided by the university, which is also working closely with liquidators to minimise disruption for staff and students. For students, only stock on hand will be available for purchase, with no special orders. If you plan to purchase or redeem course books for Semester 2, be sure to do so before closing day on August 31st. While returns won't be accepted, gift cards and vouchers can still be redeemed by students and staff with university ID. Staff members were also urged to place orders by the General library on July 7th, due to a 'supply issue'.

Meltzer Mason, the insolvency firm assigned to UBIQ's liquidation, sees the sale of the business as the preferred option for realising the company's assets. In a liquidation report, issues such as declining student population and adverse economic climate were cited as contributing factors to UBIQ's decline. The store owes an estimated \$586,526 to unsecured creditors, as well as around \$150,000 to gift card and store credit holders. They are also alleged to owe \$154,919 in wages and holiday pay and owe Inland Revenue over \$28,000 in GST and employee reductions. In total, debts could reach up to \$919,000, with additional debts to secured creditors, including Westpac, Fujifilm, David Bateman Ltd, and Acco New Zealand Ltd.

Our credit cards and spending habits reveal a growing trend across the student body: a declining interest in physical media. There seems to be growing sentiment that print media is an unnecessary expense, with many students comparing UBIQ's high prices with the convenience and affordability of digital formats. Many students seemed unsurprised by the liquidation, pointing out the bookshop's tendency to 'overcharge and underdeliver'. As one student put it: "It's most likely the digitisation of materials leading to...students (engaging) in piracy to avoid the exuberant costs that publishers charge".

The implications of this closure were questioned by both students and alumni. Whether the bookstore will be bought out by the University or replaced by another store remains uncertain. The danger is clear: the possibility of a campus which no longer requires print media, as



PHOTO BY AZZURRA SNELGROVE-DOUCH

we move further along the timeline of the digital age. We contacted both UBIQ and AUSA in search of insight. There seemed to be a lack of information available, even to staff, with one admitting that they themselves "don't really know what's going on". Meanwhile, AUSA president Gabriel Boyd clarified that, despite news coverage, AUSA is not the direct owner of UBIQ and instead the beneficiary of the owning trust, so has no direct operational control over the bookstore. He added that AUSA is also still uncertain as to whether the bookstore will be bought by the university or a third party. However, their priorities now lie in ensuring students retain access to necessary materials.

Some also questioned the university's involvement in UBIQ's closure. One student asked: "What on earth is going on with university shops??? Five coffee shops shut down... shops in the Quad sitting empty... Shadows shutting down at least twice in the past year, prices going well through the roof, yet attendance seems to be its highest since precovid... you can only blame so much on the economy and inflation and wonder how much the university has screwed all these places over."

Beyond the initial shock, this prompts deeper conversation surrounding print media's role on campus, as digital media becomes increasingly commonplace. UBIQ's closed doors fit into a broader trend of digitisation, marking the possibility of yet another redundancy. Over recent years, we've headed steadily towards this 'digital future', explaining perhaps the indifference of many students. Many of our resources have undergone this digital switch, most notably the consolidation of three Creative Arts and Industry libraries into the main General library in 2018, which saw cutbacks on books and print media. The university defended this decision, stating that students were 'increasingly choosing digital study options', and citing a responsibility to be financially viable.

The move is part of a broader cut on print media, particularly the decline of physical journalism. This digital wave has encapsulated all, with even Craccum partially shifting media formats earlier this year. AUSA's Craccum Administrative Board stated that this budget cut was to 'better serving the evolving needs of students' and claimed there was declining readership and advertising revenue. However, since AUSA runs the advertising for Craccum, the decline in advertising revenue reflects poorly on their management capabilities. Furthermore, there was no consultation with the student body either. With Craccum, UBIQ and the other student cultural entities it is a guardian for such as 95bFM and Shadows, it seems AUSA's modus operandi is keeping us in the dark about its plans until it's too late for anyone to do or say anything about their decision, so it is final. Students are confused, pessimistic and left picking up the pieces of our declining campus culture.

For others, particularly alumni, it feels like the loss of an institution which had previously withstood digitisation. One person commented: "I really miss physical media. Digital changes how we read and research". Others see it as an attack, particularly on the arts and humanities sectors. Many feel digital replacements are inadequate, with scholars stating that this switch "reflects the blinkered ignorance of technocrats and administrators" who don't understand the deeper level of education that books offer. There's also fear surrounding this emerging format and its possible influence on our perception of information. After all, UoA has already seen a decline in interest in arts and humanities focused courses, with a steady rising interest in more practical, applied subjects such as Business and Engineering. This sentiment was echoed by scholars, who felt that this cutdown on physical media and increasing focus on convenience has "systematically devalued the areas of intellectual, social, political and cultural inquiry, in favour of education which prioritises practical, applied knowledge".

In the end, UBIQ's closing doors represent not only the loss of a beloved bookstore, but also a shift in our media consumption habits. Their financial struggle reflects students' changing habits as we move away from physical media in favour of digital options. For now, the doors close on UBIQ, and perhaps on print media itself.

## DAVID SEYMOUR VS...THE UN, I GUESS.



IRENE PARSAEI

Group projects are a nightmare. Especially if there's no communication between any of the group members, and everyone just seems to be doing their own thing. While they're not in university anymore, the three leaders of our current coalition government seem to embody the vibes and chaos of a failing group project perfectly. Chris Luxon seems disinterested in most matters, I don't really know what David Seymour is doing, and Winston Peters just hates everyone. Truly a dream team, right?

This dynamic has only been proven further by the recent news of Seymour's blunder of a letter to the United Nations. In June, Albert K. Barume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had written and sent a letter to the New Zealand government outlining some concerns, some of which was about the Regulatory Standards Bill, proposed by David Seymour. This bill is explained as providing regulatory principles that would have to be considered by lawmakers and the government should they wish to create new legislation.

Since its proposal, there have been numerous concerns raised about the bill, and the general reaction from the public has been negative, to which Seymour has been quoted to dismiss these reactions as having been made by 'bots.' Convenient. The strongest point of criticism for the bill comes from the fact that there was little to no engagement or consultation with Māori before the bill was introduced. An inquiry conducted by the Waitangi Tribunal found that if the bill is enacted without any Māori engagement, it would likely breach the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These concerns were also expressed by Barume in his letter

Seymour, who just to clarify is *not* the foreign affairs minister and also should *not* be giving an individual response decided to say fuck it, and sent back a scathing letter in which he called Barume's letter 'condescending', questioned Barume's audacity in even voicing his concerns, and framed the whole situation as an attack on New Zealand's sovereignty.

Now, after probably getting told off by Luxon and Peters (although he denies this), Seymour has accepted to withdraw the letter that he sent in order for Winston Peters, the actual Foreign Affairs Minister, to coordinate an official response. Despite this, Seymour still stands by the contents of his initial letter, stating that "we all agree that the UN's criticisms are crazy." Winston Peters denied this when asked about it, asking reporters "why would he say that?" Why indeed Winston.

Chris Luxon on the other hand has decided to side with Seymour in calling the UN's letter 'a waste of time', while also stating that Winston Peters should be the one to give the official response.

Needless to say this group project isn't going well.





## WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT YOUTH PARLIAMENT?

#### HOW TALK CALLING OUT CENSORSHIP IRONICALLY CENSORED OUR YOUTH MPS.

ARSHITA BHARDWAJ AND GLENN MCCONNELL

The other week 16-to-18-year-olds filled in as Youth MPs at Parliament. And to cover the Youth Parliament, the Youth Press Gallery arrived at the capital amid accusations of "censorship" and fierce debate about voting rights.

But as Youth Press Gallery correspondent Arshita Bhardwaj reports, the Youth Parliament was about far more than 'censorship'. For those who aren't already aware, here's your TLDR: Youth MPs in Youth Parliament 2025 faced tight restrictions, impacting live streaming and speech topics. Some Youth MPs accused the Government of attempting to censor the Youth Parliament, while Young NZ First and others argued no such censorship occurred. The Ministry for Youth Development, which runs the event, admitted its communications could have been clearer - after Minister for Youth James Meager said officials only wanted to offer support, not limit what could or could not be said.

But the accusations of censorship risked drowning out other, important, topics debated during Youth Parliament. From my seat in the press gallery, I saw that Youth Parliament was far more than the talk about censorship communicates. The 123 Youth MPs, who came to Wellington from across the nation, showed how diverse Aotearoa has become. The Youth Parliament was a remarkably diverse space, even more so than the adult Parliament itself. That diversity means there cannot be one single, uniform opinion among Youth MPs. That's the point. Youth Parliament exists precisely to reflect the wide range of issues and experiences that matter to young people across Aotearoa. Fixating on censorship risks flattening that diversity and drowning out conversations about the real challenges youth MPs came to raise. The very fact that the media is covering multiple, sometimes contradictory perspectives on censorship speaks to the vibrancy of Youth Parliament.

Despite the constraints felt, Youth MPs continue to speak up, applaud, challenge, and hold leaders accountable. And they continue to raise issues on behalf of their age group, a group which cannot have a say at the ballot box. The key issues were housing, the climate, growing wealth gaps, international conflicts, mental health, developing education systems, the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, workforces under pressure, employment, and the impacts of laws on vulnerable communities. Across the two days of general debate, powerful speeches addressed urgent problems within Aotearoa. Among them was Youth MP Matthew Debreceny's fierce call for Aotearoa to uphold its obligations as an international peer. "I want them to know a world where genocide can only be seen in their history books, and not on the six o'clock news," he declared.

Debreceny cut to the heart of it. He could have recited the statistics, but instead reminded us of these are real people, not just numbers. People who, like the Youth MPs themselves, dream of changing the world for the better. Not only did he speak up, but he also did something about it. The morning of his speech Debreceny sent statements out to all the cabinet ministers with a list of demands, including placing sanctions Israel. One of many ways Aotearoa should be meeting its international obligations. To promote peace and prevent conflict is what we signed up for when we became a member of the United Nations and it's time that we upheld that. So, I urge you to look beyond the question of whether censorship happened and instead focus on the voices and urgent issues behind it.





## DO YOU NEED-O SOME PASTA?



IRENE PARSAEI

For years now, if anybody on campus has had a craving for Italian food, Needo has been the go-to spot. Operating from the small yellow stand in the court-yard outside of Kate Edgar, Needo serves a variety of different pastas from lamb ragu, to pesto, to mac n cheese. During lunch hours, you're almost guaranteed to spot a handful of students walking around campus holding the familiar navy blue Needo cartons. If you're a fan, get ready to spend even more money at Needo in Semester 2. They've just gotten a glow up.

The cafe space to the right (your right) of Needo, which used to be Shaky Isles and recently has just been empty, has now become the pasta-merchant's new location. No longer do you have to stand in the rain while waiting to pick up your order of marinara pasta with parmesan, there will now be spaces inside to sit. But hold up, that's not all! In addition to the already beloved pasta menu, Needo will also now serve pizza, and whispers say perhaps even gelato for the upcoming warmer months.

But you may find yourself asking, Irene, what is going to happen to the yellow stand that Needo used to occupy?

Throughout Semester 1, many different food vendors had pop-ups in the courtyard in the stand next to where Needo was. Different businesses selling piz-za, doughnuts, and desserts all came and went, but one of them is now becoming a permanent part of the UoA food scene. Bagel Love is officially taking Needo's spot! With numerous different flavours of both bagels and fillings, Bagel Love now presents another food option for students.

With the opening of Bagel Love, and the re-opening of Needo in a much larger space with a now expanded menu, these spots will offer nourishment and fuel students through the upcoming semester.

Send your tip offs, gossip and news articles to news@craccum.co.nz

#### A FANTASY OR DISTANT-REALITY? AUCKLAND BECOMING AUSTRALASIA'S BEST STUDENT CITY.

EXPLORING AUCKLAND COUNCIL'S ACTION PLAN.



IRENE PARSAEI

hat comes to mind when you think of a city that is perfect for students? Perhaps you're thinking of cheap, reliable public transportation, or affordable groceries and rent. Or maybe you're looking more on the social side of things, focusing on the activities, clubs and accessible spaces. Does Auckland come to mind when envisioning any of those things?

I'd bet that the answer is probably no. A lot of students can agree that Auckland isn't particularly the greatest city to be in for students. For years issues such as unreliable public transport, and rising grocery and rent prices have made it difficult for students to make the most of their 'golden years' in Auckland. Finally, after ranking 24th (which has now gone down to 25th) on the 'QS Best Student Cities' list, it seems that Auckland Council's competitive spirit has kicked in.

In June, Auckland Council released an action plan which stated its goal of 'providing the best tertiary student experience in Australasia'. The document states that the estimated 70,000 university students in Auckland are a vital part of the city who bring about energy and creativity. In addition to acknowledging students already in Aotearoa, the council is also interested in drawing in more international students. By making Auckland a more desirable and accommodating city for students already here, they will also be able to compete with other countries in terms of being a potential location for international students and researchers.

So, what strategies is Auckland Council proposing in order to transform Auckland into a premier student city? Four categories of proposed actions are described.

## FOSTER STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CITY CENTRE LIFE.

Essentially, make student life more fun and provide more activities and events catered to students. Some plans listed under this category include creating and promoting activities taking place in the city during the orientation weeks of Semester 1 and Semester 2. Examples of activities and events proposed in the document include a vintage market, festivals that showcase the diversity of the city, annual student-focused events, and performing arts related activities such as performances by students

Participation in city life doesn't mean just fun and games though, as there are also multiple plans to create more connections between students and potential employers and their businesses within the city.

## ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE STUDENTS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.

The ideas given for this aspect of the plan seem to heavily focus on making students feel more encouraged before beginning their university journey and celebrated when they are graduating. Outlined in the potential ways to create a sense of community celebration are plans for putting up congratulatory banners in the city, and engaging local businesses with celebrating graduation. The timeframe for the beginning of these plans is set for August.

In terms of acknowledging and encouraging students starting university, there are plans (to be confirmed) to have kiosks at the airport for international students, offering them a welcome pack with essential items that they need such as a SIM card, or an AT Hop Card.

#### SUPPORT IMPROVED SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS.

If you've ever walked through Albert Park at night, this section will matter to you. In this section, there are plans for more security cameras, increased security, and better lighting. More communication to students about safety, and also the development of 'safe zones' during Orientation weeks and graduation are also proposed.

Public transport is also discussed, with proposals to create bike parkings, and investing more into bus connections between social areas like K Road, downtown CBD and the Viaduct. Affordability of public transport is also mentioned, with ideas of making public transport free on days such as graduation, orientation or open days in order to encourage people into the city and remove potential barriers.

Student concession rates and fare caps are also mentioned. These already exist, however they very much still have room for improvement.

## OF THE CITY CENTRE AS A PLACE FOR STUDENTS TO LIVE.

Perhaps the most important aspect of their proposed plan, this section tackles all of the common concerns and struggles that students in Auckland currently face. It talks about ensuring affordability of accommodation, and that any potential needs of students living in those accommodations is met. It also very crucially references research that has been conducted into issues such as cost of living, affordability of food and public transportation. The document states that following the results of the research done, actions will be taken to address these issues that are currently affecting the desirability of Auckland as a student city.

The document shows that many of these proposed plans are set to begin in 2025, with some of them being scheduled to begin ASAP. Hopefully, the students reading this article now will be able to feel some of the benefits before they graduate.



# AUSA & AUPISA PRESE

GET YOUR TICKETS HERE



**23 JULY** 

6.30PM

**B201 ATRIUM** 





# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MAKE AUCKLAND A BETTER CITY FOR STUDENTS?

WHAT DO UOA STUDENTS THINK?

**IRENE PARSAEI AND ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTORS** 

"(HEAPER FOOD

OFFERINGS ON CAMPUS."

"LOWER COST OF LIVING,

"LOWER COST OF LIVING,

AND AFFORDABLE

GROCERIES THAT CATER

TO STUDENTS."

Recently, Auckland Council released an action plan to make Auckland the best city for students in Australasia. Detailed in this plan were many ways to make this happen, but we wanted to ask the students from UOA what their thoughts were on how this goal could be achieved.

As the responses started coming through, a clear pattern unveiled itself almost immediately. There was one thing that 72% of responses agreed on:

#### BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Many of the responses surrounding this topic were calling for the same changes.

Cheaper and more affordable fares, more frequent buses, and a more reliable system with less cancellations or buses arriving too early/late.

Some other responses and ideas are expressed here:

"MAKING THE CITY MORE

"MAKING THE CITY MORE

WALKABLE, CREATING GREEN

SPACES AND SOLAR CHARGING

STATIONS."

- "MORE AFFORDABLE
- HOUSING AND
- SAFER RENTING
- ARRANGEMENTS."
- HKKHNYEMENT

"(REATING
MORE JOBS FOR
STUDENTS."

## HARRY'S BI-WEEKLY SPORTS RECAP! FROM CRACCUM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Iright, now my favourite kind of story! There is a lot to cover, but I will try my best to inform you on all the best sporting news over the last wee while!

#### BOTH ALL BLACKS AND BLACK FERNS START THEIR SEASONS OFF WITH A WIN.

A week is a lifetime in sport, as we saw over the second test of the All Blacks versus France series, where the narrow victory the week prior was just a distant memory. As the men in black set the tone, scoring try after try and beating the French comfortably 43-17. An overall much slicker, cleaner and better-looking All Black performance and relaxing the ease of Kiwis all around the world.

Continuing the trend of winning, the woman in black looked a little slow to start their game versus the Wallaroos, only leading 10-7. However, they came out on fire, from Portia Woodman-Wickliffe to newbie Jorja Miller dominating both sides of the field. It was a second-half domination from the Black Ferns, who beat the Wallaroos 37-12. They will need to take this winning momentum into their next game as they prepare to defend their Rugby World Cup title.

## OKC WIN THEIR FIRST EVER NBA

I mean, are we surprised?

Although it took them seven long, gruelling games against the scrappy Indiana Pacers, OKC looked like the best team in the league all season long, including the playoffs. They blew out teams, they won in the clutch, and they had the MVP of the league. After torturous playoff runs that this fanbase had been through, it was about time that OKC won their first title.

They have young stars in Jalin Williams, they have veterans like Alex Caruso, and they have a coach of the year in Mark Daigneault. They are poised and ready to go back-to-back. We very well could be looking at the next great dynasty.

#### CHELSEA WINS THE CLUB WORLD CUP OVER PSG

Thanks to a Cole Palmer masterclass, Chelsea was able to easily beat powerhouse PSG 3-0 to win their first-ever Club World Cup trophy.

PSG before this game were heavy heavy favourites going into this game due to PSG winning the Champions League and Chelsea barely making it into the top four of the Premier League last season and winning the Conference League, PSG were still heavily best to win.

It didn't take long for Cole Palmer to find the back of the net, with him scoring twice within the first 30 minutes of the game. PSG were stunned. Palmer then set up his teammate Joao Pedro to score a third goal, and Chelsea never looked back, with the final score showing 3-0 in favour of the underdog Chelsea. Maybe this is the time for Chelsea to build themselves back up to winning the Premier League.....

# REDEMPTION FOR YANNIK SINNER AS HE WINS WIMBLEDON AGAINST RIVAL CARLOS ALCARAZ

Although it wasn't as close or intense as their final from Roland Garros, as Yannik Sinner redeemed himself, winning Wimbledon 4-6 6-4 6-4 6-4. No generation comeback from Carlos Alcaraz this time. Sinner made sure of it.

His forehand was dominant, his volleys looked strong, Sinner took the second set and he never looked back once he led the fourth set 3-1, There was no chance of a comeback from Alcaraz, as even Alcaraz began to display the smallest signs

of dejection dashing his hopes of winning three successive All England Club titles was extinguished.

A somewhat straightforward final compared to the craziness of this tournament overall, and I'm sure there isn't the last time we see these two battling for a grand slam.

# VENEZUELA ARE THE NEW MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CHAMPIONS, BEATING NEW ZEALAND 3-0

The Black Sox will return home with silver medals after a hard-fought final against Venezuela in the World Championship Softball final.

The men in Black were looking to add to their winning ways in this tournament, attempting to win their eighth title; however, it wasn't their day as they were held scoreless 3-0, forcing them to settle into a very respectable second place, a much improved position than their previous time around in 2022 where they placed eighth.

The game was lost in the bottom of the sixth inning, where Venezuelan Jesus Kleiver Barreto Rodriguez hit a two-run shot to increase the lead to 3-0. The men in black tried their best to get runners to score, but their bats went cold and couldn't close the gap, leaving the final score and the win to Venezuela. Their first ever.

Although the Black Sox weren't able to win, they will come back home with silverware and that is all we can ask for.

That's all I have for today, until next time!





# AUSA PRESENTS

PERFORMER SIGN-UP!



**23 JULY** 

**12 PM** 

STUDENT QUAD



## CAPTURING MOMENTS IN TIME

INTERVIEW WITH SOPHIE MATTHIESSON ON 'A CENTURY OF MODERN ART' EXHIBITION



**JUDY ZHANG** 

n the reclaimed serenity of Auckland Art Gallery following a busy opening weekend, *Craccum* spoke with Dr Sophie Matthiesson, Senior Curator of International Art, about the new exhibition of iconic paintings that have journeyed all the way from Toledo, Ohio. As we moved through the space to stop in front of masterpieces, so too did our conversation, meandering from art's evolution in the wake of new technology to the ongoing human pursuit of documenting and decoding the world through images.

#### Judy: To begin, could you share a bit about your journey and how you brought this exhibition to Tāmaki Makaurau?

Sophie Matthiesson: A Century of Modern Art is a touring exhibition of Impressionists right through to Pop artists. I have always specialised in international shows like this one — I spent 13 years as a curator at the National Gallery of Victoria before joining the Auckland Art Gallery.

As the host institution for this exhibition, we've been working closely with Erin Corrales-Diaz, Curator of American art at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio who proposed the concept and checklist. I started with her ideas and translated them forward into multiple levels of interpretation within the exhibition space. So your ticket brings you not only an amazing lineup of artworks from an eminent collection in America, but also your room brochure, wall texts and labels, and access to an audio guide. There's a whole set of public programmes and lecture series offered alongside the show as well. You could spend your entire winter in the Gallery uncovering new layers in this exhibition.

Museums offer inclusive experience and the beginning of a dialogue, through the artworks as well as through the exchange of ideas between professionals as they work together. It's very enriching to be on the team behind these kinds of shows.

## Do you feel like there are any misunderstood or overlooked aspects of curating?

SM: Well, there's a lot of layers to any show. We've just got such a wide, wide audience, from children to people with learning disabilities and all sorts of experiential challenges. How do you convey a show like this to the partially sighted? How do you convey the paintings representing soundscapes and music to people who are auditorily challenged? It's very much a collaborative effort with the designers and specialists in our public programmes teams to turn one exhibition into a versatile offering that can benefit as many people as possible.

Speaking of audiences, this exhibition features many big names including Monet, Degas, and Van Gogh. How do you balance your experience as senior curator with the kind of expectations visitors might bring with them?

SM: In this particular example it's very easy because the Toledo Museum of Ohio has always had a policy of buying the best of the best. If you come to this show you'll see the very best of Van Gogh. One of the most large-scale and sublime water lily paintings by Monet at the height of his powers. One of Gauguin's earliest Tahitian scenes. You'll see a superlative example of those big-name artists. Toledo has a super high quality collection, only it hardly ever travels as a group. The Monet, for example, is so large you would almost never bother to lend it because it requires a huge air freighter. It's a huge privilege to work with these pictures and to have them under one roof at the same time.

## That must have been a lot of organise. Did you run into any crazy logistical predicaments?

SM: I haven't personally had any crazy moments, and transporting paintings doesn't pose the same challenges as sculptures can. But having said that, it's not always a case of hopping in a plane and airlifting them from A to B. The first shipment was delayed at the airport and one of the couriers from Toledo Museum had spent almost 30 hours on the road, escorting the works from the Midwest to New York by truck...she was just utterly exhausted.

The word "Modern" here refers to the art period between the late 19th and 20th century. We're a fair distance from that chronologically, but do you think there are any questions or desires pursued by the Modern painters that are still relevant today?

SM: Oh, yes. There's the ongoing challenge of seeing the world with new eyes, breaking with learned ways of looking and thinking. Sometimes you have to be shown how to do it. The Impressionist movement came about because enough like-minded people began creating works which challenged conventional perception at the same time.

Another important aspect is experimentation with new materials. This exhibition witnesses a number of leaps in technology: the introduction of new colours like mauve, painting on ready-stretched canvases instead of the artist having to stretch them out themselves, aniline dyes in the late 19th century. The invention of the train system in the 1840s meant artists could travel to distant places quickly, bringing portable equipment like paint tubes - that was all newfangled, all freshly innovated for the growing trend of painting outdoors in the countryside. Morris Louis works with a paint maker in the 1950s to make paint acrylics more runny and thin so that he can trickle them.

We have had similar technological changes that have enabled us to transform art in our time. The age of the computer in particular. Generative Al. And the, what, NFTs? I hardly know what some of this stuff is [chuckles].

## How then do you see the role of galleries evolving, especially in this post-digital world where art and media is so accessible and so quickly made (and consumed)?

SM: We are actually making a strength of being the opposite. Slow looking. A direct connection to a work of original art. A lot of the works in this exhibition are glazed so you can actually come up close to see how they've



CLAUDE MONET, WATER LILIES, ABOUT 1922, TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE LIBBEY ENDOWMENT. GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

been made. This is an immersive kind of show, it's not a quick fix. Generally speaking, it takes over an hour to see it all. There's something pure about a show comprised of only paintings. It isn't high stimulation in the sense that there are lots of objects sitting there, but each artwork has been given its own contemplative space. I think that acts as a bit of an antidote against quick consumption.

Our conversation migrates through to the next room, and true to Sophie's word, there is something cathedral-like in the way the huge Monet water lily painting is cradled by abundance. Each frame bears the legacy of a visionary artist, each wall a gathering of contemporaries. The doorway we arrived through has a Gauguin on one side, a Van Gogh on the other — "two best friends who admired each other hugely."

I'm reminded of the international Van Gogh Alive multisensory experience which came to Auckland a couple years ago that was all over social media. It seemed as though the whole point eventually became to snap pictures of yourself there and share them online.

SM: Yes, that's really the perfect counter example. I've never been to one of those shows but I feel like I ought to, because it costs quite a lot to go to and there's not a single authentic experience in there, in the sense that there's no original work of art. It's a bit like Baudrillard's idea of the original having been replaced by simulacra, by replicas and reproductions. But here [in this exhibition] we have only the original. Coming to a show like [A Century of Modern Art] is a chance to realise mass production can't give you the proper experience of, for example, the Van Gogh painting. You'll never see a reproduced image of painting which gets the colours right. For some reason it's a very difficult picture to photograph.

There is a special experience standing in front of a work of art. For me, it means a community. It means I can look at the painting by Monet and imagine we are in Giverny. Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, would hop off the train to see these pictures in production and discuss the fact that they should be given to the French nation. His work ends up being in the Musée de l'Orangerie where people are making a pilgrimage to see them.

I also think about how Cézanne painted with Pissarro, whose enormous influence is visible in Cézanne's brushwork. Whistler and Courbet painted



VINCENT VAN GOGH, WHEAT FIELDS WITH REAPER, AUVERS, 1890, TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE LIBBEY ENDOWMENT, GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1935.4

together in Normandy; I can think of three artists who captured that particular spot that same summer. Van Gogh and Gauguin in Provence. These paintings weren't made in a vacuum at all. Each one represents a relationship with another artist, a community of artists who were not necessarily imitating each other but paying attention to what everybody else was doing.

You could interpret this room as an escape from modernity. These artists all left Paris, repelled by the Eiffel Tower

and the emphasis on wealth and industrialisation, going out on picnics to paint together, searching for utopia.

## The Impressionist artworks are quite popular among audiences, why do you think they are so beloved?

SM: I think there's an immediacy of response to the seen world, to colour, atmosphere, weather, transient effects. These are pictures that are grounded in experience and observation, not in history, in morality, or in

strong messaging - it's about living in the moment. I do believe it's a pernicious effect where we regard Impressionism as being simply pretty. That's the last thing it was at the time, the Impressionists were not attempting to create a new canon of beauty. They were rigorously engaged in experimentation and colour theories, and were politically involved too. A lot of advertising about Impressionism will tell you things like 'Monet was only an eye, but what an eye,' whereas in fact, he kept political journals and held political opinions that were considered to be auite subversive. We've depoliticised the Impressionists and turned them into something pretty to commodify. That is something we have to work against.

The latter half of the exhibition moves towards abstraction, revealing an experimental emphasis on texture, angular geometry, striking planes of complementary colours, and new methods of painting. These rooms are charged with a hushed energy.

# The artworks become less representational as the Modern period progresses. I think some audiences might find it harder to "get it" or feel that the art is more for the artist and not for the viewer. Could you share your take on that?

SM: Very good question. You do get these very cryptic messages. I think that abstraction does not come naturally to many people. We all read each other's faces and behaviours, understanding the world through visual signs. It is really difficult to free yourself from that sign-related habit of learning and understanding to attempt what the Bauhaus artists wanted us to do: to just respond to colour, relationships, and forms. To be entirely free of recognisable subjects, narrative, or any prescribed meaning. To be aware of no thing but art.

I think that in these rooms here, the artists are trying to remove art from the realm of the everyday. They are simply immersing us in sensations, unlearned sensations. This is about art propelling us into other avenues of expression in ways untrammelled by ideas of decorum and convention. In both the Ad Reinhardt and Hans Hofmann, for example, there's no story being told. But the paintings are intensely dynamic, the colours are pushing against each other, every area is an essay in texture. All these artists would say that abstraction is the purest form of painting.

The artworks most definitely appear to be different across art periods, yet



STANTON MACDONALD-WRIGHT, SYNCHROMY, BLUE-GREEN, 1916. TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE LIBBEY ENDOWMENT, GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

many of the same elements continue to be used: working with pure unmodulated hues, not trying to control how the oil paint behaves, allowing accidental effects to happen. These are all ways of exploiting spontaneity and chance effects that the Impressionists and Surrealists used as well.

### Fascinating. Do you have a personal favourite in this exhibition?

SM: I do, and I don't think it's going to change - the Van Gogh. You could hardly get a better expression of a high summer day in rural France. It's that sense of being at one with the world; the richness, the wholesomeness of the wheat fields, and the clouds racing past in the turquoise sky. I just think it's the most amazing painting, one of his last paintings produced in the days before he died. The story is that he shot himself out in the fields in July 1890, but there were local boys bullying him and no one knows how he got a gun. In any case, I don't think that the painting reflects suicidal ideation. It's the most sublime, beautiful, uplifting painting that suggests that Van Gogh had many more years of life in him. He had a very rough life, but I just think that he was a bit of a phoenix who kept rising again.

## How would you go about describing this exhibition to, say, an extra-terrestrial who has never encountered human art before?

**SM:** Well, this is a show about artists who used colour and paint to create a genuine expression of their time. Each of these artists managed to do that without looking back or being constrained by what came before — many were released by what came before.

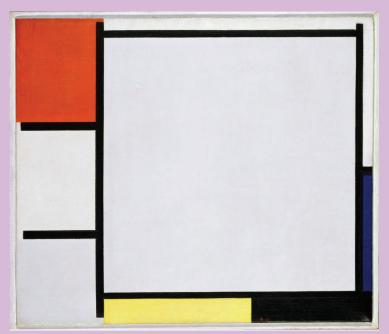
What I've seen in this exhibition is how human beings and their art unfolds like a chemical reaction. A fuse is lit at the beginning of the show, then one idea gives way to further breakthroughs. Now, I don't know how an alien would relate to that concept, but it tells me that human beings can always evolve. We can always find ways of being in the moment and responding in ways nobody else has done before.

These artists invented the imagined worlds they wanted to occupy. Pierre Bonnard painted the Mediterranean as if it's paradise on Earth. The paintings by Claude Monet, Hans Hofmann, and Josef Albers were all produced in old age when these artists had retired into a second lease of life. Monet painted hundreds of water lilies. Albers painted Homage to the Square because he wanted to capture the full gamut of effects achievable by manipulating proportions of squares and relationships of colour. He made thousands of permutations, much like Bach's preludes, fugues, and variations – just trying to push one idea to its extreme. It's one of the most amazing things, that glory of old age when you've got the freedom to pursue an idea to its very, very end point.

## Does art always require some kind of pushing back, being different to what came before, in order to evolve?

Sometimes it's just allowing the world to start to creep in again, if it's been eliminated. A bit like nature reclaiming cities. There's something quite reassuring about it.

A Century of Modern Art is yours to explore at Toi o Tāmaki until 28 September 2025.



PIET MONDRIAN, COMPOSITION WITH RED, BLUE, YELLOW, BLACK, AND GRAY, 1922, TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE LIBBEY ENDOWMENT, GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

## INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITORS OF SHORT / POTO

THE MIGHTY SHORT STORY, DUAL-LANGUAGE ANTHOLOGIES, AND NEW CREATIVE FRONTIERS



#### VIVIENE BUNQUIN

recently had the pleasure of sitting with co-editors Kiri Piahana-Wong and Michelle Elvy to discuss the release of *Short / Poto*: a boundary-pushing and magnetic anthology of Aotearoa New Zealand short stories. From luscious descriptions of traditional family dinners to incisive commentary on identity politics, *Short / Poto* captures the most illuminating parts of Aotearoa's diverse multicultural society and its emerging literary scene.

Given the dreadful weather outside, it felt fitting to open the interview with an icebreaker about everyone's current comfort reads. To my delight, Kiri enthusiastically excused herself from the screen to fetch the library books she had issued earlier that morning, including *The Joy of Snacks* by Laura Goodman. "Very fitting for exam season," I remarked as she held the title up to the camera.

I then dove into the substance of our discussion, asking what their most valuable takeaway from editing the anthology was. Kiri spoke about the privilege of receiving over a hundred submissions from around the motu, each piece a unique marvel, standing out in spectacularly distinct ways. Michelle highlighted the collection's focus on the power of language-not only in presenting English and Te Reo Māori side by side, but in showcasing imaginative and diverse uses of language in storytelling. From their responses alone, it was clear both editors had poured themselves into this project.

We turned to the translation process. Both editors worked closely with a team of translators to ensure every nuance from the original submissions—whether in English or Te Reo Māori—was meaningfully preserved. "There is never a precise word-for-word translation," Michelle noted. The imprecision of meaning often became a point of deep discussion. Kiri recalled one moment when a translator questioned whether the verb "boomed" had been intended instead of "bloomed."



Though only one letter apart, the difference was significant. After consulting the author, it was clear the soft blossoming of "bloomed" was deliberate—now accurately reflected in the Te Reo translation. It's details like this that speak to the careful editorial and translation work behind *Short/Poto*.

We also discussed the beautiful serendipities that emerged between Te Reo Māori and other migrant languages. Cadence Chung's piece on migrant cuisine included the Chinese word for grandfather yéye which translators retained in the Te Reo version. But perhaps what resonated most was Kiri's reflection on the shame often felt by beginner language learners. "That had been the case for me as an upper-beginner learner of Te Reo," she admitted. Despite feeling real excitement and empowerment when first learning a new language, there's often a fear of getting things wrong. I shared my experience incorporating Te Reo in mock courtroom competitions, where self-encouragement was paired with a deep sense of uncertainty. We seldom talk about these emotional hurdles, but they remain an important part of the language learning journey.

The editors had intended from the outset to publish a dual-text anthology featuring side-by-side translations. But as I noted when first reading the book, the true magic lies in the sheer diversity of voices. Michelle explained how much of the variety in cultural and ethnic backgrounds emerged naturally—an organic byproduct of selecting the most innovative uses of language.

The final selection posed one of the toughest challenges, but each chosen piece evoked a distinct feeling on first reading, and many rereads after. That was the unifying trait among all featured submissions.

Throughout the interview, I was struck by how intentionally Kiri and Michelle platformed both renowned writers and fresh emerging voices. One such voice is Lola Elvy, Kupe Leadership Scholar and fellow graduate of our alma mater. Lola writes about the unprecedented issue of our time: climate change.

#### Lola Elvy - Drought

The wind whispers of forgotten things. We bring ourselves to the table. Time is rich with

slowness, the way I watch with anticipation as your fingers press into the mango's skin, bend

its back to reveal the gold inside. As my fingers play around the edges of my glass, I lift it to

my lips and sip and picture rain. I think of that day: the way they pressed your skin, bent your

back. Did they find your gold? We do not speak of such things. Heavy rainfalls next season

will cause record flooding over a thousand miles away, but in two decades, the country will

be drained dry. All its water spent. Then we will want someone to blame.

#### Nā Lola Elvy — Tauraki

Kōhimuhimu ai te hau i ngā mea kua wareware kētia. Ko mātau anō e whakakotahi atu ana

ki te tēpu. Haumako kau ana te wā i te pōrori, me he ngākau hīkaka te āhua o taku mātaki

atu i a koe i ō matimati e pana atu ana ki te kiri o te hua moheni, e whakapiko ana i tōna

tuarā kia huraina ai te kiko kōura o roto. I ōku matimati e wani atu nei i te niao o taku

karaehe, ka hīkina ki ōku ngutu inu ai me te pohewa ki te ua. Mahara ai au ki taua rā: te

āhua o tā rātau pana i tō kiri, whakapiko i tō tuarā. Ko te kōura rānei te whiwhi? Kāre mātau mō te kōrero i ērā take. Ā tērā tau ka hua ake ko ngā waipuke nui neke atu i te kotahi mano māero te tawhiti atu i konei i te kino o te marangai, engari i ngā tekau tau e rua e heke nei, ka whakamimititia te whenua maroke noa. Ka pau katoa ōna wai. Kātahi tātau ka hia kimi tangata hai uapare atu mā tātau.

Some stories even began as poems. Kiri spoke about the delicate decisions involved—when transforming a poem into a short story enhanced the piece, and when it didn't. Cadence Chung's contribution, for example, originated from her poem *Carnal*, featured in a limited edition of the anthology chapbook, *Wok Hei: Aphrodisiac Poems and Recipes in the Year of the Wood Dragon*.

Short / Poto is a welcome inspiration for all young aspiring writers. Taking care to avoid narrow labels like show-casing the "best of the best", the collection instead raises a mirror to the face of Aotearoa NZ society, including its inevitable future— our rangatahi. It was interesting to learn about the deliberate editorial choice to cover universal themes (saucy content saved for another day), as Michelle stressed their goal of leveraging the book's wide accessible appeal, with the potential to resonate with adult and secondary school readers alike.

Crafting Short / Poto was far from a static process. Writers had room to adapt and evolve their work, free from the constraints of a central theme—unlike many traditional anthologies. Yet for all its ambition and innovation, the anthology faces a familiar challenge: there's still no specific literary award category for anthologies. This frustration was acutely felt by Kiri and Michelle, especially Michelle who has dedicated most of her publishing career to editing anthologies. This prompted a broader conversation

about how institutional frameworks often lag behind the organic development of creative expression. In elaboration. Kiri discussed how booksellers often prefer clear categories to market books. Michelle noted that even when publishers see the promise of a hybrid work, marketing concerns often dominate the conversation. Balancing these very real economic concerns with the integrity of the creative process is still a live issue for many actors in the publishing industry. I wonder what role we, as day-to-day consumers, play in subverting this dominant narrative of a "tough sell". Is it possible for us to overcome the simplistic pull of a categorical shorthand?

Our conversation about current publishing trends left me wondering, "At the very least, has the New Zealand publishing industry become more receptive to Te Reo Māori texts?" The question seemed especially pertinent for a dual-language anthology like Short / Poto, and its answer could have significant implications for future anthologies or other bodies of work aspiring to carry out the same kaupapa. Michelle described how more books were being translated into Te Reo Māori, from novels to story collections. A prominent example is Kotahi Rau Pukapuka – 100 books project, a series of translations in Te Reo Māori of quintessentially beloved texts, ranging from Dr Suess to Witi Ihimaera. And there's Airana Ngarewa's bilingual collection of stories, Pātea Boys. Short / Poto sits among these promising titles and offers something new by showcasing 100 compelling voices of today. Michelle pointed out that although publishers can be wary of anthologies due to marketability considerations, Massey University Press was particularly open to this project. And we are nothing but ecstatic that they were!

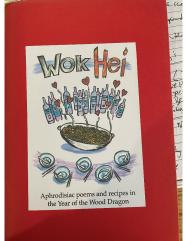
Nevertheless, anthologies are uniquely suited for experimentation. "Anthologies almost always sit outside those rules. Anthologies are, by their very nature, rule-breakers," Michelle aptly says. That sentiment resonated deeply with me. Since my teenage years, I've adored reading anthologies—flipping through pages of different voices in one sitting. In fact, one of the reasons I love writing for Craccum is the creative freedom it offers compared to my academic work. Short / Poto, of course, is no ordinary anthology. Its strength lies in its linguistic diversity and imaginative storytelling.

We spent time discussing what makes short stories so magnetic. Michelle offered a quote by Luisa Valenzuela, from a 2012 article by Robert Shapard: "I usually compare the novel to a mammal, be it wild as a tiger or tame as a cow; the short story to a bird or a fish; the microstory to an insect (iridescent in the best cases)." We paused on that word: *iridescent*. It perfectly captured the subtle yet powerful way short stories pose questions, suggest meanings, and resist tidy conclusions despite their slim length.

That thought inspired my final question: "If the sky's the limit, what would be your greatest hope for the book?" Kiri hoped to see the anthology integrated into school curricula, inspiring future generations of Te Reo learners. Michelle echoed this, noting Te Reo Māori's status as an official language and the importance of creative language learning. Rather than sticking to textbook grammar, she encouraged readers to explore language through fiction. Though writing creatively in a second language is tough, the rewards—both personal and cultural—are immense.

Despite these big-picture hopes, Kiri also shared a simpler dream: "If one day, I find myself outside Whanganui, and I see someone reading our book in public..." I smiled as I replied, "If your daydream involved someone reading Short / Poto on an Albert Park bench in Auckland, then you might have already fulfilled that dream." That's where I first started reading the book, dear Craccum readers — and yes, it was the perfect park bench read.

And so, nearly two hours later, I found myself waving awkwardly at my laptop screen, overflowing with gratitude for Kiri and Michelle. While this article may not be short, the stories in *Short / Poto* are. They're punchy, poetic, and dense with meaning. Before Ubiq closes its final chapter, open this one. The stories will stay with you long after you turn the last page.





Cadence Chung

# THE POWER BEHIND THE FABRIC

WHY THE MEDIA STILL STRIPS POWER FROM WOMEN, LAYER BY LAYER—WITH DRESSES, HEADLINES, AND SILENCE.



Click"—the sound of a shutter.

Another photograph of a First
Lady dressed in haute couture.

One after another, these photos become the cover stories of fashion magazines or mainstream media headlines.

Under the glare of the spotlight, they are the icons most coveted by fashion media

The tailored suits, gowns, high heels, hats, and gloves from various high-end designers have all become symbols that define their charm and identity.

The media has become the closest presence in people's lives in the 21st century.

It needs no permission, no discretion—using words, images, and videos, it broadcasts to the entire world.

People love the media, and at the same time, they hate it.

Duchesses, First Ladies, Princesses. They have never been the subjects of nuanced inquiry by mainstream me-

To the media, their talents do not matter—because they are the eternal icons of beauty, elegance, and tasteful fashion.

To the media, they are the women who stand beside their husbands during public speeches, offering unconditional love with the warmest and most devoted gaze.

To be honest, we cannot entirely blame the media for focusing solely on what women in the spotlight wear.

The real question is—have we ever truly reflected on the actual value of women?

And what core values should the media really be communicating to society?

In 18th-century Britain, imperial cen-

tralism reigned, and the patriarchal framework hung heavy in the air like suffocating pressure over the entire empire.

The British Empire was then known as "the empire on which the sun never sets"—which meant that no part of the world was untouched by patriarchal dominance.

Women of the time were stripped of the right to express ambition. Many of them did not even know what the concept of a "right" truly meant.

Take Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire—she was always seen, always adorned in the finest gowns.

One moment, deep velvet for a dinner banquet; the next, a dark navy military-inspired coat on the campaign stage, tailored for political theatre.

It bore golden metal double-breasted buttons. Her chest was embroidered with fine courtly motifs—leaf patterns, regal emblems.

She would also wear enormous

high-feathered hats. Those feathers—ostrich and peacock—blended into creations unmistakably hers.

They were adorned with delicate floral accents or jewels, signaling the continuation of her social power and noble rank

In the latter half of the 18th century, this was the favorite subject of newspapers.

They spoke endlessly of the Duchess's outfits, her hairstyles, her love affairs—transforming her into public entertainment, and using her as a benchmark for moral judgment.

But what people remembered was only the extravagance of her dress.

At the time, newspapers even published a letter dripping with sarcasm directed at her.

The letter was written by William Combe and titled A Letter to Her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire.

Beneath flowery praise, it concealed some of the most vicious criticisms—gendered insults, moral condemnation.

In his eyes, the Duchess was nothing more than a beautiful socialite. He wrote-

"To be conspicuous is your ambition; but remember, Madam, that modesty is the brightest ornament of your sex."

That sentence was like an arrow launched from the decaying core of a rotting system—aimed straight at women who were intelligent, powerful, ambitious, and yet undeniably beautiful

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, was exactly such a woman.

She showed the world—and she showed me—that women, too, could steer the tide and become shapers of their time.

She used her own writing to expose the constraints of structure and class.

And so, The Sylph was born in 1778.

With elegant language, she denounced the world, calling out with forceful clarity:

Women can belong to politics.

Women can embody power.

Women can harbor ambition.

And women do not always have to be the mother of an heir.

And that is why I believe patriarchy has always been the force pulling the strings behind the media—

compelling it to fixate on women's clothing, beauty, fashion, aesthetics, and lifestyle.

It is the original culprit.

Let's bring the timeline forward a little.

I saw another woman, living in a different historical moment but bearing the same quiet burden—Jacqueline Kennedy, the First Lady.

The media's harshest criticisms of her declared that "she's just a clothes have "

Some newspapers claimed she lacked the warmth and approachability ex-



pected of a First Lady, calling her cold and ungracious.

And after President Kennedy's death, when she married Onassis, the media branded her a "gold digger"—accusing her of greed.

And while these insults may have originated from public opinion, isn't it possible that the media was the one to spread them—like a virus—until they reached the masses?

The media has always known what its audience craves.

And so, it kept writing its insults, embedding the sexualization of women even deeper, crafting an image of women as beautiful but brainless.

This is the poisonous seed that capitalist media planted throughout the 20th century—

one that led people to forget that Jacqueline was once a girl who loved to write during her university years.

The media never told us that she was a romantic who once dreamed of spending her entire life in France.

She even entered the Prix de Paris writing contest held by Vogue magazine.

But these were never the things the media chose to tell us.

The media made sure the world remembered only one thing about her—

the pink Chanel suit she wore on the day President Kennedy was assassinated.

But it never reported on the Camelot era she helped craft with her own hands.

That day, her only armor was that pink Chanel suit, stained with blood.

It bore no excess embellishment, yet still shone.

She did not cry—perhaps the breeze had already wiped away her tears.

And she stood there quietly, looking to the sky, and spoke the most piercing words from the podium:

"There will be great Presidents again... but there will never be another Camelot."

It was as if she were reminding the world that her contribution had reached its end.

But the media never recorded her tears, her sorrow, her strength, or her fear.

They never captured the language of her world.

All they chose to record was the pink suit she wore.

Tell me-

isn't that tragically helpless?

I think my answer will always be: Yes.

Women have always been sacrificed by their times, silenced by their eras—even when there seems to be a noble "Fourth Estate." the media.

But no matter what, it cannot erase the curse etched into the flesh of history.

The media even becomes one of the accomplices, letting the virus seep into the cells of society.

So I keep asking myself:

Is it the lack of education?

Or the malice of the media?

Or perhaps the arrogance and blind spots of the system?

Or is it, after all, simply the cowardice of humankind?

I kept thinking, kept questioning—

and from Wollstonecraft's writings, I came to understand:

Women lacked access to the same education as men,

but that wasn't the root of the problem.

Because it was the system that denied women education—

and the system was built by men.

And the media?

The media is the least intellectually demanding tool men use to control the world.

So media, religion, law, and marriage—all follow the paths laid out by men.

And media always plays the most crucial role, because it moves freely between all these domains.

As long as education stays the same, the system remains unchanged, and men remain in power—

the media will stay the same.

And that is why the media still fails to use a more objective or neutral lens when interpreting or portraying women.

Today, it pretends to praise female figures by reporting on the dazzling gowns they wear—

but underneath, it is always implying that their worth stops at the surface.

The media loves to publish stories like:

What did she wear today?

What kind of hat did she bring?

What shoes did she choose?

Who designed her dress?

Because society doesn't demand that the media excessively praise the system—

but neither does it want to see anything too negative or overtly critical.

And so, women are forever made into the sacrificial bodies beneath the clothing.

So I began, thread by thread, peeling away their most magnificent garments.

I peeled back the corners the media never dared to touch.

And in the end, their wounds overlapped with mine—

and I discovered inside, a mosaic of shattered stained glass.

And perhaps, that is the most beautiful thing this generation has ever given me.

Princess Diana was that shattered stained glass—

she released, with all the passion of a mission,

the love that Georgiana had no chance to express.

She poured it out in the 21st century, unrestrained and radiant.

But they are all gone—disappeared.

Yet the media, the publications, they are all still here.

And so, all I can do now is quietly become their messenger in the corner of the 21st century—

carrying their wounds, their pain,

letting them sink and settle into my

living myself closer to who they were, and becoming my own media.

It will be power.

It will be ambition.

It will be politics, insult, anxiety, injustice, loneliness.

But I will always wear the purest, kindest white paper robe.

Because the world will continue to move according to its systems,

and the media will never be able to fulfill my needs—nor my longing.

So when you realize you cannot

change the media,

don't try to change the system first.

You must start by changing yourself.

Because blaming others is the easiest thing to do—

but teaching each reader to understand the flaws of the system,

or the struggles of women,

is often the hardest.

And so I choose to become the media myself—

because media isn't just what appears online.

or what is seen on television, on computers, or on phones.

We are not just readers—we are the media.

We are the medium.

glamorous gowns-

We are not just the bodies draped in

we are the museum of our time.

We are not just readers—

we are the media.

We are the medium.

We are not just the bodies draped in glamorous gowns—

we are the museum of our time.

Just like the people of this generation, who try—through song, writing, poetry, photography, and painting—to become their own media.

Just like the people of this generation, who try—through song, writing, poetry, photography, and painting—to become their own media.

And now, I will wear the purest white wedding gown,

and carry forever the weapons they left behind.

But this time, I am no longer the same as they were.

I choose to become the media my-

walking against the storm this world breathes out,

moving against the wind.

Click

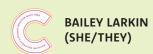
And who is the socialite in the beautiful gown this time?





#### GRIEF IS SORROW, SO SO IS LOVE.

AND THEY'RE WORTH IT ALL THE WHILE.



t's funny, the things that you remember about people.

Slightly less funny, the things that you don't.

I think of my childhood best friend, and I think of a handmade rubber ball he brought me back from Samoa. He explained that over there, kids will scrape the gum straight out of rubber trees, stretch it out real thin, and roll it over and over itself until it's ready to be used for cricket.

Climbing trees was his speciality. I don't know how many times he hurt himself — but I know that no matter what, the very next day, he was at it again.

I've seen him a few times since intermediate — outside the gas station where he worked, on campus once or twice. We always say we'll catch up.

But we're not twelve anymore. We're not eight anymore. And at this point, I can't even say I really know who he is — all I remember is who he used to be.

But that's okay. I'll always remember marshmallows over the fire. Playing spotlight and hiding by the woodstack. The smile he'd make when I'd say something lame, and decadently yearnful, over the same girl, for years — a ritual for our afternoon walks up the hill home from school.

He'd always wear trainers, and he was great at math — and before him, I'm not so sure that I ever had a true friend.

But I know that there's a thousand stories I don't remember.

We spent years together — and I can't even remember when I met him, or how

But I remember his parents, and him in goggles, tearing down the waterslide at school camp; and how one lunchtime, he pulled my shorts down in front of aforementioned girl.

At the time, I was mortified; in retrospect, I have to hand it to him.

Because I don't look back on that memory with resentment — maybe my inner child is a little pissed off, sure, but my adult brain recollects it only as us being kids.

And I find, the more I grow, the more I come to these realisations.

I've lost a lot of people in my life. But the more I have, and the more I do, the more I come to treasure memory; but also, the present moment itself.

Being in the same place, at the same time, with a person you love is a beautiful thing — and you can't leave that unchanged. You can't leave that the same person you were. And your life will never be quite the same.

I still make packet ramen in one single way, after six years, because I once got into an argument with a friend over the ideal way to do it. I insisted that leaving the starch in the water makes the soup thicker — she insisted that just makes it nasty.

And, alas, she was totally right. But my easy meals are better for it.

And I got into visual art, pretty much solely, because an ex-girlfriend of mine was real artsy.

She was fantastic at sketching, digital modeling, and had a real knack for painting.

And she'd give me 'art classes' — I was a terrible student — more interested in kissing her than picking up a pencil. But after we broke up, I started painting obsessively.

It was cathartic, productive, and gave me a sense of grounding.

And so I think of her, and I think of a me that learned to trust my shaky hands — a me that learned to have faith in the process.

And I think of others I've loved, and I think of other pretty things.

A shampoo that smells like fruit and wildflowers. The comfort of a baggy pair of jeans. Cigarettes in the park. A Halloween spent scouring for candy.

And I could list so many more — but I can't, or I won't.

Because the things I hold most precious to me are those same things I lock away.

And sometimes, I'll think I see these people — on the street, in my neighbourhood, or as a lonely face in a crowded cafe.

But then I'll remember — that's not how she stood.

That's not how he held himself.

They'd never make that face.

But I know that each time I mistake a stranger, it's because my heart is still stitched to the past. And I think that's okay — in fact, it's more than okay. Nothing brings me greater joy, greater sorrow, or such a burning intensity, as to know that I was loved, and I loved, and I'll keep loving.

Though, for a long time, I treated my heart like an attic. A place to store old and broken things, dusty and decaying — tucked between sofa cushions, or caught in the folds of shirts that no longer fit me.

But now, I don't see it that way.

My heart is a garden, and it's my job to water it.

Tendrils and blossoms and roots and leaves, scattered amongst fountains and grumpy old gnomes. And I feel so lucky to be able to add to that jungle.

So now, in my relationships, I make sure to focus on the little things.

What people wear, what people say — the way they walk, or how they light up when they see me. I take photographs where I can, but I won't pull out a camera — because I know that my eyes can do all that work for me.

Sometimes, I'll write down their little phrases. If I get home from a particularly pleasant day, I might pull out my phone, and record myself recounting conversation.

So maybe I'm a hoarder. Maybe I'm a softie. Maybe I just have a hard time letting go.

I collect ticket stubs, and wrappers, and trinkets, and fliers.

I make playlists, and write music, and stories, and I journal.

Because I can't let go.

I can't let go — at least, not of the memories.

Because I'll always have this same heart. One that loves deeply, and loves

A heart that would rather carry pain than part with a single drop of happiness

Because the moments I spend, the breath I lose to laughter, and even the tears I shed; I wouldn't trade these for the world.

I still have that rubber ball. I still wear those baggy jeans.

And I'll always, always, carry with me their warmth.



## FIVE MAIN MISTAKES THIS GAME MUST AVOID!

A CRITIQUE AND PITCH ON THE MOST AMBITIOUS STRATEGY GAMING PROJECT OF 2025



IGNACIO JAVIER VAN LOOY (HE/HIM) | @IVAN957

e know there is massive hype over Grand Theft Auto VI, however there is not as much hype over Europa Universalis V, the obvious answer to that; people do not like strategy games as much, and do not enjoy games that inaccurately simulate historical tragedies like Colonization. But I think Europa Universalis V is an important sequel to Europa Universalis IV and is a grand step taken from the Paradox Interactive company to create a new type of video game. It is no surprise the sequel to Victoria II; Victoria III well at least in my humble opinion was a disappointment, and players of that series, can agree. Many fans of this franchise felt it became too politically correct for their taste, primarily the warfare aspect, which was greatly diminished, taking a more diplomatic 'Tall' approach to gameplay. Regarding EUV, Johan Anderson the game director and his team are anticipating their efforts will form the grand strategy of grand strategy, the grandest if you will. Many Paradox gamers fear Europa Universalis V would also be downstream of its infamous prequel, but for different reasons. Some of these reasons I too hold, and they can be divided into the 'Five Main Mistakes this game MUST Avoid!'

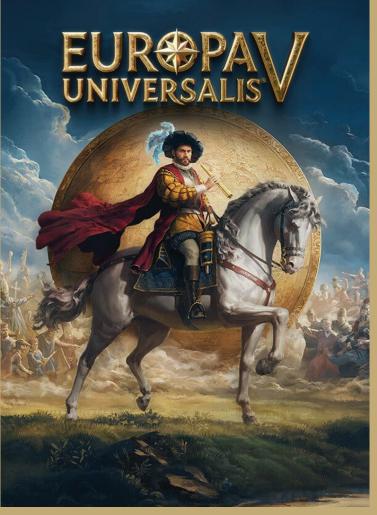
Firstly, the discovery of America, EUV starts in 1337 a little before EUIV's 1444 start date, a pivotal moment of the beginning of the game will be the Black Death and its havoc on Eurasia. Inadvertently this game based on its mechanics will result in a more Eurocentric outcome than previous installations, with a weakened Asia. But this date is also the beginning of the Hundred Years War, the Teutonic Order crusading against Lithuania, Byzantium possessing Constantinople, a roaring Reconquista, and Tamerlane having yet to invade Syria. The point is that this start date is in the Medieval era, it would be ridiculous if powers became colonial this early on, in the gameplay. Despite its counterparts like Victoria, Crusader Kings, Heats of Iron, all allowing for alternate histories to happen, especially with the country you play as, there is still necessary limitations that emphasize which historical period you are experiencing, specifically in technological advancements. For example, in EUIV, you get a large ahead of time penalty to research if you attain a Tech before its historical date, and it massively increases the more years you add on. It is impossible to be ahead of the historical year in innovation due to the penalty, good ship and naval ports were needed to reach the Americas, I hope that these will be tough to obtain in the early game. I truly would like EUV to be different to its predecessor in that you are not slammed into a race to discover other continents against nations, but, that you instead get to almost play a Paradox version of Age of Empires II. While reliving Leif Erikson's maritime voyages would be entertaining it would negatively impact the Native American, African or Oceanian gameplays.

Secondly, the danger of too much micro or micromanagement, nevertheless I enjoy some of that in limitation,

spreadsheets and drop-down tables of hundreds of minute details on economy, culture, population, migration and so on, are kind of what Paradox games are all about. But there is a difference between a game like Crusader Kings II, Hearts of Iron IV, and Victoria III, where the latter two games demand so much more careful management and detailing. EUIV was different in that it was more complex than Crusader Kings, but saved the player time, in that technology and political ideas were broad in comparison to technical inspection of every armour, weapon or law that shaped your nation's journey. EUIV in this sense felt great in that the broad mechanics did the laborious tasks for you, while you went about managing international affairs and expansion, simply you did not have to be a COMPLETE geek to enjoy this game. While Paradox's other installations like Imperator Rome and Victoria III are still amazing because of their detailing of population and trade systems, I hope EUV does not completely become an

Excel task like those games, although, a damning note it seems to be a 'CPU hog'. While so far, supply lines foods and logistics, and the visual models on the map have added perceptual dimensions to battling, they will take out the simplistic fun, if not reworked. On a more positive note, the representations of population are adding a dimension a game like EUIV needed, but they are coupled with mundane concepts of social classes, centralization versus decentralization, this will greatly bore players, if not reduced. Part of EUIV's original allure was the ability to wage wars on the map, although there were limitations, for example, overextension, instability and 'aggressive expansion' they were not as bad as Victoria II or Victoria III, that are governed by Infamy and diplomacy. This makes sense for the Victoria franchise, as it is set after the Napoleonic wars, where Britain, and other powers monopolize massive capitalist empires that desperately avoid annihilation to secure personal interests. But in EUV the timeline spans from the Hundred Years war to Napoleon; Europe was the most war-torn shithole you can imagine, meaning making this game more diplomatic or bureaucratic makes no sense, and I hope the developers do not take the revanchist spirit out.

The UI is the third mistake everyone is talking about, every popular Paradox enjoyer who has the early release copy and ordinary players who religiously check up on the Dev diaries are. Thus far, it is a working progress, I can only judge based on what I know and seen at this stage, the UI in strategy games, serve not only a functional utility, but also the gateway to this virtual world. For the most part, the UI are just maps; in EUV the world map has seven times as many individual locations as EUIV. All these locations have their own Topography, buildings, population, climate and vegetations, like the Victoria franchise, every type of human is represented individually, their movements are free and greatly change the meat of the gameplay. I Love maps; Maps are sexy, but the UI is still the bread and butter for the dessert that the maps make up. The UI is the visuality, what makes you think you are ruling a great empire of different peoples that have a purpose, and a philosophy they live by, how large your army is, which alliances you can trust. The UI must sincerely be able to spark engagement, joy and



immersion, be the avenue through which we travel hundreds of years into the past and become ambitious. EUIV managed to express good UI, implementing unique windows for the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, this inspired modders in the community to produce even prettier, deeper renditions with their own spin. This is partly why I adore the Mission Trees in EUIV, because every mission has a unique piece of artwork, feeling so good to click such a cute, little symbol to make something happen. Despite every nation having an identical visual for the Mission Tree, it is what makes the focus trees on Hearts of Iron IV for example, feel so immersive, because each focus is tailored to each nation, especially the scripted WW2 events. I'm sure Paradox has spent a lot of time on the UI, nevertheless it needs to be more aesthetically pleasing, look more like it is breathing the essence of the time it is simulating as opposed to big blue bold buttons. Gladly the greater Paradox forum communities as well as modders are Democratically inputting their opinions on Paradox's optimizations, not all is lost.

Also on a personal note, Paradox, please make the character portrait optional, this is not Crusader Kings II, I do not want to stare at a creepy Medieval

Al man's face all game long. The Fourth mistake is 3D characters, yes, they are that much of a nuisance! They are not ugly, just look cartoony and out of place, in games that otherwise reject such personalization, as opposed to immersing me, they often disconnect me. One of my least favourite aspects of Crusader Kings III, is that character's feature in every pop-up event, with various goofy poses, the fear here is that EUV will do the same. This aspect is evidenced by working progress events held by Paradox, whether in-game Papal or HRE events, the characters seem a little to in focus, taking away from the decision or lore, this is a grave mistake, cheapening the situations. A case like the Hundred Years war window, where you can see has a beautiful battle painting BEHIND the characters, and now there are multiple blocking the site. I would not exactly hate this rendition, but please DO NOT, put them in every darn window, I hope they pivot the popup windows focus on the events or theme itself front and centre. However, the improvement EUV seems to have over EUIV is that marching armies are represented in a crowd of up to thirty models, as opposed to one gigantic broad archetypal foot soldier stomping across territories. The terrain is also an

improvement; Trees, Lakes, rocks and numerous other formations are present in both windows and the close-up map. Army models adapt to the historical period in clothes, armour and weapons, as well as visual display of their loyalty or discipline, for Paradox beginners this will be greatly superior to hovering over the unit to read a microscopic number that suggests their status and upkeep. If EUV can focus on the models close on the map, and not the portraits, I will be happy.

Lastly the Music; I have not played this game yet, and the early gameplay review videos sound vague and muddled behind YouTuber's narrations. There is currently a new feature out on the Music or it's still on its way, but if there is one aspect that keeps me hypnotised it is the soundtracks, especially of EUIV. Swedish Composer: Andreas Waldetoft was involved in every classic Paradox game up until and including Crusader Kings III, but in late 2023, he stepped down. His work continues to astound me, and he brought a whole new dimension to the greater Neo-classical artistic movement, his soundtracks almost pay homage to previous centuries. His work in Stellaris is magnificent, and whoever or whomever has succeeded has big shoes to fill. My hopes are that those

composing for EUV, as experienced on official release, have created tunes that feel melodic and brand new, and manage to avoid tracks that feel grand but cliché

In conclusion, IN CONCLUSION! Ummmmmm boy there is a lot to conclude, all I can say for sure is based on game reviewers experiences this game runs incredibly slow and takes at least several hours to understand before EVEN UNPAUSING THE DAMN timer, and a few DAYs to play smoothly. I believe you will enjoy this challenge if you are a Paradox fanatic, but for beginners, I suggest you have a go at EUIV first. To the new installations credit, you can automate almost any aspect of the country you are playing, to understand each aspect better, EUV is also a WIN in terms of the lore of real historical events like the Protestant Reformation, most reviewers have not even completed half the game, so you bet there is so much more to uncover and improve. In my opinion, Europa Universalis V is the apex in strategy gaming's evolution, the developers are definitely scaling a mountain with this project, I hope it turns out better and becomes at very least a TOLERABLE game to play.





## DISAPPEARING POLYMORPHS



There are things that were but no longer are

Not because they are gone

But because the way they are cannot be

A medicine, once effective, started to weaken
Its structure changing, affecting others
The old one was only temporary
Now the new one is ensuring its demise

It's everywhere, in the atmosphere

Even a tiny hint will make the old way collapse

Nothing material lost, but the chemicals are...

different. and now you can't go back.

You can try, but it's so much harder now
And then you start to think
What if this has happened before
How many times has it happened before?

How many ways were we too late for?

How many ways did we unknowingly destroy?

These things that can't exist anymore

All trace removed, no one to miss

No one to remember, no one to pine

And weep, and wish that they could return

To the way things used to be

And beg, that it never happens again

But it will. That's just how things are.

Change is the most stable state.

Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, and whatever we do, we can't go back.

## volunteer at 95bFM



The University of Auckland student radio station is old as. But 95bFM is still going, and we need some new volunteers to help us with:

- journalism, writing + news
- events, photography + videography
- - + plus heeeeeaps else







PHOTO: ANTHONY HAZE FLEMING

**PERFORMING ARTS/MUSIC** 

## VIEWING PERFECTION THROUGH A GLORY (W)HOLE

A REVIEW OF GLORY WHOLE. BY **GRECCO ROMANK AND COPPER** MAESTEAL.

**ANTHONY FLEMING** 

A bathroom stall with a viewing hole. A gym, a surgery. A model, endlessly treading forward.

Glory Whole is a collaboration between music trio Grecco Romank and drag creature Copper MaeSteal. The members of Grecco Romank took

the edges of the space. Their music: Industrial, dark, yet glamorous. It surrounded the audience and the creature roaming within them. Copper MaeSteal played the avatar of our physical insecurities - a writhing mound of flesh, a fresh layer of skin coating their face. Their grotesque form was cleverly juxtaposed with precise drag movement and gigantic highheeled boots. They stepped through the space with authority, commanding the audience's attention with a disturbing yet compelling routine. The audience shifted and made way for Copper's demands, stranded in the centre of the action with a beautiful nightmare.

Clever propwork timed to the Grecco soundtrack told a story of internalising

society's scrutinising gaze. The two singers from Grecco Romank - Billie and Mikey - played the innocent victims, enticed by the creature's promises of beauty and responding to its demands for perfection. Equal parts horrific and satirical, the audience watches their descent into obsession, contorting their bodies to the wishes of the entity. Entirely consumed by the ideals of Copper's avatar, they are eventually gifted appendages of their own. Copper MaeSteal raises a mirror. First, to themselves; then, to Grecco Romank; finally, to the audience: we are them and they are us.

Glory Whole was gruesome; it was camp. It was fantastic.

**FASHION/EXHIBITION** 

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, DIVA!

**DIVA EXHIBITION IS ON NOW AT AUCKLAND MUSEUM TILL 19TH OCTOBER 2025** 

**ZAINAH MERANI** 

There's only one word to describe Auckland Museum's newest exhibition: fabulous.

Luckily, I have 250 to gush about Diva in all its glory. The star-studded walk of fame paints a bold, beautiful portrait of the women - and men - who've earned true diva status. Direct from London's V&A Museum, Diva marks its first showing outside Europe. It's a dazzling 280-piece collection that, quite literally, speaks to you, with overear headphones guiding your journey.

The word diva first entered our ears 400 years ago and has evolved ever since. The exhibition explores its operatic origins and modern-day reclaiming as a symbol of empowerment and unapologetic self-expression through two distinct acts.

"Divas inspire other divas," curator Kate Bailey reflects. That legacy is on full display - from icons like Whitney Houston, Madonna, and Marilyn Monroe to global powerhouses like Björk, Freddie Mercury, and Lata Mangeshkar. As for notable omissions like Donna Summer or Cyndi Lauper? "It's a jigsaw puzzle," Bailey explains - some stories simply couldn't fit, and tough calls had to be made.

While names like Rihanna, Elton John, and Nina Simone sparkle, Bailey admits a soft spot for lesser-known trailblazer Theda Bara, one of Cleopatra's

earliest stars. Bailey also highlights the contrast between old-school rebel Debbie Harry, Blondie's very own, and today's Billie Eilish: "Debbie punched her way through the '70s. Billie speaks to a new generation, is innovative in how she communicates, and owns who she is."

Diva is bold and moving and reignites the essence of what it all really means. I highly recommend it.

Auckland Museum's latest exhibition, Diva, celebrates icons from Whitney to Björk, exploring 400 years of diva history. Direct from London's V&A, this bold, moving showcase reclaims diva as a symbol of empowerment. With 280 dazzling pieces, it's a must-see.



PHOTO: AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

**ALBUM & CONCERT** 

#### LADI6 - LE VA (2025)

I RECOMMEND GIVING ALOFA OR FRACTIONS A SPIN.

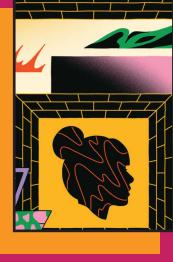
**LEWIS MATHESON CREED** 

Following up on Automatic (2013), a crystalline Electro-Pop-Hip-Hop-RnB classic, Ladi6 has returned with a new studio album, Le Vā, a project that dives deeper into the Jazzy-EDM vibe that she has developed with her longtime collaborators like her husband Parks, as well as Bharu and Julien Dyne.

While the synthesizers and drum ma-

chines create a bright lo-fi geometric soundscape (encapsulated by album art), Le Vā's lyrics explore Ladi6's grief for her mother, Fuarosa, who passed away during the COVID pandemic. A sample of the lyrics from single Alofa: "You were everything to me... I try not to cry". The dichotomy between the weeping lyrical content and the brightness of the instrumentation captures that restlessness of grief where you're faced with the question "what do I do now without them?". Letting them go and moving on feels wrong, but you know it's what they would have wanted. As Ladi6 says in the opening and closing tracks... "Tinā (mother) you are both anchor and ocean, security and movement... I believe my mum used to dream once, perhaps she is searching for her younger self in Sāmoa, perhaps I should just let her".

Her recent show at the Hollywood Avondale promoting Le Vā was quite literally electrifying, featuring a sleek light show, dancers, a career spanning set list and EDM-updated versions of her older hits like Water and Hours. Also, according to The Spinoff, Ladi6 plans to join us next year at Waipapa Taumata Rau to study counselling, so on behalf of Craccum and everyone, welcome to campus!



**MADMAN NEW RELEASE** 

#### **THE SURFER**

A FILM STARRING NICOLAS CAGE AND DIRECTED BY LORCAN FINNEGAN

PHOEBE TURNER

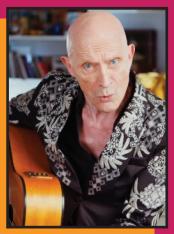
The Surfer, follows a man who returns to his hometown beach to surf, and instead faces hostility from a local cult-like surf gang while ending up in various peculiar circumstances. Cage's character has unwavering ambitions of moving back to his hometown and refuses to relinquish this dream despite

slowly losing all of his material possessions, and his sanity, due to the local's tormentation and his poor life choices. The cinematography and vibrant colors of the film are mind tickling, giving the movie a warm retro-beach atmosphere that equally pulls you in and leaves you feeling unsettled. The accompanying soundtrack is wonderfully fitting: ominous yet perky. However, the storyline fell flat of my expectations for this film. A large portion of the film was watching 'The Surfer' suffer and face humiliation in situations that could have been easily avoided. He loses all of his possessions due to either making irrational decisions or

from leaving his belongings unattended in a blatantly obvious manner. This makes it difficult to connect with the character's (self-made) deteriorating state after a certain point, and thus lacks psychological tension. Beyond this, there were many compelling elements of the story that felt unexplored - like the eeriness of the cult's history, Cage's character's background, and especially the backstory of the cryptic old man. While the film was somewhat thought-provoking and definitely unique, its frustrating moments and shortfall of narrative depth left me feeling more disjointed than impacted.



MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT



DOCEDGE 2025.

#### **DOCUMENTARY**

#### STRANGE JOURNEY: THE STORY OF ROCKY HORROR

ART OF STORYTELLING CATEGORY WINNER AT DOC EDGE AWARDS 2025

**TOBY TOMKINSON** 

Strange Journey: The Story of Rocky Horror charts the rise of The Rocky Horror Picture Show from fringe theatre experiment to global cult phenomenon. Framed through the lives of its key creators and performers, the documentary provides a detailed look into the origins, failures, and eventual cultural phenomenon of the show. It begins with Richard O'Brien, raised in Hamilton, New Zealand, and follows his early career as he relocates to England, grappling with acting, writing, and his own gender and sexual identity. His evolving self-expression - reflected in both the character of Frank-N-Furter and the broader tone of the show - remains a focus of both the documentary and the show itself. The film threads personal accounts from the actors, director, and O'Brien himself, using their perspectives to trace the show's transformation: from stage performance, to the Roxy Theatre in L.A., to the eventual film adaptation; the Belasco Theatre run in Manhattan falters, closing after 40 nights, and

O'Brien remarks that even if it had closed on night one, it wouldn't have changed much. But it was Tim Deegan, a lone executive at 20th Century Fox, who helped steer its fate. A friend of his, a New York exhibitor, suggested trying a midnight screening at the Waverly on April 1st, 1976. The same fifty attendees returned week after week. A cult was forming. The documentary doesn't treat the cult following as a footnote - it follows how rituals like shout-backs, costumes, and midnight showings became inseparable from the film itself. Audience and performance blur, evolving into a feedback loop of camp, defiance, and identification. From a personal story to shared ritual - iconic.



## MADMAN

## **MADMAN**

# CONTRIBUTOR REVIEWS

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#### **AUCKLAND WRITER'S FESTIVAL**

#### HARRIET WALTER: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

ON HER BOOK SHE SPEAKS! WHAT SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN MIGHT HAVE SAID.

**ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE** 

At Auckland Writer's Festival, Walter spoke with New Zealand actress Jennifer Ward-Lealand about her motivations and her process of writing the book, as well as how her own performances of Shakespeare's female characters influenced her choices in writing it. Having played many of these characters herself, she started to notice that none of these women ever took centre stage and started to wonder why. She realised that every woman in Shakespeare's play was there in

connection to a man, whether it was her father, her brother, her husband.

She Speaks! is a collection of verse and prose written from the perspective of many of Shakespeare's female characters, including Gertrude, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia and Lady Capulet, where she brings new voice and agency to silenced women.

I personally enjoyed Walter's readings from her book, including excerpts from Lady Macbeth and A Boy Player Reminices.

It was interesting to hear from the two actresses about their experiences playing characters written as men, Walter having played Prospero in an all female production of The Tempest, while Jennifer Ward-Lealand played the Earl of Kent in an Auckland Theatre Company production of King Lear in 2023. Well, she played Kent as a woman, making her the Countess, I suppose, who then disguised herself as a man, whereas Walter played



PHOTO: AUCKLAND WRITER'S FESTIVAL

Prospero in a way that focused more on the character as a person than on whether they were a man or a woman.

When asked about herself as a writer, she said she enjoyed the 'minimalist essence' of poetry. She'd always loved playing with words, having dabbled in writing as something very private and secretive early on. While writing *She* 

I think many of the events that were

Speaks! she had the challenge of deciding when to keep to the time period of the original plays and when to make it more modern and contemporary. Sometimes writing both prose and verse came flowingly, while sometimes it was like chipping away at a rock, and being left going 'Well, now what?' What writer can't relate?

<u>FILM</u>

## JURASSIC WORLD REBIRTH

COME FOR THE DINOS, STAY FOR THE (BARELY NON-EXIS-TENT) ETHICS LECTURE—LEAVE WONDERING WHY T-REX NEEDS A CHARACTER ARC.

BEN LUO

#### Viewing this film as a standard consumer:

Considering that Jurassic World Rebirth is my first and only exposure to this franchise, it does a fair job of explaining the past films while building out this new plotline. The movie is entertaining, heartfelt via the introduced storyline of the Delgado family and Xavier, and does provoke a lot of conversation about animal conservation and human intervention for me. As a cinematic piece, I think the plot has a bit too many 'thisevent-conveniently-transpired-this-way' scenarios. Because of this, some scenes intended to be action-packed did not strike me as dramatic as I anticipated. Especially during the Tyrannosaurus rex scene, everything works in the characters' favour and is easily predictable.

I yearn for a chase scene that surprises me and shows the characters surviving in a less cliché way. As entertaining and hilarious as the movie is, I would love a film where the fear and horror element of a world where humans live with dinosaurs is delved into more. Speaking to a few Jurassic Park fans has also given me insight into the fact that the movies have fallen into a rather formulaic route,

which dulls the potential of how far they could take storytelling. This movie was good, but there was a lot of room to create something that truly stuns audiences. With how good some of the older films were, this new one was just a slight bit disappointing.

#### Viewing this film as a studying biologist:

hough not totally realistic and is primarily an action and popular piece of media,

explained and shown in the movie are translatable into real-life cases and conversations. There are many realities that the dinosaurs face within Jurassic World Rebirth that real-life organisms experience, like global climate change displacing/driving species to extinction, human curiosity of animals leading to captivity, and transgenic mutations/scientific experiments conducted on animals.

Climate change affects many species,



especially those residing in the ocean and colder climates, like coral, phytoplankton, and polar bears. There have been many discussions of animal captivity and how curiosity about this allows for monetary gain, often at the expense of the captive animal, like the usage of animals for stunts/shows/acts, and tourist areas exploiting 'exotic' animals for photos done by long-term abuse, drugs and physical restraints. Humans have a long history of experimenting on animals, and while this has paved the way for many innovations in the modern world, there is a heavy debate on the ethics of animal experimentation/ testing. Is there another way that we can conduct these experiments without directly violating animal rights? Is there truly an ethical way we could make scientific discoveries of this scale?

One of the many things I appreciate about Jurassic Park being a popular media piece is that it can bring these conversations to a larger audience in the context of dinosaurs. I believe it can spark discussions and lead people to correlate the explored themes to our reality. Our world is filled with millions of species of plants, animals, and microorganisms, all contributing to this giant ecosystem on Earth. Each local ecosystem, interaction between species, and how species have adapted to an ever-changing world is so complex and vital to understand, so the more people who have a budding interest in what goes on in our Earth and want to start understanding conservation efforts are a helping hand that many living species need. The more people we have interested and contributing to growing conversations, the more we will be able to learn about these complex systems.

## WHĀNAU MĀRAMA NZ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

HERE'S A SNEAK PEAK OF THE 100+ FILMS THAT WILL BE SHOWN BETWEEN 31ST JULY - 10TH AUGUST. GRAB THE FULL CATALOG FROM THE CRACCUM STAND IN THE QUAD. TICKETS ON SALE NOW @ WWW.NZIFF.CO.NZ



#### **DJ AHMET**

SPARKS FLY WHEN TIKTOK MEETS FOLK TALE IN RURAL NORTH MACEDONIA

LEWIS MATHESON CREED & TREVOR PRONOSO

DJ Ahmet is an audience pleasing debut from Director Georgi M. Unkovski, featuring wholesome performances from its child actors, tense moments of smalltown drama and laugh-out-loud moments that we feel add up to an overall hopeful and optimistic film.

Let's be real, adolescent brains are simply undercooked. Yet, what is lost in the process of 'maturity' nevertheless evinces an unmistakable 'authenticity' of emotional growth and newfound knowledge. The film's plot almost reads like a fairytale story you'd be given in your average CompLit course: poor boy loves rich girl, rich girl loves poor boy, both parents forbid their relationship due to irreconcilable class differences, poor boy climbs atop a the village's tallest building and professes his love for the entire town to hear, the villagers gossip and reappear throughout like a Greek chorus, and both lovers live happily ever after (We still disagree whether the film resolves into a "happy ending", but our adolescent characters do have us questioning our preconceived notions regarding familial security and personal freedom.)

To the west, TikTok may be the latest moral peril facing adolescents in the never ending battle against communist influence. But within rural Northern Macedonia—a place composed of rolling hills, tobacco fields and paternalistic communes—the distant din of EDM overdubs the call to prayer with a call to revolution. Music becomes the rallying cry for the younger generations' dissatisfaction with the status quo, the audiovibratory middle finger of a universal struggle for the right to autonomously express oneself,

be it both culturally and economically. In a world that actively retrofits us into predetermined precepts of the 'right way' of growing up, our two lovebirds represent the ever-present impasses that destabilise the delicate intersections between love, family, and labour, and technology.

Okay that was a bit melodramatic, but *DJ Ahmet* remains a film where the healing power of music is the central focus. And adults need to listen to the kids; let music play and the healing begin. Nothing else screams modernity than Yörük teenage girls in a conservative rural village mimicking Shakira's dance moves for a TikTok duet.

While *DJ Ahmet* doesn't break new ground, it provides a well-executed and geographically-specific take on the time-old tale of youth escapism amidst their limited cultural and economic conditions. Not all stories can become fairytales, but at least all stories can be scored by music. Music is our hope, and *DJ Ahmet* has brilliant sound design. An enticing sneak preview of this year's offerings at the NZIFF.



#### ONE TO ONE: JOHN & YOKO

IMAGINE AN ACTUALLY GOOD JOHN & YOKO DOCUMENTARY, IT'S EASY IF YOU TRY

LEWIS MATHESON CREED & LOUISE MATHESON

This documentary juts out of the sea of John Lennon & Yoko Ono documentaries. Why? Because it focuses on capturing the creative/activist mindset of the period when the controversial power couple arrived in Greenwich Village, New York City in 1971. From their two-bedroom apartment they got stuck right into radicalising apathetic youth with music.

Specifically, the film stands out by refusing talking heads style and instead relying

solely on archival footage and recordings, so they tell their own story using their own words.

The documentary uses Lennon's love for television as the narrative device, punctuating interviews, home videos, concert footage and sound bites with ads and channel surfing which serves to contextualise the zeitgeist of America under Nixon. And Lennon's anti-war anthems really were the zeitgeist of the time for youth. Even here in Aotearoa, following The Haka Party Incident at UOA, students gathered in the quad to sing *Imagine*. Can you imagine something like that happening today to protest against our government?

By showing and not telling, directors Kevin MacDonald and Sam Rice-Edward provide an audiovisual equivalent to Genius for lyrics that are no longer obvious to us as they were for the audience of the Lennon's *One-to-One* concert, such as *Attica State* and *John Sinclair*.

John and Yoko used their platform to push for change and raise money and aware-

ness for worthy causes. Despite technology making it easier than ever to communicate, such forthright opinions rarely escape the lips of modern day celebrities.

And that's why I think I walked away from *One-to-One* realising how little we've come in the last 50 years. People are still racially and misogynistically using Yoko Ono and her art as a punchline. And while detractors might be sceptical of their glowing portrayal, wary of idol worship and the posthumous deification of Lennon and other rock stars; it's without a doubt that Ono and her late husband are humanised here for their bravery in the face of racial and political persecution.

If you're not convinced by my word, take my mum's, who is an avid fan of Lennon and even she was impressed by *One to One*. Is it a must see if you're not a fan? Yes, because beyond the music, the film serves as a time capsule of early 70s optimism for the future which poignantly contrasts our rather pessimistic present circumstances.

# HOW TO (ACTUALLY) GET A GIRL

#### A CRITIQUE OF THE MANOSPHERE



'm sure you've all heard the spiel. How to get a girl. Be all dominating, be all jacked up, and women will flock to you. Right?

Well, I was determined to find out, and so I've spent the last year and a half living as a girl within girl spaces\*. But before we get into what I've discovered, we first have to discuss what the manosphere is.

The word "manosphere" first appeared on Blogspot circa 2009, and it represents a series of alt-right to far-right ideas espousing the belief that women belong in the kitchen and in the home, and should not have any personal rights. It grew out of the men's liberation movement in the 1970s, initially intended to break free of male gender roles, but then the movement began to attribute its problems to feminism and we find ourselves where we are today. They became empowered when Donald Trump won the 2024 presidential election, and their beliefs have seen widespread coverage since. Sound familiar? Seen that stuff floating around on social media?

Let's see if it works.

A study by Date Psychology collected responses from 814 respondents, 48% of which were women, ranking 74 selected hobbies as either "attractive" and "unattractive" to women. Two separate rankings were created of the 74 hobbies: one by the men guessing what the women liked, and one by the women stating what they actually liked. In both lists, "manosphere" bottomed out, with less than 5% of participants labelling it as "attractive". Granted, the participants of this study were unusually well-educated for a sample population (45% of them had at least a Master's) but the results are still fairly clear: women do not like being bossed around and treated like property, and they tend not to date people who espouse those beliefs.

Additionally, a study by the University of New South Wales investigated the

behaviour of (coincidentally all male) Halo 3 players toward a simulated male or female player, and compared it to the players' own skill levels and the relative level difference between them and the simulated player. The results? In line with evolutionary theory. Yep. That stuff you learned in level 3 bio. Most of the hate and vitriol came from lower skilled players, and most of it was directed at a higher skilled female player. The higher skilled players tended to compliment the simulated player, regardless of the gender, which suggests that the insertion of a higher skilled female player threatened the social status of the players at the bottom of the hierarchy, while those higher up the social hierarchy stood to have less to lose. So misogyny suggests a skill issue, and guess what the manosphere is full of?

And finally, let's analyse the social lives of our manosphere influencers: Andrew Tate is not interested in longterm commitments. Myron Gaines does not appear to have any relationships outside of his fitness circle. Adin Ross's marital status cannot be confirmed, but he appears unable to hold down a long term relationship either. Carl Benjamin is... need I continue? Evidence suggests he's single. Granted, Jordan Peterson is an exception, having been married for the past 50 years. But with an attractiveness rating of <5% and a long-term success rate of 20%, it's clearly far from a perfect "how to get a girl" tutorial.

So begs the question: how do you actually get a girl?

The other end of the Date Psychology study contains, at the very top, reading. So if you're reading this article, congrats! It's a hobby 98% of women find attractive. You're already way ahead of the folks who didn't read this article. Good job.

But a survey can only do so much, and maybe you want some lived experience. Some tips from an insider. Well, I'm your, uhh... anyways.

I'm yet to commit to a long-term relationship myself, for reasons you can probably figure out from my past contributions to this magazine\*\*, so you are more than welcome to take all of this with a grain of salt. But with that said:

It might surprise you, but we're human! We have our own personalities and histories, and a unique set of hobbies and interests to accompany us. I'm a reader and a writer who's studying cell biology by choice, and I know girls who are into karaoke and hate cell biology with a passion\*\*\*. What might work on one girl might not work on another. Tailor your approach.

We can be a lot smarter than you give us credit for. My failure to get into med school caused a huge stir in family circles, leading to one of my male cousins being pushed away from it by his (optometry professor) father. The reason was allegedly that "Eva couldn't do it, do you really think you can do better?" He's doing Engineering now... happily, I hope. Or at the very least, without the trauma I now carry from pre-med. Point being, don't talk down to us. We will surprise you with our capability. We're human, after all, we have brains

Be authentic. This is thrown around a lot, regrettably without explanation, but if you try to be someone you're not, the relationship will be miserable no matter the outcome. We cannot hide forever. We cannot mask forever. Because masking, hiding, is tiring. Put the energy where it matters, and if you lose the relationship, good job, you dodged a bullet. It wouldn't have worked out anyway, and at this age you still have time to try again.

I hope the following tips helped some, and I wish you all the best of luck in your dating endeavours.

\* This is a lie. I did transition a year and a half ago, but for a different reason. (see previous edition)

\*\* 2024, 14th edition; 2025, 1st and 2nd editions; craccum.co.nz/author/

\*\*\* A pity. We made great study partners

Date Psychology. (24 August 2024). The Most and Least Attractive Male Hobbies. https://datepsychology.com/the-most-and-least-attractive-male-hobbies/

Kasumovic, M. M., & Kuznekoff, J. H. (2015). Insights into Sexism: Male Status and Performance Moderates Female-Directed Hostile and Amicable Behaviour. PLoS ONE, 10(7), e0131613. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0131613

Torc /cHer

ART BY PIA | @PIANORMOUS

## THE ABYSMAL STATE OF DATING APPS

THE ONLY FEELING I'VE BEEN CATCHING IS SECOND-HAND EMBARRASSMENT



his latest attempt at the dating app thing has turned out decidedly uneventful. That is, in so far as actually meeting anyone. There's still been some vaguely entertaining pick up lines, becoming mostly just annoying and making me question whether he can actually hold a conversation, if they replied.

One guy on hinge started with:

"Hey there Are you interested in adotpion? The boyfriend shelter is getting full @" It was kinda funny to start with I guess.

Also what is that spelling? And spacing?

"if you are interested theres a really cute guy in there with blonde hair and blue eyes he thinks you are beautiful and would love to get to know you I could give you his adoption papers

Really leaning into the adoption thing, starting to get a little annoying. You've used the line, now move on maybe.

"welcome to the boyfriend adoption centre did you have anyone in mind that might take you fancy in here?"

For the love of god have a normal conversation. Enough with the adoption thing. Are you sure that's the metaphor you want to go with?

A Bumble message in response to What's something I wouldn't know from your profile?

"That I could be the best decision you've ever made." Then nothing.

The stupid lines and the non-responses are reminding me why I deleted them last time. The number of profiles that are guys posing shirtless in front of a mirror is getting beyond ridiculous at this point. Now, of course, I'm not against that, if you know what I mean. But also, do you have hobbies? Or does your spare time solely consist of the gym?

If you're lucky there was a brief conversation the day you matched. Then silence. Rinse and repeat. Granted sometimes the conversation dies and you don't really have an obligation to any of these people. But, you know, you could answer the question.

At what point does it become ghosting? Does anyone know?

Occasionally seeing the same guy's profile on different apps is also mildly entertaining, as well as people who were definitely on the apps the last time you were.

At least I'm not dealing with the same shit as last time. Some interactions leave you with questions. Namely, what the fuck. Some of the most memorable messages went roughly as follows:

"I live alone if you wanna come over and hang out." No, thank you. I do not.

"I didn't mean it like that." Sure you didn't. Do I look stupid to you?

"I don't know what I'm looking for but I really like you." Right. Sure you do.

"I'm good with parents." Dude, I met you an hour ago.

"I'd love to take you to dinner." He then proceeded to cancel the morning of, after not making any plans, claiming 'sorry but I don't know if I'm ready for a relationship'. This was also the day after I'd been clear I wouldn't be sleeping with him yet. Take from that what you will.

Unfortunately, we'd swapped instagram at that point. Months later he messages me, I ignore him. A couple months after that, he did it again. I blocked him. He found me on Facebook a month later. I blocked him there too.

Dude, get a fucking life. Word of advice gentlemen. Take a hint.

A close second, presenting this idiot:

"Can I ask about your body count?" before we had met. No. You cannot.

"How do you feel about smashing on the first date?"

First off who the fuck says smash? Secondly, this is coffee, at 11 in the morning. When is that happening?

Funnily enough I cancelled on him.

It hasn't all been terrible. Some of it's just kinda dumb.

I had been talking to one guy for a while and made plans to meet for coffee. Then the day before:

"Hey, I'm sorry, but I'm going to need to cancel our coffee meet-up tomorrow. I've realised I have feelings for someone else and don't think it would be fair to lead you on, so I'm not going to be rescheduling. I hope you find what you're looking for out there. Good luck!"

I mean, ok, whatever. At least he's honest. (I assume) I don't even know anymore.

Occasionally I do see a profile that genuinely catches my attention. I matched with a guy who dances, does theatre, teaches dance and drama. I would have been down way quicker than I should be admitting. I didn't properly process the fact he's in Hamilton. In the words of a friend, "god saw a promising match and had to nerf you guys with distance." He's now ghosted me, I'm choosing not to analyse why. He claimed being in different cities didn't bother him for now, but who even knows anymore.

If you want to message them, go ahead and message them. Don't overthink it. You can't say the wrong thing to the right person. (I doubt anyone is going to meet the one on an app but you get the point.) Just maybe, don't start with this shit. You don't have to wait forever to ask them out if you want to (she says, pretending to know what the hell she's talking about). Realistically, I don't think dating apps are something that's going to work for actually finding a long term serious relationship, but they can't hurt to help meet people.

CTE?

ART BY ARIEL KALMAN

## SOLVENT SINS AND EARTHLY HYMNS

SOLFEGGIO FREQUENCIES: SPIRITUAL SCIENCE, OR BULLSHIT?

**Content warning: Contains references to suicide** 



ave you ever wondered what it's like to throw yourself in front of a bus?

Ever looked at a particularly sharp (or worse, dull,) pair of scissors, and ferociously considered how it would feel plunging into your left eye, or your right eye, or both in quick succession?

I certainly have. Way too many times. And it's not even a fucking suicide thing — at least then it would serve a purpose.

Combine an overly active brain with a 'wonderful' imagination, a medium-to-large dose of OCD, and a weird fixation with your own mortality — and, well, you may just find yourself in my shoes

So, needless to say, I find it hard to relax.

But last year, in the midst of a chronic flare-up, and a general air of 'holy fuck, I'm going through it, guess we're mental now,' I made the discovery of a lifetime – Solfeggio frequencies.

These things compose Gregorian chants. Buddhists love them. And upper middle-class white women on You-Tube? They go ballistic at their mention.

So, to put it in short-form; they're newage spirituality reaped from ancient tradition.

These frequencies, supposedly, target different areas of the mind and body — they're pretty much white noise, albeit tuned, that emphasize feeling and connection within specific chakras; and yeah, I shuddered at the use of the word, but I truly do believe it.

Because, let's face it — noise affects us. Drills are unpleasant. Concerts are not. The voice of someone you love is typically endearing. The voice of someone you hate is like nails on a chalkboard.

Sound affects us, because sound is vibration — and we, ourselves, are composed of vibration. And in case you don't believe me, just ask Einstein:

'Concerning matter, we have been all wrong. What we call matter is energy, whose vibration has been so lowered as to be perceptible to the senses. There is no matter.' You see? There is no matter. Just vibes. And no, I will not elaborate.

But if a really smart guy — one of the smartest guys, actually — agrees that we're all just a bunch of shaky little waves with no grounding in anything but the movement we perpetuate — then I fear I'm inclined to believe him. And, by that logic — if we're just waves, and sound is also just waves, then yeah, frequency is gonna have an impact.

For example, some cult or another – I think it was The Family Traditional – used singing to incite religious delirium. (And, arguably, most other churches do

this anyways.)

The idea was, they'd get their members to belt their guts out at specific tonalities for extended periods of time, to the point that they could 'feel' the music as the presence of God. People would cry, real heaving sobs. Some would speak in tongues. Others would describe feelings of ecstasy, enlightenment, and pure joy. But, if we're to be clear here, it wasn't God they were speaking to — at least, not in any dogmatic sense. It was frequency. It was sound. It was fucking vibration.

Just think of when you're standing real close to a motor, or an aeroplane, or a douchebag whose car comes equipped with bass speakers like monoliths. You can feel it in your guts. You're physically shaken by it — and it undoubtedly produces a somatic and emotional response.

Put me next to a lawn mower, and I'm ready to commit atrocities.

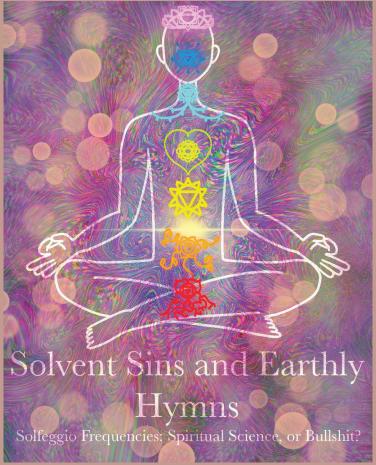
Put on some Car Seat Headrest, and I'm ready to do something gay.

Sound affects us. Sound affects us. Sound affects us.

But, for the fun of it, let's get back to my mental health issues.

I was struggling. Real bad. Approximately every third thought I had was something dark, weird, or straight up depressing — and I didn't know what I could do about it. Meditation didn't work, because how do you meditate through a stream of consciousness that screams like a homicidal toddler?

How do you practice mindfulness, when your mind itself seems like the enemy?



ART BY FOXLEY | @UR\_TYPICAL\_FOX

The answer is - you don't. Or at least, it's very, very hard to.

But I listen to music all the time. At home, on campus, on the bus — since fourteen, I've pretty much always filled my ears with sound, because it makes my cognition shut the fuck up (or at least, it does a little). There is a problem with this though. Songs have words. Words make images. And images are a gateway to rumination — (or, they are for me; but maybe some of you are normal.)

And then I found those frequencies.

Let's start with 396 hertz, or, the frequency of the root chakra. This one targets fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame — because all that shit is stored closer to the base of your spine. It's the rocks in your gut, the heaviness you can't quite carry around with you. I listen to this when I'm feeling... bad.

417hz, meanwhile, is the frequency of the sacral chakra. This one focuses on the area that's either your uterus, or your... something else? Whatever the alternative is?

I'm an arts major.

It targets (though, in this case, exacerbates rather than diminishes), sensuality, sexuality, pleasure, and sociability. I don't really listen to this one. Couldn't tell you why — and I don't think you'd

need to know, anyways.

But then you have 528hz, my baby, my darling, my guiding light — this one, supposedly, does some of the most work for your genetic material. It targets your solar plexus, and is meant to provide pain alleviation, encourage somatic and cognitive healing, and generally, just make you feel better. I like this one. Really like it. In case that wasn't clear.

Now, I'm gonna take a quick moment to illustrate something that some of you probably already clicked on — if you look at those numbers, and think about where they target, you'll notice a pattern. Lower vibrations hit you lower in your body. Higher vibrations hit you... higher.

So now we're moving up to the heart chakra, at 639hz. For this one, you can guess the effect. It makes you feel loving, and loved. More accepting, more sincere. It's a little bit like warm water, or, as heroin addicts might describe it, a big ol' hug. I do like this one. Good for loneliness. Except I never use it, because I have a shit tonne of friends, and a girlfriend who goes to another school.

Three left, by the way, in case you're getting bored.

Stick it out. I'm doing this for your own good — although, I really am sorry for the list.

I don't want to write for buzzfeed.

Anyways, 741hz is the frequency of the throat chakra. If you wanna get talky, say some real profound shit, or just express yourself in any manner you see appropriate, this is a good pick. Some say it helps with creativity and inspiration, though I can't say I've ever found that to be true. And, in honesty? Not my favorite frequency.

I talk enough as it is.

But maybe you'll like it. Maybe you need it. So, feel free to give it a go.

Penultimately, we have the third eye chakra, targeted at 852hz. This sits between your eyes, boosting your intuition, mental clarity, and trust in yourself and others. Again, I can't say I use it much — because, if I'm to be frank, all of these higher frequencies just dip me even further into my brain; which is exactly the kind of thing that I try and avoid.

But we all have different needs. We all have different bodies.

So please, don't let my experience put you off.

And with that in mind, we have 963hz — and the crown chakra. This one is kind of, above, your scalp... and promotes higher consciousness, the acquisition of knowledge, and a general sense of

understanding. Keep it in mind for exams, I guess — or your next dungeons and dragons playthrough.

And that's all of them. All the common ones, at least.

So I'll leave you with a final thought.

Whether or not these frequencies do exactly what they claim, is... a little beside the point. To me, at least, they feel fucking good. They make me feel better. And they help me feel like I have some control over my emotions, propping up anything I can achieve internally.

So whether or not they're science, or spirituality, or acting entirely on place-bo, I don't really care. They work for me. Real fucking well.

And maybe, just maybe, they might work for you too - and if not, then I'm not your G.P.

And I'm certainly not your cult leader. But... I guess I could be?

Just give me the right sounds to work with.

(A final note from the author; if you're feeling especially neurotic, try overlapping multiple frequencies at once and fiddle with the volumes until you're content. It feels like homeopathic waterboarding, and it's beautiful.)

## How's Craccum so far?

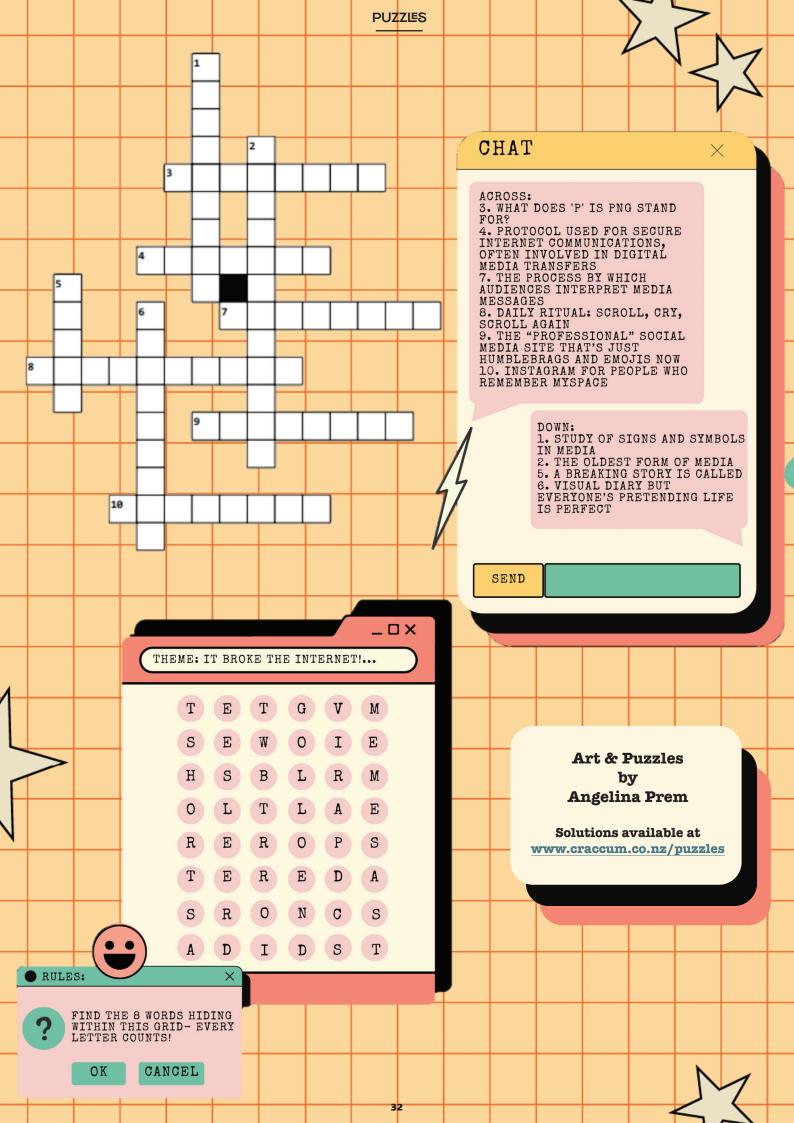


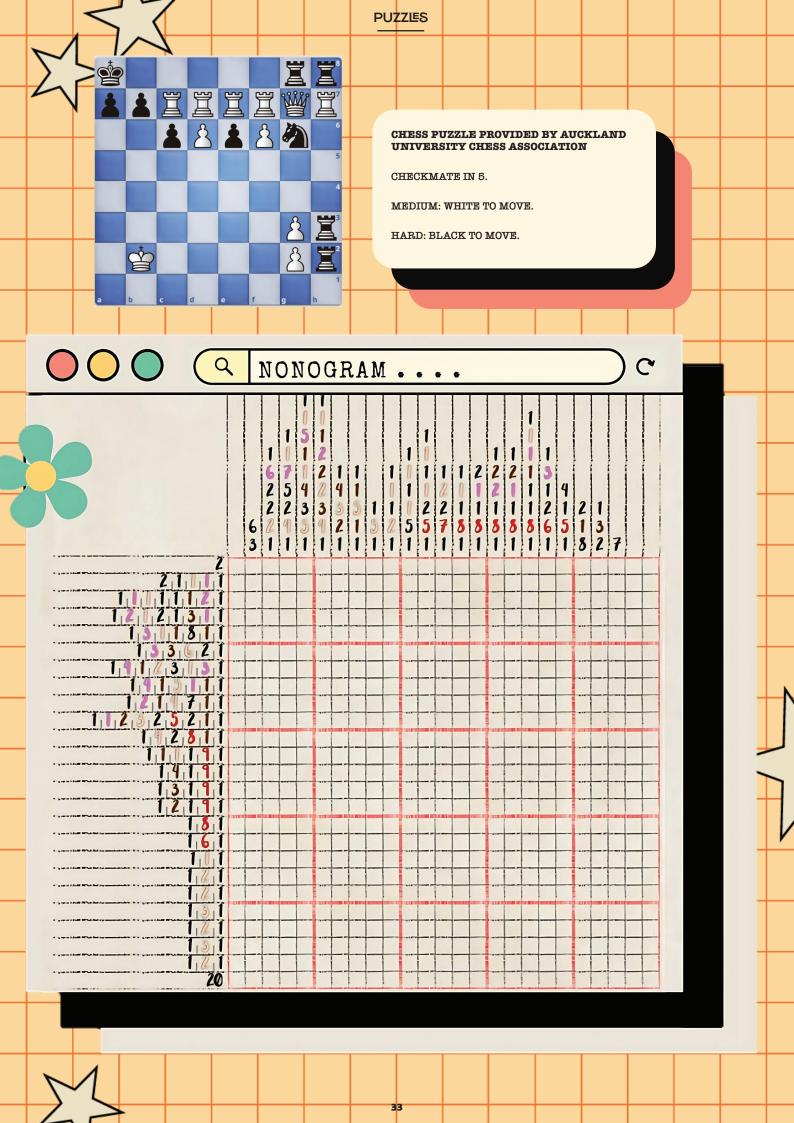
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AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927







#### A DUMPLING RECIPE(ISH)

#### WITH ESTA EATS.

The truth is making good food as a student doesn't have to be hard.

We just need to let what we do have be our guide.

So here's a recipe(ish), throw in this week's quick sales, what's at the back of your fridge or what's in season.

I encourage you to learn the traditional way to make tasty dumplings when you can, but we need to start somewhere!



A dumpling filling can be anything! It's simple, just put your favourite things in a pan add a bit of sesame oil, soy, minced ginger & garlic, cook it till it tastes good. Here's what I put in mine



Top tip, make your filling when you've got a little spare time and put in the fridge till you are ready to fill your dumplings.

#### THE DOUGH.

You can buy the wrappers, but flour & water doesn't cost a lot.



Mix 2 cups of flour with 1/2 cup water. Mix with your hands till you've got a shaggy dough. Let it rest for 15. Knead the dough till smooth, take it as mindfulness time. Let it sit for 30 minutes then you are ready to roll.

Divide the dough into eight for easy rolling. Dust your surface with flour and roll to 3mm(ish). If you don't have a rolling pin use a glass, use that same glass to cut out circle dumpling wrappers. Keep rolling and cutting and be sure to flour them to avoid a sticky mess.

#### FILL, FOLD & FREEZE

Let's be real, a video will do a better job at

My top tips, make sure the filling is cold and don't stress if they don't look perfect.

explaining folding dumplings, just look it up.

The best part is this makes quite a few. Freeze the dumplings separated on a tray and then store in a freezer bag. That way they won't stick together.



I like a crispy dumpling, so I pan fry them in oil first. Then I fill the pan with enough water to go halfway up the dumplings. Put the lid on and steam till there is no water left.



But you could also just chuck them in a pot of boiling water.







@ESTA\_EATS



You can serve these with rice, in a soup, with some cabbage, or even just on their own. I like to make more soy, ginger, garlic, lime, whatever I feel like adding in sauce to drizzle over.

Making good food is all just an experiment.

Have fun, make this Recipe(ish) yours.

## HOROSCOPES

hot off the press

#### **©CANCER**

Good news, Cancer, things are looking up! No more crying in your bed at sad edits and depressing movies of dogs dying. This month, if someone asks you to hang out, say yes and attempt not to cancel on the

Someone around you is plotting

something. Unfortunately, I don't know

who it is and what they are planning. My

suggestion? Sleep with one eye open and

trust no one. (and one of your flatmates

your

**GEMINI** I

stealing

Taurus, I can hear you snivelling from over here. Admit you are un sick for the sanity of everyone around you and stay in bed. Catch up on some crappy television and ignore every Canvas message:

#### **LAPRICORN**

With exams over, you can breathe a sigh of relief and focus your concern on the next ten years of your life. Remember, time is of the essence, and your bank account is shrinking with every impulsive purchase.

AQUARIUS ...

This month, Aquarius, you will be faced with a BIG decision. Although I can't say what awaits you, it's looking tough. I recommend a pro-con list. Also, consider seeing a therapist. Seriously, I think you need to reflect and ponder.

Virgo, the chances of bumping into someone from primary school are at an all-time high this > month. Be alert and ready to justify your life choices from the past 10 years, whilst they discuss their most recent high-profile achievement. (Try not to let it freak you out.)

#### SAGITTARIUS A

Woah there, cowboy, quit horsing around and get it together. The campus is NOT your playground, and we are sick of it. Let's use our inside voices and take a moment to consider the consequences of our actions for time in months.

A LEO

This month, your life is a romantic movie, a messy love triangle with drama, tears, and a Top 40s hit montage. Be prepared to burst into song and be a part of a flash dance mob, just watch out for a backstabbing friend with a vendetta.

Try to take the lead this semester, Libra, the group needs you, and we all learnt what happens when you leave the project in the hands of that one guy at the back of the tutorial. Lead your team to victory and revel in the glory, I'll allow it.

PISCES X

Logging films on your doesn't Letterboxd make you artsy, it makes you insufferable. Take a step back from curating your social media - I don't wanna see another sunset or brunch post put to a Lana Del Rey song-

ARIES T Let's find a creative outlet, Aries, something to focus on that isn't doomscrolling or yelling at people. Take a pottery class or paint your feelings whatever it takes to lower your heart rate and eliminate that scary look in your eye.

M. SCORPIO I see you, Scorpio, you've been saving videos on TikTok of

obscure and random activities. month, let yourself explore that one hobby always wanted to you have try. Will you be the next Picasso or simply end up in tears? Who can say, but either way, it funny.



NOMINATIONS OPEN MONDAY 28TH JULY UNTIL FRIDAY 8 AUGUST - 5PM! FOR POSITION DESCRIPTIONS - SEE VOTE.AUSA.NZ

