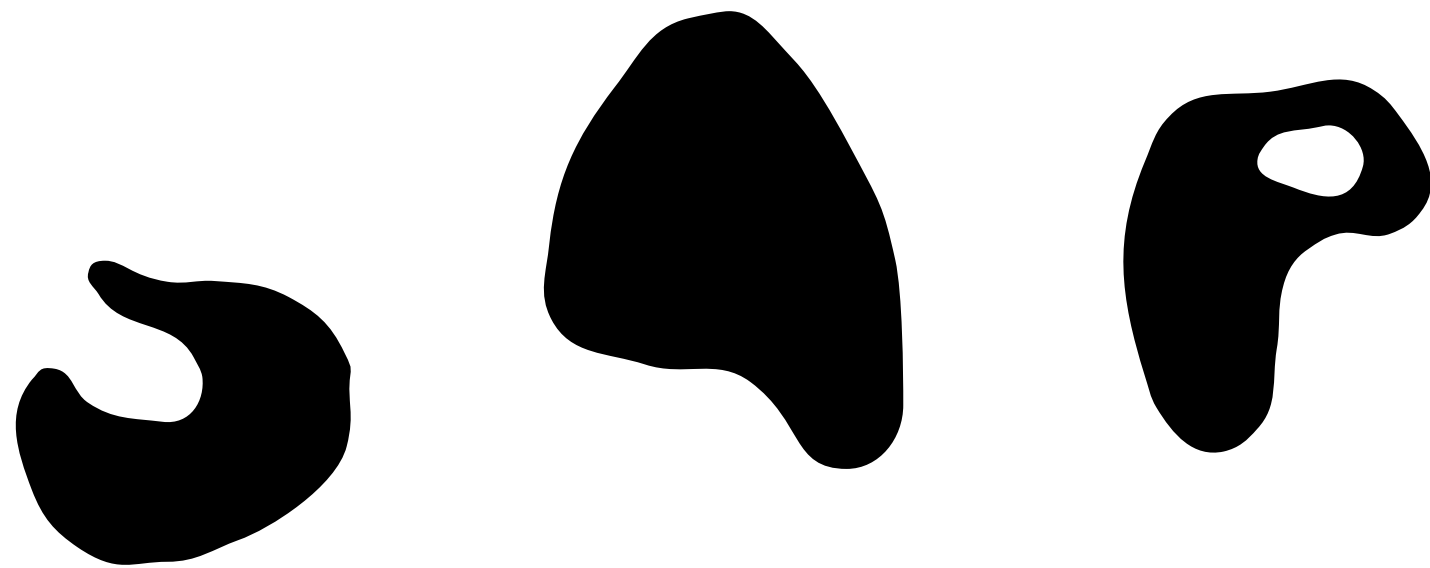


# S A P



issue 003: summer 2022

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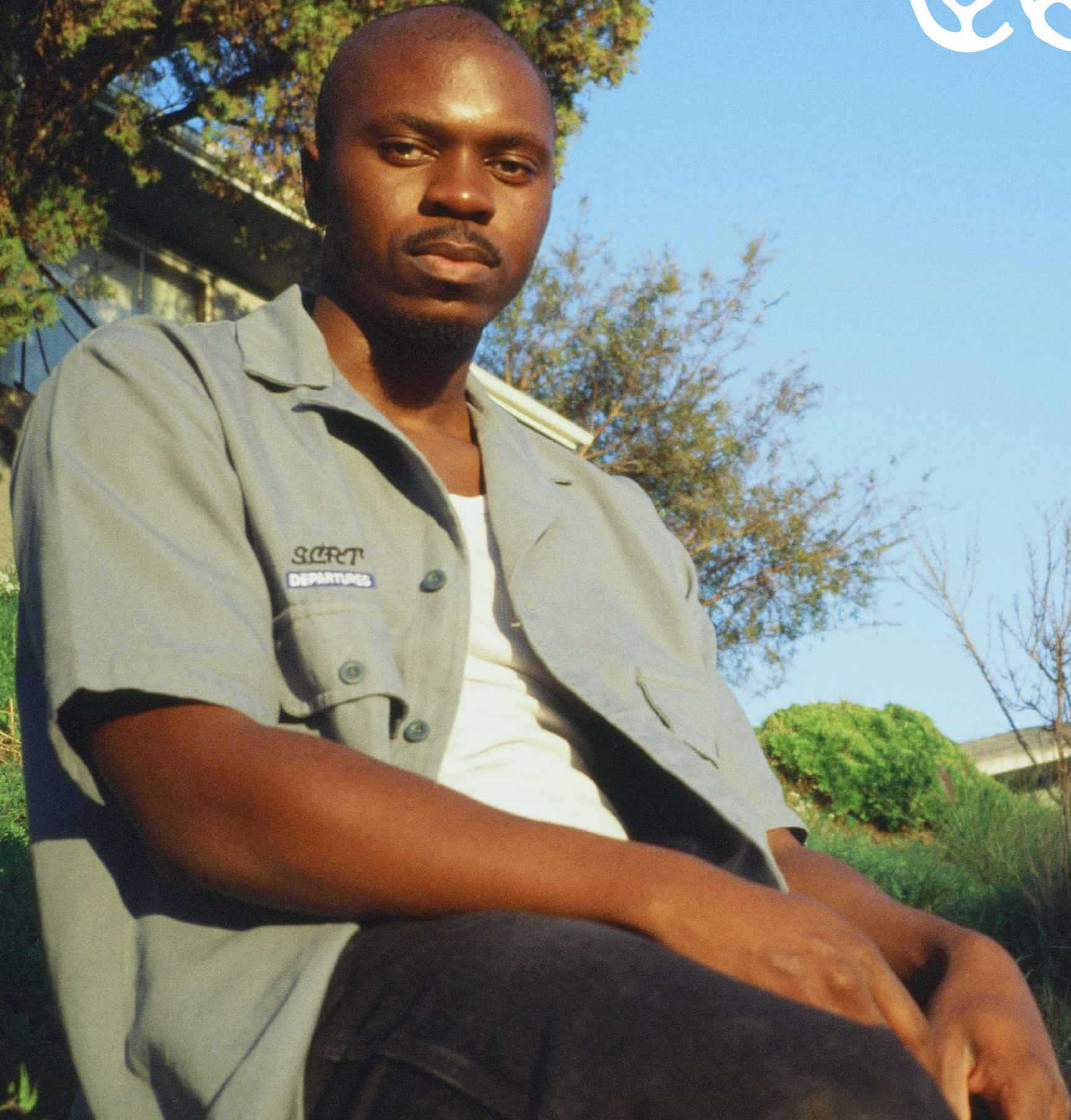
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# COLLOBOH

*interview by max burkeman  
photos by patrick no*



Collins Oboh, stage name Colloboh, was born in Nigeria and moved to the DMV area when he could barely remember. Since then, he has developed a deep and complicated relationship with modulator synths, his main tool to creating his luscious soundscapes that you can also dance to. Having recently moved to Los Angeles we chat over a casual zoom call about “chill cali vibes”, his recent tour with Beach House, how Tik Tok white girls responded to his music, the hands on aspect of modular synths and much more.

For this issue of SAP, Colloboh has graciously created a 62 minute mix. An edition of 50 have been dubbed on tape.



**Max Burkeman: Yo, what's up, man?**

Collins Oboh: Hello.

**MB: How you doing? You really wanted to get this thing started (laughs). So you're like an "I'm up, let's get this shit goin', type of person"?**

CO: Yeah, I don't know. I just felt like...

**MB: Why wait for it?**

CO: Yeah, right. It's been one of those weeks like, I just gotta get my shit together.

**MB: Yeah, I thought the same thing. I don't know, I feel like right now everything feels like it's in this weird limbo.**

CO: Yes, that is life right now for a lot of people, including myself, it's just weird. I mean, what else can you do? Yeah.

**MB: How you been?**

CO: I've been alright. I've definitely been better. Just personal shit going on. Like, work and life. All that shit. It's a lot. But I mean, overall, I guess I'm here. So, How bout you, man?

**MB: I've been alright. Just been doing Sap stuff, looking for a job, you know, trying to get that bread up because I'm a [REDACTED] dropout. RECENT dropout. Gotta get life moving.**

CO: Dude! I feel you, man.

**MB: Yeah, exactly. So where are you calling from?**

CO: I'm in Pasadena, California. Yeah, I live here right now.

**MB: Right. And you just moved there?**

CO: Yeah, just moved here. Got to California like three months ago and just got a place here maybe a month and a half ago. I don't even know, times just a blur.

**MB: Right. Especially in California. I feel like there's nowhere else where time and life can move right past you.**

CO: Yeah, I feel like it. (Laughs)

**MB: Well, I was gonna ask you if there's anything that you do or don't fuck with California. Specifically, DON'T fuck with. You know, I'm from New York. Gotta be a hater.**

CO: Oh man, I feel like I haven't experienced it enough to talk shit yet, to be honest. But I know what I do love and that's the weather. The mountains. It's just a beautiful tropical place. So I do really fuck with that.

**MB: Are you a big outdoors dude?**

CO: I'm moderate. I like to go on hikes once in a while but I'm not like...

**MB: You don't got the Lululemon tights on and a Hydroflask.**

CO: Nah! (Laughs) No way. But I do like being outside listening to some music you know, just chilling.

**MB: You moved from Baltimore, right?**

CO: Right.

**MB: Have you noticed a difference in the different dance scenes between the two?**

CO: I mean again, to be honest, I haven't really experienced this place enough to have an opinion. Although, I didn't experience that much in Baltimore either. I don't really go out.

**MB: And you were born in Nigeria, right?**

CO: Right, yeah.

**MB: How old were you when you left for the DMV?**

CO: I was seven when I moved to Gaithersburg, Maryland, which is close to the DC area. That's pretty much where I grew up. Then I moved to Baltimore right after college and lived there for about six years.

**MB: Do you remember leaving Nigeria?**

CO: Vaguely. I remember random memories from there really vividly. I remember I used to collect toy cell phones.

**MB: Like the ones you get from Chinatown? You press a button and they light up and start speaking to you? (Laughs)**

CO: Exactly!

**MB: I feel like that's gotta be some sort of an early embodiment of you now; collecting synths or some shit you know?**

CO: That's interesting. I never even connected those dots. I've always liked collecting shit.

**MB: What was that transition like, leaving Nigeria for the DMV? Do you remember if you wanted to leave?**

CO: I don't remember if I wanted to leave. I was too young. But I definitely remember it being a culture shock. I mean, coming here took a while to adjust for sure.

**MB: Did you have someone back then that helped you get into music or was that just a full self-exploration?**

CO: Nah.

**MB: Damn that was all you, left to your own devices?**

CO: Well, I could give credit to one of my homies in high school. His name is Tyler.

**MB: Shoutout Tyler!**

CO: He had this radio club in high school. It was like some weird nerdy after-school thing that was only like four or five kids. I remember when I first went, it was my introduction to vinyl and records and stuff. I was like, and this is gonna sound corny, but like, "Damn, it sounds like I can feel the music." (Laughs)

**MB: No, for sure! I think we've all had that memorable corny feeling.**

CO: And then I just got really into records. I just plunged into things. One of my friends started rapping and I tried to make beats for him and that's kinda how this shit got started.

**MB: Ohhhh, I see. Classic. Didn't know you were making beats for people first.**

CO: It wasn't for people, it was specifically for my two friends. We just had a rap group together for a couple years and thennnnnn shit didn't work out. (Laughs)

**MB: So, how old were you when you really got into music and wanted to discover new stuff?**

CO: Ohhh, that was like 10th grade, so I don't know, I think 2010?

**MB: So, I grew up with a ton of music around me. My dad was a DJ so I didn't really have to do that much of my own exploration until later on in my life. Though I feel like there's something kinda special in a more challenging way of being left to your own devices and deciding what you like completely by yourself.**

CO: Yeah, I definitely agree with that. That's kinda how it was. I mean my parents did play a lot of music in the house growing up. There was always music playing. Even if it was like traditional African music.

**MB: Like dancehall type stuff?**

CO: Not really dancehall, more highlife. Also traditional gospel music. African and American. Just like random shit. My mom was really into country music so a lot of Kenny Rogers and stuff. It was random, but I think that helped me appreciate all aspects of music.

**MB: Yeah, I feel like you can always tell when a kid had parents that always had music playing. It definitely changes how you approach music, even if it's stuff that you don't fuck with. Gives you a wider view, being constantly enveloped in that.**

CO: Right, exactly. I mean, I didn't really get my own appreciation or rather my own deep appreciation until I started doing my own exploring. I remember the first record I got was from the band Yes, their "Fragile" album.

**MB: Ha! My dad used to be a Yes head. (Laughs)**

CO: Mannn. They're awesome. I got pretty into that whole prog-psych-rock stuff. Not super deep, but you know, King Crimson and Pink Floyd and bands like that.

**MB: Right, right. It wasn't like you were outside the parking lot tryna cop acid tabs from weird old dudes?**

CO: No, unfortunately.

**MB: Well, I gotta give a huge congrats on the Beach House tour, that's amazing. Was that your first real tour? How did that end up happening?**

CO: That was definitely my first legit tour. Before that, I did two shows with Injury Reserve. Shout out to them. They just randomly hit me up and that kinda showed me like, "Oh shit, I can actually perform in front of a good amount of people." I definitely appreciate that, giving me that confidence I think I needed.

**MB: How was that compared to the Beach House one?**

CO: I was driving by myself the whole time. Just driving every day

into these different cities. Caucasian ass cities, like Des Moines, Iowa-type shit.

**MB: Right. (Laughs)**

CO: It was fascinating. I mean, I'm going to cherish those experiences and the Beach House crew forever. They're like family for real. Really friendly and genuine. They made it way more fun than it could have been.

**MB: I'm assuming you've been a fan of theirs. How was it like being with a group that you have respected and followed? And also, both Beach House and Injury Reserve have very different sounds, but I feel like you fit in perfectly with them. How was that, having a different style of music than the main act?**

CO: It's so weird. I feel like I'm always doing shows with odd combinations. Though, I feel like with both Injury Reserve and Beach House there is a core appreciation of experimentation. I think that's the main thing that ties us together. But yeah, very strange just getting hit up by Beach House. Like I don't make Beach House-type beats. (Laughs)

**MB: Right, your shit isn't really Lofi Beach House beats to relax/study to.**

CO: But it worked. We were able to connect and create this music. Performing together, it still didn't feel like I did that. Super trippy. I don't feel like that happened. Kinda an out-of-body experience. But yeah, massive gratitude to them for putting me on.

**MB: I always prefer when the opening act is super different from the main act. When a big band can appreciate greatness in something other than their own.**

CO: I mean I didn't feel like I deserved it. I've been fucking with Beach House for a good minute. I have all their records. They are pretty much always on rotation. It was very surreal.

**MB: How did you feel opening for a band where their fans probably weren't expecting your type of music.**

CO: It was fun. Actually, it was a lot of fun. I enjoy opening because





I feel like there are no expectations.

**MB: No bias.**

CO: At first, I was nervous but then I was like, “I can literally do anything I want.”

**MB: You don’t have a choice, they are either gonna fuck with it or not so you might as well put on a show.**

CO: Exactly. Push things to the limit. Make it as loud and intense as possible because that’s what I like.

**MB: For sure. When I first met you at Public Records, it was a brief hello but I could tell you were beat. Does touring take it out of you? Was that the first time you’ve felt that fatigue as an artist?**

CO: I mean, to be honest, the whole tour itself was pretty fun. I usually just did the show with the band and went to bed (laughs). But that last show coming to New York and driving, fuck. It was like 10 hours straight. I got burnt. That was unfortunate. but other than that I felt pretty good.

**MB: Oh, sweet. With some artists, they either get pumped up by the more touring they do, and others crash and burn by the end. Glad it gives you energy.**

CO: Yeah, it’s exhilarating. Performing your shit on bigger speakers than yourself to a big ass crowd. It’s a dream.

**MB: Do you have any pre-show rituals? A Diet Coke and bowl of cashews or like 25 jumping jacks?**

CO: I definitely do a lot of pacing.

**MB: I’m a huge pacer.**

CO: Especially before doing something in public. Just pacing back and forth for like 15 minutes.

**MB: When you blow up big time and the green room riders are like: “Mr. Colloboh what would you like?” What are you asking for? (Laughs)**

CO: Hahaha, the tour manager on the Beach House tour asked me what I would like provided and I was just like, “I’ll take some pistachios and a beer” and I got that every. fucking. show. Like I’m so fucking tired of pistachios.

**MB: (Laughs) Oh man, and that’s a dangerous nut. Gotta be careful cracking them open. Cut up your fingers.**

CO: It was a mess. It was the red chili pistachio ones. After the third show, I didn’t want them anymore. I just didn’t know what else to get.

**MB: What got you into modular synths? Was it also high school?**

CO: That’s a good question. I mean, to be honest, mostly YouTube. I first started with a little synthesizer called the MiniBrute. It’s just a little synth as a keyboard. Really, really, great little thing. After a while, though, I got kinda bored with it. Then, on Reddit, somebody posted a video of them jamming out with this weird box with all these cables. I was like, “Yo, this is crazy” and that was kinda my introduction. I just flew off the deep end after that.

**MB: The idea of Modular synths is really intimidating to me. It’s almost like an alien object. I would have no idea where to even begin. Did you learn everything online?**

CO: It took a while dude. It took me like a year or two and having like three or four modules before it really started to click. To actually understand what the fuck everything does. I’m still learning. I see some people doing some intense shit. Most of the stuff I’m doing is pretty straightforward. I’m not doing super experimental stuff, it’s shit that Beach House fans can get into.

**MB: (Laughs) Right, you can’t scare the Beach House fans.**

CO: Nah you can’t. There’s a lot of caucasian little girls. It’s crazy because their fan base has changed a lot.

**MB: No, for real, it’s yooouungg now.**

CO: Cuz of that Tik Tok shit.

**MB: My little sister loves Beach House. She’s 15, also a little white girl.**

CO: I mean, I feel happy for them, they deserve it.

**MB: The most interesting aspect of modular synths, to me at least, is the hands-on aspect of it. Is there something about the tactile-ness of it that you gravitated towards?**

CO: Yeah, I mean, that’s exactly the reason I got into it. It’s super-expressive. You can put emotion into it with your own physical movement. It aligns with your feelings.

**MB: You can really put yourself into it.**

CO: Literally. I can attest to it. You can feel like you’re one with the machine. It’s crazy, because you build it yourself, you make it for yourself. Also in terms of performing, I think it adds a lot. To let the audience see you working in real-time. Seeing the flaws and mistakes you make. The randomness of it adds a new layer to the performance. It’s very visually appealing.

**MB: I was reading an old Index magazine interview with Aphex Twin and he was saying how he works on like 30 tracks at a time and constantly hops from one to another. I was wondering what your work process is and if you’re jumping from track to track or just doing one and done.**

CO: I’m totally one and done. I mean, with the modular synths you are pretty much locked into one track at a time. So there are times I’ll spend months on just one track, and just run with it. I’m super casual about the whole thing, I don’t feel the pressure to constantly be creating. I kind of wish I felt that pressure, to be prolific, but I kinda just... don’t. So yeah, I wish I was making 30 tracks a day. That way I’d probably have more than six tracks on the internet (Laughs).

**MB: So the synth limits you to be stubborn and keep pushing with one track? That must help keep your eyes on the main goal of a song.**

CO: Yeah, that was actually my problem before using modules. When I was using Fruity Loops and shit I would just have a whole bunch of saves never finished. But now I’m forced to be like, “Ok I gotta finish this fucking song or else I just wasted all this time”.

**MB: Has any Nigerian music influenced your music? I’ve been heavily into Dancehall recently and I noticed on a track like “one2Many” off Entity Relation there’s a lot of correlation.**

CO: I mean yeah. It makes sense because that’s just a part of me. It’s gonna come out in some way. I don’t listen to a lot of dancehall music, but I do listen to a lot of high life. A lot of Diaspora music. I do listen to a lot of Brazilian Music.

**MB: Yeah, Portuguese music goes crazy.**

CO: Yeah like Milton Nascimento and you know like João Gilberto.

**MB: João is insane.**

CO: I mean, I am just constantly listening to a bunch of different types of music so it’s gonna come out in my music. It’s a big part of who I am.

**MB: Right, it’s not a fully conscious thing. Just happens.**

CO: Even like classical music. I’m a huge fan of classical. So going back to the question, I just like being open to anything. Any kind of music. Just allowing yourself to be a reflection of that is important.

**MB: Allowing yourself to be in touch with what you hear and incorporating that into your own sound.**

CO: Exactly, yeah. Being to accept it, process it, and regurgitate it into something genuine to yourself. That’s what I think makes interesting and good music. I think it’s a form of sincerity. Even now, the music I’m making right now, it’s not super dancy or super happy, because that’s just my feelings at the moment.

**MB: With dance music, I think it’s hard to be able to have an easily recognizable identity. With other genres, other elements make it easier to recognize, like singing. You only have 6 tracks out as of right now, but those tracks already have that voice and uniqueness. That’s what made you so interesting to me. How was that process for you? Did you ever have a time when you couldn’t find that sound?**

CO: Hmm yeah, I guess so. I feel like I always was going back to being genuine about my creative process. I’ve always had my own sound. It was definitely shitty, but it was always my own. Just slowly working it out, like chiseling marble. Practicing and being alone and working on music as an escape was really important to me.

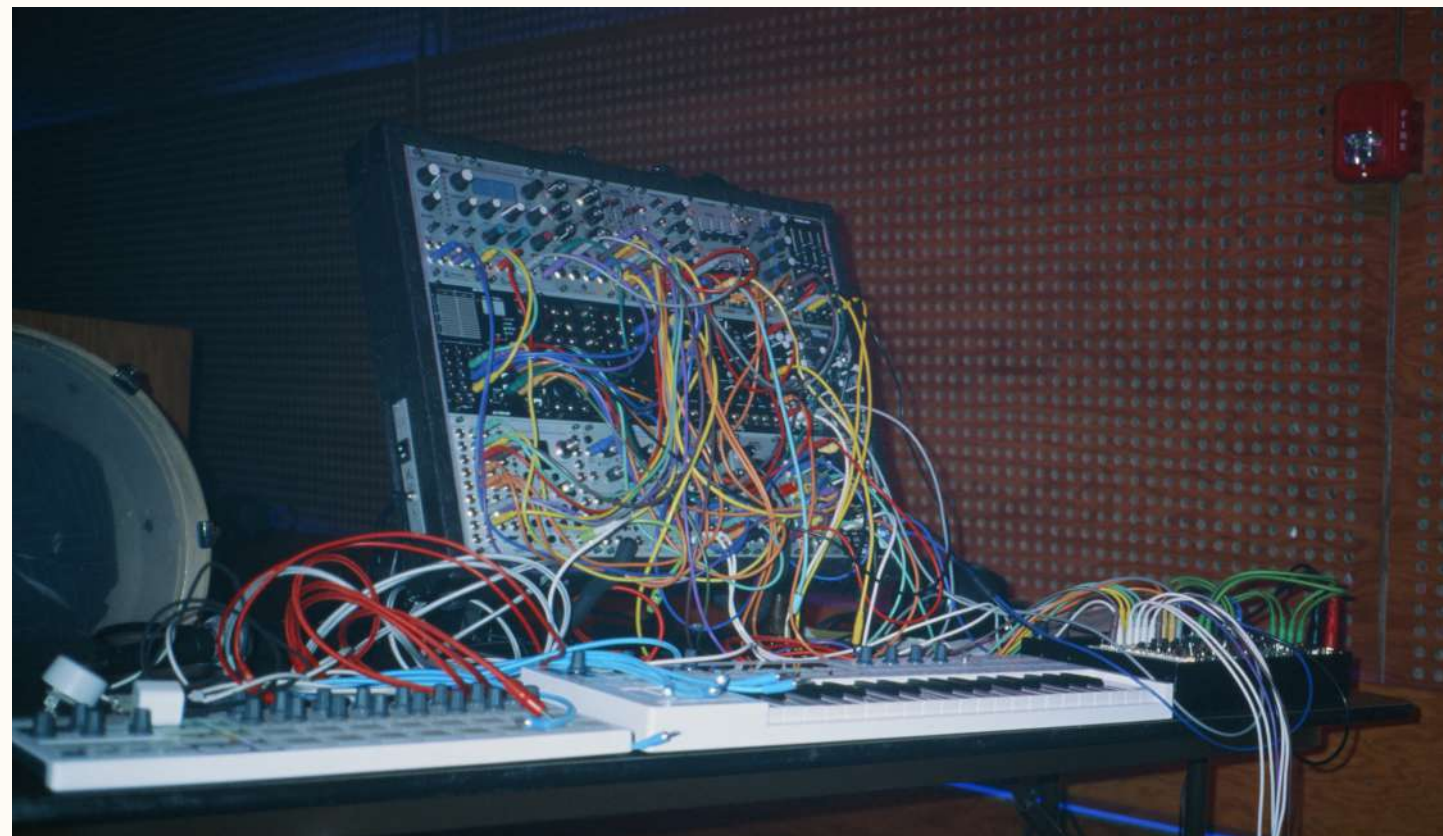
**MB: Was there a moment where you were just messing around and practicing and you felt like “this is it, this is my sound” or is that just constantly shifting?**

CO: Yeah I mean I love mistakes. I love when you make a mistake and your like “this fucking slaps”. I love it. It’s just the best feeling. It’s a gift from God. I’ve had that moment, a lot of times actually. I feel like in the music that I actually put out, there’s always some presence of randomness. I think it adds something more to the music.

**MB: It’s the happy little accidents that count.**

CO: Right. That’s the other thing, performing live. I make mistakes but some of them actually work. I didn’t mean to do that but fuck it, it sounds really good.

**MB: When I saw you at Public Records, you mentioned to me that you weren’t feeling that set and I couldn’t believe it, because to me it sounded incredible. Is it one of those things where only you recognize your mistakes, but when you catch them, it can help you experiment and change your music?**







CO: I think it's just a thing of when you play enough, you know when you do a good job. I remember like the 3rd of 4th show with Beach House, that show went perfectly. Now I'm always tryna get back to that. Like, "Damn, this show just wasn't as good as that one."

**MB: (Laughs) I never thought about it like that, if you have the perfect show, you're always gonna be chasing the dragon.**

CO: Exactly. It's easy to let yourself down, but if the audience enjoyed it, then whatever!

**MB: With social media, it's much easier to find new people, and get inspired artistically, but on the other side of the spectrum, it is really easy to lose your identity and uniqueness. It's super easy to pick up other people's styles. How is your relationship with that? Do you use social media to find inspiration?**

CO: Social media is ruining my life.

**MB: You're telling me.**

CO: Honestly, as much as I have to use Instagram to promote my music and stuff, I do not like that app. I don't like what it does. Going back to your question, I guess maybe when I started modulator stuff there was definitely more of an aspect of getting inspiration. There are a lot of really good modulated musicians out there. There's even more shitty ones, but there's a lot of really good ones that I'm lucky to have connected with.

**MB: Yeah, I think there is a lot of great that can come out of Instagram if you can avoid all the bullshit. I'm actually doing an Instagram break right now. Shit just makes me sad. (Laughs)**

CO: For sure. I've gotten myself in lots of bad situations with that fucking app. But I have to be on it.

**MB: I think if you're able to reach the community aspect of it, there's a lot of good that can come from it.**

CO: I mean as much as I hate it, that's why I got this Beach House shit. That's why I'm doing shows with Leaving Records. So I can't hate too much.

**MB: It's funny that you mentioned Leaving Records. I saw that you signed with them, so big congrats.**

CO: I wouldn't say "sign". It's not a conventional record label. I didn't sign anything. You don't sign anything.

**MB: Oh shit? They just want you a part of the team?**

CO: Yeah, it's run by a guy named Matthew David. He is the biggest champion that you could ever have on your side. When he really fucks with your stuff, he will do all he can to support. That was enough for me. It's more like if I make something, they will help try to spread it as much as they can.

**MB: That's amazing, I had no idea it was that casual. Also, it has that feeling that the other people on the label have different music to you, but you fit in so perfectly.**

CO: Dude, the other artists on Leaving, I'm such a huge fan of them. It's an honor to be a part of that.

**MB: I was on Twitter and Leaving Records posted a snippet of you making a trap beat. I just thought that "this has to happen". Is that style something you would be interested in doing?**

CO: Listen, as I said, I just make whatever, right? There's really no preconceived idea of something I'm gonna make. It just happens one step at a time. It's gotta connect. I'm not just gonna trap it out in the middle of an EP. It has to make sense at the time.

**MB: Got it, got it. But if Uzi hits you up, "Yo Colloboh tryna get into a new sound"...**

CO: Oh, I'm doing that for sure. I won't pass up any opportunities.

**MB: So you're up for anything, but when it's just you and your music, you are gonna put out the music that you feel the most in touch with.**

CO: Exactly.

**MB: What was 13-year-old Collin's top three albums?**

CO: Man 13, I wasn't even really into music.

**MB: Alright fine, 10th grade, 11th grade Collins, when you really got into music.**

CO: Like I said I was definitely in my rock phase when I first started getting into it. So #1 is definitely Cream "Disraeli Gears". I still love that album. King Crimson "In the Court of the Crimson King". Still love that one. And fuck it, throw in Madvilliany. That was when I was getting acquainted with all the classics.

**MB: Right, so the Rate Your Music Top Albums.**

CO: Haha yes. You know, I was just going on YouTube and Google searching like, "Top 100 albums of all time" type shit.

**MB: Well, I feel like that is the thing with RYM and internet music culture. All these kids that want to get into it, all kinda start on a similar playing field.**

CO: It's a rite of passage man. Just spending too much time on the YouTube aethers. I remember I got really into Italian, like Morricone and all that Spaghetti Western stuff. All those Italian exploitation movies, I would just stay up and listen to hours of that.

**MB: When you're young and you really care about wanting to learn about music, even if you don't necessarily fuck with what your hearing, you still just appreciate learning about it. It's almost stressful because there is such a vast amount of stuff you need and want to know of.**

CO: Yeah, I feel like this goes back to Beach House. I'm sure there's a divide between people going there to discover new shit and people that are going to hear Space Song. But yeah anyway, having that younger audience is so valuable. Having them on your side at that age is amazing just cause they're so hungry. Now I just listen to the same stuff. Like I'm too old for this shit. I can't always be looking for new music.

**MB: Any favorite music videos off dome?**

CO: Hmmm. Love Numbers on The Board by Pusha T. Man that beat. That's like one of the best beats ever. Uhhhh shit, not sure what



else comes to mind.

**MB: I mean, I only ask because I wanted to know, now that you're putting more songs out are you gonna start doing more videos as well? I saw the visualizer that you had for "Roam", the song you did with BlankFor.ms. I thought not only is that track fucking beautiful, but also the visualizer works so well with it. It really encapsulates the song strongly.**

CO: Well, first, I should say that I had nothing to do with the visuals of the track. That was all Blankfor.ms. His name is Tyler. That was all his handling. I think that gonna be a part of something he's working on. But yeah I loved it. I actually have a track coming out on the 6th of April that has a visualizer attached. I don't know about music videos of me playing music, I already kinda just do that with my iPhone. But I'd be down for a music video if it makes sense.

**MB: Totally. I want to talk about working with Tyler. That was a long-distance collaboration, correct?**

CO: Yeah. Honestly, that was the most ideal type of collaboration. I'm not very good at jamming with a synthesizer. Maybe if I was a drummer or something that I could get into that jam mindset, but having to think about plugging the cables in time with someone, just doesn't work for me. I would rather it be over the Internet. He'd send me an idea, maybe like a loop or something and I would add to that. We would just constantly be sending back and forth these ideas. It was great because I could take it at my own pace. I very much appreciate working with him, he's incredibly fucking talented. Not just musically, but as an engineer and composer. Big props to him, the collab really inspired me and made me really think critically about my composition and input.

**MB: How was working with someone so closely on a piece, but also being physically so far away? Is this the first time you've ever done anything like that?**

CO: Just finding a way to send anything back and forth was awesome. I don't think I've ever done it with anybody else. It felt super natural, or supernatural (laughs). It just made sense. He hit me up and told me he was gonna release it and I was like, "Yeah, of course, like shit. I was gonna fucking release it also". Everything just came together naturally.

**MB: I feel like with collaboration, space and time are crucial aspects that a lot of people overlook. People just want to be together and work on top of each other constantly, which I think can cause a lot of stress and suffocation, in turn harming the product. That long-distance form of collaboration can help spawn new ideas that you wouldn't be able to think of if you were both right next to each other.**

CO: One hundred percent. I mean, some people can thrive off that. I'm not that kind of person.

**MB: I know you were a late bloomer with music now, but were you ever into other music scenes in the DMV?**

CO: I was never really in a scene. I don't think I was even really a part of the dancing scene in Baltimore. Before music, I was actually really big into film. I wanted to be a filmmaker since middle school. I remember, one of my teachers made us watch 12 Angry Men. That shit yo, I was like "This is VERY cool, I want to do this". So pretty much from then to my freshman year of college, I was preparing to be a filmmaker. Then I realized shits expensive. It's easier to pirate Fruity Loops (laughs). I mean I still want to do that at some

point, but right now this seems like the path I'm trying to follow.

**MB: I mean I just dropped out of [REDACTED] where I was a film bro. I just realized, "This shit is so not for me".**

CO: Now I gotta know what your top 3 movies are then.

**MB: Ohhh man. See this is the question. This is why I needed to leave. All the film majors wanted to be directors and screenwriters and everyone always talked about movies. I like, occasionally watch a movie. But anyway, I'd say Old Boy the Korean one. I watched that with my dad which was an interesting experience. Paris, Texas which is a film bro pick but whatever it makes me cry every time. Then I don't know, I just watched the Jimmy Neutron movie and I can't get enough of that shit.**

CO: Love that.

**MB: When that Kim Wilde Kids in America song comes on when they are flying in space, I get goosebumps.**

CO: (Laughs) I don't blame you. That shit was hitting back in the day.

**MB: Also with film, you said that you don't like working physically with people that much. There's so much collaboration. You can't really do anything by yourself, which is a huge reason I don't like it. I'm a pretty independent person when I have my own vision with a project. Was that ever an aspect that threw you off?**

CO: Yeah, I was also a broke kid. I'm not gonna lie, I was writing weird scripts with strange plots. Just weird film shit. Like it was probably some trash. But yeah, I just realized that everything attached costs money.

**MB: Especially if you don't have access to equipment. For every single aspect of film, you pretty much need a budget.**

CO: Exactly. It's not gonna happen. I can't do that. Not yet. Maybe one day!

**MB: Well, I want to ask, do you have any other hobbies right now besides music.**

CO: I enjoy birdwatching.

**MB: Oh shit.**

CO: My girlfriend or maybe ex-girlfriend, dunno, it's complicated, got me binoculars two years ago cuz I told her I was getting hooked just watching these birds. And now I'm in this perfect place because Pasadena has so many birds and so many trees. Birdwatching, gardening, I guess. You know, just like chill shit man. I'm not tryna be stressing out.

**MB: Are you keeping track of the birds you've seen?**

CO: There's like an app I use where you can identify birds that you see. So yeah, very casual. Not over here hunting for certain types of birds.

**MB: I don't know if you can get any more casual and chill than small gardening and birdwatching.**

CO: (Laughs) True. So yeah I'm like a fucking old man.

**MB: (Laughs) Nah! That's the vibe now! The young shit is gone. It's about taking a walk around the park.**

CO: Seriously. Disconnecting and unplugging. Something I'm constantly fighting. Fighting the urge to look at computers. Even though my day job is being a Data Engineer so it's like I'm always looking at the screen.

**MB: I mean I was gonna ask, I peeped the LinkedIn on my stalker shit.**

CO: Oh shit. That shit not updated though bruh!

**MB: (Laughs) Does being a data analyst play into your music at all? Modular synths and data analysis are two things that my brain can't comprehend so like...**

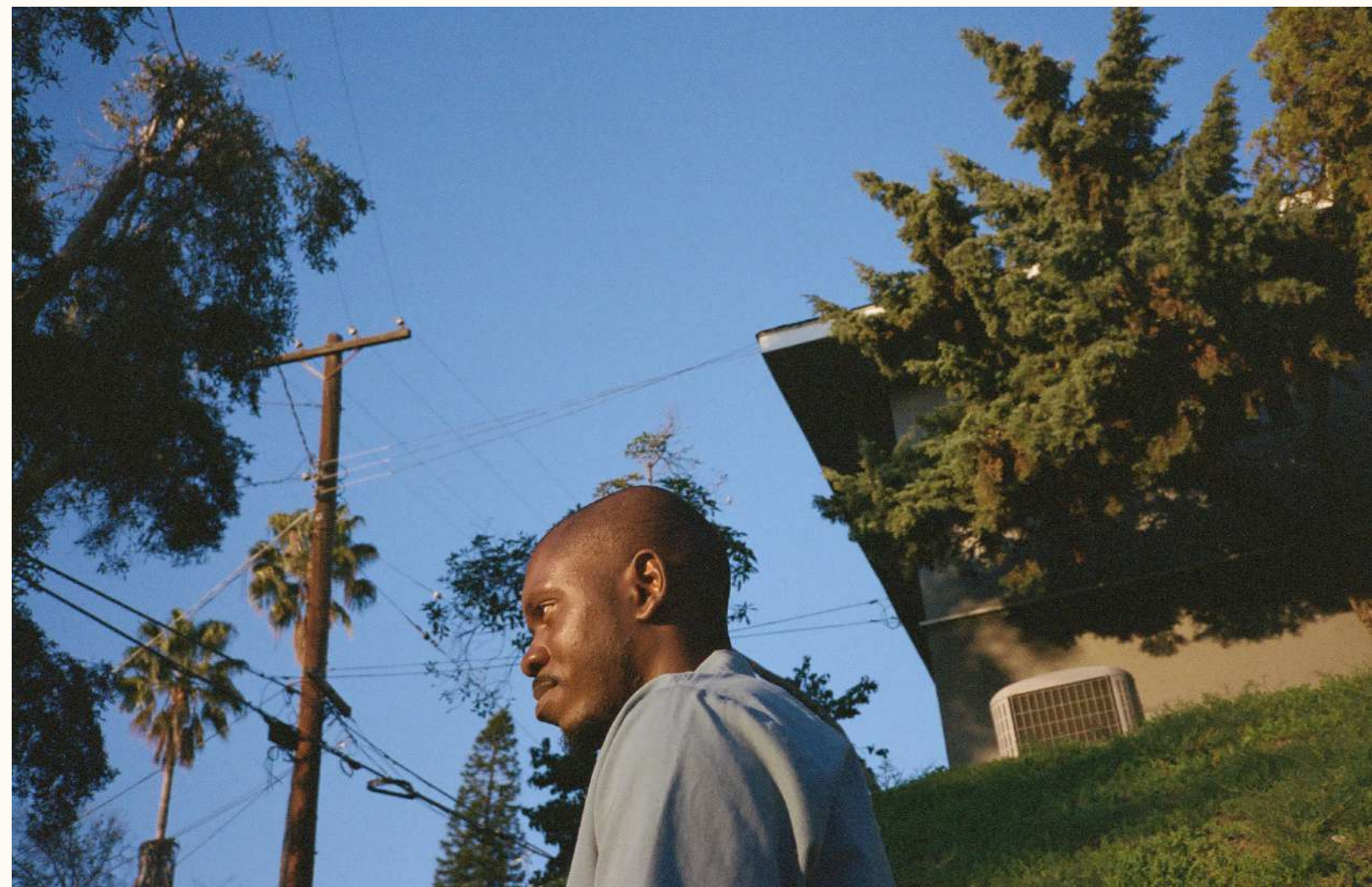
CO: Well, I'm a Data Engineer now.

**MB: That's an upgrade? You got that promotion??**

CO: We movin up!

**MB: Congrats bro.**

CO: Hmmm, does it connect? I guess logically, thinking about "Ok you got this data from a source, and that could be from like an oscillator or synth. Then you gotta filter things and change things. SO I guess in the mindset of input and output there are similarities". I guess I'm a fuckin nerd.



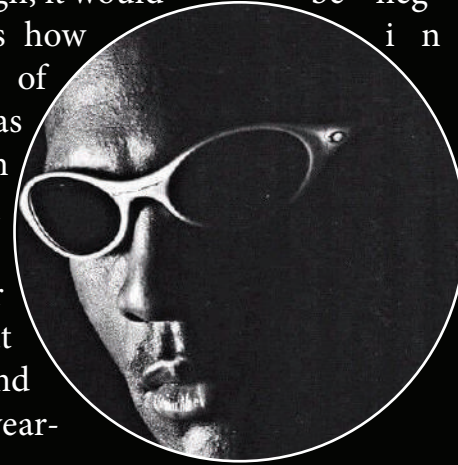




why the *fuck* are people wearing oakley?

words by patrick no 6 brooks morrow

Okay look, when you think of Oakley, the first thing that could pop into your mind are those white, rectangle framed glasses that cops or bozo conservatives wear. Or maybe it's an old photo of Michael Jordan or Dennis Rodman looking dope as fuck in the 90's. Whatever it may be, we all think of Oakley in a specific way. The thing is though, it would be negligible to discuss how in the past couple of years, Oakley has started to engrain the main fashion world with influence & minor popularity, but how did it start and why are people wearing it?

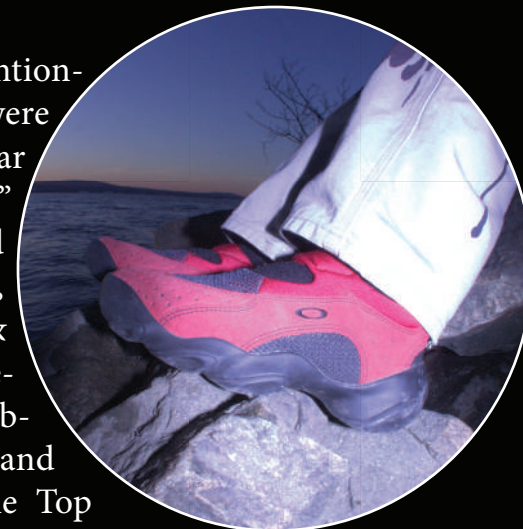


Sure, I could just immediately talk about how the shoes are sick as hell or how I wish I could have this specific jacket, or have an original pair of the Eye Jacket, but first, we should talk about the history of the brand, as a quick refresh. Oakley was founded by this guy named Jim Jannard in 1975 and started selling motocross gear out of the back of his car. Eventually, he went on to make skiing equipment, biking equipment, and then in 1984, he made the brand's first pair of sunglasses.

We were lucky enough to talk to Peter Yee, who worked at Oakley from 1993 - 2018 and held the prestigious position of Vice President of Design. Throughout the article, we've included sketches of his time designing at Oakley. Peter Yee was the first trained industrial designer at Oakley and throughout his long tenure at the brand, he would say



that "Unconventional and Brave were words we'd hear a lot at Oakley." He designed the Eye Jacket, which Stussy & Palace have reworked, the absolutely wild and iconic Over The Top alongside Jannard, which is instantly recognizable, and many many more. Not even to mention the fucking LOGO. Yes. The Logo. When talking to him, we were interested in how he designed the glasses and objects he made. He noted that he was influenced by paraphernalia specifically outside of glasses, with him looking at "... airplanes, fighter planes, race car geometry, sculpture, cars..." Peter also noted that it's important to look at other glasses designs, although if you want something new and innovative, you should look elsewhere. Peter's work has been recognized by the MoMA and SFMoMA as well, including the Eye Jacket and with two shoes: the Flesh (2000) and Shoe One (1998). He didn't do all the work with the shoes, but did help out here and there. We asked Peter what he thought about, what we said was "vintage," Oakley coming back in style, and he was thrilled that people are wearing them again. He mentioned how "The psychology of a good product is just as important as the good product itself."



Oakley, alongside general sportswear, has been back in style for the past couple of years.



The twenty-year “back-in-style” conundrum will always occur no matter what, and these days it’s starting to happen quicker and quicker. As Y2K and 90’s fashion is ever so popular today, let’s look back and see specifically HOW Oakley got cemented into that era of culture.

Most famously, athlete Ato Boldon from Trinidad and Tobago wore the Over The Top at the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympics in the Men’s 100-meter sprint. As Peter says, “The Over The Top was not for everybody, but everybody knows this design.” Look, okay, I know, this was just a literal list of all dudes with dongs and I’m sorry for that, but the trend was pretty menswear heavy.

European rave culture also was a part of this era, coming from the Netherlands in the early 90’s. When the Eye Jacket was released, the Gabber generation took that design and ran with it. Ravers had the real glasses and many had knockoffs, and now you have people twenty years down the line wearing the exact pair at raves in NYC. (I have seen multiple people at warehouses and Nowadays wearing the Eye Jacket. I myself wear a knockoff.) Ravers often wore these due to the classic two reasons: form and function. They have the look of the future and were something very modern and would stay on your head while you’re sweaty and dancing. Even DJ’s are wearing some look-alike in the club like Miley Serious or LU2K, or maybe they’re being worn while they DJ on your favorite HOR video.

It would be blasphemous for me not to discuss how Oakley has made its own wave in the fashion world today. Sports, athletic, biking, whatever you wanna call it, GORPCORE, this genre, and its eyewear has been trendy for years. These days though, it’s a first where the brand has created garments and not JUST eyewear. Let’s start with how in the past 5 years, Oakley has had collaborations with: Stussy, Palace, Samuel Ross, Vetements, and most recently, Brain Dead.

We all know what GORPCORREEE is, by this point, dudes and dudettes wearing their fancy Arcteryx jackets. I would argue that old Oakley garments have that same tech that brands like Nike Gyakusou, Prada Sport, and even... even maybe... Kiko Kostadinov. Old archive jackets made of nylon, gore-tex, and fleeces, along with curved and non-linear cuts

*that resemble the likes of And Wander, Post Archive Fashion, and Hyein Seo.*

*In April of 2021, Stussy brought back the 1994 Eye Jacket in two colorways; black and tan. Alongside a beautiful photo campaign influenced by Southern California surf, Stussy was selling these at their flagship stores around the world and all of the Dover Street Markets. Wow! Oakley in Dover Street Market...*

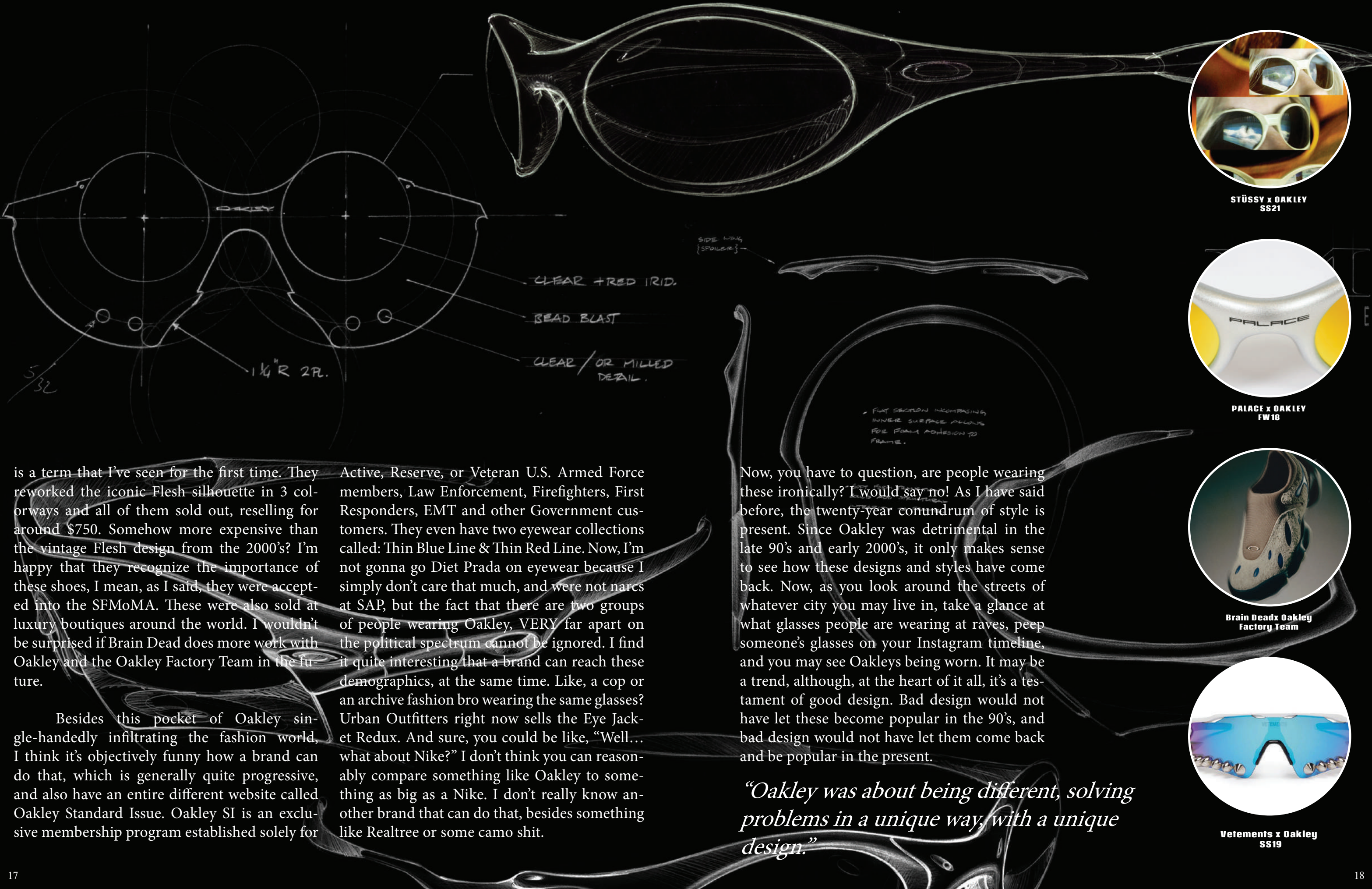
*Three years before that, Palace decided to ALSO release their spin of the 1994 Eye Jacket, in two colorways; silver and black. Palace also released some (ugly) windbreakers alongside a pair of biking sunglasses.*

*Samuel Ross from A-COLD-WALL\* has had 3 entire collections collaborating with Oakley, starting with his first in Fall 2018. Mainly dealing with clothing rather than eyewear, Ross created garments that deem to be pre-gorp and still have experimental drapes and cuts. Ross made lots of jackets, tees, and accessories that have the Oakley undertone, whether it be waterproof or using industrial hardware. I mean, there’s literally a bag in his third collection that says, “Garments for outdoor use.”*

*Vetements. Ahhhhh... Demna Gvasalia. What a guy. Back when Vetements was REALLY popping, I guarantee you remember when they made those Oakleys with spike studs. First seen in Vetements SS19 show, it confirmed the placement of sportswear glasses in the fashion world. They came in two models, the 200 and 400, with varying different colorways. They also came with ridiculous prices reaching about \$1,000, classic Denma move. Outside the internet, I’ve literally never seen anyone wear these, but that’s kinda the point, right? Even so, if you’re looking at the new Balenciaga stuff, the wrap-around glasses that they’re recently making are so sport influenced. You can see world-famous people like Kim Kardashian or Ye sporting a pair of Balenciaga glasses that very much resemble the function of Oakley glasses. Literally, Google Balenciaga Fall 2022. As they walk through the beautiful show, they are wearing wrap-around glasses just like Oakley.*

*Brain Dead just released a couple pairs of shoes quite recently. Oakley now has a team named “Oakley Factory Team,” which*





STÜSSY x OAKLEY  
SS21



PALACE x OAKLEY  
FW18



Brain Dead x Oakley  
Factory Team



Vetements x Oakley  
SS19

is a term that I've seen for the first time. They reworked the iconic Flesh silhouette in 3 colorways and all of them sold out, reselling for around \$750. Somehow more expensive than the vintage Flesh design from the 2000's? I'm happy that they recognize the importance of these shoes, I mean, as I said, they were accepted into the SFMoMA. These were also sold at luxury boutiques around the world. I wouldn't be surprised if Brain Dead does more work with Oakley and the Oakley Factory Team in the future.

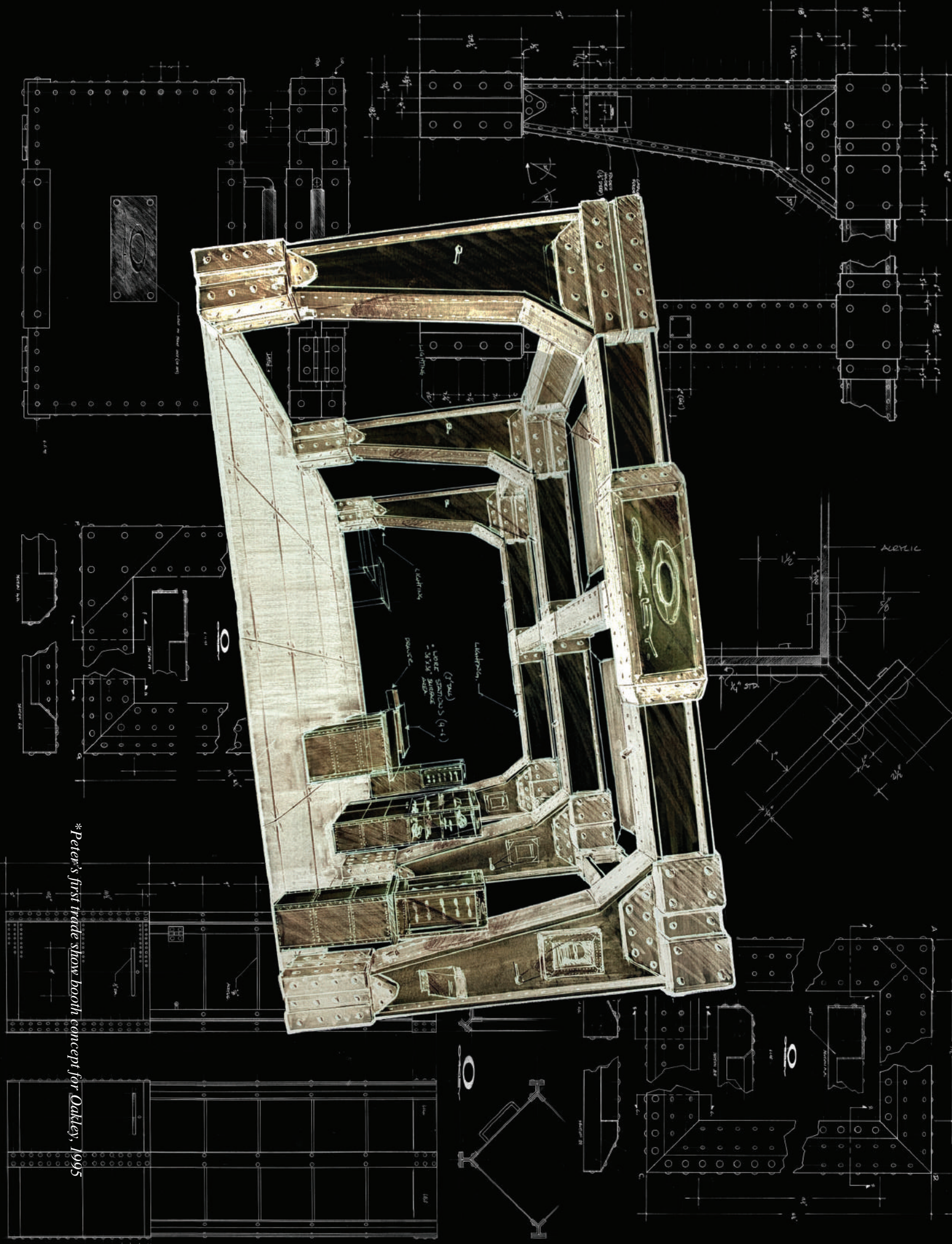
Besides this pocket of Oakley single-handedly infiltrating the fashion world, I think it's objectively funny how a brand can do that, which is generally quite progressive, and also have an entire different website called Oakley Standard Issue. Oakley SI is an exclusive membership program established solely for

Active, Reserve, or Veteran U.S. Armed Force members, Law Enforcement, Firefighters, First Responders, EMT and other Government customers. They even have two eyewear collections called: Thin Blue Line & Thin Red Line. Now, I'm not gonna go Diet Prada on eyewear because I simply don't care that much, and were not narcs at SAP, but the fact that there are two groups of people wearing Oakley, VERY far apart on the political spectrum cannot be ignored. I find it quite interesting that a brand can reach these demographics, at the same time. Like, a cop or an archive fashion bro wearing the same glasses? Urban Outfitters right now sells the Eye Jacket Redux. And sure, you could be like, "Well... what about Nike?" I don't think you can reasonably compare something like Oakley to something as big as a Nike. I don't really know another brand that can do that, besides something like Realtree or some camo shit.

Now, you have to question, are people wearing these ironically? I would say no! As I have said before, the twenty-year conundrum of style is present. Since Oakley was detrimental in the late 90's and early 2000's, it only makes sense to see how these designs and styles have come back. Now, as you look around the streets of whatever city you may live in, take a glance at what glasses people are wearing at raves, peep someone's glasses on your Instagram timeline, and you may see Oakleys being worn. It may be a trend, although, at the heart of it all, it's a testament of good design. Bad design would not have let these become popular in the 90's, and bad design would not have let them come back and be popular in the present.

*"Oakley was about being different, solving problems in a unique way, with a unique design."*





\*Peter's first trade show booth concept for Oakley, 1995



words by lauren colasanti

# DIARY OF THE LESBIAN BAR WENCH

so before we knew we wanted to fake smoke out of something that looks like a hand drive

Do you remember, pre <sup>from our</sup> Juul, when you'd see a puff of smoke E-cigarette & your brain would siren "isn't anyone going to tell them NO SMOKING INSIDE?" because you weren't used to it? It was beyond your imagination that a fake cigarette could ever not look very stupid. <sup>come close to capturing the essence of the thing.</sup> Much like giving your personal information to a social media site or <sup>or talking to strangers</sup> online, E-cigarettes did not seem <sup>capable</sup> likely of becoming popular enough to ever be considered normal. And doesn't that worry you when you think about how the (inevitable) app designed

to pair us up as friends will likely follow this E-Cig trajectory? That right now is the point where you'd come across it & mentally sort it into a pile called "no thanks" until 5 years down the line you see someone trying w/ the newest/sleeker/better version and "no thanks" turns into "... looks fun" which quickly becomes "I can't imagine my life w/out this".

I only ask because I have a habit of reframing my problems as 'things we all do'; like how we all need to recite the whole alphabet to check which letter comes after another, or how we all thought Quentin Tarantino was hot before we realized we might not be all that attracted to men. I would like to be spared going through this alone. I don't want to be in charge of worrying about the hypothetical -friend-making- app, I don't want to be responsible for eulogizing the time we're in now before it, I don't know where I'd even begin to describe it all. It's WEDNESDAY & I don't know what to do about the silence. I

**OBSOLETE THINGS 2 REMINISCE ABOUT (in the future) ONCE THERE'S AN APP THAT MAKES FRIENDS 4 US:**

- silence between strangers
- lulls in conversation
- Being friends w/ someone for weeks/months/years before realizing you have nothing in common / don't like each other

spend a lot of time wondering what makes a bar a good bar & what I've arrived at instead of answers is an array of buzzwords that describe the factors we contribute to but have no control over: it's "the vibe", it's "the ambience". Bartending grants me ambience authority but that doesn't lend me the power to flip a switch on a mood board & change the room over to my vibe of choice (~~my~~ my ~~vibe of choice~~ JAWTY) Really the best I can do is exchange silent pleasantries (smirk too urgently / prolong eye contact) in order to make this a friendly quiet that will hold us over while we wait for a (thing/person) place to bring us noise. Lucky then that Wednesday is karaoke

night & karaoke is the cure for having to be alone w/ alone w/ your own thoughts as well as



A person voting off the reasons they like karaoke & a person explaining why they hate it are very likely to end up saying the same thing.

The ultimate noise. My favorite think about karaoke is that usually an adult has to be good at something in order to do it in front of people - that's not the case here though? + is pairs well w/ drinking since one of those feelings that's unlocked in drunkenness is the suspicion that you are secretly very good at things. I have to imagine this is why a consistent crowd makes their way here every Wednesday night, bringing w/ them a warmth & familiarity that makes me feel like a barwench in a cozy lesbian village. it's very JAUNTY.

To report accurately on what makes our karaoke night any different I would have to visit straight bar karaoke. I have not done that so I'll just venture to guess we have less Drake. <sup>much</sup> Less Eminem - as in I've only ever seen an Eminem rendition a total of 3 times. To put that in perspective, 3 times is also the record for amount TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME from Rent was performed in a single night. I would have thought that would be our most popular duet but it's second to SHALLOW.

The most regular of regulars are Alanis Morissette & Britney Spears who rank highest in the dominating subcategory of queer-c-ize that belongs to pop hits, by female artists that sat at the top of the chart between the years ~~1997-2008~~ 1997-2008. (See also: Kelly Clarkson, TLC, The Spice Girls, Avril Lavigne, Destiny's Child)

It's music that a large portion of patrons here crossed paths w/ at some point while they were anywhere between the ages of 6 & 20 years old. & Maybe it's how often this particular well <sup>is</sup> returned to or maybe it's the excitement these performances elicit that make me believe "nostalgia" is too simple of a term to <sup>explain</sup> describe why these songs are as popular here as they are. Because of course this consistency has a lot to do w/ the fact that many of us had no choice but to memorize these songs since they played so often during the time period <sup>when</sup> our brains were malleable enough to memorize things unintentionally. But there are plenty of songs we recognize in the same way that we don't choose to recite cathartically in front of gay strangers.

Because the recognition we feel is stronger than just knowing a song. It came from having carried it w/ you, from the time when you knew the words but not the feeling they were describing, into an older age

where it was more than a little likely to have to experience your way into understanding what the lyrics, and the women who sang them, were trying to explain. So often too did they tread through the same themes: yearning, heartbreak, resentment, independence & ruining a man's life / an alternative 5 stages of grief. / There's plenty of Olivia Rodrigo performed but I can't imagine how much more there will be once the people who grew up on her music are old enough to go to bars.

So it's THURSDAY now. And trash juice is a cocktail kind of like a Long Island Iced Tea made from missed sips of <sup>liquor</sup> wine, beer, & lots of melted ice + a hint of lime and a hint of napalm. It's never the same blend twice but it always smells like the taste a hangover leaves in your mouth. It coats over everything left in the depths of the garbage bag & I have a lot of time to think about all this while I dig through the trash looking for something that endears being where it was supposed to be. Particularly about how there's a thin line between what ends up in the garbage & what makes it to the Lost & Found. When we realize that line has been incorrectly crossed then we will either do away w/ what no one is coming back for or someone (me) will have to look through the trash. What's left behind is tricky. There are rules that make things easy to sort like how no one is coming back for a chewed up piece of gum & Apple <sup>(tm)</sup> specializes in making very expensive things for people to lose. Between these extremes though there's a sea of cheap umbrellas, hats, & bent jewelry that I don't know what to do w/. (Side note: not knowing what to do w/ a single,

gorgeous dangle earring that resembles a piece of doll house furniture is surely a lesbian bar employee specific problem). The only things I dare to keep for myself are the empty shot sized liquor bottles that look like a scaled down version of a larger handle that people (nearly) sneak in & leave for me to clean up. I'm going to give them to my younger cousin so she can play Lesbian Bar w/

her American Girl Dolls. FRIDAY I'm in love. FRIDAY I'm at work, behind the bar, watching like I'm at an aquarium (where instead of fish there's people) & I'm in charge of trading the fish \$ for alcohol.





In reality I am just the bartender who's bad at metaphors & plays up pretend to get through it all. Apologies if you can pick up on the distance I feel from people when I'm not listening to them sing or looking through their trash. From this point of view I miss out on any juicy tid bits like what one lesbian might say to another before leaning in for a kiss. On Friday nights I deal less in intimacy & more w/ the Ambiguous Drunk Mass (A.D.M), an unwieldy group not unlike a school of intoxicated fish that flounders around as a single clumsy thing w/ no leader & no purpose beyond their own movement. / If there's one group I don't wish to make an enemy of it's this army of the inebriated so I'll add that one advantage drunk people have over the sober is the power of their reaction. Sober people don't laugh at the right part of a story and rarely shriek w/ horror or delight. I won't praise the A.D.M. for their communication skills but I can't argue w/ the emotional power they conjure as a group. They specialize in large waves of emotion & speak through shared body language & collective reaction. I especially like the feeling they emit when they realize the song that just started is Always Be My Baby by Mariah Carey. There's a beat of silence, then gasps & a scattering of wows while they get themselves in place to dance / sing / listen along. Because they operate uninhibited & on pure emotion, the A.D.M are star appreciators in simple pleasures. — like Mariah Carey and her pioneering work in a genre of music that makes you feel like the hottest girl in the room.

- Hottest Girl in the Room Playlist
- 1. Pretty Girl Rock (Kerri Hilson)
  - 2. American Boy (Beyoncé)
  - 3. Breadwinner (Lil Nas X)
  - 4. Savage Remix (Megan Thee Stallion)
  - 5. Say So / Like That mashup (Doja Cat)
  - 6. Savage (Megan Thee Stallion)
  - 7. Big Energy (Lil Nas X)
  - 8. Industry Baby (Lil Nas X)
  - 9. Heart Breaker (Mariah Carey)
  - 10. Cybersex (Doja Cat)
  - 11. Always Be My Baby (Mariah Carey)
  - 12. Nasty (Janet Jackson)
  - 13. 34+35 (Ariana Grande)
  - 14. Material Girl (Madonna)

Because the hottest girl in the room isn't a real person, but a myth, built to sell us shirts that looked good in the dressing room and fast fashion from Instagram (use code HottestGirl @checkout for 20% off your 1<sup>st</sup> purchase!). I'd call it smoke

& mirrors except I'd done most of the trickery in my own imagination. I don't know where I get off on assuming there's a woman who has no problems & then resenting her for it. I'm not mad at her. I'm not mad at any one person. I'm a little mad at the A.D.M. but I can forgive them because

what's a mass of drunk people if not a collection of individuals who want to feel like the hottest girl in the room. We pile into taxis w/ our least favorite friends delude ourselves into thinking the line won't take that long & reach the perfect level of drunk only to soil it while pursuing

- THINGS DRUNK PEOPLE CRAVE
- Vulnerability
  - Intimacy
  - Compliments
  - New life long friends
  - Just one more shot.
  - Loud noises
  - General human connection

- THINGS DRUNK PEOPLE HATE
- Being told what to do
  - Being accused of lying
  - Being accused of being fake
  - Being accused of being drunk
  - Being accused of being sensitive
  - Being accused of being accusatory
  - Loud noises
  - Being accused of fishing for compliments

SHHshhh

a more perfect drunk. We never learn our lesson. Our bodies tell us to not drink like that again the only way we know how to (through head aches & nausea) but we don't accept the signs.

It's WEDNESDAY again & this time I'm hung up on all the things I forgot to say. I did not mention any of my genius proposals for the bar (an ALLY award for the straight person who tips the best) & I didn't mention any of my great, great coworkers who give such ideas a soft rejection. Perhaps too much got lost in my effort to generalize. For privacy sake I sought not to talk about anything that has happened & instead about the things that keep happening all the time. But maybe I made everyone look younger & drunker than the real thing.

For that I'm sorry. I only wished for having so much in common because it's more convenient. Not better in anyway, just easier to paint a picture of. Leave knowing so many of the best parts got lost between the cracks.





say? Furry? We want y  
Join the Socialist Rifle Association t



# THE SOCIALIST RIFLE-ACATION OF THE INTERNET



Become Ungovernable

POV: You are a woman walking into a gun store for the first time in need of a self defense handgun



For better or for worse, firearms are an inherent component of American culture and society. Infamous throughout the international community as the gun capital of the world, the United States houses roughly **46 percent** of the world's civilian firearms stock, and hosts a domestic police force that rivals the military might of major nation states. The American obsession with firearms is typically understood as a result of the Second Amendment, which states, **"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of the free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."**

Historical analysis reveals that when the Founding Fathers referenced the right to bear arms, they envisioned it as a feature of their decentralized, militia-style government rather than an inherent individual right to self-defense. Nevertheless, unethical interpretations of the Second Amendment by scholars with National Rifle Association (NRA) ties have influenced keystone court cases such as District of Columbia v. Heller, which ruled in favor of the armed individual interpretation.

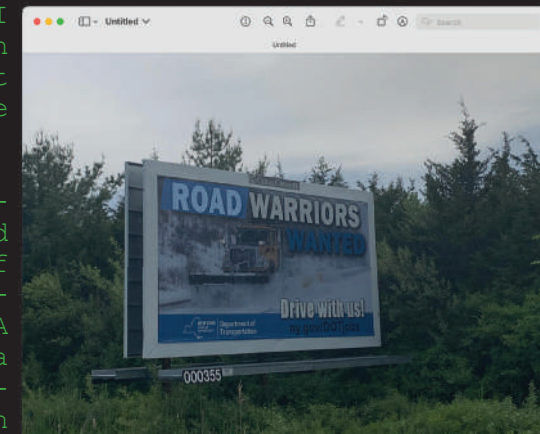
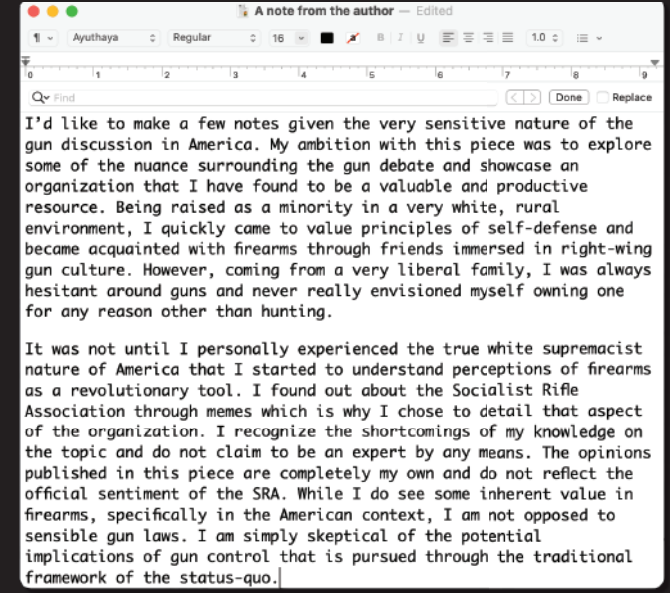
This uninformed perception of the Second Amendment consequently infiltrated and occupied the American psyche, and has led our collective imaginations to envision a martial society. American media is rife with themes of individual self-defense, most often achieved through an embrace of the ole' Brown Bess musket or Bushmaster AR15.

These martial themes are even present in the way we conceptualize people and entities, as can be seen through the dubbing of healthcare workers as frontline heroes. Take this highway maintenance billboard ad that I passed on my way home as another example. It's both hilarious and disturbing that routine careers must be glorified as battlegrounds in need of honorable warriors in order to appeal to Americans.

Whether intentional or not, these tropes have conditioned the collective American conscience, and brought us to a point where even the mass murder of children is not capable of mobilizing genuine reform. This ideological foothold, combined with NRA lobbying and political polarization, has erected a barrier around gun rights that has proven impenetrable for establishment Democrats and traditional gun reformists.

The **Socialist Rifle Association (SRA)** has bypassed this barrier and pursued a paradigm shift within American gun culture that's compatible with its pervasiveness. Established in 2018 following loud calls for an official left-oriented firearm group in America, the SRA is a non-profit organization that comprises over sixty local chapters in all fifty states and Puerto Rico. Guided by Marxist tenets of anti-capitalism and self-determination, the SRA's organizational mission is to **"combat the toxic, right-wing, and exclusionary firearm culture in place today,"** and advance an inclusive, safe gun culture free from the reactionary influences of bigotry.

Instead of denouncing firearms as an exclusively right-wing asset, the SRA are blazing alternative trails in an attempt to seize the means of defense for the American left. This daunting task is pursued through knowledge sharing, direct action, and mutual aid: local chapters engage in a wide variety of activities including weapons





training, disaster relief, political seminars, and community gardening.

Recognizing the proliferation and politicization of firearms by the right, the SRA advocates for responsible gun ownership in order to safeguard the will of the proletariat in the face of an increasingly tyrannical state. Despite this, the SRA prides itself in remaining a wholly civic organization and denounces any claims that they are a militia or anti-fascist action group. These principles are supported by staunch bylaws which prevent members from engaging in offensive violence or carrying weapons at protests.

While grassroots initiatives represent the organization's primary mission, the internet has also served as a platform for combating robust alt-right meme campaigns aimed at appropriating pop culture, instilling fear, and spreading disinformation.

The rise of the internet has presented the world with a dangerous duality. Typically understood as a tool for democratization, the web has revolutionized the way in which information is spread and consumed by giving a voice to anyone with access to a device. However, for all of its good, the internet has **continually managed to serve as a platform for extremist rhetoric and coordination.** This is increasingly apparent in the United States, where the alt-right and other neo-fascist entities have established an imposing internet presence through innovation opportunism.



The algorithmic "race-less" nature of the internet provides numerous benefits to these movements. The most notable of them is the ability to open the **"Overton window"** through the dissemination of prejudiced and conspiratorial talking points into mainstream observation. Memes have served as the primary weapon in this digital conquest, with seemingly harmless

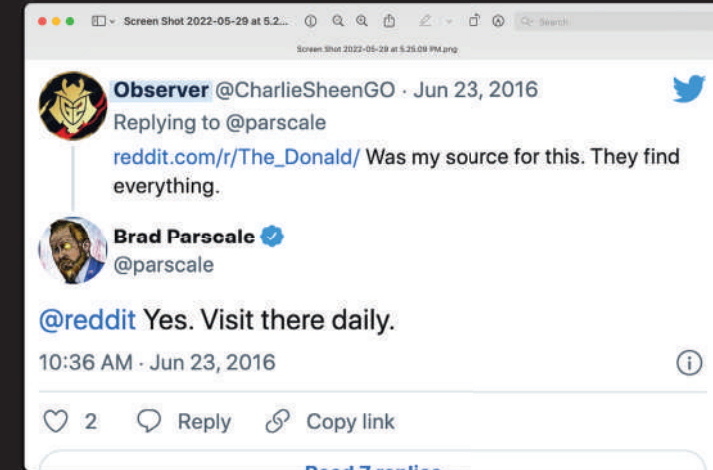
figures such as Pepe the Frog being appropriated into figureheads for the alt-right. Algorithms have worked to their advantage, as they effectively establish digital ecosystems that function as echo chambers for individuals to receive confirmation bias and further entrench their reactionary takes.

The subsequent moderation of violent hate content by social media platforms was then used by the alt-right to fabricate a narrative of authoritarian censorship by the **"woke left,"** who are supposedly "too sensitive to make funny memes." In opposition to this perceived censorship, these fringe communities operate under the premise of absolute freedom of speech, utilizing self-proclaimed "dark humor" memes to push the boundaries of socially acceptable rhetoric. The normalization of hate content fronted as "dark humor" is an explicit objective and achievement of these fringe communities and their extensive meme presence.

These processes can be clearly observed in the success of Trump-affiliated internet groups such as TheDonald, an online message board community that began as a subreddit devoted to covering the Trump campaign in the 2016 election. After amassing hundreds of thousands of subscribers, the group caught the attention of the former-President, who on multiple occasions hosted "Ask Me Anything" sessions on the subreddit. The

Trump White House remained tapped into the community throughout their 4 year term, with both Trump himself and his staffers often reposting memes sourced from the subreddit.

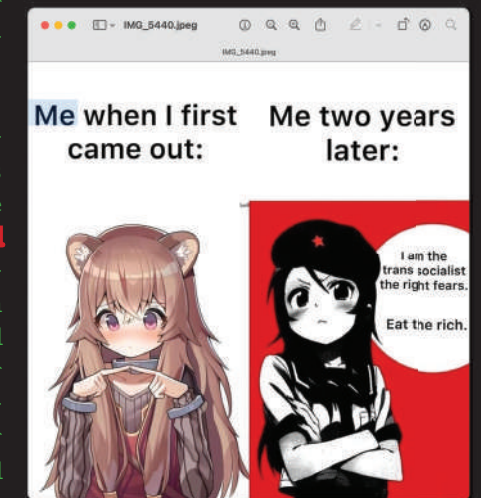
After being banned from Reddit for violent content, the community migrated to their own site, thedonald.win, where they are able to push content free from any outside restrictions. The result was a breeding ground for content even more robust and aggressive than the original subreddit. During his reelection campaign, Trump and his staffers began boosting more of the group's memes, and even went as far as to coordinate with community mods in order to sew new trends and grievances. This was in large part the pretext for the January 6th capital riot, which was organized and promoted on TheDonald as a crusade against satanic pedophiles who rigged the election. TheDonald's community and content have now become so pervasive that I discovered its propaganda stickered to garbage cans at my local deli.



Recognizing the rapid growth of the neo-fascist online propaganda campaign, the SRA and their members have been working to combat the infiltration of right-wing content with its own aggressive meme campaign. Pushing an explicit stance on leftist armament and defense, this campaign is making significant strides to revitalize the collective perception of the American left as a force to be reckoned with. The alt-right's predatory online campaign attempts to portray leftists as physically weak, reactionary **"betas"** who are incapable of self-defense. Countering this, the SRA's content often pictures leftist militants in black bloc toting Kalashnikov rifles. This works to instill fear in dogmatic adversaries who for too long have found strength in the passivity of mainstream American liberalism.

Where the alt-right's campaign focuses on sowing division, the SRA instead fosters inclusivity and appeals to a diverse swath of users. Many of their memes make reference to niche forms of media - like **anime and adult animations** - to gain the sympathy of unlikely allies and expand the movement. In similar regard, much of the content is aimed at supporting marginalized and oppressed peoples, encouraging them to actualize their natural right to self-determination and defense. Official SRA advertisements and merchandise include their iconic "Trans Workers, Take Up Your Rifles!" t-shirt and defend equality sticker, both of which I've seen on the streets of NYC.

The unprecedented frequency of mass shooting events in this country depict a clear need for effective gun reform. With a majority of Americans supporting gun laws such as enhanced background checks, it is evident that our political system is continually being stalled by industry representatives dead set on preserving their power. The work of the SRA, both digital and physical, has made strides in promoting a paradigm shift and weakening the hold that the NRA and normative gun culture has on America.







# WELCOME TO GRACE'S REALM

Grace Requejo is a young continuously rising interdisciplinary artist currently based in Chicago. Grace originally gained traction from Instagram with their uniquely ethereal drawings that illustrate a fantasy-like atmosphere. Grace is jack of all trades, and has expanded into several other mediums such as sculpture, animation, and textiles.

*written by sally pfeifer  
photos by roy zhu*

**Sal Pfeiffer:** How's your day been so far?

Grace Requejo: It's been okay. I've honestly just been sleeping all day. I'm tired from the week, but yeah. What about you?

**SP:** Yeah, good. I had a tattoo appointment pretty early this morning, so still kind of groggy from it, but overall pretty good.

GR: I really like your tattoos, by the way. I really want one when I go back to LA.

**SP:** Yes! Do you have plans of coming anytime?

GR: Yeah! My family lives in LA, so I'll be there during the summer.

**SP:** Very sick, I've been thinking about making a trip to Chicago, there's a bunch of artists that I've been meaning to get tatted by. How long have you lived in Chicago?

GR: I came here for school, so I lived here for a year, freshman year. Then I moved back home during Covid, so I have pretty much just been living here for almost three years.

**SP:** Do you think Chicago is a place you could see yourself staying long-term?

GR: I don't know, a lot of my family members ask me that. Honestly, yeah, I really like living here.

**SP:** It seems like there's a bit of a Renaissance happening in Chicago in the art and music scene, it has really been popping off. I've seen on your Instagram a lot of your work being shown in partnership with local musicians. Would you say that's kind of a natural collaboration thing via networking that's happening, or is it more so, that

**your friends are in the scene together?**

GR: I guess it's a little bit of both, yeah. I think a lot of the time it is sort of a natural thing because there are a lot of people that are putting on really cool DIY shows. Then getting a bunch of musical artists, and visual artists, and then also getting artists to add to the ambiance of the show. I was in one show where they had a DJ, and then someone that, I don't know what the word for this is, added scents because they are an artist that makes perfume.

**SP:** Wow, that's wild. I haven't heard of that before. I think the closest I've seen to that is a musician in NYC lighting like 100 sticks of incense during their set. So you grew up in LA?

GR: I grew up in Long Beach.

**SP:** What was your introduction to art-making? Has it always been a consistent interest or a later development?

GR: It's always been pretty consistent. My parents are not into art at all, they're both working in the medical field. None of my family is super into art, but I've just really always been into drawing and it's something that my parents have always really been supportive of.

**SP:** That's awesome to hear.

GR: Thankfully. Yeah, they were always just like, "Oh, Grace is the quiet one that likes to draw, sort of thing." Then I ended up going to the Orange County school, the arts high school, and that's when I started getting more serious about drawing and painting.

**SP:** What was an art school like in Orange County? I'm not from Southern CA, but I hear a lot of opinions about Orange County as a more generally conservative environment.

GR: Yes, that was weird. I think since it

was an art school, a lot of the students were definitely more accepting and progressive than other high school experiences that I've talked to friends about. I'm pretty sure there was a Republican club at my high school and they were like, "Everyone hates us, we are the outcasts."

**SP:** (Laughs) Were there musical arts and theater, or was it just a school for visual arts?

GR: Yeah actually, it was mainly focused on performance art. But I was in the visual arts department. I feel like they were pretty separate from the other conservatory programs, which is nice. I just feel like I'm not really like the musical theater type.

**SP:** Did you give it a try ever or did you jump in solely as a visual artist?

GR: No, there weren't really opportunities to be, or maybe there were. I just wouldn't have been interested in that. The hours were really long because you had to do 2 hours of art after normal schooling. But I do think it really paid off, I got so much technical training all throughout high school.

**SP:** And you are studying at SAIC right now?

GR: Yeah!

**SP:** What is your major there?

GR: I'm going to my BFA, but I don't really have one focus. It would be illustration if there was an illustration Department, but drawing is kind of grouped in with painting. I do mostly fibers and take those classes, then painting and drawing, but a lot of my drawings I do outside of class.

**SP:** All the 3D stuff that you've been making is so beautiful. Is that a newer



**practice you picked up in school with SAIC's resources, or have you always had an interest in taking it from 2D to 3D?**

GR: I think school and my peers have introduced me to a lot of different materials that I can try. Mostly in high school and stuff, I just did drawing and painting. So being able to expand on that, and represent things in my style in 3D is more new and fun.

**SP: Yeah, I love all the frames you've built around your drawings. What material do you use for that?**

GR: For some of the frames I use moldable plastic, but lately, I've been hearing it's apparently kind of controversial. It's really fun to work with, but I guess you have to make the right thing with it because sometimes it can turn out really weird looking. But then most of my frames I just use Sculpey, oven-bake clay.

**SP: Oh, nice. Do you get a studio on campus, or do you rather work out of school?**

GR: Yeah, I work at school. For the past three drawings I've done, I have just gone to school when I don't have class and worked in one of the empty classrooms. I did just move into a new apartment, though. We got an apartment with an extra room that my roommates and I can use as a studio.

**SP: That is going to be great to have that space, are your roommates also artists at SAIC?**

GR: Yeah, one of them does furniture and design objects. Then the other one does sort of the same thing as me, drawing, but then sculpture.

**SP: I'm sure it is really fun to live with other creatives, it becomes very motivating. I saw with one of your drawings you posted on Instagram, you did a collaboration with the artist @divulsion, is it common for you to do visual collaborations with others?**

GR: Yeah, I really like collaborating, but I honestly can have a lot of trouble with it. I have been trying to collaborate with my partner, and I will just like, start crying (laughs). Trying to do a drawing at the same time is really hard, but trying to do an exquisite corpse situation where we pass it off is nice. I do really like collaborating. I won't always say yes when asked, but as an artist I really respect when friends ask me, I am always down.

**SP: Do you have a usual duration with your projects, or is it pretty varied piece by piece?**

GR: Typically, I will sit down and do a drawing in about 2 days. I guess this isn't a problem but, I feel like a habit for me is that once I start drawing, I have to keep doing it. I feel like I won't finish if I step away, but I do want to try doing longer-form projects.

**SP: I am actually super shocked to hear that a lot of your work has a 2-day timeline, your drawings are so intricate.**

GR: I do think I have gotten much faster at drawing just because

I am doing it so much, which is good. Also though, I think I have a little bit of a problem with wanting to see the result so quickly. So I will get like I can't stop until I finish because I really just want to see it finished.

**SP: Do you think that social media, or Instagram specifically, is a big influence on that? I know at least with my own work, I feel a pressure to put things out faster, or a feeling like if I'm not constantly creating, I'll get lost in the stack.**

GR: Yeah, oh god, I could talk about Instagram for a long time because it is something that I have thought about and written about a lot. I would be lying if I said it didn't influence my art, honestly, which I don't know if that is a terrible thing. Especially the part of wanting to scan it and upload it as soon as I finish, which I used to say was just for documentation purposes. It's hard because you get that instant feedback, which is good and bad. I do feel like in terms of my style, I really try to make a conscious effort not to let social media or other trends affect my style too much or the actual contents of the piece. Sometimes I do think though, would my art be different if I didn't upload it to Instagram?

**SP: Yeah, that is a daunting question.**

GR: At the same time though, I still show my work in critique, so I still would always have an audience in mind.

**SP: Definitely yeah, so you still have input from the physical world. The topic of Instagram is kind of a mindfuck.**

GR: Yeah, I feel like I was so jumbled answering that.

**SP: No not it all, it's a very complicated and layered topic. I've seen your work on Instagram has really been blowing up and getting a lot of reach, which is obviously very exciting. But with that, I am curious if you feel that anxiety or pressure to feel like you have to constantly be cranking projects out.**

GR: Yeah. I don't feel that pressure honestly because I would just be doing drawings anyway. It's the most therapeutic and consistent thing that I do. I don't feel the pressure to produce all the time because it's something I get to do. But there are a lot of conflicting feelings. I don't know if you saw it but I just finished a piece and then uploaded it. That piece had a lot of emotion put into it, and I was kinda scared to post that. I feel like that always happens though, just right before, I get a little scared to post something. Also sometimes, this one night I was having, this feels stupid, but I was having this crisis where I thought my art must be bad because it is popular now.

**SP: No way.**

GR: Then I say to myself "Ah I'm just overthinking it." I am really grateful for how much people resonate with my art. I really didn't think that the type of art that I make would get that popular.

**SP: It is really amazing! Do you feel like as you have reached**

**a larger audience it caused an increase in posting anxiety? Or have nerves about sharing personal stuff online always been there?**

GR: When I first started posting my art, well I actually didn't start posting my art for a while because I was scared. But yeah I do, before I post something I will get scared, but I also get really excited to show people. I am honestly more scared to post non-art-related things, so I try not to do that because I always think I am going to make a fool out of myself.

**SP: For sure, I can definitely understand wanting to remove yourself online when posting your work.**

GR: Yeah, I honestly don't care that much. Well, I don't want to say I don't care what other people post but more so unless it's art, I really don't pay too much attention. So I guess I really probably just shouldn't care.

**SP: Most of your drawings I've seen are hand-drawn, but it seems like there is maybe some digital rendering in the final stages. What is your relationship with physical vs digital work?**

GR: No one has asked me that, but I would love to talk about that. I do edit my drawings in photoshop, I'll use it to clean them up. In the last drawing I did, I didn't edit it because I wanted to show all the smudges and stuff on it. But I really like doing digital work, I kind of wish I did more of it. I also think digital and physical work can have a really nice relationship. I



*Enmity*  
Graphite on wood  
9" x 12"  
2021

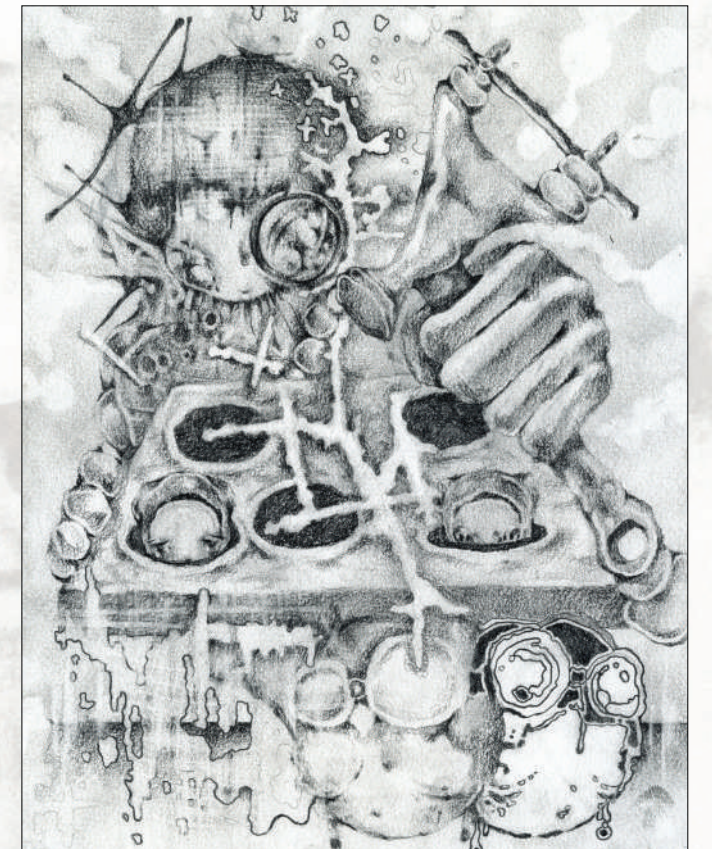
think I might attempt a project for one of my classes that is an animation kind of exploring that relationship. There was that one piece I did, that wasn't a drawing. It was a collage book that thought a lot about how I am taking pictures of physical things and then altering them digitally, then printing them out, and then turning them digital back again, and doing this whole cyclical thing. And I really like that. I don't think it is bad to alter your physical pieces in the documentation because you are just using it as a tool.

**SP: Definitely, and with that, you can continue to contribute ideas to a piece. For that animation project, are you planning to do a digital or hand-drawn animation?**

GR: I think it is going to be a combination of both and a bunch of things. I am really excited because I really just want something I can think about and work on all the time, and I feel like a long-form animation would be good for that. I want to do a combination of collage and then hand-drawn and digital animation. I am not very good at animation, but I am going to experiment with what I can make move.

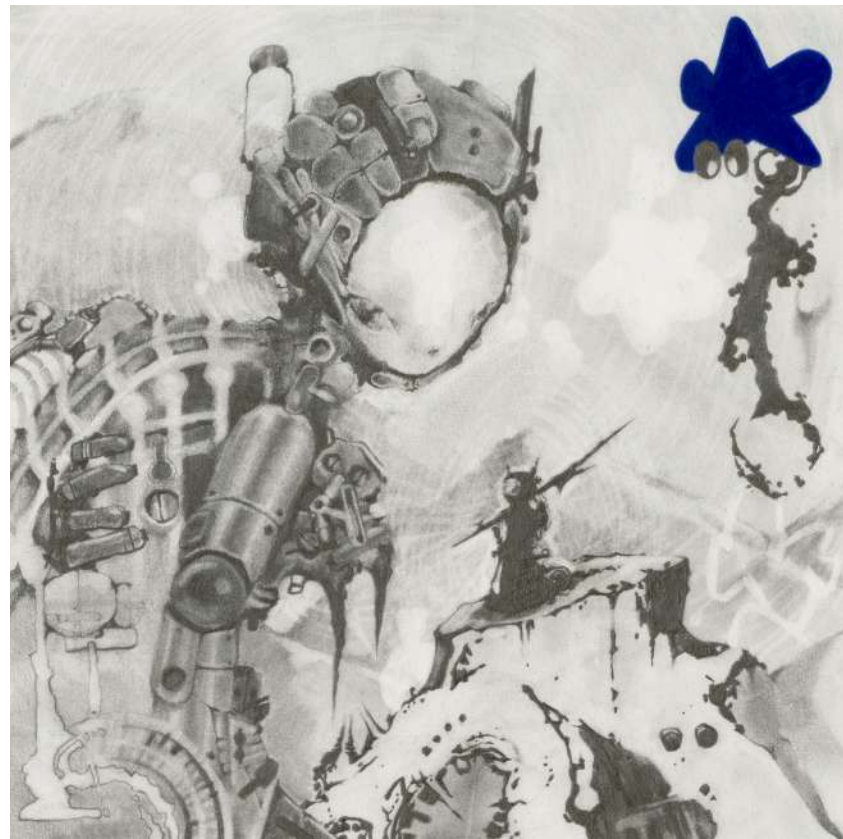
**SP: I can't wait to see, have you done a lot of other video work before?**

GR: Yeah, I did a hand-drawn animation like 2 years ago, it's on my Instagram but you have to really scroll down. I really liked working on it, I don't do a lot of video work, well I guess I do but just for fun and for myself. It is definitely something I have wanted to do more seriously. Or I don't want to say seriously,

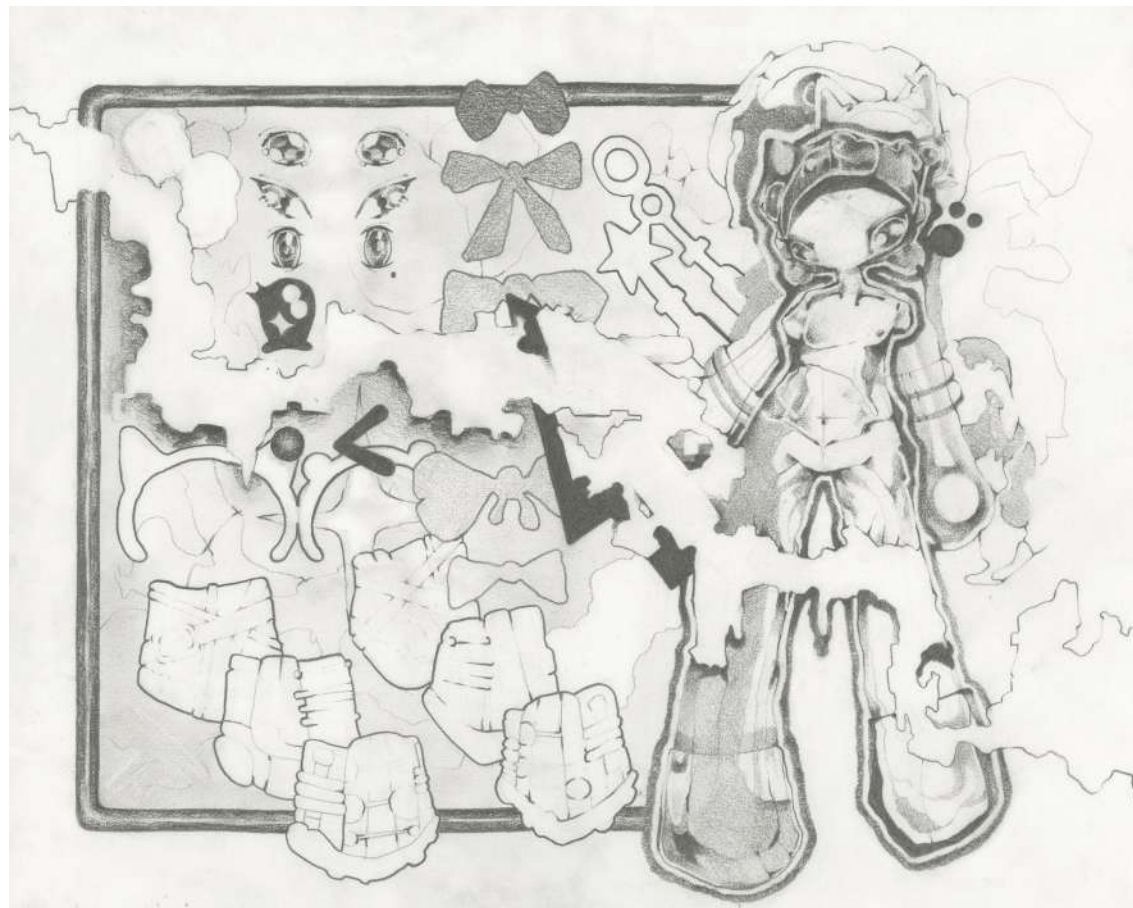


*Whack-a-mol*  
Graphite on paper  
9" x 12"  
2021





*laceslases Cover*  
Graphite on Paper  
11" x 11"  
2021



*Dress Up Game*  
Graphite on Paper  
14" x 11"  
2022



*Brain Spots*  
Graphite on Paper  
11" x 14"  
2022



more so just something that would have a final result as a whole. I really like movies and films, and I also just really like editing. I feel like if I didn't do drawing I would focus on editing.

**SP: I could see that. I feel like editing is a really tedious practice in that world. I mean even more so with animation. Would you say SAIC is fairly interdisciplinary, and that you're able to pick and pull different mediums in your classes?**

GR: Yeah, I mean I'm not taking a lot of studios right now. Which is another thing, I don't usually take a lot of studios. I am in a screenprinting class and my other class is a "Women in Technology and Women in Web art", so I want to do it for that class. It is nice because I have access to the facilities, so I can use bigger computers and borrow cameras and such.

**SP: What other classes are you in right now?**

GR: Those are two classes, and then I am just in a science and art history class. Also, a "professional practices" class, which is just a class that prepares you for things after college. You write artist statements and stuff like that.

**SP: Oh nice, that sounds like it would be very helpful. Would you say you've felt more overtly supported or at ease within the Chicago community than growing up as an artist in Orange County?**

GR: I don't know, my art in High school I didn't really show as much, it was definitely a different style. But I do feel like the style and the work I do is Chicago-core, for lack of a better word. Which I like a lot.

**SP: For sure, I can definitely see the compatibility of your work with Chicago's environment. What is your stance on selling work? I know that you sell prints, but do you have a sentimental attachment to original drawings? Or do you also sell originals?**

GR: That's hard, I don't really like to sell originals because I also have a hard time pricing them. I started selling the prints on Imprint, and all of that money is actually going towards buying tattoo supplies. I think I only like selling work because then I can use the money to fund more work. But yeah, selling work is honestly such a pain. It is something if I want to keep having a career in art, it is something that I will have to keep doing.

**SP: I get the money thing being really uncomfortable. I think when you start tattooing that will also help with learning to make a boss out of yourself and getting comfortable with the idea of charging. It is definitely an awkward and daunting thing though. I am glad you brought up tattooing though, I was going to ask if that is a practice you have ever considered. Have you given yourself any tattoos?**

GR: Yeah, I have given myself a couple, but mostly stick and poke. Not that many. I think once we get all the supplies, my roommate and I are trying to tattoo together, so we are going to

tattoo each other.

**SP: That will be super fun. Are most of the other artists you're around friends from school or just people you have met within the scene in Chicago?**

GR: Mostly either from school or just through school, actually yeah, I would honestly say it is an equal amount of people just living in Chicago in the scene or that went to SAIC.

**SP: Oh cool. I am really curious about the connectivity of the community in Chicago, just through seeing all the work coming out of there. Is school pretty full-time for you, or are you balancing other work on top of that?**

GR: Yeah, I do some nannying. I am actually going after this. But mostly just school and working on commissions and stuff.

**SP: Definitely seems like a lot to balance. I am sure that can get exhausting.**

GR: Yeah, I can't wait for school to be over honestly, or at least just until summer.

**SP: Do you have any summer plans aside from coming back to Orange County?**

GR: Just practicing tattooing honestly, I have just been thinking about that a lot. I am going to go back to California and then I think my partner and I might go to Mexico.

**SP: Oh fun! I am sure after having a very regimented schedule it will be really nice to take a breather.**

GR: Oh yeah.

**SP: I did want to ask you one more question about your style. You have really created this whole realm and world within your work, and wanted to see where you gauge inspiration from. Has it always been more of a subconscious accumulation of stuff, or are there any people or things you feel have had an impact on what you make?**

GR: I feel like it is kind of an unconscious amalgamation of a bunch of different things that I can't exactly pinpoint. But I think in general a lot of sci-fi fantasy illustrations I like to look at, and lately a lot of manga artists. There's this one, I can't remember the name of the author, but he wrote this one manga called *Lame*. Someone that commissioned me actually put me onto it, and it is very mechanical fantasy-type stuff. I could list off a bunch of artists that inspire me, but I think in general I try to emphasize shape a lot, and will focus on that to create a lot of flow throughout the work. So I really like to look at naturally occurring shapes like in pavement or different types of growths. This sounds kind of gross but I get hives on my skin pretty bad, but I have been looking at the designs and patterns. So yeah really just any kind of naturally occurring shape, I am really drawn to. I guess this also translates into the style, but a lot of my work can feel really emotionally charged, so I feel like trying to capture a certain melancholy or complicated feeling plays into it.

excited to start to translate them into tattoos.

**SP: Hell yea, I am personally very excited to see what comes out of that. I think that kind of wraps it up for me as far as all the questions I have, are there any final thoughts you want to add or say?**

GR: I think people should really come to Chicago. There's a lot of stuff going on here and a lot of interesting artists

**SP: That is really cool to hear, I really haven't seen anything like your art on Instagram or really anywhere, it is just incredibly evolved. Every element seems very intentional and developed, so I feel lucky to get to hear where it comes from. I have been following your account for a while, and have been a big fan of your art.**

GR: Thank you! I think out of all the artists on Instagram I am honestly really inspired by a lot of tattoo artists, so I am really

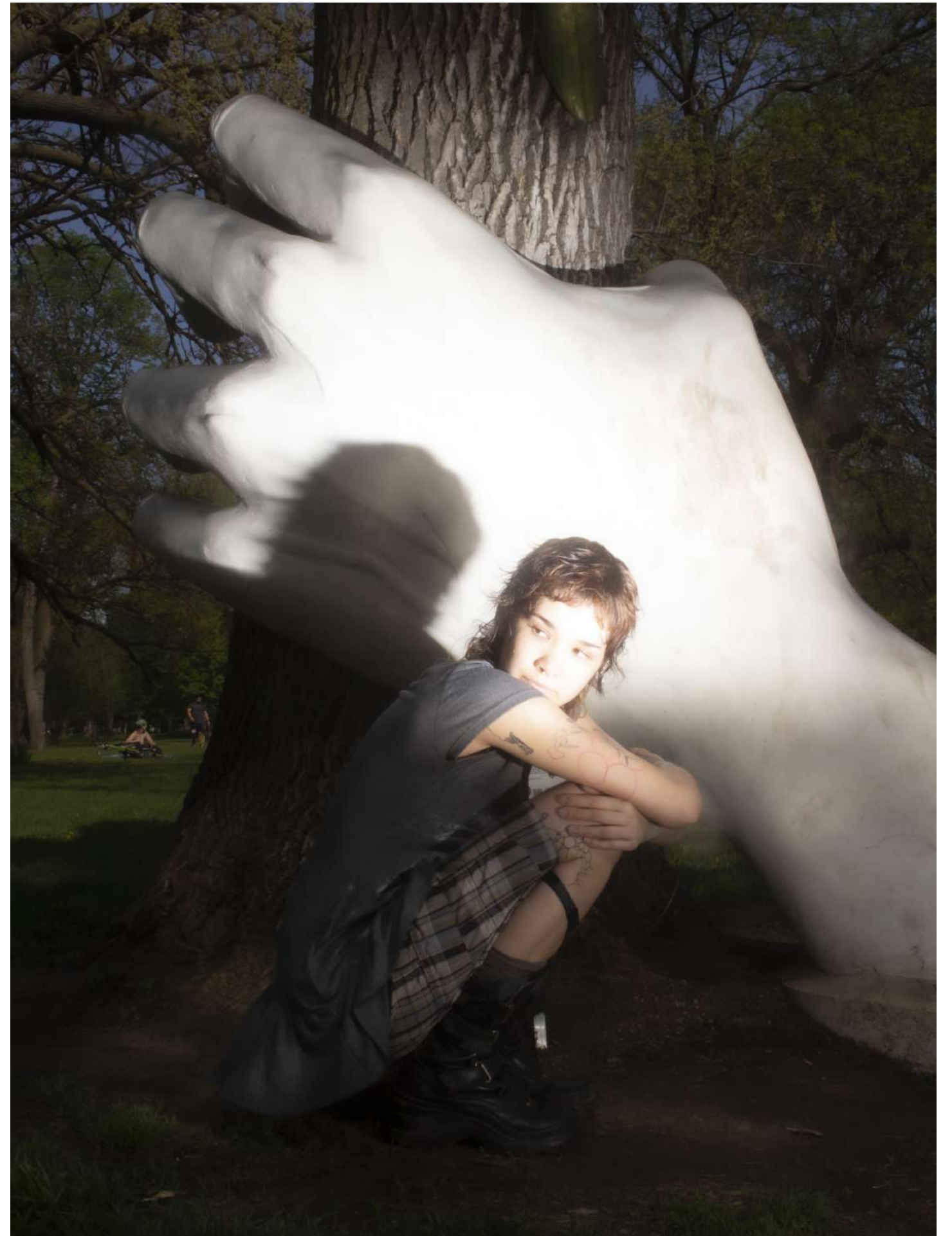


*How To Stop Yourself From Focusing*  
Graphite on Paper  
12" x 9"  
2022





Satin Lock  
Graphite on Paper  
11" x 17"  
2021







# Finessing: Half a Decade of Partying in Orlando

words by valentina gamero

I'm not fronting this piece as anything other than rambling (Patrick and Max can attest to that), but... that's all I got. A party does not require consistency of space. Parties can and do happen in basements, in clubs, warehouses, bars, parks, fuckin U-Hauls. But even then, the space of a party only partially matters. It's fun to show up somewhere weird to party (NYC cannot believe in commodifying experiences) but if you're not in the mood to party, it's not going to BE a party. Basically, I'm just saying what everyone already knows, which is that space does not fully dictate human behavior.

So this is kind of going to be about partying, about my friends, a lot about what we did in Orlando, maybe about what we're doing in NY, and about all the spaces these things happened in. I have no real qualifications to be writing on this (in that I'm obviously not a writer) other than that I <3 partying, I <3 my friends, and I <3 dance music. I'm also a weird little architecture freak. If you know me, you know me as that annoying girl trying to talk your ear off about shit like the spatial-political implications of chair layout, or maybe booth design or something equally an-

noying while standing next to speakers red-lining some chopped up funky UK track. Most importantly though, is that no one has written about Orlando in this way, so I'm honored to memorialize it in whatever way I can.

*Enough intro. We're now in Orlando 2016.*

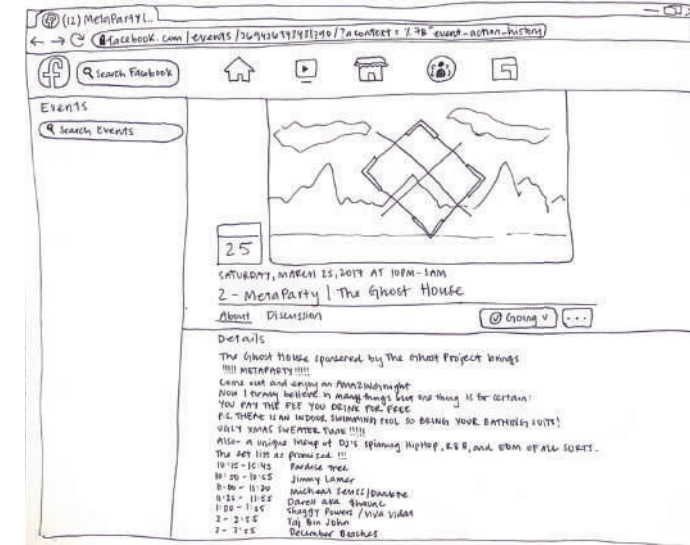
Around this time, the scene was mostly indie-dance parties (think themed) led by problematic collectives, noise shows in venues with floors on the brink of collapse, and a bunch of kids that spent most of high school in their rooms "inventing" lofi house all trying to start their own party series. The city used to have a crazy breaks and DnB scene (Florida Breaks yeahhh) in the 90's but Disney shut that down. Think: Psy-trance 90's rave destination. (Check this doc out - it shows anything I could say way better):



Dance music as a part of the city's identity effectively collapsed in 1997. But fast forward 20 years and now you have a ton of old heads linger-

ing at the same four places and a random batch of kids trying to bring it back and play literally anywhere that would let them. Some of them took to us, others were just bitter. Tale as old as time. This definitely impacted the sound of Orlando though. Disco-heavy, 90's house reigned supreme.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. I'm 18 and we're still at house parties (do they say everything starts at the home? They should.) Introducing: MetaParty. This dude Troy wanted to make money throwing parties (*Florida Man*). I'm including screencaps



of the event page for context. You get the vibe (*rancid*).

We joke about this being the first party in Orlando. They tried making this a series, but I'm just going to paint a picture of the second MetaParty, starting with the house: Somewhere in the Central Florida woods. Run-down mid-century house, slanted ceilings, carpeted floors, paneled walls. There's vape juice and fog machine air, a fire pit outside, and this disgusting 80's Florida-bimbo-pool. There are punk bands playing next to the pool and behind that there's a weird tiki/bamboo table with a set of 1200's, power strips plugged into power strips, water splashing everywhere (every electrical hazard, ever). Guy throwing that party did so much acid he got naked during one of the bands, jumped in the pool, and had to be wrestled away.

Whole time, disco edits are bumping, packed out room of people dancing, but no one had any idea what the fuck they were listening to. I think there's a lot of elements of houses that make their way into the most successful clubs. Everything does start in the home (not to get Freudian) - it's what we associate with comfort but also how we familiarize moving through rooms.



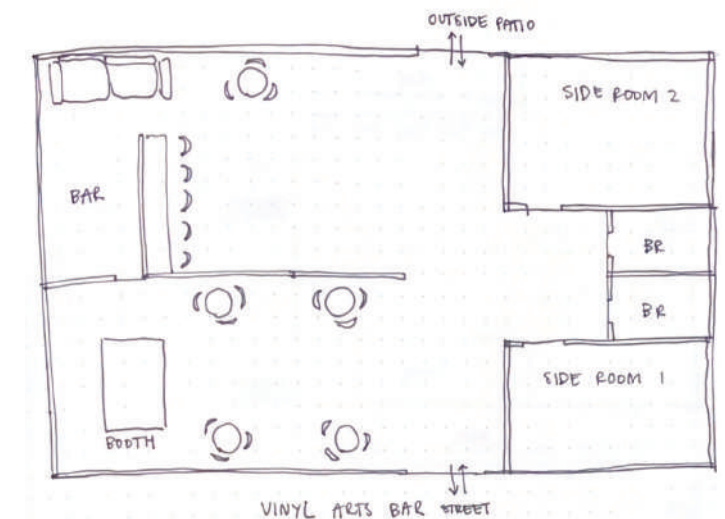
*Aside: house music might be called house because they were making it in their homes instead of studios, but not because it was meant to be played in houses. Early house music was very much still played at clubs. Also possibly because of the venue called "The Warehouse".*

Obviously, this series did not last, bloke throwing the party owed lots of people moderate sums of money, and everything about it on the production end was a shit show. Now we're at venues.

Introducing: Vinyl Arts Bar. Around the same time, we find out about this spot called Vinyl Arts Bar from Austen. Great location, just by downtown, but an incredibly unfortunate spot. Like records-as-wall-decor in some repurposed house with overpriced drinks and a crowd of regulars composed entirely of burnt-out 60-year-old cougars that show up at 1:50am for the "secret" after-hours club downstairs. Absolutely epic in its own way, terrible for music. But it was the only venue that would let Austen book straight-up legends to the tune of DJ Pierre, Kieth Worthy, and Mike Huckaby. So we were there.

*Side note: these were the best parties this venue saw. Most of the time we were there it was just an offshoot party of the aforementioned problematic indie dance collective bullshit. Lots of going to things you don't want to in Orlando just for the sake of going anywhere.*

This spot was so infuriating because the potential was there. The torn-down-walls-house-vibe was cool, but the way the space was being used made it impossible for the music to ever matter. That, combined with blatant disregard to sound quality or equipment maintenance elevated this spot to legendary status just



because of how bad it was. To clarify, it wasn't our music we gave a shit about, but it becomes embarrassing when you're bringing people in. They also would change their entire business model every 6 months (see attached).

I'll talk my shit, but it did keep us entertained. Eventually, Austen (professional, undoubtedly) stopped throwing parties there. He still is and was booking godfathers of dance music, but now we would drive two hours out to Tampa for them. In comes the two-year lull. Sparse one-offs, lots of trips to Miami (coinciding with the first few years of III Points), but also a lot of hanging out and a lot of digging. Besides that, here are some honorable in-betweens: Stonewall, Remix Record Shop, Henao (Version 1), Blackstar (RIP), and Grumpy's.





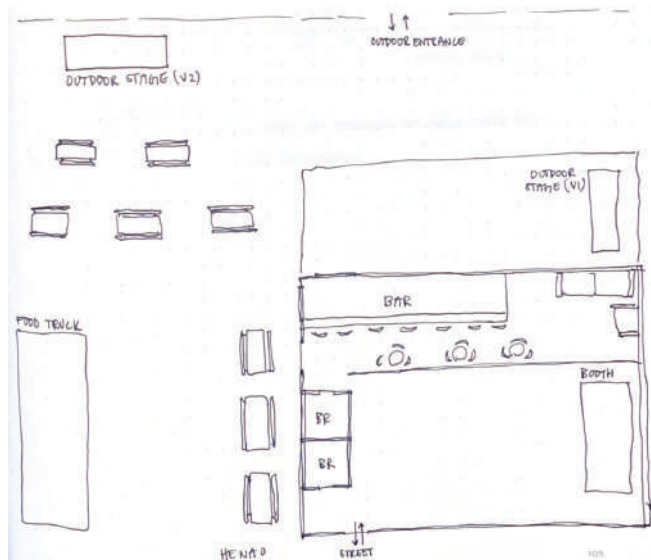
**Stonewall:** Just really epic. They have a little pool on the second floor and a hidden booth you have to get to by ladder. Nice patio. The layout was kind of confusing so it was fun to walk around and explore. Crowd was always gorgeous, Orlando gays are really something else.

**Remix Record Shop:** Insane selection of cheap, kinda shit house and breaks 12"s. If the right people were there it was an amazing spot to kill an afternoon. The wall of windows brought in this gorgeous filtered light that worked in the rain or sun and the listening station was always open. Sometimes, if you asked super nicely they would let you throw parties there.

**Henao 1:** Whole spot will get its moment later but for now: it's sooo grungy and if it existed in Brooklyn it would have lines around the corner, and that's true because Mike Servito himself said it. Which he said when he played a ripping set to a crowd of like... 35... in a huge room. Which was a good turnout for Orlando at that time. To those that were there, it was undeniably special (it could have also been the drugs, but I don't think so). Plastic couches and junk piles outside (they had a huge outdoor space, this will become important later). Two big, open rooms, that's the jist. Its simplicity made it stand out design wise from the other clubs capital C of downtown.

**Blackstar:** Blackstarrrrrrrr. Orlando's late stage DFA-indie-house-synth-punk gift to us all. Part of what was Venue 578 (formerly the famous Firestone), it was like a little indie-sleaze-core-noon heaven for my 20 year old self. Two seperate rooms (sound still bled but ok Val shuuuut uppp), a courtyard inbetween it all, cheap drinks, crowd was gay as hell, and it was the first major music thing in the city run by someone we all knew (s/o to Hannah). 50 cent's friend or something bought it and it shut down within like six months of being open (hence, RIP). (This was the first time I ever DJ'ed out, and I thought Ladies Drink Free would be really funny. It was.)

**Grumpy's:** Maybe an unpopular opinion, but one of the best crowds in Orlando. We pulled up (had never been) because Onsulade was rumored to be playing his own birthday party. Small room, crowd was between 35-50 years old, gospel house was bumping in this tiny ass room and everyone knew every song. Amazing dancers, amazing music. Cute little bobble head turtle.



**Orlando Finale: Henao and I-Bar**

Over the course of the past four years, all those floaters are now friends. Barbeques, beach trips, dinners, streams, parties, all amounting to ~friendship. And love. COVID obviously stopped everything, but Henao took it as an opportunity to remodel their space, with the help of our friend Nick. Up until now, anything that had attempted consistency failed and obviously if you want people to come to your parties, consistency is key. In exchange for his help, Nick was able to secure a weekly, outdoor party at Henao called Discotheque. They took away the plastic couches and junk piles outside, paved a little corner off, added a not unsizeable outdoor stage with some picnic tables, lighting, sound, the whole shabang. It went from crusty to cute basically overnight.

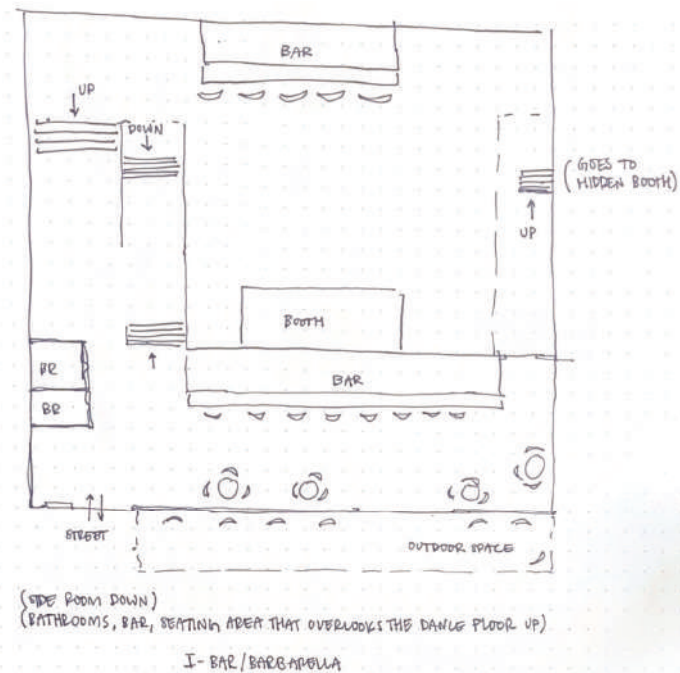
For the first few months, it was an excuse for us to see all our friends and listen to our favorite music in a safe environment. Every single Friday night, we would put on little outfits, drive 20 minutes there, and cause absolute chaos in this outdoor space. If there were any outsiders, they would be subject to our running around and screaming. Drinks were dirt cheap for the first few weeks, and we were more than happy to support our friends. I would find myself on the grassy hill (hilariously that the only hill in Florida was the one that we had to dance on) in front of the DJ booth thinking: *"Man I love my friends, it's so awesome that after all these years of effort and driving out to the shittiest parties ever and trying to meet people nonstop and helping each other work on tracks and begging literally everyone you knew to come out to something, it's finally happened!"*

It was tailored for us because it was by us.

In the same thought I would think: *"This can't last."*

But not in a pathetic woe-is-me way, moreso in a somber way. It made us take it really seriously.

Four months into Discotheque at Henao, people started to hear about it. That it happened every Friday, that the house music was banging, that it was full of super hot and really fun girls, and that everyone there was a friend. It was a cutie pie time. With this momentum, combined with the unfortunate shadiness



that plagues every Orlando venue owner, Nick had to move the party to I-Bar.

It was the only one of the downtown clubs we genuinely liked. It stayed popular because of its Goth Night and Mac and Cheese Night on Wednesdays (which was like... Cheesy 2000s songs). Basically untouched since the 90s, this club had more than enough bars, terraced spaces, hidden booth, and the most psychotic lights you've ever seen. They also had a DVJ-1000, which is like a CDJ that also plays videos (archaic technology). So there were flat screens everywhere mixing music videos to the songs, it was fun.

Again, every Friday, we'd head over to I-Bar, still in our little outfits, and wreak havoc. The downtown crowd eventually caught on, the DJ booth got moved to a little stage near the floor, and over time the crowd grew even more. The management had changed, which is how they let Discotheque happen there in the first place, but at least now Orlando had a nearby spot to book people at. Louie Vega and Todd Terry played sold out shows, which was beautiful to see when comparing it to the numbers from years past. I went back for New Years and after months of the NY party scene, it was overwhelmingly gorgeous to be at a semi-empty club full of only friends. As all good things come to an end, I-Bar (which a few months in changed their name to Barbarella), sometime after I moved, decided to close shop. Not to sound insanely lame but especially in that year, Discotheque truly became a space for us to support each other through DJing, dancing, and partying. Each Friday became an exercise in absurdity - playing

vengaboys edits multiple times in a row, encouraging the randos to start conga lines, smoking/fucking in bathrooms, playing dress up like characters, just general jolly times with pals. There's many things that bring people together, and it doesn't have to be music, but it just so happened that it was. And it is.

My New York Saga coming soon.





writers

# HATE PAGE BIATCH!!

Patrick hates: **Palmetto's - Bushwick, NY**  
I haven't been to Palmetto's ever since I went nuclear on being a thot. I won't disclose numbers, but once the bartenders started to recognize me, I realized I had a problem (NOT ALCOHOL). NGL though, the negroni sour slaps. Maybe I should go back soon...

Nico hates: **BASEMENT - Queens, NY**  
They wanna be Berlin so bad and it's lame. Have fun getting out there, no trains, you gotta call an Uber and you're stuck in the middle of nowhere. No other bars or clubs in sight that you can bounce around to... and the unspoken fuck cubby in the back corner is the most illustrious part about that place. "I hEaR u Can FuGk TheRe!!!" I get it, fucking in public places is fun, but there are 1,000 public places way more enjoyable to get your rocks off that don't closely resemble a damp bat cave or have a cover.

Max hates: **Cafe Select - Soho, NY**  
So crowded always with annoying looking people who wear leather jackets too small for their bodies and big heads. Never eaten there. I make sure to cropdust you and your little dog when I walk by.

Sal hates: **3rd St. Promenade - Santa Monica, CA**  
Ugly tourist trap next to a beach that has had sewage dumped into the ocean. Don't go there unless you like to wear a strapped GoPro to your forehead. Everything is overpriced, even the rats there live off a vegan non-gmo organic diet.

Val hates: **BASEMENT - Queens, NY**  
End the shuffle wars, the dancefloor shushing, the obnoxious monotony, the freaky red lighting outside, the grilling at the door. I find myself saying over and over, that this time is my last, yet I love my friends too much

to turn down a night over a venue. Curse BASEMENT for existing, because I sure as hell can't escape it.

The Grass Fed Goon hates: **Nashville of Saratoga - Saratoga, NY**  
Located right across from my house at school, the free roam NPCs that frequent this joint look and act like they're straight out the SIMS world of a blue lives matter bootlicker. I can LITERALLY hear these fuckers doing karaoke renditions of country roads in my sleep.

Brooks hates: **Broadway - Nashville, TN**  
Downtown Nashville is a breeding ground for infectious bachelorette parties that sing Sweet Home Alabama 7 times in a row at a honkey tonk karaoke, pedal taverns for bridal parties to twerk to Fergie and live out their drunk driving fantasies, neo antebellum ass frat bros + hoes riding bird scooters on the interstate then throwing them into the river after slamming 15 white claws, a Hard Rock Cafe, horse carriages whos chauffeurs whip skaters for riding too close to their mistreated animals, and an angel wings mural that you have to wait in line for 2 hours to take a selfie in front of.

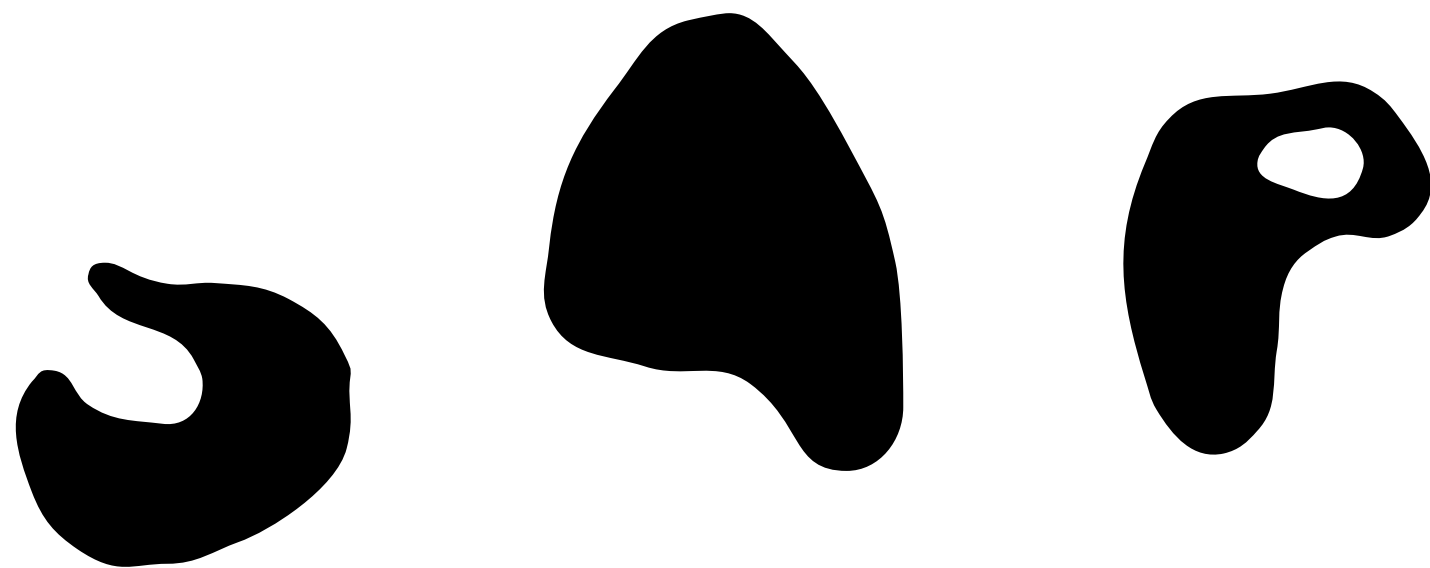
Lauren hates: **West 14th street - Manhattan, NY**  
I swear to god, there used to be a Dairy Queen. I always have to explain this to people and they don't believe me. It's one thing to not have a Dairy Queen but to have one slip through your fingers?

## WE ALL <3 YOU



@Mohawkamaniabob <3





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O O 3  
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