

*Community printshops often exist in a realm somewhere between the private and public spheres, accessible to those who make prints and mysterious to those who don't. An artistic practice in printmaking*



*relies on communal life in neighborhoods. It flows into the texture of life as far and as global as our visits in the kitchen. It touches private aspects of life more than ever. What is a community printshop?*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

This edition of *SNAPline* explores the theme of **public/private**—and it comes at a strange, but appropriate time as we begin ramping up to normal operations.

This last year and a half has been far quieter than what we're used to at SNAP. Our printshop, exhibitions, classes, fundraising all had to adapt due to the pandemic. And while much was still accomplished, there's no question that many staff, artists, volunteers, and community felt more isolated. Our experiences were more private, no matter how used to zoom calls that we became.

As of July 3, we opened again to public drop-ins and appointments (Thursdays through Saturdays). It is the most public we've been since last December. We're taking things slowly, making sure staff, members, and guests feel safe. Mandatory masks and other precautions are still required.

Our in-person exhibitions re-opened in June with Haylee Fortin and Andrew Testa's wonderful shows, which are now closed but it was great to welcome our community back in. We will be announcing our fall exhibitions and programs shortly, with the gallery reopening to visitors at the end of August. In the meantime, stay tuned for a special project, *Wish Machine*, on display in our 115 Street window.

Speaking for SNAP's board, we're excited to welcome you back when you're ready. We can't wait to fill our expanded space with new and old faces. And we want to hear what you missed most about SNAP during our downtime, as well as ideas you have for making our community even stronger.



**Matt Whitson**  
Director,  
SNAP Board of Directors

## MESSAGE FROM THE SNAPLINE COMMITTEE

This issue's Featured Artist, Emmanuel Osahor, created a contemplative set of prints that reflect on gardens and art as sanctuaries. In his statement, Osahor mentions the work of Elaine Scarry in discussing beauty and injustice. I wasn't familiar with Scarry; looking her up, I read: "With its direct appeal to the senses, beauty stops us, transfixes us, fills us with a 'surfeit of aliveness.' In so doing, it takes the individual away from the center of his or her self-preoccupation and thus prompts a distribution of attention outward toward others and, ultimately, she contends, toward ethical fairness."<sup>1</sup> Art like Osahor's helps us to cross that boundary between the private and public worlds we inhabit.

In "When to stand and when to run...", Luke Johnson turns our theme on its head to consider artists who tend to work on a more private basis. He interviews Ryan Cain, C. Couldwell, and Rebecca Aronyk in a wide-ranging essay that was also responsible for teaching me the term 'horror vacui' with reference to *Where's Waldo?* ("A fear or dislike of leaving empty spaces, especially in an artistic composition")<sup>2</sup>. In "Duplicator Dreams", Mia Riley profiles Yolkless Press and its founders, Teresa Tam and Aruem Kim. Alberta's newest risograph-powered press is creating exciting opportunities for artists and writers to get their work out into print. In "Poetic Resistance: The Public and Private Politics of Drone Warfare", Danielle Siemens interviews Riaz Mehmood to discuss his art, its influences that range from Pakistani truck art to Islamic manuscripts, and the unsettling threat of drones. Finally,

the latest instalment of our flash fiction contest takes Cindy Baker's dream-like patch *Pill Deer with Finger Legs* as its prompt. Congratulations to Stephanie Medford for the winning story, "Deer Crossing," and to Madison Dewar for the runner-up story, "Absence." Look out for the next image-prompt flash fiction contest in 2022!

Thanks for putting your eyeballs on this magazine, we enjoyed assembling it. SNAP's Executive Director has generally written this introductory letter, but we will begin rotating it through the *SNAPline* Committee so you can hear more from the editors and designers behind the project.



**Charlie Crittenden**  
SNAPline Committee (Editor)

<sup>1</sup> Publisher Overview, *On Beauty and Being Just*, <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691089591/on-beauty-and-being-just>

<sup>2</sup> Horror vacui, [https://www.lexico.com/definition/horror\\_vacui](https://www.lexico.com/definition/horror_vacui)

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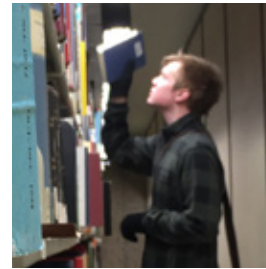
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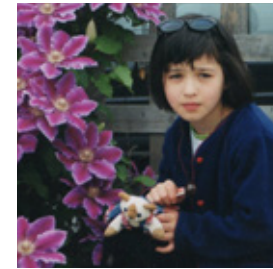


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**LUKE JOHNSON** is a Minnesota-born artist, researcher, and volunteer librarian based in Treaty 6 territory (Edmonton, Alberta). Working in print, photography, and durational engagements within collections, Johnson creates work that complicates notions of standardization and categorization within systems of knowledge. He received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his MFA from the University of Alberta, where he is currently a lecturer in lithography and drawing. He was one of SNAP's 2021 Emerging Artists in Residence.



**MIA RILEY** is an emerging artist, writer and curator. Sometimes she makes ceramic sculptures but like many people right now, is in the process of figuring out who they are and how they fit into the world. She holds a BFA from the Alberta University for the Arts in Calgary. She has completed residencies at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and interned at the Harvard Ceramics Program in Boston. In her work she is currently interested in intersections between identity, culture, history, and her experience as a mixed-race Asian-Canadian.



**DANIELLE SIEMENS** is a writer, curator and gallery professional based in amiskwaciwāskahikan/Edmonton. She holds degrees in Art History from the University of Alberta and Carleton University Art Gallery, and is currently Collections Manager/ Curatorial Associate at the Art Gallery of Alberta.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Emmanuel Osahor, detail from *Study for Centrepiece*, Etching on archival paper, 14"×18", 2021.





TOP LEFT: Emmanuel Osahor, *Trellis and Vine*.

TOP RIGHT AND FRONT COVER: Emmanuel Osahor, *Over the Fence*.

BOTTOM AND BACK COVER: Emmanuel Osahor, *Eastern Redbud*.

ALL THREE PRINTS: Etching on archival paper, 10"×8", 2021.



#### SNAPLINE FEATURED ARTIST

## EMMANUEL OSAHOR

Emmanuel Osahor is a Nigerian artist currently based in Ontario. His practice is invested in explorations of painting, photography and installation, and his recent work explores the garden as a constructed sanctuary space. Currently completing his MFA at the University of Guelph, Emmanuel Osahor graduated with a BFA in Art and Design from the University of Alberta in 2015. His work has been a subject of multiple solo and group exhibitions at venues including The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, The Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, The Art Gallery of Alberta, SNAP gallery, The Art Gallery of Guelph, and The Works International Festival of Art and Design. In 2014, Emmanuel Osahor was the provincial winner for the BMO 1st art Competition, representing the province of Alberta, and in 2018 he was honourable mention at the 20th RBC Painting competition.

#### ARTIST STATEMENT

My practice explores an engagement with beauty as a necessity for survival, and a pre-cursor to thriving in the midst of today's marginalization and inequity. My works depict garden spaces as constructed sanctuaries within which manifestations of both beauty and care are present. This work builds on Elaine Scarry's writing on beauty, and an engagement with the beautiful as necessary components in the cultivation of societal care and attention towards issues of injustice.

These images are developed from photographic snapshots of private garden spaces which are then reconfigured through processes of collage and drawing. They are created through a simplification of the compositional elements in the photograph and a reliance on abstract mark making interlaced with gestural drawing.

Although these images stem from private gardens that are in most cases exclusive, my images function as recreated and imaged sanctuary spaces that are inviting for bodies of culture like myself and the plethora of *others* that exist today. By prioritizing an engagement with the beautiful, my works offer a space where one can tend to the complexities of marginalization and inequity inherent in contemporary existence. ■





THIS PAGE: Emmanuel Osahor, *Study for For a Moment*, Etching on archival paper, 14"×18", 2021.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Emmanuel Osahor, *Untitled*, Etching on archival paper, 14"×14.5", 2021.





## WHEN TO STAND

written by  
**LUKE  
JOHNSON**

## AND

## WHEN TO RUN...

**CADY NOLAND, PATRON SAINT OF PRIVATE ARTISTS**, opened a show (*THE CLIP-ON METHOD*) at Galerie Buchholz (17 East 82nd Street, New York, NY) on June 17th, 2021. Prior to this, her last showing of new work was followed by a studio silence of two decades, interrupted by a blip on the radar in 2008, when she quietly exchanged an older work in the collection of the Walker Art Center for a new one (*untitled*, 1 metal basket, 2 motorcycle helmets, 1 film reel, 3 subway straps, metal). Her actions in 2008 and 2021 were not initially publicized, but detected by ardent Noland acolytes who are tuned to her signal like those who track and record number stations; those intermittent channels, apparently run by global intelligence networks, broadcasting empty static punctuated by ciphers.

Noland's work is at once stoic in its indictment of interconnected capitalist pathologies, and austere coded in tactics; not unlike the number stations, with their buzzing of electric razors in boxes, or women repeating *Yankee... Hotel... Foxtrot...* into the ether. She at times issues statements, to the public and to those she litigates, which are all too often held up as decoder rings to her *modus operandi*. Nevertheless, the ability of her art and words to reduce to the didactic is low.

Noland's spectre hangs over the millennial art world like an absentee landlord, omnipresent in discussion even when she has made herself and her artwork scarce. I think about the other ghosts who linger in the minds of artists, gallerists, critics, and the public. Agnes Martin's monastic retreat to the desert, or Duchamp's public persona as 'retired artist' turned chess player. Lee Lozano's refusal to engage the art world, begun gradually in 1969, became her final work, and continues on past her death, I suppose, into the present and on to the future (ouija board pronouncements and reincarnation notwithstanding).

The works of private artists are ripe for this kind of haunting, appearing as they do like ectoplasm on the table of the Spiritualist medium: evidence from a world not our own. When I read the call for contributions for this issue of SNAPline, which starts: "*An artistic practice in printmaking is rarely private*," I think of those artists who defy this pronouncement—rare birds, or odd ducks, who disperse their work outside expected systems, or who make their images after hours as passion projects, or who have shown powerful bodies of work and then pull away.





LEFT: Ryan Cain, untitled etching with hand-colouring, c.2016-2021.



RIGHT: Ryan Cain, untitled layered drawings and etchings, cut paper, c.2016-2021.

**Ryan Cain** agrees to a conversation about his work, which he shares online through the anonymous handle *da\_\_\_da\_\_\_da\_\_\_da*, and which otherwise arrives via text or DM in litanies of uncaptioned images interspersed with musical recommendations. I think here of Ray Johnson's carefully coded collages—*moticos*—sent through the mail to his 'correspondance school'. Johnson largely avoided traditional exhibitions, preferring to arrange meetings of his 'school' (during which he might himself be absent), or to stage 'nothings' (as opposed to 'happenings').

Like Johnson, Cain's is a roving eye that sets up generous connections between ideas that do not immediately correspond. While acknowledging the influences of historical masters like Goya, Redon, and Dix, Cain's more contemporary inspirations—Tino Seghal, Krzysztof Wodiczko, and Teresa Margolles—deal

in more transient forms which often live on primarily as memory, always at risk of becoming forgotten. To put one of Goya's *Disasters of War* up against the minimalist memorials to victims of cartel violence created by Margolles, it becomes clear the exhausting consistency of human violence—and in turn to triangulate this takeaway into dark interpretations of a work like Tino Seghal's *This Progress*. Looking at Cain's artwork has a similarly telescopic effect.

His figures stare off into space, or past the viewer through the picture plane. Behind masks or flurries of calligraphic marks obscuring their faces, they hover between coming together into solid beings and falling apart into the space between their atoms, rendered in static and snowfall, or viewed as if through stained glass windows or a school of particoloured minnows. The work becomes ever more densely layered: a drawing or etching

you once saw seemingly complete might get cut into a mesh-like form, revealing other accumulated marks through the perforations. Within their maximalist aesthetics, close viewing is rewarded—every inhabitant of the horror vacui is the correct answer to an unwritten *I Spy* or *Where's Waldo?*.

I ask Ryan about the intensity of this layering, and am met by one of his characteristically stream of consciousness replies: "[Incise] or take away enough of a moment in times again many marks given edit remove restart without canvas or camera in life like flowering engulfing resonance then just embrace breath and vanish."

When **C. Couldwell** agrees to be interviewed, she politely leaves me an exit; mild protests that she isn't a full time, or even necessarily a part-time, artist. A dabbler maybe, an amateur perhaps. If she's not right for the piece, I can look elsewhere. For an amateur, however, her results appear dedicated: since 2006, she's taken over 600 photos in an ongoing series peering through the windows of offices and businesses after hours. While she takes pains to avoid repetition, there are forms and symmetries to the urban landscape that prevail, telling us about ourselves even in our physical absence.

In exhibitions, the small size of the images makes you lean in close, recreating Couldwell's curiosity as she cups her hands around her eyes and then fixes her camera through the window: "I could see into this place, which as a workplace is both public and private, and document the space and the artifacts left behind by those who were there."

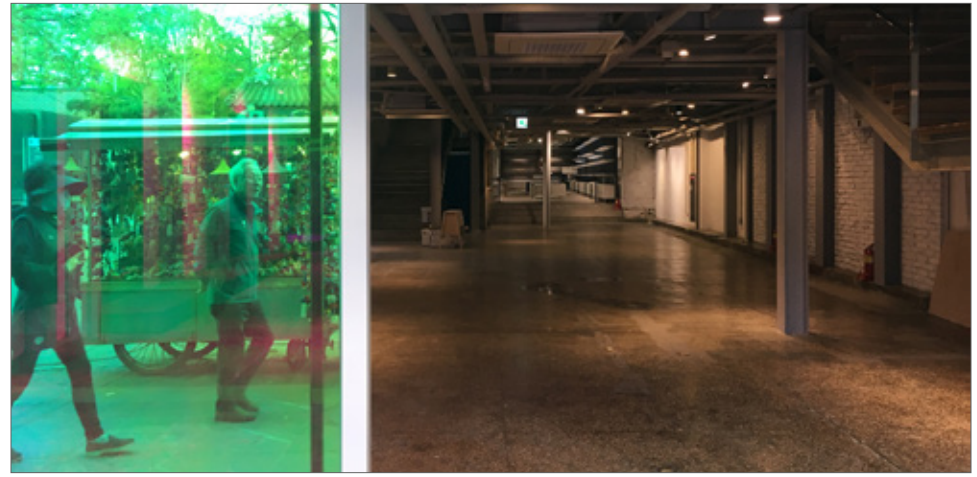
Her interest in photography began while working at *The Gateway* student newspaper at the University of Alberta. One could understand the various adaptations of her project into different formats as a legacy of this journalistic education, where every photo has the

potential to serve different authorial narratives based on its arrangement on the hierarchy of the page. To date, her photos have been hung in grids, output as a poster, turned into illustrations for a colouring book, and most recently exhibited as a collection of several hundred business-card sized tiles to be interacted with and arranged by viewers in the gallery to form their own narratives.

However, unlike a photo accompanying a news item, Couldwell does not caption her images. They remain an insider's view of the city, navigable by landmarks rather than street names, familiar and unnecessary to label. These are not the photos of a tourist. To recognize a window scene is to share in a private geography, to feel yourself a local. "Look, there's the building they've remodelled three times in the last decade, and still nobody ever stays long!" These are things one *can* know about Couldwell's images, but that the images themselves never overtly tell.

My biographical file on the last artist I profile, **Rebecca Aronyk**, is thin: born Kingston, Jamaica (Cancer on the cusp of Leo), a BFA from the University of Alberta in 1980, followed by a master's degree in December of 1982. I consult the 14 slides of work from her MVA exhibit (13 of them still in their slide sheet, #9 found later, by chance marooned in a binder of student work previously gifted to me). Delicate photo-lithographic shadows and screens, soft vessels of paper and plant matter emerging from black and grey, embossed mesh forms and occasional applied elements pricking the illusions with reality. Colours are subdued; flesh tones that stretch between pallid and sunburnt, punctuated by an occasional bright orange or red—and once, by a hovering object fading gold to green to blue like a tropical bird in flight. Titles: "*Of Unknown Origin*," "*Duality and Contradiction*," "*Two Possibilities*," etc.









She showed such works in several major national and international print exhibits, and then, after 1982, the public record largely goes blank, save for a credit—'preparation of illustrations'—in a book on aneurysms. On the cover, dilated and weakened arteries are shown in silhouette, embossed in black onto the grid of red book cloth. It is imbued with her aesthetic when you know to look, whether she drew it or collated the illustration from elsewhere.

A mutual friend connects me with Aronyk, who is in the thralls of family wedding preparation, but generously offers up a few notes on her prints. It was her childhood in the tropics that led to a fascination with organic forms and found objects, such as seed pods and dried plants. Later, she began to make her own objects to avoid the limitations imposed by pre-existing forms, while hoping these found and invented forms would take on "a vitality and presence of their own."

Printmaking allowed for a combination of photographic imagery with the tactile, while the steps involved in the process sometimes led to unexpected surprises. The Japanese paper that carries most of her work was utilized for its semi-transparency, creating a 'partial view into a world' enabled by printing on both sides of the paper. Indeed, looking at a few unmounted prints in person, the view of this world from the verso can be nearly as intriguing as it is through the frame.

Is there something to be gleaned from pairing the grids of Aronyk's lithographs against the pierced screens of Cain's drawings and etchings? Are his assemblages the interior lives of Couldwell's empty office denizens? Do her photographically captured shadows of storefront plants and ergonomically dubious chairs call back to Aronyk's printed jungle, light cast through gaps in the canopy? These are possibilities, but they are not my goal.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Rebecca Aronyk, *Fission*, lithograph, screenprint, embossment, 1982.

THIS PAGE: scanned slide sheet from Rebecca Aronyk's MVA exhibition, December 1982, Ring House Gallery, Edmonton, AB.

Author Joshua Cohen describes a certain genre of novel which might serve as "trials of historical consciousness," where the understanding of the work relies on the reader's engaged understanding of the world. To engage the works of private artists is often to be deprived of the release-valves of artist statements, biography, or the navigable arc of a continuous career, being left instead alone with the work and the world it inhabits. Cohen continues, "these are the books that provoke the reader, or at least provoke me as a reader, into seeking out the sources that are being denied, and in the process of that seeking I find myself situated within and vital to myriad continua." This is what the works of Cain, Couldwell, and Aronyk provoke in me as a viewer, and why I look to them so often: for the endurance and depth of their mysteries, and the rewards of their engagement.

Cohen once more: "... this is how tradition works. This is what it means to live in a culture. Our books should be missing something, the finding of which makes us whole."<sup>†</sup>  
...and there's no hole in my head—  
too bad. ■

† Cohen's quotes here from: Riker, Martin. "The Covering Cherub: An Interview with Joshua Cohen." *The Paris Review* (June 23, 2021). <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2021/06/23/the-covering-cherub-an-interview-with-joshua-cohen/>.

The title and closing lines are borrowed from Malvina Reynolds' song 'No Hole in My Head'. All other quotations are from the author's correspondence with the individual artists. Cady Noland's exhibit *THE CLIP-ON METHOD* at Galerie Buchholz, New York, runs through September 11, 2021.



# DUPLICATOR DREAMS

## Yolkless Press

ALBERTA'S  
NEWEST  
RISOGRAPH  
PRINT  
SHOP

**IN THE HOT PANDEMIC  
SUMMER OF 2020,** a new

risograph machine made its way from Japan across the Pacific Ocean to so-called Calgary. The purchase finally put artist Teresa Tam and writer Areum Kim's duplicator dreams in motion. One year later, they are Alberta's newest risograph publisher, Yolkless Press. 'Riso' means 'ideal' in Japanese, which couldn't be a more apt descriptor for this new venture. The timing is perfect as neighbouring Edmonton risograph, Frankie Press, went on hiatus late last year. Yolkless Press is the risograph printer that we need right now. They are the perfect outlet for artists working through the pandemic's resulting emotional baggage and the many critical cultural shifts of the past year.

*written by* **MIA RILEY**

In 2019, the Yolkless Press duo worked on their first risograph book as part of Teresa's exhibition "*an ordinary hole-in-the-wall along macleod before the railway underpass*" (AOHITWAMBTRU) at Stride Gallery. The publication was a compilation of artfully written traditional Asain recipes, artwork and stories by Areum and Teresa as well as Amy Lam, Cindy Mochizuki, and Ryan Tang. Through the project, Areum and Teresa found a shared passion for bookmaking and risograph printing. The vibrant colours and materiality of the process drew them in, and the potential for collaboration with others kept them dreaming of future opportunities.

The pair decided to embark on a trip to the Philippines in early 2020. The dream to start their own print shop was already brewing and became reinforced by DIY creative spaces they saw that were providing positive opportunities to people without access to arts funding. They saw risographs as the perfect tool to serve a community. While the initial start-up costs are high, Riso duplicators provide low-cost and brightly coloured reproducible prints. There is a good amount of artistry involved in the process, with many colour options and an intricate layering process akin to silkscreening. This is why risograph printing is a part of a longstanding and close-knit subculture of artists that extends across the world.

From an accessibility standpoint, risograph books shine as the perfect tool to help people translate their ideas into an easily circulated medium. Areum and Teresa envisioned that as a small but knowledgeable team, they could provide opportunities for those with little experience to work with them directly to design the work together. They liked that risograph machines are efficient at duplicating a large number of prints, which is why they are commonly used in



Areum Kim and Teresa Tam.

schools or churches to print pamphlets and posters. From an artist's perspective, the accessibility of the medium allows for creative ideas to become widely available. On the other hand, the materiality of a riso printed publication also made it a compelling choice. The two knew they wanted to craft beautiful objects with deliberate paper, ink, and binding options. The idea of large-run commercially printed works that typically show up as higher-brow artist publications and magazines did not fit right with the culture and community they could relate to: they were in all senses "too glossy".

Wanting to become a part of the risopress community, and control their own means of production, Areum and Teresa decided to buy their own machine in the summer of 2020. During this time they started to explore their creative intentions for the project. Thinking back to their time in the Philippines, they began to consider







## Napa Cabbage Chart



Mint 45°  
Fluorescent Pink 22°  
Yellow 0°



LEFT: *Nappa Cabbage Chart*, 2020.

ABOVE: *2021 Calendar*, 2020.

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Colonial Imports*,  
*Tender Pearl Zone*, Vol. 1, 2021.

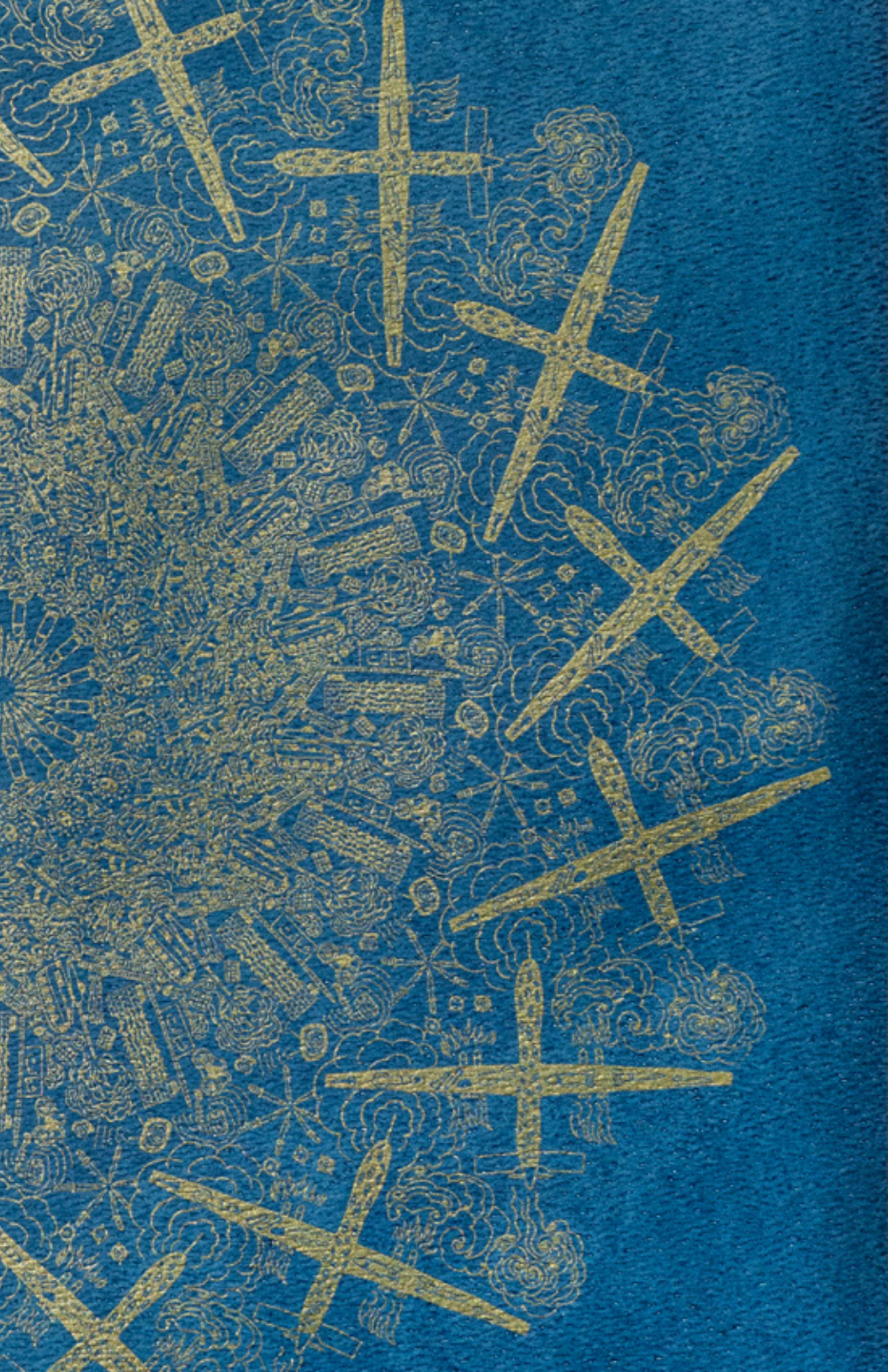
The team at Yolkless Press has learned a lot already, especially what it means to run a community-centred business. Paying people fairly, offering affordable costs and focusing on sustainability are all part of their mission. They see this as a slight deviation from the artist-run centre and institutional model, which often becomes paralyzed by scarcity funding. After creatively sourcing money to pay artists fairly for their first few projects, Yolkless's goal is to generate revenue sustainably through the sales of their publications. In terms of covering start-up costs, Areum likens the purchase of the risograph to buying a car, where the initial investment may not hold much value. Their priority is community-based work, with the understanding that BIPOC communities have had less access to publishing and printing resources due to the prohibitive cost of larger commercial-focused options. The service they provide to the arts scene and the ability to cover operational costs is

enough for them to want to keep the project going. It is more important to them right now to give opportunities to individuals to share their creative ideas and pay them fairly for their labour.

Yolkless continues to be surprised at how people are finding them, but the fact is that the community has been asking for a local riso print shop for years. Their final dream is to one day have an affordable, great-looking storefront space. Rather than acting as an agent for gentrification, they are envisioning a space that is an extension of the community where folks can use it as a library, shop, workspace, and venue. With a longer-term vision in mind for Yolkless Press, there are so many possibilities of how it will grow and shift. For now, they want to let people know "we're here, so let's do it!" and encourage people who have been thinking about a project to consider them as a good option to turn their publication ideas into reality! ■







# POETIC RESISTANCE: THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POLITICS OF DRONE WARFARE

*An interview with*  
**RIAZ MEHMOOD**



*interview by*  
**DANIELLE  
SIEMENS**

**AS SNAP'S IN COMMUNITY ARTIST IN RESIDENCE** from March to May 2021, artist Riaz Mehmood continued his work looking into the public and private nature of war in his home region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Situated at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, this area, formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province, has long been the site of US drone warfare against the Taliban and other known terrorist groups. Drawing on a mix of stylistic influences from Pakistani truck art to Islamic manuscripts, Mehmood tells layered and complex stories, revealing both the public politics of the so-called “War on Terror” and the private lives of citizens whose homes and way of life have been forever altered. In these prints, Mehmood combines personal memory, spirituality and stories of resistance in an attempt to humanize Pashtun narratives while at the same time avoiding sensational accounts of human suffering. Recently, Mehmood and I sat down to talk about the political history of his home region and how individual and collective acts of resistance have inspired his recent body of work.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Riaz Mehmood, detail from *All we are left with is the damage*, screen print, 2021.





**In the context of our discussion about public/private, drones are a particularly potent symbol. They occupy public space but are shrouded in secrecy. In your 2016 work, *Once Upon a Drone*, you took a US predator drone as your subject and transformed it through the vernacular tradition of truck painting. Can you tell me more about this work and your interest in drones as a technology of control?**

Growing up in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistani truck art was everywhere. It has a long history and is very colourful and bright. Truck art is also very public and recognizable.

My interest in drones comes from talking to people in my village who had experienced being watched by them. Or at least the sense of being watched; maybe they were imagining it, but you don't know because you don't necessarily see the drone, you only hear it. According to the witnesses, they hear this shrill, whistle-like sound.

A drone is this bland thing; it has no colours, and has a generic metallic body. I wanted to make it very bright so you take notice of it. I used the colours and geometrical patterns found in truck art but added my own themes. The images that I used pointed towards the history of colonialism, and justification of violence for imperial gains. I wanted to bring out this private object, as you mentioned wrapped in secrecy, and through truck art make it very visible, very public.

**You return to the image of the drone in your recent print *Burāq and Fairy*. This time you look at a drone produced by the Pakistani military that's name refers to a story from Islamic tradition. What is the importance of this story and why is its appropriation for militaristic ends particularly troubling?**

In my research, I looked at Islamic manuscripts. In these folios, the text is always accompanied by hand drawn images, and the borders are very intricate.



**OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
Riaz Mehmood,  
*Once Upon a Drone*,  
sculpture, 2016.

**THIS PAGE:**  
Riaz Mehmood,  
*All you want is dignity*,  
drypoint, screen  
print, 2021.

**FOLLOWING PAGE:**  
Riaz Mehmood, *Burāq  
and Fairy*, screen print,  
watercolour, 2021.

All these floral patterns and geometrical designs are just mind-boggling. Meanwhile, I was also looking into truck art. Within truck art, the Burāq, which is a mythical half-human, half-mule creature in Islamic cosmology, is also commonly known as *peri* (fairy). Images of *peris* are very public; growing up, I would see them illustrated on posters and on trucks.

The *Mirāj Nāme* was written in the 15th century and narrates the story of Burāq. The arc-angel Gabriel came to the prophet Mohammed and brought him the Burāq. In Arabic, Burāq also means the speed of lightening. Gabriel told Mohammed that Burāq would carry him to heaven to see God. Later on, writers and artists started attaching attributes to this mythical creature according to different Muslim cultures. In Pakistan, the Burāq is usually depicted as a horse with the head of a beautiful woman.

I came upon an article that mentioned the Pakistan Army's successful launch of its own drone named Burāq. I was really struck by this; naming a piece of destruction Burāq. Again, using religion

to justify violence. Burāq is a public figure but also important to a private practice of spiritualism. But then it is turned into something so ugly.

In my print work, *Burāq and Fairy*, Burāq is seen against a blue background, which represents heaven. But just beyond, is the drone hidden in Islamic geometric pattern.

**In All we are left with is the damage you continue to use the aesthetics of Islamic design to look at the aftermath of war.**

In the image, I have drawn eyes on almost everything, especially on the drones to convey the sense of surveillance. This applies even to the foreign scholars who study drone warfare. They parachute in, they write about you, what you think, what your life is like, categorizing your traumas, they then decide everything for you.

After each drone incursion, what is left behind are the people who have to deal with the aftermath. They come and do their war and leave.





**As an artist do you see yourself as having a responsibility to truth telling, or of creating a kind of public archive?**

I feel that I have a responsibility as an artist. But my stories are through a different angle; I'm not a journalist or a historian. I try to bring complexity of my region and its people. However, you cannot avoid the pain, the destruction. At the same time, it's not only ugliness, there is beauty too. There's humanity too. There's hope too. So, I want to highlight those things, that's my goal for now. And I'm struggling, I always struggle with what's the boundary between someone's really private account, really private story and making it public through art. Where does my responsibility as an artist lie? What is my role in telling that story?

**This brings me to some of your recent prints where you turn to more individual stories such as in *All you want is dignity*. Can you tell me more about this work?**

Often it is social media that provides information on the Pashtun region—this is because of Pakistani state policy, which significantly censors the news. In one report, a woman says: “I don’t want my son back [referring to the army], and I don’t demand to return my husband, I just want you to leave us in dignity—don’t raid our homes.” That was her only demand. She just wanted to hang on to her humanity, or her idea of dignity. She felt that her home was a sanctuary that no one without her permission should enter. But there were strangers coming in with the intention of violence.

**Pakistani security forces?**

Yes. Women have been traumatized by these raids because traditionally, in this part of the world, strangers, especially men, are not allowed to come in to your home. There was a recent incident of a

woman named Noorani Bibi. She, like most Pashtun elderly women, doesn’t know how to read or write, but she wanted to keep a record, so she would scratch a line on a piece of paper that would mark an incident when the army came to her house and harassed her. And so far, she has drawn 25 lines. For me, this gesture is an act of resistance.

In Pakistan, women are the ones that connect the whole community. When men are either killed or taken away, it is the women who are the keepers of the home, of community and of stories. When you disrupt that link, you disrupt the whole fabric of the society, the very backbone of a family, and of the culture. I always find it so encouraging, so heartwarming when I hear women’s stories like this one. We need these strong voices.

**Your print of a Kochi pendant points to the issue of imposed colonial borders. Can you elaborate more on that?**

The jewellery belongs to the Kochi tribe, a Pashtun nomadic tribe from Afghanistan. During the winter, when it gets cold in Afghanistan, they would cross the border and build a camp just outside of our village. There were a lot of exchanges—of songs, stories, information and goods. Since 2005, they stopped coming to our region. There are a few reasons for this. One is of course the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, and the border fortifications by Pakistan. However, people who live on the border, they don’t see it as a border especially since there are familial, trade and cultural ties in the region. Because of the conflict and the brutal vetting process at the border you now need to have official documentation, but the Kochis are marginalized in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. I want to emphasize that where we belong is also historically and geographically contingent.



I wanted to tell that story and the beauty of the culture. For me, the most memorable thing is the jewellery Kochi women would wear, which is really intricate, bright jewellery. So, for me it was to tell this story but through their material culture. It is this idea of remembrance but also of loss.

**Adornment is a private thing but also a public display of identity.**

Yes, that's very important.

**Has working in print changed your practice at all?**

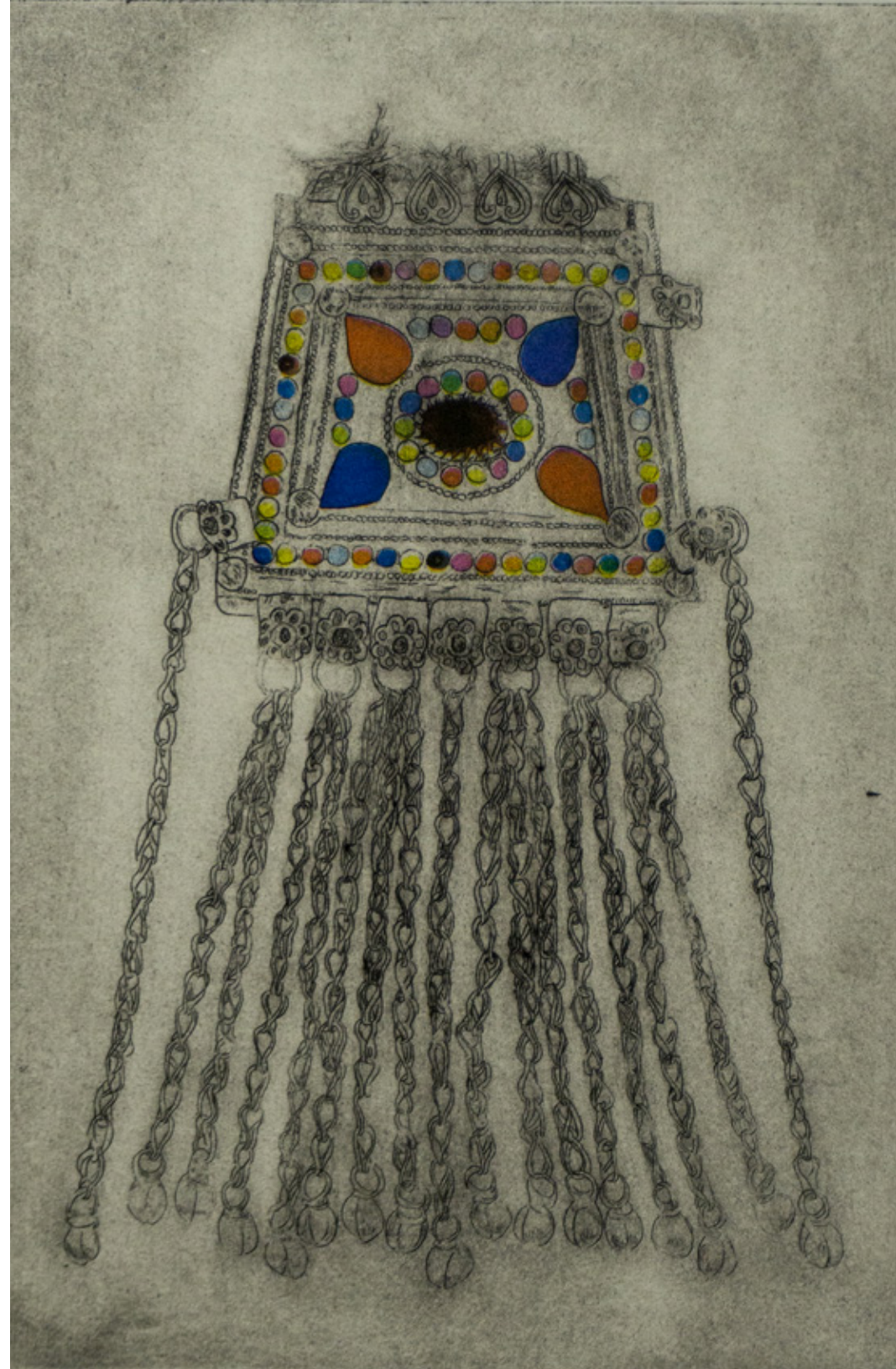
I've always liked experimentation. When I started my SNAP residency, I quickly learned about the flexibility of printmaking and that there are so many things you could do. All of the colours, the mark making, and the ability to make many prints. It's very exciting because you can keep experimenting during the printmaking process too, and produce different results. There's also the idea of time. Printmaking has so many variables that all my preconceived ideas of deadlines were challenged. I learned to take it slowly.

There's also this practice of cooperation and meeting other artists at SNAP. It's a very public space for artists. For me, it's all about this—the cooperation and the insights from others. Even yesterday, an artist showed me I could do something slightly differently in my screen printing. She didn't have to, but she did and I'm so thankful. I believe in sharing knowledge. What she showed me yesterday might have been a small thing for her, but for me it was big. ■

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Riaz Mehmood, *Pendant*,  
drypoint, screen print, 2021 .





Contestants were asked to submit a story responding to Cindy Baker's embroidered crest patch *Pill Deer with Finger Legs* (pictured). Congratulations to the 1st place winner and to the runner up. Thank you to everyone who submitted stories this year, we enjoyed reading each entry!



## WINNER!

### Deer Crossing

by **STEPHANIE MEDFORD**

Standing in the same spot for 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. Standing and staring and waiting. She turns the sign back and forth. Stop. Slow. Stop. Slow. Stop. Slow. And sometimes, when no one is around, stopslowstopslowstopslow. Vibrations travel up from her feet into her bones as heavy machinery passes. Her feet ache. Her back aches. Her eyes blur. Sometimes people shout at her as they drive past. She doesn't hear anything except the whine and rumble of the machines, the pounding of blood in her temples.

The sun sets late this time of year so they work until nearly 10pm. She's still hungover from last night, from the night before, from who knows when. It's a weeknight so there are no drivers to watch her stopslow dance. The sun hasn't set but there is a creeping darkness gathering under the spruce trees on either side of the road. She turns from the din of machines to watch as one tree melts into the next. They fade into each other, the dark highlighting the lone sign on the road: a silhouette of a leaping deer.

A deer crossing. Go ahead, she thinks. I'm not gonna stop you. She hides her stop sign behind her back, in case the deer can read. It's paused mid-leap, weighing its options.

Dude just go, she urges him. He leaps from the sign and onto the road, standing there staring at her. Another deer appears but this one doesn't hesitate. He leaps onto the road behind his friend. One after another, deer leap out of the sign and onto the road, stopping nose to tail with the ones before. The road is covered with a herd of deer, standing stock still, their heads turned to look at her, asking her to join them.

She considers it for a moment. Thinks about dropping her sign and leaping towards them. They could stand there, blocking the road together. No one would be able to get through. Even the bulldozers wouldn't be able to get through. They wouldn't think twice about killing a deer, but a whole herd of deer? Even the most hardened of them wouldn't be able to handle that amount of blood.

She imagines the warm embrace of the herd and the strength of standing together for something. She's never stood for anything except this damn stop sign and she would gladly leave it in the ditch. What might she stand for instead?

Her radio screeches to life. Car coming from the opposite direction. Reluctantly she turns away from the herd. Turns the stop sign towards them, the slow sign towards the car. Waves it through. The car speeds off, straight into the herd of deer. She listens for the splat but doesn't hear anything. When she turns back, the road is empty. The trees have melded into one dark shape now. There's nothing left but the yellow sign: one small deer, leaping into the night. ■

## RUNNER UP!

### Absence

by **MADISON DEWAR**

He had promised that they would drink bubbly and nibble on Camembert while the lilacs bloomed. Wrong on both fronts—the flowers had not yet opened and Walter was keeping her waiting.

Annie shivers, berating herself for not bringing a jacket. He was finally the late one for once. Maybe Walter hadn't recognized their spot either. There was a deer crossing sign here now, planted next to their bench like a neon flag. Annie hoped, for their sake, that there were no deer left here anymore. That they'd migrated to some safer place. The wildness of the park had been tamed too far back into manicured supremacy last fall. Had the road always been this close?

A frazzled man bursts around the path, his balding head sweat slicked, scarf flying. When he sets his gaze upon her, he wheezes out a low sound that might be a curse. Annie offers him a kind smile, excusing his embarrassment. Some signal misfires between them, and soon the stranger's weight is settling on the seat beside her. She huffs in annoyance. Annie had dealt with his kind before, audacious and prying. Well, so be it. Soon Walter will round the bend, hazel eyes sparkling, picnic basket in hand, and this intruder will have to go.

"What are you doing here?" The stranger asks.

"That's my private business." She bristles back.

At his crestfallen expression, Annie softens.

"I'm waiting for my husband." She relents, "It's our anniversary today. Six years strong." The man's eyes grow impossibly sad, haunted by some former heartache. Annie compels herself to turn away for the sake of his dignity. She gazes instead over the park, yellow lawn dusted in pale white.

"Do you think maybe he isn't coming?" His voice is soft and careful as a fawn. She glances down at her watch—Walter's gift, from which year?—and finds a lonely plastic band. A shiver. The smell of detergent, sharp and chemical and nothing like lilac. Annie shakes them all away, "We come here every year. I can wait."

The man swallows hoarsely. It's her turn to study him now—teeth clenched, straining to corral the thousand unspoken questions behind them.

Finally, he lets one free.

"Did you take your pills today?"

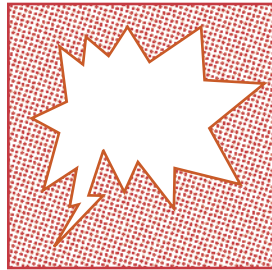
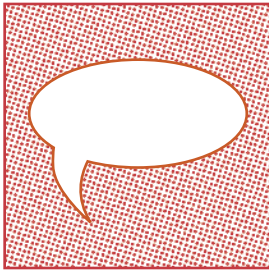
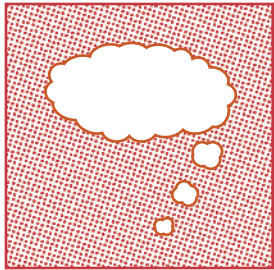
Annie looks at the stranger and his wet, hazel eyes. She's never spoken them before, but the words bubble out of her all on their own, bittersweet and familiar as champagne. "I'm sorry my dear. They must have grown legs and wandered away."

A deep breath. Then, Simon just nods, placing a patient hand on her shoulder and tugging her up.

"Let's get you home mom."

Annie lets him take her from the bench, away from the road. The trees' bare limbs twist about them like fingers and IV tubing and antlers. She smiles, warm and lightheaded from the wine and Walter's affections. Her husband knows her so well; the watch is lovely. She'll forgive him for falling behind. ■





## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

**SNAPLINE 2021.3**

## PUNCH LINE

2021 has been a year of recovery, of grief, and of sustained sorrow. A devastating news cycle of climate crises, ongoing global violence, and ever-widening wealth inequities. Traditionally a punchline is delivered as the third part of a joke—the part that makes us laugh—but sometimes we feel like the punchline never arrives. For our third publication this year, *SNAPline* will release its first ever fully graphic edition to explore what gives us laughter in challenging times.

We are seeking **visual submissions** including (but certainly not limited to): comics, illustrations, satire, political commentary and other visual submissions that engage with humour. We expect that the creative community will only punch-up, and are open to investigations of “funny/ not funny” scenarios or current events. As we move toward the end of a year that has offered nothing to laugh about, we ask artists and illustrators alike to take up the call and remind us of the small localized moments in our day-to-day lives, in our communities, and in our families and friendships that make us smile and laugh, even if we are only laughing so we don’t cry.

### How to submit your pitch:

By email to  
[communications@snapartists.com](mailto:communications@snapartists.com)  
no later than **September 15, 2021**

### Pitches must include:

- 1a. finished but unpublished work  
or
- 1b. a proposal to create a new work.  
Proposals for new works should be clearly described and include images of previous visual works in the style proposed.
2. A short bio – tell us who you are!
3. Links to online content of previous work or attach images of previous work (any format is fine)

Final publication page size is limited to 8.5" h x 5.5" w or a spread of 8.5" h x 11" w. Submissions for multiple pages or multiple spread content will be considered. Acceptable formats are: .TIFF, .JPEG, or PDF with a minimum resolution of 300dpi. Feel free to reach out to [communications@snapartists.com](mailto:communications@snapartists.com) if you have any questions about formatting your submission.

Contributor fees range between: \$350–600 CAD and will be based on number of pages and total number of artists/ publication budget available.

**Deadline for proposal: September 15, 2021**  
**Final Content Due: November 1, 2021**  
Publication Release: Early December 2021

## SNAPLINE 2021.2 — PUBLIC / PRIVATE

**FEATURED ARTIST: EMMANUEL OSAHOR**

### IN THIS ISSUE

*When to Stand and When to Run* ..... by Luke Johnson

*Duplicator Dreams: Yolkless Press,*  
*Alberta's Newest Risograph Print Shop* ..... by Mia Riley

*Poetic Resistance:*  
*The Public and Private Politics of Drone Warfare,*  
*An interview with Riaz Mehmood* ..... by Danielle Siemens

**FLASH FICTION WINNER:** *Deer Crossing* ..... by Stephanie Medford

**FLASH FICTION RUNNER UP:** *Absence* ..... by Madison Dewar

### SNAP MEMBERSHIP

**When signing up to become a SNAPline Member you'll take part in a limited edition mail art program!**

At a cost of **\$150 a year**, you will receive **3 limited edition fine-art prints** along with the triannual edition of the *SNAPline* Publication beginning in 2019. Through this program SNAP commissions 3 exceptional, diverse and exciting artists a year to create a limited edition of prints, one of which is sent to your home three times a year. We are switching from our previous quarterly model to devote more resources to our contributing writers and artists as well as to the production of special and innovative magazine issues. You'll also receive all other SNAP member benefits including discounts on SNAP's classes; special event tickets and discounts at retail supporters around the city.

**For more information on how to become a SNAP Member visit:**  
[www.snapartists.com/membership](http://www.snapartists.com/membership)

TWITTER: @snapgallery / INSTAGRAM: @SNAPgallery  
FB: SNAP - Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists

*SNAP loves all the volunteers, members, supporters and funders that make our organization not just possible but also a thriving art community. A special thanks to our funders and supporters.*

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*Or are artists' studios becoming more public as they are broadcast online through social media and other online events? The past year has redefined not only what "studio" means, and who has access but also the nature of art and the public. Print has become more accessible as we warily see printed public: joint festivals, social donation may offer dissemination practice, community public/private*

