

floated

ISSUE 6

ALTERNATIVE CULTURE MAGAZINE

ANTHOLOGY

PRESENTS

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY
23
7:00 PM



SATURDAY
MARCH
9
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THURSDAY
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MONDAY
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22
7:00 PM



FRIDAY
MARCH
1
7:00 PM



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Floated Mag is an **alternative arts and culture magazine highlighting up and coming creators, alternative lifestyles, and social topics.**

We aim to share the stories behind the artist and offer niche perspectives on emerging trends within contemporary culture, showcasing unique and obscure aspects of society.

As a collective of artists, designers, writers, and music fanatics, we produce quality content to ensure that our readers are engaged and well-informed with the best in upcoming entertainment. **We're here to show you what's dope today, and what's going to kick ass tomorrow.**

floated

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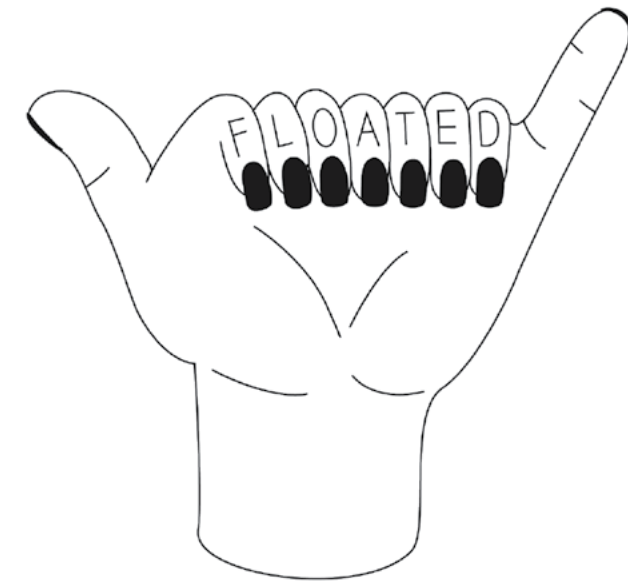
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EVERY **SUNDAY****

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Fostering Joy and Creativity in Education

Art by Olivia Konys
Words by Emmarae Stein

"Why be a bully? Be a buddy! Share all the love you can," sings Jor Lewis, a local singer-songwriter with a focus on writing fun-filled and inventive children's music. Performing under the stage-name "Mr. Loops," this artistically-inclined musician is a true multipotentialite, digging his hands into a number of creative endeavours throughout the Rochester area. From working as a videographer for local

"Most of my music is geared towards an altruistic and empathetic behavior, developing the idea of being **SILLY**, **DANCING**, **EXPRESSING** yourself, and always **HELPING OTHERS**"

historical societies to instilling a love for hands-on learning in his role as a preschool teacher, Lewis finds an inherent joy in sharing his creative passions with the community. Entering his sixth year of performing under the stage name of "Mr. Loops," Lewis can be seen donning wildly colorful outfits and expressing a wacky persona through singing original children's music at birthday parties, large family events, daycare centers, and the occasional park or library. Lewis holds a unique ability to seamlessly synthesize his role as an educator into his work as a creator, combining the art of emotional pedagogy with playful and approachable lyrics to encourage children to explore their own emotions and engage with problems that necessitate conflict-resolution. During a lighthearted and cheerful phone call with Floated editor Krit Upra, Lewis unpacks the messages in his songs, sharing that, "As Mr. Loops, most of my music is geared towards an altruistic and empathetic behavior, developing the idea of being silly, dancing, expressing yourself, and always helping others."

Working as a preschool teacher in the Rochester City School District, Lewis aims to bring creativity into the classroom, often hearing students refer to his main instrument as, "Mr. Guitar." Playing

exciting and joyful melodies to start off each day and light soothing songs during naptime, Lewis insists on the importance of making the children's time spent in school an inviting opportunity for learning and personal growth: "When I go into school, my life gets put at the door and it's all about greeting these kids with a huge ball of energy when they come in, making them feel wanted and making them feel important, and that they are important enough to be whatever they want to be." Openly aware of his minority status as a man in the field of adolescent education, Lewis hopes that he can act as a positive male role model by using his craft to impel his students to express their emotions through empathy rather than violence. After spending hours of quality time in the classroom, this hope became a reality as Lewis noticed that students were using their toy blocks to pretend to play music rather than pretend to shoot guns. Describing the phenomenal shift that occurred as he incorporated music into the curriculum, Lewis states that, "It totally changed their mindset of using things to pretend like they were shooting or being violent to being creatively oriented and playing music, and that makes me so happy. That's something that's already started to happen in front of me."

Emphasizing the importance of combining the concepts of work and play, Lewis reflects on his own grade school experiences, sharing that, “As a student myself growing up, I focused way more on play than work. I wasn’t a very good in class student, I was always extracurricular doing a lot of theatre, or video projects, or comedy to make my way through school. That was always my opinion of education, it should be stressed how important it is to cultivate these social skills and the ability to make work and play the same thing throughout your whole life, so that people don’t grow up thinking that you need to separate these things so much.” By working with

“ When I go into school, my life gets put at the door and it’s all about greeting these kids with a huge ball of energy when they come in,

making them feel wanted and making them feel important, and that they are important enough to be whatever they want to be.”

HighScope, a curriculum emphasizing the role of student-led education, Lewis explains that he’s able to actualize this philosophy by providing foundational blocks for preschool children to become proficient in solving conflict and developing their own set of social skills. In describing the tone set by the HighScope curriculum, Lewis expresses with an infectious level of delight that, “the focus isn’t on regimented strict education at all. It’s more about cultivating the idea that these kids can solve their own problems without violence.” During work time, Lewis explains that students are allowed to do whatever they want in the classroom. The teacher’s role is disengaged, and they hang back, mediate, play music, and give some thought-provoking questions to stir the children’s imagination. If conflict occurs, the teachers act as mentors to inspire empowering solutions that the students can come to on their own accord. While children may forget the precise lessons and abilities gained as they grow, Lewis asserts that implementing these skills throughout an early-childhood curriculum is crucial to a child’s healthy development: “The research is there that people who are taught this HighScope curriculum in preschool are much more functional, less violent people, and the graduating percentage is much higher in people who have had that early-on training.”

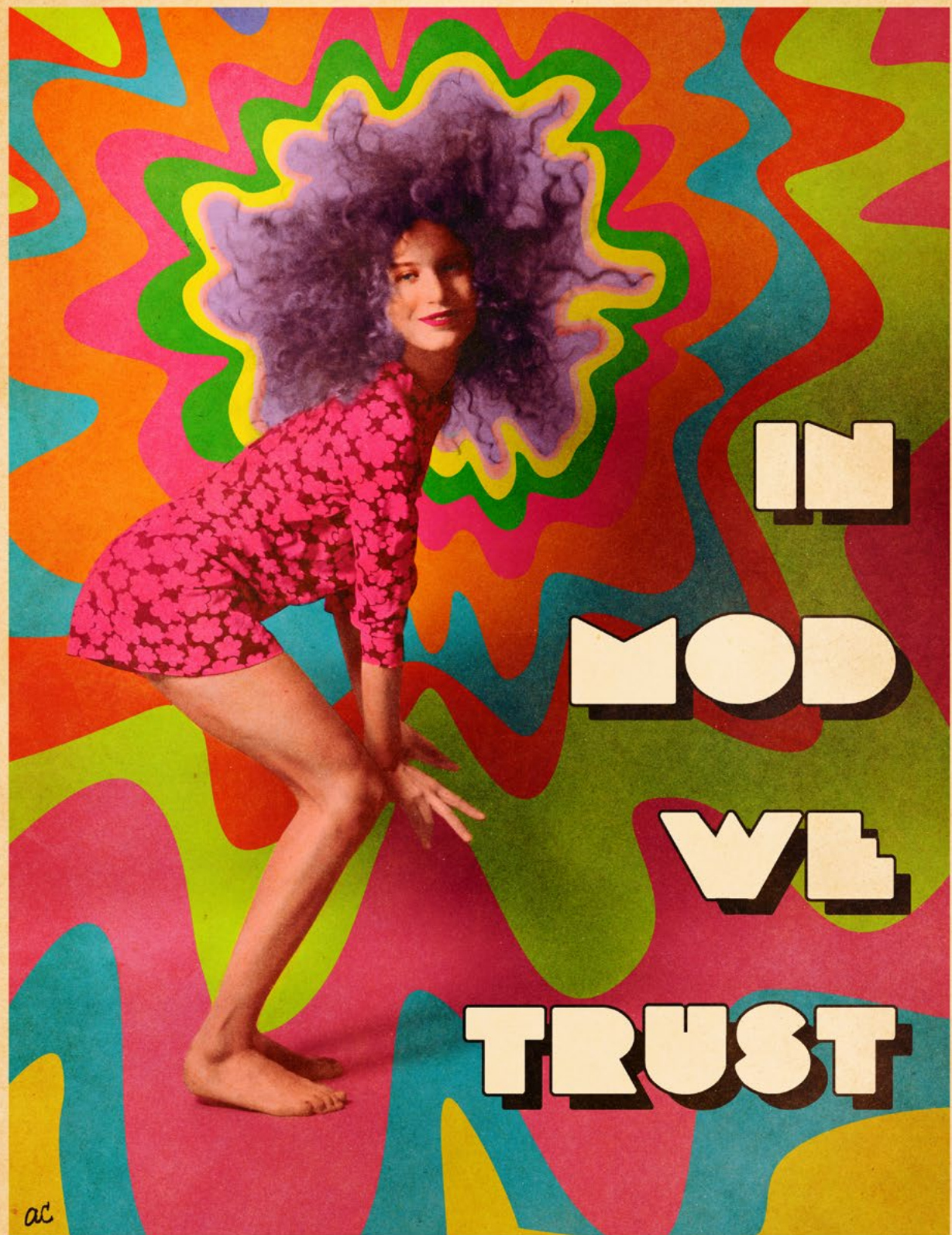
While Lewis takes pride in the radical improvements that have been made to the preschool curriculum in the district, he fears that a lot of work is left to be done to heighten the quality of education for higher grades. After hearing a radio host call the Rochester City School District a “glorified daycare” for parents, Lewis argues that critical changes must be made, asserting that, “There needs to be a priority put on the educational system, and people need to realize that this is the next generation of citizens, and people, and humans that are coming up and their education is so important. It’s not just a glorified daycare, this is the future. If we’re going to save our future we need to start by making sure that they’re growing up without the same sort of conflicts that we are having as an older generation now.” Alongside dialogues about supporting students in poverty, allocating resources to improve the quality of the schools, and learning how

it should be stressed how important it is to cultivate these social skills and the ability to make work and play the same thing throughout your whole life

to instill a higher level of care for each student, Lewis explains that, “A really important part of working where I am is understanding what I need to do to help this situation.” Although it is no small feat, Lewis hopes that by bringing the joy of music to his students from a young age, he can foster a love for creativity that will make his students feel empowered to continue to find excitement in learning throughout their academic career.

As he nurtures the minds of the youngest members of our society, Lewis looks to the future and envisions a world where children are taught to value each other for their differences, expressing that, “because we’re all raised a little differently, because we come from different places, because we look different, we have implicit bias that’s ingrained in us--that makes us treat other people differently sometimes without us even realizing it. So, I want kids to grow up with more of an ability to be open and have conversations about that which aren’t so antagonistic and conflict-oriented, and are more about problem-solving. More about our ability to understand differences as complementary rather than something that can subtract from a situation.”

By teaching younger children the importance of empathy, attentiveness, respect, and kindness, Lewis believes that many of our other conflicts would simply fade away. In the lyrics of Mr. Loops himself, “When your heart is full, you’re invincible every single day.”



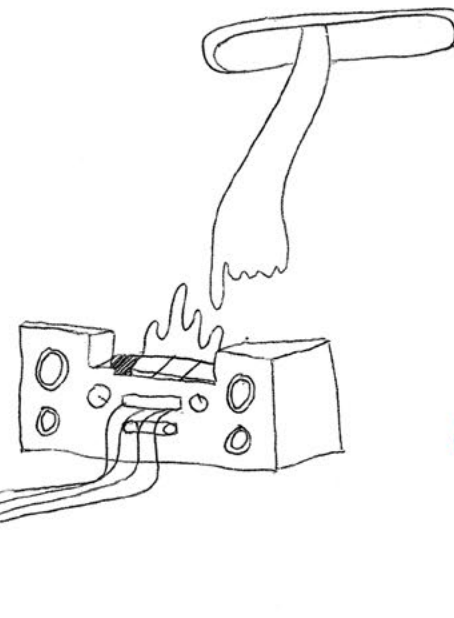
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ISSUE SIX



NOVO

Taking Action to Make

AMOR

the Music Industry Greener

Words by Gabriel Birkby

Photography by Lloyd McCullough

Forward-thinking artists such as Novo Amor continue to rethink and challenge industry standards, paving the way for their team to continue touring and creating music while preserving the planet for future artists to enjoy and take inspiration from. Much of Novo Amor's discography leans on natural and organic timbres, with vulnerable instrumentation and stunning vocal melodies all being driven by singer-songwriter Ali Lacey's reflective lyrical stories. His most recent album 'Birthplace' reflects much of the juxtaposition occurring in our dynamically changing world. Set upon a lush soundscape, a hint of melancholy and a sense of urgency is ever-present. Floated had a chance to sit down with Lacey and talk about his green initiatives, and how they tie into his regular touring life as well as the inner workings of his supporting cast.

Going green can be tough as a musician with how much traveling is involved in touring. Novo Amor is no stranger to being on the road and realizes the impact musicians have on the planet when they are on tour. From plastic water bottles and cutlery to the diesel burnt over tens of thousands of miles, there is a real footprint left behind. Working to counter their carbon footprint, Novo Amor collaborates with two UK charities – Julie's Bicycle and Energy Revolution. Lacey explains that Novo Amor balances fuel consumption by funding projects that help support clean energy initiatives: "We've essentially given ourselves a pollution tax which will help fund projects such as community solar power in the UK, wind power generation, and reforestation in India."

In addition to reducing their carbon footprint on tour, Novo Amor is taking great strides towards a greener operation. The vinyl records they sell are made up of recycled vinyl pellets. This makes each record unique in color, and according to Lacey, it was actually cheaper to do this than buying new vinyl. All of the album covers for vinyl and CD's are FSC certified, and the shirts sold are 100% organic cotton. Only water-based inks are used on merchandise, which are environmentally friendly and entirely solvent free. Lacey mentioned that he is always working with his merchandise supplier to make sure that environmentally friendly items are being used.

"It won't take long for nature to reclaim the world. If we get replaced by robots, they'll likely be better guests than we were."

“We’ll have ruined our oceans in thirty years, exhausted our water supply and become pretty claustrophobic.”

Novo Amor recently released a music video for their song “Birthplace” as well, which focuses on plastic pollution. A touching and well-done video, Lacey attributes the conception of the video idea to the directors-- Sil van der Woerd and JorDozy.

Lacey took the chance to use his platform as a well-known musician and advance an idea that he believes will benefit generations to come. He only has three words when asked what he’d say to those who don’t believe that global warming is impacting the planet: “You’re an idiot.” Strong words with passion, backed up by Lacey’s drive and execution of the green initiatives he has laid out. He has a protective view of this earth and only hopes for the best for the future of the planet.

When it comes to what Lacey hopes to help this world achieve, he boils it down to longevity. Lacey mentions that “we’ll have ruined our oceans in thirty years, exhausted our water supply and become pretty claustrophobic.” While his initiative is a great template for bands everywhere to follow, he knows that the real power rests mainly outside of the industry. Lacey hopes that governments and large companies will start investing in the future of the planet and not just the present since these entities are capable of enacting true change on a large scale.

While the outlook is somewhat bleak, Lacey isn’t prepared to sugar coat the situation and is sharp with his observations. His fiery drive bleeds into his work and is becoming a staple part of his identity as an artist.

In a world where a lot of performers are clamoring for things other than global rectification, Novo Amor is like a weather vane pointing to where the industry should be heading in terms of carbon and waste mindfulness. Lacey is optimistic that the damage on earth is generally reversible but concedes that there are things that may be too far gone. We aren’t able to reverse all of the unrecyclable products that have been manufactured, and we can’t bring back extinct species, but there is still hope to reverse the course of the ship to avoid the iceberg.

Although if things do happen to fall apart, Lacey offers some words of wisdom: “It won’t take long for nature to reclaim the world. If we get replaced by robots, they’ll likely be better guests than we were.”

Make sure to check out Novo Amor’s latest release, ‘Birthplace,’ on major streaming platforms- and pick up an environmentally friendly vinyl or CD if you get a chance to catch them on tour!





The Mushroom Mentality

Discovering the Regenerative Mushroom Startup in Our Own Backyard

*Words by Emmarae Stein
Photography by Amber Estherpeace Doerr*

“The biggest word that comes to mind is meaty-- sometimes I think that this can be a little too dramatic, but it really can be a great alternative to meat for those who are trying to cut down on their intake.”

It's official: 2019 is the Year of the Mushroom, and Nick Pesesky, a mycologist for Leep Foods, is here to tell us all about the world of this growing gourmet industry. Located in an unassuming 5000 square-foot warehouse by the Genesee River, the staff at Leep Foods describe themselves as a “regenerative mushroom startup cultivating healthy

and sustainable communities.” Originally opening with the purpose of selling mushrooms as herbal supplements throughout Asia, co-founders George Zheng, Chris Carter, and Scott Valpay quickly realized the potential for fresh mushroom cuisine to thrive in the Rochester area. As a mycologist, an individual who forages or works directly with mushrooms, Nick found himself thrilled with the potential of working with Leep Foods, explaining that, “There's this stigma

surrounding mushrooms of them either being illicit or low quality and limited to one or two species--when really the diversity of the fungal kingdom is just vast.”

At Leep Foods, each staff member works to spread an idea known as The Mushroom Mentality, a concept which aims to reshape the public opinion on how mushrooms can be used in a culinary setting. Elaborating on this vision, Nick shares that, “The immediate reaction to mushrooms as a field are drugs or portobello and button varieties, which are essentially the same mushrooms.” Often containing a bitter taste with that classic mushroom texture, Nick explains that many large distributors of these mushrooms are using non-organic chemicals and manure during the growing process: “The poor flavoring is a reflection of the properties that are being used to mass produce these products. At Leep Foods, we're certified USDA organic, so all of our ingredients are being reflected in the integrity of our product.” Leep Foods is focused on providing the Rochester Area with a high-quality and sustainable yield, using innovative tactics and the power of scientists and engineers from the Rochester Institute of Technology to change the mindset surrounding the typical mushroom experience.

Walking through the warehouse, the unique varieties of fungi growing in the facility could not go unnoticed. Mushrooms with rich blue coloring and spindly fur-like strands filled the walls of the laboratories. If you're looking for a Portobello mushroom, you're not going to find one here-- but that's exactly the experience that Leep Foods wishes to create. Currently offering three distinct varieties known as Blue Oyster, Coral Maitake, and Lion's Mane, each species has its own flavor profile which holds no resemblance to the slimy texture of the Portobello. When describing the mushrooms, Nick says that, “The biggest word that comes to mind is meaty-- sometimes I think that this can be a little too dramatic, but it really can be a great alternative to meat for those who are trying to cut down on their intake.”

The discovery of these unique varieties made it easy for Nick to switch to vegetarianism himself,

likening the Lion's Mane to the flavor and consistency of crab, and their trademarked variety, Coral Maitake, to the experience of eating steak.

Following the market created by the meat-free generation, Leep Foods has been digging their hands into local restaurants and distributors to unveil new and exciting vegan-friendly products to the Rochester community. By working with businesses such as Hettie's Delites, they've been able to offer a number of their products at the Rochester Public Market, pairing with local Puerto Rican chefs to create vegan-friendly pasteles. Last October, the team took to social media to create a Mushroom Takeover by having three local restaurants create unique dishes utilizing their signature product, the Coral Maitake. The participating restaurants included the Owl House, Bar Bantam, and Han Noodle, with each restaurant having one week to create a myriad of exciting dishes to share with the interested public. From Coral Maitake mushroom ragout to miso-roasted carrot and coconut broth served over Coral Maitake cutlings, each chef illustrated the endless culinary possibilities that one can explore through the use of these unique fungi varieties. Missed out in October? Never fear, Leep Foods has plans to expand and pair with many local restaurants in the near future.

If you're still not convinced, take it from Danny Wegmans who visited Leep Foods earlier this year. I asked Nick to elaborate on this connection a bit, and he said that apparently Danny Wegmans is a “big mushroom-head,” and he claimed that their mushrooms were among the best that he had ever tasted. By establishing a partnership with Wegmans, the organization began distribution of their products throughout the stores, which allowed general consumers to purchase their varieties. Running around from store to store, Nick provides samples of their products in Wegmans all across the state, explaining that, “Everyone at Leep Foods is working really hard to move this forward because we believe in what we're doing here. And I think this is reflected in what every individual has done here.” As the holiday season approaches, their next big adventure will be to release a “Supershroom Pâté,” substituting the traditional use of liver with their Blue Oyster mushrooms and distributing them through Wegmans. If you're a vegan or a vegetarian-- or if you're looking to reduce meat from your diet--this is going to be something to look

out for during your holiday shopping spree. The avocado was so last year-- those who are working towards a healthier diet can find an answer in the fungi varieties offered at this growing organization. Contributing to your daily dose of Vitamin C and D, which are both essential for the cold and stormy Rochester weather, and offering high-levels of antioxidants, protein, and dietary fiber, these unique strains of mushrooms act as the perfect superfood to help you push through the dreary winter season. Keeping in-tune with the growing health phenomenon, Nick shares that, "We're all really focused on what we're eating. We're all starting to realize that what we're putting in our body is influencing our health. Maybe not tomorrow-- but down the line. And when all of this stuff is coming out about mushrooms being healthy in X-Y-Z ways people start thinking, 'Alright, so what if they have this weird texture?' But the reality is- they don't have to have that texture at all."

Sprouting into a number of industries, the future of Leep Foods is promising, and you can expect to hear a lot about their unique mushroom products in stores and around town in the near future. As I spoke with Nick down at their factory, Leep Foods' co-founder George Zheng was spending time in New York City, working to expand distribution to chefs and restaurants in the area. Reiterating the potential for this local startup, Nick states that, "We're starting from the bottom here and doing something big for Rochester."

This is a growing culinary phenomenon occurring right in our backyard, and you don't want to miss out. Interested in trying them out for yourself? Stop by the East Avenue or Pittsford Wegmans, and pick up a bundle of their Blue Oyster variety today! For fun and innovative ways to cook, broil, and bake these varieties in your own home, check out their Instagram (@leepfoods) to find a host of recipes and tips for novice fungi aficionados.

Interested in trying them out for yourself? Stop by the East Avenue or Pittsford Wegmans, and pick up a bundle of their Blue Oyster variety today! For fun and innovative ways to cook, broil, and bake these varieties in your own home, check out their Instagram (@leepfoods) to find a host of recipes and tips for novice fungi aficionados.

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Molding an Appreciation for the Natural World

Bethany Krull Sculpts an Environmentally Conscious Future

Words by Caroline Rhoads

Photography by Molly Richardson

More and more often, we hear that our technologically driven society is losing touch with nature. From the way that we treat plants and animals to the legislation that harms rather than helps the planet, we have proven that our relationship with nature is complex. Sculptor Bethany Krull has used her medium since her career began to appreciate the beauty of the natural world and more recently to weave together the “complicated aspects of our species’ relationship with the rest of nature.” Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, Krull grew up a “barefoot frog-catching kind of kid” whose rural upbringing and time spent exploring the outdoors inspired her to create. She received her bachelor’s degree in ceramics from Buffalo State and went on to pursue a master’s degree in ceramics from the Rochester Institute of Technology. After graduating, Krull spent the next five years traveling the country in pursuit of resident artist and teaching gigs with her husband and fellow sculptor Jesse Walp. She has also been featured in galleries far and wide, from the Cheongju International Craft Centennial in Cheongju City, South Korea to the Archie Bray Foundation Permanent Collection Exhibition in Helena, Montana, and back home in Buffalo with such exhibitions as “Entwined: Jesse Walp and Bethany Krull” and “Tamed: Recent Work by Bethany Krull.” Krull also enjoys teaching part-time at the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo.

In her current ongoing series, Dominance and Affection, Bethany Krull “explores our history of pet keeping” and “questions the hierarchy of our perceptions regarding specific animals whereby some are deemed to be precious while others are considered pests.” She draws inspiration from the devastation that all species face due to the rapid expansion of the human population. We as humans go to great lengths to keep the “unpredictable and problematic” parts of nature at bay while keeping the cute, less dangerous, genetically modified natural beings as domestic plants and house pets. While her current exhibit is inspired by our “complicated and often contradictory” relationship with nature, Krull is inspired by all of the natural world and credits her time spent in nature as a source of creativity: “I love the beauty and complex intricacy of tiny things like seeds and insects. I am amazed by the way animal bodies are all so different but maintain certain structural similarities that just change in their proportion from creature to creature.” As a mother herself, we asked Krull how she felt we could get our younger generations involved in the care and keeping of our planet. “It starts at home!” Krull responded. She is always working to instill in her two and four-year-old that earth’s many resources, like water, are finite: “They know that we must recycle as much as we can, that paper comes from trees, and that it’s better to buy something used than brand new.” Krull and her family are also “avid trash pickers and thrift shoppers saving many a used treasure from

becoming trash at some landfill.” If you’re not sure how to create a greener household, fear not. Even Krull admits there’s “always something to be improved upon in this realm.” While Krull has reduced her family’s carbon footprint with high-efficiency lighting, a fully insulated home, and working with Push Buffalo to swap their old windows for more energy efficient ones, she feels she could do more: “Our family has drastically reduced our meat consumption but still hasn’t pulled the vegetarian/vegan trigger. I own plenty of canvas shopping bags but forget them on shopping trips more than I care to admit. We own two cars and can’t quite yet see how we could manage without both.” Even if you cannot walk everywhere or fully go vegan, role modeling eco-friendly behaviors impact the way children value finite resources, like electricity and water.

Krull is also excited to see young people making the change on their own through organizations like the Sunrise Movement, a group determined to stop climate change through a “Green New Deal” and by encouraging legislators to move in favor of laws that protect our environment. Krull also feels it’s important

for the media to take a stand: “It’s important for the mainstream media to stop dancing around talk about climate change. The recent devastating weather events we are experiencing like massive hurricanes, unprecedented flooding and historic wildfires need to be commonly and consistently connected to the effects of climate change.” According to Pew Research Center, in August of 2017, two-thirds of Americans reported that they received at least some of their news from social media sites. As Krull said, if the media made a very public stance on the effects of climate change, especially through means like Facebook and Twitter, it appears it would reach a wide majority. More importantly, Krull feels it is vital that we “realize the urgency and gravity of mitigating climate change” and pressure our legislators to make changes. “As complicated as it seems in the current political environment, the most productive thing we can do is to participate. Know your candidates. Know what they stand for and support representatives that are pushing an agenda that moves us away from an energy system reliant on fossil fuels and onto one that relies on green energy sources.”

“As complicated as it seems in the current political environment, the most productive thing we can do is to participate. Know your candidates. Know what they stand for and support representatives that are pushing an agenda that moves us away from an energy system reliant on fossil fuels and onto one that relies on green energy sources.”



“As a parent, I am trying my best to ensure my kids are growing up to be strongly connected to nature even though we live in the city. I strive to get them outside every day no matter the weather and try to instill in them an appreciation for simply exploring.”

Krull also encourages her children to break away from our technology-driven society and take time out to appreciate what nature has to offer: “As a parent, I am trying my best to ensure my kids are growing up to be strongly connected to nature even though we live in the city. I strive to get them outside every day no matter the weather and try to instill in them an appreciation for simply exploring.” We are experiencing a generation who have never lived without technology, the accessibility of the internet, and the ease of communication that cell phones provide almost instantaneously. Disconnecting and getting outdoors, showing children how mystifying nature can be strengthens their bond with nature and in turn, makes them want to protect the planet. If you’re interested in exploring more of Bethany Krull’s work, she will be working on a few shows this coming spring, including *Animals Among Us* at the Red Lodge Clay Center in Red Lodge, Montana, *Anthropocene: The Innovative Human* at the Dairy Barn Arts Center in Athens, Ohio as well as a solo exhibition of new work in the Corridors Gallery at Hotel Henry in Buffalo, New York. You can follow her on Instagram (@bethanykrullsculpture) to see work in progress or on her website, bethanykrull.com.



SOULFUL BLUES MUSIC FOR A NEW GENERATION

WORDS BY EMMARAE STEIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRIT UPRA

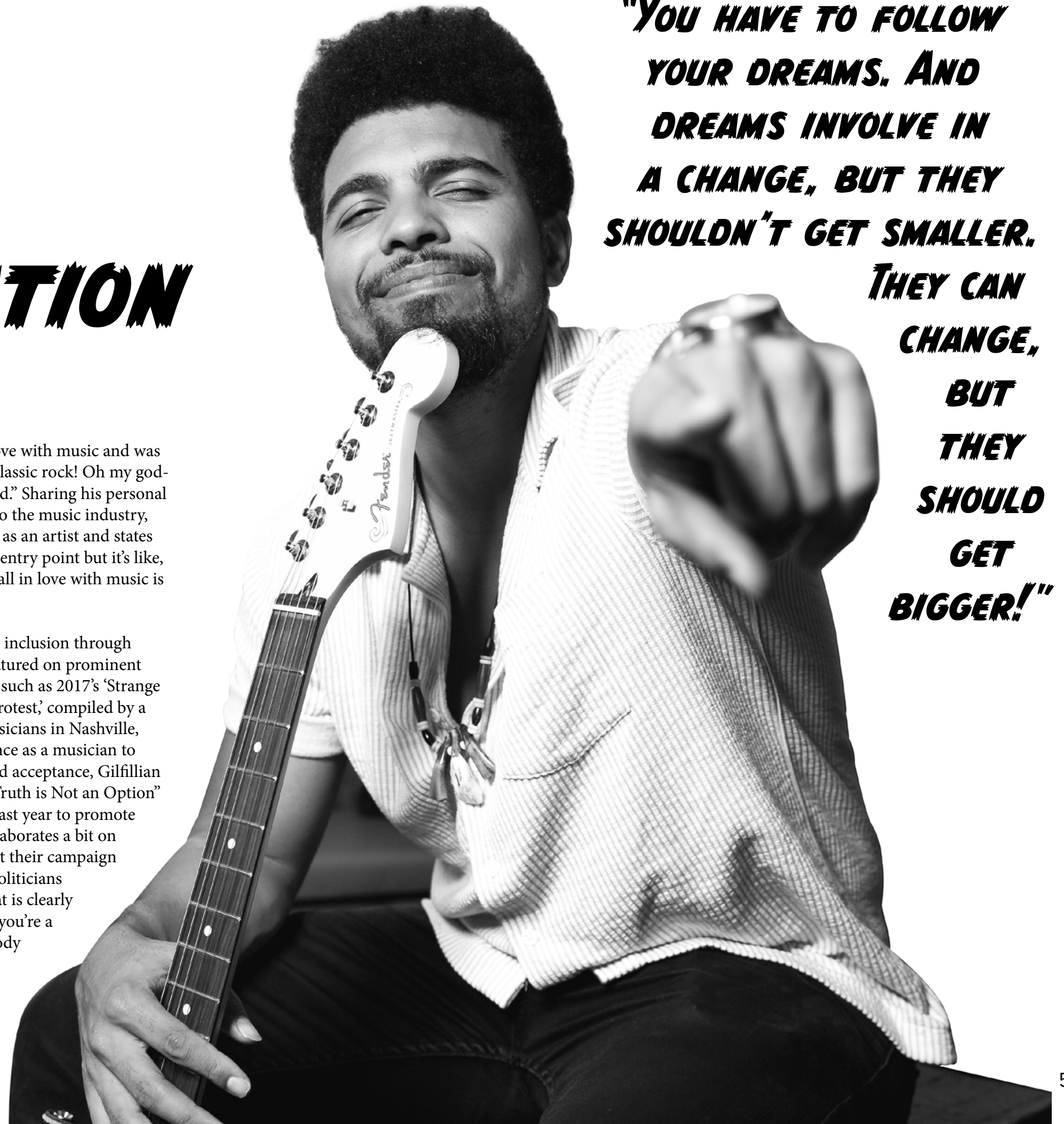
Devon Gilfillian is a pop-influenced blues musician writing euphoric melodies for movers and shakers of the new generation. Drawing elements from classic soul artists such as Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, and Ray Charles, Gilfillian's signature sound combines the smooth vocal tones of R&B artists of the past with the groovy pop-influenced bass lines of the future--adding in a taste of country grit. After the release of his self-titled EP in 2016, Gilfillian signed to Capital Records which has jump-started his career into timely opportunities such as performing for NPR's World Cafe and AudioTree Live. Over the past year, Gilfillian has produced dance-worthy and contagiously catchy singles including the recently released "Troublemaker" and "High," which captivate the energy and promise of this up and coming artist.

Growing up in the outskirts of Philadelphia, Gilfillian's father was a wedding singer which familiarized him with the music industry from a young age. From humming melodies as a toddler around his childhood home to participating in choirs throughout middle and high school, Gilfillian has been working to create his own sound for decades. As he picked up the guitar at the age of fourteen, he explains that something clicked inside of him-- it was an urgency which shouted a need for creation and musical innovation. Over an energetic phone call with Floated editor Krit Upa, Gilfillian explains his first experience playing the guitar as, "the

moment when I really fell in love with music and was like, 'Jimi Hendrix, the blues, classic rock! Oh my god--woah--' and my head exploded." Sharing his personal philosophy and investment into the music industry, Gilfillian discusses his journey as an artist and states that, "Everyone has a different entry point but it's like, man, that moment when you fall in love with music is so magical."

Sending messages of unity and inclusion through his craft, Gilfillian has been featured on prominent collections of resistance music such as 2017's 'Strange Freedom: Songs of Love and Protest,' compiled by a group of forward-thinking musicians in Nashville, Tennessee. By using his influence as a musician to instill a culture of positivity and acceptance, Gilfillian and his manager started the "Truth is Not an Option" campaign at the beginning of last year to promote honesty in politics. Gilfillian elaborates a bit on their mission, and explains that their campaign revolves around, "calling out politicians and anyone who is in office that is clearly lying-- and it doesn't matter if you're a republican or democrat-- nobody is safe." Releasing the single "Truth" (Feat. Tate Tucker) last October, Gilfillian uses choral vocals to lyrically emphasize the message of

**"YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW
YOUR DREAMS. AND
DREAMS INVOLVE IN
A CHANGE, BUT THEY
SHOULDN'T GET SMALLER.
THEY CAN
CHANGE,
BUT
THEY
SHOULD
GET
BIGGER!"**





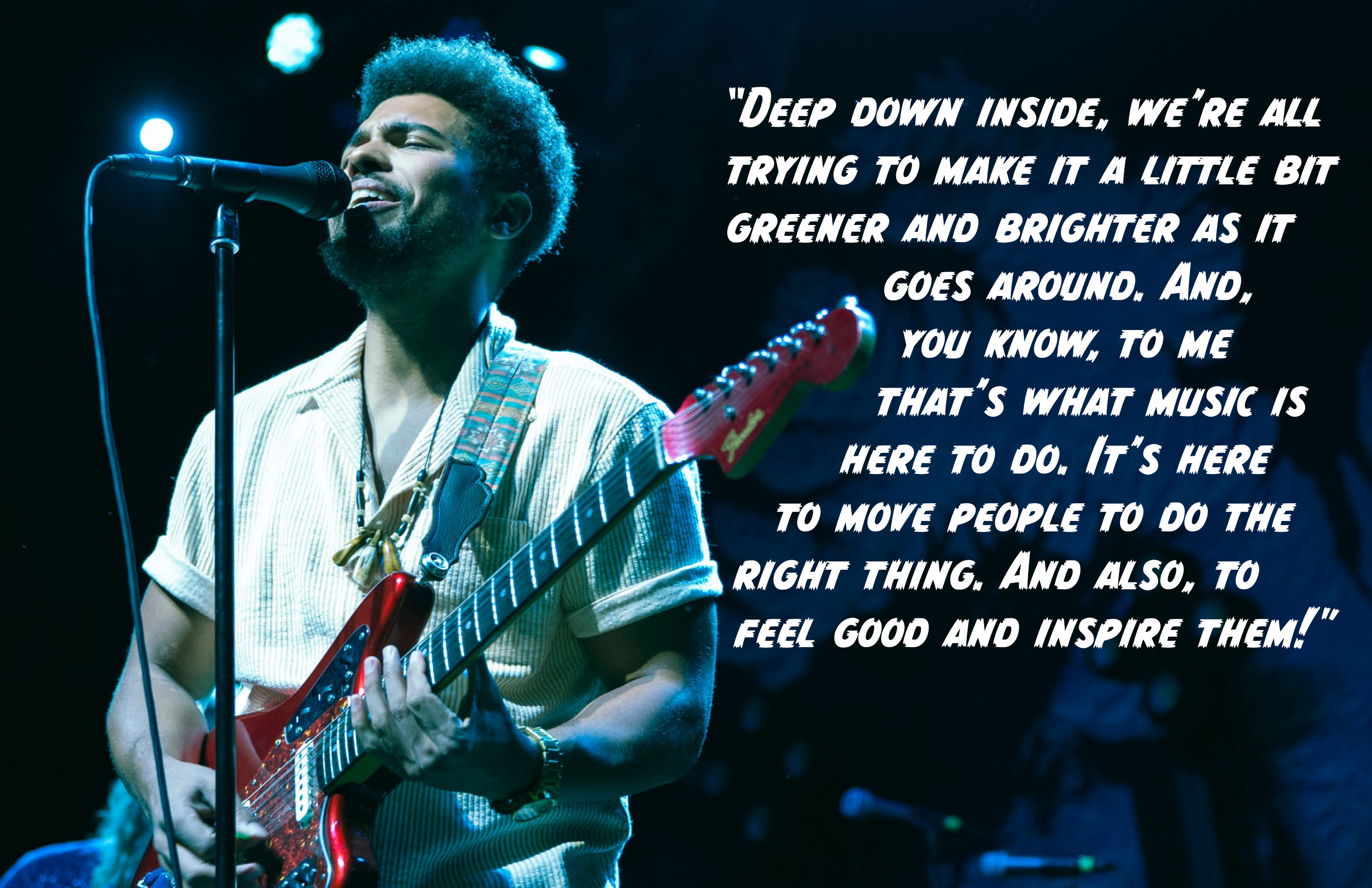
their campaign, urging his listeners towards a call to action: “What are we waiting for? I don’t know. I didn’t know the truth was an option. We’re not blind, you’d think we ain’t watchin.” Gilfillian hopes that through the messages in his music and his campaign, he can raise voter awareness and get younger generations excited about becoming involved in local government. Expressing the root of his concern, he explains that, “I feel like people think that their vote doesn’t matter. And the younger generations are now becoming the largest population. So now, it’s so important for them to get involved in this country. We need to push forward with eco-friendly progression and awareness of climate change. In order for there to be progression, the younger generations need to get on board.” Gilfillian’s involvement in eco-friendly initiatives extends into his personal life, as he tries to create an environmentally friendly lifestyle by cleaning up litter, refusing to waste food, and saving up to purchase an electric car. Reflecting on the effects of toxic pollution in Southeast Asian countries and cities in India, Gilfillian argues that, “If people aren’t woken up by now, in three to five years, the weather’s just going to get crazier- people need to see it. I hope it doesn’t come down to a tornado taking Florida off of the United States, just washing Florida away. But, you know that might help!”

Gilfillian’s positive mindset is electrically infectious, and his hopes for future generations can be mirrored in the effusive joy that he spreads through his work both as an activist and a musician. Viewing some critical blind spots in society, Gilfillian wishes to see a culture of mutual fairness and respect grow within the upcoming decades-- not only on an individual level, but through systematic structures such as

the judicial system, law enforcement, and our educational model. Honing in on a person-centered approach to schooling, Gilfillian states that, “I would love to see education focus on curricular activities for single parents that adhere to kids that don’t have anything to do after school. Keeping kids busy in neighborhoods that are in poverty.”

Viewing his music as a means to communicate uplifting and empowering messages, Gilfillian shares that, “To me, music is just a vehicle for people to make the world a better place. And, I think that to me, those are the people I’m trying to bring together and bring to the show. I think that if I can get everybody on board, then it will allow people to feel free to be honest and feel free to also be empowered to want to make a difference in society. That’s the message that I want to send out with the music.” While Gilfillian understands that his music may not persuade everyone to get involved politically, he hopes that at the very least he can inspire his listeners to get up on their feet and dance: “It’s the ultimate way to move people for the greater good. And hopefully, you’re doing it for the greater good. I know there’s a lot of people out there doing it for just the money and you know, we all tryin’ to get paid and make a living. But deep down inside, we’re all trying to make it a little bit greener and brighter as it goes around. And, you know, to me that’s what music is here to do. It’s here to move people to do the right thing. And also, to feel good and inspire them!”

Devon Gilfillian is living his childhood dream, and he hopes that through his music he can motivate younger generations to unabashedly follow their own passions. After a few brief moments of silence, Gilfillian states with a sincere tone that, “There are people who dream of having a family and having kids, and that is beautiful-- do that. You have to follow your dreams. And dreams involve in a change, but they shouldn’t get smaller. They can change, but they should get bigger! To me, this is my dream.” Signed to a record label and creating music for a living, Gilfillian has accomplished many of his goals-- but that doesn’t mean he’s stopping here. Planning to release new material in early May, Gilfillian’s upcoming full-length album cannot be ignored for fans of music that can be equally enjoyed on the dancefloor of a rambling Saturday night as on an early Tuesday morning over a steaming cup of coffee.

A man with a beard and afro is performing on stage. He is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt and a patterned guitar strap. He is holding a red electric guitar and singing into a microphone. The background is dark with some stage lights visible.

"DEEP DOWN INSIDE, WE'RE ALL TRYING TO MAKE IT A LITTLE BIT GREENER AND BRIGHTER AS IT GOES AROUND. AND, YOU KNOW, TO ME THAT'S WHAT MUSIC IS HERE TO DO. IT'S HERE TO MOVE PEOPLE TO DO THE RIGHT THING. AND ALSO, TO FEEL GOOD AND INSPIRE THEM!"



The science of stars has been studied for hundreds of thousands of years, and over that time has accumulated various interpretations, associations, and connotations. It has been pondered by both psychics and scientists, skeptics and believers. Due to its mysterious and fairly unexplainable nature, astrology has received its fair share of criticism despite how deeply it has been studied and proven to reveal intensely intricate truths about the nature of how we act and what we do. Those who don't understand astrology run from it, and more often than not poke fun at those who take to such wild and "outlandish" ideas. The misconceptions surrounding astrology have caused people to become scoffed at, and almost immediately put into the stereotype of the out-of-touch hippie-dippy persona. This is the unfortunate, yet somewhat valid conclusion which has arisen as a result of those who have ruined many first dates by asking the dreaded question of, "what's your sign?" in the first 10 minutes--deciding their own judgment of another person on the compatibility of their sun signs.

Our current social media culture has turned astrology into somewhat of a fad, with some of today's most

popular memes being a visualization of the signs' behavior in relation to their most well-known traits. I follow these memes-- and even laugh at them, and from most of them, I learn something that pieces together the bigger characteristics of each individual zodiac sign.

However, many people are unaware that it all goes so much deeper than just our sun signs, and often the people behind those hilarious memes have devoted serious time and effort into learning the complexities of this vast and complicated warehouse of astrological knowledge.

That being said - I suggest taking it all with a grain of salt, and a heavy dose of skepticism. I do not recommend basing your choice of mate or weighing the strength of your relationships on another person's sign. It can get pretty blurry when we begin to think about it in that way and start living through the lens of where our planets lie. But - there is indeed something to be said about the mysterious and sometimes undeniable accuracy of our own planetary positions and their influence on our lives.

We've all probably figured out at some point what our "sign" is, which of course aligns with the day of the year you were born and refers to your Sun sign. The signs align with the four elements, each bearing their own particular characteristics.

Fire signs:
Leo: (July 23 - August 22) Loyal, Proud
Aries: (March 21 - April 19) Fiery, Impulsive
Sagittarius: (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Adventurous, Outgoing

Air signs:
Libra: (Sept. 23 - October 22) Social, Artistic
Aquarius: (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) Humanitarian, Non-Conformist
Gemini: (May 21 - June 20) Intellectual, Communication

Earth signs:
Virgo: (August 23 - Sept. 22) Analytical, Organized
Taurus: (April 20 - May 20) Grounded, Stubborn
Capricorn: (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Hard-working, Realistic

Water signs:
Cancer: (June 21 - July 22) Emotional, Caring
Pisces: (Feb. 19 - March 20) Dreamy, Imaginative
Scorpio: (October 23 - Nov. 21) Intense, Passionate

If you have known your sun sign for most of your life yet haven't felt very connected to your sign's well-known stereotypes, a valid explanation can be provided to solve your feelings of astrological detachment. The complexity of astrology goes far beyond the daily horoscopes that we can find in the Sunday paper. Each planet rules over particular parts of one's life and development and influences us based on which sign it was in at the time of our birth. The planet's influences are listed as follows:

The Sun: The ego, sense of self
The Moon: Moods & emotions, internal hemisphere
Mercury: Thinking & Communication
Venus: Love, beauty & relationships
Mars: Outward activity & drive, Sex & aggression
Jupiter: Philosophy, Faith & Hope
Saturn: Limitations & Restrictions, Morality
Uranus: Revolution, Collective Awareness, Humanity
Neptune: Imagination, Transcendence, Universal Love
Pluto: Death, Rebirth, Transformation

A beautiful visualization of the placement of all of these influences is depicted in an astrological birth chart, which you can have made for yourself if you know the exact time and place of your birth. The astrological

birth chart acts as a map of the planets' alignment in the sky at the moment you entered into this life, and it cannot be created without a profound level of science. Creating the chart allows the viewer to see what sign each planet was in at the time of their birth, and the house that each planet fell into. There are twelve houses, each representative of different aspects of our life and individual evolution as human beings. They are as follows:

1st House: The Self, Ego (Ruled by Aries / Mars)
2nd House: Material Possessions (Ruled by Taurus / Venus)
3rd House: Communication (Ruled by Gemini / Mercury)
4th House: Home & Family (Ruled by Cancer / Moon)
5th House: Romance & Creative Affairs (Ruled by Leo / Sun)
6th House: Health & Work (Ruled by Virgo / Mercury)
7th House: Marriage & Partnerships (Ruled by Libra / Venus)
8th House: Death, Transformation, & Sex (Ruled by Scorpio / Pluto)
9th House: Higher Thinking & Philosophy (Ruled by Sagittarius / Jupiter)
10th House: Public Image, Career, & Legacy (Ruled by Capricorn / Saturn)
11th House: Friendships & Humanity (Ruled by Aquarius / Uranus)
12th House: The Hidden, Unconscious, Psychic & Self-Undoing (Ruled by Pisces / Neptune)

Over the internet, many people turn to blame their troubles on Mercury being in retrograde- but few of us understand the origin and legitimacy of this complaint. This is a perfect example of how a planet's movements can cause us to feel upside-down or backward. Mercury is the planet of thinking and communication, so when it's pulled in reverse it tends to make our brains feel a bit fuzzy and make communication feel out of whack or even painfully awkward. If you're interested in further investigating how Mercury's alignment affects you, figure out what house Mercury is in on your chart!

All this being said, remember that there is a lot more that goes into astrology than just zodiacs and daily horoscopes. People spend their lives studying the intricacy of this science, and having a conversation with a trained astrologer would most definitely be worth the experience. Think twice before you judge a prospective mate based on their sun sign, and remember the level of complexity that is involved in understanding the science of the stars.



DEFINING HOP HOP

A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY JORDAN OSCAR

For as long as Jaz Frazier has carried the artistic persona, Hop Hop, people have been trying to define it. Much to her amusement, Jaz herself doesn't have a definition for her music - seemingly as much an amalgamation of her upbringing and resulting identity crisis as well as the musical influences she pulls inspiration from. "Everyone is trying to pin it, but I don't have a clear answer," Jaz says about her sound, "I've tried many times. If I listen back to it and it makes me happy and pleases my ears, that could be Hop Hop."

The question of what is and isn't Hop Hop - a moniker that serves as both a personal caricature and genre - doesn't seem to give the twenty-seven-year-old much grief. Her vivacious and sarcastic nature seeps into everything she does, with her music as another tool to express herself and the persona to give her the means to remove her own filters. "Every human has so many facets and it's really unfair to squish them into squares and say this is all that you and this is all you're allowed to be and you can't go outside of these lines. Me busting out of my box is where Hop Hop comes from," Jaz says. "It's an easy entry into exploring more of who I want to be. It's troubleshooting. I probably can't do this in real life, but what happens if I grab my crotch on stage?"

Hop Hop was born of frustration and angst. What began as an attempt at spoken word poetry quickly turned into something much more fulfilling. Beats were added through GarageBand and were eventually refined album by album as her music became more of a priority. All of this, however, stems from her upbringing in the South. Born in Birmingham, Alabama to a white mother and black father, Jaz spent most of her formative years coming to terms with her identity as a biracial woman. Having a father who was mostly absent, Jaz was predominately raised by her white mother and grandparents and attended a school with primarily Caucasian students. Becoming sheltered from interactions with other young black men and women in her adolescent years, Jaz explains that, "My mom made it kind of clear, I'm not like them and I think she meant I'm not ghetto. I'm still trying to unpack that. I think my mom confused her anger with my father with black men in general.

She didn't realize she gave me an identity crisis. I really thought I was white for a really long time." On top of facing confusion about her racial background, Jaz also questioned her gender identity throughout her youth, voicing that, "I wanted to be a skater and I wanted to be a boy really bad. I was very pissed I was a girl. I was constantly trying to fit in. I even ace bandaged my boobs down when they started coming in, and I got my Chuck Taylors, and I started walking with a whiter gate."

When she moved again, her upbringing began to clash as Jaz discovered that she had trouble fitting in with the more diverse student body at her new school, explaining that she "wasn't black enough" to fit in with many of the other kids in class: "I couldn't make either side happy. As I got older, I realized it's not my job to make anyone happy. I started realizing how multifaceted people could be. Black people don't just wear ecko and fucking listen to trap. Your interests do not make you black or white; your heritage does." It wasn't until she moved to Buffalo seven years ago that she was able to begin unpacking all of the issues that had weighed her down for so long. Surrounded by people like her boyfriend, Brandon, who created safer spaces to explore the identity issues at hand, Jaz began to find harmony in her identity - even as she became increasingly convinced that she has ADHD. She describes her brain as "cartoony, wild and animated," constantly pulling at the flurry of thoughts and beats rushing through her head as she composes sentences and song lyrics. Jaz explains that, "I've come down on myself. As I've gotten older, I've realized some of what I use to consider faults can be channeled to be somewhat productive. No one person is one thing. There's good and bad. Accepting everything that you are and channeling it constructively has brought me a lot of peace."

If nothing else, Hop Hop is as much a message as it is an artistic persona. She strives to keep moving forward, unabashedly herself as Hop Hop gives her the chance to explore every facet of who she is and who she wants to be. "There is no perfect. You're just human, so as long as everyone is trying to be the best person they can be, what the fuck else can you ask for: nothing." Jazmine has a vast imagination, but no matter what voice her thoughts find, Hop Hop will certainly be part of their expression.

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KARMA IS A GODDESS: THE PEACEFUL MUSINGS OF JUST LOUD

WORDS BY: CHRISTOPHER SNYDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: TEAGAN WEST

To be without the sauce is to be lost. However, one can get lost in the sauce. Just Loud can only be described as a man with just the right amount of sauce. When I first dipped into the artist's work I found something that was both fresh and at the same time familiar. Just Loud's clean vocals are liquid light, flowing over and between pop, alternative, and R&B. His sound takes the shape of its surroundings, worth listening to with the windows down or mixed with the color and life of a Friday night dance floor.

The qualia of Just Loud's musical expression is locked into his journey as an individual. We had the chance to sit down with Just Loud and challenge him with a battery of questions to peel back his layers and see the filament behind the light. As a response to being cast out from his church, he decided to "be like Jimi Hendrix and Start Electric Church 2!" Just loud followed in that spirit to launch a creative project with a message: "I want to show people you can be rebellious and still have integrity."

"WE'RE ALL MADE OF THE SAME DIRT, THE SAME BLOOD, THE SAME FLESH, AND WE ALL HAVE THE SAME HEARTBEAT."

Our first volley of questions centered around what was missing from the world and how Just Loud thought that gap ought to be filled. When it came to god, his message was that we should accept and respect each other. When asked how he would change society, he pointed out how smoking pot had helped him relax as he was growing up and touts it

as his go-to strategy for catalyzing difficult decisions and quandaries. From the perspective of this writer, his strategy has borne fruit. He sees the key to loving others is to truly love one's self.

His answer to the timely question of how to handle those with different opinions than us speaks volumes: "Everybody shits don't they?.... At the end of the day, we all have the right to have an opinion.... That's what makes life beautiful and that's what makes being human beautiful."

"I LIKE TO SAY KARMA'S A BITCH AND KARMA'S A GODDESS. IF YOU LIVE YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE AS A BITCH, YOU'RE GOING TO GET THAT BACK TENFOLD. BUT IF YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH INTEGRITY AND CORE VALUES YOU'RE GOING TO GET IT BACK."

As the interview progressed we moved a little closer to home. The common thread that ran through our discussion with Just Loud was the consistency of his earthly wisdom. The ring in his voice tells of someone totally at ease within their own skin: "We're all made of the same dirt, the same blood, the same flesh, and we all have the same heartbeat." Part of that self-acceptance came with recognition of the importance

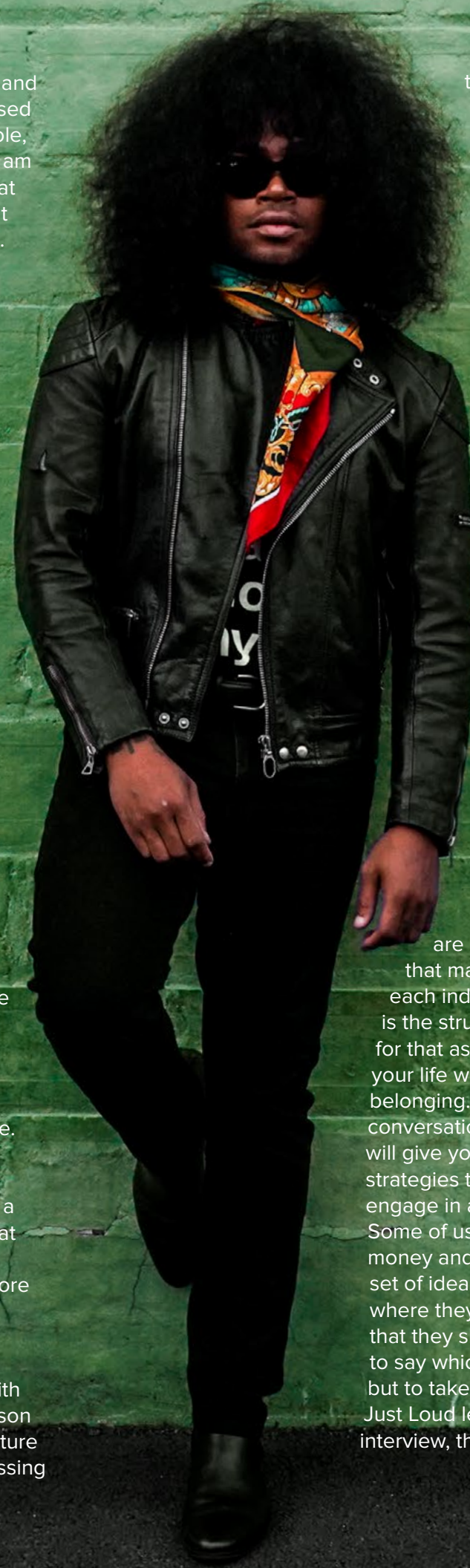
of his role as an entertainer and the qualities that he possessed that made him a fit for the role, "Entertainers are servants. I am a servant first." Knowing what one wants to do and doing it well are two different things. The perennial problem for many artists is staying on message by sticking to their core values. What follows is Just Loud's approach to this challenge:

"Morals and values... it's crazy that those are even words. It's got to be the place now where humans are so distraught and without purpose that we even have to ask the question about morals and values. When you're a kid and you're born and you're a baby, you're here, you've got love and you draw love. What happened? In elementary school when you realized you were different and I was different from the rest of your classmates. When did it happen, when did it stop? As humans, it is our obligation to serve one another. No matter if you like it or not. And if you serve one another what happens is. If I serve you, and I make a left and I keep walking somebody's gonna serve me. I like to say Karma's a bitch and Karma's a goddess, If you live you live your life as a bitch, you're going to get that back tenfold. But if you live your life with integrity and core values you're going to get it back."

The interview finished off with an homage to Michael Jackson and some musing on the nature of fame and success, expressing

that, "Those who chase fame die early." Just Loud swears by the paradoxical truth that when we chase the rewards of success we are thwarted, as he explains that, "I don't chase fame, fame chases me. And it was the same for Michael Jackson" A truly great artist does not have to try to be profound or original. Profundity and originality are the footprints left by someone seeking something authentic--something pure.

We live in a time marked by the shifting sands of shattered assumptions. For most folks in our generation, everything we thought growing up has in some way been shown to be either a lie or a benevolent muddling of reality in order to maintain our resolve as we move upward through the trials of maturity. Whether you're reading this in your college dorm, in your apartment after a long day at work, or as something to do before filling out another job application, there is something we are all looking for--a common craving that manifests in a unique manner for each individual seeking to look for it. This is the struggle for identity, the search for that aspect of yourself that leaves your life with a sense of meaning and belonging. Surfing the internet and sampling conversation from a cross-section of society will give you a sense of the uncountable strategies that individuals these days will engage in as a means of finding that identity. Some of us tie our identity to the search for money and status, for others it is a certain set of ideas. Still, others find an identity with where they come from and the experiences that they share with others. It is not my place to say which strategy is the best for you, but to take inspiration from the words that Just Loud left us with towards the end of our interview, there isn't really a choice.



"I WANT EVERY PERSON TO EVER MEET ME TO GET THE SAME ME THAT'S GOING TO BE AT MY FUNERAL.... NO MATTER IF YOU'RE THE CUSTODIAN OR THE CEO OF THE BUSINESS.... AND THAT'S HOW IT NEEDS TO BE AND THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE."

We asked Just Loud if he had any advice for those struggling with their identity, and he advised that they should, "Keep on struggling. Embrace the struggle. Figure that shit out. Do it, because I did it. The more you struggle the more human you are and that's what allows us to keep living. When you start living and you don't have any more struggles and no more demons and no more addictions, you're no longer earthly good. Keep struggling its fine, its ok. All you need is one person to love you. And even if that one person is yourself." Time moves in one direction, and unlike any other direction, we have no choice in which way to go.

A noble approach to art is to seek to take the best of the past and bring it into the present. The wisdom Just Loud shared during our interview does not begin or end with him.

We asked him who he thought of as the ideal compassionate and peaceful person and what he did to emulate their qualities:

"Oh peaceful person let me tell you something.... Michael Jackson, that's peace... I read something that said that when Michael would get on the plane he would put his wine in a Coca-Cola can.... That's deep. You get what I'm saying. The biggest icon in the world is going to put their wine in a Coca-Cola can and not only that. To make music and heal the world.

It's not about fame. Like I say, people that chase fame, they die quick. Fame is not something that I'm chasing. It's chasing me... and I think that it chased Michael, and David Bowie. It chased Madonna. And it's like, 'damn I'm different and you know I have a voice. I have something to say that will bring people back together.'"

Listening to Just Loud leaves the listener with the inescapable conclusion

that he has left his whole drain into the mic. It's an example of a creative project that flows from the point of view of someone who is comfortable with who they are and hopes that the feeling that their music has brought them can be kindled

through their expression in the hearts of their listeners. The sound and the lyrics that build up the Just Loud moment are saturated with emotion. Nothing is held back and the result is invigorating. Just Loud is on a mission to let you know that he is feeling something and if you're lucky, by the end of the song you'll be feeling it too.

We concluded our interview by asking for his hopes for the future "You want to know the truth. I hope this god damned music business doesn't run me crazy. You get what I'm saying? That the thing don't run me crazy. I like to keep it real and I think a lot of artists start off with it really real. And they have a kind of confidence of who they are and somehow or other I guess it is because of the yes men and the fame and the money, they lose track of that. I don't want to be that. I want every person to ever meet me to get the same me that's going to be at my funeral....No matter if you're the custodian or the CEO of the business.... and that's how it needs to be and that's how it's going to be."



RAP IS SOMETHING SPECTACULAR
CALL ME BAKI THE GRAPPLER
THE WAY I WRESTLE WITH WORDS

– KZA K' LEE

"Self-Aware"

Entirely
A black kid in dije need of a haircut

"Stare at my naps like you fear them"
They wish my black had a serum

I fall in line
Or I die like its prophesied by the Hebrew

They like me lax off the syrup
They like the lack in my spirit

I've drawn the lines
To find the infinjite greys in between them

Distinguished every detail
And Jesus it's lit

This third eye
At first
I couldn't see but a glimpse

of Most High

I learned high frequencies as a kid.
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You've been transported to a dreamy colorful world full of poetic lyrics, funky beats, and captivating falsetto; this is what happens when you listen to Slenderbodies.

The duo, Max and Benji, met while attending UC Santa Cruz: "We had a ton of mutual friends, and music came up naturally the first time we met. We started making music together on a more acoustic side, but slenderbodies didn't develop until we decided to hone in on specifically collaborating together three years after we met."

"Down below / Sandy like the ocean floor, quiet like I like it ...But here it's better, I hear better/I like it better underwater, send me underwater." Those are the lyrics to one of my favorite songs by slenderbodies, "anemone." Nature has always been a major influence for the duo, as the pair explain that, "We both grew up heavily influenced by nature, frequently taking hikes and immersing ourselves. Nature has so many lessons to teach, and for us, the most beautiful metaphors for relationships and emotion we explore in our music are often best described by nature and color." Looking towards nature for inspiration, we asked slenderbodies if they considered themselves to be an eco-friendly band. They responded, "Absolutely. Remember to recycle and pack out your trash kids."

Listening to their music and watching them perform live are two entirely different experiences. In addition to seeing their beautiful faces, they have a live analog liquid light show projected onto the stage. Concert-goers are able to see the creation of swirling colors being mixed around and projected behind the band. When we asked slenderbodies about why they chose these visuals to accompany their performance, they thoughtfully



.. Nature has so many lessons to teach,
and for us, the most beautiful metaphors
for **relationships** and **emotion** we explore
in our music are often best described by
nature and **color** . . .

responded: "We want our music to be more than just music, we want it to be a mood...to fully immerse ourselves and the audience in this bath of sound and color is something we feel just fits. Plus we both had lava lamps as kids."

There are many emotions and feelings that can wash over you when diving into the world of slenderbodies. Explaining the emotions and thoughts that they wanted to inspire in their listeners, slenderbodies shared that, "I think we feel like our music evokes calmness, introspection, moodiness (in a positive way).

but honestly, we believe that however someone interprets our art is correct, it's not for us to say how something is perceived. We hope to invoke intense feelings of something, anything with our music." When asked to describe a set of images to go along with the tone of their music, slenderbodies gave an extensive list: "Owl and crow, ocean and trees, desert and night. Duality is a big theme for us."

Being in a band can wear you down between touring and constantly working to prove yourself in a sea of evergrowing talented mu-

sicians. In order to stay fresh, slenderbodies "take time to ourselves to be inspired by our loved ones and by fresh experiences. Indulging in home and our families helps, as does novel experiences through travel with those we love. Making music itself is a beautiful puzzle, and so if we continue to see music with a growth mindset we will never tire of it."

If you are a fan of the band or have an interest in exploring their music further after reading this article, we have good news for you! When asked about the future, slenderbodies explained that "We plan on always pushing forward. Look forward to so much new music, many new videos, and a bigger better Slenderbodies in 2019!"



slenderbodies

ASTRONAUTS, ART, & EDUCATION

WITH SIR SLI

WORDS BY TAYLOR MARIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRIT UERA



Sir Sly, a psychedelic indie rock band from Los Angeles, comprised of lead vocalist Landon Jacobs and instrumentalists Jason Suwito and Hayden Copen sat down with Floated to talk astronauts, art, and education. Determined to find their true sound after the release of their first album, the band took a hiatus from releasing any new material until 2017. Sir Sly has watched their music grow and change with them over the last six years, leading to sold out shows and appearances in popular video games and TV shows. Now, at the end of 2018, the trio is finishing off a very successful tour with Joywave and is already gearing up to release more new music and additional tour dates in early 2019.

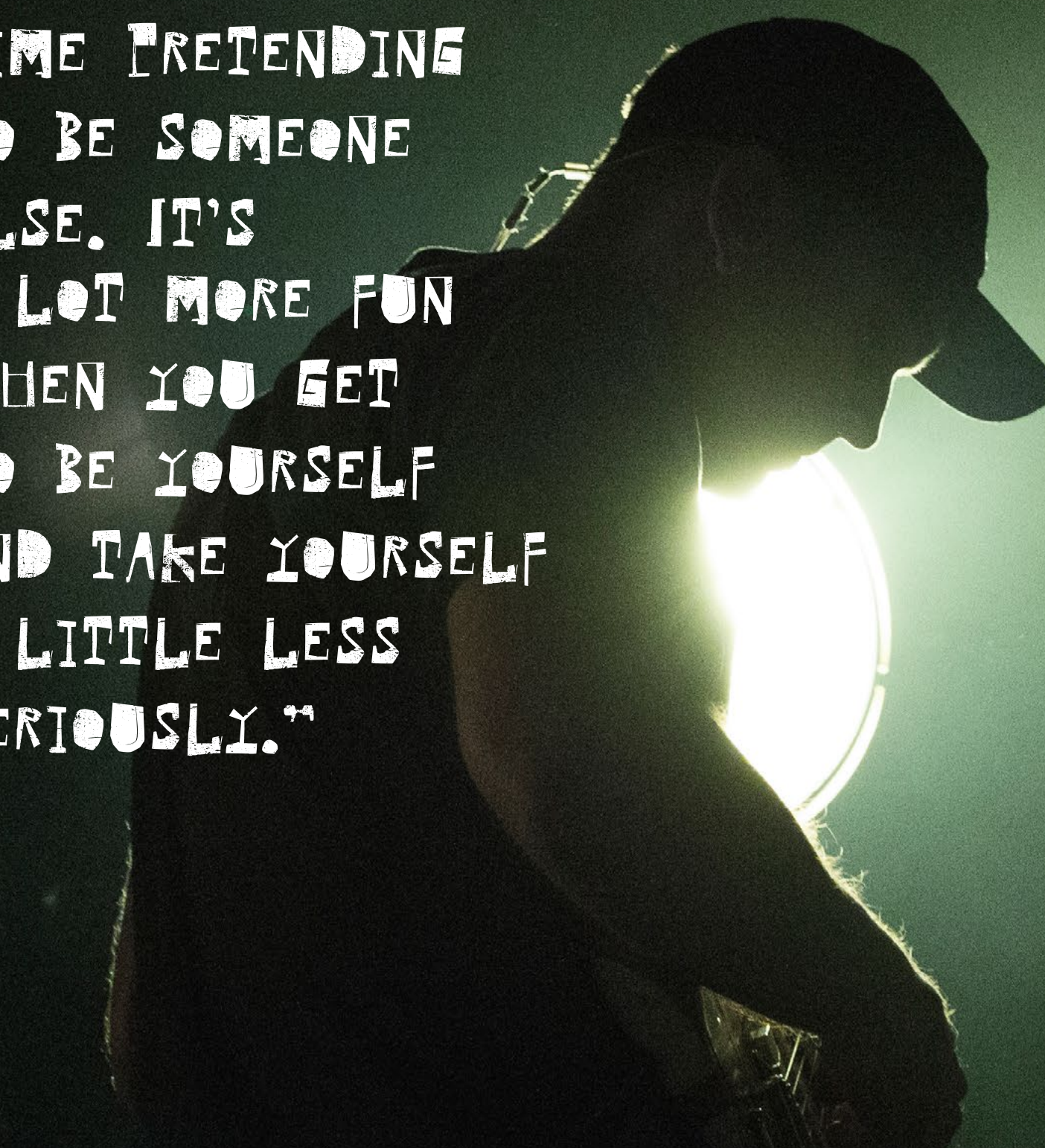
The band's single "Astronaut" off their album 'Don't You Worry, Honey,' left us unable to pass up the chance to discuss some hypothetical space adventures. Though the astronauts in their song may have been of a trippier kind, when asked if they'd go into space themselves the band agreed that they would, rationalizing that, "You take a risk driving a car every day you might as well go to space." When discussing Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa, the first tourist to be sent into space with Elon Musk's SpaceX technology, the band agreed that they'd prefer to travel into space with a team of scientists rather than a collective of artists.

Since their formation in 2012, the band has gained top-charting fame and has been using their influence for good. This year, Sir Sly teamed up with Headcount to register voters at their shows and aid in recruiting volunteers for the cause. They are setting an example for their fans by taking personal responsibility to help keep the planet green. The trio discussed the state of our climate, explaining that, "Corporations and governments are choosing not to lead the way." It's up to each of us to make a conscious effort to reduce our footprint, as money will continue to push businesses into conducting irresponsible production practices. The consumers must be the ones who take control and make a statement with voting numbers: "With the way we are going right now, it's a mere population issue. Put billions of people on this planet, I don't know if there is a way to really lower emission enough so that we're actually not hurting the planet."

Aside from their advice to boycott companies to encourage them to change their harmful practices, they say that the key is awareness and positivity: "If everyone does a little better, corporations wouldn't produce the way they are now." It all starts with making conscious choices to be a part of the green solution

instead of another irresponsible part of the problem. The group took on the issue of voter registration during their 2018 tour, and pushed the message "not to fall prey to cynicism" and "stay in the fight." They all agreed that it's important to, "use your sphere of influence for good." Spreading a message of choice, hope, and inspiring crowds to take action is surely more than just good-- it's incredible. They stand by the idea that to make a real difference we would need systemic change, but in the meantime taking what we can into our own hands is of the utmost importance Sir Sly are also passionate about education, understanding that knowledge is the best tool that we can give to future generations. The members of the band noted that the more we teach younger generations about our planet and our history, the more we can do to create a better future for all of us: "Access to education has been shown to change entire cultures," they expressed to Floated, "Better education across the board will lead to better worldviews and that teaches you everything from how to treat people to how to vote." The band believes that this is another way to help save our planet and get more people to actively take a role in reducing emissions and cleaning up the earth, voicing that, "School would teach the same things the government wants to change: drive less, carpool more, use less plastic." They also called for equal attention to public schools from all districts by using examples from their own hometown: "If you go deep into the cities close by to where we grew up you see a larger Hispanic population, schools with majority Hispanic populations that don't get as much recognition and money." Speaking with us about the importance of racial integration in schools in order to build a tolerant and understanding America, the band members shared that because they attended schools with a primarily Caucasian student body, going out on tour was the how they began to understand more about the many cultures that make up the United States, how they are treated in this country, and how important it is to stand up for a future that helps us all. The trio discussed the value of art and music programs, and explained how "you find they can be really powerful for kids who grow up in economic difficulty, it gives them some form of escape and empowerment to be able to create things and express themselves in positive ways." When asked what they would want to see in the future of our world, they called for an end to racism, fair and equal access to education, and heightened ease of accessibility to medical care.

"I THINK THE IDEA THAT EVERYONE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THIS AVANT-GARDE ARTIST IS PRETTY LAME...WE'D SPEND A LOT MORE TIME PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE ELSE. IT'S A LOT MORE FUN WHEN YOU GET TO BE YOURSELF AND TAKE YOURSELF A LITTLE LESS SERIOUSLY."



The band members have all faced hard times whether through divorce or lost loved ones and told Floated that the most important advice they have for anyone else that finds themselves in a difficult place is to try and go to therapy. In a society where depression and anxiety have a hold on most of our lives, the band members express that just sitting down for “an hour or two every week and taking control of it,” is immensely important. These disorders are so common, and Sir Sly told us that, “we’re raised by screens and the internet and we’re raised with a lot more awareness and I think more awareness is capable of tampering with optimism and self-confidence...we’re put in a place where we struggle a little more for our sanity.” This explanation is why the band wants to use their music to “make a difference...make people feel less alone by writing about things that are real and honest.” Like many artists, their music has been a way to cope with their hurdles, setbacks, and tragedies. Jacobs tells us

“I LIKE TO SAY KARMA’S A BITCH AND KARMA’S A GODDESS, IF YOU LIVE YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE AS A BITCH, YOU’RE GOING TO GET THAT BACK TENFOLD. BUT IF YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE WITH INTEGRITY AND CORE VALUES YOU’RE GOING TO GET IT BACK.”

that, “I’ve always written songs, almost as long as I can remember, I needed it. It’s like writing in a journal.” The band explains that they are in a constant state of growth and experimentation, which has allowed their sound to change and develop throughout their career. Sir Sly discussed how this innovative approach to their musical craft has shifted their genre and fan base, stating that, “I hear smatterings of ‘oh you got poppier’... I agree.” The band has a lot of pop influences, though they maintain their indie rock sound

and don’t take the term ‘poppier’ as an insult at all: “If you call me more pop I assume you mean we wrote better songs,” the band laughed and explained that many of the best songs of all time are pop tracks. “I think the idea that everyone’s supposed to be this avant-garde artist is pretty lame...We’d spend a lot more time pretending to be someone else. It’s a lot more fun when you get to be yourself and take yourself a little less seriously.” This band takes their sound seriously and gave themselves time to try new things-- unique things which led to the creation of their catchy and upbeat crowd-drawing tunes today. The band let their happy-go-lucky attitude play into a hilarious tour poster for their co-headlining tour with Joywave. Sir Sly explained that it can be difficult to blend two band’s aesthetics into one poster, which led the bands to decide to make a unique design by doing a series of face swaps. The funniest part? Not everyone realized that it was a little digital manipulation: “The people look real enough that it’s like, ‘Wow what a hideous looking bunch.’” With “Don’t You Worry, Honey,” doing so well and their fan base growing strongly, the future is brighter than ever for these talented men. When asked about the past, Sir Sly made a shout out to the crowd for their NYC show at Warsaw where they sold out the 1000 person capacity venue.

When we asked what awaited their fans for the future, they said that they can expect more, more, more! They will be releasing their third record at the beginning of 2019 with the announcement of a set of new tour dates.

The trio is also excited to take full control of their brand, planning to collaborate with other artists to create incredible new merch to support their upcoming album. It can be said without a doubt that 2019 will be another exciting year for Sir Sly.





MAKOTO DESIGN HOUSE

KRAMER CAMPISANO DESIGNS FOR THE FUTURE

Photography by Lloyd McCullough

A search for the definition of industrial design turns up myriad results, ranging from the practical definition of Industrial design's concern with the appearance and usefulness of manufactured goods to the lyrical idea of how design brings a story to life to the philosophical musing of how design is the signal of human's first intention. However, my best cobbled together definition would go as follows: industrial design determines the materials, features, and appearance of most of the products we use on a daily basis. When a product works well, looks great, and even elicits an emotional response from the user, there's a talented industrial designer behind it. For instance, I've got a counter-top mixer that I love and it works like a champ, but it also looks so sturdy and capable that I almost feel I could turn to it for assistance in times of crisis. Its weighty presence makes me feel a little better equipped to face the world.

While industrial design is an art within itself, sustainable industrial design takes the process we've already defined a step further. It seeks to create new, better products while reducing negative impacts on the environment. Sustainable design makes use of non-toxic, sustainably produced, renewable or recycled materials. Due to their use of sustainable materials, these products can often be repurposed or composted when their usefulness is exhausted.

24-year-old Rochester Institute of Technology graduate Kramer Campisano founded Makoto Design House in 2017. Its stated purpose is the creation of "thoughtful and conscientious" sustainable products. His choice of the name "Makoto" is a nod to Campisano's personal connection with the traditional Japanese religion of Shinto. The Shinto worldview places focus on aesthetic sensitivity, harmony, and Makoto, which translates loosely to sincerity. The follower of Shinto believes that from sincerity flows all other virtues. A truly sincere person, it is said, will tend to live in harmony with the natural world, never seeking to undermine its fabric: "I wanted my brand and product to reflect my mission," he says, "of responsible product design with a focus on sustainable materials and processes." When asked what drew him to industrial design, Campisano sites an attraction to the process of creative problem-solving, "fostered through years of exploring different industries and cultural shifts in design thinking." Henry Ford (no environmentalist, perhaps, but certainly a creative problem-solver) famously said: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." Ford's words highlight one of the challenges of industrial design - meeting the consumer's needs in new and innovative ways that the consumer may not have known were possible.



For the industrial designer working with an eye toward sustainability, this challenge is compounded manifold. Greater consideration must be given to

every step of a sustainable product’s lifecycle. Can the product be manufactured more cleanly and with less energy expended? Can it be made with materials that are renewable and won’t damage the environment? Perhaps most importantly, where does all this new stuff go when it’s no longer wanted? Some have suggested that we are approaching a crisis point in which the process of development can no longer be supported - where natural resources are depleted and waste overwhelms us.

“It’s our job as designers and consumers to create and to buy products that use natural materials. These will ultimately beat out cheap plastics and other harmful materials.”

Campisano, however, remains sanguine about the future of his industry: “We can still develop and create without loading up our landfills.” How can this feat be accomplished? Renewable materials are part of the answer. For example, a number of the products Campisano has designed incorporate bamboo and bamboo fiber: “Bamboo is a material that I’ve wanted to work with ever since I started in industrial design. It’s a fast-growing grass that can be harvested within five years, is biodegradable and can be utilized in many ways.” When asked if sustainable materials presented unique challenges to the designer, Campisano responded stating, “Oh absolutely! There is definitely some trial and error when tooling and machining a product using sustainable materials. When trying to match a color or finish, plastics tend to work more easily. A natural material may have imperfections that cause the color to react differently in different areas. However, that also allows for a beautiful one-of-a-kind look that many people appreciate.”

Campisano hopes to see the resistance of big business to the sustainability paradigm resolved in the near future. He believes that the market’s hesitation is mainly based on cost: “It will cost them a lot to switch over from tried-and-true synthetic material manufacturing. They’ll have to pay more to

produce the same part when using a natural material.” Campisano feels that positive pressure from his industry and from the buying public can win the day, encouraging the market to embrace sustainable products: “It’s our job as designers and consumers to create and to buy products that use natural materials. These will ultimately beat out cheap plastics and other harmful materials.” Disinterested consumers can likewise be convinced to buy sustainably, Campisano suggests by explaining that “When you invest in a sustainable product, you invest in the story of the material, the mission of that company to produce less waste, knowing that it may cost them and you a little more.” This idea of shared sacrifice for the greater good, Campisano says, can actually create “a reason for the consumer to become attached to the idea of purchasing that product - helping the environment down the road.”

While they’re solving the world’s problems, industrial designers are also allowed some simple pleasures. Designing for fun and for aesthetic appeal is as much a part of the work as its heavier, more technical aspects. Campisano’s designs are as artful as they are functional. When asked if industrial design is more of an art, or more of an engineering discipline, Campisano voices that, “It’s the integration of form and function, so it contains a little of both worlds. Design is very different from art, however, in that art is for the artist and their own personal expression. Design needs to be for the people.” Campisano’s design philosophy has been greatly impacted by a couple of his favorite artists: “The two largest inspirations for my creative work are the modernist Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, and Hayao Miyazaki, the creative head for Studio Ghibli, who charmed my childhood with classics like Spirited Away and Castle in the Sky. Gaudi inspires me to reach for unconventional concepts to solve problems. Miyazaki’s work reminds me to stay playful in my approach, and to include whimsy and awe in each final design.”

When asked about what the future holds for his business, Campisano expresses that, “Makoto Design House intends on designing not only kitchenware but everything to do with the home - furniture,

lighting, and so on. We are working on a catalog to be launched later this year that includes a variety of new products.” As for the future of industrial design as a whole, Campisano sees it “entering the digital realm, moving away from pen and paper to digital sketching and Computer Aided Design programs. I also expect prototyping concepts to shift digitally as we invest in 3D printing and Desktop CNC routing.” As sustainability becomes integral to the modern

lifestyle, sustainable product design seems poised to move from niche to near-obligation for the world’s manufacturers. Can an inspired design help to reverse our current trajectory toward environmental destruction? Can it be done with grace and style? Kramer Campisano is convinced it’s worth a try.



The Art of Minimalist Tattoos with Karrah Teague

Words by Steve Bass

Photography by Evan McClellan



Karrah Teague, resident badass of Rochester, NY, is a locally famous tattoo artist out of Kamikaze Tattoo on Alexander. While she's best known for her stellar ability to perfect minimalism and detailed line-work behind the needle, she is also a formative member of the self-proclaimed "post-whatever" garage-rock band FUZZROD. It's clear that Teague bleeds creative talent, and simply stating her accolades in multidisciplinary artistic endeavors don't seem to do her justice as the brilliant artist she is. Rochester is lucky to have her, and Floated's Hillary Bosy was equally fortuitous to be able to sit down with the tattooer and pick her brain.

How did you get into tattooing?

Well, I was an art school dropout. I was back in Rochester waiting tables; I was 21. I was trying to find something to do artistically, as a career, that wasn't graphic design. At that age I realized tattoos would be cool, tattoos would be fun. I happened upon someone who would take me into a shop and teach me. I had no idea what I had gotten myself into. The first few years were a total struggle; [I was] just trying to figure out what I was doing. I felt like it was the path I wanted to take. The first three to five years were just figuring out how to tattoo. Then I just tried to push things artistically. I left the country and ended up in Melbourne, Australia. I think when I got my job there is when people there were interested in the stuff I was interested in doing more than the people here. People were into black on grey and the stippling style.

When I started, it was all about traditional work. I loved the physicality of them; They're not trying to reproduce other kinds of art. They're just trying to be tattoos. Using the marks that the tattoo machine makes naturally is part of traditional tattooing. You can make really nice clean lines, you can do what's called "Whip Shading" - only a tattoo machine can make that mark.

When I got back to the states, I started painting again. I started doing really abstract stuff which is very line-based. I began to (not on purpose) inform my tattoo work and doing abstract stuff with tattoo.

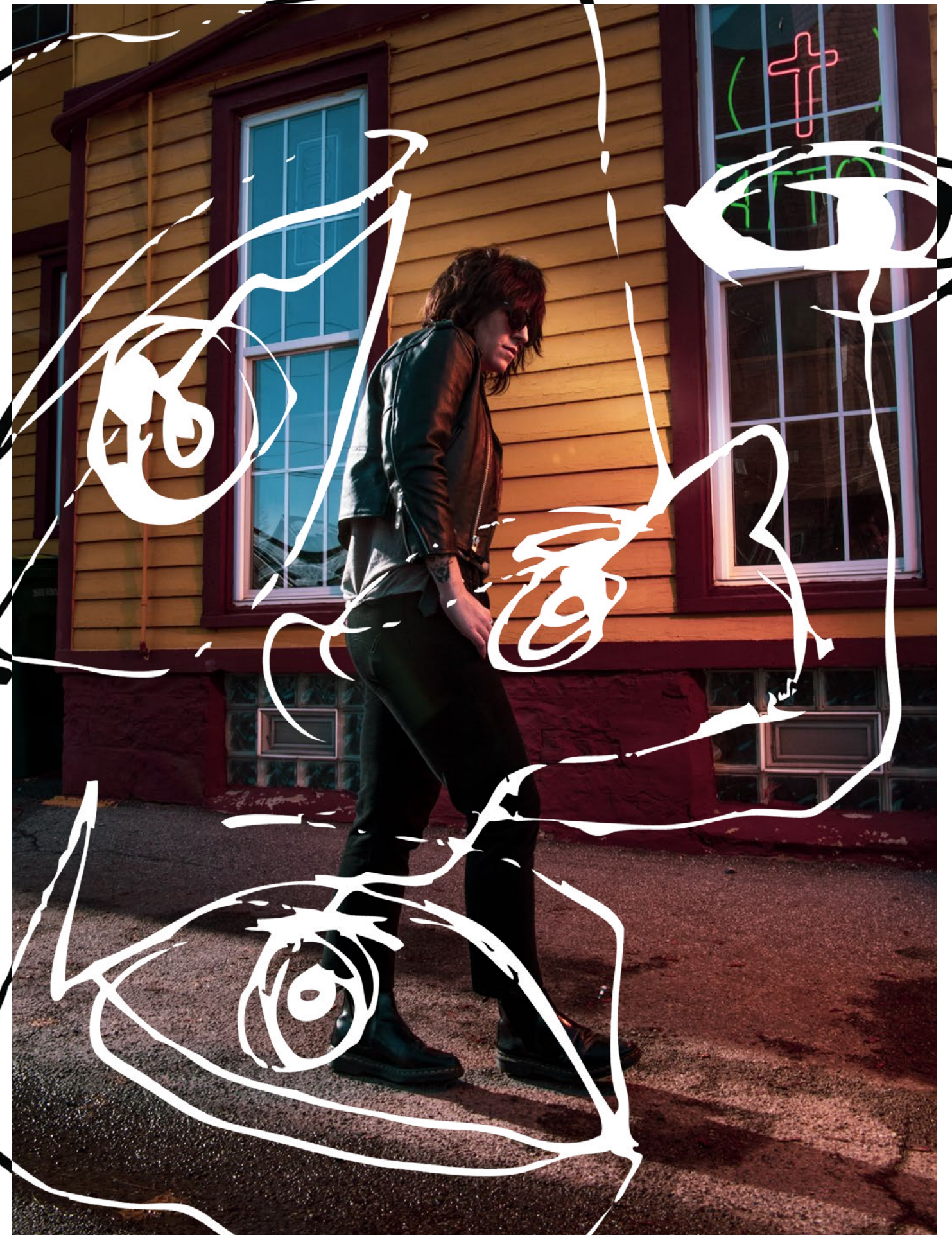
I've been tattooing for about ten years. I think from when I started to now, who tattoos are for has changed a lot. They're not just for the badass or the biker. A lot more people want very small, meaningful tattoos. Lot's of text-based stuff has become popular - handwriting and stuff like that.

I think tattooing went pretty far in the direction of fine art. People are doing what I would consider "high art" tattoos. They're traditionally drawn, there's a light source, they're color-theory approved pieces that would look good on canvas. People want an art piece on them. To me, I think a tattoo is a way of decorating your body. Tattoos will age with you and I want to focus on things that will almost become more beautiful as you age. Highly curated pieces will fade as they get older, rather than a minimalistic line that fits your own form, I guess. Something that becomes part of you as a human being more than saying, "Hey let's put a pretty picture on my arm..." [I'm] currently working towards more abstract pieces and things that aren't so literal. Getting away from the literal concepts of tattooing.

Is there any stigma or stereotype that you have seen in the culture that sticks out to you?

Anyone and everyone can want a tattoo for any reason. I have kids coming in that are 18 or 20, whatever, and they don't have any preconceived notion of who has a tattoo. When I was younger, certain people had tattoos and they looked a certain way. The "alt" crowd I guess you might say. People are trying to find their own personal look and their own path in an aesthetic way. A lot of people are more open to seeing tattoos on all kinds of people. I just tattooed a woman in her 60s who said, "I always wanted a tattoo when I was younger but I couldn't back then." Now, it's quite normalized. Everyone knows someone that has at least one tattoo. It's almost more different [now] to not have one, and I think that's why people are trying to go different directions with their tattoos. Minimalism seems more popular now. They become part of your body more.

The internet has changed tattoo, as far as I can tell. When I started there was no Instagram. People could Google patterns that they wanted and we saw these trends. Instead of looking at designs on the wall, they were looking at designs on the internet, only with the same idea of "what's out there? Let me pick something." I've noticed that clients... are more interested in something more unique. We as tattooers are very lucky because there are so many of us that we can focus on our own artistic vision.



I think a lot of artists make the tattoo about them a lot of the time; When really it is about your client and what they're going to live with for foreseeably the rest of their life. I think about that a lot. Maybe my client may want something that's not my perfect idea of a tattoo, but it is still my job to make it their special thing. Because it is special to them.

Karra Teague's work can be seen on the decorated walls of Kamikaze Tattoo's studio, on their website, and in their coffee table binders overflowing with their accolades. Beyond that, Teague's Instagram account (@the_grim_weeper) is full of some of the pieces she's most proud of; readers who claim to have an ounce of creativity in their blood should be sure to give her a follow.

How has music influenced your drawings and tattoo style?

I wouldn't necessarily say that music itself has influenced my style, but it is all part of what I do. As a painter, a tattooer, and a musician, things all come back in a weird way. Something about music is if you're trying to write something that people like, they might like it, but it may be worthless; You're trying to fit yourself into doing something a certain way. I've been thinking about that and how some of my favorite artists, whether they gained recognition along the way or not, they really pushed things. I'd like to push things artistically a little bit, to do something that's meaningful artistically and not worry about literal likes on Instagram. With music and art, something I think about a lot is: What can I contribute? Growing as an artist, what can I put out there that will further the music or the art, rather than just replicating the same garage rock or eagle [tattoo] over and over again.



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Our Earth

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Aesthetic

Words by Hillary Bosy - Photography by Amber Esthernease Doerr



Kimm Branch is the owner and creative mind behind branchhomestead, a small business based out of Rochester, New York that focuses on reusable goods such as washable paper fabric bags, containers, and pouches. Kimm uses her creativity to solve the important issue of excessive waste. It isn't a secret that our planet is suffering from humans being wasteful and inconsiderate. This is not to say that all humans are like this. There are thoughtful innovators out there like Kimm who use their talents to allow us to make better decisions and act consciously about our impact on our environment.

Kimm was inspired by her parents and grandparents. Coming from a big family, she saw her family donating what they didn't need or want and reusing everything they could. The acts of reusing, recycling, and donating to reduce waste always stuck with her. As the news of climate change and global warming became ever present, she realized that she needed to take action. She wanted to ensure that she was appreciating and taking care of her environment so her daughter can live a long full life.

I had the opportunity to sit down and talk to Kimm about her efforts to produce minimal waste. In preparation for the interview, I looked deeper into the zero waste movement, and during this research, I saw several trends. The first trend that I observed was the minimalistic design of reusable products. I asked Kimm if she realized the same correlation, and she thoughtfully replied that "[Minimalist] design especially, think about a napkin or a cloth bag. Its design is more simple but useful, you can use it for anything." The second trend I noticed was that people who strive to create as little waste as they can tend to

follow the minimalist movement. Kimm commented on this point as well saying, "I feel like the more I become interested [in the minimal waste lifestyle] the less I want to have. It's really more convenient to have life simpler, the more you have, the more you have to take care of. The more you have to worry about moving along eventually."

Creating waste has become convenient-- but for those who claim that it is hard to cut down on how much they throw out, Kimm has some tips for you: "Take things with you, it's really helpful. It's kind of a pain

sometimes. I always have a bag with me. I use it when I grab something to eat or you can always have a cup with you. I use one cup that you can use for hot or cold, with a lid or not. I always have a napkin with me and a cloth bag because it seems like even if you don't need to put something in it you can use it for a napkin too! Silverware is easy to carry too, some people think it's a bit too much, but whatever!" You can also find multiple uses for one item, such as a mason jar: "The mason jar you can use it for storage, to drink, for leftovers...there are a lot of things you can use it for, it's not just one thing."

One major benefit from involving herself in the zero-waste movement is that it has caused Kimm to be more creative. She did not stop at creating these bags, containers, and pouches.

She has also gone the extra step to make these reusable goods aesthetically pleasing by naturally dyeing her products with everything from avocados to all types of onions to carrots. The experimentation has been fun, rewarding, and an ongoing learning process!

Kimm's face lit up as she walked around her home and showed off her products and explained her natural dye baths. Her products can be found and purchased on her website branchhomestead.com. She also goes to craft fairs, farmers markets, and has an occasional pop-up shop. To find where she will be next. follow her on Instagram: [@branchhomestead](https://www.instagram.com/branchhomestead).



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A Conversation with Fruits & Flowers: Self-Empowerment and Feminism

*Words by Emmarae Stein
Photography by Fruits & Flowers*

If the Riot Grrrl movement of the 90s was reinvented today, Fruits & Flowers would be their shining surf-punk starlets. Writing fiery and expressive tracks graced with celestial harmonies and high-powered guitar licks, Fruits & Flowers have been taking on the New York City music scene by storm, putting on memorable performances in venues stretching from Brooklyn's definitive DIY-locales to the highly acclaimed stages of SXSW. The creation of the band's energetically-charged EP 'Drug Tax,' released last summer can be described by the band themselves as a "furious fit of hot nights and inspired mornings, layering lush and distinctive three-part harmonies over gritty, expressive guitars and a driving rhythmic backbone." Putting out a retro-inspired music video for their single "Out of Touch," last May, Fruits & Flowers have already established their own unique sound and style, infusing the raw and authentic vocal tones of seminal punk bands such as Siouxsie and the Banshees with high-powered exuberant guitar riffs. Acting as huge proponents of women's liberation and artistic visibility, frontwoman Caroline Yoder and lead guitarist Ana Becker of Fruits & Flowers sat down with the Floated team to share their own philosophies on feminism and unpack their views on empowering female creators in the artistic community.

Introduced to the feminist movement at a young age, Ana Becker explains that her mother would often discuss issues of gender equality throughout her childhood. However, she didn't fully grasp the concept until she entered the workforce herself. Reflecting on the adverse experiences that she faced at her first job, Becker voices that, "Since then I have wanted to burn the established hierarchy all straight down." Initially working in technology and now pursuing a full-time career as a musician, she sarcastically states that these are the, "two industries noted for not being sexist at all!" While frontwoman Caroline Yoder holds an equal level of passion towards feminist causes as her bandmate, she wasn't introduced to the movement until she took a women's studies course in college. During this course, Yoder began to understand the integral role that feminism has played in the construction of our democratic society, sharing that, "I interviewed a bunch of the women in my family. Two of my three grandmothers were born before 1920, and women demanded the right to vote here in the US almost exactly 100 years ago--which is not very long. And we owe that to the wonderful women of the Suffragettes."

Viewing the fight for women's equality as a multi-faceted issue, Becker asserts that feminism involves, "1. the theory of political, economic, and the social equality of the sexes, and 2. the organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests." As a way to create a space for women to express themselves creatively and follow these two binding pillars, Becker organized a mini-fest last year titled "Babes All Rock," to highlight the music being created by women in the Brooklyn area. Partnering with popular media outlets

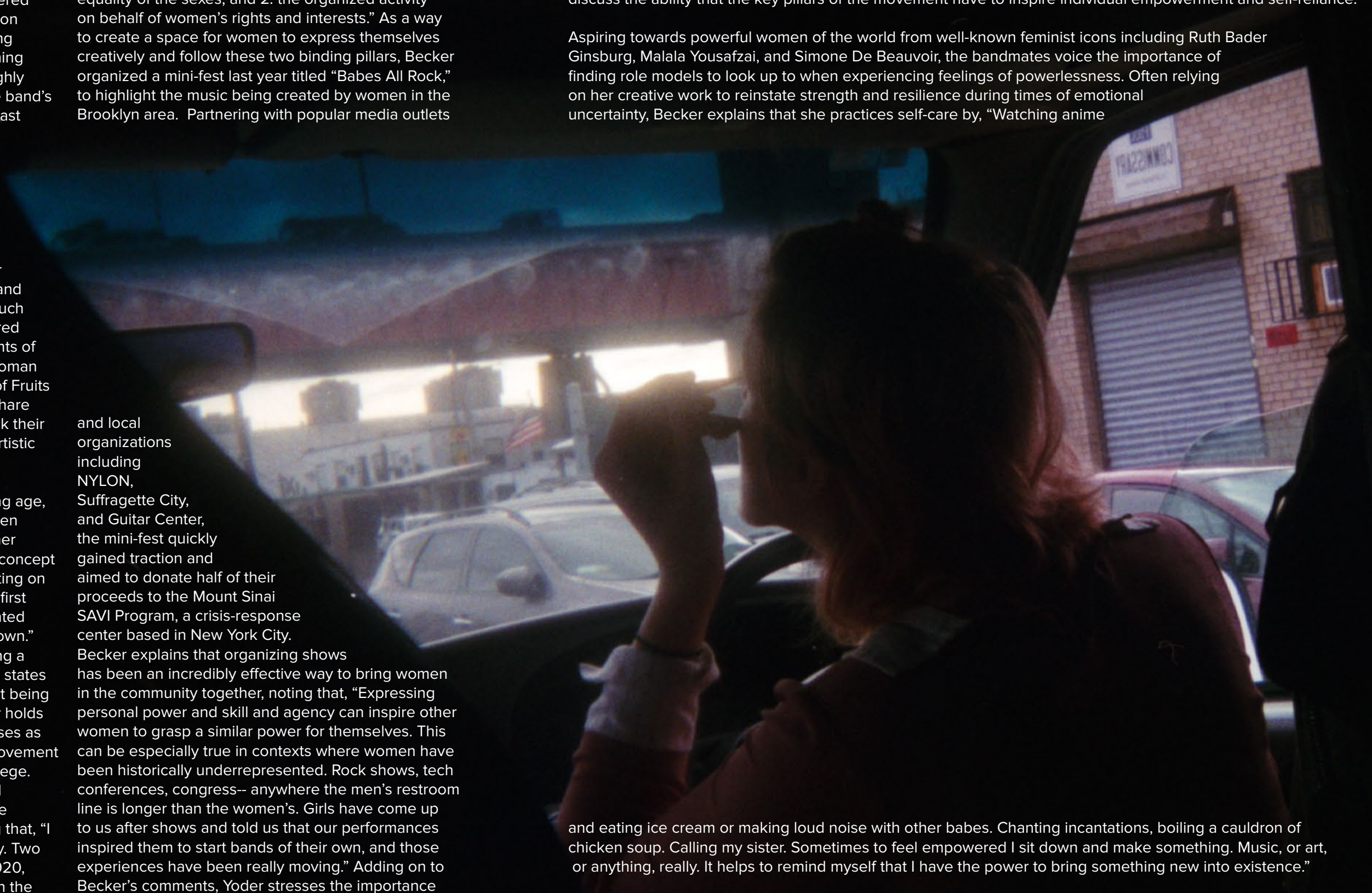
and local organizations including NYLON, Suffragette City, and Guitar Center, the mini-fest quickly gained traction and aimed to donate half of their proceeds to the Mount Sinai SAVI Program, a crisis-response center based in New York City. Becker explains that organizing shows has been an incredibly effective way to bring women in the community together, noting that, "Expressing personal power and skill and agency can inspire other women to grasp a similar power for themselves. This can be especially true in contexts where women have been historically underrepresented. Rock shows, tech conferences, congress-- anywhere the men's restroom line is longer than the women's. Girls have come up to us after shows and told us that our performances inspired them to start bands of their own, and those experiences have been really moving." Adding on to Becker's comments, Yoder stresses the importance of supporting the artistic endeavors of women in the community, and shares some valuable insights for those who are seeking to become involved in their own local music scene: "To be a good ally in the

sisterhood we gotta look out for each other. It's so important--Be a kind person and just do your thing. Don't worry too much about what other people think. Fuck em, punk rock!" While feminism has traditionally been praised for its benefits to society on a macro-level, Becker and Yoder discuss the ability that the key pillars of the movement have to inspire individual empowerment and self-reliance.

Aspiring towards powerful women of the world from well-known feminist icons including Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Malala Yousafzai, and Simone De Beauvoir, the bandmates voice the importance of finding role models to look up to when experiencing feelings of powerlessness. Often relying on her creative work to reinstate strength and resilience during times of emotional uncertainty, Becker explains that she practices self-care by, "Watching anime

and eating ice cream or making loud noise with other babes. Chanting incantations, boiling a cauldron of chicken soup. Calling my sister. Sometimes to feel empowered I sit down and make something. Music, or art, or anything, really. It helps to remind myself that I have the power to bring something new into existence."

Recognized as one of New York City's hardest working bands by Oh My Rockness, this dynamic punk-powerhouse is only starting to make their mark on Brooklyn's DIY-scene. Currently in the pre-production phase of creating a follow-up to 'Drug Tax,' Fruits & Flowers have been picking up countless opportunities to showcase their strengths as a live band, including giving a stellar performance for Audiotree Live last summer.



'Drug Tax'

Exemplifying their playful and inventive personalities, Becker and Yoder finished our conversation by describing each song off of their latest EP, 'Drug Tax,' as if it were a fruit. Be sure to check out this exclusive breakdown of their tracklist, and don't skip the opportunity to catch one of their live shows--- it's an experience that cannot be passed up.

Out of Touch: Grapes. Satisfying and the perfect size for a bite.

Subway Surfer: Kiwi. Tangy--and a little confusing! A charred cantaloupe rolling through foot traffic on the NQR train.

Dark Surf: Blackcurrant. A bit mysterious and alluring.

Down Down Down: Apple! Feels good to crunch into....or a ripe plum.

Pick Fairy: Lime. Hurts a little good. Goes well with tequila.

Drug Tax: Anti-fruit.

Turquoise: Fruit salad. Lots going on!



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