

The SBU Graduate Arts & Sciences Magazine

# The Human Connection



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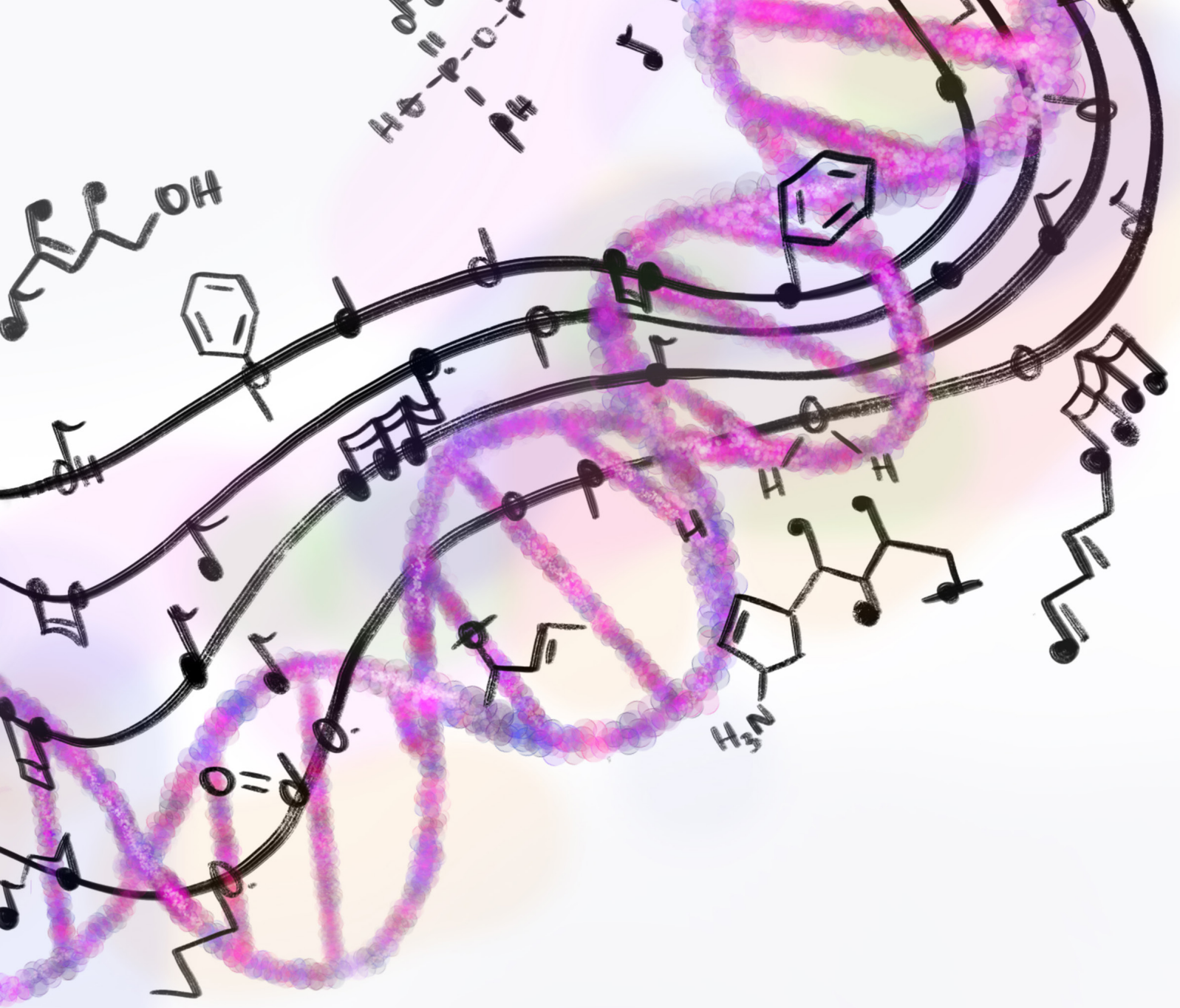
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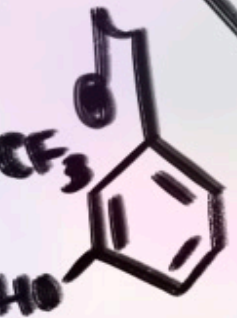
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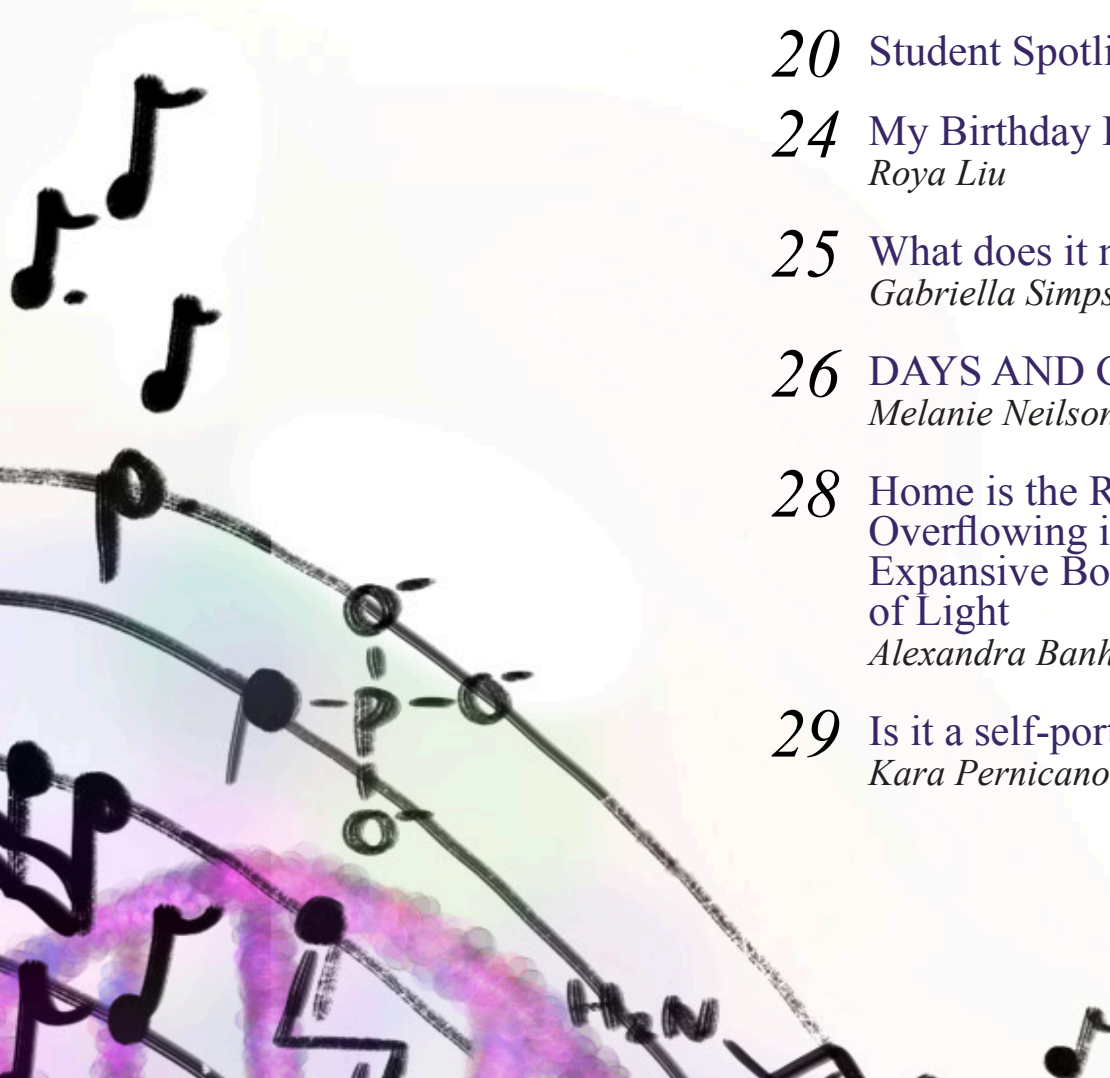
# The Human Connection

Spring 2024

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# Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of *The SBU Graduate Arts & Sciences Magazine*!

The magazine was founded from a motivation to integrate academia and research together in both the Arts and Sciences, while communicating these intricate disciplines to broader audiences. Our goal encompassed the establishment of an organization and vibrant community of prospective and current graduate students from diverse departments. This collective endeavor aligns with our overarching theme, the Human Connection, as it is within the fabric of community-building that we find the true essence of interdisciplinary collaboration and its profound connection to the human experience.

In every brushstroke, equation, melody, and discovery, we find threads of commonality that bind us together. The Human Connection serves as a guiding principle that underscores the very essence of our exploration into the realms of Art and Science. This magazine is a testament to the idea that these disciplines, while distinct, can be deeply intertwined, and it is at their intersection that profound insights into our existence can emerge.

I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the realization of this vision — from our dedicated team of editors and contributors to the faculty mentors who have guided us along the way. Special thank you to Muskan Gupta, Noor Imran, Gina Landtwing, Jennifer L. O'Connor, and Animesh Uttekar who have been on this journey with me from a very early stage. Together, we have created something truly special, and we invite you, our readers, to join us in exploring the endless possibilities that emerge at the intersection of the Arts and Sciences at Stony Brook University.

We hope you enjoy the magazine!

Warm regards,

Ava Nederlander  
Founder  
President/Editor-in-Chief

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# About the GradMag

Written by Muskan Gupta and the GradMag Editorial Team



In the academic year 2023-2024, *The SBU Graduate Arts & Sciences Magazine*, colloquially known as GradMag, was established as an official graduate student-run media organization under the umbrella of the Department of Student Engagement & Activities at Stony Brook University, marking a significant milestone in our collective journey towards fostering an inclusive, interdisciplinary, and vibrant scholarly community. As a newly registered organization, we have dedicated ourselves to fulfilling our mission of providing a collaborative platform that cherishes diversity, encourages innovation, and promotes a blend of scholarly and creative pursuits. Our club's mission is rooted in the belief that the convergence of arts and sciences can lead to groundbreaking ideas and foster a deeper understanding of the world around us. We are committed to showcasing the talent and achievements of our university community across campus.

Last September, we launched with the Inaugural Social for graduate students to introduce themselves and become familiar with our organization's mission. The substantial number of attendees at the event demonstrated the growing significance of our organization within the community, further emphasizing the need for an all-inclusive environment where students from various academic backgrounds feel valued, heard, and inspired to contribute. Following this success, we held weekly general body meetings, and in February, we hosted a Welcome Back Luncheon. The luncheon featured numerous speakers, including faculty and staff from the Career Center and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Professional Development, and a live, musical graduate student performance. The event concluded with a Stony Brook University history-based game of Jeopardy where the winners won exciting prizes.

Our monthly newsletters serve as a bridge, connecting all departments by spotlighting past and upcoming events, and featuring a nominated "Professor of the Month". The launch of our organization and publication showcases the artistic and scholarly works of the campus community, providing a platform for professionalism and exposure.



(Left, pg. 8) GradMag board members Animesh Uttekar, Noor Imran, Gina Landtwing, Ava Nederlander, and Jennifer O'Connor with Media Advisor Isobel Breheny-Schafer. (Top Left) Dr. Vibha Mane, Muskan Gupta, Ava Nederlander pose with members of the GradMag. (Top Right) President/Editor-in-Chief Ava Nederlander, Dr. Kathleen Flint Ehm, Dr. Molly Lotz, and Jessica Roman at the Welcome Back Luncheon. (Middle) Graduate student attendees of the Inaugural Social in September 2024. (Bottom Left) Graduate student Octávio Deluchi performs. (Bottom Right) Managing Editor Jennifer L. O'Connor photographs the Walcome Back Luncheon.

# The Effect of Medical Ethics and Compassionate Care Training on Empathy Decline in Medical Education

Written by Ramsha Shoaib  
Illustration by Biwen Liu

Medical school can contribute to feelings of stress, burnout, and disillusionment. Experiencing these feelings can be disheartening for students who pursue the field of medicine due to their values of helping others. Throughout their journey, studies show students end up becoming less compassionate (Post & Wentz, 2022). In fact, many medical students demonstrate a significant decline in empathy as they progress through their education, often attributed to a lack of access to proper support and resources (Coulehan *et al.*, 2003). Some medical schools, however, have taken steps to alleviate the problem by raising awareness and providing access to ethics learning modules. These programs additionally offer a variety of mental health resources for students who may be struggling. Despite the few existing resources to face empathy decline available in certain institutions, it would be in the best interests of aspiring physicians and practitioners to reference a standard procedure learned directly from medical school, ultimately serving to uphold a foundational value of the Hippocratic Oath, compassion.

A method to foster compassion and teach medical ethics is to create professionally-led programs designed to decrease the probability of empathy decline amongst students. This begs the question of whether or not compassion can be taught. More specifically, would teaching compassion and medical ethics to medical students be effective to combat the progression of empathy decline? The structure of these programs should encompass classes and workshops with the goal of nurturing reflective capacity, fostering professional socialization, facilitating identity formation, and establishing meaningful mentor relationships. Some examples of effective methodologies include, but are not limited to, a strong emphasis on medical ethics in respective courses, preclinical reflection circles, circles of trust, residency reflection rounds, and Schwartz rounds throughout the curriculum. These methods would also encourage community service and narrative competence, guiding students toward feelings of greater empathy. Overall, medical ethics and compassionate care training are philosophically fundamental pillars of medicine and medical ethics education. Practicing these concepts enhance a student's capacity to address and overcome empathy decline by fostering identity formation, reflective capacity, and narrative skills.



## Empathy Decline

Medical ethics and compassionate care should be included from the outset and emphasized in the early years of medical education. This approach allows students to witness real-world applications of ethical principles and compassionate behavior, fostering a deeper understanding and integration of these concepts into their own practice. Medical school can be a challenging time for many students as they are balancing school work, clinical rotations, studying for and taking the medical board exams, among other things. As a result, the need to prioritize psychological safety within educational and clinical settings is dire. Dr. Stephen Post and Dr. Susan Wentz from the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at Stony Brook University report that “Students are at greater risk of burnout, depression, and in the worst of cases, suicide” (Post & Wentz, 2022, p. 5). Stressful experiences faced in medical school lead to empathy decline. According to Dr. Mohammadreza Hojat, a researcher at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, empathy “...tends to erode as students progress through medical school” (Hojat *et al.*, 2020, p. 3). As a preventive measure, medical schools need to provide an environment where students are educated and able to discuss the topics of ethics, empathy, and compassionate care.

Studies have shown empathy decline occurs due to the unfortunate outcome of medical students failing to receive adequate support during

their medical school training (Coulehan *et al.*, 2003). In fact, according to Dr. Mohammadreza Hojat, a researcher at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, “A statistically significant decline in empathy scores was observed when comparing students in the preclinical years (years 1 and 2) and the clinical (years 3 and 4) phases of medical school ( $P < 0.001$ )” (Hojat *et al.*, 2020, p. 1). Many students, and even healthcare professionals, have claimed they do not have access to this kind of critical training to directly combat the lack of compassion they experience (Coulehan *et al.*, 2003). These shortcomings may lead students to become disillusioned with their medical education and can negatively affect how they view patients and patient care. Notably, the phenomenon of empathy decline occurs rapidly, often within the first one or two years of clinical training (Coles and Testa, 2002, pp. 23-24). Thus, it is important to employ early methods to mitigate these concerns.

## Teaching Methodology

### *Compassionate Flourishing*

Just a year shy of two thirds of a century ago, compassion was not required to be explicitly taught in medical schools or higher medical education (Coles and Testa, 2002, p.24). These behaviors were instead fostered through interactions with teachers and patients. Interestingly, as observed by Coles and Testa (2002), “...the pace of medicine has accelerated in the second half of the twentieth century, the slow educational process by which physicians ‘learned compassion’ [has] suffered” (p. 24). In addition, current students are sometimes advised to be more cynical and detached, possibly as a coping mechanism to deal with the demanding and emotionally taxing nature of modern medical practice. Students need to be taught how to process their difficult feelings surrounding patients while still remaining compassionate. Dr. Post and Dr. Wentz have explained that one way to combat burnout and the dehumanization of the medical field persona involves the process of “compassionate flourishing”, which “...refers to the well-being and sense of integrity that emerges from alleviating patients’ suffering and uplifting the full measure of their being, including supporting patients’ life meaning and social roles” (Post & Wentz, 2022, p. 3). Dr. Post created the framework to consist of three related parts: altruism, self-care, and resilience. These three underlying values of “compassionate flourishing” can be developed through various teaching methods (Post & Wentz, 2022, p. 3). In order to successfully implement these effective teaching strategies, Coulehan *et al.*, (2003) suggested four “... interrelated themes and strands of experience throughout the educational process”: personal reflection and reflective practice, narrative competence, strong role model engagement and interaction, and community service (p. 30). While many students spend their medical school years accumulating scientific knowledge, it’s equally crucial to cultivate humanistic virtues.

### *Reflective Capacity*

Students can enhance their professional identity by engaging in

reflective practices about their clinical experiences. Gaining positive experiences with patients and their families is vital for students to become confident in their interpersonal and clinical skills. Chandran *et al.* (2019) further expand on this idea: “Curricular opportunities for reflection, such as mentor-facilitated discussion groups or narrative writing, enable learners to participate actively in the construction of their own professional identities” (p. 2). These reflective writing practices also allow students to process difficult feelings regarding complicated or sad cases they may have seen. These practices are similar to the practice of narrative medicine which is very interesting and greatly beneficial to both physicians and patients. In the article “Narrative and Medicine”, Dr. Rita Charon, Professor and Chair of Medical Humanities and Ethics, stated, “More and more health care professionals and patients are recognizing the importance of the stories they tell one another.” (Charon, 2004, p. 862). Upon sharing these stories, students and other healthcare providers can better understand their patients and themselves. Being well-versed in reflective and narrative capacity helps to proficiently combat the aforementioned empathy decline and leads to more successful interactions with patients.

## Future Studies

By integrating courses and teaching methodologies centered around ethics and compassionate care into the existing curriculum standards for medical practice education, students can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of medicine. Promoting overall well-being and professional development aims to prevent burnout, disillusionment, cynicism, and mental health issues, thereby fostering a healthier and more resilient work environment. Moving forward, it is important for newly implemented teaching methodologies to include and prioritize identity formation, narrative and reflective capacity, as well as positive role model engagement. Given the evidence suggesting these programs do prevent the decrease in empathy, it is essential for all medical schools to implement educational methodologies aimed at fostering an enhanced perception of medical ethics, compassionate care, and humanistic values. After this point, analyses need to be conducted to determine which strategies will be most effective.

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# Formula 1: The Epitome of Motorsport

Written by Ram Mohan Telikicherla  
Illustration by Biwen Liu

Formula One, also known as Formula 1 or F1 for short, is the premier class of international racing and has long been regarded as the pinnacle of motorsport competition. A typical F1 Grand Prix sporting event spans an entire weekend. The first day starts with a practice session where all the drivers and teams get accustomed to the track, thereby determining the suspension, tire setup, and other parameters that'll maximize the car's best performance. The second day is the qualifying session where the lap times are set to determine the track position of the cars for the following race day. The final day is the actual event where drivers race to the finish line. In the realm of motorsport racing, where precision engineering is paramount, research endeavors are directed towards leveraging extensive computational resources. In the contemporary era, these efforts encompass various aspects, including failure analysis prediction using software and the development of computational test rigs to simulate actual track conditions for drivers. As part of my Ph.D. research, I focus on the development of novel computational methods aimed at enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of failure prediction in both structural components and fluid flow scenarios.

## Dominance and Achievements

Ferrari has achieved the highest level of success in the sport, securing the most championship wins as a team with a total of 16 victories. Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton share the record for the most driver championship wins, with each having won 7 championships. Many American drivers have also found success in the sport, including notable figures such as Mario Andretti. More recently, Sergio Perez has also made a significant impact, despite the sport being historically dominated by European racing drivers. Max Verstappen is the current reigning driver world champion, holding the title from the 2021 season through the previous year's 2023 season. In the history of the sport, the recent season stands out as the most dominant for both the Red Bull constructor and driver Max Verstappen.

Over the years, the sport has seen some of the most talented race car designers and engineers namely Gordon Murray, Adrian Newey, Peter Bonnington, and Gianpiero Lambiase. Many aspiring race car drivers idolize previous champions and engineers, starting their training at a young age of 8-12 years old. The road to F1 starts with junior karting, then to Formula 4 (F4), Formula 3 (F3), and then Formula 2 (F2) before eventually moving to F1. The expenditure from junior karting to F1 would cost a parent around 10 million dollars (Opong, 2022).

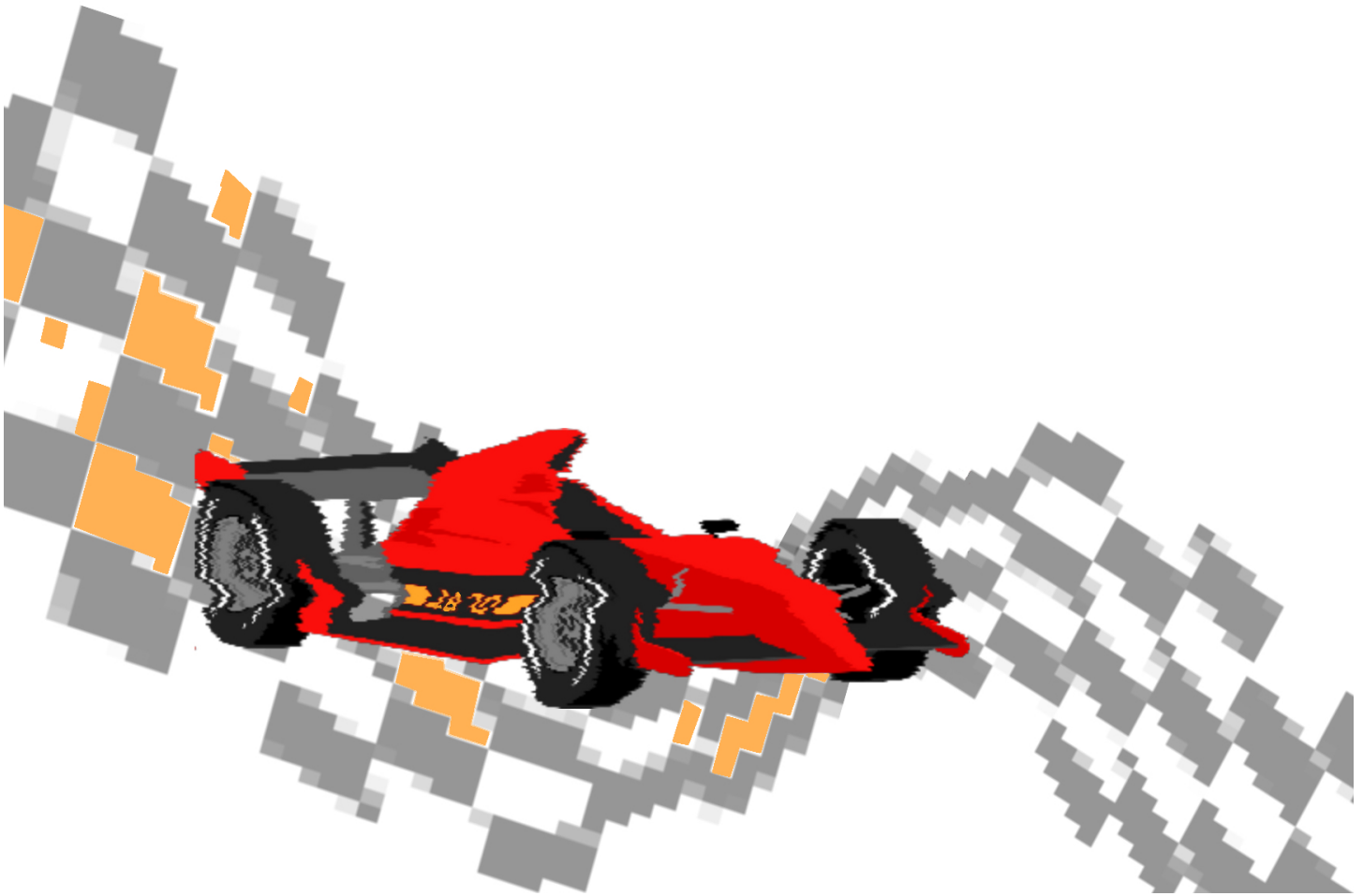
Most parents cannot afford such a large sum of money, which likely explains why this sport is more dominant in developed countries. Two notable drivers who have worked their way up, despite financial barriers into the sport by their pure talent are Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton. While Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton have demonstrated remarkable talent in overcoming financial obstacles to excel in motorsport, their achievements are further underscored by the significance of venues such as the United States track COTA (Circuit of the Americas) in shaping the landscape of modern racing.

The COTA held the first race in 2012 in Austin, Texas. Since then, this circuit has been the most consistent U.S. racetrack. The motorsport's popularity has also increased due to a popular Netflix show *Formula 1: Drive to Survive*, which shows the on- and off-track drama over the entire calendar year. The increased popularity of racing in the U.S. can be seen in the number of races held in the past year (2023). In contrast to the usual one race, there were two additional races held: one in Miami during the day, and the first night-time race in Las Vegas. The race's advertisements were geared towards a larger audience to increase the likelihood of future sponsorships, as the sport is quite expensive to start in as a racing driver. Interestingly, the race held in Las Vegas was critical to F1's overall marketing appeal.

## Advancements in Technology

Every four years, the sport evolves with new rule changes, emphasizing a need for more skillful engineers and to further new technologies directly appeal to potential sponsors in future races. The rules dictate the amount each team can spend on research, testing, and bringing out new state-of-the-art technology into their race car. In race car design, one key aspect to improve aerodynamics is through wind tunnel testing. This involves physically testing a car inside an apparatus called a wind tunnel, where the air profile along the length of the car is studied. The experimental results are validated using simulation software. The amount of time a team can spend on a wind tunnel has been capped with new rule changes. The goal is for the car to be faster and stand out from the other teams. In addition, the rule changes for racecar development critically factor in reducing carbon footprints to promote environmental conservation.

Over the years, F1 car technology has massively developed. For



example, the development of ABS (Anti-lock braking system) and other safety features have been improved ever since the death of one of the world's greatest drivers, Ayrton Senna, at the Imola circuit in Italy. Considerable research has been dedicated to track design, particularly in the selection of materials aimed at minimizing the impact on drivers in the event of a crash into a barricade for example. The materials used in barricades have undergone significant evolution, enabling them to absorb more energy during crashes, thereby protecting the lives and safety of drivers. These research efforts have ignited my inspiration to pursue my own research endeavors from a young age.

## Computational Techniques in Racecar Engineering

For my Ph.D. project, I have developed a series of computational techniques to perform structural, fluid dynamic, and fluid-structure

analysis. With these computational techniques, powerful predictions can be employed that would help a lot in the overall design of the racecar and make it aerodynamically more efficient than the competition. Over the years my experience through my undergraduate and graduate work has inspired me to one day become a successful race car engineer, who would be directly involved with designing these cars. As a member of the SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) BAJA program during my undergraduate studies, as well as my previous involvement in a F1 SAE team during my graduate study at Arizona State University, I have been able to improve my hands-on engineering skills. These programs simulate real-world engineering design projects that have provided me with a variety of opportunities for the development of strategies, approaches, and ideas for my thesis project.

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# A Tale of Two Gulls

Written by Esther Nosazeogie  
Illustration by Ming-Wei Chou



## Gull Species Diversity on Long Island

There are at least eight gull species on Long Island. However, the Herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) or the Great black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*) are your more likely sightings, being the most common gull species on Long Island. You may observe both species scavenging for food on the beach, in landfills and/or other urban waste disposal spaces, where they steal from each other and humans. When it comes to conflict with humans, all gulls are often lumped together without considering species-specific differences. However, understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective management strategies that minimize conflicts and promote coexistence between humans and gulls. By studying the unique behaviors and adaptations of each gull species, conservation efforts can be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by different populations.

Kim Lato, a Ph.D. candidate from the Thorne lab at the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, has successfully defended her dissertation. Concentrating on the ecology of the two most prevalent gull species on Long Island, Lato's research revealed noteworthy differences in the feeding patterns of these coexisting gull species (Lato et al., 2021). Over a period of three years, from 2019 to 2021, Lato and

If you have lived on Long Island long enough, you have either had a run-in with a “seagull” or know someone who has, and chances are, it is not your favorite bird. The bird may have stolen your food, or pooped on you or your vehicle, or worse. As a PhD student in Marine Sciences, I find it fascinating how the term “seagull” has historically been misunderstood and overlooked. Many bird watchers and experts assert that “seagull” is a misnomer, as it fails to capture the diverse species within the family Laridae. These birds, while historically associated with marine environments, have also shown remarkable adaptability to urban settings. Gulls occupy a unique ecological niche, being both seabirds and urban dwellers, which makes studying their behavior and ecology particularly intriguing.

her colleagues employed various methods to track the movements and dietary preferences of these gulls during their breeding season. These two gull species not only inhabit the shared locale of Long Island but also coexist in a breeding colony located on Young's Island in Stony Brook, New York. At their breeding colony, the birds were captured and equipped with GPS tags to precisely monitor their locations.

Additionally, the birds underwent blood sample extractions for isotope analyses, which authenticate the chemical signatures of the consumed food in the samples, ultimately revealing the animals' diets. The data revealed the two species demonstrated a partitioning of their habitat use. Notably, among the Herring gulls breeding on Young's Island, the majority were observed feeding in urban areas, whereas Great black-backed gulls showed a tendency to feed more in marine environments (Lato et al., 2021).

## Adaptation of Gulls to Urban Environments

The question persists as to whether these gulls, originally seabirds but now adapted to urban environments, derive greater benefits from feeding on marine resources such as crab and fish as opposed to urban resources, such as junk food. Marine food resources may be more nutritious, but there may also be some benefits to eating junk food. High-calorie junk food is readily and abundantly accessible, and a gull is likely to expend less energy locating it—simply flying to the same mall it obtained a

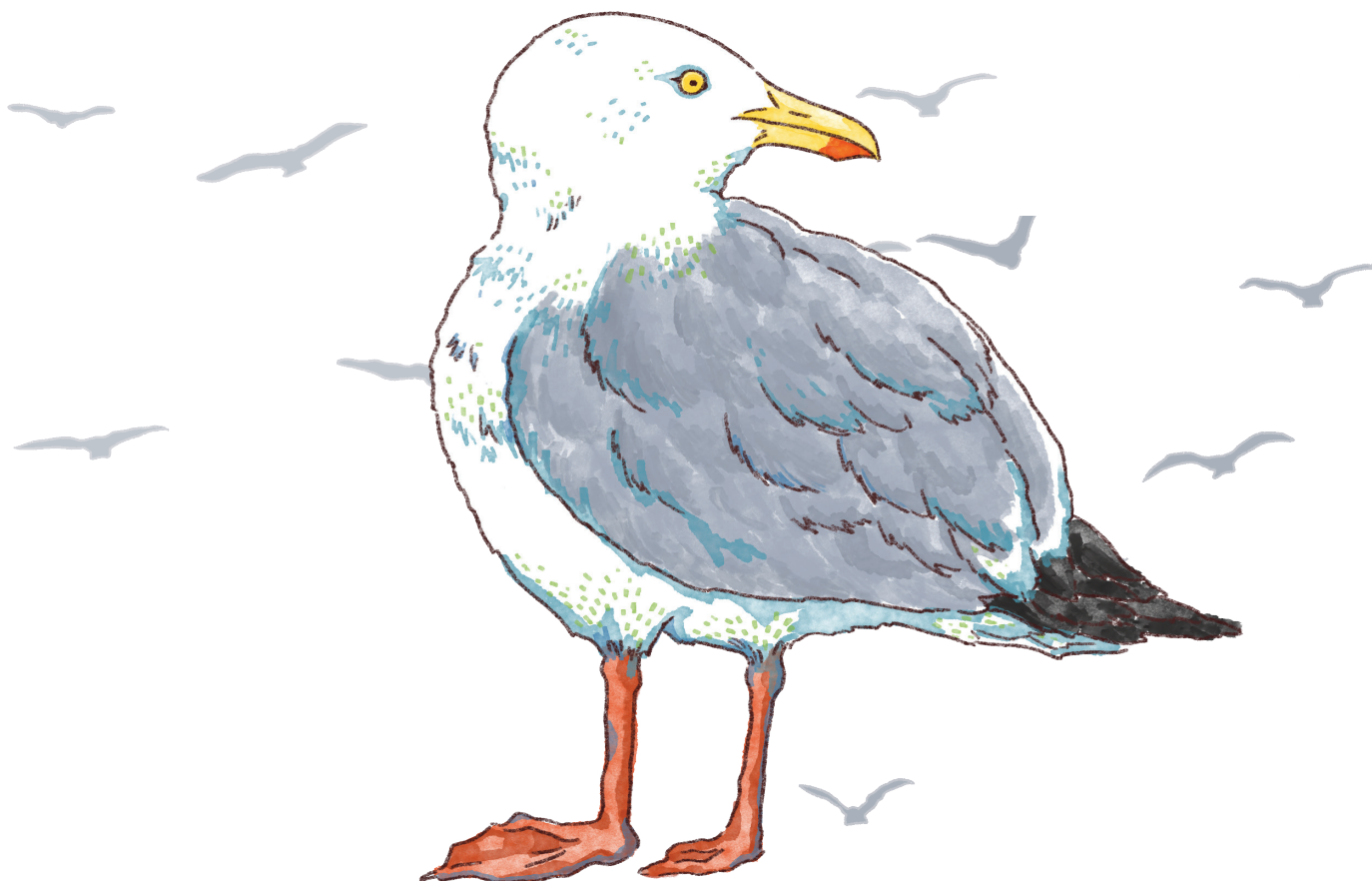
bagel from yesterday, where there's bound to be more. In contrast, obtaining food from the ocean demands a significant amount of energy and involves some searching. With birds that focus on junk food, there are concerns about reduced immunity and exposure to diseases, however, the impacts of junk food on gull health are currently unclear. It would be interesting to see more research on the nutritional physiology of Long Island's gulls to give us a better understanding.

## Foraging Strategies and Coexistence

In the interim, the findings from Lato et al. (2021) elucidate the interactions between these gulls and their environment, as they play a pivotal role as predators in the marine ecosystem. The interactions of these species with both marine and urban ecosystems have implications for the structure of ecosystems in both environments. I find the foraging strategies reported by Lato et al. (2021) as a story of adaptability and coexistence between two neighboring gull species. Their work functions as a window that delves into the drama of adaptation: revealing how the world is ever-changing and how species endeavor to adapt and survive in their environment, regardless of their location. These different foraging strategies may just be an innovative way in which the birds are figuring out how to coexist. Maybe we as humans can learn from that.

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# How to Build an Intellectual Community: *The Public Review* and the Future of Art Criticism

Written by Genevieve Lipinsky de Orlov  
Illustration by Ming-Wei Chou

In 1979, two professors in the graduate program for art history and criticism at Stony Brook, Lawrence Alloway and Donald Kuspit, published the inaugural issue of a journal they founded for art criticism. The journal, simply titled *Art Criticism*, was “the outcome of the editors’ dissatisfaction with published criticism,” as Alloway and Kuspit (1979) wrote in the first issue’s editorial. The journal ceased publishing in 2001, but in its twenty-two-year run it produced an impressive collection of texts written by Alloway and Kuspit’s peers and contemporaries—other working critics and art historians—as well as graduate students in and outside of Stony Brook’s program.

Since then, however, the program for art history and criticism has not attended to the “criticism” in its name in a sustained way. Yet this outward commitment to criticism is unusual among graduate programs in art history in the United States, despite criticism being an integral genre of knowledge production in the discipline. For me, coming to Stony Brook immediately after working as an editor of *Texte zur Kunst*, a magazine for art criticism and theory, and with the intention of continuing to work in publishing, the program’s title was a significant factor in my decision to enroll. I had already been thinking about starting a publication of my own before arriving at Stony Brook, and when I learned about the legacy of *Art Criticism*, it indicated to me that this program and the public university could be the ideal environment in which to realize such a project.

## Making *The Public Review*

Last February, I launched *The Public Review*, a digital publication for long-form art criticism, with my friend and colleague Carlos Kong, a PhD candidate in art history at Princeton University. The project in part seeks to fill the gap that *Art Criticism*’s end left in Stony Brook’s program, attempting to extend—while revising and updating—the journal’s mission. In their first issue’s editorial, Alloway and Kuspit outlined their intentions:

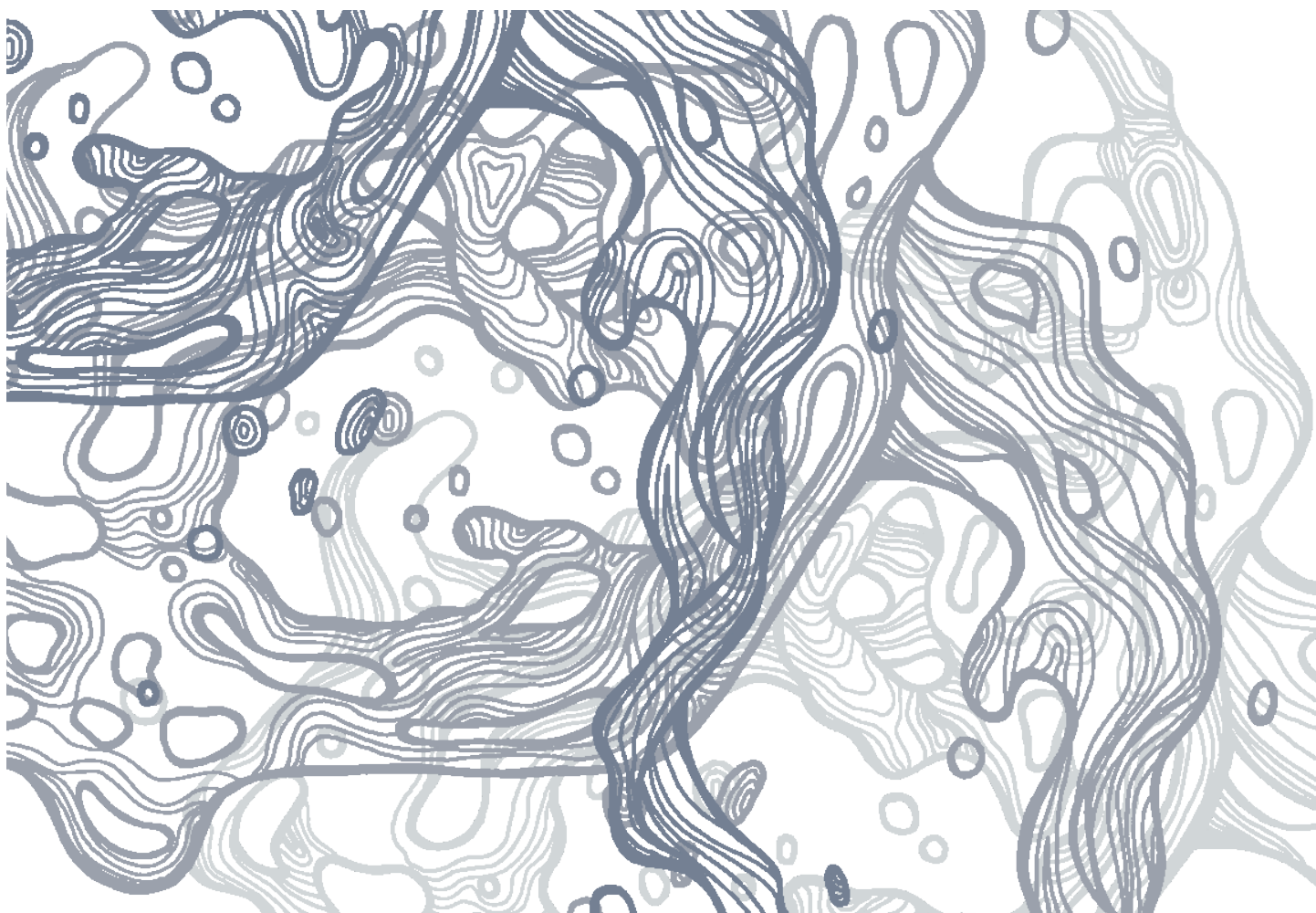
If *Art Criticism* meets some of its editors’ hopes for it, we shall be able to claim the appearance of some art criticism, with subjects arising from the writers’ or editors’ decisions, rather than the art market’s. Articles on individual critics and on current groups and tendencies

will lead towards the adequate history of art criticism so badly needed in relation to art and in relation to the literature of other disciplines (Alloway & Kuspit, 1979, p. 1).

Alloway and Kuspit implicitly indict other art criticism of the time for following market trends and offer their journal—situated, crucially, in the public university—as an alternative forum independent from the demands of the art market. Funded through the Stony Brook Foundation, *Art Criticism* was free of the market entanglements, pressures, and partnerships that were becoming common at privately run outlets for art criticism. This model of private funding increasingly dependent on advertisers and corporate sponsorship—in lieu of public financial support—has since become standard practice.

Like Alloway and Kuspit’s *Art Criticism*, one of the main impetuses for *The Public Review* was a concern around the relationship between art criticism and the market. In the many conversations Carlos and I had about criticism and its problems, the main, structuring issue we always returned to was the economics of art criticism and publishing. Most art critics and editors work on a freelance basis, and both are paid so poorly that it’s impossible to make a living wage from them, let alone a profession out of them. The low wages also impact who is actually able to write art criticism; for the most part, wealthy white people still tend to be overrepresented among working critics—a quick look at the staff critics at leading publications easily confirms this. These conditions have resulted in art criticism increasingly coming to serve as purely promotional material: Texts tend to be very short, descriptive, and affirmative, and devoid of critique or anything that could be understood as “negative”—anything that could disrupt the relationship with advertisers. In the wake of this development, there is a scarcity of critical engagement with the public-facing presentations of art and culture.

When we began organizing *The Public Review*, one of our top priorities was to ensure that we pay writers fair honoraria for their texts. We also reached out to peers and colleagues—many of them also enrolled in graduate programs for art history—with whom we had worked in the past to form an editorial board, establishing a formal infrastructure for broadening our network. Above all, we wanted to publish texts that were



critical, and that engaged their objects and institutions thoughtfully and incisively. Essentially, we developed *The Public Review* as an attempt to address the tensions between the economic reality of art criticism and the role we want art criticism to play in public civic discourse.

## Reinvesting in Public Discourse and the Humanities

A big part of our endeavor, then, is an investigation of the nature of publicness in an increasingly privatized political context and in its specific relationship to art. *The Public Review* offers an infrastructure and platform for graduate students to critically engage with institutions tasked with mediating art and culture for the public and producing public history and knowledge. The ultimate goals of *The Public Review* are to initiate and sustain conversations about art and culture, their institutions and publics, and their role in civic public life, and to nurture an emerging generation of humanities scholars who are invested in contributing to these conversations. An implicit part of this project is an investment in the humanities and an attempt to demonstrate practically the role that the humanities can play beyond the academy—their indispensability to public discourse and to politics more broadly. And, finally, the project is about community building: cultivating a network of emerging humanities scholars who are similarly invested in criticism as

a form through which to generate and exchange ideas, and to engage in thoughtful dialogue with the public and our cultural institutions.

These are, admittedly, lofty and idealistic aspirations. Yet we are steadfast in our commitment to at least attempt to create the forum for critical, public cultural dialogue we feel is sorely missing. In this first year, we have managed to begin to realize our goals through the indispensable support of a Public Humanities Grant from Humanities New York. We have also connected with other graduate programs in art history around the country—especially those few that also have “criticism” in their name, and with a particular emphasis on other public universities—to share the project and invite graduate students to reach out if they’re interested in contributing. As momentum builds, we want to translate these connections into events, specifically workshops for graduate students interested in writing criticism. Our hope is that *The Public Review* will contribute to cultivating a viable professional field for critics and provide a platform for meaningful public cultural discourse.

*The Public Review* can be found at [www.thepublicreview.org](http://www.thepublicreview.org).

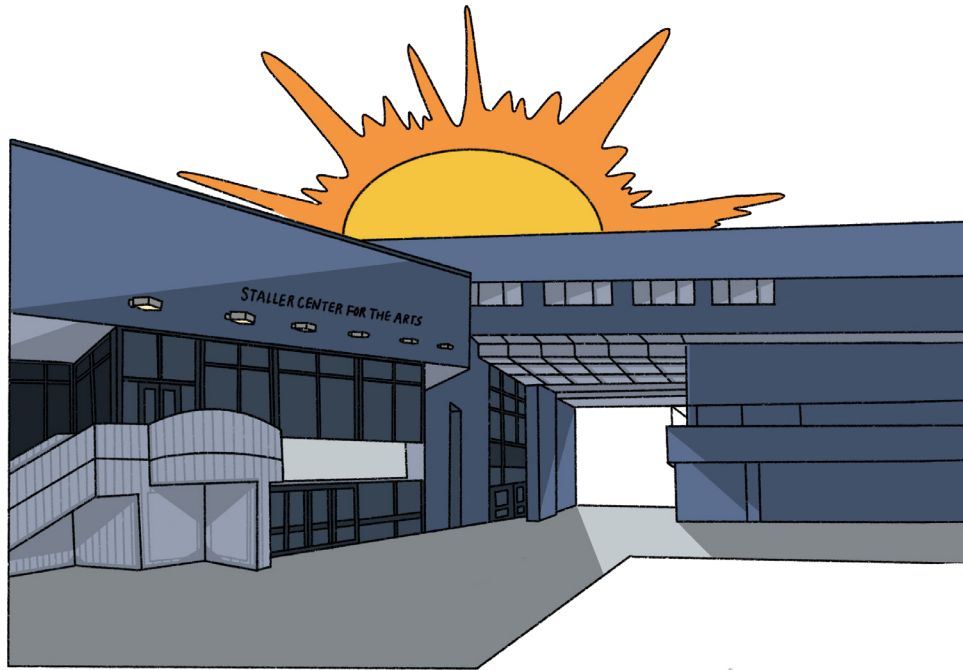
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# Staller Center for the Arts — a Cultural Hub for Students and the Community

Written by Amber Lewis, Multimedia Specialist at the Staller Center

Illustration by Ming-Wei Chou



The year is 1975, and the Stony Brook University Fine Arts Center has just opened its doors. Within its humble confines stand a handful of classrooms and offices, a foundry, a few rehearsal studios, and an art gallery. In 1978, the second phase of the Fine Arts Center introduced two black-box theaters, a recital hall, and a 1,200-seat concert hall. Flash forward 45 years, add a third black-box theater, the largest movie screen on Long Island, an ever-expanding roster of world-renowned performers, and a substantial donation from the Staller family, and you have the Staller Center for the Arts. Located in the heart of Stony Brook University's main campus, the Staller Center for the Arts is easily identifiable by its LED marquee and 'Staller Steps', a favored outdoor gathering spot for students. For more than four decades, the Staller Center for the Arts, or colloquially known as Staller, has stood as a beacon of artistic expression on Long Island.

## Educational Initiatives

Often described as a unique hub of activity, housing outstanding entertainment barely scratches the surface when it comes to the offerings at the Staller Center for the Arts. The mission of Staller comes down to three E's: educate, enlighten, and entertain. Beginning with education, the center enlists the help of students at the University's Department of Music to bring the arts to all ages through the Instrument Petting Zoo.

This popular program provides a hands-on workshop where young people can see, hear, learn about, and play instruments from around the world. The Instrument Petting Zoo tours across Long Island at various libraries, schools, children's hospitals, coffee shops, and nonprofits. This program enriches the lives of young people by exposing them to the arts at an early age and provides Stony Brook students with valuable teaching experiences that will prepare them for careers in music education upon graduation.

Another notable program, Music at the MART, spearheaded by Staller and Community Sponsor, Ardolino Realty, involves Stony Brook Music students sharing their talents with patients at the Stony Brook Cancer Center. Through this initiative, graduate students have the opportunity to bring moments of joy and respite to individuals facing various medical and health challenges. This program showcases the power of art in healing and fostering connections in the local community. It's through these endeavors that Staller cultivates a culture of compassion and service, instilling values that extend far beyond the physical building. Outside of these educational programs, Staller also presents a diverse array of family shows every season. Whether it's a musical adaptation of a best-selling children's book or a live-to-film concert with a 20-piece ensemble performing a film score live alongside favorite movies, Staller's kids programming ensures families leave the theater with

memories to cherish. Moreover, these shows help to nurture the cultural expression of the next generation, laying the groundwork for a lifelong love of the arts.

## Cultivating Enlightenment

Moving on to the second ‘E,’ the Staller Center easily enlightens its University, local schools, and the community through Seats 4 Students, a program that offers free and reduced-rate tickets and provides transportation to events for school districts around Long Island. This program ensures that the transformative power of the arts remains accessible to all, regardless of economic barriers. Furthermore, Staller frequently collaborates with campus and school clubs and organizations, facilitating exclusive opportunities for them to attend performances and engage with the artists. In the fall of 2022, undergraduate student a capella group the Stony Brook Vocalists were treated to an unforgettable evening. They had the opportunity to meet and greet with acclaimed singer-songwriter Morgan James in which they performed a song of their own for her to critique and provide professional feedback. Additionally, the group received complimentary tickets as part of Staller’s Outreach initiatives for the performance that evening.

The Staller Center also demonstrates its commitment to enlightenment through student engagement, as it actively collaborates with campus organizations to host a series of events throughout the year. Through partnerships with the Undergraduate Student Government and Black History and Women’s History Month Committees, the center provides free movie nights for students with complimentary refreshments and raffle prizes, offering a welcome break from the rigors of coursework. Moreover, Staller hosts a series of recital and chamber concerts featuring talented members from the Department of Music. These performances offer a platform for faculty members and students to showcase their artistry and engage their passion with Staller’s many classical enthusiasts.

The Staller Center is also home to the Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, which is always free. Exhibitions bring works by celebrated artists to the campus, including Yoko Ono, Faith Ringgold, Elizabeth Murray, Philip Pearlstein, Sara Greenberger Rafferty and the Guerrilla Girls. In addition, each year the gallery presents exhibitions featuring the work of Stony Brook University undergraduate and graduate students as well as triennial exhibitions featuring the distinguished faculty of the Art Department. The Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery runs its own series of Outreach programming for both the University and community members. They offer Art at Home programs, visits for School Groups and Art2Go, a series of Artist Talks and a biannual Art Crawl, as well as specific programming for Stony Brook students, all with the shared goal to provide free access for all to Art, and to help foster a love of the Arts for all ages.

## Entertainment Programming

Lastly, entertainment is where the Staller Center for the Arts shines

brightest. The performing arts center is renowned for its diverse range of entertainment options, featuring everything from Broadway stars and African Cirque to Drag Ballet and Japanese Drumming. There is truly something for everyone at Staller. The venue not only prioritizes bringing in the biggest names in the industry but commits itself to showcasing up-and-comers and diverse performers. Audiences may not have heard of such artists before, but they will undoubtedly leave as huge fans; the 2024 spring season saw a performance by Veronica Swift, a jazz artist often compared to crooner Ella Fitzgerald. Swift brought a refreshing twist to the stage when she incorporated elements of rock and roll and various other genres into her performance. The result was electrifying, captivating both those who knew her for her jazz records and those who were completely unfamiliar with her work. The show was a resounding success, selling out and leaving a lasting impression on the audience. Staller’s entertainment options are a testament to their commitment to pushing boundaries and providing unforgettable experiences for its patrons. Other unforgettable experiences at Staller include performances by world-renowned artists such as Kristin Chenoweth, David Sedaris, LeAnn Rimes, Leslie Odom, Jr., and Yo-Yo Ma, to name a few.

When the spring season ends, audiences do not have to wait until fall for more entertainment. Every summer, the Staller Center presents the Stony Brook Film Festival, a ten-day program of new, independent short and feature films from around the world. Started by Director of Staller Alan Inkles, the Festival stands as a proud tradition spanning 29 years, representing 78 different countries, featuring screenings of over a thousand films, and bringing in some of the biggest names in show business. Festival attendees can participate in Q&A sessions with the directors and actors from the films they just watched, and exclusive receptions are offered after the screenings at local restaurants in the Stony Brook area. Lastly, Staller’s Met Opera: Live In HD program broadcasts live performances of the Metropolitan Opera to audiences who may not have the opportunity to see them live in Manhattan. These diverse cinematic experiences ensure year-round cultural enrichment for audiences of all ages.

## Staller’s Legacy

The Staller Center for the Arts has evolved from its modest beginnings in 1978, now acting as one of Long Island’s cultural cornerstones. Through its mission to educate, enlighten, and entertain, the Center continues to connect with audiences in the Stony Brook community and beyond, ensuring that the transformative power of the arts knows no bounds. Furthermore, Staller’s dedication to fostering a love for music in young minds while ensuring that all members of the Stony Brook community have affordable access to arts and culture underscores its commitment to equity and inclusion. As a beacon of cultural excellence, the Staller Center not only celebrates the past but also embraces the future, inspiring generations to come with its enduring commitment to artistic expression and offering a Manhattan-quality experience. The Staller Center remains a shining example of the profound impact the arts can have on society, both now and for years to come.

# Student Spotlights



Mary Brantley is a first-year MA student in Public Policy in the Department of Political Science. She works for Campus Residences as the Assistant Coordinator for Residential Marketing and Communications, and is also interning in the Long Island office of Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer. Mary is a recipient of the Pi Sigma Alpha Penniman Scholarship for Graduate Study, is a JFEW SUNY Global Affairs Scholar, and has been granted the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Academic Excellence along with the Ward Melville Valedictorian Award.

Christine Pash is a fifth-year PhD Candidate in Critical Music Studies. Christine's research focuses on anti-oppressive curatorial and teaching strategies at institutions such as museums, archives and universities. Christine also serves as a Music Department Mobilizer for the Graduate Student Employees Union (CWA 1104) and sings Western Classical music.



Magdalena Markowska is a fourth-year PhD student in the Department of Linguistics. Magdalena's research focuses on mathematical and computational approaches for language learning and understanding. Magdalena has been working with Jeffrey Heinz, PhD on developing and implementing algorithms for the learning of morpho-phonological processes and with Owen Rambow, PhD on how discourse participants establish common ground in dialogues. She received the New Recruit Award and Junior Researcher Award offered by the Institute of Advanced Computational Science.



Caitlin Hetherington is a fourth-year PhD candidate in computational and theoretical chemistry in the Department of Chemistry. She works with Benjamin Levine, PhD to simulate light-driven processes in nanomaterials using GPU-accelerated quantum chemistry calculations. She earned her master's degree in Chemistry with German at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland. Caitlin is a recipient of the Institute for Advanced Computational Science Junior Researcher Award.

Yushen Huang is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Computer Science. He is supervised by Michael Bender, PhD and Yifan Sun, PhD. Yushen's research focuses on data structure, algorithms, and optimization. He is also an affiliate of the Institute for Advanced Computational Science (IACS). He received travel awards from the National Science Foundation and IACS.





Jacob Crosser is a seventh-year PhD student of Computational Biology in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics. He works in the Center for Neural Circuit Dynamics with Braden A.W. Brinkman, PhD studying the behavior of neural networks through the lens of statistical physics. He presented his work at the Conference for Computational and Systems Neuroscience and the Conference for the Bernstein Network on Computational Neuroscience, and published in *Physical Review E*. Jacob is the recipient of an Honorable Mention for the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program.

Rachita Ramya is a third-year MFA Student in Creative Writing and Literature at Stony Brook's Southampton Campus. Rachita is an author and public health researcher. She previously graduated from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai with MPH in Global Health. Her works have appeared in *The New York Public Library's* literary magazine, *Library Zine!*, *Calamari Press' Sleeping Fish* magazine, *The Southampton Review*, and in the *Health Equity* scientific journal. She also teaches a Science Writing class at Stony Brook and uses creative wooden blocks, known as the MuBaBaO<sup>®</sup> method, as an instrument for storytelling.



Huzaifa Dokaji is a fourth-year PhD Student in the Department of History with a concentration in African Studies. Originally from Kano, Nigeria Huzaifa is a fellow of the Ibrahim Mu'azzam Institute of Philosophy and Political Theory for Young People in Nigeria and a consultant for the Kano State History and Culture Bureau in Nigeria. Huzaifa's research focuses on the history of Islam, gender and religious minorities in Nigeria. He is especially interested in the history of the Shi'a Muslims in Northern Nigeria and their experiences of oppression in state and social institutions.

Kathryn Hill is a seventh-year Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) student and Graduate Council Fellow at Stony Brook University. Kathryn completed her PhD in Neuroscience in 2022, focusing on fully quantitative positron emission tomography to explore the connections between biology and behavior under the mentorship of Ramin Parsey, MD, PhD and Christine DeLorenzo, PhD in the CUBIT Lab. Currently in her fourth year of medical school, she aims to pursue a neurology residency. Kathryn has been recognized for her research excellence as a 2022 Finalist in the Three Minute Thesis Competition and received the 2023 Award for Excellence in Research by a Current Student in the MSTP.



Omar Badessi is a fifth-year PhD Candidate and instructor in the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature. Omar's ongoing research seeks to redefine the narratives surrounding colonialism and to promote discourse on crucial global matters. He previously received the Stony Brook President's Award for Nurturing a Welcoming, Inclusive Campus Culture, and the Marjorie Kending Award For Outstanding Translation from The Institute of General Semantics.

Jacques Coste is a first-year PhD student in the Department of History. He is also an editorialist and political essayist for various Mexican journals. Under the guidance of Eric Zolov, PhD, Jacques is currently studying Mexico's democratic transition and neoliberal reforms. His other areas of interest include violence, organized crime, militarization, and human rights in Mexico and Latin America.



# My Birthday Fever

At night, closing my eyes,  
I can't flick the on-off switch.  
I want to take a day off,  
Without seeing the night  
In the evening.  
The sleep forgot to come home,  
As usual.

A burning in my throat was  
Misread as my melancholy.  
I invited idleness around,  
Transcribing poetry, making mistakes,  
Being distracted by  
The memory of our good friendship.  
The fever in our time became  
My twenty-seventh birthday fever.  
*2022.7.17*

Poem by Roya Liu  
Illustration by Ming-Wei Chou

# What does it mean to be Human?

To be human is to empathize with others' experiences  
to laugh, cry, and express emotions vulnerably without judgment or questioning one another  
to smear and paint pictures of human figures with friends in the art studios.

To mold pottery clay into human forms in a sculpture class  
allows us to recollect what it means to be human

To be a man or a woman?

To be both or neither?

That is the question.

To attend science museums in New York City,  
while analyzing Issac Newton's laws of gravity,  
and how these laws of gravity draw us across space, time, and earth  
to discover our passion for artistic and scientific expression.

Art and science attract our bodies and captivate our minds to write, draw, and think  
while stressing philosophical thought about mother nature and, dare I say, artistic nature?

To be human is to appreciate how art and science allow us to express our emotions  
through feeling, sensibility, knowledge, and tangibility.



Poem by Gabriella Simpson  
Illustration by Qiu Chen

# DAYS AND GATES

(excerpt)

By Melanie Neilson

Make this gate a hearth  
write the way  
free glow itself

Dream stamped walks  
quicker then sleepy follow  
stay outdoors

By hand in journal  
or on phone  
Let's ghost book

Untamed everything  
flower through  
Forest or Fresh Pond

"Pardon me sir"  
after stepping on  
her executioners foot

Two travelers on a train  
one reads a book  
the other asks

"What's in the book?"  
Astronomical gusts  
and poetry eyes

So thinking what's this?  
I saw you tsk-tsk  
spotted lanternflies

Everytime I walk by  
stop. write. at the gate  
bare spring spell

Snippets crickets slippers  
M is the mockingbird's nest  
L is linden tree or

Lion and mouse  
look roar try  
today way of writing

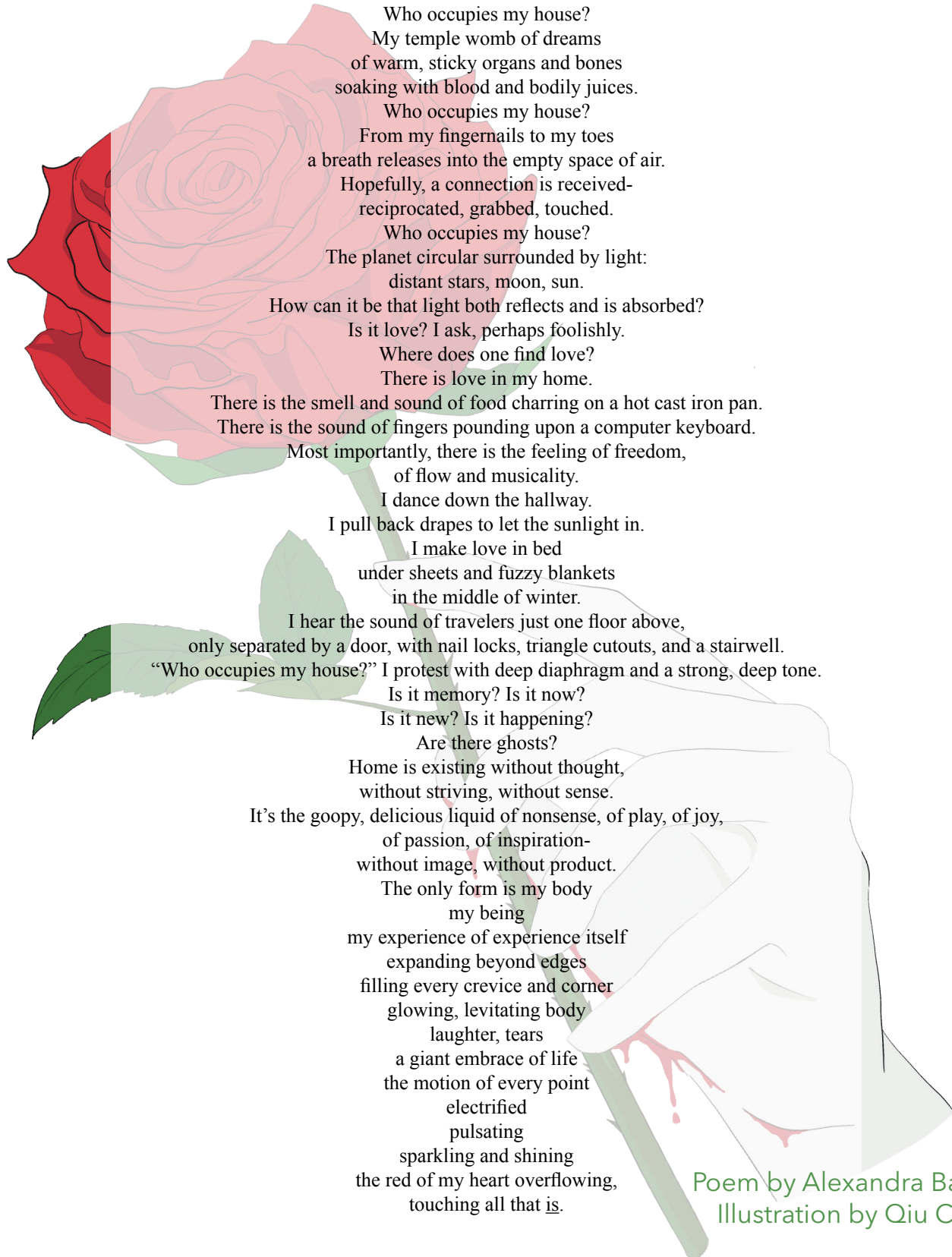
Start from affection  
new sounds day  
break two minutes away

Let's write the body  
draggy shaggy outside  
free eyes first

Love human assisted  
hope plays placing  
mercy itself

\*\*\*

# Home is the Red of My Heart Overflowing in the Ever-Expansive Boundaryless Universe of Light



Who occupies my house?  
My temple womb of dreams  
of warm, sticky organs and bones  
soaking with blood and bodily juices.

Who occupies my house?  
From my fingernails to my toes  
a breath releases into the empty space of air.  
Hopefully, a connection is received-  
reciprocated, grabbed, touched.

Who occupies my house?  
The planet circular surrounded by light:  
distant stars, moon, sun.  
How can it be that light both reflects and is absorbed?  
Is it love? I ask, perhaps foolishly.  
Where does one find love?  
There is love in my home.

There is the smell and sound of food charring on a hot cast iron pan.  
There is the sound of fingers pounding upon a computer keyboard.  
Most importantly, there is the feeling of freedom,  
of flow and musicality.  
I dance down the hallway.  
I pull back drapes to let the sunlight in.  
I make love in bed  
under sheets and fuzzy blankets  
in the middle of winter.

I hear the sound of travelers just one floor above,  
only separated by a door, with nail locks, triangle cutouts, and a stairwell.  
“Who occupies my house?” I protest with deep diaphragm and a strong, deep tone.  
Is it memory? Is it now?  
Is it new? Is it happening?  
Are there ghosts?

Home is existing without thought,  
without striving, without sense.  
It’s the goopy, delicious liquid of nonsense, of play, of joy,  
of passion, of inspiration-  
without image, without product.  
The only form is my body  
my being  
my experience of experience itself  
expanding beyond edges  
filling every crevice and corner  
glowing, levitating body  
laughter, tears  
a giant embrace of life  
the motion of every point  
electrified  
pulsating  
sparkling and shining  
the red of my heart overflowing,  
touching all that is.

Poem by Alexandra Banhazi  
Illustration by Qiu Chen

# Is it a self-portrait, no?

I think  
painting is a bit like writing—  
to capture an impression  
of the everyday

performance:  
En plein air is the way to go.

Just imagine it.  
A covered boat  
all one's own  
maybe headed

down a canal a river a stream  
of  
words waterlilies toads.

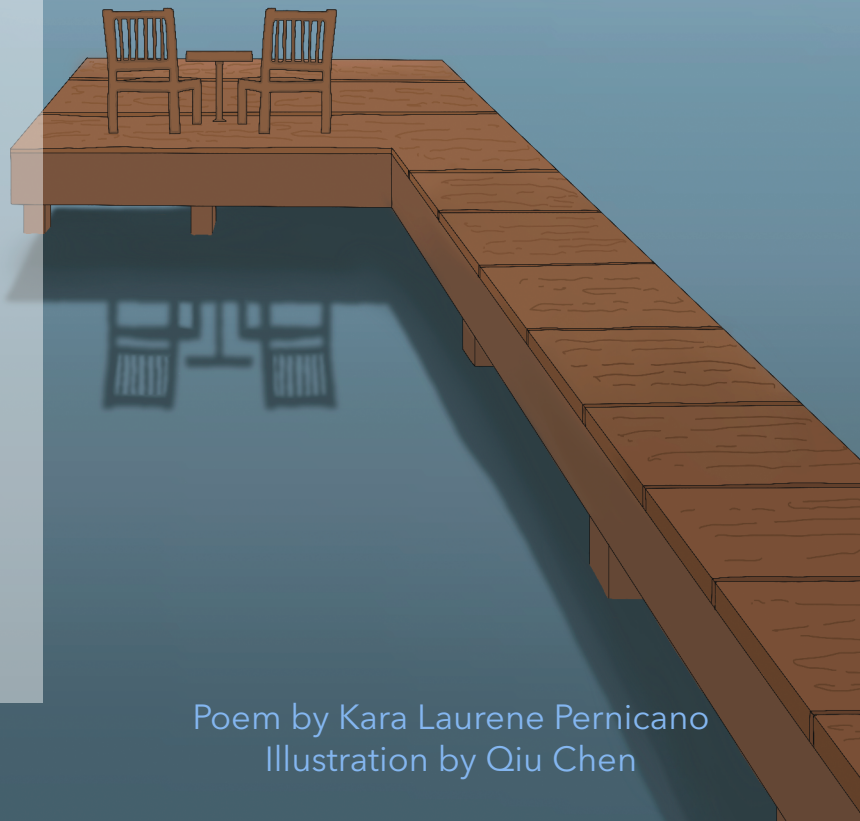
My memory is a bit murky  
to start.  
I imagine the channel matters.

There's care to the reflection.  
A wake  
of loose unrefined strokes.

It's play; it's a sport.  
Don't worry!  
It need not be so pristine,  
so words-

worth. Like a sower,  
reap your own  
memories. Impress us

with what only you know.



Poem by Kara Laurene Pernicano  
Illustration by Qiu Chen

**Competitive edge in  
securing high-paying  
job offers**

**Solving real-world  
problems beyond  
just algorithms  
and software**

**Holistic  
hardware/software  
knowledge and skills**



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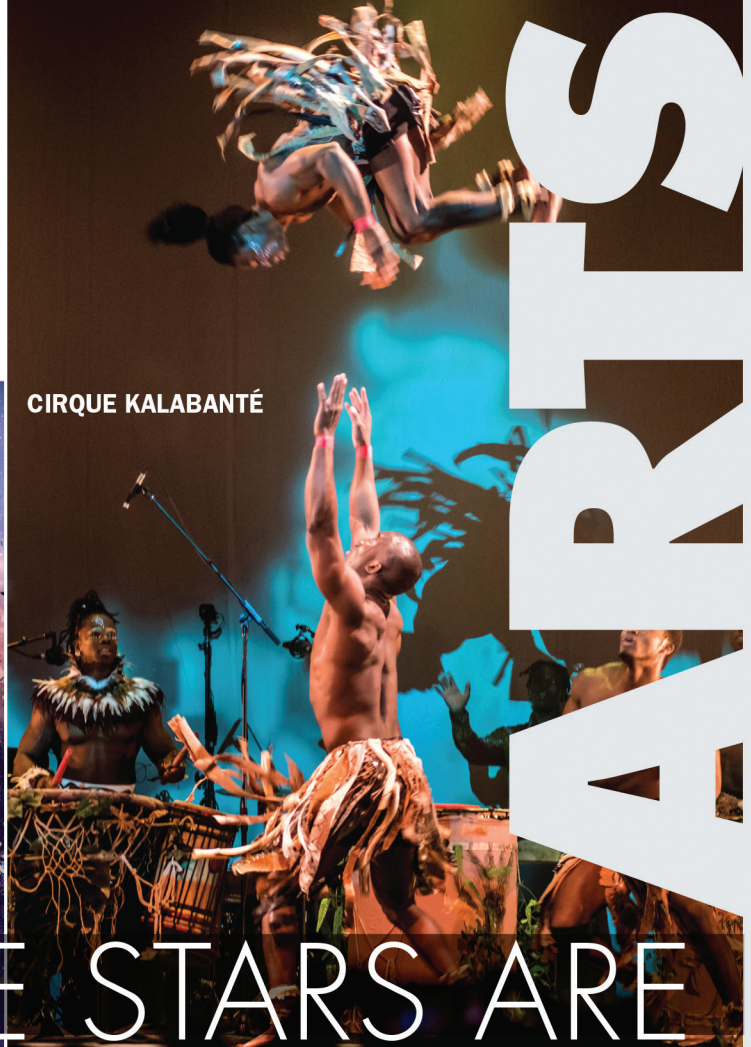
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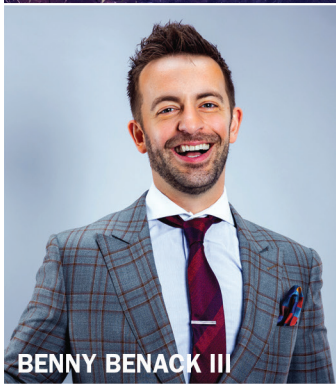
MALEVO



CIRQUE KALABANTÉ

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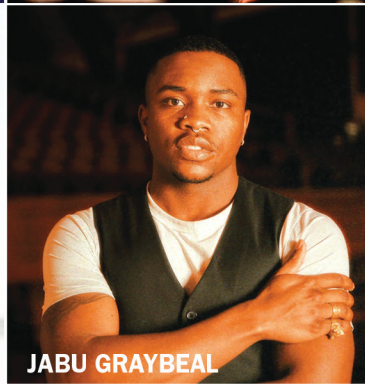
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**JACKIE EVANCHO**  
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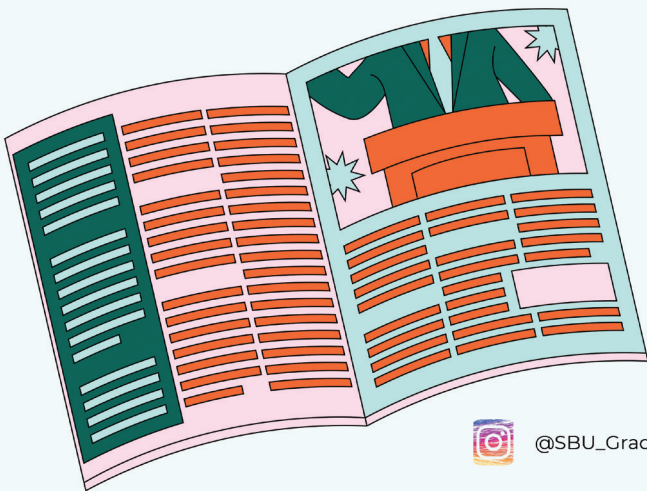
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