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Inretrospect - Spring 2025

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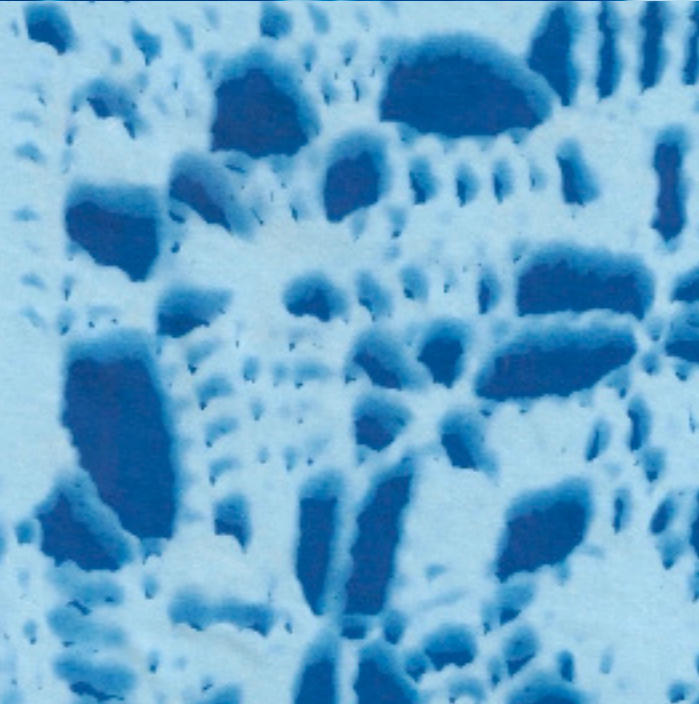
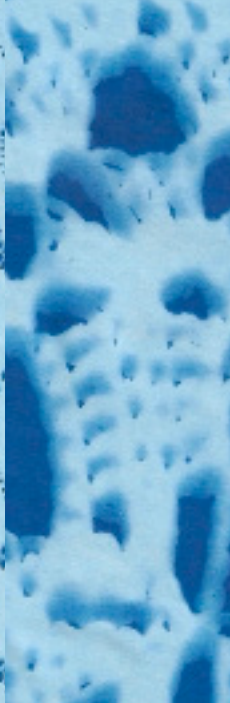
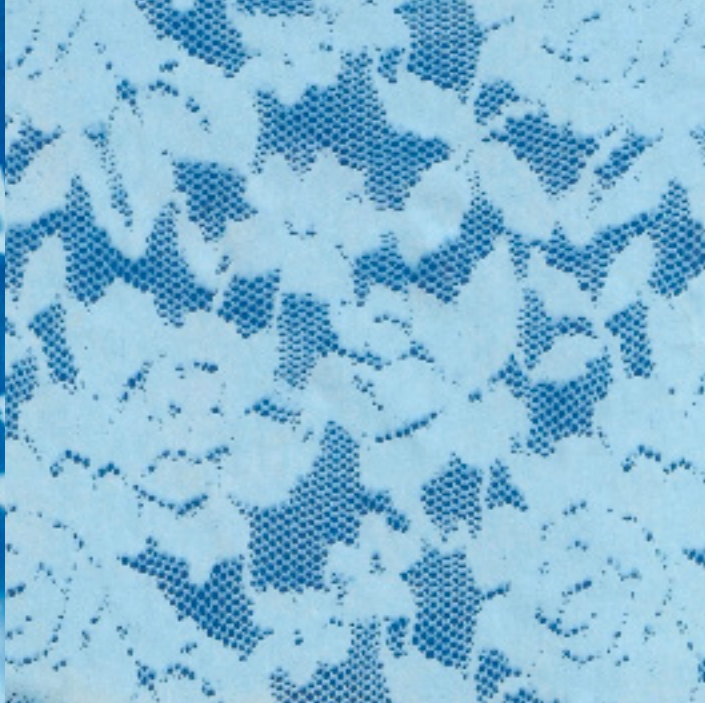
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IN RETROSPECT

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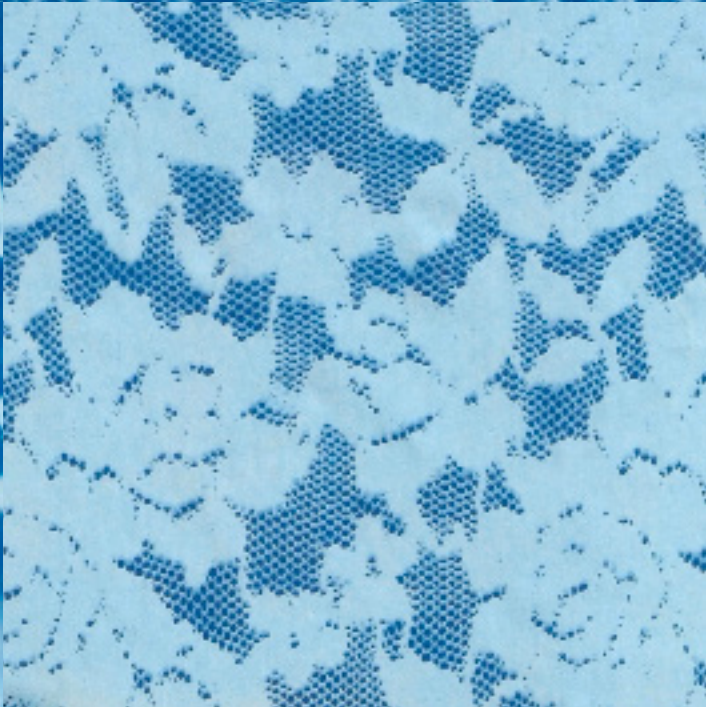
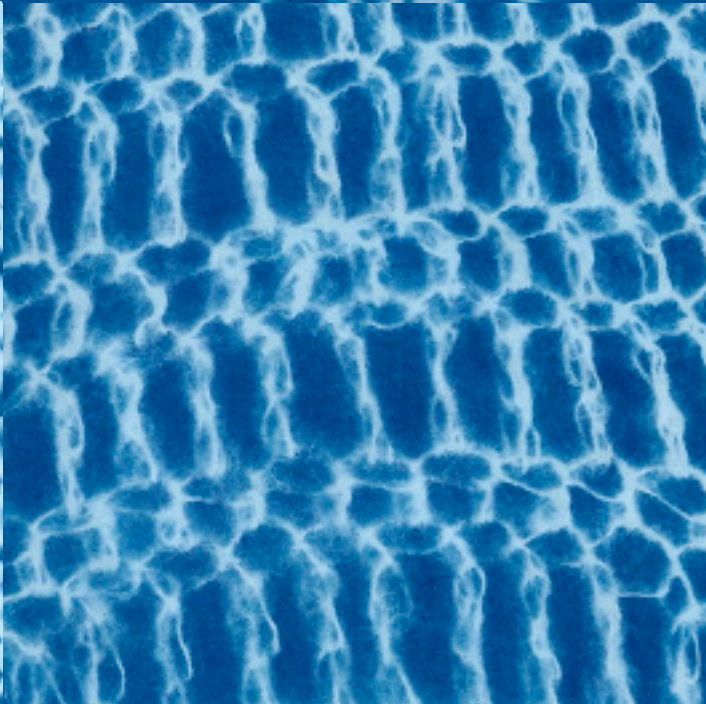
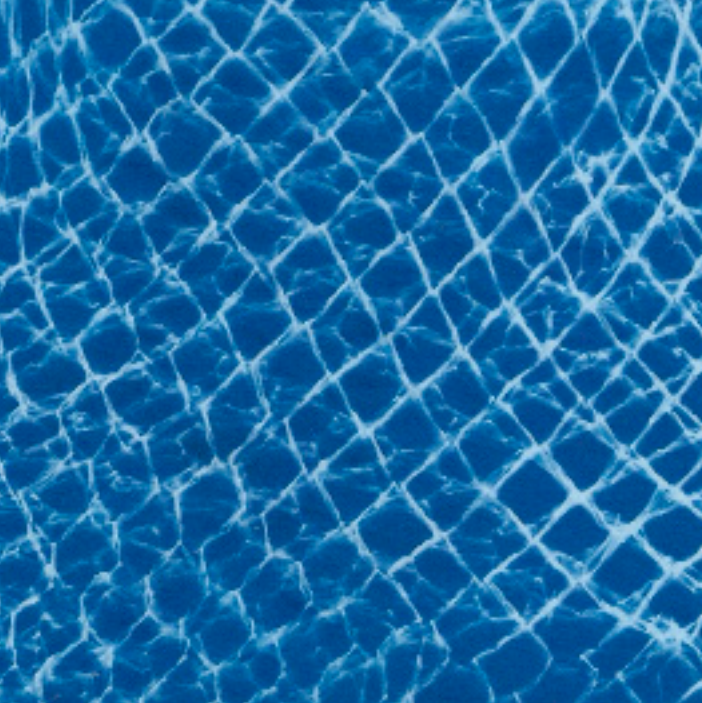
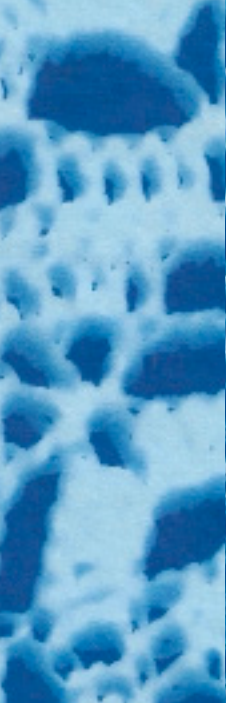


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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Memory is a tricky thing. It distorts and reshapes itself each time we revisit our pasts. What we remember is rarely exactly what was - and there is a certain beauty in that. Sometimes, the past is a place we go not for accuracy but for solace. Memory can create continuity where time tries to interfere, allowing us to preserve old feelings in the present. Memories serve a different purpose for each of us. And yet, memory is essential to our understanding of our identity, anchoring us to our experiences and relationships.

In this issue, our artists and writers dive into the complexities of remembering, more specifically, the ways we capture, manipulate, and preserve the moments and stories we give importance to. Through painting, collage, photography, digital art, and writing, our contributors explore the tension between reality and recollection, and what happens when we can't forget.

Melina Menghi
Untitled 9 Cyanotypes
4 in x 4 in, 2025

Sara Sierra-Garcia
En Algún Lugar
Digital collage, 8.5 in x 11 in, 2025



Art itself is an act of remembrance. It is a way we keep records with the understanding that there is a collectiveness in our experiences. The works in these pages are not just expressions of past histories, but meditations on how memory shapes our perceptions and the stories we tell ourselves and share with others. As you flip through these pages, we invite you to reflect with us. Whether in longing, joy, or in hopes of seeking clarity, consider the things you hold on to, how your recollections evolve over time, and how, in retrospect, you see yourself more clearly.

Warmly,
Kayla
Editor-in-Chief.



Work

Sara Sierra-Garcia
Hvitzitzilin
Digital collage 8.5 in x 11 in, 2025

Fragments of Light: Memory, Art, and the Longing to Preserve




Maya Yermekova

What is art without nostalgia?

Artists and writers alike are fueled by longing for something so distant in their memory and imagination that they often find themselves in desperate attempts to replicate that which was once lost. I myself suffer from nostalgia — its waves hitting me every now and then, convincing me that life, enshrouded in the veil of memory, is much more beautiful, appealing, and desirable compared to what I can see, feel, and hear right in front of me, right in this moment. I find myself incapable of seeing clearly with my eyes constantly seeking to catch a glimpse of something familiar. Yet, memory is distorting and so are all of my attempts to replicate the past.

Outside, it's March 20, 2025. It's Nowruz — Persian New Year and my grandmother's 79th birthday. Prior to moving to the US from Kazakhstan, I spent the majority of my childhood with her. After school, I would climb up the stairs of an old soviet apartment complex and be greeted by a bright red door on the 5th floor. I would come inside and my grandmother would instantly pour black tea with milk in a porcelain cup, turn on the TV that barely worked, and ask me about my day at school. I don't remember my answers, nor do I have an idea of what we even talked about. All I remember is the way her hand, with the veins protruding through her thinned-out skin, felt on top of mine.

Now, she doesn't know who I am. She simply does not remember. Not only that, but she doesn't remember her children and seems to have forgotten that her own mother, after whom I was named, passed away a long time









ago. My mother would often say that it was a gift from God — that memory loss was a means of protection. In my grandmother's world, her mother is alive and she has no idea that her son passed away merely a year ago. In this case, ignorance is bliss, all thanks to the human mind and its flawed nature.

Yet, we are still craving to preserve our memories, thoughts, and experiences. Such attempts provide us with a promise that happy moments exist, they happened once and they will repeat over and over again as long as we keep our memories of them alive. Art as a medium can preserve not only the happy moments but the bad ones as well, reflecting the mistakes once committed by humanity.

War, like memory, leaves behind remnants — fragments of a past that refuse to be forgotten. Felice Beato, an early Italian-British photographer, sought out these remnants, turning his lens toward devastation with the same urgency that one clings to fading recollections. During the Second Opium War in 1860, he captured the brutal aftermath of the battle at Fort Taku, where the Chinese defenders fought to the last man. In his pursuit of the “beautiful,” Beato urged, almost pleading, for the dead to remain untouched—at least until his camera had captured them. The contrast between his eagerness and the grim reality before him felt unsettling to the people present at the sight. In that moment, Beato was not just an observer but a director, wielding control not only over the lifeless bodies before him but also over the laborers who made such images possible. His photograph was more than a record; it was an assertion of power — over memory, over history, and over the very act of looking.

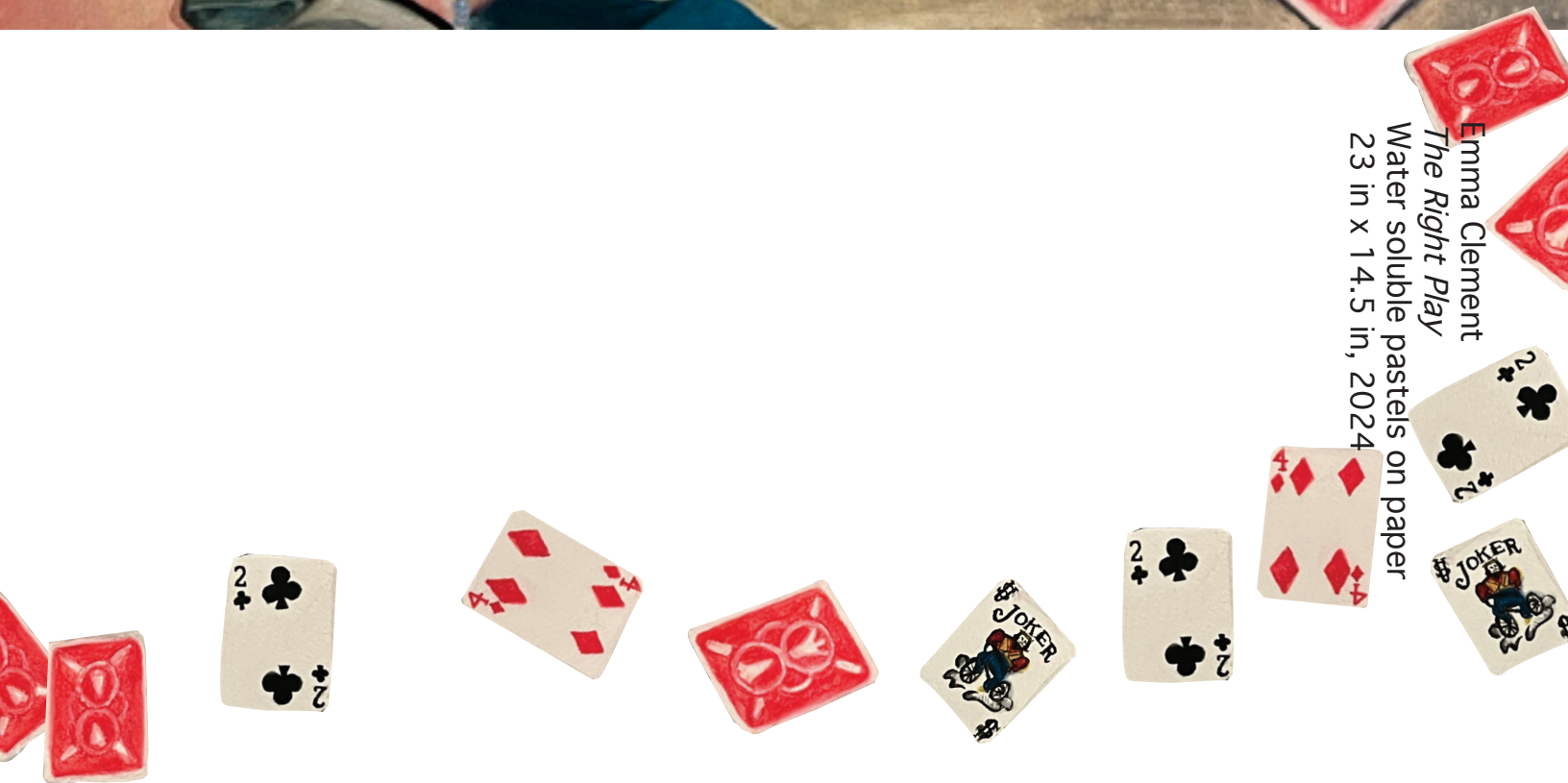
Perhaps Beato understood that memory, like a photograph, is selective. Less than two months after Fort Taku, he stood within the Summer Palace north of Peking, capturing its ornate interiors just before they were consumed by fire on Lord Elgin's orders. His images are among the last traces of what once stood, just as our own memories serve as the last echoes of those we love.

Memory, like a photograph, is a trick of light — what it chooses to illuminate, what it allows to fade. Beato's lens froze history in its most unflinching state, a mirror held up to destruction, yet even his photographs tell only fragments of the truth. My grandmother, too, holds a collection of images in her mind, but time has shuffled them like loose pages in the wind, erasing some, rearranging others. In her world, the past is not fixed but fluid, bending itself into softer, kinder shapes. Perhaps this is what all artists do — whether through words, paint, or the mechanical eye of a camera— they balance between fact and fiction, between what was and what is longed for. And perhaps that is the greatest paradox of memory: we cling to it desperately, knowing it is flawed, knowing it is incomplete, yet believing, somehow, that in its hazy glow, we might glimpse something true.





Emma Clement
The Right Play
Water soluble pastels on paper
23 in x 14.5 in, 2024





The Wereldmuseum: Art, Colonial Legacies, and the Power of Reclamation

Carter Plantinga

The Wereldmuseum in the Netherlands stands as a powerful reflection of the intersection between art, colonial history, and cultural identity. Once a repository for artifacts collected during Dutch colonial rule, the museum has transformed into a space that critically examines the legacy of colonized art and its place in contemporary discourse. By shifting its focus from mere exhibition to a more reflective engagement with history, the Wereldmuseum raises crucial questions about ownership, representation, and the ethics of display. It's leading the charge for artistic and historical institutions to grapple with their colonial legacies, but is it enough? For centuries, the colonial powers appropriated, categorized, and displayed the artistic expressions of the lands they conquered. Dutch colonial administrators, missionaries, and traders amassed vast collections of paintings,



textiles, sculptures, and ceremonial objects, often stripping them of their original meanings and context. These works, removed from their cultural landscapes, were exhibited through a Eurocentric lens, reinforcing narratives of exoticism and subjugation.

The Wereldmuseum itself has undergone several transformations in response to shifting attitudes toward colonialism. Founded in 1864 as the Koloniaal Museum in Haarlem, it was initially a showcase of Dutch overseas possessions, reflecting a vision of imperial grandeur. In the post-World War II period, it became the Indisch Museum (1945-1950), focusing on the Dutch East Indies, before expanding its scope as the Tropenmuseum (1950-2014), with a broader anthropological approach. The formation of the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (2014-2023) marked a more critical engagement with colonial legacies, and in 2023, the museum was rebranded as the Wereldmuseum, in English the World Museum, underscoring a more global and inclusive perspective.

Among the most striking examples in the Wereldmuseum's collection is its array of Indonesian wayang kulit puppets. Once used in elaborate storytelling traditions, these shadow puppets were not simply artifacts; they were living elements of a rich cultural practice. Removed from their original function and placed behind glass, their power as performative art was diminished. Similarly, the intricate batik textiles, traditionally crafted by Javanese artisans, were commodified for Western consumption, and their spiritual and social meanings were often disregarded.

James Roberts
Adolescence Series (Left: 2D, 6D, Right: 1D, 3D)
Digital photography, 2018 - 2022


The museum also houses Surinamese Maroon wood carvings—works that embody resistance and resilience. These carvings, created by escaped enslaved Africans in Suriname, were once viewed as ethnographic curiosities rather than artistic masterpieces. Today, the museum is working to reframe them as significant contributions to global art history, challenging the notion that fine art exists only within Western traditions.

The Wereldmuseum has taken steps toward a more ethical engagement with its collection, acknowledging that art cannot be divorced from the histories of those who created it. Rather than merely displaying objects, the museum now incorporates perspectives from source communities, ensuring that their voices shape the interpretation of their own cultural heritage. This shift has led to partnerships with indigenous artists and scholars, fostering a dialogue that bridges past and present.

One of the museum's most ambitious initiatives is its commitment to repatriation. Recognizing that many objects were acquired under exploitative conditions, the Wereldmuseum has begun the process of returning certain pieces to their countries of origin. In September 2024, 288 pieces of art were officially repatriated to Indonesia, marking a significant milestone in the museum's evolving approach to ethical curation. This move not only restores cultural heritage to those from whom it was taken but also challenges the long-held Western assumption that museums are the rightful caretakers of the world's art.

While colonialism sought to suppress and redefine artistic traditions, artists from colonized regions have continuously used their work as a form of resistance. The Wereld





museum now highlights these narratives, showcasing how contemporary artists reclaim and reinterpret traditional forms. Indonesian artist Entang Wiharso, for example, incorporates wayang motifs into his politically charged works, questioning power structures and cultural memory. Similarly, Surinamese artist Remy Jungerman blends Maroon artistic techniques with European modernism, creating a dialogue between past and present, oppression and self-determination.

By foregrounding these voices, the Wereldmuseum moves beyond being a static repository of the past—it becomes a dynamic space for rethinking the role of art in shaping history. This evolution mirrors a larger reckoning within the art world, where institutions must confront their colonial legacies and reimagine their role in a more equitable future. The question remains: What is the ethical responsibility of museums that house colonial collections? The Wereldmuseum's transformation suggests that the answer lies in transparency, collaboration, and restitution. By engaging in difficult conversations about its own past, it challenges other institutions to do the same. As the Wereldmuseum continues to evolve, it does so with a renewed sense of purpose—not just as a custodian of artifacts, but as a forum for dialogue, accountability, and artistic reinvention. Through critical exhibitions, partnerships with artists, and a commitment to justice, it redefines what it means to be an art museum in the 21st century. In doing so, it honors not just the objects in its collection, but the people and cultures from which they came.

James Roberts
Adolescence Series (5D)
Digital photography, 2018 – 2022

The Museum of Fine Arts' Presentation of Ancient Greek and Roman Sculpture

Cameron Bennett

When you walk into the main Ancient Greek and Roman gallery of the MFA, you are immediately faced with several marble sculptures, pots, and friezes. It looks like a traditional exhibition of ancient art. In fact, the focal point of the gallery is a colossal Roman statue called *Muse with the Head of Juno*. The statue is practically the epitome of what comes to mind when we think of Ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, with its flowing drapery and gleaming marble. The gallery is set up in a way so that one weaves through life-size sculptures and all white marble, but another one stands out. It is a Roman copy of the Athena Parthenos, and to the side is a screen with a technological rendering of what she is thought to have looked like. The position of the screen behind the sculpture forces you to reimagine the Athena Parthenos, as well as all other Greek and Roman sculptures. The text on the wall goes on to explain "The Myth of Classical Whiteness," stating that objects in the gallery marked with a color wheel have traces of pigments and urges the viewer to "experience ancient art as it was meant to be seen." Science and technology are now forcing museums to present a more accurate presentation of this art, and consequently forcing us to reevaluate our memories and perceptions.

Ancient Greek and Roman art have historically been characterized by gleaming, white marble statues, large temples, and lively pottery. However, this has not always been the case as it has gone through gradual



Muse with the Head of Juno, Marble, Roman 1st B.C. j

transformations in its style and content. Following the Dark Ages of Greek art and the collapse of the Bronze Age, Greek art gradually became what we know and recognize today. This is because of the narrowing in on the human form that will become the hallmark of Greco-Roman painting and sculpture. We can see this in female-youth statues known as kore and male-youth statues known as kouros. In the Classical period, we see an increased interest in replicating the human body in a naturalistic manner. Sculptors created new techniques like contrapposto, the representation of the natural shift in body weight, and painters developed atmospheric perspective and multiple ground lines (Gondek). The Hellenistic period is characterized by more dramatic emotions and motions in sculpture. These foundations create the basis for our perception of Greco-Roman art. Moreover, Ancient Greek and Roman culture is intricately woven into today's society through movies, theater, architecture, medicine, philosophy, etc. However, our collective perception is slightly askew. Modern technology and advances have allowed for us to see this civilization in a more truthful manner, as the sculptures were not gleaming white, but brightly painted (Gondek).

The way we remember ancient civilizations is primarily by the art and architecture they produced. Our collective consciousness of Greek and Roman art is through its main canon—the Pantheon, Riace Warrior, Nike of Samothrace, the list goes on. This aligns with most of the art we see in museums, but as the research moves forward the museums need to as well. We see this in the Ancient Greek and Roman galleries of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston with the previously mentioned digitized 3-D model of the Athena Parthenos statue. Technology is permitting us to see art the way it was meant to be seen. However, we are used to thinking of Greco-Roman sculpture the way it is normally presented in museums; a marble bust or sculpture behind glass with a stoic expression that exudes sophistication. This is how we want to remember Classical art, but there is a stark difference between this memory and one with the addition of color. The MFA states that the polychromed sculptures could even be considered garish by today's standards, which directly contradicts the air of sophistication that is associated with these sculptures. The painting of Ancient Greek sculpture has become sort of a fun fact when we learn about it or when we see it in a museum, hindering us from coming to terms with how we envision this civilization in our minds and what it actually looked like.

Memory can skew reality at times and impacts how we see things. Sometimes we only want to remember something the way we want to, and it can be hard to adjust. Memory is something that can be very personal, and it can be collective. The same can be said for art. When art and memory become intertwined it is hard to untangle and adjust to the truth. Ancient Greek and Roman statues are an essential element of our collective memory when it comes to these civilizations. The “Myth of Classical Whiteness” will forever be ingrained in our brains, even though we know it is not true, because sometimes that is how memory works. When it comes to art and memory we constantly have to readjust and reevaluate when new information arises.



Red in My Memory

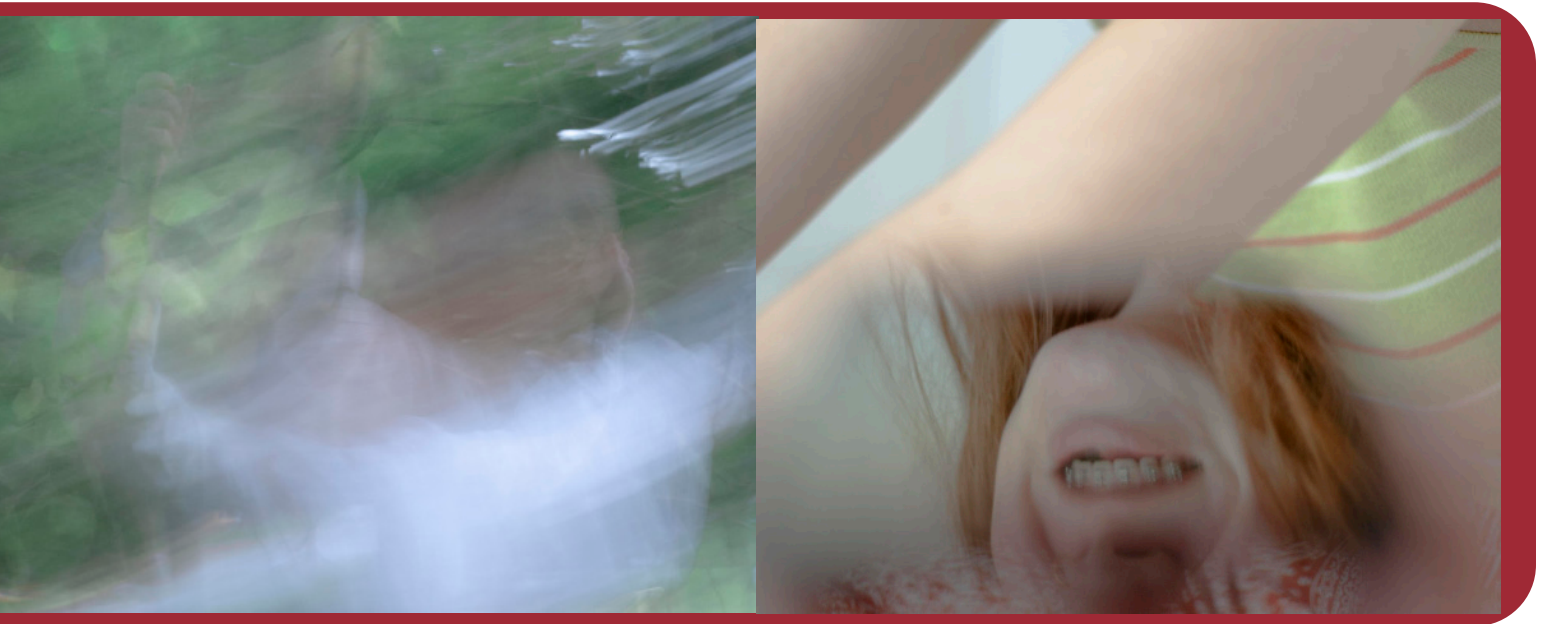
Nancy Wang

Each year, as the first new moon of the Chinese lunar calendar marks the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the visual language of celebration takes over, with red emerging as the dominant hue in decorations, art, and symbols. Preparations for the New Year begin, with ubiquitous 福 (fú) taped onto windows and doors, symbolizing more than just a wish for happiness—believed to invite fortune. Rolls of couplets (对联) are placed on the doors, while peach blossoms and bamboo adorn the windows. Each year, as the streets of Chinatown come alive with the beats of lion dances and firecrackers, I'm showered with confetti and given 红包 (hóngbāo) (red envelopes) filled with money. Every action holds special meaning, symbolizing the giving or receiving of luck for the new year. In the drawer of my desk, I keep a collection of red envelopes from each year, as though hoarding luck itself. Often adorned with gold details and its year's designated zodiac animal, these envelopes carry more than just monetary value—they symbolize the passing of blessings and the continuity of fortune across generations. The act of giving and receiving red envelopes, in art, represents familial bonds and the transmission of good fortune within the community.

In traditional Chinese painting, red has long symbolized prosperity, protection, and good fortune, with a rich artistic and cultural history dating back to the Tang and Song dynasties. According to ancient folklore, the color red and loud noises, such as firecrackers and fireworks, were believed to ward off demons. As spring arrives and the cold persists, cherry blossoms (plum flowers) are among the first to bloom. In Chinese art, these early blossoms symbolize resilience and enduring hope, embodying the concept of renewal. Rendered in delicate brushwork, often with ink wash or watercolor, the flowers appear in varying shades of red or pink, evoking themes of rebirth and new beginnings. The brushstroke technique, with its fluidity and spontaneity, contrasts fragility with strength, symbolizing resilience in the face of adversity. Chinese New Year art often depicts commu-

James Roberts
Adolescence Series (3L)
Digital photography, 2018 – 2022

James Roberts
Adolescence Series (4L, 11L, 10L)
Digital photography, 2018 - 2022



nities and small towns, where children dressed in red embody the joy and vitality of the season. Red firecrackers and decorations, carefully integrated into these works, symbolize protection and abundance with their deep roots in cultural traditions. Examining Chinese New Year art reveals that these colors and symbols are far more than decorative; they are steeped in centuries of tradition. The evolution of artistic techniques—from the delicate brushwork of the Tang and Song dynasties to the intricate woodblock prints of the Ming and Qing dynasties—shows how these symbols have been continually reinterpreted and preserved across mediums. Through calligraphy, ink washing, woodblock printing, and even modern digital art, artists have upheld the essence of renewal, hope, and prosperity.

As I turn 20, I realize that the red in my life holds memories of every New Year I've experienced. These memories capture the vibrant spirit of the season—family, friends,



celebrations, laughter, happiness, and hope for the year ahead. In Chinese culture, as well as many cultures across Asia, red symbolizes luck and prosperity, making it a constant thread woven throughout my childhood. As millions around the world celebrate the Lunar New Year, I understand that the red in my life is not unique to me alone. The same red decorates homes and windows everywhere, creating a shared tapestry of joy, luck, and renewal. This red binds us all together in celebration, symbolizing community and family. It carries not only personal memories but also the weight of centuries of artistic tradition and cultural significance. In this way, the essence of the Lunar New Year is found not just in its traditions, but in the shared joy of a fresh start, the hope for a brighter future, and the collective spirit that unites families and communities. The red in my life, like the red around me, speaks to the power of togetherness and the enduring love that shapes our memories.



Emma Clement
2011
Digital, 17.8 in x 12.4 in, 2025

Anna Novick
Wistful Glee
Digital, 3.6 in x 4.8 in, 2025



The Mete and the Muse: The Uncategorical American Identity

I often forget myself. Having moved around so often in my youth, I question if I can justify stating I am from New York, or Los Angeles, or even Hailey, Idaho.

Over this past winter break, I visited four separate locations: New York, Los Angeles, New Jersey, and New Orleans, the home of my mother's side of the family. Despite never having been there myself, I am close with my relatives in Louisiana - my mother's

cousin, her parents, and her six-year-old daughter, whom I adore.

Coming into New Orleans, I had a fixed idea of what their arts scene consisted of. Based on my East Coast education, I understood New Orleans' contributions to the arts through their modern affinities to celebration. During Mardi Gras, tourists flood the French Quarter, treating the city as an amusement park. The French Quarter has often been remarked as "Disneyfied" for tourists, with Walt Disney himself stating, "Where else can you find—and antiquity so close together?" (Souther, 2007, p.804). To outsiders, the complicated history of New Orleans has been overlooked and replaced with a seasonal fantasy for tourists, with the historic downtown and Bourbon Street being transformed by foot traffic and raucous behavior for beads. With the media coverage of New Orleans, one can reduce New Orleans into a hedonic place of escape, but New Orleans continues to greatly contribute to the arts world without tourism involved, both during and outside of Mardi Gras.

During the season, the Mardi Gras Indians combine the African American experience with Native American motifs with elaborate hand-sewn suits utilizing feathers and beads. Established af-

Malachi Roth-Cohen
Observant Sex Worker
Oil on linen, 12 in x 12 in, 2023



ter the end of slavery in America, the Mardi Gras Indians create a subculture with leadership and kinship that extends beyond Mardi Gras in a city that has been divided by race for centuries (Becker, 2013). Creating the costumes takes hundreds of hours of work, and they beadwork a diverse collection of scenes, sometimes representative of self, but often displaying the injustices experienced by their ancestors. They are a living representation of American history in their combination of culture, finding self in modernity after history has been suppressed, and America's penchant for violence against African Americans that continues into the contemporary.

New Orleans' artistic output beyond Mardi Gras has always been present, but especially after times of political turmoil. In 2017, resident

Neal Morris allowed for a street artist, Cashy-D to create a mural quoting President Trump's infamous Access Hollywood tape with pictograms of the offensive statements on his property. Because of the explicit statements, the city threatened to sue. The ACLU backed Morris's right to free speech, and his charges were dropped. After this experience, Morris founded the NOLA Mural Project to protect the rights of mural artists and to expand the public mural outreach in the city. Current Mayor LaToya Cantrell enforced mural ordinances in cooperation with artists, showing a city-wide interest in the arts (Nola Mural Project).

A few days into my trip, Ali suggested that my mother and I should go to the New Orleans Museum of Fine Arts around town. When she dropped us that it looked like every other museum on the East Coast. It had many of the neoclassical elements I was used to, with distinguished Ionic columns and pilasters. For some reason, I had expected southern museums to be completely different from the ones I was used to seeing on the East Coast, but it just wasn't.

The first floor galleries featured Italian Renaissance and Flemish arts, all of which took up several rooms each. My mother and I wandered around the first floor we kept stating how shocked the museum had this many pieces from other countries and times in history.

As a military brat, my mother grew up all across Western Europe, and she had been taught that Europe is the center of the arts world, while I, a New York, had been taught that it was New York. Our shock continued and our curiosity grew as we ventured into the third-floor galleries - Arts of Asia and Africa. While we were cramped, we were shocked at their presence. We had the idea that everything in the museum was going to be local and contemporary, based on our media consumption of only contemporary NOLA artists. fantastically curated and dedicated to local arts, spaces that nod to the history of NOLA.

Although there was a contemporary section dedicated to local arts, the museum includes many spaces that nod to the history of NOLA. On the second-floor pavilion, the left-hand entry gallery is dedicated to the portraiture of the French aristocracy during the time of French colonization in the Americas, as New Orleans was the capital of the French colony until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. At the center, a large portrait of Marie Antoinette, and an accompanying portrait of the artist, Elizabeth Vigée-Le Brun,

while she did some errands off, I was surprised to see the classical elements I was used to in museum I had been to on the East Coast, but it just wasn't. The floor galleries featured Spanish-Colonial arts, all of which took up several rooms each. My mother and I wandered around the first floor we kept stating how shocked the museum had this many pieces from other countries and times in history. As a military brat, my mother grew up all across Western Europe, and she had been taught that Europe is the center of the arts world, while I, a New York, had been taught that it was New York. Our shock continued and our curiosity grew as we ventured into the third-floor galleries - Arts of Asia and Africa. While we were cramped, we were shocked at their presence. We had the idea that everything in the museum was going to be local and contemporary, based on our media consumption of only contemporary NOLA artists. fantastically curated and dedicated to local arts, spaces that nod to the history of NOLA.



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itself. A portrait of Louis XVI hangs on the right-hand side, accompanied by French-born representatives who overlooked New Orleans during the period. New Orleans does not forget its French heritage. Instead of cultural shifts, it remembers the complexities of its history and the subsequent cultural absorptions from its influences.

New Orleans celebrates its people, but also the land it resides on. Nestled in a corner across from the "French room," a wood-paneled room houses idyllic landscapes from the 19th century, showcasing the swamps New Orleans is known for, but in a different, beautiful light. I had seen the swamps as something rough and untouchable, a disadvantage of expansion, but these artists saw their unique biological makeup as something to admire. The trees twist against the sunset, further radiated by the reflective surfaces of the water in a serene composition encapsulating the love radiated by the artists. The last painting, as one leaves the room, is of *The Spirit of Louisiana*. She is said to have ambiguous features, recognizing the diversity of NOLA, Draped in pearls and flora of the area, she covers herself with classical drapery reminiscent of the motifs I had come to recognize in my arts education of the western canon. After our tour of the inside galleries, my mother and I explored the outside gardens of the museum which can be walked around all year long because of the weather. It was there I saw *The Mete and the Muse* by Fred Wilson.

Wilson is known for his critique of the antiquated teachings of art history as categorical, whether that be by religion, race, or region (Pace Gallery). *The Mete of the Muse* places the two ideals of ancient beauty - the strong, unyielding power of the cubic

Egyptian Queen, a goddess of truth and order, and the sensual, playful beauty of the classical Grecian muse through the lens of the neoclassical point of view. Both are encapsulations of the ideal of womanhood, but both place women in categories that do not place them as a whole. As I stared at the two women, I saw how I too had been placing culture into separate categories through my art history education, and how wrong I had been, but also perhaps the faults in my education for not giving me a complete view of the arts of America.

Fred Wilson is not southern, he is from the Bronx in New York City, only forty minutes away from my quiet town of Rye, New York. Wilson comes from where I come from, and yet his work is in NOLA. This country is not a separation of just states, it's a larger, multi-connected culture that defies category. We as a nation are so large that we often forget our national identity. We disassociate from other parts of our country when they are, in fact, our country. Regions remember their history separately, especially in recent times, but we are one.

When I came back from the museum, I sat with my mother's cousin's six-year-old daughter at her request and talked about each piece I had taken a picture of. She talked incessantly about coming to visit us in New York again because she wanted to see more of a world that was not in her everyday, but still a part of her. She was far more open-minded than I had been. That night, we watched *The Rescuers*, a Disney movie with both New York City and New Orleans. Maisie was ecstatic that there was something that had represented us both, and I saw how connected our homes and the arts have been.

E•TEN

Helena Nguyen + Malachi Roth-Cohen

POV

Oil and mirror on canvas, 30 in x 40 in
2024



The Myth of Originality

Andrew Wang

The other day, I looked back to those special days when I was a kid. I would sit in front of a blank sheet of paper with a colored pencil, and freak out. I was a very neurotic kid. Nothing I could put on the paper seemed right. No beauty could come out of my mind and through my hands. There were a lot of neuroticisms I had to overcome in order to appreciate and engage with art, and a big one was a notion of “originality” in my head which always stopped me from actually making art. To kid me, art was about bringing something from nothing, and to take inspiration was to cheat. Art was the pure expression of coming up with an image in the mind and then transmuting it perfectly onto the page. As I grew up, I learned how a lot of my favorite artists worked, and my childlike notion of “originality” started to feel only like a one-sided illusion, held in the viewer but never in the artist themselves. Whenever I would read the history of a piece of art, I would look for the “originality” and it would never come.

As I learned more about music, especially the vast ecosystem of influences that went into a piece of prestige hip-hop, art seemed to be a game of connecting different pieces together, like building Lego blocks. There was artistry and originality in connecting different influences, sounds, samples, and interpolations, but the songs I liked were pretty much never created from nothing. I would watch producer breakdowns on youtube for Kanye and saw that there were so many samples and interpolations that it felt like he was just gluing different pre-made pieces together. Obviously there is artistry in that, but it helped break my view that art was creating something out of nothing.

While reading about Picasso, I learned about how his work developing Cubism was some of the most ground-breaking artistic thought at the time. But it was also taking advantage of thousands of years of African artistic tradition of mask-making and putting it in a 2D medium, and bringing it over to people who had never seen it before. It seemed more like arbitrage than originality. An idea in one place can be common and undervalued, but when simply shifted over a thousand miles north it can become a hit. While it requires valid labor and creativity to bring it up, it doesn't align with my childlike opinion that creativity is originality, and originality is creating something

James Roberts
Adolescence (1-n)
Digital photography, 2018-2022



out of nothing. Studying Picasso taught me that sometimes good art feels like stealing, and doesn't feel like creation from the perspective of the artist. If I were a Parisian gallery visitor, Picasso's cubist work would be shockingly original. But to Picasso, it probably felt odd that he could make a career by xeroxing ideas from a hundred miles south of his native Spain.

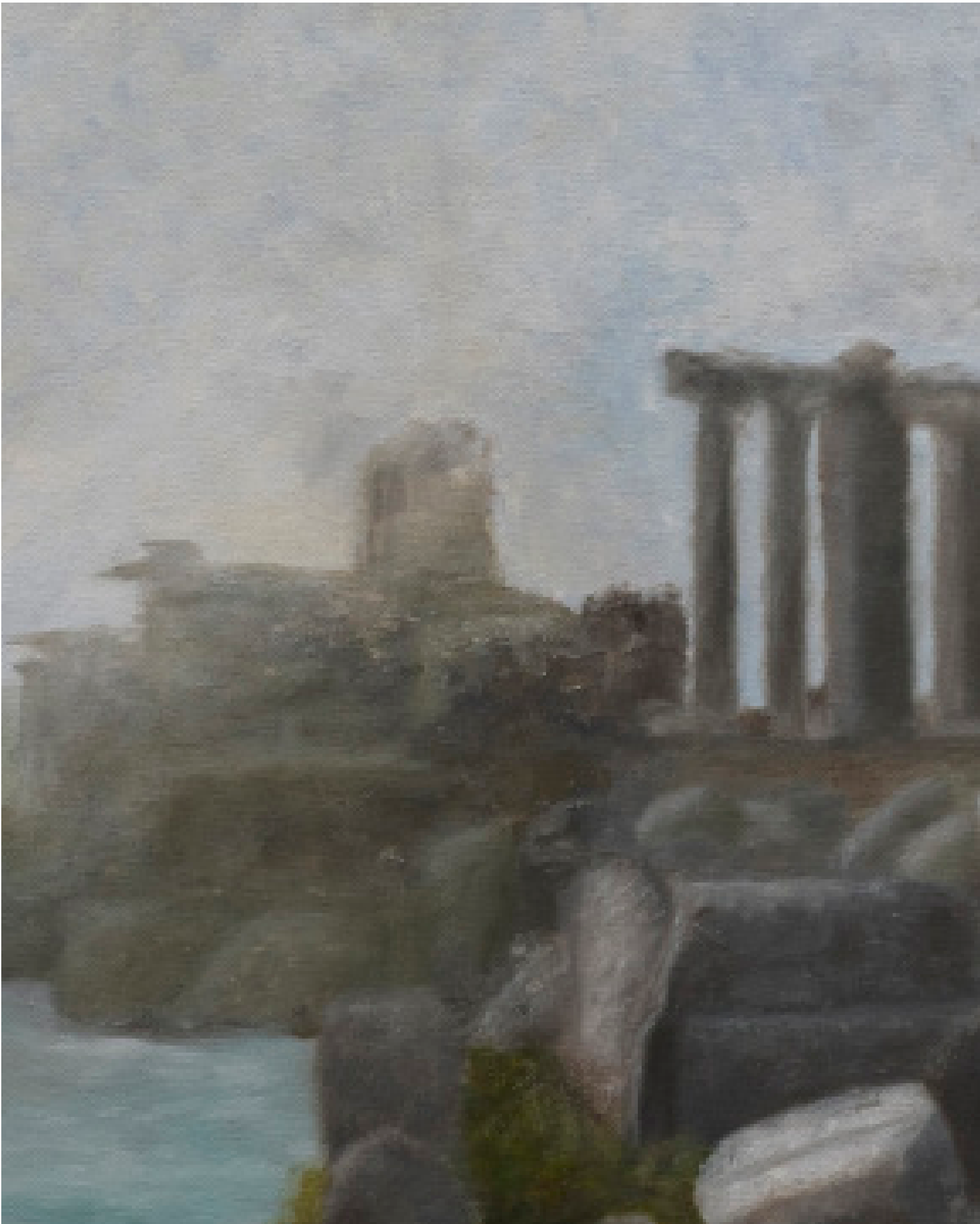
I care about fashion a lot, and to be plugged into the fashion world is to see influence move around like syrup mixing into a drink. The more I could see the influences percolate through the different designers across the world, the less that originality seemed real. Take one of my favorite designer's, Jun Takahashi, piece in the UNDERCOVER spring 2020 runway. There is creativity and vision, and originality in the eyes of the viewer, but to the designer, it probably felt like a pastiche of different influences.

Jun Takahashi didn't invent the work jacket, didn't take the picture printed on the piece, but combined all of these elements to create this look.

I'm so happy I don't believe in creating something out of nothing anymore. The only artist who could do that might be God in genesis. Nowadays I see artistry and creativity as combination, modification, and the movement of ideas to new audiences. I can be part of a long chain of people who received an artistic canon, modified it, and passed it on. All the way from the simplest representational work on cave paintings, to Byzantine angels, to runways in Tokyo. But there are no people who create something out of nothing. It gives me hope that one day I can learn to create things, and I won't have to tackle the gargantuan task of trying to be God.









George Stoica
Ruins

Oil on canvas, 16 in x 20 in, 2025

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Malachi Roth-Cohen
Those Who Watch (Anxiety)
Oil on linen, 24 in x 36 in
2022

Contributors

Executive Board

Kayla Palmer

Editor-in-Chief

Kayla is a senior studying Media Science. Over the past 3 years, she has loved creating opportunities for artists and writers to gain more visibility at BU. Her favorite parts have been the gallery events and being able to watch the Squinch community grow. Kayla looks forward to seeing all that Squinch will continue to do after she graduates!

Elena Jordan

Creative Director

EJ is a junior studying History of Art and Architecture and Visual Arts. She is approaching her third year as a member of Squinch where she has been the Creative Director for the past year. Her favorite moments in Squinch have been the late-night creative discussions and issue launch parties! She hopes to pursue a career in the art field as a fine arts conservator.

Gabrielle Wylie-Chaney

Senior Editor

Gabrielle is a sophomore pursuing a double major in the History of Art and Architecture and Cinema and Media studies, minor-ing in Italian and Urban Studies. She has been at Squinch for the past two years where she loves to foster her deep-rooted passion for the production of media.

Julia Cheung

Creative Marketing Director

Julia is a senior at the School of Visual Arts, receiving her BFA in Graphic Design. This is her second year on the Squinch team, and has found passion in promoting the work of artists and writers through social media designs. While she enjoys her role in marketing, she also pursues practices in experimental photography, etching, and monotypes.

Mia Hand

Outreach Director

Mia is a junior studying History of Art and Architecture and Political Science. This is her second year in Squinch, and she has enjoyed writing for the publication as well as working behind the scenes on our community events and launch parties! She enjoys reading and writing about modern and performance art and hopes to continue to grow the Squinch community next year!

Contributors

Artists

Henry Backus

Henry is a junior pursuing a major in Biology with a CMG specialization. He's always been an avid doodler which helped him a lot when he started taking drawing seriously. Aside from art, he also likes to spend time rock climbing, backpacking, baking bread, and working on his bonsai trees.

Emma Clement

Emma is a freshman studying Journalism with a minor in Visual Arts. This is her first semester as a member of Squinch and she is excited to be a part of the team. She loves to draw and paint and her favorite mediums are gouache, oil pastels, and digital. Emma hopes to pursue a career in journalism or graphic design in the future.

Melina Menghi

Melina is a Sophomore studying Advertising, with minors in Visual Arts and Art History. This is her second semester in Squinch, and she has loved being part of such a talented and welcoming community. She creates all sorts of art, and is excited to have her series of cyanotype prints in this issue, which explore the patterns and forms of various salvaged textiles and foraged plants.

Anna Novick

Anna is a sophomore studying Graphic Design with a minor in Advertising. She joined Squinch her freshman year and has enjoyed being part of such a driven community of artists and writers. She works mostly with digital mediums but also enjoys mixed media, painting, pastels, pencils, and more. Anna is excited to continue growing her artistic skills with Squinch and to help spread positivity and knowledge with her art.

James Roberts

James is a senior studying Mechanical Engineering and this has been his first and final semester with Squinch. He has enjoyed being in this creative environment collaborating with all the other artists to create this issue. He is thankful for all who contributed to this issue.

Malachi Roth-Cohen

Malachi Roth-Cohen is really just an explorer. He is studying Advertising, Anthropology, and Visual Arts. Malachi enjoys exploring the possibilities of life and pursuing what makes him happy. He joined Squinch because Svetlana told Malachi he should and Malachi listens to Svet. His oil painting career began at age 12 when his grandmother, Margaret Vendryes, sat him down at her easel and taught young Malachi how to use oil paints and solvents. His first painting was a truffla tree sitting alone in a purple forest. She hung it up in her office in SUNY Queens (EOC). His work has gone on to be featured in galleries across New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Italy. His current life plan, as of right now, is to buy his mom a house. After that, Malachi Roth-Cohen is just going to be free styling it.

Sara Sierra-Garcia

Sara is a Sophomore studying the History of Art and Architecture with a minor in Visual Arts. She joined Squinch her freshman year and has enjoyed being part of such a driven community of artists. She works mostly with mixed media photo collages, but enjoys working with other mediums such as ceramics as well. She looks forward to further exploring her creativity and expanding her artistic skills with the dedicated group of artists at Squinch.

George Stoica

George is a junior studying Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He joined Squinch during his sophomore year and enjoys being in a community that appreciates art. He uses oil paints and has been trying to develop his painting techniques throughout the issues for Squinch.

Contributors

Writers

Cameron Bennett

Cameron is a junior studying the History of Art and Architecture with a minor in Business Administration and Management. She joined Squinch this semester and has really enjoyed exploring writing about art outside of academic settings. She hopes to one day own a gallery and is looking forward to doing more with Squinch in the future!

Carter Plantinga

Carter is a senior studying Political Science and Art History. He has had a lot of fun writing for Squinch this semester, and loves getting to talk about the stuff he's interested in for a magazine. He's passionate about music and horror movies, and is a lifelong Tennessee Titans fan.

Andrew Wang

Andrew is a senior studying Biomedical Engineering. He has only recently gotten into the BU writing community but he loves it. He enjoys writing, art, and biohacking, and hopes to pursue independent media in the future.

Nancy Wang

Nancy is a sophomore studying Biology, and minoring in Art History. She joined the Squinch writing team this year and has thoroughly enjoyed writing about art and contributing to this semester's edition. In her free time, she loves visiting art museums, and spending time with friends at cafes! She hopes to continue her studies and be active in the healthcare field after graduation.

Jocelyn White

Jocelyn is a sophomore studying History of Art and Architecture. She joined Squinch this semester and has been loving being a part of the team. Her favorite place is a museum, and she is so thankful for having a place to express her love for art. She hopes to continue her education in Museum Studies in Boston after graduation.

Maya Yermekova

Maya is a junior studying Linguistics & Philosophy and Art History. She has thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Squinch team and hopes to continue helping it grow even more! She loves to write fiction and stream-of-consciousness style pieces, with hopes to pursue a career in publishing or museum work.

Marketing

Andrew Kim

Andrew is a freshman studying Chemistry with a specialization in chemical biology in the pre-health track. This is his second semester working with Squinch and he hopes to better help show the wonders of his fellow writers and artists to the BU community.

Madina Khasanboeva

Madina Khasanboeva is a sophomore pursuing a dual degree in Architectural Studies and Advertising, a unique combination that allows her to blend design with strategic storytelling. This is her first semester with Squinch, where she's excited to merge her passion for creative design and marketing. Madina thrives at the intersection of space, visuals, and audience engagement. Outside of Squinch, Madina enjoys exploring urban landscapes for inspiration, sketching architectural concepts, and experimenting with digital media.

Sarah Tocci

Sarah is a sophomore majoring in Advertising with a minor in Visual Arts. This is her second semester with Squinch and has enjoyed her time creating social media graphics for the marketing team. In her free time, she loves drawing, going for walks around the city, and writing songs.

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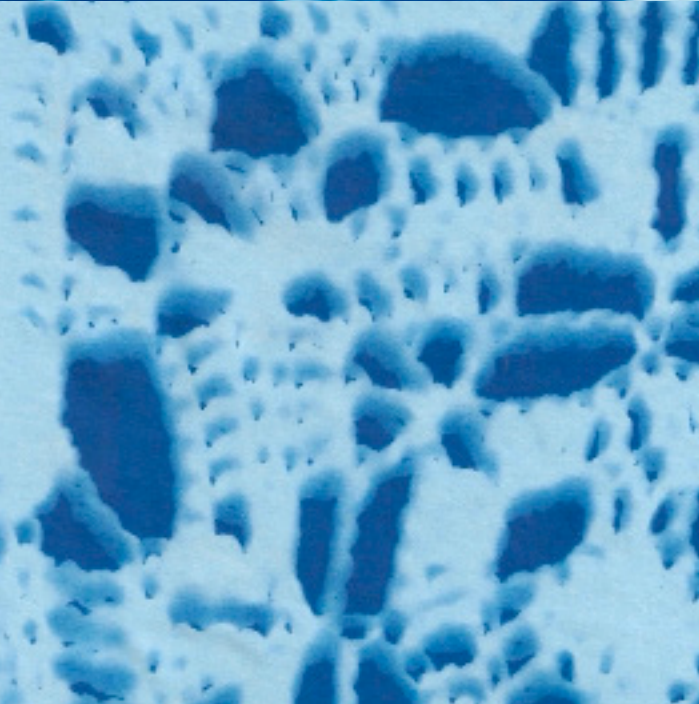
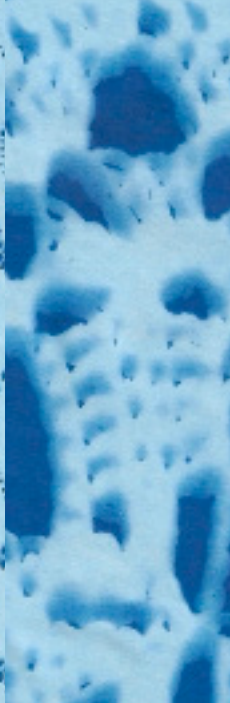
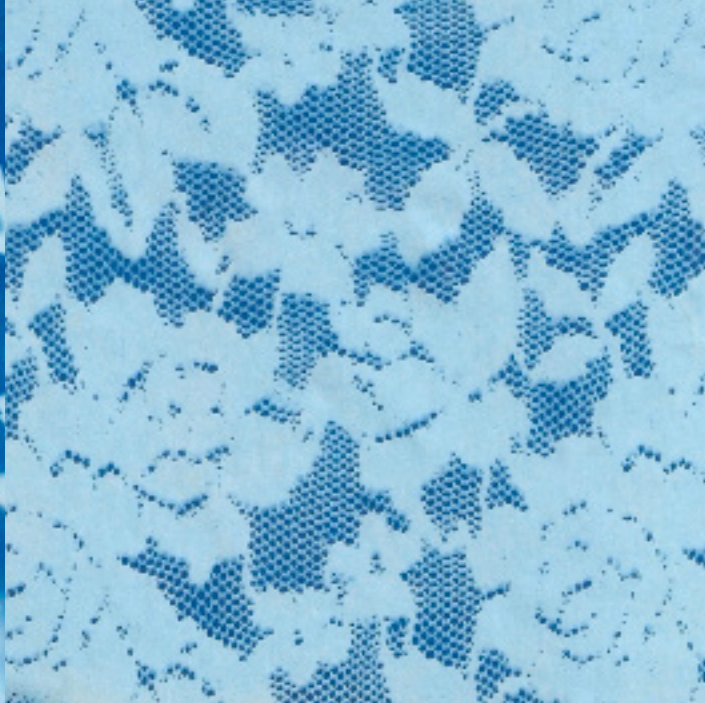
Muse with Head of Juno, Roman, early Imperial period, late 1st century BCE. Marble

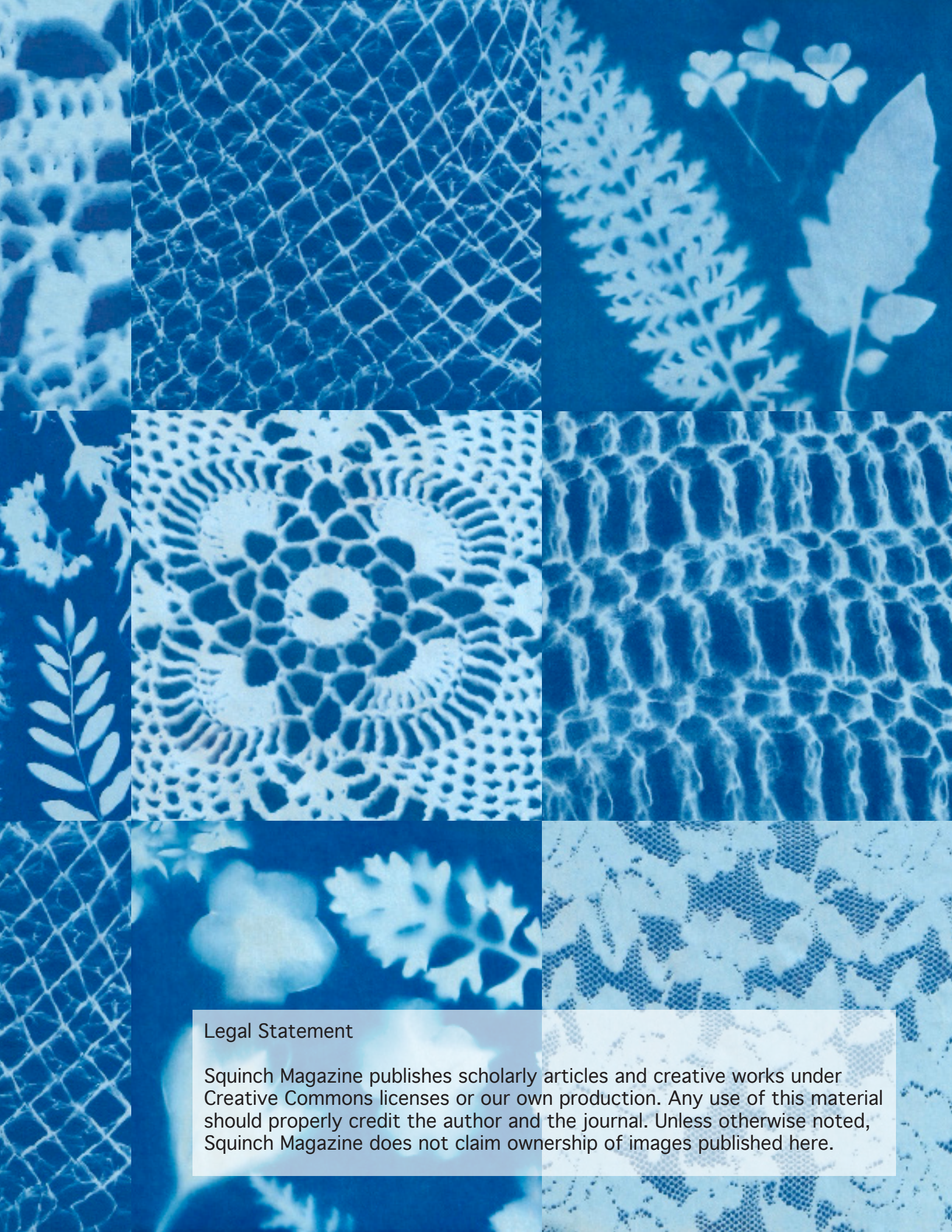
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