11th Annual Creative Arts Festival

Eli Civetta and Finn Rollings – Emcees

VISUAL ARTS:

Nur Hussain – Portraits of the People I Adore (Photography)

Haris Bukaric – The Face of Love (Visual Art)

Chloe Chow – The Face That Drew a Thousand Swords (Visual Art)

PERFORMANCES:

Joyce Pu – Why Is She Speaking? (Poetry)

Andy Hartman – All-In (Staged Reading)

Olivia Yarvis – La Casa del Migrante (Documentary)

Laurisa Sastoque – Light as He Willed (Excerpt) (Short Story)

Yanis Cherif – Melodies in Distance (Video Journalism)

Samantha Cho – Femme & Queer Asian American Narratives (Creative Non-Fiction)

Lalla-Aicha Adouim – Wabaya (Poetry)

Abdullah Imran – Against All Odds (Short Film)

Olivia Pierce – Toonana Mangwana (Original Music)
Professional Jury
Bryce O’Tierney, Poet-Musician
Maris O’Tierney, Poet-Musician
Mickie Pascal, Pascal-Rudnicke Casting
Jennifer Rudnicke, Pascal-Rudnicke Casting

Stage Manager
Mikaela Fenn
The *Face of Love* is a digital illustration, a piece done using the *Procreate* software on an iPad. The illustration features a blue background with small simplistic white flowers and red hearts. The background also uses transitions in lighting to add a sense of depth and put the foreground characters in focus. The characters, two lovers in the center, are drawn with pencil strokes that resemble charcoal qualities. In contrast to the background, the two figures are drawn so that the illusion of transitions, brightness values and edges come together to form a realistic look. Finally, in the center point of the drawing, the heads of the figures are left without any details on their faces – yet another contrasting quality of the piece, this specific feature is the most important symbol of the artwork, and therefore, the inspiration for its name.

As a Muslim from Bosnia and Herzegovina, an important part of my culture is the belief that depicting human faces in visual arts goes against the values of Islam, and is therefore considered a sin. This barrier has shaped my path as an artist from an early age. “The Face Of Love” is the first drawing I have made that does not try to work around
this obstacle, but rather fully embraces the lack of facial features. This decision goes outside of my comfort zone, since blank heads could be interpreted as disturbing by the audience, or seem like an indicator of poor artistic skill. This risk is especially significant, as the two lovers are me and my girlfriend, so it was only appropriate to be fearless in order to express my emotions towards her. The drawing was made for her as a Christmas gift, and depicts us holding each other and posing for a “photo”. The colors of the background (blue, white, and red) were put together to create a wintery Christmas ambient. Specifically, the white flowers carry a significant importance. At the beginning of our relationship, my girlfriend took my tablet and doodled these flowers on my Chem lecture notes, and I copied those doodles and incorporated them into the drawing’s background. Even though my girlfriend did not directly participate in creating this drawing, I made sure to add both our signatures to the bottom left corner of the piece, to further symbolically represent “us standing together”.
This is a digital piece showing Helen of Troy and Menelaus at the end of the Trojan War. Helen has her back to the viewer and though Menelaus faces Helen, most of his face is out of frame. Menelaus is holding Helen's hand with his right hand. His sword is in midair, falling from his left hand. Menelaus wears heavy bronze armor covering his chest, shoulders, and upper legs. He also wears bronze greaves and sandals. Helen wears a sheer blue and gold dress with her chest exposed in the style of Bronze Age Minoan women. She also has gold jewelry and is not wearing shoes. Helen has red hair and her head is the center of the scene. The figures are placed on an empty field with mountains and a blue sky. The painting was completed digitally on Procreate with an effort to recreate a painterly style.

This piece is based on the story and images of Menelaus deciding not to kill Helen at the end of the Trojan War. Most depictions of the scene show Helen and Menelaus in clothing accurate to the artist's time period or to the artist's imagining of the Ancient Greeks rather than what is accurate to the Bronze Age, the time period of the mythic Trojan war. I also wanted to focus on Helen as the center
of the scene. Helen has been attacked and defended throughout literature and art, so I wanted to highlight how she both does and does not chose to use her beauty and intellect to fight back against the men seeking to harm her in different iterations. Menelaus is often shown with his sword unsheathed, showing his intent to hurt his wife, but falling from his hand, showing that he has changed his mind for some reason. Though we cannot see the face of either figure, Helen is exposed in her dress while most of Menelaus' body is covered by his heavy bronze armor. Their respective clothing shows the power dynamic, yet it is unclear who is winning over whom. I used the Dendra Panoply as a reference for Menelaus and the Thera wall paintings as a reference for Helen. This piece was completed digitally on Procreate. In making this piece, I hope to add to the long history of showing Helen as a complex and interesting mythic figure, both victim and instigator.
Nur Munawarah Hussain

Faculty Advisor: João Queiroga

Portraitures of the people I adore (Photography)

*Portraitures of the people I adore* is an anthology series of portraits that showcase my friends and family in Singapore and Qatar. I wanted to capture them in a way that differs from what they are normally seen by others daily. Through this series of portraits, I want the viewers to imagine how they are like as individuals. Would they be projected like how they are on a regular basis through the photographs? *(Each photo are accompanied with their own description on how I met each individual.)*

I enjoy capturing moments and subjects as a photographer. I believe that a picture can be interpreted in different ways and that there are more to people than what we normally see of them. Hence, I was inspired to do this series with that believe in mind. Through this photographs, I hope the viewers could have their own interpretation. Afterwards, read the descriptions to see how I have known them over the years.
This poem is a protest. A song. An urgent cry. It inherits the agony of not being able to speak entirely in its mother tongue, but also the freedom to express itself in a state of foreignness that it keeps resisting and reconciling with. This poem is about the process – the bearing/witnessing, the writing, and the speaking up. It’s about reclaiming female narratives that are outlawed and silenced and seeking agency in a voyeuristic, exploitative instead of restorative media environment. It refuses to be defined and outgrows itself each time it’s going to be heard. It was written at a time of fear and confusion as well as foresight and clarity, and through writing, it shapes into a fearless voice on its own.

This poem would not have been born without the Chinese women who have screamed from the bottom of their hearts. A tribute to Her. And a question that demands an answer from us.
This past summer, I had the privilege of working on my project, “Where The 1% Meets The 99%: A Theatrical Exploration Of Income Inequality Through The Unlikely Friendship Between A Driving Instructor And A Student,” with the support of an Undergraduate Research Grant. Over the course of eight weeks, I researched not only what it generally means to be working-class in the United States by reading a variety of academic texts but also how the working-class experience manifests itself in the lives of driving instructors by talking to actual driving instructors. I completed this in hopes of answering: What does income inequality really look like in America? In what ways does income inequality pose a barrier to connection between people in different groups, and how can that barrier be broken, specifically between a driving instructor and their student? I wanted to then write a two-act play that would tackle socioeconomic status in a manner that did not let audiences continue to be passive about this injustice – and I did just that. I was able to complete a draft of a play I was extremely proud of for the way in which it centered the relationship between a driving instructor and student to make a statement about income inequality. No play even
remotely similar exists in the canon, and I feel mine is a valuable addition as it synthesizes the in-depth research I did into a theatrical piece that audiences can understand and empathize with, no matter their own financial situation.

While I have performed my whole life, I did not get into playwriting until studying under Professor Myatt; it was in her Introduction to Playwriting class that I realized my passion for creating the stories told on stage rather than just being in them. With my first full-length play, “All-In,” I wanted to write a piece that would feel fresh but also still appeal to an array of audiences. I hoped to craft a play that made people laugh, cry, and question their beliefs as they walked out of the theater. I strove to present ideas to anyone who was willing to listen that were at the same time specific to who I am as a person and applicable to everyone else. Whenever I was having trouble writing, I always went back to my main two characters: driving instructor Carol and high school student Josh. These two are the center of my play and the real reason I believe it has been so well received by those I have shared it with. I tried hard to create very distinct voices for them and ensured that every line they spoke related to whatever they were after. We go to see a play not to see people living comfortably in their everyday lives, but because there is conflict in something they want. I hope I am able to share a scene from my play at the Creative Arts Festival and further spark conversation surrounding how we discuss wealth disparities in this country!
Olivia Yarvis, Yaakov Gottlieb, and Samuel Heller

Faculty Advisor: Brent Huffman

La Casa del Migrante (Documentary)

Piece Description: Inside the seemingly abandoned property at 3200 South Kedzie Avenue in the South Side of Chicago is La Casa del Migrante, a vibrant, bustling home of Mexican immigrant artists seeking to improve their native and local communities through their craft. Over the past four years, the Little Village-based building has become home to both the residents and their benefit concerts which raise funds for their communities in Mexico and Chicago. The documentary short, La Casa del Migrante, brings audiences into this community hub as its very existence is threatened after the Chicago Southwest Development Corporation (CSDC) bought the property from the city of Chicago and placed an order of demolition on its residents. CSDC’s ultimate goal is to create a community campus and relocate a private hospital to the site, but not everyone in Little Village supports their endeavor. As the conflict continues to escalate, fears rise among community members that the plight of La Casa del Migrante is indicative of a larger wave of gentrification in the region. A story of clashing desires, La Casa del Migrante examines the fragility and sanctity of community spaces amid trends of displacement in the South Side.
**Artist Statement:** At its core, La Casa del Migrante is a human rights story that allows viewers to directly confront the realities of urban displacement. Although our film is Chicago-based, eviction and gentrification are issues that affect communities domestic and foreign, and which require community advocacy. By zooming into a shocking story that likely has not been heard beyond Chicago, we hope our film can give a personalized face to an issue that likely plagues a community close to each of our viewers. We hope that our film will show the immediacy of these issues and prompt audiences to advocate against such injustices happening in their own backyards. In viewing our film, we implore viewers to consider how we as a society, and more specifically how governments and cities, view community spaces. When spaces like Chicago Southwest Development Corporation’s campus are installed, whose needs are we prioritizing? Those of the developer or those of the community in which these spaces are introduced? Our film is ultimately of and for the residents of La Casa del Migrante and their loved ones. As our subjects continue to protest in and outside of court, we hope our film will both bring awareness to their mission as a community hub and prompt viewers to reflect on the sanctity of the communities in their lives.
This performance is an excerpt of my short story “Light as He Willed,” written during the first quarter of the creative writing fiction sequence with Prof. Sheila Donohue. This short story takes place in 2021 Cali, Colombia, during a time when massive protests against the government struck the city. It follows a group of college students from different socioeconomic backgrounds who became friends by chance, but all share a certain disappointment for the future prospects that their city offers them. One night after a particularly heated argument, three of them decide to participate in a major protest, leaving the rest behind in a luxurious apartment. During the protest, the police take Pacho, one of the friends, with them. As Pacho’s family and friends begin to notice his disappearance, the friends once more gather in their usual spot. Together, they try to cope with the night’s events, wondering whether they will see their friend again. Over the course of the story, the characters must come face-to-face with their family issues and their personal challenges. This story gives a peek into the lives of youth in a challenging environment, but it is also filled with vivid descriptions of the setting that remind the reader of our essential connection to our landscape, in spite of the different courses of our lives. This excerpt, which I am proudest of, captures the marvel of Cali’s landscape,
while also providing a rendering of the heartbreaking violence that took place in Cali in 2021.

On May 11 of 2021, student leader Lucas Villa was gunned down by the police in Pereira, Colombia. Last year, the entire nation erupted in massive protests after the announcement of a series of reforms from President Iván Duque. The concerns of the protest included a lack of economic advancement, human rights violations, and government negligence. In many of the major cities in Colombia, these protests were met with brutal violence from the police and the army. Many disappeared never to be seen again. As I went to my bed in Evanston, Illinois, sometime in May of last year, I watched videos of the protests, and my heart filled with concern. Not only for my family members, who decided to stay at home but also for my friends whom I knew were attending the protests. It was a question that all the young people were asking themselves. Should we go protest, even though we may not come back? ‘But that’s the very reason we’re protesting,’ a friend said to me over text, ‘so they’ll stop killing us.’ These events inspired me to write a story set in Cali, one of the cities that was struck hardest by the violence. My aim was to capture the sense of hopelessness that many Colombian youth feel to this day, along with the beauty of the people and the land. This inescapable conundrum of violence and beauty is what marked my childhood, and what continues to mark Colombians to this day.
This journalistic feature video explains the situation that Qatar’s Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO) went through during the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the struggles that these artists went through and how they got over their creator’s block. This video was motivated by the fact that QPO’s artists had an important story to tell that was never covered in Qatar’s mass media channels before. The video was entirely shot on an iPhone, which eased the process for easy access to the backstage venue and authentic responses from the musicians. QPO had a difficult last 2 years where they were stuck physically and mentally within the shallowness of their 4 walls. Which makes their success story interesting when one can see the emptiness inside of their hearts - being in the dark about when their next life performance would be. This feature helps creatives around the world how professional artists are able to deal with their creative blocks in the worst possible situations and recover from it in order to keep moving forward.
Femme, Queer, or Both: Asian American Narratives in the Midwest

This project was inspired by the use of zines—Independently published grassroots media covering a range of different topics—in the 1960s and 1970s Asian American student movements that explored “Asian American” identity as a new and developing concept. Zines allowed creators freedom to tell their stories and to protect the privacy of people whose stories are shared. The Asian American experience is often shared through East or West Coast lenses. This zine voices the experiences of Midwest Asian Americans who identify as femme, queer, or both. The 10 interviewees are people who responded to advertisements I sent out to community organizations in 12 Midwestern states. I asked them a series of questions that relate to my broader research question, “How can a diverse collective with distinct histories and cultures form lasting solidarity and connection with each other?” Although interviewees were prompted by pre-planned questions, what each interviewee chose to share and discuss was ultimately left up to them. Each interview lasted about an hour. The cover art was submitted by one of the interviewees. Two questions I heard echoed throughout the interviews were, “How can we as a society and as humans take better care of each other?” and, “How can we balance acknowledging our mutual interests while also honoring our individuality and uniqueness?” This project offers reflections from an Asian
American perspective that may help us see ways we can create a society that attempts to answer these questions in an earnest and inclusive way.

I intended for this project to address what I perceived as a void in the Asian American narrative. I also wanted to bring a conversation to people, as a way of connecting with each other during the isolation of the pandemic. I hope this project helps to contribute something to the larger discussions of race in America, and to offer insights into how we might find kinship with another again despite the incredibly polarized current political climate in the US. Though this project is meant to honor the femme and queer Midwest Asian American communities and the individuals whose stories and reflections are shared, it only represents a small group of people at a certain time and place and I hope it is seen as part of a much larger movement where new ideas about race and identity are emerging and developing. Readers are encouraged to see themselves as a part of the movement no matter who they are. Identity-focused spaces can sometimes have the effect of making people who do not share that identity feel as if they don’t belong, and so this zine seeks to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible. In this vein, I left lots of space around the text on each page if people would like to write their own responses and reflections alongside ours.
This poem tells the story of Zarqa Al-Yamama, a mythical Arabian woman who had the power to see her enemies approaching a week ahead of time. The work begins with women narrating how this story is a forbidden one, yet they have the power to tell it through song. They then narrate how long ago, in the desert, Zarqa would sit and wait for the enemies of her tribe to approach. When she saw them, she would warn her people, eventually her enemies began to hide behind trees as they moved in order to hide themselves from her gaze. Again, she warned her people, but they did not listen, and as a result were all murdered. Zarqa herself had her eyes torn from her and was then crucified, however her spirit lives on through the earth.

Most literature taught in the United States derives from Christianity and the stories of the Bible, with very clear Christian influences. I sought out to bring light to the stories of my culture, of Arabia, and took inspiration from the myth of Zarqa Al-Yamama. While the story in my poem follows nearly exactly, I expanded on the ending so that she wasn’t just another forgotten murdered woman in history, rather that her legacy lives on somehow, through the earth and through memory. My version of the story focuses more on her power rather than the terror of her enemies and the stupidity of the men around her. Like old medieval texts, I sought to make religious references to Islam, mainly through the use of language. The poem is littered with Arabic words, done to create a clear distinction between
other religiously inspired texts such as *Paradise Lost*. Words such as *wabaya* are meant to highlight the language, but also add meaning. *Wabaya*, for example means oracle, emphasizing the power that Zarqa has. *Dum* translates to blood, but its pronunciation is similar to “doom,” and invokes that same environment.
A docufictional short film about early life of Malala Yousafzai and her fight against the terrorism in Pakistan and Education for all. Malala Yousafzai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her fight for the right of every child to receive an education. She was born in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. When the Islamic Taliban movement took control of the valley in 2008, girls’ schools were burned down. It was not long before the Taliban threatened her life. In 2012, Malala was shot in the head on a school bus by a Taliban gunman. In October 2014, Malala, along with Indian children’s rights activist Kailash Satyarthi, was named a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Thus, the film tells her early life story and her fight for education and Taliban.
Moyana Olivia

Faculty Advisor: Patrice Michaels

Toonana Mangwana, or, “We’ll See Each Other Tomorrow” (Original Music)

This performance consists of two original compositions. Moyana Olivia wrote the first, “Missing You,” in Fall of 2020. The meaning of this song has developed along with Olivia’s lived experiences. Initially about a high school relationship, the song now encompasses questions of how to navigate the grief and loss caused by the pandemic. There are many versions of this song, from acoustic to punk rock. These shifts in instrumentation allow for varied emotional expression. The rhythmic piano of this ballad arrangement engenders feelings of contemplation and longing, as if one is calling out for someone who they know cannot hear them. Moyana Olivia wrote the second piece, “Gogo’s Lullaby,” in Winter of 2021 for a composition course assignment. The piece originates from an acapella recording of the voice of Olivia’s grandmother, found within the archives of a family group chat. The text comes from a traditional hymn. Olivia composed the instrumentation around the recording, adding harmonies and embellishments from acoustic and electric guitar. While Olivia added production effects such as reverb to the orchestral elements, the original recording remains unedited, just as one would preserve an archival document. Therefore, this project serves as a combination of Olivia’s interests in Musicology and performance.
Toonana Mangwana means “We’ll See Each Other Tomorrow” in Shona. This is the language spoken in Zimbabwe where my maternal grandmother lived. Her influence remains present in my life—even the name “Moyana Olivia” comes from her. My grandmother, who I called Gogo, was an educator, a mentor, and a leader. She died of COVID-19 in January of 2021. The culture of the United States, as well as our university, pushes each of us to move forward despite the massive losses that we have experienced throughout the pandemic. Through music, I can create space for myself and others to pause and grieve the loved ones and experiences that we have lost. For example, my mother remains the top listener for “Missing You,” repeating it for hours as she moves throughout her day. This attests to music’s ability to allow us to process our emotions, even just three minutes at a time. When someone passes away in Black communities, it is common to say that they have transitioned. This challenges the idea that death represents finality. Similarly, I say “toonana mangwana” as opposed to “goodbye” because I feel that my grandmother is still with me. Although the knowledge that we will not meet in person again causes me to cry out to her in songs like “Missing You,” her presence is memorialized through recordings such as “Gogo’s Lullaby.” With each performance, she is brought into the present with me. Thus, we could very well see each other tomorrow.
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Join us on May 24, 2022 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM for the inaugural Winner’s Circle Event. We will celebrate the top Oral Presenters, Poster Presentations, and Festival Winners with University executive leadership. Norris – Louis Room.