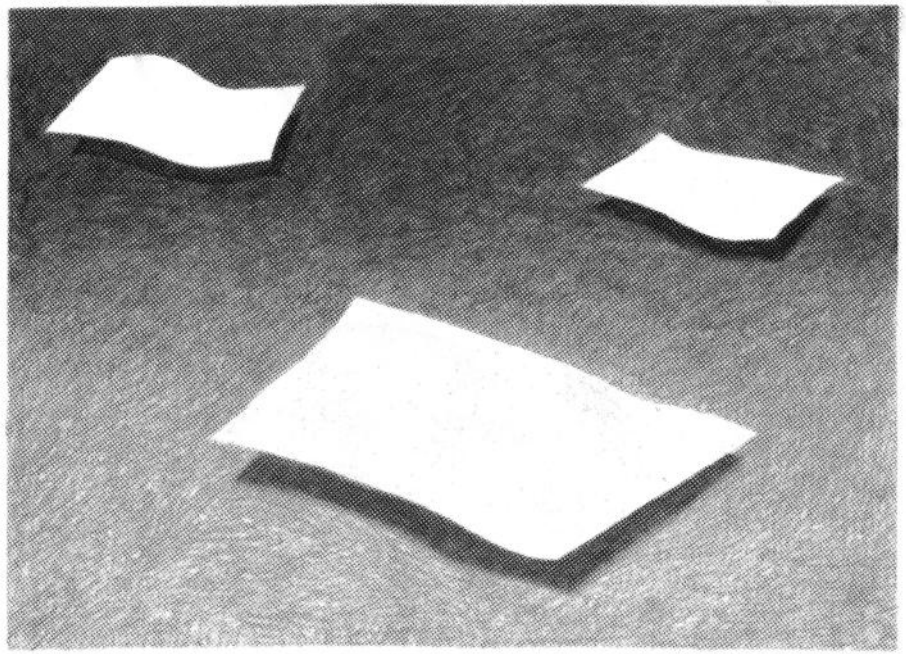

Connective Tissues: printed & published

January 28 – March 12, 2022
Visual Arts Center /
The University of Texas at Austin

Artists:

Aishwarya Arumbakkam; Mac Benson; Julia Haas; Sophia Hashemi; Patience Herbert; Quinn In; Suheyla Katirci; Logan Larsen; Kerry Maguire; Rachel Massey; Caroline Padon; Caroline Perkison; Paige Perusquia; Abby Raffle; Milana Todua; Seth White

Acknowledgments

To Clare Donnelly, Marc Silva, and Mackenzie Stevens, thank you for your ongoing support and guidance.

Thank you to the VAC team: Adrian Aguilar, Zoe Berg, Rachael Starbuck, Kaya Sumer, Mark Kovitya. Thank you to Logan Larsen for making this book all come together, and for generously sharing your craft. Thank you to the LLILAS Benson for thoughtfully lending your cases to our exhibition. Thank you to Annie May Johnston for lending your time and energy to this project. Thank you to the 14 individual donors who contributed to a crowdfunding campaign in Fall 2021 for making this exhibition possible. Thank you to our many professors who have supported us at UT, including Adele Nelson, Elon Lang, Ann Johns, George Flaherty, Astrid Runggaldier, and Julia Guernsey. Thank you to our friends and families for your unwavering encouragement and support.

Lastly, thank you to Ann Reynolds. This exhibition would not be possible without your mentorship. Your presence and guidance continues to be felt from afar.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Macaella Gray & Zoe Roden

In the body, "connective tissue" refers to that which supports, protects, and provides structure for vital systems and networks. In many ways, publications have performed a similar function for artistic communities throughout history, providing necessary space for collaboration and cohesion across geographic, temporal, and cultural boundaries.

As important sites of discourse and exhibition, the medium of publication has long been integral to the formation of artistic communities and their diverse practices. And yet, publication is in a precarious position today. Sometimes lauded as an especially democratic form, publication lends itself to reproduction, manipulation, and mass distribution. As such, the medium naturally destabilizes the hierarchies of traditional museum rituals dependent on preservation and maintaining distance between object and viewer. *Connective Tissues: printed & published* meditates on this essential dilemma facing contemporary and historical publications alike, simultaneously tracing the lineage of twentieth century literary and arts publications to the present day. Presenting a collection of historical magazines alongside a range of contemporary works, the exhibition points to the shared legacies these objects carry.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, literary and artistic figures engaged with "little magazines" and art reviews. Publications such as *View* (1940–47), *Bief: Jonction Surréaliste* (1958–60), and *Dance Index* (1942–48) not only provided a necessary platform for emerging creative voices, but also served as tools for communication, personal development, artistic growth, social engagement, and community-building. Whether it be through happenstance or word of mouth, little magazines landed in the hands of mutual friends, acquaintances, and strangers. *View* magazine expectedly passed between literary and artistic figures belonging to a range of fame and celebrity, including Man Ray, Marcel

Duchamp, and Georgia O'Keeffe. Though it never exceeded 3,000 copies in its seven-year run, the magazine traveled among an array of unexpected readers, such as soldiers fighting in WWII and incarcerated individuals. In a recurring section titled "View Listens," the editors printed letters from readers responding to previous issues; this was a common practice amongst little magazines, speaking to the types of dialogues these publications hosted and immortalized within their pages. *View* provides an early example of how these magazines connected with audiences beyond their immediate communities and physical locales, therefore constituting a public of unlikely peers. In these ways, little magazines functioned as nearly democratic sites in which diverse webs of individuals with ranging degrees of separation could debate personal philosophies and subjects like art, literature, and contemporary politics. Selected for their historical significance and relationships to one another, the collection of publications featured in *Connective Tissues* provides a fragmented yet representative glimpse into these historical print cultures.

As time passed, print cultures inevitably diversified and evolved. Remnants of little magazines continued most obviously in publications like *Soup* (1979–1984) and *Film Culture* (1956-96), maintaining a dedicated network of readers and dependable editorial style. *The Studio Zine* (1998–present) represents the ephemerality and overpopulation of zine culture, which often held an outright political edge. Meanwhile, the commercialization of arts publications manifested in magazines like *Artforum* (1962–present), an authoritative yet highly regulated voice in contemporary art. To point to the many factions of print culture in the latter half of the twentieth century is not to suggest the absolute uniformity of the former, but rather to emphasize the multiplicity of forms that publication came to embody.

While publications no longer serve the same essential functions they once did, legacies of twentieth century print culture endure. The collaborative and communal certainly live on in student publications, magazines, online newsletters, and large

format arts publications, as they are intended to be consumed by readers. Equally, publication studios provide occasions for collaboration; shared equipment, common interests, and the cult following around niche printing methods all incentivize—and sometimes necessitate—community. These circumstances reveal how publication might still "constitut[e] a public of unlikely peers," connecting the medium's historic functions with those of the present. Though less literal, many artists use publication to engage with their work, also abstracting ideas of dialogue and communication salient to the medium.

The contemporary artists included in this exhibition each present a range of compelling approaches to the medium of publication. Through repeated editions, Aishwarya Arumbakkam searches for nuances in the meaning of her work. Both conceptually and physically expanding with every rendition, each of her publications reveals something new. Arumbakkam first outlined her father's figure in a drawing, which later became a film, *Appa Walking* (2020). Through an ongoing set of drawings and publications, Appa Walking has evolved into an artist book. As with Arumbakkam, publication is only a piece of the expansive practices of both Logan Larsen and Kerry Maguire, which span across a variety of media. Maguire's *Known Unknowns* (2021) responds to her sculptural work *Reality Tunnel / Humdrum Oracle* (2020), while Larsen's *Patroclus and Achilles* (2019/2021) incorporates printed and sculptural elements. Dialogue is more obviously present in printed text and in the real-time exchanges prompted by publication. However, the dialogue between an artist and their work, while less visible, speaks to just one of the transformed remnants of the medium present in these contemporary works.

Though contemporary publication practices may look very different from their predecessors, this isn't to say these works don't facilitate communal, collaborative, and communicative dynamics akin to those which came before. All featured artists refract rather than reflect historical functions of publication. The argument posed by this exhibition is by no means a comprehensive one; in putting our personal collection of

little magazines on view alongside works by our friends and neighbors, *Connective Tissues: printed & published* is first and foremost a love letter.

Macaella Gray & Zoe Roden are the curators of *Connective Tissues: printed & published.*

Timeline:

a brief history of artists' publications

Llewyn Blossfeld

2010s:
Artists' Books and the Digital Age

1990s-2000s:
Artist books in museums and Art History

mid-1980s:
Self-publishing

early 1980s:
Cut to the Arts

mid-1970s:
Alternative Bookshops

1960s and early 1970s:
Democratic Multiples

1960s and early 1970s: Democratic Multiples

Artists began making their own publications (including books, zines, little magazines and other formats), often documenting performance art, happenings, pop art, conceptual art, and other media events, to sell in art markets and bookshops. Some historians cite the concept and production of "democratic multiples" in the early 1970s as the beginning of the contemporary artists' book genre. Democratic multiples were kept cheap or given away en masse, and typically held a social or political intent for their perceived democratizing, anti-institutional power. Compared to traditional exhibitions, books were easily transportable, cheaper than renting physical space, and did not require lighting or insurance. They had a relative permanence if treated properly, as opposed to gallery installations, and could travel and be seen by a more widespread viewing public.

Artists' books are interrogations; theorists like Ulises Carrión have described them as, rather than a text, a specific set of conditions that need responding to. They are containers of a "sequence of spaces," almost like separate gallery rooms. However, Carrión was critical of the idea that artists' books somehow "subverted" galleries, arguing they more often simply adopted other intermediaries like publishers and critics.

A founding myth concerning artists' books is that they flourished outside gallery and museum systems, when often the most successfully spread artists' books were produced out of or supported by institutions, as an extension of artists' more traditional practices. In removing their art from the oppressive white gallery wall, artists could move toward a "less contemplative and more participative public," as well as a separation from art critics and spaces; a so-called move from art to culture. Artists sought to remove their work from institutional spaces, instead placing it in the hands of a populist audience.

mid-1970s: Alternative Bookshops

Alternative book shops specializing in selling artists' books and magazines evolved as distribution centers in place of galleries. Grants from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and other state agencies supported art organizations in their beginnings, enabling them to publish artists' books by housing spaces to sell and equipment to make them. Early examples of alternative shops still open today include Printed Matter in New York and Art Metropole in Toronto. Artist publications, by their nature, were not standardized in terms of bar codes, size, shape, or even dust jackets. A significant challenge for spaces selling these books was a lack of infrastructure to sell and distribute them; artists instead circulated their work "through the mail, through artist-run shops, [and] through friendship."

early 1980s: Cut to the Arts

An anti-art ethos was ushered in by Ronald Reagan's administration, with funding removed from artist organizations that actively produced artists' books in the form of democratic multiples. In the 1980s, artists like Stewart Cauley confirmed that artist publications had been sucked into the market's mechanisms—including the cult of celebrity—losing their experimental origins and becoming their own institutions that mimicked the galleries and museums they were once trying to escape. Historian and critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau has said the assimilation of artists' books into the discourses and commercial markets they aimed to fight against is part of a general tendency in conceptual and postmodern critical practices toward co-option. Resistance is not a permanent establishment but rather must be continuously renewed to address appropriations from oppressive powers and create new challenges to institutional structures. Solomon-Godeau insisted this cannot be done inside those systems, which explains why many artists opted instead for self-publishing.

mid-1980s: Self-publishing

Methods of self-publishing and production increased rapidly with the introduction of computer technology in the 1980s. Artists could create their own covers and fonts and print from their homes using letterpress, offset, risograph, or print-on-demand technology. The shift to desktop publishing during this period changed the number and types of books artists produced, altering terminology from artists' books to artists' publishing. With the introduction of the internet, artists and publishers no longer had to rely on artist bookshops in terms of selling venues, and were not limited in distribution or production based on what was in demand.

But production costs for self-published books caused selling prices to rise, as these books were not as cheap to produce as the democratic multiple and were not bought directly in-person. An important paradigm shift for this age, and artist publishers in the 1990s, is that younger creators began to use the internet as a space for collaborative community. An international publication community began to grow online, with differing ideologies driving their use of zines, artists' books, and similar publications that sometimes borrowed ideas and structure from late 20th-century publishers. Today, physical bookshops have largely fallen out of existence because of big retailers, though a few still exist and profit from international book fairs. Expensive production and shipping costs can mean that limited editions of artists' books, with niche audiences and increased profitability for collectors, have become what Lucy Lippard called "edition de luxe," or coffee table books; the artists' book "transformed into glossy, pricey products." The danger in the disappearance of the once avant-garde medium's more radical origins is that these publications become inaccessible, both in price and in content, for artists to reach audiences outside the narrow, elite art world.

1990s-2000s: Artist books in museums and Art History

Artists' books in their contemporary form have been in library collections since the mid-1970s; however, proper collection, analysis, and display of artists' books in museums, along with integration into the study of art history, has taken longer. Artists' books have existed in journals, events, and artistic production longer than in cultural institutions in part due to two issues: the physical and symbolic dilemma of the medium, as well as the epistemological place of books in art museum systems today.

Artists' books can sometimes occupy a hybridized place in arts institutions. A book's status might exist somewhere between the museum's library, archive, or main collection, depending on the institution's systems of categorization. Often, the intent behind the creation of the book determines the practices and policies that surround its needs: whether its age or delicacy enables it to be made available to the public, or how its use is defined and communicated to the viewer. A theoretical framework on how to order and analyze artist books in museums typically involves two discursive fields: artistic study and museum study. The contemporary art museum prides itself on its reflexive practices in terms of genealogy, limits, and institutional assumptions, yet still artists' books necessitate new ways of exhibiting, collecting, preserving, and even categorizing within the museum context, by establishing other mediations and points of contact between the institution's workers and their publics. Under museum and library systems, artists' books, regardless of a creator's intent, have been treated as documents rather than artworks in their own right. Only gradually did artists' books join more traditional artworks in being recognized for their artistic, symbolic, and discursive significance. All the while, some museum professionals proposed establishing new and improved policies surrounding the management and treatment of publication collections. Institutions still have a ways to go toward treating the artists' book, and other publications, as a book in the museum, and an artwork in the library.

2010s: Artists' Books and the Digital Age

Understanding the history of artists' publishing can be generative in helping us imagine new futures for the artists' book in today's age of digital publishing. Lippard theorized that artists chose the book medium because of its effortless movement out of the art world and into the hands of everyday audiences. In the '60s and '70s, this facile method proved less effective in reaching the public in part because, outside the context of museums and galleries, which can help viewers make sense of complex works of art, publications could often be too esoteric for their desired readership. Still, artists' books were—and are—important to independent art structures, organizations, and venues, and many artists see the book as the ideal means to have complete creative control of their work. With their cheap production costs and ability to extend artists' works to the public, Lippard went so far as to picture a world where artists' books would be available in mass consumer culture in settings like supermarkets, drugstores, and airports.

Some historians have concluded that there is no satisfying description for the publications of artists: democratic multiples were a distinctly pre-Internet, 20th-century form of production. 21st-century independent publishing lacks one satisfying, all-encompassing descriptor, at least for now. But for many artists working today, the medium of the book or publication enables them to expand our idea of what a book is, what an art object is, how art can engage audiences directly, and how cultural institutions might rethink how these objects are treated in their collections. The questions and conversations raised by these objects are, in many ways, the great benefit of engaging with the medium, and this understanding of publication need not necessitate the creation of a single, comprehensive, and in some ways restrictive definition for the artists' book.

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View Series iii no. 4, 1943. Ed. Charles Henri Ford & Parker Tyler

A Glimpse, A View / A Conversation with Macaella Gray, Zoe Roden & Vega Shah

This conversation took place between Vega Shah, Macaella Gray, and Zoe Roden on January 5th, 2022. After closely looking at three issues of *View* (1940—1947), Vega brought her questions and observations to the curators.

Vega: "Vertigo" from *View* series ii no. 3 is the first *View* piece I've read that is blatantly political due to its commentary on war. I imagine the piece was especially contentious during WWII, considering the text does not directly say whether war is good or necessary. It's a subtle critique on behalf of Roger Caillois, but perhaps controversial for the period?

Zoe: This was actually something that drew Macaella and I into the magazine, and we have spent a good deal of time thinking about the politics of the publication. Running from 1940–1947, *View* was a war-time magazine in the most literal sense, and I think we both expected its contents to be either more or less about the war than it reads today. It wasn't until the pandemic that we really started to understand the moment *View* operated in… Thinking about our own lived experiences during a moment of global catastrophe, a lot of things are "about" the pandemic without explicitly being so. Two years into this all consuming moment, though it still dictates our everyday lives, there is not necessarily a need to reiterate its effects to friends and strangers over and over again. Similarly, I think, the contributors of *View* did not need to explicitly credit WWII as a major presence in their writing. The essay you're talking about Vega is one by Roger Caillois on abandoning rationalism and adopting Surrealism during war-time, a charged sentiment in 1942. It is a great example of what would have read as blatant and radical political commentary appearing, as you put it, "subtle" in 2022.

Macaella: That being said, *View* was also critiqued at times for being apolitical or laissez-faire when it came to the war…but as Zoe said, we don't necessarily believe this to be true. *View* published a broad scope of content, ranging from radical texts which directly addressed the War to metaphorical and whimsical short stories. Perhaps what was somewhat unique was that *View* published this political content all while its editors refused to define the magazine's partisanships and loyalties, which many other little "communist" or "socialist" magazines took it upon themselves to do. Despite their perceived ambivalence, Charles Henri Ford and Parker Tyler's approach to *View* represents just one outlook on how the artist, poet, or editor should relate to the War, and, more broadly, the outside world. Writers in *View* also contributed to this conversation, which notably extended beyond the magazine's pages. Some championed more isolationist perspectives—interested in protecting the artist's creative spirit from the dangers of War—while others advocated for a complex space in which political concerns could co-exist alongside various topics, subjects, and sentiments.

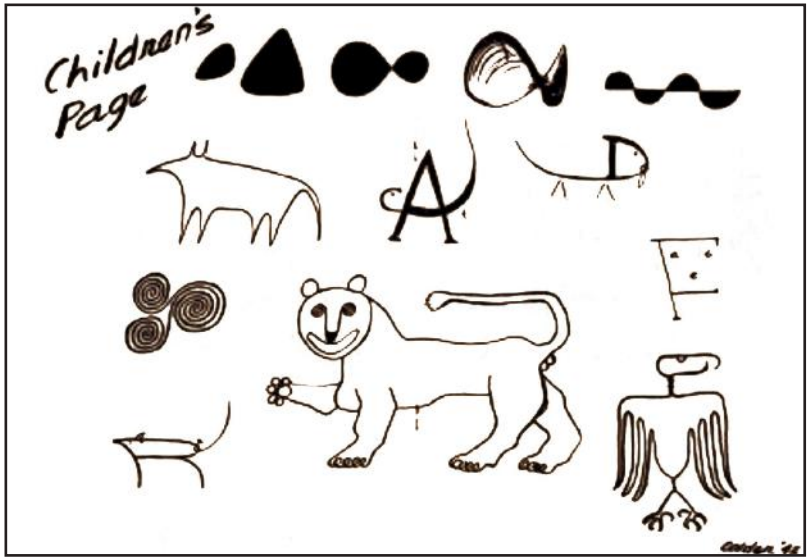
Vega: I definitely expected Charles Henri Ford to be more present in the writings within the magazines. I was surprised to see only one essay from him. Why does he leave such a substantial mark on *View* when he was so in the background?

Zoe: When writing about *View* or other magazines, Macaella and I have had to often remind ourselves that the magazine can't *do* anything. While we usually have to think about this in relation to our near constant use of passive voice, it is important to think about the agency the editors had over these publications. Macaella talked about the unique editorial style of View, but the social role of the editor is equally important. Charles Henri Ford was known

for his ability to make connections, and first garnered attention for getting literary giants Gertrude Stein and William Carlos Williams to publish in his little magazine *Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms* (1929–1930) at only seventeen. Though maybe somewhat invisible to twenty-first century readers, Ford's editorial style was distinct and he selected artists and writers that were often associated with social and intellectual circles he was either a part of or adjacent to. Though maybe a bit cheesy, I think a connection between *View* and *Connective Tissues* can be made in this way, as Macaella and I have reached out to artists who are both socially and artistically proximite to us. Whether it be showing works by my roommate Rachel or featuring works by Logan, an artist who we admired for a long time and have grown closer to through the show, putting the space together required we make and maintain connections with everyone in it.

Vega: The ads found within the issues are particularly interesting. They promote other small magazines with content that seems highly interdisciplinary. This makes me wonder how many of these small magazines were in circulation and the breadth of context these publications reached.

Macaella: Yes, in a saturated economy of little magazines, where competition for readers and resources was very present, *View's* editors recognized the necessity of advertisements… Including ads for commercial products like perfume or cosmetics was, for some, just good business. Historically, the ads in *View* serve as an important reminder that little magazines were circulating and money-making objects. It is easy to forget this given the way they are treated now by archival institutions and museums: as rare objects or artworks to be looked at, not handled. While a magazine's finances are not necessarily



self-evident, they are nonetheless essential for understanding the object; sometimes choices we assume to be purely aesthetic were equally informed by efforts on behalf of the editors to be cost-effective. For instance, in lieu of not being able to afford color photographs, *View's* editors would sometimes opt for colored pages. And, as you're pointing to Vega, *View* promoted and advertised other little magazines. These advertisements give an indication as to how many magazines were in circulation at the time, which, as we've clued, was very very many. They also trace how magazines and their communities of writers and contributors were consistently intermixing. It is important to remember that some magazines might have been in "competition" with one another and still have had overlapping ambitions, aims, and interests.

Vega: I thought the Children's Page was peculiar and cute, even a little jarring. It was difficult to understand, given my impression of who the average reader was for the magazine. Did children actually submit content to *View*? Why is it so dark? What was that process like?

Macaella: To an unbeknownst or unsuspecting reader of *View*, I imagine how the Children's Page might be taken at face value–especially given the unique and sometimes eccentric editorial style of the magazine. However, adult guests and contributors to *View* were the authors of the Children's Page, not literal children. It is also at times implied that the section's intended audience was children. But, based on our work with the magazine, it is our thought that these pages sometimes functioned ironically, as commentary on the War, or had something to do with Surrealist ideas around children and their perceived creative purity. Essentially, it was not actually intended for children.

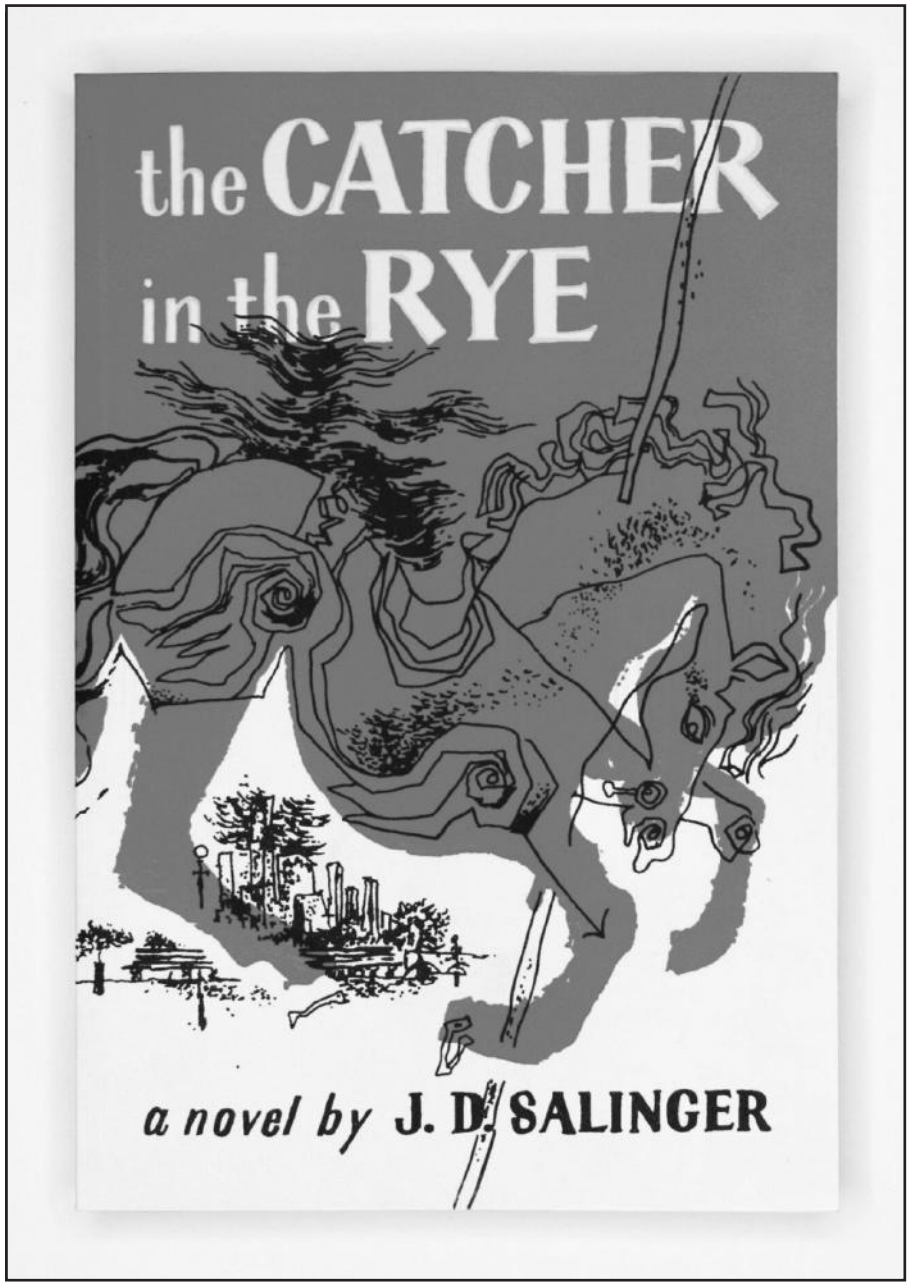
Zoe: Totally. Vega I think the Children's Page you are referencing is in the Narcissus issue, which is in my opinion a more ambiguous one. The Children's Pages often ranged in how earnest they came across, holding content ranging anywhere from poems from the perspective of children and crayon drawings to unsettling photographs and dark prose. It is important to recognize that some of these pages are not only ambiguous to readers in the twenty-first century, but would have also been relatively coded for a 1940s audience. Acclimating to these vocabularies of images and themes took both a knowledge of source material and time with the publication, and especially with a motif as heavily used as children, it is very possible that *View's* readers would have had a range of interpretations.

Macaella: To add onto what you just said Zoe, this idea of varying levels of familiarity and readability was not unique to *View*, but is also characteristic of other little magazines, especially those working in the Surrealist tradition. For instance, *Bief: Jonction Surréaliste*, a Surrealist magazine also included in *Connective Tissues* contains many visual

and textual references to a history of Surrealism and its body of print. These references demonstrate that to glean "complete" meaning from a publication of this type–if that is even possible–one didn't just have to be an initiate to Surrealism en masse, but also to a specific lineage of magazines. That being said, certain things hidden to us now might have been obvious to even a casual observer of these works, as they were living at the time and were immersed in the context. One of my favorite takes on this is from Surrealist scholar JH Maathews, who has some really impactful thoughts about the self-referential nature and readability of Surrealist magazines. He explains that certain features in the magazines function as "a secret handshake" which would allow those familiar with Surrealism and its communities access, while denying others at the gate. In this way, I think our description of little magazines as "nearly democratic" really comes through: often they were accessible but sometimes there were barriers to the "uninitiated."

Zoe: Yes, I really love that quote. We can speak to this from a contemporary perspective as to how long it takes spending time with these objects, and getting to know these authors, writers, and communities on a personal level to begin to glean meaning from some of the more opaque content of the magazines. I can confidently say that I still don't understand the lineage of most of *View's* contents, and I suspect a lot of it is lost to time. An important part of working with these materials is expecting and accepting this.

View Series no. 1, 1940-1941. Ed. Charles Henri Ford & Parker Tyler



Logan Larsen, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 2021

Logan Larsen

Megan McKenzie

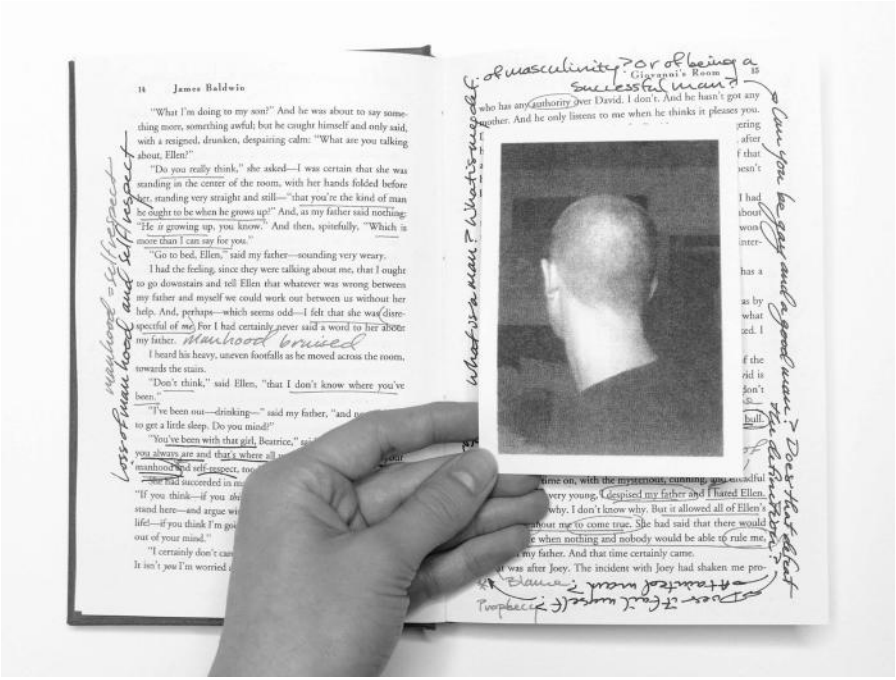
I read *The Catcher in the Rye* during my sophomore year of high school, when it was assigned in my Language Arts class. I remember next to nothing of the plot. What I do remember is picking out a copy of the book from my school library, in which I unearthed a Post-It that said of Holden, "he likes ducks he feels alone like them." My best friend, who sat next to me in that class, found the note so funny that it earned a place on the corkboard in my high school bedroom, where it hangs to this day. While I remember so little of the book and will never know the identity or thought process of its prior reader, that note has been enshrined into my memory of the novel because of the humor we found in it.

When Logan Larsen began his series *The Catcher in the Rye* in 2018, he had never read the eponymous novel. He still hasn't read it—he listened to the audiobook, and he didn't like it. I don't know how he escaped reading it in high school, while seemingly everyone else I know was being forced to read and annotate Holden Caulfield's internal monologue. Using the circular economy of Half Price Books, Logan's work documents the *Catcher*-reading of an unknown generation of high school sophomores. By removing the published text of his collected *Catchers*, Logan foregrounds the marks, thoughtful or otherwise, left behind by each copy's previous reader. The text he found so illegible in his own attempts to read the novel is erased, leaving behind its shadow in our individual and cultural imaginations. The annotations, elevated to the status of artwork and stripped of their original context, become quietly romanticized. As viewers, we are left to question to what extent these annotations are an affectation, a classroom performance of having read and digested the text no longer at hand, rather than a legitimate tool of processing and understanding a beloved work.

Logan is an incredibly generous collector and lender of books, and to read a book from his library is to experience it alongside him. The presence or absence of annotations shows whether or not he's made his way through a book yet, while the density makes clear his interest level. When I read Logan's books, my experience mirrors his; I dutifully note the passages he found worthy of emphasis and repetition. My friendship with Logan and my fluency in the language of his annotations inducts me into an inner circle of intimacy, where I am able to try his thoughts on for size and get as close as anyone can to reading through his eyes.

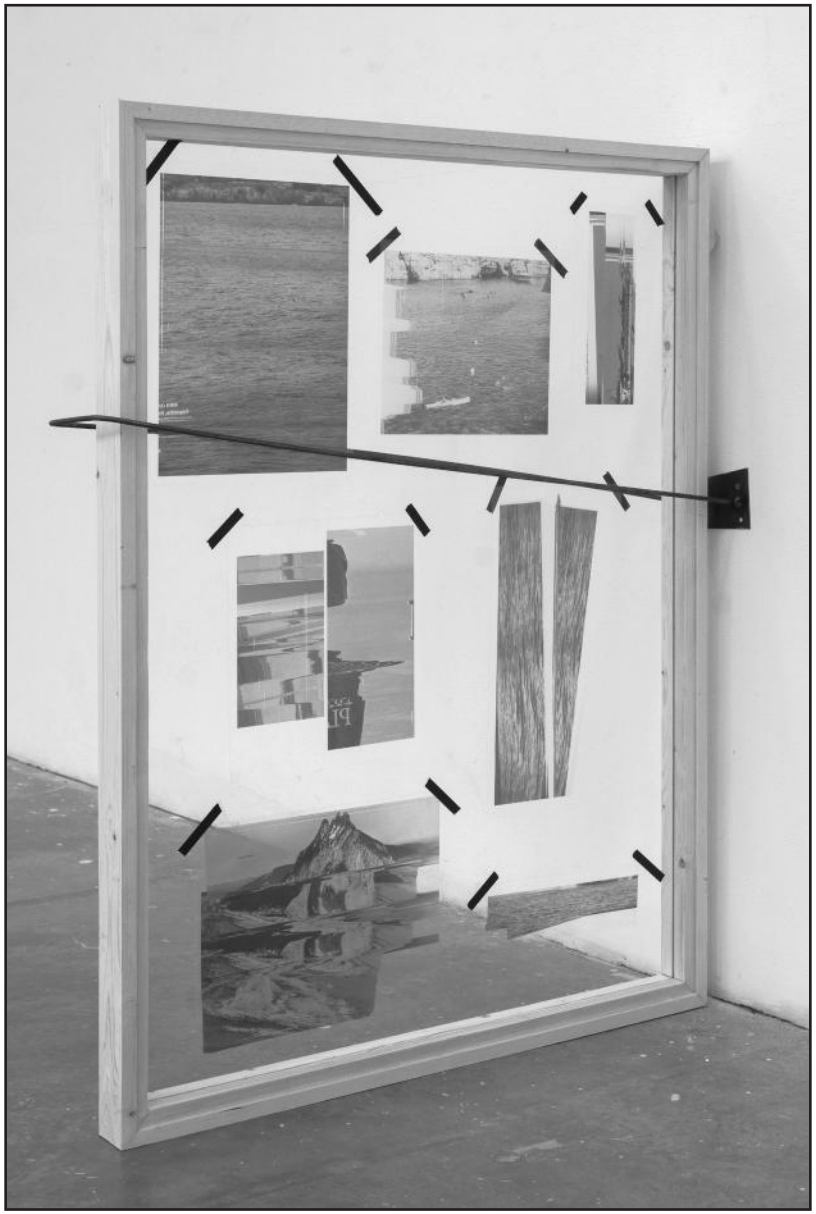
Through his artistic practice, Logan opens this means of intimacy-through-object to an unknown and unknowing audience. Outside the context of an interpersonal relationship, viewers are given a slice of Logan's own thoughts–often diarylike as in *Giovanni's Room* (2020–2021)–to make from what they may. The result of these annotation-works is a parasocial interaction, where viewers develop through their reading of his reading an idea of who Logan is, feeling that their one-sided experience with Logan's annotations is an authentic experience with the artist himself.

In much the same way, Logan's second-hand *Catchers* give us a false sense of intimacy with an unknown reader. As voyeurs reading over the shoulders of unsuspecting strangers, we are led to consider how they consider, and reminded that the thoughts and inner worlds of others, while often opaque to us, are just as complex as our own. Rather than as outsiders looking in, questioning whether we are reading a text right, Logan's work and the annotations they foreground place the viewer in conversation and companionship with those who read before them, creating an asynchronous camaraderie between readers–just like reading his own books.

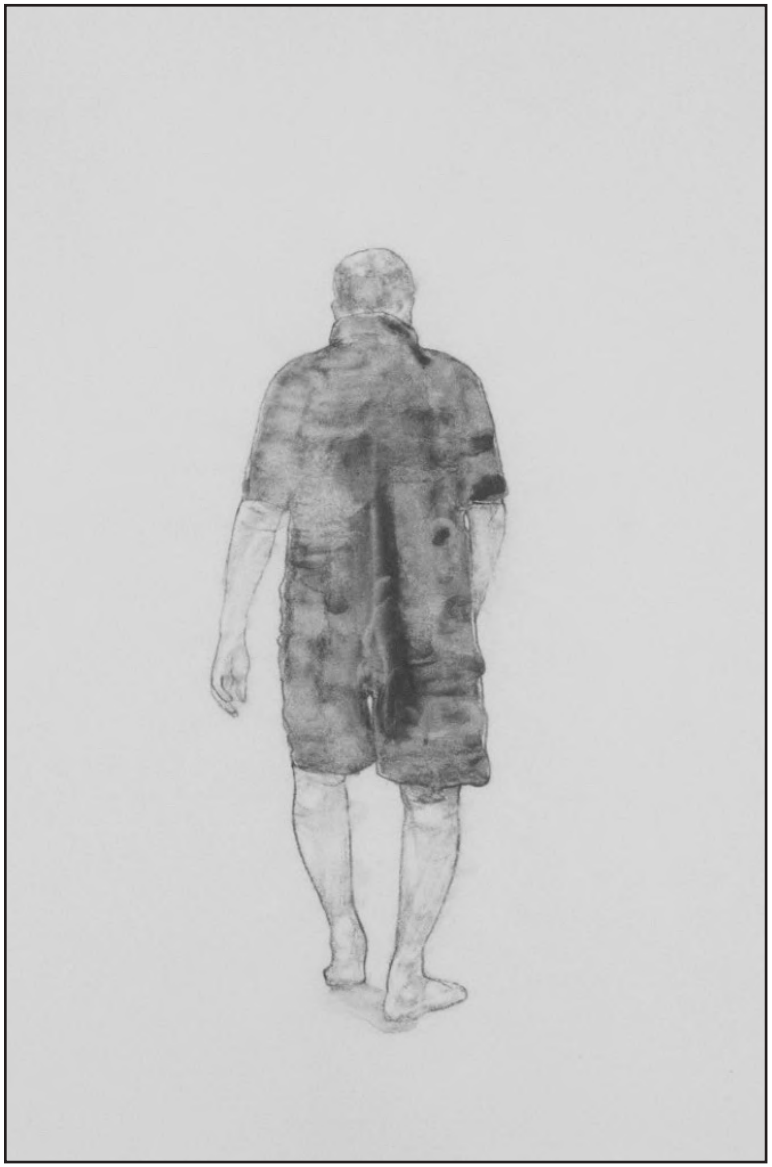


Logan Larsen, *Giovanni's Room (Detail)*, 2021/22

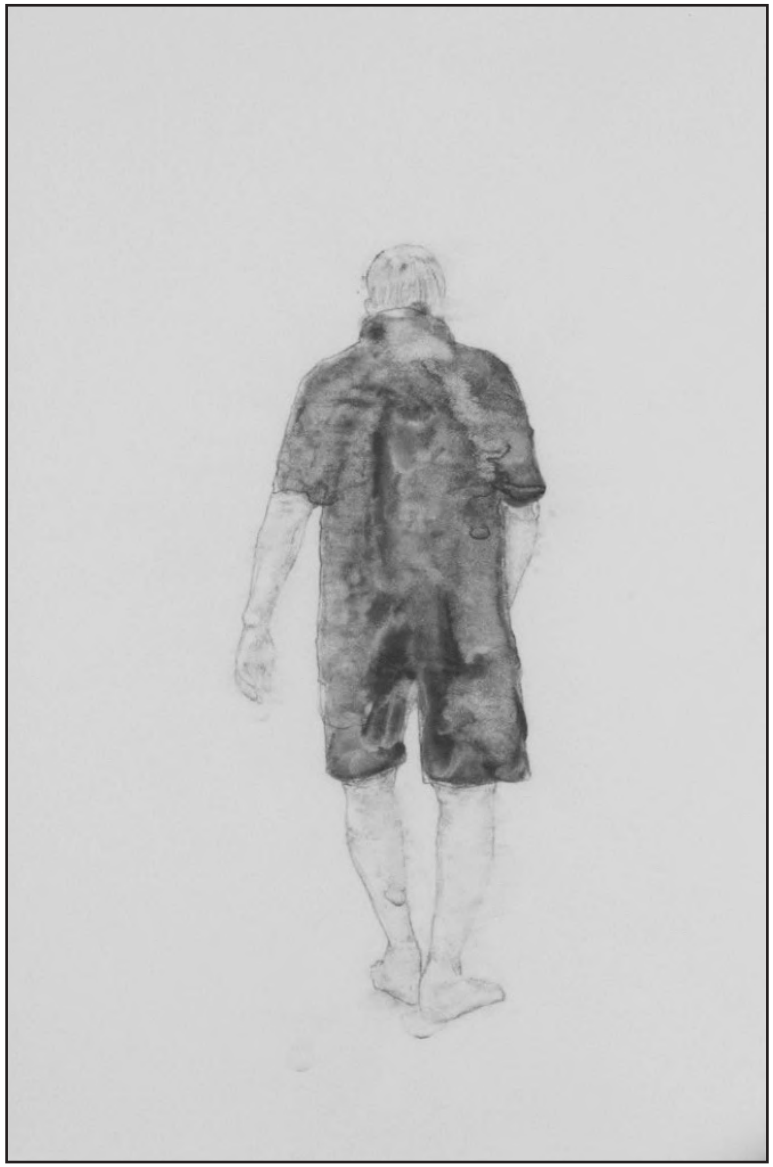
Rachel Massey, *Trout Series*, 2021



Kerry Maguire, *Reality Tunnel / Humdrum Oracle*, 2021



Aishwarya Arumbakkam, *Appa Walking*, 2020



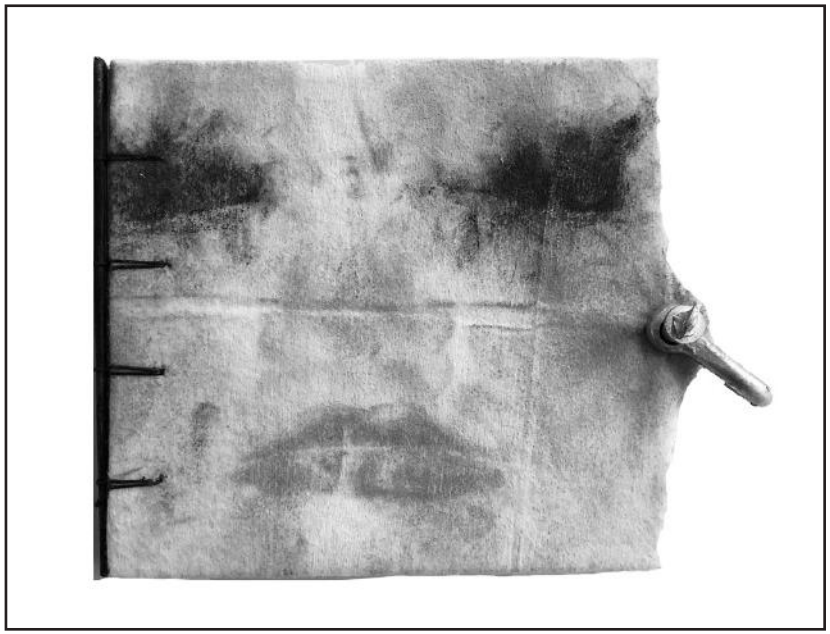
Essential Paradoxes

Olivia Tijerina & Hayden Juroska

Julia Haas' *Smudge* (2021) is, in the most literal sense, a true act of publishing touch. The cover is upholstered with a used makeup wipe that exhibits an imprint of Haas' face. Stylistically, the large metal fixture that juts out of the side of the book juxtaposes the softness of the makeup. Upon viewing the publication, one can imagine Haas pressing their head against the sheet, adjusting enough for the pigment to stick, but not obscuring the clear impression of their closed eyes and rouged cheeks. Haas describes the smudging as a performance. The goal was to exaggerate the form of the face while simultaneously creating a seemingly naturalistic remnant of themself. In its concrete permanence, *Smudge* functions adjacently to the performance relic, necessarily raising issues of authenticity and singularity.

Artists working with publication are often faced with decisions when it comes to the production and reproduction of their work. One can produce a single edition, sometimes associated with rarity or authenticity, or distribute their works on a mass scale using accessible or commonly found materials. While Haas has considered making additional copies of *Smudge*, they reiterate that the object's singularity is essential to its reading as an artifact of a single moment.

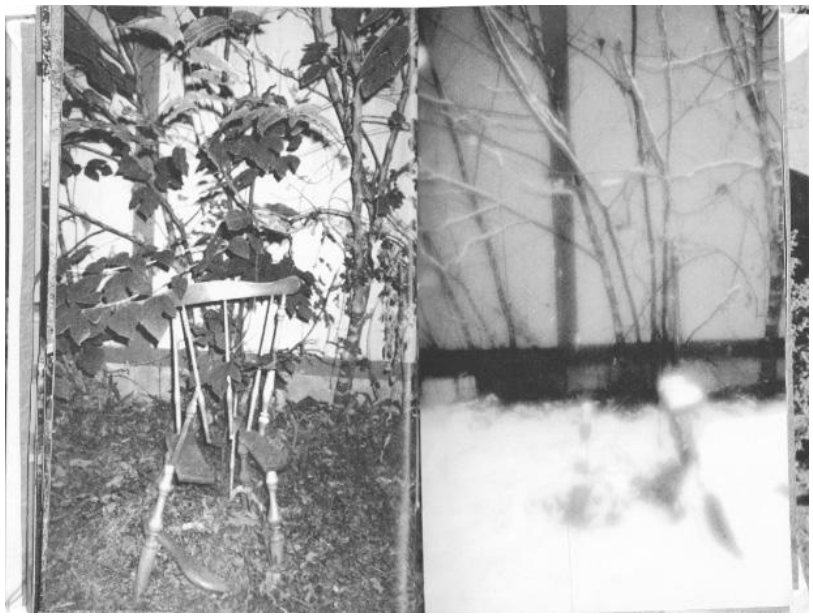
Other works featured in *Connective Tissues* are similarly used to document personal or ephemeral experience. For instance, Caroline Perkison's *Untitled #4* (2018) is composed of found objects collected off the beaches of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. This work highlights the capacity of publication to serve as a site for memory, both personal and collective. Perkison might use the work to reflect or reminisce on her unique experience, while viewers are briefly able to access these intimate moments. The meaning of the work is dependent on how the publication's miscellaneous scraps and objects are specific to a single moment in time, and therefore



Julia Haas, *Smudge*, 2021

unreproducible by another artist, edition, etc.—essentially authentic and singular. Meanwhile, Abby Raffle's works in film photography and Rachel Massey's works in graphite similarly grapple with issues of novelty; however, in contrast to Haas, these artists use publication to transform past works which once existed as unique pieces.

In some ways, the use of publication for performance or ephemeral experiences is antithetical to certain functions of the medium, often celebrated for its ability to be widely accessible and democratic. These works capture some of the essential paradoxes of the show. Twentieth-century little magazines such as *View* (1940-1947), *The Studio* (2000-present) or *Evergreen* (1957-1984) were meant to be physically circulated, but are now treated as rarified objects within museum and archival collections. Haas' *Smudge* saliently brings this history to the literal surface. At the cover, the artist's physical impression only emphasizes the viewer's inability to reach and interact with the work. Our attention is called to the boundary between strict observation and physical touch, and—as with the exhibition space of *Connective Tissues*—our sense of where one ends and the other begins is left unresolved.



Abby Raffle, *Here and Dale (Detail)*, 2021

On Abby Raffle's *Here and Dale*

Llewyn Blossfeld

Growth and decay, sometimes directly juxtaposed, were the first motifs I was drawn to in Raffle's book of photographs *Here and Dale* (2021). The first two pages show images of a tree and a tomato plant, respectively. Below the tree is a pile of dead branches and leaves sitting next to recycling and trash bins. On the tomato plant, light green bulbs are growing. The immediate idea presented in these images is the notion of how we structure our environments: clearing away dead things, and encircling the ones we grow with concrete bricks.

Abandoned or wrecked structures are photographed throughout *Here and Dale*. There are objects left behind, mostly trash bags, wires, and containers. But the homes don't feel unoccupied—more like they've been ransacked, a recent break-in. It makes the camera's angles unsettling; even though I know Raffle is behind the lens, it's like crime scene footage. My favorite aspect of the fifth and sixth images in *Here and Dale* are how the doors lead into one another. There's this formal connection or pathway between the living room and the kitchen's pantry door, as well as the back door, that make the home seem sort of open and endless, or like a stand-in for multiple homes with the same entries and exits. The images make me aware of how we leave homes behind. Reminding me, eerily, of how all this stuff, including the spaces in our neighborhoods, will decay.

There are ways we organize decay, like the dead branches stacked up, or the jar left neatly in the pantry door. Another harsher way to put it would be how we hide decay, instead of honoring it in a book. I'm not sure if honoring is the right word, so much as offering up for study. In the twenty-first and twenty-second images of Raffle's book, there's an overgrown field behind a wood and wire fence, on which is draped a green hose.

Across from it is an image of a house or a tool shed which, like the images above, appear to have decayed. Not in the traditional sense—more like they have been left to their own devices: the paint is peeling on the door and the one window visible is broken. Although items seem to be arranged carefully in the image in places, like the object nailed to the door, the milk crate on the floor, or the wrapped hose, they give the appearance of abandonment more than they do continual or recent use.

A Cast of People are photographed in Raffle's book. I write about them as a cast because the first figure pictured chronologically is shown pissing on a fire hydrant across from a bright yellow lined page of notes, which begins "EPISODE 1: The Dishwasher." The episode's outline includes an illustration of a man getting sucked into a dishwasher head-first, only legs and feet visible. The figure, wearing a bomber jacket and jeans, appears as though sprayed by the fire hydrant due to the angle at which Raffle documents the scene. The flash she uses in the darkness adds to the illicit nature of it all for me.

On page nineteen, we see just the upper half of a person shot in black and white, their lower torso, legs, and feet jammed in sandals, only half-visible. They hold a patterned mug of dark liquid in their hand, and their shorts are pulled down to their ankles in the grass where they stand. Again, Raffle uses a bright flash in the darkness to create the photo; the image is similar to the figure pissing, both formally and in its innocuous humor. In the photograph on page twenty, a person munching on pizza is arranged so that their eyeline meets the crotch of the cut-off torso. In this cast of characters, the figure holding the mug and the pissing figure feel like the comedic relief. Characters like the three standing in an interior scene are less intelligible, or archetypal.

Another use of the book's format is in the cut-off between pages twenty-nine and thirty, where a hand emerges from the binding, dropping a bottle of tic-tacs or pills into a person's open mouth. Below them is a person laughing with a scrunched nose, eyes red from the camera flash. The blurriness of the

open mouth. Below them is a person laughing with a scrunched nose, eyes red from the camera flash. The blurriness of the pair's faces is somewhat distorted, so that their identities feel less important than the action, and the feeling of excitement and movement. Opposite the interior image is a person waiting outdoors, their face upturned and mouth open to catch falling snowflakes. Viewing the two figures together in both pages feel somewhat voyeuristic; there's trust in closing one's eyes, and relaxation, and humor: mostly in theatricality, in mimicking a happy movie scene, like catching snowflakes. Thinking about Raffle's subjects as a cast is generative for me in thinking about how we act for a camera, and for our friends, especially for a laugh.

Abby Raffle, *Here and Dale (Detail)*, 2021

On the seventeenth page, another cast member's image is cut in such a way that plays formally with the book's edges: their palms seem to be pushed forward, pressing on either side of the page, their thumbs and one forefinger visible. The setting appears to be winter again, by the looks of their red nose and leopard-print lined coat. I like this photograph in particular

because of the characterization I made viewing it opposite the photo of leaves covered in frozen dew—their intense but blank gaze and bottom row of teeth and the leopard print appear animalistic! Another way the pair could be viewed is in an action sequence: the figure pushes us and we gaze up at the trees above where we fall. The leopard print in image thirty-three is paired with the feline in image thirty-four. Two figures stand opposite each other and face toward the book's center; both gaze at the camera, one indoor and one outdoor. In the first, a figure plays with their hands and gazes, unfocused, their eyes red from the flash, surrounded by movie posters. In the second, a figure carries a black cat with a startled expression on its face and a kerchief around its neck. These have also been taken with flash, an effect not unlike the photos we might find in old family photo books to me. In almost all of her images, it feels as though Raffle has caught her subjects off-guard, or in a sort of home movie.

A great pairing of photographs showing a cast reacting to cameras is photographs thirty-one and thirty-two. A pair of figures is shown seated on a plain white bed holding one another. One of the figures has their naked back turned to us, and the other rests their head on the figure's shoulder. Behind them is a landscape scene on a wall, almost like a set background, but not all-encompassing in the illusory sense. The camera angle makes it appear as though Raffle is a peeping tom, viewing the moment behind a curtain through a window. Although, to me, this scene is the most evocatively charged figurative image in the book, the image opposite reinserts its staged-ness: a crowd of what appear to be tripods stand reed-like and strangely sculptural in the dark. It's as though the empty tripods watch us watching them, and are at the same time their own strange set-up. Without any cameras atop them, I'm more aware of the one pointed at them.

Of course, personal associations that guided Raffle's decisions surrounding the figures in the book—the person holding the cat across from the figure in leopard print, for example—wouldn't be intelligible to me. For this reason, I find they're easier read as a "cast," with scenic "props" like the posters, leopard print, or cat, reacting to the camera "between scenes."

Time lapses through the photographs in various ways, through changing seasons and objects breaking down. The recycling and trash bins are shown both covered in snow and without, and so is a white car parallel-parked on the side of the road, facing either direction. Raffle's attention to her format can be seen in the two roads converging in the middle of the book. Other broken objects include what appears to be a bird bath or sculpture in front of a black dog, and a chair shown in images twenty-five and twenty-six. On the left, the chair is photographed in black and white before winter has overtaken the backyard. There are leafy vines crawling up the structure behind the chair and dangling over its back. The chair has collapsed in on itself somewhat, because its seat has been cut away; its legs and back are starting to give, but it remains recognizable. In the second image, this time in color, the chair is (like the bird bath) almost sculptural. All but part of the seat and legs are left standing under the weight of the snow. What made it a usable object is now buried, and the leaves behind the chair have fallen too, leaving bare branches. I see the chair as representing a lapse in time, but also as a placeholder for something. Its function has been removed, but the documentation of its gradual decay (under Raffle's control) lives on.

There's an interesting parallel between the different seasons captured in images twenty-three and twenty-four. A tree (like the pair before) is photographed with telephone wires crossing the image in front of it, and on the other page is a single shoe print in the snow. Parts of the tree seem to poke through the space between the wires, beginning to use the man-made structure as support. The lush grass has filled the shoe print, using the person's impact to melt the snow. The tree's canopy almost mimics the round upper shape of the shoe, and our human presence in the environment is demonstrated by the two objects in subtle ways. Photographs thirty-five and thirty-six also connect visually. On the first page, a photograph of a bridge is turned sideways so that its crossed vertical and horizontal metal bars appear to mirror or repeat the lines in the next photograph, a color photo of a wooden structure outdoors.

On the bridge are carefully made footprints in the snow that remind me of the Pink Panther detective. The trail the person has left goes from the bottom of the book to the top as though walking off its page; behind the bridge is a canal and what eerily appears to be headstones and stone benches. The image of the wooden structure is taken at an odd angle so that the dark ceiling fills the top, and there is no visible bottom, only an opening into the woods surrounding it on either side, continuing off the page's edge.

There's this openness these structures have to the environment that gives me a new awareness of how inseparable from nature, or how fragile, the structures we make are. The openings and the railings, and places where continuing structures are cut off, challenge the contained space of the book's pages as well. The wooden structure frames this environment in the background that is doubly contained by it and the page. It appears sort of untouchable, like the receding background of a painting. The bridge's railing is at an odd angle so that it appears to push outward rather than flatten its environment on the page.

Another way I've read *Here and Dale* is as a diary, rather than a work of fiction or a director's cut. So far, I've thought about Raffle's intent in terms of characterization, playing with our relationship to the camera, considering the connections between the natural environment and our structures, and musing on the passage of time. But another quality of her photographs is their momentariness, this sense that they were taken in between actions or moments of rest versus moments of unrest—as with photograph twenty-eight, of a ball about to fall off the rim of a basketball hoop, or image twenty, of the person biting into a pizza. Raffle documents small events like one would in a diary (I ate pizza today, I played basketball in the yard) that are guided by what she notices and decides to separate for us to study along with her. Her settings, especially, contribute to the diaristic reading for me: the backyard, interior scenes, abandoned houses, telephone wires, and bins; things that we'd notice in our everyday lives. The dogs, too, are without people, and so appear to be freely wandering. Even the dogs in

images three and four, but especially the two lounging on the concrete in the image next to the hoop, outside and off-leash. There is also the impossibility for me, and others who don't know the persons pictured, of connecting them to each other, without the ability to "read" the diary from one's own point-of-view; they're effectively strangers in the neighborhood. The neighborhood walkthrough remains highly structured, made-up, in some ways formally so. Excitingly, it's clear that, although personal objects and people in Raffle's life are in the book, it remains a fictional document directed by her camera.

To me, there is a level of trust between Raffle and her subjects, and Raffle and the reader, that is implied in a diaristic reading of Raffle's book. Scenes like the figure pissing on the hydrant, the people posed with their mouths open, and the figures holding each other have an openness and a willingness to be captured and kept that exceed the boundaries of many people. I think part of that trust comes from anonymity, but that part could come from the fiction-making aspect of the book as well–the staged scenes, based on or not based on real lives. Nothing can be taken as fact-—the fact of the photograph is made up—and aspects of Raffle's hand (and a foot!) are put into the work so that we can see the directorial gaze, and the camera's flash, disrupting the idea that any of what is pictured is reality. The final note, made on the same bright yellow lined paper, is also cut off. Raffle's (or someone else's) handwriting in the work refers to "Hilldale Drive" as one would a set, in the main room, at nighttime. "All the cast" slow dances, setting the mood for the final page. The notes describe the dishwasher from the earlier page, specifying actions like director's orders. The cast slowly comes to a rest in various parts of Hilldale, and the final action written is a sniff. The title *Here and Dale*, as a play on "here and there," refers to several places at once that, brought together, create a fictional place, the place in the book, while ultimately referencing a specific one in Raffle's book: "Episode 1."