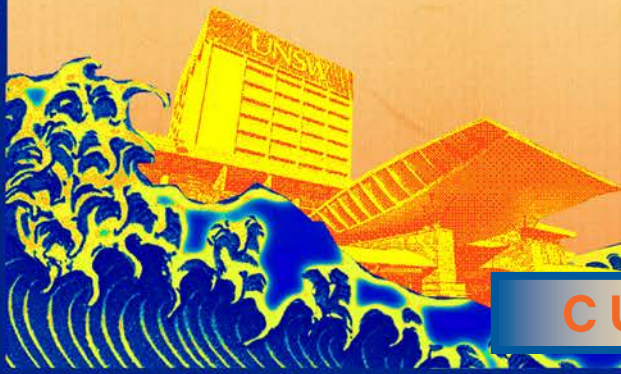
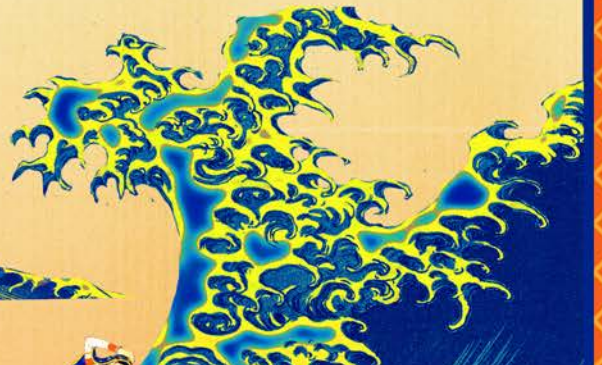
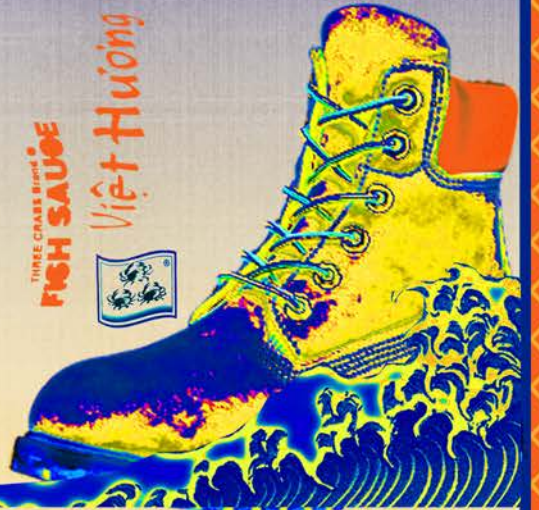


# THARUNKA

UNSW'S STUDENT MAGAZINE / MARCH 2017



THREE CRABS BRAND  
**FISH SAUCE**  
Việt Hương



CULTURE

# THARUNKA

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# Letters From the Editors



**MANAGING EDITOR**

**BRITTNEY RIGBY**

Pop. Literary. Australian. Political. Food. UNSW. Indigenous. Selfie. Art. Geographical. Queer. Digital. Sexist. Theatre. Drinking. Sporting.

Culture.

We are immersed in so many different cultures constantly. Cultures shape our experiences of the world and how we move through it. Cultures impact our privilege, identities, access and understanding. They contribute to structural inequalities and systemic change. Culture matters.

I recently returned from a trip to India, which was the biggest culture shock I have ever experienced. Everything was different, in every way: the people, food, languages, religions, histories, cities, landscapes, road rules. There were rickshaws, tuk tuks, Bollywood dancing, constant horns, cacophony, colour, chaos, calm, curry for breakfast.

Throwing yourself in the deep end of a new cultural experience can be the most difficult, but most rewarding, thing you do. And being in a foreign place can be as much a physical immersion as it is a mental one. It took days for my body to adjust to the cuisine, and days to recover from jet lag upon my return. I twisted my knee (which was reconstructed five years ago) hiking part of the Silk Road in Jaipur. My nose ran and throat burned as we navigated the largest Asian spice markets in Delhi. I never adjusted to the Indian method of

crossing the road: stepping out, extending both arms to ward off oncoming traffic, acting confident, praying. My eyelids were tugged with sleepiness when we woke at 4:30am to see Mumbai at dawn. My skin turned red under the Goan sun. My heart felt heavy when we left.

I'm still processing India, whilst readapting to Sydney. Singlet tops/saris. White bread/naan. Coke/masala chai. Tap water/bottled water only. Soft serve/jalebis. Eating cow/worshipping them.

But I know, as an Anglo-Australian, that in a time of persisting whiteness, my interpretation of "culture" is framed by white privilege. I cannot claim to understand the lived experiences of people still exposed to casual racism and embedded discrimination. I have never been abused, disenfranchised or underrepresented because of the colour of my skin. I know that, in the same way the patriarchy disadvantages and suppresses me, my people continue to disadvantage and suppress others. We committed genocide against the oldest culture in the world upon our invasion on 26 January. We took children away from their mothers. We allow people to sit like prisoners in offshore detention centres. We elected a racist, Islamophobic, misogynistic, unqualified white man as the leader of the free world. We populate TV screens and websites and stages, while people of colour go unheard and

unrepresented. I do not intend to speak for non-white people, but, as Managing Editor, I do intend to make *Tharunka* as culturally inclusive as possible.

Here in Issue 2, many contributors traverse the complexities of "culture" in their works: the death of the Roundhouse, being Asian-Australian, the politics of street art and veganism and comedy and political correctness and Macedonia's struggle and what it all means. There's poetry and art and stories of travel and lessons on bookshops and Mughal miniature paintings.

We hope you enjoy it all. We hope you're nestled back into life at UNSW. We hope these pages prompt you to take a moment to think about the last time a place or musician or artwork or experience cracked your heart open. We hope you allow those moments to build and build, until they becomes skyscrapers in cities of your best memories. Until next time.



**FEATURES**

**ALICIA D'ARCY**

Culture is the thing you imbibe when you go overseas and eat another country's food, watch their sport or marvel at their buildings. Culture is also the thing that shapes our default mode of interacting with others in any given social environment. We are all individual islands of thought moving throughout this world, and yet we are so much more than the walls of our own minds: we are social and we connect, and culture is inherently a part of this.

Cultures can be a source of comfort and can provide a sense of belonging, for example the cultures within our families and close friendship circles. However, interrogating the type of cultures we want to see around us is also necessary. Cultures can be toxic, whether that be rape culture (or just the broader culture of patriarchy), or the changing Australian culture which is becoming bizarrely and problematically more and more patriotic and exclusive.

Hence, this issue is a challenge to that. With arms open wide, we embrace the best that culture has to bring to us, and turn our cheek to the rest.



**CREATIVE**

**SHARON WONG**

*Where are you from?*  
Australia.

*No. Where are you really from?*  
I guess my parents migrated from China. But I'm Australian. Sort of. And Chinese. Sort of.

*Do you always use chopsticks?*  
Sometimes. It's convenient.

*Do you like going and having a VB at a local barbie?*  
Ummm probably not. I love dumplings and noodles?

*How will your parents react to you liking girls?*  
They don't believe in bisexuality.

*Your parents must be super conservative. Very Chinese.*  
Well it's not a simply Chinese thing though.

*But you're probably heaps good at maths.*  
Not really, I love studying history and literature. I love poetry and reading fantasy novels.

*Do you speak Chinese?*  
Well, the national language is Mandarin but I also speak Cantonese. My vocabulary and grammatical understanding of the languages aren't as great as my English though. I can't read or write Chinese very well.

*But it must be super easy travelling to China!*  
Well I'm a foreigner there. It's very different to Australia.

*So who do you support during the Olympics?*  
Umm, both?

*So where are you from?*



**ONLINE**

**DOMINIC GIANNINI**

Culture shock. I think that's the only way to describe bringing your new Australian girlfriend over to your wog household. Nothing can quite prepare a petite Australian for the nuances of the Italian lifestyle, where food is made fresh and everything is recyclable. How can she possibly accept that a hessian sack can double up as an old Italian man's belt when her sauce comes from a bottle and the fruit isn't from the garden?

*la mia casa è la tua casa ... now pull up a shovel and help nonno dig up these artichokes because no one's shy in an Italian household.*

This issue is all about culture, and tbh, apart from my inability to wear shoes that aren't thongs and my special ability to appreciate beer from a can and wine from a bag, I dunno too much about what you Australians do for fun, so imma leave it to the experts.

However, I do know Australian music culture, so if you like live music and sweaty singers, hit up the Facebook page for this issue's Spotlight On bands, including Mosquito Coast and Dorsal Fins, who are totally jamming.



**DESIGNER**

**LEO TSAO**

If you took a magical x-ray lens and peered into my second-generation Asian-Australian, trans, queer, creative body, you'd see a multi-coloured kaleidoscope of particles from a myriad of different cultures, some violently clashing, some gently fusing, and some just co-existing, swirling and dancing with each other.

Like many others in my demographic, these cultural clashes are such a large part of our everyday experiences and identity. Growing up and traversing this world, especially in the current social/political/cultural climate can be quite tough.

However it's kinda cool to think about the fact that we're basically the people of the future, bringing a bit of spice into the under-seasoned, bland af world of the white folks.

BY BRITTNEY RIGBY

## Agony Ibis

Dear Agony Ibis,

I'm in my fifth year of medicine, but I'm considering dropping out. The quality of uni life has plummeted since the Roundhouse closed, and the Greenhouse just isn't the same.

I'm this close to taking a year off to find myself, or transferring to USyd, where the bar is no doubt cheaper, but first, I wanted to reach out to you. You're my last hope.

Best,  
Ailments and Ale-ments

Dear Ailments and Ale-ments,

You've come to the right place, pet. Modesty isn't my finest quality, and we all know that I'm UNSW's finest food and beverage connoisseur. I propose the following:

### 1. Take over the Greenhouse

Firstly, we steal as many old SRC election t-shirts as we can, and train our minions. I'm thinking the Yellow Shirts and the Arc Street Team; they're keen for anything. Get them on board and I'll get the ibis army ready. Then, we storm the Greenhouse.

Lunchtime peak hour. At least 20 of us in student politics regalia. Students enjoying their lunch and overpriced beer scatter; they don't want to be bombarded yet another "Vote for [insert shit ticket name here]" spiel. They're so scared that they don't realise student elections are still weeks' away. Staff run too. Abandonment of employment? Who cares, Ian Jacobs is probs gonna fire them anyway. #staffcuts

The place is ours.

### 2. Convert it from the Greenhouse to the Lakehouse

Next, we flood the place. Beer taps turned on, Alco pops emptied, goon bags split. The alcohol spreads, the water level rises, until the Village Green becomes a lake. There's more alcohol in the Village Green Lake than there is in first years' stomachs on Law Camp.

We crack open a leftover VB to celebrate. We bathe in the tears of our livers.

### 3. We Snapchat/Facebook Live/Instagram story the whole damn thing (whichever it is you kids do these days; I can't keep up). Internet fame arrives, quickly.

Okay? Okay.

Your partner in crime (and beer),  
Agony Ibis

BY LARA ROBERTSON

## It's 2017 and I Can't Believe We're Still Debating...

### Veganism

Let's face it, it's easy to hate on vegans. But before you interrupt with "but bacon!", hear me out. The stats are clear – our current meat consumption habits are bad for our health, the environment, and animals. Here's a whole list of common arguments against veganism, and my responses (TL;DR: nup).

#### ISN'T A VEGAN DIET UNHEALTHY AND UNNATURAL BECAUSE IT LACKS ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS LIKE IRON AND B12?

Australia's peak health body, the National Health and Medical Research Council, acknowledges that a vegan diet can be suitable for people of all ages. A vegan diet provides many sources of iron in the form of legumes, grains, nuts, seeds and vegetables. Though a B12 supplement is recommended for vegans, B12 is actually produced by bacteria that live in the soil the animals feed from, not the animals themselves. In many cases, industrially farmed animals are fed B12 supplements.

#### BUT HAVEN'T HUMANS BEEN EATING MEAT FOREVER?

Yes. But there's a massive difference between the times of cavemen, for example, and now. When humankind were largely hunters and gatherers, seasonal changes meant that the majority of their diet – consisting mostly of wild nuts, seeds, berries and roots – needed to be supplemented with the energy-dense calories provided by meat in order to survive. Today, we have easy access to supermarkets and a wide variety of nutritious food; with so much choice, why would you choose to take a life?

#### BUT I LOVE THE TASTE OF [INSERT ANIMAL PRODUCT HERE].

Taste is the most arbitrary and malleable of our senses. Also, we are creatures of habit – if we grow up eating a certain food regularly, then it makes sense that we gain

pleasure from eating it. People in other countries claim that dog meat tastes wonderful, yet in the Western world people usually react to such a practice with disgust. Does taste justify cruelty?

#### BUT ANIMALS EAT OTHER ANIMALS – IT'S ALL PART OF THE NATURAL FOOD CHAIN.

What separates humans from other animals is our cognitive ability to make moral decisions. Therefore, the "food chain" point becomes moot when we realise there is nothing "natural" about the way modern society forces animals into a machine-like existence, robbing them of their natural behaviours and desires.

#### SO I GET WHY YOU DON'T EAT MEAT. BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH EGGS AND DAIRY? THE ANIMALS AREN'T HARMED.

Well actually, they are; such animals arguably have a more painful life than animals raised for their meat. Instead of being slaughtered after a matter of weeks or months, hens and dairy cows have to endure years of suffering, often in cramped, unsanitary conditions, constantly producing at an unnatural rate, and with a much shorter lifespan. Ultimately, the dairy and egg industries are intertwined with the meat industry, so supporting one inevitably means supporting the other.

#### BUT I EAT FREE-RANGE EGGS AND HUMANELY KILLED MEAT. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

Don't buy into the clever marketing ploys. "Free-range" doesn't often mean what you think it does. Also, there is no way to "humanely" raise an animal as a production machine or to kill an animal that clearly doesn't want to die. You think they volunteered themselves to be enslaved and eaten?

## Death of the Roundie?

The Roundhouse, aka Sydney's first ever round building, is set to be closed for another 12 months, undergoing a \$25 million renovation which will hopefully bring it back into the 21st century.

However, students have raised concerns that the glory days of the Roundhouse are over for good.

With live acts such as Peking Duck, the Preatures, Safia, Alison Wonderland and Rufus taking the stage at Roundhouse parties in 2012 and 2013, it's easy to see how the DJs in recent years don't measure up.

Roundhouse Venue and Events Manager, Brittney McLennan, said that the venue actively tries to engage emerging acts and performers as well as those with mainstream attention, as was the case in previous years.

"The Roundhouse has always been popular with students; we anticipate the refurbishments will increase the popularity and the scope of use possible within the building," McLennan said.

McLennan also addressed concerns that the 18-month closure to the Roundhouse will lead to a decrease in quality of UNSW's cultural and social life.

"Many iconic buildings undergo a refresh at certain points in their lifespan," she said.

"We don't anticipate the culture of The Roundhouse to disappear over this time, but to return within a building that supports the needs and wants of today's students.

"The Village Green Facility, aka the Greenhouse, isn't aiming to replace the Roundhouse."

How the Roundhouse aims to maintain student social culture in the meantime, remains to be seen.

Vice-Chancellor of UNSW from 1992 to 2002, John Niland, said that the Roundhouse needed to be saved and adapted to fulfil its modern purpose.

"We need to make it into a building that will live and breathe again," he said.

The Roundhouse is due to be opened in O-Week 2018, after 18 months' of closure, with two new lounges and study spaces, as well as being more energy efficient and sound proof.



## What's in a Name?

I am a Macedonian Australian. Even though I was born here, have studied here, and currently live here, I haven't lost sight of my cultural roots: the very roots that gave me my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, the roots that gave me my identity, my traditions and my second language. For all of these things, I am proud to call myself Macedonian while living in Australia. I am glad that I live in a multicultural Australian society that gives me the *freedom* to call myself Macedonian.

It's a freedom my family and I have celebrated.

Yet, my cultural identity has been questioned for years. It's an identity that's been disputed most recently since Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, when the country formally started referring to itself as the Republic of Macedonia. Greece has continually challenged the use of the name, based on the premise that Macedonia "stole" the name from the Greek province that lies to the south of the Macedonian-Greek border. This is notwithstanding the fact that the geographical use of a name in one country does not signify a right to, or sole ownership of, that name, nor does it trump universally accepted principles of self-identification and self-determination.

Greece has even gone so far as to give Macedonia an ultimatum: change your name or we will prevent you from becoming a member of NATO and the EU, echoing the threats of primary school bullies who want something in return for not dunking your head in the toilet. It's terrifying that this ultimatum may eventually push Macedonia to breaking point, if the tiny country cedes to the demands of Greece by changing its name.

Despite this, I've never had doubts about my identity. I've never once doubted who I am, or who my family is, but it does make me uneasy that there are people out there who want to impose on me *their* ideas of what my identity should be. It worries me that my identity is considered somewhat void or worthless because it's still, to this very day, a plaything for politicians and diplomats without a backbone.

But why should the petty politics of European countries decide that I am Macedonian, or Macedonian in quotation marks? Why should their fruitless nationalism dictate that my family is from Macedonia, or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? Perhaps the country will one day give into the pressure mounted by Greece and in that case, why should I accept a new name, foreign and far removed from anything I've ever known?

I think it's important to remember that there is strength in reason and compassion. Our claim to the name does not call into question your right to use the same name; yet, your claim to own the name denies our identity and existence as Macedonians.

Put aside the politics and aggressive pride, and focus on the identities of real, living Macedonians in Europe and in diasporas around the world, who are in limbo without their name. We all want to belong to something, we all want to belong to what we know and are familiar with, so at least give us that.

## More than Meets the Eye

### A Brief Dip into the Depths of ~Culture~

Szechuan pepper. In Hunan, where old mate Chairman Mao hails from, there is a drier, spicy flavour. And in the Shanghai region, many dishes are soy sauce based, giving them a more caramelised richness.

The point though, was tidily summed up by my friend, Cady,

“Asia, or even just China itself, is rich with diversity, diversity that can’t be reduced to similarity in appearance,” she said.

“However, I can accept the usage of ‘Asian-Australian’ in the context of the minority experience in a very general sense. In this context, I think the term can have a unifying effect.”

The point is not to nitpick and unstitch that Asian blanket, but simply to uncover it and glance at what lies beneath, beyond the vast continent that meets the eye.

Whilst on exchange in Paris, I was confronted with a new slipperiness between my Australian-ness, and Chinese-ness, that I had not ever been so conscious of at home. In Australia, I mostly felt, well, Australian.

Five-year-old me had once sallied into the local stationery shop for my regular chat with the lovely Peggy, the elderly Caucasian employee, and said, “Hi Peggy, I’m Chinese!

Did you know that?” I had never felt anything other than Australian and this new discovery that I was Chinese didn’t strike me as cultural difference, but was simply an interesting piece of information to chew on for the day.

As I grew up though, and particularly as I constantly met new people while abroad the question, “But where are you really from?” made me begin to wonder much more about culture and identity.

I was overwhelmed by Sydney’s diversity upon coming home, having been away for six months. I’d forgotten, and I was seeing it afresh with this new, inquisitive self-awareness that I’d started to explore more deeply whilst abroad.

Every third person is of Asian ethnicity and likely every person knows someone of Asian ethnicity. Mandarin is the second most spoken language in Australia after English, and Chinese people alone are the single largest minority in the country. So it’s no wonder I had never really experienced that same self-awareness growing up in Australia that I did in Europe quite often.

I wanted to start talking more to my Chinese-Australian friends, to see what sort of experiences they had. Many interesting conversations ensued, and will surely continue. I expected to find similarities, yet, despite all being young Australians with a Chinese background, our experiences were often very different.

It’s a sunny morning at the Champs de Mars, where you’re going for a run. A smiling vendor of miniature Eiffel Tower trinkets appears in your pathway. You smile back. A nice, harmless exchange of smiles, then:

“Konnichiwa! Konnichiwa?! Nihao! Nihao?!”

Ah, so it’s one of those days.

(The other kind of day being the incessant tirade of “1 euro! 1 euro! 1 euro!”)

Despite popular opinion, not all Asian-looking people are Japanese or Chinese.

Would you say, “We just had some European steak”? Probably not. But you might say, “We just had some Asian stir-fry.”

This may seem harmless enough in an everyday context, but it’s still worth interrogating. This is a wonderfully patch-worked and colourful blanket – the pan-Asian throw – yet it smothers the myriad details of many rich cultures in one broad sweep.

It’s easy to do this when it comes neatly marketed to you, for example, if we are to continue on the strain of stir-fries: “Simply Asia” or “Oriental Sauce”. Yet stir-fries vary greatly from province to province and city to city in China alone. In the Szechuan region, the dominant flavor is a numbing spiciness – think

## More than Meets the Eye

### A Brief Dip into the Depths of ~Culture~

from either Australian or Chinese culture.

However, I’ve come to embrace this sometimes unrooting feeling as a sort of transience, wherein my personal sense of freedom is enriched via my cultural identity. I think that I owe my open-mindedness, and a more free way of thinking, to being able to tap into and inhabit more than one culture.

How does being Chinese-Australian feel then? As words, “Chinese” and “Australian” look distinct and isolated, alternate existences. Yet as lived experience, they are interwoven, merging and diverging. The ancient stories of both countries are richly sewn.

For China, there are the dynastical centuries, opulent imperial wealth, springs of creative innovation in technology, art, poetry and medicine, the collision of western imperialism, colonialist powers and both the triumphs and horrors of Maoism.

In Australia, there is the innumerable richness of Aboriginal communities, their cultures and languages. There is the injustices and severe misunderstandings of colonisation, the naissance of a federated country at the turn of the twentieth century, the diverse population.

In the classic “melting pot” of cultures, being Chinese-Australian is a unique mélange, a fused yin-yang.

Even in this brief dip into Asian-Australian, and particularly, Chinese-Australian culture, I hope there is some momentary reflection on how we interact, and are aware of our own and others’ cultures.

What’s more than meets the eye, quite simply, is the experiences and the feelings of who you are. It’s the feeling of meditating blissfully amidst the intense blue Australian skies and the summer cicada song, or the feeling of unadulterated sunshine on my face, limbs and back as I float through salty waves.

## Her; India



Shakti Srikanth has been on a three-month internship in Bangalore over the summer.

*1 January 2017: Indian women wake up with bruises, not hangovers. Reports emerge of widespread sexual violence in the nation's Silicon Valley – Bangalore. Women tell of being groped, physically assaulted and fighting off men with their heels. All the while, policemen watch with perverted indifference.*

Sadly, incidents such as this are all too common in India. No matter your age or attire, all women are “open season” for men. We no longer feel safe in public spaces. We have been pushed into hiding, as men arrogantly claim the public sphere as their own. In 2011, a book titled *Why Loiter?* described women's access to public space in India as “conditional”.

It comes as no surprise then that 90% of females in India experience sexual harassment, or that a sexual crime against a woman is committed every four minutes. Surveys reveal that over 62% of Indian men still believe women provoke them by the way they dress. Meanwhile, their dhotis<sup>1</sup> expose their hairy legs (and their sexism). Families impose curfews on their daughters. Boys and men are not told to simply stop assaulting and molesting us.

In 2012, India revolted after the fatal gang rape of a 23-year-old student. Thousands came together in anti-establishment marches

demanding greater protection for women and tougher punishment for perpetrators. Legislative response has been barely effective: the number of reported sexual assaults in India has increased by 39% since 2012. Disturbingly, most forms of marital rape are still legal, even if the victim is a minor.

Reclaiming public space is not easy. Cultural structures in India have always sought to restrict women's autonomy and sexuality. From the Hindu narrative of the Mahabharata – “there is no creature more sinful than woman” – to the nation's cruel and distorted sex ratio – 945 females for every 1000 males – Indian society does not emancipate women, but confines them to a life of inferiority. There is a common expression in India that “bringing up a daughter is like watering a neighbour's plant”; her dowry alone can drive the family into debt.

In urban spaces, the divide between men and women becomes more apparent. From a young age, Indian boys are separated from their female counterparts – sitting on opposite sides of the classroom, told to leave the class when teachers discuss menstruation. The stigma attached to sexuality and the female body has invariably created a society where boys view it as their birthright to wolf whistle, catcall and ogle because these are the only “social” skills they know. If only I had a dollar for every Facebook request, inevitably accompanied

by a variation of: “Did not feel bad, will you friendship with me?”

To add insult to injury, misogynistic politicians continue to pander to the masses, claiming western culture is at the helm of corrupting sanskari<sup>2</sup> women. Apparently, not only are women victims, but perpetrators of their own sexual assaults.

Inspired by the Women's March, a constellation of Indian women (and men) have demanded reckoning through the #IWillGoOut movement. These women, who refuse to succumb to a culture of entitlement and who refuse to keep their hymens intact until marriage, will continue to fight for public space.

They will continue to fight for *her* future.

1. Traditional men's garment sometimes tied up above the knee

2. A traditional and conservative Indian girl.

## Freedom of Speech and “PC” Culture

“Political correctness” is our language changing to reflect an increasingly diverse society in which citizens attempt to avoid causing unnecessary offense to one another.

Yet, many people, such as my friend on the train, see a political correctness as a conspiracy with which to strangle their freedom.

This kind of thinking is incredibly dangerous; it perpetuates the idea that political correctness is the language of the entitled, creating a quasi-victim identity for those who believe in their right to belittle our society's most vulnerable.

In reality, political correctness is not the musing of cultural elites, but rather, is the expression of the oppressed.

The debate on political correctness and free speech has been tense in this country since the Coalition's first attempt to amend racial discrimination laws when the Abbott government came into power in 2013. The controversy heated up even further with Attorney-General George Brandis' now infamous comment that, “people have a right to be bigots”.

Labor and the Greens have backed the existing legislation, with Bill Shorten saying the push for change is a “vendetta driven by prejudice” that shows current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's weakness against conservative Coalition MPs.

Liberal MP Ian Goodenough, who is heading the parliamentary inquiry, has said that it is “misleading” to say that reforms to 18C will promote race hate speech, as there are

already laws in place which prevent abuse or threatening speech.

However, if it is freedom of speech that Coalition MPs are worried about, there is legislation of much greater consequence. Section 35P of the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979* can lead to journalists being jailed for revealing misconduct by government agencies.

The Act also allows for the jailing of journalists where they disclose “operational information” about a person's detention by ASIO within two years of that person being detained.

There are no exceptions for fair reporting or situations where a media story reveals misuse of powers or mistreatment of detainees. And let's not forget about the sanctions imposed by the *Border Force Act*, which prevents detention centre workers from disclosing information concerning detainees wellbeing.

PC culture and the *Racial Discrimination Act* do not pose the greatest threat to free speech. To purport that they do certainly appears to be protecting people who merely want the right to be bigots.

“Don't discuss religion or politics” is a social rule I often struggle with.

For example, on a long train ride last week, I found myself talking politics with the stranger sitting next to me, the *Herald* spread across his lap, open on yet another article on President Trump's inauguration.

After asking for my thoughts on the current political landscape, the man (probably aged in his mid-60s) listened intently to what I had to say before ever so politely informing me that I was wrong.

According to my train friend, the rise of Donald Trump and other ultra-angry, anti-establishment populists can't be put down to the fragmenting nature of globalisation, xenophobia, failures of neoliberalism or the patriarchy, but rather... the “PC police”.

“People are sick of being told what they can and can't say by the elites, it's our right to say what we want,” he said.

The ongoing debate on PC culture has been given a lot of air time recently, both internationally and domestically, with the current parliamentary inquiry examining free speech and Coalition MPs pushing for an overhaul of section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

# Multiculturalism and Street Art: Responses to Peter Drew's Posters

During Australia Day this year, Adelaide-based artist Peter Drew released the third iteration of his street art poster series "Real Australians Seek Welcome". This series features 250 designs, one for each Indigenous language group.

Drew is currently plastering his posters across Australia and hopes they will also reach remote Aboriginal communities. His previous posters have addressed questions of Australian identity and its conundrums, and have received criticism from both the left and right sides of politics. It's for these reasons that Drew's work is intriguing; he combines street art with a political message, despite the artist himself stating that he has "always disliked political art".



'REAL AUSTRALIANS SAY WELCOME' - FIRST ITERATION

below. The most prominent poster was a 1916 photograph of Punjab hawker, Monga Khan, who applied for exemption to the White Australia policy. These posters address the question of Australian identity and the roots of multiculturalism in this country.

"We need myths. As long as they are known

complexities of identity and multiculturalism. The "Real Australians Seek Welcome" poster infers that Australia's multiculturalism existed before colonialism, with the represented 250 distinct Indigenous language groups, each with their own customs and culture. Most importantly, "Real Australians Seek Welcome" has a crucial meaning about acknowledgement of Indigenous lands.

"60,000 years of cultural survival carries an important lesson in that it shows us that our sense of belonging to this land needs to be earned and continually renewed by everyone, whether you were born here or not," Drew said.

Thus, the posters reflect a "cycle of belonging" where Australians must simultaneously "say" and "seek" welcome.

Drew himself has stated that he wants his work to speak to the "silent majority in the middle" who have become drowned out by the noise made by the far left and far right. These aims are not without their own controversies. Although Drew has stated he is "apolitical", it is impossible to accept this; his works carry political messages and creating street art is undeniably a political act itself.

There have been several prominent cases of Drew's posters being vandalised. In Darwin, the word "Aussie" on Drew's "Aussie" poster was ripped off, replaced with the words "Muslim Terrorist" written in black marker.

"Real Australians Seek Welcome" is the flip poster to Drew's first work "Real Australians Say Welcome". The first series was created as a response to Australia's treatment of asylum seekers and the "Stop the Boats" election slogan propelled by Tony Abbott in the 2013 election. Posters were placed in all Australian capital cities and Drew even ended up meeting with politicians and activists across Australia in response to the work.

The second series was the "Aussie" posters, depicting early Australians of different ethnicities with the word "Aussie" written

to be myths, it's an important tool of identity," Drew said.

"Why can't we have an Aussie folk hero who fulfils a new role or a role which is different?"

"Aussie folk heroes are rebels, they rebel against authority. And what better authority to rebel against than the White Australia Policy?"

Peter Drew's work does carry an important message about the continually evolving Australian identity and its myths. All three iterations of his posters have addressed the

'AUSSIE' SERIES (MONGA KHAN) - SECOND ITERATION



In Auburn, in Sydney's west, similar incidences occurred. In another case, a poster of child sex offender Rolf Harris and terrorist Jihadi Jake were created and placed beside Drew's "Aussie" poster of Monga Khan. In response to the latter incident, Drew stated that, unlike the previous anti-immigration and discriminatory protests of vandals, the vandal may have been attacking aspects of "nationalism" evident in the posters, highlighting that not all Australians are heroes and instead, have committed many wrongs.

A similar critique of Drew's work was clearly expressed by William Scates Frances, in the *Eureka Street* article, "New nationalist myths entrench white denial".

"This myth is one of an Australianess that is redeemable, an Australianess that deftly sidesteps nationalism's ugly past in this country. Rather than countering white denial, it is instead its own kind, where racist legacies are swept under the rug by projections of acceptance back into the past."

Drew has responded to these critiques by stating that his work focuses on celebrating diversity and provoking discussion among Australians, who are initially reluctant to discuss identity and culture.

These critiques are relevant, but we should also question if a single poster could (or should) be burdened with the obligation to express all the complexities of the Australian identity and history.

Is Australian multiculturalism inherently connected to nationalism? Peter Drew's work does strike a chord with the everyday Australian and the fact that his work is "out in the streets" makes his message even more accessible. Overall, it is important for people to discuss whether an "Australian identity" exists, acknowledge that we live on Indigenous land, and understand that to be a truly multicultural nation we need to "say welcome".



'REAL AUSTRALIANS SEEK WELCOME' - THIRD ITERATION



## The Aesthetic of

Recently, I was thinking about why I enjoy drinking alcohol. I'm convinced, and perhaps by the end of this essay, you will be too, that there's an extra layer to our enjoyment of drinking that isn't often touched upon. Of course, all of the usual reasons still apply: I'm a little less hopeless with flirting when I'm buzzing, I can dance a little better, and sometimes, (worryingly) alcohol can take the edge off a tough week or something that's sitting uncomfortably in the mind. Yet I think there's a deeper layer, one which deserves extra attention and (an attempt at) clarification.

To properly explain this extra subtlety, I want to draw on one of my favourite rom-coms, Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*. It tells the story of a young American man, Jesse, (Ethan Hawke) and a young French woman, Céline, (Julie Delpy) exploring Vienna together over the course of a day and an evening, while Ethan Hawke's character awaits a flight home to the United States. The characters only meet earlier that same day on a train into Vienna, and Jesse convinces Céline to disembark prematurely and explore the city with him. The film is highly minimalistic, almost entirely absent of a plot, and relies on the growing familiarity and attraction between the two characters.

The most important part of the film, for me, is the sense that these characters are "marooned" in Vienna for a night. Since Jesse awaits his flight the following morning, and has no money for a hotel room, Jesse and Céline are forced to wander through the city, with only the next morning's flight serving as a punctuation of time. This gives the film an incredible lightness, and gives their evening, as Céline remarks, an "otherworldly" feeling; it is as if the characters exist in a suspension of time itself.

The audience partakes in this experience, too. Visually, the film avoids almost all establishing or long shots, placing us within Jesse and Céline's world, which also helps to emphasise the immediacy of their experience and the removal of the rest of the world. Linklater also places particular emphasis on the tactile, with shots focusing often on the hands and feet, again as if to ground the audience, and the characters, in the world immediately around them. This immediacy, I think, is what contributes to the romantic tone of the film. We, like the characters, experience the city and their romance more intensely, since it occupies our entire attention.

How can we best clarify this immediacy of experience philosophically?

The philosophy I'd like to draw upon is aestheticism, outlined in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Here I must confess that I am yet to read *Madame Bovary*, but have read an analysis of aestheticism by Mark Grief in his book *Against Everything*, which I found to be a great explanation of Linklater's efforts in the film. For Grief, aestheticism is a method of living, whereby one trains oneself to see everything, all objects in the world, as works of art in their own right, and to respond to them with the same zealously that one would respond to traditional art.

In this way, "art becomes a training for life, to let you learn how to perceive what you will ultimately experience unaided. Let anyone's ordinary face fascinate you as if it were a bust of Caesar; let the lights of a city draw your eyes like Egyptian gold". Aestheticism is an ongoing process, but it promises a wealth of potential experience; in aestheticism,

any failure of experience, any exhaustion or boredom, can be solved by the aphorism "look closer".

Aestheticism goes further. Aestheticism does not just limit itself to the passive experience of the real world, but encourages active emotional engagement with the artistic forms we encounter. In Flaubert's aestheticism, art is not independent artifacts, but *experience*, an emotional investment as dependent upon the audience as it is upon the artist. And, given that aestheticism encourages this attitude be applied to all objects in the world as well as to art, we must see all things around us as potential emotional experiences. Grief explains this well when he says, "You *experience* a work of art. You go into it. Not just a calm onlooker, you imagine the figures in the painting, and relish the colors and forms, the style becoming as much an object of experience as the content". Grief argues we should never shy away from seeking this kind of experience in art or in the real world, as, to Flaubert, this is the only real way to engage with the world artistically.

We can take this as a good explanation of what the audience, and what the characters, are experiencing in *Before Sunrise*, yet with one crucial difference. Unlike Flaubert's voluntary aestheticism, which is as much a product of one's attitude and temperament as it is one's circumstances, the aestheticism of *Before Sunrise* is imposed upon the characters. The suspension of the characters, in their void of responsibility and time, allows them to engage with their surroundings, and each other, in a more direct and emotional way than expected. This is, I think, what provides a possible antidote to their youthful pessimism.

## Isolation

At multiple points in the film, we see their dialogue dealing with the "transitory nature" of human figures, or "all those unknown people lost in the world". In this, we can see the confusion and disorientation of the transition from youth to adulthood, something many of us can identify with. Yet, in a wonderful way, Linklater puts a spin on these very ideas – when the characters choose to lose themselves for an evening in Vienna, and thereby become more directly engaged with their sensory experiences, they call to mind Tolkien's idea that "not all those who wander are lost". In choosing to be lost, they find a liberating wealth of experiences, which I would argue approaches real meaning, as expressed by Céline toward the end of the film when she says to Jesse that he could have "no idea how important this night is to my life right now".

Now we return to my original question. What is the extra subtlety to my enjoyment of alcohol? It is, I think, like getting lost in Vienna, a way of forcing aestheticism upon oneself. But this doesn't relate to the properties of alcohol itself, but to the ritual: when I decide to go out and drink, it's not only that I choose not to be productive that night, but I remove myself from even the possibility of productivity. And it is only when the possibility of productivity is removed, when there is not even the opportunity to work, when one's responsibilities can be completely removed from the mind, that one can engage the most completely with an experience. I call this the aesthetic of isolation; the aesthetic experience triggered by a suspension of one's contact with reality.

In all cases, the experience has to be a transitory one. In the film, when the characters wake up the following morning, Jesse exclaims that they're "back in real time". Yet this transitory experience is absolutely valuable. Thus we come to my prescription; in order to access this kind of experience, set aside time where you intend on completely removing yourself from your responsibilities. Don't just avoid using the smartphone, leave it at home completely. Go out and drink and sacrifice an entire evening. Wander through the streets with nothing to restrict you. This, I think, is the only way to access this liberating aesthetic.

**SATIRE****Law students barricade the law building in a desperate attempt to protect their library**

Students were shocked this morning to discover that finally, after years of blissfully occupying a law library desk, the doors had been barred shut by angry law students.

Late last night, a band of furious law students chained all entrances to the multi-story library, before piling chairs and cabinets against the entrances to seal themselves in.

A crowd of students soon gathered outside the library, banging on the doors and demanding entry. However, a rain of constitutional law textbooks forced them to retreat.

This morning, the attacks grew increasingly fierce, with students dedicating the day to attempts to break through the lower-level barricades. However, a counter-attack by the law students forced a general retreat by sundown.

Bella, one of the student leaders of the attack, said she was surprised at the ferocity of the law students' defence.

"I always assumed law students were a myth. Apparently they complained about people being in their library, but I never saw anyone there studying law," she said.

"They've clearly been plotting for a while."

The law students have allegedly established a roster for keeping watch on the barricaded doors, suspiciously eyeing any passer-bys. Non-law students have erected haphazard barricades around the building, in an attempt to starve out the defenders.

Despite running low on energy and having sparse ammunition, the law students are in good spirits.

"I figured out that we can keep control over at least the upper part of the library until I finish my degree," Jeffery, a third year law student, told me, peeking his head over the barricade.

"Every aspect of this plan has been carefully calculated."

During my interview with Jeffery, I had to throw myself to the ground as another barrage of books scared off a clueless student who dared to venture too close to the barricade.

"We had hoped to tow the law building away from the main campus, but nobody had a truck license," he said.

The law students say they are held together by common determination.

"Engineers and arts students get their own space," argued one law student who was using a bucket to hoist up textbooks provided by an outside ally.

"Everyone feels entitled to use the law space. It's about time we fought for our rights," she said.

When asked if they had pursued legal remedies against non-law students, a spokesperson said, "We hadn't thought of that."

Professor G.R. Matthews, the Dean of the law faculty, addressed the media about the unprecedented incident in a press conference this afternoon.

"We have a passionate and engaged student body, who will do anything to protect rights when they're under threat," Professor Matthews said.

"They let you in through the back door if you win a moot, so I don't think [the barricade is] that bad."

**A (Cultural) Tug Of War**

My life is a constant oscillation: feeling like I belong to multiple cultures or feeling like I don't belong to any culture at all. As a second-generation immigrant, I was raised by the ebb and flow of cultural overlap: my parents' background pushed up against stereotypes of Sydney's Western Suburbs. Attempting to explain my culture (and answering the question any immigrant is all too familiar with: "Where are you from?") is something I have become accustomed to, but will always struggle with.

Thanks to my skin's melanin, I can pass as a local in most Southeast Asian countries, provided I don't open my mouth to haggle. But in Australia, at home, my appearance means people question my culture, and doubt me when I tell them I'm from Rooty Hill. I'll never be sure if these interrogations are a result of a genuine curiosity, or casual racism. Regardless, when I finally give in and explain that while I was born and raised in Sydney, both of my parents were born in India, I'm usually bombarded even further. Do you speak Hindu? (Hinduism is a religion, not a language.) Do you wear a sari? (The first and only time I wore a sari, I looked like a human burrito.)

People don't seem to understand that India is a huge country. It's over three million square kilometres; its one billion people live in hundreds of regions with just as many cultures. Colonisation by the Dutch, Portuguese, French and British (among others) influences a region's

traditions, religion, cuisine and clothing. My family is from a state colonised by the Portuguese, so my conceptions of "Indian" culture are very different to Indians originating from British or French colonies.

I am deemed the "whitest" brown person people know. I eat Weet-Bix for brekkie, Portuguese chicken for lunch, and curry for dinner. I watch Hollywood blockbusters and three-hour Bollywood films. English is my first language, but my conversations are occasionally sprinkled with a little Hindi and Portuguese. I went to Sunday School and I celebrate Easter, Christmas and every other Catholic occasions. I enjoy barbeques and beach days, yet my "Australian-ness" is constantly brought into question.

*I am a little bit of everything. I am not properly anything. I am. I am.*

## SPOTLIGHT ON



## Matt Okine

### WHEN DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT COMEDY WAS FOR YOU AND YOU THOUGHT, "HEY, MAYBE I CAN MAKE A CAREER OUT OF THIS"?

I don't think that idea ever really solidifies in your mind. One day I'm like "I AM THE GREATEST COMEDIAN IN THE WORLD", and three minutes later I'm like, "Maybe I should just buy a squeegee and start washing windshields at traffic lights..."

### YOU MENTIONED ON TWITTER THAT YOU'RE MAKING A TV SHOW, CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS? WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

It's called, The Other Guy, and it'll be on STAN in August 2017. It's about depression, anxiety, self-loathing and self-destruction in the aftermath of a break-up. Sounds hilarious, I know! But trust me - it will be. We've got an incredible team behind and it's gonna fkn rip. I'm super excited.

### WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT GETTING PAID TO CRACK JOKES?

Working at nights. Do you know how late you have to sleep-in to miss your alarm when you start work at 8pm? Late. Also, getting to say whatever the hell I want. I'm the writer, director, and performer. If it's not going well, I've only got myself to blame. Oh, and getting

immediate reactions. Some people have to wait months for performances reviews. I find out pretty quickly. As in - as soon as the audience doesn't laugh, then the review is in.

### MY DAD LAUGHED AT A FAT JOKE I MADE AGAINST MY SISTER, CAN I MAKE IT BIG IN COMEDY?

Your dad probably congratulated you the first time you drew a stick figure too. Doesn't mean your the next Picasso... that said - if you move on from fat-shaming jokes, and work on things a bit more personal, and also spend years performing to disinterested audiences in RSL's across the country... then maybe. Never give up your dreams.

### HOW HAS YOUR DAILY DYNAMICS CHANGED NOW THAT YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO GET UP AT 4AM FOR THE TRIPLE J BREAKFAST SHOW?

I oversleep every day now. It's pathetic. I wake up sore. My body hurts. And I feel confused all the time. I actually lie in bed and moan every morning. Like a beached whale. But once I get out of bed I try to go for a swim, which usually wakes me up. It's a pretty good balance.

### WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT'S EVER HAPPENED AT ONE OF YOUR STAND UP SHOWS? LIKE HAVE YOU

### EVER FORGOT THE PUNCHLINE ON STAGE AND WENT HOME CRYING?

A girl vomitted in the crowd recently. I don't know what that says about my last show, but I'm glad she wasn't a reviewer.

### ARE PANTS REQUIRED WHEN YOU WORK AT TRIPLE J? LIKE I'M THINKING OF APPLYING BUT THIS SEEMS LIKE A DEAL BREAKER YA FEEL?

Pants aren't required anywhere in life. That's just something "da man" got you doing so that you'd feed money into the fashion industry. Stay woke, my G.

### AND LASTLY, YOUR INSTAGRAM FEED AND TWITTER AND STAND UP ALL REFERENCE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY YOU'VE MADE IN COMEDY, SO, CAN YOU HELP OUT A STRUGGLING JOURNO AND SHOUT US A BEER YOU LEGEND?

Yes. I actually can. But you can only have one. Because you're driving me home.

## Neel Kolhatkar on improv and improvement

**Economics Student turned comedic sensation, Neel Kolhatkar, is constantly bettering himself. With #ObjectifyNeel coming to Sydney in May 2017, we took the time to discuss the new show, the art of improv and much more.**

### WHAT MADE YOU GO FROM BEING AN ECONOMICS STUDENT TO A COMEDIAN?

Funnily enough, economics was more of a backup. I always wanted to be a comedian. Luckily enough, with the Internet, I was able to do that quite early and quite young and focus fully on the comedy.

### HOW DO YOU RECOVER FROM A BAD GIG?

Oh, it can be tough, but it really depends on how important the gig was. The key is to use that experience and use it to become a better comedian and try to work on different ways of delivering the jokes or find what you've done wrong.

### WHERE DOES YOUR MATERIAL COME FROM?

Well, from a range of things basically. Some of them come from my personal experiences, some of them are pure observations. A lot of them are quite observational, some of them are things I want to say, and I'll put that in the subtext of the joke.

### IS IT HARD TO SPEAK FREELY WITHIN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE?

It is more difficult, but at the same time, it's also forced a lot of comedians to be better and really come up with some good material. This tense political and social climate can almost be a good thing. It remains to be seen as we're still in the early stages of social media.

### DOES YOUR COMEDY SUBVERT STEREOTYPES OR EXACERBATE THEM?

A mixture of both, to be honest, a lot of it is outwardly exaggerated and hyperbolic. Especially with the cultural stereotypes and that's where a lot of the humour comes from. It's probably more on the side of exaggeration, but I like to subvert as well.

### WHAT'S THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STAND-UP AND ONLINE COMEDY?

When performing on stage, you're just performing to the audience in front of you. You have to be in the moment; you have to build a rapport with an audience. Whereas with Youtube you're going out to thousands, sometimes millions of people all across the world, and you've no idea how they're going to react.

### HOW DOES #OBJECTIFYNEEL COMPARE WITH PAST SHOWS?

It is probably more unapologetic and irreverent in some parts. As time's gone, I've stopped trying to appease certain critics and certain sectors of society that have said that my humour was dumb and lowbrow and offensive. I think it's a show for everybody and I think there's something for everyone.

### WHAT'S THE WORST SHOW YOU EVER PERFORMED IN?

One of the first ever gigs I did was at a talent show for little kids, and for some reason... they asked me to do it. There were a little four, five and six-year-olds playing the flute and singing songs and I had to go on after that, to all these parents and senior citizens from the church next door, and do all my sex jokes and race jokes – they did not go down at all. The host had to apologise after the show.

### ANY ADVICE FOR FUTURE COMEDIANS?

The best thing I can say is to get on social media, that's the future, it's where all the eyeballs are. Don't be afraid to self-market a little bit and keep at it, it can take a few years sometimes.

*Want more Neel Kolhatkar? Be sure to check out his show #ObjectifyNeel at the Enmore Theatre on 6 May 2017.*

# CREATIVE

## Fish Sauce

The fish are dying.  
Clusters of protruding bellies  
glistening in the harsh sunlight;  
pale stripes tessellating the cold coastline  
like tuna packed in a well-expired can –  
oozing with rottenness.

The fish are still dying.  
The fishermen know;  
the conmen know;  
the government knows;  
yet after detailed research  
from the country's most elite,  
"Nothing was found to have  
poisoned the fish."

The fish continue to die;  
it was reported  
that  
mere apologies and empty promises  
were brought forward by the company at  
fault;  
no further reports were made.

The fish are left to die;  
their tears  
reflected in every Vietnamese's  
fish sauce.

## In Memory of Miniature Mughals

Take me back to the time when the Mughals ruled a united India. Take me back to the place where jewels were crushed into fine colours and art knew no geographical boundaries. Take me back to the mango trees and flowing streams in the centre of white marbles, where whispers of grand kings and stories of their great adventures were painted. An art form that has continued to live on centuries after the fall of the sultanate.

She smiled at her painting, as she gave it a final brush stroke. It was done, the room was loud with the silence of her paint, wet seashells and brushes, but the weight of history could not be undone. Her back hurt from her six constant hours of bent posture, leaning over her board with one leg propped up to her side, focusing on each brush stroke she gave the *washi*.

"*Washi!*"

She mouthed these words in silence as she remembered her teacher explaining how to create the surface for her paints. "Now we will take this glue and mix it with sulfur ... yes it will sting – No! Do not insult me by asking to use gloves – and spread it smoothly and in abundance. Now take your sheet, and press it against the glued sheet. Use your elbows to apply the pressure ... is okay to look fat. Keep adding 'til you have twelve sheets. There! Now, you burnish the surface six times in all possible directions with your seashells ... it will give your *washi* glow and your paints will shine even more."

She was the student of a great artist, whose lineage took him back to the Mughal Era. He was as ancient to look at as the relics at The Met. She still felt the privilege of being his apprentice. It was a gift, it was a curse. She could feel the great emperors and their grand masters of the arts looking down at her attempt at capturing a fraction of their magnificent work and the weight of their history felt even heavier on her shoulders.

Her *sufaida* had turned out quite excellent this time, her choice of chalk and the quantity of *gum arabic* had been perfect. With her things set, sea shells still shining with the glimmer of their first paint from years ago, and her squirrel hair brush which she had made herself as a sophomore in college, she was ready to show it all off to the world. But that was a thought of the future, and not something she would dwell too much on.

There she sat reminiscing about the past. Her past. Her nation's past. Her historic past.

As she sat there on her folded legs, she stared at the painting she had created, with the piece he had written. Her lips twitched into a smile; she titled it, *The Maze*.

Simple. Articulate. Beautiful.

Just like the Mughal Dynasty.



## Svalbard



“Vlad!” The tour group halted as our guide, Katya, waded through the knee-deep snow from the back of the group to confer with guide number two. I followed the direction of their

gazes and leaned in as I caught my breath, nervously trying to pick up the tone of their conversation. “I thought I saw... that could be... no, probably not.” Katya turned around and cheerfully addressed the group. “We thought maybe we would meet the bears just now, but we think it’s probably just some deer. Shall we continue?”

I found myself nodding feebly as I looked again in the direction Katya had been pointing. We had left the town lights of Longyearbyen behind us and what stretched ahead was a seemingly infinite tundra of ice and snow. The heavy snowfall made land indistinguishable from sky and although it was somewhere around noon, the polar night cast us in pitch-black darkness. It was hard not to imagine just how easy it would be for a two hundred kilo polar bear to hurtle from the shadows and pick off a member of the group for lunch. I felt sure it would be me.

“You will protect us, won’t you Nina?” Vlad asked our reluctant guide dog as we prepared to continue trekking. She looked at him. “She says she wants to go back to bed,” someone said. Everyone laughed.

“Ha.” I tried, and failed, to join in.

By this point in my trip, worrying about a polar bear attack didn’t feel like neurosis — it was totally justified. It was my second day in Svalbard and every interaction with a local so far had included a warning something along the lines of: “There was a polar bear and two cubs somewhere in town. We don’t know where they are now. Be careful!”

Although this information had sent me into a tailspin of increasingly violent and biopic-worthy visions of death-by-bear, it had not come as a total shock to hear. At around 78° north and just over one thousand kilometres from the North Pole, the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard is well and truly arctic. Polar bears come with the territory, and make it necessary by law to carry a gun when leaving the town limits.

I knew this. This was one of the first snippets I had learnt when I first looked into travelling to Svalbard. I also knew that when I visited in January, the temperature would be somewhere around -20°C (really quite balmy for the Arctic, thanks Gulf Stream!) and that the islands would be shrouded in darkness all twenty four hours of the day.

Keen for an adventure in the wilderness of the far north, I was more surprised as I continued planning, to discover just how accessible Svalbard really was. I flew to the largest island, Spitsbergen, by budget airline, booked activities a few days in advance on my phone and even stayed at a backpackers’ youth hostel.

While *Vice* journalists might have us believe that fringe destinations are only for the truly edgy, high demand has created thriving tourism centres in many unexpected corners of the world. Although the population of Svalbard is under 3,000 and contains a surprising diversity of careers, from coal mining to climate change research, the small tourism industry has rapidly expanded in recent years.

As my Australian husky sledding guide, Tanya, pointed out, Svalbard offers something to visitors that people seem to crave. “Some will try to live here but the darkness, the cold — it’s too much,” she told me. “But lots of people fall in love with it. I’ve been here for two years.”

On my final night in Svalbard, I sat, disappointed, in the hostel. After one cancelled flight and three nights of wind and

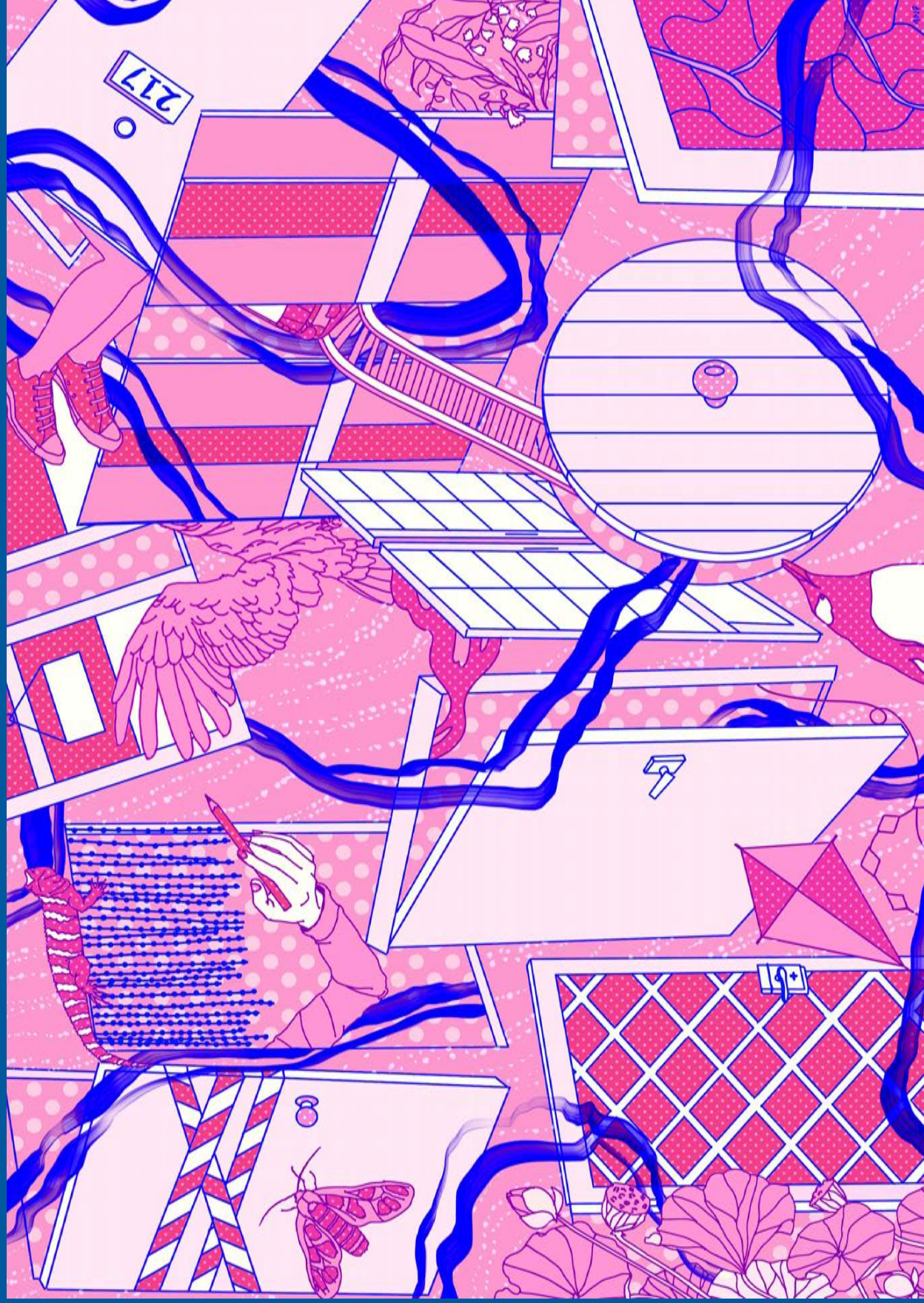
snow, the final blow had just been delivered to my hopes and dreams of seeing the aurora borealis. In a last-ditch show of optimism I had booked a “Chasing the Northern Lights” bus tour, the driver from which had just called to inform me that the bus was stuck in the snow. There would be no chasing that night.

Just I was preparing to wallow in self-pity, one of my dorm mates, Laina, burst through the door. “I’ve seen them!” she cried. “The lights!”

As Laina warmed up, I threw on my various outer layers and soon, we were out the door. A hundred metres away from the hostel, the lights of the town dropped away and the elusive aurora borealis was suddenly right before our eyes. For forty minutes we watched the green lights dance and move across the sky until they melted away and the clouds returned. Staring into the sky at what was now just fog, I could understand the appeal of living in the darkness, at the whim of Mother Nature, and why so many were drawn to the arctic and chose to stay. Then, I shifted my gaze into the darkness before me, thinking again of polar bears.

“I think I’ll go back to the hostel now.”





## Doors

I open the car door and step out, bags in hand at the airport. I'm apprehensive. Perhaps it's because I got home at six in the morning not twelve hours before. The Australian sun sinks into the horizon, its red veil spilling over to fill my heart as I wave goodbye to my parents, to my home. I try to lock in the sight before me – every single chintzy airport souvenir, every last view of that cloudless sky – before I head off for the adventure of a lifetime.

I collapse through the door of my new home for the next three months, sleep deprived and incredibly hungry. Two flights, one stop-over, eight movies, one shuttle bus and thirty hours since stepping through the glass sliding doors of Sydney airport. Birmingham University is a culture shock, in every way. The food is different, the accents are different, and, increasingly, I become different. I tend to a growing garden of herbs beside my desk, a small sanctuary to distract from the smell coming from my radiator.

The train doors close and I sit down, my life for the past three months packed up neatly beside my seat. The sky is a sullen grey, beginning to weep as the train pulls away from Birmingham. I stare at the sanitised, blank canvas seats of the carriage. The train pulls into London; it starts to rain again.

It takes me a while to find the door to my room in the epileptic hostel. I step out into London, a grey monolith constantly moving, lights ever present. I see museums and musicals; I get inspired and humbled. I see history and humanity, humanites and the arts. Every day is an exercise in losing my mind, taking in every piece of beauty and culture and wonder I can find, and getting lost in a city of winding streets and forgotten relics. One day, I wake up again, pack my bags once again, and hope to hell I don't have to get up at five in the morning again. I do.

The bus doors open with a subtle hiss, sliding to welcome me in. I'm on a two-weeks-and-a-bit tour of the UK and Ireland. Every night I open the door to a new hotel, to a minuscule rest, before the adventure continues. I eat things I didn't think I'd eat, I see things I didn't think I'd see, I do things I didn't think I'd do. The flickering images keep playing in my mind, the rolling green hills, the stormy skies, the constant and repetitive potato, meat, potato, veg, potato. I replay that moment of joy when a bus full of Aussies finally see snow falling for the first time; all the Americans and Canadians scoff at how we could call that snow. I feel the rain and wind piercing my very core on top of Hadrian's Wall, as I stare into the vengeful face of God. I recall the final goodbyes, the hugs and promises to keep in touch, as we part for the final time.

The doors of the hostel welcome me back, and I'm greeted with the familiar-yet-different rooms and sounds of drunk travellers having a really good time. I take my sweet time doing nothing, exhausted from the trip. I re-introduce myself to those in my room. I see more musicals. I search London for interesting things. You know you're a foodie when you travel half an hour through pelting rain and sudden snow just to eat a sandwich. And it's worth it. And by the end I'm refreshed, restored. And also regretting how long this damn trip actually is. I get up at 5am again.

The doors on the second tour are more welcoming than the first, I somehow manage to have the same driver, and we talk and catch up as we meet a whole new group of Australians. This time, I'm travelling around Europe. Tours, museums, demonstrations, and partying juxtapose the uniform blocks of in-between travelling. My body is acquainted with the bus for more than seven hours a day, restless energy coiling inside to be spent the next day, in the next location, until the next drive. I see the heart of Europe and feel its heartbeats, traversing and exploring and discovering the legacies and histories and dreams of those who have come and gone before us. I tick off the stereotypical touristy things alongside the beautiful secrets that hide in plain streets. I see "real snow", and feel the cold soak into my bones as I throw snowballs, build snowmen, and steal a food tray to use as a makeshift toboggan. And once again it comes to the time where we part ways and continue our journeys in different directions, never to cross paths again. The growing voice of discontent in my head is thankful it's finally over.

Every door that opens is a chance to change and grow. Every door is a surprise that you should treasure and remember forever. Every door shows you another life, another voice, another dream. But sometimes, all you want to do is open the next door and say, "I'm home."

## Lifeguard at Leura Beach

My father knew the owner of the surf lifesaving club from when he was at school. Every few months, he went out drinking with him to reminisce about their adventures together in the school swimming team. They'd go to the club bar and drink until closing time, and have to catch a taxi back home. One evening, on the first summer break of university, the owner mentioned sullenly how hard he'd found it to find a lifeguard for Leura Beach.

"It's far out of the way," the owner had said. My father described him as a crotchety old man, which I thought was ironic. From what my father told me, the owner could drink twice as many beers as he did at dinner. He often did.

"In the summer, the university students come and swim there during the day because it's a bit of a quiet spot. So we only need the guard for a month or two, and since you need to wake early, and it's about an hour's drive from the club, none of the old blokes want to stomach it."

My father had said that was very interesting. And, in fact, he knew exactly the right person for the job. I was looking for work in the summer, and I could swim well enough – I'd gotten an A in sport in year 10. Some early rising would do me good, he said. Invigorate me with the spirit of life. I, however, found the spirit of life hard to grasp before sunrise. He'd also forgot that I'd gotten a C in year 11 sport, and that I'd never ridden a board, or swam any long distance in the ocean in my life.

I only took the job because I found nothing else, and stuck with it for three years because it paid well and I did essentially nothing. I spent my days in a small wood and glass observation post on the beach. It was built twenty years ago when the local town boomed. People expected the area to blow up, bought plots of land, and started developing it into a wonderful, quiet, holiday destination. Then the markets crashed, and they left their dreams behind, in piles of

decimated trees they'd cleared from the land.

The little beach post remained, but in its solitude on the sand and its degradation from age, it was a symbol of isolation on the flatland. The wood was beginning to rot and the glass was stained from the salt spray, but it had lights and heating, and a small TV that I could watch Netflix on whilst occasionally casting my binoculars onto the beach. I was also equipped with a small radio – phone reception was poor, and I needed a reliable way to contact the surf club in case of a real emergency. To my amusement, I found a newspaper from 1991 and a flare gun with one round, which, from its flaked grey exterior, looked just as old.

My day consisted of waking up early to drive out to the observation post, before doing a quick round of the beach and marking off the safe swimming areas. I'd then slip back into my post, watch two episodes of a TV series, (sporadically scanning the beach) before going and adjusting the flags and making sure people were swimming safely. Two weeks immediately after university ended were the only busy times during my two months as a lifeguard. Otherwise, the day went by with only a few dozen people on the beach.

I'd asked my father why they kept me on for so long – two months' work was a little excessive for a two week rush. He replied, a little hesitantly.

"About a decade ago, the son of the surf club owner drowned at the beach when he hit his head on the sandbar. It's a ceremonial post, of sorts." He was quiet for a moment. "About your age, too."

It was a beautiful afternoon near the end of my third year as a lifeguard. The sun brought a gentle heat that was blown away by a subtle cool wind, and the water spread gently on the shore. The beach had been abandoned for the

entire day, and I took the chance to catch up on some more TV and read a book I'd been putting off for the last month. By the afternoon though, I was tired of being cooped up in the observation post. Since there was nobody around, I decided to go for a long stroll to end the day. I hooked the radio on to my shorts and walked out into the crisp summer air. The sky was clear and the red sun was dropping below the horizon in front of me, tinging the sky and the sand a hellish burgundy. The sand between my feet was still warm from the day, but the air was beginning to cool, leaving goosebumps on my skin. I took a breath in, and felt the salt clean my lungs.

I walked with my feet splashing in the calm beach waves. It was easy to lose track of how wonderful it was at Leura Beach. After a while, I'd thought of it as a place where I worked, not somewhere that had beauty. I was enjoying the cool sensation of the water and sand between my toes, and the reverberant shimmer of light curling on the waves. I felt a wash of admiration for the beach that I hadn't felt before. It seemed amazing that every element came together to form the landscape. It was like I'd found the final piece of a puzzle, and the landscape was completed in front of my eyes for the first time in three years. The water, the sand, the saplings growing past the sand dunes – I took all of it in, properly, for the first time.

As I looked out on the water, a silhouette shattered the calm rocking of the waves. Someone was splashing sporadically, head bobbing up and down, maybe about two hundred metres from the shore. I swore there was nobody at the beach before – I hadn't seen anyone in an hour. But the man out there seemed to be struggling to get to land. I called and waved to him, but he was too focused on keeping his head above water to respond. As I kept watching him, his head ducking beneath the wave, I realised he wouldn't make it back to shore alone.

I froze for a moment. The water lapped against my feet. My body tensed and my brain sharpened as I was drawn out of my tranquillity. I needed to go out there, and get help. I started to run back to the post to get my board, unclipping my radio. I'd call for help so we could evacuate him right away. As I raised it to my mouth to speak, the sand gave way beneath my feet, and I fell face first into the water. The shock of the cool water and the impact on my face left my body fluttering. I wiped the sand out of my eyes and looked around. The radio was nowhere to be found, catapulted into the water. I feebly felt the ground around me for it. Only wet sand.

My body began to shake, from the adrenaline and the cold. Against the flat water and the decaying post, I'd never felt so alone.

I ran towards the post to get to my board, but it was far away. The salt air stung my lungs. I couldn't help but think, I've never saved anyone properly before. I got a C in year 11 PE. I've only done training. It's going to get dark soon. But I kept jogging towards the post, as if I was being carried along. It didn't matter whether I *could* save him or not, I had to, that's why I was here. But the gap between the person who sat watching TV and strolling the beach all day, and a real lifeguard, seemed insurmountable.

I was heaving and my muscles felt weak by the time I got to the post. I ran inside, rummaged through one of the old drawers, and pulled out the flare gun, loading the flare into it whilst going outside. I thought that the flare would attract one of the guards on the beach nearby, and hopefully they'd come to help by the time I'd rescued the man. I ran outside. I aimed the flare gun over the water, closed my left eye, and pulled the trigger.

Click.

Nothing moved. I looked down at the flare gun. It was marred with rust and sand. The damn thing had jammed. I opened it up, took out the

flare, and cleaned it as fast as I could, rubbing off the salt and rust with my hand and spit. I caught a glimpse of the man floundering in the waves. His movements were getting more and more sporadic. I blew down the barrel to remove the last of the residue, then tried to load the flare back into the gun. My hands were shaking, shaking so much the flare rattled around the barrel a few times before I could load it in. My breaths were long and heavy. The man thrashed against the waves. I tried to steady my fingers. He dipped below the water. I aimed the flare gun.

Click.

A dancing red fire, bright as the setting sun, flew and settled over the water, leaving speckled white dots and a long white line on my vision. I threw the flare gun at the post and grabbed my board, half blind, running to the water close to where the man was drowning.

I dove into the water and began to swim. The water drained the warmth from my body like I was gripped by hands and they were pulling me into the cold. The colours were unnatural, shining red when I dove in, but the flare quickly faded, leaving the water a deep, oily blue. The sun had dropped below the horizon, draping a grey cape over the water. I paddled furiously towards the man.

As the water turned greyer and greyer, like dye, and my arms tensed and heaved from the swimming, I felt a great sense of calm. I remembered the feeling I had just earlier – the final pieces of the puzzle slotting into place. But there was something wrong with the image, its colour mottled or its composition off. I thought of the lifeguard club owner's son. I saw his head smacking on a sand dune, the water carrying him away. I saw the bulldozers, crunching trees down in a violent frenzy of revenge. The landscape open and empty, the water empty and dark. Each stroke I took through the water were my hands reaching out, taking the puzzle pieces, and finally making it whole. The salt

cleansed my hackneyed breaths, washing me clean. I swam closer and closer towards the man. The man's body dipped below the waves. The sun set. I gripped his hand.



## In the Words of My People

“I thought you stopped smoking.”  
 A glance. Fingers tremble, curling around sweaty limbs of metal railing. Inhale.  
 “I never stopped. Started when I got here.”  
 Silence hangs in the air like a wet velvet curtain, unspoken words running between them, pooling on coarse cement landing.  
 “My uncle smoked. Had his first cigarette when he was twelve.”  
 “Ah. Chinese regulations of smoking are pretty lax here, huh?”  
 “I suppose so.”  
 Peggy Lee sings from the bar behind, a muffled murmur seeping through the balcony doors.  
 “I ordered tea.”  
 “I already have my whisky.” A shift. Pause. “But what did you order? Tie guan yin? My grandpa drinks only that.”  
 Fingers trail cloudy paths on clear glass.  
 Another pause.  
 “I meant drank. Drank. He died three years ago.”  
 Sirens wail in the distance, screams of sinful ecstasy, screeches of pain. Sounds that should have been familiar, the voice of Dongguan. China’s sin city.  
 Exhale. Smoke pierces the air in a cloud of

dusky fantasy, desperation carried on its back.  
 “I’m sorry.”  
 A sigh.  
 “But no. Too expensive. I – well, I prefer chrysanthemum.”  
 A bite of a lip.  
 “How do you like it here in China?”  
 Quickened breath. A lean over the railing, torso hanging three storeys up, hair a charred tapestry that reaches for the ground. A cigarette dangles from between fingers, blood rushes to a head – delirium.  
 “It’s good. I suppose. I mean I’ve been here before.”  
 Smoking upside down is harder than it appears. Upturned lungs struggle to pull in breaths of icy smoke.  
 “Family?”  
 “Yeah. My mum’s family. And some of dad’s. Visited every couple years or so.”  
 “Have you seen them recently?”  
 Flip. Leather soles clap on concrete, body no longer swaying vicariously, arms knot across a cotton-covered chest.  
 “Lost contact. After mum left anyway. Haven’t spoken since.”  
 “Oh.”

Fingers twist a single thread running loose on woollen pants. Pulls.  
 “Good thing you speak Chinese then. Should make things easier. Working here.”  
 “Probably. Maybe. I mean I still sound different.”  
 Knuckles crack, whipping through the silence. Clammy hands clench. Another inhale, dried innards of the cheap cigarette curling through the heat.  
 “What do you mean?”  
 “I mean, I’m not from here. I sound different. I speak differently. My – what do you call it – oh, accent.”  
 A twitch, head tilting. Listening. Contemplation.  
 “It’s not so bad.”  
 “I mean I don’t get the jokes here. The language. It’s so different. I can’t, I just – I don’t know.”  
 A tilt of a glass, light glinting, muted in the burnished bronze of drink.  
 “You like history right? Visit a couple museums. Talk to more people. You’ll pick it up.”  
 “But I should know this, shouldn’t I? I should already know all this. I was born here for fuck’s sake.”  
 A blink. A twist of a head, eyes scanning the jagged horizon of lights and skyscrapers, the tell-tale arch in the distance marking the

opening street of New South China Mall.  
 “If everyone here spoke English, it’d practically be New York. Or Sydney. You’ll be fine.”  
 “But it’s not New York. Or Sydney.”  
 A sharp jerk, pink tongue reaching for the last drop of alcohol in the glass. Straining.  
 It misses.  
 The balcony doors nudge open, a waiter struggles through. Tray in hand, steaming cup aloft.  
 “My tea is here.”  
 A twist. Fumbling hands pull bills from a squeaking leather wallet. Presses crumbling paper into the waiter’s hands. A nod of thanks.  
 “How’s your tea?”  
 Slurping.  
 “It’s good.”  
 The gurgling of hot tea runs over the click of a lighter.  
 “Can’t believe you’re drinking that in this weather. It’s so humid.”  
 “It’s not so bad.”  
 “That’s what you said about my Chinese.”  
 A puff of amusement. Fingers grip the ends of the cigarette, pinching the foam. A pull and drag, the end licking the curved metal surface

of the railing. It leaves an ashy trail, crumbs of burnt paper and tobacco tailing the pathetic stump.  
 “Hey, it was good meeting up. Maybe we can do this again soon.”  
 Fingers twisting the white butt, pressing it into the slate grey metal.  
 “But I’m not done with my tea yet. Stay a little longer.”  
 A shift.  
 “I’ve got to go. Work tomorrow. You know. And stuff.”  
 “Oh.”  
 A swallow. Fingers tapping. A fold.  
 “Still got to brush up on my Chinese, you know?”  
 A flash of teeth. Grimacing grin. A turn to leave.  
 Fingers reach for the door.  
 “对不起。”  
*I’m sorry.*

# The History of Bookshops



It is no secret that bookshops all over the world are experiencing severe financial hardship and closures, leaving booklovers everywhere with a sense of dread. Dread of a future where you can no longer immerse yourself in the smell of a thousand pages, run your hand along endless shelves of unknown covers, or simply marvel at the sheer weight of potential wisdom embodied in its shelves.

In the wake of these troubling times, it may be comforting to take a look at the history of bookshops; drawing strength from the knowledge that in spite of everything, they have, thus far, endured.

Bookshops have been around since as early as 300BCE, when ancient Athenians relied on them to stock their private libraries. Roman elites also possessed private libraries, and would often have slaves specifically responsible for the handling of books. Not unlike our modern bookshops, these ancient ones contained book scrolls stacked on tables or shelves. To draw in interested customers, selected passages and attention grabbing quotations were displayed in the shopfront. While it seems that bookshops then were popular haunts, there was disdain from the elite for the business side of the industry, and many a renowned author complained of their distaste in seeing their “high art” works in the hands of the masses.

During the Middle Ages, bookshops became less common as reading became reserved for the elite. It was not until the invention of printing in the 15th century that bookshops truly flourished. Now, instead of waiting for each book to be painstakingly written out by hand, one could easily reproduce books en masse. Rulers at the time quickly recognised the power associated with the mass production of knowledge, and special bookselling guilds and licensing requirements were created to control this industry. This meant too, that knowledge could be controlled to ensure that unfavourable material would not reach the “impressionable”.

Today, bookshops continue to have an enormous influence on society – they shape and frame what and how we think and imagine our worlds. They also exert immense power over what is published, and hence, what we get to read.

One of the most valued international bookshops to be found in Sydney is *Kinokuniya*. While it only reached Australian shores in 1996, *Kinokuniya* first opened its doors in Japan in 1927. It began as a simple two story shop, with an art gallery (the Shinjuku store now spans a massive 8 floors!). The pairing of books and art has continued to be a central part of the bookshop’s ideology, with gallery spaces and specialty art books forming a large part of its identity.

Another bookshop, located in Paris, which captures the imagination of many a traveller is *Shakespeare & Co.* Opened in 1951, this bookshop was a haven for artists and writers, and acted as much as a community as it did a bookshop. Indeed, the founder of the shop called it, “a socialist utopia masquerading as a bookstore”. Still thriving, this historic bookshop is a sanctuary for English reading booklovers, offering a space to step back in time, surrounded by years of accumulated wisdom and a love for reading. Also opened in the 1950s, but championing a completely different philosophy, is *City Lights Bookstore* in San Francisco. A legacy of their role in creating the Beat Poet movement, *City Lights* focuses more on books of resistance, alternative culture, and opposition.

The (apparently) aptly named *Last Bookshop* in Downtown L.A. provides our final example of the modern bookshop experience. Opened in 2005, the shop is a cross between a living room and a library, giving readers a magical book-centric universe in which to immerse themselves. Galleries, installations and art related shops on the higher levels add to the celebration of creativity and culture that seems to flourish in this space.

It is uncertain what the future holds for the bookshop: perhaps they will eventually succumb to the online shop; or perhaps we will see a resurgence of interest in the traditional bookshop – after all, *Amazon* has now opened physical stores all across America. Whatever the future holds, let us hope that in our love of books and storytelling, the bookshop, in all its forms, does not become a relic of some distant past.



# You’re My Warrior

## A review of Vernon Ah Kee’s exhibition: *not an animal or a plant* at The National Art School

On 26 January every year, masses of Australians come together to celebrate a day loaded with political incorrectness. Australia’s history as we know it is dark and twisted, like most former colonies of Great Britannia’s rule. We are now in the questionably “post-colonial” time of history. Yet many would argue we are still clinging to the racist times of colonialisation. We are not quite “post” anything yet. The simpler evidence lies within the celebration of “Australia Day”. From 7 January until 11 March, Ah Kee invites to see his version of culture in Australia. To contemplate not only the day itself, but also the overarching consequences of celebrating a day of racial injustice.

The Vernon Ah Kee exhibition at The National Art School (NAS) in Darlinghurst comes at an incredibly important time for Indigenous rights in Australia. Marking the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, this exhibit recalls that it was only half a century ago that the Australian government recognised Indigenous Australians as people, and not simply as a part of the flora and fauna of Australia. The statement *not an animal or a plant* is a declaration, and allows Ah Kee to use his art as a political message in which he critiques popular culture in Australia, especially highlighting the dichotomy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies. *Not an animal or a plant* sits loud and clear as a text that tells us the story of Ah Kee’s own indigeneity, where at his birth in 1967, Innisfail, northern Queensland, he was not considered an Australian citizen.

As I walk into the exhibition, the history and culture of Sydney are embedded in the walls on which Ah Kee’s work hangs. The NAS building was first built by convicts as a prison; there is a sense of being trapped in Sydney’s history as Ah Kee’s work hangs on the walls. The vast empty grey spaces frame and swallow the larger than life beaming faces. I am invited to question the mug shots of Ah Kee’s relatives. His own son, Eddie Ah Kee, is part of the exhibition,

a giant installation of his face asking me *why are Aboriginal youths 24 times more likely to be incarcerated? Why are scabies a very real problem for 70% of Indigenous children living in some regions of remote areas of Northern Territory?*

Just as Ah Kee’s older relatives question the atrocities they faced with the colonisation of Australia, the exhibition recognises that this displacement that has never been resolved. Through Eddie, Ah Kee invites us to consider our own definitions of our culture amongst our drinking and celebrations of Australia Day: *why will an Indigenous person in Katherine, in the Northern Territory, have a 1 in 4 chance of being homeless? Why will a person of Indigenous background be more likely to see the end of their life in custody?*

The top floor of the exhibition contrasts the intimacy of the lower level; instead of being guided through Ah Kee’s family lineage, we become very aware of our small bodies in the large room, amongst the large artworks.

We see Ah Kee’s portrayal of the events on Palm Island in 2004. In the hands of police, Cameron “Mulrunji” Doomadgee met the end of his life. For death is punishment; the crime: swearing. Doomadgee’s autopsy results indicated that he died from a ruptured liver; the island’s pathologist claimed it was the result of “a fall”. This result led to riots on the island, of which Lex Wotton was a part of. Up on the top layer within the former Darlinghurst Gaol, these riots are the subject of Ah Kee’s portraits *Tall Man*, (2012) and *I see deadly people, Lex Wotton* (2012). Lex Wotton’s face demands truth for the audience. Wotton was declared the ring leader of the riots and sentenced to seven years in prison.

The former Palm Island councillor has been witness to both the injustices of police brutality and “the system”. But as a hopeful sign of a greater understanding that change needs to

happen, Wotton has finally been awarded compensation. Wotton successfully argued that police had contravened section 9 of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, and that police wouldn’t have acted the way they did if they had not been dealing with an Aboriginal community.

This exhibition review goes beyond a critique on the art and the exhibition itself. I had a lecturer once who told the class that the lack of critique on Aboriginal art is inherently racist. Yet, I question my ability to critique Ah Kee’s exhibition; it is honesty in its rawest form. Ah Kee’s work reveals a part of culture in Australia that terrifies me. I want to hate his work, but I can’t. The work that rings this message most loudly is found in the back of the first floor, the shocking text and installation piece: *born in this skin* (2008). The found toilet doors from Cockatoo toilet block made me feel sick. This isn’t *just* art, it’s beyond art. But through it, we see truth, and Ah Kee’s defiance to let us forget history.

His critique of culture is so important to understanding his perception of time. Ah Kee says on the front of the floor sheet, “I’m expanding the idea of what it means to be Aboriginal and what it means to be human. A lot of the problem this country has with Aboriginal people is that it struggles to see Aboriginal people as fully human.” Ah Kee has presented an opportunity to tell these stories. To talk about culture in Australia and how it is perceived. A reminder that we all look at the world through different eyes and different backgrounds. This exhibition speaks volumes of the importance of understanding culture far beyond what we read in newspapers and the history books. Each artwork acts an indicator to a truth, a story, and our own interpretation of it.

*The statistics within this article have been taken from SBS’s National Indigenous Television (NITV) website.*

## PRESIDENT

AISLINN STEIN-MAGEE



Hello again from the SRC!

Hopefully you've all had a good first few weeks of coming back to uni, got all your free goodies at O-Week, and maybe even saw the SRC presentation and signed up to one of our collectives!

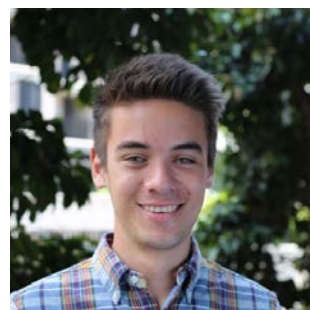
This month we've been working with state and national education activists on the campaign against trimesters, held working bees, and have been working with your lecturers and tutors to say no to staff cuts that would hurt your education and mean you get less time to be guided in your learning. If you want to know more about trimesters, how they'll affect you or how you can get involved in the campaign, you can email [srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au), [education@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:education@arc.unsw.edu.au) or check out our website or Facebook page.

This month we're also seeing the roll out of consent training and information both online for all students and also training for colleges. While this is a great step in the right direction, we'll also be continuing to campaign for specialised sexual assault and harassment support services, for a standardised and accessible reporting policy, and for respectful attitudes and behaviour on campus, because everyone deserves to be able to feel safe while accessing education.

As always, any feedback, ideas or questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're YOUR student rep council and we're here to make sure this is truly YOUR university!

## GENERAL SECRETARY

ZACK SOLOMON



Hey UNSW,

It's Zack, your UNSW General Secretary, back again!

We've all been pretty busy for the last month or so, both preparing for and running O-Week for the SRC. Now that we've got a new exciting influx of passionate UNSW students, we've got a lot planned for you for this year.

We've been continuing to work to provide subsidised RSA & RCG Courses for students on campus, investigating and contacting possible providers, working with Arc to assist in the running of collaborative events such as Arts Festival and most importantly ensuring that student voices are heard at UNSW.

If you didn't already know, UNSW is trying to implement damaging Trimesters and we have been working hard to stop this. You may have happened to come along to, or been made aware of, the "Stop the UNSW Trimonster" rally held in Week 2. It is important that everyone possible continues to build on this work, making the student position on the issue of trimesters known. If you want to get involved make sure to contact Dylan Lloyd, the UNSW SRC Education Officer.

Additionally, the SRC has been busy working to support the National Union of Students education campaign – Make Education Free again. Make sure to come on down to Eastern Avenue, USYD at 1pm on 22 March to protest and support this campaign.

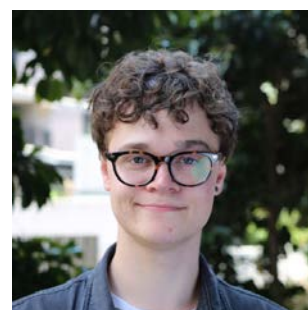
This is only a small part of what the SRC has been doing at the moment, so make sure you check out our website or hit us up on Facebook and get involved with the amazing campaigns all of the SRC collectives are running.

Cheers,

Zack

## EDUCATION

DYLAN LLOYD



The University must have heard our message loud and clear in Week 2 – students and staff say NO to harmful trimesters! Our rally was a huge success, and you can check out our campaign page at [facebook.com/UNSWtrimonster](https://facebook.com/UNSWtrimonster) to keep up to date with the future of our fight against a new academic calendar that will hurt tens of thousands of vulnerable students and staff.

Right now though, we're gearing up for a slightly larger-scale issue by bringing free education back on the agenda! Students won free education here decades ago, but over time, those wins have been eroded to the point where Australia is on the cusp of an unfair and unequal US-style education system. This year, free education is the flagship campaign of the National Union of Students, and we're having an action at UNSW before heading to USyd together on 22 March to show the huge amount of support there is in this country for free education. Like "Make Education Free Again" on Facebook and demand our leaders stop talking about how many more cuts they'll make to education, and start talking about how they'll make it more accessible for all.

We're also beginning our push to reinstate the Pass Conceded grade and change UNSW's Academic Withdrawal policy, which currently discriminates against people with disabilities and those who face issues beyond their control while studying.

As always, you can get involved with our amazing work both on and off campus by coming along to our weekly Collective meetings (email [education@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:education@arc.unsw.edu.au)), or by checking out our stalls over at the Library Lawn or the Quad (we're out there almost every day!). If there's an issue you'd like to champion or a problem you're facing with the Uni, let me know at [education@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:education@arc.unsw.edu.au) and I'll be in touch!

Thanks,

Dylan.

## QUEER

PRIYA GAUCHAN, JACOB COURTENAY, ANNA TRAN, MIRACHAEL RACELA



Hello UNSW.

It's that wonderful time of year again, where first years are settling into uni life beyond O Week and all students are finding their rhythm.

Among members, we have planned a number of "Queer collective goes to..." events, where members are invited to hang out at a number of locales. Previous places have included Coogee Beach and karaoke in the city. As well as this, monthly potlucks are planned.

In collaboration with various organisations, we're also planning a Big Gay Wedding event for IDAHOT and participation in Wear it Purple Day.

Whether you're interested in helping out, making your voice heard or just chilling with fellow queer students, you can join our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/UNSWQ/>.

A meeting is held each Monday 1-3pm, with additional autonomous meeting for specific groups being held throughout the year at the queer space. If you have any questions they can be directed to our e-mail: [queer@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:queer@arc.unsw.edu.au).

## WELFARE

AMY MILLS



The Welfare Collective has a major event planned with the Environmental Collective for Semester 1. We will be holding an all day event where students can come together to learn how to be economically frugal while still being able to make conscience choices about the environment. There will be a large lunch, where students can volunteer their time to assist in the preparation of the meal, and in doing so, they will receive a free lunch in return. There will also be workshops, electrical waste drop off stations plus a clothing and book swap. We are looking for volunteers to help organise this event, so if you would like to be a part of the day or have some great ideas please get in contact with me via: [welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:welfare@arc.unsw.edu.au)

The Welfare Collective is also in the process of working with Arc to facilitate discounted RSA and RGS certificates. This will enable more students to access part time work, and help take some of the financial pressure away from students. We hope to roll this out during Semester 1.

We are continuing the revamp of the Welfare and Disabilities room on main campus. New additions to the room include pot plants, cushions, blankets and everyday emergency supplies such as Panadol and tissues. We are still looking for student artworks to highlight the room, so please contact me if you would like to showcase your work.

Our Free Breakfasts will be held again this year, every Thursday from 10am on the library lawn. We are need of volunteers to keep this initiative going throughout the year. Drop by for a breakfast smoothie to see how you can help!

## WOMEN'S

LIZZIE BUTTERWORTH



It's been a busy beginning of semester for the women's collective!

O-week started us off with an exciting couple of events. Our "Smash the Patriarchy Piñata" event also saw the introduction of the National Union of Students' Women's campaigns on campus. We're incredibly excited to be a part of "You're worse off as a woman, fight back against the Liberals!" and "It's about bloody time! Axe the tampon tax" over this year. Check out photos from this event as well as our craft afternoon on the UNSW Women's Collective Facebook page!

International Women's Day was a huge success with multiple events run across campus celebrating women, fighting for gender parity and embracing the 2017 theme of "Be bold for change". The events included a movie night, Dress for Success clothing drive, a contingent to the anti-trimester rally, and many more.

There's a lot more happening over the next few weeks so make sure to get involved! Approach Women's Collective or SRC stalls for more information, or drop into a meeting. Our regular meetings are held Monday 12pm-1pm, and Wednesday 11am-12pm in the women's room (Arc equity spaces behind Baxter College, off the Basser Steps, Main Campus).

## ENVIRONMENT

BREANA MACPHERSON-RICE



Hello out there! Many of us from the environment collective have just returned from the Blue Mountains, where we took part in a nationwide convergence of students running Fossil Free campaigns on university campuses. We are feeling skilled up, motivated and determined to make a compelling case for why UNSW should stop funding dirty coal and gas polluters – but to make an impact, we will need your help! Come along to Fossil Free meetings from 12pm-1pm every Monday at Thoughtful Foods in the Blockhouse to find out how you can help this historic campaign.

In other news – did you know that in Victoria's East Gippsland region, beautiful old growth forest is still being logged today, despite not generating any profit, and with many alternatives in existing pine plantations? These forests, apart from showcasing some of the most spectacular trees you'll see in this country, are important stores of carbon that we can't afford to keep logging if we are serious about climate change. That's why, this mid-semester break, the UNSW enviro collective are joining students from across NSW, ACT and Victoria to converge in Goongerah, far East Gippsland. We will be helping the Goongerah Environment Centre Office with their citizen science efforts that seek to uncover unlawful logging practise and strengthen legislative protections for the forest. We'll be spotlighting, tree-measuring, frog-listening and all that fun field work stuff!

Join us – from 19-23 April. Visit [asen.org.au](http://asen.org.au) to find out more. Till next time!

## INDIGENOUS

TAMARA KENNY



Hi all,

February marked the 9th anniversary of the National Apology given to the Stolen Generations by former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. The National Apology was given by Rudd to members of the Stolen Generations who were forcibly removed from their homes. Whilst it is an important moment in Australian history due to the government acknowledging past policies and expressing its sorrow about how those policies affected Indigenous people, it is also an important part of healing for members of the Stolen Generation. However, much criticism was given to this event. The apology was only one fifth of what was recommended of the total of 54 recommendations made in the Bringing Them Home Report. Further, removal rates of Indigenous children today are higher than ever. Many shared the sentiment that "sorry" means, "don't do it again".

February also marked the March for Justice for TJ Hickey, a young Aboriginal man whose death sparked the 2004 Redfern Riots. His death was said to be a "freak accident", however, the family and many in the community do not accept these findings and blame his death on the police who were said to be pursuing him. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Tamara

## ETHNO-CULTURAL

CINDY EL SAYED



Trump's Muslim ban, Jacqui Lambie yelling at a Muslim woman on national television that the majority wants Muslims to be deported, the TJ Hickey march being met with backlash, the anniversary of Rudd's apology.

These events have made the beginning of 2017 an incredibly hard time for a lot of people. We don't feel safe as the world takes a scary shift to the right. That's why I've been thinking a lot about people of colour having a voice in national politics.

This month, the bulk of work has been in knowing that we must campaign against these issues. We have focused on making the ethno-cultural collective a space of safety and support, where we build each other up and fight back.

I am also preparing to launch Race Talks, where a speaker will discuss issues such as racism, white supremacy and other topics in a free workshop open to all people. There is also some ground being gained on having a Women of Colour collective, as well as the Queer officers creating a Queer People of Colour collective!

Students reading this, please know that you are not powerless and you are not alone. The SRC is here for you to make your voice heard, to fight back against trimesters (and even global issues like Trump, the evil orange Cheeto). I encourage you to come to a meeting, any meeting, and get involved.

We can and we will fight back.

## DISABILITIES

ALEX LINKER



Wow! What a fantastic start to Semester 1, 2017!

I wanted to take this time to remind everyone that if you need special provisions in order to make courses more accessible, now is a good time to contact the Disability Services Unit (DSU) to get that process started (if you haven't already!).

If you are having difficulty in organising your accommodations, please contact me ([disabilities@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:disabilities@arc.unsw.edu.au)) and I will help you out however possible.

I hope you enjoyed the picnic and movie for O-Week, and if you missed out – fear not as there are more awesome events coming up! Check out our Facebook (<http://tinyurl.com/unswSWD>) for more details!

Looking forward, the May edition of Tharunka will be focused on disability issues, and there will be a disability awareness week during May – if you would like to be featured in the issue, or have ideas for disability awareness events to be run, please email me for more information!

Disability Collective meetings run on Thursdays from 2-4pm in the Welfare/Disability Space (near the top of Basser Steps). Anyone who identifies as disabled/having disability is welcome (and encouraged) to join – I hope to see you there!



WE WANT YOU IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT  
WHEN IT COMES TO STEERING YOUR TIME  
AT UNI, MAKING SURE YOU ALWAYS...

# love unilife

## Arc BOARD ELECTIONS 2017 GET INVOLVED

Arc WANTS TO BE THERE FOR YOU, WITH YOU AND HELPING YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME AT UNSW. THE Arc BOARD IS LED BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS, ELECTED BY YOU AND STEERING Arc IN THE DIRECTION YOU WANT. GET INVOLVED AND HAVE YOUR SAY BY NOMINATING AND VOTING.

**Board Nominations Open** Mon 27 March, 9.00am

**Board Nomination Close** Fri 7 April, 4.00pm

**Positions Available:** There are four (4) positions up for election of which, two (2) positions must be filled by women while the remaining two (2) positions are unrestricted.

**Nomination Forms:** May be obtained from Arc Reception (level 2 Basser College Kensington), at the Arc Office at UNSW Art & Design Campus or from the Arc website. Nomination forms may be lodged at either of these offices or emailed to [returning.officer@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:returning.officer@arc.unsw.edu.au).

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE BEFORE YOU JUMP ON BOARD? CHECK OUT...



[arc.unsw.edu.au/board](http://arc.unsw.edu.au/board)

### WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

SEND YOUR STORIES, IDEAS AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS TO  
[tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au)

