

Filed to
The
Gradient

Can design be a realm of pure magic? How do designers manipulate symbols imbued with historical texture and richness? How does a trans spirit not only survive but thrive in abundance? Rin Kim—a New York-based trans multidisciplinary chimera, demi, hydra, mutt, graphic designer, filmmaker, alchemist, performance artist, writer, and yong (룡)—discusses these and other questions in a new interview. When asked banal questions about their design process and career Rin returns with mystical pleasures, spells of vengeance, and prayers of golden victory. Call them: they / him / Rin / or nothing.



Statement from Rin:

This interview was started in early 2019 and completed in the summer of 2020, and at that time of completion I was seriously questioning whether I felt comfortable publishing my thoughts through a cultural institution whose values I perceived to be at odds with my own. But after seeking wisdom from those that I trust, and through communication with Walker staff, I will instead use the occasion of this interview to make a short statement. I would like to call upon the Walker Art Center and other such institutions like it to remember that the marginalized artists and makers they benefit from are watching and listening. We desire better for them and they must remember that how they exist in the world is more important than their attendance, relevancy, and even art itself. This is what I hope for arts institutions. That they will create inclusive, equitable work environments for their staff. That they will actively contribute and give to their communities (especially Black, brown, indigenous, LGBTQIA+ and all intersections of these identities within the community), utilizing their physical space, money, and time to pour back generously. That they will confront their white supremacist origins and the white supremacy institutions currently rely on to profit from. And for them to be bold in how they champion these values and act with urgency and transparency.

I'd like to express my utmost respect, gratitude, and love for the time put into this piece by everyone in the design team (especially Som <3) and beyond who worked so hard to make this happen.



Your work seems to be applying graphic design and publishing methodologies in ways that transcend the idea of just a design “practice”—but in fact are embracing your personal spirituality and sexuality.

I love that you used the term “embracing.” It has this intention of intimacy about what it could mean to redefine design as personal embrace. To abstain from just formality. For me it’s an outlet more than a practice. My work is a direct extension of my spirit/personhood just like my physical form, the hierarchy of needs for my body, and work shift and realign priority, but they both act as vessels for my identity to permeate throughout. I have the privilege to make, and if I’m going to make I’m going to put all aspects of myself into generation: blood, sex, love, death, my relationship to my gods and spirits.



A still from Rin's upcoming project *Two Sides of The Rotted Wood* Co-directed and shot by Connor M. Barrett



Your work occupies the creation of "space" in a very unique way: metaphorically, physically, and conceptually. Can you tell us more about your body of work and the spaces it inhabits or wants to inhabit?

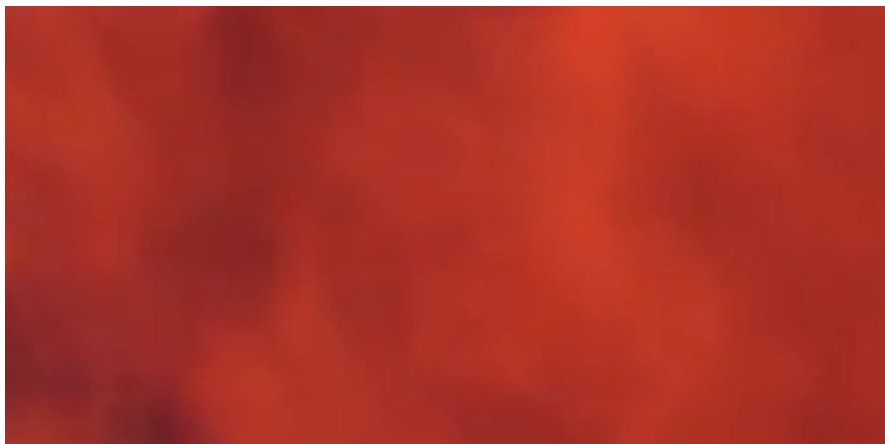
Vengeance ☾

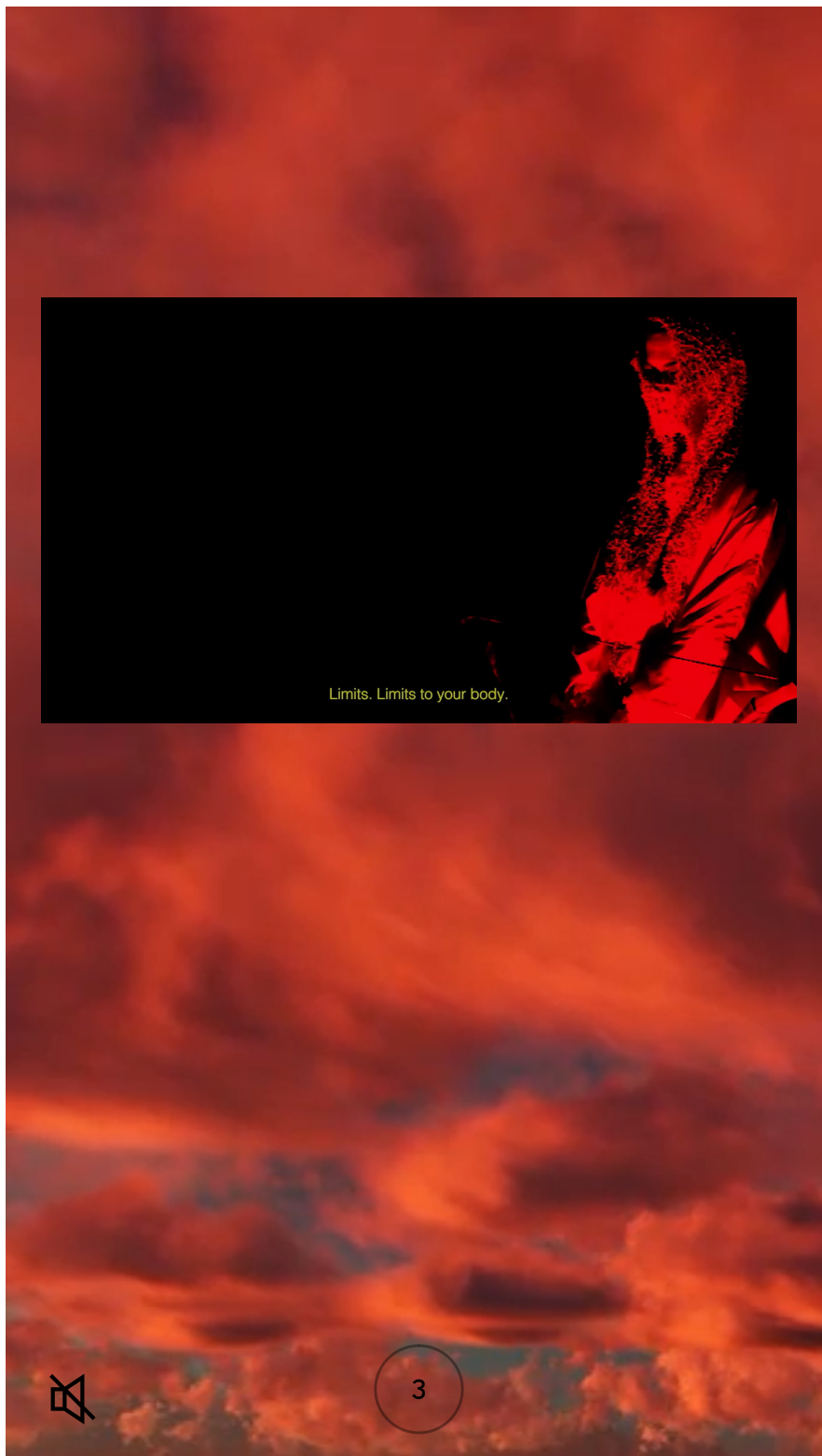
Madness ☽

Fury ☾

☽Passion

I try to make the visuals delicious. It feels good to let yourself feel. Fantasy feels good. I want to inhabit pleasure and rage and all the forbidden and sacred. I want that for us.





I think the key is not about cutting my body up into manageable portions at the feast but the sleight of hand it takes in making a structure, building, room, tapestry, book look so impossible and irresistible that someone tries to swallow the sword knowing the danger. World's with disillusioning entrances reward those who take chances.

There's something fundamentally holy about trans people of color making something larger than how the world allows them to appear or than what others can expect them to inhibit, whether it's in a literal space or metaphysical propositions like ideas through art. I want worlds where trans people get to do what they want and be filled with joy and empowerment.



I would like to know your relationship to talismans and symbols. They seem to be central to your body of work. They aren't just decorative; you take them to a political realm.

Talisman and symbol became a way of being able to exist assured, vulnerable, and in this exalted truth outside of dysphoria—to take a look through new perspectives and return to myself anew and patient, ready to get to know myself in new ways. Symbols of self can be symbols of gender affirmation, euphoria, release, healing, feeling felt and seen in a radical way beyond humanness.



Three-headed crane deity, the deity of abundant imagination and protector of mortal dreamscape, made by Lentz Marseille.

Having that kind of control, especially in the hands of queer, trans, QTBIPOC peoples, is powerful. Tools for pleasure and self-discovery, history, and knowledge are necessary in all of their forms.

Especially that of ancient magic like a channeling object or symbol.



Deity of pagan desires, the beholder of queer fortune, made by Lentz Marseille.

Talisman and symbol can be a reminder of who we are, desire to be. They can be moonlight that show us the way to where we collectively desire to go. They can be affirmations of our ancestral power, and be moments of reminder to the love we share with one another in times of trial. Symbols have always been powerful. They are agents of chaos as much as they serve us and our communities. They are grounded in deep complex histories both in spirit and





Symbols make sense for how I inhabit my body. I want to bring them into every aspect of my interaction with creation. Being creators comes with responsibility. I don't choose lightly the objects that are recurring talismans of Rin. All of us exist as political entities. Everything summoned into the world by artists is political. Symbols must be made with intention regardless of how simple or complex their existence will be. They are bridges where fantasy can find space with the reality of our desire to be understood.







In their first collaboration with Ghostly, Rin took inspiration from ancient Korean love poems with a dedicated voice to the liberation of bridled sensitivities. The Korean love poems in this piece were for Ben. Rin dedicates this to all of the orchids they have sent one another. This one is for the reader. Orchid commissioned by Rin, created by Lentz Marseille.



Can you tell us more about how the orchid and the matriarch are part of your political weaponry?

On the specific items you mentioned I can talk about the frequent use of orchids in my work, such as in *Orchid Bloom*, my halmoni (할머니, grandmother) has some. She has a special relationship to the earth, the soil, living things that have no human voice. She grows and keeps many things that I think share a secret language with her. She told me she talks to plants; it makes them healthier. She loves her orchids though. I gave her an orchid as my first gift to her, and they bloomed for so long that she thought they couldn't possibly be real. I took it as a good omen. For me the orchid is a symbol for the secret lives that bloom in the latest seasons. The orchid reminds me of sacrifice and honoring our boundaries with our own hearts and truth.

I wanted the orchid to be me. I wanted her to whisper me secrets and care for me. I want to bloom for so long, resisting the tests of mortality and natural life cycles to bring joy to my kin. I want to bring wonder into her life. Any greatness I achieve in my lifetime is all owed to her and her strengths. She raises her orchids, and it gives them the chance to bloom in the ways she has sacrificed much to ensure I can bloom and have the privilege to live out my truth, even if my queerness and transness is a secret to her. It is agony. The orchid is the holder of sacred secrets and agony and whispers of love.

My work both honors and challenges my ideas of the matriarch. I was born a daughter (I extinguished her, the gods jest) but will not hold the gauntlet of matriarch. I exist as the breaker of intergenerational curses to honor my current matriarch, her and all before her. But I also honor all of those of all gender expansive identities that have come before me even if I do not know of any in my bloodline, I can feel deep in my heart the truth they come before me illuminating the path though they exist as a title-less idea in my soul. We have always existed. Deep into time and space. I think about the nature of the matriarch as a transmutable object and imperfect deity. Given this title without consent. The expectations of others thrust upon them. The ways in which humans are assigned and are held under and into power. The expectations of birth humans thrust onto one another. The use of it is an attempt to understand my place and mother's and halmoni's place in these systems. My work holds it for me... my work holds me above these waters. It remakes what all of this can look like for me and parse through the complex feelings surrounding it. These ideas are weapons because they can bring about agony just as they can be utilized to triumph through that pain. I used them as reminders to myself who I desire to be and to never become. Use your work to remind yourself who you are. Who you are going to be. Remind you the ways of the cruel that must be purged and the ways of the compassionate that must be taken up and honed. The words and symbols that hold weight for you, use them to guide you in reverence.



How would you describe your way of working, between personal projects, client projects, collaborations, etc. Do you draw a distinction at all?

You could see my practice as prayer. Bringing something into the world is central and sacred. The act of "making" defies while simultaneously celebrates being.

❖ FOR MYSELF:

I am honored when someone puts the sweat, adoration, and hunger we share together to bring something into this world. Others are extremely generous with me as well; it goes both ways.

We orbit together. Maybe if the one planet was made of gold and the other of silver and as they hurtled into one another at a speed beyond light their impact rattled each to their core—but then they realize they have passed through one another unscathed. From the sheer force of the will of each to be created anew, they realize they are speckled with pieces of one another continuing on their own trajectories but changed from this meeting of two great forces.

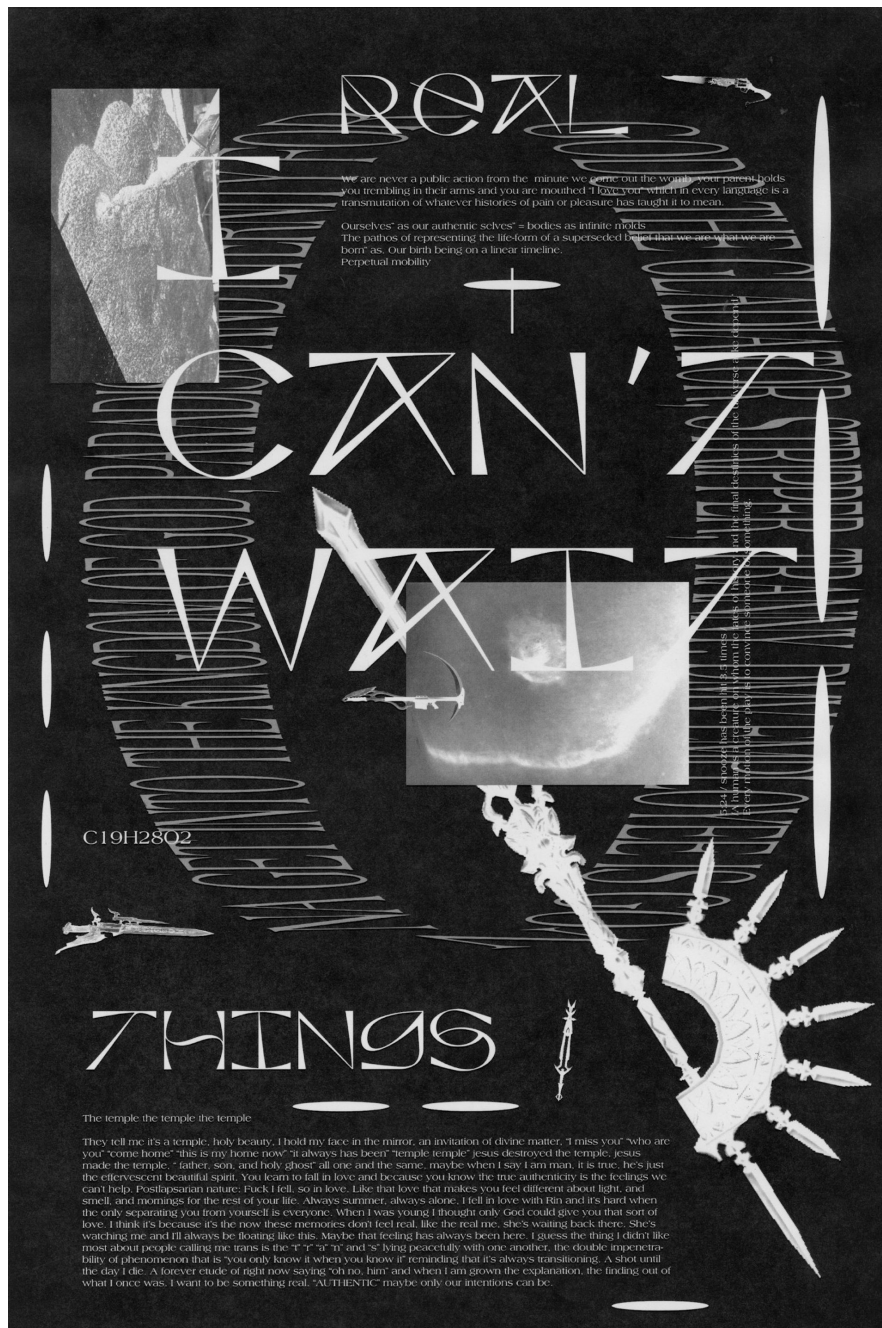
When metal touches in deep space it sticks together for eternity. But from sheer force of will we come with the intention of embracing for but a moment and when we open our eyes we will have brought something new into the cosmos and remain true to our core.

Maybe another way I've thought about it is slow dancing to a song that we're humming the melody to together. Once we want to be done we'll simply stop singing. Embrace for a moment, then pull apart. Every partner in this dance unique, each with different height, pacing, breath, and technique. The embrace shifts and glimmers in different light. Our bodies meeting in a moment of time that will never occur in the same way again.

There's something to be cherished in people coming together to create. It's holy. We are allowing one another to step into divinity.

Even with the softest or most simple of collaborations I take other's divinity as a creator seriously. We're sensitive organisms; the harmony of you and I becomes energy that permeates with heat and energy.

Collaboration is a delicate thing, and how I go about it differs from person to person. I try to bring my best highest self: ready to communicate, set boundaries, uplift those who I have partnered with, and provide a space to push one another and dream further than we could have on our own, but also not create unhealthy or unrealistic expectations in this framework.



Rin Kim describes their *Infinity* series as "posters for the new body."

❖ FOR CLIENTS:

Categorically, clientele can fall under two things:

1) I currently work at a design studio that involves innovation and marketing consultancy called Verdes. I was hired there after a fellowship I did there through Scope of Work run by Eda Levenson and Geneva L. White who are incredible and are doing critical work addressing racial inequities in the creative sector and assisting young BIPOC. I highly recommend looking into SOW and supporting the work they're doing. I'm really grateful to work where I do, I don't allow my corporate job space into my personal practice, but I allow my practice to try to help inform my work there. I am really humbled and blessed to work alongside my coworkers who are brilliant, compassionate, and kind. I have a mentor there, Kapon Chung (who runs COMBO nyc) who is literally family to me and I wouldn't be the designer I am now without his guidance and wisdom. I feel really supported working there with a super close team that all really show up for and love one another.

2) my freelance work.

For freelance I see it as creative spaces that should be higher spaces of respect and joy. If someone is making themselves vulnerable to ask me to honor their creative goals I want to make sure that the space we make together relationally is special and that I'm doing my best to show up with their needs in mind while also being responsible for myself and my capacities. I just want people to have their needs met in a safe, comfortable environment while ensuring I'm healthy and protected in the process. I work often on a sliding scale, or for free for friends or community projects. I don't get many corporate clients for freelance, but in those cases it's about me experiencing respect and is a place for me to practice boundary setting. I have the privilege to be in the creative force, and I need to be accountable for how clients treat me. Because if they're treating me like that they're treating other laborers that way as well. They're bringing that entitlement or disrespect to other spaces. I'm trying to make my voice stronger so I am equipped to do this.



I'm intrigued by the binyeo (비녀)! What does it mean for you to create a symbolic object and offer it to people out in the world? Where is the motivation coming from to give birth to something like this?



The pin is an exaltation for my people.
A channeling object for transmuting our power.
Before anything is said, I must express gratitude: I owe a lot to
Nontsikelelo Mutiti, because I never would have made the pin without
her generosity in language and care giving me a space to create it. And to
Lentz Marseille for bringing the design of the pin into the existence of the
3D world so it can be cast.
I wanted to make an object that was a reminder for the queer+/trans
Korean diaspora that our identities are in a great romance with one
another. A symphony. The pin is a reminder. It feels cold, brushing the
small parts of one's skull where the hair doesn't touch. It is suspended
between me and the world looking into my back. Being doesn't have one
mold, and the destinies of our forms can also be integrated with our pasts.



I have a lot of gender dysphoria and racial imposter syndrome that manifests in ways that are taking me lifetimes to understand and process. I wanted to have this be a grounding object. I wanted to make something that someone could look at and feel adorned in power. When people choose to adorn themselves with this I want them to feel like they are also choosing themselves over the whispers of serpents. I don't think the project does all of these things yet, but there's something intimate and hopeful and precious about an object made for someone with love, and that wilderness is worth walking together.



Also, I love the idea of pushing an idea out into the world via digital modeling, until it summons itself into a physical existence. How do you deal with the failure of its being?

I hope it is one day born as a physical object. I'm actually working to have it produced as we speak! But to be honest, making something like this is new to me. I tend to be very hard on myself when doing something for the first time, and I want to be meticulous in research and in practice while making space for my capacities.

Yet, if it never materializes as a physical objects I hope it is a failure.

There's a reading by Jack Halberstam called *The Queer Art of Failure*, and I think even in "failure" there is fire.

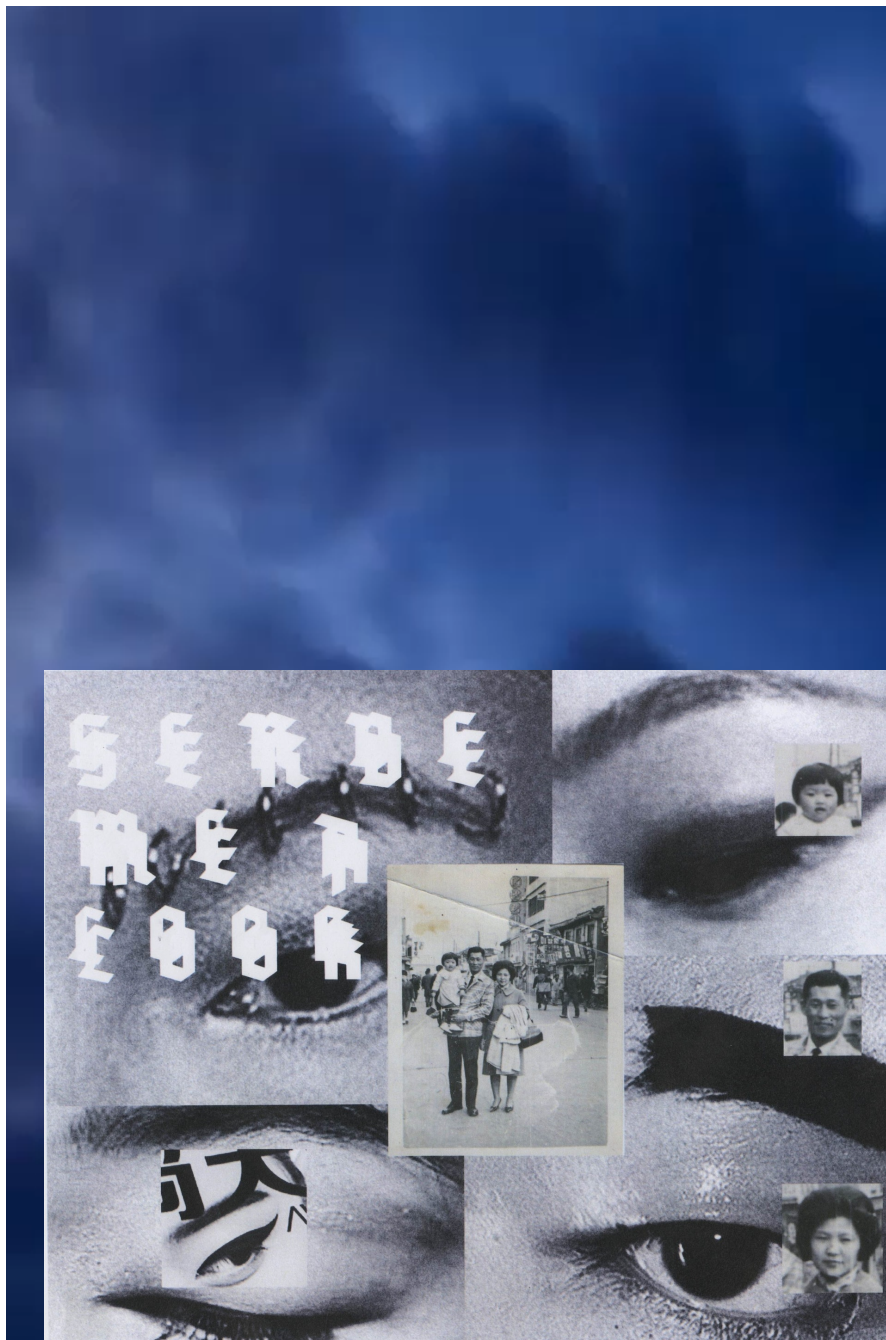
I don't believe that there is no take away from the powers of failure if it doesn't come to pass it living as "physical." To take a note from the wind: nothing needs a physical body to be valid and alive. What manifests from that might be something even greater than the pin if I "fail." In failure, I reflect, I critique, I muster, I change, even if the feeling isn't necessarily that of beauty. So if I can't bring the pin into the world from its digital body that's OK. I'm at peace with it.

It makes me think a little bit about my relationship to using the word failure. We should stop teaching makers to be afraid of failure but instead to be afraid of ignorance around never making an attempt at all. Failure and victory come with knowledge, but the sweetness of victory's fruits can often cause us to become disillusioned and overlook the lessons it teaches us. Your senses can become dull in paradise. And besides, there is no binary to creative process. Why must we set out on each path to show up in the world with completed objects every time shiny and new in our hands on our bodies?



**How do you describe the formal gestures and formal quality of
your work?**

I'd describe the quality of my work like a lion whose ribs are filled with honey. Like waking up and your hair in ten feet long. Like taking your clothes off with a lover. Like species euphoria. Like a great dragon that wraps around the sun and squeezes it until it drips out all its nectar and goes dark. Like entering a temple. I want it to feel intense and otherworldly like fucking the moon. That is my hope for the formal gestures of my work.





Can we reduce design to biography? How do you think design accommodates for personal narratives?

Design is like a werewolf: under the full moon we watch design become a personal narrative.



I've been thinking about the idea of reducing, renaming, recontextualizing, or calling design something as a whole. I don't think I can reduce design to anything outside of my own design; it's not my place. But at the end of the day, who am I to make sweeping commands about what such a magnificent or powerful or dangerous tool can be reduced to for others? Though I do think biography is one of its many forms; biography is the first kiss of new lovers. It is oftentimes our first introduction to a body of work, and it holds so much gentle strength and elegance. I think the platform is what the maker needs of it, and all of our truths of that said platform can coexist with one another in parallel harmonies.

I hope to be a carnal storyteller and image can guide people's dreams of my work where sometimes my words slip through empty spaces. But honestly, it's as simple as I just feels good making images and photographing things and I'm a huge believer in people not having to further explain point blank pleasures.

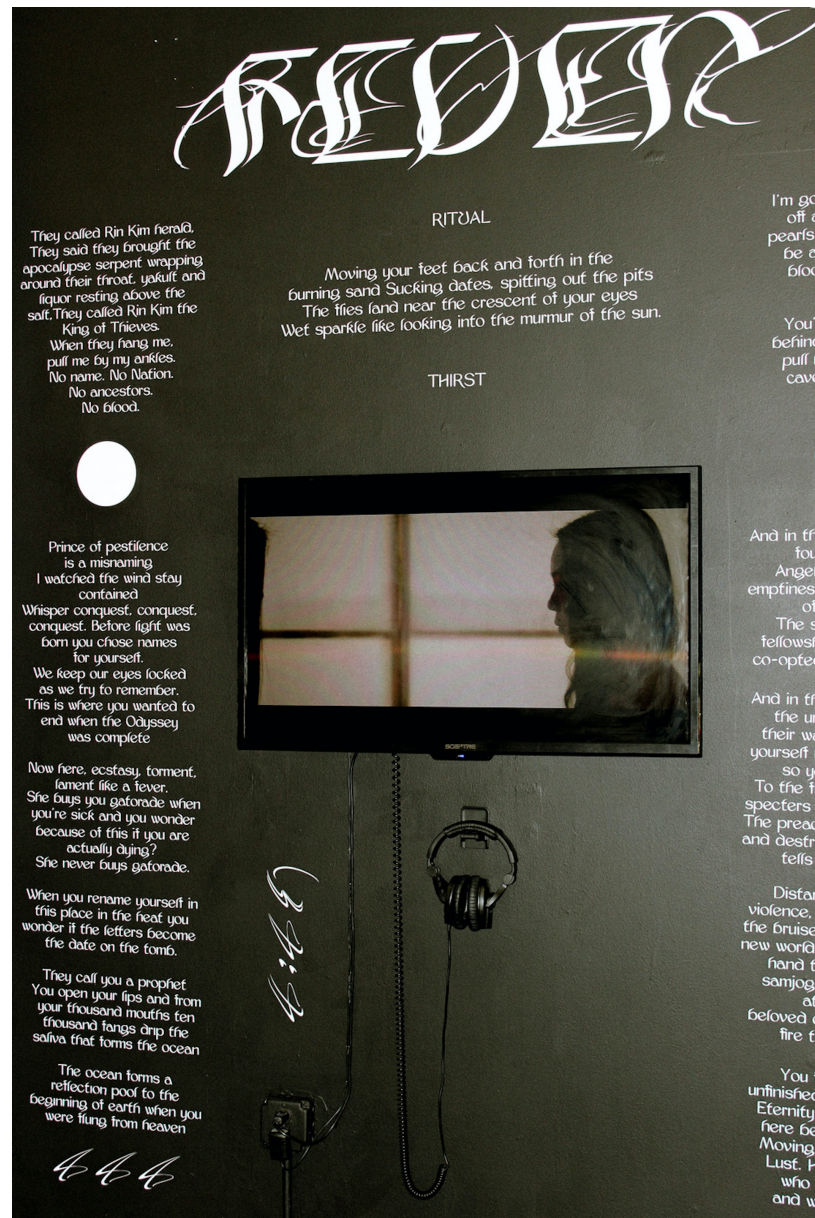


Rin, I was really captivated by watching *FEVER*. I want you to tell us something about this project you may not have shared with anyone else. Were there aspects of this saga you weren't able to share? Got scratched in the process?

I love to share first-time secrets. This might be the first secret I have shared with you, my love, if I'm not mistaken? I'm going to text you a secret now so this can be the second since I want to ensure our first secret is between us and this about fever can be for anyone who accesses this.

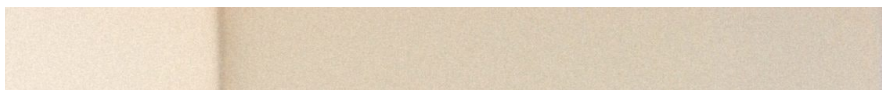
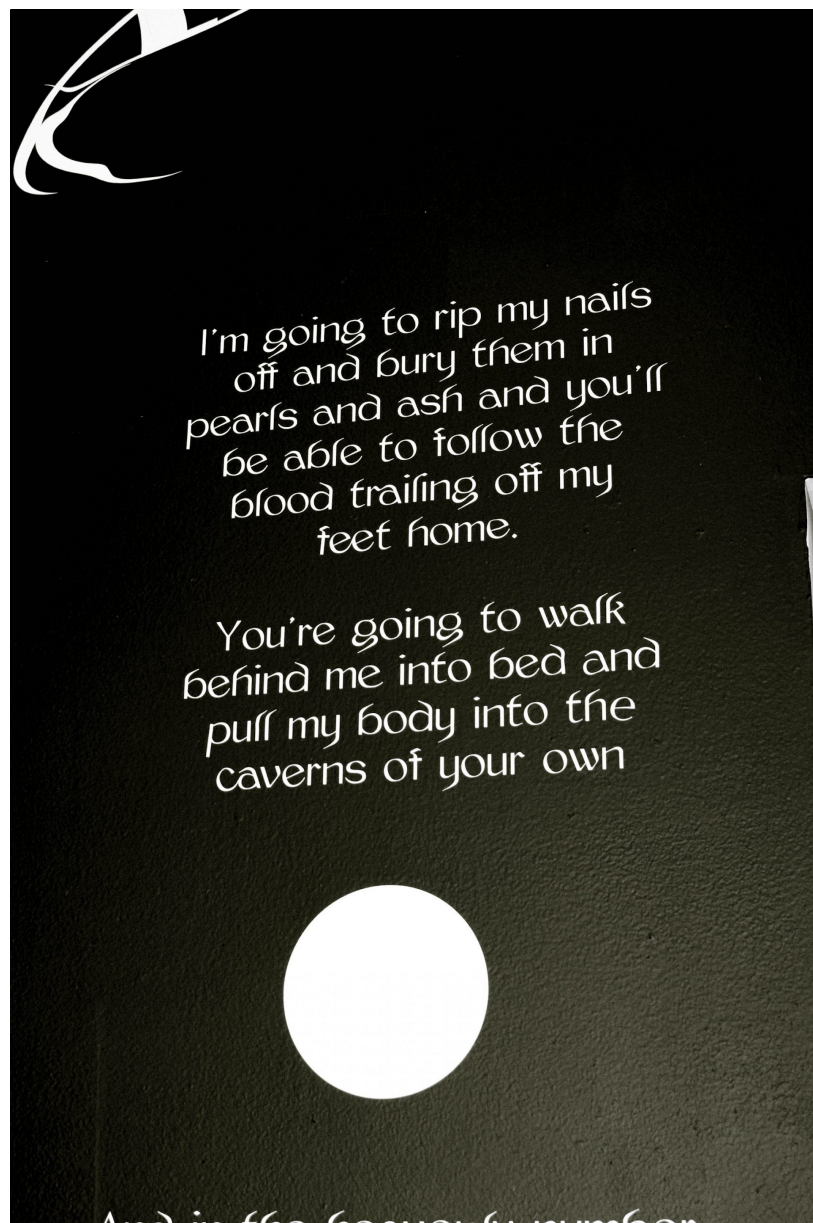
So a secret I haven't talked about yet...maybe that I deeply hate my voice and it makes me ashamed hearing it when watching. It's because my voice is the narrator of the dream, and I'd never heard my voice so accurately before than in those recording headphones. It was like hearing my own voice for the first time. I whispered the whole thing, I couldn't bear to raise my voice in the mic. I was already so shaken hearing the sound of it. Ever since I started taking hormones I feel like i'm learning to be very present with my body and am constantly discovering and holding new evolutions and homecoming both cherished and difficult. Making *FEVER* just pushed me to be more mindful about every aspect of my body as it was, I had just had top surgery a bi before filming so everything and felt tender and breakable. I felt like a baby bird in the hanbok Shawna Wu had made for me...very vulnerable that hearing my

voice felt like it was crumpling me up.



I'd never really heard it before. It was something I had never been aware of that when I'm alone and comfortable I'm silent. That consideration was just buried deeper within my heart when I started hormonally transitioning because I had people make a lot of horrifying comments about how my voice sounded. I had someone say I sounded "broken." Or people would constantly ask if I was sick. It made my heart ache, and I internalize that. I was so raw and emotional after recording because it was such an intense experience hearing my own voice so clearly in my body for the first time in such an intimate way was overwhelming. Moments that allow you to hold yourself and see and experience yourself are rare, and it was a reward I didn't expect in this process. Scratch-wise, there was a

really specific vision I had in mind for a lot of the visuals, and there were a lot of things that didn't perfectly line up with what I desired, so I had to come to terms with that loss of control in the outcome. I think it's part of the process that our work bites back sometimes or resists us. It can be a signal work has matured on its own. It's a good thing. It's when it can start to form its own opinions, conscious, or when it stops mimicking how we've made it, like a form of mystic artificial intelligence. I'm all for harmony with my work, but it's rare and overall a good critical challenge that it bites back like that so I try to soak it in when it does happen whether it's me surrendering control of the framework I originally had or technical issues.





You are very generous with your collaborations. You seem to pour yourself in them. Can you tell us about your top three collabs? What is it like melding your personal mythology with someone else's? Is it like two planets colliding? What can you tell us about your collaborative practices?

Maybe if the one planet were that of gold and the other of silver and as they hurtled into one another at a speed beyond light their impact rattled each to their core. But then realize they have passed through one another unscathed. From the sheer force of the will of each to be created anew, they realize they are speckled with pieces of one another continuing on their own trajectories but changed from this meeting of two great forces. When metal touches in deep space it stick together for eternity. But from sheer force of will we come with the intention of embracing for but a moment and when we open our eyes we will have brought something new into the cosmos and remain true to our core.

Maybe another way I've thought about it is slow dancing to a song that we're humming the melody to together. Once we want to be done we'll simply stop singing. Embrace for a moment, then pull apart. Every partner in this dance unique, each with different height, pacing, breath, and technique. The embrace shifts and glimmers in different light. Our bodies meeting in a moment of time that will never occur in the same way again. But maybe that is in itself the same as our planets colliding.

I am honored when someone puts their sweat, adoration, and hunger we share together to bring something into this world. Others are extremely generous with me as well, it goes both ways.

There's something to be cherished in people coming together to create. Top three collabs is really difficult, but maybe three i've been thinking about it all the work I do with my chosen family in Other Publishing, making the Trans Divinity shirt with Jason (UDLI Editions) and Angel (Ice Cream Support Group), and *Future Pleasures* with Malachi, Dex, and Bri.



The Other Publishing team, left to right: Nix Ni, Rey Carlson, Rin Kim, Yi Song, Mai-Phuong Bui, Mary lai

Even with the softest or most simple of collaborations I take other's divinity as a creator seriously. We're sensitive organisms, the harmony of you and I becomes energy that permeates with heat and energy. Collaboration is a delicate thing and it differs from person to person how I go about. Collaboration also teaches us about the balance of ego and boundaries. How to tap into where our boundaries are and how to state them clearly or communicate when something doesn't feel right or is uncomfortable or we don't have capacity for. It guides us in surrendering the ego while uplifting one another. It's a celebration of harmony. Having a creative community of people I love is part of collaborating with the greater spiritual unit. Us uplifting and seeing one another. I have a growing list of loved ones to bear witness to on my website homepage and it would mean the world them being honored in this way of using this space to also re-direct to them.

ASTROLOGICAL ALIGNMENT

Mai-Phuong:
sun: Aquarius
moon: Libra
rising: Cancer

Rey:
sun: Gemini
moon: Sag
rising: Virgo

Nix:
sun: Cancer
moon: Aquarius
rising: Scorpio

Rin:
sun: Aquarius
moon: Virgo
rising: Sag

Yi:
sun: Aquarius
moon: Leo
rising: Scorpio

Mary:
sun: Taurus
moon: Libra
rising: Leo

Mai-Phuong:
Vietnamese

Rey:
Chinese

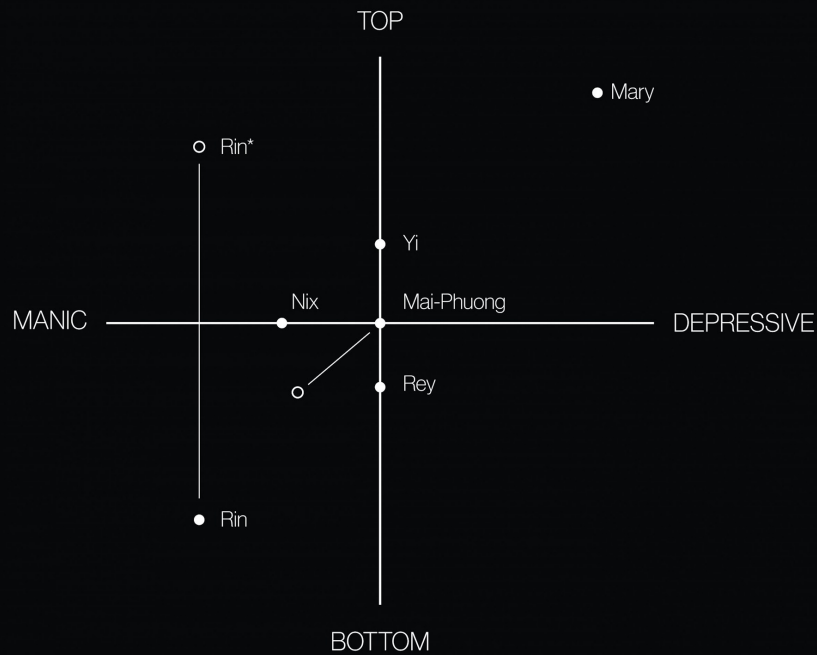
Nix:
Chinese

Rin:
Korean

Yi:
Chinese

Mary:
Vietnamese

NATIONAL ALIGNMENT



Alignment charts of various group members from Rin's publishing collective, Other Publishing.



You mention that design is a prayer, an opportunity to bring something new to life. What is something you wish you had designed?

The “Awakened Beings” from the *Claymore* series.



Rin, what compels you to build your own imagery? You use photography in a lot of your projects. What is your relationship to the camera?

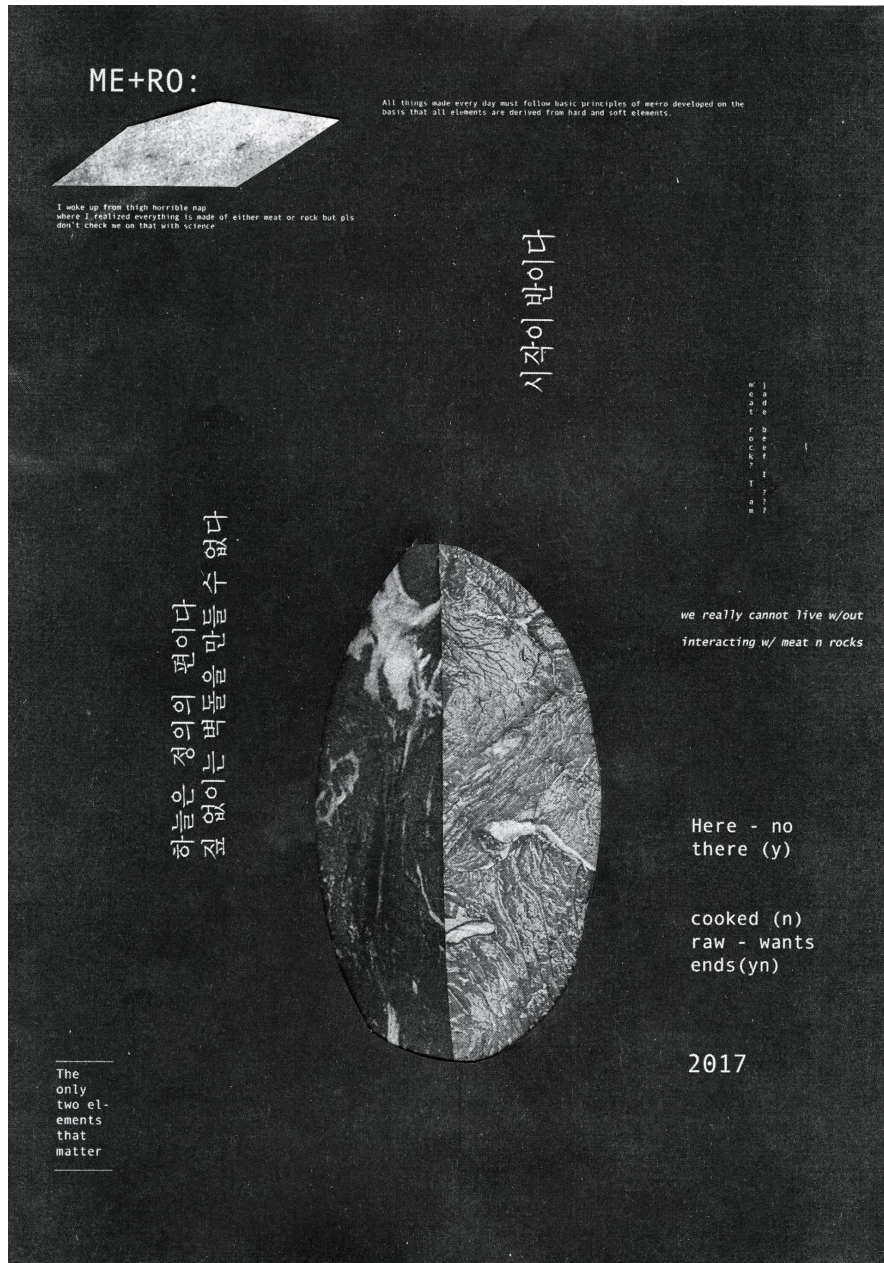
I hope to be a carnal storyteller, and images can guide people's dreams of my work, where sometimes my words slip through empty spaces. There are visions I genuinely can't fathom explaining with words, and however an idea wants to be born and to exist, I want to honor that. But honestly, it's as simple as I just feels good making images and photographing things, and I'm a huge believer in people not having to further explain point blank pleasures.

I also work with a lot of incredible friends who are image makers and I'm drawn to their work and it feels really nice and intimate working with a loved one's work as well.



What are some of your favorite stories, fables or mythic sagas.

There's almost too many, but some off the top of my head: Ungnyeo / Tu'er Shen / Ragnarok / the paradox of Chiron and Prometheus / all the stories and lore around the Fire Emblem series / The Nine Cloud Dream / all tales around the kumiho / fox rain (In Korea, a male tiger gets married to a fox, which makes the cloud, who loved the fox, weep behind the sun.)



ME + RO

+ meat and rocks, sayings for a better future? Questioning the relationship of flesh based organisms to sedimentary matter





Strange Serpents a postcard for the future



Rin, I want you to share with the readers about your collaborative erotica *Future Pleasures*. It's one of my favorite projects. I love the kind of energy it radiates.

Future Pleasures "is a queer science fiction and fantasy erotica anthology centering pleasure as a place of queer and trans exploration. What our relationships with our bodies can be outside of gender binaries, what our relationships can be and look like with other species. What it means to be human, or demon, or droid, or magic, what it means to feel longing and desire. As QTBIPOC writers and dreamers, this was our space to play and explore and question and envision worlds where our pleasure matters and exists and is centered," as contributing writer Candex Seokyi Louie put it.



The project was born when Paul Soulellis from Queer Archive Work reached out to me about participating in their third collection and gave me free reign around my contribution. A huge part of my private practice is within the erotic and written trans+queer fantasy erotic (which had a birthplace in *Lord of The Rings* and *Dragon Codex* fanfic). A big goal this year was to start making an intentional effort to move my smut writing to the forefront of my practice which this gave me ripe opportunity.

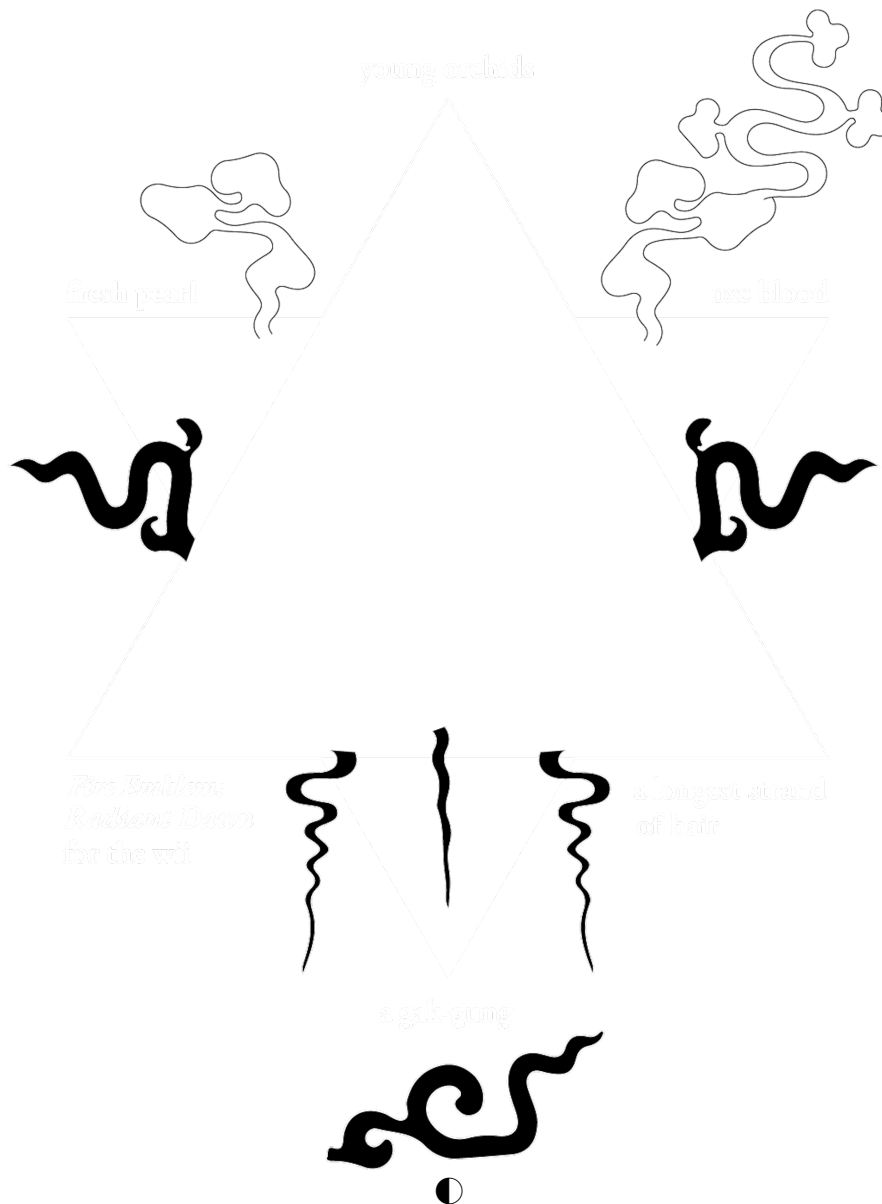
I made it a collective publication because even when practiced alone I believe pleasure is a communal magic. Decision. Agency. Community. The collaborating contributing writers are like family to me, and I love them so deeply: Malachi The Moth, Candex Louie, and Bri. In the book you'll find Malachi's piece *The Violet Island*, Bri's piece *Suspended*, Candex's pieces *Lost Angel* and *There's No Gravity*, and my piece *The Orchid Door*. We are curating the reader's experience with our world-building. Monster porn. Inhuman experiences. That's the kind of fucking I want to read about. It's the thing I want to write about.

My written piece *The Orchid Door* is a pornographic play about an alternative fantastical universe of Korean-influenced gods and monsters where a banished deity takes a form of a stag and faun and falls in love with a trans mortal man. It's this interspecies queer tragedy. Lots of death. Lots of violence. Lots of sex. Lots of betrayal. A proper erotic tragedy. There is a lot of interspecies sex and variance from orgies to just one on one, and I get really excited to write about non-human bodies and how they interact with or without humanity and stretch the readers perceptions and experiences.

My body a lot of times feels very inhuman or dehumanized by others and turned into a fetish object because of the identities it intersects, and it feels powerful to lean in. I deeply resonated with a lot of the writing in the article "Trans/Sex: Inside the queer fascination with monster porn," written by Ana Valens. I felt really seen. My own writing makes me feel seen or understand myself and my desires better, because it's not that I just want pleasure; I want opportunities for my body to be more expansive and my experiences to be more than human.



What objects would you want someone to place on a pentagram, to summon your spirit?



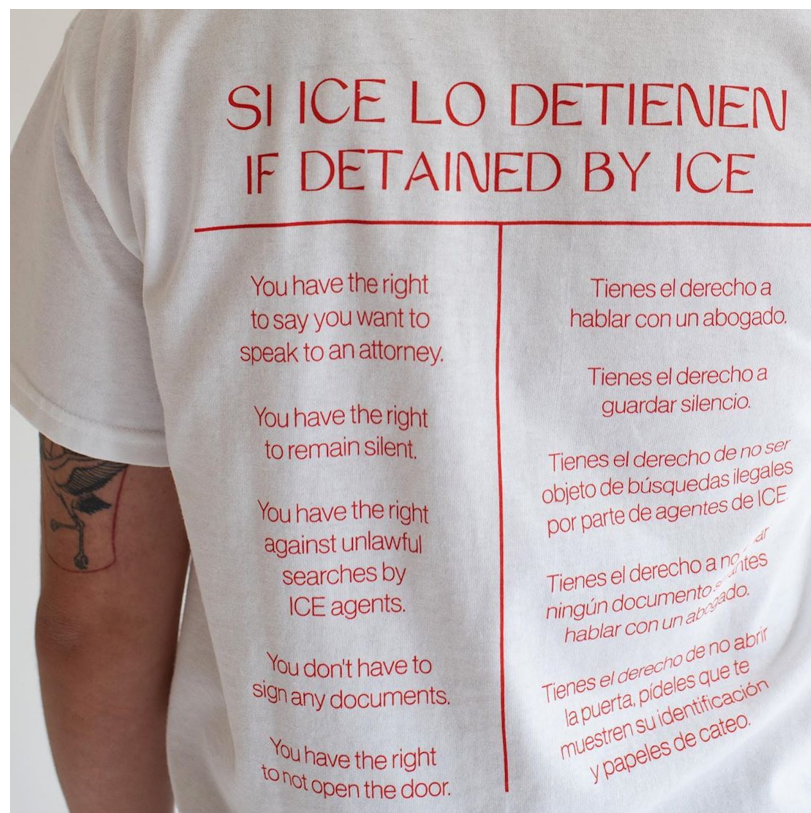
What are some projects that you have not birthed yet?

For things that are currently in the womb: working on a new publication in honor of han (한) called *FURY*. It's a parallel of the Odyssey but Odysseus is a trans demi-god, and the journey is poetic around this character's relationship to vulnerability and madness. Working on a new video which will be the next installment of *FEVER*. I can't reveal much yet but it's an amalgamation of if Rapunzel was a Korean folk story about cheating the devil, car heists, and motherhood, all combined. Last big project on the plate is the second installment of my curated queer and trans QTBIPOC fantasy sci-fi erotic collections "Future Pleasures," but that's all I have capacity for, trying to be gentle with my capacities. Dysfunctional harmonies like an eternal birth where time swims in and out of my conscious. Trying to keep external order without exiling myself to eternal work and leave spaces for bliss.



Rin, one last question. According to me, the biggest sorcery of our times is the Capitalist Sorcery: the mythos of a straight-cis survival that is largely affixed on wealth and reproduction. How as designers can we dispel this magic?

When we talk about dispelling capitalist magic, we are also talking about fighting colonialism, anti-blackness, environmental injustice, colorism, transphobia, homophobia, police violence, native genocide, ableism, and how capitalism intersects, feeds, and breaks bread with them. I think my approach tends to come from perspectives of familial survival: how to make sure my QTBIPOC family is cared for and protected. I'm building a community and chosen family that is actively practicing unlearning internalized ideas that we are not supposed to exist or survive.



Rin Kim in an effort to raise awareness around the rights of migrants @chroma.ny & @awakenewyorkclothing have collaborated on this PROTECT PEOPLE NOT BORDERS tee.

Acts of care and gentleness mean something. Especially in systems that want to use us as kindling. Checking in on one another spiritually, emotionally, physically. Cooking meals for one another, sharing resources, making art, making space for pleasure and joy. Making space for rage. Make space for one another to explore our

cultural identities, our mother tongues, our gender(s), our sexuality, our hopes.

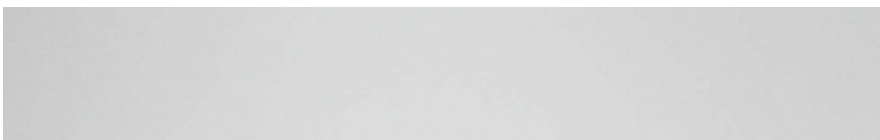


One hundred percent of the proceeds from T-shirt sales will be donated to Casa Arcoiris, an organization providing legal aid and shelter for the LGBTQ+ migrant community in Tijuana, and Al Otro Lado providing legal support to migrants across the southern border.

It's not this general thing "designers" can solve alone. But we can utilize our artform as a tool for empathy, accountability, and change. It's about actively not worshipping working culture and not letting others bring that energy into my life or the lives of my loved ones. Making space to talk about our mental health, to cry, to process emotions, unpack our histories of trauma. Using our tools to teach and learn. But also a lot of white designers could learn to listen. To embrace stillness and making space for QTBIPOC.

I feel like there's so much to cover. I don't have a perfect answer and I'm still trying to learn more myself about how I can dispel, but I want to leave some of my own affirmations as small offering to other creatives surviving and practicing dispelling:

Capitalism has a never-ending hunger that wants you to devalue





May I ask you to bless this interview with a prayer.

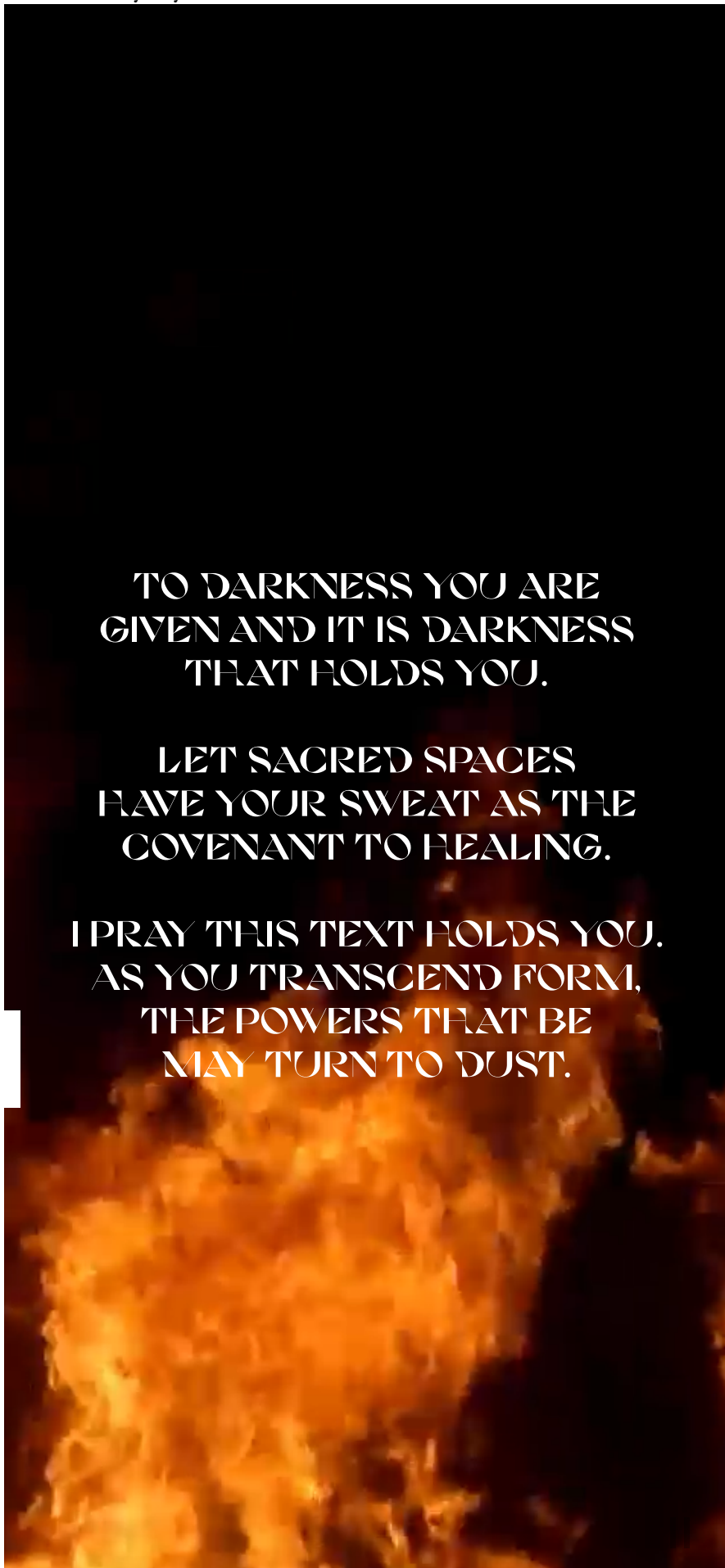
Yes ! Certainly, my dear.

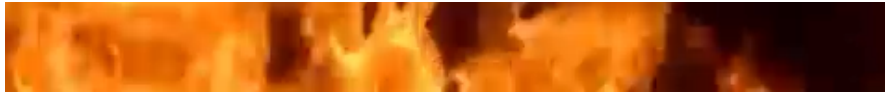
TO DARKNESS YOU ARE
GIVEN AND IT IS DARKNESS
THAT HOLDS YOU.

LET SACRED SPACES
HAVE YOUR SWEAT AS THE
COVENANT TO HEALING.

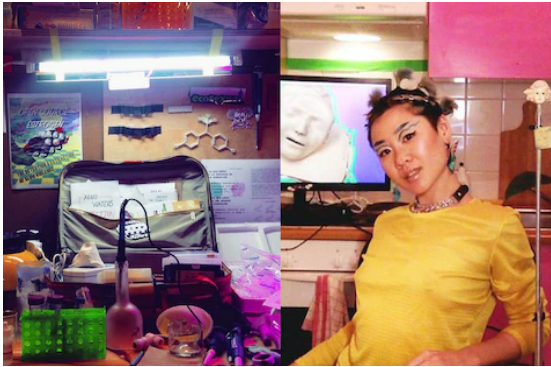
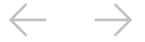
I PRAY THIS TEXT HOLDS YOU.
AS YOU TRANSCEND FORM,
THE POWERS THAT BE
MAY TURN TO DUST.

WALKER



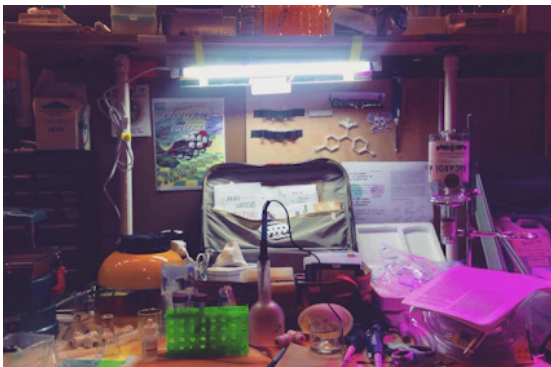


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