



ONE



nasi

In Indonesian, rice; the daily sustenance.

“We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller.” - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

We are here to do the opposite of that.

Women / femmes have always stood at the origins of life, nourishment, and sustenance. We are bigger than the spaces made for us. We hold up more than half the world. We are, have been, and will always be unwavering, abundant growth.

nasi is an online and print platform that gives weight to a woman’s creative labor — something all too often erased. Our content, imagined and created by women, carves space for those who who make up the complicated web of identities with which we intersect and represent: for those who identify as women, as queer, as people of color.

Here, we write our own narratives. We hold space for those too often told to be subdued, smaller, and softer. Here, we reclaim our bodies, our beauty, and limitless ability to create. We give a place to heal, to celebrate, and to love in today’s daunting political landscape.

Here, we provide the daily sustenance. We are women, and we are artists.
And we are ready.

We are here. Create with us.

MXCQ

By Eileen Syrop and Eda Yu



Brazen, loud, and wholly unafraid to speak his mind through his art, MXCQ is a New York-based illustrator who tackles everything from raunchy political works to nostalgic, childhood cartoon characters. His raw, almost crude style transforms things like dollar bills into symbols for burning capitalism and Trump's toupee into the joke that has become America's political system. Read on for more insight into his artistic process and his relevant, topical inspirations.



What do you do creatively? How would you describe your art?

I illustrate my drawings on paper and animate/color them digitally. I would describe the majority of my work as humorous, with some social commentary on hip-hop and the news. But there are times I just like to draw things that I think people could relate to and feel nostalgic about. Those are a little more personal.



When and why did you start?

I started drawing when I was a lil' baby. But it wasn't until I got sent to alternative school my senior year [of high school] where I met my art teacher who told me that I should pursue art professionally. One time, she even organized recruiters from the American Academy of Art in Chicago to come meet me. It really opened up my eyes that someone else saw that much potential in me.



Where are you from? Where are you currently based?

I'm originally from Chicago and am currently based in Brooklyn.

What's one thing not many people know about you?

I was born in South America.

How has where you're from influenced your art?

Growing up, I moved around a lot, so it forced me to not care about making friends. That's when I started drawing more and more. I ended up going to the American Academy of Art in Chicago. There, I learned the basics and took some art history courses.



What or who inspires your work?

A lot of things do actually. It can be new music I discover, or a show that I just got into, or even people on the subway. It's fun to observe everything and try to figure out what colors, shapes, or form it can take on paper. Oh, and this election gives me a ton of material to work with too, lol.

What have you made or done that you're most proud of?

Just being able to make art and getting to this point where I can make a living off of it. I sometimes get doubts about what I'm doing, but seeing people engage with my art keeps me going.

What are you currently working on?

I currently have a list of ideas on my phone that I have to sketch out. There's another nostalgic drawing, a Halloween-themed one, and another money drawing.

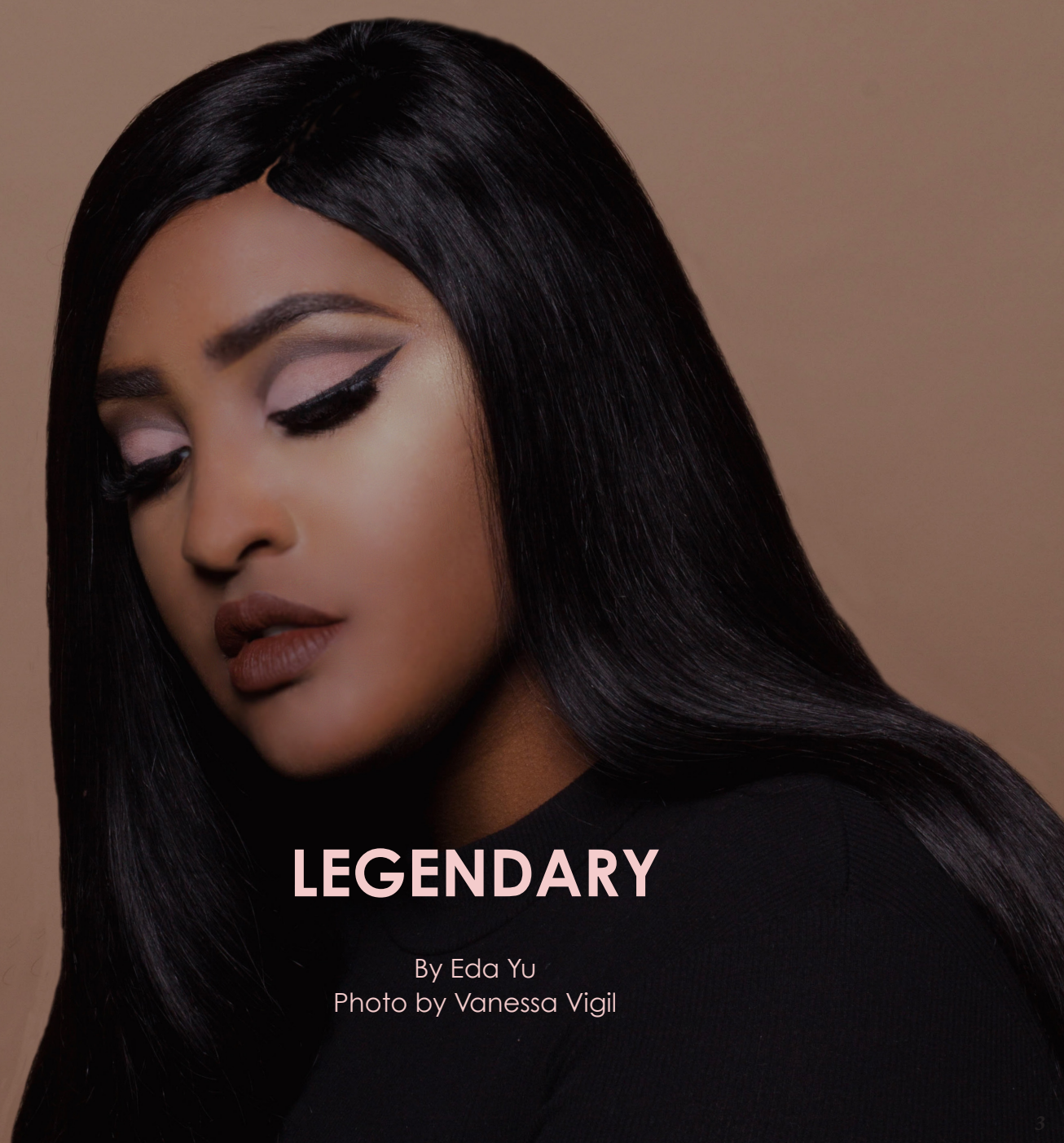
What do you have planned for the future?

I want to add more options to my shop, like stickers and shirts. And hopefully I can collab with more artists on Instagram like @Reeg. I had a lot of fun animating my ideas with someone else's work.



RAYANA

JAY



LEGENDARY

By Eda Yu
Photo by Vanessa Vigil

I'm a lover," Rayana Jay said, without missing a beat. She looked up and deliberated her answer for a second before continuing. "Yeah. That's really what it comes down to."

The Richmond-born singer-songwriter perched atop a stool outside a cafe on Grand Avenue, at ease amidst the bustling Thursday night crowd in downtown Oakland. Her head rested firmly on the heel of her palm; her long, mauve-polished nails drummed out an even rhythm on her full lips. The evening wind blew a strand of long, black hair across her face.

"A very passionate person. Very hard to understand, but kinda desperate for everybody to understand," she said, a small smile turning up the corners of her mouth. She reached up to smooth the stray strand of hair back into place. Yet with her easygoing demeanor and sarcastic humor, Jay — one of the standout artists leading the wave of rising Oakland talent — appeared difficult to misunderstand. And the success the Bay Area singer has encountered the past year resoundingly echoes that.

Just last year, the 22-year-old began gaining traction on Soundcloud with the release of her first EP, "XXI". Then, late this August, Jay dropped "Sleepy Brown" as the first single off her debut album — a song which has now garnered over 88,000 plays on Soundcloud. Her second single from the work, "Nothing to Talk About", premiered on The Fader not too long after. And earlier this October, Jay released *Sorry About Last Night*, her soulful, jazzy, and aching-honest 7-track debut work.

The album — "I'm gonna call it an album, fuck it. A debut album. I'm so excited," she laughed during our chat — was completed over the course of only a couple months. Since she began recording, Jay has attempted to be as efficient as she can, demonstrating a fierce focus and drive that sometimes escapes those struggling in their creative process.

"If you don't have to leave for something, there's really no reason to take a break from what you're doing. Not if you love it. I don't

work a nine-to-five. This music shit is what I do," Jay expressed matter-of-factly, casually referencing her long-standing experience in the field. The artist, who's sung professionally for only three or four years, has already worked extensively with local veterans like I-O.A.K., Caleborate, and Elujay — as well as Bay Area producer Mikos Da Gawd, who produced two singles off *Sorry About Last Night*.

Although having participated in church choirs most of her childhood, Jay shared that she really began recording when she joined Youth Radio, an Internet and public radio station based in downtown Oakland, while a junior at El Cerrito High.

"I applied [to Youth Radio] and ended up getting into their...internship program. They gave us a little tour, and [when] they finally showed us the studio, I was like, oh, wait a minute. You mean I could come here and make music for free? Like I can actually do this?" She recounted. Six months later,

"There has to be a level of honesty at all times. I have to be honest with myself... with people listening."

Jay released her first studio-recorded single. Yet, finding her sound — and the full, husky voice that smoothly guides listeners through each of her tracks — was not necessarily something that came as easily.

"Yeah it definitely took...it took a lot of heartbreak, actually," Jay said slowly. Her gaze flitted to the clamor inside the cafe for a moment before returning to me.

All the music I make is about love. 'Cause I'm a lover," she added with a quick smile. "So, when I actually went through an intense heartbreak, I couldn't — I couldn't hear music anymore. Music had just vanished from my life. It's like I'd gone deaf." Jay delved into how, in order to come out of the process, she grew enormously as an artist in her search for sound — something that had previously come so fluidly — as she tried to

"make music when there was no music."

Outside of love, Jay draws inspiration from the works of other R&B artists: notably, Frank Ocean's *Channel Orange* and Solange's recent *A Seat At The Table*, which she described as "one of the most honest albums I've ever listened to...[an album] that'll leave you with something." For Jay, authenticity, alongside alcohol — "The cover for 'XXI' is a bottle of Hennessy!" she stated unabashedly — is a plain necessity in the creation of her own work.

"That's what it is," Jay said, slightly shrugging her shoulders to emphasize the simplicity of her words. "There has to be a level of honesty at all times. I have to be honest with myself. I have to be honest with people listening." More than anything, Jay emphasized that she just wants — like the musicians who move her to create — to leave listeners with something, to stir in them a feeling they can carry beyond a superficial sound.

And Jay continues to create because music, in her own words, "is keepin' me alive, honestly." The art form has become a medium to help her move through her personal struggles with mental health, a subject she found to be often stigmatized in the Black, artist community.

"Music has definitely been a lifesaver. It's become much more than a hobby now," she said as our conversation wound down. "It's one of the only things I get angry about...when I can't create. When I don't create. When somebody's telling me how to create...I'm ready to fight for it." Jay sat up a little straighter, her eyes' clear gaze alight. It wasn't difficult to see how her passion so effortlessly shone through the gorgeously, timeless sound and raw emotion that make up her music.

"This is one of the only things I have that is for me, and that is mine," she said passionately. "I wanna be a legend. Legendary. All caps. And with spaces between every letter. In bold." Jay spaced out the image with her hands above her head, unconcerned by the looks of strangers passing by. She winked playfully.

"Iconic!" Jay cried into the dark Oakland street and laughed freely. "Legendary."

ELI

By Taylor Marie



Writer, freedom fighter, and visual artist Elijah Ndoumbé has been pushing the boundaries of art and identity through their thoughtful and fiercely passionate work. The boldly queer creative uses writing, film, and photography to amplify the voices and stories of folks whose narratives often, in their words, “go untold, or are shoved under the rug.”

Currently Ndoumbé is collaborating with Black Queer London-based filmmaker and artist Nadine Davis on “Undone,” a documentary web-series seeking to elevate and explore the experiences of Black Queer folks – especially those that vary on the gender spectrum. Find their words on their inspirations, loves, and their own story in their interview with *nasi* below.

How would you describe yourself?

Chuckles I’ve always had a hard time with this question because I feel like my essence is something that’s constantly shifting depending on the day. That’s how I relate to my gender, my identity, and therefore my artistry — a fluidity that bypasses time, you know? At my core, I’d say I’m a creative soul trying to figure out how to navigate this world in a way that centers my people and the communities’ whose narratives and voices aren’t being prioritized or centered in the struggle. It’s been a helluva journey, so far. I’m intense, passionate. When I know what I want: I plan, manifest, and I achieve.

Tell us about your work.

My first love is, writing. Right now it’s taken the shape of creative non-fiction prose that seeks to disrupt structures of traditional writing. It explores traumas, triumphs, and existential thought processes around marginalized identities, namely Blackness/Brownness, gender, queerness, etc. I’ve also been doing photography and film. This is a newer sphere of work for me, but I’ve always been a very visual person, so it’s been pretty dope being able to execute in these mediums.

How did you get started doing film/photography? What inspired you at the onset?

I’ve always been around folks in the industry. My mother is a makeup-artist and was a model; father works in pre-press. We also had a number of photographer friends and family. I worked for Warner Bros. to check out the PR scene, and worked for other film folks.

I’ll never forget — I had just arrived in London and was very slowly connecting with other Black Queer fam. I met Nadine in Vauxhall Gardens during London’s Black Pride. We started chatting about community. I noticed she had a DSLR on her; she was taking footage for a film project. At the exact moment she was expressing this to me, I was looking through the camera lens. I can still recall the shock that ran through my body, the internal switch that was flipped within the confines of my chest. All it took was seeing members of my community — crisp, clear, and beautiful on that screen — and I knew that I needed to do something that documented our people. That’s how “Undone” was born.

Are you working on a project now?

The primary project at work right now is the “Undone” series, which started in London with Nadine. The series seeks to amplify the voices of Black queer/LGBTQ, gender-variant folk. We recently launched the trailer for the project and are in the process of prepping for the release of the first season. Writing wise, I’m working on a piece that looks at the decolonization of desire between Black (mixed-Black) queer bodies of the diaspora, and the ways in which various dynamics of power and struggle are always inherently present in the room, especially when sexual desire erupts.

Can you tell us a bit about your artistic process?

I recall writing a piece where I spent an entire month just pounding out work. I felt it in my chest. I had to get it out. When I get like that, I can’t speak to anyone; I can’t engage. I need to be in a room, unbothered, creative hands digging and scraping and searching for meaning around a muse that has incited the need for the work to be released. When that piece finally was published I was exhausted and didn’t write for months following. Since then, I’ve tried to ease myself back into writing. Part of this has been me developing a spiritual practice forcing me to stop, breathe, still my mind and observe what is happening within and outside of me. As I execute this more — meditating, rituals of movement to warm the body, reading snippets of Rumi to help set intention for my day. Also, collaborating and working with other folks helps immensely with collective imagining and creative execution.

Is there a particular reaction you’d like to see in response to your work?

I want people to engage with the work in a way that, when they depart, they do so with a question, a critique, or a need to do something. It shouldn’t be a clean break. It’s messy, criss-crossing, confusing, and mind-bending. If I’m not adding nuance to a conversation or starting a new one, then I haven’t

done my job as an artist.

Are there certain people or individuals which have impacted you?

Too many to name. [In] terms of my current writing, I'm drawing a lot of influence from Rankine, Nelson, and Díaz, to name a few. They do exactly what I'm striving to — disrupting the traditional flow of writing, while weaving topics of race, diaspora, and queerness seamlessly into their work. Lorde, Moraga, Fanon. But I want to give a shoutout to one of my writing mentors, Harriet Clark. She continuously challenges me in ways that have really made me shift my thought processes around writing. And shout out to A-lan Holt for always being a spiritual rock and source of encouragement when the creative road looks too tough to tackle. Visually, I love me some Steve McQueen — he holds shots for so damn long it forces you to engage with the feeling of uncomfortability - is that a word? — that arises. That's what I'm trying to do. I'm a big fan of Zanele Muholi's work. Haunting, but so damn engaging and life giving. It's important for me to see that happening by someone who is Black and Queer.

I just recently watched the documentary "Dreams Are Colder Than Death" by Arthur Jafa. A filmmaker who forces you to really engage with a moment. I was put on to Jafa's work by my friend, dream — a documentary filmmaker who directed "Treasure; From Tragedy to Trans Justice, Mapping a Detroit Story". Kyla Phil, an amazing filmmaker and friend. It's people like Kyla, dream, and Nadine who foster love, encouragement, and growth. I'm grateful for these folks and the countless others who've been a part of my current journey.

Tell us about one of your favorite memories thus far.

Nadine and I were in New Orleans earlier this summer shooting one of our people, Mün. A day of listening, and hearing, and honoring Mün's story and experience in their body and identities. Felt as though I'd been invited into a sacred space where we were able to engage with their home, their places, the imaginings of their mind. It is such a precious thing, to be privy to narratives that are not your own, connect with other members of your community, and find healing and love with one another.

We ended our time in New Orleans at our friend Al Tee's — eating gumbo and peanut stew on a sticky summer night...dancing, affectionately shading, laughing and just living in a room full of Black Queer folks. Brings tears to my eyes just thinking about it. I'm so damn grateful. This is what it's about for me. The moments when the work has introduced me to so many beautiful souls.

Is there a meaning you hope your work carries, both now, previously, and in the future?

I hope it communicates love. I know that, in many ways, it communicates pain, and frustration, and grapplings with systems and dynamics of this world. But I'm trying to figure out what it means to still leave the audience with a deeply seated sentiment of resilient, mind-blowing, beautiful love. That's how we get free. That's what I'm trying to figure out, now.

What motivates you to continue doing your work?

The need to connect narratives. I grew up being read to and was consuming literature from the moment I could read. When I was lost in

confusion around my queer identity, I sought solace in watching and reading works that provided me with glimpses of what life could look like as a person who was different. I sought solace in creating stories where I felt seen. But one of the biggest motivators has been my grandmother's story — or lack thereof. She passed away when I was 12. My grandmother, who was from Cameroon, didn't speak much to me about her history. And at the time, I wasn't asking about it. But now that I'm older, I've felt like a part of my narrative is missing. I've realized that I've tried to find my story in other peoples' — it's only now that I'm beginning to embrace my own narrative of a scattered diaspora, across various continents, people, families. It's that curiosity and need to honor my ancestors that drives me to try and do the same for others — provide a platform for them to tell their stories. It is so important that our stories be documented. Especially those of Black and Brown Queer folks. So often our narratives go untold, or are shoved under the rug. But we've been here. We've held you, we've led you, we've kept you safe and warm and loved. It's time that you hear us, now.

What's your next project?

The "Undone" series is taking priority, especially because Nadine and I want to travel with it. Obviously, we're both based in countries that prioritize a specific kind of capital and narrative, the U.K. and the U.S. We really want to make sure that we are also prioritizing our fam in other parts of the world besides the Global North / West.

Given unlimited resources, what would you create? What are your dreams?

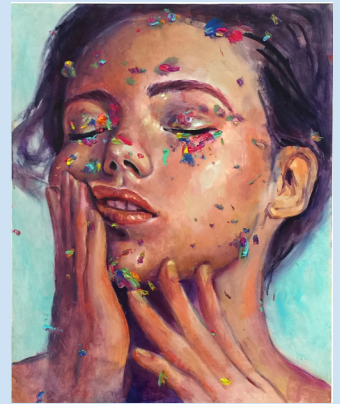
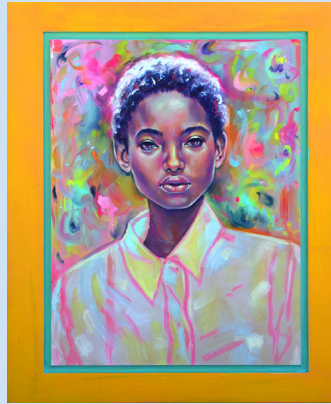
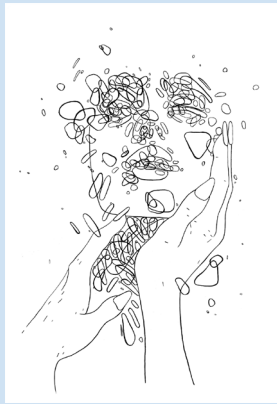
I've been thinking a lot about what it means to center the Global South, as a member of a country that literally functions as an oppressive economic and military presence around

the world. Or what it means to create and foster spaces by and for us. I know people are doing this work already, but how do we foster community-engaged art at a more expansive level? Collective storytelling? Spaces that seek to challenge folks and make them uncomfortable without fear of repercussion? I just want to write and make things, to dance, cook, laugh with my chosen fam, and live in a world where I don't have to fear for my life or the lives of the people I love.

Why do you do what you do? Who do you create for?

I'm sure this answer will shift across time and space but, [right now], I'm doing it for my healing. My ancestors' healing. My community's healing. I'm doing this work so we can breathe. And I'm doing it because I want to be able to live in a world where I can say that the work I'm engaging in is more than just a frivolous, shallow attempt at aesthetic. I'm interested in reconnecting with the Earth — in bringing her narratives to the forefront. In connecting with people and listening; exchanging, learning, loving. To ascend to a higher level of consciousness and understanding; realizing that I am but a part of something much larger than myself - and that only happens when one stops. Listens. Honors. This kind of work - writing, documenting narratives, observing... helps me do just that. I have a long way to go, trust me. But I'm looking forward to it. I really am.

Check out their work at: www.elijahndoumbe.com



PAULINE

By Eda Yu

Pauline Thai is a 20-year-old artist earning a Bachelors of Arts in Art and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work — often colorful, dynamic, and moving portraits — focuses on investigation of the human experience. Humble, honest, and unafraid to give every part of herself, Thai shed light on her creative process and the motivations behind her work in an interview with *nasi*.

How would you describe yourself?

I recently told a friend I had come up with a new description for myself — sad and groovy.

Tell us about your work.

It's always so hard to talk about your own work. Partially because not a single description can encompass the entirety of your career. I guess I would describe it as very emotional and passionate. Much of it is rooted in my experiences and feelings. I address each piece and topic with utmost tenderness — but also a lot of caution.

Can you tell us a bit about your artistic process?

As of present, it typically begins from a small idea or emotion. I don't go about selecting a theme, and I hardly sketch anything out or make any sort of predisposed grand scheme. Most of my work grows out of intuition and imagery formulated in my head, which are frequently linked with a set of emotional incidents.

Is there a particular reaction you'd like to see in response to your work?

I would like my work to be provocative and visceral. Hopefully, it induces some sort of reaction and doesn't remain static. I think most people should laugh at my work, but also allow it to resonate with them on a deeper level.

“I think most people should laugh at my work, but also allow it to resonate with them on a deeper level.”

What motivates you to continue painting/drawing?

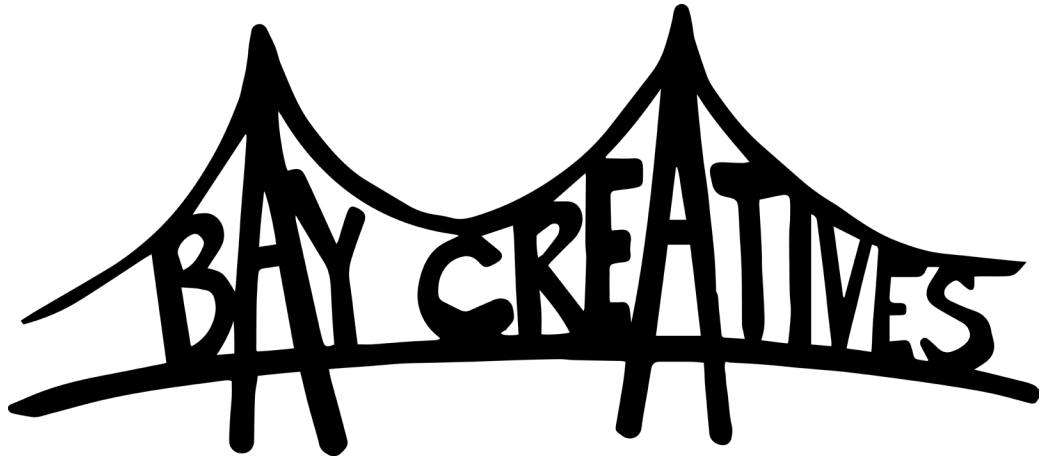
For the most part, it's the draw towards an emotional outlet. Before, when I first started drawing, it came as a hobby. Now, painting and drawing is something very dear and personal to me. So much of it embodies and captures feelings and memories I had at the time. Also by creating work, others are allowed to get a peek into these emotions and hopefully be influenced by them.

Given unlimited resources, what would you create? What are your dreams?

I'm not sure. There are so many things I would want to create, it's hard to pinpoint a single thing I'd want to make. However, I do dream of making installations and murals on a grand scale. Projects that would reach a greater breadth of audience.

Why do you do what you do? Who do you create for?

More than anyone I create for myself. Sure, it's satisfying whenever someone gains something from your work, but in all selfishness, I do what I do for myself.



Who are we?

As the community grows and spreads this is a question often asked and never defined. To sum it up, Bay Creatives is an organization focused on bringing together, representing, and sharing the artwork of local artists and giving them the opportunity to network and collaborate through the use of social media and monthly meet-ups held in the San Francisco Bay Area. Bay Creatives is not exclusive to people in the Bay Area; the meet-ups and connections are open to any and all with creative energy who want to create, support, inspire, and be inspired. We are an open community focused on spreading this creative energy and positivity. For any further questions, feel free to contact us.

Much love; keep creating.

@baycreatives

The next 5 pieces are brought to you by Bay Creatives Founder, Eileen Syrop.

TOMBOGO

Tommy Lederer-Pon is the owner, creative director, and designer of the up-and-coming clothing brand TOMBOGO. Born and raised in Oakland, and currently based in San Francisco, his clean, avant-garde style has been gaining rapid traction since the brand's start in 2012. Read on for his Q&A with *Nasi* to learn about the history and growth of TOMBOGO, as well as the creative direction Tommy plans to pursue.

What do you do creatively?

I am the owner, creative director and designer for the clothing brand TOMBOGO; I also am a vocalist and producer under the name Tommy&Company.

When did you start?

I established TOMBOGO in 2012/13, my senior year of high school. In 2011, I was granted a summer scholarship to the Academy of Arts in San Francisco where I learned graphic and web design. At the same time, I was attending a screen-printing workshop and learned the basics of how to print. I absorbed as much as I could from these classes so that I could transfer these skills to my own work. After a year of trial and error, I developed my logo and started printing and selling shirts at my school, Oakland Tech.

What led up to the creation of Tomboogo?

Both of my parents are visual artists and influenced my interest in art and music, so I was into doodling, drawing, and graphics at a young age. But they also warned me that it was hard to make a living in the arts, so my solution to my parent's concern was to capitalize on my interest as a creative.

At that time, there wasn't really anyone in my peer group who was making unique custom clothing — so I had a dedicated and enthused audience. My ambition and commitment to my new found passion of TOMBOGO and design was popular and sought after by my peers, which really spurred me on. I think that the fact that I was so young and taking-on this creative business venture made people want to rally and support me. With encouragement from my community, as well as a new set of skills under my belt, TOMBOGO began its journey.

(Also, at the same time, I was also learning to produce music, but no material would emerge until 2016 when I released my song, "Get Around", under the name Tommy&Company.)

How has where you're from influenced your art?

Growing up in Oakland has blessed me with a diverse community, and allowed me to understand how to market my art and products to a broad range of people.

What inspires your work?

As a kid, I was an avid skater, and I loved skateboard brands and the many different iconic logos, such as Spitfire and Element. The creative energy of the skate community definitely influenced me as I was designing the TOMBOGO logo. These days though, my creative process is not influenced by other companies at all.

What have you made or done that you're most proud of?

I can't deny that I'm proud of the fact that I established TOMBOGO by myself, as well as [the fact that I] designed the logo and managed all aspects of production. Sticking with the company and not becoming discouraged over the years of growing TOMBOGO is something I am personally proud of. It's also very humbling to have had madeinTYO, Iamsu! and many other talented artists wear my clothing.

What are you currently working on?

It's top secret. All I can say is stay tuned for the drop in December 2016.

What do you have planned for the future?

Once I finish school at San Francisco State, I plan to further expand TOMBOGO across the nation, and internationally.

What's one thing not many people know about you?

People know me for TOMBOGO, but many may not know about my alter-ego in music. I recently debuted a new song called "Get Around" under the name Tommy&Company, which is available now on iTunes, Spotify and Soundcloud. My music will give folks a more personal perspective on my life that may not be as apparent through the TOMBOGO brand and products.



DEATH AMPHETAMINE

You've probably seen their heavy-metal inspired logo in the corner of a number of event fliers. Whether it was to do a set for a Craig Xen show, a Smoke Purpp collaborative show with Plus Minus, or their own series of infamous "Yungins Get Hyphy" events, Death Amphetamine knows how to get the crowd moving (most likely by going dumb in a moshpit). The collective of DJs, producers, and visual artists consists of 7 members, most of which met at different times during their time attending El Cerrito High and even through the internet. Adrian, Lindsey, Elison, Peace, Jeff, Jason, and Isa are all Bay Area natives (except for Isa) and under 21 years in age.

Born January 2016, Death Amphetamine came together with the common goal of throwing shows to bring people together for a good time. The group, which consists entirely of artists who are close friends, all share similar musical taste, and has been on fire since their first show in February.

"The growth has been crazy," says Adrian, the youngest member of the group at 17 years old. "We're either working on shows or working on mixes, and now, clothing."

Every member dabbles in a little bit of everything. Together, the seven contribute mixes to the collective, play sets at events, organize and host their own events, design clothing, and more. To learn about the 6 Bay-Area-based members, read about each one on the following page.



meet the members



adrian corpus, 17

Goes by Yung Adrian

At seventeen years old, Adrian is the youngest member of Death Amphetamine. In 2015, as a junior at El Cerrito High, he would go to fellow member Lindsey's house after class and watch him mix. This inspired him to pursue mixing himself. He describes his sound as "calm jazz with a mix of hyphy and violent, very vulgar music... and a little bit random." His artistic influences are predominantly local Bay Area artists, but he mentions a range of inspiration (21 Savage, Lil B, Wocka Flocka, 2 Short, and more). When he's not mixing and organizing shows for Death Amphetamine, Adrian dabbles in photography or designs streetwear. He is currently focusing on a project called "Lowkey", a compilation of 100 collaborative mixes that he plans on dropping at the very end of 2016.



lindsey vernon, 18

Goes by Lindsey

When asked how he would describe his sound, Lindsey answered with one word — sad. Influenced by a mixture of classic jazz singing and dark rap (mentioning artists such as Sade, older Earl Sweatshirt, Cortex, Erykah Badu, and anyone making fusion jazz), he got his start in mixing music about 3 years ago. Originally, he treated it as a mere hobby, without knowing "people were actually doing sets outside of their home." He had his eyes opened to the scene when he started going to local events. Lindsey plays around with piano and has toyed with producing, but prefers to stick with mixing and networking. He likes getting people involved with the group, promoting, and booking artists for Death Amphetamine shows. For his future plans, he plans on setting up their website and dropping more merchandise.



elison bailey iv, 19

Goes by Alison

Elison's eclectic style is displayed physically through his fashion and sonically through his mixes. In his senior year at El Cerrito High, he stumbled upon Virtual DJ and started mixing, eventually developing the dark and versatile sound he has now. His mixes have a standard progression: hype to happy, mellow music, to sad, dark songs that lead back to mellow sounds, and end with hype. He draws inspiration from a number of places, including sub-genres of metal, the diversity of the Bay Area (and its '80s thrash-metal scene), and especially from Bones, an artist known for his versatility. Elison doesn't want to be known for any one thing; he wants to be known by all that he identifies as, "not just being the livest in the mosh pit, not just mixes." He's currently working on a handful of mixes as well as designing clothes.



jeff wright, 18

Goes by Smakalak

Like the majority of Death Amphetamine's members, Jeff, who goes by the artist pseudonym of Smakalak, is an alumni of El Cerrito High. Starting fresh out of middle school, he splits his focus equally between mixing and producing, something inspired by watching his friend's father professionally DJ. For his mixes, Jeff describes his style as "hyphy depression trap," inspired by hip-hop from the Bay and beyond, as well as by every member in Death Amphetamine. His personal production has a heavier trap influence: "It's always some type of trap beat," he said. He's always working on personal production aside from his mixes and currently plans on drop more of his own tracks and clothing soon.



peace taylor, 20

Goes by Peace

Peace's passions are as varied as his musical style. His goals include making mixes that feature everyone in Death Amphetamine, making his own cartoon, and taking over the world. Currently, he's working on his first tape, as well as studying animation in San Jose. At 20 years old, the oldest member of Death Amphetamine, Peace balances a chill personality with a sense of urgency — and you can see it in his music, which he describes as "a kaleidoscope, a mixture of everything that sounds good." Most mixes consist of slow tempo tracks; his newer songs are mixed with older house music (such as Daft Punk), but if working with other members, Peace likes to switch his sound: "I'm always tweaking things... I want to put out the best I can, whether it's a painting or a drawing, or a mix."



jason clemente, 19

Goes by Champloo Papi

It all started in 2012, during his sophomore year of high school, when a friend Jason bought DJ hero for his PS3. Playing the game while witnessing friends take mixing seriously led him to believe that being a DJ was something he could pursue. Aside from mixing, he focuses on creating mashups of songs. He's currently working on the "Guava City Tape", a combination of mixes and mashups that encompass his perspective of the Bay Area — "music I recall driving through the city listening to," he described. On top of this project, he also plans to work on designing new apparel for Death Amphetamine.

Photos by Eileen Syrop



Photo by Elan Watson

BLAIR BROWN

Blair is an 18-year-old creative from Oakland, CA currently at Cal State Long Beach. She is a photographer and filmmaker who lives for surprises.

What do you do creatively, how would you describe your art?

I am a photographer, film student, overall art director and enthusiast. My art is very me. I'm from Oakland, a very diverse, beautiful, and hyphy place so those elements are very predominant themes in what I do.

When and why did you start?

I started because I fell in love with it. I slowly and more often began taking photos of everything around me. I had been playing basketball my whole life and my love for my creative side sort of eclipsed my passion for hoop. And I'm not one who can do something that I don't love. I have to really love what I'm doing. So after my junior year of high school, we had just won the state championships too, I made a wild decision that I was gonna see where I could go with this whole camera thing. Best decision I've ever made for myself, and everyone still sorta thinks I'm crazy for it, especially the adults in my life.

Where are you from? Where are you currently based?

Oakland, California is my hometown. I'm currently at Cal State Long Beach starting on my track to major in Film / minor in Business. Every weekend I'm up in Los Angeles for different obligations and shoots though.

How has where you're from influenced your art?

Oakland, the Bay Area, that's everything about me. The cultural melting pot and booming art scene is an amazing environment.

Who inspires your work?

Everyone I choose to surround myself with is an inspiration for me. All the artists from the Bay are really on their grind, doing their thing, so that inspires me to keep pushing myself. Chris Simmons, David Camarena, Aris Jerome. Those guys really were the first ones to inspire me and get me thinking like, "I wanna do this".

What have you made or done that you're most proud of?

I had an art show, the first and only so far to be hosted by Diamond Supply Co along with two of my best friends/brothers Elan Watson and Dan Franco. We had that last June in their store on Haight St. in San Francisco.

What are you currently working on?

I'm currently working on my first music video for this really dope all-around artist and friend, for one of her songs called "Cruise." It should be dropping very shortly. I am putting more effort and time into doing more video as well as collaborating with stylists on some portrait shoots.

What do you have planned for the future?

I want to hit the road; travel with some artists, that's definitely high on my list. Overall, I want to be happy, and continue to create opportunities for myself to be able to continue being an artist. I want to graduate college too. I don't wanna give away TOO much about what I have planned, I'm a fan of surprising people.

VANESSA TORRES

From the cut-and-sew clothing items she crafts to the hand-poked tattoos that line her arms and legs (many of which she inked herself), San Francisco-based designer Vanessa Torres is definitely no stranger to style. Originally from Ecuador, Torres now creates eclectic clothing in the Bay Area for her brand Or Die (OD). Self-described as a “fashion designer slash puzzle maniac,” Torres brings a sense of unique, high-energy liberty to the clothes she makes, with her bubbly, open personality shining through effortlessly.

Why did you move to America?

I moved away from [Ecuador] at 18, just as I wished to do when I was younger. It’s a long story and somewhat effed-up. Basically, I didn’t feel like I was being true to myself for a while. I had molded myself into becoming what my parents wanted me to be for the longest time. I decided that I wanted to be me (I know lots of kids feel this way too), so to set free I have always finessed my way in getting what I want. I moved away because I wanted to find myself, I wanted to struggle, I wanted to know what it’s like to have full control and responsibility over my life choices, etc.

How did you get your start in fashion design?

Initially, I wanted to get into interior design and architecture. I knew I loved designing and crafting things, but I don’t know how I ended up pursuing a career in fashion. I went to school for it here in SF. I started about two years ago, around the idea that I pretty much love building, crafting, and figuring out how to do things. That’s what fascinated me about fashion design — the fact that I had to make the puzzle pieces in order to proceed with the masterpiece.

How would you describe your art?

All my art revolves around the juxtaposition of everyday observations — how something so perfect can be chaotic. Basically, everything revolves around the concept of a failed utopia. I’d say that what I do correlates with my life lessons. For example, you’ll know if I’m going through some bumps in the road because I’ll openly create my failed-utopian version of it and speak it out loud.

What inspires your work?

My inspiration often comes from fictional characters I meet in books. I know it’s pretty random, but I’m one of many that are obsessed with Chuck Palahniuk. I swear that reading his books opens up a whole different dimension in which I dive and live and have these tight-ass friends, and we do things like crashing cars and traveling in time. I think I’m more inspired by the lifestyle and whole world that my alter ego lives in — that’s a whole different story, too. going through some bumps in the road because I’ll openly create my failed-utopian version of it and speak it out loud.

How has where you’re from influenced your art?

Honestly, where I’m from, there’s not really a way to aspire to living off an art. So, if you’re not a doctor, a lawyer, or some corporate thing, it’s really hard. Something about my culture, and I mean not looking at it in the literal way — that’s a failed utopia right there. I remember how happy I was being with my family. And although there’s no wealth like in the U.S., there is that family connection and love that has been so hard for me to find elsewhere. Poverty can show you a different type of wealth.

Why do you currently pursue your art?

There’s a voice within; my artist voice wants to scream and scream. Fashion speaks boldly and is one of those things that connects us worldwide. It allows us to express and relate and stunt and be whatever, which is what I love about it. I want to create not only clothes for my people to express themselves



What are you currently working on?

I am working on a set of things that are all upcycled and 1 of 1, which I’m really excited about because they are experimental pieces, and it’s my way of fixing my current artist’s block.

What do you have planned for the future?

So, OD (my baby) is what I want to push forever and ever, until it’s actually a thing. I’m not widely-known, and my production runs pretty slow since all my work is done by myself on my free time. What I mean for it to be “a thing” is that I’ll have a consistent run of items every season, with a variety of sizes and colorways. Someday, we’ll walk into a cute store in New York and find OD right there — or even my own lil’ store, maybe several of them, all over the world. Who knows?

What exactly is OD?

OD is handmade apparel / youth streetwear and accessories, currently only sewn / crafted by me. OD stands for Or Die, a satirical name. It came about from my two favorite letters, and then I was like, “Wait, this could be two of my favorite words, too!” And then bam, Or Die or die. Do what you love or die, no other options.

OD is the absolute correlation and expressions of my bad luck being young. My way of getting through dumb things in my life is just by being satirical about them. OD is for all the kids who, reckless or not, push social boundaries, speak their mind, are proud of their heritage, and most importantly, understand the power of unity to create positive change.

OD is the attitude. It’s the determination, holding your identity close to your heart.

DEE DOT JONES

Dee Dot Jones, a musician and singer, was raised all throughout the East Bay. And her diverse, experimental sound encompasses all the energy of the space she calls home. Read on for more on her inspirations, influences, and her recent debut release, *Get 2 The Chopper*.

What do you do creatively; how would you describe your art?

I am a creator of sound, visuals, emotions, and moments. My art is the result of when the pressures of society and the necessity of survival press down hard on a carbon being such as myself. In a sense, my art is a diamond; though the experience is intangible the story is tangible. I make my own music from nothing, and every single note from start to finish is a memoir dedicated to my personal conviction, giving insight and truth to my reality, as well as my imagination.

When did you start?

I've been making music my whole entire life, lol. As soon as I could talk, I sang. To fill every room with music was where I flourished the most, and what I enjoyed and gravitated to the majority of my childhood, though it wasn't until about 2008 that I started actually making beats. From there, it grew to recording pretty fast. It kind of came to me as a calling that I couldn't ignore, and following it was my mission from the very start. I was born to do this.

How has being from the Bay Area influenced your art?

Well I'm very much a transient being in a way, I'm barely anywhere for too long, so I feel like my music takes after my own never ending journey, with such diversity and experimentation to reflect the vast amount of experiences I've lived through. I also feel like being from the Bay gives me this great distinct energy that makes my music have allure and influence on the listener. I do believe my music is akin to a road trip, sonically.

What inspires your work?

I am inspired by the people, mostly. My friends, family, loved ones, contemporaries, my community. There's a driving motivation to being able to showcase my stories, and provide others with something that can have individual sentiment. Also, the journey I've taken and the things I immerse myself in make the details important. Drug culture, skateboarding culture, art culture, it all has a way of connecting together to bring something brilliant out of anyone, especially creatives.



Photo by Cleveland Smith

What have you made or done that you're most proud of?

Well, I've made and done a lot of things to be proud of, but I have been working on this big big project for the past year and a half. It's what I consider my debut, even though I already got hella music out. I call it *Get 2 The Chopper*. It's really really cool, honestly. It reveals a lot of vulnerability, strength, emotion, even some fun in there. What I love about it most is that it tells many different stories in individual ways so that anyone and everyone can relate and reference to it somehow.

What are you currently working on?

Besides promoting my new album and working on releases for winter and for 2017, I've been working on myself! Just trying to learn new things about myself and retain good information so I can build and improve as an artist and as a human. I've spent a lot of time working on music. There has to be a balance, always.

What do you have planned for the future?

More music, more connection, more empathy, more change. I want to see more people. I'm gonna tour or something, that'd be fuckin' hella fun lol.

To stream or download *Get 2 The Chopper*, visit go4broke.org/deedotjones

EILEEZUS

Eileen is a young singer, community organizer, and creative just forging her way.

What do you do creatively?

It depends on how I'm feeling. Occasionally I'm messing around with graphic design or making oil paintings. Sometimes I'm producing beats on Logic or doing photo shoots. Most of the time I'm curating events / art shows and recording vocals.

When and why did you start?

Music is my main focus now. I've been singing my whole life and I've been playing piano for almost 10 years. I started producing in 2013 after downloading Nano Studio for iPhone. I got more serious about it all in 2014 when I was living in SF taking pre-college courses at the Academy of Art University. I was all over the place with my art while almost everyone had one focus they excelled in. I decided to experiment and see what would happen if I just dropped my other pursuits and focused on making music, producing complete tracks and developing the lyrics I had saved in voice memos and notes. That experiment turned into a way of life for the years to come.

Where are you from? Where are you currently based?

Born, raised, and currently living in Hayward, CA. But you'll usually catch me in Oakland or SF.

How has where you're from influenced your art?

There's no place like the Bay. It's so diverse in culture and the people are simply *nice*. There are so many places to pull inspiration from, people are so happy to share their ideas and ultimately their version of success. Everyone's rooting for each other. You're never marginalized to one art form, medium, style - there's room for it all. I've always felt free to create whatever. Making art, surviving, it's not a competition out here. We're all trying to make do with what we've got and help each other in any way we can. It's not like that 100%, but it's like that here more than any other place I've ever been.

What inspires your work?

I find inspiration in everything. It's everywhere without trying to be. The most common places are experiences I've had, people that have influenced me, the way I feel about something or someone. I almost feel like everything I do is to have more to sing about. Like heartbreak for example. I don't mind it because it makes for stronger lyrics.

Why do you make music?

I couldn't NOT make music even if I tried. I come up with at least a new song a day without even trying. Lyrics and melodies constantly flow into my head — it's kind of crazy actually. Sometimes, I'll just be running errands or in class doing work and a whole chorus to a song will just surface in my head. I have hundreds of these ideas recorded as voice memos on my phone, as pages and pages of lyrics in my notes app. It's just a matter of investing time to develop the ideas I have stored. I get super overwhelmed with everything in my life and out of it. Simply existing is so much for me to process! Making music helps me process that sense of being overwhelmed, it helps me process any sort of experience or feeling — have a better understanding of it and maybe help anyone else feeling the same thing come to a better understanding as well.

What are you currently working on?

I'm getting a debut album organized, but since the debut is at its very starting stage (refining the sound I want to go for, people I want to work with, concepts to focus on, etc.), I'm working on a smaller, casual release in the meantime. I'm developing music video concepts as well.

What do you have planned for the future?

Better quality music with a distinct sound that can't be compared with any other artist's. Everything I've put out is so flawed (to my ears at least) because I'm always rushing the process. I'm 17 trying to get through my last year of high school, get into a good college, trying to support the creative community by throwing collaborative events, running Bay Creatives, working multiple jobs to afford it all, and a bunch of other pursuits. I have so many ideas just waiting to be expanded upon and it drives me crazy. I'm planning on taking a gap year when I graduate so that I can try to solely pursue music and see where it takes me. The way I see it, I'm currently doing a lot WITH my focus being split between school, work, and event-throwing. If I got rid of all of those factors and did nothing but make music, I think I could create something amazing...we'll see.



VAVI

By Taylor Marie

Vanessa Vigil's eyes flicked up as the waiter set down her beer. Her silver eyeliner caught the light, highlighting its careful precision. She took a sip.

"Yeah, you know I did skate — I was the only girl in my neighborhood with a group of guys. My brother skated, and I would go with him," she relayed, playing with the sleeve of her green flannel.

Vigil — better known by her artist name "Vavi" — has never been the girl who held back from doing what girls weren't supposed to. From her prolific work to *Not Ur Baby* — her incredibly successful all-female art show — to skating and gracefully slaying a buzz cut, she does anything but let herself be subdued by men. Vigil and her work reframe the common notion that emotion equals vulnerability and weakness. In fact, she finds immense power in her ability to change other people's emotions through her art, something she describes as a projection of her frustration.

"All I want is [for] my art to cause a conversation. I want my art to cause an argument between you and your boyfriend." She described her art as her "projection. The things that I say are my reflections and projections." She looked up in between bits of pizza.

"I'm constantly running off emotions, the core of me is just a ball of emotions — that's why I do the things I do, [why] I say the things I say, [why] I make the art I make."

And she's no stranger to process: Vanessa has been making art since she was a child. Although most widely known for her photography, she is also a painter, a writer, and even dabbles in drawing.

"I also love writing — I write poems all the time," She laughed. "They are usually love poems, I'm a hopeless romantic. I'm a Pisces, so I'm very dreamy — I'm always in a dreamstate." She however, keeps that work close to her. The majority of her work has been photography projects, collaborating with her friends to make art that refutes the sexualization and obstruction of women. Vavi first found her way to photography in high school on a trip with her mother and her mother's



Photo by Nancy Gant

boyfriend, who first encouraged her to start shooting.

Later, she moved towards female-empowered and based works, especially with *Not Ur Baby*, an art show whose second installment appeared at Oakland Terminal this March. The event was a gathering, show, and celebration of women identified artists, a space dripping with powerful female energy. The last show, themed to support anti-human trafficking, offered vendors who did nail art, registered you to vote, and did hair-art. The entire endeavor was a female-run one, showcasing female artists and community vibes in support of femmes.

"A lot of the times I was the only woman in the shows. I'm like this shit is hella weak. I know hella dope women, hella dope female artists. I tried telling curators, but they only fucked with their friends and their friends were all guys," she recounted. *Not Ur Baby* stemmed exactly from the kind of project and frustration she described inspires much of her art. Vigil described how she knew "hella dope women who come together" and decided to get every inspiring woman artist she knew to come and throw their own show.

"I had no intention of, like, one day, 'I want to be a curator and curate a show,'" she explained.

"It was out of frustration. And that's how a lot of my art happens... That's how *Not Ur Baby* happened. It was taking this frustration and being like, you can't stop me — it's not going to stop here."



“It was out of frustration. And that’s how a lot of my art happens...That’s how Not Ur Baby happened. It was taking this frustration and being like, you can’t stop me — it’s not going to stop here.”



ELUJAY

By Eda Yu

Photo by Amina El Kabbany

Smack in the midst of the recent Bay Area wave of incredible, emerging talent sits Elujay: the soulful 20-year-old rapper whose recent project, *Jentriky*, was released to national critical acclaim. The Oakland rapper's highly-anticipated album has been hot in rotation in the Bay and beyond. Its bright, jazzy production and catchy, soulful beats wrap softly around Elujay's voice as he navigates harder pertinent issues affecting his hometown, like gentrification and Oakland's dramatically-shifting landscape.

Outlined by his thoughtful, raspy voice, Elujay's experiences feel older than his spry 20 years. But his wide smile — and penchant for throwing up peace signs — reminds listeners that the rapper is much younger than his reflective creative approach might suggest. After everything, he's just another kid from Oakland, figuring out how to grow up and get by.

How would you describe yourself?

Man. Shit. laughs. Uh. Dynamic. Versatile.

What inspires you?

I get inspiration from everything. Movies. Life. Interactions I have with people. Gentrification is definitely something I experienced [myself]. Music is just your life experiences converted into songs, right?

Once, I got harassed by the police during the Warriors parade. I got thrown on the ground and called a nigger. It was pretty bad, man. I mean, I was already hella politically conscious and woke, but [after that] I just became more and more involved. I wanted to do something that invoked more political messages and ideals in my music. Not just political rap; it was more subtle.

Do you hope that your music acts to raise awareness for these issues?

Yeah, a call to action is definitely the goal. That's all it's meant to be. Last year, 2015, that was when I started *Jentriky*. I scrapped [this] other tape [I'd been working on], just got in the studio, and started working on that. Being away from Oakland and coming back, and watching it evolve into something it didn't used to be anymore inspired that.

What's your biggest challenge?

Getting myself to fully believe in myself. Sometimes, I doubt a lot of the things that I do. And I don't know why because I know that I have a gift. I'm not really...Confidence is something I've dealt with. I act really insecure around other artists



sometimes. Other than, like, creating art, it's not really an issue with me. It's just something I love to do. I'm really passionate about doing it.

Since everything came full fruition, I know what my purpose is. I know what I'm living for. I said this when I was younger: I wanna aspire to inspire people. Inspiring people is so much greater than being by inspired by other people. The regular shit. Norm. Whatever medium you do, inspiring is just awesome — to say, I made the next person be great through my actions. I gave this person a purpose. An idea. And he stuck with it. She ran with it. And they're killing shit now. It's dope.

“I really want to give back to Oakland, and communities just like Oakland. Especially Oakland.”

I inspired one of my old dorm homies to rap and shit. He makes beats now. It's awesome. It's crazy how much love...it's infinite love. I'm so appreciative of all the love I'm getting back. I never expected to get this much love for one project.

Who do you create for?

Anyone who is confused about what's going on right now. Anyone who has questions about our ever-so-changing world, or is questioning life right now and the direction it's going — because a lot of things are evolving around them and they don't understand why. A coming-of-age type. Clarity, reassurance. I want people to feel good. To put this on and be like, 'Yeah, I feel good.'

A homie told me, 'I don't even have a favorite song on here. I just play it all the way through.' I tried to ask him what his favorite song was, and he couldn't tell me. It's awesome to know [someone feels that way about] your whole project. He said, 'I can listen to three or four songs off someone's mixtape, but the rest of them are not good. With yours, I can listen to everything.' That's what I wanted to accomplish, for people to really vibe with it. The political message is not the focal point — just something that comes with it.

Why do you do what you do?

'Cause if I don't create, I go crazy. I have to constantly create. I go to school for psychology, but I don't want to be a fucking psychologist. I'm tryna tour the world man. It'll be lit. Creating is definitely what I'm put on this planet to do.

I don't wanna work for no man, or take orders from some big hotshot. I don't want to be a big hotshot tellin' people what to do. I want people to gravitate towards me. I want to be charismatic. I want to be someone that people can come to me for advice, a leader of my community. And for people to respect me as such. And everyone should be respected that way. I see past flaws. It's like Lil B said: "Treat everybody like a million dollars." That's it.

My aspirations are so much bigger than just music and rap. I want to do so much more. I really want to give back to Oakland, and communities just like Oakland. Especially Oakland.

when lions roar

eda yu

when i bleed,
you bleed.
when you force yourself
inside my daughter,
you are raping generations of women,
my mother told me.
when you are hurting,
my child,
speak.

i have scrubbed raw my own skin
so it stops reeking of my sins:
the man who gave me
Everclear in place of vodka shots,
the man who pushed himself
inside of me
raw,
the man who gave me more
when i asked,
“how much.”
i know i talked a lot, but
i swear,
i just wanted you to hear.

i am my mother's daughter
but she is the one who said,
i did not teach you silence,
so that you would not know
when to scream.
they will call you crazy, but
you are not
just a woman.
you will never be
just a wife.
you will never be
like me.

my mother said,
you have my Southeast Asian
blood
coursing through your veins.
how did you think
you would not find the strength?

i just want to know,
was i not good enough?
i am sorry i am
loud and unapologetic and
dripping with frenzy.
could she
speak softly?
is that why you
chose her over —

i am not roaring because i am
overemotional or
crying or
angry.
i am roaring for all the times
my father told my mother
to be quiet,
for all the times
he told me to endure pain
without speech.
i am roaring because
i want to know
just how many women
keep their men alive
like fucking lions —
and are told to stay
docile,
humble,
and meek.

ASH

By Taylor Marie
Photos courtesy of Ashley Mills

Self-care and healing are practices that Ashley Mills, founder of hair and skin-care line Shealoe & Coco, doesn't take lightly. Through her handmade, organic products, the young entrepreneur is paving the way for a new kind of self-care — one made for health, abundance, and prioritized care for her communities and black women alike. Mills has designed a brand made specially for women of color and the unique necessities that surround their self-care. Read on for her words on the brand's mission, her inspirations, and her dreams.

How would you describe yourself?

Ambitious. Easygoing on the surface, but always grinding.

Tell us about Shealoe & Coco.

I founded Shealoe & Coco out of my dorm room at Stanford. The name was inspired by the product line's three base ingredients: shea butter, aloe vera gel, and coconut oil. It's designed to be inclusive of women of color, and I've spoken with lots of women these last few months to find the pain points of products already out there. Shealoe & Coco was built on the vision of (1) building healthy hair habits, (2) being simple and straightforward to use, and (3) providing a quick 101 on ingredients that work with our hair.

How did you get started doing wellness products and lotions?

I've been making wellness products since high school. I started wearing my hair naturally when I was 17 and was sucked into natural hair movement. I was inspired by the connection between natural hair and natural products, especially given how many women with kinky-curly hair depend on toxic hair products to make their hair manageable and "appropriate".

I always had trouble finding products that worked for my natural hair, so I started making them myself. I was always in the kitchen mixing up products for my hair and found that a lot of the ingredients worked well for skin too. I made shampoos, lotions, face scrubs, the whole nine yards — I was in it.

When I got to Stanford, I didn't have the time to be mixing up this, that, and the other, so Shealoe & Coco came from a need to save time and effort. I was tired of being a product junkie, of three-step processes that left my hair feeling heavy and my skin greasy. I wanted to wake up and use a product that left my hair and skin feeling sufficiently taken care of without additional products.

Are you working on a project or product now?

I just graduated this past June, so the transition from school is a project in and of itself. But for Shealoe & Coco, I've spent the summer selling at farmer's markets, art fairs, and cultural festivals around the Bay Area. I'm currently working on building an online presence as well as connecting with hair stylists, masseuses, and aestheticians in the Bay, especially those that work with women of color. I recently partnered with a hair salon in Oakland and an online retail shop that "supports interdependence in the diaspora" by featuring products created by black folks.

Can you tell us a bit about your process?

I start by melting down the oils and butters and then cooling the mixture down to solidify. Essential oils are added to the butters, which are then whipped and put into jars. Between mixing the product and labeling the jars, the whole process takes around 3-4 days, but leaves me with enough product to only have to do it once a month. Designing marketing material is what I enjoy doing the most — I studied Product Design in school, so it's fun to tie a lot of my learnings to designing an experience around the product. I create material that directly addresses and satisfies the needs of my customers, which are primarily women with kinky-curly hair. I love playing around with the colors, typography, and layout of each design, while still pulling in information that is relevant to their needs.



Can you talk a little bit about your experience starting your brand in the Bay? How has it influenced you?

I was blessed to have a very supportive community at Stanford that helped push and develop my brand to where it is now. Launching my brand in the Bay has been an awesome way to connect with black women, not just on-campus but from all walks of life. We're all connected in the fact that many of us were never taught to take care of our natural texture when we were young, some of us even discouraged to do so. It's sometimes hard to erase the discomfort we have with how we look, because that fear was instilled at a young age. I'm inspired by the natural hair journeys I hear from my customers — many of them have a story they want to share and it creates a community around our evolving relationships with our hair.

Tell us about one of your favorite memories thus far.

A woman I'd never met came up to my booth and said that her friend had gifted her a jar of Shealoe & Coco. She was wearing it in her hair and told me she was obsessed. That made my whole week!

What motivates you to continue doing your work?

I'm really curious about the intersection of design, healing, and wellness. That's the space I see myself moving into, and building Shealoe & Coco helps me dig deeper into that.

What's the next chapter?

I'm in the works of partnering with Jasmine of AvoCurl to launch a joint workshop series that teaches women how to make their own natural beauty products and also promotes ours. We're still in the brainstorming stage of what that will look like, but we both have experience leading workshops, so I'm excited to see what we'll launch together.

Given unlimited resources, what would you create? What are your dreams?

The dream is to build an all-natural, full-service beauty spa that would be inclusive and comfortable for women of color. You could get your hair done or get a massage, aromatherapy, a facial — maybe throw some Reiki (a Japanese healing technique for stress reduction) in there, too. You would have all your hair, skin, and healing needs taken care of by professionals who understand your texture and appreciate your melanin. It would be so dope if all the beauty products used were made in-house.

Why do you do what you do? Who do you create for?

I'm very much a believer in keeping it simple and becoming more comfortable in oneself. I made Shealoe & Coco to not only simplify the natural hair and skin care routine but also empower women to feel confident about how they look and feel in their natural glory.

Check out her products at: <http://www.shealoeandcoco.com/>



JACKIE

By Eda Yu

Rain fell steadily outside, drumming out a backdrop of soothing white noise against the chatter of the cafe that Friday afternoon. Jackie Dimailig, a young San Francisco creative, stood at the white counter as she ordered a loaf of pound cake, sporting a heavy, burgundy fur coat that fell just past her hips.

Her hair was pulled back in a slick, high bun atop her head. The gentle click-clack of her pencil-thin heels tapped out an intermittent rhythm between the abating drops of rain. The pristine ensemble gave her an aloof, reserved appearance — leaving her practically unapproachable to the unacquainted eye. Then, she broke into a disarming smile.

“You have to try some of this pound cake!” she greeted warmly.

Dimailig, better known by her Instagram handle “@bubbzzz”, is a Bay Area frontrunner in the new, up-and-coming trend of creative styling. Even though stylists have been around as long as image has existed, professional styling — for artists, musicians, and other creative personalities — is just now beginning to gain recognition as its own autonomous art form.

Although having only styled professionally for about a year, Dimailig has worked with countless models and photographers in the Bay Area after garnering recognition for her clean, bright style and unique form. Recently, this last September, the artist even styled Samaria, a rising R&B singer from Oakland who’s opened for artists like Washington D.C. rapper GoldLink on his stops in the Bay.

In an interview with *nasi*, Dimailig shared that she began styling informally like many of us — by dressing up friends in high school and shooting with their parents’ cameras. The artist only started taking things more seriously after she threw her own art event last year.

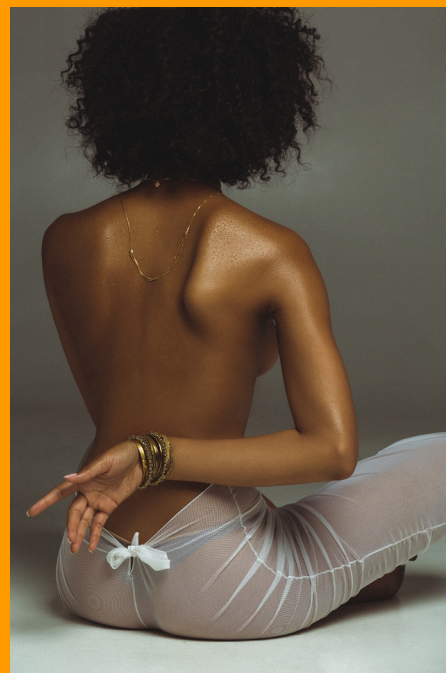
“For a long time, I really felt out of place with things...[like] no one [that I knew] was really into what I’m into,” Dimailig described, referencing how she previously studied science. “I just love the creative space. I love being able to express myself in this type of way. I went to school, and I did sports [medicine] and everything. And that was me. But that’s not me anymore.”

And the way she’s carved her unconventional path as an artist has definitely been a journey. Pragmatic, confident, and extraordinarily determined, Dimailig is able to zoom out from the engrossing creative process to evaluate her current circumstances and how to best navigate them. She described what she does as “a little bit of everything,” and hopes to infuse both sides of herself — the logical as well as the creative — through her events and her styling.

“I feel like a lot of artists need that person to put them out there, to kinda guide them, ‘cause people with creative minds aren’t that logical sometimes,” Dimailig explained. She wrapped her hands around her steaming coffee for warmth but left her drink untouched. The coffee’s swirled surface of white-and-brown foam remained unbroken. She hopes, then, that her events will help showcase those who otherwise wouldn’t have a platform for their works, as well as offer a space to collaborate and exchange ideas — to build a network of creativity.

But for now, Dimailig will keep focusing on creative direction and styling, pushing forward with a drive rarely seen in so many multitalented, 20-year-old artists. Currently, she she’s working on building her portfolio and expanding her clientele, maybe even moving down to Los Angeles — “I need some sun,” she insisted, laughing and gesturing to the gray sky — sometime in the next year or two. The stylist, who identifies heavily with her Aquarius air sign, described herself as a “chameleon,” one who’s able to throw herself head first into any situation and make do.

“I really wanna do celebrity styling and image consulting first. And then later on — I mean obviously I want to do some editorials too — but I really want to move to New York eventually and just do ad campaigns. I really want to work for Vogue,” Dimailig rattled off excitedly. “I’m gonna take Anna’s spot. I’m tryna....I’m tryna make it out here, you feel me?”



Styling, in Dimailig's opinion, is definitely a fun piece of work and artistry. She views sets and looks as puzzles to solve, especially as she navigates how to incorporate her own mark into what the model is wearing, while still leaving the model confident and comfortable.

Despite her sometimes elaborate looks, her creative process is surprisingly quite simple: She's inspired by everything. When Dimailig feels a creative block, she'll just take a stroll around the block to feel reinvigorated, drawing influence from her closest friends to random strangers on the street.

"You know who's really fitted?" she asked suddenly, remembering one moment of street inspiration. She answered herself without waiting. "The Asian ladies! They know! I'll never forget this one lady [who] had this olive green velour sweatsuit. Like, where did you cop that??"

Even though she's been swathed in fabric her whole life (her grandma owned her own seamstress shop), Dimailig's work is still largely spontaneous, experimental, and sometimes haphazardly thrown together on the spot.

"I'm getting a hold of how I like things to look. And the thing is too that I'm always changing. A year ago, I would never wear this, you know what I mean?" she asked, gesturing to her fur coat. "When I pitch things together, it has a lot to do with what I'm feeling at the moment, too." Her shoots are often a rare immortalization of the clothing that gets recycled everyday — a timeless snapshot of the ephemeral feeling she experienced in that moment.

Her direction, motivation, and commitment to her art stems largely from the success she hopes to share with her family, as well as others who have supported her along the way.

"I come from a very humble family. So, what I really want to do is...I just want to send my dad on a farm, because he really loves farms. Let him have his little animals," Dimailig said with a playful smile. Her joking tone grew more serious as she continued. "My grandma just retired, and she's 70. She's been working her ass off. I really want to take care of her too. You know. Just take care of people who have been there for me." She grinned before finally taking a sip of her now-cold coffee.

Through her reserved persona, Dimailig's generosity, warmth, and exuberance for her passion shone through easily. As the drizzle abated, the sun began to peek out under a blanket of gray.

"I do what I do because...this is going to sound cheesy," she laughed, interrupting herself before continuing again. "When I create, it's like a release. It's like, I have to style. I have to do something. So, I guess It's for me, but I guess the success side. It's for them."

Photos by Sammy Bisquerra
and Darrin Baldrige

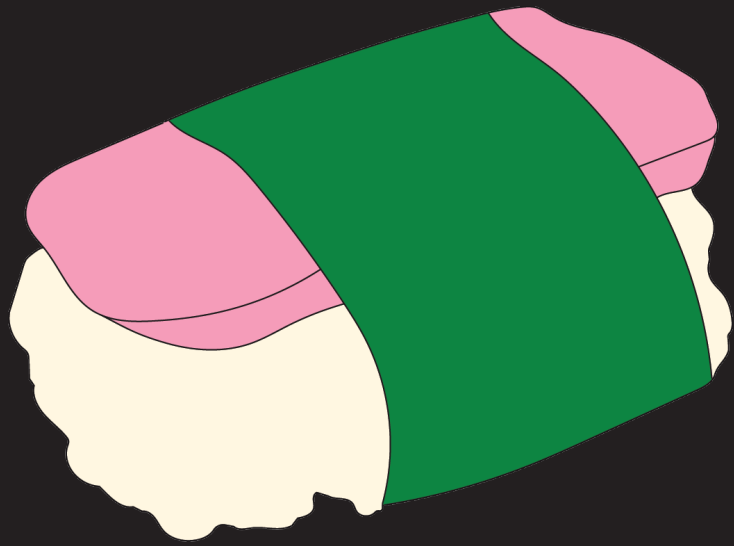


THANK YOU TO EVERYONE
WHO HELPED BRING THIS MAGAZINE TO LIFE.
THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

— Eileen, Taylor, and Eda

Photos by Fiona Duerr





just love.