

Kanto

CREATIVE CORNERS / N° II, VOL II, MMXVII

A New Day

THE OPTIMISM ISSUE

ANGLES

Photographer *Fabrice Fouillet's*
architectural epiphany

LENS

Miguel de Quiros' unraveling
of the human form and psyche

CANVAS

Talking heads with
sculptor-painter *Reen Barrera*



On the cover: Before climbing Licancabur Volcano,
Photographed by Arthur Dassan (@arthurdassan)

H E L L O

2016 was a year of tragedies.

Death, despair, and dramatic shifts were its favorite themes—manifesting in politics (from Brexit to the US Presidential Elections), Hollywood (Alan Rickman, Leonard Cohen and Prince, to name a few) and terror attacks the world over. It is a listless task to be reminded of all the terrible events and heartaches, both personal and global in scale, which marked the passage of this year. But for better or worse, 2016 has finally come to a close.

In this issue, we will not do as many “lifestyle gurus” would tell us to do and “wipe the slate clean”. What’s past is past, but it’s also a part of who we are. As hard as we try, we cannot divorce ourselves from 2016. The mistakes and tragedies happened and should not be forgotten, and even if we manage to tuck it away, life will always find a way to remind us of them—often with good reason.

Instead, join us in welcoming 2017 with *Tenacious Optimism*. By that, we do not mean that you should become the type of people who only choose to see the good in life (and willfully ignore the bad), but that in spite of constant change and uncertainty, you will hold on to an outlook that prioritizes above all the values that make us human.

Rather than running away from where 2016 last left us, let us actively steer the narrative to a better path, however “little” our individual roles may be. Ground every silver lining with daily realities, and do not be blind optimists. Share your light to the world. In the face of division, rest in the knowledge that there will always be one thing that unites us all: that we share this planet as our home. What becomes of it is a shared responsibility and—let’s have a head start on that optimism—reward.

The new year presents an opportunity to reassess one’s self; to reflect whether you and I are developing into the optimists this world needs. As you turn the pages of Kanto’s first issue for 2017 and be immersed in the stories of featured creatives who are all making the world a better place, I hope you find all the encouragement you need.

Dear reader, whatever 2017 brings, we hope you stay ever positive. Have a blessed New Year! ●



Patrick

@patrick_kasingsing

EST. MMXXV

Kanto

CREATIVE CORNERS

A JOURNAL
ON CREATIVITY

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Reen Barrera, Kris Abrigo, Timothy Percival,
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Awesome People

WHO MADE THIS JOURNAL POSSIBLE



Sibyl Layag

What are you looking forward to in the new year? More people realizing that things aren't always black and white, good and evil, heaven and hell.

Sibyl Layag is a bookworm and a traveler, an animal lover and a beach enthusiast. Although now a straight-edge business news reporter, her first love is writing features, and so sometimes her verbosity cannot be helped. She was formerly the assistant editor of *BluPrint* magazine.



Fabrice Fouillet

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Love and beautiful projects.

Fabrice Fouillet is a Paris-based professional photographer. His work fluctuates between architectural commissions and personal projects which can be seen in various photography festivals. His photography has been published in *T Magazine*, *Wallpaper*, *ArchDaily*, *The Architectural Review*, and *The British Journal of Photography*. He is also a shortlisted photographer of the prestigious Arcaid Architectural Photography Awards 2016.



Severine Tournaire

What are you looking forward to in the new year? A better world. Also looking forward to a lot of travel and beautiful photography!

Severine Tournaire works as a communications specialist for a French energy company. She counts photography and travel as two of her life's greatest passions. She pursued photography as a hobby to document her travels and her love for architecture.



Arthur Dassin

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Exploring Jalapão in Brazil and climbing Mount Roraima in Venezuela.

Arthur Dassin is a 26-year old economist from São Paulo, Brazil. Nature has always attracted him and it is the feeling of unfamiliarity within Nature, being a city-dweller, that pulls him to venture out into the wild with his lens. He desires to show how beautiful and rich the reality we live in is through his photography.



Kevin Le Golvan

What are you looking forward to in the new year? I'm looking forward to creating my portfolio website this year.

Kevin Le Golvan began photography a year ago and has been hooked ever since. He is a avid lover of jazz music. He is deeply passionate of hobbies and projects he engages in and would immediately want to share it with others. His main objective as a photographer is to enable his viewers a peek at his perspective of life.



Dan Villacruel

What are you looking forward to in the new year? 2017 will be about improving myself further and reconnecting with friends and family.

Dan Villacruel is the owner of Vongarde Art Gallery and Maison Art Workshops. A Fine Arts graduate from UP Diliman, he also owns a few small food business start-ups. He enjoys travelling and discovering new dishes.



Kris Abrigo

What are you looking forward to in the new year? I'm optimistic about the possibility of securing new opportunities and bigger projects to reach more people.

Kris Abrigo is a visual artist and muralist. He studied Fine Arts at University of the Philippines Diliman. His work has gained much visibility over the years from doing gallery exhibitions and creating murals for commercial, residential and public spaces.



Shane Johnston

What are you looking forward to in the new year? In 2017, I simply look forward to being in the right place at the right time.

Shane Johnston is a writer, moonlighting as a chef. A self proclaimed pessimist, Shane wants nothing more than to be proven wrong. His short stories offer a chance for anyone to see that the world really isn't so bad.



Justine Punzalan

What are you looking forward to in the new year? 2017 calls for new opportunities and more stories to tell.

Every night, Justine Punzalan writes short tales that she posts on her social media page. Her friends saw it, and now they say she's someone who loves making up stories.



David Price

What are you looking forward to in the new year? 2017 is the year that I flee the nest that is England. Leaving my day job and travelling the world without a plan is something that has always excited me.

David Price is a filmmaker graduate and photographer living on the south coast of England. He enjoys the simple pleasures in life and is enthralled by capturing the beauty of the natural world and those that inhabit it. His current focus lies in aspiring to defy his creativity by documenting the unknown in his travels.



Reen Barrera

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Aside from staying alive and healthy, I look forward to creating more sculptures and paintings; I'm also looking forward to doing a large-scale wall mural.

Reen Barrera is a multimedia artist that dabbles in both painting and sculpture. Aside from art, Reen is passionate about music and songwriting.



Miguel de Quiros

What are you looking forward to in the new year? 2017 looks to be a promising year for collaborating with people, especially now that I have started unveiling my work.

Miguel de Quiros is a storyteller, regardless of form. He is a full-time art photographer but also moonlights as a director. His current solo show 'Buto, Tiklop, Laman' (Bone, Joint, Flesh), sought to reveal the relationship people have with their bodies.



Timothy Percival

What are you looking forward to in the new year? This year will be about resolve, getting all those projects finished that I started over the past 12 months, and revisiting my love for filmmaking.

Timothy Percival is an architectural artist. Experienced as a writer and photographer, his latest work takes on the task of translating architectural language into sculpted form.



Miguel Llona

What are you looking forward to in the new year? A fresh start.

Miguel Llona writes stories in his spare time, but none of his work has been published yet. He won't stop trying, though. He is a former managing editor at *BluPrint* magazine, and is currently a freelance writer until something good comes along.



Gel Galang

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Start what I can start, do what I can do to make this year different.

Gel Galang believes that her purpose is to write stories that break you then bring you back. That's why she struggles every day—except on days when she's distracted by starting new hobbies, applying Psychology, or kicking ass at martial arts.



Chino Hernandez

Chino R. Hernandez is a movie addict, foodie and curious traveler. An old soul and lover of art, he spends his time watching films from Hollywood's Golden Age, pretends to write like Ernest Hemingway and dines out way too much. He currently holds a full-time position as a writer in *LifestyleAsia* magazine.



J.P. dela Cruz

What are you looking forward to in the new year? My love life.

J.P. de la Cruz is an Associate at Leandro V. Locsin Partners + Architects. One of his latest efforts is being part of the curatorial team behind 'Muhon: Traces of an Adolescent City', the Philippines' first entry to the prestigious Venice Architecture Biennale. When not trying to be serious, he likes dancing on his own—to Roisin Murphy, Kylie Minogue and Mariah Carey.



Emarrah Sarreal

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Moving to my new place and getting a chance to change my lifestyle for the better.

Emarrah Sarreal is currently living out her realization that there is no such thing as “work-life balance”. Accepting that work is a part of life has given her so much peace and clarity in setting boundaries and prioritizing things. As a Social Media Manager and freelance writer, she's in a quest to find the right level of sure-footedness to stay sane in this fast-paced world.



Rina Camacho

What are you looking forward to in the new year? Honestly? Coldplay in April! And the belief it will be a love-filled year.

Rina Camacho is a published art director, graphic designer and writer but with still much to learn. In her spare time, she loves to cook, read fiction, explore heritage architecture and binge-watch shows on Netflix.



Kit Singson

What are you looking forward to in the new year? I believe 2017 will be a year of awareness—socially, and on a more personal level, emotionally. It will be a year of dreaming and taking first steps towards achieving goals. 2017 will be a year of moving forward, of taking action and giving back.

Kit Singson is a creative director, freelance designer and copywriter, and owner of 55Square Café. She's a local coffee advocate who spends afternoons looking for stray cats to pet. On weekends, she can be found at the cafe, or underwater.

TRANSITIONS

#WriteDaily

Written by Justine Punzalan

#WriteDaily is a series of quick and easy to read stories Justine writes on a daily basis. It started as her New Year's resolution to write something—anything —every day. It eventually served as a regular dose of entertainment to her friends and followers.

#WriteDaily aims to inspire aspiring writers like Justine to showcase their talent even through the simplest things, like their day-to-day experiences.



Bravery and Joy

Put on a brave face and spread kindness this new year

WORDS *Rina Camacho*

Considering myself the least positive person in the planet, I took on the theme of this issue as a personal challenge: To start thinking and seeing things in a more positive light amidst all of today's negativity. I think a majority of us agree that 2016 has been a challenge. And as we enter the New Year, we are hoping that in one way or another, 2017 will be better. After all, how could it possibly get any worse than the year that was?

But how did we even get to this point in the first place? I'm talking about the divisiveness that is so apparent and prevalent today. It reminds me of what Yoda said to a young Anakin Skywalker: "Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering." I think we were consumed with fear this past year leading us to make decisions that, although made with good intentions, have caused us to witness the violence, the hate, the aggression that we are seeing today. Let's start this New Year of change with ourselves. As the great Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change we want to see in the world." It's tough, I know, but life has never been easy anyway. It's always mixed with difficulties and it's the decisions that you make that'll determine whether you'll end up a victim or a survivor. This 2017, choose to be a survivor. Have the courage to face these obstacles. Find inspiration in those who have been in similar situations and have overcome them. Never lose hope that you will reach your goals, no matter how long it takes. Just keep moving forward.

In this process of moving forward, don't forget to spread kindness. It's human nature for us to have disagreements and in this time of divisiveness, it is good to have a little more empathy and maybe, just maybe, we can find a compromise, if not a solution, to the things we disagree about. Do not lose your faith in humanity. 2016 has been crazy and we're all trying to survive. Finding hope and kindness in the most unexpected places can go a long way.

It has been said that it's always darkest before the dawn. Find hope in the knowledge that the sun will rise again. Let me close with a quote from one of my favorite authors: "In the world to come, let us be brave—let us walk into the dark without fear, and step into the unknown with smiles on our faces...And whatever happens to us, whatever we make, whatever we learn, let us take joy in it...So that is my wish for you, and for me. Bravery and joy." – from Neil Gaiman's 2012 New Year's Wish. ●

Follow the advocacies close to Rina's heart on Facebook: [Philippine Heritage Mapping](#), [Kusina ng Kalinga](#) and [METamorphosis](#).



Photographed by *Fabrice Fouillet*

Angles

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Fabrice Fouillet finds divine inspiration in architecture

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Severine Tournaire on the joys of experimentation in photography

Interview by
Patrick Kasingsing



A N G L E S

SACRED GEOMETRY

Fabrice Fouillet draws inspiration
from architectural forms and produces
poignant portraits of space that
provokes introspection

PHOTOGRAPHY *Fabrice Fouillet*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

Opposite page Musée des Confluences
by Coop Himmelb(l)au, Lyon, France



Fondazione Prada by OMA, Milan, Italy

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hello, I am Fabrice Fouillet, a Parisian kidnapped by photography 20 years ago and still held captive by it.

What sparked your interest in the photography of architecture? When, and how did this fascination with buildings start?

As a still-life photographer, I've always felt a sort of pull towards architecture, an unconscious interest at first, which eventually turned to a full-fledged passion. It was in 2008 when my curiosity for sacred imagery drove me to visit some modern churches in Europe. While far from being religious, I was very impressed by the interiors of some churches that it pushed me to think about working on a photographic project around the architecture of modern sacred spaces. This eventually solidified into the 'Corpus Christi' project, which I believe is the true catalyst for my fascination with architecture.

You also studied sociology and ethnology before deciding to pursue studies in photography. Did the two former fields you studied influence your decision to pursue Photography?

I knew I wanted to be a photographer even before going to university for sociology and ethnology. These two fields actually informed two of my personal projects. I've always wanted to explore the notion of symbols and cultural identity, as I did with my 'Colosses' series. Meanwhile, 'Eurasisme' is a project focused on the city of Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan. The subject is more architectural in nature and is an exploration of how the arrival of new architecture affects the city in the social and economic context.



You specialize in still-life photography. What about this genre attracts you, and what challenges does it bring that fuel you to explore such a genre even more?

I like the rigor, the precision required and the reflection involved in the slow and sometimes tedious process of still-life photography. It sits well with my personality. My work now focuses more on architecture as subject, but I practice the same rigor and treatment as when I'm working on my still-life projects. These two genres aren't so far apart, and it's just a difference in scale. I find the idea of going from the very small to the very big quite interesting and challenging.



Center for High Yield by Alvaro Andrade, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, Portugal



You won the 2013 Sony Awards for your beautiful work on church interiors in the ‘Corpus Christi’ series. What drove or inspired you to pursue this series, and what insights did you learn when working on this project?

As mentioned, the series was inspired by a growing curiosity for religious iconography, of how modern church architecture in its starkness and minimalism can still serve as aesthetic interpellations of Catholicism and its tradition of strong and ornate imagery. I am intrigued with the codified, mystic beauty of modern church architecture examples in my photo series, in that its beauty and poignancy is still respectful of church liturgy, despite the modernity and evolution of forms. ‘Corpus Christi’ aims to show how modern church architecture is an evolved and timely expression of sanctity, and is as much a celebration of divinity as the church styles that preceded it. I also wanted to show how architecture could influence the liturgy, and the religious sentiments of the faithful.

What is the greatest challenge you face whenever you set out to shoot architecture? How do you deal with such challenges?

A commissioned work always brings the obligation of perfect results whatever the conditions you'll find on location. This is already a challenge, but one that I always find great pleasure in. The greatest challenge is dealing with "out of control elements" like the weather, which determines the lighting conditions. Not knowing what to expect forces one to adapt. The location of the building itself and the surrounding environment can also be more or less difficult to deal with. I usually don't start shooting right away and take my time to soak up the place and explore.

Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center by
Zaha Hadid Architects, Baku, Azerbaijan



Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center by
Zaha Hadid Architects, Baku, Azerbaijan





St. Mary's Cathedral by Kenzo Tange, Tokyo, Japan

"Photography can offer architects a rediscovery of their creation from another artistic viewpoint, which invites reflection."

What is your imaging device choice?

I use a tilt-shift Alpha camera along with its range of lenses. It is perfect for architecture and landscapes, as well as shooting in film or in digital.

How do you think can architectural photography help contribute or effect change in the profession of Architecture?

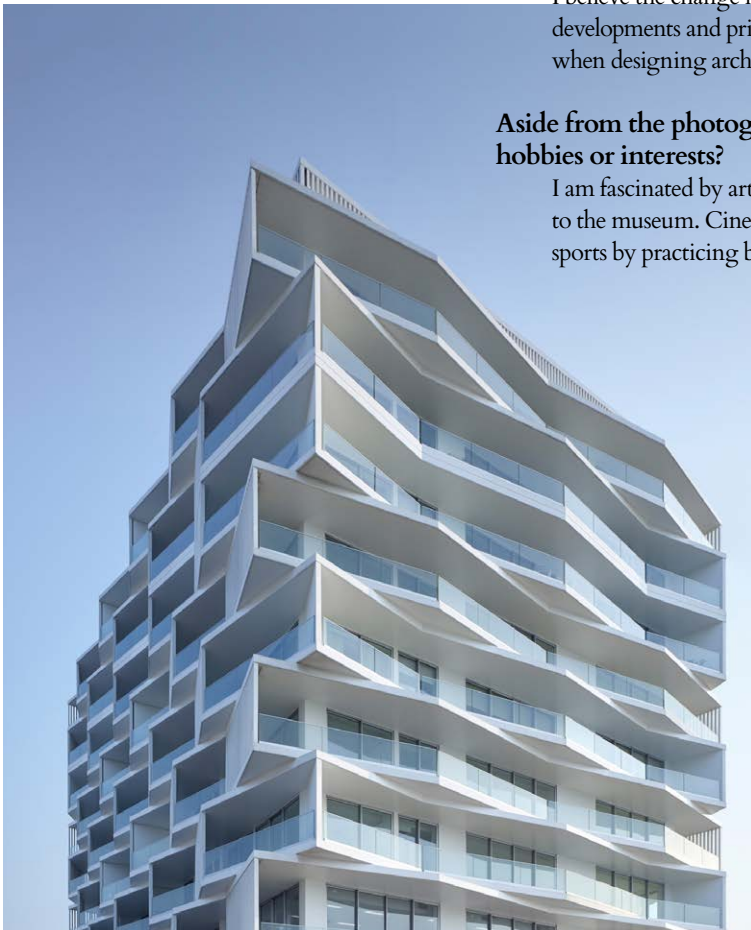
I personally believe that it can be a bit pretentious to assume that my field of work can provoke change in the architectural profession. Architects know their projects better than anyone else, having worked on it for months and years at a time, and the photography and visual documentation stage usually comes after the end of construction. That said, what I do think architectural photography can offer architects is a rediscovery of their creation from another artistic viewpoint, which invites reflection.

How can architectural photography make the world a better place to live in?

Photography is a medium, a tool, and a witness of a subjective reality. I believe the change has to start with architecture itself. Sustainable developments and prioritizing effects on ecology should taken into account when designing architecture.

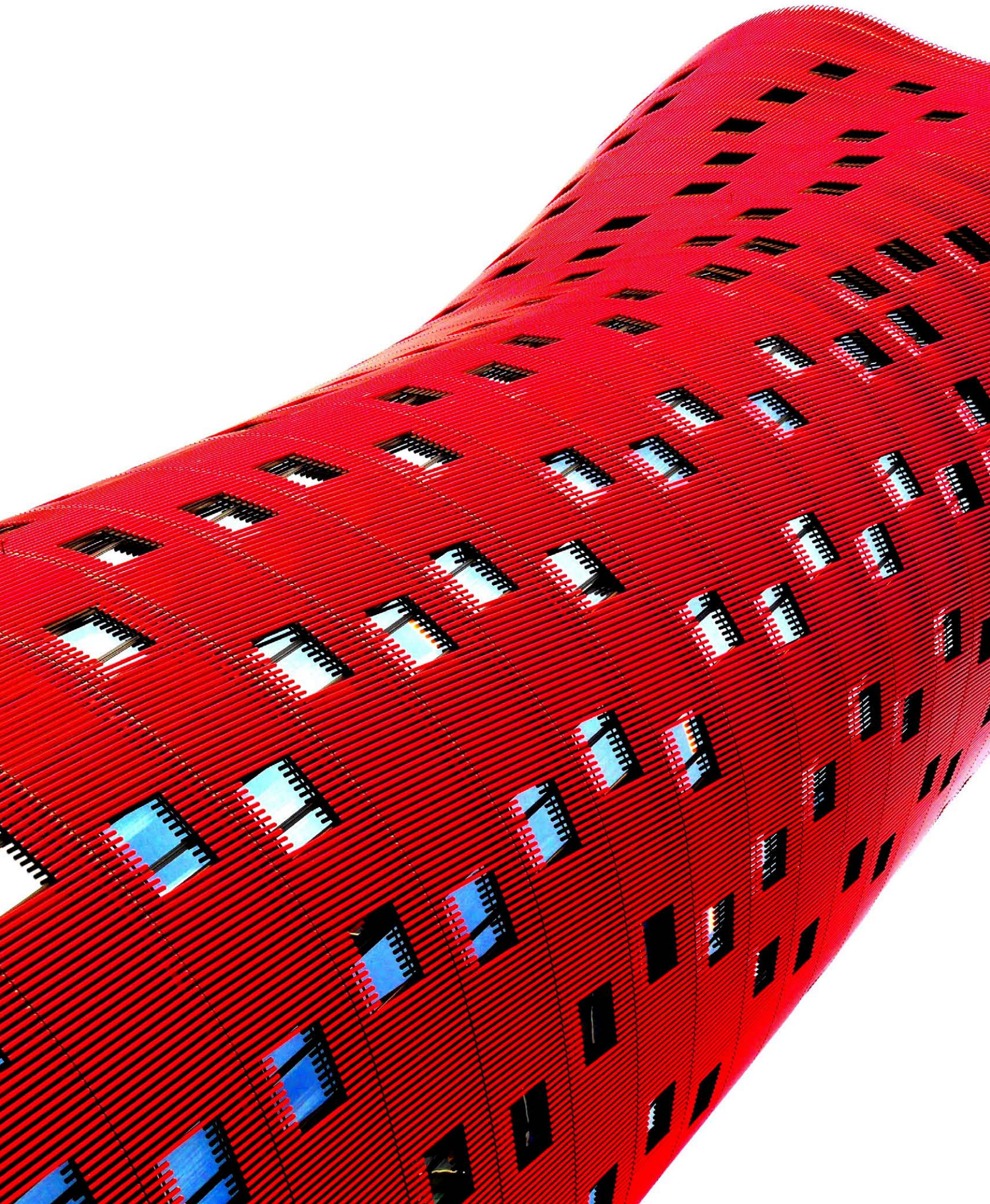
Aside from the photography of architecture, do you engage in other hobbies or interests?

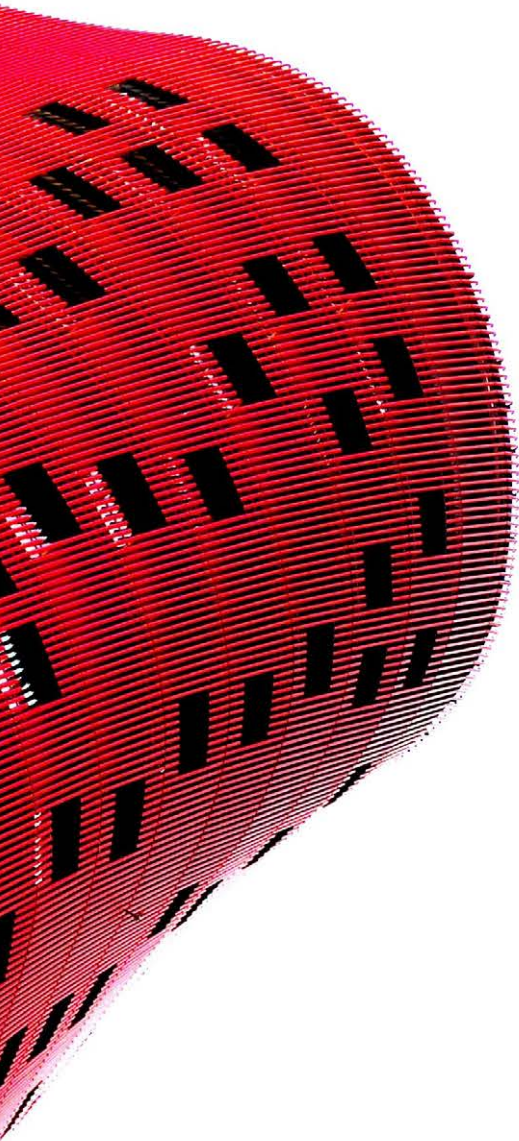
I am fascinated by art, especially paintings and drawings. I love making visits to the museum. Cinema is also an important part of my life. I dabble into sports by practicing badminton as often as possible, and I love to swim. ●



Dyeji Building by Costalopes Architects, Luanda, Angola

Follow Fabrice on Instagram [@fabricefouillet](#) and on his website at [fabricefouillet.com](#)





A N G L E S

View Points

Severine Tournaire revels in
the countless ways one can view
architecture through photography

PHOTOGRAPHY *Severine Tournaire*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

Hotel Porta Fira by
Toyo Ito, Barcelona, Spain



8 Spruce Street by Frank Gehry,
New York City, USA

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi! I'm Severine Tournaire. I currently work for a French energy company where I handle everything related to internal communication. Traveling and photography are my great passions, further fueled by my love for books, the cinema and attending exhibitions.

What sparked your interest in the photography of architecture? When, and how did this fascination with buildings start?

Architecture became an interest after having worked for two years in Europe's biggest business district, La Défense. I was enamored by the amazing towers around me, and how it resembled one big playground with all the architectural acrobatics and geometries

Your photography often emphasizes the geometric forms and details present in architecture. What about it excites you?

I've always loved lines, curves and reliefs, and how they form patterns. I can photograph the same tower several times and never get the same result. I love how these geometric details, taken in various light conditions, point-of-views, weather, etc., can result in various outcomes making every image taken unique.

Monochromatic tones and deep blues often characterize the color of your photography. What attracts you to these color filters and how do you think they enhance the presentation of architecture in your photos?

Monochromatic tones play up the contrasts and shadows in photos, something I find well suited to architecture—as it emphasizes forms and geometry that sometimes aren't always visible in color, and it adds an aura of mystery. I play with blue filters at times to accentuate reflections of the sky on shiny façades and for a more subdued, cooler mood to the image.



Any funny anecdotes or experiences you want to share which involved your shooting architectural photos?

This isn't exactly a specific event but more of a general experience; it is that general feeling of joy and connectedness in being part of a creative and inspiring community of photographers in Instagram. If you compare my first post and the recent pictures in my feed, you will have noticed the evolution in quality—a real difference. This growth is partly because of the supportive and inspiring environment espoused by this social media app. It has also allowed me to share, exchange ideas and meet incredible people. It really is heart-warming and encouraging to have such an appreciative community.



World Trade Center Oculus by
Santiago Calatrava, New York City, USA



The Broad Museum by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Los Angeles, USA



Tour Manhattan by Michel Herbert and Michel Proux, Paris, France



There is a large, growing number of architectural photography accounts on Instagram. How do you think the growth of architectural photography as a genre can help the field of Architecture?

Instagram has opened the doors for a lot of laymen and normal people like me to appreciate architecture around the world. It has presented us the opportunity to capture [architecture] in the different ways we see it, from a vantage point that is specific to each and every one of us. Photography [as a medium] and Instagram encourages creativity in that we can break the code; that there's no right way of capturing something, and that we all have our own take on our photography subjects. And I'd like to think that architects can derive inspiration from our outputs and aid them in their future work. Everything is allowed.

How do you think architecture can effect positive change in the lives of people and society?

Architecture CAN help effect positive change in the environment and in our society. The emergence of new technologies has enabled the design of more environmental-friendly materials, as well as the integration of renewable materials like biomass. We should champion and support the causes of emergent architecture that utilizes natural resources and helps reduce carbon emissions. It is important for our architecture to be 'positive' as it is an integral part of our daily lives and CAN influence our individual and collective activities. In order to make the world a better place, it is important that we make our spaces livable and sustainable in that it serves our needs but not at the expense of the environment. ●

Tour Pascal by Henri de la
Fonta, Paris, France

Follow Severine Tournaire on
Instagram [@_sev_happysty](#) and
on her macro photography account
[@_happysty_pic](#)



Photographed by *Miguel de Quiros*

Lens

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Patrick Kasingsing



L E N S

Silver Screen

Life's a movie in *Kevin le Golvan's*
cinematic portraits of everyday life

PHOTOGRAPHY *Kevin le Golvan*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*





L'axe majeur, Cergy Pontoise

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hello! My name is Kevin. I'm a 29-year old resident of Versailles, France. I'm passionate about photography, music and rock-climbing.

What got you into photography? What fueled your fascination for capturing images?

My journey with photography started a year ago, when I moved into my new apartment and wanted to decorate my wall with pictures. I started taking photos, and a friend remarked that I have a good eye. This motivated me a lot, and the rest is history. I'm a perfectionist and an eager learner, so I try to practice and read up on photography as much as possible to sharpen my skills.

Your photography is often rendered in black and white. Why is that?

I shoot mainly in black and white because I find it easier to focus on composition and lighting. I did try taking pictures in color, but I was not satisfied with my output. This is something I'd like to practice on and try out more this 2017.

Despite the dark monotonous and sharp contrasts, there is a certain 'warmth' and 'humanity' in your photos. What are your favorite photography subjects?

I think the best subjects are children, as they are brimming with activity and spontaneity. But of course, there are considerations to take note of when exposing children on the Internet. I try to draw the focus instead on the play of light and emotion transmitted by the picture. The scale between the subject and its background is also important as it determines the degree of intimacy or feeling of vastness of the photo.

What stories do you hope to tell with your photography and how is this expressive of who you are as a person?

I hope that my photography inspire feelings of peace and hope to its viewers. This is especially relevant nowadays with so much hatred and violence going around.





Philharmonie, Paris



Philharmonie, Paris



Louvre, Paris



Quai de Seine, Paris

"I hope that my photography inspires feelings of peace and hope to its viewers. This is especially relevant nowadays with so much hatred and violence going around."



Pool, Dinard



La Pointe du Grouin, Brittany

Your photography seems a celebration of the beauty of small moments and coincidences. How do you tell when to take a photograph?

Those moments are what Henri Cartier Bresson call, "the decisive moment." I honestly can't explain how or when brilliant imagery happens. You just have to be really aware of what's going on around you and hope that you have a camera on hand.

As this is our optimism issue, what would you say is photography's contribution to making the world a better place?

Whenever one takes an image, you capture a brief moment in time—be it an image of either beauty or horror. We all have our preferences of subjects in photography, but I choose to document those beautiful, little moments in life; I want to be able to remind my viewers that there is still goodness and beauty in life amidst the heartaches and the pain.

What is your imaging device of choice?

My camera is a Fujifilm XT-10 with two prime lenses: 35mm/f1.4 and 23mm/F2.0.

Is there a certain place or landmark that you've always wanted to photograph?

I would love to go to Norway! It seems like a wonderful place to photograph.

Any other hobbies that you indulge in?

Aside from photography, I also practice rock climbing, mainly bouldering. I live near Fontainebleau, which has a beautiful forest perfect for avid climbers and bouldering enthusiasts. ●

Follow Kevin on Instagram [@vankhey](https://www.instagram.com/vankhey)

L E N S

Call of The Wild

*Arthur Dassan depicts Nature
at its most raw and beautiful
with his photography*

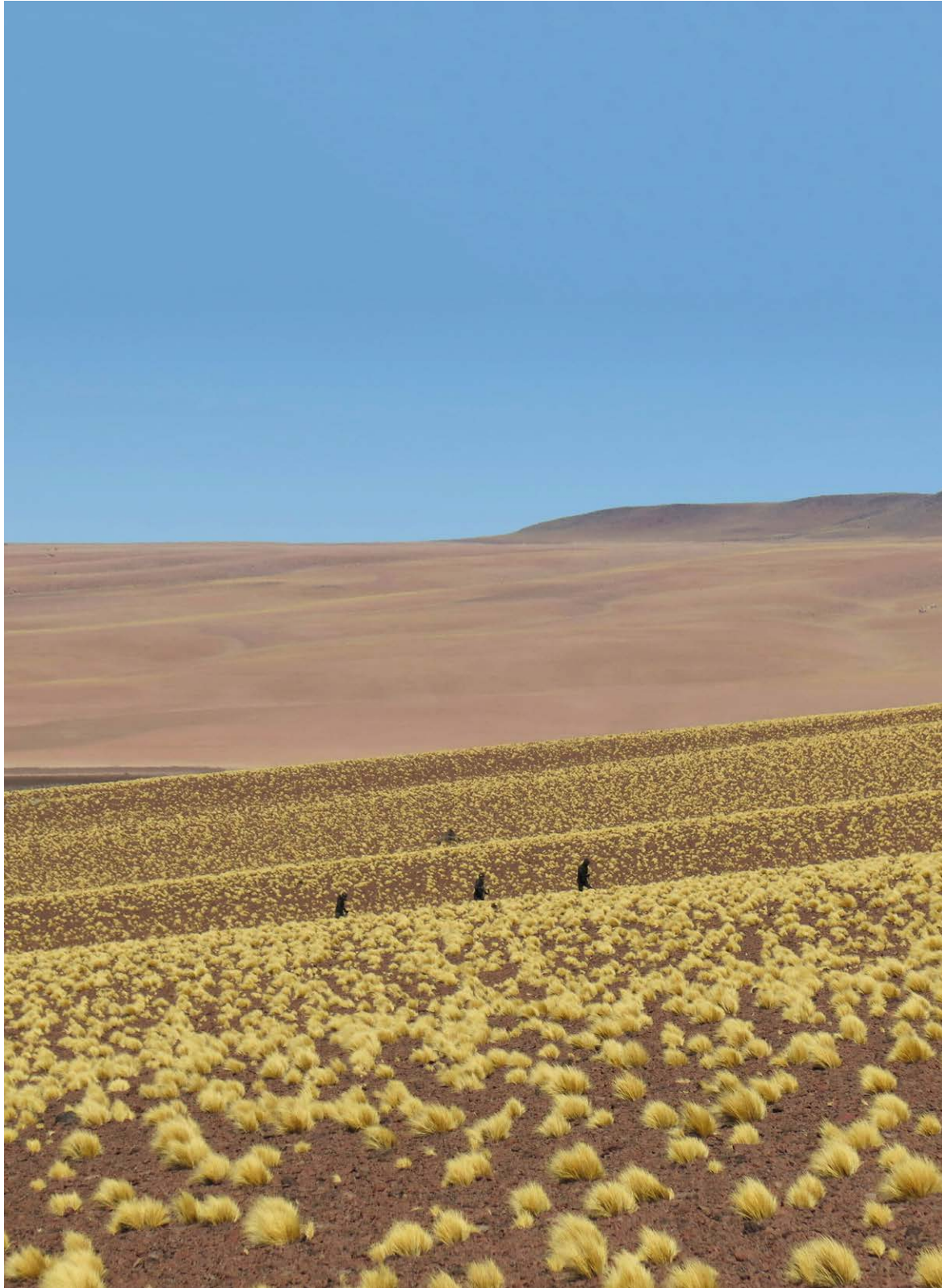
PHOTOGRAPHY *Arthur Dassan*

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*





The guardian of Salar de Tara



Before climbing Licancabur volcano

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi! I'm Arthur Dassan, a 26-year old economist from São Paulo, Brazil. I also do volunteer work for an NGO related to education. While I love living in the city, I find going back to nature mandatory. The unfamiliarity and vastness of this big unknown makes me feel uncomfortable; it urges me to rethink my priorities and goals, and my life in relation to it. Through photography, I want to capture how beautiful and rich the reality we live in is.

What got you into photography? What fueled your fascination for capturing images?

My dad and I used to hang out a lot to take pictures. My love and interest for photography soon followed.

While you photograph in various genres, your landscape shots stand out for their vivid hues, framing and textures.

What attracts you to shoot nature and landscape?

I always find myself stunned by nature. The effects of water, wind, and time on nature often result in photogenic natural formations that are worth capturing and revisiting.

What for you are the qualities of a beautiful image?

Something that I can look at for more than three minutes.

How difficult is it to do nature photography as compared to other genres of photography?

I feel it's more about: "What will nature allow me to see?" There are times when you only have a day to spend at a remote spot, or when you go climb a mountain, reach the summit, only to find the view obscured by clouds. You just really have to try to make the most out of your situation and encounter with nature and I guess that adds to its allure.

As someone who's traveled a lot, were there any particular places that left a mark on you?

Atacama Desert was the most mind-blowing place I've ever been. That's why my selection of imagery for the feature are all stills taken at the Atacama.





Geiser del Tatío



On the road



Lagoon near Lascar volcano





Laguna Miscanti

"I do think that photography plays an important role in building environmental awareness worldwide."



Your photography inspires feelings of awe and wonderment at the beauty of nature. What is your stance regarding environmental preservation and how would you say photography is instrumental for its continued existence?

I love trekking, and it's nice to see some places garner decent attention and awareness for its preservation, like in Patagonia. I do think that photography plays an important role in building environmental awareness worldwide, but it can only do so much without the support of our governments and businesses. Admittedly, it can be really hard to be optimistic about it. But we should always hope for the best.

Would you have any interesting anecdotes related to your experiences in shooting nature photography?

Climbing a mountain at 4 A.M. to catch the sunrise using a trail I've never done, getting lost in the process and arriving just a few moments after sunrise had to be one of my more memorable encounters with nature. It was also a good learning experience to plan ahead and not be rash about things. "A goal without a plan is just a wish," right?


As this is our optimism issue, how do you think nature photography contributes to making the world a better place to live in?

Whenever people find happiness and hope while looking at beautiful photographs of nature—that's good enough for me. ●



Right: Laguna Mifiiques

Follow Arthur's adventures on Instagram [@arthurdassan](https://www.instagram.com/arthurdassan)



L E N S

SKIN DEEP

*Miguel de Quiros's latest work
is a depiction of the human body
freed of standards and labels*

PHOTOGRAPHY *Miguel de Quiros*
INTERVIEW *Kariza Gonzales*





Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hello! Most people call me DQ, but I don't mind being called by my other names. I'm currently a full-time art photographer and a director.

What sparked your interest in photography? What compelled you to pick up a camera and start shooting?

I've always wanted to make movies growing up, and I found photography helps me practice my composition and lighting techniques. It has been just that for a long time until 2015 when I started using it as my main medium for storytelling.

One of the most commanding themes of your photography is nudity. What is it most that attracted you to this type of photography?

Being naked is more than just presenting oneself as a sexual, physical object. It is an unburdening of the self of other people's standards and expectations. It's the simplest way of accepting one's own body and beauty.

What for you are the characteristics of a good photograph?

I think a good image should express the human condition taken from our relationship with ourselves and our environment. That said, a photograph shouldn't just be beautiful to the eyes. It should entertain as well as provoke.

Please tell us what your latest solo show 'Buto, Tiklop, Laman' is all about.

'Buto, Tiklop, Laman' is a study of how people interact with their own bodies based on their own perspectives. There are no predetermined poses and looks. I set the mood of the images depending on the subject's view of themselves.

Your chosen medium for 'Buto, Tiklop, Laman' was a Hasselblad 500cm film camera. Why this particular camera? Is there a reason that you chose to use film instead of digital photography?

I believe I can convey the same emotions with any of the cameras I use, but the Hasselblad uses medium format film which makes it easier to blow-up for exhibition. I use film for most of my work because it requires more of me. It keeps me engaged.













"Being naked is more than just presenting oneself as a sexual, physical object. It is an unburdening of the self of other people's standards and expectations."

What do you love most about film photography?

I love that I only have a limited amount of shots per roll of film, and that I don't see the photos right away. It requires me to be precise and patient with my work and my subjects.

Tell us about the process of shooting people nude and the importance of the connection between the photographer and the subject.

Before every shoot, I try to spend at least two hours with my models to learn about them. I try to ask about their relationship with themselves, and I let them open up to me about their lives.

What do you find most challenging about shooting nude subjects?

In any situation where nudity is involved, finding comfort is crucial. It's a very vulnerable state for the models and they have to give their trust to me. The challenge is keeping that trust throughout the shoot.

What do you think is the positive effect of 'Buto, Tiklop, Laman' to its audience/viewers? How do you intend for it to affect or inspire others?

When people see my photographs, they tend to look at themselves rather than judge the images. It makes them think about their own nudity and it helps them come to terms with their own insecurities. This is true, also for me. ●

Follow DQ on Instagram [@migueldq](#) and on Facebook [@migueldqart](#). Also, check out [@vetromanila](#) on Instagram for more news on their upcoming exhibits.



Art by *Reen Barrera*

Canvas

ART AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

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TALKING HEADS

Reen Barrera marries painting and sculpture in his latest work

Interview by
Kariza Gonzales

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SHAPE SHIFTER

Kris Abrigo's body of work harmonizes geometry and color

Interview by
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ART POPULI

Dan Villacruel of Vongarde Art Gallery wants to bring art to the masses

Interview by
Patrick Kasingsing

C A N V A S



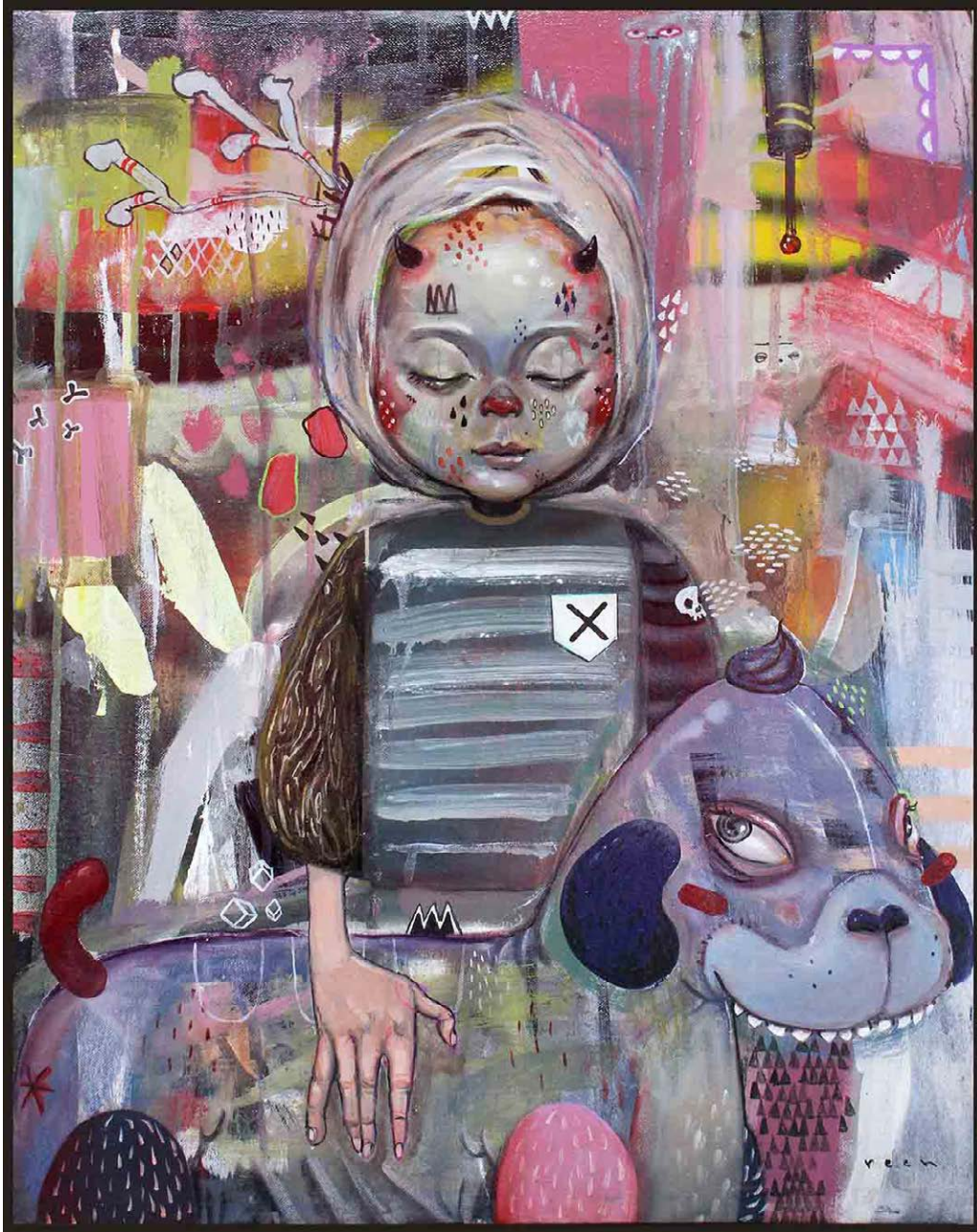
Talking Heads

Reen Barrera experiments with
sculpture and explores emotions on
his latest series of artworks

ART *Reen Barrera*
INTERVIEW *Kariza Gonzales*







Ohlala x Duge, mixed media, 19x24 inches

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

Hi I'm Reen. I am a Filipino artist who loves creating sculptures, paintings, comic books and songs for a living.

One of the more memorable and iconic characters that appear in your work is 'Ohlala'. They appear in your paintings, but more interestingly as resin sculptures. What is the inspiration behind this character?

There is this expression that goes “It’s written all over your face”, which in turn brought me to think that regardless of what we say, our true feelings can still be read via our facial expressions, a silent way of communicating something without the friction caused by words. This is what inspired the creation of the Ohlala character.

In some artworks, I discreetly take on socio-economic classes. Some people are born rich; some are situated in the middle class or wallow in poverty. But the common ground is that they all have to deal with what they have and make the best of it. Using this as inspiration, I covered all my sculpted resin heads with a canvas cloth so I can paint on them, endowing each Ohlala their own persona, a sort of freedom to paint their own symbols on their heads as if they are designing their own fate. And I guess that is what we all have in common: the power to make things happen for ourselves.

How do you go about creating your artworks? What goes into the conceptualization, planning, and production of each 'Ohlala'?

I start with sculpting the Ohlala's head. Then, I will paint ten to twenty pieces, and choose two to five heads that I like. [I will] then give them bodies of their own depending on what I think their face tells me with regard to their personalities.

How long does it normally take you to finish a piece, from conceptualization to execution? What’s the longest time you’ve devoted to a single one so far?

It usually takes around two to three days, including the chemical treatment of the wood. So far the longest time is one week, when I made my version of 'Pieta' by Michelangelo.

Opposite spread, left:

Ohlala #6 - Ngee, 3x3x9 inches, resin cloth wood, Right: Ohlala #3 - Twins, 3x4x9 inches, resin cloth wood





Take my hand, acrylic, 36x36 inches



Touch Move, mixed media, 24x24 inches



"I have learned that being comfortable kills creativity and as an artist, it is imperative that we venture out of our safe zones to grow."



Close your Eyes, mixed media, 36x48 inches

Another theme noticeable in your work is your putting together of some opposing elements that create a bit of dark playfulness to your pieces. Can you tell us more about this?

Suffice it to say, I do a lot of improvising; I compose the piece as I go on. I often have no idea as to what will be the final outcome of my piece. I let "accidents" like drips, smudges and paint splatters help me decipher what to do next. I often change my mind midway through production, and this may result in the dark and sometimes macabre combinations where unintentionally opposing elements meet and "hug" each other.

What other particular themes and subjects do you enjoy depicting? Why are you attracted to these themes?

When I was a kid, I had a penchant to draw muscled male superheroes, but when I started painting the female figure, there was no turning back. I find the female form more refined and beautiful.

Who are your artistic idols? How have they inspired you in your artistic philosophy and work as an artist?

I am a big fan of Basquiat, David Mack and David Choe. The common denominator between these artists is that they are risk-takers. I have learned that being comfortable kills creativity and as an artist, it is imperative that we venture out of our safe zones because that's the only way for one to grow and achieve fulfilling artistic success.

You are going to have a solo show featuring "Ohlala" in May 2017. How do you intend for your works to affect your viewers? What positive impact do you think your pieces impart on those who view them?

I would like them to see that *life is you make it*. Life is short; do what is right and do what you love—No hate, just love. We are all like Ohlala; we have a choice.

What do you love most about what you do?

Being able to create what I want and make a living out of it. I wish to do it as long as I live. ●

View Reen's art on instagram [@reerustart](https://www.instagram.com/reerustart) and on his Facebook page: [Reen Barrera Art](https://www.facebook.com/ReenBarreraArt).

C A N V A S

SHAPE SHIFTER

Kris Abrigo transforms surfaces and
planes of all forms into a kaleidoscope
of color and geometry

ART *Kris Abrigo*

INTERVIEW *Kariza Gonzales*



Good Evening, acrylic and aerosol
on vinyl record, 2016



Mural in Flushing, Queens, New York City

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

I'm Kris Abrigo. I'm a 27 year-old visual artist. I do murals for commercial and residential clients. I also do art shows for galleries and art fairs. I've been a full time visual artist for seven years now. I have a tiny art studio that I share with my fashion illustrator girlfriend. I have a fat pet cat, but we don't like each other a lot.

You are most known for your colorful geometric murals. What sparked your interest in this field? What is it that drove you to this particular art form?

I've always loved drawing geometric objects and architectural figures when I was young. I would often copy what my older brothers drew for their drafting courses. My father would also always bring home back issues of architectural magazines and brochures from work.

I acquired my love for color when I started joining poster-making contests in high school. I honestly think that I still have more to learn in working with colors [and] that's why I continue to explore various techniques to improve. I also love the challenge and complications involved in painting straight lines, something that is widely perceived to be very difficult to do.

How do you go about creating your artworks? What goes into the conceptualization, planning, and production of each of your murals?

A lot of time is devoted to thinking about the 'personality' of an art piece. I consider almost all of the elements that surround it. I research about the desired theme, the location and the people who will be looking at it on a regular basis. I always procrastinate during the conceptualization part, and tight deadlines can really squeeze out all of my creative juices. Power naps help me a lot with the visualization phase. It's a bad habit, I know, but it works for me. I focus a lot on planning the schedule and preparing the materials. It's the key to top quality work. I particularly enjoy shopping for the materials. Hardware stores and paint shops excite me. The painting part has got to be the most stressful portion but wrapping it up is the most satisfying. That's why I paint as quickly as I can. I stop when I'm already in love with the piece, but then I quickly get over it and start to think of making a better piece next time.



How long does it normally take you to finish a mural, from conceptualization to execution? What's the longest time you've devoted to a single mural so far?

I usually plan everything to be executed as quickly as possible. The longest time I've devoted to a single mural is a month, and I don't plan to repeat it. Long working days on a single piece cut the fun and excitement to finish it, which results to boredom. It makes me feel like I'm a regular worker and not an artist.





Good Night, acrylic and aerosol
on vinyl record, 2016







"One of the major roles of artists is to reflect on their present situation and inform or influence people of these current issues through their art."

Discover Kris Abrigo's art process and new works on his selfless Instagram [@krisabrigo](#)

What are your inspirations for your artworks? Most of your pieces are depictions of wonderful plays on geometry, colors and textures.

[Like other millennials], what I see in the in the Internet often inspires me to do art. I translate these images and ideas into abstract figures that provoke thinking as well as inspire a reaction from my viewers. Making people think and feel a little bit different about their world is one of the main objectives of art. I think geometry in my artwork makes the piece look intellectual and dexterous, and the color makes it fun and comfortable, the texture giving off an impression of richness and generosity. It's a balanced mix of elements that attracts viewers and buyers, a very important factor in the business of art.

What other particular themes and subjects do you enjoy depicting? Why are you attracted to these themes?

I also enjoy depicting traditional subjects such as landscapes, portraits and still life in a personalized contemporary way, as a nod to the masters that cultivated art throughout the ages and as a wink to the future artists that will continue the practice. Contributing to art history is always an underlying intent for artists.

Some of your other pieces seem to have socio-political images/messages/subtexts in them. Can you tell us more about this?

One of the major roles of artists is to reflect on their present situation and inform or influence people of these current issues through their art. When I was in college, I was introduced to murals and street art as a form of protest art and graffiti. Since then, I would always make an effort to include subtle representations of socio-political issues in my work, a natural response and as personal concern to the conditions and issues faced by the deprived majority of which my family belongs. I always try to use happy colors to express optimism, comfort and positivity in my art because I think majority of the people in our society are experiencing great discomfort and grief.

What do you love most about what you do?

The best thing about my practice is that I inspire young people, especially the creative ones, to push for their aspirations and never doubt the power of their talent and skills despite the cultural gaps, societal ignorance, false mentalities and financial barriers that can poison the Filipino dream. If a poor average kid from a sleepy province can become an established artist and do monumental pieces in capital cities, then there's no reason why the other talented Filipinos out there can't. ●

C A N V A S

Art Populi

Dan Villacruel of Vongarde Art Gallery
in Katipunan, Quezon City opens the realm
of Art to the masses

INTERVIEW *Patrick Kasingsing*

ART *RV Basco, from solo show '13th Month'*

PHOTOS *Dan Villacruel*



Vongarde Art Gallery and 55Square Café; paintings by Claudine Delfin

Hello! Please introduce yourself.

I'm Dan Villacruel from Angono, Rizal. I took Fine Arts in UP Diliman, and fate brought me to the industry of art management right after college. Besides art, I also enjoy food and fashion.

What triggered your desire to start a gallery?

After six years of working in galleries, I felt an urge to start my own gallery—one that will support budding artists. I wanted to share my knowledge of the art industry and help young artists jumpstart their careers. I just listened to my instinct and moved forward to starting Vongarde.

Your gallery is housed in a café. What contributed to such a decision and arrangement? And how do you think this is a plus for the gallery and the café?

Art galleries are often perceived as an exclusive venue which only the rich and educated frequent, so I want to bring it back to the public, closer to the masses; while Kit Singson (owner of 55Square Café) wants to help small-scale coffee farmers and make good coffee more accessible to a bigger market, so the marriage of the two concepts seemed fitting. The café customers get to discover art while the gallery customers will have a reason to stay after looking at and appreciating art.

Can you tell us about how Vongarde Gallery works? And how do you curate your lineup of artists

We're on the lookout for individual artists or groups who have unique styles and fresh ideas, new takes on traditional concepts or innovative uses of new media. After sorting through exhibit proposals, we create a lineup of shows to be opened every month.

Is there an advocacy the gallery would like to promote? How does the gallery go about promoting this advocacy?

The gallery mainly supports starting artists. We provide them insights about the market as well as management assistance. We would like to also promote other forms of art like photography, digital art and new media as we think the fine arts market is still partial to traditional art forms like paintings and sculptures.





The Gambler, 2016, oil on canvas, 30x30 inches



The Dreamer, 2016, oil on canvas, 30x44 inches

"Art galleries are often perceived as an exclusive venue which only the rich and educated frequent, so I want to bring it back to the public, closer to the masses."

What themes or topics does the gallery often depict? Why these particular themes?

We try to be as flexible as possible when it comes to themes that we showcase. For the past few months, we have already shown different styles—from abstraction, modern drawings to social realism.

How is the reception of the gallery so far? What other programs or features can patrons look forward to?

We are getting a good amount of exhibit proposals from different groups and individual artists, and we're excited to break them to the public soon! We also offer one-on-one art workshops that are available to all ages. This January we're holding an event called 'Katipunan' to launch the gallery-café as an art hub where the creatives can gather and re-energize. There will be a live mural painting session, a community art exhibit and live music performances by bands from Ateneo and UP, with guest DJs. We will also launch a project series for the first half of the year where different creatives can congregate and benefit from.



The Frugal Next Door, 2016, oil on canvas, 36x54 inches

As a gallerist, how would you say the local art industry is doing? What trends or movements are you seeing?

The past five years have been another golden age for Philippine art. Art collectors are getting younger and Filipino artists are being hailed internationally. Hopefully, this will boost support for the local art scene and encourage our artists to continue exploring. I think we will see a vast subject variety in the next years as we take off from being a conservative to a more expressive country.

As this is our optimism issue, how would you say Vongarde Gallery can contribute to improving the lifestyle and social fabric of the community surrounding it?

Vongarde, together with 55Square, aims to serve as a catalyst in forming a creative community in Katipunan.

How can budding artists participate/mount an exhibit in Vongarde Gallery?

For interested exhibitors, they may email us at vongardeartgallery@gmail.com or send us a message via our Facebook page: Vongarde Art Gallery. ●

Follow [@vongardeartgallery](https://www.instagram.com/vongardeartgallery) and [@maisonartworkshops](https://www.instagram.com/maisonartworkshops) on Facebook and Instagram.



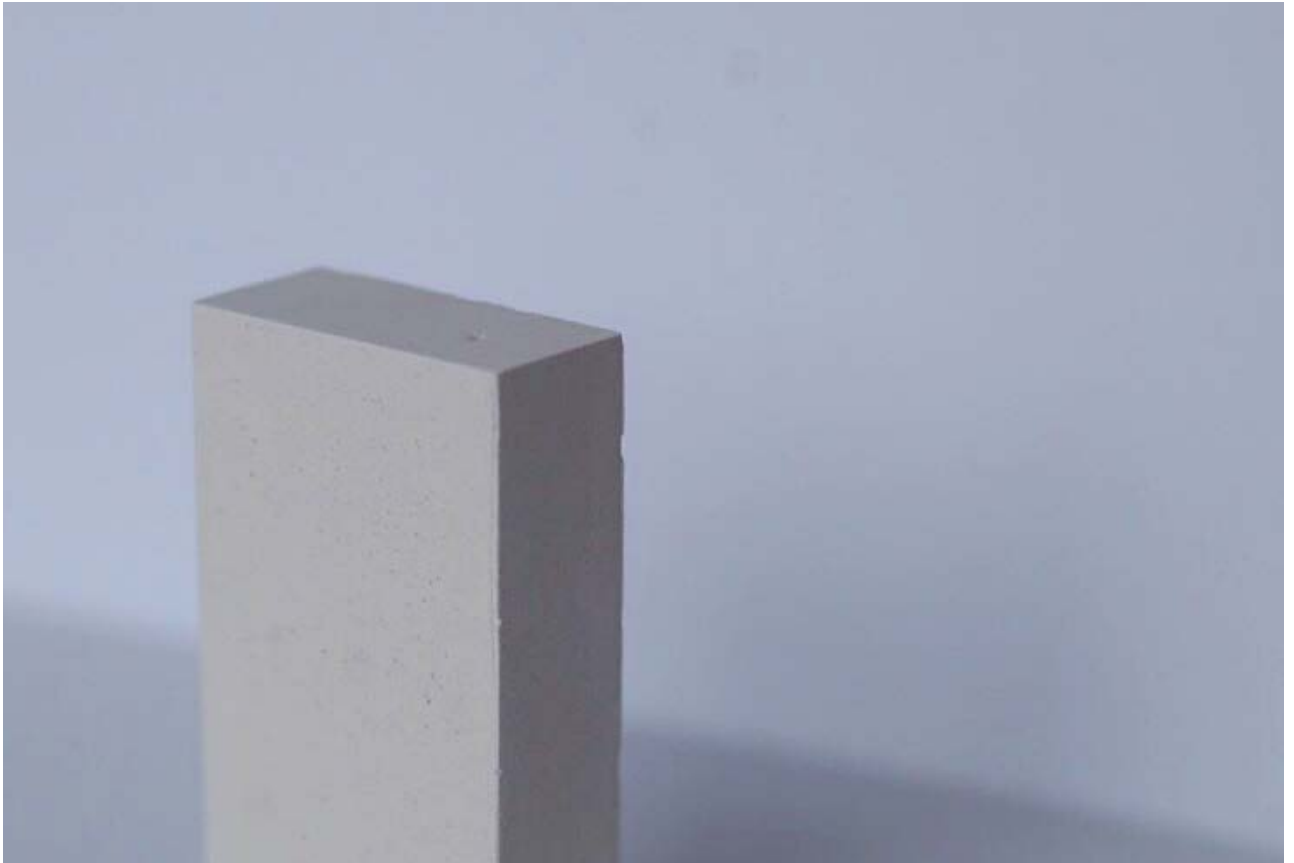
The Crisis Manager, 2016, oil on canvas, 24x36 inches

R U M I N A T I O N S


WRITER'S BLOCK

An artist, a writer and a photographer collectively ponder on the concepts of Object and meaning in 'In Memorial,' *Timothy Percival's* latest art installation

ART *Timothy Percival*
PHOTOGRAPHY *David Price*
WORDS *Shane Johnston*



The monolith stands as an imposing figure.
A minimal structure imbued with complex meaning.
Parallel lines and right angles, flat planes, and a suggestion of mass.



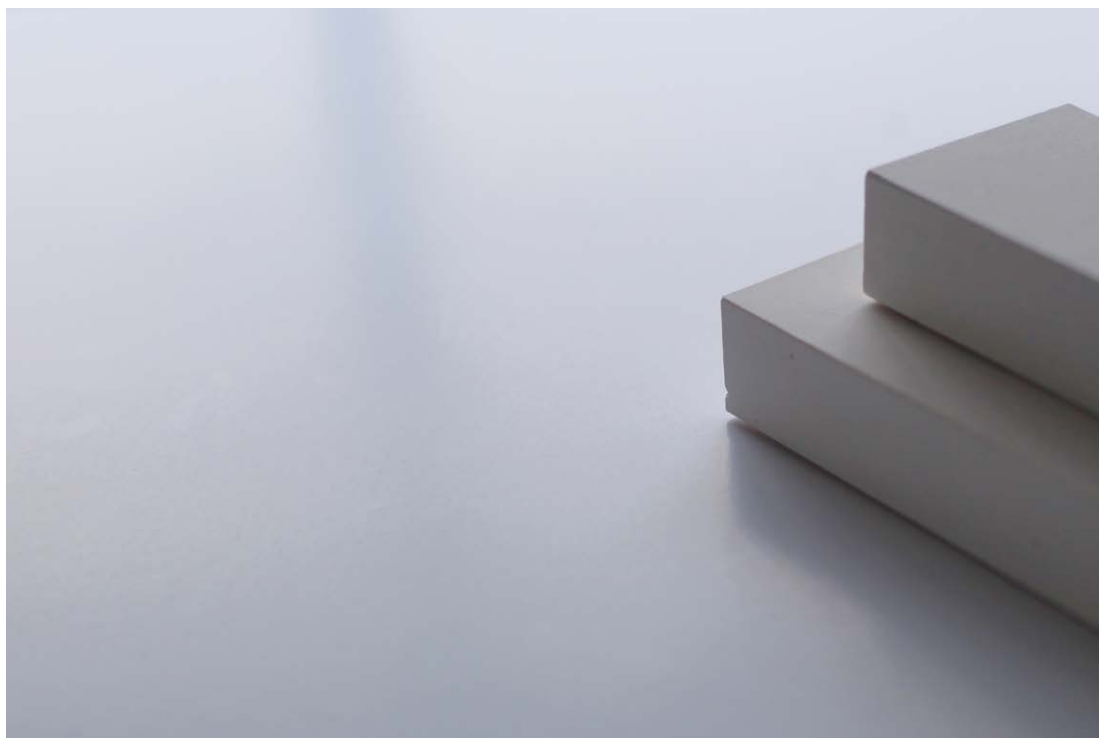
But the monolith is unfathomable, it is used to represent higher powers, emblematic of dictators and dystopias.
A gateway to the apocalypse.

Yet in this regard we should not consider it exceptional,
we are prone to elevate objects to the role of icon.



Cigarettes, crucifixes, picket fences, lovers,
all dressed up in meaning until the artefact itself becomes
nothing more than the abstract.





Although we may suggest finding an object with no fundamental meaning to be as improbable as touching the horizon, it is our desire to embellish that is being called to question.

And even the humble monolith has fallen victim.

Timothy Percival takes this idea as the premise for his latest work. An array of 100 monoliths, minimal, architectural, implicitly neutral. Each standing 10cm tall, the scale is on a personal level. The work has invited cross-disciplinary collaboration, acting as a sounding board to explore the elevation of 'objects to the role of icon'.



Photographed by *Timothy Percival*

Quill

LITERATURE

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INTO THE LIGHT

An ode to shadows
by *Timothy Percival*

Written and photographed by
Timothy Percival

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ONE DAY

A short story on love,
remembrance, and moving on

Written by
Gel Galang

Q U I L L

Into The Light

An ode to shadows, to the warmth
found in the absence of light

PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS

Timothy Percival

A photograph of a building facade featuring Gothic-style windows and decorative carvings. The image is split vertically, with the left side in shadow and the right side in light. The text "There's an air about a silent street that lets life settle gracefully." is overlaid in the center.

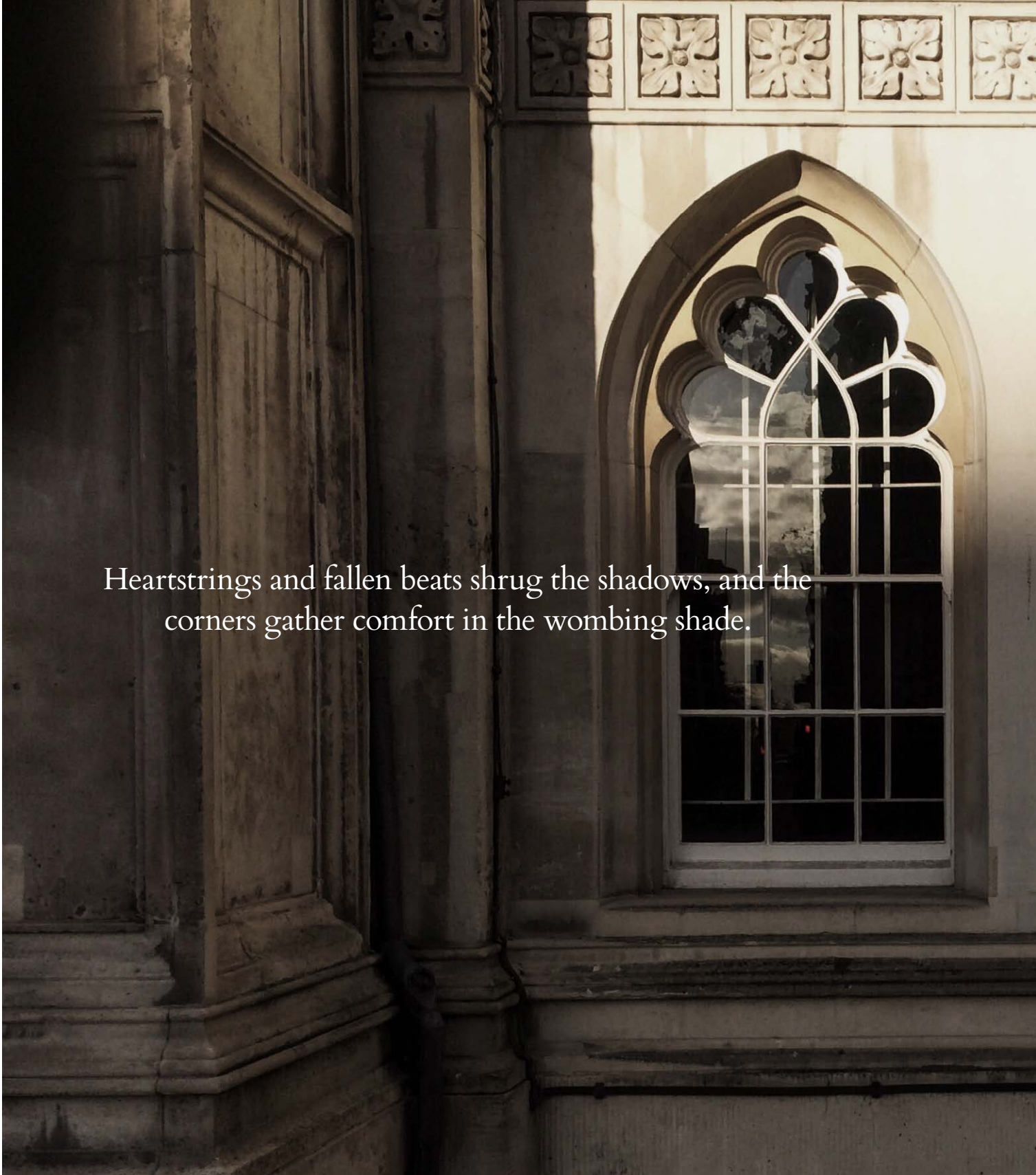
There's an air about a silent street that lets life settle gracefully.



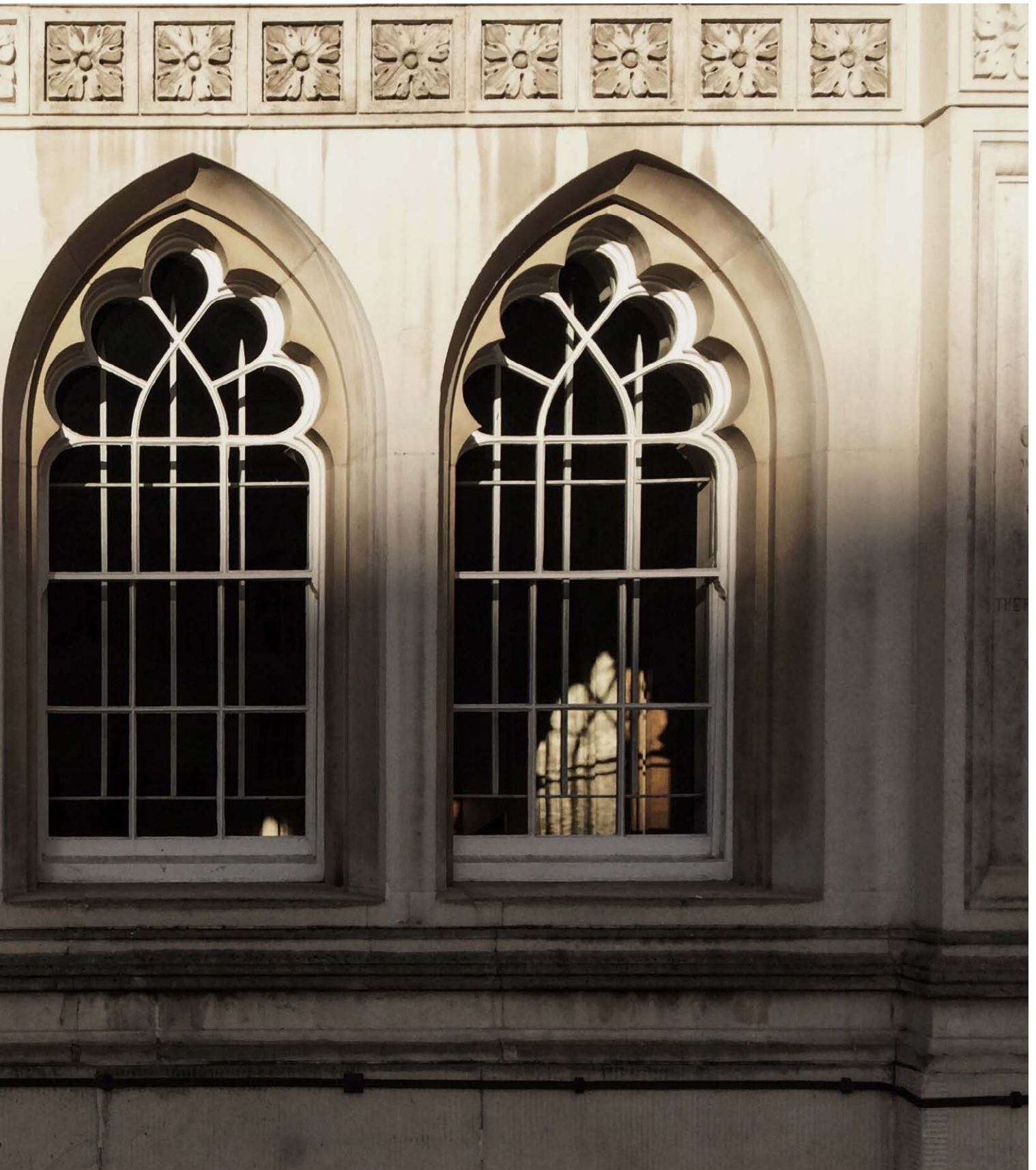
Existing only in light, and in the placid hours inscribed
with the scent of each season



Though each shadow has a pace, a speed at which it falls.
Faster than light, faster than the growth of the day.



Heartstrings and fallen beats shrug the shadows, and the
corners gather comfort in the wombing shade.





For the faces have no depth, no wisdom, no wealth that can't
succumb to the effects of a passing shadow.



But all is the result of aperture, framed by shadows
and composed of light.

SHORT STORY

One Day

WRITTEN BY *Gel Galang*

You're already out the door before I even open my eyes, which is why I know it's Monday morning again. Another doctor's emergency probably tore you away from my side, but I guess I can't complain. Who could blame the hospital for always putting their best cardiologist on call, right?

I get up and feel your cold side of the bed. A little wrinkle here from where you sat last night, a little dent on the pillow for your head—does every little thing become adorable when it's your anniversary day?

I blame it on my hormones as I pull myself up from bed. There's still time for breakfast but Starbucks is always a more convenient choice for coffee and a Danish. I know you won't complain if I put on a little weight. I'll probably lose it when I go running again next weekend.

Outside, there's the usual flurry of people. BGC is always a nice sight in the morning. Usually, I'd be among the regular crowd of people walking from the residential condos to their workplaces. I'm lucky that my building's just a good ten-minute walk from our loft. But today's my day-off, because we're celebrating not just Hallmark's holiday, but our own anniversary. Even if I have a big smile on my face, a newlywed's blush, as they say, I won't be any different from say that high school girl hugging the teddy bear from the guy beside her, or that woman on the phone who's obviously swooning from the conversation on the other end of her phone.

I twirl the ring on my finger and know that my smile is probably so much bigger and brighter than anyone else's.

I guess Valentine's Day is different when you're celebrating something just as special.

Our bellman greets me with his usual banter. He's my favorite of all of them, so much so that even you become jealous, remember? He tips his hat and bows when he opens the glass door. Before I step out, he gives me a yellow rose. It's not long-stemmed, like what you would've bought me, but I'm sure you'd be just as annoyed if I Viber you a Valentine's selfie with a rose that wasn't from you.

I feel like one of those young couples again—I still am, I guess, I am only twenty-nine—and I could pretend that this flower is from my hardworking husband. I know you wouldn't get me one, thanks to the little bet you won when we were dating. My bet being we'd be forever boyfriend-girlfriend, and that you can't do anything to make me say yes to a wedding. And that if you won, I'd be the one to buy nice gifts for all of our anniversaries and couple holidays.

Two years later, you strong-armed me—I kid, you bullied me—into saying yes. I never thought you'd work hard to buy us our own place, plan the entire wedding by yourself, and gamble your head on my police dad's *batuta* by asking for consent with your *barkada* while I was out on a business trip.

I step inside Starbucks and see a line that's longer than what I'm used to. It's probably the Valentine's Day promo drink that everyone's clamoring for this week. Remember that one day five years ago when I was late to the office because of that? You couldn't bear to buy your own Molten Chocolate Frappuccino because you're a man like that. Sure, you gave me the drink afterwards, knowing that I loved chocolate and just didn't believe in Starbucks. And little did I know that that was your way of starting your courting, but that's beside the point.

I snicker at the memory, and steel my resolve to not buy a Valentine's Day drink, not this time. Yes, because I'm a petty woman like that. I already have tons of chocolate stacked in the fridge for later, though we both know that I'll be the one eating it all anyway.

I step forward to the counter and the usual barista greets me. She punches in my order before I even have to say it. Starbucks has become my habit after you introduced me to it, and she now knows to not even ask if I'll be having an extra cinnamon roll. We never

get to eat breakfast together these days. I think twice about the Danish before taking it off my order.

I don't have a ticking time-in to worry about, but my clock already reads 11:00. I take my receipt and wait in line once more to get my Venti-sized Molten Chocolate Frappuccino. I roll my eyes to myself, seeing just the kind of face you'd make if you saw me right now.

So sue me, but you'd probably just take the first sip as your prize.

There aren't as many flower shops around as back then. Vendors would sell red roses by the bucket, though I know how much you love long-stemmed ones.

I get to Holland Tulips in time to catch three remaining bouquets of roses, bundled by the dozen. The lady manning the stall looks over at me and gives a smile. She's probably wondering if I was buying roses for myself. I could almost hear you scold me yet again for that. Don't ever judge people, you'd say. But I believe in never judging them first. If they do it first, then it's a free pass to whoever does second or third, right?

I point to the bundle with the ones that look the freshest. Some are already in full bloom, while a few are still in buds, something I've taught you was the best way to picking out a dozen roses. I remember because that was the time you pretended to ask me for good advice on how to woo your so-called crush. That kind of took away the thrill of seeing on my desk the roses I handpicked myself, though I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to hug you in front of all my officemates right then and there.

It's already half past noon by the time the lady finishes tying that red bow for the bundle—yes, because you'd probably laugh if I chose pink—so I look around for the nearest restaurant for a quick bite. I see the sign for 5th Avenue and realize that my feet were already walking toward the familiar Net Lima building, home to our favorite, official first date, and everyday restaurant.

There's a vacant table just outside when I get to Wildflour. As usual, I'm the one who gets here on time. It's always a guessing game if you'll appear right in front of me or if you're held hostage someplace

in some appointment doing some good work again. It's the mistress that will forever follow us, so it's no wonder everyone at our wedding answered correctly when asked who between the bride and the groom is always late for dates.

A waitress brings me a menu, though I already know what to ask. It's always the same thing anyway; a shared tarte flambé of bacon and gruyere and the salad. She takes our order and slips inside as I try to find a way to hide the bouquet. I know I should've brought the car, but it would just be a waste since we both know you love walking around. It's the only time where you don't feel pressured, and the only activity with no distractions of my work laptop, your medical journals, or our Netflix.

I remember my magic bag, the eco bag that you always insulted as raggedy. It's saved us from so many occasions, you remember? That one time you tore the grocery bag in half—who holds instead of hugs a heavy grocery bag, seriously?—and sent us both running after apples. Or that time when you bought three pairs of shoes and forgot that your car was on coding that day so we had to commute back to your place? And you dare insult Eco?

I put the roses in the bag, careful to not crush the petals of the fully-bloomed flowers. You rarely allow me to give you gifts, so it's only right that I give the best each time.

I pull the flap of the bag over the roses just before I turn around, a smile ready because I know you're already near before I actually see you. You smile as you take the empty seat opposite mine. You've never been a fan of sitting beside me. I used to think it was because we were still just dating, but even when I said yes, you never budged from the place opposite me. When you were finally comfortable with holding my hand, you'd never let it go even the whole time we'd eat. It's one of the rare benefits of you being left-handed as opposed to my normalness. Sitting opposite each other, eating pasta or any dish that doesn't require both hands, and you'd be free to hold my hand. I wanted to tease how cheesy you were, but that'd mean I had to let go, too.

I get a slice of the flambé, half-expecting you to hold my hand. Of course, there are some days when you won't. We've been together long enough

to know that we're not in a fairytale romance or a forever honeymoon. And we've come to know the joy of sitting in silence, just satisfied with each other's company without the fear of a rut.

You're looking far ahead, and for a moment, I wonder if you would've preferred that I waited before getting anything. I follow your line of sight, which lands on a couple two tables down. It's a serious discussion, the girl's brows almost clashing together, eyes avoiding the guy's entirely. I then catch you smiling, and you turn to face me, lips pointing in their direction. Yes, yes, as if I hadn't noticed yet.

We've always played this game, haven't we? Two introverts trapped outdoors, well of course people watching would become our favorite pastime. It's more interesting when our chosen characters seem to be in an excited argument. Sometimes, they look like old friends who just got reunited. Other times, they look like lovers in a fight. My favorite has always been that one time, when a couple were just eyeing each other throughout their dinner, mirroring us back during our fifth-month anniversary.

You had forgotten that day, and I didn't let you forget it. All the way through that impromptu dinner right here in Wildflour, I believe three seats down from the door, we were sitting quietly and face-to-face, because of course I didn't want to stay beside you when I was half-thinking of nice but vindictive ways of breaking up. Just as my roast organic chicken arrived on the table, a couple walked in, looking just as surly as we probably did.

Their fight had been a bit more public than ours. We were just sitting there in silence for almost thirty minutes before they came in. The girl had stormed in, followed by the guy who seemed too shy for her. She had taken the booth at the corner, probably thinking it was private enough for their conversation. But they were still within our vision. I wasn't in the mood to play the game, but you grabbed my hand and wouldn't let go, even though we were eating a main course that night.

I played along just so you would let go of my hand. I didn't want to eat cold chicken, you know? That, and the feel of your warm hand was bringing second thoughts about that breakup. We both knew whose side I was on.

I didn't want to talk even though that was the point of the game. To put words into other people's mouth for our own entertainment. We were great at it, the more absurd the better, but this particular moment stung too much to laugh at. You looked at me once more, so I offered the best thing I could. I looked straight at the stethoscope you clearly forgot was around your neck the entire damn time, my eye roll the equivalent of, "It's like you're dating your work now." The girl mimicked me, this time with her arms crossed as she looked out the window.

You wave your hand in my direction, lips clamped as if to say, "But it's for us." The guy suddenly looked sheepish, probably surprised at himself for what came out of his mouth.

I scoff visibly, the air I let out should be more than enough to mean, "Not when you forget." She was still looking outside, as though the rain was far more interesting than her boyfriend.

You give that soft smile, one that annoyed me for a second before I realized its true meaning, "I always remember even if I forget." He pushed the bouquet of roses closer to his girl. She gave it a sideways glance before looking at him squarely in the face. The guy keeps his eyes on her, those puppy eyes annoyingly endearing as I tried to avoid the same ones that are fixed on me.

It's one of those silences that you just want to kill with noise. Didn't I say I was petty? Just the sound of two little words would've ended this.

"I'm sorry."

I felt it more than heard it. I've never believed in being so in sync with another person that you get to hear what they're thinking.

But it was the first time I admitted to myself that I love you. And the first time I honestly believed that I had superpowers that were somehow synced with yours. Though I know you didn't protest that time, we know it's because you just wanted to tap out and avoid round two.

You laugh at the memory. I give you that face, the same one as my Viber Legcat sticker that screams "No way" because damn, we did it again, didn't we? And you just return it with one that says "Gimme a break."

I scrunch my face as I shove another flambé slice into my mouth. I'm ready for another round, and this time, you'll be the one who will suffer that sudden stab of feels when you're not expecting them.

We've already perfected the art of that wordless dialogue game. An eyebrow lift can mean four different emotions, but somehow we manage to get each one right in this game. But as I look at the girl's hand clutching the guy's arm so tightly, the guy trying to coax her into letting go just for a minute, and the dreaded feeling of a separation coming, I stop myself. There's something about the way she cries, like she needs to get over something, that rubs me the wrong way. And even though the game is far from over—and because I always want to get the last word, you know that—I break our code and say out loud, "I miss you."

"Excuse me?" A waitress was passing by our table and probably thought I was talking to her. I shoot you a sideways glance and suppress a smile.

"Um, I mean, bill please?" She gives an uneasy smile and nods, before I see some leftovers which I ask her to bag. She gives another smile, stiffer this time, and walks away in three long strides. Shame it wasn't one of the waitresses I knew. They would've just shrugged it off as a joke.

I chuckle to myself, though it's more to ignore the way you're looking at me. You're probably annoyed at how I ruined that punchline, but I told you, didn't I? I always wanted the last word. I look at you and have to squint my eyes for a moment. I hate it when the sun's light seems to bounce off your hair like a reflector and blind me unexpectedly. But then again, I appreciate it because it takes away the shadows under your eyes, highlights those annoyingly defined cheekbones, and erases three years' worth of time from your appearance. It's the same way you'd look during our honeymoon, or even the days that would follow, when I would wake up beside you and see the morning light beaming down through our drawn curtains. My best memory of you, I would say.

The waitress arrives and leaves the doggie bag and the bill. I place P800 to cover the food plus tip. You're still looking at the couple, the girl now a little calmer, but her lips pursed, the same thing I do

when I'm holding back the feels. I look at my watch, remembering that you probably have one other place you need to be.

"I'll see you later?"

You smile and make that kissy "Yes, babe" face, the same one that made me love that kissy face Panda sticker even more. I return with a flying kiss to distract you from my picking up the bouquet on the sly.

As I walk towards High Street, I look at my phone and see your message, knowing just how well my eco bag kept my surprise.

"Will be waiting for you, love. And don't forget my flowers."

It's almost half past five as I make my way through the grassy field. Everyone else is probably in warm and toasty restaurants ordering their appetizers. The night is still young for lovers and couples, because Valentine's Day is the one day we have an excuse to become the love-struck teenagers we all are.

Me, well, we both have our own weird way of celebrating love. It's what attracted you to me, and it's what keeping me grounded. I pull your jacket over myself, the breeze oddly biting considering the month. I walk amidst the grass and small flowers, until I arrive at the foot of that tall stone building, the one they say is a symbol of love, a flower's heart shaped to house the memory of people you love.

It's a place I've come to hate and hold dear. How can I hate a place that holds my heart, after all? I walk inside, my feet carrying me to a stone slab three levels above my head. It's a good thing I was still able to get the third level at such short notice, so I could still touch the carvings of your name along with the date that took you from me. The same date that we should celebrate our love is also the same date I have to remember the pain of losing the point of that happiness.

I take out the flowers and lay them on the ground. See, I didn't forget? It's become a sad anniversary, me bringing flowers and you forever waiting for them. Though we don't really get the satisfaction of giving and receiving them, face-to-face.

The open area of the Aeternum Columbarium feels even emptier on Valentine's Day. Everyone's out on

a date, but then again, I guess you can say that I am, too. You're here with me, even though everyone else would probably say otherwise.

You're standing there, almost clear as day yet hazy as a dream.

I hold out my hand, hopeful but careful enough to not touch your memory. If I look hard enough, you're still wearing your doctor's coat, the one you were wearing when they found you in the car wreckage heading home after a thirteen-hour surgery. If I believe hard enough, it's pristine just like the way I ironed it the weekend before. You'd have on your favorite blue tie, the first one I bought you before we even started going out, now faded three shades lighter. You're standing behind me, arms wrapped around my shoulder, a habit you indulge in because you dwarf me in your bear hug even when I wear good heels. I hug your jacket closer, if only to complete the memory with the smell of your perfume and hint of hospital ammonia.

The wind blows harder so I hold on to my skirt. Maybe it's just the sounds of the trees, but I hear my name in the wind, a whispered Liz that stretches on until the wind stops. It's never the same as your deep baritone voice, but I like to believe you've got a cold on days like these, transforming that sexy voice into a rattling one.

I guess you can give me this one day, right? February 14th isn't just about flowers or dates, not when it was the day we vowed that we'd have and hold each other in sickness and in health, for better or worse. Is it wrong that I haven't gotten around to fulfilling that last part yet?

I can almost see you with that sad smile, the same one you offered before I had to turn away when I heard the long flat beep. It has already been two years when I only had an hour with you in that emergency room, an hour that you held on even with that large piece of the windshield lodged right in your chest. It wasn't even a choice of pulling the plug or waiting for a miracle. The only choice was to take it out to take you out of that misery.

A cardiologist who died with a literal broken heart. You'd probably tell me to laugh at the irony, but you know better than to test me.

It's been two years, but it also still feels like just yesterday, I was so worried that my dress wouldn't zip right.

A year and eleven months since my dad had broken in through our window to find me in bed, unconscious after downing pills because I just couldn't sleep.

A year and seven months since I started to feel like I was going crazy. Since I quit my job. Since I did nothing but park myself in front of the TV for Netflix. Since I started hating everything, because all of it reminded me of you.

A little over a year since I started therapy, counselor-hopping because it just didn't make sense. Every therapist told me that acceptance happens once I learn how to picture my life as a single woman again, independent and able to smile at your memory. It might be slow and frustrating, sure, but it will come, and I'll be able to come to grips with the fact that you're gone and move on with my life. It wasn't the pace I was frustrated by, but the fact that she expected me to get over it at all and get a new life.

Just before our anniversary last year, I came across that story on Facebook. A wind telephone somewhere in Japan, where people go on pilgrimages for one thing: to make a call to their loved ones who were no longer here. Years ago in that tragedy, the Otsuchi town had taken the worst hit, an earthquake, a tsunami, and a fire that brought down a town of thousands. Now that wind telephone booth exists for those who want to talk to those that they miss, a disconnected line that connects them to the ones they want to hear from the most. For a few minutes, about the same time a single phone call lasts, they're able to be with them. Live a short while believing that the ones they love are somewhere just waiting for them, calling them to come home where they're waiting.

That's why I know why you still haven't left me, not really. Because I haven't let you, not yet.

They call it the continuing bonds theory. People with ongoing attachments, mothers tucking in their dead daughters every night in empty rooms or widowers celebrating anniversary dinners in the same restaurant for twenty years, it's a way for them to cope.

Death takes away the person, but the relationship stays and it's that person's way of keeping that memory

alive, continuing, because they themselves are still here. Sometimes moving on isn't always the end goal, because there's some way to keep them with you forever.

And if there was a way to keep you here, I'd take it. Because I know you would, too.

One day, even just this one day every year, the day that holds so many memories, heartbreaks, first times, first fights, and a lot of possibilities, you'll be with me. I know you've always been by my side these past two years. You've been there to receive the flowers, the ones I bring each time in response to our dare. You've really been there holding my hand even when I can't feel it. You've really been there all those times I'd be talking to myself, because we're connected like that.

I look around, the setting sun a reminder of the very long phone call I'm not ready to end, not yet. You remain fuzzy in the dusk light; I guess the time I spent by your bedside last night staring at my favorite photograph of us together until I slept wasn't enough. Because it's a memory from some years ago, one that hasn't faded, but one that has been outlived.

I know that the next moment I reach out, I'll probably realize that you're not there, not anymore. The same way that you can't send me any real messages, I'd know that no one's on the other end, not really.

Perhaps next year, I'd learn to forget. Maybe this year I'd learn to really truly accept. Or maybe I already did. Who knows how a year would go?

I look at the message one last time. You sent it three years ago, remember? Maybe if there was ever any real regret, it was that I never got to say anything back. I never got to say the last word. I wipe my face with your jacket, the smell almost faded since I've used the last of your remaining perfume last week.

I never got to say what really had to be said either. In between choked up breaths I type in the words, "I'll never forget. See you, love." My finger hovers over the send button for one, two, three beats of a minute, before I erase the message again and pocket my phone.

I make my way towards the exit with the disappearing light as my guide. I look back for a moment and see the last rays of the sun illuminate the roses I left behind, a heavy mark to end my one day.

Maybe next year I'll bring white ones instead. ●



Photographed by *Sibyl Layag*

Compass

TRAVEL

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FALLEN

Sibyl Layag savors the sights and sounds of Seoul in fall

Written and photographed by
Sibyl Layag

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MADE IN MUNICH

Chino Hernandez revels in the cultural attractions of Munich

Written and photographed by
Chino Hernandez

LA DIOSA TUNDIA

La Diosa Tundia is located on the mountain of Tundia, in Potosí. Legend has it that the mountain goddess shed so much milk and honey that the loss of it was so much despised to form the great lakes of Uyuni.



COMPASS

FALLEN

A brief love affair with autumn in Seoul

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Sibyl Layag*

EHWA WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY

Ehwa Women's University was a revelation. Perhaps being not so far removed from my college days, I've always relished the free-spirited, tranquil and academic feel of university towns. But what makes Ehwa that much more memorable is the gorgeous architecture and the tree-lined streets adorned by autumn foliage at its peak splendor. The entrance, designed by renowned architect Dominique Perrault, is a masterpiece of place-making, an imposing structure that easily gives way to the natural beauty of the gardens within. Outside, a more riotous form of play emerges, as several shops, cafes and street food stalls vie for the attention of visitors and students alike.

MYEONGDONG

To me, Myeongdong felt like Christmas. I'm not sure why—maybe it's because of the polished mercantile feel of the place, or the constant feasting going on in the streets, or the crowds of people all looking like they are in the throes of a perpetual celebration. I resisted the call of the cosmetic shops (I have that scheduled for another day, I won't pretend to be a poster girl for frugality), but the street food was irresistible.





CHANGDEOKGUNG PALACE

Huwon, or what is called the Secret Garden at the Changdeokgung Palace, is a resting place for the Joseon kings. Its peaceful beauty is best experienced in the autumn season. Inside, the air is noticeably cooler and the atmosphere much quieter. It is not so much a garden as it is a vast private forest, as the flora is maintained in its natural condition. This is evident in the way its lawns, trees, shrubs and greenery don't at all appear polished or overly manicured. A 300-year old tree is left unperturbed within it — a fitting homage — and between pathways small pockets with mini libraries and pavilions abound to serve as retreats and temporary escapes for the royals housed in the palace. We didn't take a guided tour, but we enjoyed just fancying ourselves anachronistic entities stuck in the Joseon Dynasty as we walked around the sprawling grounds.

NAMDAEMUN MARKET

One of the best ways to know a city is through its markets, and within Seoul's oldest and largest, Namdaemun Market, lies a treasure I never would have stumbled upon if I remained within my comfort zone. Still in search of a warm reprieve from the autumn cold, we entered a plastic door to a tight, dimly lit alleyway lined with *kalguksu* (hand-cut noodles in clam broth) vendors — definitely unassuming and even perhaps uninviting to some. The *ahjummas* manning the stalls are insistent, but friendly. As soon as we sat down, they served us a quick bowl of *bibimbap* (fresh vegetable and chili paste rice bowl) and a few sides, all of which blew our minds.





KALGUKSU

Then to the main event: the *kalguksu*. Our *ahjumma* plopped our bowls down in front of us: the dish looked simple enough, clear broth and rough-hewn noodles with a bunch of vegetables and some chili paste thrown in. But then we tasted it, and there's no other word more appropriate to describe it other than "epiphany". As we sadly slurped our last bite, we thanked the high heavens for the existence of *kalguksu* and the almost serendipitous opportunity we were given to experience it.

TOSOKCHON

It was a crisp autumn day—a mite too cold for us tropic dwellers—so we decided to extend our history lesson through lunch at a cozy *hanok* restaurant. One of the most popular (and affordable) of those in Seoul is Tosokchon. The restaurant has a small courtyard inside, typical of *hanoks*, and we sat on cushions surrounding low tables, completing the traditional feel. Tosokchon's specialty is ginseng chicken soup, or *samgyetang*, traditionally eaten in the summer to replenish energy lost to the heat. To us, however, a steaming bowl of hot chicken soup is just perfect in the autumn weather.





GWANGJANG MARKET

Gwangjang Market is one of the most vibrant places in which to soak up Korean culture through its cuisine. It had the greatest concentration of the most popular street food and delicacies in Seoul: only few among them *mayak gimbap* (bite-sized vegetable rice rolls), *soondae* (blood sausage), mung bean pancakes, *hotteok* (fried sweet pancakes); seafood pancakes, octopus, pig trotters, *teokbokki* (spicy rice cakes) and *odeng* (fish cakes). It's where workers spend their happy hours and students buy their after-school snacks. Its creation was also a form of rebellion against foreigners usurping the local's share of the market scene.



PAJU BOOK CITY

An unfortunate incident forced us to cancel one of my most anticipated destinations for our trip, which led us to an impromptu trip to Paju Book City. It is a quiet community of publishing houses, book shops and book cafes with a book-to-human ratio of 20:1. Indeed, there weren't many people around; most of them were tucked inside the beautifully designed Modern buildings, the likes of which I've only previously seen on print, in design magazines. Some of the towering austere, geometric forms reminded me of bookcases, and I felt like a tiny visitor in a giant library of metal and glass.

PAJU CULTURE AND INFORMATION CENTER

I opened the door to Paju's Book City Culture and Information Center, and immediately felt like Belle when the Beast showed her his enormous personal library. The walls were literally made of bookcases.

Art installations peppered the spaces between. A reading area and café dominated the middle of the space, and a bookstore stood by on the side for those wishing to take a part of Paju's book culture home. Unfortunately, there were hardly any English-language books (or maybe I wasn't looking hard enough).



SUNGNYEMUN GATE

Sungnyemun Gate, like all the other ancient gates in the city, stood majestic amid all the metal and glass and concrete of modern Seoul. It was burned down by an arsonist in 2008 and was since masterfully restored to its former glory. Walking through the gate itself was like travelling back in time, so well-preserved and recreated was the structure. As we emerged from the gate, still immersed in our time-travelling thoughts, the immediate sight of the skyscrapers and cars speeding along the road was almost jarring. ●







C O M P A S S

MADE IN MUNICH

Munich homes a city proper designed to entertain visitors with a glimpse of its past

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Chino Hernandez*

NEUES RATHAUS

The *Neues Rathaus* (New Town Hall) stands tall at the center of Munich's cultural Marieplatz district. Flocks of tourist and locals seeking a lively afternoon find a warm bench with a view of the 255-foot Neo-Gothic landmark, anticipating a treat that happens only twice a day. Completed by George von Hauberrisser in 1874, the building acts as the seat of the mayor's office and headquarters for the city council and administration. When the clock strikes five, Germany's famous wooden carvings perform a famous routine on the side of the building, portraying figures from Munich's rich history. The audience stares in awe as they experience a century-long tradition of the vibrant city's heritage.

PALACE NYMPHENURG

The German royal family's summer retreat home, Palace Nymphenurg, is a sprawling garden retreat. Easily accessible to the public, a visit to the baroque structure of King Ferdinandry Maria and Hanriette Andelaide of Savoy leads to an afternoon of royal culture.





STONE HALL

Comprising of two main palace wings, the home is connected in the middle by the central pavilion called Stone Hall. Used as a mere entrance hall, gold fixtures from France detail walls filled with Greek-style frescos by Johann Baptist Zimmermann and F. Zimmermann. It is easily the palace's most impressive space.



RATSKELLER

A hearty meal after a day of sight seeing is in order when in Munich. Located beneath many buildings across the nation, a *ratskeller* (underground bars and restaurants) serves unpretentious food that will certainly satisfy a grumbling stomach. Recommended dishes include a large platter of fried chicken and fries. Cheeses, pretzels and other breads are served on the side, and are best enjoyed with a cold mug of German brew.



BMW MUSEUM

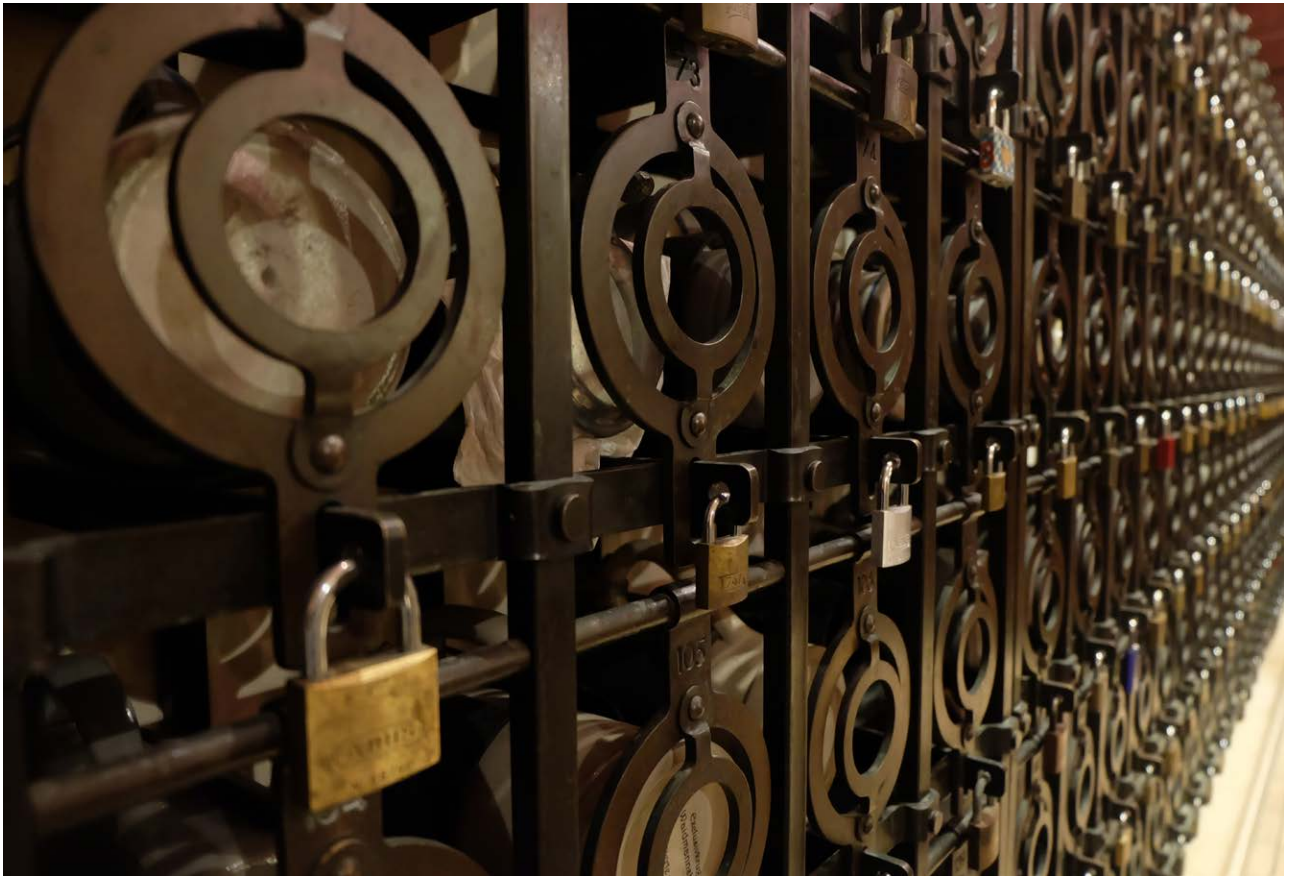
South of the Neues Rathaus district stands one of Germany's leading manufacturers. BMW's expansive property is more than just a factory and retail distributor. It also acts as a modern museum, educating tourists and the local youth on the history of the brand and its impact to the country. The museum features a collection of cars dating back from the Bavarian company's humble beginnings on display in a multi-level complex, back in 1916. Available for viewing and appreciation are iconic cars from 1939 cross country races, James Bond's famous blue sports car and classic Isettas.



HOFBRAUHAUS

Munich nightlife is vibrant and enjoyable. The city homes countless beer houses, which features lively song and dance numbers, bar chow for the drunk and happy, and in-house made *bier*. Hofbrauhaus is one of the oldest and most notable beerhouses in town.





HOFBRAUHAUS HALLWAY

Hallways at Hofbrauhaus include locked cellars for mugs owned by house regulars. It has been a withstanding tradition for hundreds of years to purchase a space on the wall and to lock your mug up for safekeeping. Your return will be a celebration amongst the spirits of previous patrons that include Mozart and members of the German royal family. Hung over and off to the airport, your space on the wall will be an everlasting reminder that once, you stood in the city of King Ludwig, fine cuisine and—even better—*bier*. ●



Photographed by *Patrick Kasingsing*

Palate

FOOD

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DESSERT DOSSIER

We pair Dolcelatte's dessert offerings to five creative personas

Produced by **Patrick Kasingsing** and **Patricia Herbolario**

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MY REGULAR

Kit Singson lets us in on her favorite lunchtime chow

Written and photographed by **Kit Singson**

P A L A T E X D O L C E L A T T E

Dessert Dossier

We pair five of Dolcelatte's
scrumptious dessert offerings
with a creative persona

PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS

Patrick Kasingsing and Patricia Herbolario



THE METICULOUS CRAFTSMAN

No detail is spared in the name of artistic vision

Berry Amour Waffled Crougmut

THE PICKY CURATOR

Nothing but the best and brightest for the collection

Almond Fruit Tart





THE ECCENTRIC THINKER

Style and substance with a dash of different
Smoked Pulled Pork Crouhnut

THE QUIET MINIMALIST

Simplicity trumps extravagance

Valrhona Molten Lava Cake





THE CLASSICIST

Because new isn't always better

Ube Queso Croughnut

Satiate your dessert cravings at Dolcelatte.
Follow them on social media on Instagram [@dolcelatte](#)
and Facebook ([Dolcelatte](#))

MY REGULAR

Chicken Inasal Tenders with Anattomato Rice

at 55Square Cafe

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY *Kit Singson*

Craving for something filling, familiar, and fresh? Try the Chicken Inasal Tenders with Anattomato Rice from 55Square Cafe if you're in the Katipunan area. It's a bowl of freshly baked chicken tenders marinated in a special *kalamansi* brine on top of half-cooked, half-fried rice coated in *achiote* oil. It's topped with freshly diced tomatoes, leeks, and drizzled in a homemade *inasal* mayo, and red-hot sriracha sauce. It's the intricate marriage of zesty, smokey, sour, and hot. Science and precision went into every step of the preparation and presentation of the dish.

HOW MUCH P160, with a free glass of house iced tea
WHERE 55Square Cafe, G/L Alcal Bldg., 285 Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City (right across the Ateneo Blue Eagle Gym)





But the best-known product, and one of France's most important agricultural exports, is wine. Wine has been produced in France since Roman times and, perhaps earlier. There is hardly a region of France that does not have its vineyards. Ranging in color from pale rose to deep ruby from golden amber to almost clear white, the wines of France are considered by many to be the finest in the world. There are the roses of Provence and Anjou, the reds of the Rhone, and the whites of the Loire and Alsace. The sparkling wines of the Champagne region are the only ones in the world legally entitled to use the name. Some of the only great red wines of the world, though often they may come from holdings only a few acres in size.

Besides the important well-known vineyards, such as Rothschild and Romance-Conti, there are local wines and everyday wines (vins ordinaires), which are rarely exported. Many small farms have their own prized vines, producing just enough for family and friends. In some parts of France, after picking time, farmers still trudge up the slopes to prune their weathered, gnarled vines with old-fashioned long-handled knives, as they did in the time of Saint Vincent, long ago. According to an old Burgundian legend it was this saint who first taught that severely pruned vines yield more grapes. It takes year-round, unremitting toil to grow the grapes that keep France in the forefront of the world's wine producers.

France is also well supplied with uranium deposits near the town of Caq, where it is used for reactors that run huge experimental solar power stations—that are so important in the transportation industries in th Les Baux, the town in southern France mined in the 19th century.

A Shot of Creativity

New Year Resolution: Take more coffee breaks

WORDS *Emarrah Sarreal*

When you're rushing to meet a deadline, taking a break is the last thing on your mind. As for creativity, at this point, you'll take whatever comes and hope for the best. But what if you could rewind time and redo everything, what would you do differently?

I bet you would force yourself to sit at your desk for hours until you come up with a good draft or idea, right? But that's the wrong way to go about it. This only leads to subpar work.

One thing that will do you (and your overworked brain) some good is scheduling coffee breaks. I know, I know. You're probably thinking that finishing the project as early as you can equates to wise use of your time. Hear me out.

Creativity is an elusive thing. In order for you to give your creative best, you need to set a deadline as well as space to wander and think. After all the wandering and thinking, you would need to refuel your focus and work on executing your ideas. It is between ideating and executing that you would need to schedule a coffee break. Here's how coffee breaks work:

Coffee breaks have been proven to keep you focused. Brief diversions, in general, can dramatically improve your ability to concentrate. If you're swamped with work, try the 50/10 rule. Allot 50 minutes for uninterrupted work and 10 minutes to a break, ideally with coffee. This system does wonders. Trust me.

Coffee breaks relieve stress. This is because coffee breaks usually involve a social component. A visit to the office pantry is guaranteed to increase chances of a quick, lighthearted chat with a colleague. Relish this time. This short interaction allows your mind and body to ease up and release the tension from sitting hunched over your laptop.

Coffee fuels you with much-needed caffeine. It's no secret that caffeine boosts productivity. Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard was known to drink coffee before working. Novelist Honoré de Balzac was notorious for crushing coffee beans and ingesting the powder before sitting down to work. Beethoven, Sartre and Mahler were also known for depending on caffeine's productivity-boosting wonders.

Coffee breaks recharge you. Without any downtime, you would be less efficient and more mistakes would be made. A coffee break is not procrastination.

Lastly, taking coffee breaks is a creativity-boosting ritual. Many artists, writers, philosophers, and even politicians establish a ritual that helps them get started. The act of getting coffee itself is a ritual that can jumpstart any creative process and keep your stress levels in check. For proof, you only need to look to the Swedes who take coffee breaks twice daily. Known for the popular minimalist Scandinavian design, Swedes are also among the least stressed in the world.

So why not take a leaf out of their book? Go ahead and take that coffee break. ●

THE REVIEW: FILM

Your Name

Miguel Llona reviews Makoto Shinkai's animated masterpiece that induces an out-of-body experience for viewers, much like its central love story

REVIEW *Miguel Llona*



Set in modern-day Japan, *Your Name* tells the story of two high school kids who inexplicably switch bodies on random days. Mitsuha Miyamizu, a country girl who dreams of moving to Tokyo, and Taki Tachibana, an aspiring architect living in the big city, find themselves waking up in each other's bodies despite never having met each other. Initially thinking they're dreaming, they eventually immerse themselves in the other's life as much as they can, resulting in confusion and misunderstanding with the people around them. Through this mysterious occurrence, the pair forms an unlikely bond whose significance they must uncover before it fades away.

PLOT

According to writer and director Makoto Shinkai, *Your Name* attempts to answer the question of why people meet. Is everything happenstance, or is there a preordained reason why certain people enter our lives? Countless love stories have asked the same question, but *Your Name* pushes boundaries by marrying the typical gender switcheroo with the perplexing intricacies of time travel. While time travel has ruined a good number of movies, it's used to great effect here and doesn't really distract from the overall story.

Using classic anime archetypes for characters (the moody boy, the demure girl), Shinkai weaves an emotionally powerful love story that zigs when you expect it to zag. What's impressive is the way the film stacks climax upon climax and throws curveballs at viewers every now and then. The non-linear sequence of events is deftly handled, allowing the story to build up its emotional intensity so that by the end of the film, Mitsuha and Taki's connection becomes the key to averting catastrophe and saving hundreds of lives.

The film's time-travel aspect is a convoluted mess, but let's face it, what movie with time travel isn't? There are holes in the story: Why doesn't Taki remember the name of Mitsuha's town? Why didn't they notice they were time-traveling when they were checking each other's smartphones? But due to the film's endless surprises and fantastical elements, these holes become afterthoughts to be nitpicked after multiple viewings. Even then, the story's lasting power should be enough to make one dismiss the inconsistencies.

CHARACTERS

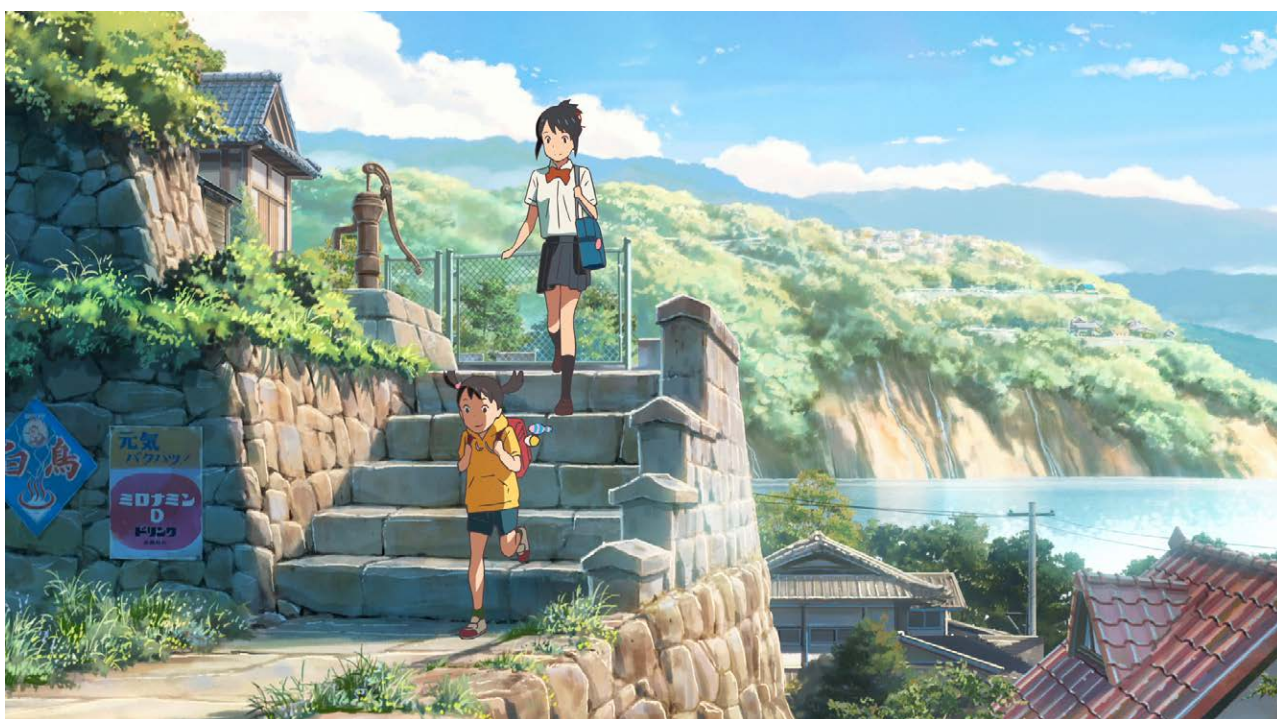
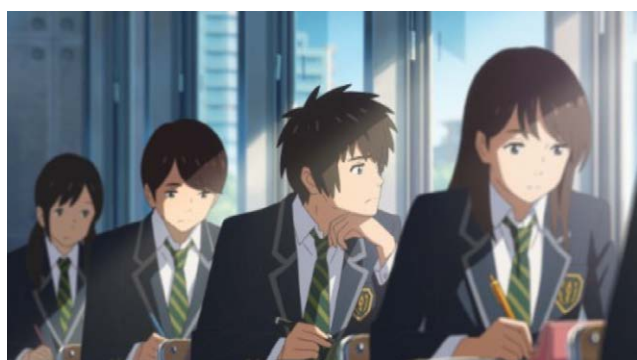
One of the opening lines—"I always feel like I'm searching for something"—already imbue the film with a universal appeal. Everyone is searching for someone or something that will give meaning to their life, and Mitsuha and Taki serve as the perfect vehicles for the audience to relate to. Their relatable (albeit cliché) motivations make it easy for us to care about them, and leave us laughing and gasping at their every action.

Having stereotypes as characters actually enhance the story, as they unlock the thrills and sorrows of young love most of us are familiar with.



According to writer and director Makoto Shinkai, *Your Name* attempts to answer the question of why people meet. Is everything happenstance, or is there a preordained reason why certain people enter our lives?

The landscapes of Tokyo and the fictional Itomori, as well as Japan's old traditions, are captured to the finest detail to visually ground the story.



Adolescent awkwardness shines through as well, seen in Taki's first date with his workplace crush (orchestrated by Mitsuha), Mitsuha (as Taki) struggling to juggle school and work, and Taki (as Mitsuha) groping his host's breasts for the first (but definitely not the last) time. Ryonosuke Kamiki and Mone Kamishiraishi voice the young protagonists wonderfully through both the humorous and tear-jerky moments.

Even the film's supporting characters have their moment in the sun. Mitsuha's father, the town mayor, is everyone's overbearing dad; Tessie and Sayaka are our supportive, no-nonsense friends, and Ms. Okudera is our teenage crush come to life. The script assimilates them into the larger story, assuring they play crucial roles in the film's climax instead of serving as filler characters.

DIRECTION AND ANIMATION

Even the most romantically jaded out there will acknowledge the film as a visual masterpiece. The blend of animation and CG effects gives most scenes an impressionist quality (the meteor shower scenes are breathtaking), complementing the movie's magical realist leanings. More than making each scene a joy to look at, the dazzling array of colors dictates or reflects the mood of specific scenes, my favorite being the soft sunset hue in the *kataware-doki* scene when Mitsuha and Taki finally meet.

The landscapes of Tokyo and the fictional Itomori, as well as Japan's old traditions, are captured to the finest detail to visually ground the story. Shinkai knows when to zoom out for breathtaking panoramic shots and speed up the action when the situation calls for it, making for an enjoyable roller-coaster experience.

MUSIC

Rivaling the film's visuals for attention is the music, which hits all the right notes. Scored by popular Japanese band Radwimps, the music seamlessly transitions from energetic to poignant, furthering the emotional power of every moment and subtly moving the viewer to tears (something I did the two times I watched, which never happens). It feels like the film is taking its cues from the music itself, a fact that Shinkai admitted in numerous interviews. In fact, I'd say listening to the whole soundtrack is akin to watching the movie itself, as each song crystallizes the pathos and nuances of Shinkai's script.

That's not an indictment of *Your Name*, but rather a testament to its brilliance in all aspects. Moreover, it transcends your usual tale of adolescent love to touch on the connections between human beings in general. It's a movie that argues against happenstance—the people in our life are here for reasons we might never know. As Grandma Miyamizu in the movie teaches us, god exists in the connections between people, and though these connections may twist, tangle, unravel, and break like threads, they will eventually connect again. As it certainly did for me, I'm sure *Your Name* will leave viewers feeling hopeful for things to come, and ultimately appreciative of all the love surrounding them. ●

Your Name (Kimi No Na Wa)

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
Makoto Shinkai

PRODUCED BY
Noritaka Kawaguchi
Genki Kawamura

STARRING
Ryunosuke Kamiki
Mone Kamishiraishi
Masami Nagasawa
Etsuko Ichihara
Ryo Narita
Aoi Yūki
Nobunaga Shimazaki
Kaito Ishikawa
Kanon Tani

MUSIC BY
Radwimps

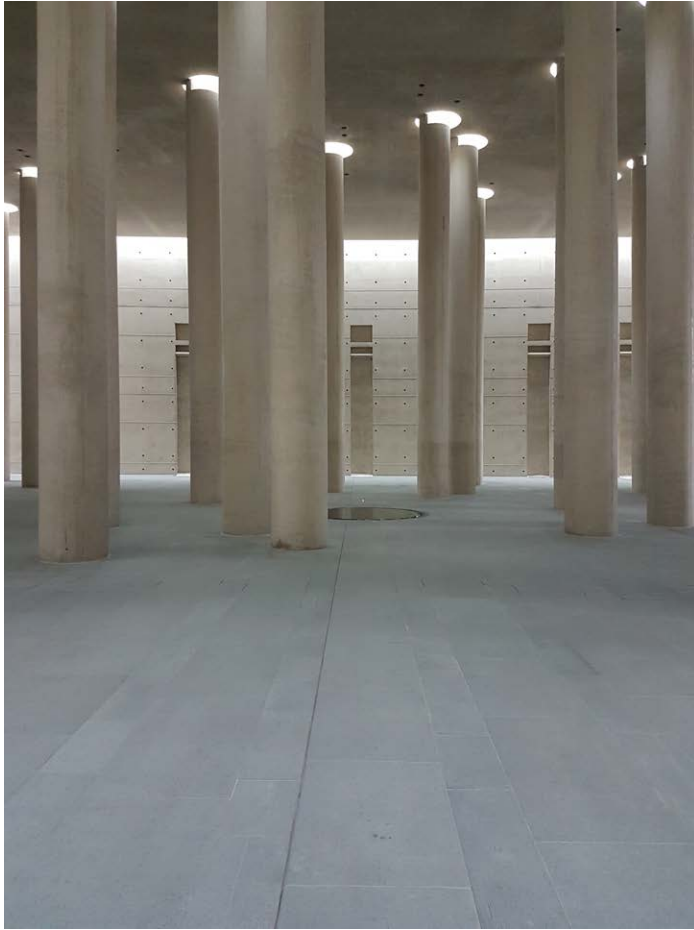
CINEMATOGRAPHY
Makoto Shinkai

PRODUCTION COMPANY
CoMix Wave Films

DISTRIBUTED BY
Toho

RELEASE DATE
July 3, 2016
RUNNING TIME
1 hour 46 minutes
COUNTRY
Japan
LANGUAGE
Japanese

AWARDS WON
Best Animated Film,
Los Angeles Film Critics
Association Awards;
Best Animated Feature Length
Film, 49th Sitges Film Festival;
Arigato Award, 29th Tokyo
International Film Festival
(for Makoto Shinkai)



LOCATION *Krematorium Berlin* DATE *December 6, 2016*

Parting Shot

A VISUAL ENDNOTE

Photographed by JP dela Cruz

Death has always fascinated me. Sounds macabre, but there is something about transcendence and spirituality (and leaving this damned world behind) that has gotten me quite curious. How does architecture play a role in this part of Man's life? I took the trek to see this building and boy, was it worth it. I had the space all to myself—the chance allowed me to immerse in the experience, even for just a while. A true highlight of this trip—Berlin was a last-minute choice—it was a powerful moment.

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