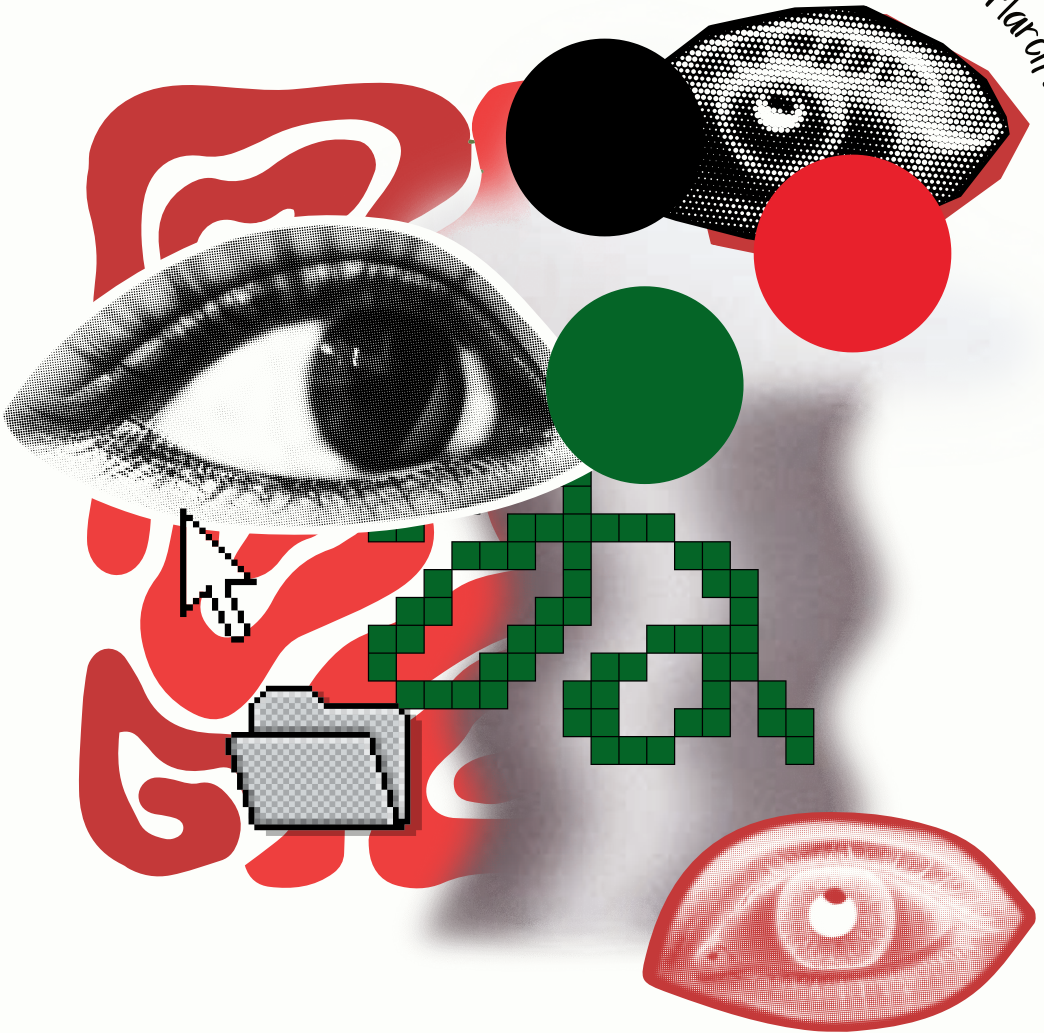




# COLOURBLIND

VOLUME 2 - 21st March 2024



# Acknowledgment of Country

The ANU BIPOC Department would like to acknowledge this zine and all of the art and writing inside, was created and produced on Ngunnawal and Ngambri land. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands across Country. We pay respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and acknowledge the long history of art and storytelling on this land. As non-Indigenous people, we recognise our position as settlers on this land, and commit to standing with First Nations people. We commit to amplifying and prioritising Indigenous voices and perspectives in all of our work as a Department.

On all days but specially the '*International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*' we commit to truth-telling. The truth of how this nation is established on the colonisation and racism suffered by First Nations People. We have a long way to go with decolonising ourselves but we stand committed to it.



# OFFICER'S NOTE

WELCOME TO OUR SECOND EDITION OF THE BIPOC ZINE - 'COLOURBLIND'!

I'm Selena Wania (she/her) - your 2024 ANUSA BIPOC (Bla(c)k, Indigenous & People of Colour) Officer and am so proud to release an edition which explores anti-racist themes. We created this zine in light of '*International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*', hoping to provide BIPOC students a platform to voice their experiences with racism and anti-racism.



We should no longer shy away from themes like racism and anti-racism. We understand that these conversations can be hard or uncomfortable to have. Our zine aims to open up these conversations in a safe space - one where you're able to visually see and read the realities and stories of BIPOC people.



In Australia, the '*International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*' is replaced with '*Harmony Day*'. Is calling it '*Harmony Day*' truly acknowledging the lived realities of those who experience racism, or is it hiding behind a weak celebration of "diversity"? I'll let you decide on that one.

I call on those who are reading this zine to truly reflect on this day and hereafter, whether you are BIPOC or not. Acknowledge racism, stand in solidarity with those who have experienced it, open up real conversations, and engage with decolonising and anti-racism initiatives.

Lastly, I want to thank all our contributors who've shared their stories with us - thank you for trusting us with them. I also want to greatly thank the editor of this zine, Emalisa Edwards for bringing all our stories together and presenting them to you.

Our voices are here, loud and clear and now I hope you listen to them.





# EDITORS NOTE

The inspiration for Colourblind is inspired by the phrase "*I don't see colour*". This phrase, though well-intentioned, often serves as a shield against acknowledging the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). It reflects a desire to overlook the harsh realities of racism and discrimination that persist in our society.

This zine, "*Colourblind*," stands as a testament to the ongoing struggle for equality and justice. Through its pages it seeks to amplify the voices of those marginalised by systemic biases while recognising the resilience and strength within our communities. May it serve as both a call to action and a celebration of our collective journey toward a more equitable future.

Enjoy,  
Emalisa





# THANK YOU TO ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS!

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*Bella Wang*

*Emalisa Edwards*

*Maria Alkhouri*

*Maya Eusebio*

*Nihar Janjua*

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*Emalisa Edwards*

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# CONTENTS

LAND BACK, BORDERS,  
SOVEREIGNTY, MAPS 9

MY NAME 11

GROUPESS PERSON 12

BIPOC VOICES 13

BIPOC TUNES 15

TACTILE SYMBOLS OF  
RESISTANCE 17



**"CRAZY IRAQI WOMAN" 22**

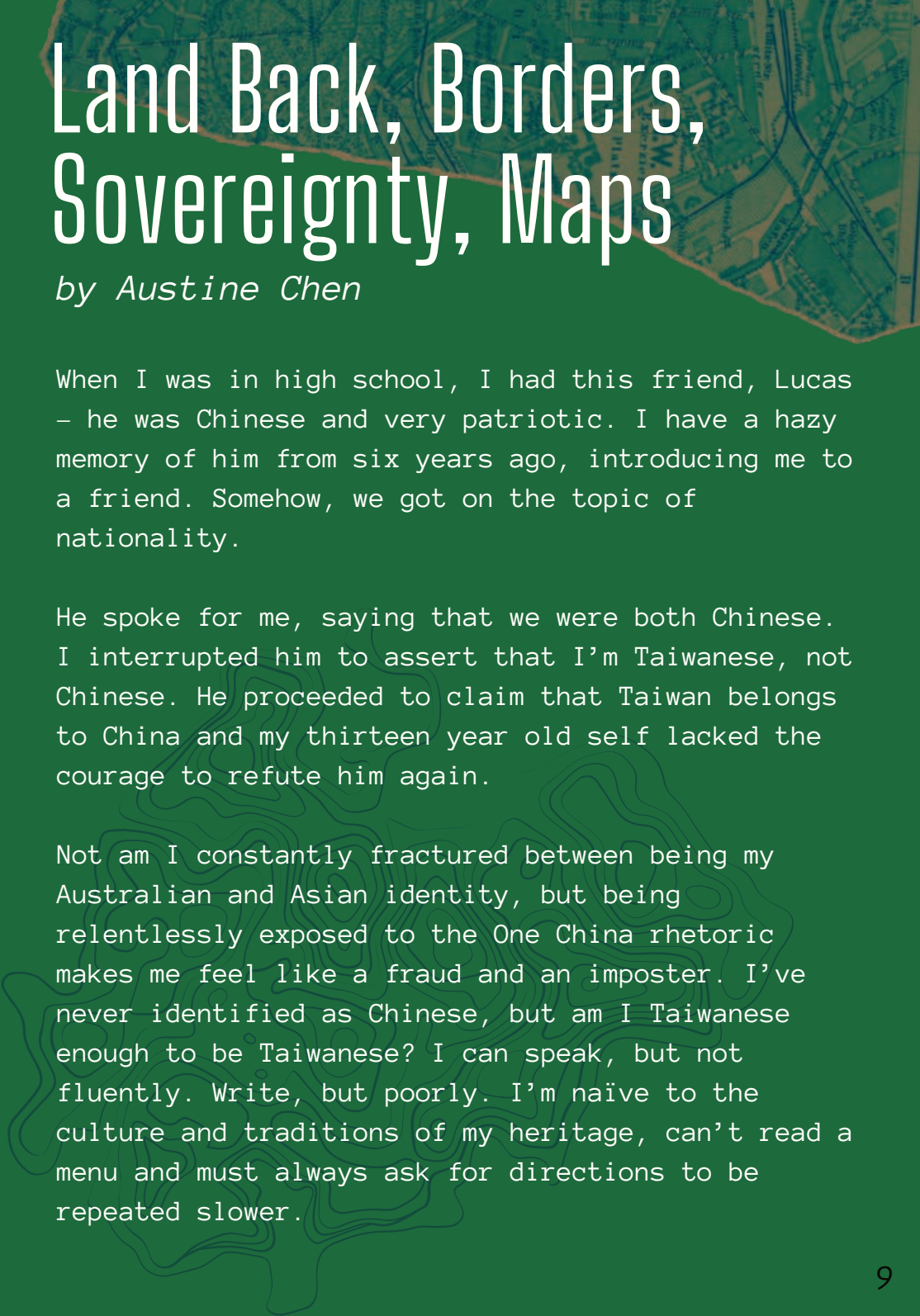
**STRAIGHT PEOPLE HAIR 24**

**WHO AM I? 26**

**IT'S HAIRY BUSINESS 30**

**CONFESSIONS FROM RESIDENT:  
RACISM AT XXX HALL 32**

**STAFF ADVOCACY 34**



# Land Back, Borders, Sovereignty, Maps

*by Austine Chen*

When I was in high school, I had this friend, Lucas – he was Chinese and very patriotic. I have a hazy memory of him from six years ago, introducing me to a friend. Somehow, we got on the topic of nationality.

He spoke for me, saying that we were both Chinese. I interrupted him to assert that I'm Taiwanese, not Chinese. He proceeded to claim that Taiwan belongs to China and my thirteen year old self lacked the courage to refute him again.

Not am I constantly fractured between being my Australian and Asian identity, but being relentlessly exposed to the One China rhetoric makes me feel like a fraud and an imposter. I've never identified as Chinese, but am I Taiwanese enough to be Taiwanese? I can speak, but not fluently. Write, but poorly. I'm naïve to the culture and traditions of my heritage, can't read a menu and must always ask for directions to be repeated slower.



I visited over the summer. An eight-hour flight and I woke up in Taoyuan International Airport. The familiar accent of Mandarin and scattered sentences in Taiwanese always makes me feel at home, along with the shiny marble tiles that pave the floor and the bold traditional characters guiding me through the airport.

Whenever we go back, we visit my great-grandfather. He's 101, born on the island. He likes to scrapbook – he carefully cuts out newspaper clippings and pastes it onto a sheet of paper. One particular piece says 正名台灣自由國家台灣基進台灣主權。It roughly translates to: rename Taiwan from the *Republic of China* to *Taiwan* and advance Taiwan's sovereignty. Each individual word is from a separate article, in a multitude of colours, each glued neatly in with care. It gives me hope.



# My Name

*By Youngseo (Sabina) Lee*

I am sure you guys are used to self-introductions, whether you started doing it from a very young age or very recently.

As a consequence to having to move around so often, I have started developing a script for my self introductions. Here is the first part of the script: “Hi! My name is Youngseo Lee, but you can call me by my English name, Sabina.” From the age of 4, I started attending international school in Japan and was given an “English” name by my parents for it to be easier for “other people” to pronounce. And I have lived as Sabina ever since.

Many POC individuals around me have alternate names they go by. My friend Sungyeon Park as Sunny, my Sister Kyungseo Lee as Adela, and the list goes on. It never registered how this was a form of conforming with Western standards as well as dismissing my Korean culture and identity that is represented through my name.

As I was going through some struggles regarding my identity, thinking about questions like, “How do I introduce myself? What is my actual name?”, what helped me think through this were the interactions I’ve had with the BIPOC community at ANU. At this party during O-week, I was talking to this girl and was introducing myself as Sabina, and followed that with my background of being Korean. She then asked me, “What is your Korean name? What do you prefer to be called by?”. This was probably the first time I ever got asked that question, so I was stunned. It felt so refreshing, inclusive and encouraging to be given the option to identify as both names for my own sake, not for others’ convenience.

I thought this was a rare interaction, but majority of the time I interact with BIPOC individuals at ANU, I feel my identity is welcomed and comfortable enough to be expressed. Even as a first-year student, it is evident that the BIPOC Department at ANU is a vital pillar of not only the BIPOC community at ANU, but the entire community to be harmonious.



# GROUPLESS PERSON

*By Bella Wang*

Every person belongs to some sort of a group either divided by race, gender, habit, political opinion, etc. Labour, Liberal, chocoholics, Swifties. But I wonder, which group do I belong to?

I used to think I belong to the group of European history enthusiasts. As natural as it is, I was happy when I was invited to a dinner with other students and someone started talking about Italian history.

“What do you study?” someone interrupted before I could join the conversation. He had a surprised face after hearing me say “history”.

“When did you come to Australia? Do you have citizenship?” he rudely continued his investigation.

I told myself it was ok. I had answered the same questions 5 times over to employment agencies and the Home Affairs Department.

“I came to Australia when I was 15,” I answered, “from China.”

“Do you know C? He is also Chinese!” he enquired. The table then started to talk about C. I never tried to talk about history again.

Next I tried Maths. As a Chinese student it felt almost like a prerequisite, even though I had no interest in it all. Progressing from not passing the mid-term exam to ending up with a distinction was a moment to be proud of.

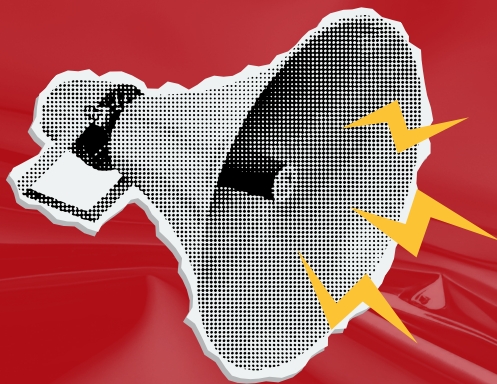
Yet, all I got is “Of course you got a Distinction, you’re Chinese”.

All my hard works, my late-night studies, my struggles and stress, ceased to be of any importance because I’m Chinese.

So now you ask what group do I belong to? History buff or Math enthusiast? Chinese or what else? I could not think of anything except being myself.



# BIPOC Voices



*by Selena Wania*

I in this article I would like to celebrate those in our BIPOC community who stand ever so strong in their voices. This article serves as a reminder that they will never be silenced.

## DR KARO MORET MIRANDA

In my opinion only the best professor ANU has! Dr Karo is an Afro-Cuban historian and used to run an amazing course called African and Afrodescendants (HIST2315) – which I highly recommend if it's on offer. You can now find her facilitating 'Racism and Bigotry' panels at different res halls to start conversations around spreading awareness and providing visibility on the racism that impacts university students. Dr Karo has always consistently supported the BIPOC Department and we are so ever grateful!



# ANJALI SHARMA



Name a 16 year old who sued the Australian government to fight for a climate safe future. Anjali Sharma. She aims to raise awareness about the disproportionate impacts of climate change, particularly towards young people and people of colour. In 2021, she successfully established that the Environment Minister owes all young people a duty of care to protect them from the impacts of climate change.

# MIRIAM EL-BEHESY

A proud Palestinian woman who is unstoppable. A student at ANU who represents her people and land fiercely. Whether that's giving a powerful speech at Palestinian protests, providing the Canberra community with beautiful Palestinian music DJ sets, or raising awareness on her Instagram story – Miriam is a powerhouse – and also a dear friend.





# BIPOC TUNES

*By Zizi Lawal*



## CRUEL SANTINO

Cruel Santino, formerly known as Santi, is a Nigerian musician known for his eclectic blend of Afrobeats, R&B, and hip-hop. He is a pioneer of the Alté music scene and his music often explores themes of identity, culture, and youth experiences in Nigeria. His distinct sound and innovative approach to genre fusion have garnered him critically acclaimed to both locally and internationally. If you ever want to (pretend to) experience being a youth in Lagos, play some Santi and you are immediately transported on a vibrant journey through the streets of Lagos, pulsating with energy and rhythm. With his introspective lyrics and infectious beats, he has established himself as a trailblazer in the Alté music scene, captivating audiences with his authenticity and creativity.

**Recommended Songs to catch the vibe:**  
Sparky , Rapid Fire , Murvlana

## LOYLE CARNER

Loyle Carner is a British rapper known for his introspective lyrics and jazz-infused beats. His music often delves into personal experiences, mental health struggles, and family dynamics, offering listeners a glimpse into his world with honesty and vulnerability and encouraging them to find strength in their shared humanity. Loyle Carner's music feels like a gentle conversation with an old friend, comforting and familiar yet filled with depth and honesty. His music often conveys warmth and sincerity, resonating with audiences seeking solace and understanding in a chaotic world. Carner's laid-back flow and storytelling have earned him praise from critics and fans alike, establishing him as a unique voice in the UK hip-hop scene.

**Recommended Songs to catch the vibe:**  
Desoleil (Brilliant Corners) , Dear Jean , Ice Water





# CORRINE BAILEY RAE

Corinne Bailey Rae is a British singer-songwriter known for her soulful vocals and heartfelt songwriting. With influences ranging from jazz and R&B to folk and indie pop, she creates music that is both timeless and contemporary. Her music often explore themes of love, loss, and personal growth (which for some reason resonated with me as an 8-year-old). Through her music, Bailey Rae invites listeners on a journey of self-discovery and emotional exploration, reminding us of the power of music to heal and inspire. Corinne Bailey Rae's music feels like frolicking in a field of daisies without a care in the world. If you want to feel enveloped in a warm embrace of nostalgia, be sure to give her a listen.

**Recommended Songs to catch the vibe:**

**Like a Star, Call Me When You Get This, Choux Pastry Heart**



# BARKAA

Barkaa is a Malyangapa and Barkindji rapper, known for her powerful storytelling and raw lyricism. Through her music, she addresses social issues faced by Indigenous communities, including cultural identity, systemic racism, and intergenerational trauma.

Barkaa's music not only delves into the struggles and challenges faced by Indigenous communities but also celebrates Blak joy and power. Through her raw lyricism and impassioned delivery, Barkaa paints a multifaceted picture of Indigenous life, showcasing resilience, strength, and cultural pride.


Her songs shine a spotlight on moments of triumph, solidarity, and joy within Indigenous communities. Barkaa is making waves in the Australian music scene and beyond, inspiring listeners to confront and address the realities of Indigenous life in modern Australia as well as shedding light on blak culture.

**Recommended Songs to catch the vibe:**

**We Up, For My Tittas, Blak Matriachy**

*For more BIPOC baddies and just amazingly curated playlists in general, follow my Spotify: @whoisZizi*

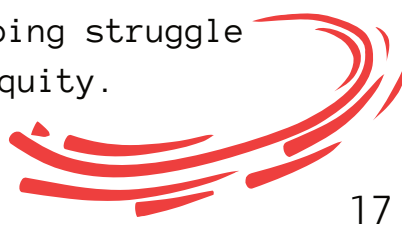
# TACTILE SYMBOLS OF RESISTANCE



Throughout history, BIPOC people have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of oppression. Despite concerted efforts to silence their voices, they have consistently found ways to resist and persist.

Tactile symbols serve as tangible manifestations of defiance against systemic injustice. These symbols, imbued with deep historical and cultural significance, become tools for expressing solidarity, resilience, and the unwavering determination to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures.

In this article, we discuss tactile symbols utilised by BIPOC communities, exploring their meanings, evolution, and enduring legacy in the ongoing struggle for liberation and equity.



# KEFFIYEH

*By Nihar Janjua*

The keffiyeh, or hatta, is eternal. It is an uprising uniform against early British occupation, a national identifier, a liberation symbol, a map. It is a witness to injustice, unshaken in resisting the denial of a rich people. It is living and breathing, always, for a free Palestine.



# UMBRELLA

*By Emalisa Edwards*

Amidst the Hong Kong protests, demonstrators confronted escalating restrictions and CCP government presence by utilizing umbrellas as shields against tear gas and pepper spray. These umbrellas transformed into symbols of resistance and defiance against inequality.

# “Crazy Iraqi Woman”

*Artwork and Commentary By Maria Alkhouri*

Inspired by the ‘Kawliya dance’, this painting represents my intersection between ‘woman’ and my Iraqi heritage. I chose to represent the turbulent and expressive movements of the dance as my intersection’s crossroads because its history and meaning deeply resonated with how I understand myself as an Assyrian-Chaldean woman.

The dance originates with the Kawliya ethnic minority in Iraq, and has transcended persecution in Iraq; both in the way womanhood is contested between conservative and ‘taboo’ spectrums of female sexuality, and in the way ethnic minorities have been silenced, hidden, reclaimed and have survived. The dancer’s movements reclaim stereotypes of the ‘Iraqi woman’, that we are dramatic, reactive, emotional, expressive, and they subvert notions that we are submissive, domesticated and obedient.

I navigate a world in which the women in my home life have been outspoken, artistic, and vividly capture the electrifying spirit of our people, whilst being dislocated in the Australian preference to be ‘chill’, easy-going and non-problematic. The unrestricted theatrics portrayed by the Kawliya dance thus helped me render the sense that I am every melodramatic Iraq-woman before me, and that this manifests often rapidly and chaotically, reacting against my socialised passivity and acceptance of white patriarchy.



I felt the composition of the dancing figures conceptualised the inherently maternal dimension of my Iraqi-woman-ness, that we carry the struggles, sadness, anger, grief and wanderlust of all the women before us. There is nowhere in my own journey in which I have not mourned and celebrated what these women have collectively experienced, and where grief is made acute when reminded of their infinite, inherited sacrifices. The painting illustrates a continuous stream of consciousness where I imagine the life of my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother and so on: when they were my age, what exactly they must have been doing, what dreams they had, what emotions they both felt and had to put on hold.

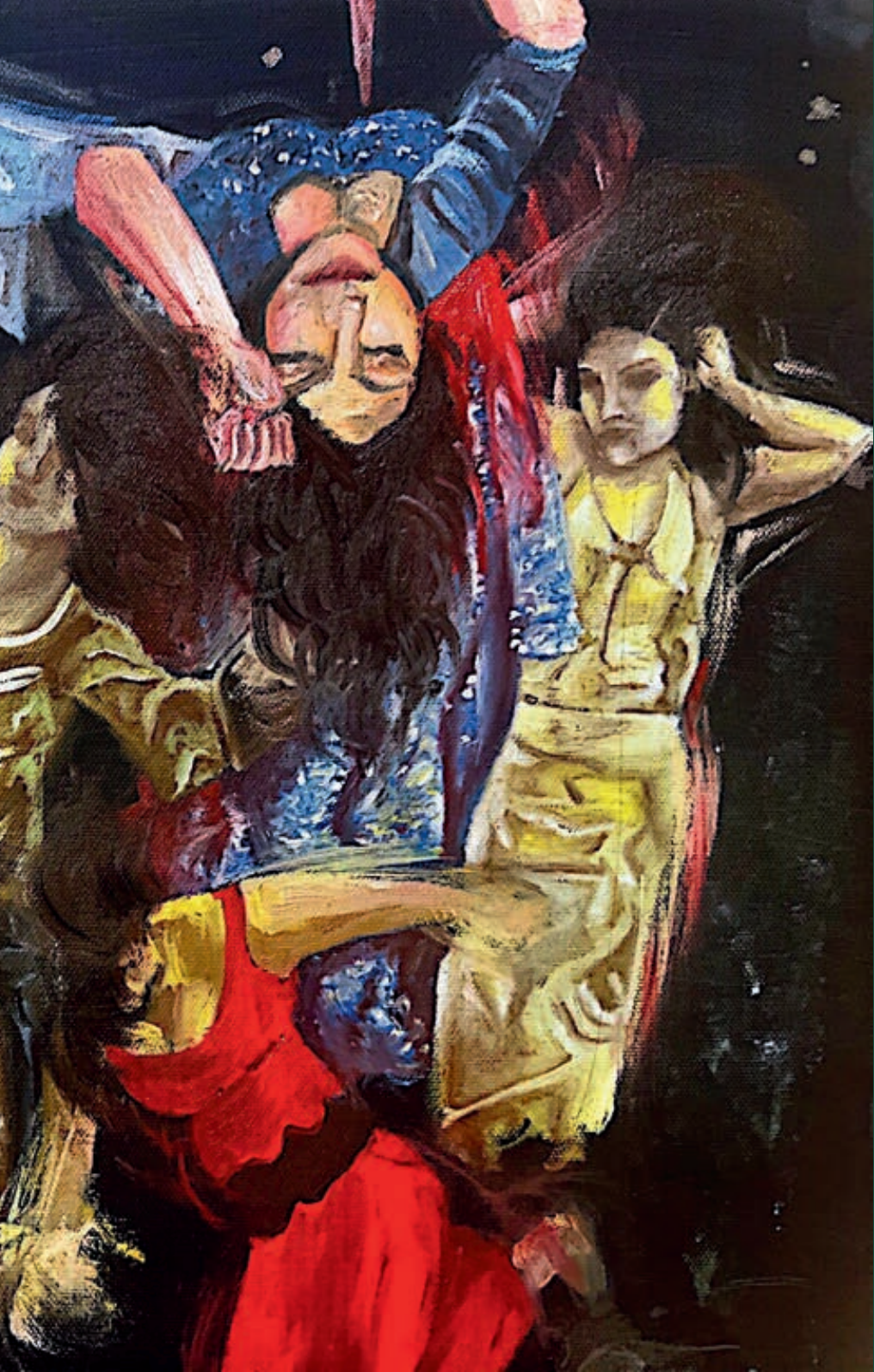
I also felt compelled to show this piece before its completion, as a way of accepting that my identity is an ongoing personal and public project. I continue to rediscover and reproduce cultural and historical dimensions between my woman-ness and my Iraqi-ness, searching for how to translate these inner struggles and revelations to my outer world. As post-Arab Spring, post-American Invasion Iraqi-women, we find ourselves swinging on the pendulum between anguish and joy for our changing realities, both in the diaspora and in the homeland.

ARTWORK ON NEXT PAGE

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# Straight People Hair

By Maya Eusebio

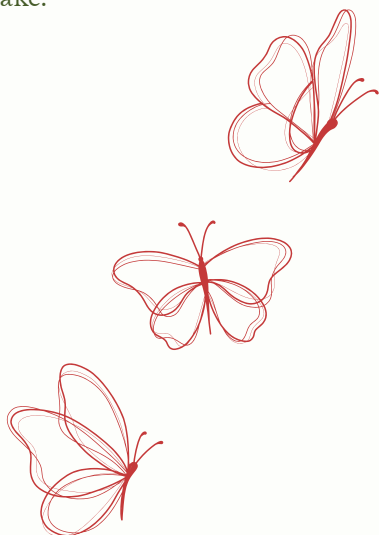
Back when I wore my hair in two little braids, I remember the pounding headaches; the uniquely hollow sound of plastic butterflies against my scalp when they'd manage to flutter through my mom's tired fingers; and telling her through tears that I wanted "straight people hair."

I remember begging my mother for relaxers so that my hair would lie limp and give me cover. If only it would fall flat against my face and hide me from the usual gawkers. I wanted to be allowed to be a Disney princess for Halloween. I wanted my curls gone completely. I wanted "straight people hair."

Of course, that phrasing was an innocent mistake.

I felt undesirable. I feared none of the boys in my class would like me the same way they might like the straight-haired girls. I was constantly fawning over some boy that a pretty girl identified as crush-worthy, but the butterflies I thought I felt in my stomach were as real as the ones that tucked my hair away.

How ironic it was, my fixation on whether men wanted the straightened version of myself; my fixation on girls with "straight people hair."



Eventually, I stopped pulling my hair up and out of sight, but I still had a habit of pulling. I smothered each strand of hair into the strict curl pattern that YouTubers deemed acceptable, never comfortable unless straightened just enough to be palatable to others. Little by little, though, I explored new ways to express myself. From a “Teeney Weeny Afro” to a shoulder-length cut, I wore a different hairstyle every day.

This was up until my quinceañera drew near. You know what they say about old habits. I sat my mother down and watched her mouth move while she urged me to “spit it out,” wondering whether it’d be better to let her go now or watch her leave after telling her. This time, the butterflies were real. I don’t know what gave me the courage, but I resigned myself to the latter. I wanted to wear my hair out for my quince. Like, really out, without using three tubs of gel like the woman at the salon did. I wanted my hair to come out the way it naturally does, and yes I was sure, and yes I knew that I would get weird looks, and yes I knew that being curly is a ‘difficult lifestyle’, and no this was not a phase.

But the old habit didn’t die that day.

I still cringe at this photo. I know it’s me because I remember the weight of that giant red dress, but it really doesn’t feel like it. A candid of me awkwardly stepping around my male chambelan, the hair I agreed to straighten for the sake of tradition and the sake of my grandmother all puffed up at the end of the night. I can’t bring myself to feel nostalgic for a person I barely know. I promised the girl in this shot that I’d never straighten myself out for anyone again.

That’s why I keep this picture on the photo wall.











# WHO AM I?

*Anonymous*

WHO AM I TO YOU?

ANOTHER PERSON, OR ANOTHER SUBJECT?

WHO AM I TO YOU?

A FASCINATION OR ANOTHER OBJECT?

WHO AM I TO YOU?

DO YOU SEE ME FOR MY ANTICS OR AS A CONQUEST?

WHAT AM I TO YOU?

ALWAYS QUESTIONING MY ORIGIN, BUT NOT MY CONTEXT.

ALWAYS PERCEIVING ME IN AN 'OTHER' LENS.

ALWAYS WONDERING ABOUT MY FACE, ABOUT MY ACCENT.

WHEN I SPEAK, I DOUBT WHAT I CONFESS. WHEN I SEEK, I SEE ONLY WHAT YOU  
CAN ACCEPT. WHEN I'M FREE, I FEEL RESTRAINED AT BEST.

WHO AM I TO MYSELF?

IS WHAT I CONSTANTLY QUESTION MYSELF.

BECAUSE WHO AM I IF YOU VALIDATE MY EXISTENCE THROUGH ONLY ONE LENS.

# IT'S HAIRY BUSINESS

*Article and Artwork By Maria Alkhouri*

I've been wavy, I've been curly. I've been three-hour-hair-oil-ed, brush-coiled, moussed, gel-ed and diffused. I've been keratin-ed and ironed straight, my ends could slice you sharp. I've been spontaneous bangs in the bathroom, and rebellious pixie cuts. 'Mermaid'; 'Princess Jasmine'; 'androgynous'. I've been blonde, an emergency brunette in the laundry sink, highlighted, lowlighted, jet black, and red. I've been layers of caramel and brown, marbled by UV and daily washes, a milky way of colour palette experiments. I've been bleached all over, and only in strands. I haven't dyed my hair in years. Let me tell you where it all began.

It's 2005, in an apartment in Abu Dhabi. Shakira's Hips Don't Lie music video is released, and MTV plays on the television to keep us entertained. My dad owns Shakira's latest album on cassette tape, Oral Fixation Vol. 2, and sometimes, I hold the cassette in my hands and stare at the cover. Call it what you will, eurocentric beauty standards or early onset bi-panic: I was obsessed.



One day, Mama puts corn in the salata. Little morsels of gold nestled in a Garden of Eden, where beauty and nature are uncorrupted and pure. I sit on the couch, and hang my head towards the floor, my legs suspended above me. I watch my dark spiral curls sweeping the living room tiles and upside down MTV. I place the corn kernels in my mouth, chewing and falling down the rabbit hole. I shut my eyes and chew and chew and pray and chew, and swallow. The science is, I'm upside down, so when I swallow this corn, the yellow will go to my scalp instead of my stomach.

I enter a long winding path of hair disaster. My hairdresser dyes my whole head blonde. I dye it two more times, it muddies between warm neutrals and cool brown. It's more khara than it could've ever looked in the mirror in Abu Dhabi. The keratin releases slowly, and I'm both curly and straight. I enter my Jerseylicious mania. Everything must be animal print and my hair teased beyond belief. I cut some more bangs in the sink; my mother screams at me. I roll around in a haystack, and no one can tell what is hair and what is horse breakfast. Let me tell you when it all ends.

It's 2015, I've discovered leaving it alone. I spend my nights doom scrolling on Tumblr, discovering my sexuality, reposting radical feminist quotes and 80's anarchist punk bands. I do the big chop. Fuck femininity, fuck the performance. Fuck you all. I'm no one's Princess Jasmine and I own a leather jacket. I haven't dyed my hair since.

If I collected strands from each era of my life, I would trace a long line of women who gambled on their destinies and new phases to escape their conventional worlds. Each phase tells me where I'm located in my womanness, my Syrian-Iraqi-ness, my 'otherness'. I'm the conformist, the rebel, and as always, getting bored. I chase the high of change, escape the monotony of DNA, and seek roots anchored in a past in which I've never been a resident. I leave my hair alone; imagine myself one hundred years ago, in the village, in the market. I tease it, cut it, dye it, blow it out, and imagine myself living another history. I put one foot in the past, the other in the future. Both go on forever with no dead ends. I am one woman, and post-hair-wash day, I'm another. I'm both 'forever' and 'just a phase'. No one, nor I, can catch up with any of it.

# CONFessions of a Ressie:

at  Hall

By Anonymous



In Punjab, there is saying: je sukh chaven jeen da, khulle khambeen udd, which is loosely translated to 'if you want contentment in your life, be free'. I find myself disgruntled at the prospect of striving toward some unshackling, or an emancipation. It seems preposterous, as if an inescapable weight isn't on our shoulders.

At each protest, I look for residents from my hall in attendance. I usually spot a few - all people of colour. No leadership, none of those who preach liberation, equality with such a passion one might easily mistake it for care and activism. I've heard the rationales, and no, I do not speak of those who are suffering, have emergencies, mental health, caretaking or financial responsibilities, or simply any other significant obligation. I'm infuriated with the wilfully ignorant, residents casually remarking the disruption is irritating, my absent closest companions who understand death, grief and loss, countless silent supporters.

I feel furious, enraged and nauseous. I carry it, envious of those who are not hyper-vigilant, ashamed, aching to succeed for their ancestors' sacrifices. I wonder, in this state of slight delusion, if traipsing around to go primal rage at the world of university residence, my white friends, the performative staff is the best course of action. Perhaps, not. After all, I wouldn't want to fulfil a stereotype.



So, I decide, if I cannot scream, I will quieten. I will internalise this, attach these minor grumbles to my affirmation mechanism:

1. I will be okay when residents adore Matty Healy.
2. I will be okay when residents tell me "they keep making it about race".
3. I will be okay when residents gawk at my exotic Commencement outfit.
4. I will be okay when residents homogenise Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal.
5. I will be okay when residents use racial slurs and relish in their bigotry. ?!
6. I will be okay when residents reduce clear genocide to 'complicated'.
7. I will be okay when SRs complain cultural competency training is too much.
8. I will be okay when staff refuse to provide support and resources to BIPOC.
9. I will be okay that all this took only the first four weeks of the academic year.
10. I will be okay when my proximity to whiteness does not grant equal treatment.
11. I will be okay when the hall has no safe spaces to retreat to as a community.
12. I will be okay as the subaltern. I will be okay as the other. I will be okay here.

And, if repeated thrice daily, in a meditative state, I'll be okay.

I'm hoping the satire is obvious. And, if these declarations fail, I will rely on my invisibility trick, my in-built default. I'll return to the safe crevices of my culture, where my brother's turban is majority, where haldi is not a modern-age wellness supplement, where tears are shed daily for all suffering, and it is known that a rising tide lifts all boats. I'll blast 'Chat Mele Nu Chaliye' in the hall, and wear my chuni around the kitchen and pray, knowing the comments which will inevitably follow - "aggressive banjo music" and "you look fancy, where are you going?" - are symptomatic of oblivion and privilege.

I remember that I have this freedom, to know and share truly with people of colour, and for my Punjabi soul, this is enough.







# STAFF ADVOCACY

*By Raida Chowdhury*


In the academic landscape, the on-going Palestinian genocide has been a test on the freedom of speech and the academic freedom of our teaching staff, with black and brown staff inevitably placed on tougher trials.

Two teaching staff members at the University of Arizona, one of whom was Latinx, were suspended and one University of Carolina was demoted to online teaching for making pro-Palestinian remarks in November last year. In February this year, two professors at New York University, one of whom was Palestinian, were suspended for opposing the genocide in Gaza. In Australia, very recently Lebanese-Australian Professor Ghassan Hage of Melbourne University was removed from a German research institute for his pro-Palestinian views.

While these examples remain a testament of the flagrant racism and suppression that courses through Universities in the north, beneath the surface hides implicit tactics that fearmonger staff into staying quiet.

The manifestations of this are two-fold.

First, staff at universities cannot openly criticise and teach the University's shortcomings, don't bite the hand that feeds you. A professor at the ANU can teach you about Palestine, although only in relevant courses which often times means leaving it to regional studies such as the Center of Arab and Islamic Studies (because god forbid you bring up Palestine in a social justice philosophy course). However, what they can't use as legitimate course material is the University's relationship with Northrop Grumman or AUKUS as an example of militarisation in higher education or social injustices.



The don't bite the hand that feeds you remains a dangerous paradox. Staff, who are the hand, who are the units of this University, who feed it with their work, find themselves at the mercy of the university. As universities continue to be reimagined as commercial institutions, the power relations shift from staff and students to the for-profit stakeholders. As the ANU balances the interests of its stakeholders like the hedge funds and the Australian government, staff interests fall between the cracks.

For the case of Palestine, universities have historically been centers of pro-Palestinian activism. University management also remain some of the most complicit parties in the Palestinian genocide, actively supporting Israel's militarisation, maintaining partnerships with the apartheid regime and tacitly refusing to condemn it's actions.

Second, black and brown staff who do openly criticise the University must deal with social alienation.

With increased casualisation, temporary tenures and a lack of funding, these staff are forced to forgo their autonomy, along with their academic freedom if they wish to remain sufficiently employed. Instead staff must transform themselves into mind-less workers, spewing the same views as their university.

While social ostracisation in white spaces remains an all too familiar feeling for black and brown people, in Universities it reflects the implicit policing of black and brown staff. Universities do not need to abduct staff in an Orwellian fashion. Instead institutions like the ANU police academic freedom and free speech because it refuses to normalise Palestinian solidarity, this inevitably places black and brown staff at cross roads; speak against the university and risk social alienation or loss of tenure, stay silent and drown in guilt.

The many open letters written and signed by staff, many of whom are at the ANU, calling for universities to do their part, remain emblematic of their advocacy. As the fight for Palestine continues on University grounds, it is important to investigate the ways our activism and advocacy is distributed and more importantly and how we can reshape and bring into scrutiny the relationships we have with post-colonial institutions and our roles in it.





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