



MARGIN

HAIR

Volume VI, Spring 2017
Hurford Center for the Arts and Humanities, Haverford College

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Haverford College

Margin is Haverford's themed student-edited publication.

Each issue features a topic marginalized in academic discourses, presenting submissions of critical essays, reviews, creative writing, visual media, and any other artifacts that critically or creatively engage the theme. We seek to publish the work of students, scholars, artists, musicians, and writers, both from within and outside of the Haverford community.

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Design by Duncan Cooper

Cover: *TKTKTKTKTK*

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Haverford College.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hair plays and has long played a critical role in people's expression of self, politicized identities, and belonging. Traditionally, Han Chinese men and women alike wore their hair long, while in the U.S. long hair on your head (and minimal hair everywhere else) is almost exclusively a marker of femininity. African-American people and communities experience institutional and personal discrimination based on how they choose to wear their hair; women who cover their hair with hijabs face Islamophobia; Native American children were literally stripped of their hair in boarding schools in acts of extreme violence.

It is because of the power vested in hair that oppressive structures and institutions are so bent on literally shaping it. *Margin* is interested in this power and the lives that hair has as demarcator of identity, protector against the elements, vessel of beauty, nuisance, joy, and triumph. Hair is a rich source of cultural, social, and aesthetic power. *Margin* wants to know how you harness, evoke, or question that power; what your hair, and others' hair, means to you.

As you read, we invite you to think about how hair defies a distinction between the literal and the abstract. When the material reality of hair on your head, or somewhere else, comes to connote virtues, vices, "lifestyles," gender, race ... this material reality becomes inseparable from its various meanings. *Margin* wants the people with the hair to create those meanings.

Kaylynn Mayo's "It's My Hair (I Bought It)" opens our issue with a declaration of agency in surreal and captivating blues and purples. Jonathan Zelinger's powerful essay on trichotillomania, "Aristotle Didn't Go to Medical School," reimagines a definition of agency in order to question medicalization of a hair-pulling disorder as a means of trying to stop it.

Hair seems to lend itself to poetry and portraiture, and we have extremely strong representations of both in this issue, from Késha Hollins' poem "From the Roots" to Chloe Wang's photo "Personal Abyss" after Yoko Ono. Pieces such as Alexandra Ben-Abba's "Glass Haircut" and Xiyuan Li's "Untitled" show us the

ways in which artists manipulate hair in gallery spaces to explore questions of subjectivity, connection, and conflict.

Each of our numerous, stellar pieces works to explore the power and mystery of hair. Each one offers a different take on the question, “What does [your] hair mean to you?” We aim to continue *Margin*’s tradition of investment in questions of margins and body texts, multimedia work and communication of complex themes, drawing from, and going beyond, the classroom. We hope that this issue illuminates a subject both mundane and majestic – hair.

Acknowledgements

Thank you so much to James Weissinger and his guidance, as well as the Hurford Center for Arts and Humanities as a whole. Thank you to Duncan Cooper, and thank you so much to all our contributors as well as our editors.

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Esme Trontz '18

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Lily Xu '19

Susan Kelly '18



Kaylynn Mayo

It's My Hair (I Bought It)

Artist's Statement: This is a self-portrait. I typically create one completed self-portrait painting every few years, and in my past three self-portraits I have adorned very different hair styles.

The title *It's My Hair (I Bought It)* is the response I have adopted when ignorant non-black people ask me questions such as "is that your real hair?" even if they just saw me the day before with an afro that was significantly shorter. I am intrigued by how much significance hair has within the Black community and how little non-Black people know about Black hair.

ARISTOTLE DIDN'T GO TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

Jonathan Zelinger

My mother was raised traditionally. She grew up in an affluent midwestern suburb where gender roles were strictly assigned, emotions were suppressed, and personal happiness often took a backseat to social status. She was the kind of person who would often use the threat, "what would other people think" as rhetoric against any actions she saw inappropriate. So the fact that I plucked hairs out of my scrotum, it didn't quite jive with the image she wanted our family to cast.

Trichotillomania is a hair pulling disorder that affects roughly four out of every hundred people. It's said to be triggered by stress and anxiety, which is funny because my stresses and anxieties are often provoked by my mother. I started picking hairs out of my skin at age ten. At first, I only did it between my eyebrows to prevent a unibrow because my brother's friend, Amanda Aisee (who was not his girlfriend!) told me to "avoid a unibrow at any cost." I thought picking hair would just be a phase, like getting pimples, or being happy, but it continued, hair by hair, day by day. Even worse, I eventually began to do it all over my body: on my eyebrows, on hairs that grew out of moles, on my scalp, on my knees, on my knuckles, and most distasteful, on my scrotum.

According to my mother, I made up trichotillomania in order to annoy her, which is absurd because if I were to purposely annoy her I'd pick a better cause, like dating someone non-white, or working in the nonprofit sector. She refused to believe this hair-pulling habit plagued anyone other than me. As futile as my mother's comments were, it still brought me a great satisfaction when I read in my senior year of high school that trichotillomania was first mentioned by Aristotle in the fourth Century B.C. In this specific text, he distinguishes between rational pleasures (things that please everyone) and brutish pleasures which are not naturally pleasurable and cannot lead to sustainable happiness. His examples were "cannibalism, fetus eating, and hair pulling." Even though these passages

depicted me as a barbarian, for the purpose of proving my mother wrong, I was satisfied with any tangible evidence .

It's conceivable that my mother had been around longer than I had, and that she was more knowledgeable about mental disorders, but if Aristotle thought it was worth mentioning in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of the most commonly read philosophy texts in the world, I figured she'd have a hard time refuting trichotillomania existence.

She didn't.

"Aristotle didn't go to medical school!" she retorted as if Aristotle were the local chiropractor.

I never understood how she could so confidently state such wild opinions. "You can't trust Bernie Sanders. He had his honeymoon in Russia," or more commonly "You're not going to Wesleyan. I didn't raise a freak." I try not to take her too seriously on all of these things, but when it came to trichotillomania I had a harder time biting my lip.

"Good point. But you don't have to have gone to medical school to acknowledge the existence of something. Surely you can agree with that," I said in the tone of a kindergarten teacher.

I wasn't asking for her to treat my trichotillomania like my father, who still encourages it, and even lets me pick the hairs off his nose. What I wanted was that she at least pretend to care about my happiness and my health rather than get so caught up in what the neighbors might say. The couple next door was eighty! They had more important things to worry about than me picking my knuckle hair, like their garden, or not dying.

Trichotillomania comes in all different forms. Like many people with the disorder, I use it as a way to relieve stress. Many consider it a trait of OCD, or even a symptom of PTSD. Personally, I prefer not to think of it as an illness, but rather

as a weird and unproductive hobby. When I pick a hair out of my skin, it's not the result of a sickness, but rather keeping myself busy and calm, the same way someone keeps checking their phone when they don't know what else to do with their hands.

The habit gets a little weirder when I personify the hairs on my body. I think of each hair as an orphan in an orphanage waiting to be chosen by a friendly couple. Well, not too friendly. I'd like the couple to be one that straddles the line between friend and disciplinarian. Parents you can be honest with, but still know you can't tell them everything. Anyway, when I pluck the hair, I imagine a young child, longing for acceptance, and who with one quick pluck is given the cathartic moment they had always dreamed of. It's a silly daydream that not only allows me to rationalize a weird quirk, but enables me to turn my OCD into a funny bit.

Though, my mother never found it all that funny. In the seventh grade, which was my second year with trichotillomania, I developed my first bald spot. There, on the top of my head, was a poignant bald spot, very similar to the one the seventy year old band teacher had. I remember being surprised that it bothered her enough that she would be willing to pay someone to make me stop, because more than her image, my mother cared about money. But in this case, she was willing to splurge on me. Yay! For her, the money was worth making sure her son didn't look like a monkey eating bugs off himself. I think what bothered me the most was that it never felt like she was doing it for my health. She was doing it because it was embarrassing for her to have her twelve year old son showing signs of male pattern baldness. I have to take some of the responsibility. I was probably encouraged by her disapproval and that was not fair. My mother, who had her fair share of internal hardship, did everything in her power to make her external reputation didn't reflect her emotional turmoil. She just wanted to seem put together and it's understandable that she wanted to make sure her son wasn't alienating everyone he came in contact with by having a horseshoe of hair on his head. That's solid parenting, but I wanted her to express her concern for my well being rather than expressing her discomfort at having a weird son.

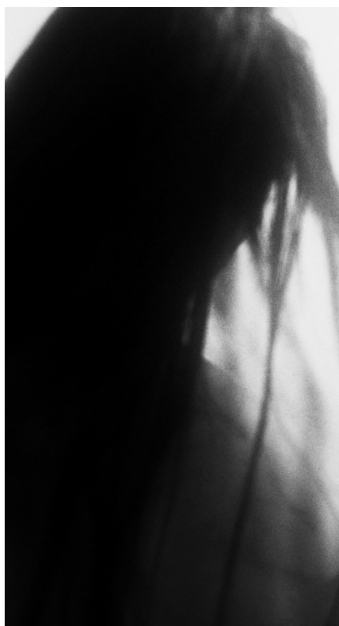
I went to the doctor with intrigue. I was curious what one human being could do to stop another from picking hairs out of himself. I learned that there is actually

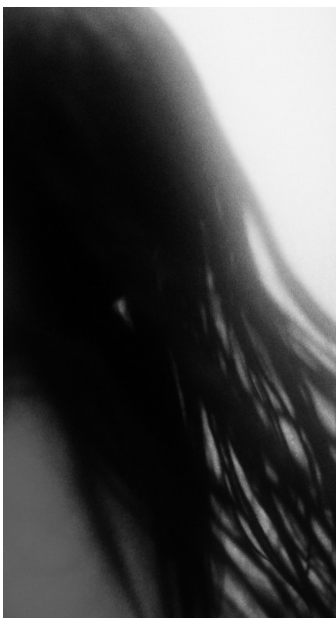
very little one can do. The doctor delivered a truly inspiring speech that day. "Listen Jonathan, I feel your pain, but we can fight this, together," as if I were a recovering heroin addict. "This doesn't mean you are a bad person or anything like that, it just means you are going to have work just a little harder to be better."

If I hadn't put so much work into putting on a patronizing smile, I would have remembered more of her sermon. It didn't matter much because I left her office with "medical mittens." These oven mitts were bright orange, designed to let everyone at school know that I should be locked in an insane asylum. I was instructed to wear these mittens for a week so that I couldn't pick my hair (and could avoid making new friends). I figured my doctor missed the day of medical school where they went over how to treat trichotillomania. Even my mother was frustrated with this solution. If she had known they were just going to give me oven mitts she would have just brought me to William Sonoma. She loved William.

The visit was moot, because I wore those mittens for the car ride home, and then never saw those monstrosities of an antidote again. I threw them out in the dumpster behind my house the moment we got home, and then proceeded to pick every hair I could reach.

I don't so much mind having trichotillomania anymore, and I don't know if I'll ever outgrow it (no pun intended), or if I even want to. It has become a part of my identity, and that's something my mother is going to have to live with. I just hope she can find solace in the fact that I'll never eat fetuses.





Alina Wang

Rebirth



Alina Wang

Medusa

Artist's Statement: I am interested in exploring themes of the body, identity, and hybridity through photography and other visual mediums. My work often involves self-portraiture, documentary photography, and seriality or narrative. You can find more of my work at alinawang.format.com.

FROM THE ROOTS

Késa Hollins

Beautiful strands of mine
Kinky thoughts taking over all of us
Coils from my ancestors, I hope I'm making you proud enough

Everyday I'll fight for us.
I wonder if there will ever be a day where natural hair won't be a thing
and just be IT.
My tangles, close to my roots
They intertwine, holding onto each other for dear life.

I hope I'm doing you justice
even when it seems lost
Beautiful strands of mine, I'm so sorry I once
betrayed you
I didn't appreciate you, so I tried to change you
without knowing how much it would change me.
My tangles will not conform to society's norms,
even if it means I'll have the rest of the world against me.

Ancestors, see how we are fighting back
You haven't died in vain I promise
Look at how we fight for peace
and justice, and originality, and
everything else that's beautiful, we know we deserve it now

Look at us going for it now.
Ancestors, see how they try to break us
like mirrors so we cannot see our own beauty
created by the Most High,
Expertly hand-crafted.

Golden from the Sun herself
strengthened by the Earth below us we are so...
Valuable. Look at us, recognizing our worth
Conquering obstacles,
trying even harder,
succeeding
Onwards, and upwards.



Chloe Wang

Personal Abyss

Artist's Statement: I took this photograph to show a friend the likeness of a young Yoko Ono that results if I brush my hair when it is dry. In the heat of the summer night, I was enveloped in my very own cave of keratin. The webcam captures my moment of play in an LCD mirror.



Alliyah Allen

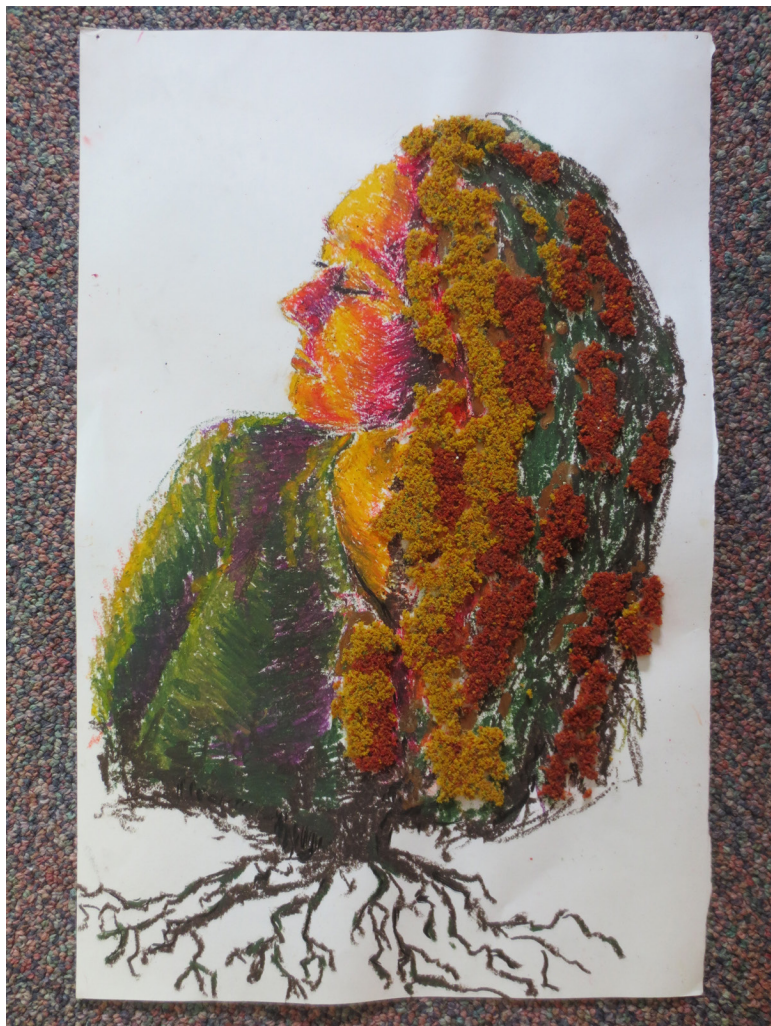
Untitled



Alliyah Allen

Untitled

Artist's Statement: The *afro* is an emblem of black culture, black resistance, and black womynhood. Most notably known as a way of showing black power and resistance from White-European norms, the afro made its mark in the 60s. Now, there's a beautiful natural hair movement amongst black womyn that screams carefree. Sometimes one my might wake up from a carefully done twist-out or maybe a wash and go. Regardless of the method, texture, or styling there are so many ways to wear an afro. The hair defies gravity and shows all that is magic, blackness, pride, womyn and love.



Isabella Siegel

Miss Wild

Artist's Statement: My goal is to use elements of ornament and the subject's natural environment to express her inner beauty as well as her outer beauty. This piece uses foam that is usually used for model trees, as well as oil pastel, sumi ink, and nail polish. I started forming the piece based on her hair — I wanted to use the red and orange tones that interacted with autumn leaves to emphasize the natural quality of her vitality, kindness, and warmth.



Nana Nieto

The Limit Does Not Exist

Artist's Statement: 'Mean Girls' has iconic memes and one-liners that have been staples in pop-culture since its release in 2004. *Margin's* 'Hair' theme immediately got me thinking about the quote I included in Trump's portrait painting because he's kind of a 'hairy' guy.

'hairy'

adj.

1. Covered with hair; having much hair.
2. Consisting of or resembling hair.
3. Informal. Causing anxiety or fright, full of hardship or difficulty.

RECOGNIZING THE BEAUTY WITHIN: BREAKING FREE FROM THE OPPRESSION OF MY KINKS AND CURLS

Mercedes Davis

The smell of flat irons and blow dryers filled my nose as I walked into Wendary's Dominican salon. Like many times before, I had come so that they could essentially "fix my hair" and by fix I mean straighten. This was routine, an occurrence that took place every other week for as long as I could remember. The woman in the back motioned me to come sit in the chair. Despite my normally satisfied disposition I sat with uncertainty, not knowing if this is what I wanted to continue. Not knowing how hard she was going to scrub my scalp with the pads of her fingers. Hearing the sound of the water, I leaned back into my chair. I closed my eyes knowing that soon enough I would have to withstand the heat of the blow dryer and flat iron against my scalp. I can remember the countless times that I have sat in this exact seat: content, quiet, happy to deny a part of myself. Did the stylist truly understand her position? She was my accomplice and I was a criminal, proven guilty of robbing myself blind: of heritage, of culture but most of all of self. The stylist was going to get as close to my scalp as possible to straighten every curl and kink. Yet I had always known that it was all worth it, because in the end I would have what I wanted — or at least what I thought I wanted.

My hair had always been a problem for me even at a young age. The very essence of my hair defied the norm. My thick curly coils required a lot of attention, much more than my twin's hair which was made of a different texture — fine and straight. It had developed into a source of distinction between us, not just with strangers but with family as well. Essentially, I had been given an identity before I even had a chance to figure out who I wanted to become.

"Your hair is too difficult Mercedes. I can't possibly do it. You understand, right?" my mother said while lathering my sister's hair with shampoo.

"Of course," I said.

It was clear to me at a young age that the texture of my hair would and did define the way I would be treated and viewed in society. However, I was too scared to question something so embedded within my culture, something so perpetual throughout generations of women within my community, that I had become silenced.

Looking at the reflection that faced me, I did not know who I had become. The correlation between my hair and the way I felt about myself was so strong that I had lost sight of my other traits. My tamed tongue became free and I could no longer mask the feeling of oppression any longer nor could my mind be susceptible to the criticism of others. The realization that I could never “fix” what was never broken allowed for me to divert from the static ideals of my community. Ultimately, I decided not to straighten my hair. Looking into the same mirror my reflection had changed. I was able to appreciate my hair for what it is and not hate it for what it wasn't. The only thing truly broken was my perception of not only myself but the world at large. I finally released my thick curly coils from their bondage. I was finally able to realize after years of straightening my curls and kinks that I was not my hair and my hair was not my worth. Hair, I believe is a form of expression and to suppress that expression into a standardization form of beauty, is unjust. Of course, this realization came years after my first and even twentieth visit to the salon as the true price of this service became more and more evident. I had to unlearn that straight hair meant good hair and that curly or kinky hair meant bad hair. Through the process of unlearning I was able to fully embrace myself and redefine the identity given to me.

To this day my hair is a conversation piece; it is the first thing that is noticed when I walk into a room. My hair has served as a bridge between my past self and present being. And while my hair remains a major part of my identity, it is not the only thing that identifies me.



Alexandra Ben-Abba

Glass Haircut

Artist's Statement: Originally trained in glass and ceramics, Alexandra Ben-Abba employs performance, video and interactive installation as means to engage with process. The relationships explored in her time-based practice touch upon the uncertainty, aggression and helplessness often felt during times of conflict.



BARBER SHOP MOMS

Lauren Sahlman

I cut my hair off
in the summer;
I finally let my neck breathe.
My mom says I am still pretty,
even with my neck out,
but I don't want to be pretty.

In college I get a *boy's* haircut,
at a *barber shop*,
to blend in
with my reflection.
When she sees my
close-to-bald head
her eyes go narrow:
"What did you do to your
fucking head!"

I cut my hair again
She scoffs and tells me
"it looks terrible"
I smile. I know
I am not pretty
anymore.



Anonymous

Untitled

Artist's Statement: I use my camera to document the world I see. This photo was taken when I was on a train in Kyoto. The young boy's hair reminds me of my hair when I was little. While taking the photos, I was looking at him, but he was looking outside of the window. My curiosity about this boy, as well as his appearance, was left unfulfilled with the presence of his hair in front of me. However, this unfulfilled curiosity allowed me to project my childhood memory onto his hair.



Xiyuan Li

Untitled

Artist's Statement: There is lack of connection or communication between teenagers nowadays. And I think people need to be more connected rather than just being a stranger. I believe hair is an important part of our body. We lose hair everyday, and people don't really care or notice it. As we are losing hair, we are losing part of ourselves. Hair is very individual, at the base of human hairs contains cellular material rich in DNA, so hair can really represent one or another. There is hair everywhere in a person's room, and by collecting and documenting it, I am connecting these lost parts together and connecting these people together. As the viewer is seeing and examining this archive they are connected to these strangers.

So for this project, I'm collecting hair from different teenagers, from different races. I'm going to one individual's room to collect their hair on the floor and I will put these hairs together and make it an archive. I will take a portrait for each hair owner and put it in a small plastic bag. And I will take close up detail shots of these different people's hair. I will also include a magnifying glass. So the viewer can use it to examine both the hair in the plastic bag and the photos.

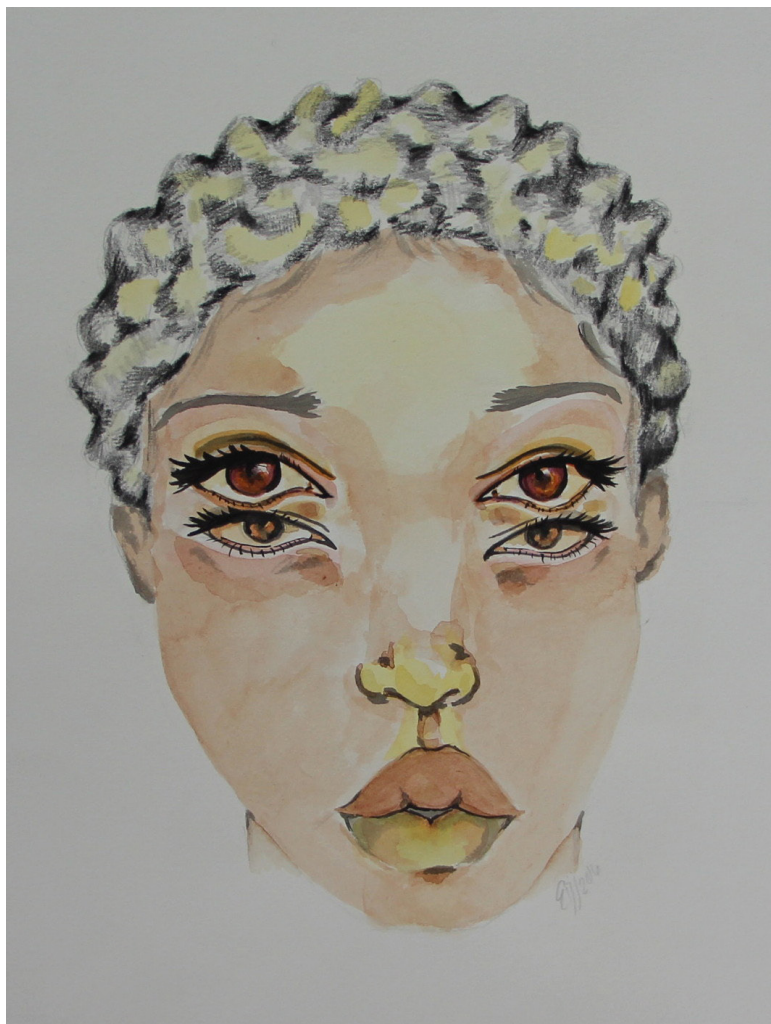


Glorín Colón
"Apollo's Hair"



Essence Jackson Jones

Untitled



Essence Jackson Jones

Untitled



Essence Jackson Jones

Untitled

Artist's Statement: This trio represents the multiple identities in which women of color fluctuate between while being examined by society. Questions arise as to which lens is best suitable for accurate representation of self. This piece encourages viewers to think about the multiple lenses that relate directly to their societal positioning.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alexandra Ben-Abba is a Brooklyn based artist. She received her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (2011) and her BFA from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design (2006).

Alice Lin '19 is a double major in anthropology and German from Shanghai, China. You'll usually spot her reading German dramas or doing ethnography in Green Engine Coffee. If nowhere to be seen, she's probably taking her 3-5 hours naps.

Alina Wang is a 21-year-old photographer and visual artist working in New York and Philadelphia. She is currently studying fine arts at the University of Pennsylvania.

Alliyah Allen is a photographer, writer and activist. She is from Newark, NJ and hopes to use art to liberate black communities, and more.

Ari Kim '20 is a D.C. native who will probably be a history major, unless some dead person they are studying haunts them away. Ari can be found making small talk to their pet gecko, rowing along the banks of the glorious Schuylkill, or furiously scribbling in a coloring book.

Cecilia Burke '18 is a political science major and Spanish minor. Currently she is enjoying her modern drama course at Bryn Mawr College, and is really broken up about the end of the HBO series *Girls*, despite the controversial nature of the show and Lena Dunham. She aspires to one day fail to thrive in New York City much like the hated characters of Dunham's creation, though she now resides in Massachusetts when not at Haverford.

Chloe Wang is a brunette chemistry and environmental studies student. Over her lifetime, Chloe's natural hair texture has progressed from ringlets to pin straight before settling into ambiguity. Who knows what the future holds!

Esme Trontz '18 is a history of art major and museum studies minor from Brooklyn, NY. When they're not taking trips into Philly to gawk at public art and hit up Philly AIDS Thrift, they're watching Man Repeller videos and eating Twizzlers.

Essence Jackson-Jones studies art therapy and counseling at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work aims to bring personal experience and perspective into art making, and collaborating with individuals and groups in finding accessible ways to explore various media centered on and around self. Currently Essence works primarily with video and digital media.

Glorín Colón is a graphic designer, muralist and multimedia artist, born and raised in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. She studied graphic design and fine arts at Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Through the years, she has worked as art and creative director for major advertising agencies in Puerto Rico and the United States, and as a freelance artist. Glorín currently lives in Puerto Rico with her husband of 27 years and works in projects involving a wide range of mediums. She is the mother of three daughters and enjoys her three dogs and various cats.

Isabella Siegel is a sophomore fine arts major who concentrates in painting and drawing, with strong interests in calligraphy, ornamentation, and portraiture. She works with a variety of mediums, including pen and ink, graphite, pastel, and other multimedia techniques and is also a student of visual studies and museum studies.

Jonathan Zelinger is in his third year at Franklin and Marshall College. As an English major, he primarily focuses on humorous writing through a variety of platforms such as memoir, poetry, screenwriting, playwriting, and stand up. He enjoys running, biking, and being involved with his community.

Katy Frank '17 is the editor-in-chief of *Margin*. Hailing from New York, she will be making Philly her second home this summer. She is an English major with a

concentration in gender and sexuality studies with a really big sweet tooth.

Kaylynn Mayo is a visual artist primarily interested in capturing the human form and figure through drawing, painting, and sculpture. She also is the founder and CEO of Rho, a wearable art brand that creates sustainable clothing with original artwork.

Késa Hollins is a 20-year-old artist born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is currently a junior creative writing major at the University of the Arts in center-city Philadelphia. Her concentration is in poetry, but she also enjoys writing short story fiction from time to time. She consider herself an artist because she experiments with art's many forms. Before making the career move to creative writing, she studied graphic design for many years. She also designs, makes and manufactures her own clothing line called Shop Orenda.

Lauren Sahlman is a creative writing and German studies student at Binghamton University in Upstate New York. They love writing poetry, hummus, and petting small dogs (especially pugs). They have gone from natural to blonde to purple to bald, in the span of less than a year—bald is definitely their favorite.

Lily Xu '19 is a film and media studies major and sociology minor. She loves telling stories with her camera, and enjoys talking about the importance of avocados and eggs.

Mercedes Davis is a Philadelphia native and currently a freshman at Haverford College. She is currently a Community Outreach Multicultural Liaison, a member of the First-Year Dean's Council, a member of Black Student League, a member of Womxn of Color, an employee of the Haverford College Bookstore and a MAST tutor.

Nana Nieto '19 is a rising junior from Puerto Rico who's recently decided to focus on museum studies. She's planning to go abroad to Madrid in the fall, where she'll find out how quickly a semester can end, but she'll be back in the

spring, and will continue to be a member of *Margin's* lovely editorial board.

Susan Kelly '18 is a Spanish major and history of art minor from Lexington, KY. She loves warm colors, cute dogs, the women's Ultimate team and being near water.

Xiyuan Li is a photographer from Shanghai, China. She currently studies photography and other digital mediums at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her photography projects focus on Portraiture.