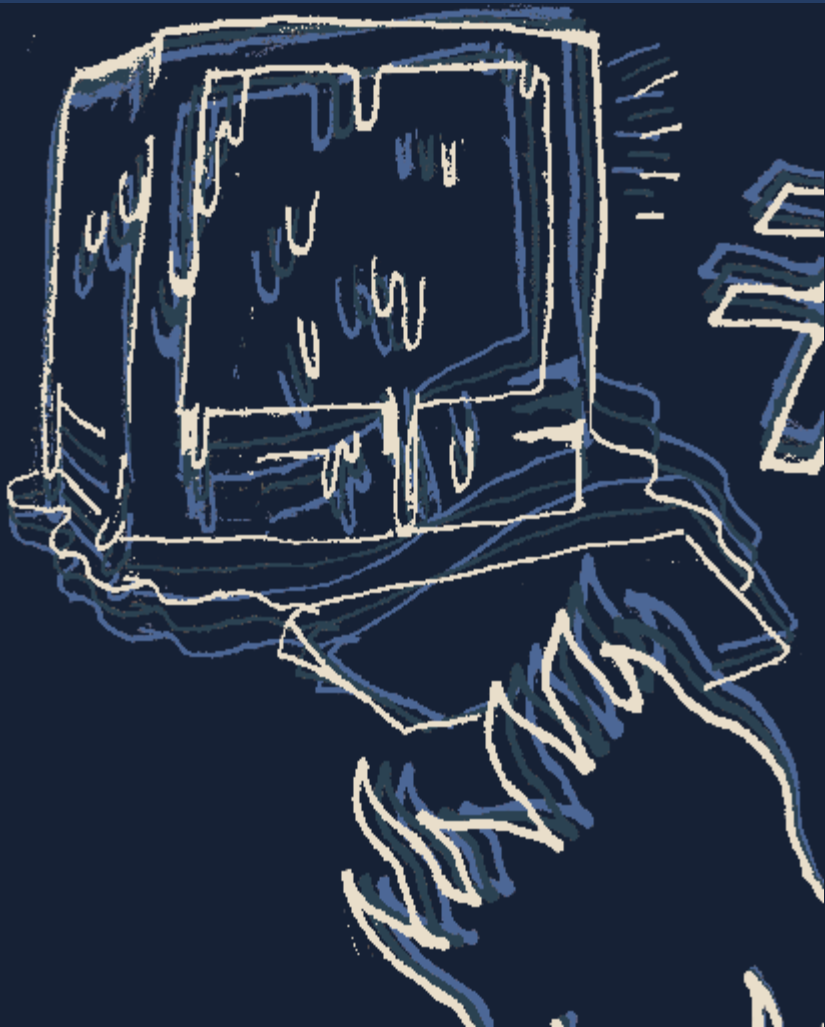


fiteclub



An unfinished collection of utter shite. (2019 -2020)

preamble/ apology

A post-mortem of the thing you just started reading to
handwave away how shite it is.

Fiteclub (like a majority of the projects I've worked on) was never supposed to be a major undertaking - the aim was essentially to force myself to be productive and to have released a small compilation of ten or so articles on varying topics by the end of 2019. At the time I viewed it as a small side-project that'd get me back to some mythical vague past state of creativity, it was to be a project that wouldn't necessarily challenge me (after all I had five months) but one that would still require significant effort on my behalf. After a few months of making dumb blog posts during all-nighters, making dumb zine articles during all-nighters felt like some form of progress. In other words, the zine would edge me closer to becoming one of those pretentious posers who refer to themselves as "journalists" due to their 3,000 word think-pieces on how "Killinaskully" represents neoliberalism. It was essentially just an attempt for me to pretend to be an actual "writer", as opposed to just some narcissistic gowl who made a habit of sending excessive spiels about disliking the internet to random people on Discord at screwy hours.

But obviously that's not how things panned out, leading us to this current moment in time. I'm sitting here at around half two in the morning and am finally getting around to working on this preamble/apology after putting it off for the better part of three days and it's been over two months since this zine was meant to be released. It currently contains around seven articles, two of which feel extremely similar to me. None of the "major" (ie. actually requiring me to leave the gaff) articles ended up panning out, and a lot of the concepts I spent the

better half of August gushing about to unimpressed friends are mysteriously absent. This introduction aims to essentially be a post-mortem of Fiteclub while also explaining the concepts I aimed for it to be based around. In other words, this introduction is just an attempt to claim that this zine is shite for artistic reasons and that it's obviously your fault for not recognising that.

Fiteclub started out (like all things) as a dumb joke that gradually morphed into a serious project. I had overheard a rumour that a nearby private school had an organised fight club and for some reason the premise of a "club" consisting solely of the sons of Marks & Spencer shoppers battering the shite out of one another was deeply funny to all three of my friends accustomed to my brain worms. Something about the faux-masculinity parroted by well-off private school arseholes (remember that this was around the time that Versatile were exposed as posh pricks) and represented in this dumb fight club rumour felt so artificial to me to the point of absurdity - it's just fundamentally weird to me that the same people who go to schools with badminton courts try to act "tough" and because of that the better part of a month was spent joking about this contrast. Eventually it was ironically agreed that "Young Fine Gael Fight Club" would be a funny title for a pretentious zine and because I am incapable of sensing irony I started work in earnest.

My aim for this project was to write about topics that only I cared about in the hopes that by writing with an expected audience of zero people this zine would somehow loop around and be vaguely interesting to those who have similar brain worms to

mine. I've spent way too much time in the past trying and failing to condense my work into a more general, consumable format to the point where I was convinced that the only way to reach that goal would be to just indulge my worst habits to their logical extremes and essentially just parody myself. The articles that Fiteclub would consist of intended to only be interesting to people in the exact same situation at the exact same time, regardless of the fact that this audience doesn't exist and never would exist. If you were a vaguely depressive and anxiety-ridden culchie who spent too much time on the internet for three months last year this was going to be the zine for you, for better or for worse.

Around the time I started work on Fiteclub I was obsessed with reclaiming the concept of "culchieism" and attempting to depict the humorous bleakness that permeates life in rural communities. I'm reminded here of a stupid joke I made after a socialist friend quipped that rural life was fundamentally reactionary - "culchie culture is going weeks without talking to people, being nostalgic for when TV3 was barely visible, and getting dread after seeing your sixty-five year old uncle on rural grindr". There's something about the isolation, confusing pageantry, and oddly in-depth GAA drama fundamental to rural life that progressively melts your brain (and leads to you being very online) and this brain melt has gone from being something I actively despised and derided to becoming the sole source of my creative inspiration. It's hard to make a piece of art that captures the feeling of finding out the neighbouring village had a major Cumann na mBunscol cheating scandal or realizing you haven't left the house for days, but that didn't stop me from trying.

I never finished Fiteclub - a majority of what is published in this zine was penned in the months between August and November of 2019 but just sat on my laptop until mid-February due to a prolonged feeling of burnout from writing and the creative process as a whole. The attempts that I made to finish this project felt equally as artificial as the private school masculinity that inspired it - for better or for worse the materi-

al in this zine accurately captured a certain chapter in my life that I like to pretend that I've moved beyond, despite the fact that the feelings that defined that chapter still lurk around in the background. This project feels deeply narcissistic, whingy, and egocentric (after all how many times can you bitch about being a manchild) but to alter or subdue the material felt strange to me - it was as if I was airbrushing a picture of a past self in order to alter my memory and allow nostalgia to seep in. Fiteclub was where I was for the better half of last year and it felt wrong to change it, even if it does expose me as an utter hack incapable of writing. It felt as if the only real way to move beyond Fiteclub and the feelings it contained was to finally release it into the digital ether, resigning it to the confines of some Neocities server in a country I've never visited, letting me refer to this work in the past tense, and move on to bigger and better things (ie. gabber songs that sample episodes of Reeling In The Years). I doubt anyone will get any real enjoyment out of this project, but hopefully it offers you some form of perspective - even if it's derived from pointing and laughing at it.

acknowledgements

This project would never have been possible without the support of a wide range of friends and mutuals (to the point where I'm scared I'll forget to mention one or two of them, please don't kill me if this ends up happening). Patricular thanks needs to be given to Andy (@cyber_semen) for providing the cover illustration (and the YFGer illustration which still haunts me to this day), to Tom (@gembertom) for providing edgy pictures of Europe for me to use throughout this work, to Star (patreon.com/infiniteoutlaw) for having to read nearly every single first draft I've composed for the past twelve months, to Lee (@leecairnduff) for coming up with the title of this zine and being the main inspiration of a lot of this material, to Fintan (@regretwillcome) and Titus (@titusgilner) for somehow agreeing to let me interview them, to Oisín (@oisinesc) for enduring my Portlaoise anecdotes, to Lia (@liablonded) for enduring my explanations of Irish history, to Jacob (@challaharendt) for making me realize I should make fun of people who go to Trinity, and to anyone and everyone I've talked to online in the past twelve months. Despite the fact that it sounds deeply trite, if I've sent you a link to this PDF you mean something to me and I appreciate being able to talk to you.

gaffleavers

Online games are still something that's new to me. In the past I rarely if ever played them, mainly as my internet sucked, I thought I had some self-respect, and I was perpetually scared of sucking so bad someone from my team would yell at me over their mic. However, since I spent this summer between the same four walls and behind the same four screens I started to play them frequently - if anything just because it facilitated human contact in a way that didn't make me feel desperate. It felt weird and somewhat needy for me to ask someone to hop in a discord call or hang out with me if I was feeling bleak but asking someone to play a dumb internet game made me feel vaguely "normal" - whatever that meant. It was an easy way to force someone to listen to me and an easy way to make three-to-four hours pass, even if it meant having to deal with capital G gamers.

Because I hate myself I focused a lot of my time and energy on Counter Strike Global Offensive, a game arguably populated by some of the biggest capital G gamers and objectively one of the easiest ways to give yourself deep existential angst. I'd hop on every second or third day with either my friend Autumn or Yuvsol, try to shoot some lad with a cropped hentai profile picture over and over in the same two maps (since they were the only ones I didn't suck on), eventually land a shot or two, and then riff on how we were perpetually matched up against cringy manchildren.

What was initially just an excuse for me to talk to people quickly became a minor obsession and I started to play CS:GO daily - usually either with a friend or just against bots. I initially avoided playing online by myself, mainly as I still sucked at the game and couldn't be arsed

being stuck babysitting whatever manchild Valve decided I needed to spend an hour of my life with. However, I eventually bit the bullet one night and that session lead to my fear of aging being heavily reinforced (and this article being penned).

Spending half an hour with a thirty-something sounding Polish MGTOW is not a pleasant experience in any way, especially when he keeps on getting mad at you over his inability to play a children's video game. As he raged at me for not landing a shot (even though he camped in spawn with a joke weapon and got obliterated round after round) I didn't feel dread because of his inability to shut up, but more because of the fact that he existed. Something about the fact there was a grown thirty-something screaming over a shooting game at 4:30 in the morning on a Tuesday without feeling any form of shame gave me this weird feeling of visceral disgust. As he got madder and madder I just started to ask myself the same questions over and over. Does he not realize how much of a scene he is making of himself? Does he not realize how embarrassing it is to act this way in front of strangers? Why is his profile picture (google "MGTOW profile picture" and go to the tenth page) something an edgy fourteen year old would use? Does he not have a reason to be asleep? Why does he keep on buying the worst weapon in the game and expecting to win?

In the two games previous to this one I intentionally sucked up to the random person I was playing with in order to wring some humanity out of them - basically I just said "nice shot" to them whenever they killed someone in the hope that by appealing to their egos they'd suddenly be nice to me. However, with this lad I

I want to end up in life. The idea of owning a house, having a healthy relationship and settling down are completely alien to me, hell the idea of choosing a career because it pays well is something that's equally as alien. The fact that there's a life outside of this weird stunted online purgatory is something that constantly tortures my thought process despite the fact I'm unable to properly conceive it. If anything, all I am capable of is thinking about how screwed I am - how I have less and less time to get my shite together and how likely it is that I'll end up being a weird stunted failure with little to no social life and fifty unread discord messages sent to friends who moved on from the internet ages ago.

Because of this inability to think about my future I'm always a little intimidated when surrounded by people who are able to talk about theirs - whenever someone my age says "oh I'm going to go into teaching because it's a stable position" I will freak out internally and picture myself as a 34 year old screaming over CSGO voice chat. Whenever I try to get out of this rut I just see him, a 34 year old wielding a revolver and screaming slurs. Whenever I think about going back to my counselor I hear him, a grown man heavily breathing into a broken microphone. It's as if I'm perpetually trapped in his room, writing this article on his greasy keyboard.

Recently I sent some of my older writing to some random person on a Discord server, if anything just expecting to get a well-deserved bollocking over my inability to use words in an interesting and coherent way. Instead, they started to praise some of my work and this person found one of my oldest pieces - a really sappy half-baked script about why I made things on a blog I used to run. For some reason they managed to enjoy this piece and pointed out how it'd be interesting for me to do a follow-up in five years time to see who I really was. I replied back to this person with a joke about how funny it would be if I still completely related to that piece five years down the line and if I just wrote the exact same article again as the follow-up. Being brutally honest, that statement to me feels like less of a joke and more like a prediction of the one future I am rapidly heading towards. But hey, at least I'll probably have a decent PC to play CSGO on by then.



Indian Men going their own way - MGTOW

@mgtowbharat

Home

About

Photos

Videos

Posts

Community

Create a Page

feck blogging

The following is lifted from my Medium account and was originally penned in July of 2019, but you're being exposed to it again just for the sake of irony.

I am a scarily cyclical person. Every three-to-six months I decide that it's finally the time I get my life together and start consistently writing again — this decision is usually inspired either by feeling of false nostalgia for the last time I was in this state of mind, by feeling motivated by literally any mediocre book or documentary about someone who made a thing in their bedroom, a feeling of having done nothing all year or even just a feeling that I need “more of a personality” (please don't ask how my brain equates writing with having a personality, it hasn't been on poetry twitter). Pretty much every single time I've entered this state of mind I end up asking myself one question with no real answer or relevance, “Should I make another zine or start a blog?”.

At first I'll settle on making some sort of zine — mainly since zines are objectively cooler, since I have some experience with graphic design (translation: I make album covers for my friends) and since the kind of person who still openly talks about starting a blog is usually some sort of brain-pill peddling small business pervert. I'll open up Photoshop, throw together an uninspiring “placeholder” cover thinking it'd lead to me having some form of investment in the zine (even though it does the opposite), write one and a half articles that drag on for way too long and then promptly give up on the project — after all who even reads zines anymore, let alone zines written by me? Usually, once I've made this realization I'll feel guilty that I wasted a stupid amount of time writing one and a half whole articles and try to find some way to recycle them, leading to the inevitable blog.

The inevitable blog usually houses one or two (perhaps even three if I'm motivated) of these zine-inspired blog posts, uses a

default theme I'll “eventually get around to tweaking” and is exclusively visited by poor internet friends forced to read 2,500 word long essays about Yoütu songs and find some sort of positive response due to my inability to Shut Up About The Blog. Once I get this positive feedback I'll either discard it as forced and the cycle will end or I'll feel the urge to write even more — after all if some infinitely cooler Dutch mutual supposedly enjoyed it when I self-flagellated to the sound of “All The Things She Said” by t.A.T.u perhaps they'd enjoy it if I proceeded to self-flagellate to increasingly niche yet samey topics over and over in repetitive ways. Then, during the process of writing this third blog post I'll discover that whatever software I'm using to host this inevitable blog has analytics.

Something about analytics (and data as a whole) appeals to both my inner-middle manager and lizard brain in a way that's nearly impossible to explain. Just watching the numbers on my blog fluctuate and reading oddly-specific facts (oh, 10% of my friends I annoyed read half of my 5,000 word t.A.T.u article on an iPhone? this is cool) is something that I'm easily addicted to — even if it's objectively nerdier than having a blog in the first place. Despite the fact that it's probably morally murky for me to snoop on largely irrelevant details I'll still spend a stupid amount of the day after releasing a post just refreshing the analytics page over and over, hoping to see something change. I end up writing just to see the numbers go up — if I get one more of my internet acquaintances to read my third boring YouTube post it's automatically more of a success than my second. This chasing of numbers leads to the darkest point of this cycle — posting my writing on Reddit.

Reddit is a really bad website populated

mostly by alt-right boomers perpetually mad at their Antifa-loving grandkids, freshly-divorced Lego collectors and people who compile “Rick and Morty Epic Moments” videos as their main hobby. However, despite how awful the site is whenever I post any original content on there I feel a sense of immense guilt. Self-promotion is something I am perpetually incapable of and whenever I try to do it I just feel deeply sleazy. I end up getting really anxious over whether I’ve posted too much original content on my account (which is a major faux-pas on Reddit for some reason) and ponder on if I’ve become one of those soylent-chugging weirdos who spend most of their day getting mad at the search engine placement of their Juggalo bare-knuckle boxing blog, have an in-depth Google Calendar setup for their Discord calls and enjoy using the word “niche” instead of “demographic”.

One of the weirdest results of me having used the internet as my sole source of friendship and community for way too long is that I am constantly self-aware in stupidly specific ways that inevitably just drag me (and my work) down. I can’t say positive things about myself or my creative output because I’m too busy thinking of some oddly-specific caricature that somehow resembles what I’m trying to do. I nearly gave up on writing this blog post halfway through this paragraph because it reminded me of someone from Twitter. I can’t promote myself on a forum mainly populated by divorced Lego uncles because my brain is warped to the point of fearing being embarrassed by them, despite knowing how dumb it is.

This is usually when “reality” (really just my self-awareness) kicks in and the cycle ends for another few months. I unintentionally abandon the blog due to an inability to actually finish any content, fall into a slump of doing nothing creative for a few months then let the cycle start all over again. To be brutally honest (even if it sounds lame) I’m scared to work out how exactly how many times I’ve gone through this cycle – it’s clearly been quite a few times since each time this cycle restarts I motivate myself

by pretending that this is the time I do everything right, that this time I’ll get my shit together and that this time I’ll push through. It clearly won’t be considering the fact you aren’t reading this inside a zine and the fact this will probably be the only post on this Medium account. It’s a nice thought though.

In other words, I’m back on my bullshit.



interview: regret will come



Trying to explain the work released by multi-instrumentalist Fintan Gallagher under the name Regret Will Come is something I've tried and failed to do a stupid amount of times. Ever since the release of their 2016 project "i hope you thrive" a scary amount of my time has been spent trying to explain why a bunch of lo-fi bubblegum pop anthems recorded on a PS2 microphone had such an emotional impact on me. The closest that I've gotten to explaining the appeal of their discography was just coming up with niche, semi-autobiographical comparisons of what their music felt like. The music of Regret Will Come feels like that pang of existential dread you get on a Sunday afternoon after wasting the weekend (or your life) on the internet. Their music feels like going to a Supermac's halfway through November for comfort food after not eating for 24 hours. It feels like rewatching "Serial Experiments Lain" for the third time in a failed attempt to get out of your head. Instead of wasting 2,000 words coming up with new comparisons I managed to land an interview with Fintan and got to talk about living in the middle of nowhere, niche internet communities, isolation and walking into concerts late while high. It's the closest thing to real journalism you're going to see in this zine so enjoy it.

FC: What first inspired you to get into making music and why?

Growing up in the countryside means having fuck all to do outside of school and whatever extra curricular activity I wasn't cut out for (in another life, I can solo a GAA ball with my eyes closed). I'd always loved listening to music and then one day when I was 14 I heard Reckless Abandon by Blink-182 and was so moved by its beauty, I immediately taught myself it on guitar. I spent the next few years just learning how to play any instrument (poorly) I could get my hands on. I recorded my first song when I was 16, and I'm still trying to reach Reckless Abandon levels of beauty.

FC: What is the process of recording a Regret Will Come song like?

I usually come up with songs by just messing around with an instrument until something comes out of it that I like. Then I spend the next week to a month gathering the energy to finally sit down and write and record something with it. Once all the lyrics and main instrumental bit is written, it's usually just 3 or so hours of adding and subtracting until I get something that sounds good. Or I just delete it if I'm not into it and move on.

FC: Your work has been lumped in as bedroom pop or lo-fi in the past, is the lo-fi nature of your records an intentional aesthetic choice or just a result of circumstances?

Well when I was 16 I couldn't afford nice mics or ableton or any of that shit. I had a singstar microphone and a laptop with audacity and that's always felt like enough. If there was actually anything riding on my music (i.e. I was doing this to make a living), I might invest in better gear. But right now, I don't see the point. Needless busy work and effort for music that three people will probably listen to (that sounds way too bitter, I accepted that I won't be making any money of this a long time ago). I hate recording with a mic that starts clipping if you speak too close to it, but it sounds like me now at this point.

FC: A lot of your early listeners found you through threads on a certain internet music forum, do you think that this forum and the internet as a whole has been a source of inspiration for your creative output? If so, in what way?

Man, 4chan gets a bad rep, and definitely deservedly so. But /mu/, /a/ and /mlp/ kept me sane as a lonely 16/17 year old kid. The guys and girls on that board and website encouraged me and my music in a way that honestly, very few people in my personal life ever have. They are also the only people who are completely unafraid

of giving criticism which could be good to hear sometimes. Also /mu/ was mindblowing for me as a kid. I don't know if you remember sharethreads, but they completely shaped how I listened and approached music. So much weird, awful, amazing music archived and immediately downloadable. That website meant a lot to me back then, despite it being a cesspit.

FC: In the past you've talked about growing sick of music and (seemingly) burning out during the process of working on your self-titled. How did you deal with this burnout (if you did deal with it in the first place)?

I haven't really dealt with it honestly. I've discovered through that album that I hate pretty much everything about being a musician other than making music. Advertising, live shows, publicity all that stuff just makes me anxious. And for a while before this I was deadset on taking this music thing full time, so discovering that something you thought you wanted your whole life actually makes you unhappy made me become disillusioned with the entire creative process. I discovered that I just want to make music with no pressures from outside parties. No manager, no fans. Just me and my singstar microphone. I'm still working on getting my creative juices flowing again, but it's getting there.

FC: A lot of your earlier songs (and some off your last record) were recorded in your childhood home in Co. Monaghan. Do you feel like growing up in a "smaller" (for lack of a better word) county inspired your music in any way?

Big time. I think living in isolation shaped me as a person and in turn, has had some sort of effect on my music. I think it might be why I can't make music with other people. I got used to being alone (in a way, I still had my family for company back then). Trying to figure out why I sought so much time alone and why I have such difficulty with people is a recurring theme of mine. Recording in the country was easier as well. Less distractions. I was at my most active musically when I lived in Monaghan.

FC: In a recent performance and the album cover for your self titled you're wearing a mask - is there any meaning behind you wearing it?

Well I don't play live shows anymore, cause of anxiety for the most part and also because I've always hated it. That was a small festival that some friends of mine put on every year and I've played every one of them so far so I agreed to play a one off show there. I wore the mask cause I was shitting it. I hate people looking at me but with the mask on in didn't feel like they were actually looking at me, if that makes any sense. I could pretend I wasn't there or I was someone else I guess. Took the edge off the nerves. And I guess that's the whole point of the mask.

Self defence. The self titled album needed a self portrait, and the mask felt the most natural and comfortable way to take a picture of myself.

FC: What are some records you've been listening to lately?

I've spent the last year listening to Veteran by Jpegmafia. Dude's incredible. Alopecia by Why? as well as cLOUDEAD's discography. I always have some Stars of the Lid album on the backburner as well, and Avec Laudenum is making me emotional everytime I listen to it at the moment. Stars of the Lid are probably the best band that has ever existed and I interrupted them by stumbling into their gig (at the national concert hall) stoned as hell and late. I still haven't forgiven myself.

FC: Who do you main in Ultimate and what is the best kind of soup?

Ike boi. His sword's got such a huge hitbox and he can survive smash attacks at like 150%. He also a lil bit handsome.

Chicken broth. I like a chewy soup.

Regret Will Come's latest release "every time i see the ocean" can be found on streaming or at regretwillcome.bandcamp.com

we all have something interesting inside us and they hate us for it

Or why everyone who makes art is constantly insecure about it. (Hint: our current system)

Whenever I've tried messing with a new creative medium one of the biggest blocks I face is this nagging insecurity I am not creating a "proper" version of said medium. As an example of this, when I mess around in FL Studio I often get paranoid that instead of creating "real" music I am instead trying and failing to create an emulation of sounds I enjoy. Whatever I work on doesn't feel like an actual piece of music - instead it seems like an atonal mess of unoriginal concepts done confusedly, somehow badly ripping off the musicians I enjoy without actually having any of the positive aspects of their work. Regardless of how much time I spend tweaking with samples, fiddling with mixing or even just working on new demos, nothing truly feels like "music" - whatever that even means. The experience of sitting down and listening to something I made feels inexplicably different to the experience of listening to "music" - regardless of quality or how much time I sunk into it.

Interestingly enough when friends send me demos I've noticed a similar insecurity seep through - we'll both self-deprecate about ourselves before even daring to swap MP3s and then we'll spend a silly amount of time gushing about the work of the other person to make up for it. None of my friends who create music (or even just create full stop) feel as if they do so. The idea of making things has been relegated to other people - those with fame, talent or even just a different body. But where exactly does this concept of "proper" art stem from and how do we go about creating it?

At risk of sounding like a small-business owner there is only one way to create

"proper art" - go out and make it. This obviously sounds quite reductionist, a cynical bootstrap statement peddled by scarily overpaid motivational speakers. However, at the end of the day the only way to create a good song is to put it to tape and the only way to create a good article is to put it to paper. It is extremely likely that none of the people you idolise never woke up one morning and told themselves that they were going to create a piece of "proper" art - they instead told themselves they were going to create a piece of art. There is no objective way to create a "proper" work - there is no specific chord that suddenly makes a song real, there is no turn of phrase that makes a novel a novel, and there is no hue that makes a painting a painting. After all, if one attempted to define what a "proper" piece of art is they'd probably go mental - there are no actual rules as the concept of "proper" art is completely arbitrary. The closest one can get to a clear definition of "proper art" is often just a simple shrug of "everything I didn't make".

At the end of the day, the one thing that actually links the works you define as "proper" is the presence of emotion. Emotion is inherently linked with art and it could be argued that art as a whole is merely a time-capsule of the thoughts and feelings of a certain person at a certain period of time. Nothing more, nothing less. Therefore, all one needs to do to create a real piece of art is to translate their thoughts and feelings into a medium that will outlast them.

Everyone is capable of creating an interesting piece of art - it's just that our brains are very good at blocking that ability off.

Now obviously this isn't to say that those who create amazing works are weird Übermensch types who overcame basic self awareness in order to make weird Simpsons webcomics but instead that those who are capable of making interesting art tend to be in environments where this ability to create is fostered (or is brought out in spite of said environment). As Mark Fisher aptly pointed out, what goes on inside of our heads is to a certain extent spurred on by societal factors. So it shouldn't be too surprising that those in supportive circles churn out work more consistently, those who have a safety-net tend to go beyond needing it, and that those in collectives end up being more creative as a result of their membership.

Now obviously one can't completely replace their inner-voice with outside support (especially considering how unhealthy that would be for everyone involved) but this support is a major help in overcoming oneself. Even from personal experience, I have entered prolonged states of writer's block multiple times throughout this year and without fail every single time I have overcome this state of creative anhedonia it has been a direct result of discussing writing with a supportive friend (to the point where my creative peaks tend to arrive around the time I meet new people). Our brains are currently quite talented at preventing us from reaching our creative goals, so countering this blockage with an encouraging environment is essential to creating art. This trope is probably best depicted in popular bands - their collective work tends to be their most coherent while their solo work tends to be more confused.

But why exactly are our brains so intent on classifying our work as anything other than "proper"? This is a very subjective question but the more I ponder upon it the more I feel as if there is a correlation between what capital promotes as "proper" art and what we assume it is. The pieces that come to mind when one thinks of "proper" art (Greek statues with small penises, Banksy getting a monkey to say 'oi bruv the gov'mint are cheeky', 'Jack and Jill (2011)' erotic fanfiction) are often those that fit in with the contradictions of capital the

easiest.

Now art and capital barely mix in the first place - after all unlike a product with a set value art is a subjective creature, hard to truly define or set a price to. Therefore, it shouldn't be too surprising that capital promotes certain types of art over the others, essentially limiting what we assume is "proper" through constant exposure and judgement. We are trained by the press (and society as a whole) that paintings are just fifty million euro hyper-realistic depictions of Three Stooges characters billionaires hang on the Epstein island, that film is just a way to rehash the same three pieces of intellectual property in five hour snoozefests every six months, that poetry is weird rhyming Shakespeare stuff you were forced to learn off but never understand, that music is just factory churned Ed Sheeran blackface songs, and that writing is the realm of pre-internet incels from the 1800s who loved male camaraderie as much as they loved to do colonialism. Works that go outside of these capital-endorsed limits are derided by those who maintain the status-quo. After all, *who would pay for that?*

One of the most insidious things about neo-liberalism is that all our interactions have been commodified - everything we do is a financial transaction and our confidence in our art and even ourselves is inherently linked to some monetary concept of worth. Art is not measured based on the emotions it conveys (or even how it conveys them), but instead on how much money it could generate in an auction house or on a streaming service. What we internally consider as "proper" art may just be the art our totally benevolent billionaire overlords enjoy.

Arguably the best proof of this link between "proper" art and capital arrives in the form of punk music, street art and rap - three things that have gone from icons of a degenerate subculture derided by those in power to ways that those in power attempt to look relatable to us peasants. There was no real societal value associated with any of these types of art when they were consumed mainly by those who can't afford yachts, even if they all objectively

pushed their mediums forward. Street art was graffiti, punk was going to turn your kid into a gay Marxist, and rap was an easy excuse to be racist in your newspaper column. Those who created these kinds of art were openly mocked if not treated badly or oppressed because of it (just google what an ASBO was or which venues the police chose to shut down). However, the second that these forms of art became commodified (and arguably pacified) and packaged to the rich for ludicrous prices we suddenly began to respect them. When what made the art truly counterculture was stripped back and removed of its teeth and context it suddenly became acceptable. When all we were left with were the aesthetics of rebellion being sold in an auction house for fifteen million all was “proper”. In other words, the work of a band like Rage Against The Machine became acceptable the second a person like Paul Ryan could claim to like them. Once your work is palatable to your feudal lord it is suddenly real.

There is a reason why those hellbent on defending the status-quo at all costs rail against modern art pieces, complain about drill music, and burn books. Firstly, they provide a good enemy. After all, it is probably more enjoyable to get mad about and laugh at artsy college-educated types, people who refer to themselves as

“writers” and inner-city youths than those with actual tangible power. This is arguably best seen through “Entartete Kunst”, an art exhibition organised by the Nazis in 1937 to mock the works of “Jewish” artists that they confiscated. Instead of choosing to just destroy the works that they believed would subvert society due to its depiction of “decadence”, “weakness of character”, “mental disease”, and “racial impurity” they opted to compile these works into an exhibition of 650 paintings mentioned in avant-garde publications. This was (unsurprisingly) a very cynical, calculated choice - after all if one was dumb enough to actually think without a shred of irony that the one thing preventing you from living in some strange aryan utopia was too many people looking at strange paintings of French people, why would you choose to exhibit them to the wider public?

These paintings offered the Nazis an easy enemy - a spectacle for the public to gawk at, be enraged by, and confirm their biases with. After all, the Nazis made a point of including exaggerated prices with the pieces to seemingly indicate how much was spent by a museum to acquire a certain painting. The psychology and ideology that lay behind this exhibition lives on to this day. Conservative newspapers spend hours trying to work out a way to talk about drill



without being too racist and reactionary. YouTubers think that making fun of Yoko Ono is in any way new, edgy or original. However, I feel that the true reason that these status-quo defenders despise unconventional art cuts much deeper.

Art is universal. The emotions expressed within each medium are fundamentally relatable to us as people - they are the thoughts and feelings that stew in our heads and saunter in our conversation. Art offers us a way to temporarily get inside of the head of another person - to understand the world as they see it from their perspective and to glimpse at the thoughts filtered out in normal conversation. It is a medium through which one can gain an understanding of someone completely different and a medium through which one can notice fundamental similarities, and that is arguably one of the scariest things for those hell-bent on keeping us separate and divided.

Art that isn't seen as "proper" to capital will never be the true cause of its downfall (just watch 'HyperNormalisation' by Adam Curtis if you want to understand why). However, art provides us with a medium through which it is possible to temporarily have a clear understanding of what binds oneself to the so-called "other" - be they of a different creed, ethnicity or gender. It allows us to see that we share these same emotions, that the struggles we assumed were unique to us are actually universal, and that the differences between us peddled by status-quo defenders are mere distractions from the genuine differences we have with those with genuine, tangible power. At risk of ending this article in an utter cliché, we all have something interesting inside of us and they hate us for it.



gowlhunting

Just in case you haven't gotten sick of the same three points being hammered over and over I decided to hunt for gowls on twitter again.

I am incapable of writing about things other than the internet being bad. Even though it's cliché to point out that the internet is a breeding ground for apathy, mediocre gaming youtubers with untamed foot fetishes, and acne tablet fueled hate crimes I keep on coming back to this one topic, beating a dead horse over and over in the hopes of filling two or three pages of this zine (which I will probably never finish). I am incapable of writing about other things to the point where when I try to contribute to other publications I always have to define my work as "inspired by the internet" - even though if someone else used those words I would make fun of them in a catty, self-loathing inspired way. The only way I can really get around the fact that I am perpetually writing the same thing over and over is to start each piece with a weird spiel about how self aware I am about it. After all, if someone wastes 200-ish words pointing out that they are incapable of compiling words properly it suddenly means it's okay for them to waste another 1,800 of them. And waste them I will.

Observing online gowls in their prime habitat (Twitter) is my worst habit. For some reason that is probably linked to self-loathing, whenever I have more than fifteen minutes spare and not enough energy to get out of bed I will often end up scrolling through the profile of some person I despise just so I can "laugh at them" (translation: feel unnecessary dread). Regardless of if they're a LibDem under the age of thirty, a gamer who never showers and really dislikes the art direction of a show for people half their age, an unironic racist, or even just a person who claims to enjoy youth politics, I will probably end up trying to enter their headspace by reading their tweets (and by checking to see just how many porn accounts they follow). If I had the mental

energy and social class of a media centrist I could probably make a big song and dance about how this habit is helping restore "civility in the era of hashtags" or "good-spirited debate on the Epstein island", but in reality all it does is give my brain a creative way to overthink (as if I needed another excuse). What often starts out in earnest as an attempt to make fun of the one person in CIT who joined Renua often ends up with me wondering how someone gets to the point of being the one person in CIT who joined Renua and whether they're happier than I am. Eventually I snap out of this temporary dread and fire two gags sneakily making fun of them into the digital ether - hopefully ruining any chances of me having a career in anything at any stage in the future. However, the more I stew in these thoughts the closer they get to having a coherent structure - meaning it's time for me to bore you with some armchair psychology.

If you're reading this sorry excuse of an article you have probably encountered the concept of "false consciousness" before. Just in case I send this zine to someone outside of my sphere of two trusted friends, it is a term used mainly by Marxist sociologists to describe the ways that different processes (be they material, ideological or institutional) can be used to obscure or conceal the true causes of exploitation and suffering. In layman's terms, it's basically when convenient scapegoats (i.e "big government", migrants, or people who write thinkpieces about that Joker movie) are used to get people to misunderstand their genuine interests and to not notice exploitation. I'd like to propose that being extremely online and isolated leads to a state of "false self-consciousness" - a fake feeling of being "self-aware" that in reality is only just your inner-voice finding convenient

scapegoats to explain away why you're so miserable the whole time (in ways that always seem irreparable for some strange reason). After all, this self-awareness isn't strong enough to actually inspire some change in your life - it just leads to you lying on top of your bed feeling dread reading the tweets of a dead centrist political party and wondering why you're so childish. Unlike actual self-awareness, false self-consciousness is smothering - cancelling out your ability to create (after all everything you make is embarrassing), your ability to do "embarrassing" things, or even your ability to see yourself as a functional person. For example, a truly self-aware person who can't dance would be okay with doing so at a rave as they realize that nobody really cares if they stumble around the gaff. A falsely self-conscious person on the other hand would just realize that they're shit at dancing, freak out about it, dance even more awkwardly as a result, hate themselves for it and then somehow use it as an excuse to explain why they're lonely in a meandering blog post.

False self-consciousness reigns supreme in small internet communities full of alienated loners. In unsurprising news, people who feel alienated from society will congregate, and if they're left unchecked for too long they'll come up with some weird reasons to explain this alienation. Arguably the best example of this is the "looksmaxxing" community - a group of depressive incels who believe that the one thing preventing them from being happy (and getting the ride) is a few millimeters of cheekbone. Obviously this seems insane - after all these people fetishize camp 90s underwear models as the apex of attractiveness and blow a scary amount of time and money to reach this weird Ken doll fantasy that most normal people aren't even attracted to. However, to the people inside this community it is their personal key to understanding their misery. Practical reasons to explain why they don't leave the house often are brushed aside or dismissed before they're even mentioned. Sure what's the point of picking up a craft, seeing a counsellor or taking your medication when the second you get that millimeter of bone moved

you'll become functional? But of course, moving a bone around won't solve their problems. If they do get the surgery they'll just assume that they need to take another procedure in order to feel okay and if they don't get the surgery they'll just wallow in self-hatred. These people are self-conscious enough to know that they feel horrific but not self-aware enough to know the genuine reasons why.

As I sat there mid-migrane anxiously looking across the Supermacs I noticed the broken television screen above me start to flicker. Some gaelic football match was being repeated but it was barely visible - instead what could only be described as "rejected tumblr glitch-art" stared back at me. My anxiety had flared up hard that day as I hung out with a townie friend - manifesting itself in awkward social interactions, laps around Lidl and weird unfinished half-jokes. We'd been constantly talking for hours - somehow translating an erratic and hyperactive texting style into something resembling human interaction as we walked across the three buildings still open in Laois. At this point my brain felt like mush, melted by irrelevant fears and constantly looping awkward attempts to interact socially in a "human" way. Fragments of conversation came and went like waves as I anxiously glared across the sanitized restaurant. We looked at websites that sold arcade prizes in bulk, traded weird old school gossip and referenced in-jokes too dumb to bother explaining.

I felt a sense of embarrassment wash over me as I stared into the pizza and tried to come up with a pun to mask my train of thought. I'd always been concerned as to how this friend found me cool (or even as to how they dealt with my bullshit for so long), after all I am a manchild incapable of functioning normally. Usually I just brushed this concern off with the fact that most of our interactions were over text. After all, text was something I was relatively okay at. I could control my image through words, obfuscate my inabilities through irony, cancel out my fidgets with ironic emojis, and emulate being a functional person after enough practice over the years. However,

we were face-to-face now and I was facing the music. The inabilities I could correct from behind a screen were leaking out in front of them and I was convinced that they suddenly understood why I wasn't functional and why I needed internet friends in the first place.

The topic changed quickly. They brought up Chris-Chan, an internet personality whose every move (both online and off) was tracked by an obsessive group of morbidly curious bystanders. The internet discovered Chris-Chan through "Sonichu", a webcomic Chris-Chan worked on in the early 2000s. However, these bystanders were more interested in the trainwreck that was Chris-Chan's life than the adventures of a combination of Sonic and Pikachu. My friend jokingly remarked about how bleak it must be to be a figure like Chris-Chan, being perpetually made fun of and harassed by weirdos online and being none the wiser of it. I responded by semi-seriously saying that Chris-Chan was probably happier than I am. The friend pointed out that Christine's house was destroyed in a fire and that this fire was believed to have been caused by Christine herself. I remarked that at least Christine wasn't aware of it.

During an interview with VICE, Daniel Loptain (better known as Oneohtrix Point Never) remarked that the title of the song "Sticky Drama" off his 2015 release "Garden of Delete" was inspired by Julia Kristeva's book "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection". According to Loptain, Kristeva suggested that "although we try to repress things that come out of us, we're still curious about them". He then goes on to use the example of sneezing to further explain this concept - "when you sneeze, you look at the napkin for a second before you throw it in the trash". When I was talking to my friend about Chris-Chan I was briefly reminded of this concept. Perhaps the reason that characters like Chris-Chan and the gowls who give me twitter-induced dread are so interesting to me because they remind me of the aspects of my personality I try to repress or mask within my speech and writing. Maybe they're logical extremes, paths I could have went down if

I didn't have the support of my weird circle of internet friends. It could have been me causing a fire, getting mad about cartoons or joining a centrist party if things went differently - and perhaps that's the reason seeing these people online makes me feel dread.

The weirdest side-effect of my false self-consciousness is an odd kinship with assorted internet failures. Even though I know they are horrific people with regressive views and disgusting personalities I see a distorted version of myself in the kind of person who assumes the only way for them to become functional is to become a Ken doll and that scares me. I often joke to my friends about "nothing people" - generic internet failures who moderate the over-watch subreddit, are oddly racist on discord servers, don't have many friends, and think that "Greta Thunberg OWNED By TRUMP" compilation videos are the peak of comedy. However, it seems as if the reason these people irk me is because if it wasn't for good friends I viably could have ended up as one. As I go to throw this napkin of isolation, self-loathing, and false self-consciousness into the bin I stare into it for a moment and see the exact reasons why I need to do so. It tries to tell me that "Negative XP" aren't a shite band.



★YFG



stupidly late review: jesus is king

Writing about the work of Kanye West is uniquely hard because it is quite easy to end up looking like a confused English teacher searching for meaning in increasingly minute detail. After all, in the eyes of most people Kanye is either a musical genius who single-handedly changed rap music or a funny bumbling eejit who harasses Taylor Swift and raps about bleached arseholes and as a result of these perceptions a lot of the pieces on Kanye's work tend to pander to one of these two extremes. You either end up with a piece in which you repeatedly call Kanye an egotistical weirdo or a piece in which you imply that the line "I guess a blowjob's better than no job" was inspired by Trotskyist theory. It's scarily easy to over-simplify Kanye's work but it is equally as easy to over-complicate it. I always found it fun to toy with these perceptions and as a result, often ended up trying to explain the character of Kanye to bored friends in order to mess with them. Something about going from gushing about the emotional impact of "Runaway" to explaining as to why he was involved in Pornhub awards related controversy felt very fun - even if it presumably bored the life out of the poor people who had to put up with it. For a while I was essentially the designated Kanye West explainer of my social circle, translating his antics into digestible anecdotes. So obviously, when he released "Jesus Is King" this October I

hopped at the opportunity to put some of my semi-ironic translations of Kanye into this zine. However, things ended differently.

In order to understand "Jesus Is King" properly one has to sit through an explanation of the various delays it went through. Originally announced as "Yandhi" in September of 2018 it was expected to arrive on the 29th but that date came and went without any real update. Kanye eventually revealed he decided to delay the project until he could head to "what is known as Africa" (his words) to re-record the project. Eventually it was announced that the record would release on Black Friday (November 30th) but after performing with Kid Cudi at Camp Flog Gnaw (the Electric Picnic for yanks who are annoying on Instagram) Kanye claimed that the project wasn't "ready yet" and indefinitely delayed it. After eight or so months of leaks, speculation and rumours Kim Kardashian tweeted a handwritten tracklist of the album (now called "Jesus Is King") and claimed it was to be released on the 27th of September, 2019 (a year on from the initial announcement). This date was later shifted to the 29th (supposedly as Kanye needed to finalize the mixing of the record), but the 29th (unsurprisingly) came and went with no sign of the project. According to TMZ, Kanye had already finished the record but he kept on

tweaking with it as he felt unhappy with the project. Eventually, Kanye tweeted that the project was to be released on the 25th of October. The album missed its midnight deadline (again as a result of mixing issues) but finally released later on that day - ending over a year of waiting and bringing us to the time of me writing this piece.

“Jesus Is King” is a deeply flawed record. Despite only being twenty-seven minutes long the record (in its current state) is littered with cringy lyrics, genuinely confusing mixing choices, trite concepts, and deeply mediocre execution. A lot of the songs feel like unfinished sketches of something greater, a demo that'd get leaked to YouTube five years down the line for obsessive fans to wank themselves over. And that's ignoring the disgustingly cheesy ode to Chick-fil-A that verges on being a genius piece of anti-art. Now, this isn't to say that the record is horrific - the production is generally strong throughout (with some notable exceptions) and the presence of Kanye's Sunday Service Choir is a welcome one. However, this doesn't stop the record from feeling like a disappointment - especially for those of us who followed the constant drip-feed of snippets and leaks surrounding Yandhi. Obsessive Kanye fans basically spent the better part of a year waiting for full versions of songs they got emotionally attached to, only for them to receive weird badly-mixed Christian parodies within one of Kanye's least coherent projects and no amount of subreddit-induced Stockholm syndrome can change that. One of the most damning things about “Jesus Is King” as a project is that the conversation surrounding it is barely even related to the music - after all, there's not really that much to say (as this paragraph proves).

However, “Jesus Is King” is an extremely interesting record to me as it completely obliterates our collective notions of Kanye. The old perceptions of Kanye as either an artistic genius or a funny delusional narcissist are seemingly (unintentionally) deconstructed by this project and the carnival of

reaction surrounding it. Instead of it being a fun carnival show or a high-concept cinematic experience we were instead presented with the image of an unstable man, latching on to whatever grifters surround him that week and sabotaging his creative output as a result. The spectacle surrounding Kanye shifted from being generally “funny” (since his mental illness wasn't as apparent) to being oddly disturbing, killing any notion of Kanye being a fun clown in the process. His mental illness was funny when it could be shrugged off as “just Kanye” but now we're well beyond that point and we now just feel collective guilt as the spectacle drags on. West's self-sabotage is further emphasized by the near-constant leaking of the material of this album. A lot of these demos that surfaced online throughout the summer feel more complete and coherent than the actual songs - to the point where Kanye fans are returning to the comment sections of bootleg uploads to mourn on what could have been. Our seemingly contradictory interpretations of Kanye West have been deeply challenged by this record and perhaps that's why it feels so jarring. Signs of the true extent of Kanye's mental illness have been staring us in the face for the better part of a decade but we ignored them because they were attached to memorable melodies and funny bloopers and perhaps that realization hurts harder than any Chick-fil-A metaphor.

Extremely-online Kanye obsessive have responded to the release of “Jesus Is King” by compiling hypothetical alternative versions of the album. Using a combination of the aforementioned demo leaks, live performances, and bootleg recordings, fans released “Project Yandhi” - a fifteen song attempt to imagine a version of an album that will never release. Something that struck me about this project (other than the fact it's better than the actual album) was how hauntological it felt. For the uninitiated, the late Mark Fisher used the term “hauntology” to describe art that was preoccupied with and was nostalgic for a “lost future” - something that never arrived and something that left a nota-

ble absence. In Fisher's case he used it to talk about how bands such as the Arctic Monkeys turned back to the past in order to deal with the bleakness of neoliberal reality, but in this case it seems as if Kanye West obsessives are dealing with the reality of "Jesus Is King" and Kanye's mental state by retreating into fantasies about what this album could have sounded like in a lost future. In other words, they are imagining a reality where we received "Yandhi" when we were supposed to, and where the spectacle of Kanye was still enjoyable to witness.

A common reaction to this record is claiming that it is "career-ending", something that marks the point where Kanye finally crossed the line from being a visionary genius to being insane. However, in reality, this album feels like the point where we went from being English teachers treating Kanye like this mythical god-like figure to random onlookers staring with concern. Kanye essentially went from either being a rich arsehole, or a rich arsehole who happens to be a musical genius to just being a sad bastard with too much money who keeps on falling for grifters. One of our worst habits is treating people who make art as these mythological foreign

beings who hand-pick every minute detail in their creative output. The reality is sadly more mediocre than that, art is made by people - people who can be unwell, people who can self-sabotage, people who can join megachurches. Our perceptions of Kanye were so flawed as they dehumanised him - either to idolise him or mock him. Traditional warning signs of someone going down the deep end (and even lyrics directly dealing with his bipolar disorder) were just shrugged off as part of the mystique of his character and we went along with his spiels out of a sense of morbid curiosity. When he showed signs of needing help we responded either with snarky tweets or 2,000 word thinkpieces. Now obviously we couldn't have done much of anything to help but I do feel as if this whole ordeal shows us that even though we idolize fictional statues, the characters that dominate our headlines are still flesh and blood humans at the end of the day and this idolization is something we need to actively avoid - even if that does mean I won't get to fill my conversations with funny Kanye facts.





interview: titus gilner

Titus Gilner is an artist who defies clear definition or expectation, to the point where I put off writing this paragraph explaining his art for a stupid amount of time. Gilner has hopped constantly between projects and formats over the years - experimenting with poetry, design, photography, music videos, and music in a way that feels oddly coherent. Despite the fact that his creative output is extremely varied there is a unified voice that lays behind his work - regardless of the medium a sense of authenticity and sincerity permeates. Gilner's art is interesting as it seems focused on fostering a sense of community - either online through the journal entries and poems compiled in "This Is Me" or offline through his constant promotion of young creatives in his hometown of Amarillo, Texas. Equally as interesting was the push Gilner made away from the traditional infrastructure of social media, favoring the use of mass-text and email to promote and release new work. This meant that Gilner was able to reach out to a local audience in a personal and direct capacity, avoiding the black hole of social media while also being able to utilize the low cost of entry and speed associated with digital distribution. In the hopes of making this introductory paragraph slightly less pretentious and getting a clearer idea of what goes into one of his pieces, I reached out and talked to Gilner about fostering local scenes, his main inspirations and aspirations, as well as the challenges he faced maneuvering around the three websites that consume our lives.

FC: What first inspired you to make art and why?

i was living in san marcos texas going to texas state university. pre law track, on a debate scholarship. then i met people that identified themselves as "artists" for the first time in my life. growing up i went to a small school - my graduating high school class was 18 people - and i didnt have that much of a social circle. in college

i met rappers and photographers and graphic designers and graffiti artists and punks and all sorts of people. getting out of my hometown was the best thing that happened to me, even though i have returned and plan on staying for a long time. i became very close to a really good artist and they said something that changed my life "critical thinking is just creativity with a different name." i've always been good at critical thinking. i strive in liberal arts. it was just a matter of changing my mindset from writing speeches to writing poetry. analyzing public policy became analyzing landscapes and architecture. i was not an artist, or even thought about being one, until 18 or 19.

FC: What is your creative process like? Do you feel like your art is mostly methodical and well thought out or is it more improvisational and focused in the moment?

very much improvisational and in the moment. I love the science of chaos. letting the chips fall where they may. thats something i really like about public / street art like graffiti. its imperfect and not permanent.

a lot of payrent is reliant on the art of random. i bleach dye, tie-dye, and splatter a lot of clothing and i do it mindlessly.

in photography it's the thrill of chaos that draws me. I love not knowing what to expect. Studio work has never been my favorite thing because it's much too predictable. coming across something that no one else has seen, or haven't cared to really look at, is what draws me to walk around aimlessly with a camera.

I love the serendipity of the world and I think it's much more advantageous for artists to embrace that rather than fight it.

the light won't always be perfect, but the mo-

ment is, the brushstrokes might be visible, but they were made, someone did it, just like the life of a person is full of chaos, I think it's important to let that leak onto the page, or photo.

FC: When doing research for this piece I found it hard to find just one word to describe your creative output. Throughout the years you've hopped between many different mediums and forms of expression (such as music videos, poetry, photography, and fashion). What word would you use to classify yourself and your work?

I don't know, this is a good question, maybe decisive. I make decisions and I follow through with them, sometimes blindly. Growing up my one of my dad's favorite sayings was "don't half ass it," he said it to me constantly, about everything, from trivial things to huge life decisions he would say "don't half ass it," he's a cowboy, so I guess I was sorta brainwashed to decide what I want and to do it till its done.

FC: Over the past year, you've talked a lot about moving away from social media and the norms it entails. What is your relationship with the internet like and do you think that this relationship has shaped or formed your art in some way?

Man....

My relationship with the internet is rocky. The best and the worst things in my life stems from the web. MOST of the people in my life, even in my hometown, are from the internet. I met most of my friends online first and even most of my romantic relationships since high school have been because of tinder.

To answer your question directly, yes, the internet has greatly shaped me and my art. I wish that I could exist without the internet but I just don't think that's possible for most people anymore. The only reason anyone even knows who I am is because of the internet. My audience is online and in real life second. That shapes how most people consume my art, how most people hear about my art, and how most people perceive me as an artist. I want to be as genuine and human as possible when I am online.

FC: Seemingly as part of this push you've made away from traditional social media you've started to share your work via group text and email. What was the process of setting this up like and would you recommend this alternative method of distribution to other artists and creatives?

Using the internet as a social infrastructure while trying to ignore all the things that were designed to be social infrastructure is definitely challenging.

The setup is something I still haven't totally

figured out. I was doing a mailing list through google voice, but now the list is too large. They have algorithms that prevent you from sending out spam, so the moment I try and send the same link or text or photo to over 50 people I get blocked out for a day. My mailing list is about 200. In order to get proper mailing list software I would have to pay a monthly fee that just isn't feasible right now.

But I would recommend this sort of distribution to anyone that can pull it off. I have a ton of obstacles but I have seen the power of direct marketing. Before these algorithms, I was throwing shows with 100s of people that would have normally only had 30-50. The mailing list allows me to have direct access to the people that care about my work, without cluttering up the feeds and lives of people that could care less.

FC: You recently tweeted that all art is political. What do you think that your art stands for and why?

I think it really depends on what aspect of my art you're talking about.

I think what that saying means - "all art is political" - is that all art impacts people from top to bottom. Politics (my favorite thing after art) is just the happenings of people in a society or town. And art happening in a society or town will inherently affect the lives of people in that society or town. It is impossible to create in a vacuum. No matter how hard an artist tries, their work will inevitably inspire someone, or give perspective to someone, or make someone angry or happy. Art will inevitably make people have an opinion.

FC: A lot of pieces (especially your photography project "Oh, Amarillo!") relate in some way to the city in which you grew up. Do you feel like growing up in a smaller city such as Amarillo shaped you as an artist and if so in what way?

Without a doubt yes. I had just moved back from San Marcos/Austin when I started "Oh, Amarillo!"

I had experience living in a big city for the first time. Being away from home made me miss home. I started to realize that most people, however, are not from big cities. The majority of people on this planet are from cities like Amarillo or smaller. We are the 14th largest city in Texas, like 116th largest city in the US, and our population sits at about 200k. That's about the cusp between "town" and "city". I started viewing Amarillo as an "everytown" - sorta like the idea of the everyman that you might have learned about in high school. Amarillo is just like every other town in America. It isn't a phenomenon like NY or LA or Chi, its average, like Cheyenne, Glendale, Baton Rouge, or Durham. Once I realized that Amarillo is a great test subject when it comes to learning about and

studying the average american / american city, i've kinda become obsessive.

FC: A lot of your work has also related to your attempts to foster the creative scene in your community. What would you say to other creatives who want to grow their local scene and find other artists despite living in smaller cities or towns that traditionally aren't given the attention they deserve?

i've been asked this question by a lot of younger people in my city recently. I think that's interesting, im 24 and people that are 18 have no clue about any of the shit ive done in the past.

that's kinda how the local scene goes though.

they are all bigger than you realize.

I would say this - break the fourth wall of the internet, if you want to make an impact in real life then you have to impact people in real life. pull up in your local square and do a pop up. bring an amp and a mic to your college quad. do it. fuck it. why not

also don't worry about making friends, it will happen naturally, but if you wanna do something then do it. don't wait for other people, just do it. you don't need help.

FC: It seems as if a lot of your work has been related to building some form of alternative to the traditional means in which we consume media, whether it be by championing local scenes over the mainstream or just by moving away from using corporate social media to share your art. Is this an intentional choice and if so do you feel like this alternative to the mainstream is becoming more and more necessary in our current climate?

A little bit of both. I feel like its really easy to get crowded off the shelf online and by taking things to a more traditional playing field it's much easier to stand out.

I think that if you want to be a big fish, it's good to become one in a small pond first, so that you don't get eaten alive when you try to move on to more spacious waters.

FC: Of all the pieces that you've worked on over the years what ones are you the proudest of and why?

"This Is Me" is probably the most impactful thing i've done to date honestly. It was like 2015 or so and it was honestly such a dope project that really reached a lot of people. I think it's still up on ibooks.

FC: What are your main creative inspirations as of late and how are they inspiring you?

I think first and foremost my biggest inspiration as of late has been Bones and TeamSesh. I know a lot of the members through the internet and have seen them grow a ton over the years. I just love their dedication. They stand by their principles to the end even if its detrimental. Bones is independent and stands for so many of the same things that I believe in.

Secondly i would say tv. I'm a huge television fan, more so than movies. I don't watch a big variety, i just binge the same handful of series for months at a time. Right now i'm on People Just Do Nothing, the Ricky Gervais Show, and West Wing.

Also im very inspired by the people around me and in my city. One of the main reasons I do oh amarillo and things of that nature is to give my city, people just like me with similar interests and obstacles, something to root for. Something to hold on to and something to claim and something to be inspired by. If I lived on an island all alone i would kill myself. I am a very social person and a lot of my actions revolve around the needs and desires of other people.

FC: What albums have you been listening to this year?

I'm still listening to theStand4rd album. I'm very excited for the next bobby raps project. I've been consuming bones albums like they are water. I'm really into UnderTheWillowTree at the moment. It's one of his best projects in awhile. I have decided that I like Endless more than Blonde. The Pouya album surprised me.

JACKSON!!! How in the world could I forget Jackson. Everyone reading this needs to go check him out immediately. He's put out 3 projects this year and I love every single one of them. I haven't been this excited about an unknown artist in a long time. He's kinda hard to find on spotify/apple music so seach "jackson wolfwood" then go to his page from there.

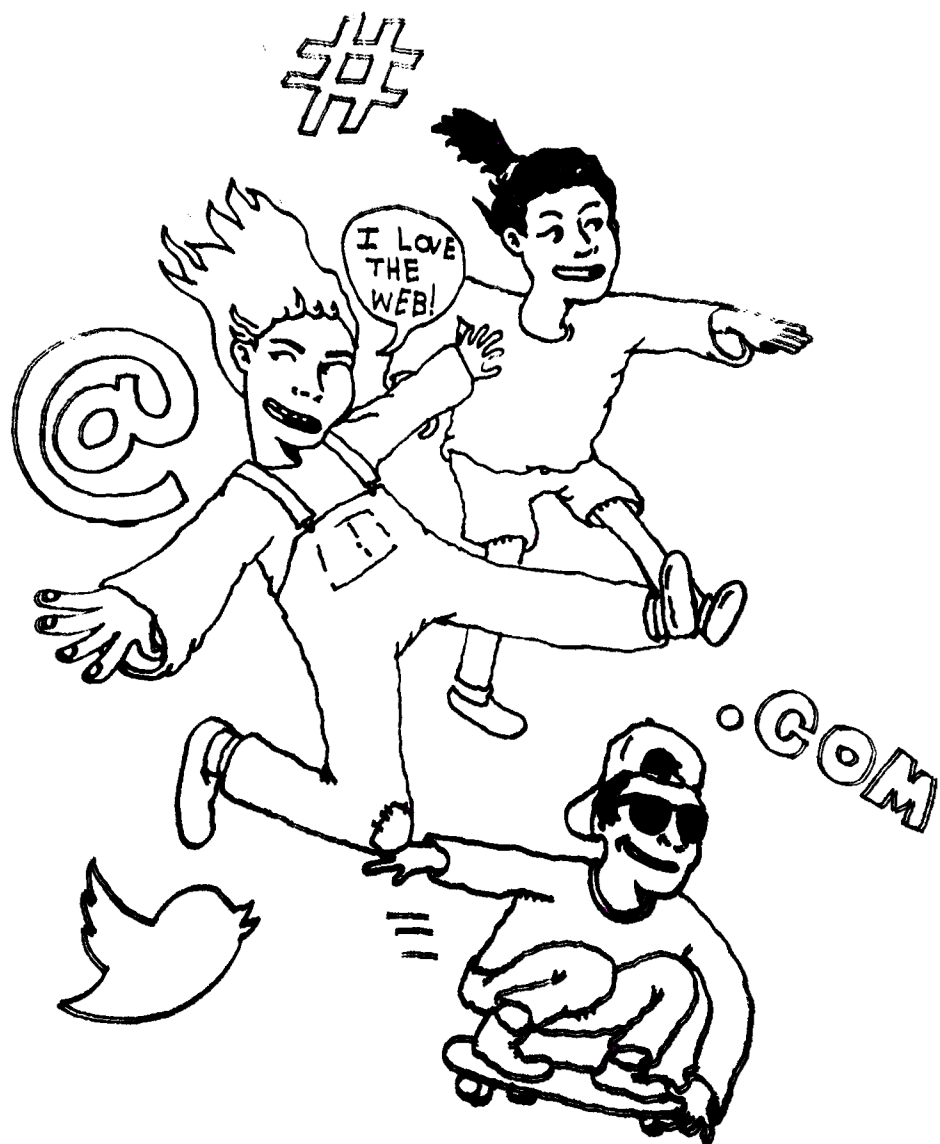
FC: If you could talk to a past version of yourself what would you tell them?

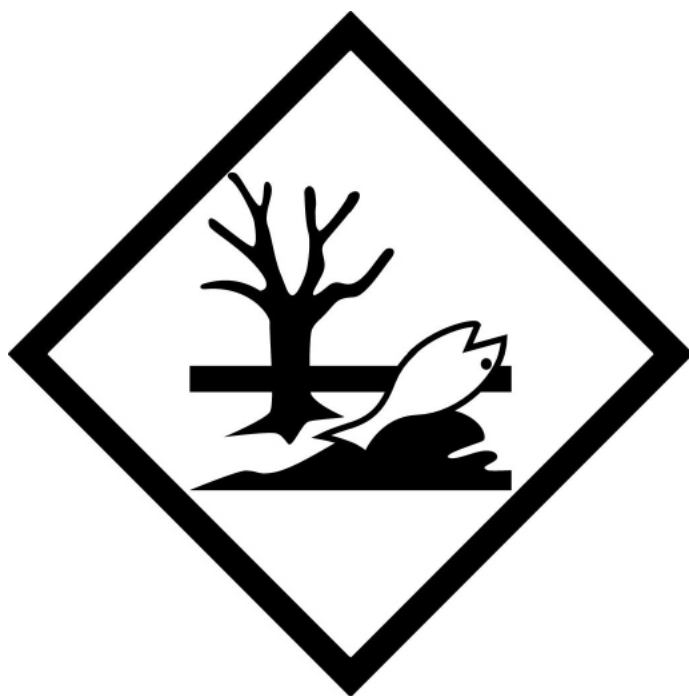
Care more about yourself.

FC: What are your creative plans for the future?

I'm honestly not really sure. I don't like to plan very far in advance. I think I want to be a journalist / historian of sorts. I love all media, from radio to TV to print. I just want to leave a mark. That's my creative plans for the future: Leave An Impact. Right? Change the game in such a way that it can never be played the same again.

Titus can be found on Twitter and Instagram as @titusgilner.





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