

TALON

Community College of Denver

Spring 2021



The Art of Teaching A Profile of Brian Weaver

Article by Zada Herrera

Perfectly Placed A Profile of President DeSanctis

Article by Jenna Duke

Bring a Good Camera & Wear the Right Shoes

Lessons from a Protest

Article by Molly Thomas

Let There Be Change

Meet the Staff



Jenna Duke, Editor-in-Chief

Jenna is an English major with a passion for telling the stories of others through her writing; she enjoys diving into the backgrounds of individuals and looking through the lens through which they see. Because of this, she takes pride in her role as Editor-in-Chief and loves reading the work of student journalists. She also serves on the Student Trustee Council for the Society of Professional Journalists which both inspires and excites her to be a part of the future of journalism.



Zada Herrera, Editor-in-Chief

Zada is a committed writer, Editor-In-Chief for the Talon, and Vice President of Communication for the PTK Honor Society. "The 'Talon' Magazine isn't a job, duty, or club but a team that is always growing and refocusing the lens of journalism and the world. I'm grateful to have this experience with these aspiring beings."



Chayce Lanphear, Photographer

I am a full-time engineering student, entrepreneur, professional artist and lover of growth! I am also a futurist that is obsessed with technology and constantly dream of advancing it. I love having deep, philosophical conversations, getting my hands dirty, and exploring all the wonders of nature. I'm really passionate about passion and hope to inspire any other person in need of it.



Aria Gehman, Creative Director & Designer

Aria is a multidisciplinary creative based in Denver, inspired by the relationship between design and storytelling as it relates to identity, environments, and interaction.



Kaila Baldwin, Creative Director & Designer

Kaila is an artist and designer based in Denver. She is finishing her degree in graphic design this spring and is honored to wrap up her education at CCD as a member of the Talon Magazine team. She describes her design style as inspired by her urban living experience as well as her time spent in the mountains, "I think Denver is incredibly energizing and inspirational but find that if I don't make frequent trips to the mountains I tend to feel a bit drained." Kaila's plans to gain as much experience as she can and eventually work remotely to allow for more frequent travel.



Dan Schaefer,

Assistant Professor of Journalism & Communication

Dr. Dan Schaefer is an assistant professor of Journalism and Communication at CCD and faculty advisor for the Talon Magazine and the Digital Storytelling Student Club. He is passionate about those genuine true stories that resonate and help us make sense of our world. As a native Michigander, Dan loves two things: fishing and stories of fishing the third coast.



Gretchen Occhionero,

Project Manager, DZGN Studio

Gretchen has worked as a graphic designer at CCD for 27+ years. She is CCD's lead staff photographer and does freelance design for non-profit organizations. This is her second year as MDG 194/294 Service Learning project manager, officially called DZGN Studio. "The Talon design team exceeded my expectations with their professional work ethic from conception to completion. It's been my privilege to work with them on this project!"

Special Recognition

Zoe Folte-Neul, The Printer's Devil, Spring 2021

Jordan Smith, The Bicycling Journalist, Spring 2021

Molly Thomas, Contributing Writer, Spring 2021

CCD's Journalism Program

The purpose of journalism is to see life and make sense of the world by sharing our stories. These stories find us, draw us closer, make us feel, and shape our decisions.

CCD's journalism program offers classes that will start you on this path to a career as a journalist or as a public relations professional and give you what you need to transfer to a four-year university. For more information please contact us at journalism@ccd.edu

DZGN Studio: MGD 194/294 Service Learning Course

In this course CCD students operate a multimedia graphic design firm to provide them with work-based learning opportunities prior to entering the job market and learn professional and business practices. This course provides a great opportunity to gain training in creative problem solving, graphic design and production on working world projects.

The Talon Magazine Project

The Talon Magazine Project is an online and print magazine produced through a unique collaboration between the CCD Journalism Program and the Service Learning Graphic Design course in Fall and Spring semesters.

Each semester, Talon journalism student-contributors write feature news stories, interview and profile interesting people, report on emerging trends, and take pictures about topics that matter to CCD students on the Auraria campus. This content is then carefully edited and handed over to the Graphic Design team to layout the stories, illustrate, and design the graphic vision for the magazine.

All CCD students are encouraged to submit their journalism feature articles, photos, and illustrations for selection. If you're interested in journalism please contact us at journalism@ccd.edu or if you're interested in graphic design contact us at CCD.edu/GraphicDesign.

Cover Photography: **Chayce Lanphear**

To The Reader

Welcome Back!

If 2020 was the year of the virus, of enormous uncontrolled virulent change forcing us to change the way we see ourselves and our world. Then 2021 has to be the year of the vaccine, empowering us to control the change we want to see in ourselves and in our world.

Before you turn the page and savor the well-written articles waiting just inside, I want to share some good news, a few thoughts about this issue's focus on change, and an explanation for our back cover's parting shot.

One change we wanted to see in 2021 is simply recognition for all of our hard work struggling to produce a magazine in the dark depths of the pandemic last semester. We worked hard and we succeeded! The Talon Magazine was the Finalist for Best Student Magazine in the Society of Professional Journalist's Mark of Excellence Award (MOE)! And Jenna Duke was a Finalist for MOE's new Covid category with her photo essay, 'A Pentax Photographs a Pandemic'.

A few thoughts about this issue's focus on change. We wanted to interview and profile people who have undergone a fundamental metamorphosis in their life. We worked hard and we succeeded! The changes we reported on in this issue covered so many transformations from protests to professors, presidents, photo essays, and even a Peruvian artist.

Finally, an explanation for our back cover. The inspiration for the parting shot came from Coors Field, as the heart of Denver, becoming one of the mass vaccinations sites for the coronavirus. CCD student, Jordan Smith, mounted a 360 Virtual Reality GoPro camera to his helmet and rode his bike through Denver to Coors Field as a witness to history.

Along the way we were able to see how much we have changed and how much our world has gotten just a little smaller.

Cheers!
Dr. Dan



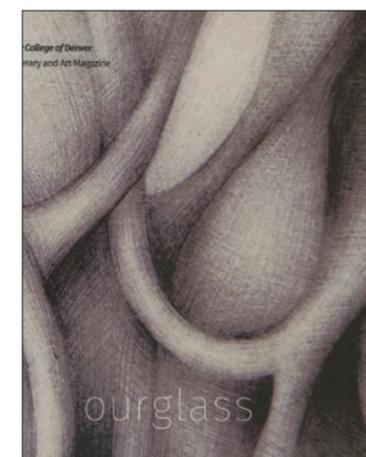
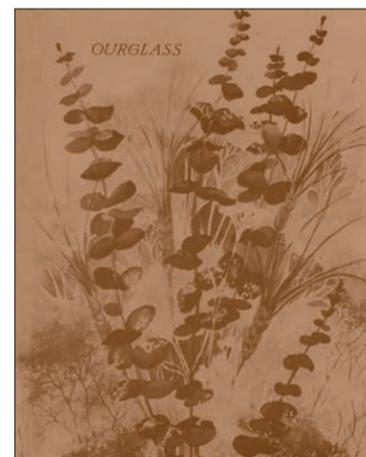
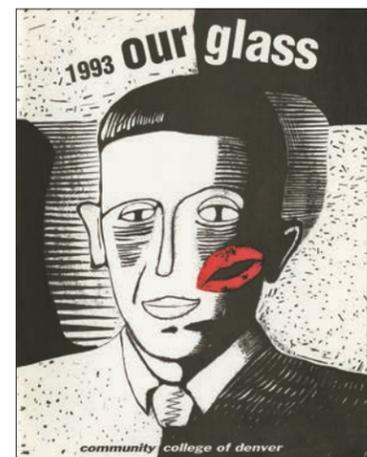
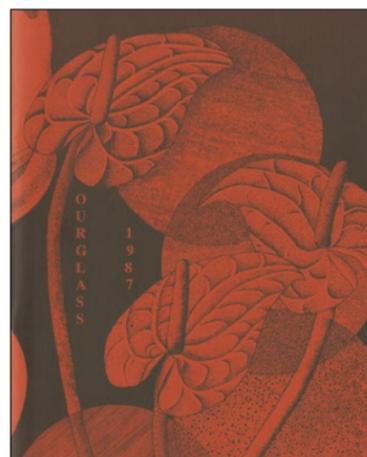
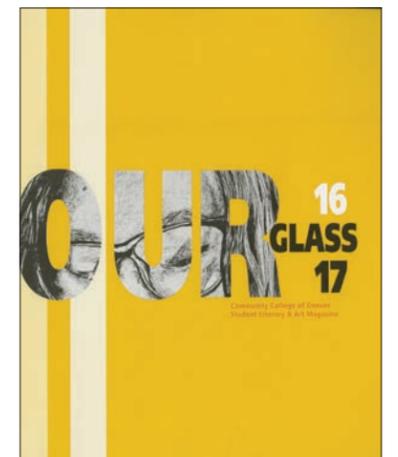
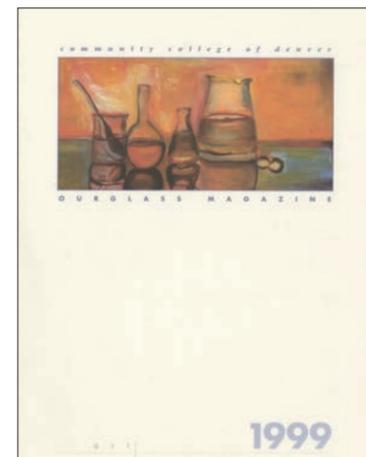
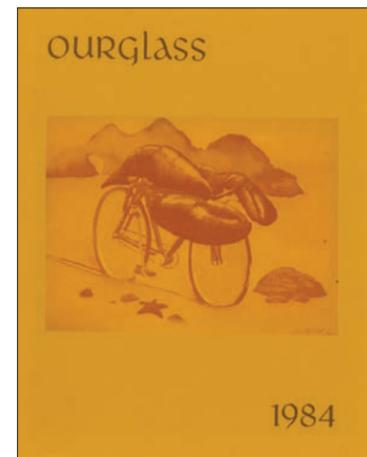
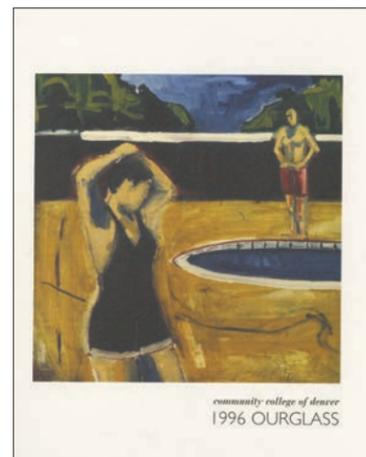
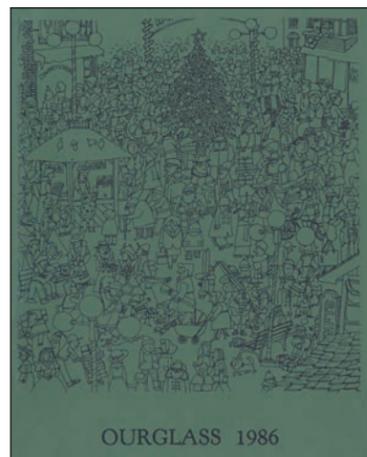
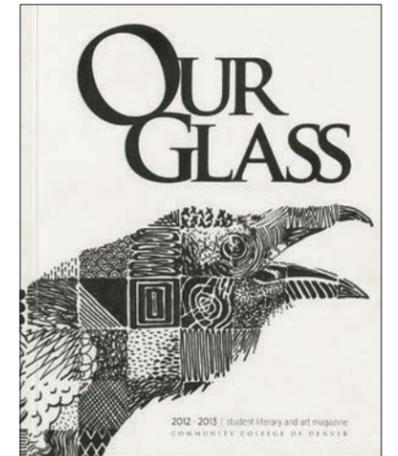
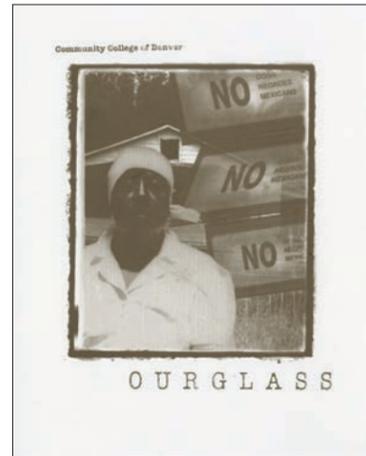
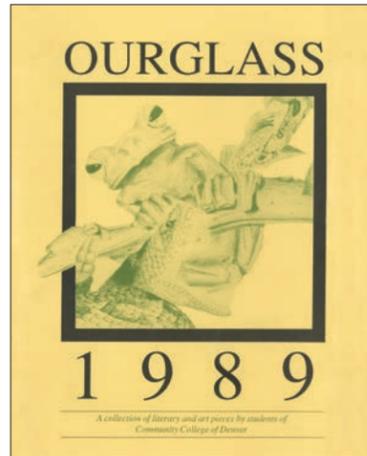
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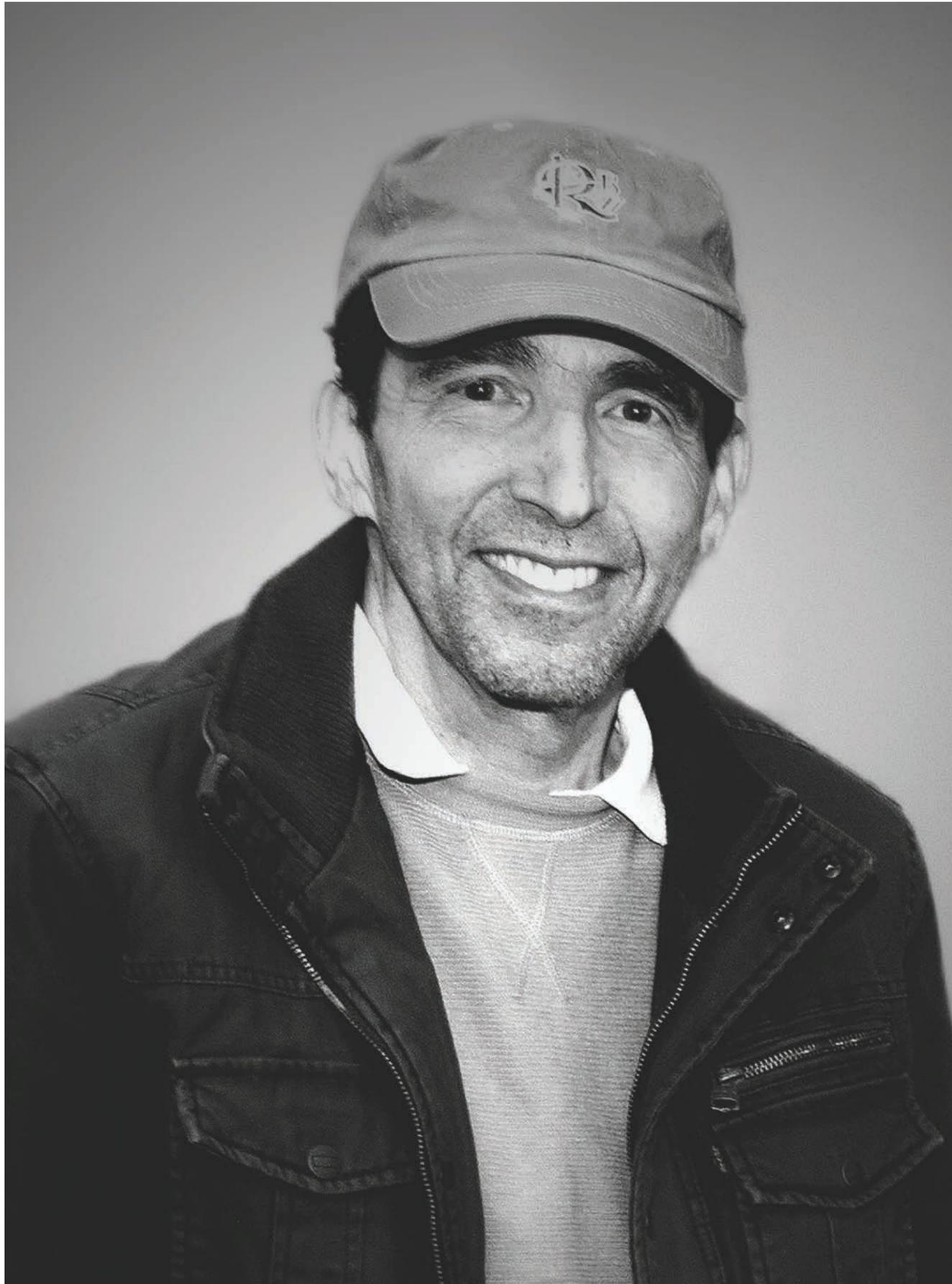
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A Magazine's

Soul

Words: Jenna Duke
Photography: Gretchen Occhionero





Magazines have souls. I believe these souls are all of the emotional and intellectual energy that go into transforming a magazine from a collection of individual pages into a living entity—like a human heart beating steadily on. The passion put into every page carries over into the next, stringing together the overall message. Editors, writers, and illustrators each contribute just a little bit of their energy and the result is a magazine like the Ourglass.

This year, CCD's premiere literary journal, Ourglass, is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The Ourglass has transformed from a freshman comp journal composed of narrative essays to an award-winning magazine for literary and visual arts comprised of a lot of soul.

This would not have been possible without a village of people each sharing a little bit of themselves and their passion. I interviewed one of the people in this village, former CCD English professor and former long-time Editor of the Ourglass, Leonard Winograd. He shared his admiration for his colleague, CCD English professor, Susan Simons, for starting the Ourglass as a platform for students taking English Composition classes.

Though the beginning of Ourglass looked different than today, it laid the foundation for Winograd to build upon for student voices to be heard. "Susan did a terrific job and I pretty much just followed it," he told me. His apparent modesty would continue to present itself throughout our interview, continually dodging compliments that focused solely on him (all the more a sign of an important role played, in my eyes).

He made sure I knew he was just one person in the grand scheme of things—the success wouldn't have been possible without all of the passionate students and faculty involved. Behind the Ourglass is a vast number of individuals that have all shared the same desire: to connect through the magic that comes alive through expressing oneself.

When Susan passed him the torch to take on the publication in 1988, there wasn't a large budget to work with and Winograd noticed that art "wasn't part of the bailiwick." Keeping in mind the abundance of talented and creative students at CCD, he knew the journal had potential to be transformed into something more.

It wasn't until around 1990 that the funds had increased enough to grant them the ability to use a 4-color printing press. At first, it only allowed for a colored cover and centerfold but little by little, the journal was full of vibrancy. Around this time, English 121 stopped requiring students to write narrative essays and CCD began offering more creative writing classes. This would begin shaping the Ourglass we know and love today.

Leonard's role was Editor but he saw himself more as "a liaison" that communicated with everyone involved, coordinating all moving parts to work together and making sure deadlines were met. His favorite role, however, was being able to pick student writing that was to be published.

If you were to rewind the clock and submit a work of prose to the magazine, you would receive a phone call from Winograd himself. It was a personal touch that has always been uncommon in the publishing industry and it let students feel heard,

regardless of their work being chosen or not. "It just made people's days when they got accepted. These were a lot of students who weren't accepted to anything in their lives. A lot of them had been rejected from day one. And to get a piece in the magazine, which was a well-regarded magazine [...] was absolutely thrilling for them."

Winograd saw the value in having a platform for students to publish their work and to feel the weight of their importance through doing so. He especially marked the significance of this for the students at CCD, explaining "A lot of our students have had a pretty rough upbringing. They haven't had a lot of chances to be heard. So I think more than most [traditional] schools, I think having a platform like the Ourglass is crucial." He added: "We wanted them to be heard and give people an idea of what they were going through."

This mindset was the reason for CCD's creation of the Winograd Award, a scholarship that recognizes excellence in creative writing for students whose work is published in the Ourglass. When I inquired about this, his response was of humble origin, first brushing off the compliment. It wasn't until after I read him the award description that he finally gave in. Chuckling, he said, "Yeah... okay I buy that." Then quickly succumbing to his modesty and giving rightful credit, "But Susan was the first to do it."

Artistry of all types began cultivating the magazine: short story prose, poetry, photography, drawings, and paintings. Work would be picked for publication when the art department had student shows; but Winograd noted, "And not even [only] the winners." Anyone was considered for publication and all art was embraced.

This embrace encompassed (and still does) a no censorship policy meaning the magazine wouldn't edit anything out. "At one point, the administration was kind of frowning on it but we pretty much overruled it [...] It was very freewheeling which was really neat about it." Winograd, being a writer himself, knew art should speak for itself. The beauty of it comes from the originality and the emotions put into each piece, to disregard that would be to rob art of its integrity.

Throughout his tenure, he continued to advocate for artistic integrity both in student work and experimenting with layout and style. He worked with Richard Jividen, who was in charge of layout, and together they created some avant-garde issues that even included one that was like a stack of cards. "We took a lot of pride in the magazine," he told me, "and I think the students did too."

The pride Leonard described reinforces my idea of soul. Everyone involved with the magazine throughout the past 40 years has cultivated an assemblage of emotional and intellectual energy that transformed a magazine whose soul is eager to be heard. Open an issue of the Ourglass and you'll see striking art and beautiful words from students; and if you listen closely enough, you might be able to hear the heart behind the magazine beating steadily on. Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub. ■

PERFECTLY PLACED

Until recently, everything in Dr. Marielena DeSanctis's life was followed according to plan. It wasn't until she became CCD's new president and moved to a state she had never been to before this fact changed. Regardless of this unexpected transformation, she arrived in Denver with a mindset ready to rise to her newest challenge.

Words: Jenna Duke Photography: Chayce Lanphear, Gretchen Occhionero

In our new world of virtual meetings, the bits of background peeking out behind each person can tell us a lot. Aside from providing a respite of distraction during long meetings, it leaves us wondering and searching for clues about people we would usually interact with in a more formal setting. We get a peek into who they are: the person behind the screen.

When CCD's new President Dr. Marielena DeSanctis logged on to Webex for our interview, I noticed her background right away. She sat perfectly placed framed by a doorway between two pictures hung on a light blue wall that contrasted nicely with her red lipstick. The background struck me as planned, organized, and engineer-like.

It's not out of character for Marie to be so organized. Thinking like an engineer is part of

her forte. "As you can imagine someone with a mechanical engineering degree, I tend to be a major planner," She admitted. This mindset reveals a background in pragmatism that has catapulted Marie towards a career in educational leadership dedicated to transformation and improvement.

For example, when the young Marie DeSanctis confessed her dream of becoming a professional ballet dancer, her parents asked if she had lost her mind. "My parents weren't shy," she explained, while laughing. She made the pragmatic decision to set aside her love for dance and later discovered a different passion: transforming peoples' lives through education.

Her mom was a middle school teacher that had fled Cuba in 1961 at the age of 16 with nothing but the clothes on her back. She had always



“People can take everything away from you, but they can never take your education. What you’ve learned is yours.”

emphasized the importance of education. Marie recalled her mom’s mantra, “People can take everything away from you, but they can never take your education. What you’ve learned is yours.”

Growing up, she spent school breaks in the classroom watching her mom teach. She observed the environment where her passion for helping others through education was born. When it came time for college, she kept this interest on the backburner and instead received a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering.

She quickly made history by being the first female engineer at the manufacturing company she was hired at (not to mention the first Hispanic female engineer). It wasn’t long before she realized this wasn’t an easy role. Like most females and minorities in the workplace, she had to prove herself to the men around her that thought she didn’t belong in the industry. After six years of hard work, she was presented with an unexpectedly welcome offer: to teach calculus and physics at her son’s private school.

The offer reignited her passion for transforming lives through education. Marie performed an admirable balancing act working as an engineer, getting a teaching certificate and a master’s degree in math education all while raising two young children.

Due to her engineer and educator training, Marie’s ability to spot patterns that most people overlook enabled her to see flaws in America’s educational institution that needed to be addressed. Before leaving her corporate engineering

position, she told her colleagues “I really want to revolutionize, I want to completely change education.” This pursuit for change is what led her to getting her PhD in educational leadership.

One flaw she noticed was the textbook-based method of learning. She believes there is an “art and science” to developing the craft of teaching. While Principal at Fort Lauderdale High School, Marie and her team took 50 students in 11th grade and created interdisciplinary teaching units. Instead of the students jumping from class to class, teachers in different areas of expertise came to the students to teach lessons that merged different subjects together. This implemented a more engaged, “free-flowing” environment for both teachers and students.

While she explained this to me with much fervor, I began to see where her hard work comes from. Her passion goes beyond pure methodical thinking, she deeply cares about the work she does. Perhaps it’s because she sees her younger self sitting in her mom’s classroom all those years ago.

She embraces students coming from a multitude of backgrounds and sees them through an individualized lens. She wants to shatter the “I’m not good enough” fear for anyone considering coming on campus. There should not be a wall to be climbed in order to feel good enough.

I asked her what advice she would give to these students. She smiled, seemingly pleased to be asked this, then responded in a frank manner, “Oh that’s an easy question, always work harder than everybody around you ... believe

it or not that’s an incredibly rare quality in people.” This answer encapsulates her own work ethic. She possesses a sense of urgency around the work that needs to be done and pushes those around her to strive to their own personal heights as well.

As president, she will continue to work hard because she knows there are always lives to be benefitted. When asked about her vision for CCD, she thought for a moment then said, “A vision for CCD is not just the president’s vision, it’s the community’s vision.” She hopes to honor the great work that has been done throughout the years while working together to move the organization forward.

After dwelling on what comes to mind first when hearing the word ‘leader’, she decided, “How is that person serving others?” As president, I can’t really do a whole lot. It

takes everybody at CCD to actually move the organization forward. How is the leader helping people learn more, do more, be better personally and professionally?” She stressed the value of taking care of oneself first in order to best serve others long term; a concept she remedies by regularly exercising, cooking, or reading nonfiction and mystery novels.

It’s difficult to imagine that the experiences and diverse knowledge that Marie accumulated throughout the years have not played a critical role in building the current foundation upon which she stands. Her own personal mantra, “The universe evolves as it should,” represents the circumstances of her background forming who she is now in the foreground of her life—a methodical, hardworking, leader in higher education eager to let everyone know what her parents repeatedly told to her; that education is the road to opportunity. ■



The Hill I Climbed

My heart sank. The test was positive—I had coronavirus.

Words: **Jenna Duke** Photography: **Chayce Lanphear**

I received news the first week of November when tension in America was at an all-time high. With election results already lurking in my mind and a heavy workload from college classes, having a potential deadly virus infect my body was the cherry on top. I had been reading the statistics and reports like everyone else, I knew the virus's impact was unpredictable. Would I be one of the unlucky ones?

Confined to the four walls of my bedroom robbed of any taste, smell or energy at a time when I needed those the most, I began to dread opening up my laptop for online classes. People told me I should take time off, but that only stuck me in a place of contradictory limbo: restless yet exhausted; inspired to take on other tasks I hadn't previously had time for yet deeply filled with boredom. The irony that school had become both a respite and a burden was all too apparent.

I started to notice trivial things in my house that hadn't been evident to me before. To make coffee every morning—that I couldn't even taste or smell, mind you—I needed to walk down 13 steps to the kitchen, heat water in the kettle, scoop two tablespoons of coffee into a filter, and pour water from the same kettle that had somehow taken on the weight of an elephant. A task that had always been so pleasant and comforting to me (the sign of a new day!) transformed into a habitual nightmare that always ended in my frustration and fatigue.

I kept reminding myself of the luck that accompanied me through this. My case would be considered mild compared to others, I was sure. While holding this sense of gratitude, I started thinking like a journalist. I had a story to tell in spite of these hindrances.

The outline for this began when I was quarantined in November but it wasn't until January 20th that I saw what this piece truly could be. I watched as

National Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, performed her poem "The Hill We Climb" at the inauguration of President Joe Biden and was hit with a revelation. A sense of patriotism washed over me, a word I never thought I would use to describe myself.

"So while once we asked, 'how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?'"

Now we assert: "How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?"

Gorman's poem is a beautiful anthology of words comprised of a powerful message symbolic of our country's unified desire to create a legacy of resilience while acknowledging the history that has brought us here. She writes of the hill we must climb if we want to rise to our country's future; one that emphasizes connection

and not differences. These words resonated with me. The past year has cast a dark shadow over our lives and we all desperately wondered how would we, how could we, survive something that seemed to rob us of our relationships and connections—our very own humanity?

Gorman's poem made me realize that I wanted this piece to be an ode to the pandemic, so to speak. It handed us a basket full of bruised lemons and we drank the sour lemonade. It has proven to us all what we can handle and push through together—from afar.

I pushed through the effects of the virus because I realized I had a new perspective, one that not everyone could speak about firsthand. Like many other Americans, I saw my motivation and reached up to grab it. My newfound patriotism wasn't about waving a flag, it was about feeling my country beside me; prevailing over catastrophe, facing the hill we must climb. ■

"How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?"



The Art of Teaching with Intellectual Intimacy

By Zada Herrera
Photographs by Chayce Lanphear

When a butterfly wants to travel its wings will begin to flutter through the air making itself fly up and down rather than in a straight line and since their wings wear bright colors it attracts birds easier to them. Yet, their way of flying is what helps them from being caught to get to different places. Butterflies' wings spend much time in the sunlight causing them to appear tattered but luckily, their wings are bigger than their body, allowing them to grow and move through life for a while longer.

The wings of a butterfly simply provide them a way to live, migrate, and survive but I also believe it symbolizes how a natural struggle in life does not tear down a strength but allows one to continue life along with hard times to keep moving and transform. The way butterflies' wings persevere through challenges and damage can relate to the ways in which the professors we meet at CCD surpass their life struggles to teach us every day.

Before Brian Weaver became CCD's Assistant Professor of Communication and Phi Theta Kappa's (PTK) chapter advisor, he was on a self-growth path trying to transform himself by going through life's changes to be able to spread his wings. In a recent exclusive interview, Brian reflected on how he got started on this path and what he learned along the way.

In high school, he admitted that he struggled with uncertainty and self-doubt from bullying. However, in 1992, he was in his first year of college and took two chances

which helped transform his identity and overcome these challenges. He became Editor-In-Chief of the Arapahoe Community College of Denver's newspaper and a lifelong member of PTK. Weaver describes those days as, "Those moments taught me that I could have 'A's' that I could have good grades. I was relieved of all the social pressure and social disdain."

"I believe adults have these qualities in us still, sometimes we just have to re-learn that inner child and remember what learning should feel like."

Weaver embraced this new identity, and it was only a matter of time before other big transformations started to emerge. People in his life started to tell him that they thought he would make a good teacher, that he had a natural "teacher spirit" in him. This provided Brian with the motivation to start teaching elementary school after college.

Teaching elementary school was an opportunity for him to be in the right environment to learn the ways, emotions, and mind of children. While he was aiming to educate them, they taught him to recognize a passion with joy and enjoy learning. He said, "I believe adults have these qualities in us



still, sometimes we just have to re-learn and even re-teach ourselves how to access that inner child and remember what learning should feel like.”

Accessing the inner child has been one of his first milestones that made the large transformation of Brian’s view of education, inspiration, mentorship, and worldview.

One person he gives endless credit to for this transformation is Shannon B. Jones, his first mentor. In her guidance she taught him how to build kinship with students and engage with creativity, education, books, and a variety of demographics. He told me, “Shannon would read, study, and craft in her spare time. I noticed it really built up because she amassed a wealth of knowledge.”

From thereon, she taught him the gift of appreciating time. Nowadays, Weaver dedicates time every day to write a Senryū poem, a Japanese form of short poetry. He pairs it with a picture to send to his loved ones and students to build a connection and curiosity for what happens after the last verse. His admiration of writing and its power to help along self-development is strong.

Weaver said, “To someone who is having any trouble with growth, feels stuck or like they aren’t achieving their goals, I would suggest getting many different journals of all sizes and shapes because you could study yourself and always look back on how you have grown. Tell yourself ‘I get to write today’ not ‘I have to.’”

While writing is his preferred creative outlet, he does recognize that it is not everyone’s mechanism to improve in growth and skills. There are times when work, school, and hobbies may seem repetitive. Making a change to your daily life and habits can be a big step to take and accept, but for everyone there is a passion, interest, and spark somewhere.

In his opinion, that spark is lit when self-care is a priority and unlocked as a daily practice. It could be as simple as going to bed early, listening to affirmations, and nur-

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turing your body. He views these five principles as most important to remind yourself of for self-development: 1. Listen to your inner voice. 2. You can do more than you think you can. 3. Hard work pays off. 4. Remember that learning is done by the learner. 5. Be your own best friend.

Joining PTK is another way to build yourself up, meet new people, and see your potential. It provides students not only as a resource but as an opportunity to get involved in a different and enjoyable college experience to help you develop into your truest and most driven self. It is a membership with a key to support, guidance, and growth with no expiration date. He said, “PTK is something that you will always remember as being one of those first big milestones and it’s a place where likeminded people can find a home to develop service, fellowship, scholarship, and leadership.”

Asmita Khattri-Chettri, City Hawk and PTK International President has noticed the effectiveness of Weaver’s strategies for dealing with challenges, “Brian challenges an individual to bring forth their skills and without him challenging me, I would have not pushed myself as an individual to be where I am now. We face challenges every day in life. Some of us will back away and others will move forward. I persevered and he was proud and supportive of that.”

His term that defines the bond between him and his students a kind of ‘intellectual intimacy’, that reaches through a connection to the way him and his students communicate and think. The number of students and members he works with is growing all the time, but he



aims to always look after those under his wings. The recognition of himself playing a part in his students’ growth will always overwhelm him with gratification and relish.

The time is always present to start incorporating new and positive habits in your day to day to become more in tune with yourself, life-path, and skills. Weaver demonstrates promising motivation to not let a day go by without doing what you love and what is right to help yourself be comfortable and stable within your goals, confidence, and lifestyle. So, as long as Weaver’s wings keep him flying through ultimatums that life has in place, it is inevitable the butterfly effect of his teaching will continue a legacy of transformative learning. ■

Attentive Art

Author **Zada Herrera** Artwork created by **Yohanna Guerra**

“If I had to make something that would insult my culture, I wouldn’t do it. If I had to make something that would insult my morals, I wouldn’t do it.”

To express through art requires a unique blend of different elements. It is important to be able to mix a few things such as painting, sculpting, and relying on the resources near you. It is also important to be creative and see the possibilities of bringing your vision to life. Finally, art is at its best when remaining true to your identity is the award after hard work.

It is the blend in which the Peruvian artist and CCD student incorporates in her work, Yohanna Guerra, in the fall semester of 2020, won the Mel Carter Scholarship for her artwork, “The Native Worker” and “Grandma’s Chair”.

Her well-executed art defines the delightful depths of thematic, knowledgeable, and diversity from her Peruvian culture. She states, “If I had to make something that would insult my culture, I wouldn’t do it. If I had to make something that would insult my morals, I wouldn’t do it.” The art pieces are a glimpse of a strong representation of her hardworking ancestors and culture.

The incredible detail and symbolism of ‘The Native Worker’ only took a week to accomplish. She says, “When I was chosen, I thought ‘wow okay, maybe it’s not the best to me but to the teachers and artists, it was seen as worthy enough to accomplish that achievement.’”





“I was looking around and saw my flag. I thought ‘wow, when is the next time I’m going to see you?’”

The artwork began as an assignment to create a hero. She states, “For me, my hero is an Indian, a native, a person who works and represents culture and status as a nation. It’s the piece I feel I truly came from.”

Her identity is a descendant of educational artists and she grew up as a child fascinated by books, politics, and debates. Born in Peru and motivated by her

Peruvian bloodline, she has always had a deep love for her country’s work ethic and culture. Her great grandfather was a poet, and her mother was a decorator, shop owner, and had a creative perspective on crafts.

When Yohanna was in Peru majoring in law school she could agree to disagree with the thought of enjoying crafts. Yet with a persistent mother, she was bound to get a peek into this passion. Her mom said, “Let us explore crafts. Let us see if you like making chocolate. Sometimes you’re going to have to make some extra money.”



Yohanna gave it a try and in return gained a newfound love for crafts. She crossed the threshold of her creative boundaries and began making dolls to be sold in her mother’s store. It did not take long for the first doll to be sold and she says, “That’s when it came down to me as an artist and my focus on detail.”

Once she embraced her artistry it took a snowball effect transforming into one of her favorite things to do. In 2015, she was 38-years old with one daughter and son with a plan to leave Peru and migrate to Colorado. She was in a dilemma but knew it would be okay. She says, “I was looking around and saw

my flag. I thought ‘wow, when is the next time I’m going to see you?’”

When Guerra arrived in Colorado, she longed for her family, friends, job, and flag. Her children were young, so she spent much time nurturing them, but once she was in a new place a desire began to take act in her life. She got up, enrolled in college, and went after her goals.

She has kept her culture, beliefs, and tradition along with her home, art, and education by learning the ancestral Peruvian language ‘Quecha.’ She says, “It helped me to deepen my appreciation for

my culture and understand that a native language is different from Spanish. Spanish speakers and their language have its own identity.”

Her creative vision of what she wants to create comes to her in her quiet time and through her experience, beliefs, and worldview. She is admittedly a perfectionist and a heavy planner; she has one rule for herself when it comes to her process: to always finish what is started.

She believes when a person treats their work as a good way to use their time rather than a duty, time goes by faster without noticing. Guerra goes after what she enjoys and through her passion, she expresses her thoughts and truest self.

It is important to do what makes you feel creative, happy, and you. The inspiration itself should carry context that tells what your work is and what it speaks. By being focused and happy when working on a certain art piece, it adds value to you, your job, and how you feel about it.

Her inspiration is her children, they understand and motivate her in every aspect because they see her passion come into life.

She says, “They are looking at you every day and they see you. They see what I do and how much I love my country.” She is not only a mother, artist, and student but a TESOL/ESL instructor and recently re-

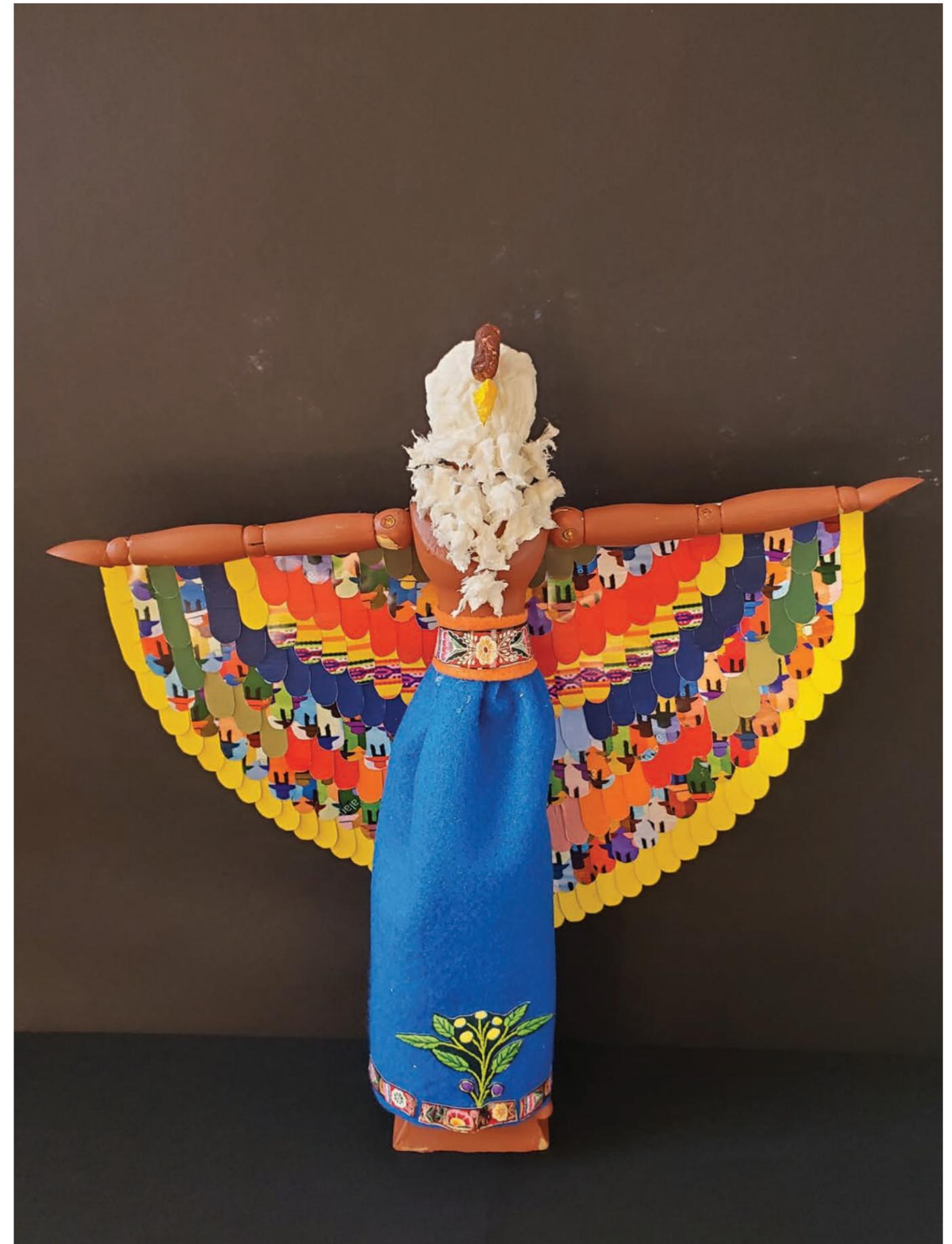
ceived her certificate to teach English. Her next move to make with her academic growth is to visit Peru to provide help to students by teaching them English because her hometown is currently going through a hard time due to the pandemic.

She has a personal ambition to accomplish what she wants before turning 45. Guerra says, “I want to work on an independent research on cathedrals back home. My goal is to visit a particular area in Peru where there are many cathedrals with so much detail and history and that’s how I like my art.”

Her plan is to recreate the details from cathedrals made with pastels, graphite, and charcoal. Her appreciation for civilization, religions, literature, colors, and opinions is infinite. One of her strongest admirations is Chinese culture. Soon, she aims to receive a master’s degree in Chinese art or Pre-Columbian art.

In the long run, Colorado is not where she plans to raise her children and work. She says, “I consider myself as a citizen of the world. My kids are citizens of the world. Although, I have a lot of appreciation and sentiment for this state.” Colorado gifted a blessing in disguise to Guerra when she made the decision to move her family to a new place. Although it is where her opportunities and creativity took flight, the trip still has a long road planned for her to visit new places, find new inspirations, and make new art. ■

“I consider myself as a citizen of the world. My kids are citizens of the world. Although, I have a lot of appreciation and sentiment for this state.”



Bring a Good Camera and Wear the Right Shoes: Lessons from a Protest

Story and photos by Molly Thomas



“My eyes felt as though they were on fire, my mask trapping the fumes in my nose and. I pulled my mask off, but the effects had already begun to take over.”



A tear-gas canister skidded across the worn concrete and stopped at my feet. “I did not wear the right shoes for this,” I thought. There was no time for me to react as the yellowish fumes cloaked the air around me. My eyes felt as though they were on fire, my mask trapping the fumes in my nose and mouth. I pulled my mask off, but the effects had already begun to take over.

I fell to my knees as tears fell from my eyes. A reaction to the tear gas? Or an emotional response to experiencing police brutality for the very first time? For days, violent clashes between Black Lives Matter protesters and the Denver police plagued downtown Denver in late May 2020, leaving the streets littered with battered traffic cones, abandoned masks, rubber bullets, and tear-gas canisters.

Growing up in the south, I was no stranger to the realities of the institutionalized racism and discrimination

our minority communities face on a regular basis. My small town of McKinney Texas was good to me in a lot of ways—the summer rains that I still yearn for to this day, the abundance of sweet honeysuckle come spring, and the love and support I felt from the only community I had ever known. But as that small town country girl grew, so did my awareness of the lingering effects of slavery and centuries of oppression that were haunting the lives of people I grew up alongside. I moved to Colorado in 2018 in hopes of leaving behind racist ideologies that I naively believed were only found in pockets of the deep south.

On May 25th, 2020, that belief was shattered when three officers took the life of George Floyd in broad daylight in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The killing of George Floyd sparked a historical moment in the fight for equality that gained widespread international support. It was evident that the struggles of racism and po-

lice brutality were not specific to the small Texas town I was raised in.

Worldwide protests against police brutality forced citizens and governments to confront histories of systematic racism. Cries for help to end the justifications of white supremacy were heard around the world and Denver residents responded. Just two days after the death of George Floyd, thousands of protesters flooded the streets of downtown Denver.

As the crowd wove in and out of my sleepy Capitol Hill neighborhood, hoisting signs made from old moving boxes reading “No Justice. No Peace” and “Black Lives Matter,” I grabbed my backpack, scurried down my steps and found myself right in the middle of what would soon be one of the largest protests in Colorado history.

After hours of marching through the streets of Denver, protesters began to settle near and around the city’s

Capitol building. Mothers and fathers sat quietly with their children as demonstrators pleaded for change. Volunteers with water and hand sanitizer shifted through the crowd. Men fell to their knees in tears, begging for a safer life. The evening was coming to an emotional but peaceful end for all of us.

To our surprise, Denver police officers in riot gear, holding guns loaded with rubber bullets and tear-gas, began to approach the gathered protesters from behind. Without warning, officers began throwing metal canisters into the crowd. Echoes of rubber bullets and screams permeated the gas-filled air as demonstrators choked on the toxic fumes while scrambling to find their loved ones.

I felt like what I was witnessing deserved to be captured. Over the course of the final days of the protests, pockets that previously filled with eyewash, Band-Aids, and extra masks were stuffed to the brim with rolls of



35mm film. I have always been a lover of photography. Although I have no formal training and the viewfinder on my Nikon has never worked, the only thing I could do was cry as I shuffled through the developed photos I had taken. It took me back to the days of protesting when the images were shot, reminding me of how profoundly transformative it was for me, for everyone, to have bonded with this community in times of conflict and mourning.

I attended every protest for the next two weeks, observing the ebb and flow of emotions felt by fellow protesters. A movement fueled by unbelievable sadness and solidarity turned into an explosive expression of anger and hurt until finally settling into a celebration of culture and community. African dance circles began popping up all around Civic Center Park, volunteers

"A movement fueled by unbelievable sadness and solidarity turned into an explosive expression of anger and hurt until finally settling into a celebration of culture and community."

were seen passing out essential items to the homeless population who were caught in the crossfire, and the air that was once consumed with toxic gas was soon replaced with rhythmic melodies and burning sage. I decided to divert from my new protest morning routine and shoved my 1973 Nikon film camera into my backpack before setting out for the Capitol yet again in the hope of making sense of what I was witnessing.

This little girl from Texas had finally begun to understand the importance of blending the love and support she felt in that sleepy southern town and the frustrations that grew from opening her eyes to the racial injustices of the world.

The marriage between compassion and action is essential to true change, especially for those of us who are navigating this movement as an ally. I hope these photos encourage activists to keep pushing forward on this long journey towards racial equality. I also hope that these images resonate with those who have misconceptions surrounding these protests and those who have chosen to participate. Defenders of equality look like our children, they look like our mothers, our fathers, our educators, our neighbors, our friends. They look like me. And they look like you. ■

Pocho Y Pocha

In the No Man's
Land of Journalism

Credits:
Luis Arnada and
Zada Herrera



What's up, y'all. My name is Luis Arnada and this is 'Pocho y Pocha'. Today I am accompanied by none other than Zada Herrera. We're talking about different topics. Our identity as children of immigrants, speaking Spanish and much more. Thanks for listening.

Zada: Do you have any Native American blood in you?

Luis: I actually have no idea. I really want to find out. I do know. My Dad told me he and my Mom are from the northern part of Mexico. They are Native people there. They are known for running long distances for some reason. They're just built like that. Somehow we come from those people. What about you? Do you have any native blood in you?

Zada: Yeah. I have my mother. She's from the Navajo.

Luis: That's so cool! That's pretty dope!

Zada: I wish I had Aztec or Mayan blood in me.

Luis: That'd be super badass. (Laughing)
Honestly, that's where we get our badass from. Those guys were really dope. Going to us being their children. What has it been like for you? Is there something you struggle with knowing that you are a child of an immigrant? Or that you haven't?

Zada: No, one thing that I've struggled with is fitting into my family, my generation. Because I don't speak Spanish and I can't understand what they are saying. And I have some differences in my religion. Now it's like it's all different. I'm just learning.
What have you struggled with?

Luis: What have I struggled with? I don't know. I think I agree with you in the sense, I don't fit in either group. I'm kinda ok, well, I look like them. But all of the things I like and do are from over here. It's weird. It's like a no man's land.

Zada: What racial struggles do you think are in journalism?

“I've struggled with fitting into my family, my generation. Because I don't speak Spanish”

Luis: Hm. That's a really good question! You should have asked this earlier! I'm just kidding! But.. Do you have an answer? I have to think about it.

Zada: No

Luis: I think it's like they wouldn't take us seriously. What do you know about the world? You're secluded to this little community. What do you know about the world?

Zada: True! Like 'go report in Mexico. What are you doing here?'

Luis: Yeah! All of it. And I think about that a lot. Because like imagine you and me. You go and be a journalist. Like.. from the looks. Right? From what you look like. It's like no problem. But for me, full on Mexican uncle over here. They're going to be like 'Bro! Go build some houses! Get out of here' you know. 'What do you know about anything?'

Zada: (laughing)

Luis: This conversation was really dope.

Zada: Yes!

Luis: Peace! ■

Miley



Miley
(again)



Cat Stevens...
or The Beatles...
sometimes Elton John



Story and Photographs by Elle Schmidt

This photo essay was an inner monologue piece to illustrate how life in quarantine has affected my mind and personal outlook.

First you see my cat, Miley, laying on my bed. Next, an image of my record player. The record in it is Cat Stevens Tea for the Tillerman, which is a record my dad gave me. My most played records right now are The Beatles White album, and Elton John's greatest hits. This is me laying on my couch, sinking slowly into madness. This is the view from my bedroom window and is what I see every day when I wake up. This is a pile of my laundry, and an accurate representation of my mental state.

The purpose is more based on how the pictures make people feel, rather than the content of the pictures themselves.

As the pictures of my day progress, they become less and less saturated until the end when almost all of the color has been removed from the photo. This illustrates how dull and lifeless some of the days have become. The words are my inner monologue. They are some of the thoughts that go through my head when I have a particularly hard day.

This is where the transformation is. I look at photo memories from myself from a year ago and see that I spent almost all my time outside of my house. At work, school, with friends, etc; I was never home and therefore, never alone. Now that I am somewhat forced to be at home, I think I'm becoming more aware of my thoughts, and realizing I don't think I was as happy as I thought I was. ■

Sinking



Mental State



View every morning



A Peek into My View

Photographs and Essay by Zada Herrera



The feeling when you know what you are doing is aware and attentive of what you learn, see, and do. One of my favorite things to do is to open my notebook to a fresh blank page and start letting the words in my mind flow through the pencil. At least, when it is not writer's block, writing is enjoyable.

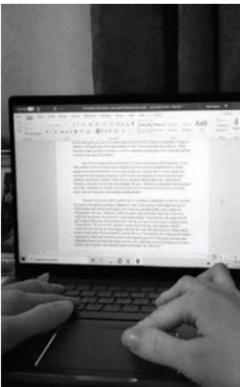
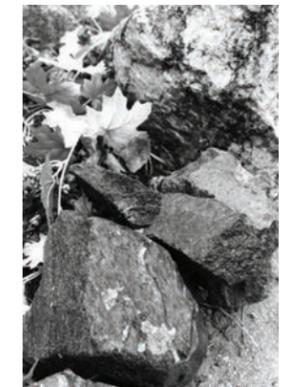
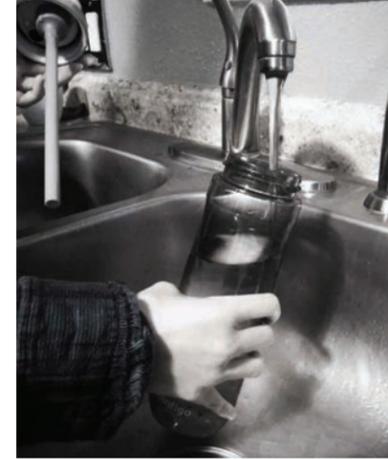
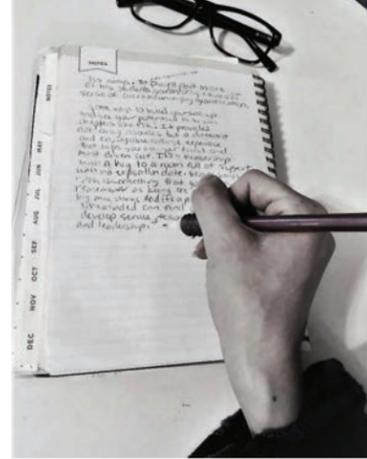
Depending on the location, view, and mood it might be a struggle to figure out how to start off a story. Luckily, sitting on my desk staring back at me is a silver frame holding a card my grandma gifted me that portrays an image of red, blue, and yellow birds on a tree. To others it might be a simple card but to me it gives a sense of reassurance and motivation to create and finish my work.

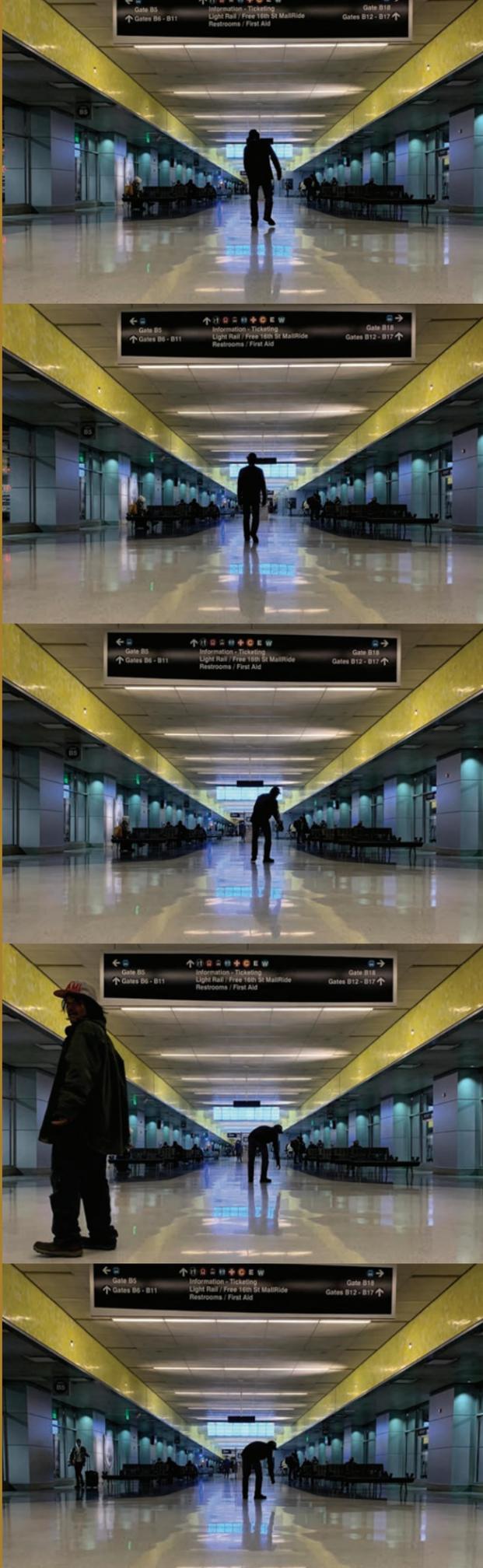
Once I can do exactly that I know that all I have left to do is to edit and turn in my paper. But, before I move on to that next step and continue to write another piece, I prefer to move around, get some fresh air, and drink water.

For the most part I will take a 10-minute break outside sitting on my porch, yet today's weather and sky is chilly, gray, and appealing to take a stroll around the neighborhood. The roads are black and wet and around the corner I can hear cars driving across the rain.

In my front yard, I have always admired the beauty within the ancient rocks and trees that we have. Some of the houses on my block have unique features compared to the rest like a wooden mailbox, a fire hydrant, and a driveway being made. But, from every corner I would gaze at nature itself.

By just looking at what is surrounding you, there are a ton of things that deserve the time to be appreciated. Whether it is the bird flying above you, the trees that were planted around you, or the droplets of rain that fall on you it is a sight to see, feel, and capture. So, from what my walk symbolizes to me, is what my card reflects to me while I write. ■





CREDITS

Story and photos by

Luis Aranda

Jesus, Take the Camera

“
You are at the mercy of whatever
happens around you, you are simply a
witness, a documentarian; you have to
let the story come to you.

”

Artistic photography is all about having control. You get to decide what happens. How the model is posed, what the model wears, what facial expression they make, and what story you're trying to tell is... under your control. Journalistic photography on the other hand is quite different. You are at the mercy of whatever happens around you, you are simply a witness, a documentarian; you have to let the story come to you.

I experienced this first-hand when I made a trip to Downtown Denver this past Tuesday evening. I ventured there with the goal of capturing people dressed in their awesome outfits. I ran into a problem though... nobody cleans up nice on a regular Tuesday evening. So, that plan failed. My next idea was to capture one street corner over the period of an hour and watch how it changed through every photo. But I grew impatient after about 5 minutes. Fail, again. Then, I went up to the roof of a parking garage. I decided to capture the sunset changing for 24 minutes. I almost dropped my camera a few times, I eventually said "screw this." Yes, fail once again.

Finally, I trudged over to Union Station for one last idea. I sat down on the grimy floor of the underground station. Out of nowhere a homeless man, who seemed to be inebriated walked right in front of me and starting dancing like Joker in that bathroom. I took out my phone and captured his every move. It was both magical and very concerning. Photojournalism has taught me that I have to be ok with failing over and over again. It has taught me to be patient, to keep my eyes open and alert, because there is always a story happening around me, whether I see it or not. ■

GET OUT

Some days you just have to get out and enjoy the sun.

By Juvenal Luna

One of my favorite things to do is to walk my dog. On this bright and sunny day in February, I decided to get ready and take my dog, Peluchin, for a walk and take pictures of my park and neighborhood near downtown Denver.

There were just so many people outside doing their own thing on this sunny day. People everywhere were walking, running and otherwise enjoying themselves. It was during lunch time hour when I started my walk, and there were students outside their high school enjoying the day with their friends during their lunch time.

After I passed the high school and got to the park, it was easy some people enjoying the day walking around the park and other people walking and playing fetch with their dogs.

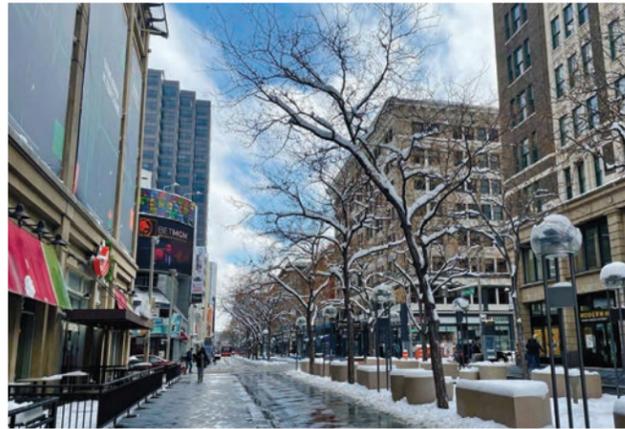
I noticed some nurses on their lunch break from Denver Health Hospital getting out and enjoying the sun. They were exercising walking around the park. People with their children at the playground enjoying themselves and playing in the sun.

It was just a nice bright and sunny day to get out. ■



Wait & See

Essay and Photography by **Juliana Chernova**



Wait and see. I honestly don't think that I can just go back to my life like nothing happened. It's really interesting to see how our lives have changed. Some of us got used to this new reality, while others can't wait to go back to what used to be normal.

I decided to combine the photos that I took a couple of weeks ago and create a so-called "Ken Burns" effect. It's a panning and zooming effect which makes you

feel like you're watching some kind of a documentary. I think it's really interesting.

I took a lot of pictures in Downtown Denver where I live and work. I used to think those were just random snaps, but when I started working on my photo essay, I realized that they can actually tell a story. We're still in the middle of the pandemic which can be noticed in the pictures. It was a sunny afternoon after several snowy

days. Downtown is usually a busy place but not anymore. The main street was almost empty, there were no people in a coffee shop, and a lot of places went out of business. It's probably sad for some people, but I'm an introvert, so I actually enjoyed this.

I also took a couple of pictures of my cat because I can only see my friends once every other week because of COVID and different schedules. My workplace seemed

rather empty as well, even though I was told that it was a very loud place full of people just a year ago. That's a huge transformation in everyone's life.

I wish I knew how severe the whole situation was going to be, so I could take more pictures and realize how different our lives used to be. Once everything is over, I don't think it will be that easy for me to be around huge crowds of people again. We'll just have to wait and see. ■





Photograph by **Jordan Smith**

