

WORD

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ISLA VISTA ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE



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free

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FRONT COVER PHOTO // EMMA HERREROS DE TEJADA
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UC SANTA BARBARA

Letter from the Editors

Dear WORD readers,

It's January once again—a time for starting fresh and reminding ourselves what we value most in life. Out come the new clothes and blank paper, awaiting our resolutions to be thoughtfully etched in. But as students, January is also the insignificant center of a long and taxing school year. By now, we have fallen deeply into routine: weekdays followed by weekends, essays followed by midterms, a vicious cycle of our time being spoken for, punctuated only by slashed bike tires and bombed exams. As the final slivers of sun dip into the horizon, it can feel like we spend more time in the darkness than we do in the light. We wrestle to escape the tight clutch of twilight's arms, but sometimes we fail. Like winter's daylight, we burn quickly, while the things that bring us the most joy slip into dark obscurity.

But remember: we call the shots. Chiseling out the time to do what makes us happy—a sunset pilgrimage to Devs or playing chef with roommates—is how we break the cycle. Trying to “romanticize your life” isn't just a corny TikTok trend; it's a testament to the passion, love, and zest we all ache for amid the hustle and bustle of daily life. When we neglect the little joys in life, we neglect the most human parts of ourselves.

WORDies have crafted this issue with love and intention—inspired by the special passions we hone outside of class. So grab a magazine, curl up with a warm cup of tea, and take this as an opportunity to celebrate all the things, big or small, that bring you unfettered joy. Watch from your seat as daylight ebbs away and the lights in your home flicker on.

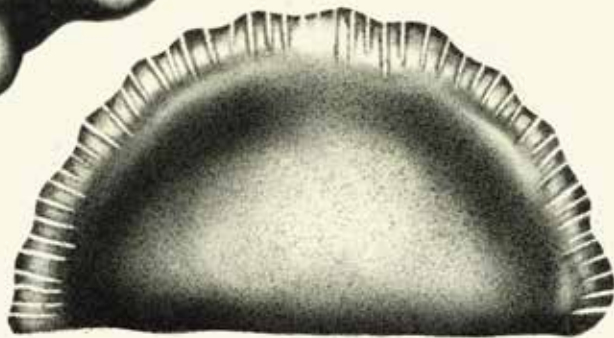
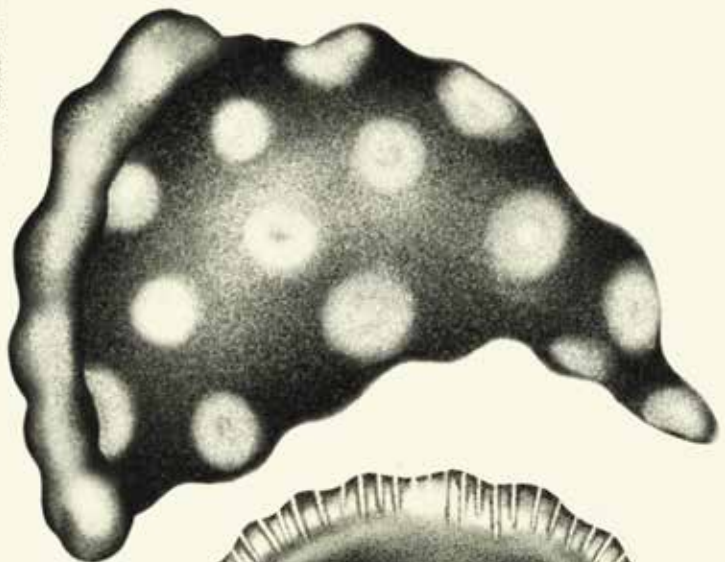
WORD Editors-in-Chief,
Isabel Cruz and Makenna Gaeta

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Saying Goodbye



WORDS // GRACE FREESE ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // CAMILA URIEGAS

How Restaurant Culture in IV is Changing

Summers in Isla Vista can be a bit depressing. June gloom—the term which encapsulates the hazy weather that suffocates IV in the summers—often stretches out into July. The town is nearly barren as the students flock away from our little town and go back to other places they may or may not call home. However depressing it may ultimately feel, nothing could have prepared me for the heartache I felt this past summer when I walked past an open Pizza My Heart for the very last time. No longer would my favorite food joint be within reach. I was right in assuming this news would not sit quietly in and around IV. After walking away from Pizza My Heart, I hunkered down for the inevitable storm of increased sadness and despair which would undoubtedly plague our pizza-reliant beach town.

Pizza My Heart's long-resented flight from IV came just in time for the start of the 2022-2023 school year. Few restaurants parallel the level of deliciousness attained by said pizza joint, previously kept in business by college students and local Pizza My Heart devotees. For myself, the mourning period for Woodstock's biggest competitor only ended upon discovering that a new taco joint was making its mark on IV come October 1st, 2022. Checo's—yet another restaurant at Trigo's end—opened its doors as Pizza My Heart slammed theirs forever shut.

Although this closure seems random, there is an underlying trend at play here. As of late, new eateries replacing old eateries has become commonplace in IV. Just last year, Wingstop replaced Subway, making its grand debut within the outdoor food mall that houses both Starbucks and Habit Burger Grill. Hummus Republic, which was previously a Blaze Pizza, opened shop at the end of May 2022—another pizza shop down. Echoing this pattern of change, the once iconic Buddha Bowls recently underwent an entire name change and is

now officially known as Dank Bowls. While not a complete restaurant replacement, it was a shocking enough occurrence for the IV community.

So why has this trend taken over in IV? Should we fear that our favorite shops might soon succumb to these large-scale adjustments? At best a name change, at worst an entire closure. The answer may be unknown, just out of students' reach. We might have to make our peace with the death of certain eateries, honoring—but never forgetting—the integral roles they played in curing our hangriest (potentially intoxicated) moments.

However, lacking a concrete explanation for these closures and changes only forces us to draw new conclusions about where food culture in IV is headed. As many restaurant doors close, many more open in their place. New restaurant hopefuls have taken over, gearing up to shift their styles to better match the wants and needs of the surrounding community.

"I was expecting the students and the community to not embrace [our food] so much, but a lot of them seem to know Mexican food really well," said Sergio Ortega, Checo's chef partner. Ortega believes that opening a restaurant in the heart of our beloved college town is an attractive investment.





While restaurants in IV might very well be seen as epicenters for filling up the stomachs of broke, hungry college students, Ortega attributes his ability to expand Checo's menu to students' interest in multicultural cuisine. This expansion has ultimately increased levels of authenticity in his restaurant.

"I was not expecting people to know these preparations, but they do. It gives me more room to bring in other things, and grow the menu in a way that is closer to my style," Ortega said. While the chef might just be highlighting a personal experience—reflected in his abilities to grow Checo's menu past its original potential—his claims capture why restaurant culture in Isla Vista is special.

Comprised of students who come from a variety of backgrounds, Isla Vista is a melting pot of cultures from all over the world. The unique perspectives of the thousands of students who have ventured in and out of IV have evidently impacted the culture of food and dining. Perhaps that's why Pizza My Heart finally found itself at its demise. The demand for eateries that feature global dishes is increasing in

IV. Pizza, the staple of American cuisine, is becoming less relevant.

"Everything I do has that cultural element ingrained in it," Ortega continued. "Culture is the common ground on all my projects, and it's really cool that I can show real, honest Mexican food as opposed to modified versions of it that try to fit other styles which were done in the past."

There is no fear in embracing the originality of a dish knowing that the community will support the cuisine for its intended purpose. IV restaurants do not feel that they must adulterate their food to appease a demographic of unappreciative college students anymore. Authentic food, it seems, is in style. "I think it's great, it's diverse, and it makes everything richer culturally," Ortega said. Community members are ready to embrace the meals they are given, especially when they are reminders of a true, authentic, home-cooked dish.

Zócalo, which opened in April 2022, has joined the eatery revolution. "A lot of Latino students say, 'hey, this tastes like the food my mom makes at home.' I think that's something we're really proud of," said Jaime Hernandez, co-owner of the establishment and recent UCSB alum. Honing in on the increased student interest in cultural food, Hernandez recognizes how student appreciation for authenticity has greatly benefited the success of Zócalo. "We always wanted to stay making authentic Mexican food, but hearing that from students reassured us that this is what we were meant to do," he said.

Finishing his last round of classes in the 2021-2022 school year, Hernandez jumped on the opportunity to open the restaurant at the end of Pardall when offered the space. Their goal was to open before Deltopia "because everyone will be out and about, and no one will be cooking food at home that day." Using the knowledge he acquired from years of being a student at UCSB, Hernandez

and his team successfully opened before Deltopia in the spring of 2022, offering a diverse menu tasty enough to satisfy the student population.

As uncertainties with COVID died down, Hernandez felt more confident in the success of his business. “In Isla Vista, when all the students are gone, it seems like a ghost town, so it would’ve been hard to have gotten a business started during COVID,” he said. Like many others involved in the restaurant business, Hernandez is grateful for the recent turnaround in community comfortability with going out to dine. “Now that everyone is back, people are staying here to drink coffee, and people are reaching out to do fundraisers. People want to have more social events now. There is a difference [in comfortability] between now and when we opened.”

Perhaps then, this restaurant revolution is a result of a number of things happening in and around Isla Vista. Surely, it’s wrong to assume that restaurants didn’t take a hit during the early stages of the pandemic. Perhaps the rise of COVID was enough to encourage some of IV’s most beloved restaurants to move up and away from the college community.

Yet, seeing that pandemic-induced fears and COVID precautions have begun to loosen their grip on the IV social scene, it may be more reasonable and more honest to attribute recent restaurant changes to evolving student standards

and expectations of restaurant cuisine. More students have begun to look for food that is authentic—reflective of meals that were once cooked at home by their families and family friends. Fortunately for Checos, Zócalo, and Hummus Republic, student expectations have equipped them for success. Unfortunately for Pizza My Heart and Subway, students’ needs could not be earnestly met. Their success will have to be championed elsewhere.

IV’s college-forward persona is not a total turn-off for restaurant owners. There is something to be said about the money that can be earned if a business owner can conjure up a menu appetizing enough for hungry—likely budget-bound—UCSB students. But if we are to ensure that IV’s new and most iconic food joints will stay in town, we have to be gracious customers and continuous supporters of our favorite local eateries. Listening to the ask of these business owners, it seems they agree. “Talk to the staff, talk to me, know about the food. Try it, give it a shot,” Ortega said. “Just give us a chance to show the community what we have to offer.”

At first, I believed my heart couldn’t bear the loss of the once iconic Pizza My Heart. But, after considerable reassessment, I like where the food culture in IV is heading. It’s time we ditch pizza (I’m not talking about you, Woodstocks) and embrace new cuisines. That seems to be what people want anyway. **W**



in time

ART + CURATION + DESIGN // VEDA GUJRAL



The Unburied
// JUNTING WU

Tread on debris, tap at the fragmented door
On the other side, the black ruins of my life
In I pad, without disturbing the silent corpses
How selfish I am! Never dare to bury the dead
But attempt to awake in them, the far oblivion
The elapse, the demise, in the desolation
Once spring and blossom, perhaps not them
It's me, all are me, but I have to depart
Yet don't feel lonely, for I will come back
By then we unburied, will have awaited another me

Bloom
// ISABELLE BRADY

Minute buds dot bare branches,
sealed blossoms waiting for the
right spring day to open.
I think of you and laugh at
myself, slow to bloom.

Vine tendrils twine around
boxy wire frames and creep up edifices
to drink in the sky.
I think of you and wonder at
myself, growing roots in two directions.

untitled, forgotten.
// SYLVIE BASS

a soft violin
warm hands intertwined
glowing from within, my apricity
the memory of your eyes

the fog rolls in
malaise nights
they're asking for my next of kin

in a daze I fight
cold, hard medicine
when did the music fade?

SIT WITH YOURSELF

Recenter at These Serene Spots

WORDS // ALAINA LANDEFELD
PHOTOGRAPHY // SAM PLASCENCIA
DESIGN // KAITLYN SMITH

In the ever-shifting, fast-paced handful of years we know to be college, it can be all-too-easy to get wrapped up in the frenzy of assignments and newly found responsibilities—and with so much of our focus poured onto academics and establishing social connections, it isn't unheard of to lose touch with your inner self along the way.

But what could matter more than your inner equilibrium? What is the point of running around and completing task after task if you, the one experiencing it all, don't feel at ease or in tune?

It is immensely important that, regardless of what flows in and out of your external world, you always feel connected to your inner self. Luckily, UCSB and Isla Vista are home to numerous serene spots that can serve as the perfect backdrop for a deep dive into your inner realm. As busy as life can get (especially as a college student), it is nonetheless worthwhile to tap into your own sweet nature and to simply be.

Here is a curated list of coordinates where you can go to check in with your lush inner world and tap into your innate desires. Perhaps you will feel called to meditate, free write in a journal, or simply sit and observe the landscape that surrounds you. Whatever the case, the act of showing up for yourself is what matters

most. Allow these spaces and meditative practices to aid you in your journey inward. Consider this an invitation to freely roam and explore what external spaces and ways of showing up for yourself feel most fitting within.

May these coordinates serve you well throughout your time here at UCSB, and may you always look inward for clarity and guidance.

[34.41273° N, 119.86922° W]

This picnic table centered amidst a playground might just inspire you to have a lunch date with your younger self—to reconnect and remind fun-sized, elementary school you just how far you've come. Spending an afternoon here will surely help to ease your inner critic, for who could be rude to miniature you?



[34.40699° N, 119.84348° W]

Next up we have an inviting bench overlooking the beloved beach. Perhaps the waves will remind you to remain in flow, and to focus in on your current current; life comes in waves, and it's in your best interest to swim at a pace you can reasonably handle.



[34.41319° N, 119.84409° W]

As you sit in the serene courtyard outside the Earth Science Building, think of all your yet-to-be-completed tasks and watch as they shift form from stressors within your brain into light, airy bubbles that peacefully drift upward into the sky. Feel your being become relaxed and entirely present. All that is filling your to-do list has been taken care of by future you.

[34.40815° N, 119.87929° W]

This built-in-to-the-scenery bench at Sands Beach is sure to provide you with a chance to tap into your inner realm. Upon settling into your own sweet company, invite all your senses to come out and play. Feel just how supportive the sand is beneath your feet, how refreshing the sea breeze sounds to your ears, what a delight it is to watch the surfers down below... Paint your surroundings with love, then be sure to channel that love within and show yourself compassion for who you are in this very moment.





[34.40714° N, 119.84903° W]

Oh, to be fully immersed in nature. This bench is tucked beneath a breathtaking tree and is amidst an all-encompassing scenery that houses greenery as well as the ocean in the distance. As you occupy this thoughtfully-placed bench, learn from the tree it is situated beneath. How, like the tree, can you become more rooted in your inner world? And how then can you branch out and connect with parts of society that compliment your innermost dreams and desires? Draw inspiration from the tree's grounding presence.

[34.41247° N, 119.84878° W]

Located outside the Arts Building, may this final spot allow you to tap into your inner artistry and unveil more about your expression. As you comfortably lounge at this coordinate, paint yourself a picture: what does your inner landscape look like? What colors and imagery does it contain? How accessible is your inner world? Are you free to enter at any moment, or is it currently blocked off and hard to access? Reflect on how you can further express yourself in daily life. **w**



CLIMBING IN COLLEGE

Whatever Happened to Recess?

WORDS // K.C. YOUNG

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ELLIE AQUILANTI

Standing in the doorway of UCSB's Climbing Team practice, prospective members are immediately met with the sounds of excited chatter from the climbers within. A sound foreign to most university students coming out of a long day grinding at the lib—the team's energy is invigorating. The atmosphere awakens memories of us as young students, yammering away at the monkey bars or howling frustratedly at the handball courts. The team's practice reminds me of recess. Do you remember? A once-sacred space, where students of all ages are liberated from academic responsibilities and get a chance to move beyond the confines of a desk.

"I really want to promote that this club is open to everyone, at any skill level, because they have the potential," said Charlie Smith, President of the Climbing Club. Our childhood tendencies to scale any surface make each of us a promising climber, and the team's officers see that. Smith and the officers are passionate about creating a welcoming space and cultivating interest and confidence in climbers of all abilities on campus—especially for novices.

Here at UCSB, we have two indoor rock walls: one at the Rec Cen and the other at Robertson Gym. To an untrained eye, the rock wall structure seems to be decorated with a rainbow collage of grip pieces trailing skyward. But you'll come to learn that corresponding colored grip pieces actually delineate a specific path—based on difficulty—for the climber to follow. A climber must employ full-body maneuvers and unique techniques to secure a hold on the intricate grabs with their hands and feet. Or you can just wing it. That's the beauty of climbing: there's no one right way to go up. The thrill is in the venture.

"One of my favorite things about climbing is that the problem is right in front of you, especially with bouldering," shared James Nuci, Climbing Team member of four years. At the base of a 15-foot rock wall, climbers size up their challenge, formulate a plan of attack, and send it! Grasping onto the first grip pieces of the route, looking up at their challenge, climbers stretch their fingertips up to the next. But one wrong maneuver and they're hurled back onto the mat.

For Nuci however, the innate trial and error aspect of the sport is rewarding.

“If there’s this one move or one problem that’s been bugging you for weeks, right when you fall off the wall, it’s still gonna be right there in front of you— staring you down.” He shares that not only are you constantly challenged by the wall, but you’re also challenging yourself to take it one step further with every attempt.

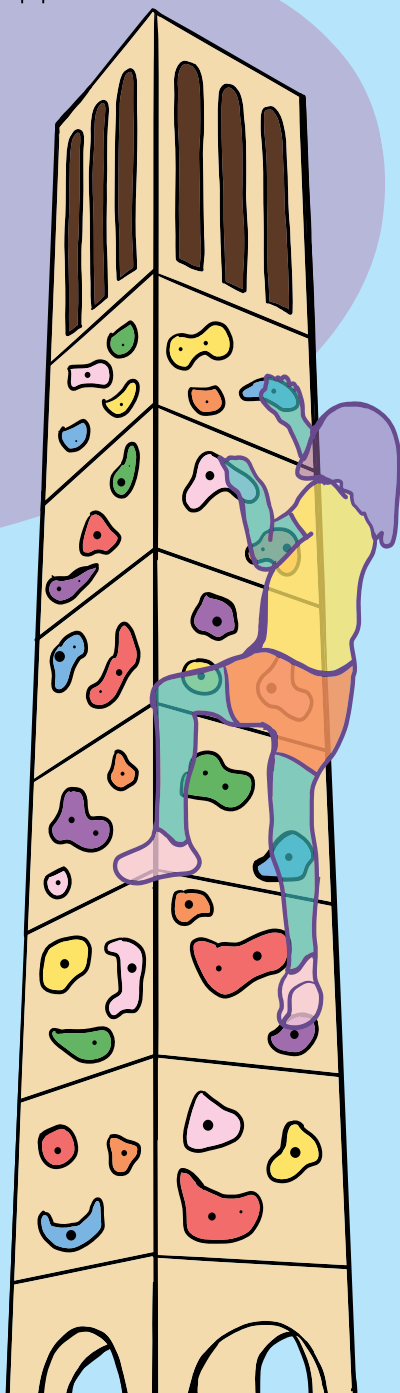
In this environment, you get comfortable with failing—and fast. “If climbing has taught me anything, it’s how to try hard, work through fear, and be more okay with failure,” shared Lauren Berry, the club’s Sport and Competition Officer. For climbers, landing back on the mat is an opportunity for reflection towards self-improvement... and it’s addictive. Take a look around and climbers are perpetually tumbling down and jumping right back up—all with a smile plastered across their faces.

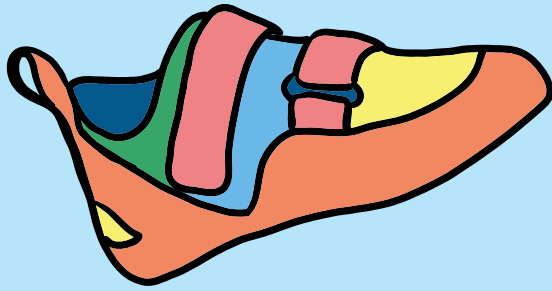
“Climbing is a very humbling sport since it uses muscles and tendons not used in other sports,” explained Brian Shubat, Captain of the Climbing Team. “The progress from climbing is also very slow, so it takes a long time to get good at climbing as opposed to being able to pick up a new sport and doing well from natural athletic capabilities.”

“There’s always ego in that you’re trying really hard to better yourself,” Smith said. “But you’re just as stoked when the person next to you sends it!” Though rock climbing is an independent action on the wall, it’s a collaborative sport. In between climbs at the wall, climbers stand shoulder to shoulder, swapping wisdom, brainstorming, and debating the problems before them. This is where teamwork and friendships evolve, and where the excited chattering emerges.

Climbing is like solving a puzzle with your body and mind. Maneuvering through a complex arrangement of rocks, with strength and logic, the sport is “a really great puzzle since every climb is

different,” Berry recounted. The officers routinely create new routes by rearranging the pieces so that climbers face a variety of challenges or get to climb through new warm-up paths.





The growing popularity of the sport and team also holds its challenges. Climbing enthusiast Grace Benzler found that independent time in the Adventure Center rock wall in the Rec Cen was more her speed than actual practices. “I feel like practices are more of a social supplement to climbing on your own time, you just have to expect that you won’t have that much climbing time.”

Beyond the artificially prepared rock walls on campus, the team also travels to the great outdoors. At least once a quarter the team hosts a trip to some of California’s most popular climbing destinations. “Since I’ve been a student we’ve gone to Bishop, Joshua Tree, and Red Rocks,” Smith said. “But in the past, people have hit Yosemite, and Castle Rock up in the Bay Area.” These trips provide opportunities for climbers to get their hands on some natural rock.

For a more local trip, a quick thirty-minute drive up the Old San Marcos Road brings you to the highest point of rock formation in the Santa Ynez mountains. And not to mention a beautiful panoramic view of the Santa Barbara coastline. Lizard’s Mouth Rock and the adjacent wind caves in the area are a popular bouldering location for the team and locals because of its accessibility off the main road.

For their Fall 2022 trip, first-time member Roque Martinez had the opportunity to travel out to Bishop, California, and experience firsthand what it was like to climb in a natural environment. “I had a really fun time camping and


climbing with the team!” Martinez explained. “I was nervous at first but after seeing how well prepared the team was in ensuring the safety of everyone, I was not nervous anymore!”

Outside of civilization, members get the chance to translate their skills on natural rock formations. “The team made everyone feel included by compensating for everyone’s climbing level,” Martinez went on. “There were groups that went to areas with climbs around the same grades so everyone could climb at a level they were comfortable with.” Just as the rock walls on campus are differentiated in color by their difficulty, natural rock routes also have a range of skill and strength required. Don’t worry though, the officers have got your back.

“SEND IT!”

“It’s a primal sport,” Shubat said. “I see rock and I must climb.” Scaling large structures hones a child-like curiosity that pushes climbers to test their capabilities and have fun.

Yimin Avara, a member of four years, explained that “chalked hands and a massive forearms pump” are the fruits of full sends at a rock structure. They are well-earned mementos of a climber’s physical achievements.

The team’s mission is to provide a friendly environment for novices and experts alike. Whether you prefer social indoor competitions, laid-back practices, or long weekend trips to one of California’s most popular climbing locations, there’s something for everyone on the team. So check out this portal back to a simpler time—a makeshift recess on campus—where any college kid can get active and escape the chaos of daily student life. 

CLOSET Q & A!

INTERVIEWING UCSB STUDENTS!

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ALICE MADRIGAL

“Bags are such a staple and the little shoulder bag will always be my favorite ... I’m really excited to pair it with my cowboy boots when I’m home!”

- Rachel



“It looks good with everything. It’s my go-to favorite piece because I don’t have to worry about anything else when I put it on.”

- Alyssa



“[Telfar] is authentically Queer as well as authentically Black ... when I wear these pants in particular I feel like I’m being authentically myself.”
- Jacob



“I got a job literally so I could just buy those shoes ... I wore those shoes and I was like ‘Oh yeah, this is what I want to do.’”
- Josephine



AS SEEN ON HOT TICKET

ILLUSTRATION • DESIGN // AMANDA HARRIS





hotticket_ucsb



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HOLD YOUR HORSES

A Look Into the
UCSB Horse Boarders Association

WORDS // ITZAYANA GONZALEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY // EMMA HERREROS DE TEJADA
DESIGN // AMANDA HARRIS



When you think of UCSB, what immediately comes to mind? Beaches? Surfing? Partying? But what about horses? It might not seem like they go together, but we are Gauchos after all, and we have an incredible organization that's perfect for those students who don't want to part ways with their beloved animals while at college.

“This barn really is for students. Students always have first priority.”

Located at the West Campus Stables behind IV Elementary School, the UCSB Horse Boarders Association, or HBA, is a unique co-op organization that provides boarding for the horses of students, faculty, staff, and even some local community members. Because the HBA is a co-op, every member contributes to making sure things run smoothly in the stables. Each student is responsible for their own horse, which includes routinely cleaning their stall and filling up hay boxes for feeders. They also take turns in feeding every horse in the stables for breakfast, lunch, and dinner— along with other chores and duties throughout the year. These duties range from being on hay barn duty, manure duty, or even being placed in charge of small repair projects every now and then. Because every member cooperates in helping each other and their horses, the HBA is able to keep their prices considerably low.



This year's chairperson, Claire Divola, is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Earth Science department. As part of her position, Divola is in charge of managing the HBA community, planning events, receiving deliveries, as well as interviewing and accepting new boarders. She also gives tours to prospective UCSB students who may be interested in bringing their horses to college. Divola has boarded her horse, Red, at the HBA since October 2021. Being introduced to horses at a young age has led her to the position she holds today. “When I was nine or ten my mom put me in a horse camp for kids which was a week-long and I got hooked,” Divola said.

At the moment, the HBA boards 15 horses, with the majority of them belonging to students and a few to faculty and community members. “This barn really is for students. Students always have first priority. You always get the first choice of stalls and then faculty and staff and then community members,” Divola explained. Owning members are students who have a horse prior to coming to UCSB but just

It is clear that having your beloved horse close by can help alleviate some of the stress from school.





need a space for them to live and be taken care of. Along with this, the HBA provides special services for experienced students who know how to ride and properly take care of horses but don't actually own a horse. The student rider program allows owners to choose other students who they think would be a good fit to ride their horses. These students do their fair share of chores and tasks, which helps relieve the heavy load of duties for some owners.

Student rider Neeli Tummala is a grad student who has been involved with the HBA for a little over a year now and is treasurer of the organization. She described her experience with the HBA as very manageable and fulfilling. "I think I get the best of both worlds. I'm very fortunate to be able to help owning members with their horses and also get to ride," she said.

Currently, there are eight student riders and the process to become one is a bit different than the process to become a boarder. "I met with each of the owning members whose horses I would be working

with, and we discussed my responsibilities and schedule," Tummala recalled. "I then had a brief interview with the executive board where they asked me basic horse care and knowledge questions that showed I could be responsible and safe when working with the horses."

Sufficient experience and knowledge are necessary to help things run smoothly, especially because caring for a horse requires a considerate amount of dedication and time. Students have busy schedules with class and schoolwork—taking care of an animal on top of all of that can make time management a bit harder. But that's when student riders and the other boarders come in handy. "The nice thing is because everyone here is in the same position a lot of people are willing to help," Divola said.

However, it is clear that having your beloved horse close by can help alleviate some of the stress from school. Divola, who did her undergrad at UCLA without Red, noticed the benefits of having him nearby. "I found I have a lot more time

where I can de-stress and reset. I think because I have time to just be in a place that's really calm. I can get away from the hassle of being a Ph.D. student," she said.

Tummala also agrees that her time with the HBA so far has had a meaningful impact on her experience as a grad student. "Being able to engage with the community here at the HBA and spend time with these beautiful animals has gotten me through stressful times this past year," she explained.

Just like the relationship between boarders is supportive, the one between the HBA and IV is as well. "We've coexisted really well. I think we've actually noticed a pretty positive relationship between us going out on the trails, or having people walk by and ask questions and us being able to talk about the barn and educate," Divola said. Although in past years there have been a few hiccups with local residents, things have been going smoothly as of recently and the HBA hopes to keep their relationship with the community strong through multiple initiatives.

"I'm excited about our plans to enhance local and equitable food production for the diverse population of Isla Vista in community gardens and orchards by delivering high-quality horse manure and straw from our stables, which we currently do for UCSB community gardens and habitat restoration programs," Tummala said.

As for the Goleta community, the HBA used to have an Open House which they hope to continue this year after being put on pause during the pandemic. Divola hopes that events like this can give the HBA more traction and be a great opportunity to get to know new faces in the community. They also would like to have more community outreach in the future. "We do have some goals to help spread the word about our barn and also spread some education about horses," Divola said.

Educating the community about what it means to own a horse is crucial due to the many misconceptions people have about the process and horses in general. Divola believes that "a lot of people will





think that owning a horse means that all you're doing is riding, and that's the part that people show on social media or when they're speaking, but there's actually a lot of responsibility that comes with it."

Taking care of horses is almost a full-time job in itself. Owners must be devoted to them and give the animals their all. These are the qualities that the HBA cabinet looks for in prospective students who wish to be a part of this community. If you are interested in possibly boarding your horse or becoming a student rider be sure to check out the HBA's website or Instagram for more information. While it may be hard work, it is definitely very rewarding and gives way to a deeply unique and special college experience. **w**





TOYS OF OUR PLAYFUL PAST: A WONDERLAND OF DISPLAYS

WORDS // SAM MILLER
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ALICE MADRIGAL

The building's arch-way entrance is a pleasant white with tall, black fencing underneath. Red tiles contrast against the gray concrete of the downtown walkway. The entrance is plated with gold lettering, spelling out the building's name: "Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum." When I stared up at the golden title during my first visit, I imagined a place with wide halls and open displays.

Susan Quinlan and Terence Quinlan founded the Doll & Teddy Bear Museum in 2005. Before this, Susan Quinlan was a master in her fields of Library Science and Historical study. The two work as a team to care for their museum and promote it while traveling to different toy-related conventions across the country. Terence Quinlan can be found at local toy events, often in a speaking role. Decades of dedicated collecting have led to the place you can visit today. As you enter through the double doors and turn to the left, you

enter the Tea Room and Toy Shop. The two rooms are connected in one space. The shop section is where you can find all sorts of toys and decorations for sale. Meanwhile the tea area is full of antiques pouring off the shelves and onto small tables around the room. When the cold season comes blowing through Santa Barbara the picket fence surrounding the store is strewn with red flowers. Wooden shelves are lit with soft light to reflect off the section of children's books possessed by the shop for any young reader to flip through.

In my walk through of this little area, I was pleasantly surprised by how cozy the Museum felt. It was similar to a child's dream near a gift giving holiday.

After paying a small fee at the counter farthest from the entrance, you walk through a large doorway to the display room. A wonderland of displays ranging from a mini Disney Themepark to locally



made Native American dolls greet you with smiling faces. The displays within the museum range from the 19th to the 21st century, all within vast glass containers. Halls of beautiful scenes consist of lovingly crafted props and tenderly cared for toys. The pop culture sets contain dolls from Star Wars, Harry Potter, Disney, Barbie, and more. When visiting with my father, who is far older than myself, I found it quite fun to compare which pop culture dolls we knew the origins of. There were dolls from old shows I never heard of!

Going further into the glass maze presents two paths, leading you toward the local historical toys or general historical toys. The local historical toys are made by the many different groups that have lived in Santa Barbara over hundreds of years, including Native Americans and Spanish settlers. Meanwhile, the general historical section shows how toys have evolved over the years and the different toys that were made in each generation. This wonderland can truly suck a viewer into different cultural worlds.

After my first walk through, I had to loop around the entire museum a second time just to see all the details I missed in my first walk around. You never know what you might have missed on your first stroll down Santa Barbara's playful past.

After her first experience at the Museum, a local resident of Goleta, Cammie Miller, said, "The museum brought me back to my childhood. The eclectic collection of toys throughout the generations was nice to experience."

As the cold season sees its climax in Santa Barbara this January, you may be

looking for something special to start off the new year. Why not see what is left from the Museum's holiday event? There may still be some cheer you can collect for next year's winter! From Christmas ornaments to antique toys still waiting for their forever home. There are memories to be made for both young and old at the Quinlan's Museum. [W](#)



isla vista arts gives you credit

WORD MAGAZINE INT 185ST, THE CREATION OF THIS MAGAZINE

This issue of WORD: Isla Vista Arts & Culture Magazine is brought to you by the student artists and writers in INT 185ST and its partner SEAL campus organization. We welcome new writers, designers, photographers, and artists from all majors.

[Not Necessarily] SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK THEATER 194A, GROUP STUDIES IN ACTING AND DIRECTING

Spring Quarter only.
Experience theater by acting and producing it. Students rehearse, act, create costumes, sets, and finally perform their work during the final week of classes. All majors welcome.

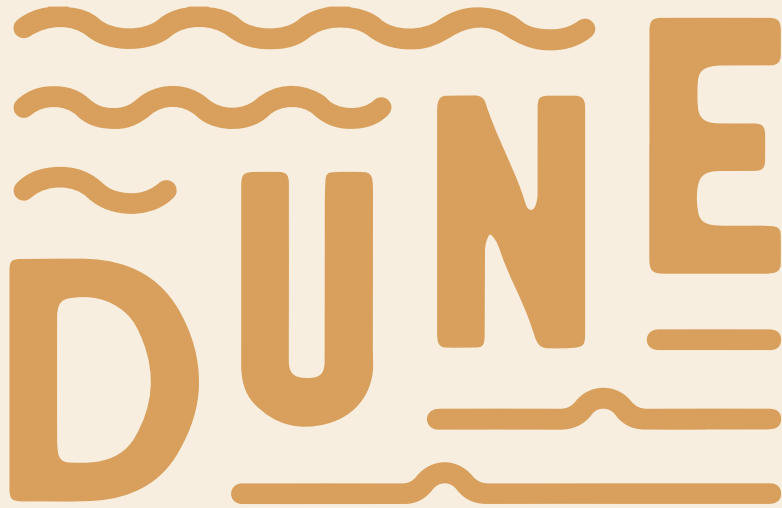
MAGIC LANTERN FILMS FILM/MEDIA 119ML, ISLA VISTA FILM EVENTS

Magic Lantern Films teaches the ins and outs of film programming using the IV Theater as a lab. Students gain experience in budgeting, publicizing, researching, curating, and theater management, culminating in the execution of screenings that come out of students' own pitches.

IV LIVE! THEATER 42/142, PR AND ONSITE EVENT MANAGMENT

Experience promoting and producing weekly Improvability comedy shows along with additional live performances in Isla Vista. Learn backstage and front-of-the-house skills. Explore public relations, advertising, and production management in this real-world setting.

For more information, go to our website:
<https://ivarts.ihc.ucsb.edu/> or email: ihc-ivarts@ucsb.edu



DUNE

COFFEE ROASTERS

From Goleta to downtown Santa Barbara, we've got your coffee cravings covered. Our retail locations feature pastries, toast, whole bean coffee and custom made espresso drinks. Come see us in person, pull up a chair and stay a while.

528 ANACAPA STREET
5915 A CALLE REAL
1101 STATE STREET
250 STORKE ROAD

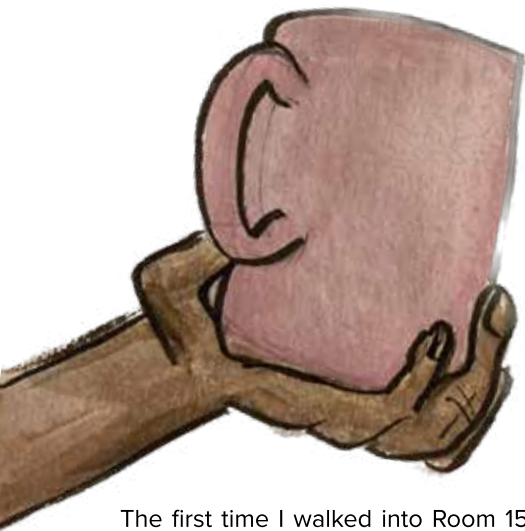
Taking the First Spin

Pottery With Troy Schmidt: A Hidden Gem in Room 1514

WORDS // LARA BRIELLE HEREDIA

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ZOË WITHERSPOON





The first time I walked into Room 1514, I felt like a little kid again. I felt the same wonder that encompassed me on my first field trip to an observatory and a familiar eagerness from the first time my mom let me be her sous chef in the kitchen. Here, behind an unassuming gate at the back end of the UCSB Rec Cen, several pottery classes are held throughout the week where a mix of beginning and advanced students are guided through wheel throwing, glazing, and firing their own creations. The shelves lined with hand-painted mugs and dishes, the pottery wheels set in a circle around the room, and even the aprons stained with streaks of clay filled me with anticipation for the weeks to come.



Feeling extremely burnt out by my classes in spring quarter of my freshman year, I needed an outlet. I was pleasantly surprised to find that pottery classes were conveniently offered at the Rec Cen, and I made a point to sign up for the first available spot in the fall. On the first day, we immediately got our hands dirty, distributing chunks of clay and creating “pinch pots” the way one would handle Play-Doh. We were also shown different methods and tools to achieve the looks we wanted our pots to have. This ranged from stamping texture into the clay with sheets of lace to using machine-made coils to alter the pot’s shape. It was amazing to



see the various methods and stylistic choices one could make to personalize a piece—the possibilities seemed endless.

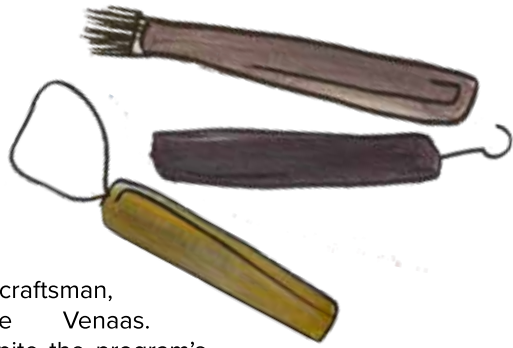
That same day, we made our first attempts at throwing clay on the wheel. To demonstrate, our instructor gracefully transformed a wet glob of clay into a perfect bowl in what seemed nothing short of a magic trick. He then sliced it in half to provide a better visual for how we can use our finger placement to manipulate its shape, height, and thickness. As effortless as he made it look, it took an immense amount of patience for us first-timers to get it right. I would come close to forming something that nearly resembled a pot, only for it to slip or break apart 10 seconds later. This happened repeatedly, but it was

a proud moment when I finally created a decent—though flawed—shape.

Despite my numerous failed attempts, the keen spirits of my peers completely eclipsed my fears of making a mistake. It was encouraging to be surrounded by newcomers who were all so eager and unafraid, as well as some more experienced students with great beginner's advice. Everyone was willing to lend a hand when needed, and our instructor was always nearby to give technique pointers or share his expert opinion on how to best execute a design.

The class is led by long-time pottery maker and teacher, Troy Schmidt, who divides his time between his at-home studio, his gallery, and several local classrooms. With over 20 years of experience creating wheel-thrown pottery and having mastered the meticulous art of small-scale ceramics, Schmidt enjoys sharing his expertise with a wide audience that includes college students and art collectors alike. His miniature pieces have even caught the attention of celebrities like Gigi Hadid, who is one of the thousands of followers of his Instagram page.

Schmidt has been teaching pottery at UCSB since 1997, but the program was founded in the 1960s by fellow instructor



and craftsman, Dane Venaas.

Despite the program's long history, it is not very well-known or heavily publicized. The instructors would happily welcome more students into their classes, but space is very limited since the on-campus pottery studio houses fewer than 25 wheels.

Schmidt leads the class by demonstration and in-depth explanations while students follow along at their own pace. Everyone is given the freedom to work on their own project—some refining their skills on the wheel and others layering glazes or experimenting with different techniques for added texture. On any given day, there are people at all different stages of the process. To Schmidt, the classes are not about teaching people how to make perfectly smooth pieces but simply about “exposing people and introducing them to pottery.” The freeform nature of the class removes the stress of typical classroom settings and allows students to ease into it naturally.

Working with beginners, Schmidt never hesitates to remind us that pottery is a patient and forgiving art. “When you're starting off, everything is new. You have to explore. You have to see what your boundaries are. To tell what those boundaries are, you have to exceed them,” he said. “We start off with the basics, let you get the feel of things, and each week we'll go a little bit further. It's one of those things where you'll build and see a progression over time.”

This attitude lies at the core of his class and makes for a unique learning



environment that reinvents the childlike curiosity and enthusiasm of our youth back into our lives when the rest of the world feels relentless and fast-paced. It's a refreshing opportunity to be creative and learn something new without the looming pressure of a grade.

As a full-time student, this pottery class has given me a place to set my everyday stressors aside and just focus on tailoring a mug, dish, or sculpture to my liking. When the outside world gets too overwhelming, I look forward to Wednesdays when I get to hone my skills at the wheel. Graduate student Olivia Anderson, who has taken the class twice, expressed a similar sentiment. "It's nice to have a two-hour period of the day to myself—really slowing down helps to destress."

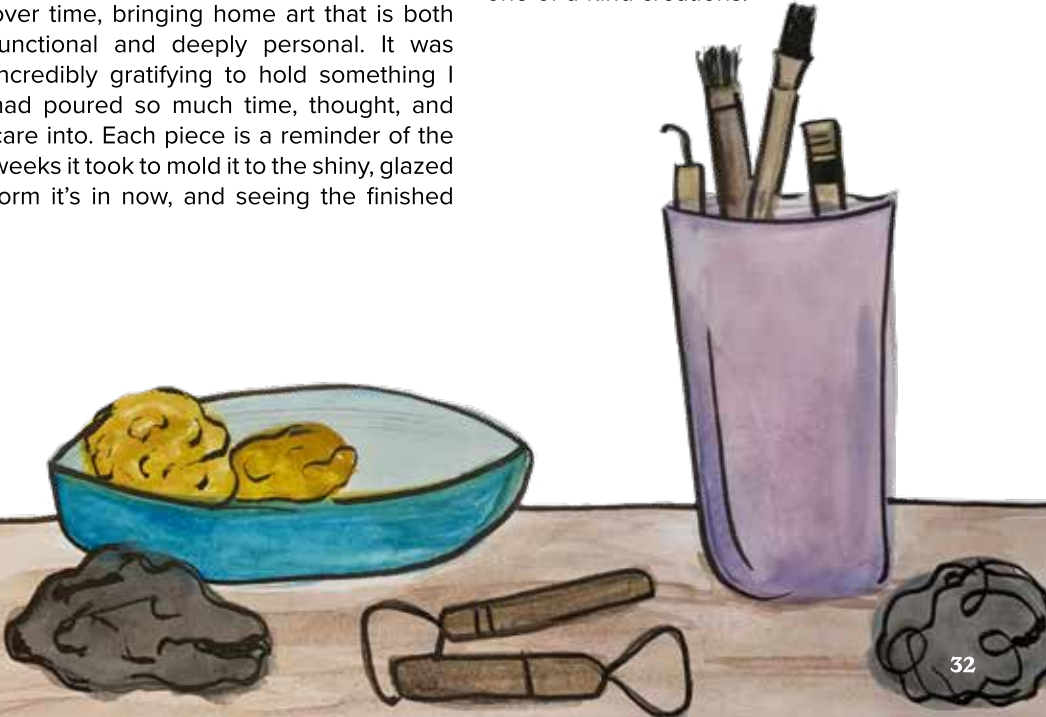
Schmidt himself also recommended that everybody take a class. "It's a creative outlet, so it's very therapeutic. It gives people the chance to try new things, which is always really rewarding."

Going into my first day, there was excitement in knowing I would leave the class with a tangible display of my growth over time, bringing home art that is both functional and deeply personal. It was incredibly gratifying to hold something I had poured so much time, thought, and care into. Each piece is a reminder of the weeks it took to mold it to the shiny, glazed form it's in now, and seeing the finished



products gave me an overwhelming sense of accomplishment.

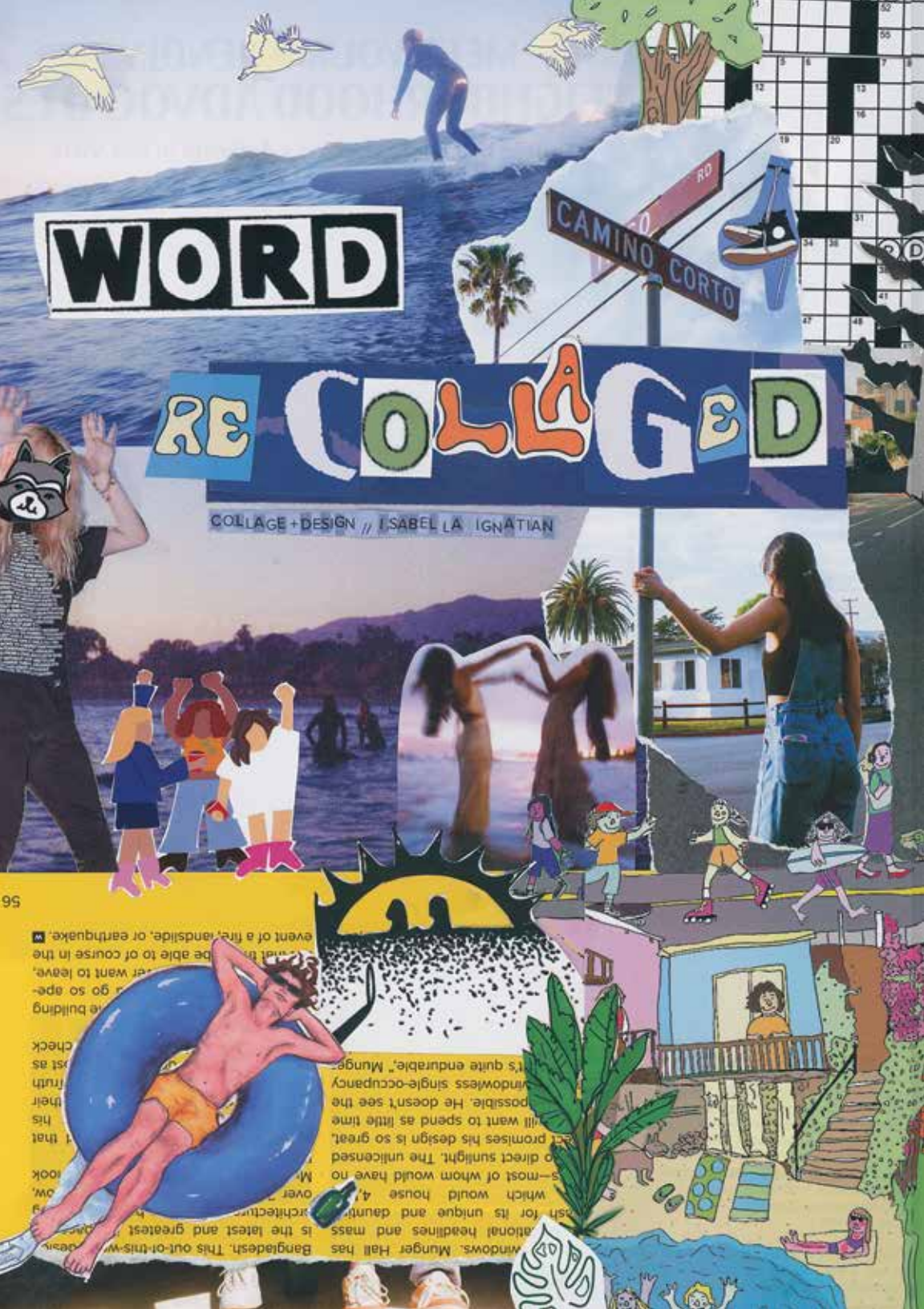
But the finished pieces and new skills were not the only rewards that this class has to offer. In the weeks I spent in Room 1514, I got to experience the thrill of delving into a new hobby, the warmth and support of the pottery community, and the unexpected introspection that trailed the intense patience and focus of shaping my first clay pot on the wheel. And the bonus—a handful of one-of-a-kind creations. **W**



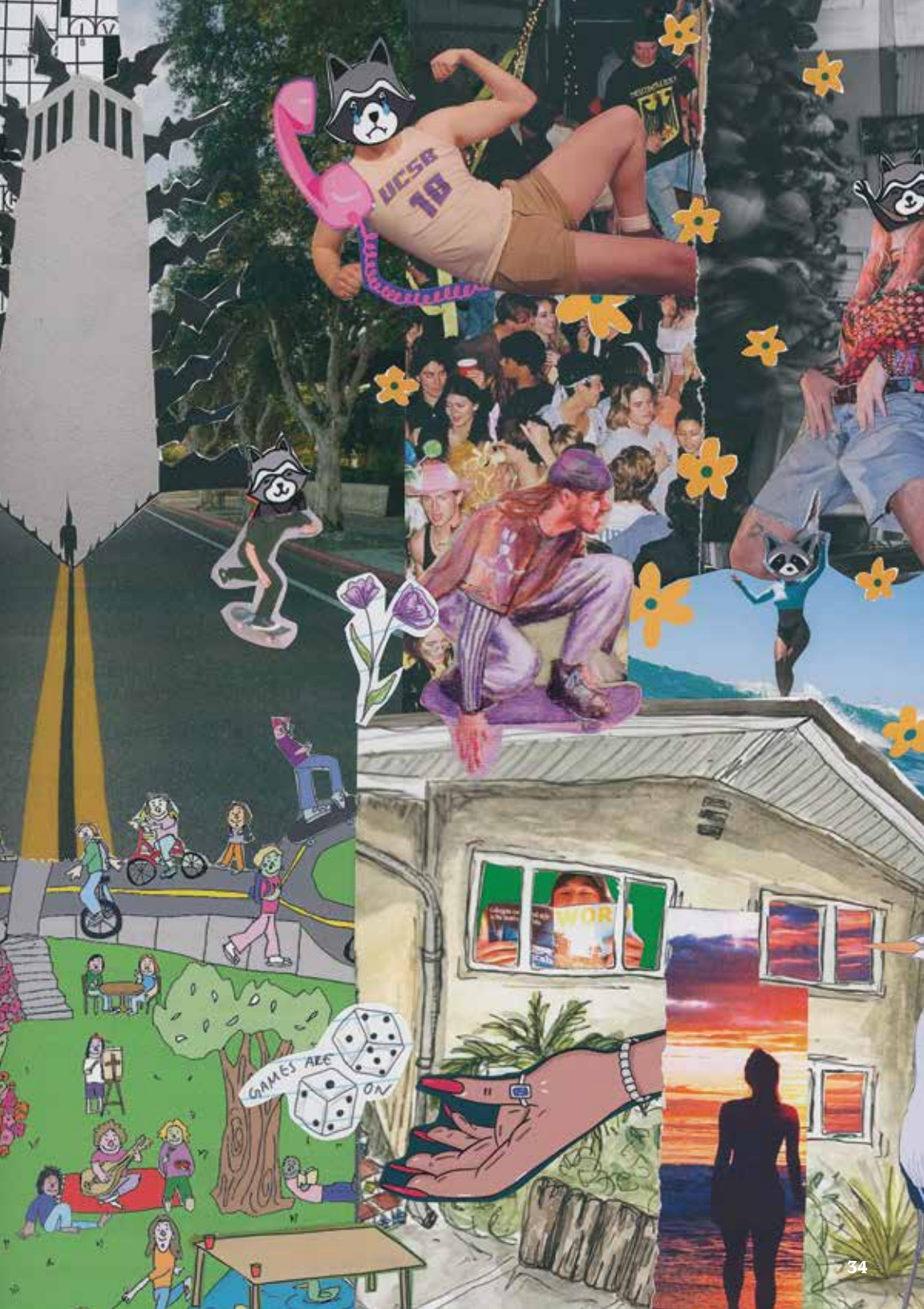
WORD

RE COLLAGED

COLLAGE + DESIGN // ISABEL LA IGNAIAN



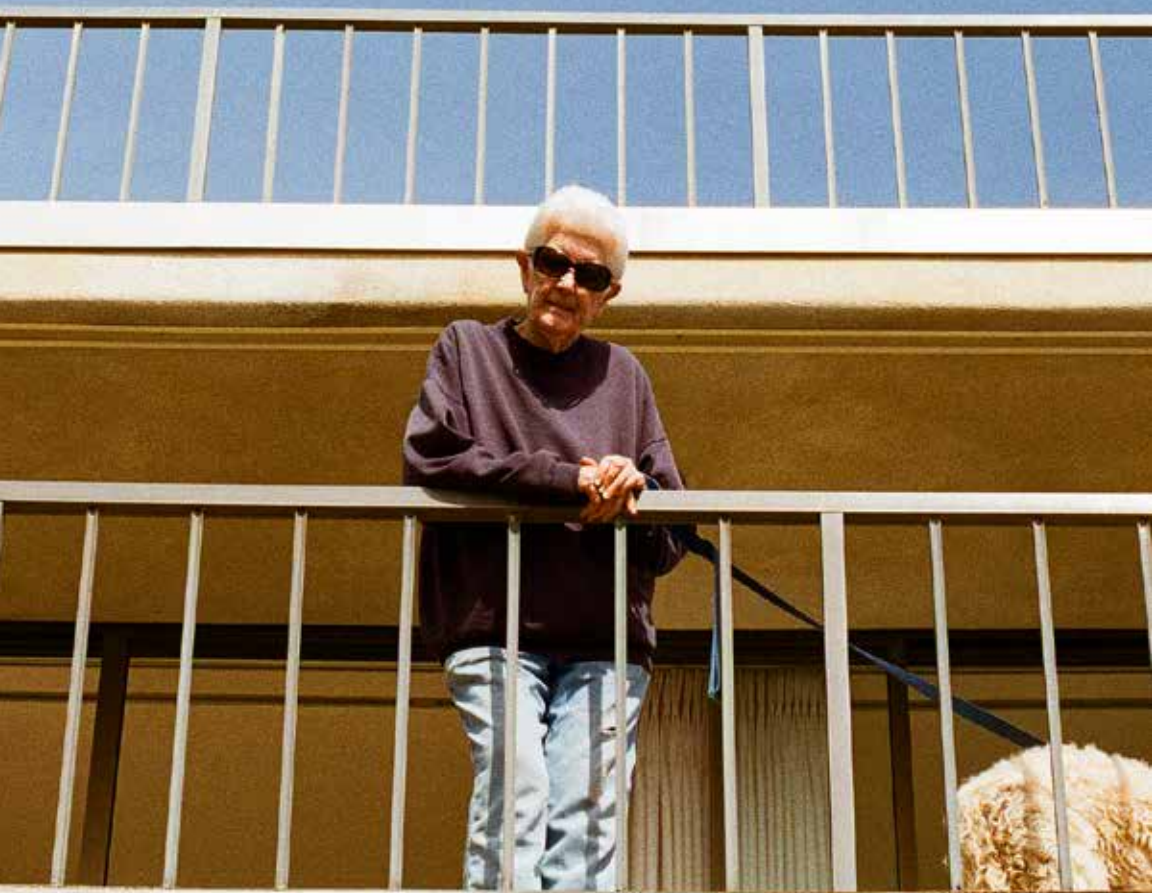
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LONG TERM RESIDENTS

LIVING IN ISLA VISTA FOR OVER 20 YEARS

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // EMMA HERREROS DE TEJADA



Sue Whissenand



Sue with Ariel and Ava

“Living in IV is like living in a rose garden. It is a beautiful place to live but roses have thorns and every once in a while you get stuck”



House built in the mid 60s by Sue's late husband Paul Lee

Hal Kopeikin



“Bear’s birthday party is one of the fascinating IV parties. We’ve done 3 of them now and it is a collection largely of students, but also of the old people, little kids in the neighborhood and homeless folks with dogs in town and we all just get together and hang out. It’s one of my favorite experiences.”



“UCSB students are the best older siblings, guitar teachers & babysitters we could have asked for. My kids had a lot of fun in Isla Vista growing up and benefited tremendously. They both started music careers based on their experiences here.”



Hal, former Psychology Professor at UCSB

Rick & Janet



Sitting in the living room of their “dream home”

“You can’t have everything but for the most part, the kids here are great. We’ve had great relationships with the students that have come to school here and continue to do so. We’ve kept them over the years, they have families, and we’re invited to weddings. We have 3 or 4 long term friendships with the students.”

“Sometimes they make us feel very young, and other times they make us feel very old. But it keeps us going to see everyone on their bikes, with their surfboards...everybody’s outside enjoying life.”



A Conversation with a 68 Block Resident

WORDS // EMMA HERREROS DE TEJADA

This resident, who has requested to remain anonymous, has lived in Isla Vista with her husband for 30 years. Long ago, on a trip with her daughters to Greece, she fell in love with the island's architecture. So when she found the lot she currently owns in IV—and realized that if you squint and look at the mountains with the ocean next to it, that it could be mistaken for Greece—it sparked an idea. Then, she found the least expensive buildable lot in Santa Barbara County right on the 68 block of IV. She had lived in Santa Barbara since the 50s and never thought that she wanted to live in Isla Vista—after seeing the lot, it took her 10 minutes to make an offer.

The resident decided, based off of her past experiences, that she'd be the contractor, builder, and owner of her house and thus only need an architect. She was able to subcontract Dennis Thomson, a serious environmentalist, as her architect. To make it suitable for IV, she made sure the house was built with extra thick walls and double-paned windows. As they do in Greece, her and her husband decided to shape the roof of the house into a funnel, with tanks built underneath to recycle water into their garden. The house was designed to use minimal electricity and water, using strategically placed cement for heat, and solar panels for energy conservation. With wooden skewers and turkey twine, the resident herself changed the design of the house to face the ocean.



Resident's front porch guarded by her dog.

“We had one kid climb into the house. I had just woken up and as I went to make my coffee, I looked over and saw a young man asleep on the couch. I thought it was my grandson, but it wasn't. My husband says that he must've been a nice kid because at least he took off his shoes. Overall after 30 years, it could've been a lot worse.”^w

You Want Me To Pay With My Face?



The Scoop on PopPay

WORDS // JOSHUA RUBOW ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ISAAC RESURRECCION

PopID, known as PopPay for most Isla Vista residents, may be the most convenient way to pay for your desperately needed hangover cure. Some may get the creeps from the idea of paying with your face, but those who don't will reap the plentiful benefits that are obtained through the subscription.

What is PopID?

Free money and discounted food! It seems too good to be true in a college town. Well, not in Isla Vista. Thanks to PopID, you can lose your wallet on DP one night and still purchase food from many locations in IV! If you have ever been the

victim of drunkenly losing your wallet or phone then you understand how awkward it can be to ask your friends to buy you food. But thanks to PopID, you have no reason to ask your friends to pay for you. Kourosh Gohar, the company's Co-Founder and President, cleverly developed this futuristic method of payment.

Excuse Me? How Do I Pay?

According to the PopPay website, there are four steps to create an account. You must first venture onto their website and take a selfie. This doesn't have to be a professional headshot—PopID will accept your worst selfies. Once you have

successfully uploaded a selfie of your good side to their website, your picture is translated into a secure key and stored in the PopID cloud where you can also safely save your payment information. Step two is choosing to be recognized at PopID-enabled businesses. Once you are ready to pay, ask the employee at the register to pay using PopID, and stand in front of the camera, making sure your face is in the middle of the frame. Step three is completed by the company's software system: the face verification carefully ensures that it is you by ensuring that the PopID cloud matches the encrypted image to your key. Then PopPay lets the business know who you are. The fourth and final step is simply enjoying the modern way of paying for products! The website explicitly asks you to enjoy faster and easier payments, so no more ID cards, no more passwords, and no more annoying cash! Just simply look into the camera and say "cheese!" You get to pay with your face, how cool is that?

Keep in mind that there are some caveats to the convenience of PopPay. Eliminating the process of taking out one's wallet when making a purchase makes the consumer feel as if they are not paying for the product themselves. The convenience of paying with PopPay will inevitably force you as a consumer to spend more money on average. So make sure to watch your PopID balance and ensure that you can chew as much as you bite off.

What Should You Do Now?

Now that you are a professional PopID user, go to the select PopID-enabled locations and pay with ease! Some of your favorite businesses in IV that use PopPay are Super Cucas, Deja Vu, IV Deli Mart,

**Just simply look
into the camera
and say "cheese!"
You get to pay
with your face,
how cool is that?**

Wingstop, Roger's Tacos, and the staple of IV: Sams to Go! PopID is known for taking care of its users and applying rewards to many users' accounts, like citywide PopPay weeks and frequent promotional deals. Keep in mind, every dollar spent after the promotional deal comes straight from your pocket and if you're not careful, the bill can look similar to your tuition. If you are looking to eat some of your favorite IV cuisines at a discounted price or tend to lose your phone and wallet more than you can remember, there is no need to worry, biometric payment methods are soon to be the new norm! **W**



TO BE OR NOT TO



BE... REAL?



THE DIGITAL JOURNAL FOR GEN Z

WORDS // SAM PLASCENCIA

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // MIA JOHNSON

In an overcrowded lecture in Girvetz Hall, fourth-year Devin Dunlap receives a notification for BeReal. The buzz of several phones hum in unison with the same notification reading across their screens—“Time to BeReal: 2 min left to capture a BeReal and see what your friends are up to!” For the two to three students that have their ringer on, the familiar jingle echoes across the hall sporadically. Amid students shuffling, others giggling, and the rest still focusing on their notes—it’s clear that this new social media app has successfully weaved its way into our everyday life and conversation.

If you don’t already know, the current app of favor is BeReal. It is a platform where users can post a piece of “authentic” content for their friends and interact with one another. The app is a space that advocates for authenticity via unfiltered moments in users’ day-to-day life—unlike the manicured snapshots

found on other platforms like Instagram and TikTok. In just the span of two minutes, users are notified daily to capture a raw moment. Both the front and back cameras complete this by capturing a representation of the user’s real life.

In attempts to boost content and engagement, a user has to post their own photo to view their feed and have the chance to send out an optional “Instant Realmoji” or live reaction to a friend’s post. To further promote the app to new users, one has to share their post with someone else via Snapchat, Instagram, or iMessage to reveal who screenshotted your post (if anyone did), enhancing feelings of gratification and curiosity. The app’s ability to archive past posts adds the touch of nostalgia we all crave. The featured calendar full of posts can consist of anything, from lying in bed by yourself to pleasing memories with friends, and that’s the fun of it all.

“There is some reward at the end when you post. But there’s not something like that for any other social media. Everyone posts every day. No more, no less,” Dunlap said. In other words, the only way to unlock and interact with others is through the production of your own content. No filters. No videos. No followers. Especially, no influencers. Just you and your friends being real.





VS.



Since its 2020 launch by French entrepreneurs Alexis Barreyat and Kévin Perreau, the app has been downloaded 43.3 million times—becoming one of the most downloaded apps in the current mobile market. BeReal has rapidly become a powerhouse in the social media realm. In wake of the latest fads and culture amassed by Gen Z, the idea of an app collecting not-so-picture-perfect scenes of everyday life seems intriguing. As a generation inundated with polished photo dumps on Instagram and entirely edited highlight reels on TikTok, BeReal has abandoned these routines and built a platform to challenge an overly produced life.

“There’s so many TikToks about waiting and wanting the BeReal to go off at the perfect time. That’s not the point of it, right?” Dunlap points out. Suitably the app allows users to view their friends’ lives while elevating authentic and relatable content. A user’s image boils down to their perceived authenticity—though sometimes fabricated—reflected in their posts. This can even allude to the number of retakes a post has. BeReal has its pros

and cons for users, just like any other social media app. Some users handle the app differently than others, posting just in time or hours past the two-minute window.

A BeReal notification can ring at any time. During a shower, when you’re crying in bed, or popularly noted, in the time of a midday snooze. “Out of the week, I probably post six out of seven times on time. If it’s not on time, it’s usually because I’m asleep,” said third-year Adrian Llamas.

With an Apple Watch readily available, Llamas makes an effort to post on time wherever that may be, when he sees the notification pop up. He finds humor in viewing the everyday lives of his friends, especially when he can recognize the distinct routines of those he hasn’t spoken to in years. In between catching the bus,

“BeReal is just a quick capture of that moment in time of where you are.”

going to work, or simply relaxing in bed, Llamas thoroughly enjoys the one-and-done posts. “As opposed to an Instagram photo or a Snapchat video, BeReal is just a quick capture of that moment in time where you are,” he said.

Others take on the app for their own venture after using it for over a year now. The act of scrolling through over 50 posts seems overwhelming and possibly unnecessary for fourth-year Maya Sinha. She remembers attempting to convince her friends to download BeReal back in August 2021, and no one listened. Sinha had a major “I told you so” phase once more and more of her friends downloaded BeReal during the apex of its popularity earlier this year. She tries to make the most of her days and lucks out when the notification lines up with when she’s out and about. As a longtime user, Sinha has found BeReal to be more of a creative outlet than typical social media apps.

“I’m usually at the library or at work. But I like capturing my outfits because I ideally try to dress up for work. It’s cool to see how my style has changed,” Sinha said. In a way, BeReal hosts a space to document and store memories for herself. As her investment has dwindled over time, BeReal has become “more about the experience on the app rather than what you’re putting out for other people to see.”

For someone who uses TikTok and Instagram as main platforms for social media, fourth-year Julissa Cruz finds it difficult to keep up with another space for friends.

Only finding out about the app through word of mouth from her younger sister, she remains disinterested and continues to use apps she knows well instead. Already on TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram, Cruz wants to avoid another distraction. “I dread having to download another one and then having to keep up. So much time out of my day already goes to Tik Tok scrolling,” said Cruz. Well aware of BeReal’s notorious purpose, Cruz didn’t cave into the frenzy others hold about the app.

Given only one chance to exhibit your day within a two-minute period, some users will continue to make the effort to capture a picturesque environment paired with a flawless selfie and call it real. So what’s the appeal of fabricating authenticity? Is it for the satisfaction of boasting a weekend getaway? Is it to impress friends you haven’t seen or talked to in three years? Or is it for memory’s sake considering the app’s ability to archive past BeReal’s?

Social media’s reputation for fabricating simple outings and forming subsequent judgments about others is inevitable. The intense comparison met through scrolling on ordinary social media apps adds a layer of insecurity alone. In a way, posting on any platform invites the capacity for criticism, assumption, and validation from others. So, BeReal intends to represent an authentic version of yourself at any given moment, promoting sincere flashes of life. The creation of a platform where memories, friends, and live reactions have a place to exist is the real charm. **W**

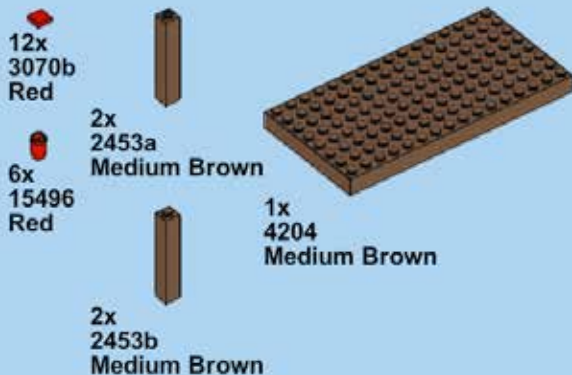




Design // Isaac Resurreccion

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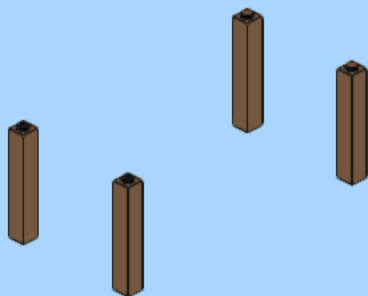
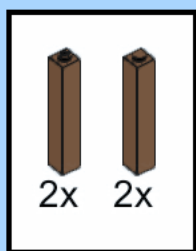
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LEGO DIE TABLE



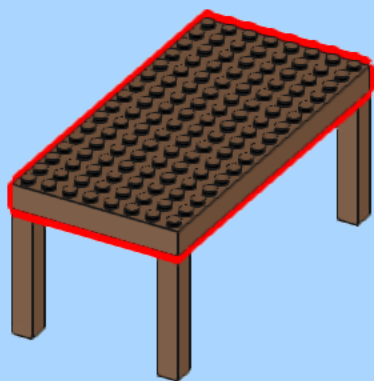
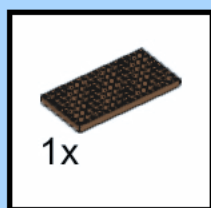
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IN VERSE

ART // CAMILA URIEGAS
POETRY CO-EDITOR // ALAINA LANDEFELD
DESIGN + POETRY CO-EDITOR // ELLIE AQUILANTI

Reminiscence of a Retiring Gaucho

// LEAH MELMAN

Spanish tile and groves of oak,
Years ago to my heart spoke.
A statement I did promptly send,
A promise that I would attend.
And so they came, those moments sweet,
Of lab coats, books, and tar-stained feet.
Balmy sunsets, long caffeinated nights,
Cold beer and laughter between pizza
bites.

Now has come the final year.
Though much is foggy, this is clear:
I'm glad I chose, for my degree,
Our perfect campus by the sea.

iv, lifeline

// PREANA AHMED

what is it like to touch something
that you never left? my lip stings
and my brain refracts around the pink-
lavender
in the sky, but my hand, my hand wants
to catch the clouds and pour the water
down
i could do a little salt, a little lime
another weekend spent lying in the grass
curling into a bed of itchy flowers
watching the waves
whirling the waves
i stream pain into a glass.

Dating as a STEM Major

// JASON CATHCART

The issue with me having dating down to a science is that it's not a science
It's a language full of its own dialects: gift giving, acts of service...
you know, the true romance languages.

I try my best, stumbling through
conjugations with an accent thicker than
my tongue
Where do I draw the line between quality
time and quantum theory?
How can we explore physical touch
without touching on physics?

I have a bad habit of doing the
calculations in my head,
Over-projecting our arc into having a
downward trajectory
So if you're going to say you care about
me, then I'm going to make you show
your work.
I don't need words of affirmation, I need a
mathematical proof.

Because when I assume pi equals
three or g equals ten, I may lose a few
significant figures
But if I assume that we have the
chemistry of significant others, your
reaction could blow up in my face.

dawn

// DANIEL ALVARADO

purple skies and foggy gaze
crashing waves, blue moon
Isla Vista morning dew

Trampoline

// LEO SAFIR

We grow tired of jumping,
And collapse
Onto the tightly woven,
Spring suspended,
Unenclosed darkness.

Patches of exposed skin
tremble,
Pressed into nylon.
Dew has settled
In the vacant slivers of night.

Closer we urge,
Our contorted limbs
intertwined,
Layered,
As though we are a
continuation of seams
Sinking towards the center.

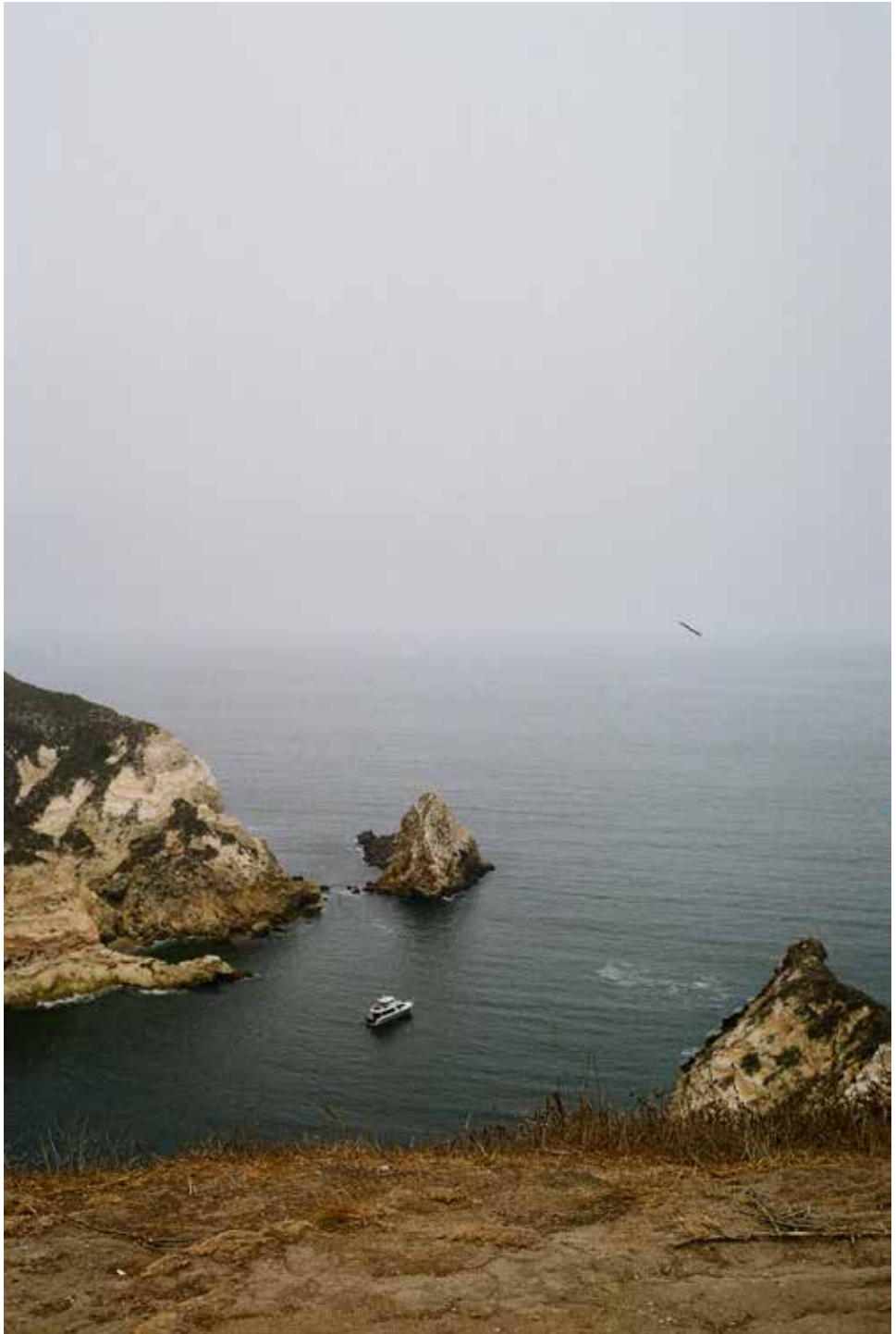
Santa Cruz Island

a photo essay on the misty mountains

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // DYLAN BUCKLEY DELANEY





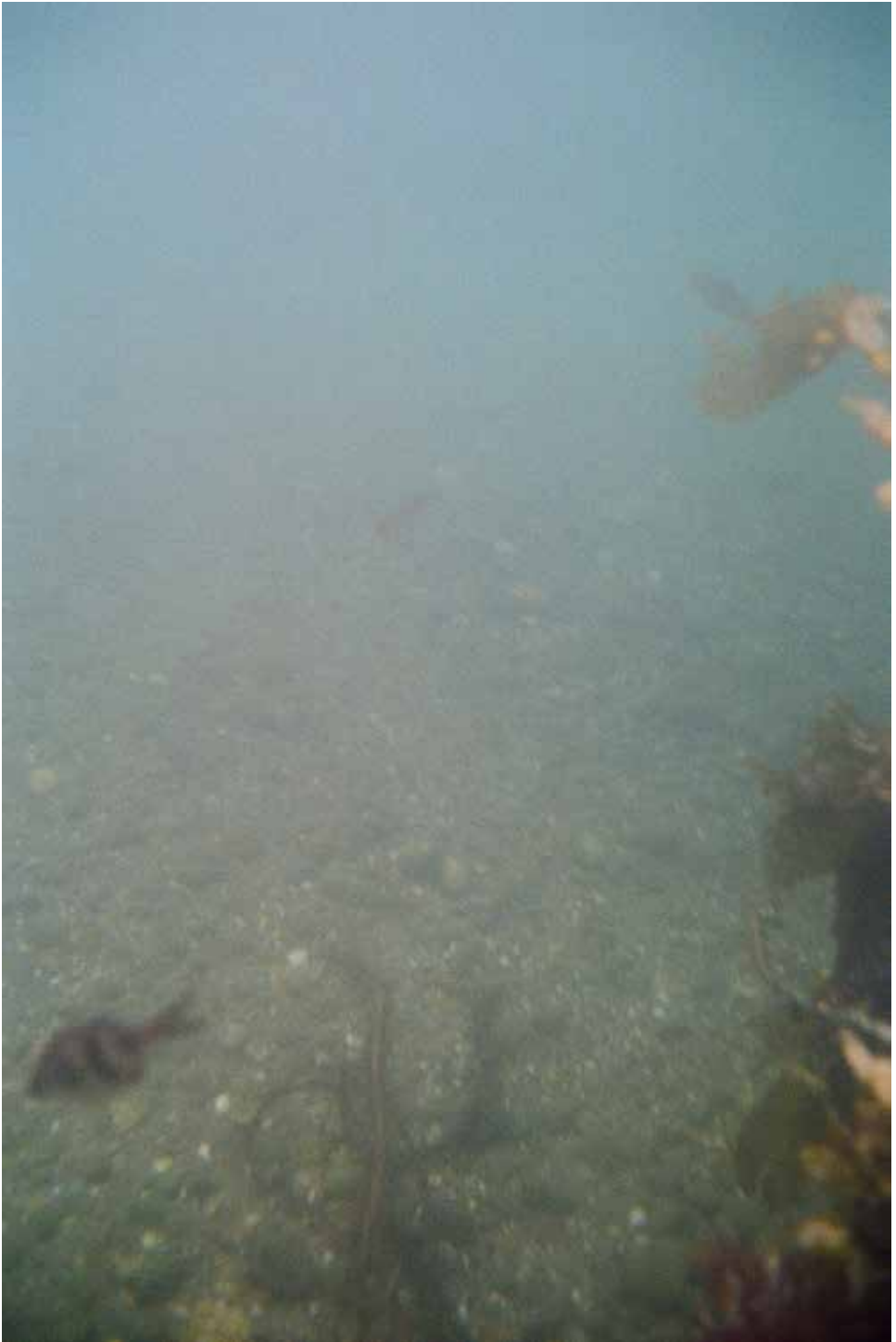












Dirty Little Secret

WORDS // GISELLE LEWIS

ILLUSTRATION // ZOË WITHERSPOON

DESIGN // SOPHIA CHUN

I stare myself down in my bathroom mirror, unable to turn my gaze away from the girl looking back. Her eye bags and knotted hair don't paint a pretty picture, and the stain on her T-shirt is not helping.

It's nearly midnight on a Sunday, and I still have schoolwork calling my name. We're mid-quarter, and I've blown through yet another week in hurricane fashion—moving like a nonstop whirlwind until finally giving out, with a heap of dirty laundry and an empty fridge in my wake. Between juggling academic responsibilities, putting in hours at work, jumping into extracurriculars, and trying to maintain a social life, I simply feel beaten. In trying to do it all, I feel like I've only done things poorly.

"Why can't you just be better at this?" The tired eyes in my reflection give no answer.

Isla Vista is a truly stunning place. Gripe all you want about the White Claw cans in the street or our raccoon problem—one can't deny the easygoing beauty that sways through our palm trees and lights up our homes.

And the people. Just like the town itself, its residents exude an effortlessly cool, ever enjoyable aura. Kindhearted and bright-minded, rocking unique style and a timeless sense of rebellion, the Gauchos are a tough crowd to hate.

When I first stepped foot on UCSB soil as a wide-eyed junior transfer, I was impressed by every new person I met. The more I interacted with my fellow students, the more amazing and successful they

seemed. My peers were out tackling tough majors, making strides at internships, holding down jobs, and leading club sports—all while being the life of the party.

Despite being in a competitive major myself, and making my own strides as I found my footing, I was never quite able to see in myself what I saw in the students around me. The tired girl in the mirror was just so different from the radiant characters I interacted with every day. I tore myself apart, comparing and scrutinizing as I searched for an answer: "If everyone else seems to have it figured out, why don't I?" The question kept me up at night, and ended with the same disheartening answer every time: "I'm just not doing enough. I'm not enough."

But as I got to know my fellow Gauchos better, I chipped away at a discovery. In building closer relationships, I caught quick glimpses into minds that worked eerily like my own. I watched stoic athletes in puddles, consumed by the weight of expectations on their shoulders. Top class students breaking



down, their GPAs entangled in their self-worth. The most beautiful social butterflies with clipped wings, sliced by loneliness and feelings of isolation. I was baffled. Incredible, well rounded students who seemed nothing short of ideal—across all walks of life—were plagued by the same feelings of self-doubt that haunted the corners of my own mind.

As I poured over this new development, one could almost see the floating question mark above my head. “If we’re all quietly questioning our abilities, and comparing

ourselves to our peers,
how can we all present
such spotless
outward images
to the world?”

Then, it clicked. Of course the existence of others’ inner turmoil feels like a secret—as individuals, we’re all very good at keeping our own insecurities quiet to the world. I was so worried about the flaws and shortcomings of the girl in the mirror—why would I ever go search out and dig in to the flaws in others? Our sunshine soaked lives paint stunning first-glance portraits. But look beneath the sunset colors and glassy water, and you’ll find the turbulent undercurrents of doubt that every single student fights.

Now, as a senior, I have a few more quarters under my belt. With time and experience, that “secret” has been demystified to be more like a common knowledge guideline: Yes, everyone makes mistakes. No, you’re not an idiot (mostly). Yes, you will graduate. You will find love, you will find friends who make you feel authentically you, and in the end you are going to turn out just fine.

So now, if you didn’t before, you know our dirty little secret too—and here’s the best thing you can do with it: pass it on.

Next time you see that ragged, it’s-I-am-and-I-still-have-shit-to-do person in the mirror? Be kind to them. Look at that reflection with compassion, and maybe even a little pride, knowing that you’re far from alone. The picture-perfect “study aesthetic” is nothing more than a picture. This is the real deal, in all its exhausted, “may my TA have mercy” glory.

When you inevitably catch a glimmer of someone’s



self-doubt breaching their all-together persona, do a fellow student a favor and hit them hard with kind words, maybe even be a shoulder to cry on.

Who knows, if you're anything like me, you'll probably need it sometime down the line too.

And when the weight of the world feels like an impossible burden, just know that there is light on the other side of the struggle. Whether you're battling just to get into your major, grappling with an ex, feeling alone in a crowded room, or just plain overwhelmed—remember that you are far from alone, even if the rest of this campus feels picture perfect. These four years are no joke, and every student can attest to the trials and tribulations of just existing as an independent, yet not quite grown up person in the world.

We may cook our own food and pay our own bills and we may be able to legally buy wine bags as we decide our futures, but until we walk across that graduation stage, we're all still kids here in IV. Reaching the cusp of true adulthood comes with some major growing pains. Whether we can see it in our fellow students or not, we all hit mighty highs and ride out heavy lows on this wild rollercoaster ride through our little slice of paradise over the ocean.

Your heart is a muscle the size of your fist—keep loving, and keep fighting, Gauchos.

You are enough. **W**





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groceries ☆ produce ☆ deli ☆ bulk

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Del Playa Drive...
My two siblings
and I have embarked
on a journey across
this magical place.
try to find us all!
your dear friend,
-Mapache





WHERE'S
MAPACHE?

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WORD

The background of the cover is a photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, there are dark green, spiky plants. In the middle ground, there are several palm fronds with feathery, brownish-tan heads, some of which are blowing in the wind. In the background, there is a blue ocean with white-capped waves breaking. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

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free