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# frankie

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IT'S THE  
OFF SEASON  
IN TASMANIA

— Finally.

Because when winter arrives,  
the real Tasmania wakes up.

And we're more than a little 'off'.

On this island we don't endure the  
cold and dark, we live for it.

We fire up an effigy, and wake the  
dead. It's when we feast harder,  
dance longer, and hurl ourselves into  
the very wilderness that defines us.

Whether windswept and half naked,  
or wide-eyed and single malted,  
inhibitions drop with the mercury.

And if that's not your speed, catch  
some art, or even just your breath.

So if winter awakens something  
in you, there's nowhere better to be  
than teetering on the edge of the world.

Visit [discovertasmania.com.au/off-season](http://discovertasmania.com.au/off-season)

THE OFF  
SEASON

TASMANIA  
COME DOWN FOR AIR

## there's nothing quite like getting lost in a really good book.

We've known this since we were wee ones, poring over the Scholastic Book Club catalogue for the perfect after-school reading material. Would we join Kristy, Mary Anne, Claudia and co. on their adventures in child-rearing and early entrepreneurship, or get spooked by ghostly next-door neighbours and malevolent dummies come to life? Perhaps an excursion through the human bloodstream would be more intriguing, or learning the history of the Terrible Tudors and Groovy Greeks.

Immersing ourselves in a curious new world is still one of the top ways we get our kicks (also up there: digging into a fresh jar of peanut butter and whacking on some trackies after a long day in stiff jeans), and we have endless appreciation for the imaginative minds who dream them into being. That's why we reached out to some of Australia's newest fiction authors for this issue, and picked their brains on everything from why they write to the publishing process and tried-and-true creative rituals.

We've also slipped a little treat within our pages: some lovely stick-on bookplates so your favourite novels never go astray. Find them on page 48, then keep on flipping for even more goodies, including an extra-special art card to pop up on your wall and a bonus poster featuring scrummy cocktail and mocktail recipes (to keep your belly nice and warm). Hope you enjoy!

xx Sophie and the frankie team



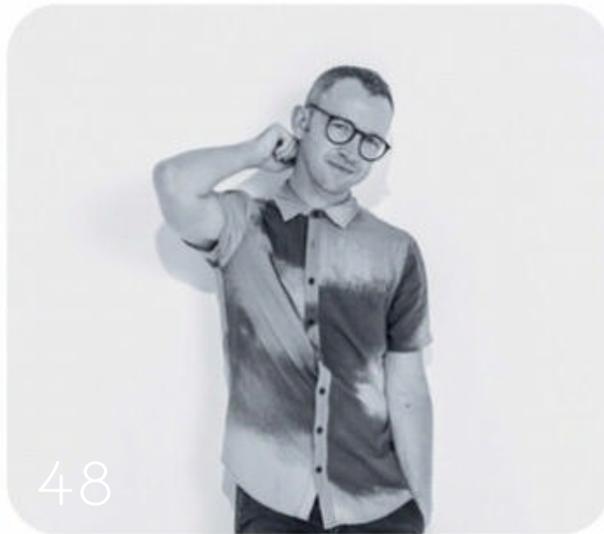
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# dear frankie

GO ON, SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US.

LETTERS@FRANKIE.COM.AU

**Dearest frankie,** Deirdre Fidge nailed it: the time IS now. In my late teens/early 20s, having discovered adulthood and independence (and a pay cheque), I had a taste for all things expensive. "Champagne-drinker on a beer budget," my mum often scoffed at me. It all changed at 22 with one dress. It was beautiful, short, sexy and made of a gold, slinky material. I wore it once to a New Year's Eve party, got it dry-cleaned and ever so carefully tucked it in my wardrobe, still in the plastic and safe for some other 'special occasion'. A year or so later I pulled it out, having completely forgotten about it. Alas, the moisture generated by the plastic had caused the material to break down, and all the glitzy gold had dissolved or fallen off. I'd only worn it once. ONCE. The lesson learnt that day: wear the dress, use the nice sheets and live for now... not that so-called special occasion. *Love, Jules x*

**Dear frankie,** Never have I felt more seen than when reading Wendy Syfret's love letter to housework in issue 101. Nothing soothes me quite like a good scrub of the bathroom tiles. Coming in a close second, though, is a bubble bath with the latest frankie issue (in a squeaky clean tub, of course!). *Love always, Shelby*

**Dear frankie,** I'm only 12, but adore your magazines! My family is currently travelling up the west coast of Australia for three months, and frankie has accompanied me on all the long car trips. After poring over the articles in issue 101 (which was picked up in Kalgoorlie, and has travelled all the way to Monkey Mia), I dove

straight into the pages with a pen and added my own decorations. I also managed to get my hands on issue 49 from a free book swap at a campground in Shark Bay. After reading it from cover to cover, I cut it up and created collages with it. Frankie, thank you for your beautiful, boredom-busting magazines. *Lola xoxo*

**Dear frankie,** I remember the first article of yours I ever read. I'd been given a special bumper edition as a baby shower gift. In a sleep-deprived haze, and needing time for some adulting, I randomly turned the pages, hoping to find something that caught my eye. An article laced with nostalgia, love and a little bit of comedy drew me in immediately. The author wrote about video-chatting with her sick father (note to cancer: a big F.U.) as he wolfed down a finger bun (and got it caught in his throat, a jocular sparkle in his eye). I cried. A lot. (In my family, this is known as 'having one's pissbag too close to one's eyeballs'.) Since that edition, I've read articles that have made me laugh, cry, feel frustrated and inspired. Thank you for providing a smorgasbord of entertaining, thought-provoking and even waterfall-of-tears-inducing stories. *From, Maree*

**Dear frankie,** I can't stop laughing. I've just read Fraser Harvey's ruthless take on entrées in issue 101. Boy, he has nailed it. I'm going to photocopy that page and secretly leave one on the table at each restaurant from now on! *Merci beaucoup, frankie! Camilla xx*



**Dear frankie,** I'm sitting here reading James Shackell's piece on accents in issue 101 and it has sparked something in me. I was born and raised in Ireland, but moved to Australia when I was 10. I can do this thing where I turn on either accent at any point in time, however I typically move towards the Aussie accent as it's easier and won't get as many 'what did you say?' questions. I'm embarrassed to speak in my Irish accent at times, as most people only understand me with my Australian one. But now I feel empowered to stay true to my roots, and will try my best to be confident in my history, as it's something I'm so proud of. So thank you and James for this much-needed push. *Much love and appreciation, Kirsten*

**Dear frankie,** I first discovered you in a tiny library in a tiny suburb of Wellington, Aotearoa. It was a somewhat lonely time for me, so borrowing my copy and spending the week carefully going through each story became a calming ritual. I appreciate how one page invites me to enjoy a little satirical cat pin and another challenges me to interrogate my privileges as a white woman. Now I'm back home on Vancouver Island – Coast Salish territory – and finding the current issue can be difficult. I usually end up finding you somewhere unlikely, a few months behind and in the opposite season. Still, after a particularly turbulent year working in healthcare, spending a Sunday morning with you (and coffee) is my favourite time of the week. Thank you for bringing me joy, reflection and accountability. *Love, Carly*

**Dear frankie,** Please tell Deirdre Fidge we should be friends. Because lady, your writing speaks directly to my soul. Especially

your piece "The Time is Now" from issue 101. Loud, wild and frilly frocks dominate my wardrobe, and it's astounding how draping myself in one can make me feel like a goddess. Why should I save that feeling for a special occasion? I recently wore one of my most loved, expensive and lavish dresses to spend a day at home. I went nowhere. I saw no one but my husband and three boys (who did all comment how pretty I looked!). But I felt amazing as I swished and swirled through the day. *Carpe* that *diem* indeed. To be totally corny: life is the special occasion. *Eliza xx*

THE LETTER OF THE ISSUE WINS A MUD AUSTRALIA TWO-CUP TEAPOT, RRP \$179, FROM MUDAUSTRALIA.COM

**Dear frankie,** Reading all the thoughts about grief in issue 101 resonated deeply and made me feel less alone. For that, I owe you a big, warm hug. I lost my dad in 2020 after several years of chronic health decline, illness and dementia. Watching someone you love slip away piece by piece is utterly heartbreaking. The pandemic meant my family couldn't spend time with my dad in his last six months. Not being able to touch, comfort and nurture your loved one through the journey of dying is a grief that's beyond explanation. And so, after he left us, we were not only grieving for him, but also how he died. Without us. It cuts deep and is beyond difficult to discuss. So, sometimes just reading about grief and that I'm not alone is just what I need. *Much love, Aly x ❁*





### kowtow's winter duds

Wellington label **Kowtow** has made a promise: to leave the planet in the best shape they can. That's why their winter '21 collection is made entirely of fairtrade organic cotton. With the glory of mother nature and explorers like Sir Edmund Hilary and Junko Tabei in mind, they've whipped up a wardrobe of bold and textured threads, perfect for crossing rugged terrains or simply flouncing around in a flower-filled garden. To see more quilted vests, puffed sleeves and pleated skirts, head to [au.kowtowclothing.com](http://au.kowtowclothing.com)



### let it rain

Be warned: if you purchase this striking umbrella from **Alperstein Designs** – which features an artwork by **Ruth Napaljarri Stewart** from **Warlukurlangu Artists** in remote Central Australia – you may find yourself eagerly watching for grey skies and an opportunity to whip it out. The clever piece folds backwards when it's not in use so you can admire its loveliness all the time. And, even better, each sale directly benefits the artist and their community. Find it at [alpersteindesigns.com.au](http://alpersteindesigns.com.au) for \$39.95.



### bianca mavrick jewels

It's official: we have the hots for these glossy chain-link bracelets from Brisbane lady **Bianca Mavrick**. It's a little more than a crush – we're just about ready to whack them on a poster and blu-tack them to the wall so we can gaze at them and sigh while we listen to sappy songs. If they've also struck your fancy, you're in luck, because we have one to give away in the turmeric hue (worth \$60). Just head to [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win) and make a wish – or [biancamavrick.com](http://biancamavrick.com) to gather more inspiration for a romantic sonnet.



### give it a spray

Nothing to see here, folks. Just a delightfully vintage-looking glass mister to make your plant-care sessions a smidge more stylish. Spritz it here, spritz it there, and if you fancy, find it for \$16.50 at [plantsmith.net.au](http://plantsmith.net.au)



### harper & charlie

Warhol's Marilyn Monroe portraits are pretty cool, I guess, but Melbourne folks **Harper & Charlie** are immortalising a true icon in this pop art-inspired print: the classic jar of Vegemite. If thick, yeasty spreads are up your alley, you might like to pay [harperandcharlie.com](http://harperandcharlie.com) a visit. You'll find the artwork available for \$75, plus an assortment of other prints reflecting design from the 1950s and '60s.



## pop-up desks

If your shopping list includes a good-quality, easy-to-assemble, functional and nice-looking desk (and you don't fancy getting lost in the maze of a Swedish megastore) may we suggest you have a gander at [popupdesks.com.au](http://popupdesks.com.au)? The Sydney-based brand sells home office furniture made from MDF in an assortment of pretty pastel hues (this classic desk will set you back \$289), and popping it up or down doesn't require complex instructions or Allen key-inspired meltdowns. High fives for that.



## birdy and clementine

Queensland lady **Robyn Stewart** has a confession: she's totally and utterly addicted to earrings. So much so that she decided to make them her business. First she plays around with pattern and colour concepts, before building the pieces with porcelain and firing them three times in her solar-assisted kiln. They're topped off with some 24-carat gold edging, then presto: they're ready to jazz up your ears. Digging her style? Head to [birdyandclementine.com](http://birdyandclementine.com) to see more.



## five minutes with... budjerah

**How would you describe your music to your nan?** My nan is one of my biggest supporters. I would tell her my music is inspired by a lot of soul and gospel, but with some modern R&B influences. **Where does your love of gospel music come from?** I grew up in the church. My family played in the church band, so I was exposed to gospel music a lot when I was little. Gospel has some of the best musicians, songwriters and singers in the world. I love it because I'm Christian, but as a musician and vocalist, I appreciate how good the music is, too. **How does your hometown of Fingal Head inspire your songs?** It's a very chill place and right on the beach – everyone just tries to be happy and relaxed. I try to keep that same attitude when I write and perform. **Tell us one thing about Fingal only locals know.** I don't think I'm allowed to spill the secrets, but something people don't realise is that the beaches can get very dangerous. Dreamtime Beach is one of the most beautiful beaches in Australia, but people don't know how dangerous it is. If you come here, be safe in the water. **How do you manage school alongside your music?** I couldn't manage it. I left school about two years ago because I was working too much. I chose music. It's my career now and I don't regret it. **What would your dream show look like?** My dream is to get a band, dancers, lights, pyrotechnics and everything. I basically want to go big or go home. I really look up to artists like Michael Jackson and Beyoncé because the production of their shows is amazing, and I want to match that someday.



## suck it up

We'll never know what designer **Misha Kahn** had on his inspiration board while creating these glass cocktail straws, but we'd like to think it included figure-skating costumes, pictures of outer space and a sprinkling of Ziggy Stardust. Either way, if you dig the zany, colour-drenched results you can stop by [comingsoonnewyork.com](http://comingsoonnewyork.com) to nab one straw for around \$33 or a set of four for \$117 (all wrapped up in a spiffy leather case!).



## the highland peep sweater

Oh hello there, little fellow. We're quite happy to carry you around in our breast pocket, but please make sure you come prepared with an assortment of chuckle-inducing jokes. There are no free rides! Not even in lovely, tartan-inspired lambswool knits. So make with the entertaining gags and all will be well. Around \$268, [donna-wilson.com](http://donna-wilson.com)



## messing up with... jo syme from big scary

**Why did you leave the 'mistakes' in your new album?** When we came back to playing together again after a five-year break, we were reflecting on what Big Scary is. The simple answer was that it's the music made by Tom and Jo together, so that's what we embraced. We could have neatened up every element of our performance – handclaps out of time with snares, shakers that flam with the hi-hats – but we decided to let those bits stay a tad loose so what you're hearing is what we actually sound like. **Would you describe yourselves as perfectionists?** Perfectionism is an enemy of creativity and output. I think Tom and I strike a good balance between exploring how far to take a song so it sounds its best and not letting fear of failure or a desire to reinvent the wheel prevent actual progress. **You slip up while playing live on stage – what do you do next?** Try not to smile and make it really obvious. If it's small enough, you've got to just pretend you meant it – that's jazz, baby! **What have you learnt from your failures?** My main failures have occurred when I haven't had time or headspace to focus on something properly. Know when to say no. Trying to take things on to help people isn't helpful if you aren't going to do a great job. **One thing you'll never be good at?** Knitting. I've given it a few attempts, but cannot keep a straight line. **What's the best perfectly imperfect song?** Cat Power's cover of "Sea of Love" is a little out of tune on the autoharp, loosely timed and lo-fi, but it's exactly how it should sound.



## nomad chocolate

Sometimes it's simply too cold to risk leaving the comfort of your house, freezing your tuchus off and contracting frostbite, probably. Sorry, local café, we won't be visiting you today. In lieu of a barista-made beverage, though, you could try this rich and yummo drinking chocolate from Sydney-based **Nomad Chocolate**. It's vegan and gluten- and dairy-free, but packed full of flavour thanks to the cacao beans sourced from Ecuador, West Africa and the Dominican Republic. Did we mention it comes in a cute-as illustrated tin? Because it does, and you can find it at [nomadchocolate.com](http://nomadchocolate.com) for \$10 to \$12.



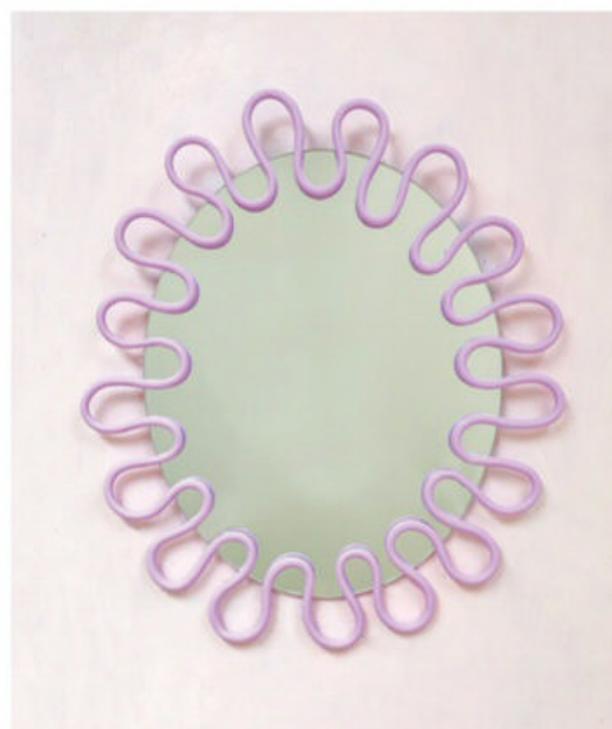
## oh, bowie

If your heart still wrenches when you hear "Life on Mars" but you squeal like a schoolgirl when you see a whole magnet set in David Bowie's likeness, which official stage of grief does that put you at? Because that's us right about now. Aussie illustrator **Niki Fisher** has captured the late great in his many guises: the Thin White Duke, Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane and Jareth the Goblin King. And if you nab \$18 and head to [simonandschuster.com.au](http://simonandschuster.com.au), you could enjoy them every time you go to grab the butter.



## denz + co

Ah, the dachshund. A dog so long it can't be contained by just one dangly earring, but instead must stretch itself from one side of the head all the way to the other. These here earrings are made from lightweight stainless steel by Sunshine Coast maker **Kate Bordessa** – aka **Denz + co** – and if you fancy attaching them to your lobes you can pop by [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win), where we have three pairs up for grabs. Hot dog! \$39, [denzandco.com](http://denzandco.com)



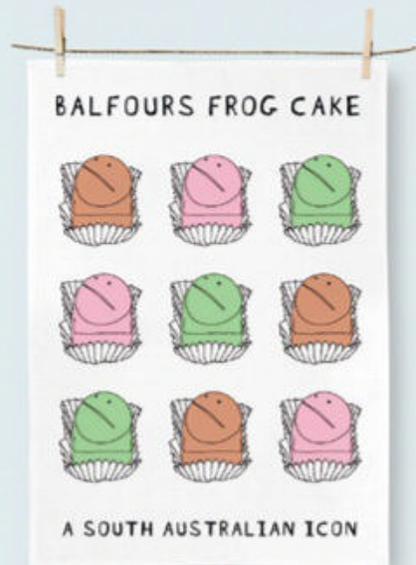
## lotta blobs

In news that will thrill Narcissus, the Evil Queen from *Snow White* and other notable fans of their own reflection, mirrors are having a real moment right now. Take this handmade, wavy wonder from London brand **Lotta Blobs**, for instance: more than just a plain old looking glass, it plays with colour and shape to make the act of gazing at your own mug even more fun. Like what you see? Head to [lottablobs.com](http://lottablobs.com) with around \$99.



### tabletop niceties

These 100 per cent cotton table mats are designed in Paris and hand-screenprinted in India for the sole purpose of making your mealtimes extra swish. If you ask us, **Le Petit Lucas Dutertre** and their merry team have done a bang-up job, and you can visit [lepetitlucasdutertre.com](http://lepetitlucasdutertre.com) if you tend to agree. (They're going at \$54 a piece.)



### the pride of the south

Proud South Australians **Beryl** and **Marchelle Matthew** run **Tea Towel Co**, where, aside from turning found tea towels into other nice things for your home (namely cushions) they design their own linen dishcloths splashed with icons from the Festival State. Take the fondant-covered sponge that is the Balfours Frog Cake, for instance – for \$25 you could commemorate it in your kitchen, then use it to sop up an errant water puddle or two. Or visit [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win) where we have five to give away. [teatowelco.com](http://teatowelco.com)



### a good fede

Why send lovely-but-unwanted fabrics off to sit sad and lonely in landfill where they'll release harmful greenhouse gases into the ether, when you could gather them up and turn them into something delightful to wrap around your person? That's the thinking behind **Fee Dyer's** creations for her Adelaide-based label **fede**. From woolly guitars to blanket capes, vests and dungarees, the Earth-friendly, hand-crafted bits can be found at [fede.com.au](http://fede.com.au)



### alpha60

There's something a little sci-fi-like about **Alpha60's** winter '21 collection – like it's made to dress a gang of futuristic librarians who will zap you with a ray gun if you don't return your books on time. Explore the dramatic lines, rich hues and unexpected textures at [alpha60.com.au](http://alpha60.com.au) – then grab those dog-eared novels and hotfoot it to the returns slot, stat.



### a basket case

**Wicker Darling** designer **Jasmine Norrie** has cornered a very specific part of the accessories market: animal-shaped wicker bags. And thank goodness for that! Why shouldn't we be able to cart our belongings around in a menagerie of cane critters if we so please? Found over at [wickerdarling.com](http://wickerdarling.com), each design is made in limited quantities by artisans in the Philippines. This here cottontail goes by the name of Harvey Rabbit, and costs \$470 – worth it for a ridiculously cute companion, we think.



## my favourite things with... megafauna

**Favourite way to rev up an audience?** Freyja Fox: Doing a poem usually gets things weird and intimate pretty fast. Lily Keenan: Synchronised dance moves. Tess Wilkin: Lucy's bass slides. **Favourite onstage moment as a band?** Ellen Fitzgibbon: Our first-ever gig, which was actually just in a lounge room with our friends. TW: We emerged during COVID, so Megafauna had only ever played to a seated audience until about a month ago. **Favourite classic album?** Lucy Warriner: *Diamond Life* by Sade. EF: *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?* by The Cranberries. That album, on a very warped cassette in my parents' crappy Corolla (with fresh P plates slapped on), is my coming-of-age story. LK: *Born Sandy Devotional* by The Triffids. It will forever conjure up the flat, open plains and searing heat of my Western Australian homeland. **Favourite Aussie flora and fauna?** FF: I love flannel flowers because they feel feminine, but they also have a toughness to them. And apparently they're from the same plant family as carrots – wild! As for fauna, we can't choose between the bunyip and the yowie! **Favourite op-shop find?** EF: My red boots that may make it into every Megafauna photoshoot until the end of time. Or my lime-green velvet chair! FF: I have a two-piece, crimson velvet suit that has done the rounds on the bods of many friends. **Favourite place to write a song?** FF: In the strangest corner of my mind, in the warmest corner of my room. LK: In bed at 1am whispering into my iPhone voice memos. **Favourite piece of advice from your parents?** LK: "Remember Lily, everything you do, I've probably done it and I've probably done worse." EF: Just slap it on! (In reference to paint, but applicable to life and love and all the big things.)



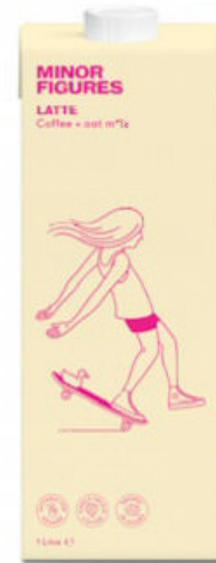
## raincoat

You might say that **Raincoat** is a bit of a family business. The sweet, waterproof onesies are inspired by Hobart founder **Laura Broomhall's** mum, who whipped up her own versions for Laura when she was a wee one. Before the brand properly kicked off, Laura gifted the protective overalls to her lucky nieces and nephews. And now that she's selling her wares through [raincoat.com.au](http://raincoat.com.au) (in, rather appropriately, a rainbow of colours), she's encouraging folks to pass them down from one sibling or playmate to another. Pretty ace, huh?



## tell it like it is

Three cheers for an accessory that expresses your feelings without you even having to open your mouth – especially when doing so may result in an unwanted puff of vapour clouding your face. Available for around \$78 at [kristinamicotti.com](http://kristinamicotti.com), the candid scarf is made from recycled cotton, and is ideal for brisk walks on a crisp morning or nights when your energy-conscious housemate refuses to pump the heat.



## creamy coffee goodness

Mmm, **Minor Figures**. Thanks to you, we can access coffee-shop-quality oat milk lattes from our kitchen, or the office, or our camping esky, or wherever the heck we happen to be. (Within reason – we might not be able to find them on a trek through an arid desert, for instance.) The creamy, dairy-free drink comes in long-lasting cartons for \$6.50 a pop, and if you'd like to do a taste-test, we recommend stopping by [au.minorfigures.com](http://au.minorfigures.com)



## the choice is yours

Surely **Hallie Bateman** should be up for some kind of award for her services to the artistic community. After all, without the LA-based lass, painters all over the globe would find themselves absentmindedly sipping on gouache-spiked water on the reg. Lucky for them, this mug duo exists to set things straight. And for around \$50 (or \$25 per mug), it could be yours – along with a thirst-quenching, paint-free gulp of H<sub>2</sub>O. [halliebateman.bigcartel.com](http://halliebateman.bigcartel.com)



### sock it to me

If clothes maketh the man, it stands to reason that you should select only the finest coverings for your feet (lest a fashion snob catch a glimpse of your ankles and turn up their snooty nose). For this purpose, you can trust Swedish label **Socksss** and their Quadrangles collection. Made from super-soft organic cotton and woven in vibrant gingham patterns, the sleek designs score top marks for comfort and dashing good looks, as well. Around \$39, [socksss.com](http://socksss.com)



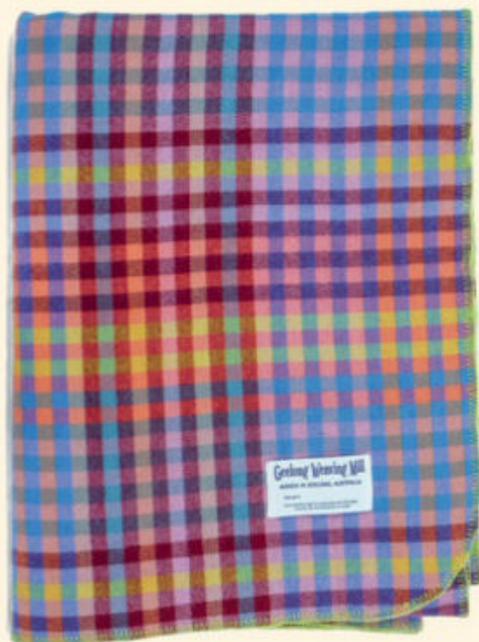
### colour me caddy

This pretty little desk caddy is whipped up by local makers **growme Melbourne** to help keep all your bits and bobs in one neat and tidy place. Pens and pencils, knives and forks, toothbrushes and toothpaste – the choice is yours. There's even a nifty handle so you can transport your things around, and a drainage hole in case you'd like to turn it into a swish plant house. Find it for \$59.90 (in four fresh colourways) at [growmemelb.com](http://growmemelb.com)



### awesome sauce

In the grand tradition of time-poor parents sneaking readymade mixes into weeknight dinners, it's only natural that the next generation embraces culinary shortcuts, too. Except, rather than reaching for the home-brand beef stroganoff, we recommend perusing [theluckycatcollection.com](http://theluckycatcollection.com). Drawing from their experience working in Hong Kong's hospitality scene, condiment makers **Tim Stapleforth** and **Jodi Langford** bottle Chinese-inspired marinades, sauces and dressings from their home base in Melbourne. Rub them onto meat, mix them into noodles or spoon them over a bowl of rice and greens and prepare for a trip to Flavour Town.



### geelong weaving mill

Standing in the heart of one of Australia's historic wool and textile regions is the **Geelong Weaving Mill**. There, woollen yarns left over from commercial weaving projects are turned into colourful, vintage-inspired blankies, thanks to textile designers **Ana Petidis** and **Gemma Glazik**. They're cosy and cuddly and all kinds of nice, and we're chuffed to have one (worth \$215) to give away. Check it out at [geelongweavingmill.com.au](http://geelongweavingmill.com.au) or visit [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win) to enter the draw. Good luck!



### mustard made giveaway

We know them for their colourful lockers, but did you know sisters **Becca** and **Jess Stern** – who go by the name of **Mustard Made**, and reside in Newcastle, NSW, and London, UK – also make these sleek, neat-as-can-be storage baskets? We have a set of three to give away (valued at \$59), and if you make a trip to [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win) and do a luck-bringing jig, it could be yours. [mustardmade.com](http://mustardmade.com)



## get to know our cover artist, alicelindstrom

**Tell us a bit about yourself, please.** I'm an artist and illustrator living in Adelaide. I originally studied philosophy and theatre design before finding my way to art and illustration. **How do you describe your style of art?** I create paper collages and also make papercuts, draw and paint. I'm influenced by 20th-century art movements, mid-century illustration and folk art. I gravitate to bold colour and expressive works. **How long does it take to complete a collage piece like this?** Generally about a week. I sketch out the image, choose a palette and paint lots of paper in the colours I plan to use. Then, I carefully translate the drawing to a collage by cutting each piece from the painted sheets. I use tweezers and a scalpel, which helps with the fine detail. **How did this particular design come to be?** It was created for Art for Wildlife – a fundraising project organised by Miriam Rosenbloom, the publisher of Scribble Books, after the catastrophic Australian bushfires of 2020. **What do you listen to or watch while creating?** Angel Olsen, Belle and Sebastian and The xx are always on regular rotation. Some favourite podcasts are *The New Yorker Fiction Podcast*, *The Great Women Artists* and *The Daily from The New York Times*. **What's something unusual we should know about you?** I'm ambidextrous. When I first started writing as a child, I did mirror-writing with my left hand. I had to be taught to write from left to right rather than backwards! Now I do all my writing with my left hand, draw with both hands and cut with my right hand. **What are you working on at the moment?** I've just taken almost a year off work to be home with my baby daughter. I'm slowly getting back into work now, including some children's books I'm very excited to finally start working on!



## a good baddie

Try telling us this dapper cheetah doesn't spend his days plotting revenge against a wily secret agent from a villainous lair carved into the side of a mountain. We simply won't believe you. To nab the stylish scoundrel in enamel pin form, grab around \$13 and race over to [berkeleyillustration.com](http://berkeleyillustration.com)



## strictly business

Do you run a small business, work for one or just fancy learning more about things like marketing, cash flow and selling your wares online? You might like to subscribe to **Strictly Business** – a free monthly mailout and dedicated community for commercially minded folk. Pop over to [frankie.com.au/strictly-business](http://frankie.com.au/strictly-business) to find out more (and get mighty inspired!).



## knot bad

**Tiffany Janine Clayton** – aka Tijay, or the lass behind Kiwi brand **arowm** – thinks that everyone's lives could do with a little more light right now. That's why she introduced these twisty, bendy Knot candles to her lineup of goodies at [arowm.com](http://arowm.com) – they're hand-poured in her studio in Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa, using a blend of natural beeswax and soy wax, and will set you back around \$33. (Whether you actually choose to light them or just admire them in their knotted glory is up to you.)



## it's egg time

Well, this is unexpected in the best possible way. A clock that celebrates the pride of 1970s dinner parties: the one and only devilled egg. It comes straight from the mind of **Leanne 'Elrod' Rodriguez** (a place we'd quite like to frolic about in, if this is any indication of its awesomeness) and is part of her **Mexakitchen** range, which is all about giving old-school party snacks new life. Resin eggs and glitter paprika, oh my! [mexakitsch.com](http://mexakitsch.com)



## tell us something about... with fruit juice parade

**The value of emo:** Shannen Petersen: We describe our sound as earnest, melodic 'tweemo' rock. To be emo is to actually care about things, and to be empathetic towards yourself and other people! It's more a mindset than a genre to us. **Tharushi Bowatte:** Emo is about being as honest as you can in your music. Showing sensitivity through lyrics and expressing broad feelings through broad chords. **Starting a band:** TB: Starting a band is easy! Finding a place to practise and committing to practices is the hard part. My advice for new bands is to play lots of gigs, even to audiences of fewer than five people. Learning your way around the stage and thinking about how the crowd will hear your music is a great way to be critical of your work. **Being creative in a small town:** TB: Small towns are pretty conducive to creativity. We grew up in an all-ages, DIY scene in Palmerston North, NZ, with some extremely talented musicians. Just because it was a small town doesn't mean our lives weren't as profound as any other person's. In a way, coming from a place where there wasn't much to do meant we had lots of time to focus on music. Ultimately, all you need to be creative is a landscape that makes you feel things, complicated relationships and a sky to try to find yourself reflected in. **The future of Fruit Juice Parade:** TB: For now, our goal is to keep writing music together and playing live shows. Our stage presence is hard to replicate in recorded music. **SP:** Our shows are very funny. To truly replicate them, we'd need to record a comedy album – which is probably not where we're headed, but only time will tell.



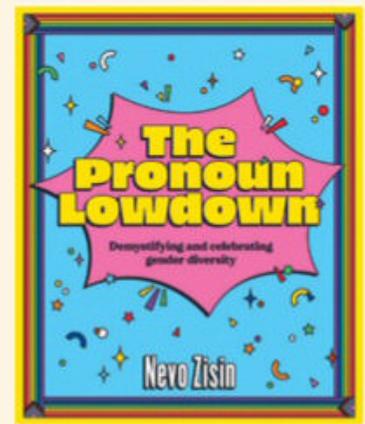
## stay sobah

Pub hangs for non-drinkers just got a whole lot easier thanks to **Sobah**, a Gold Coast-based business brewing a range of non-alcoholic craft beers infused with Aussie bush tucker like Davidson plum, finger lime and pepperry. Founded by Gamilaroi fellow **Clinton Schultz** and his lovely wife **Lozen**, the aim is to break down the stigma of socialising sober, while also promoting Aboriginal arts, language and history. Plus, there's the small matter of quenching a serious thirst. To get sipping, visit [sobah.com.au](http://sobah.com.au) – a four-pack will set you back \$18.



## what a hottie

Large carnivores that live in the Arctic Circle aren't the first things that spring to mind when pondering cosy nights snuggled up to a hot water bottle. But after a quick squiz at this polar bear hottie cover from New Zealand crafter **Alex O & Co** you might change your tune. Made by hand from 100 per cent pure wool vintage blankets, it's yours for around \$42 from [felt.co.nz/shop/alexoandco](http://felt.co.nz/shop/alexoandco). Here's to a whole lot of cuddly winter nights ahead.



## it's a celebration

Gender has a complicated history, but its future is looking brighter with books like *The Pronoun Lowdown* in the world. Written by **Nevo Zisin**, the joyful pages explore the evolution of gender identity and language, as well as providing support for young trans and gender-diverse folks and their loved ones. Nevo shares their own pronoun journey and sends a metaphorical high-five to LGBTQIA+ trailblazers who've come before. We're thrilled to have five copies of the book to give away (out now for \$19.99 through Simon & Schuster), so if you'd like to get your mitts on one, visit [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win), quick smart. [simonandschuster.com.au](http://simonandschuster.com.au)



## warm hugs only

How good would it be if someone invented a jumper that felt like a loving embrace? Until that day comes, we'll gladly don a woolly knit from Ukrainian brand **Warm Hugs Only**. Pals **Olia Pasichna** and **Svitlana Kobelnyk** keep folks looking cute as a button while also staying toasty in their hand-crafted garms. If this tasselled sweater strikes your fancy, it's available for around \$350 at [warmhugsonly.com](http://warmhugsonly.com) ❄️



## late mornings, early nights

ALL EMILY NAISMITH WANTS IS AN EVENT THAT STARTS AT A REASONABLE HOUR.

Someone once said “nothing good ever happens after midnight”, but I’m going to call bullshit on that and revise it to 9pm (potentially even 8pm in winter). At exactly that time, my body begins shutting down for the night like an overloaded browser with 100 tabs open. If I’m at a dinner, I start to tune out of conversations, focusing instead on stuffing my face with roast potatoes to prevent my snoozy head from falling onto someone’s shoulder. If I’m at a party, I try to dance it off (even though my limbs feel like marble table legs), until I realise I’m solo-swaying in an empty room. If I’m at a gig, I rest my eyes... just for a bit... until BAM! The encore is over and I’m being swept towards the door by a mass of bodies and bags.

It is actually absurd how late some events *begin*, let alone end! Comedy festival shows that start half an hour before midnight? Good gag, guys! I’ll be tucked up soundly in bed. Musical headliners who are scheduled to kick off at 2am? I’ll be attempting at least four hours of sleep and setting my alarm for 1.30am before zipping into the city to see you, thanks. Casual basketball games at 9.45pm? What planet are you ON?! By the time I stop sweating and my adrenaline has subsided I’ll need to get up for work. Not cool.

I swear to god, I enjoy going out. Events make me happy. I like to have fun! But can all fun things please be wrapped up before my bedtime? What’s wrong with organising a lunch instead of a dinner? Or a gig that starts at 2pm and finishes by teatime? Or a party that rolls from 11am into afternoon kick-ons (then wraps up neatly so we can all trot off home in time to watch a little TV before bed)? Is that too much to ask?

You could still do all the things you normally would at these events. Drinking, dressing up, dancing – it’s all still on the table while the sun’s out. Make new best friends in bathrooms! Lose your phone! Find your phone! Smash your phone! Believe it or not, that’s possible during the day – in fact, it’s even better, because you can easily get public transport home afterwards, and your post-party food options aren’t limited to kebabs. (Not that I have an issue with kebabs – I’m just also interested in post-party yum cha.)

OK, it might feel a little awkward at first: losing your mind to your favourite DJ, then walking out into broad daylight and catching a train home surrounded by elderly people making use of the free public transport on weekends. Cutting sick to Rihanna while the café next door churns out lattes. But I promise, it’ll be worth it for the smug feeling of getting a full night’s sleep, plus the added perk of not feeling as bad the next morning. Total game-changer.

Seriously, there are so many benefits of doing stuff while the sun’s up. Think about it: you can walk around after the event’s done and dusted without worrying someone’s going to pop out of the darkness and steal your phone. Your babysitter doesn’t have to hang around all night and – most importantly – you actually have the energy to go out, thus reducing the likelihood of last-minute flaking.

So please, next time you’re organising a party/gig/show/meal/sporting fixture (come to think of it, literally any event), please consider making it a daytime do. The fact is, night-time is for being horizontal in bed. Not dreaming about being horizontal in bed while actually being tired, cranky, far away from your pillow and very, very vertical. ❁

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Photo Bri Hammond

## big hair, don't care

ELLA BENOIRE ROWE RUNS ELVIES,  
A HAIR SALON FOR TEXTURED TRESSES.

Words **Emma Do**

If every shampoo commercial is to be trusted, frizz is the single greatest enemy of good hair. When Ella Benore Rowe worked in salons, the message was the same. “The attitude towards curly, thick and coarser hair was, ‘It’s too boofy! It’s too frizzy! Cut the weight out of it!’” she says. “There was a de-frizz message everywhere you turned.” As the proud child of an Anglo-Australian dad and Papua New Guinean mum, Ella’s tresses are a mixture of both her parents’ locks: she has two or three different curl patterns, both wavy and straight sections and – you guessed it – a fair bit of frizz.

For a long time, Ella has railed against the notion that her natural hair is unattractive. She grew up in an affirming home environment where she was regularly called upon to style her mum’s Afro, as well as those of countless other aunties in Melbourne’s Papuan community. “Mum would put a *lap-lap* (waistcloth) around her, hold the mirror up and show me how to cut and shape her ‘fro,” Ella explains. “She’d talk about the different kinds of Afros, how Fijians wore their hair, how Auntie Gloria or Auntie Pauline liked this or that shape.”

Haircare was a joyful, loving experience within her family, but it was a different story outside the home. In her early school years, Ella kept her mane tied back – braiding, plaiting and tucking it away felt safer than having curious strangers constantly trying to touch it. Though, while Ella’s mum refused to have her hair done by an outsider, Ella was game enough to give salons a go. “I cried every time!” she says of her early haircuts. “They just didn’t know what to do with my hair! One time, when I asked for it to be short, they just cut a straight line. My hair bounced up into a triangle!”

Oddly enough, it was a chance meeting with a hairdresser in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs that got 15-year-old Ella interested in playing around with her curls some more. “I was walking down the street and this hairdresser asked if I could model for them,” she says. They put conditioner in my hair, finger-twisted it and gave me an undercut. It was really cool and really positive, considering my experiences.” Ella was her community’s go-to for hair and make-up during her teen years, but she didn’t immediately enter the industry after school. Instead, she pursued teaching and youth work (one of two lifelong goals) before eventually jumping into a hairdressing apprenticeship at age 22. Now, at 36, she’s fulfilled her other lifelong goal: to run her own empire in the form of a textured-hair-focused salon called Elvies (named after her mum).

Ella knew she wanted to do things differently from the get-go. Her mum and aunties had never felt comfortable getting their hair cut in a mainstream salon – Elvies had to be a place that felt safe and nurturing for people of colour with similar experiences. Ella’s ethos is written on the walls of her salon: ‘lift from the roots’ and ‘disrupt,

decolonise, hydrate and moisturise’ are her mantras for fighting the status quo (and keeping natural hair healthy and stylish). “I always encourage my clients to lift their hair up from their roots, which is another way of saying ‘give it a bit of volume’,” Ella says. “It’s also a way of disrupting, because others have tried to reduce us, shut down our hair and make it smaller. I’m saying, ‘No, our hair is a celebration of what is truly us: our heritage and our roots.’”

Just last year, TAFE NSW came under fire for not including Afro and curly hair in its curriculum. Ella experienced that lack of education first-hand during her own apprenticeship. Although she was confident with curly and coily hair thanks to her upbringing, her peers simply weren’t taught how to cut and style textured locks. “In Australian salons, the focus is on European standards of beauty,” Ella says. “If you have hair that’s curlier than a wave, you’re either erased or you’re exoticised and experimented on.” Her time working in mainstream salons confirmed this: big hair had to be tamed, and was only selectively celebrated at cutting-edge hair shows. “When clients came in, I’d ask what they wanted done and what they wanted to avoid, and some would say, ‘I don’t want to leave with big hair like yours.’”

It’s not only attitudes towards coily hair that Ella would like to see change. With her background in teaching and youth work, she wants to create more opportunities for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour). Her newest hire at Elvies is one of her past students and a new mum. While it’s unconventional to have a newborn in a salon, Ella is passionate about creating a supportive environment for staff to learn in. “She brings her baby in on Wednesdays and we work around her needs as a mum. It’s just really important to me that this is done,” she says.

When it comes to staffing, Ella is careful to select people who understand her specific vision and mission. Some clients who come through the door haven’t had a professional haircut in years due to negative experiences. “We approach hair holistically; we want to know your story. I think the hairdressing industry can lack that care for wellbeing because hairdressers might not know what our experiences are,” Ella says. “So it’s not just about getting a haircut – it’s about feeling safe.” She recently announced Elvies’ Women’s Only Studio Sessions, a fortnightly time for hijab-wearing women with curly and coily locks to come in and have their hair cared for discreetly. It all goes back to Ella’s aim to build a warm and welcoming space for people who’ve felt left out – people like her mum. “I’m doing my best to continue the legacy that is my mother Elvie,” she says. “I want to pay homage to her, and the ancestors who came before.” Considering how often her mum drops in for a wash and treatment (“I tell her off because she comes in twice a week!” Ella exclaims), so far, so good. ✿



Photo: Lukasz Wierzbowski

## meaningful mumbles

JAMES COLLEY HAS A HABIT OF MUTTERING UNDER HIS BREATH.

No, I will not speak up.

I am a mumblor. This isn't something I would have specifically called myself, but it's certainly something I've been called by others. Often. Including as part of my wife's impression of me, which was as illuminating as it was entirely unrequested and impossible to erase from my memory. Apparently I spend a lot of my day walking around the kitchen, mumbling my way through an invisible to-do list and admonishing myself for every task left undone.

But is mumbling so bad? Sure, it's infuriating for anyone having a conversation with me, but it's already infuriating to have a conversation with me, so that's just a matter of scale. I suppose I can understand why people don't like mumbling, though. If we're talking, you would probably like to hear what I'm actually saying. And it would be a mistake to discount the paranoia element: what if I'm mumbling about you? What am I saying? Why won't I speak up? Am I mad at you? The simple answer is yes, I am furious, but that's not why I mumble.

The easiest way I can reconcile it in my own head is that I'm not talking softly, I'm thinking loudly. I'm not speaking up because these are my private thoughts, and the fact they're audible at all is an unfortunate habit I cannot kick.

Talking to yourself feels weird, for sure. I don't hugely care for either of the people involved in the conversation, even though they're both

me. And I'm hugely embarrassed whenever anyone else notices. But there are times when I'm not fully aware I'm doing it. I'll be walking along mumbling to myself, only to realise I'm suddenly the guy walking down the street mumbling to himself. I think that's what worries me most. By all accounts, this kind of external-internal dialogue is perfectly healthy and possibly even beneficial, but it feels like an early warning sign of something more troubling.

Still, part of me likes it. So much of the dialogue we have with ourselves is hyper-critical and brutal. It's nice to have a little mumble about an interesting flower or something equally mundane. There are mitigating factors now, too. I will talk to my dog as I take him for walks. It's absolutely pointless, but for some reason it feels more socially acceptable when I have someone to bounce my ideas off, even if it's a dog.

This leads me to the final, most illuminating revelation. The things I say to myself are much crueller than anything I would ever say to a dog, even if the dog doesn't speak English, aside from a few key words ("Dinnertime, walkies, drop it, DROP IT," for example). It becomes clear that what hurt me about my wife's loving impression wasn't the fact I mumble – I knew that. I was proud of that. It was the way I mumble to myself. I speak to myself as someone who is failing. Internally, I'm someone who hasn't achieved everything they set out to do, and I'm scolding myself for those failures.

How different would the world be if we walked around mumbling all the things we like about ourselves? Honestly, that still sounds pretty weird (and somehow sadder), but hell, it's worth a try.

So I spent a week having a go. I potted about the house, not so much grumbling, but mumbling kind things. Meaningful mumbles. As always, they were meant only for me. But importantly – and for the first time – I actually cared that they were only for me. I took notice of what I noticed. More than smelling the roses, I forced myself out into the garden. And I'm ashamed to admit it worked – I'm a better person for it. I hate becoming a better person. I'm going to mumble about this later, I can tell. ❀



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**GOLDEN**  
**AXE**  
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# a rolling diagnosis

photographer emile ducke jumped on board a medical train servicing remote towns in siberia.

INTERVIEW SOPHIE KALAGAS

**How did you find out about the Saint Lukas medical train?**

I spent some time during my studies in documentary photography living in the Siberian city of Tomsk. I became interested in the challenges of daily life for the region's more remote communities. One of these challenges, of course, is healthcare. In many places, there are simply no doctors left. In others, one or two remain, but are overstretched and overworked. The medical train caught my attention as it was a unique solution to this problem: sending doctors from regional capitals – some on boats, others by train – to serve remote communities.

**Can you tell us a bit more about it?** At the time I took these photos, the Saint Lukas train was one of five government-funded medical trains that travelled to remote towns in eastern Russia. It takes 10 two-week-long trips a year, each along a different route in Siberia. At every stop (which lasts one to three days, depending on the size of the local population) inhabitants are able to arrange appointments with the medical specialists on board. The Saint Lukas train brings 17 doctors and their assistants to these areas, where they examine up to 150 patients a day – in total, about 15,000 per year.

**What types of facilities does the train have?** The dozen carriages are equipped with everything from X-ray and ultrasound machines to a blood test lab and dental surgery. Patients register at the reception, which is located at the front of the train. There, they're told the time and date of their appointments with the doctors; both the appointments and any treatments are free of charge. The patients are able to visit several different medical specialists on the same day. If they see the necessity for special treatment, they set up an appointment for the patient in a hospital in the regional centre.

**Were they happy to let you in to take photos?** The staff of the Saint Lukas train invited me to join them for nine days, providing me with a compartment in the carriage – which also housed the X-ray equipment. (At first, I was concerned that the X-ray might destroy my film rolls, but the staff reassured me there was a special lead screen separating me from the X-ray machine!) I introduced myself to the patients as they waited in the reception area onboard, and most were interested in me joining them for their appointments. Only at one

stop did the people coming onboard decline to be photographed. I later discovered it was a village where a religious cult that rejected modern technology (like cameras) had taken root some time ago.

**How do the doctors feel about the train service?** The doctors and their assistants live and work in narrow compartments throughout the entire journey. Often they have to ask the patients waiting in the corridors to be quiet; otherwise, village small talk can disturb the appointments and treatments on board. Despite the limited time they have with their patients, they take pride in being part of a team of specialists that makes healthcare available in remote places.

**What do people do while they wait for their appointments?** Even in the snowy conditions of a Siberian winter, people queue up from the early hours of the morning to secure their appointment with a doctor on the train. Once the Saint Lukas train opens its doors, they register at reception and wait in one of the train's carriages for their appointment (some of which are heated by coal stoves).

**What is the fancy final carriage all about?** The medical train is named after Saint Lukas, a priest who worked as a doctor in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, during World War II. The final carriage has been converted into a mobile church in his honour. In Kuragino, one of the stops on the train's route, Father Igor, a local priest, held a service on board for patients coming for treatment that day. Such services are regularly frequented by the Saint Lukas medical train's patients before and after treatment.

**And who are the folks exercising?** They're a group of pensioners in Kuragino who set up an exercise class in order to stay fit between health check-ups.

**What did you learn while working on this project?** Something that will stay with me was the woman who took care of my carriage: when she saw that I was taking my gloves off in the freezing Siberian cold to operate my camera, she gifted me some woollen gloves the next day. They even left the fingertips bare so I could keep them on while photographing – she'd spent the entire night knitting them herself.

**Where can we see more of your work?** Online at [emileducke.de](http://emileducke.de) ❁







Photo: Kate Hansen for Houzz

## blanket fever

RAMONA AUDREY HAS A RATHER WOOLLY STASH.

I collect everyday items made in Australia in the early- to mid-20th century. Things I find appealing in some kind of (often inexplicable) way, like Persinware scales, Bakelite ammeters, spectacles, canteens and camera bags that have lost their cameras. Everything has to be handsome, practical and have a place! My biggest collection, though, features 100-per-cent-wool blankets manufactured in Australia between the 1920s and the end of the 1960s. I've been accumulating them for just over a decade – more than 500 have passed through my hands, but the current collection sits at around 150.

Australia had hundreds of wool mills last century, across every state. The Waverley Mills in Tasmania are still going, Onkaparinga in South Australia is now a museum, and Godfrey Hirst in Victoria just makes carpets these days. There were so many mills employing hundreds of thousands of people and following the fashions of the

time. The most recognisable blanket style – the checked blanket – started in the 1950s and is the most sought-after today after army blankets.

I used to go to a vintage market every Sunday to look for Onkaparinga travel rugs for my flatmates – a bit of Australian history for each of us. That progressed to a particular type of blanket, which progressed to another type of blanket, which progressed to... you get the picture. These days I find them at the usual gambit of markets, fairs, swap meets, vintage shops, op shops and eBay stores, and I'm also lucky to get gifts from friends and surprise post from fellow 'blanketeers'.

I live in a large house with a downstairs guest room dedicated to all things blankets: framed advertising from the 1940s to '60s, shop signage, a cupboard full of colour-coded pastel blankets, samples of 1930s panel blankets, World War II army blankets and more. Upstairs, the 1950s checked blankets are displayed in a beautiful set of 1930s pigeonholes. The National Wool Museum in Geelong is about to purchase part of my collection, too, which is very exciting!

What's not to love about these woollen blankets? They look great, they keep you warm, they feel great and they remind you of your grandmother. I've been sharing my home with short-term flatmates and guests for 20 years, and almost everyone has a story from their youth about their relationship to these blankets, usually through memories of gatherings with friends and family. It's a universal thing: each country has its own style of blanket and everyone's reaction to them is the same. I've had people from Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand and beyond find me online and write me lovely stories.

I love using the blankets, too. The travel rugs are for outdoor use like festivals and picnics, the checked styles are for indoor activities like movie nights and dressing beds, and the army blankets are upcycled into items I sell online. I don't think a single day under 25 degrees goes by without me using a blanket – and I live in southern Australia, so that's a whole lot of days. ❁

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# mmm, delicious idioms

james shackell investigates the origins  
of some very tasty-sounding terms.

**SPILL THE BEANS** In Ancient Greece, citizens would elect council members by placing white and black beans in special clay jars. A white bean meant 'yes' and a black bean meant 'no' (a baked bean was probably a donkey vote). The thing is, voting was meant to be anonymous. Nobody knew the colour of your bean. Unless the jar Clumsycles was holding sort of... slipped and cracked open, and the beans were spilled all over the floor, and they had to start the whole damn thing again. This is possibly where the idiom 'spill the beans' comes from, i.e. giving away a secret to someone who's not supposed to know the secret. But some etymologists have pointed out that people didn't start saying 'spill the beans' until the early 20th century, so maybe the whole Greek beans thing is a myth. Another possible explanation is simple word evolution: the verb 'spill' has meant 'divulge' since the 1500s, and 'beans' has often stood for 'information'.

**RED HERRING** Seriously, who are these red herrings, and why do they keep interfering with murder investigations? For starters, there is no actual species of 'red herring'. Herrings are usually a fishy kind of silver-blue. The term – referring to a piece of information that's intended to mislead – goes back to the 13th century when people used to brine-cure or smoke their kippers, turning the flesh a deep red (and, incidentally, stinking out the entire house). For a while, people thought the idiom came from old-school hunting techniques: hunters would train young dogs by dragging an alluring

smoked herring along the trail. But it turns out that was also a red herring. Now, etymologists reckon the fish were actually used to train *horses*, not hounds. Either way, the herrings were a useful guide, not a misleading distraction. Radical journalist William Cobbett is probably responsible for the misunderstanding: in 1807 he published an article in the *Political Register* with the term "political red herring", and the idiom kind of stuck. Or did it...

**THE BIG CHEESE** Cheese pops up in idioms all the time. You can be 'cheesed off'. A bad movie might be 'cheesy'. We say 'cheese!' when taking cringeworthy family photos. And, of course, there's 'the big cheese', which means someone who's powerful and important and cheese-worthy. The phrase seems to come from 19th-century London, where people started comparing other people to dairy products, saying things like, "He's the cheese," or, "That's quite the cheese." (As an aside, can we please, please bring back "that's quite the cheese"?) By the early 20th century, Americans had added the 'big', perhaps in reference to the ridiculous 561kg Mammoth Cheese given to Thomas Jefferson during his presidency in 1802 – this seems unlikely, since Americans didn't start saying 'big cheese' till the 1920s, but it's still a fun cheese-related anecdote. One last theory harks back to publicity stunts in the early 20th century, where giant blocks of cheese would be displayed then ceremonially sliced up by important people. (It was a simpler time.)



**TAKE THE CAKE** If something 'takes the cake' it's especially remarkable – either the best or worst of its kind. This idiom goes all the way back to pre-Civil War America, where slaves on Southern plantations would compete in a special dance called a 'prize walk' – the prize being an elaborately decorated cake. In the tradition of deeply troubling practices that were once commonplace, Black couples would dance for a judging panel of white plantation owners (in a prancy style that, ironically, mimicked white people's hoity-toity attitudes), and the winners were said to have "taken the cake". By the 1870s, 'cakewalks', as they became known, were popular in travelling minstrel shows. This is when the idiom really started taking off. By 1892, New York's Madison Square Garden was hosting cakewalk championships – these dances also came with their own music, which evolved into what we now know as ragtime. Eventually the cakes, and the dances, and even the ragtime tunes went away. But the idiom stayed, as idioms tend to do.

**BRING HOME THE BACON** The year was... well, it was some time in the 1100s. The town was Great Dunmow in Essex, England. According to legend, the Great Dunmow church would award a side of bacon (also known as a 'fitch' for some reason) to any man who could honestly claim that he hadn't argued with his wife for a year and one day. Why a church would do this, why pigs became standard marriage currency, and why the men of

Great Dunmow were so dishonest is anyone's guess, but 'bringing home the bacon' apparently came to mean 'providing for your family'. That's one story, anyway. Others reckon the idiom originated in county fairs in the 1500s, where contestants had to catch a greased pig. If they caught the pig, they got to keep it – hence 'bringing home the bacon'. Eventually, 'bacon' came to denote money in general, and the idiom kind of snuffled its way into the public consciousness.

**BROWNIE POINTS** Like most idioms, no one is 100 per cent certain how 'brownie points' got started. The phrase now refers to some kind of ethereal good-deed currency: you can earn brownie points through foot massages and doing the dishes, and lose them by forgetting anniversaries. Brownies were originally mythical Scottish creatures who came out at night and did household chores (teenagers know them today as 'parents'). Some people think the phrase 'brownie points' originated there, or perhaps from Girl Guide 'Brownies', who borrowed the moniker and earned badges by helping people. Another option is American wartime rationing, where people were given ration 'points' of different colours. Red and brown points were used for buying meat – a big deal at the time. The term 'brownie points' also crept into the 1944 edition of *American Speech*, meaning "a person who stays after class to try to insinuate themselves into the teacher's good graces." Whatever the origin, it seems brownie points have nothing to do with actual chocolate brownies, which we can all agree are delicious. ❁

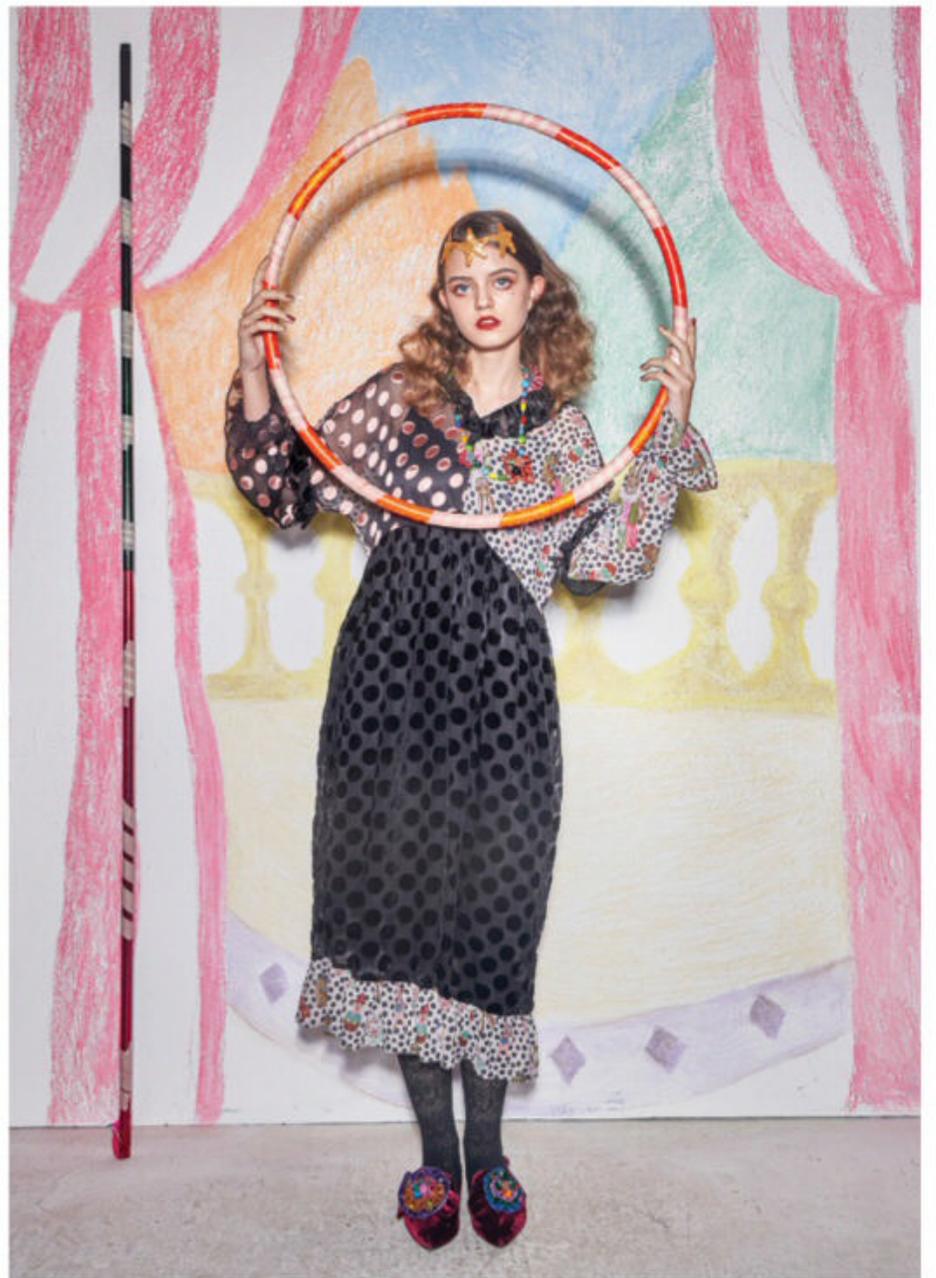
# July

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	NOTES
			01	02	03	04	
05	06	07	08	09	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

# August

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	NOTES
30	31					01	
issue 103 on sale							
02	03	04	05	06	07	08	
09	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	





## life's a circus

UNLOGICAL POEM DESIGNER TIMMY TIAN WANTS YOU TO CLOWN AROUND IN HER PLAYFUL PIECES.

**What motivated you to start Unlogical Poem?** I published a magazine called *Little Thing*, and around 2012, we opened a shop that sold many interesting indie fashion brands from all over the world. They inspired me a lot, but it was still a bit difficult to find fancier indie brands with reasonable prices. As my major at university was fashion design, I decided to try starting my own.

**Where did the name come from?** I love classic things mixed with a little quirk and fun, and the word 'unlogical' came to me first. After, I read an Emily Dickinson poetry book. I hoped my brand could achieve a feeling that is poetic but interesting, fancy but 'unlogical'. I think it's charming when someone can carry two opposite parts together.

**What type of person do you design for?** I look beyond age and design for someone who always keeps an innocence inside, while also having a sense of humour when looking at the world.

**Tell us about the Circus collection.** I am a big, big circus fan. I just love the fantastic images and roles – especially clowns – because our life is like a big circus, a dramatic *lila* ('holy drama' in Sanskrit). We don't need to watch a real circus nowadays, but we are still inspired by the images. In this range, we've included clown-like ruffle collars, polka-dot patterns inspired by decorative circus objects, and circus illustrations.

**Who did you collaborate with for this collection?** I've been wanting to collaborate with my friend Nathalie Lété for a long time. She's a French artist and we've worked together in the magazine several times. Nathalie is so full of passion – I adore her beautiful fairytale world so much! When I saw her circus illustrations, I thought it was a good opportunity to create a collection together. It was magical to work with her.

**How have you played with colour, fabric and texture?** Embroideries are used frequently in this collection – I wanted to give a little surprise when people wear it and feel it. There's velvet and silk, and custom-embroidered fabrics for coats and skirts. The sweaters have very colourful patterns, and the hoodies have sequins on the front – I like to mix different textures together. I also customised little elephant and bear buttons, which were drawn by Nathalie and hand-painted one by one by our crafters.

**Describe the studio where most of this was designed.** Our studio and office is located in Shenzhen, China. It's kind of a mess, but we've coloured the walls in different functional areas.

**What is the creative scene like in your city?** There are many creative events happening in Shenzhen. There are exhibitions in different art locations and institutes, and every second year there's the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, which is the most magnificent creative event with many famous artists and architects coming over to show their work. The whole city joins in to enjoy it.

**What is your personal approach to fashion and clothing?** I prefer a vintage, girly style, or combined Western and Eastern fashion – old and new together.

**Where can we see more of your stuff?** At [unlogicalpoem.store](http://unlogicalpoem.store) or on Instagram at [@unlogicalpoem](https://www.instagram.com/unlogicalpoem). ❀





## a poor relation

NO, THAT'S NOT SAM PRENDERGAST'S MOTHER HOLDING HER HAND.



I want to begin by saying that I am a 30-year-old woman with a significant amount of grey hair, and my partner is a 40-year-old woman who looks approximately 10 years older than me, as per the laws of ageing and physics. In the first few years of our relationship, people would occasionally mistake us for sisters – a common experience among queers. Then, seemingly overnight, ‘sisters’ disappeared and everyone from flight attendants to friends of friends and miscellaneous people on the street began to assume – out loud – that my partner is my mother. At best, this gets kind of awkward.

The first time it happened, I was lying in a hospital bed with a concussion, when the nurse asked if I wanted Mum to come with me to my X-ray. To be fair, a hospital bed is not where anyone looks their most adult. After I stifled some outrage and explained that, actually, my “mum” was not my mum, we all had a lol and moved on with the day. At the time, it seemed like a one-off – an innocent mistake made by someone who was probably 13 hours into their 16-hour shift and only trying to be kind. We told the story to our friends like a funny quip that ended with my partner yelling, “Maybe it’s time to start moisturising,” and me chortling, “Why do I look like a child?” It was not a one-off.

From that point on, we were assumed to be mother and daughter at least a few times a month. At stores, in restaurants, walking down the street. I once received a free and not actually requested tomato juice “because your mum is so nice”. I didn’t complain. Other situations were more uncomfortable. When we moved to a new town, we joined a gym and began to suspect our favourite coach thought we were a Lorelai-Rory deal. Three months later, he finally said the ‘mum’ word out loud; we corrected him, and we all quietly spiralled into our personal pits of shame.

The thing about this first-world problem is that it’s both somewhat funny and endlessly enraging. When I talked to my actual mother about the phenomenon, she told me to take it as a compliment because, as we all know, it is every adult human’s dream to be mistaken for a teenager. One day, I’m told, I will be grateful for my baby face. For now, it’s hard to be ‘grateful’ for people repeatedly choosing to look at you and your partner and see anything other than a couple. “What have we here, two cousins holding hands?” If it was truly about my face, I could live with the recurring error of other people’s assumptions. But I have a little assumption of my own, and it rhymes with ‘the world is so straight that the existence of gays is often an abrasive shock’.

If I’m being honest, the number of mummy-daughter assumptions we receive has drastically increased since we left the comfort of a very queer metropolis to move to my much smaller hometown. It’s not that anyone is outwardly malicious in their assumption that we’re not a couple. No one is calling my partner “Mum” with a snarl. But as I’ve tried to explain to anyone who will listen, the fact that it happens so often is making us a little strange. We now walk into banks, dentists and extended family gatherings braced for a Graeme (the original Karen) to do the mum thing, providing us with yet another unwanted opportunity to come out to a total stranger. In the scheme of things, maybe this is just a little blip, something we’ll tell future generations of age-gapped couples and fellow queers. Or, in the words of my gut instincts, maybe, despite rainbow crossings and pink ATMs, we’re not quite there yet. ❀

# something to say



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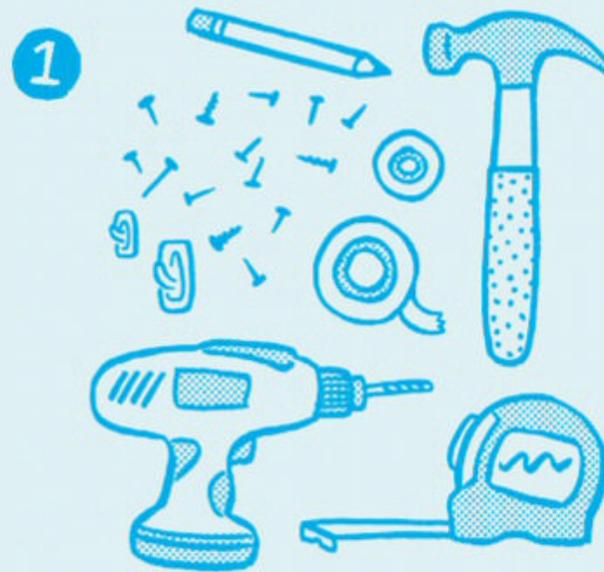
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# framed and hung

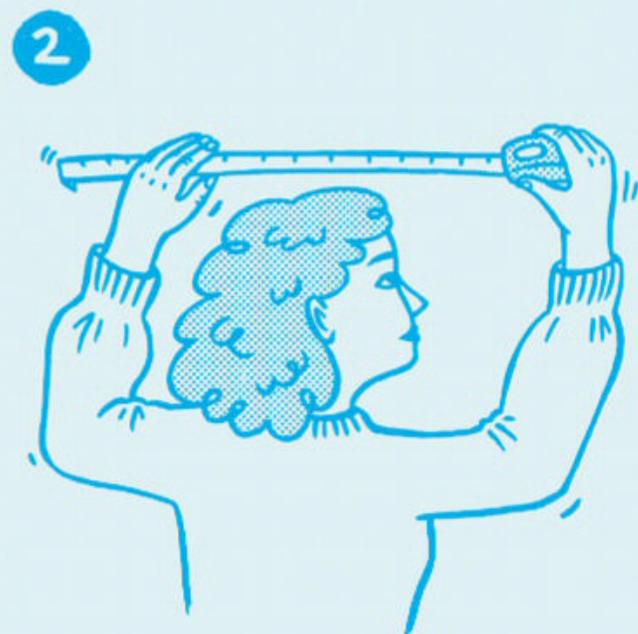
A STRAIGHTFORWARD GUIDE  
TO HANGING A PICTURE.

Words **Sophie Kalagas** Illustrations **Ashley Ronning**

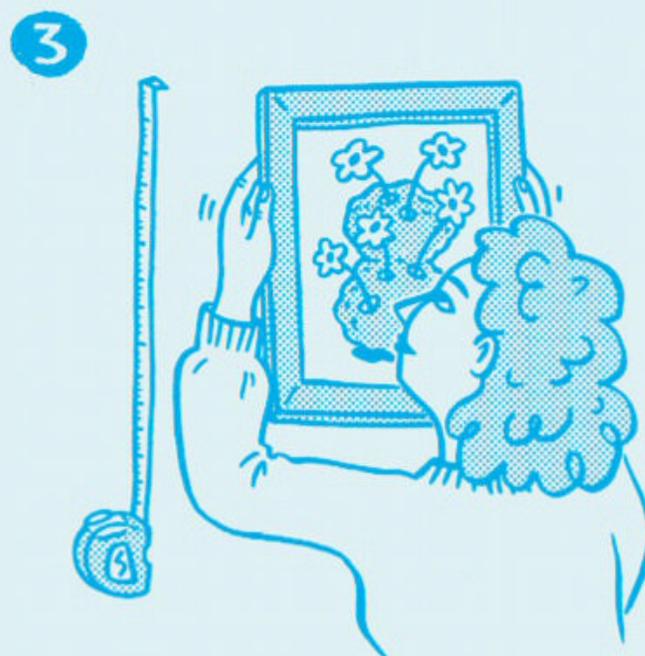
Adding some pizzazz to your walls is a sure-fire way to make your home feel more, well, homely – but if you don't have picture rails (and the previous tenants haven't done the hard yards before you) you'll need to figure out the best way to hang your art. Take into consideration the shape and weight of the frame, the type of hook on the back, and what the wall is made of. For a heavy piece on a plaster wall, you may need to drill into a stud; meanwhile, sticky hooks will do for lighter frames. If you fancy your art being flush against the surface, there are special wall-mount kits available, too. Below, we'll focus on the simplest technique: hanging a picture with a basic hook or nail.



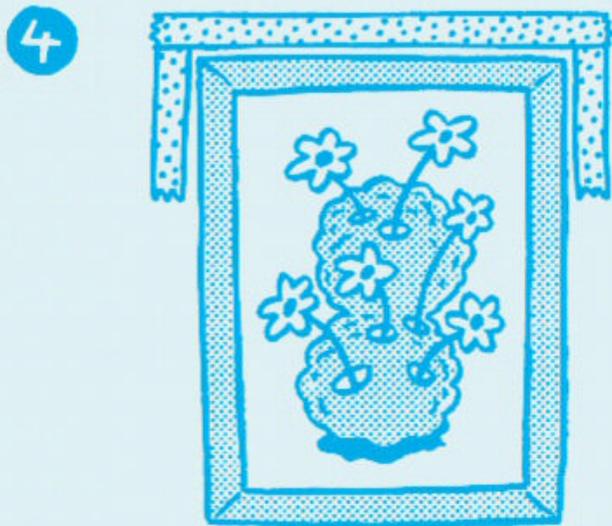
Gather together all your supplies. As a general rule, that will include your hook (either a sticky, removable version or a nail-in type), a hammer or drill, a tape measure, a pencil and some painter's tape (washi tape will also do, and look super-cute to boot).



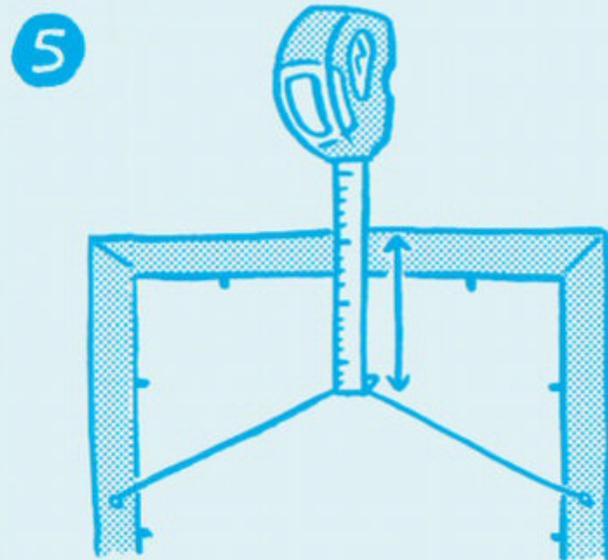
Decide on the wall you're going to adorn, then find its centre by measuring the full width, dividing it in half and marking that point with your pencil. This, of course, assumes you want your art to be centred – if something more off-kilter is your thing, feel free to choose another position. (And remember: if your frame is particularly heavy, you're best off locating a stud for extra support. You can do that with a stud-finder – or by lurking around your nearest gym.)



Next, you'll need to find the best height for your art. The classic approach is to hang it at eye level, but feel free to experiment – after all, following rules is for chumps. Once you've settled on a height, mark it with the pencil. Then, mark the spot where your horizontal and vertical measurements intersect. (This is where the top-centre of your frame will sit.)



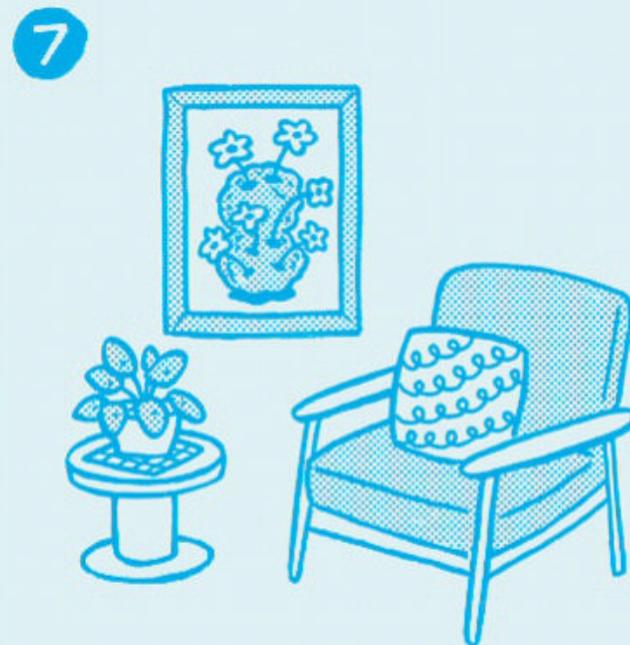
Before **you start making holes in the wall, you might** like to use some **removable tape to double-check the positioning**. Enlist a helper to hold the frame in place while you run tape across the top and side edges, then step back and make sure you're digging the arrangement.



Turning your attention to the artwork, measure the space between the top of the frame and the attached hanging implement (if that's a wire, make sure it's pulled taut, as if it were hanging on the wall). This will help you figure out where to place your nail or hook. Pencil in that spot on the wall, measuring down from your top-centre mark. Worth noting: if your artwork is very wide or on the heavy side, you may need two hooks to keep it secure.



Now the important part: attaching your hook to the wall. If a sticky hook is your preferred method, remember to follow the packet instructions carefully, including wiping down the wall surface with rubbing alcohol first (this will help it grip on super-tight). If you're using a nail, make sure it goes in on a 45-degree angle so the frame sits closer to the wall and won't be able to slip off. Watch your fingers while hammering and don't go too hard, lest you wind up with a wonky hook or – worse – a chunk out of the plaster.



There's only one thing left to do now: whack your artwork on the wall. Shift it left or right as needed to get it hanging straight (if you're feeling particularly fancy, you could even whip out a spirit level). And if you've caught the wall-decorating bug, you may want to continue with your measuring and taping to assemble your very own gallery wall! ✿



# mirror, mirror

take a little time to reflect with  
ziqian liu's striking photos.

**Tell us a bit about yourself – where are you from, and what do you do when you're not taking photos?** My name is Ziqian Liu, I'm an independent photographer based in Shanghai, China. When I'm not taking pictures, I like to look after the plants in my home, putting them in different vases and placing them all over the room. I also like changing the position of my furniture – I like to always have order and freshness.

**How did you get into the photography game?** I was very uncertain about my future and quite depressed. So, I travelled with my friend for a long time. During the trip, I bought my first camera and found that taking pictures could release my emotions. When I returned home, I began to take photos of small things around me – gradually I found my own style. Feedback from viewers also gave me a lot of strength and made me more determined to go on shooting.

**What were your first images like?** They were similar to normal selfies, often with faces exposed and plants used as props. At the beginning, I didn't know anything about shooting, or even editing pictures with my mobile phone.

**What kinds of themes are you exploring in these snaps?** There are two main themes in my work. The first is the symbiosis between humans and nature. All creatures live in the same world: we breathe the same air, depend on each other, are tolerant of each other and, to some extent, are equal. I try to find a kind of balance and synergy between man and nature, because only in this kind of state can beauty be truly embodied. The second theme is about perspective. Everything has two sides, so I use the mirror to convey the same thing from different angles, where there'll be different findings. The mirror also represents the idealised world I wish to live in, and the integration with the outside is a reminder to respect and recognise the imbalance in the real world.

**For you, what are the best and hardest parts of working with self-portraiture?** The best and hardest parts are the same: being alone. When I'm shooting, I'm completely alone. It's a free time – it

gives me the power to freely express through the camera. But when the mirror accidentally moves or the position of a prop changes, it takes a lot of time and energy to fix it.

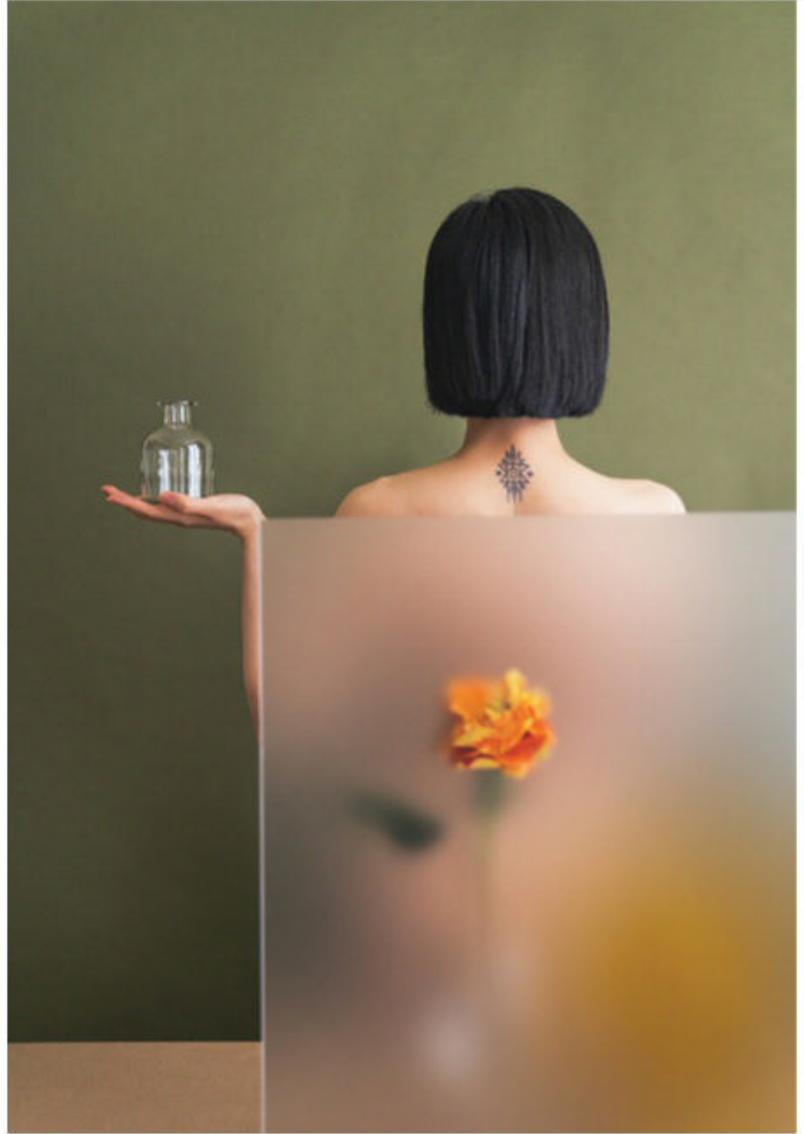
**How much planning goes into each setup? The placement of each object is so precise!** Sometimes I get images in my head first, but more often I improvise. Bringing a picture I've imagined into the real world is a very physically demanding process. First of all, I connect my phone to the camera to control the shooting. Then I get the general position of the props, before adjusting them and my own posture. To ensure the mirror can reflect the right thing, I have to try many different angles. Sometimes there's a big difference between my imagination and the actual outcome, so I'll adjust the original idea. The whole process is really hard – each image can take up to three hours – but it's very satisfying to see the final result.

**Why do you choose not to show your face?** I don't want my face to be the main part of my work – whether beautiful or not, it attracts the attention of the viewer, and it's easy to ignore the other elements. Plus, the main character can be anyone, and each viewer will have a different idea of the work due to their own experiences. This allows them to participate in the work, which I think can be very interesting.

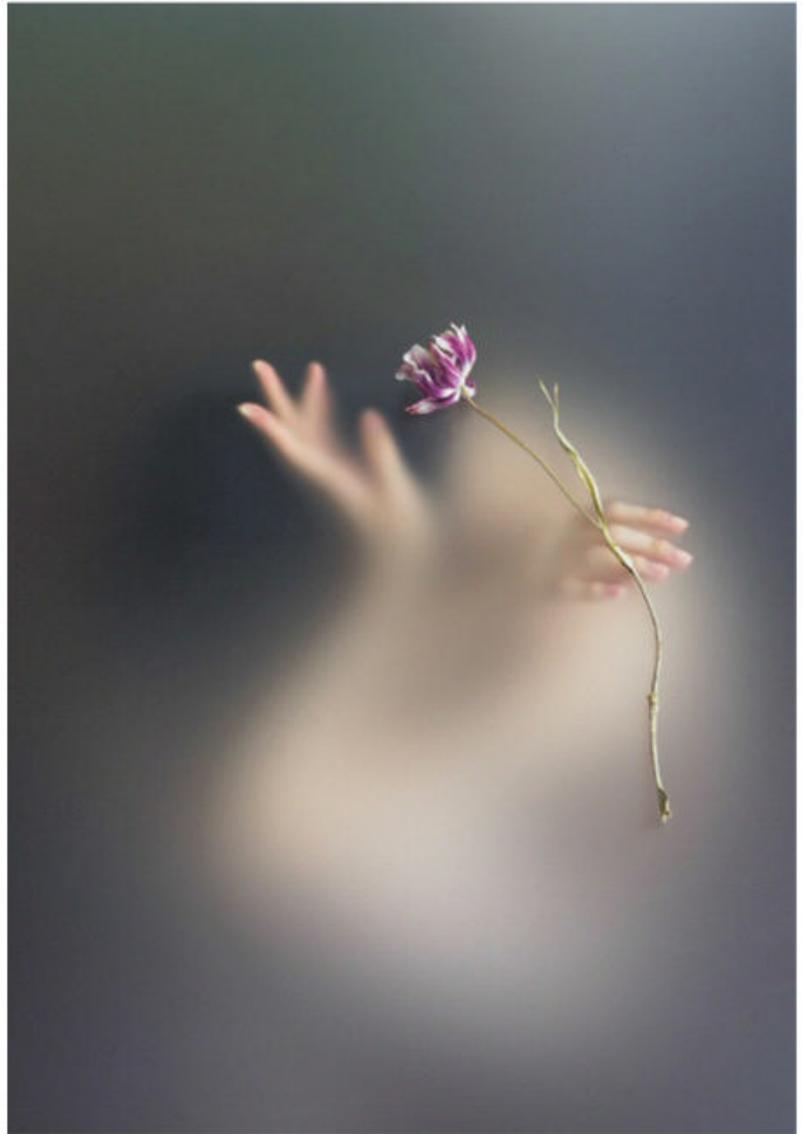
**How does where you live influence your style?** Traditional Chinese cultures always influence me: one is 'implicit', the other is 'nothing can be accomplished without rules'. These make me pay attention to the aesthetic sense of order and balance in my images, and treat the details with a rigorous attitude.

**What makes you happy?** When I find something new while I'm shooting, like a sudden inspiration, I'm very happy. In life, when I buy new flowers or clean and tidy my room, it also makes me very happy.

**Where can we see more of your stuff?** Online at [ziqianqian.net](http://ziqianqian.net) or on Instagram at @ziqianqian. ✿









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# a matter of time

if you had a time machine, would you travel to the past or the future? jack vening and deirdre fidge have differing ideas.

## STRAIGHT TO THE PAST BY JACK VENING

God, the future – a big ‘no thanks’ from me. When folks talk about the relentless march of time, it’s never in a particularly positive light. Modern life is already so torturous. There isn’t a government agency on the planet that doesn’t have my personal information on one USB or another. I subscribe to a thousand streaming services and there’s still nothing to watch.

If you ask me what I think the future holds, I immediately hear that white noise experienced by soldiers who’ve been conked in the melon with a bazooka. All the wild places of the world littered with so many discarded DVD cases slowly going brittle and toxic in the sun. Spotify auto-play ads at funerals. Roving gangs of immense, genius children descending on us on hoverbikes to demand a turn on our vapes. A vape-based global economy.

But the past? Now there’s a big red calzone. Hoo-daddy. I’m licking my chops like a hound. I’m tossing my silky mane. I’m horny for the past, and you should be, too!

Imagine the good places of the world untouched by extinction. Primeval forests absolutely filthy with birds. Rural utopias and bustling cities that smell only a little like wee. Ever wanted to ride one of those gigantic wombats that roamed the land in prehistoric times? You shouldn’t, but hey, you’re the one with the time machine! Watch them lug all those rocks up to Stonehenge, if that’s your thing. Sample the delights of the (first half of the) Titanic’s maiden voyage. And that’s not even touching on the celebs! You can’t land a time machine in any era without crushing a historical celebrity’s house or loved one. Give a dictator a wedgie or meet those artists the Ninja Turtles were named after. Get creative!

Sure, depending where you go in time and space, there are the occasional issues of horrifying sectarian and religious strife, miserable life expectancy, highly communicable diseases,

poor-to-non-existent building regulations and fire codes, poor-to-non-existent public wi-fi, child workers being mangled inside gigantic machines while trying to pull other mangled children out of said machines, a largely unchallenged class system and a social fabric composed of what can only be described as ‘ultra-racism’. But. But!

Remember that so many of history’s nastier moments have been modern concoctions, cooked up in a horrible vat by Western minds. Just be careful where you land, boil your water, take a few pockets full of antibiotics in case you scratch yourself on... uh... anything, don’t ride the ancient wombats too long, and if you get sick, don’t let anyone sell you on blood-letting or leeches or drinking wine instead of water (maybe bring your own water, too).

We do have to talk about responsibility, of course. Being the only person in the world with knowledge of an imminent disaster is a tall order. Redirecting civil unrest, dampening a global pandemic, sabotaging unnecessary sequels, diverting a historical tragedy – is that too much for someone like me, who regularly takes the afternoon off after the labour of resetting my email password? Yes. But the good news is, we’re not expected to change the past (and given how the whole space-time thing works, we probably couldn’t if we tried).

We used to be obsessed with changing the past. Our stories were about the singular heroics of averting what we now know to be wrong. We used to think that was the only way society could be saved. But those were the old days, so to speak. In this new era of rugged individualism, we’re expected only to look out for ourselves. So go ahead, make a few million florins on the 17th-century Dutch tulip market. Play *Candy Crush* with Julius Caesar (tell him you invented it, who cares). The resulting tear in space and time could be catastrophic and, worse, it may seem a little selfish, but that’s the modern world, baby.

### ON TO THE FUTURE BY DEIRDRE FIDGE

I've never been hugely interested in the past. Maybe it's the mind-numbingly boring way history was taught at school, or maybe it's my future-focused anxiety disorder, but The Past as a concept simply does not wow me.

Believe me, I've tried to get invested. (I mean, Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* is a masterpiece.) I recently tuned in to a history podcast that involved two old British men hacking sputum onto their microphones before arguing about a specific date when something happened in the 1800s. That in itself is a nice summary of historical events. No thanks.

What we know about the past is largely a lot of atrocities. Were a time machine to be plonked in my backyard, I would have ZERO desire to vacation to an era when I'm likely to either be eaten by a spinosaurus or drowned in a lake under suspicion of being a witch. The future, though, is full of possibilities.

In the future, I have less chance of getting some weird disease that could easily be solved with antibiotics. And OK, perhaps I'll contract a new freaky disease that exists because of our misuse of antibiotics. But maybe they'll name the disease after me! Silver linings. The unknown typically frightens me, but in the context of time travel, the only answer is forward.

The first thing I'd do is head straight to the pub. I'd want to chat to people and learn through casual conversation about things that are ordinary to them, but amazing to me. I'm so curious about the weird advancements that would be normalised. Is everyone vegan? Are helicopter parents more chill because their kids have tracking devices implanted? Do people actually holiday on Mars? Have folks discovered a new way to do sex that I can bring back to the present to impress my lover? (Saying 'lover' is the one throwback in my life and I can only apologise.)

It would also be fascinating to see how the present day has been recorded in the history books, and to discover which events have been lost to the ages. Like all of history, they're bound to be full of omissions and biases, but I'd love to spend a few solid days in my Future Motel flicking through bygone descriptions of 2021 and watching 'retro' TV shows set in the now. (Frankly, the couch potato in me would probably spend a *lot* of time watching TV under the pretence of 'research'.)

Since the '80s, on-screen depictions of 'the future' have implied that everything will be chrome-coloured and hoverboards will be commonplace. I don't think either of those things will be true (leopard print will always be in style, and hoverboards are just Razor scooters for start-up geeks). Instead, I have hopes for a future that doesn't look too different to the present, from the outset.

Young people are the future and I've met a bunch of them: they're pretty darn great. I'd love a time machine to take me to a world where capitalism and greed aren't powerful driving forces anymore. A world where universities and research groups are funded adequately and they've discovered ways to reverse the effects of climate change. A world where someone has invented a very specific supplement that not only keeps Kathryn Hahn alive in the year 2121, but ensures her work is universally acknowledged and appreciated. THIS IS THE FUTURE I WANT.

There is, of course, the chance that I'll misjudge things drastically, hop in my time machine and step onto a barren land devoid of any lifeform except a rare species of coal-fuelled cockroach, a swarm of which will devour me instantly. Still, better than the witch-drowning. To the future! ✿

read all about it

# the bookish types

meet some of australia's newest fiction authors.

INTERVIEWS SOPHIE KALAGAS



## MADELEINE RYAN

**Have you always been into writing?** I've kept journals on and off since I was really young. I still have a picture book I made of *The Little Mermaid*, including hand-drawn illustrations of Ariel and Flounder. I studied literature and creative writing at school, because those subjects didn't have exams! Writing has always been part of my life, but I didn't see myself as a writer until recently. **Tell us about your debut novel.** *A Room Called Earth* is an adventure inside the mind of a dynamic, sensual, observant young woman as she prepares for – and attends – a party in Melbourne on Christmas Eve. It takes place over less than 24 hours as she encounters all different kinds of people and has all different kinds of experiences. It's a celebration of what it means to truly connect with ourselves and each other. **How did it feel to write an autistic main character?** I was diagnosed as autistic while writing the book. It took me a while to realise she was autistic too, though. I was sitting outside one day with a cup of tea and it occurred to me. I was like, well, if her story is in the first person, and if I'm using the way I process thoughts and feelings to give shape to her reality, then is her reality neurodiverse like mine? Then I felt really special. It was as if she'd chosen me. And I find her astonishing, and multidimensional, and courageous in so many ways. **What do you want readers to take away from the story?** A sense of belonging. An understanding that all their thoughts, feelings, experiences, sensations, relationships and memories are sacred. **How did your work get published?** It took continuous leaps of faith and many periods of waiting. Then stars colliding, and presto, a novel! Throw in a literary agent who rejected me here, here and here, then one who saw value in the story there, and her connections here, and that pretty much sums it up. **What surprised you about the publishing process?** It's hugely collaborative and requires tons of communication with others. Beautiful things can only happen when many minds and hearts are involved. **What is writing a book actually like?** I found it deeply nourishing and exciting. Scary, too. I didn't know how it was going to turn out, or if I was going to be proud. I didn't know how the book would change me or my life. I just had to trust, which is what made the process so exciting. **How did you deal with writers' block?** I don't believe in writers' block. Sometimes the block is the answer. The human mind is way too multidimensional and magical – beyond our comprehension, even – for writers' block to be a real thing. **Three books you've recently loved?** *Demons* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Super Attractor* by Gabrielle Bernstein, and I always have *Madame Pamita's Magical Tarot* on hand.

## ROBERT LUKINS

**Tell us about your debut novel.** *The Everlasting Sunday* is set in England during the catastrophic winter of 1962 that came to be known as The Big Freeze. The story takes place in a manor house that's been repurposed by the government as a kind of warehouse for young people 'found by trouble'. It's inspired by a real facility of the time and a crumbling mansion I discovered when working as a postman in rural Shropshire. The novel is about finding a way to love and survive.

**You've written other stories in the past though, right?** I've written a novel every year since I was 14. I had no intention of getting any of them published; *The Everlasting Sunday* was the first I sent out into the world. I was just convinced I was teaching myself how to write. Some were never printed, just deleted from my computer the day they were finished. **Do you have any other writing habits?**

I write on the train to work, in the lunchroom and on the train ride home. I've always had to squeeze it into the folds of the day; I can't wait to be inspired or for all the conditions to be 'right'.

**How did you get your first book published?** It was all dumb luck. I had no connections or track record – I just picked the publisher I wanted and the agent I wanted to represent me, printed off the book and posted it to them. I didn't hear a word for 18 months. Then they both stumbled across my manuscript in their slush piles. **What other jobs have you had?** Dishwasher, library assistant, rubbish auditor at a tip, taste-tester at a chip factory, art researcher, manager of a poetry peak body, music journalist, band manager, busker, postman. It's impossible to have that many odd jobs and not accumulate a few story or character ideas for future use.

**Is book-writing a lonely pursuit?** The moments of writing are necessarily solitary, but publication is an inspiring and fun conversation with a whole cast of people: agents, publishers, editors, cover designers, booksellers, readers. Plus, the gang of weird and neurotic writers you inevitably find yourself part of. **Who is your literary inspiration?**

Adrian Mole. I read Sue Townsend's *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 3/4* when I was too young to realise Adrian was supposed to be a pretentious prat. **Any tips for emerging writers?**

If you feel like you have no idea what you're doing or how you're supposed to go about this whole odd game, you're not alone and you're probably on the right track. Every writer I've met has, after a glass of wine, admitted to having no idea what they're doing. **Three books you've recently loved?**

*New Animal* by Ella Baxter, *Extraterrestrial: The First Sign of Intelligent Life Beyond Earth* by Avi Loeb and *She is Haunted* by Paige Clark.



Photo: Shelley Horan

# ELIZABETH TAN

**What are your books about?** My first book, *Rubik*, is made up of interconnecting short stories about digital afterlives, fan fiction, conspiracies and consumer culture. The main narrative thread is about a woman who dies in a car accident after purchasing a pie. My most recent book, *Smart Ovens for Lonely People*, is a collection of short stories about mermaids, cats, things going missing in the laundry, utopias, dystopias and the things we do to console ourselves when the world is ending. **Why are short stories your preferred format?** I like the way they can be suggestive – you can imply a whole world or life with a few shrewdly chosen scenes and details. Plus, short stories are a little easier to set aside and pick up again, or to work on alongside other projects. **What surprised you about the publishing process?** One of the loveliest surprises was when I saw the draft of my first book's cover – that's when I got a fresh sense of what it was about; how it felt and breathed to someone who hadn't been caught up in the writing and editing of it. It hit me that the book was leaving my hands, and soon other readers were going to make their own meaning of it. **Do you have any writing rituals?** I mostly like to write on my laptop in bed right after I wake up, when I'm a bit sleepy and dreamy. If that's not working, I try to change the scenery. **What's it like seeing your books out in the world?** I feel a bit shy; I can't quite bring myself to look directly at them. Perhaps it's like encountering a clone of yourself, or yourself from a different timeline – you don't want them to notice you or to disturb the fabric of the universe, so you just kind of watch your other self nervously out of the corner of your eye. **Why do you write?** I just really like playing with words; I like the pleasure of being able to describe something precisely. Also, making connections with other people and finding common ground. **Do you have any other jobs?** I'm a university tutor in creative writing and professional writing. It can be a struggle to balance teaching and writing; I try not to glance at emails or the class discussion board during the mornings I've set aside for writing. **What types of books do you like reading?** Books that are committed to emotional honesty, where you feel like the author has had to reckon with themselves in some way in order to have written it. Even if the book is not about them, they're writing from a position of humility and curiosity rather than smug judgment. **Three books you've recently loved?** *New Animal* by Ella Baxter, *The End of the World Is Bigger Than Love* by Davina Bell, and *Echoes* by Shu-Ling Chua.



## VICTORIA HANNAN

**Have you always been interested in writing?**

My mum claims she knew I was going to be a writer from age five, but it took me a bit longer to work it out. As a kid, I'd write dark, open-ended stories where all the characters were named after my friends. Later, I discovered I could use writing to make people laugh. Very little about my writing practice and motivations has changed.

**Tell us about your debut novel.** *Kokomo* begins in London with Mina. One day she gets a phone call from her best friend back in Australia informing her that her mother has just left the house for the first time in 12 years. So she rushes home to find out why. It's a story about grief, desire, disconnection, but most of all, it's a love letter to friendship. **Where did the idea come from?**

It came to me at a karaoke party. A friend sang "Kokomo" by The Beach Boys and I started wondering where the tropical island of Kokomo is. After some googling, I discovered The Beach Boys made it up. It got me thinking about how often we readily believe the things we're told. **How did you get your work in front of the publisher?**

I spent two years drafting and redrafting *Kokomo*, then entered it into the Victorian Premier's Literary Award (VPLA) for an Unpublished Manuscript. When I found out I'd won I cried on the street. Off the back of the VPLA, I signed with my dream agent who helped me navigate the submissions process. **What was the hardest part of writing a novel?**

Sitting down every day to get the work done. I have a note above my desk that says 'do the work, you big baby'. I respond well to tough talk. I also employ a beefed-up Pomodoro Technique where I'll set a timer and write for 50 minutes, take a break for 15, then start again. I need routine. **And the best part?** I never imagined I'd make so many new friends by writing a novel. I used to think the Australian writing scene was scary and impenetrable, but it turns out most people are lovely and the community is very supportive. **Why do you write?** I legitimately have no other skills. Unless someone out there is willing to pay me to look at expensive LA real estate? **What types of books do you like reading?**

I try to read a diverse mix of writers across fiction and non-fiction. Reading widely and from outside your own experience will make you a better and more informed writer (and maybe a better and more informed person, too). **Three books you've recently loved?** *Inferno (a poet's novel)* by Eileen Myles, *Dropbear* by Evelyn Araluen and *Love and Virtue*, a forthcoming debut novel by Sydney writer Diana Reid.

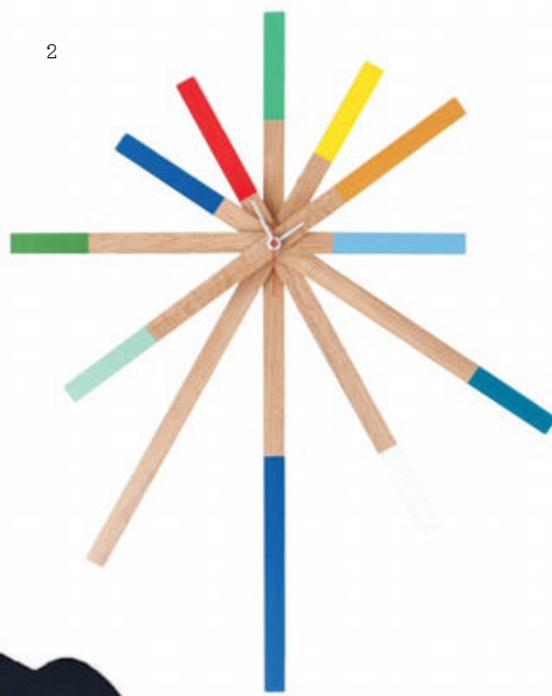
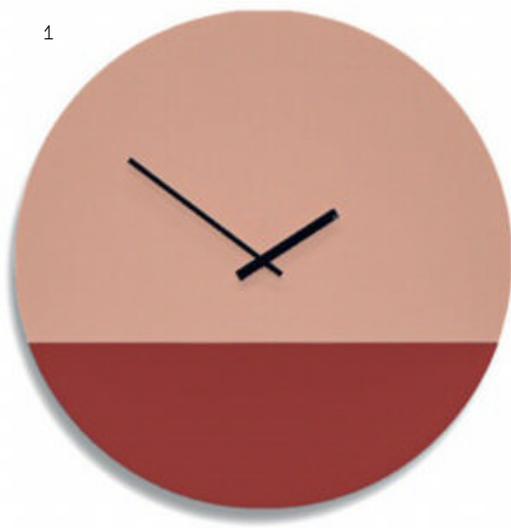


## NARDI SIMPSON

**Have you always been into writing?** I've always been fascinated by the way words work, how combinations can evoke bodily responses, and how strings of words melt together to create their own momentum. My first foray into the world of writing was transcribing song lyrics. I'd tape radio shows then listen back and write the lyrics down. **What's your book about?** *Song of the Crocodile* follows three generations of a family in an outback country town. It's a story told above, upon and below the land and focuses on the relationships the land fosters, creates and tears apart. **What do you want readers to take away from it?** I wanted to examine how people, black and white, relate to 'place'; how the forces in its creation affect relationships, and in turn, how relationships affect the spirit of the landscape. I hope people can brush against First Nations language, relationships and worldviews and see a bit of themselves within them. **How did you get your first book published?** I entered the manuscript into the black&write! Indigenous writing fellowship with the State Library of Queensland. It was mainly for feedback, but I was lucky enough to win. That led to a year of editing with two First Nations editors, then six months with my publisher, Hachette. I feel so grateful to everyone for the support and love they showed my words. **Hardest part of writing a book?** Settling on a plot I was confident in. I have a lot of things I want to say, and in the past I've done that through songwriting. Writing a novel, at times I felt lost and overwhelmed, but when I just let the narrative develop and unfold, the story showed me what it wanted to be. **And the best part?** I loved the editing process – with guidance from others, really digging down deep into the concepts and construction. **Why do you write?** I have a lot of things to say about First Nations history, culture, language and connection. I want to put that on the page for my family and community so we can see ourselves and our stories in the things we read. **Do you have any other jobs?** Oh man, I do *heaps* of jobs to keep afloat. I teach a choir at the Sydney Conservatorium, I'm a writer-in-residence at a school, I do regular gigs with my band and take any performance, speaking, workshopping and project work I can. When I write, it's calming and good for my soul. **Will you write another book?** Definitely, and I want to do it completely differently. I want to push myself to write in a style I normally wouldn't; engage with plot, language and characters in a way that challenges me; and connect to a story I have to search for and shape. **Three books you've recently loved?** *Throat* by Ellen Van Neerven, *The Rain Heron* by Robbie Arnott and *Love Objects* by Emily Maguire. ✨



Scan the QR code to find books from these ace authors – plus some other frankie recommendations.



## on the clock

TICK-TOCK, THESE FANCYPANTS TIMEKEEPERS ARE WAITING.

1. TOO Designs T00 tone clock in salmon/oxide, rrp \$155, [toodesigns.com](http://toodesigns.com). 2. Senkki Starburst clock, rrp \$168, [senkki.etsy.com](http://senkki.etsy.com). 3. KOOKOO Singvögel wall clock in dark green, rrp \$139.90, [hardtofind.com.au/store/the-design-gift-shop](http://hardtofind.com.au/store/the-design-gift-shop). 4. Picomodi Sunflower and Bee wall clock, around \$41, [society6.com/budikwan](http://society6.com/budikwan). 5. The Labrador Co. tail-wagging clock, around \$89, [thelabradorcompany.co.uk](http://thelabradorcompany.co.uk). 6. Letterfolk Elemental wood wall clock, around \$65, [letterfolk.com](http://letterfolk.com). 7. KIBARDIN Foldable Transformer clock in black/multicolour, around \$71, [kibardindesign.com](http://kibardindesign.com). 8. Schoolhouse Electric clock in industrial yellow, around \$373, [schoolhouse.com](http://schoolhouse.com). 9. Lorien Stern Shark Park wall clock, around \$41, [society6.com/lorienstern](http://society6.com/lorienstern)

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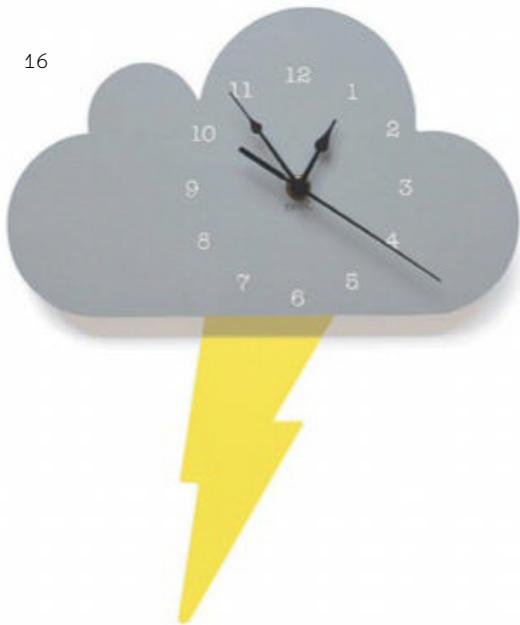
14



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18



10. Lavinia's Tea Party kitchen plate wall clock, around \$44, [laviniasteaparty.etsy.com](http://laviniasteaparty.etsy.com). 11. Cynthia Frenette Oh For F's Sake wall clock, around \$41, [society6.com/cynthiaf](http://society6.com/cynthiaf). 12. Sunday's Daughter Wooden Modern Geometric clock, around \$72, [sundaysdaughter.com](http://sundaysdaughter.com). 13. Flow Line Two Living Vases wall clock, around \$41, [society6.com/flowline](http://society6.com/flowline). 14. Kikkerland Cross Stitch clock, around \$26, [kikkerland.com](http://kikkerland.com). 15. Naoshi My Aquarium wall clock, around \$61, [naoshi.etsy.com](http://naoshi.etsy.com). 16. Nest Accessories Cloud clock, rrp \$69, [nestaccessories.etsy.com](http://nestaccessories.etsy.com). 17. Minä Perhonen Yamanami clock, around \$210, [mina-perhonen.jp](http://mina-perhonen.jp). 18. One Sunday Morning Flying Bird wall clock, rrp \$99, [onesundaymorning.com.au](http://onesundaymorning.com.au) ❁



# never said motel

THIS REFLECTIVE PERFORMANCE EXAMINES THE CONCEPT OF UNSPOKEN WORDS.

Words **Marieke Hardy**

Without meaning to completely bum you all out, I'm going to start this piece with the following icy slap of information: you're going to die. And all your friends will die, and your family, and your dogs (this particular one REALLY isn't fair, and to be honest, I haven't completely reconciled it, because dogs are perfect), and your ex-lovers, all of them, even the ones you never got over. It's such a brutal and painful thing to consider. I know, I *know*. But even still, I try to remind myself of it constantly, because it's important.

It makes me reflect on the things I've never said, the ones that long ago got stuck in my throat because they were too hard or too painful or raw or embarrassing to air. It makes me strive to reach out to those I've hurt or lost. To say thank you, and sorry, and goodbye, and I love you. To know that, should my time among the living end this very afternoon (and I hope it doesn't; I still haven't read all of Jim Dodge's back catalogue), I'll have left behind some closed doors for those who once played a significant role in my story.

Sometimes we don't get the chance to speak our truth. People melt away from our lives and we're left carrying utterances on our lips like powdered sugar. Sometimes it's not safe to go back, and wiser to hold our unsaid words close to our sore hearts to heal alone. Sometimes the boundaries are harsh and unmoving and those we've hurt no longer want to make space to hear what we have to tell them. We need to respect their wishes, too.

In her art piece, *Never Said Motel*, Melbourne writer and performer Tamzen Hayes interrogates the concept of Words Unspoken. It's raw and vulnerable, a heady combination of performance, nostalgia, letting go and healing. Taking place in the confines of a motel room, *Never Said Motel* asks audience volunteers to play the role of real-life figures in Tamzen's intimate world, helping her tease out conversations that have, until this point, only happened in her mind.

Tamzen's motivation for creating the show is borne less of a fear of mortality and more of her propensity for over-thinking – she admits she walks away from most conversations in her life hashing over the numerous things she “should have said” in the moment. “It loops around in my brain so much that sometimes, if they're a friend, I have to text them afterwards to explain myself,” she says. “Otherwise I can't sleep! I just toss and turn and have imaginary conversations.”

There's a lot to love about this project, but let's start with the space: a motel. (In the past, Tamzen – with the assistance of producer Annie Bourke – has performed the work in a black box as part of the Melbourne Writers Festival and, in a moment of creative symmetry, as part of regional art project OK Motels.) *Never Said Motel* takes place in just one room. The aesthetic is incredibly specific, leaning into those cheesy, vintage, pastel-saturated boxes where over decades, weary travellers (or naughty philanderers) have passed out, argued, wept, jerked off, broken up and fallen for the age-old trick of sampling the pillow mint, only to discover it's a complimentary bar of soap. Tamzen has a romantic connection to old motels, finding particular inspiration in a road trip across America in an RV. “We stopped at quite a few roadside motels and I fell in love not only with the aesthetic, but the way these somewhat unassuming buildings hold on to so many stories,” she says.

It's true that motel rooms can act as some strange bubble of disconnection from the tedious minutiae of our lives – in that generic, sealed-off box we can trick ourselves into thinking the

rules no longer apply. We eat toast out of a paper bag, drink from miniature bottles and experiment with opening every hand lotion and conditioner, mixing them together in the bath to create a tower of aromatic bubbles. Motel rooms can occupy the same blurry moral landscape as airports: timeless, lawless, free of responsibility and of natural light (those blackout curtains can confuse the shit out of a particularly jetlagged traveller). Star-crossed lovers often meet in motels due to the 'neutral' territory, while lonely corporates strive to connect in a strange city. It's a *mélange* of fluidity and feelings.

Tamzen agrees. “There's something about the transitory nature of a motel room that really resonated with the idea of people coming and going through your life,” she says. “In the show, I – the central character – stay in one place while different people enter the space, enter my life, and change me in some way when they leave again. Motels only get a glimpse into people's lives, and usually a part that's in flux – they're travelling, between homes, meeting in secret.”

Tamzen's background as a maker is varied. She's done everything from theatre to TV commercials, even enjoying a stint as a PA on Channel 9's *Lego Masters*. “I've always had a secret desire to do stand-up comedy, but just standing on stage with a microphone seems too exposing and a bit naked,” she says. “So I guess this is my hybrid performance.” *Never Said Motel* isn't the first time she's put herself on the line for her art practice, but it's definitely her most vulnerable work – not least due to the dangers of manifesting ghosts.

“Once I started writing *Never Said Motel*, I had a joke that it was messing with the universe because I kept having encounters with the people I was writing about, even if I hadn't seen them in years,” she says. “One moved back from overseas, I bumped into another in the street, and another just started contacting me out of the blue. All these people who were basically out of my life just kept reappearing.” It's also a risk, of course, to use audience volunteers in a live art performance – especially when requesting they help you with emotional bruises of your own. But it works – Tamzen's openness about her past has inspired others to share their own unspoken words. Some of her favourite contributions include:

“Wash your towels.”

“I was too afraid to leave.”

“I'm a person, not a plaything.”

“I wish I was as beautiful as your ex.”

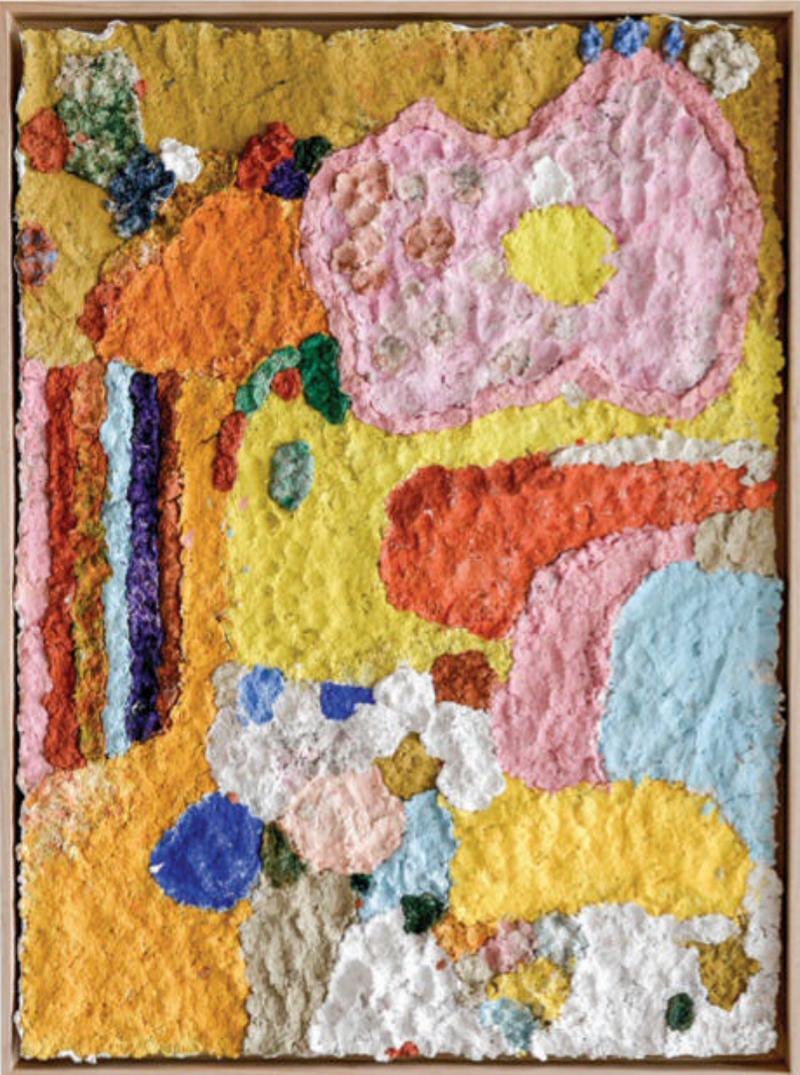
“I'm sorry.”

Although the audience members are just standing in for a 'real person' in Tamzen's past, she says each performance is a release. “Letting these words out into the world can take the burden of holding on to them away.”

Tamzen is grateful for the opportunity to look back at past emotional entanglements and reflect on her own place within them (“I keep journals and have done for the past 15 years, so I actually got to go through them all and see how I was feeling at the time of some of the stories in the show,” she says), and has aspirations for future iterations of *Never Said Motel* that include anonymous stories from audience members. She hopes those who experience the show will connect with the universal themes of regret, heartbreak and hope, and feel some catharsis from the voice she gives to their own unspoken truths.

Given my cheery (look, I find it cheery) fascination with death, I like to think I'm pretty clear on my 'Never Said' front. When a big and beautiful ex-love died not long ago (he and I had said everything we needed to by that point: I'm sorry and I forgive you and I love you; we were lucky) I took some time to consider any other people I needed to say something to, and wrote two once-dear humans in my life letters. I didn't expect replies; I just wanted to give oxygen to some final soft, loving openness before closing the door for good. There's comfort in knowing it's a completed circle.

When I ask Tamzen if there are still things she wishes she'd said, she's quick to say yes, but acknowledges that performing *Never Said Motel* over and over is ultimately a healing experience. “The more I say some of these words, the more my feelings shift. Some lines have morphed from sadness to confusion or anger, and I've realised I'm finally grieving, going through the stages. Finally letting go.” ❀



# trial and textures

morgana celeste's art proves a little experimentation never goes astray.

**Hello! Tell us a bit about yourself.** I live in Naarm/Melbourne and do a lot of different activities every week: I have a job making ice-cream, run a floral studio with my friend Meg called Candy MT, and make these sculptural pulp artworks.

**What is your background in art?** I don't particularly have one; I'm a fashion school dropout. But I went to a Steiner school, so everything was about drawing and making and crafting – shout out to the rainbow knitted recorder bag I made in primary school.

**Where did the idea of making art with paper, cement and paint come from?** It was a happy rainy-day experiment. Not having formal training means I don't always think to use technical or sophisticated materials, because I haven't been exposed to them. I often try to make things with what I have at home or can easily find. I'm quite impatient and like to jump straight into an idea without having to hire special equipment or do a course, so that was a big part of working with these materials. I could take my time and really get to understand their limits.

**What specific techniques do you use in your pieces?** Pulping paper, squishing paint and cement and water together, shredding, noticing things, and moving between an open mind and a closed, analytical mind.

**How did you learn these different techniques?** Partly the internet, but the most powerful technique I've ever found is being fearless in the face of a creative attempt that doesn't go to plan. Now I look at something that doesn't turn out as expected and check to see if there's something I can learn from it. It didn't come naturally; it's a resilience I exercised. Why is a creative failure so deeply embarrassing, even when no one is watching?! I still don't know.

**What do you love about this style of making?** Working with a medium that's hard to control completely means there's a lot of room for spontaneity. Because I'm squishing paint through the paper fibres

and sculpting shapes with my hands rather than a paintbrush, it's much more tactile and physical, and feels like I have more of an active role in each piece. It's intuitive and there's no time to agonise over something; you just have to make a decision.

**Is there anything particularly tricky about it?** Choosing colours is sometimes tricky – there are just so many great colours, and I love orange so much that it can be a real challenge not to use it in every painting! The trickiest part, though, is not trying to please everyone with my art and staying true to my own taste.

**What kind of feeling are you trying to express?** I like to express feelings of carefree, easy-going optimism, of gentleness and surprise. I aim to draw attention to moments that can get overlooked because they're small or quiet, like a bump-in with a friend on the street that turns into an aperitivo hour, or finding one perfect stripe or speckle on a flower petal. Those sorts of things are my favourite kinds of treasures.

**How long do you take with each piece?** Because the cement starts setting as soon as it's wet, I have to work quickly and all at once. I draw out some shapes and designs onto a big piece of paper, then it's almost like a paint-by-numbers exercise when I apply the pulp over the top. In summer, I can have a piece ready in a day or two because I dry them in the sun, but in colder months, they can take a week or more to fully dry.

**What are your biggest creative inspirations?** FOOD. Desserts and frosted icing. Textures you want to eat but can't, like mohair. Memories from my childhood that I'm trying to call back to life. Plants and the way we interact with them. People like Iris Apfel who are maximalists. And colour. I just can't get enough of that stuff.

**Where can we see more of your lovely art?** Online at [morganceleste.com](http://morganceleste.com) or on Instagram at [@morgana\\_celeste\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/morgana_celeste_art). ❀

# everybody has a story

ashkan mehrnejad came to australia  
as an international student.

AS TOLD TO EMMA DO

Coming to Australia will always be the thing that changed my life forever. When I was growing up in Tehran, Iran, family from all over the world would visit and tell us how things were culturally limited there. My family is very open and not particularly traditional or religious, so we would talk about these things. We were middle class and had a decent life, but I always had this feeling I could leave and do better, even though there was no war or economic issues at that time. As I got older, I became awakened to Iran's totalitarian government.

I was very observant as a kid. I could see how school life was different to home life. You couldn't be openly non-religious – school was strictly Muslim. At school, we didn't talk about the wine at parties, because we had to be good, obedient Muslim boys. I remember being slapped by the teacher – that kind of stuff happened on a daily basis – and realising there was a lack of respect for human rights. When I was nine, I had the chance to visit family in the UK. The moment the plane was out of Iran's borders, everyone pulled their headscarves off. I thought, "Why can't people live the way they want in Iran?" I pieced all these experiences together and knew I didn't want to live there.

My mum supported my idea to do high school overseas. When I was 14, I got accepted into a music conservatory in Vienna (I'd played violin from the age of eight). I was preparing to move to Austria when my visa got rejected. It's extremely hard to get a visa as an Iranian – even genuine tourists get refused because countries think you might overstay and claim asylum. After that, Mum researched other countries where I could study, work and eventually live. For my 16th birthday, I found out I'd been admitted to high school in Australia. I was really surprised and crying in disbelief. There was still uncertainty over the visa (my brother's Australian visa ended up being rejected), but nine months later, I arrived.

I was 16 and had travelled by myself. Still, the 20-hour plane journey felt so long; I thought, "I'm never going back, it's too troublesome!" It was all so different, but I was on a high when I landed. We didn't get to pick the school or the host family I'd stay with, but luckily, my host was so lovely. I lived with her for three years and she became my Australian mother. Later on, she told me she memorised my name by rhyming 'Ashkan trashcan' – not great, but at least she made an effort!

Before going into regular high school, I had to do six months of English language school where the majority of students were from countries like China and Vietnam. It was interesting because I could see what it was like to be a teenager across all these cultures. When I went into high school, the Aussie students really embraced me – they were so friendly and I ended up making lifelong friends. I do remember having to defend Iran for the first few years, being like, "No, I didn't ride a camel! Yes, women can drive!" Iran is a beautiful, diverse country, but when you say you're from the Middle East people picture an oppressed person in a warzone or hot desert. Little did they know, I used to walk through snow to get to school!

From year 11, I actually felt like a local – maybe because my English was decent to begin with (though my high-school essays were terrible). I had to progress fast for year 12 exams, too. How was I going to compete with local students in their own language? There was so much pressure on me. My family had spent a big chunk of their savings to get me there, so I couldn't relax – even being at a public high school cost \$12,000 a year. A big weight lifted off my shoulders when I got into a pharmaceutical science degree. Unfortunately, by the time I got to university (which cost \$33,000 a year), Iran was going through huge sanctions. The value of the



Iranian toman decreased dramatically, which made it much harder for my family to support me. I ended up working as a disability carer to support myself through my studies. The job was really fulfilling, but I envied people who didn't have to work as much. I would do night shifts then go straight into class. That was really tough.

I didn't experience a big divide between myself and local students – maybe because there wasn't much of a Persian community around. I had to have friends from everywhere. The support for international students is quite Asian-focused, which is fair given there are many coming from Asia, but I couldn't relate to that international student culture. I also think people who immigrate at a later age sometimes surround themselves with others from the same culture. But when I was in my early 20s, I felt like I couldn't fully relate to Iranian culture. I was in this in-between, not fully connecting with Iranian or Australian life.

The toughest aspect of my journey as an international student, though, has been the bureaucracy of visas. Many students go back to their home country when they finish uni, but I didn't want to. The conditions in Iran deteriorated after the Green Movement protests in 2009, and many people tried to leave. If I went back, I'd have to do compulsory military service; my passport would be confiscated. I'd done this whole degree in English – I'd gone too far to go back. In hindsight, I think one of the reasons I left Iran early was to be my true self. I was teased for being feminine at school, and I sort of knew I was interested in boys, but at 16, I wasn't really thinking about it. At 19 in Australia, I fully faced my sexuality and came out to friends and family. My family was supportive, but telling them from afar is different – I don't know how it would have gone if I'd been living with them in a country where you could be hanged for homosexuality.

After finishing my degree, I kept getting job rejections due to my student visa. It hit me then that I was a foreigner. Even though I was dating Australians, going to their weddings and funerals, I wasn't Australian. I could have been deported at any moment. I tried applying for the skilled migration visa, but needed a year's experience in one of the relevant fields after graduation. I couldn't get a year-long job straight out of uni, though, because my student visa was expiring and getting a company to sponsor you is extremely difficult. Even though I'd started work as a graduate chemist in a skincare laboratory, that wasn't enough. It was a dead end.

It took a lot of money and a lot of lawyers to stay. It became a traumatic experience. I thought I'd come the 'right' way (even though there is no wrong or right way, really). But no one cared. In the end, I was eligible for a humanitarian visa, because I disclosed to my lawyer that I'm gay and my sexuality is discriminated against in Iran. I hadn't wanted to take that path because it's an even tougher and slower route, but it ended up being the only way. I had to get statements from friends and people I'd dated to prove my sexuality. After three years in limbo on a bridging visa, fighting anxiety and depression and not knowing what was going to happen, I got my permanent residency. I'm so grateful for that.

People think international students can just come here and stay, but they don't know how hard it is. International students aren't only from privileged backgrounds – some are really here to change their lives. There are moments when I think, "This is so cool – I left my country at 16, studied at one of the best universities in the world, and now I'm 28 and working in cancer research." It's amazing. Your hometown isn't necessarily your birthplace – it's where you and your values belong. Where you can have a life, raise a family and have dreams. ❀



## going through the lotions

IT HAPPENED: WENDY SYFRET  
BECAME A HAND CREAM LADY.

Growing up, hand cream mystified me. It seemed to be everywhere: cluttering supermarket aisles, spilling from handbags, crowding bathroom drawers and oozing between fingers. My mother is a hand cream lady. Vaseline Intensive Care is her yellow elixir of choice. She marinates in the stuff, just as her mother did – although Gran was a lily of the valley girl. My sister followed in their footsteps (or handprints, as it were). Her teenage bedroom, a sanctuary I was rarely invited into, was adorned with Body Shop pots and pharmacy travel tubes.

Whenever my mum got carried away with an application, leaving her hands too slick to grip a steering wheel or mug of tea, she'd instruct me to hold out my own paws. The excess cream would be deposited via a hurried massage of sorts. For a moment, I'd join a lineage of glistening women. I enjoyed it – a mini-pass into the world of adult rituals. But afterwards, I was left holding my sticky appendages away from my body, scared to touch anything in case I left greasy fingerprints or attracted household residue. It was all kind of gross.

My relatives weren't the only ones devoted to moisture. They were part of a silky cult with members everywhere. On TV and in movies, women seemed traumatised by the spectre of dry hands: they oiled themselves constantly, dramatically rubbing and reapplying lotions in front of huge dressing tables and steamy mirrors, or before crawling into clean beds. I shuddered at the thought of being so moist beneath sheets, feeling them cling to my body. It made my skin crawl.

That was until about two years ago, when some mysterious chemical change occurred. I was clear of puberty, decades away from menopause, pregnancy-free and generally familiar with the circuits of my own physical existence. Still, something was shifting. My hands – unremarkable, usually clean, and largely drama-free – started to occupy my attention. They looked the same but felt strangely tight. I was *aware* of my skin and its rivets in a way I hadn't been before. One day, while absentmindedly browsing at the chemist, I saw that iconic yellow tube and, as instinctually as a bird building a nest, I grabbed it. So began my transformation into a hand cream lady.

Soon my home was littered with product experiments. I bought creams compulsively, searching for the unique mix of rich-but-not-tacky, pleasant-smelling-but-not-sickening, thick-but-not-gummy that spoke to my needs. Personally, I favour an oatmeal base, though I'll take shea butter if necessary. Cocoa is too rich, and anything perfumed beyond a chemist's impression of a baby is nauseating.

I accepted my evolution as a personal (albeit hereditary) journey until last year, when a deluge of hand-sanitising and washing ushered the wider population into my wake. The pandemic reshaped our lives and habits – and our hands changed along with our world. They cracked and dried, chapped and roughened. Even those blessed with the smoothest, most perfectly sebum-balanced paws felt the effects and found themselves suddenly aware of this subculture that existed just below their fingertips. Hand cream entered the global discourse, clogging articles, phone calls and Zoom conversations. Journalists investigated the best ingredients, products and brands, painstakingly educating a new generation on the globs and dollops me and my brethren knew as well as the backs of our dewy hands.

As a result, hand cream sold out everywhere. I was forced back to the abandoned tubes and lint-filled pots I'd previously tossed aside for infractions as minor as 'leaves a powdery finish'. All around the world, across borders, genders and occupations, people became hand cream ladies. So now, as life begins to feel like some form of normal (and thankfully, as hand cream supplies stabilise), let me officially welcome you all with open arms and smooth, slightly sticky hands. ❁

'*One Hundred Days* is the tale of mothers and daughters the world over – the relationships we navigate, the weight of our histories, and how, no matter the fractures life throws between us, our daughters will always hum us home. Pung's characters are so real, I could feel them in the room. There is no word out of place, no sentence that doesn't sing with poetry. This is truly fiction at its fiercest. It is a masterpiece, a triumph – Pung's greatest work yet.'

**MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE**

'*One Hundred Days* tells a story about growing up, discovering the difference between love and control, and taking responsibility. I loved the details: they spoke of a whole world. How I admired this young, determined protagonist. The book is wonderful.'

**SOFIE LAGUNA**

'What is astounding about *One Hundred Days* is that while it is fearlessly honest about the damage family members can inflict on one another, it is also full of forgiveness and harmony and grace. Pung's discernment and command as a writer is astonishing, elating. I adore this book.'

**CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS**



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## winona ryder fan club

DARK, PECULIAR AND ENDLESSLY QUOTABLE: JO WALKER RECALLS THE GREATEST HITS OF A '90S ICON.

**REALITY BITES (1994)** Who among us has not dreamt of dancing to “My Sharona” in a convenience store, wearing a questionable frock made of doilies or nibbling on a young Ethan Hawke’s beard? If these things are not on your to-do list, then you probably haven’t seen *Reality Bites* yet. Ryder plays Lelaina, fresh out of college with dreams of being a documentary maker. She’s working her first shitty and unfulfilling job in TV, until she gets fired and starts working a shitty and unfulfilling fast-food job instead. Because this is the ‘90s, there are plenty of grunge gigs and DIY bongos with best pal Vickie (the hilarious Janeane Garofalo). Plus, a love triangle between Lelaina, hot slacker Troy (Hawke) and yuppie Michael (Ben Stiller). For a lot of people, this was a film that helped define Generation X (angsty! Ironic! Retro-obsessed!), and the soundtrack’s pretty iconic, too.

**STAR TREK (2009)** Live long and prosper, friends. This reboot of the original *Star Trek* characters (Kirk, Bones, Scotty and all) features a lot of Beastie Boys tunes, as well as a bunch of time-travelling aliens. It also features Ryder as Spock’s human mum, dressed in a wardrobe that suggests Vulcans have really weird ideas about boobs. Ryder’s role here is small but significant – it was hyped as a career comeback after her 2001 conviction for shoplifting \$5000 of merch from Saks Fifth Avenue. Somehow, it didn’t stick. The real comeback didn’t happen till 2016, when she started talking to fairy lights in *Stranger Things*. How many terrible men did Hollywood forgive and facilitate while this waifish acting angel was shunned for 15 years? Plenty. What can we blame for the fact we collectively missed out on years of awesome Winona Ryder movie projects? The patriarchy. Is she any good in *Star Trek*? Of course! She’s great!

**BEETLEJUICE (1988)** Barbara and Adam (Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin) are a wholesome young couple who also happen to be dead. When their house is invaded by living newcomers, they turn to professional spook and gross undead pest Betelgeuse (Michael Keaton) to help drive them out. As Lydia Deetz, Ryder is almost too goth to function, and seems more at ease with the dead than with her own family – even though her stepmum is Moira from *Schitt’s Creek*. It’s an epic and demented battle between living and dead. All this culminates in a haunted prawn cocktail sing-along and an attempt at forced supernatural marriage, and it’s as weird and gonzo and dark and silly as you’d expect from a vintage Tim Burton flick. (Ryder also worked with the director on *Edward Scissorhands* and *Frankenweenie*.) There aren’t too many feel-good exorcism films, but this is one of them.

**HEATHERS (1989)** What could be more iconic than four terrible white girls fighting over a red scrunchie while playing croquet and racking up a body count? In *Heathers*, the mean girls at school are the monsters you always thought them to be, and most of them have the same name. Then there’s Veronica (Ryder), a relative newcomer

to the popular group, who kind of hates her friends, and kind of accidentally starts murdering them alongside JD (Christian Slater), the cool new guy on the block. There’s no getting around the fact this satire is DARK, riffing on death, hate crimes, disordered eating and assault. It also manages to be camp, absurd, stylish and endlessly quotable, though, in that grand tradition of teen movies where high-school girls talk like jaded, 30-something drag queens (see also: *Bring It On*). As Veronica, Ryder is gorgeous and naïve and righteous and vengeful. In short: a gory delight.

**MERMAIDS (1990)** Let me sell you on this entire movie with one simple fact: Cher is the mum. Cher is Winona Ryder’s mum, and her arse looks amazing throughout. It’s the 1960s, and Charlotte (Ryder) is a Jewish teen with high anxiety levels who’s obsessed with becoming a Catholic nun. She’s also increasingly horny for Joe, an honest-to-god nunnery groundskeeper. Single mum Rachel (actual Cher!) is quirky and sexy and loud and smart and not too good at staying in one place for any length of time. Also, younger sister Kate (Christina Ricci) might be an Olympic swimming prodigy. Ryder is always great as the quirky and neurotic ‘nobody understands me!’ teen, and there are plenty of gentle cringe moments here, with Charlotte throwing herself dramatically onto her bed multiple times. Plus, Cher’s cover of “The Shoop Shoop Song” is a total banger.

**GIRL, INTERRUPTED (1999)** In 1967, being a depressed girl who also likes sex is enough to have you committed to a psychiatric hospital. Here, Ryder plays Susanna, who’s just been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and sent to an asylum. This is where America dumps its broken and its traumatised and its just-too-difficult, alongside those with genuine mental disorders. It’s all pretty grim, but the patients form an odd kind of sisterhood and there’s joy amid the suffering. Most of that comes from rebellious sociopath Lisa (Angelina Jolie) and a girl gang stacked with ‘90s star power: Brittany Murphy, Elisabeth Moss, Clea DuVall and more. This is really a film about what it takes to fit in when the structures around you (government, society, family) are cracked. The country sending its boys off to die in foreign wars is also the country waging a quieter battle against its young women.

**BRAM STOKER’S DRACULA (1992)** There are so many gloriously weird and sublime parts to Francis Ford Coppola’s stab at the Dracula legend that the silly bits are now just straight-up iconic. Gary Oldman’s vampire has two upturned ice-cream cones for hair? Sure. Tom Waits eats flies with extremely camp enthusiasm? Of course! Keanu Reeves is a London lawyer with an English accent so bad it makes you question your sanity? OK! Ryder plays Mina Harker – wife to Keanu, best friend to the vamp-sex-positive Lucy Westenra (Sadie Frost), and object of Dracula’s obsessive attention. It’s a lush and romantic take on the original tale – containing more supernatural orgasms than you’d really expect – and Ryder makes a wonderful 19th-century good girl seduced by gothic darkness. Shot using only old-fashioned, on-set special effects (Coppola thought CGI would ruin the period aesthetic), the film now feels timeless rather than dated. And a breathy Ryder with big bite-me eyes is always in style.

**STRANGER THINGS (2016–)** As Joyce Byers, Ryder is a mum searching for her missing son, Will. Unfortunately, she lives in the kind of 1980s Steven Spielberg/Stephen King town where stories of lost children don’t always end nicely. Strong-willed but freaked out, Joyce soon realises that something supernatural is going on. And, as an audience, we all realise a paranoid chain-smoker doggedly following paranormal leads looks an awful lot like a paranoid chain-smoker sincerely losing her shit. Ryder is frayed and tragic and feisty and magnetic in her first television role – a reminder of what an acting powerhouse she’s been all these years. If the series that gave us a host of new pop-cultural obsessions (the Upside Down, demogorgons, Eggos, #justiceforbarb), not to mention a newfound respect for synthwave tunes, also gives us the second coming of Winona Ryder, then that can only be a good thing. ❀



## lego lost at sea

TRACEY WILLIAMS CATALOGUES  
PLASTIC DEBRIS THAT WASHES  
UP FROM THE OCEAN.

Words **Emma Do**

Here's something you might not realise: every year, more than 1000 shipping containers are lost at sea. In February 1997, when a freak wave hit the cargo ship Tokio Express, 62 containers alone toppled overboard, carrying with them nearly five million pieces of LEGO. It wasn't long before Tracey Williams, a lifelong beachcomber, noticed bits of plastic seagrass washing ashore near her parents' seaside home in Devon, England. And nearly three decades on, Tracey and other folks in the neighbouring county of Cornwall continue to find little plastic flowers, yellow life jackets, scuba tanks and spear guns down on the beach. (Rather fittingly, much of the lost LEGO appears to have been nautical-themed.)

"The ship headed off for repairs, but many of the containers are thought to have sunk in the seabed," Tracey explains. "We tend to find LEGO after winter storms and high spring tides, when surging waves eat into the sand dunes. That releases the plastic that's been trapped there for decades." Over the years, curious collectors have shown off their toy treasures at local venues, turned them into artwork and jewellery, and kept jars full of their finds. At one point, there were even quests to find the 'holy grail': LEGO dragons and octopi.

Gathering washed-up LEGO was just a bit of fun for Tracey and her kids at first, but as pieces were still drifting ashore so many years later, she decided to start recording her finds. She set off on daily walks, collecting, sorting and photographing plastic debris, before posting the results on her Facebook page. She's been on a "voyage into ocean plastic" ever since, mapping cargo spills and LEGO sightings around the world with the help of a community of beachcombers.

"Collecting LEGO has made me realise how much plastic there is at the bottom of the sea," Tracey says. "Some LEGO found in fishing nets is in near-perfect condition, despite having been on the sea floor for more than 20 years." It's not just toy bricks that Tracey regularly finds, either. Various bits of junk from container spills – including shoes, detergent bottles and knee pads – are carried to Cornwall via the Gulf Stream and North Atlantic Drift. She's even found a mysterious Tjipetir block, a 100-year-old rubber-like slab from Indonesia. "Cleaning up after a cargo spill is often easier said than done," she notes. "Goods can be scattered far and wide." Tracey's written a book, *Adrift*, (due out later this year) to both tell the story of the great LEGO spill of 1997 and highlight what gets tossed overboard. "I hope it will raise awareness of plastic in the ocean, how long it lasts, and how far it floats." ❀

See more of Tracey's finds on Instagram at [@legolostatsea](#).



## an auckland jaunt

THE BETHS FRONTWOMAN ELIZABETH STOKES SHOWS US AROUND THE PLACE SHE CALLS HOME.

**Is there a distinctly Auckland sound?** I think it's pretty hard to tell from the inside. Auckland feels like a Goldilocks zone where it's big enough that there's a huge variety of music being made by many different music scenes, but it's also small enough that those music scenes aren't totally separate from each other. You're often playing in the same spaces, being played on the same radio stations, on the same lineups, etc. There's always amazing new music from friends and people I admire, then there's stuff I grew up listening to that has seeped into my bones without me even realising.

**Where to grab a bite?** When we're working, we always get dinner from Laojianghu Malatang, a Chinese place in the Lim Chhour Food Court on Karangahape Road. Bestie Café across the road is great for a coffee and breakfast, and we'll sometimes go to Peach Pit for a happy hour drink and dinner. Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) has seriously a lot of great food – I didn't realise until we left to go touring.

**Where to take someone on a date?** If things are going well enough that your date trusts you to take them on a boat, heading out to Tiritiri Matangi Island in the Hauraki Gulf is a pretty great day. It's a bird sanctuary and it's amazing seeing just how densely the forest would be populated with these dang birds if there were no predators around.

**Where to buy a record?** Our local favourite is Flying Out, which is Flying Nun's record store across the road from our studio.

The folks running the shop are strong proponents of local music and there are often all-ages instore events, which is really great. I'm also a fan of Real Groovy Records, an Auckland institution.

**Where to get touristy?** The best thing about Auckland is its proximity to nature, so you could head an hour west or north to a gorgeous beach, or a bush walk where you can spot even more birds. Or you could climb one of Auckland's many dormant volcanoes. Maungawhau (Mount Eden) is pretty central with a beautiful view of the city from the top, or you can get a ferry to Rangitoto, Auckland's youngest volcano, which is out in the gulf.

**Where to buy a great vintage outfit?** Karangahape Road will serve you very well. Crushes and Vixen do curated vintage clothes, the Red Cross shop is good for a bargain, and there are heaps of other secondhand-clothing stores along the strip.

**Where to discover a cool new band?** Rather than a place, I'm going to recommend you tune your radio dial to 95bFM. It's Tāmaki Makaurau's student radio station! Well loved and listened to the world over via its website and podcasts, it's such an important part of Auckland's musical fabric. The station's staff and volunteers are fiercely invested in music from Aotearoa and you're guaranteed to hear some of the best New Zealand has to offer. (Start with the *Morning Glory* show and the *Top 10* weekly countdown for new music.)

**Where to have a picnic?** I spend a lot of time walking to Western Springs Park, though the amount of goose poop on the ground makes it a challenging place to lay down a blanket. So maybe Cornwall Park? It's big and central and contains Maungakiekie (another volcano) and the Cornwall Cricket Club, where you can have a little bowl at the outdoor nets if you're so inclined.

**Best soundtrack for walking around the city?** I reckon give *Personal Best* by Chelsea Jade a listen. Chelsea and I have been close since we were kids making music together. She lives in LA now, but worked her butt off in Auckland, honing her songwriting to a razor-sharp point. *Personal Best* is a great record from start to finish and makes me think of growing up here. ❁



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## on the job

HANADA GHAZALA IS  
AN EMBRYOLOGIST.

As told to Giselle Au-Nhien Nguyen

As an embryologist, my job is essentially to take care of embryos – the earliest stage of human development. We form embryos by collecting eggs and sperm, putting them together, growing them and transferring them, and there's also gamete preservation ('gamete' is another name for our reproductive cells), because some people come through to freeze their eggs. We facilitate that, and we also do semen analysis. I'm involved in every step of the IVF process: collecting eggs, washing up the sperm, moving them, grading them, transferring them, injecting them, taking cells out – you name it, I'll do it.

There's no exact pathway towards this job. I fell into it, really. Originally, I was in scientific research – the problem in Australia is that you have to constantly fight for research funding. And the only way you can get funding is by proving that your research is doing something. You could spend years looking at something, then nothing results from it at all, so you lose your funding. That's what happened to me. It felt really discouraging, and after, I just kind of scrambled and googled 'I have a genetics degree, what do I do with it?' I enrolled for a master's of clinical embryology. I told myself if I didn't like the first class I was going to walk, but I was hooked – literally as soon as they started talking about the subject I went, "This is it, I know this is what I was meant to do."

Initially, a lot of the training was watching people do something, reading the protocol, then practising on mouse embryos. It was mostly just warming up embryos, washing up sperm (where you prepare them for insemination) and giving people checks, then as my time progressed, I started transferring embryos, injecting the eggs with sperm, doing biopsies and taking cells out of actual embryos.

“  
*there's still  
a massive  
stigma  
associated  
with IVF*  
”

On a typical IVF day, I'll go with the doctor to the surgery. We collect the eggs from the ovaries and they hand them off in special tubes. My job is to search for the eggs among the fluid and get them in a separate tube before they're taken to the laboratory. We wash them, and during that time, if they have a partner coming in who produces sperm, we'll have them do so and wash that up, too. (Basically, we separate the sperm from the fluid they're in and make sure we're getting the ones that swim best.) Once they're ready, we move them both into the same dish, with the egg on one side held by one needle and the sperm loaded into another needle. We inject it, then it's a waiting game. You come in the next day nice and early and check to see whether or not the egg is fertilised.

Most of the time it works, but if it doesn't, it tends to mean there's something underlying that we haven't considered. At that stage we go, "All right, what can we improve on so this doesn't happen again?" When it does work, there are usually enough fertilised eggs to continue on, and we watch as they develop so we can learn more about how the embryos form.

I'm working in a small clinic in Darwin, so I'm always bumping into someone I know, and I tend to know a lot about their personal lives. I know how many times they've come in and I know what their kids' names are, so when I talk to them on the phone I can say, "How's so-and-so going? You brought this up last time – is that resolved?" They're not just a number; they're a person, and they have this entire life that's not defined by what's happening when they come in to see us at the clinic.

In fact, I get very closely attached to some of the people who come through, and it breaks my heart when I see someone's name

appear again because it means the process hasn't worked. When I first started, I used to write a list of their numerical codes on a piece of paper when I did the transfers, because I told myself I was the determining factor for them getting pregnant. If they didn't get pregnant, my entire day would be shaped by that and I'd go, "Well then, I'm just going to go into the storeroom and stare at a wall." I would be so upset and take it to heart. These people have so much hope and we're basically the gatekeepers. The job takes a big emotional toll. You just have to learn to dissociate from it a little bit.

Once they finish IVF and have the child or are pregnant, a lot of people want to separate from us and what we do, because there's still a massive stigma associated with IVF. My favourite part of the job, though, is when people actually come through with their baby. One person came and asked for me, and she pointed at me and went to the kid, "Do you remember Hanada?" I said, "I remember when you were this big," like a tiny little finger. That's the thing with being an embryologist: the last time you see these people is at the transfer, so you put the embryo in, and unless you're able to keep tabs, you don't know if it took or not until you see them come through again. When you see the babies, you know the best-case scenario has happened.

I haven't met a single embryologist in my life who hasn't loved what they do. I absolutely adore it. It's a job that combines my love of science with my love of talking to people. There's a lot of extrinsic motivation in that you've got a personal investment in it, too – you want these people to be pregnant, and when they are, it's beautiful and it keeps you going. ❀

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# throwing shade

eleanor robertson dives into the history of the humble umbrella.

The modern umbrella is not a treasured object. You can buy a crappy one for a couple of bucks, if you don't mind using a low-quality collapse mechanism that feels like wrestling with an angry crab. Over a billion of these plastic nightmares are thrown away each year, stuffed unceremoniously into rubbish bins and left languishing in doorways with broken ribs and ripped canopies. If the average umbrella transmits any social meaning about its bearer, it's not one of wealth or status – carrying one simply tells the world you're too poor or too cheap to shell out for a taxi.

But this is a dramatic decline in prestige for the now-humble umbrella. For most of its 4000-year history, the umbrella has been the exclusive property of the rich and powerful. This association was so tight that in some places, like ancient Morocco and India, only the royal family was allowed to use them. Umbrellas – or more specifically, sun-shielding parasols (the name later came from the Latin word *umbra* meaning 'shadow') – were sort of like mid-air crowns, only appearing above the heads of people who were vested with serious clout. In 1780 BC, if you had the power to make an indentured serf follow you around holding a broolly over your head, it's likely you also had the power to kill him and sell his wife into slavery. In Ancient Greece, large, colourful umbrellas were carried by followers of the wine god Dionysus during festivals, symbolising the power of chaotic divinity. Apart from shading the royal visage and protecting cultic priests from light sprinkle, umbrellas were an unmistakable message from the holder to the peasants: don't mess with me, buddy.

And that makes sense when you consider the skilled craftsmanship involved in producing umbrellas, before you could just go up to the control panel of the BroollyMaker5000 Umbrella-Fabricating Machine and punch in "500, please". Before the invention of plastic (arguably a better time), umbrellas were made out of luxe materials like waxed silk; handmade, oiled paper; polished bamboo and whalebone. You can still find some umbrellas made by hand today – creations from the Pope's official umbrella maker, an 80-year-old, fourth-generation umbrella craftsman named Mario Talarico, start at about \$500. In Japan, traditional oil-paper umbrellas known as *wagasa* are still being manufactured by small umbrella company Tsujikura, which was established in 1690. One look at

these impressive objects is enough to understand how they came to mean beauty, money and royalty.

These high-class brollies are quite physically distinct from the average nylon-and-steel city umbrella you find wedged into a stormwater drain after a week of heavy rain. Full collapsibility is a relatively recent development in umbrella morphology, probably because King Xerxes I of Persia, who is pictured in 2500-year-old stone relief being shaded by a parasol, didn't need to cram his umbrella into his messenger bag before he hopped on the train home from work. The earliest umbrellas in Ancient Egypt were like a cross between a broolly, a fan and a palm leaf, often made with papyrus and peacock feathers and featuring no moving parts at all. Early folding umbrellas in Europe, from around the 17th century, were considered too delicate and feminine for use by men – perhaps getting soaked to shit in a rainstorm was a demonstration of bravery and virility.

Whatever the reasoning behind gendered umbrella vagaries, it seems universally true that the pre-modern umbrella was a potent store of social meaning, and this is reflected in its use as a literary symbol. Think of a British costume drama: how do you show that a young lady is feminine, delicate and perhaps available for marriage? Have her rest a cute little lacy parasol over her shoulder, of course. Mary Poppins' umbrella shows us she is whimsical, resourceful and a little bit magic, as well. Hard-boiled detectives in film noir carry big, intimidating umbrellas over their heads to protect their trench coat and trilby from the pouring, moody rain. And what better symbol of frazzle and frustration is there than an umbrella blown inside out by the wind? When a character's umbrella is the wrong way out, you know they're basically screwed.

"It is not every one that can expose 26 shillings' worth of property to so many chances of loss and theft," writes Robert Louis Stevenson in his essay *The Philosophy Of Umbrellas*. "So strongly do we feel on this point, indeed, that we are almost inclined to consider all who possess really well-conditioned umbrellas as worthy of the franchise." Making umbrella possession a prerequisite for voting rights is perhaps going a bit far, but you can see what Stevenson's getting at: umbrellas have a way of commanding respect. Taking a long, historical view, the umbrella's role as rain protection seems, well... almost incidental, really. ❀



# people are strange

brazilian fellow rafael silveira makes art  
that explores our surreal inner lives.

**What kind of art do you make?** Most of my works are oil paintings, sculptures and art installations. I'm also part of a textile art duo with my wife Flávia Itiberê. I think it's contemporary art with a retro-pop-op-psychedelic-surreal twist.

**How did you get started in the art-making business?** I have always drawn since I was a kid. As a teenager, I created comics and illustrations for several zines and magazines in Brazil. I studied fine arts at university, but my degree was in advertising. I worked for 10 years in the advertising and graphic design industries before finally being able to work full-time as an artist.

**Can you talk us through your creative process?** I think my process has two very different stages. First, the ideas come. They come fast, feeling very intuitive and visceral, like a message that just pops in my mind. After that, I start the slow process of bringing these ideas to the material world through various artistic techniques.

**What materials and techniques have you used here?** This series is oil paint on canvas. Before going to the canvas, I create the compositions digitally, like some kind of image construction process. Then it's all about painting. I like to use a very thin layer of paint, so the work appears to be 'inside' the canvas in some way. I also do a lot of brushwork so the viewer has this kind of strange feeling, like, "This is a painting? It's too soft; where are the brushstrokes?"

**The portraits are very surreal, and at times a little gruesome. Where does the inspiration come from?** This idea comes from a desire to understand how human beings feel and think in the intimate parts of their minds. Instead of just showing facial expressions like most portrait paintings, I wanted to create a portrait of each character's psyche. From inside, we're a strange mix of dreams, thoughts, feelings and human meat. We are gruesome creatures.

**Do you have a backstory in mind for each of your characters?** I don't think they are people, but moods. Not a specific feeling,

but the complex way we deal with what happens in our lives. We can't control what life brings us, but we can decide how to react. We make these small decisions all the time. These characters can be you or me, and that's really interesting. The spectators see themselves and their minds in these portraits. That's why the Brazilian curator Baixo Ribeiro called this series "Unportraits". I loved the term and adopted it in my production.

**What other things do you like to illustrate?** I feel very inspired by scientific illustration (botanical themes, animals, insects, human anatomy). I also like paper ephemera, old ads and packages. The strange energy of the collective unconscious inspires me. Classical painting motifs like still lifes, landscapes, portraits and allegories, as well.

**What puts you in the mood to create?** I'm in the mood most of the time – my mind is like a broken door in that it's almost always open. Sometimes I feel more deeply in the mood when I'm immersed in books or music, though. It feeds the energy monster inside with a culture banquet.

**What are you working on at the moment?** I'm working on several projects at the same time, including new exhibitions. I like to reserve some time in the studio to be experimental with ideas and materials, too. I create new categories of works, and sometimes those categories can blend together, which makes my work more diverse.

**What's one thing we should know about you?** I think I started to draw as a kid by imitating my older sister. When we were teenagers, she became sick. She died at the age of 33, after 17 years fighting against depression and schizophrenia. My journey inside the human mind started in the early years of her condition, when I was trying to figure out what was happening.

**Where can we see more of your work?** Online at [rafaelsilveira.com](http://rafaelsilveira.com) or on Instagram at [@rafael\\_silveira\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/rafael_silveira_art). ❁







## the no-go zone

SOME TOPICS SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHILE DRINKING WITH MATES, SAYS ELEANOR ROBERTSON.

Look. Typically, when I see my friends for beers, we exhaust subjects like politics, religion, insanity, constipation, masturbation and trash-talking beloved celebrities in about two hours. It's a real meeting of the minds, you might say. But there are some limits we try to respect.

**TRUE CRIME PODCASTS** Unless all your friends are women over retirement age, please keep that shit to yourself. True crime is a vortex of voyeurism, violence, fandom and, undergirding it all, thousands of people who Should Have Something Better To Do. Nobody wants to talk about blood-splatter analysis at the pub, firstly because it's morbid as hell and secondly because it is FAKE! All those CSI techniques are just made-up TV stuff cops use to retroactively justify whatever they've already decided to do. "Do you think the fluid stain in ep 5 of *Sickening Wife Murders* was the real deal?" No! Please just read a Mills & Boon and leave me out of this.

**WHETHER LIP BALM IS A SCAM OR NOT** Do you like turning your social time into a sort of fascist-versus-partisan skirmish in the middle of winter on a distant front the top brass has completely forgotten about? No? Well don't bring up lip balm. Someone will have heard the old story about ground glass in tubes of Carmex. Someone else will say you have to milk your own organic sheep and ferment

it at the end of a rainbow. Two people will peel off to conduct a duel over whether pawpaw ointment is "the second coming of Christ" or "another tube of fucking Vaseline, you complete idiot". Just say no.

**HAVING LOW SELF-ESTEEM** These days we tend to think of low self-esteem as an incorrect belief people hold about themselves, which you can counteract using OTT praise. This is why otherwise normal people say shit like, "You GODDESS, have my BABIES RIGHT NOW," underneath each other's completely average Instagram pics. Don't start on this topic around friends. You'll end up blowing insincere smoke up each other's bums until you wouldn't even trust each other to say whether the sun was shining outside or not. Compliments are potent psychoactives with counterintuitive rules and consequences, and they must be treated with respect.

**STREAMING SERVICES** Just such a downer. It starts with "Anyone seen anything good on Netflix lately?" and spirals into "Why are there so many different services, why isn't everything just on one big one"; "There's too much content, I barely remember what my family looks like"; "I think I saw something good on Disney+... or was it Binge... or SBS On Demand... oh fuck it, I can't remember"; "This isn't even any cheaper than getting cable TV back in the bloody 1990s"; "I just watch *Friends* reruns all the time anyway"; and "I've forgotten how to read a book, my brain is cooked, take me to the bare cliffs and leave me to die." No thank you.

**SYNTHETIC FABRICS** Saying this topic 'ruins the mood' is an abuse of the active voice. When it comes up, I *personally* ruin the mood. I consider polyester an extremely sinful fabric, one in whose pilling, plasticky texture is encapsulated the full tragedy of human hubris. Sometimes I can keep my mouth shut, but if I catch one look at an acrylic jumper after more than two standard drinks, it's all over. "Let me get this straight," I begin while my friends groan heavily at my bullshit. "We dig up fossilised dinosaurs, refine the goo created by their long-dead corpses, burn it to power our Bitcoin mining rigs, and turn the other half into clothing that feels awful, looks awful, gives you thrush and doesn't decompose. Make this make SENSE." No, I don't know why I still have friends either. ❀

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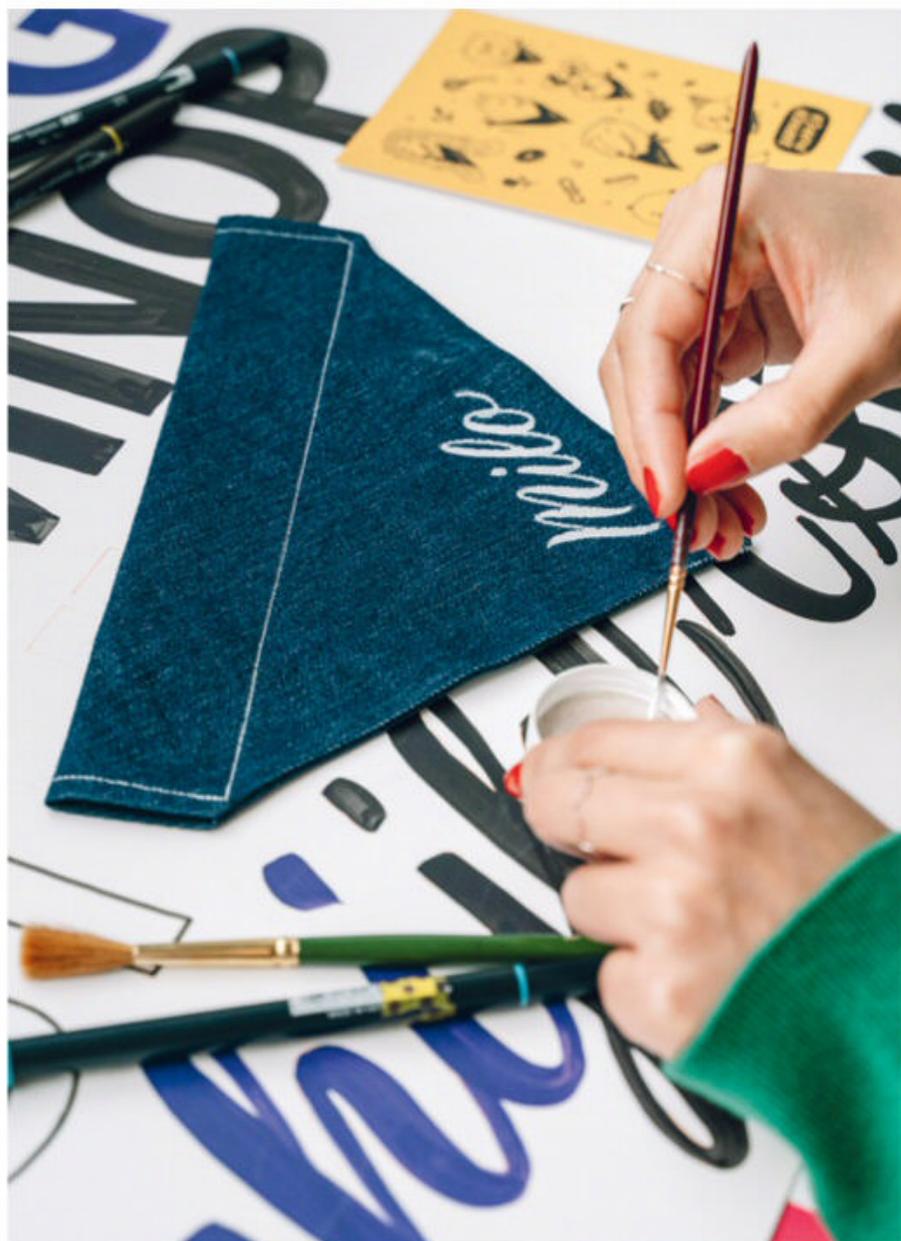
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# TURBO SMILE

IT'S  
ELECTRIC







## pooches with style

DESIGNER WANISSA SOMSUPHANGSRI BEGAN A PET-FOCUSED NEW BUSINESS DURING COVID LOCKDOWNS.

Interview **Emily Naismith** Photographs **Phoebe Powell**

**Hi Wanissa! Tell us a bit about yourself.** Hi! I'm a Bangkok-born designer and academic based in Melbourne. I run a business called Dapper Pupper, creating bandanas and pet portraits of dogs and cats. I'm also currently teaching design and illustration at LCI Melbourne. My work with The Letterettes involved live lettering and customisation, with occasional signage work, murals and campaigns.

**What's a regular work day like for you?** I often start the day with yoga, followed by a substantial breakfast, then I map out a to-do list. On the days I teach, I love going into LCI in Collingwood. All the other days, I work from home from my apartment in Melbourne's CBD. I focus best in the mornings, so I aim to get all the bigger tasks done then.

**Tell us a bit about Dapper Pupper.** Dapper Pupper is a project I started during Melbourne's lockdown. My sister Warisa (a ceramicist who makes the sweetest porcelain pieces) lent me her sewing machine. I picked up sewing and created some bandanas for dogs. I'm glad the lockdown gave me all this time to be creative and free.

**How did you come up with the idea?** I'm pretty crafty and often make homemade presents for friends. One Christmas, I hand-lettered some bandanas for friends' dogs. The fulfilling feeling of seeing my hand-painted pieces on such cute, furry beings is precisely what drove me to do more with the idea. I knew I wanted to design my own brand. I started sketching logos and looked into sustainable packaging.

**What does running Dapper Pupper involve?** Dapper Pupper is a one-woman show. I run everything myself from the branding to marketing, product design and the website. I draw the pet portraits and make the bandanas from scratch, too. A lot of trial and error goes into the process, and that is what keeps things interesting.

**Which has been your favourite pooch to draw?** It's so hard to answer because I love all dogs! If I had to choose, the best names I've lettered so far are Bean and Cricket. I love seeing how people name their dogs and putting a face to the name. It's the best feeling. I've also received a growing number of requests for cat portraits and bandanas. Nagano was my favourite cat to draw because he's so full of personality.

**How do you manage all the different aspects of your work?** I spend a few days a week at LCI, either teaching or preparing classes, and the rest is for Dapper Pupper or other freelance projects. I'm big on self-care, so I prioritise exercise, being with friends and family and being out in nature. I constantly check in with myself to make sure the work I'm doing aligns with my visions and goals.

**How did you find working on the MSI laptop?** I love how the touchscreen function allows me to work faster and more efficiently. Having used drawing tablets a lot, I find functions like pinch-to-zoom and fast scrolling on the laptop to be very user-friendly. I also like that I'm able to see lots of detail in my artwork due to the high pixel density. The battery lasts a long time, too, so I can work from anywhere without the need to keep it plugged in.

**Do you have any advice for people who want to start their own business?** My advice is to start with something you're passionate about and consider who your audience is. Also, remember to be kind to yourself when things don't go according to plan. We learn a lot when things go wrong. ❁



*This pup-filled chat was presented by MSI and their new Creator Z16 laptop. It has a true-colour touchscreen, super-high pixel density and long-lasting battery life so you can create all day without finding a power point. For more, head to [au.msi.com](http://au.msi.com)*

# LIFE ON THE BOX

four writers pitch an idea for a brand-new reality TV show.

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By  
Emily  
Naismith

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What's your Macca's drive-through order? Perhaps you like your burgers with extra pickles or entirely without them? Do you dabble in the breakfast menu at dinnertime, or are you a true renegade who dabbles in the regular menu at breakfast time? Perhaps you like your nuggets dipped in your strawberry thickshake? (May God have mercy on your soul.)

Whatever your Macca's order, it's usually an intensely private decision with the only witnesses being you, the staff member at the window and the passenger car seat (which now smells of burgers, fries and anticipation, PS). But if I get my way with the TV network bigwigs, we may have another witness: the entire population of this goddamn country. I'm pitching *Gogglebox*, but for Macca's drive-through orders.

You know you want to see it. Picture this: you watch the car drive up (ooh, a fancy new BMW) and try to guess their order in your head (Classic Angus vibes alongside a flat white). Then you

get to witness the awkward way they place their order (no one can nail ordering in a drive-through – it's a true challenge, especially without a full menu in an easily perusable format), then you get to hear their actual order (damn, six chicken nuggs and a water), plus the added bonus of the in-car chat. Angry dads telling their children to “check it, check it” before they drive off; hyper kids pestering their mum for the cheeseburger Happy Meal instead of the garden salad version (seriously, why bother even getting Macca's?); the group of mates buying some extra chips for the taxi driver to say thanks for detouring through the drive-through at 4am; the super-tired shiftworker deliriously singing along to the radio, adjusting the lyrics from ‘my lover’ to ‘cheeseburger’ on the fly.

It's intrusive and it's TV gold. In fact, I've already proved it works by unintentionally parking near the drive-through order box while I was eating a Big Mac in my car with the windows down. It was a truly fascinating scene. Long after my burger was ingested, I was still hesitant to drive off.

I first realised I loved spying on what people eat when I worked on the checkout at a supermarket. As much as you hope staff aren't paying attention to the absolute grab bag of crap you've assembled

on the conveyer belt, I'm sorry to say, they definitely are. Yes, I was thinking about why you'd need both a toothbrush and three kilos of frozen peas at that very point in time. Not that I would ever have commented on it, though – not even a, “So, you like brie, huh?” while packing 33 wheels of the stuff into bags.

One time, when I was at the shops with my mum as a kid, the checkout guy committed this sin. He saw all the chips and chocolates laid out on the conveyer belt and asked, “You having a party?” Big mistake, pal. It was our regular weekly shopping and Mum told him that, too. Fuck yeah! We eat Milky Ways and Twisties daily. Suck it!

That's why this Macca's drive-through TV idea is genius. You can comment on people's orders from the comfort of your couch, without hurting anyone's feelings or making them reflect on their own habits. In fact, we need this show to feel validated. To feel like we're not the only people who are fucked-up enough to request a Quarter Pounder for breakfast, a McChicken without the chicken or a McFlurry (even though they stopped actually flurrying them years ago). And just quietly, I'd really love to find out who – if anyone at all – actually orders a Filet-o-Fish.



## By Eleanor Robertson

Here's my problem with the dating show *Farmer Wants A Wife*: I don't care what farmers want. It's not 1780 anymore; farming isn't a noble relationship between man, beast and plough. A combination of machinery, chemistry and genetic science has caused such tremendous efficiency gains in the sector that it now makes up only two per cent of our total workforce. Eight generations ago, almost everyone was a farmer. You probably come from a long line of farmers. But now? Farming is out. People do cooler, more important jobs these days, like 'TikTok hype house resident', 'Byron Bay mumfluencer' and 'sponsored esports peripherals reviewer'. Farmers just can't compete in the culture anymore.

So why the hell do I care if some farmer gets a wife? Let me stress, I don't have a problem with the format of the show. I like watching the farmers evaluate prospective wives by making them do a bunch of humiliating farm tasks and seeing which one kills the fewest animals. This kind of sick spectacle is what reality television is all about! If you want something that doesn't feel ethically dubious to watch, go and see a classical music concert. All we need to do is replace the farmer – and the associated humiliating tasks – with something more modern. My pitch: *Smooch the Mayor*.

What screams 2021 more than a corrupt politician? These people are the backbone of society, making sure our economic surplus is correctly allocated towards bribery, dodgy real-estate deals, corrupt land zoning, and other small-time illegal rent-seeking. Who makes sure your suburb contains an anti-human mix of ugly, low-quality apartments, irrationally heritage-listed bungalows, failing small businesses, and rip-off duopoly supermarkets? Local politicians, and especially the mayor.

On *Farmer Wants A Wife*, the tasks assigned to aspiring spouses are stuff like mucking out stables, bottle-feeding lambs, pretending to build fences and so on. Usually the women are city girls, and the entertainment comes from seeing them charmingly fail at these tasks. On *Smooch the Mayor*, the contestants will have to do local politics stuff: attend a charity gala with the mayor and participate in a rigged silent auction. Cut the ribbon on a new development project whose funding consists of proceeds from organised crime, misappropriated council rates and money skimmed off the top of a local under-10s soccer team. Go around buttering up district businesspeople, promising them favourable treatment in exchange for generous donations. Use some standover tactics on a maker of corflutes and bunting to ensure good rates on future electoral advertising. You get the picture.

Not everyone will be able to do this, and like the farming tasks, the entertainment will come from seeing the contestants fail. Imagine the in-studio interview with the mayor: "It was really all over when Shelley didn't have the guts to hand the bribe to that municipal waste contractor. I needed the guy onside to ensure my voter districts got better garbage service, but she's blown it. I don't see how I can give her a rose now." Cut to Shelley crying, supported by a few other contestants reassuring her that "bribery is just a tiny part of it! You can make it up to him by intimidating that Girl Scout group into handing out his policy pamphlets for free!"

Now, *Smooch the Mayor* could only go for one season due to the thrilling ending I have devised. Once the contestants have been winnowed down to the final two, they both have to participate in a challenge that involves committing a major crime – perhaps a staged assassination that they think is real. Instead of a wedding, the show ends with a dramatic arrest and major white-collar crimes trial! Isn't that way more romantic than a stable farm marriage? *Smooch the Mayor* will enter production as soon as I can find a local councillor willing to exchange dirty cash for television fame.

## By Deirdre Fidge

*Neighbours / Everybody needs good neighbours / With a little understanding / You can find the perfect blend.*

We could really learn a great deal from the lyrics of the *Neighbours* theme song, if only we would listen. With the rise of streaming services, it's easy to overlook the wholesome wonder of this long-standing soapie. So I ask of you: what do you get when you cross a nonfiction *Neighbours* with a less awful *Wife Swap* and throw in a dash of *Come Dine With Me*? The answer: *Neighbour Swap*. Or *Next-door Friendship*. Or *Neighbourhood NeighbourGOOD*. Look, the title is a work in progress.

If I were in charge of programming the next reality television series, my first step would be to slip on an '80s powersuit. It would be a shade of fuschia so shocking it would blind any male producer who dared to look upon me, and would have shoulders so sharp they would blind any male producer who dared to look upon me. After that, I'd pitch my show.

Research indicates that the majority of people aren't friendly with their neighbours. One study from 2018 found that only 19 per cent of us would recognise them by sight. Another suggested it takes five years for people to properly get to know the other folks in their neighbourhood, often because it's a slow burn of tight-lipped smiles on bin night. Well, friends, I'm here to fast-track that five-year period.

In this revolutionary new reality series hosted by Miranda Tapsell, households are paired with another house on their street. For a full week, they'll get to know each other... *properly*. None of this polite-yet-avoidant waving from their driveway. The paired households will run errands together, go to the library, take turns cooking dinner for each

other, and generally co-exist. Unlike some reality shows, there'll be no need for dramatic escapades like skydiving or bungee-jumping, because getting to know a stranger and being vulnerable is arguably more of a challenge.

Believe me, as a socially anxious person, the premise initially terrified me too. But even more terrifying is the reality of how lonely many of us are, and how meaningful connections are passing us by. The pandemic has shown us how many people are already so isolated. We hear countless stories of older people living alone, too frightened or unwell to get their medicine, or even food.

This television show would highlight the quiet households in our community that we just don't know about: the elderly gent who doesn't have family to look after his dog when he goes to hospital, let alone visit him there. The newly arrived family that feels a huge loss of community but wants to feel welcomed. The young person who lives with disability and chronic illness but gets judgmental looks when ordering Uber Eats. The series wouldn't actively seek out individuals who evoke pity or sympathy, though – it would simply reflect the reality and diversity of our neighbourhoods.

Let's face it: none of us know who someone really is unless we give them time to show us. We've all been guilty of judging someone prematurely, and of being on the receiving end of similar judgment. This show could be an opportunity to increase connection and foster community.

*Neighbours / Should be there for one another / That's when good neighbours become... good friends.*

OK, OK, that's enough sentimental waffling – I almost forgot to add that the series will finish with a grand finale featuring a huge street party for all the contestants we've seen on the show. There'll be food trucks! And a band! And an ethical petting zoo! And perhaps some wacky carnival rides! This will help me justify the billion-dollar budget. But the most exciting feature of the show won't cost a thing. That's right, folks... friendship.

## By James Colley

I am obsessed with inventing new, uniquely awful reality show concepts. It's something I do an awful lot and nothing brings me more joy than drunkenly regaling friends with what I think will be the new format to change the reality game forever. What follows is the best idea I've ever had. This is the idea that should have already been made. The concept that stands head and shoulders above all others and the show that, if the President of Television happens to be reading, will be hitting your screens this summer. Welcome to *The Snatchelor*.

*The Snatchelor* is the shake-up the old, tired and boring reality-romance genre needs. It has all the right elements to create perfect, modern reality television: it's gender- and sexuality-neutral, has real and raw human emotion, and is innately cruel and deeply immoral.

Here is the concept:

At the centre of each episode of *The Snatchelor* is a couple that has recently split. It's important that this decision devastated them both. I'm not talking about a three-month 'Go to hell / No YOU go to hell' door-slam relationship ending. These former couples need to know each other deeply if they stand any hope of winning.

One member – let's call them The Contestant – signs up to be on *The Snatchelor*. From there, the goals are split. The other member of the former couple, who we shall dub The Romantic, doesn't know they are part of this reality show. Rather, they believe they're on a more traditional *Bachelor/Bachelorette* variant. For The Romantic, the show is simple: go on an elaborate series of dates and see if the person the show's algorithm has chosen for you is indeed your true love. Simple, easy, boring.

And so, the game is afoot. You see, there is no algorithm. There is only The Contestant. If The Romantic declares their love for their chosen partner in the season finale, The Contestant wins a large cash prize.

On the surface, it's a win-win. Look an inch deeper, though, and it's a horrifying social experiment. It's The Contestant's job to use their intimate knowledge of The Romantic to plan dates they will love. Beyond that, they also have to pick the perfect person for their former partner. Think about the emotional heft and self-reflection required for you to not only know what your ex desires, but where you failed to satisfy them. Think of the conflict you would feel inside realising that you have made the right choice, and this person is better for them than you could ever be. You'd have to closely monitor the person you love as they learn to love someone else, and spend time nurturing and growing that love like a delicate seedling, all while knowing that your actions are powered by a terrible and insatiable greed deep inside you, and maybe that's why you could never love the way they needed to be loved.

And then imagine, in your perfect moment when you have ascended the mountaintop and conquered all, that The Romantic will be told of the setup for the first time. And also for the first time, you'll discover that The Romantic now has three choices:

1. Continue to pursue this newfound love despite its false pretences.
2. Take the money for themselves, forgoing this bullshit new love.
3. Split the money with you and give this old thing one last try.

This is *The Snatchelor*.

Is it the show humanity needs? Absolutely not. Is it the show we all deserve? Hell yes. ❁



# put a sock in it

LEARN TO STITCH UP SOME COSY FOOT-WARMERS. (BUT BE WARNED: THIS ISN'T FOR KNITTING NEWBIES!)

Words **Sachiko Burgin for Laine**

Photographs **Jonna Hietala and Sini Kramer**

**A few things to note:** This is a pattern for more experienced knitters, or folks who'd like to challenge themselves. But don't be scared: if in doubt about a technique, turn to Youtube and its many, many instructional videos.

Charts are read from bottom to top and from right to left.

If you can't find the same yarn used in the pattern (or want to use something else) you can substitute it with a similar yarn of your choosing.

The pattern is written for either double-pointed needles or the magic loop method, but you can use your preferred method for sock knitting. If doing magic loop, remember to use long, circular needles (60-100cm).

## SIZES

1 (2)

## FINISHED MEASUREMENTS

**Ankle circumference:** 20 (22.5) cm

**Leg length:** 15cm or desired length

**Foot length:** Adjustable

## MATERIALS

**Yarn:** 1 skein of Studio Sock by Neighborhood Fiber Co. (100% superwash merino, 366m per 113g), colourway Lauraville.

**Needle:** 2.5mm DPNs or circular needles, if preferred.

**Notions/tools:** 1 removable stitch marker, 2 stitch markers, tapestry needle.

## GAUGE

32 stitches x 44 rows to 10cm in stockinette stitch, after blocking.

## SPECIAL ABBREVIATIONS

**ST(S):** stitch(es)

**K:** knit / **P:** purl

**BOR:** beginning of the round

**CO:** cast on

**SL:** slip (purlwise with yarn in back on right side of fabric and in front on wrong side)

**SM:** slip marker / **PM:** place marker

**K2TOG:** knit 2 stitches together (1 stitch decreased)

**SSK:** slip, slip, knit: slip 2 stitches one at a time as if to knit; knit them together through back loops (1 stitch decreased)

**M1:** Pick up bar between last stitch worked and next stitch, bringing the needle from the back to the front, then knit into the front of this stitch (1 stitch increased)

**SK2P:** SL1, K2TOG, pass slipped stitch over K2TOG (2 stitches decreased)

**SSKP:** SSK, then sl remaining st from RH needle back onto LH needle. Pass the second st on the LH needle over first st (the ssk st), then sl remaining st back onto RH needle (2 sts decreased)

[ ]: repeat instructions in brackets stated number of times

\*-\*: repeat from \* to \*

## HOW TO

### LEFT SOCK

#### CUFF

CO 63 (71) sts with Long-Tail method, dividing sts evenly on 4 needles. If desired, place a removable marker to mark BOR, and join.

**SETUP:** K1, \*p1, k1\*, rep \*-\* a total of 8 (10) times. PM, k3, p1, k11, PM, p1, \*k1, p1\*, rep \*-\* to end.

**NEXT ROUND:** K1, \*p1, k1\*, rep to marker, SM, work Left Lace Panel pattern over next 15 sts, SM p1, \*k1, p1\*, rep \*-\* to end.

Work as established by last round, working through and rep rounds 1–20 of Left Lace Panel pattern until piece measures approx. 5cm from CO.

#### LEG

**INCREASE ROUND:** K to marker, SM, work next round of Left Lace Panel pattern to marker, SM, M1, k to end. 1 st increased. 64 (72) sts.

**NEXT ROUND:** K to marker, SM, work next round of Left Lace Panel pattern to marker, SM, k to end. Work as established by last round until piece measures approx. 15cm from CO or desired length, ending with any round of Lace Panel pattern except for rounds 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17. Take note of the number of the last round of chart just worked.

#### HEEL FLAP

Turn work so wrong side of fabric is facing you, removing beginning marker.

**NEXT ROW (WS):** SL1 purlwise, p31 (35). Divide these 32 (36) sts onto 2 DPNs. Continue to work back and forth in rows on these 32 (36) sts only to form heel flap as follows:

**ROW 1 (RS):** \*SL1 purlwise, k1\*, repeat \*-\* to end.

**ROW 2 (WS):** SL1 purlwise, p31 (35).

Repeat rows 1–2 15 times more.

#### TURN HEEL

Working on 32 (36) heel flap sts, continue as follows:

**ROW 1 (RS):** SL1 purlwise, k17 (20), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 2 (WS):** SL1 purlwise, p5 (7), p2tog, p1, turn.

**ROW 3 (RS):** SL1 purlwise, k6 (8), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 4 (WS):** SL1 purlwise, p7 (9), p2tog, p1, turn.

**ROW 5 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k8 (10), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 6 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p9 (11), p2tog, p1, turn.

**ROW 7 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k10 (12), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 8 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p11 (13), p2tog, p1, turn.

**ROW 9 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k12 (14), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 10 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p13 (15), p2tog, p1, turn.

**ROW 11 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k14 (16), ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 12 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p15 (17), p2tog, p1, turn. 20 (24) sts.

*Size 1 only*

**ROW 13 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k16, ssk, turn.

**ROW 14 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p16, p2tog, turn. 18 sts.

*Size 2 only*

**ROW 13 (RS):** Sl1 purlwise, k18, ssk, k1, turn.

**ROW 14 (WS):** Sl1 purlwise, p19, p2tog, p1, turn. 22 sts\*\*.

*Both Sizes Again*

### RE-ESTABLISH WORKING IN ROUNDS

**NEXT ROUND (RS):** K9 (11) heel sts. With an empty needle (N1) k remaining 9 (11) heel sts, and with that same needle, pick up and k 16 sts along selvedge edge of heel flap, working into sl sts. With a second needle (N2), k16 (18) sts, and with a third needle (N3), work in pattern over next 16 (18) sts. [Note: 15 (17) sts if you are on round 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17 of Lace Panel pattern.] With a fourth needle (N4), pick up and k 16 sts along selvedge of other side of heel flap, working into sl sts. With this same needle, k 9 (11) sts from heel. Beginning of round is now at centre of heel, PM if desired. 82 (90) sts. [Note: 81 (89) sts if rnd 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17 of Lace Panel pattern was the last round worked.]

### GUSSET SHAPING

#### ROUND 1:

N1: K to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1;

N2 and N3: Work in pattern;

N4: K1, ssk, k to end.

#### ROUND 2: K.

Repeat rounds 1–2 8 times more until 64 (72) sts remain.

Work even in pattern until foot measures approx. 5cm less than desired, ending with any round of Lace Panel pattern except for rounds 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17. Remove markers that border the Lace Panel pattern.

### TOE SHAPING

#### DECREASE ROUND 1:

N1: K to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1;

N2: K1, ssk, k to end;

N3: K to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1;

N4: K1, ssk, k to end.

#### NEXT ROUND: K.

Repeat last 2 rounds 9 (10) times more until 24 (28) sts remain. Work last round as follows:

#### LAST ROUND:

N1 and N2: K all sts;

N3: Using N2, k all N3 sts;

N4: K all sts;

N1: Using N4, k all N1 sts.

12 (14) sts on each of 2 needles.

### FINISHING

Using Kitchener stitch, graft remaining 12 (14) sts on N2 and N4 together. Weave in ends. Wet block to measurements.

### RIGHT SOCK

#### CUFF

CO 63 (71) sts with Long-Tail method, dividing sts evenly on 4 needles. If desired, place a removable marker to mark BOR, and join.

**SETUP:** K11, p1, k3, PM, \*k1, p1\*, rep \*-\* to end.

**NEXT ROUND:** Work Right Lace Panel pattern to marker, SM, \*k1, p1\*, rep \*-\* to end.

Work as established by last round, working through and repeat rounds 1–20 of Right Lace Panel pattern until piece measures approx. 5cm from CO.

#### LEG

**INCREASE ROUND:** Work next round of Right Lace Panel pattern to marker, SM, k17 (21), M1, k to end. 1 st increased. 64 (72) sts.

**NEXT ROUND:** Work next round of Right Lace Panel pattern to marker, SM, k to end.

Work as established by last round until piece measures approx. 15cm from CO or desired length, ending with any round of Lace Panel pattern except for rounds 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17. Take note of the number of the last round of chart just worked.

#### HEEL FLAP

**NEXT ROUND:** Turn work so that WS is facing you, remove BOR marker.

Work heel as for left sock from \*\* to \*\*.

*Both Sizes Again*

### RE-ESTABLISH WORKING IN ROUNDS

**NEXT ROUND (RS):** K9 (11) heel sts. With an empty needle (N1) k remaining 9 (11) heel sts, and with that same needle, pick up and k 16 sts along selvedge edge of heel flap, working into sl sts. With a second needle (N2), work in pattern over 16 (18) sts, and with a third needle (N3), k16 (18) sts. [Note: 15 (17) sts if you are on round 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17 of Lace Panel pattern.] With a fourth needle (N4), pick up and k16 sts along selvedge of other side of heel flap, working into sl sts. With this same needle, k9 (11) sts from heel. Beginning of round is now at centre of heel, PM if desired. 82 (90) sts. [Note: 81 (89) sts if round 1, 5, 9, 13 or 17 of Lace Panel pattern was the last round worked.]

### GUSSET SHAPING

#### ROUND 1:

N1: K to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1;

N2 and N3: Work in pattern;

N4: K1, ssk, k to end.

#### ROUND 2: Work 1 round even in pattern.

Repeat rounds 1–2 8 times more until 64 (72) sts remain.

Work even in pattern until foot measure approx. 5cm less than desired foot length.

### TOE SHAPING AND FINISHING

Work toe shaping and finishing as for left sock. ✱



This Vervain project is an edited extract from **52 Weeks of Socks** by Laine, published by Hardie Grant Books and available now for \$29.99. We have five copies of the book to give away, so head to [frankie.com.au/win](http://frankie.com.au/win) to enter the draw.





## Daddy's home

THE SEPIA-TONED ERA OF ST. VINCENT HAS ARRIVED.

Words **Emma Do**

You may have spent the past few years watching St. Vincent – real name Annie Clark – bound up in latex, commanding us with icy stares and sharp guitar lines. But her latest reinvention is, in typical style, a complete 180. Out goes the aggressive fetishwear and in come the flared suits, smudged eyeliner and blonde wig. Annie described her last Grammy-award-winning album *Masseducation* as “dominatrix at the mental institution”. Her latest record, *Daddy's Home*, is “glamour that’s been up for three days straight”. Picture a starlet riding the subway home in the morning with dirt under her chipped fingernails – that’s where St. Vincent is now.

Annie landed on this vision of grimy New York opulence in the winter of 2019. She was in the renowned Electric Lady Studios with her friend and co-producer Jack Antonoff, playing an early version of her song “The Holiday Party”, when the vibe began to take shape. “You just start writing and the music tells you what it wants to be,” she explains. “Jack played on the Wurlitzer piano, I grabbed my acoustic guitar, and it felt fresh again. It was real takes of real instruments – just two people playing and capturing a moment in time.”

In contrast to the thrilling, angular sounds of *Masseducation*, there’s room to breathe in *Daddy's Home*. Annie built the album on the funky, soulful and psychedelic sounds of 1970s songs from New York – the stuff she’d grown up with and “listened to more than any other kind of music.” In a playlist she made for fans titled “Daddy's Home Inspiration”, she curated songs from Steely Dan, Stevie Wonder, Lou Reed and Plastic Soul-era Bowie. “I never fully explored this music for myself,” she says. “I was like, ‘I want to know. I want to learn. This music has a lot to teach me.’”

Being a St. Vincent album, *Daddy's Home* isn’t just a straight-up tribute to the early ’70s, though – it’s imbued with the witty, weird and

“  
*i've got shit  
 to do, things  
 to take care  
 of, business  
 to attend to*  
 ”

humorous, and feels just as sleazy as it does smooth. A keen history student, Annie was drawn to the similarities between the social and economic conditions of the 1970s and the present day. “It was a time of flux,” she says. “The idealism of the flower children hadn’t panned out as they thought it might. It was this period where there wasn’t a lot of escapism – it was just people talking about the real situation.”

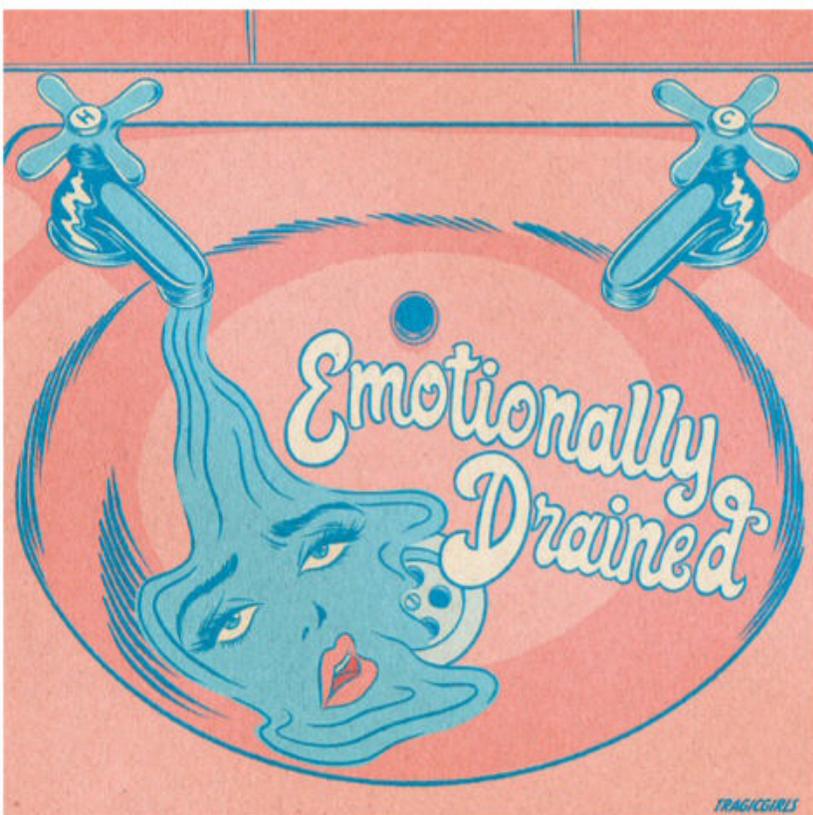
Annie was born in 1982, but credits her childhood obsession with ’70s music to her dad. (Steely Dan was her very first concert.) Notoriously private about her family, she was distraught when her dad’s prison sentence became tabloid fodder in 2016 (he was sentenced to 12 years in 2010 for his involvement in multimillion-dollar stock fraud). She’d kept mum about it for years, but her then-relationship with British model Cara Delevingne inadvertently dragged her personal life into the spotlight. “I felt like a piece of raw meat,” she says of the time. Her father’s release from prison in 2019 became one of the starting points for her new album. “Daddy’s Home” – the third track on the record – is the first time she’s addressed the topic directly in her music. “I wanted to be the one to tell my story, because I never got to – it was told for me,” she says. “I wanted to tell it with humour and compassion.” The song describes prison visits: the sorrow of the situation, but also the absurdity of it. (On one occasion, guards sent her away to buy looser-fitting clothes. On another, a fellow visitor asked her to autograph a receipt.)

The failings of America’s prison system aren’t lost on Annie. In the past, she’s spoken about its corruption and how the system disproportionately locks up people of colour. She emphasises, though, that “Daddy’s Home” is merely her own story, and doesn’t make her qualified to be a spokesperson for prison reform. Her new record is more broadly about being down on your luck – each song tells the tale of a flawed character doing the best they can. Annie says

she’s felt like every one of those people, from the girl trying to hold it together at a party to the one carrying her heels home at 9am. There’s a playful twist to the album title, too. Yes, her father is literally home from prison, but now the father-daughter roles have reversed. “The title is funny to me, and also a little pervy,” she says. “I’ve been through a transformation. I’m Daddy now.” What does it mean to her to be ‘Daddy’? “I’ve got shit to do, things to take care of, business to attend to. There’s a ‘bring me a scotch’ kind of vibe,” she says.

For years, Annie’s lived on the road, touring her albums relentlessly. But lockdowns forced her, like so many other artists, to stop all that completely – a scary prospect at first. “I was never in one place for more than two weeks at a time, but if this turn of events has shown us anything, it’s that people are adaptable,” she says. “Looking back, it was a wonderful reset.” To pass the time, she picked up tennis, home improvement projects and read about the Russian Revolution. More often than not, she wrote songs and played guitar. In the track “My Baby Wants a Baby”, Annie bemoans her childish behaviour when it comes to the all-consuming process of making music. “If left to my own devices, I’d probably starve to death,” she laughs. “It’s a disgrace. I’m like, ‘Oh, it’ll be too difficult to microwave this thing so I’m just going to have a little bowl of fruit and nuts.’”

Elsewhere on the track, she muses on what kind of legacy she’ll leave behind. She hopes she’s remembered for her work, and that her music meant something to someone. She’s been thinking, too, of how she’d like her family and friends to eulogise her one day. “In crime podcasts about a woman’s untimely death, everyone’s always like, ‘She was an angel, she walked into a room and it lit up,’” Annie says. “If someone was going to eulogise me, I’d want them to tell the truth!” Would she like to be roasted at her funeral, then? “Yes, I want them to be like, ‘She can even burn water!’” ❀



# tragic girls

katie mansfield makes art inspired by  
old comic books, horror films and feelings.

**Hello! Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do.** Hey, hey! I'm Katie and I'm the artist behind Tragic Girls! I love retro comics, horror movies, tattoos and lowbrow/pop art. I live with my partner and my poodle in a little apartment in Salt Lake City in the US, and I spend most of my time drawing.

**What is Tragic Girls and how did it come to be?** Tragic Girls is my art and apparel brand. It all started with my love of retro comic-looking pop art. I've been making silly comics my whole life, and a few years back I decided I would actually try to get my work out there. I began posting it online and several years later, here we are!

**What drew you to this vintage style of art?** I've always loved vintage and nostalgic things. I'm not really sure why. Whether it's old jazz music, vintage fashion or retro art, I love it all. But I think that particular style of art in vintage comics and advertisements had a really fun quirkiness about it that I love.

**Talk us through some of the themes you like to cover in your work.** From the beginning, I've always liked to put feminist messages in my artwork. A lot of retro art that I draw inspiration from can actually be pretty sexist, so I really like the juxtaposition of the retro style and feminist approach. I also like to explore the vast array of human emotions. People feel a lot of complicated things, and I think it's important to explore those feelings and allow people to relate to each other through my work.

**Is making art therapeutic for you?** Art is definitely very therapeutic for me. I think it is for everyone. Art helps me express what I'm thinking and feeling, and that allows me to better relate to others. Whether it's creating art that deals with mental health issues or social issues in the world, I think it's important to share and talk about these things.

**How do you want people to feel when they look at your stuff?**

More than anything, I just want people to be able to laugh at the sometimes sad or cynical things we feel. It makes life a little easier. We all feel sad, mad, anxious or jealous, and that's normal. I hope my work can inspire others to be less embarrassed or self-conscious about feeling those things, and I hope to inspire people to feel empathy for others going through them.

**Where do you do most of your illustration?** I do most of my drawing in my apartment, on the floor, in front of the TV while watching silly reality shows or listening to emo music. For some reason, it helps me focus to have trash playing or nostalgic music from when I was a kid. I do also have a little studio where I do all my order fulfilment! It's basically just a room filled with shelves of shirts and sweaters and everything I sell.

**What are you working on at the moment?** I am very slowly starting my own comic book. I've always wanted to create a full-on comic, but it's been hard to find the time. I'm still in the very early stages of writing and coming up with characters, but I'm excited to finally get this project going!

**What's one thing we should know about you?** I think a lot of people forget there are real people behind all those online accounts we interact with every day. I'm just an art nerd who loves horror movies and hanging out with my dog, and eats probably way too many French fries. I've worked very hard to get where I am, but I hope I can inspire people to take that leap and follow their passions, because it's possible to do what you love.

**Where can we see more of your stuff?** Online at [tragicgirlscs.com](http://tragicgirlscs.com) or on Instagram at [@tragicgirls.co](https://www.instagram.com/tragicgirls.co). ✿



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## MINOR FIGURES

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Barista standard



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STYLING AND PHOTOGRAPHY HILARY WALKER



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[thewoolleneath.com.au](http://thewoolleneath.com.au)





Otto and Spike Poppy scarf in dusty pink/  
golden, rrp \$110, [ottoandspike.com.au](http://ottoandspike.com.au)

Kloke Revision scarf in lilac,  
rrp \$189, [kloke.com.au](http://kloke.com.au)



uimi Beau scarf in aubergine,  
rrp \$129, [uimi.com.au](http://uimi.com.au)





Alpha60 Pleat scarf in cream,  
rrp \$99, [alpha60.com.au](http://alpha60.com.au) ❁



## i love my shop

MAGALI CORPAS RUNS LOVE AND HOPE, A TATTOO STUDIO HIDDEN AWAY IN THE HEART OF AUCKLAND.

**Describe Love and Hope in a sentence.** A cosy and chilled tattoo parlour that doesn't try too hard.

**Tell us about the space.** The studio consists of two connected buildings. The waiting room is new, but the tattooing takes place in a beautiful 1900s space with brick walls, a high ceiling, a skylight and a mezzanine. I didn't want my studio to look like the classic clinical tattoo shop – I've given it more of a homely vibe. Our waiting room looks like a lounge and we have plenty of plants. We burn lots of incense and play calming music most of the time.

**What were the biggest challenges of setting up shop?** My biggest challenge was being a new mum while setting up the studio (my son Akira was five months old at the time) and still doing work at my old place in the meantime. Opening a business in the middle of a pandemic wasn't ideal, either!

**Talk us through a typical day at Love and Hope – what do you get up to?** Days are so chilled and slow-paced for me now. We're an appointment-only studio, so I only tattoo one or two people a day – I don't want to rush or have people in and out like a fast-food joint. Some days I share clients with Bekah who works here; others I hang out with the guys from Electric Ceremony who have a private studio next door. We've created a great community with the other

businesses – we support each other as artists and friends rather than competition.

**What kind of relationship do you have with your customers?** I have amazing relationships with my customers. With Auckland being such a small place, you have to make sure you don't behave like an ass – giving people the time of day is primordial to me. People can be nervous, especially first-timers. There's this general idea that tattoo shops can be intimidating, so I try to make my space welcoming and judgment-free.

**What type of tattooing are you known for?** I don't think I'm known for a particular style – I just do honest, bold and long-lasting tattoos. I get bored with just one style. Changing things up keeps you busy, and before Instagram, tattooers would do a variety of things, so I'm a traditionalist in that sense.

**What do you love about what you do?** I love the freedom of coming here only when I need to tattoo, listening to whatever music I want, and working with people I choose. Also, having time for my family and getting to know people. As an immigrant myself, I'm fascinated by how multicultural New Zealand is, and through tattooing I get to meet different people who change my views and shape me into who I am.

**Are there any drawbacks?** Not being in a busy street shop with lots of followers and advertising can be unsettling, but I trust I'm taking an honest approach and am way happier now.

**What's your personal connection to tattoos?** I didn't want to have a 9-to-5 desk job, so I started getting tattooed 16 years ago to remove that option. I don't want to be accepted by what's considered 'normal'. Tattoos define me as an outsider, and I can't imagine myself without them. I get looks all the time while I carry my child in the pram, and my partner gets furious! I'm judged when I enter a fancy business because they assume I can't afford things, but I find it fun to play with people's views and change their minds eventually.

**Where can we find out more?** On Instagram at @lovehopetattoo. For now, we're keeping ourselves fairly underground! ❁





## family jewels

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR FOREBEARS WITH THESE HANDY TIPS.

Words **Laura M Cruz**

**POWER TO THE PEOPLE** Once upon a time, genealogy – the study of tracing your family – was a hobby for the nobility, or anyone who needed to prove they were related to a noble so-and-so. These days, genealogy can help us common folks understand where exactly we came from. Look, you're probably not royalty. But that's fine. As you'll likely find out during your search, regular old plebs can be interesting, too!

**INTERROGATE YOUR ELDERS** No matter where you are on the planet, you should always start your search by getting to know any living relatives. As hard as it may be to think about, they're not going to be with you forever. Enlist the help of your mum, dad, nan, or even that weird aunt you only see over the holidays. Tell them you're building your family tree and ask for their complete name, birthday, birthplace and parents' names. If they seem into it, keep going: How many siblings did they have? Who's the oldest relative they've met? How many places have they lived in? What did their parents do for a living? These seemingly mundane questions will prepare you for the next step: vital records.

**GET A BIT SNOOPY** We leave a long paper trail between birth and death. Humans are born, go to school, get married, have kids, enlist in the military, travel, vote, own land, go to jail and die. The government tracks most of these events in official documents, and those records can help you find more relatives. The census – if you

can find it – is another treasure trove of information. It often shows you names for entire families, as well as their ages, occupations and the street they lived on. Sites like [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) list the records that exist for different countries, states and towns, and where the documents are available. This varies wildly by country – for example, Australian public census records go from 1811 to 1901, New Zealand from 1876 to 1916, and in the US, individual census records span 1790 to 1940.

**OH, FAMILY TREE** So you've got a mess of names, birthdays and places. What's next? Why, a family tree, of course! You can make it on paper or create a virtual tree using sites like [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) and [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org). The basic details you'll need to include are parents, children, births and deaths, and you can go as far back in time as you want. Family trees can be works of art: add photos, drawings and keepsakes to give yours some personality. The point is to see your lineage at a glance and get you thinking about your family's journey. Take time to appreciate how many people it took to get you here.

**DIG UP SOME DIRT** Here's the kicker: you may learn things no one – yourself included – wanted you to know. Vital records can expose absent parents, failed marriages, tragic deaths, jail time, and even more insidious things. Start by tracking information privately, and only add details to your tree when you have documented proof. Remember this isn't just data – these are people's lives. Be respectful of the information you share and with whom. Don't go spilling the tea about Nan's first marriage at your next family dinner. Remember the Peter Parker principle: "With great power comes great responsibility".

**HEAD OFF COURSE** When you've exhausted all official records, you've hit the dreaded genealogy brick wall... and that's where the internet keeps on giving. Search for your family name, hometown or any related business names in online marketplaces like eBay (yes, eBay). You never know what family artifacts are out there and what you can learn from them. You may find a milk bottle from your great-grandad's bottling plant, or perhaps a signed invoice from your gran's first job at a dry cleaner! Get creative with your search: someone else's trash might be your literal family treasure. ❁



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## learn a little from the 2021 good stuff judges

Hey, you – listen up! The frankie Good Stuff awards are back, which means another chance for Australian and New Zealand creatives to show off all the special things they've been working on. Our categories span the full gamut from photography to writing, music and social enterprise, and we've got some pretty ace people on our judging panel, too (not to mention some awesome prizes).

We can't wait to see your creations – head to [frankie.com.au/goodstuff](https://frankie.com.au/goodstuff) to enter and find out more. And in the meantime, if you'd like to gather some insight on working in a creative field, our judges have kindly shared their wisdom.

ILLUSTRATIONS CASS URQUHART



**A FEW THINGS ABOUT BEING A DESIGNER  
WITH DESIGN JUDGE BECI ORPIN**

THE word 'designer' is very broad – it could include graphic design, web design, marketing, product design, textile design or art direction, for instance. But no matter which area you're in, there are a few skills or qualities you need: originality, time management, motivation, a knack for problem-solving, people skills and creative thinking. Talent helps, but is not always necessary!

WHEN you're starting out, getting as much experience as possible in your relevant field is great. This might require doing some volunteer or intern work, but you're still establishing connections and hopefully getting your skills in front of people you'd like to work with. Social media can be useful, but don't underestimate the effect of having promotional materials printed, or putting together a physical package of your work and sending it to people you admire.

ENVIRONMENTAL concerns and inclusivity are prevalent considerations in many briefs these days, which is a new development. The pace has changed, too – often people want things faster (because they can!). There's a huge focus on creating for social media, so things like moving images are more in demand. Designers are expected to have a lot of extra skills (like photography or animation) so they can be a sort of one-stop-shop for all the clients' needs.

I START and finish each day with emails so the in-between hours can be solidly creative. Sometimes I'll work on a handmade project with lots of making and testing; sometimes I'll work on digital illustrations with whole days in front of the computer; and sometimes it's running photoshoots out of the studio. You need to be able to manage and prioritise lots at the same time, and really understand what clients want. I love the problem-solving aspect, especially when a brief comes in with tight parameters and you have to work hard to find a solution.

YOU can make a living on design work alone, but it's very dependent on the individual and the path they take. It took me five years from graduating to support myself with just my work, but that's because I chose to work for myself, as opposed to getting a job in the industry. Even after 20 years there are periods when work is slow, and that can become stressful, but you get used to those ebbs and flows.



**A FEW THINGS ABOUT RUNNING A SMALL BUSINESS  
WITH SMALL BUSINESS JUDGE TESS MCCABE**

HAVING some experience as an employee of a small business in your industry (or a closely related one) will help you understand how things work, the lay of the land, and possibly opportunities or niches that might be underserved. Mentors and other business owners can be great supports when you're starting out or shifting to a new phase of your business.

WHEN you're running your own show, there's little separation from work and life because the beginning and end of the work day are completely set by you. That said, you can set up a structure that gives you the flexibility you desire and the daily routine (or not) that works best. There's an empowerment that comes with being the boss, but there's always compromise, too. Being small also means a greater ability to edit, adapt and shift in rapidly changing conditions (COVID has definitely made that clear).

FOR many small businesses, no two days are the same! Generally, though, you could expect communication with customers, clients and suppliers; dealing with something unexpected; planning something for the future; checking in on your financial situation; then finally getting to the to-do list you made yesterday!

WHETHER or not you can make a living from your business really depends on what you're selling. If it's service-based (think photographer, graphic designer, accountant) you'll likely have business expenses, but people are mostly paying you for your time and expertise. Once you factor tax, super and workspace rental into your fee, what's left over is yours. Product-based businesses must invest in the making of the thing to sell, then rely on people buying it. Some kind of understanding of how you'll make money (and if that income is sustainable for you in the short/long term) is essential to having a business instead of a hobby.

WE spend a lot of our waking lives 'at work', so it makes sense to not only pursue a profession that speaks to your natural skills and interests, but also gives you the life outside of work that you want. Author Daniel Pink suggests the happiest workers feel they have autonomy (independence), mastery (expertise they can build on) and purpose (meaningfully contributing to the world). Running your own business should ideally give you all that and more!



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN MUSIC WITH MUSIC JUDGE **MYF WARHURST**

THE music industry is a huge and varied beast. Whether you come at it from the creative side or from a business angle, no two experiences will be the same. That makes it both exciting as a career path but also difficult to navigate and predict. There is no singular pathway to follow.

THE biggest misconception is that working as a musician is easy. Every musician I know works incredibly hard to make their art, and when they're not working publicly, they're thinking about their art. A good way to start is by performing and creating as often as you can, and becoming part of the community in which you want to be active. Go out and support other musicians; collaborate with them.

IT FEELS like the music industry is finally starting to take serious notice of women and diverse musicians. Although, I must say, it still took a helluva long time to happen and it's still nowhere near enough. But some of those previously closed doors have been forced open, with many organisations having to reckon with their problematic pasts and limited outlook. The aim now is to do better moving forward.

I'LL be honest: this is not an industry you'd choose for the money. Only a few artists make the money we hear of – most work exceptionally hard for very little financial reward. Most musicians I know have side hustles or second jobs or make music for other people's projects. It's tough out there, especially since COVID. With streaming paying so little, touring was the only way for many musicians to make money, and recent events have rendered that impossible.

THE idea of 'success' varies from person to person. For many, being able to create and perform is enough, while for others, it's about fame. Those things take different skills, but one thing they both require is a real love for music. Otherwise, why do it? There needs to be a greater respect for the creativity of music within our culture, and recognition of how much it gives back to the broader community and economy.



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN FILM WITH VIDEO JUDGE **MAYA NEWELL**

THE best way to get started as a filmmaker is by making work. You don't need expensive equipment to find a compelling story. Look for the stories that come from within you – that you have permission to tell – and bring your passion, curiosity and openness to learning through creation. You could also think about who you admire, watch their films and reach out to help them in any way you can. I basically fangirled all my most admired directors and they came on board my project. I continue to learn so much from them.

THERE are so many ways of being and working in the film industry – the vast spectrum of learning opportunities is what I love most. Over the period of making a feature you could roll from research and spending time with beautiful people, workshopping and supporting them in telling their stories, to then filming and editing, then releasing the film to audiences and putting on your campaigning hat. It's completely different for every stage of creation.

TRADITIONAL models of documentary filmmaking are slowly shifting. We come from a history of extractive storytelling practices where filmmakers come in, take stories, and the affected communities rarely benefit from sharing their lives for mainstream entertainment. I'm excited by shifting conversations about partnerships and collaboration, shared creative control and shared royalties. Plus, the potential for creative distribution, and the growing recognition of what's possible when we prioritise social impact in our release strategies.

THERE isn't really a recipe for what you need to be a successful filmmaker, but the qualities that have kept me sane are a willingness to learn, an openness to all walks of life, curiosity, tenacity and determination. Also, the ability to hustle and a strong, trusting relationship with your gut instinct. Filmmaking is freeing, confronting and challenging – it will grow you as a human, and it's the best fun.



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT BEING A CRAFTER WITH CRAFT JUDGE **PIP LINCOLNE**

IF THERE'S one thing we should not be mad at Instagram for, it's the excellent platform it gives crafters and crafting. You can follow your favourite makers to get inspired, share your own work to document your crafty journey and find new crafty pals. Another great way to extend your craft circle is by heading to craft and design markets and chatting to other creatives. I've more than once sidled up to another person in a craft supply aisle for a chat, so you could do that, too!

THE handmade aesthetic is being embraced more wholeheartedly these days, and the growing market of crafters has meant there's a wider range of craft supplies available. There are also lots more places to buy and sell handmade, which is helpful. However, crafters are trying to compete in a crowded market, and some are setting prices that don't reflect the value of the work. Plus, some big companies are copying the work of small, independent makers. It makes me extremely angry and I hope those companies will commission or license crafters' work rather than ripping them off.

THE DIY knack craft calls for can be applied to lots of different industries. Events, fashion, food, design and horticulture are some that spring to mind. Basically, crafters are artists. Have a clear business plan, price your work correctly, be small-business compliant and have a proactive plan for marketing your work, too.

IT REALLY depends what you're working on, but being a crafter can mean shopping for supplies, planning and sketching out projects, marketing, writing project instructions, photographing step-by-step processes or doing research (aka lots of reading! Yay!). There are also some achy necks, sore wrists and copious cups of tea. You need to love spending lots of quiet time on your own, and the process of making as much as the end result.

TRY not to overthink things, lest you forget to start making! The act of making something is deliciously satisfying (even if you bummer things up a bit when you're just starting out). Invite craft into your life and you'll instantly feel cosier and smarter and more handy, I promise. Creating something from a bunch of raw materials is a kind of magic.



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT THE ART WORLD WITH ART + ILLUSTRATION JUDGE **JEREMY WORTSMAN**

BEING an illustrator is a full-time job. Even when you aren't working on commissions, you have to spend hours and days honing your craft, learning new tools and methods, paying bills, chasing invoices, sending out marketing materials and more. It's not just about doing the work itself – that's only a small part of it! Many artists and illustrators are 'slashies', in that they have multiple careers or income streams at once.

I STRONGLY recommend having some skills in basic 3D software, as well as animation. More and more advanced tools are being developed for mobile platforms such as the iPad, so having some familiarity there opens you up to many more variations of creative expression. I really encourage artists to push the envelope with their software beyond the traditional tools that have been the mainstay for years.

SELF-INITIATED work is the absolute key to becoming an artist or illustrator. Of the hundreds of artists I've worked with over the past 15 years, that is the one constant for those who've achieved sustainable careers, and it's even more vital now to cut through all the visual clutter out there. Making a living from art is absolutely possible, but it's not very easy. A unique vision or perspective is required – on top of technical skill – to really carve out a place for yourself.

TO BE successful, you also need to be a bit of a translator. For commercial illustrators and animators in particular, you're a filter for someone else's ideas, so having highly developed interpersonal skills in things like active listening, for example, is crucial to developing a sustainable practice where you're an integral part of the creative process.

WORKING in the art industry can really bring a sense of balance to your creative life: blending art and commerce, being part of a team and realising your own creative vision in partnership with other creative people. There are also barriers being broken down and new opportunities opening up thanks to the democratisation of tools and knowledge, so it's a very fertile time for learning and growth.





#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH COMMUNITY JUDGE **SIMON GRIFFITHS**

WE'RE in an exciting period where lots of new profit-for-purpose businesses are getting started, and lots of older businesses are in scale-up mode. This means there are more jobs in the sector than ever before. Keep an eye on job boards like Giant Leap, EthicalJobs, GoodGigs and B Work, and follow any favourite companies on LinkedIn to see new roles coming live.

A BIG misconception is that everyone working in a social enterprise is a 'model' human being when it comes to living out their values: they're vegan, consume with zero waste, etc. The reality is they're generally people who care deeply about the world and think about the impact of their actions, but are still imperfect humans who wrestle with daily compromises to their values.

SOCIAL and environmental issues are complex at the best of times, and require a variety of actors to get involved to achieve meaningful change. It's important for social entrepreneurs to understand which community organisations, governments, charities and other businesses are allies and supporters of their mission – then partner with them to learn where they do things well. That said, they shouldn't shy away from bringing a fresh perspective, shaking things up and making calculated mistakes!

THE requirements for running regular for-profit and social businesses are pretty similar: vision, determination and grit go a long way! What makes social enterprises different is that, as well as being financially sustaining, they need to solve a social problem. That requires a lot of empathy, often analytical skills, and the ability to build good relationships with the stakeholders of said problem. But perhaps the most important skill is the ability to surround yourself with people who are great at the things you're not so good at yourself.

THERE'S nothing like getting out of bed every day excited, knowing the work you're about to do is going to positively impact someone else. And the world of social enterprise is as exciting as it's ever been, with new innovations being designed to tackle complex problems. Plus, consumers have more power to call out companies that could be doing better, so they can live in a way that's more aligned with their values. Social enterprise is blending with just doing good business.



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT WRITING AND PODCASTING WITH WRITING + PODCASTS JUDGE **BENJAMIN LAW**

IF YOU'VE got time, sign up for work experience or volunteer for community publications and radio stations. Sign up for short courses and learn new skills, or refine the ones you've got. The main thing is to read and listen a lot – and have a bazillion ideas ready to go. The form doesn't matter. Original stories and ideas do.

DEPENDING where you're at in the content-producing process, your day-to-day work might include refining and harvesting ideas, pitching to editors and gatekeepers, doing research and interviews, or sweating at your desk trying to put the puzzle pieces together. There are lots of steps and tasks, but they all involve self-discipline. If you're good with time management, you've got a head start.

THE media landscape shifts rapidly and it's worth staying nimble. When I started, all I wanted to do was write for print. Nowadays, much of the magazine industry is gutted and newspapers are mostly online, competing with outlets that didn't exist until recently. Hell, I still remember when podcasts first appeared! Readerships are fragmented, which is difficult for legacy media, but on the other hand, there are opportunities for storytellers to find new audiences that didn't exist before.

IF YOU'RE a published author in Australia – published by a decent-sized publisher – it's estimated you'll earn around \$12K on average from your creative work alone. It's modest stuff. The rest is augmented by other work: corporate copywriting, teaching, events. The biggest misconception is that there's some kind of aesthetic or lifestyle around working as a writer or podcaster. What matters at the end of the day is the quality of the work, and whether you have something important, thoughtful or funny to say.

YOU'LL need to be an ideas factory – stay curious and in a state of wonder. Be endlessly interested in other people. Don't care too much about rejection, because every storyteller will have far more rejections than wins. And be organised. It's one thing to learn something cool or have a cool story to tell, and another thing to share it with the world. Storytelling is for nerds who like to share. (I guess I'm that nerd.)



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER WITH PHOTOGRAPHY JUDGE **LUISA BRIMBLE**

IF YOU want to be a photographer, you must live and breathe photography, because this is a long game. Part of that game is finding your style, though, so be patient. Pick a photography project and stick to it, really figuring out your strengths and favourite approach. Pitch a story to a publication instead of submitting ready-made work. And when your work is inspired by someone else's image, make sure you always credit it.

PEOPLE think being a photographer is an easy job – that everyone can take photos. It took me 13 years to make it look easy! Everyone can take photos, yes, especially with the really great phone cameras these days, but it requires a lot of time and work to really master the technical skills and language. That being said, I think everyone has the ability to create content and take it seriously – so why not?

FOR beginners, it's so important to learn the basics. You need to be across the holy trinity: ISO, aperture and shutter speed. Practise changing your camera's settings and experiment with different lighting situations. Soon enough, it will all become second nature to you.

ALTHOUGH anyone can use their phone to document what they're doing, there's a time and place for professional photography, and I don't think that's going to go away. It's not a competition; there's plenty of work for everyone. The point of difference is in the way you deliver the experience – how you made someone feel during and after a photoshoot. Your relationship with the subject or client can win or lose you the game.

I KEEP a lookout for people who are creating original content, especially on Instagram. The ones who make it are persistent and hard-working – they often do the hard yards in assisting other photographers first. (Trust me, people notice.) They also know how to celebrate others and are humble, curious and in it for the long haul. To be a successful photographer, you need to always be shooting.



#### A FEW THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN FASHION WITH FASHION JUDGE **KRISTY BARBER**

THE fashion industry employs well over 200,000 people in Australia – there's much more to it than just design! There are design assistants, garment technicians, pattern-makers, graders, textile and graphic designers, a myriad of production roles, plus buyers, merchandisers, brand managers and product planners. There are lots of technical roles, too, like cutters, sample sewers and machinists, and then there's fashion PR! It takes many people with many skills to see a range through to fruition.

BEING friendly and having a can-do attitude will take you far in the fashion world. There are lots of big egos, so the hard-working, friendly people stand out! I really believe in interning while you're at university or TAFE. You can get vast knowledge and build up amazing contacts, and become part of the fashion community – it's a great foot in the door. Take time to develop your aesthetic and style, and really think about your product offering. It's a crowded world in fashion: what makes you stand out, and why do people want to buy your products over so many others?

AS A self-employed designer, I didn't draw a wage from Kuwaili for the first three years. I was working a job two days a week to support myself and running Kuwaili in every spare second. It was hard, and a sacrifice working for free essentially, but I really loved my work, and I believed in it, so I decided to give it my best shot. The industry as a whole can be really well-paid or really not. It depends on the role, the individual's experience, and the size of the business.

THE fashion industry is inspiring, fast-paced and super-fun, but the cycle of constant change can be demanding, too. Right now, the biggest issues are sustainability and a movement against fast fashion and over-production, plus size inclusivity, diversity and ethical manufacturing. You need to be resilient and motivated with a great work ethic, a creative eye for colour and proportion, and an ability to forward-think and plan – but holding a finished item and seeing all the work, care and love that has gone into it fills you with a real sense of pride. ✨



# bloody hell

emily naismith isn't thrilled about getting her period every month, but at least there's a way to make it a little less anxiety-inducing.

Periods aren't fair. At like 12 years old (give or take a few years), on top of everything else you're dealing with (changing schools, new friends, huge hormonal shifts, trying to work out how to catch a goddamn bus) you have to deal with the onset of seemingly random, multi-day bleeding into your undies. It seems very cruel, especially at a time when Pokémon should be your top priority.

Before I got my first period, I was pretty intrigued by it all – the cute designs on pad packs, feeling like part of the cool, mature gang – but when it actually rolled around, reality smacked me in the face and I cried. This painful mess would happen monthly for most of my life. What the – and I cannot stress this enough – hell?! This happens to roughly half the population and we just act like it's fine? IT'S NOT FINE AT ALL, OK?

Now that we all agree on that, we can move on to dealing with this absolutely diabolical part of life. Look, I don't want to brag, but I basically invented period undies (that is, the super-absorbent underwear that soaks up your blood instead of, or in addition to, a pad or tampon). I was sitting in my year 7 textiles class sewing felt sea creatures onto a bag made of excess tartan from an airline that I would absolutely never, ever be seen dead using, when I got the feeling that perhaps my pad was no longer working.

"There *has* to be a better way," I thought to myself as I washed and dried my dress in the school bathroom. It'd be better if your actual undies just caught the blood, instead of having to figure out how a pad works and pray it stays in place. Look, I wish I could say that thought spurred me on to invent fabric technology that would make period undies a reality, but instead I just went back to my absolutely fugly bag and sewed an octopus on the brown and blue checkered material.

Luckily, smarter and more driven people (like Modibodi's Kristy Chong) cracked the code, and years later, period undies are a real thing. I want to cry when I think about how empowering they'd be

for young teens who are so scared their period's going to come that it stops them from doing stuff. I stopped swimming and playing water polo at 12 for that reason, and I'm absolutely sure if period swimwear had been a thing back then, I'd be an ex-Olympian by now (or at least, have stronger shoulder muscles).

As a staunch period undie supporter, I was pretty pumped to add a few pairs from Modibodi to my stash. The 'heavy absorbency' styles really appealed to me because I'm ridiculously lazy and hate changing tampons when I think they might be a bit full but am not sure. When you're wearing period undies, you can just relax and direct your anxiety towards other parts of your life (or, you know, not worry at all, if you're one of those lucky people whose anxiety doesn't instantly shift from one thing to the next).

The knickers themselves seemed pretty regular and comfy – they were just a bit thicker in parts. I tried both the seam-free and 'sensual' high-waist styles. Look, I didn't exactly feel sensual wearing them (who does on their period), but I did feel secure and dry (they really wick that stuff away quick smart). My only gripe was that the seam-free ones were so silky they caused my tracksuit pants to slip down, but if I did want to wear a silk slip while tottering around working from home, they'd definitely do the trick.

Cutting down on waste – from both an environmental and cost perspective – is a big part of the appeal for me, too. Instead of using a pack of tampons and pads each month, I can pretty much just rely on the undies. And with five pairs on rotation, each month is fairly well covered.

The best part, though: when I was wearing these period knickers I sometimes forgot I had my period (in the non-crampy moments, anyway). So yeah, the magical invention is pretty liberating, when you think about it. And if 'liberated' is something you can feel while on your period, you know you're onto something good. ✿

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This little rant was put together in partnership with **Modibodi**. Take a peek at their whole range of reusable and sustainable period underwear, activewear and swimwear at [modibodi.com](http://modibodi.com)



## the graduate

MAITREYI RAMAKRISHNAN IS USING HER NEWFOUND FAME TO MAKE SOME CHANGE.

Words Giselle Au-Nhien Nguyen

Maitreyi Ramakrishnan's first dream job – what she wanted to be when she grew up – was a unicorn. "I'm still working on that," she deadpans over Zoom. Instead, the 19-year-old Tamil Canadian became an actress. And, just casually, she made her professional debut in Mindy Kaling's 2020 Netflix comedy-drama series *Never Have I Ever* as Devi Vishwakumar, a precocious teenager dealing with the unexpected death of her dad, as well as all the usual angsty teenage things.

Maitreyi landed the role over 15,000 hopefuls after she responded to an open callout on Twitter with an audition tape she filmed at her local library. (Some people might say that's even more magical than being a unicorn.) She had a little acting experience under her belt – namely a year-10 production of *Footloose* in Mississauga, Ontario, where she was born and raised – and secured the lead part on *Never Have I Ever* right before she graduated. "Two weeks after graduation, I was on a plane," she says. "I did not have my hot girl summer. There was no transition from high school to university – it was just Netflix."

The actress learnt on the job, shooting the first season over four months in 2019. She quickly realised that acting is about doing away with perfectionism. "You get better as you go, but what's done is done – you don't get to go back to that scene," she says. "From the first episode to the tenth episode, of course I did get better. I wasn't nervous or scared because there was no point – I just had to buckle down, centre myself and learn as much as possible, and just come to work every day alert and ready to go."

The show, which returns for its second season this year, has been praised for its portrayal of teenagehood, as well as its representation of Indian-American life. For Maitreyi, it was a big deal to play a character who wasn't solely defined by her ethnic background. "You constantly get sent scripts about South Asian girls being the

“  
*i just want  
to speak out  
about things  
i believe in*  
”

quirky best friend, who for some reason always want to lose their virginity like crazy, and that's their only personality trait," she says. "Never Have I Ever is not just some quirky Asian show. It's funny, heartwarming and wholesome, and there are so many character stories that people can relate to."

Unsurprisingly, praise has flooded in from around the world, with folks reaching out to rave about all the things they love about the series. Though Maitreyi initially felt pressure to represent everyone on screen, she says that's just not authentic. "One South Asian role can't possibly represent all South Asians. All I can do is speak truthfully from the heart and my own experiences, and hey, if you're a brown girl who can relate to that, great. If you're a white man who can relate to that, great." She's developed a strong bond with her character, too – a brainy, vaguely self-involved but charming high-schooler with a habit of getting herself into tricky situations. "Before I was like, OK, you're like that annoying friend, but now the relationship I have with Devi is like a little sister – like, 'You're a hot mess, but I do love you, kid,'" she says.

You'd think this sudden fame would go to someone's head, but Maitreyi is adamant she's still a regular teenager. The fact the show premiered in the middle of a global pandemic probably has a bit to do with that. "It still baffles me that 40 million households around the world are watching my face, but minus that aspect and my following on social media, I feel pretty normal, man – I'm just here vibing," she says. "The show came out while I was literally sitting at home on the couch in my basement. As the clock ticked down I expected fireworks, but no, it's just on TV now. That's all that happened. We didn't have a premiere party or a red carpet. I just sat on my couch, and it came out, and my family started watching and my friends started Netflix Partying. I'm still very much me."

Glamorous parties or not, one upside of her new following is that Maitreyi has a significant platform to use for good, speaking up about issues she cares about (she's an ambassador for Plan International Canada, for instance – an organisation dedicated to advancing children's rights and equality for girls). "Even before fame, I truly just wanted to speak out about things I believed in," she says. "That was something my parents have always raised my brother and I to do with injustice – you see it, you call it out and you try to do what you can. I can't speak out about everything because I can't possibly know everything that's going on – I don't think anyone can – but what I can do is educate myself first and foremost, then educate others on the things I do know."

The actress has deferred university for now, but she's planning to do a degree in human rights and equity studies someday. "Human rights is such a no-brainer to me," she says. "It's just embarrassing if you're sexist, racist or homophobic." Her focus for the moment is on building her acting career, with the hope of getting into producing and directing in the future. Her dream role? "I don't want to be a superhero and I don't want to be a villain," she says. "I'd love to be an antihero – a little chaotic-neutral kind of thing. A part of me wants to be in a really, really messed-up psychological thriller because that's my favourite genre – that would be sick. And then another part of me is like, 'Oh, but what if you were a princess?' We still only have Jasmine, who's from a made-up land."

Ultimately, Maitreyi just wants to make a difference. "I want to be part of projects where you leave feeling something, whether you're mad or sad or really happy," she says. "There aren't many young South Asian actors, so I feel a sense of responsibility to take on characters with depth. I want to show that we can carry a story, because wow – we're human." ❀



# homebodies

abby davis lives with her husband tristan and sons johnny and richie in a neon-lit, bayside abode in melbourne's south-west.

INTERVIEW SOPHIE KALAGAS PHOTOGRAPHS BRI HAMMOND

**What do you do for a crust?** I'm a photographer and creative director who goes by the name Mrs White.

**Describe the house you live in.** It's a 1970s time warp, and a testament to my creative mind and love of all things colour and fun. It's also my husband's perfect spot to house his many bikes. It's a lot of everything at once at all times – my poor kids! It's 100 metres from the beach and around a kilometre from where I grew up, so everything has a familiar feeling and a sea breeze. It's the kind of home that's instantly familiar and warm.

**How long have you been there?** Just over two years. After the birth of my second son Richie, we were looking for a bigger place that was still close to the water – we found this on one of our walks.

**Tell us about the house itself.** It was built in 1973 by the original owners, maintained beautifully and left in its original state – then, luckily, handed over to us. It has three bedrooms, curved edge corners, wood panelling and three different shades of floral wallpaper. Heaven! The breakfast bar in the kitchen is a great spot to sit on a summer's morning. We can't get over the fact the original owners raised two kids here without a scratched panel or damage of any kind. Not even any stickers! It makes us want to preserve it, too.

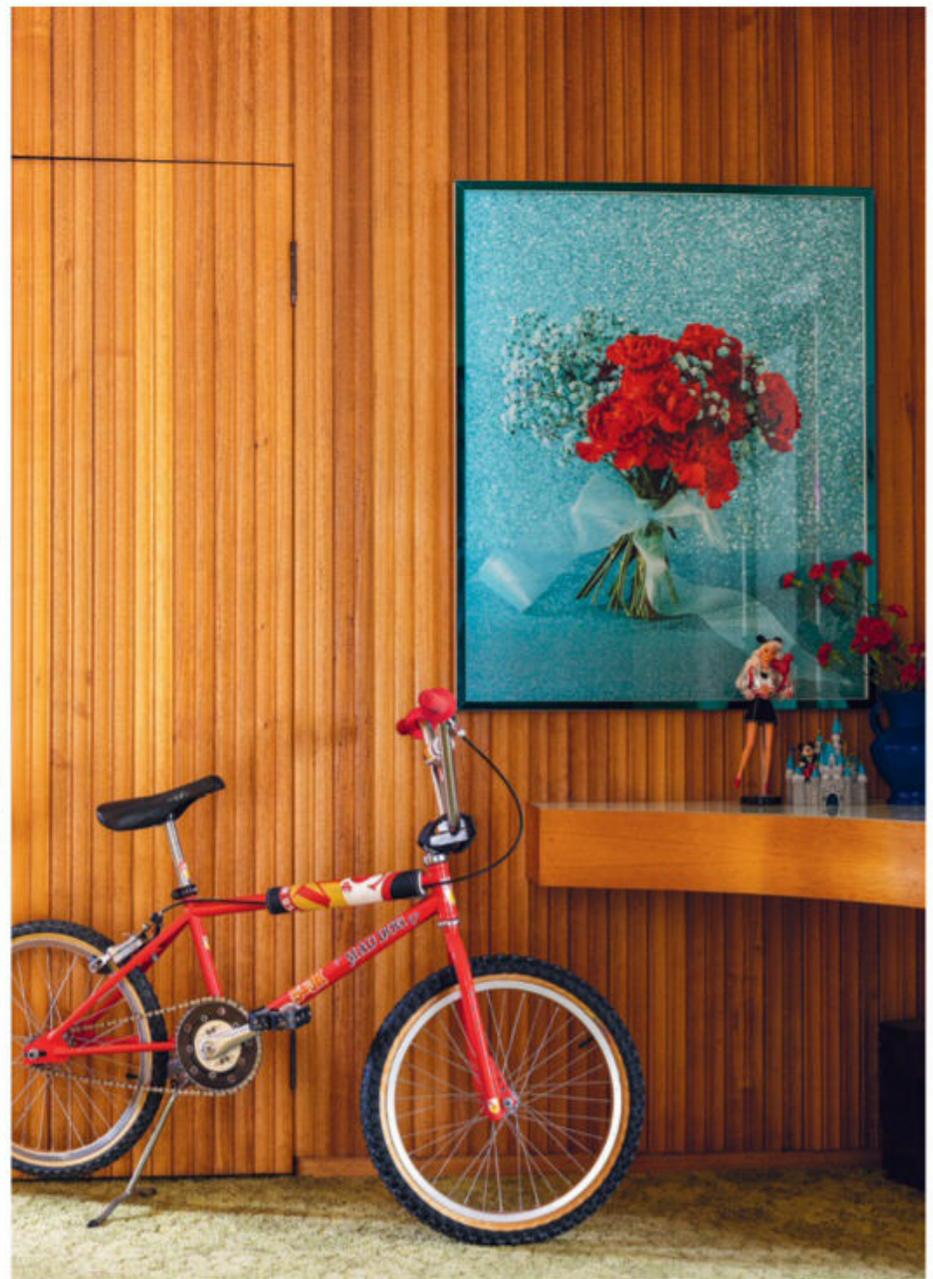
**What have you done to the place since you moved in?** Nothing structurally. It was maintained so well, there was no need to change a thing. I've just added more colour and a Vegas level of neon. I've also tried to educate myself on a bit of gardening – I'm trying my best not to undo years of care.

**How do people react when they walk through the door?** They gasp! It's a time warp and familiar feeling, like a visit to Nanna's when you were four years old. My dearest friends tend to shake their heads and say, "Subtle." We joke that we should get the fondue set out, or a key bowl.

**How would you describe your decorating style?** Maximalist to the bone. I love toys, fun and vintage finds, and bold colours that wake you up in the morning. We have little ornaments that remind us of travels, and portraits I've taken of the boys, printed poster-size to build a healthy sense of vanity! My eldest son has customised his bunk with black text and stickers, and though we have concerns about him doing it while "asleep", we commend the expression.

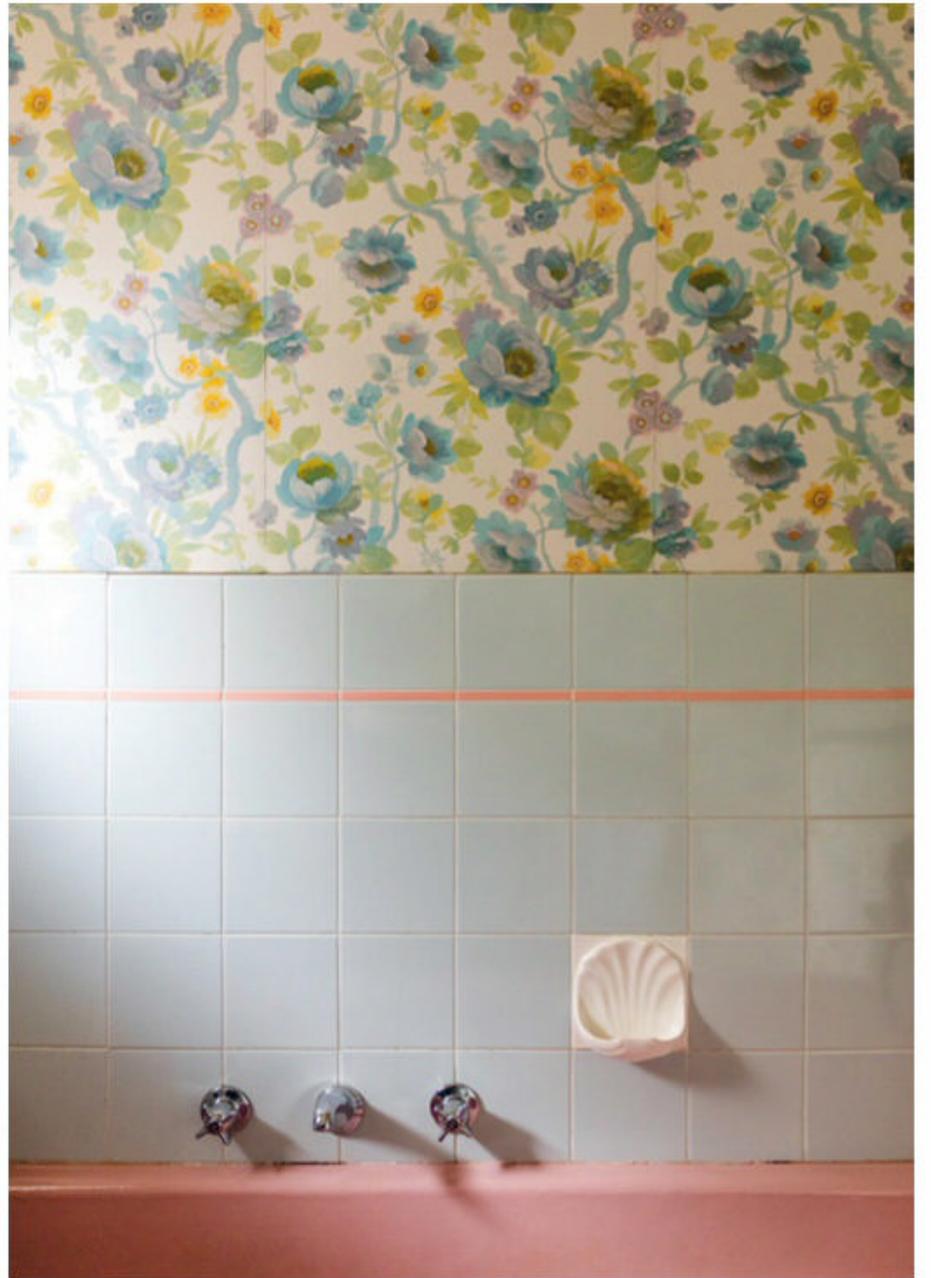
**What about the colour palette?** Very strong. Lots of red, pink, gold – you name it, it's here. I blame *The Wizard of Oz* – it was the first movie I ever watched and I think my aesthetic got stuck there. I'm surprised by how much red I use. It can be polarising, but in this vintage space it tends to work. I recently painted my dining chairs peppermint green, which adds the illusion of more space and freshness.

**Where has your furniture and décor come from, generally?** I live for the hunt! For couches and toys, especially. I tend to want to change the décor completely and often, just so I can find more. We just got a 100-kilo marble table from Facebook Marketplace for \$80! There's also a checkerboard rug from a Moroccan Etsy store. The neon signs are by Electric Confetti, and my mother-in-law has kept most things from my husband's childhood, so I like to incorporate them into the boys' toy room and bedroom.









**Do any items have special meaning for you?** Aside from the portraits of my boys, probably the 'Frank and Rocky' framed print from my debut exhibition, *Romance*. One of my best pals (the florist Bloom Boy) and I got together to create a series of flower prints. It reminds me just how much fun you can have creating with friends, and to be proud of what we've achieved. Plus, it looks killer! My husband would point to the 1988 S&M BMX he showcases in the entrance. I also cherish any Disneyland reference – we used to visit Disneyland in California every Halloween, and the souvenirs remind us how much fun we have when we travel.

**Tell us about those amazing neon signs!** I photograph often for Melbourne company Electric Confetti, and each time end up ordering a new one. The family motto 'never too much' came first, then the banana (which fits perfectly in the yellow hallway), and now there's basically one in every room. My husband and I were married in Vegas, so it's only fitting the house acts as a reminder. Besides, everyone looks better in coloured light. It's a whole mood.

**Is there anything you're currently searching high and low for?** A western-style painting. I love cowboys and art – particularly oil paintings – and think the house needs 'a little more'. I also have a dream of framing an old photo of Jack Nicholson and Angelica Huston at a 1970s Oscars after party. When I was little, my parents would host an Oscars viewing party where we'd dress up and watch TV, and I'd love to create a tribute to that in some way.

**What goes on in your house (aside from sleeping)?** Lots of drawing – my boys love to draw and watch old movies. We make

and eat pancakes often, always Mickey-shaped. Tristan was a chef for 25 years and he and Richie spend most weekends in the kitchen or riding their BMX bikes.

**Can you share a favourite memory that's taken place in your house?** Honestly, when I think of how excited the kids and I got seeing our parcel delivery guy arrive here throughout COVID lockdowns, knowing it was new toys and fun stuff and food, that was pretty thrilling. Also, being able to entertain at Christmas and having the perfect window to showcase a tree that's lit up like Disneyland is incredible. I love any excuse to add more lighting and tinsel.

**Have there been any challenges or issues setting up the space?** Just not having more living space to decorate in a totally different style for when my mood changes! And wall space. I'm always looking for more walls to cover.

**Where do you go to find a little down time and relax?** One of my best girlfriends lives 200 metres away, which makes it easy to sneak a wine while our kids play after school. Otherwise, the beach is at the end of the street. Most mornings (after school drop-off) you'll find Richie and I having coffee and starting the day right. Nothing beats the combination of sea breeze and procrastination.

**What does home mean to you?** A place for the boys to make forever memories. It's a place to express ourselves fully, with added sparkle. A place to house all our junk and our precious treasures. It's where our friends come over for house parties and laughs. Home is the best. ✿

# some like it hot

CARO COOPER AND FRASER HARVEY  
TRY SOME HEATER-FREE WAYS  
TO STAY WARM THIS WINTER.

Illustrations **Evie Barrow**



## LAYERING CLOTHES

I've been known to go to bed looking like a mismatched Michelin man. It's sexy, believe me. For this road test, I tried the full combo: thermal underlayers, tracksuit pants, jumper, two pairs of socks and a beanie. I stopped at gloves because I couldn't hold my book and turn the pages properly, but I wouldn't rule them out for a cold July night, because when your hands are cold, you're not really paying attention to the book anyway. The thermals did a lot of the heavy lifting. The tracksuit acted more like a bubble, trapping all the heat and keeping me marinating in it, rather than adding any extra warmth. The only issue with layered clothes as a heating mechanism is leaving the house. Yes, you can definitely layer when you're going out, but jeans are far less forgiving than trackies, and a layer of thermals is out of the question unless your jumper is long enough to hide the fact you haven't done up your fly. *CC*



## HOT WATER BOTTLE

Some say the hot water bottle has a thousand uses, and that's true, if those uses are all related to keeping you or someone else warm. The hot water bottle is versatile because you can put it on you, beside you, under you. Still not convinced? That's a problem, because I'm running out of ideas. The major and most obvious flaw with the hot water bottle – aside from the risk of springing a leak – is that you'll inevitably fall asleep, only to wake a few hours later clutching a freezing ice brick that was once so good and kind and warm. A harsh reality or just an accurate metaphor for life? It's hard to say. But look, if you can convince someone to periodically bring you fresh hot water bottles – say, every hour on the hour – do it. You won't ever feel cold again, and you'll have the opportunity to warm them in return with a delightful anecdote you made up while they were fetching your water-filled rubber sack! *FH*



## HOT DRINKS

If you've ever lived in a shitty sharehouse where the only heating comes from a \$20 Kmart heater, you'll know hot drinks work. They're as effective as a full cardio workout for warming your whole body. (They won't tone your abs, but it's winter, who needs abs anyway?) If you're really skint, you don't even need to add flavour: no tea bags, no hot chocolate, no coffee – just hot water from the kettle in a mug. Wrap your frosty mitts around it, give it a second to cool, then start sipping. Hot drinks turn my cheeks rosy. They don't warm my toes unless I rest the mug on them, but I have the circulation of an octogenarian, so that could just be my issue. I recommend holding the mug between your thighs for a full-body warm-up. You could even add fresh chilli to the water to take the heat to the next level. If you're getting a winter cold it will knock that out, too. *CC*



## HEAT PACK

I'm coming right out and saying it: I'm not a fan of the heat pack. It's a hot water bottle for people who can't handle real heat. I've been given many a microwaveable wheat sack over the years, and no matter how long I nuke them for, they're cold in a flash. I ignore the instructions that warn you not to cook them for too long and whack those suckers in for a few minutes of electromagnetic warming. Yes, they come out hot, but they don't retain it. I'm also not a fan of the smell. Heating wheat or whichever synthetic product is in the cheap one I bought my dog from the supermarket simply doesn't smell good. It smells a bit like sweaty dirt. Admittedly, I do tend to relax my hygiene standards in winter, so it's hard to tell where the scent is coming from, but I'd only recommend heat packs for those who are hypersensitive to warmth and really not that cold at all. *CC*



### HOT SHOWER

This really is one of the All Time ways to get warm; however, as an environmentally conscious person, taking extra showers on top of your usual daily quota can go against your natural and correct instincts to conserve water. No problem though, that's why I'm here! The key is to take showers at other people's houses, or at public pools, gyms and other places where it's not going to show up on your water bill. Ideally you'll have a spreadsheet on the go with the addresses of available shower locations, along with their hot water unit capacity so you're not caught out by mistiming and forced to experience the rude and untimely shock of being trapped under a sudden, freezing deluge. You can also achieve a surprising amount in the shower – installing a whiteboard can help you strategise your life while you sud your pits. Honestly, I'm starting to feel like I could be a good life coach? *FH*



### HAIR DRYER

I don't wash my hair, so I never have the need for a hair dryer, but I do have an old dusty one stashed at the back of my bathroom cabinet just in case I ever decide to get into grooming. I dug it out and, clad only in undies, turned it on full bore. Sure, it warmed up patches of my skin, but the heat was fleeting and very location-specific. I have sensitive skin to go with my sensitive emotions, so I wasn't brave enough to turn the dryer on my face. I can only imagine the rosacea that would erupt and the Freddy Krueger-style dryness I'd be left with. Even using it on extremities left me in dire need of some moisturiser, and everyone knows moisturiser is cold, so the whole thing felt counterproductive. I'd only recommend this method if you're truly out of other options and enjoy using the hand dryers in public restrooms. (Everyone has their thing.) *CC*



### USING THE OVEN

We've all seen the classic comedy bit where, upon hearing bad news, a character turns on a gas oven and sticks their head in. It gets laughs every time! But behind every self-harm gag is a way to stay warm (that's an old comedy proverb), so you've got to take inspiration from the masters. Now, I'm really not suggesting people stick their heads in the oven – there are other options here. Roasting or baking something for a few hours will have your place feeling toastier and smelling delicious all at once! It doesn't even have to be food – bake anything that might smell good. I've never tried baking a bunch of flowers, for example, but I'm certain that's how they make perfume, so what have you got to lose? I've even just whacked on a stovetop burner for a bit of extra warmth. I may get sued for suggesting that, though, so I implore you to not forget about it if you plan on leaving the house. *FH*



### SNUGGIE

If you want to get warm this winter, I've got a secret for you. A secret so secret it was plastered across TV and coupon offers about 10 years ago, but now it's returned to being a secret. I'm of course talking about the Snuggie. The most revered or despised piece of warming technology, depending who you speak to. Firstly, lock your doors, draw your curtains, switch off your phone and unplug your fax machine, because you should be completely undetectable when you don one of these. I'm told they're the most practical way to stay warm while lounging, but I've experienced success in this field by simply popping a jacket on. The Snuggie does have the advantage of being a full-length garment/blanket – basically a fleecy monk's robe. After all, aren't all great inventions just bastardisations of some kind of cultural appropriation? For Western consumerism, almost certainly. *FH* ❀



# whatever floats your oats

TRY OUT THIS EASY-PEASY  
BAKED BREKKIE DISH.

Words, recipe and photo **Eleanor Ozich**

My recipes are always rooted in simplicity, and this simple baked oatmeal is a beautiful example of that. As it bakes, the vanilla-infused oats become soft and sumptuous, with little tart berries creating bursts of colour throughout. The top becomes golden brown, too, making a lovely contrast to the filling.

## INGREDIENTS

coconut oil for greasing  
2 1/4 cups rolled oats  
zest of 1 lemon  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
2 cups almond milk  
2 free-range eggs  
1/3 cup runny honey, plus extra for drizzling  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
1 1/2 cups frozen raspberries  
3 bananas, sliced in half lengthways and peel removed  
3 tbsp melted butter or coconut oil

## HOW TO

Preheat oven to 180°C and generously grease a baking dish with coconut oil.

In a bowl, mix together the oats, zest, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk together the almond milk, eggs, honey and vanilla.

Sprinkle half the oat mix to cover the base of the baking dish, then scatter over half of the raspberries. Add another layer of the remaining oats, then slowly drizzle over the almond milk mixture until covered.

Finish by arranging the last of the raspberries and the banana slices on top. Drizzle over a little additional honey and the melted butter or coconut oil.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until the top is golden and the oats have set. Be careful not to over-bake, though!

Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes before serving. Top with thickened cream or natural yoghurt to bring it all together. *Serves 4.* ✿



*This is an edited extract from  
**Simply Food** by Eleanor Ozich,  
which is out now through Penguin  
Random House NZ for \$39.99.  
Find out more at [penguin.com.au](http://penguin.com.au)*



## a very handy woman

CARO COOPER HAS A NEW AFFINITY FOR POWER TOOLS.

There's power in self-reliance. I remember when I learnt how to rewire the clapped-out fuses in the geriatric fuse box of my uni sharehouse. It made me feel so grown-up. Forget cooking or learning to pay bills on time; it was that minor repair that made me feel like I'd flown the nest. I've always had a Leatherman (a multi-tool, for those not au fait with such things), but that was my limit: I could construct IKEA furniture, tighten a screw, change a fuse and clip my nails.

I always thought that one day I would work at Bunnings. I loved the large trolleys, the smell of wood shavings and the staff uniform – mostly the tool belt. My Bunnings dream career never materialised, but a while back, I did get a new job that brought me into the world of tools (and not the colleague kind). Where I was once surrounded by nerds solving problems with algorithms and spreadsheets, I found myself among people wielding power tools and discussing the merits of different masonry drill bits. A forklift licence was a prerequisite to joining the cool clique.

And then came home ownership. Buying an old apartment where doors are hanging off hinges and the walls are a mosaic of bad patch jobs is a great motivator. There's nothing like the nuisance of waiting

for a handyman who shows up late, does a dodgy job and leaves the mess for you to clean up to inspire an interest in DIY. The stars had aligned, and it was time for me to master tools.

I kicked off my new life with the purchase of a top-of-the-line drill. (OK, it's second-tier. Don't get too excited.) I also bought a set of drill bits, after I'd wrongly assumed all the 'stuff' would just come with the drill. The one thing it did come with was a poster of all the Makita power tools that were compatible with the battery packs I now owned. Did you know the actual drill part is called the 'skin'? Any power tool you buy is a new skin for your battery. Learning is fun. I put the poster on my wall as an inspirational mood board.

With my new tool in hand – both hands, actually; it's pretty heavy – I tried to attach a whiteboard to a brick wall. It was straight and looked good, until it fell a few seconds later. Turns out you shouldn't drill into the mortar, but directly into the brick, which you need a whole other type of drill for and, apparently, some skills. I wouldn't be defeated by this early failing, though. Instead, I enlisted a teacher. A tool teacher. This guy had every single tool imaginable, whether he needed it or not. Turns out I had a lot to learn – like what torque is and masonry drilling and why you don't put your fingers under the circular saw, even as a joke.

With my teacher and plenty of passion, I know it won't be long before I'm measuring twice and cutting once. My birthday list only has power tools and hardware vouchers on it now. I plan to turn my second bedroom into a tool shed – I'm not sure why more people don't do this. Who needs a study or guest room? No one visits me and I'm well past my studious days. Instead, I'll fill the room with benches and tools I can hang on the wall, with silhouettes marked out in black text like some bizarre hardware crime scene.

And it won't just be me benefiting from this new lifestyle. In return for the hardware accoutrements my friends and family gift me (yes, they bloody well will), they'll receive homemade things like simple wooden boxes or pieces of ply with holes drilled in them and bits cut off that have uses limited only by the recipient's imagination. How nice. ❁



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