



Handwritten notes in Hindi on the receipt, including 'White 1.5L Extra' and 'Tesco Adult Eat 200g'.



Handwritten Hindi word 'The' in a large, cursive font.



Handwritten Hindi word 'dodo' in a large, cursive font.



Content Editor
Harismita Govindaraj

Assistant Content Editor
Yajas Vaidyanathan

Design Editor
Zala Reberc

Assistant Design Editor
Katharina Lutz

November 2024
1st issue of the year

Hello, RCA!

As autumn settles over campus and colours deepen across the city, we're reminded of the season's unique rhythm—a gentle pause, a time for both reflection and renewal. We're thrilled to step into our roles as the new curators of The DODO, steering it on another trip around the sun—a space where student voices can echo, collide, and find their own rhythm.

The DODO, like its namesake, is a blend of contrasts: grounded in tradition yet always evolving, unconventional yet inviting. In this issue, themed 'autumnal', we celebrate the artistry that comes from looking both outward and inward, embracing ideas of change, memory, and the anticipation of what's yet to come.

Our next issue will arrive with the winter chill, and we'd love to hear from you! Whether it's a piece of writing, a visual work, or simply a thought worth sharing, don't hesitate to drop us a line at thedodo@rca.ac.uk. Be sure to follow [@thedodo.rca](https://www.instagram.com/thedodo.rca) on Instagram for updates on the next issue's theme. Together, let's make this year's pages vibrant, thoughtful, and ours.

Happy reading, and welcome to
a new year with The DODO!

Warmly,
Harismita Govindaraj
Editor



AUTUMN LEAVES DRIFTING

RADTAI LOKUTARAPOL, MA WRITING

Not here and not there: Autumn is about the state of being in-between and a resistance to time, the state of leaves changing their colour and starting to fall, the state of the weather turning cold and waiting for the damp winter to pass. If autumn were a song, it would be “Autumn Leaves,” the jazz standard originally written in French called “Les Feuilles Mortes”. If autumn were a film, it would be one of those works by directors like Ingmar Bergman, Robert Bresson, or Wim Wenders where time stretches and emotions run deep in each montage.

And if autumn were a photograph, it would be an image of him—a boy I met in July whose beauty is immaculate. A boy, the dream figure of my thoughts, whom I have only glimpsed as if he were a character in a movie. In that fleeting moment when he appeared, I was captivated by the warmth of his smile and the wistfulness in his gaze.

My autumn began when I sat in Pijiu Bar, a craft beer spot tucked away in the alleys of Chinatown, Bangkok. This area is rich with two storey high-ceiling Gothic buildings, relics from the time of King Rama VII, an era that likely felt much more romantic when viewed through the lens of old photographs that resist the passage of time. In that moment, I too longed to resist time’s relentless flow because I was deeply taken by him. I felt an intense urge to confess my feelings, yet all I could manage was small talk. Even though we spoke the same language—Thai, our mother tongue—there seemed to be countless translations needed between us. I asked him not to stop texting me when I moved to London for my MA in Writing at RCA, but I couldn’t bring myself to say “I love you.” I feared he might respond with truths I wasn’t ready to face.

Instead, we shared stories of our love lives, and anxiety crept in, whispering that if I pushed too hard, it might all end badly. It could lead to something casual, perhaps a one-night stand, which might feel

romantic, but I cherished the delicate tension between us too much to risk it. I didn’t want to ruin the phantasy I had constructed in my mind. After finishing a pint, I decided to call it a night. We stepped out of the bar and hugged goodbye. Before he left, I captured a snapshot of him with my iPhone11’s camera, a memento of that moment as he looked back at me. Once he was gone, I found myself drifting to a jazz club next door, where the familiar notes of “Autumn Leaves” filled the air.

*“The falling leaves drift
by my window,
The autumn leaves
of red and gold.
I see your lips, the
summer kisses,
The sunburned hands
I used to hold.”*

If you ever watch the video of Yves Montand singing “Les Feuilles Mortes” (The original version of “Autumn Leaves” in French), you can’t take your eyes off him. There’s a profound depth of emotion in every vibration of sound he releases from his body. His expressions and movements resonate with the feelings swirling within him, as if every part of him is orchestrating the song’s release. We are swept away by his waves of sound and emotion. In the bittersweet melancholy of this chanson, we find pleasure in witnessing the narrative unfold. Perhaps singing the same song over the years would have added much depth to the way the singer sings each note.

The song, translated into English as “Autumn Leaves” has become a jazz standard, often covered by numerous artists and played in jazz clubs. Yet the English version may not capture the same depth and poignancy as its original French. The essence of loss and longing feels more visceral in its native tongue, a reminder of the bittersweet moments that linger in memory.



Nat King Cole - Autumn Leaves is the title of a YouTube video that has amassed 4.3 million views since it was posted 17 years ago. This video might be older than some of its audience members, who come to appreciate this kind of old vocal jazz music. The song itself is likely old enough to outlast many people, having played at weddings and funerals alike, perhaps even requested by a husband for his beloved wife who has passed away.

It’s a recording of Nat King Cole performing on NBC-TV in the 1950s. I think I first heard this song while watching *My Week with Marilyn* (2011), where Eddie Redmayne stars alongside Michelle Williams. In that film, Colin Clark(ER) serves as an assistant to Marilyn Monroe(MW), and during that week they share together, he falls in love, acutely aware that their time is fleeting.

The sound is one of the important elements of cinema. Sound alone can create an illusion that is purely cinematic. When I listen to “Autumn Leaves,” I often see in my mind the moment I was 17, grappling with the reality of my mother choosing to start a new life with someone else. One day when I turned 19, she returned to take my older brother with her. She wanted to take me too but I chose to stay with my grandmother, whose house was much closer to my university. I watched them driving away from my grandma’s place.

The autumn leaves in this song serve as a metaphor for farewell. Even though both Yves Montand and Nat King Cole have been recorded long ago, they have departed this world, gone far beyond our reach. I find myself drawn to Yves Montand’s French version because each movement in the song and his performance seems to resist the transition to the next moment. Yves invests emotional depth in every beat before moving on, creating a presence that makes me imagine how the audience would hold their breath, breathe, and feel alongside him—culminating in the joyful



IMAGE: RADTAI LOKUTARAPOL, PERSONAL ARCHIVE

applause at the end of the clip. In contrast, Nat King Cole moves gently from one note to the next, in a soothing flow that is pleasant to watch. The lyrics differ between the French and English versions; the French offers more depth, lengthening the emotional journey.

It feels like endless days waiting for his text to pop up in my Instagram chatbox. “And soon I’ll hear old winter’s song.” After fall has passed and autumn approaches, London will turn cold, embodying all that is London. “But I miss you most of all, my darling,” even though I know it’s just my own phantasy of him, the thought of him makes me crave the warmth of Bangkok. “When autumn leaves start to fall,” even if I meet some interesting guy at an exhibition I visit in London, my thoughts still linger on him.

As I sit here writing, I pull up his picture once again. It’s not something I dare to do often, as it sends me spiralling into a fervent infatuation. What I adore most about him are his eyes—still and deep, like still water that runs deep, undiscoverable, unpredictable, and somewhat unattainable. This mystery captivates

my curiosity. His charm is most pronounced when paired with his smile, accented by his dimple and perfectly proportioned nose. There’s a presence in him that reminds me of my mother—a love that makes me feel valued, a love I yearn to win.

scarf *noun* [C]

1. a tourniquet against the cold
2. artificial replica of a lover's hands
3. product of a first attempt at knitting

she pulls her scarf ~~tighter~~
there's a chill,
and she suffocates.

AUTUMN JOSEPH, MA WRITING



UNTITLED PAINTING, KRISTIN SMITH CAHN VON SEELEN



A HOME FOR DIWALI

SHUBHANGI PANDEY, MA SERVICE DESIGN

Where I come from, we embrace six seasons instead of the conventional four. In addition to summer (*Grisham*), spring (*Vasant*), autumn (*Sharad*), and winter (*Shishir*), we celebrate the monsoon (*Vasant*) and pre-winter (*Hemant*). Among these, the transient autumn ushers in the most vibrant festivities in India. It's a time when families gather to rejoice in the harvest season, celebrating Navaratri, Durga Puja, Vijayadashami, and Diwali.

The air is infused with the fragrant scents of blooming flowers, incense sticks (*agarbattis*), sandalwood, and an array of sweets (*mithai*) and desserts. The arrival of winter is heralded by pleasant days, providing a welcome relief from the harsh tropical heat. Everyone comes together, sharing in the joy of the season. Delectable delicacies are prepared and savoured in good company, gifts are exchanged, and the entire country is adorned with lights and decorations. People don their finest saris and kurtas, dancing to Bollywood beats with their loved ones. Everyone is home.

Prayers are offered to the deities, enveloping the atmosphere in gratitude, spirituality, positivity, love, and peace. Diwali symbolises the homecoming of Lord Rama, the victory of good over evil, the triumph of light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. Each year, returning to my home in India felt like a personal homecoming as well. I would reunite with family, leaving behind the rigours of work and college to celebrate and cherish our beautiful bond. Everyone is home.

This year, however, I am on a different journey—a quest for home-making. I seek a sense of belonging and community, to create a place I can call my own. To give and share, to trust and hold on, to seek and to love. I've always believed that magic weaves through our lives, often in the form of the wonderful people who touch our hearts.

I've come to realise that home isn't just bricks and mortar; it's about

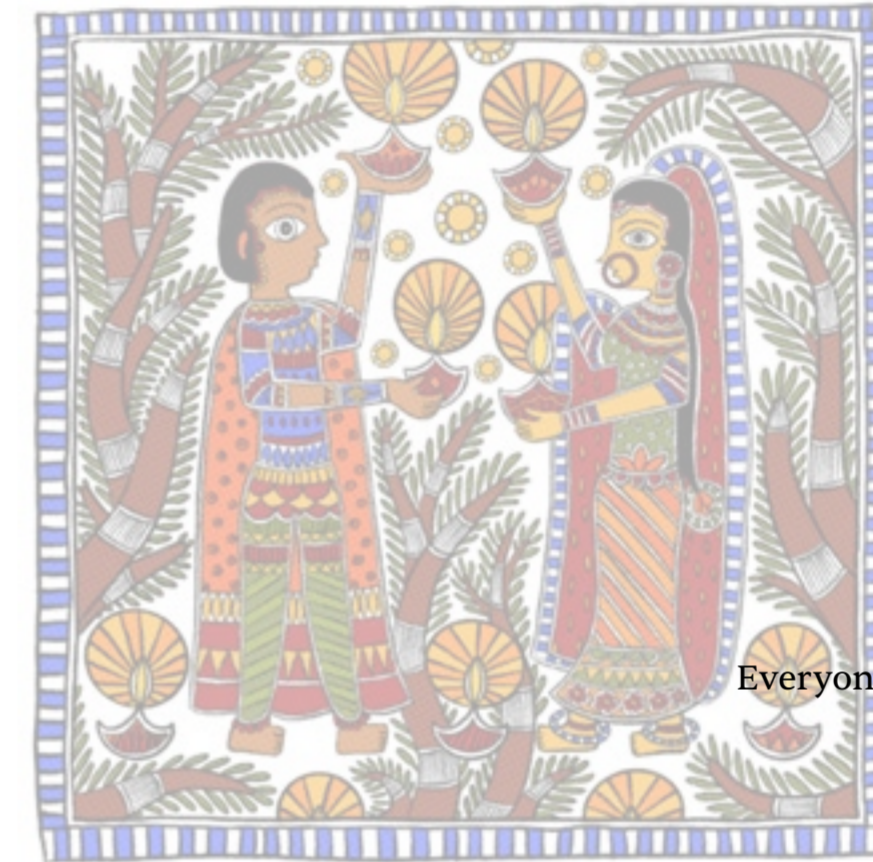
the people we cherish. Though some may be far away, I've found a way to build a home with those I've discovered here. So this Diwali, I will celebrate in spirit—because home is wherever the heart finds its light. And like

every

year,

this

year



Everyone

home.

too—I will be

will be



home.

Madhubani is a folk art style from the Mithila region of India and Nepal. It is traditionally practised by women using natural dyes and various mediums such as fingers, twigs, brushes, and pens. This illustration depicting Diwali was created by taking inspiration from the Madhubani art style. →

THE IN-BETWEEN

MENGYUAN TONG, MFA ARTS AND HUMANITIES



This work is from a series of paintings and installations that attempt to capture people in transit, migrating within the framework of liquid modernity. The blurred backgrounds sketch the suspended state of modern life. These works reflect Zygmunt Bauman's theory of "liquid modernity," which describes the fluid and uncertain nature of contemporary existence—constantly shifting, like stepping into quicksand. In this fluid modernity, people move continuously, floating like individuals in a liquid state, intersecting with others yet remaining elusive.

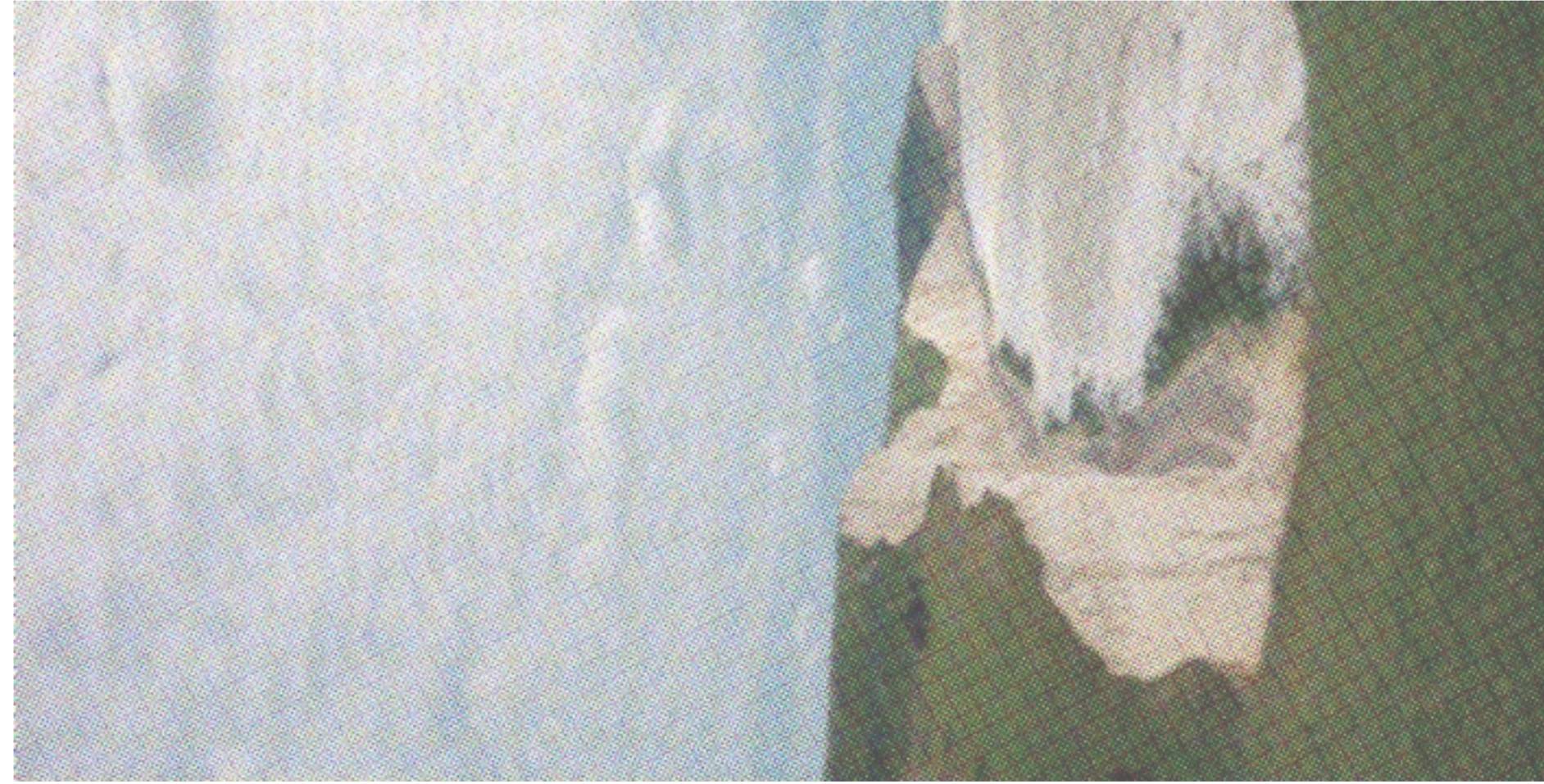
This series can also be seen as my contemplation and portrayal of memory and roots. In this uncertain and ever-changing era, we gaze at ourselves through a hazy glass, with tear-like droplets outlining faintly clear contours. These droplets fall to the ground, only to rise again in an endless, ephemeral dance.



IMAGE: MENGYUAN TONG, PERSONAL ARCHIVE



PHOTOGRAPH: WU LIN, INFORMATION EXPERIENCE DESIGN



PHOTOGRAPH: ANUSHKA TENDOLKAR, MA DIGITAL DIRECTION

ABSCISSION

SIN MAN YEUNG, MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION

In the old days we were together.
Fallen, detached, scattered.
Now alone I'm scared.
Piling again in stacks,
resting on an artist's desk,
with yellow, orange, red.
Okay I have got a crush in my head.



PHOTOGRAPH: ANUSHKA TENDOLKAR, MA DIGITAL DIRECTION

The RCA Hiking society organizes walking trips every two weeks. So far, the society has visited the Seven sister cliffs in East Sussex, Hampstead Heath in London and most recently, Stonehenge. The society welcomes RCA students who enjoy walking and discovering new places. →

She was lying sideways on her bed, gazing outside the wall-sized window. Like every night, the light at the top of the Empire State Building was flickering. The colour changed as time passed - crimson red to yellow, to brown to green, and back to red. One could see a significant part of the midtown skyline from this side of Brooklyn. Outside, it appeared to be a windy autumn night, but on the bed, she was comforted by her vermilion-flowered comforter that she was not sure she liked. Sometimes, she thought it was beautiful, and at other times, she felt it was disturbingly gaudy, but at least it kept her warm, irrespective of its perceived beauty. That night, she was also kept warm by the striking, black, muscular arm of the man she had been seeing for a few months and the sensation of his body lying next to hers. The arm was wrapped tightly around her waist as though to anchor her breasts in the seemingly right place.

The night had inadvertently turned out to be the transitory phase of their intense relationship, and neither cared to know the time at this hour. A few hours earlier, after he expressed that he was glad she came into his life, she had gently conveyed that she would like to stop seeing him. Such paradoxical intentions could only lead to the inevitable final transition, but not before leading them to engage in the deepest conversation of their relationship span. Perhaps the knowing that they would not see each other again led them to find expression of their immigrant struggles, layered relationships with their single mothers, fears, furies, unforgivables, and aspirations. Unlinked aspirations. Like the leaves outside the window, their relationship drifted towards the ground, but at least mesmerizingly.

It had been a few minutes since either of them had voiced anything. They seemed to be silently

gazing outside the window at the building opposite, with its many windows primarily covered in blinds, unlike the room they were in. Their gaze fell on this strangely moving shadow. Unlike the other shadows that night, it did not seem like a person from beyond the blinds. It seemed like a shadow of something floating outside of that building. The shadow was fluttering gently along with the zephyr. After a few seconds of observing it, she instinctively said, "That looks scary." He wondered what it was too, and after a few seconds, said, "Don't worry, when I am here, I won't let anything happen to you." Hmm...

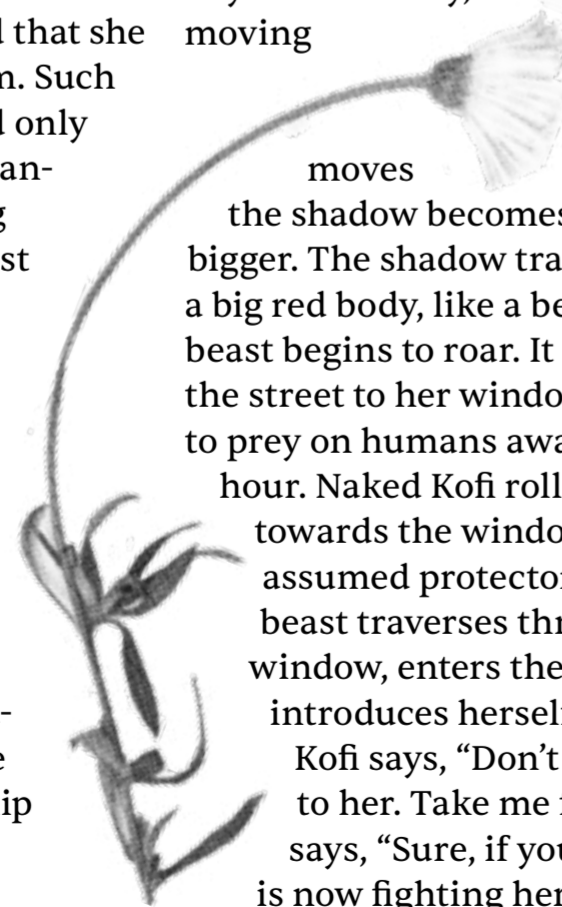
For her, the leaves drifted to the ground with heightened speed right at that second. The mesmerization concluded.

For some mental satire, she kept her intellect or independence or feminism or whatever-you-want-to-call-it aside for a dystopian moment and played scenarios in her head.

Strange scenario Red

Kofi: "Don't worry, when I am here, I won't let anything happen to you." Suddenly, that strangely moving shadow they were looking at moves fiercely, and the shadow becomes bigger and bigger. The shadow transforms into a big red body, like a beast. The red beast begins to roar. It flies across the street to her window, looking to prey on humans awake at this hour. Naked Kofi rolls around her towards the window with his assumed protector status. The beast traverses through the window, enters the room and introduces herself as Athena.

Kofi says, "Don't do anything to her. Take me first." Athena says, "Sure, if you say so." Kofi is now fighting her using all of his upper body strength. But is the strength he gets from his everyday push-ups enough to fight this super-



natural beast? Maybe not. Because in a few seconds, Kofi is devoured, and Athena now approaches the woman.

Well, at least he stuck to his word. Nothing did happen to her while Kofi was still there.

Strange Scenario Orange

Kofi: "Don't worry, when I am here, I won't let anything happen to you." Suddenly, that strangely moving shadow they were looking at moves more fiercely, and the

"Like the leaves outside the window, their relationship drifted towards the ground"

shadow now turns into a strange orange hue, like a moving dense cape, and flies across the street to her window. Given the lack of a face on this moving object, they couldn't decipher its intentions, so one can assume it was a threat - to be safer. Naked Kofi pulls her into his arms and says, we have to run. When they are about to step outside the room to escape, they are enveloped by this orange cape and taken into the abyss. Well, at least he stuck to his word. Kind of. Whatever happened to them happened together. What did happen to them? Did anything not happen to her?

Strange Scenario: Reality

Kofi: "Don't worry, when I am here, I won't let anything happen to you." She continued to observe the moving shadow for a few more seconds while playing scenario red and scenario orange in her head while chuckling in her head. It probably was a shrub on the balcony of one of the penthouses. But she wasn't inclined to share that with him, as he might just lose the assumed identity of a protector. She had already given him enough of a reality check for the night. The autumn night had finally ended, and the sky was now imitating Monet's Sunrise.

She felt his arms loosen and heard Kofi say that he would head out now. Translation: I am going to leave your life for good now. She intuitively knew this inevitability after their first night together a few months ago. But a prophecy does need to be fulfilled. As he was getting dressed, she considered everything she could say but chose not to say a word. He seemed to oscillate between the red and the orange, trying to find her version there. But she wanted to just be, and she was in neither scenarios nor anywhere between the ends of red and orange. She lived in a different dimension. After a parting kiss-hug, she shut the door behind him. EERIE! She should have just said, "That looks eerie," instead of scary. Because that's what she meant.

From that autumn to this autumn, she faced multiple evolutions - some expectedly and willingly, and some unexpectedly but willingly. Invisible beasts, monsters, and other bodies beyond what she could have concocted on that night came into her life. Some uprooted her entirely.

But, as it turns out, she was more comforted than ever by her own beautiful, brown arms. Her arms strengthened by her intellect or independence or feminism or whatever-you-want-to-call-it helped root her in the ground yet again to find expression in a new tree. The process is always mesmerising her.



ENTRAÑAS, USOA GARCIA SAGUES

↑
 Autumn is the time to start your fireplace, and textile artist Usua Garcia Sagues from MA Textiles presents a piece from her series, *Entrañas*, exploring the fire in our bellies. The artwork combines sari silk, millinery ribbon, green and brown aluminum wire, and red and orange jute, all skillfully crocheted. The flames are made with copper aluminum, rolled and hooped. Follow Usua's work on Instagram @usoa_textileartist.

Usua also recommends that if you want to see incredible artistry with magic realism—autumn trees turned into abajours amongst other inspiring collectible design trophies—make sure to check out the work of Nacho Carbonell at the Carpenter's Workshop Gallery at Ladbroke Hall beginning October 8th.

WERCHESSE SIR?

MEGHNA GOPALAN, MA SERVICE DESIGN

Good day to everyone

----- / ----- / ----- / -----

Except you

----- / -----

who has to go for a grocery run

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

To get his Marys bloodier

----- / ----- / ----- / -----

And spice up his steak oh dear

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

For he has to pass the first hurdle

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

Without making his stomach girdle

----- / ----- / ----- / -----

And say the word that cannot be said

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

Without sipping English tea

----- / ----- / ----- / -----

and a monocle with thread

----- / ----- / ----- / -----

War chester shire

----- / ----- / -----

Werchess sir

----- / -----

Wo chacha sha

----- / ----- / -----

He still can't get it right

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

No wonder we get your plight

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

It is but a shape shifting word

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

To put a question mark on yer worth

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----

Good day to everyone

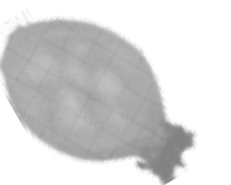
----- / ----- / ----- / -----

Except you sir

----- / ----- / -----

You are just about to kill some fun

----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / ----- / -----



Recently arriving in London from Colombia, I've found myself learning to navigate a new season of life, in the same way leaves change during autumn. Keeping alive memories from my home country has been essential to adapt to my new life.

Whenever I feel adrift, I know that if I close my eyes briefly,

I can travel to my safe, happy, and most beloved place: the Valley of Laboyos in Pitalito. The Guadua bamboo forests, the red *Cachingo* trees, and the ever-changing wetlands fuel my heart with peace.

The desire to forever hold this precious memory appears at times within my work. My artistic practice, predominantly sculptural, revolves around gathering and accumulating objects.

Although my work often features assemblages using everyday items, I'm drawn to the seemingly delicate organic materials that create highly resistant structures and relate to

Colombian traditions and terrains.

The artwork featured here, "Contained stream" (2017), is an audiovisual installation made with Guadua bark collected from the La Coneca wetland in the Laboyos Valley. This type of bamboo can only grow near bodies of water, controlling their flow by absorbing and discharging liquid. Placed on top of and beside each other, the pieces of bark create

a circular dam that contains a single-channel video of a water swirl.

The video was made at a nearby stream of water that feeds the wetland. This piece aims to preserve the memory of that ecosystem, which has faced threats from climate change-induced weather fluctuations and potential road construction for a nearby expanding town. I worry that in the future, my installation may be the only way to experience this place.

"Contained stream" (2017), is an audiovisual installation made with Guadua bark collected from the La Coneca wetland in the Laboyos Valley. This type of bamboo can only grow near bodies of water, controlling their flow by absorbing and discharging liquid.

Placed on top of and beside each other, the pieces of bark create a circular dam that contains a single-channel video of a water swirl. This video was made at a nearby stream of water that feeds the wetland. This piece aims to preserve the memory of that ecosystem, which has faced threats from climate change-induced weather fluctuations and potential road construction for a nearby expanding town. I worry that in the future, my installation may be the only way to experience this place.

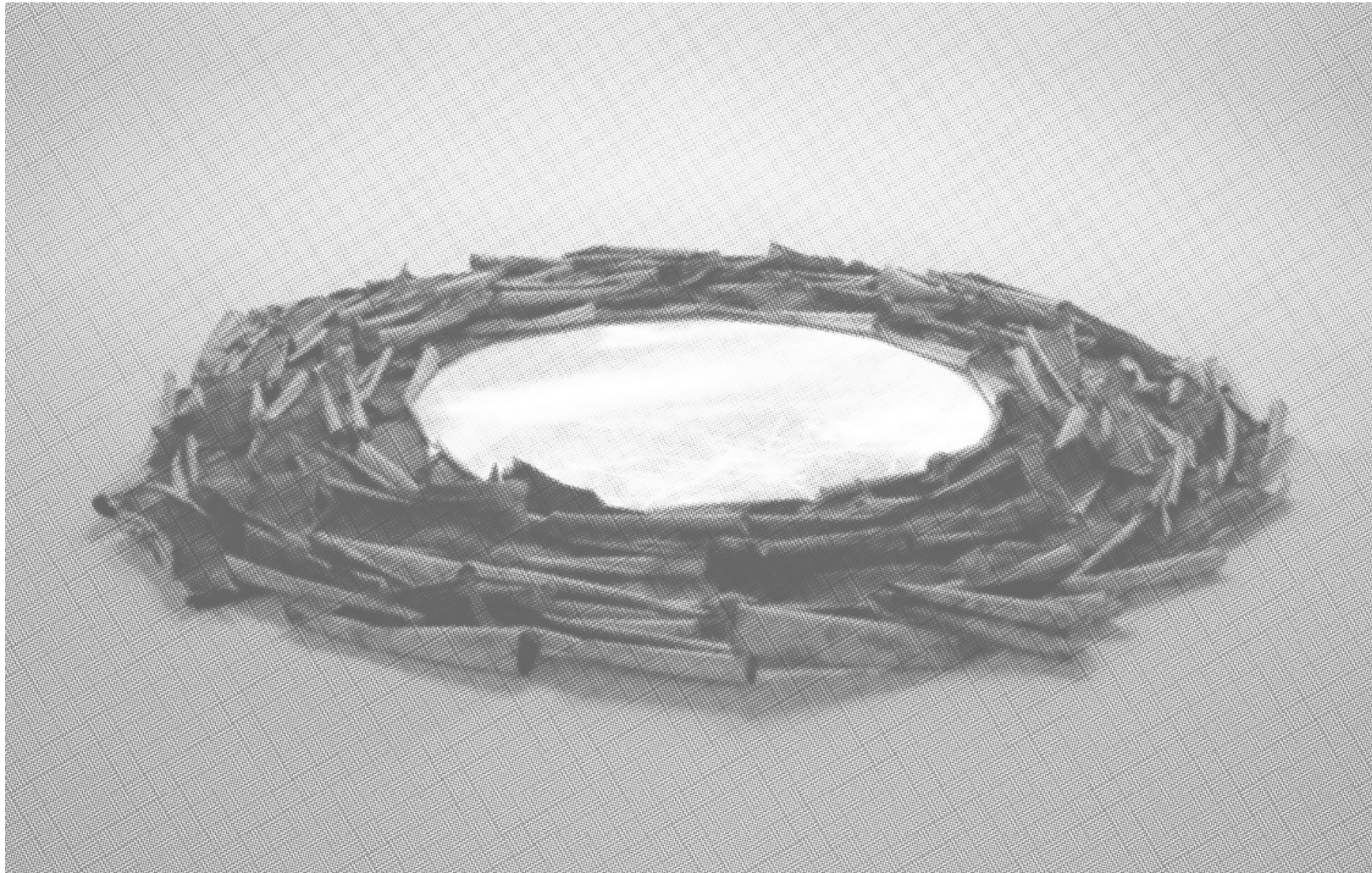


IMAGE: ANA MARIA CHAMUCERO MOLINA, PERSONAL ARCHIVE

BODILY MEMORIES

SEUNGJO JEONG

“Bodily Memories” is from my ongoing series “Woven Memory”, which I began with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reconsidering the material sustainability of my painting practice from an ecological perspective, I developed a way to recycle linen offcuts (the unavoidable by-product of making a stretched canvas that undesirably occupied my studio through years of accumulation) back into the painting process. I consider the triptych painting to be autumnal in the sense that the three canvases collectively represent the passing of seasons - the circle of life with its early, middle and late period. The painting’s subject matter, video cassette tape, represents how our body accumulates various memories of experience through the journey of life. Although some of the memories change and fade away over seasons, they gradually become part of us, just as the fallen autumn leaves that pile around us become part of the earth every season.



ARTWORK (BODILY MEMORIES): SEUNGJO JEONG, PHD
STUDENT, SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES.

1pm
Until
8pm

3 DAYS! 6th DECEMBER
5th DEC. 7th DECEMBER

THE ANNUAL RCA S.U. CHRISTMAS FÊTE



Hear Ye!
Hear Ye!
Artists &
Designers
from the
RCA
invite you
to the
annual
Christmas
Fête
hosted by
the S.U.

Find
Bespoke
gifts for
sale like
Prints;
Ceramics;
Originals;
Textiles;
Jewellery
& much,
much
More!

Courtyard Gallery &
Upper Gulbenkian.
RCA Kensington.
Kensington Gore
SW7 2EU



SCAN QR FOR
THE SIGN-UP
FORM!



Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design



Since 2012, the RCA Christmas Fête has been a popular indoor market where students, alumni, and staff showcase and sell their work, keeping 100% of the profits. In 2023, the event raised £50,000 for students. The Fête is open to friends, family,

alumni, and the public, and has garnered significant media attention, growing in popularity each year. It offers a unique opportunity for the public to engage with emerging artists and designers. This year's Fête will be held at the Kensington

campus from December 5th to 7th, from 1pm to 8pm. Scan the code to sign up to be a stallholder while spots are still available! We look forward to seeing you there!