





AND THEN...

MFA Visual Narrative's 2016 Thesis Exhibition

A NOTE FROM THE CURATORS:

**JONATHON ROSEN, ARTIST & ANIMATOR
AND ED VALENTINE, WRITER & PUPPETEER**

MFA Visual Narrative proudly brings to you eight new cutting-edge multi-media storytelling installations by our 2016 thesis class.

The projects in this exhibition reflect the uniquely interdisciplinary nature of this program, where creative writing is taught alongside visual arts to harness the power of story.

In these diverse MFA projects, we go back to 19th century Ohio to see a barn raising through the eyes of a precocious, over-enthusiastic farm boy. Next up is the story of an adolescent girl in a new house that has an anthropomorphic secret portal to another dimension. Then there's a young island girl who lives in the middle of a devastated and depleted Pacific Ocean where she has to fend for herself on the open seas.

And if that wasn't enough, we also have the last human colony in an old, dying universe, a deer plagued by anxiety who is forced to overcome his fear after delving into an abandoned building, an Asian-American girl who sees the demons and phantoms of her ancestors wherever she goes, a comic about female seals (or selkies) who anxiously mix with humans - and finally, a young zebra who goes to a portrait museum and is bothered by the fact that none of the portraits in the museum look like her.

We're proud of this brave new world of stories our students have created and we hope you enjoy your own total immersion in the stories and their respective installations we now present. You are invited to witness these projects for yourself to see what the next generation of storytellers has concocted just for you!

MENTORS

Daniel Kirk, Author & Illustrator
David Soman, Author & Illustrator
Jim Rugg, Comic Book Artist
Jörg Tittel, Director & Writer
Joseph Kelly, Writer & Producer
Julia Pott, Animator and Illustrator
Nick Cross, Art Director
Samantha Gorman, Writer & Artist

FACULTY

Anna Ogier-Bloomer, Artist & Photographer
Ben Zackheim, Writer & Game Producer
Benjamin Marra, Writer & Artist
Bill Kartalopoulos, Editor & Curator
Christina Roussos, Director
Diego Vainesman, Design Director
Ed Valentine, Writer & Puppeteer
Edward Hemingway, Writer & Illustrator
Jim Rugg, Comic Book Artist
Jonathon Rosen, Artist & Animator
Leonard Marcus, Historian & Critic
Lisa Cron, Author
Mark Sable, Author
Matt Rota, Illustrator
Pan Terzis, Artist, Illustrator & Printer
Stacy Renee Morrison, Photographer
Tim Szetela, Designer & Animator
Tak Cheung, Designer, Visible Futures Lab

ADMIN

Joan McCabe, Director of Operations
Lucea Spinelli, Project Manager
Nathan Fox, Chair & Illustrator

THANK YOU

Anthony P. Rhodes, Executive Vice President
Carrie Atkins, Learning Technologist
Carl Auge, Exhibitions Coordinator
David Rhodes, President
Emily Ross, Assistant Provost
Francis DiTommaso, Director, SVA Galleries
Frank Bonomo, Manager, Academic IT
Jay Edidin, Editor & Publishing Consultant
Jeff Nesen, Provost
John Heida, Director, Visible Futures Lab
Pan Terzis, Artist, Illustrator & Printer
Rachel Small, Writer
Robert Campbell, Exhibitions Coordinator
Rusty Gibbs, Sr. Audio Visual Engineer
Tyson Skross, Exhibitions Manager

"2016 AND THEN..." GUEST DESIGNER

Alex Stikeleather, Graphic Designer
www.alexstikeleather.com | [@chickfriedstike](https://twitter.com/chickfriedstike)

RECEPTION

July 22
6:00-8:00pm

OPEN GALLERY HOURS

July 9–July 26
Monday–Friday: 9am - 7pm
Saturday: 10am - 6pm

PROGRAM INFO

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136 West 21st Street
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THE NEW BARN

Children's Picture Book and Website

The New Barn is a children's book and interactive website that tells the story of a 19th-century barn raising from the perspective of the farmer's seven-year-old son.

In an age before machines, barns required the collective contributions of an entire community to build. Together friends and neighbors prepared, cut trees, milled wood, and then in the span of a single day, they raised what has become the quintessential sign of agriculture's presence.

In this story, young Otto wants nothing more than to raise the family's new barn, but how can a boy help build something that requires the work of more than a hundred people? He is determined to find a way, but what Otto sees as help becomes hinderance. Banished from building the family's barn, Otto gathers the other children and sets off to build a barn of his own.

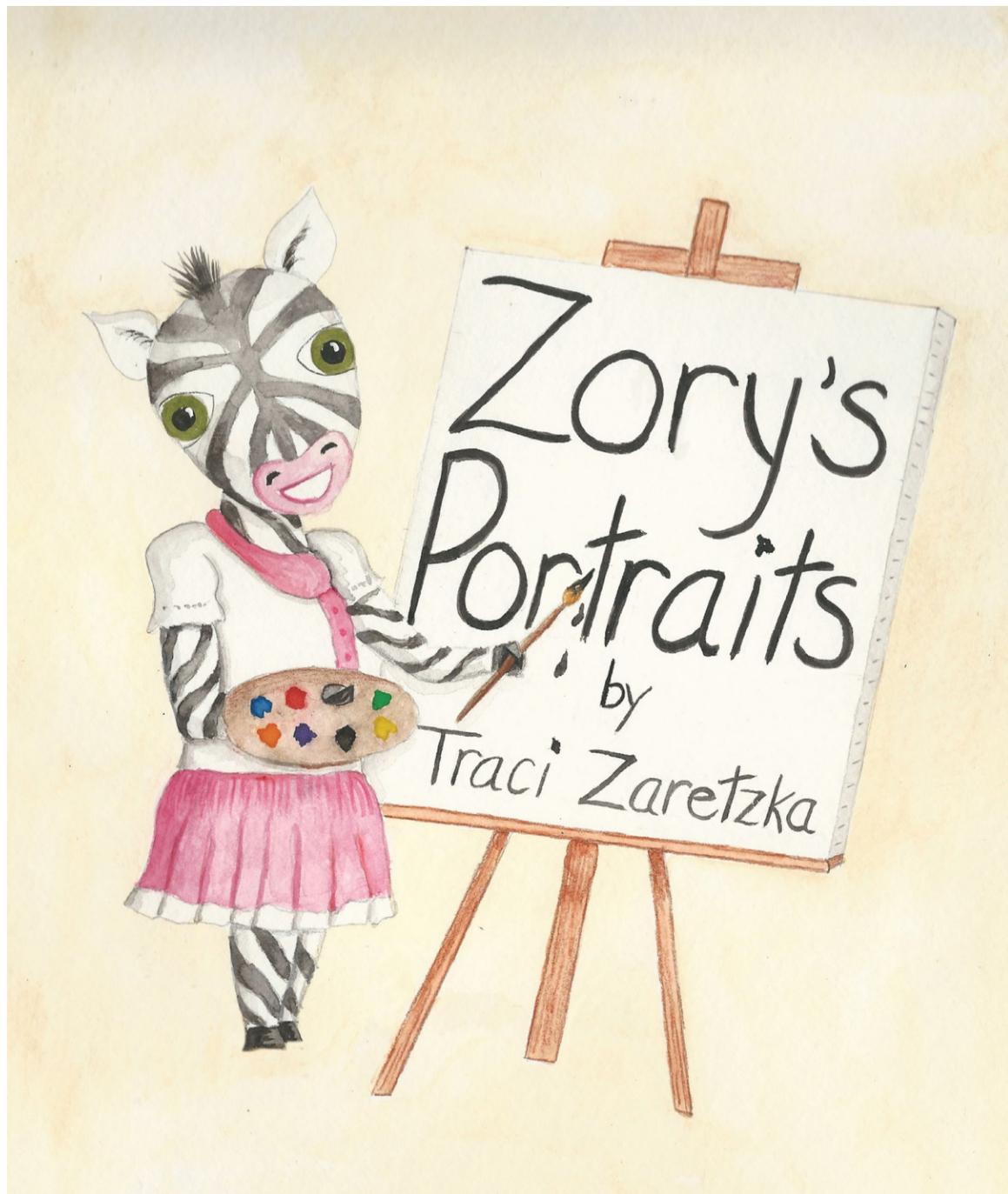
The story of *The New Barn* may be fiction, but the event was real. In 1888, Jacob and Anna Rohr built a barn. Their three children, Otto, Henry, and Isabella were there along with 200 family and friends. Four generations later, the author recreates that moment from his own family history to tell this story.

WALTER TYLER

Walter Tyler is an Emmy-winning journalist, photographer and picture book author. He tells stories that explore the intersection of communal memory and personal history. He spent much of his childhood in a barn.

Website: www.waltertyler.com

Twitter & Instagram: @bywaltertyler



ZORY'S PORTRAITS

Children's Picture Book

When Zory and her classmates go on a field trip to a portrait museum, they are excited and amazed by all of the beautiful paintings they see. But as Zory walks through the museum, she notices something that bothers her: none of the faces in the portraits look like her. Where are the zebra portraits? When her teacher tells the class to choose a favorite portrait because they are going to copy it, Zory has trouble making a choice - until she comes up with her own solution.

What Zory notices about the museum she visits is the same thing a lot of people experience when visiting museums. Many well-known museums lack diversity in both the artwork and the artists they show. Not everyone notices the lack of diversity, and many of those who do often accept it as the status quo. But not Zory. She sees the diversity in the world around her, and she doesn't understand why a museum would not reflect that diverse world. So she tries to change it.

TRACI ZARETZKA

Traci Zaretzka's background is in fine art and elementary education. She often used picture books as teaching tools. Like Zory, she noticed that both picture books and the standard art curriculum often did not represent the diverse world in which her students lived. She wants to write stories that not only acknowledge the diversity of the world that today's children are growing up in, but celebrates it. She wants all children to feel that she is speaking to them and about them with her stories.

Website: www.zorysportraits.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/traciszaretzka/

ALEXANDRA BEGUEZ

JON BERO

ANDREA SCHMITZ

MASAMI KIYONO

BARBARA GEOGHEGAN

ANELISA GARFUNKEL

WALTER TYLER

TRACI ZARETZKA

HAPPA

Comic
Credits: Jared M. Silver - Font Design

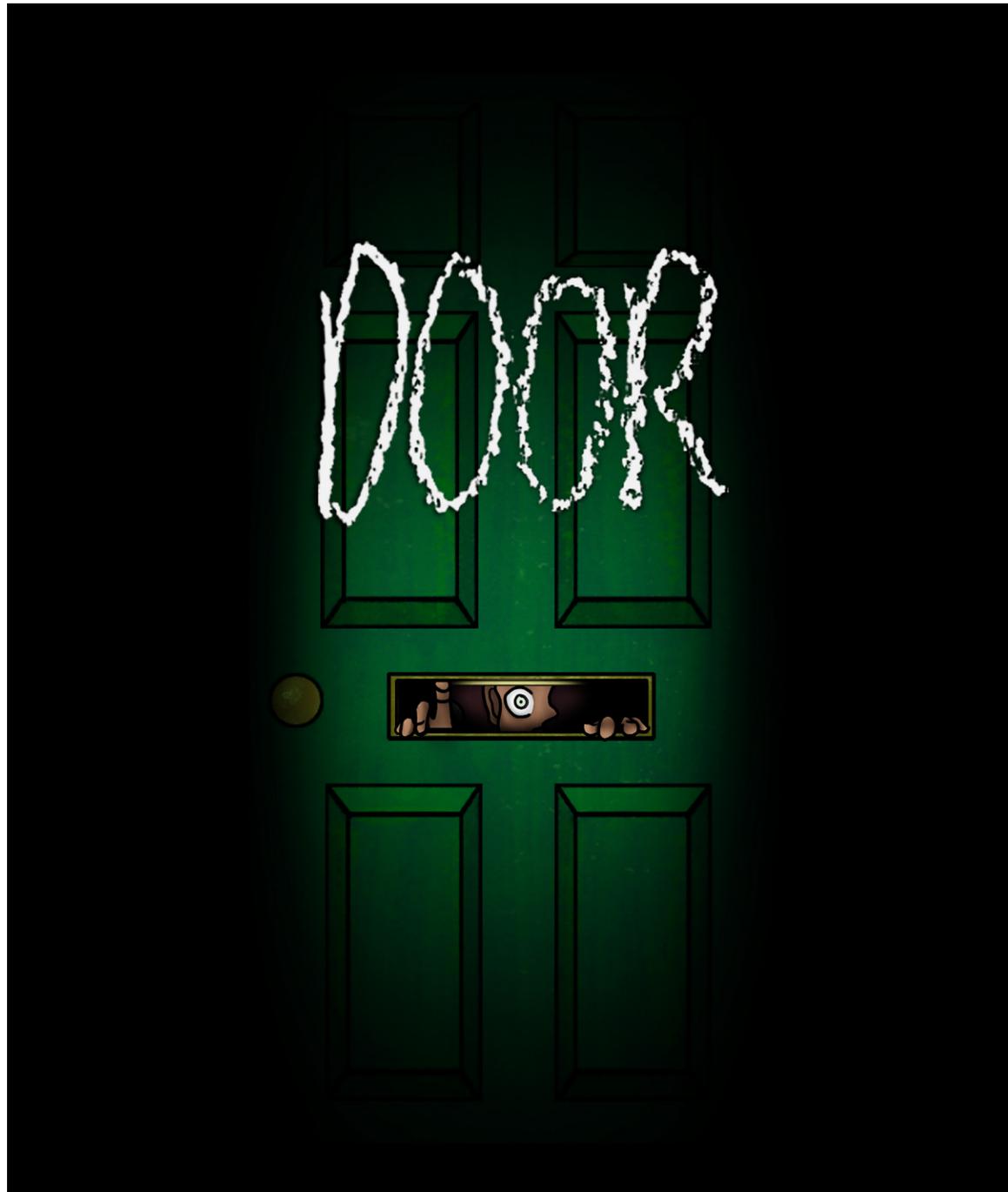
Mako is an ambitious half-Japanese and half-white New York college student with the annoying ability to see spirits wherever she goes. This power becomes debilitating when she starts fighting with her Asian father in California. All of this stress causes an old demon and Mako's former childhood friend, Yuurei, to come back into her life. He says he's here to help her confront her problems with her father, but whether or not Mako believes him is a different story entirely.

Now Mako must decide her next course of action: can she just go on with her life and ignore her monsters as usual, or will she finally face them, along with her biracial identity issues and the true reason why her father is disappearing from her life?

MASAMI KIYONO

Masami Kiyono is a comic artist and storyteller originally from the California Bay Area and recipient of SVA's Will Eisner Sequential Art Award, 2016. Her current project, HAPPA, is an eight-part graphic novel that takes inspiration from her mixed heritage. Her goal is to not only give voice to her experiences, but to create stories for others who don't fit into one box., and she plans to do it through this and other comic series she has in the works.

Website: www.masamikiyono.com
Instagram: [@bluelinepencilpusher](https://www.instagram.com/bluelinepencilpusher)
Tumblr: www.masamimakesart.tumblr.com



DOOR

Animation
Additional Credits: Taylor Steele (voice of Gaia), Margaret Koeppel (voice of Mom), Travis Knauss (Background Artist), Lori Lee Bulloch (Composer), Tally Moss (ADR recordist)

Door is the story of Gaia, a stubborn teenager who has just moved into a creepy house with her mother and is determined to hate it, despite her mother's reassurances. When a mysterious green door begins to stalk Gaia, she literally stumbles through it into another world, one that manifests a person's greatest fear- in Gaia's case, spiders. Though the door repeatedly attempts to trap her in its world, her mother refuses to believe her. In the end, Gaia must summon the bravery necessary to face her fears and come together with her mother to defeat the evil living just behind the door.

Gaia's story explores the idea of bravery in the face of the unknown, emphasizing the kind that has to come from gumption rather than sense. We are not always brave when we need to be, but part of growing up is realizing that in the face of impossible forces, big changes, and the ever approaching future, there's no way to go but forward, one way or another. Whether it's looking out into the world as a young adult with no plans, into the dark alone with a flashlight, or at a door you have no choice but to walk through, we all have to face the unknown at one time or another. The real question is will we open our eyes when we face it?

ANDREA SCHMITZ

Andrea Schmitz is a motion graphics designer and animator from the beautiful city of Little Rock, Arkansas. Andrea has always been a writer, but a love of cartoons followed her throughout her life until she began creating motion graphics, and her two passions finally became one. She hopes to continue storytelling through short form animation and motion graphics and one day create an animated web series.

Project Website: www.bewarethedor.com
Personal Website: www.andreaschmitzz.com
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Instagram: www.instagram.com/andreaschmitzz/

THE OFFERING

Comic

The Offering is a cautionary tale about how relationships change over time, facing the consequences of your actions, and finding your place in the universe.

Maite lives on Talus, the last human colony in a dying universe. She has a complicated relationship with her guardian Dian, leader of Talus, who demands perfection and obedience from her headstrong ward. One night while dreaming, Maite is contacted and befriended by Uri and his father Umb. They reveal themselves to be Uag, mysterious beings whose uninhibited way of life is considered taboo.

When a lethal affliction befalls the Talus colony, Dian keeps everyone blissfully unaware of the looming danger while quickly isolating anyone showing symptoms. Maite becomes dismayed by Dian's actions and turns to her new Uag friends who offer to help. Accepting their help inadvertently puts them in danger, putting Maite in the impossible position of choosing who lives and who dies.



ALEXANDRA BEGUEZ

Alexandra Beguez is an illustrator and cartoonist based in New Jersey. Her comics and illustrations appear in *Little Nemo: Dream Another Dream*, *Quarter Moon*, *Ink Brick* and *Carboncito*. She has received awards and recognition from The Society of Illustrators of New York and Los Angeles, American Illustration, and the MoCCA Arts Festival. She has a love for bright colors, science fiction, hoofed beasts and cautionary tales.

Project Website: www.theofferingcomic.com
Personal Website: www.alexandrabeguez.com
Instagram: [@bisforbeguez](https://www.instagram.com/bisforbeguez)
Twitter: [@abeguez](https://twitter.com/abeguez)



YUKI

Film / Animation Hybrid
Credits: Cady Juarez (voice of Michi / cinematographer / colorist)

There is beauty in the broken, but Yuki, a deer plagued by anxiety, isn't able to see it. As a result of a misguided attempt by his closest companion Michi to 'toughen him up', Yuki is forced to delve into an abandoned building where a malevolent presence lurks, ready to emerge - confirming Yuki's fears and suspicions.

Anxiety is much like living in your own horror movie everyday, and Yuki knows this better than anyone. It's gotten so bad that Yuki's anxiety has begun to eat away at his relationship with Michi. In her own way, Michi has unknowingly contributed to Yuki's problem, thinking she knows just how to fix him. The truth is, Yuki has to be the one to fix Yuki.



JON BERO

No stranger to social anxiety himself, Jon Bero has struggled with this disorder for most of his life. Working across a variety of media, from sound to animation to writing, he pulls from personal experiences for all of his storytelling endeavors. Jon is deeply inspired by Japanese art, as well as his experiences abroad. Combining his love for art making with travel, his studio primarily exists on the road, affording him the opportunity to have shot films and created animations in places such as Berlin and Tokyo. Traveling, creating art, and telling these stories has continued to be a cathartic outlet, greatly helping him to not only get a better handle on his anxiety, but to be able to share those personal experiences with others.

Project Website: www.fujiforest.com
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Vimeo: [www.vimeo.com/jonbero](https://vimeo.com/jonbero)

A CONJURING IN THE GYRE

Illustrated Novella

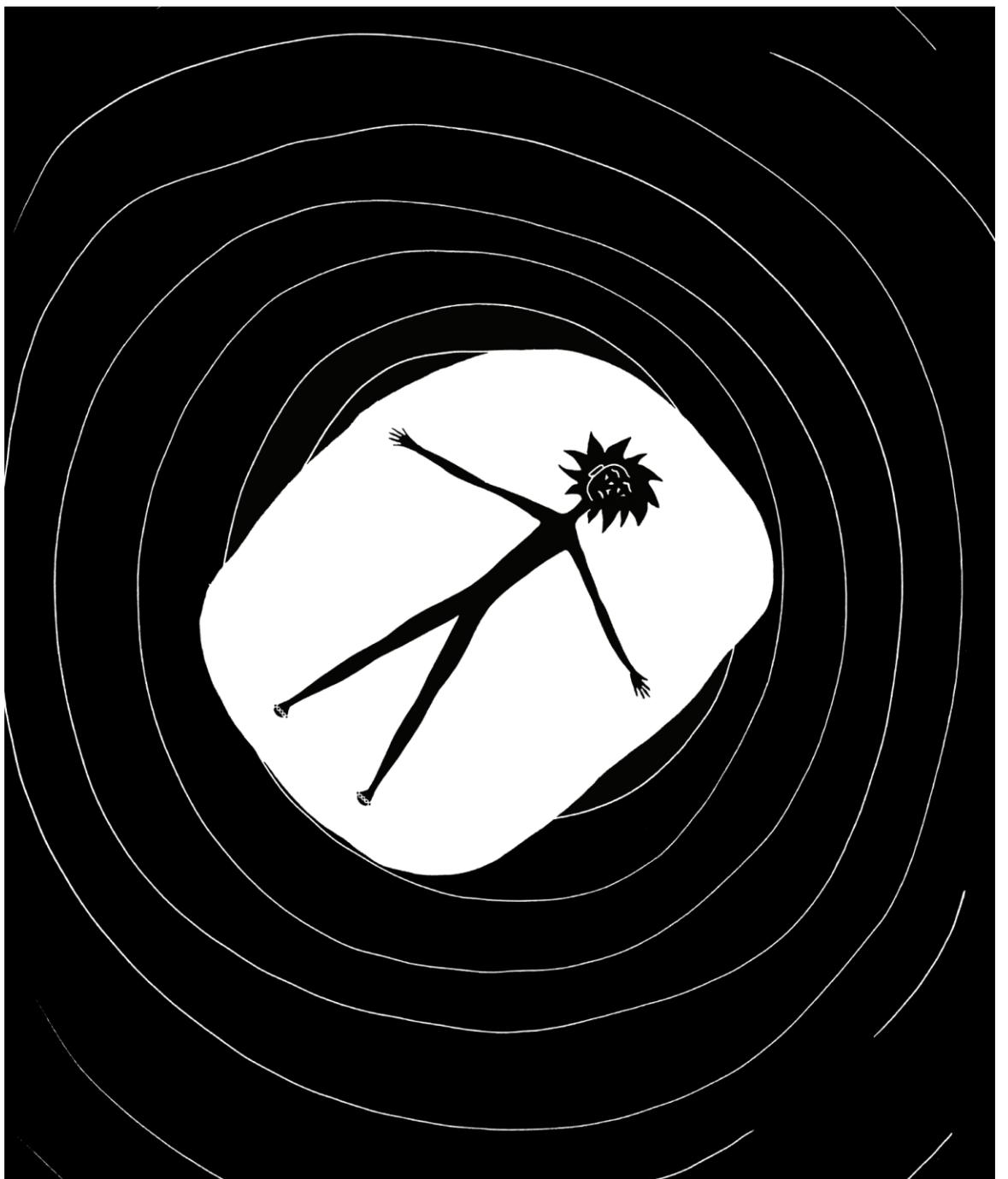
A Conjuring In The Gyre is a futuristic folktale about Lehlia, a young outlier who lives on an isolated island in the middle of a depleted Pacific Ocean. Her people have long suffered from the devastating reaches of modernization and climate change. Their connection to the natural world and their ancient traditions all but disappeared. When a catastrophic wave wipes away everything Lehlia has ever known, the strong-willed 12-year old is forced to flee her drowning island and embark on a journey that will send her straight into the jaws of the mythic Great Pacific Gyre, a toxic vortex thriving on the waste of a throwaway world. Lehlia will need to call on the wisdom of her ancestors to escape the onslaught of chaos that the modern world has stirred up, and ultimately will have to find harmony between the two to survive.

ANELISA GARFUNKEL

Anelisa Garfunkel is a filmmaker based in Brooklyn. Her career as a storyteller began over fifteen years ago producing educational films on the tiny island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia. Since then she has written, directed and produced television, documentaries, web series, and short films in the US and abroad. Although the medium of this story is a bit of a departure from Anelisa's previous work as a filmmaker, the graphic illustrations and lyrical style of the narrative draw heavily on her cinematic roots. Anelisa's stories are borne from a life spent climbing, diving, exploring, and adventuring around the world.

Project Website: www.inthegyre.com

Personal Website: www.anelisagarfunkel.com



RONA

Comic

Rona is a selkie, a young woman who can turn into a seal. Lonely and isolated within her own selkie pod, Rona grows interested in a nearby island inhabited by humans and incites their ire by choosing to explore it. But when her sealskin is mysteriously stolen, Rona can no longer transform into a seal, and must find a way to integrate with the human inhabitants of the island. After living apart from humans her whole life, she is forced to choose the kind of life she wants to lead and to figure out what is truly important to her.

Rona is a story about identity, what it means to be human, and what it means to have a home.

BARBARA GEOGHEGAN

Barbara Geoghegan is an illustrator and graphic designer from New England. After getting her dual BFA in Design and Illustration, Barbara worked as a graphic designer and published her own comics on the side. Rona was inspired by a lifelong interest in selkie stories and a love for the maritime landscape. Like Rona, most of her comics are stories about young women, and employ mixed-media collage. Most recently, her work can be seen in the anthologies *1001 Knights* and *Sweaty Palms*. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

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