A picture of a waiting room: the walls are mint green. We
OK together.

look straight onto a far wall. A large loosely painted image of

a cropped orange face surrounded by a bunch of bright green hangs above a row of chairs. Chairs line the edges of the
room, and a grey table lies in the center of the room. On the

table are strewn all different kinds of magazines. A half eaten
“I’m okay – you’re okay.” This past year, the requisite, small-talk greeting of “How are you?” has elicited more Okays, than Goods, or the grammatically more correct choice: I’m well. Okay as in – pretty good, i.e., not bad, good enough, could be worse, have nothing to really complain about. Okay as a positive feeling, as in – healthy, well, recovering, as good as it is going to get, a thank goodness I’m alive, as positive an answer as one is going to get. Or it could be just as easily used as a negative response: just okay, not great, been better, so-so, Comme ci, comme ça. ¶ For Boomers and Gen Xers, the phrase, I’m OK – You’re OK conjures up images of the dehydrated yellow cover of a bestselling self-help book of the same name, published in the late Sixties. In it, the author details the theory of Transactional Analysis, a study of relationships and interactions between people through the study of their person-to-person transactions, or units of social intercourse. The stimulus, then the response;
Island pictured behind a radiantly glowing design duo boasting their latest project assembled from the wood of old barns.

a greeting, then an acknowledgment; a question, and answer; a request, and a fulfillment, etc. Contrary to the ego-centered theories of Freud, this method centered on observation of human communication itself: words, facial expressions, body language, gesture. In addition to focusing on analyzing how we communicate, the theory placed an emphasis on the stroke, as in that specific type of physical touch, to describe any fundamental unit of social action, whether it be positive or negative. Stroke could refer to any social interaction or acknowledgment, including a verbal or non-verbal, non-physical “stroke,” rather than only a physical touch or pat. The book explains that we crave these strokes in all our day-to-day interactions, not unlike how an infant or child needs to be held or cuddled. So here we all are, 6 feet apart, with half of our faces (very necessarily) covered. In muted silence. That is, if we are actually near one another, on campus or in the studios. We are more frequently separated by walls and air and sometimes state lines, sometimes even oceans. We sit less than two feet from a computer screen, and look into the eyes of another human being, or peer all around their silhouette at all the details of the rooms that encase them, be it in real or virtual backgrounds. This access tricks us into feeling like we are becoming so close, and that we have achieved a familiarity like never before. Students and professors alike may visually enter one another's space, be it neat or disorderly, purposefully natural or subtly art-directed, quiet or with roomies and kids passing through the background. It feels like we have grown closer, but much can be lost in translation in all the data zipping up through outer space (a miracle of technology!) and shooting back down to earth, especially when you are not all breathing the same air, in and out, in and out. Keystrokes replace a nod or tilt of the head, and without notice, a face can suddenly become a black box with two words. (Did they leave the room? Or are they picking their teeth?) Some of us
are usually alone in a room these days, and some of us are never, ever alone anymore. While some of us faculty are juggling kids and families at home, these young artists here are alone together in apartments or art studios downtown, just a dividing wall away from another student sitting in front of a screen, next to take-out containers that replace evenings out with friends. We are left to crave more and different human interaction – through contact, touch, acknowledgment, gesture, all of it, some more than others. The tap tap tap of the keyboard in the chat or on the phone screen is not enough. The transactions we once took for granted have been virtual and digital, not physical, these days. ¶ We did it, and we just about made it, and we are okay, and that is okay. And okay is enough. And we have been going through this together, albeit separately, and what it is going to take to finally move beyond this and start again with resolve is to really do this together (but separate, folks!) and continue to somehow care for one another and advocate for a just society more than we ever have before. It has to be okay, because otherwise we are, well, sunk. And we have to be okay together, or else we are truly alone, while still sunk, with no one coming to pull us up – with their actual hand, no less! (Someday, and hopefully soon.) ¶ Sending congratulations and strength to the Class of 2021, who bridged the remote space and the physical one with objects of beauty and meaning.

Lisa Kereszi
Director of Undergraduate Studies
April 2021

Sources
The woman next to the kid has a small dog in a purse on her lap and rests a magazine.
drawn from the table on the back of the dog. There is a live punk rock band playing on the left side to entertain the peo-
the band wearing a Destroy All Monsters band tee. The main

table while a ballerina dances across from

the band wearing a Destroy All Monsters band tee. The main
singer has on a tee shirt from old navy and is wearing flip flops. A tv is mounted on the wall in the top right corner of
the room. One of the celebrities featured on the cover of the

*table* magazines can be seen in a mugshot on the tv. Another
man is sitting on a chair but his face is obscured by a ring stain left on the picture from a wet cup. The floors of the
room are checkered with black and white squares containing flecks of other colors. An old couple hold hands and sit pa-
tently dressed in lighter colors and wearing matching visors. They look intently at the kid sitting to their left. One of the
many magazines spilling off of the table is concealing the shoe of one of the old people. A house plant is placed in the
foreground concealing parts of the picture. The image is fading in some places and in others the colors become acidic.
They have been really inspired by all of the amazing work that exists online. They look at a lot of websites. They read
too many books, on the computer. They scroll through a lot of tweets, a lot of photos. They really want to make a typeface
that the digital world provides a space that the physical world
using a computer program. They like to code. They believe
can't. In the physical world, signs are always stuck to some-
thing. They're printed out and pasted, put together, to remain
the physical world is full of wonderful shapes and
textures that the digital world can barely imitate. They take a lot of pictures of the physical world. They take a lot of walks.
They were curious to see whether the physical world could translate to the digital world. If the best of both could coexist
in a typeface. They use machine learning libraries in python to translate shapes in images into letterforms. They created
an editor so that they can write any text they want with any assortment of attributes. Everything is malleable. Line height.
Width. Weight. Kerning. Their workflow is messy. Their code is long, thousands of lines long. Their code isn't split
into neat files. They aren’t patient. They spend a lot of their time writing instead of coding too. They write poems and
prose, two pages every week is the general practice. They use this writing practice to generate ideas and sample text for
their type specimens. They have too many files on their com-
puter – photos of the physical world that they like. They take
those photos into the editor, where the program translates them into text. They like creating work that is open to multi-
ple interpretations and applications. They want to build something that can't be boxed in, even though their typeface
is very boxy. They're sitting on a dusty step in the hallway of a friend's apartment building waiting for her to return home.
They open their Notes app and search the word “hallway;” three results appear. The first is unsorted notes for a short
piece they wrote about two sisters who shared a house next-
door to their grandfather. After the sisters had passed away,
they took home an old bench of theirs, which is now in their hallway. The second note is a ranked list of every single room
in Ezra Stiles College where they considered living junior year. Room A41, they observe, is at the end of the hallway.
The third note is an unsent letter addressed to the man with whom they shared an apartment two summers ago. After he
had left for Tibet, they began collecting all of the things they
wanted to tell him. Towards the end of the summer they ec-
statically typed that they came to believe their landlord to be a recreational marijuana user. This conclusion arose during a
had broken. Her hallway had an undeniable aroma. They
visit to her house to do laundry after their washing machine
hear voices below them in the stairwell and they peer through the railing. All three of these hallways sound more interesting.
than this one. Since tightly-packed waiting rooms have gone out of fashion during COVID, they’ve spent quite a bit of
time waiting in hallways. They haven't become any fonder of

them, or how light and air seem to never find their way from
one end to the other, always getting lost somewhere in-betw
 tween. They want to search another word in their Notes app,
but something holds them back: they don't like to think of their writing as data, or as something which can be queried.
That being said, they don't like that any of their digital activ-

ity can be distanced from its original form and turned into
data. This line of questioning is new for them: do they like their data? Do they like what it does, how it looks and feels?
They can't yet answer these questions and, for now, that's OK. They skip down the steps to the first floor and out into
the cold air. They take photos of things they stumble upon,
that babies stare longer at things they recognize, like a toy similar to the ones at home, or someone speaking their native
tongue. They never grew out of this proclivity towards things that are immediately and unfathomably familiar. They re-
main faithful to these strange moments of recognition and,

along with it, a desire to formulate these lingering images
into patterns. Photography is their attempt at preserving these sites of recognition that make perceptible relationships
newly emergent in their world. After the photos have been found, they create small prints (the size of their palm) and...
arrange them alongside each other. The photos are printed in black and white because they are interested in forms and re-
semblance, which is perhaps to say, the minimum operation of an icon. Rather than trying to “decode” the photos in a way
that presupposes a codified and suspended system of linguistic meaning, they are in search of ways to respond to the im-
ages on their own terms, as phenomenological performances that are figurative and poetic more than they are pictorial or
even visual, kind of like hieroglyphs or myths or dreams. As a result, they default to abstraction and often find it difficult to
They are interested in the moments when the images elapse

speak about their piece in a coherent way, like right now.
but their senses linger, like those Chinese poems they were forced to memorize from a young age. For this project, they
are trying to learn more about the ontology of an image from our shared memory with the silent others: the way the wind
depicts bodies in suspension, the way water imitates the cur-

vature of the landscape, the way we walk alongside each oth-
er, our shoulders barely aligned. They admire wind and wa-
ter's image-making practice and aspire to portray and
generate similar gestures of phase-shift. They derive their art practice from poetry, children's books, and the imagination.
They draw from the wonder of childhood to write and illustrate their stories. A while ago, they were very influenced by a
lecture on philosophy about using emotions as tools to better understand the world around us. While this was only a small
moment in time, this idea has stuck with them ever since and they have sought to get in tune with their emotions, be they
wonder from books like *The Little Prince* and *What Do You...
big or small, to navigate their life. Inspired by the sense of
Do with an Idea?, they try to make work that offers up mem-
ories, nostalgia, and gentle entertainment for the people who

“So often we think that the truth is a static entity that exists only in a singular place—a place that we have to find. But I have come to realize that the answers I have been looking for, the truth of my own body, was ever-changing.”

Abby Norman
from Ask Me About My Uterus
experience it. Their artistic practice combines research, illustration, design, and storytelling, with storytelling driving
their methods and workflow. At the center of their work is a will to get people to connect with their vision of the world.
From an ideation standpoint, they work by visualizing the story they want to tell, which doesn’t always come easy, but
then trying to piece it together in a physical format. Much of the process of storytelling is informed by the format itself,
and considering both at the same time helps to develop work that feels resolved in all dimensions. Thematically, they like
to work with topics like growing up, journeying through the world, and what it means to call a place home. When creat-
ing, they turn to first drawing by hand in a notebook, then transferring those illustrations to the computer and moving
to digital painting. Although they enjoy drawing, it's some-
thing they wish they were better at and by taking on illustra-

tion projects, they attempt each time to bridge the gap between what they see in their head and what shows up on the
paper or screen. Their background in design as well gives an organized quality to their work as well, working in conjunc-
tion with type and image to create harmonious compositions.

In short, they are interested in questions of identity, belong-
ing, and finding oneself, but much less interested in the an-
swers. They generate ideas by collecting stories and informa-
tion, and listening to that tug in their gut that tells them what to explore next. They do extensive research to gain a deep

...
understanding of topics so that their creative output comes from a place of care and meaning. They draw inspiration
from personal experience and the societal structures around them. Often, inspiration is found in disciplines that are far
from the arts. They use history and archives as tools to locate themselves and their work within broader contexts. They ex-
plore the visual languages that have previously existed within these topics, and rewrite them to mean something new. Their
studio practice exists mostly on the computer, inside folders and sub-folders and InDesign spreads and chaotic brain-
dump documents that eventually find an organizational rhythm. But it also exists in the physical world: in the physi-
cality of everyday personal experience, of flipping through old books, of conversations. They look to words, tales, and
stories for ideas, and from these stories, images arise. They are not necessarily someone who is concerned with meaning
or significance, but with moments and situations. They like

the fleeting image – the kind you can’t really see in your head.
The kind that is ever so slightly blurry, or perhaps, in other words, they like the memory of an image. Memory. They are
constantly thinking about and revisiting memories, remem-

bering, and re-remembering. They like the feeling, the dis-
especially interested in familial memories and memories that
many people share – whether the others can actually remem-
ber it or not. For both memories and stories, it is not the nar-

rative that sticks with them, however. No, they become at-
tached to an image or feeling, and from that, they begin to
paint. This image or feeling, however, is not necessarily a scene. It could be something as benign as kitchen linoleum.
and the woodwork of a porch or as big as holding hands and three cousins. Through painting, they imagine that they are
turning memories into objects. It becomes a cycle. The memory leads to a faint image or feeling, the faint image or feeling
leads to an object or painting, and through painting, they are re-remembering the memory. But that is all very thoughtful
and perhaps gives them way too much credit. Most days, they just paint. Because, in the end, ideas will only ever get them
so far, and truthfully, they really just love the act of painting.

Since quarantine, they have been going on a lot of walks;
spending time outdoors, riding their bike, enjoying the warmth of the sun. This year of tragedy forced them to reflect
in the sky of their hometown. They relish in the fact that it remains predictable, reliable, but still ever-changing. During
their dumb little walks, they begin to problem-solve art pieces. Maybe they had a glimpse of a piece yesterday, but don't
know where to continue from there. So they think, and listen to music, sounds – they start to listen to themselves. Then,
they come home and start to grab materials. While they used
to begin with paint tubes, they now reach for ropes, string,
practice, they appreciate its ability to suspend, densify, tex-

yarn, wood. While textile work was a new addition to their
turize. By weaving and braiding, they sculpt ropes of fiber to

a new form – one to tell their own story. And while each
sculpture can speak their own narrative, they often marry tex-

tile to canvas. Maybe this work looks entirely different from
their past creations, but they've noticed patterns in the motion they visualize in. They used to sew as a child, and the
wave-like motion of a needle captivated their imagination.

Just as the sky, the methodology behind textile work is pre-
dictable, reliable – even rhythmic. But don’t be fooled by the
cyclic process, each piece is randomly unraveled start to fin-
ish. Don't also be fooled by domestic affiliations, the tension in the work can reflect anger and passion. It's a relief: giving
themselves permission to deviate from tradition. Years of creat-
Lending homage to family, culture, and migration; has built courage to finally create. But they don't care for explicit inter-
As aforementioned, they’ve spent over a year at home, and without words.
Many hours have been spent sharing family secrets over hot

have consequently anchored their work to the Southwest.
coffee. Their mother is the best storyteller they know. Oral histories interlace with tangible photographs. Each historical
Historical ghosts aren’t meant as props for them. Instead, protagonist now has a face, and place in present-day memory.
they're projected in spaces they'd never be, with people they'd never talk to. In this process, they're highly active, simultane-
ously both a person and symbol. They still remember when their early work was regarded as, “feminine.” But this is a
loaded word, and they don’t know if they would use it to de-
scribe their work now. Because femininity withholds expecta-
stories have the power to shape our understanding of the

tion, and they don't want their work to conform. They believe
world and our place in it. As a book designer, they see them-
make it possible for the critically important stories of our

time to reach lives and societies. They begin by acquainting
sometimes, they are struck with an idea for a visually engaging
design right away, even before they have finished reading a text. Sometimes, no ideas come immediately to mind, and
they can only nervously hope that they will stumble across a
design before their time is up. Fortunately, they always do
external research after they have finished reading a manu-
script, a process that often prompts new ideas. They immerse
behind them. They also look to other designers and consider

themselves within visual cultures and learn about the history
how they have handled similar themes and concepts. Even when an initial idea is vague, it often leads to a concrete de-
sign path. Further research provides references that anchor designs in reality and context. They always try to explore at
least two different design directions at outset, using whatever tools lend themselves best to the process. If a direction is
more typographic in nature, they will usually begin by tack-

ling it in InDesign. If a direction is more image-oriented,
they like to create the image themselves and fine-tune it in Photoshop. They then solicit feedback from other people and
decide on the best design direction to move forward with.

Then starts an iterative cycle of refining a design, getting out-
side feedback, and evaluating their next course of action.

Eventually, the design gets to a point where it can't be pushed
any further. They send it off to production (or produce it themselves) and declare their work to be done. Although de-
they see it as a labor of love, a way to use their skills in service.

signing a book can sometimes be stressful and frustrating,
to the author, audience, and craft. They see it as a deeply em-
pathetic endeavor that considers how function and beauty
They were an extremely anxious child, who grew up with a
can come together to share stories and create connections.
prolific documentarian-photographer for a father (who pos-

sesses records of who and how they were, from birth). They
like to think that the combination of these two things has made them exceptionally apt at (over)thinking about percep-
tion and its conditions. Very early on, they felt that other peo-
ple constructed them through various projections, stereo-
types, and expectations. Their body has always known this as fact, and because of this, their conception of self-hood was
fraught with tension and frustration, as they tended to feel that they couldn't simply be, because they were always and
already seen as, always seeing themselves against the back-
drop of the perspective of others. When they eventually de-
cided to take up the camera to mediate their anxieties about who they were or weren't, they came to know self-portraiture
as a site of being and becoming, but through their own lov-

ingly constructing eyes and hands. They weren’t sure what
they were doing or why, but they desperately clung to this activity as a ritualistic means of reconnecting with themselves.
for years. They would lock the door, turn up the music, turn on their camera, and build, without a plan, but with their
moments of making with a new language and force, now un-

own bodily authority. In their new work, they return to these
derstanding the broader societal structures and strictures that fuel their work and that fuel(ed) their anxiety as a young
black person from the American South. In their studies, they came across the concept of the body as both image and image
maker, which finally put into words and anchored something they'd been trying to work through for what feels like their
entire life. They now wonder about embodied vision, a bodi-
ly eye, and how both the seer and the seen engage in a chaot-

ic construction of self and other. They think back to their high school science class where they learned that when you
observe something you change it. They chose to dig deeper than that and look to the traditions of feminist performance
artists, who pushed them to try to reflect the gaze of the au-
dience. They desire to use their camera as the tool to subvert
the seemingly one directional act of looking at/upon, to focus on the ways that they can make images that look back at the
observer, to disrupt their usual means of visual perception by calling spectators to participate in the world of the work.
They use objects that can be used to look, frame, conceal, and reflect to make their work meta-photographic and self-refer-
ential, and to call into interrogation the act of the look. They like to work with different mediums of art from time to time
arsenal of various art supplies on hand, ranging from digital
and film cameras to paints, markers, pens and pencils to their drawing tablet for making digital art. Not to mention the var-
ious random pieces of paper and magazine clippings for potential future collaging. They are always excited to try new
mediums and experiment with different tools when making artwork, especially for more hands-on projects. To them,
there's just something so empowering and rewarding about creating something from scratch and being able to physically
see ideas come to life. When given the chance, they also try to
combine various mediums when making artwork. For exam-
ple, they incorporated a series of their own photographs overlaid with digital illustrations to create an animation for
one of their classes. And for their thesis project, they have
built a digital, interactive map that uses photography paired
with illustrations, animations, and web design (though with
very basic coding because their coding skills are limited and
computer science is hard! so props to people who do CS!!) to tell a story about the neighborhoods they live in and frequent
in Brooklyn, NYC. Though this was originally just a photography project, they wanted to do more than just put a series
of still photographs on a wall. They wanted to create a more immersive experience that would allow viewers to engage
with their piece. And so, for this project, they decided to ex-

periment with and incorporate other mediums, such as au-
dio, gifs, and videos, in hopes of appealing to other non-visu-
al senses that would let the audience to experience a little
more of Brooklyn than just seeing it. Unfortunately there is no available technology yet, at least to their knowledge, that
can record and digitally share certain sensory experiences like

the subtle salty smell of the ocean or the feeling of a summer
breeze on a hot and humid day. However, they hope that by incorporating and combining different mediums in this piece
Published on the occasion of **OK Together**
The Senior Thesis Exhibition for the Yale College Art Major Class of 2021

Held at Yale School of Art, Green Hall Gallery
1156 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT

The Class of 2021 and their Faculty Advisors
Asher Liftin  A.L. Steiner
Felicia Chang  Alice Chung
Greg Dellis  Danna Singer
Jack Adam  Henk Van Assen
Jane Zhang  John Pilson
Kitty Kan  Julian Bittiner
Lauren Gatta  Justin Berry
Melissa Leone  Matt Keegan
Paige Davis  Meleko Mokgosi
Sydney Holmes  Molly Zuckerman-Hartung
Valerie Navarrete  Pamela Hovland
Vera Villanueva  Richard Rose

Dean
Marta Kuzma

Director of Undergraduate Studies
Lisa Kereszi

Yale OK is a custom typeface by Han Gao, Hannah Tjaden, and Miguel Gaydosh. It is a combination of Yale New, by Matthew Carter, with punctuation, numerals and symbols from SF Pro, by Apple Inc.

Thank you
To all the faculty advisors, to studio critic Corey McCorkle, and guest critics Genevieve Gaignard, Kati Gegenheimer, Mark Thomas Gibson, Pao Her, Eric Hoffman, and Michelle Dunn Marsh, and our teaching assistant Hyeree Ro. Thank you to Alex Adams and the install crew for expert installation and coordination. And thanks to Zoom for making this remotely possible.
Produced on occupied ancestral Paugussett, Quinnipiac, and Wappinger lands in late Spring 2021

Prompted and edited by the designers, the text running throughout this book is an exquisite corpse written by the class. It stitches together musings on their practice to form a collective reflection on this fractured year.
Asher Liftin© Felicia ChangΘ
Gregory Dellis♫ Jack Adam☆
Jane Zhang♀ Kitty Kan★ Lauren
Gatta〓 Melissa Leone■ Paige
Davis♀ Sydney HolmesΩ Valerie
Navarrete◊ Vera VillanuevaΞ