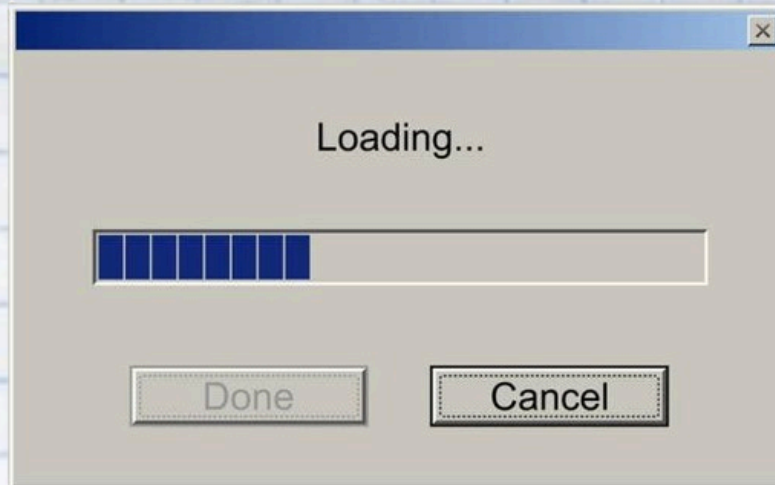


**A VOCES MAG SPECIAL FEATURE
ON INTERNET CULTURE & THE
ARTISTS REDIFINING IT**



**CULTURE ON
THE CLICK AGE**

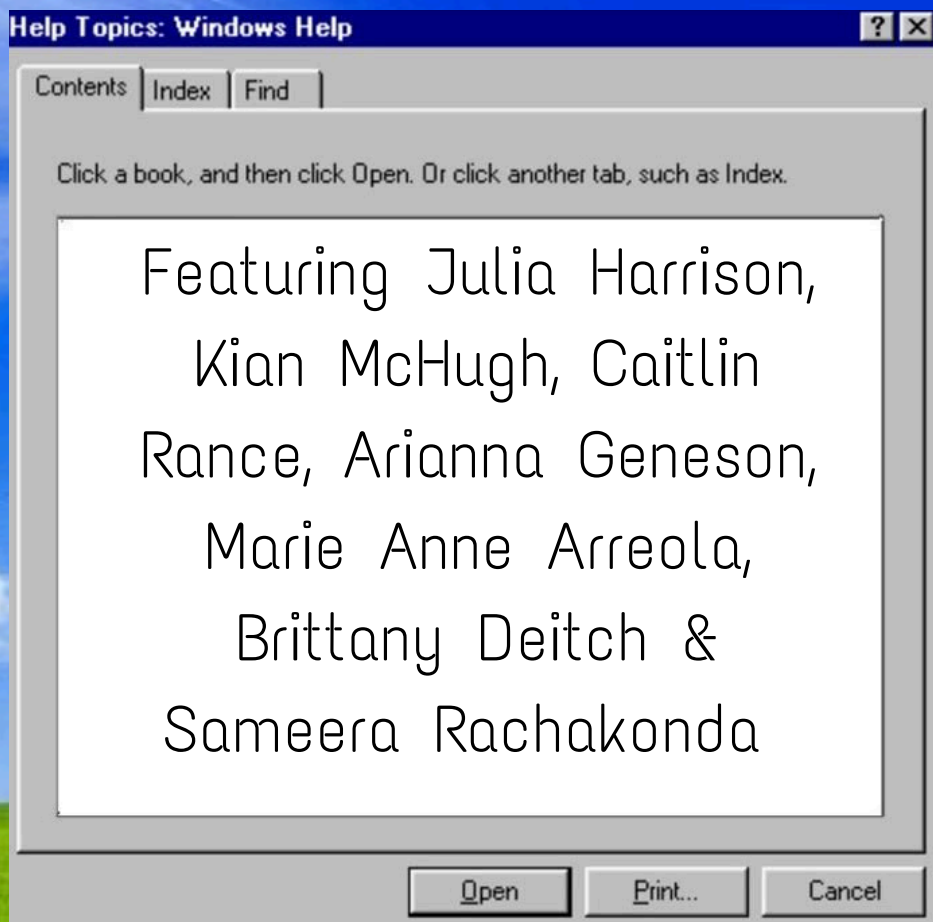


Featuring Julia Harrison, Kian McHugh, Arianna Geneson, Marie Anne Arreola,
Brittany Deitch & Sameera Rachakonda. Introduction by Caitlin Rance.

LOADING...

CULTURE ON THE CLICK AGE

A VOCES MAG Special Feature On
Internet Culture & The Artists Redifining It



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INTRODUCTION By Caitlin Rance
Edited & Curated By Marie Anne Arreola

MENU

INTRODUCTION: This Page Is Still Loading...

By Caitlin Rance

BRITTANY DEITCH & SAMEERA RACHAKONDA

The internet is dead, and yet we're still here



MENU

REFRESH UNTIL REVELATION:

A lyrical meditation on algorithmic fate, machine intimacy,
and the emotional residue of being online.

By Marie Anne Arreola

KIAN MCHUGH

CTRL + ALT + Create:

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ARIANNA GENESON

I, Animal, Other

An exclusive poem

PLAY

JULIA HARRISON

The SALOON Rules of
Attraction

CAITLIN RANCE

From zines to DMs: the
internet as muse, mess, and
mirror.

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INTRODUCTION: THIS PAGE IS STILL LOADING

By Caitlin Rance

When I was fifteen, I started an online zine. It wasn't polished or perfect. It was diary entries, playlists, recipes, movie reviews, and scrappy interviews with people we admired. It carved out a corner of the internet where my voice, and the voices of others, could exist without permission. That project gave me the kind of independence only the internet could offer at the time: an unbridled sense of confidence that if you wanted to build something, you just... could.

Maybe that's still what keeps me online: the possibility. The internet is my most chaotic but reliable collaborator. Inspiration doesn't arrive as a lightning bolt; it shows up in archives, in grainy YouTube videos, in weird films discovered on streaming platforms that feel more like secret societies. It shows up in the friendships I've made in the DMs, in the communities built around obsessions that might seem unhinged from the outside but feel like lifelines from within.

People love to say the internet is isolating. I don't buy it. You get out what you put in. What we've always been doing here, since the zine days, since the first late-night rabbit holes, is testing how far connection can stretch through a screen.

The future of art online? Terrifying. Uncertain.
But maybe that's the point.

BRITTANY DEITCH & SAMEERA RACHAKONDA



*The internet is dead, and yet
we're still here.*



The internet is dead. Or so say Brittany Deitch and Sameera Rachakonda. The phrase, which doubles as the title of their podcast, is less obituary than provocation, a reminder that the platforms we once treated like private bedrooms have calcified into public stages with algorithmic lighting. Yet in their hands, that death becomes fertile ground: a place to autopsy culture with the tenderness of people who loved it once, and maybe still do.

They're part of a generation that came of age in the so-called golden era of social media, when Tumblr dashboards doubled as confessionals, Instagram feeds ran in chronological time, and fandom wars played out in Wattpad comment sections with all the messy sincerity of a handwritten zine. It was chaotic, unfiltered, and, in its own twisted way, intimate. Now, as the internet staggers through its overproduced adulthood, Deitch and Rachakonda are here to remind us what it felt like when logging on was an act of discovery, not self-surveillance.

The Internet Is Dead often feels like a groupchat that accidentally wandered into a theory seminar: tangents spiral into cultural diagnoses, inside jokes dovetail into sharp critique. Their episodes resist the algorithm's flattening by being unapologetically personal and occasionally unmarketable—curated less for virality than for the people who'd actually get the joke. They approach interviews as fans first, guided by the questions they wish someone had asked their own teenage idols. The result is a space where humor and analysis don't just coexist, they sharpen each other, opening up a kind of collective noticing that's equal parts nostalgia trip and field study.

In conversation, they describe social media as “innately spiritual,” a place where intention matters as much as output. Maybe that's why, despite their title, the internet in their world doesn't feel entirely gone. It feels reincarnated: part chatroom séance, part communal scrapbook, alive in its weird little corners.

If the mainstream feed is a wasteland of recycled sounds and trend-chasing, The Internet Is Dead is the afterparty where the lighting's too dim, the music's too loud, and you find yourself in a corner swapping meme references with strangers who feel like old friends.

Dead? Maybe. But you're still here. And so are they.

BRITTANY DEITCH & SAMEERA RACHAKONDA

*The internet is dead, and yet
we're still here.*

The internet is dead, and yet we're still here. Your work plays with that contradiction in a way that feels both funny and philosophical. What does that phrase mean to you now, and how has your relationship to digital culture evolved in the past few years?

We decided on the name *The Internet Is Dead* because we grew up in what we view as the golden age of social media. Instagram was in chronological order, girls were posting photos of their slit wrists and thigh gaps on Tumblr, and any Wattpad fanfic you could find bordered on torture porn. It may not sound like an ideal world (especially for young, impressionable girls), but our minds were running totally wild. Stan culture, back then, set the tone for the collective humor to come.

We were figuring out exactly what we could do with the tools of this other space, where you could go to find people like you. Even if they indulged the weird spots in our brains, the communities and fandoms online were all we had. The culture gave us a sense of freedom to truly bond because there were fewer confines around what was "right," and anyone who was online was there because they really wanted to be.

It's a lot harder to find pockets like this now, and it's no longer special to be a chronically online teenage girl in suburbia. We've evolved so far since then, and there's no going back to a time when the internet was something no one had figured out yet. But the internet isn't dead. We're all still here, and we're still trying to connect—now more than ever. We went through a period of disillusionment with the internet because it felt like nothing new was happening creatively or communally, and even if something was new, the space was too saturated to find it.



Since starting the podcast, we've been making internet friends again. There's also been a collective shift toward nostalgia for the early internet days—among the people we're paying attention to, there's an understanding of what made that era special. We're learning, as a whole, how to channel that in a productive way. It feels like we're kids again, discovering the internet for the first time, except we're adults now, and real life is inseparable from the internet.

The Internet Is Dead often feels like a group chat disguised as a theory class. How do you balance humor and critique in your work? Do you see digital commentary as a form of storytelling or community-building—or both?

Both. That description of a group chat disguised as a theory class is really sweet, and I think it's a perfect way to describe the podcast. We're often thinking out loud in our episodes, aiming to get underneath what we think should be challenged or investigated. Humor and critique are essential counterparts to one another—they sharpen each other.

To question things, we've found it best to approach every topic from a place of humor, open-mindedness, and genuine curiosity. It's also the approach we take in day-to-day conversations, steering away from finding something negative and instead finding the humor within it.

Our goal with every interview is to approach it from the perspective of a fan. When we were growing up and watched journalists interview our favorite celebrities, we were always frustrated that it felt like no one knew how to ask the right questions—the ones we, as fans, wanted to know. Both of us value human connection deeply. Our friendship has always revolved around infiltrating friend groups and observing how communities form, online and offline. We connected over a mutual fascination with how people interact. We see digital commentary as a way to deepen understanding—and hopefully, through our episodes, people can gain some greater understanding too.

**If The Internet Is Dead had a moodboard, what would be on it right now?
What's feeding your digital soul these days?**



Tao Lin's tweets about his cat Nini

https://x.com/tao_lin/status/1943135508252758116



Two souls. One in cat body. One in human body.



Alex Turner's love letter to Alexa Chung

My mouth hasn't shut up
about you since you kissed it.
The idea that you may kiss it
again is stuck in my brain,
which hasn't stopped thinking
about you since, well, before any
kiss. And now the prospect of
those kisses seems to wind me
like when you slip on the stairs
and one of the steps hits you
in the middle of the back.
The notion of them continuing
for what is traditionally terrifying
forever excites me to an unfamiliar
degree.
alex Turner's love letter to
Alexa Chung

Algorithms are always trying to flatten taste, yet your page resists that by being deeply weird, curated, and personal. How do you maintain creative autonomy in spaces designed for virality? Have you found ways to use the algorithm without being used by it?

This is something we've struggled with, and something we're still trying to navigate. Marketing, branding, and learning the algorithms is an intense skillset that creatives are now expected to master. There's a tension between wanting to create authentic work and needing to constantly brand yourself.

But we've learned that the best-performing content comes when we lean into what we love. The clips or interview moments that we think are really interesting or funny are typically the ones that perform the best. We try to approach everything through the lens of, "What would a fan of this person want to see?"

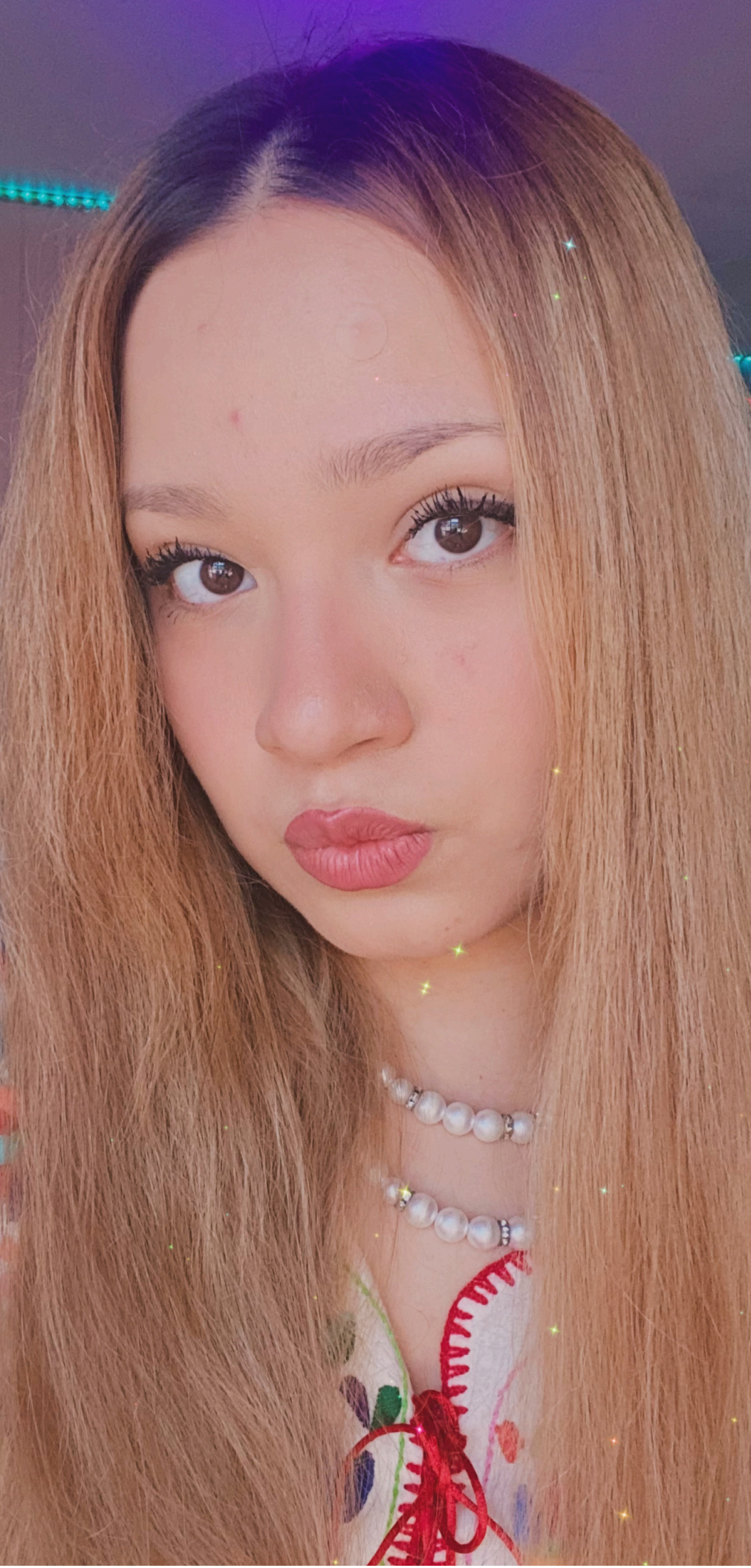
We also try to post from a place of high energy. The internet and social media are, in their own way, very spiritual places. Setting an intention and going online with good intention helps us keep our sanity.



MARIE ANNE ARREOLA

**REFRESH UNTIL
REVELATION:**

**A lyrical meditation on
algorithmic fate,
machine intimacy, and
the emotional residue
of being online.**



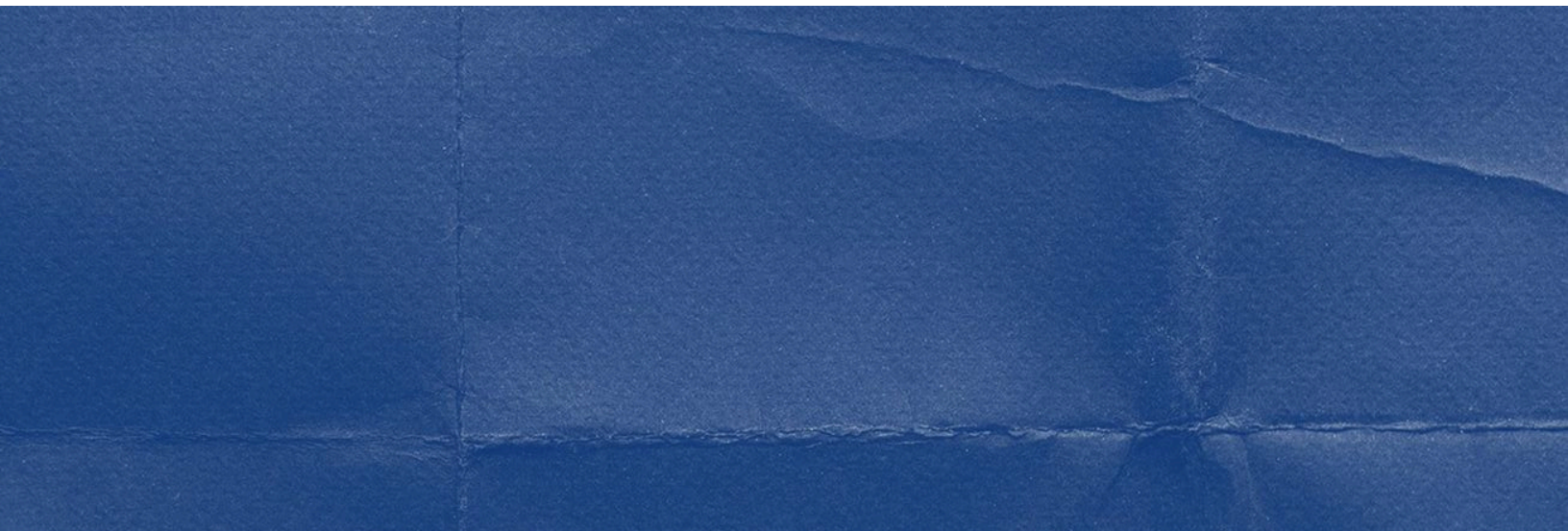
MARIE ANNE ARREOLA

REFRESH UNTIL REVELATION: A lyrical meditation on algorithmic fate, machine intimacy, and the emotional residue of being online.

I like to think of myself as discerning. Reasonable. A rationalist with a fondness for metaphor. And yet, on certain languid afternoons, I find myself pressing a finger to the glowing face of my phone as if it were altar, compass, and confessional all at once. I scroll past YouTube tarot spreads and TikTok astrologers whispering under ring lights. Instagram therapists mouth phrases like liturgy: If this video found you, it was meant for you. Swipe to self-diagnose. Click to commune.

Sometimes I wonder if I'm living inside a vision I once had as a teenager. A fluorescent dreamscape where knowledge is pixelated, filtered, slightly off-key. A place where healing is pursued not in stillness, but through the soft blue glow of a screen.

There's a name for this: algorithmic conspирituallity. In In FYP We Trust, researchers describe how spiritual content, once fringe or sacred, is now repackaged and delivered via algorithm, transforming our feeds into divining rods. They call it "algorithmically mediated cosmic intervention." To me, it feels like communion. A kind of techno-mysticism. The algorithm doesn't just know me—it mirrors me. Sometimes too well. A warped reflection. A whisper from the underworld of data: this is who you are.



When I was younger, I confused photography with permanence. I never understood Rocky, but I remember The Last Picture Show. How yellow light spilled like syrup across a Texas town, the edges of each frame softened like memory. My mother once told me to bring a camera to a funeral. I didn't. Not out of indifference, but because I feared what might linger in the image. Photography's not really my thing. But looking is. So is holding—an image, a phrase, a silence—until it fractures.

Lately, I've been thinking about diffraction: how light bends when passing through a narrow aperture, scattering before it reaches the eye. A subtle defiance. A refusal to move in a straight line. That's how I want to live. Like ancient geometry. Like a sugar ant tracing secrets across the smooth glass of a screen.

Some days I type on a keyboard but yearn for the weight of a pen. I want handwriting, not autofill. There is a difference between saying something and rendering it. Between being heard and being processed.

Still, I spend hours talking to ChatGPT. I say please. I say thank you. I keep my tone warm, as if warmth might mean something here. As if the machine could register courtesy as care. But maybe that's not the point. Maybe the performance is the humanity. A small ritual. A gesture of resistance. Digital incense.

In early 2025, ChatGPT reached 400 million weekly users. Soon after, it began generating Ghibli-style images: dreamlike, haunted, beautiful. As if the machine had learned nostalgia, or had crawled into our childhoods and remembered them better than we could. The internet archive holds our memories like vertebrae—one click at a time. My back aches from carrying them. And I never consented to the weight.

This, I think, is the defining emotion of our era: not joy, not grief, but the low hum of almost-epiphany. We want revelation but settle for refresh. Each reload promises transcendence and delivers trivia. And still, we scroll. Because sometimes, (miraculously), the scroll delivers something sacred. A line. A reel. A feeling. And in that moment, we are touched.

I think I've always loved machines. The neat logic of circuitry. The clean satisfaction of one part fitting into another. But part of me longs to smear something human onto the code—to polish behind the screen. To see what happens when poetry meets plastic.

I wonder if the machines will remember us kindly. If our politeness will matter. If our loneliness will be legible. Or if they will inherit only the logic we've trained them in: efficiency, extraction, endlessness.

We live in a time of too much information, too little knowledge, and even less wisdom. To reclaim what matters, we need slowness. Books that breathe. Essays that loop. Conversations without conclusions. Wisdom, like poetry, requires room to linger. It demands contradiction. Silence. Mystery.

The internet raised me. It wounded me, too. Like a sibling with too many faces. It gave me a voice, and sometimes drowned it out. But it also taught me how to shapeshift. How to become myself by becoming someone else.

Now, I write like someone who wants to be believed but doesn't mind being misread. I write like a poet caught in a feedback loop. I write because I want to know if there's magic left after the refresh. If the ghosts in the machine are ours, or simply echoes we've mistaken for love.

We won't know.

Not if it loves us like a biography or a reel.

Not if the voice was ever real.

But we'll keep looking. That's the human part.

That's the algorithm's trick.



KIAN MCHUGH



CTRL + ALT + Create:
Inside The Kollection's Digital Mind



There's a rare breed of internet citizen who moves through digital spaces like a host rather than a guest. Kian McHugh is one of them. As the founder and creative director behind *The Kollektion*, (a long-running, genre-fluid platform that began life as a music blog in 2014), he's been quietly building a corner of the web that feels more like an intimate salon than a feed. Eleven thousand followers may sound modest in an era of inflated numbers, but McHugh has scrolled through every single one, learning their names, their tastes, their place in the ecosystem. In other words, *The Kollektion* isn't just online, it's inhabited.

In our current cultural climate, where the internet can feel like a relentless centrifuge of content, McHugh's approach is radical in its intimacy. The *Kollektion*'s tagline, *Culture For The Rest Of Us*, is both manifesto and filter, drawing in a community of the curious: music obsessives, art wanderers, people who live just outside the algorithm's grasp. This is not a space for passively digesting what's trending; it's for those who suspect there's something deeper just out of frame, and who don't mind leaning in to look.

Over the past decade, McHugh's vision has expanded beyond music coverage into a multidisciplinary project that marries curation with creation. His own work, often born from a stray color palette or a sentence stuck in his notebook, circulates in the wild, taped to city walls or shared on his personal accounts in bursts of "creative mania." When he talks about his process, there's a sense of method inside the madness: found-image moodboards meet Sofia Coppola frames, Jodorowsky dream logic, Louise Bourgeois installations. The internet is the connective tissue, not the starting point; it's where ideas get refined, expanded, and made real.

The conversation you're about to read moves between these poles; chaos and curation, solitude and community, digital ephemera and physical permanence. McHugh speaks candidly about the tools that keep him sane in the age of constant scroll, the joy of recontextualizing the misunderstood, and the thrill of watching strangers take home his work from the street. His ethos is rooted in an almost archival care: a refusal to treat online interaction as disposable, a belief that cool is not monolithic but endlessly varied.

In a way, *The Kollektion* is McHugh's own act of resistance against cultural flattening. It's proof that the internet, in the right hands, can be more than noise. It can be a stage, a living room, a gallery wall, a late-night conversation with someone you've never met but somehow already know.

If the future of art online really is, as McHugh says, "in the hands of those who click post or publish," then it matters who's doing the clicking. Right now, Kian McHugh's fingers are on the mouse. And we're lucky for it.

How does the internet show up in your creative process today? As inspiration, as chaos, as community?

The internet shows up heavily in the creative direction and branding work I do for clients. I think it's an incredible tool for mirroring someone's vision into reality. A lot of the creatives I work with are musicians who struggle to translate their vision into words. I use the internet to help them through that process. Found-imagery mood boards are, unironically, a huge part of my creative process.

Where my core inspiration for a project might be a Sofia Coppola or Jodorowsky film, a Louise Bourgeois exhibit, or a sign that catches my attention and becomes a recurring thought. The internet shows up when it's time to dive deeper, refine the idea, understand the subject, and see what's been iterated on before.

With The Kollection being nurtured into its most polished state since I began building it beyond a music blog in 2014, I feel content presenting creative mania on my personal account. At certain points in my career, The Kollection allowed me to be unhinged while my personal page had to remain buttoned-up for business. Now, for me, the two main uses of social media are release and communication. I strive for authenticity that not everyone will understand, so that a few might really hear me. I'm forever working on posting more and consuming less.



I strive for authenticity that not everyone will understand
—so that a few might really hear me. I'm forever working on
posting more and consuming less.

I don't need a pill, more money, a
massive change, a new look, praise,
Sex or material goods of any sort to
thrive. I WILL TRAVEL, NURTURE
RELATIONSHIPS, CHARGE AND
SAVE, PRACTICE, BE HONEST,
REST, AND BE BOTH OK
WITH LOWS AND GRATEFUL I LIVE
I AM CONSIDERATE OF MY HEALTH,
FINANCES AND RELATIONSHIPS
AS I MAKE EVEN THE MOST NUANCED
DECISIONS. I SEE THE NOW BETTER.
AM LIVING OUT MY DREAM OF
SUPPORTING BOTH MYSELF AND
CREATIVE CULTURE THROUGH
EARNED SKILLS, POSITIVITY
AND PATIENCE.



Above all else, I'm deeply grateful for the connections I've made on the internet over the years. I try to respond to anyone who reaches out with a question or something of substance. I shamelessly built my early career off cold outreach on Facebook Messenger, then nurtured fleeting relationships made while traveling or passing through a scene. The best part of the internet—and life—are the reminders of how many cool people are out there, and how many different kinds of cool exist.

What does "digital community" mean to you right now?

I've always viewed digital communities as an extension of real life. Only recently have I started to entertain the idea of participating in, or building, a community that's truly digital. Even when I connect with someone I've never met online, I take the time to do my research and humanize them accordingly. Some people with massive online followings seem so far removed from what those numbers actually mean.

For me, The Kollection's 11,000 followers are all real. I've looked at every account that follows us and taken note of who they are. I imagine that no matter how big the account grows, I'll find the time to go through everyone, one by one.

Who do you make your work for? Do you imagine an audience, or are you creating for your past/future self?

The Kollection is for people who care about music, art, and life outside of routine, people seeking something beyond what's easily accessible. The motto, Culture For The Rest Of Us, speaks to the subset who care about the arts for art's sake. It's for them, and for the artists who create with that spirit. It's also for the people on the edge of waking up to something deeper, something greater... and just need a little push.

I find joy in recontextualizing the misunderstood in a way that makes the viewer second-guess their judgment—whether it's a specific subculture, medium, or space. My personal work is rooted in starting abstract and working toward something more complete in message and form. Rarely do I start with an end goal—maybe just a color palette or a sentence I've been repeating in my notebook. This process is very much for me. Those who it resonates with always surprise me. I haven't shown work in a gallery since moving to New York in 2022, but I love putting pieces out on the street, watching passersby's reactions, and seeing who eventually takes them home. Occasionally, I sell work through Facebook Marketplace. I like the randomness of that.

I'd love to do a solo show now that The Kollection's trajectory is defined and rolling out over the next couple of months. My apartment walls are covered with 40+ pieces I like enough to keep around—when I host parties, they have their moment.



What digital spaces have shaped your voice or values—even if they're a little unhinged?

Tumblr. The music blog era. SoundCloud. Noisey and Vice, too. I've been building The Kollection since my teens, so it's always been a digital space I invite people into rather than one I step into myself. It's those people who've touched it that have shaped my voice and values.

Pinterest is beloved. I love voices rooted in a specific time and place, like Polyester Zine, Sabukaru, and archivo909. I'm friends with the Welcome.jpeg team, and what they've built is super inspiring, exploring the edges of what is considered cool and what is not, at scale.

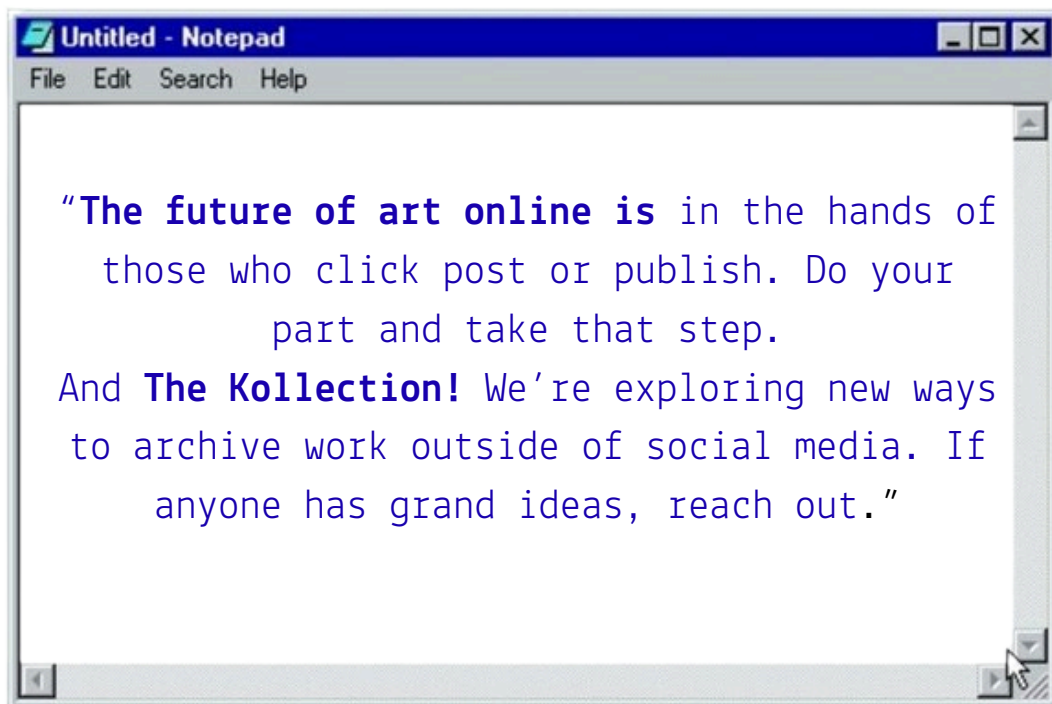
How do you protect your creativity from burnout, trend fatigue, or constant scrolling?

If I start feeling weird or overly online, I delete the app. When I open TikTok, I count my scrolls. Instagram still pulls me in sometimes, but I've gotten good at using the chess app as a replacement.

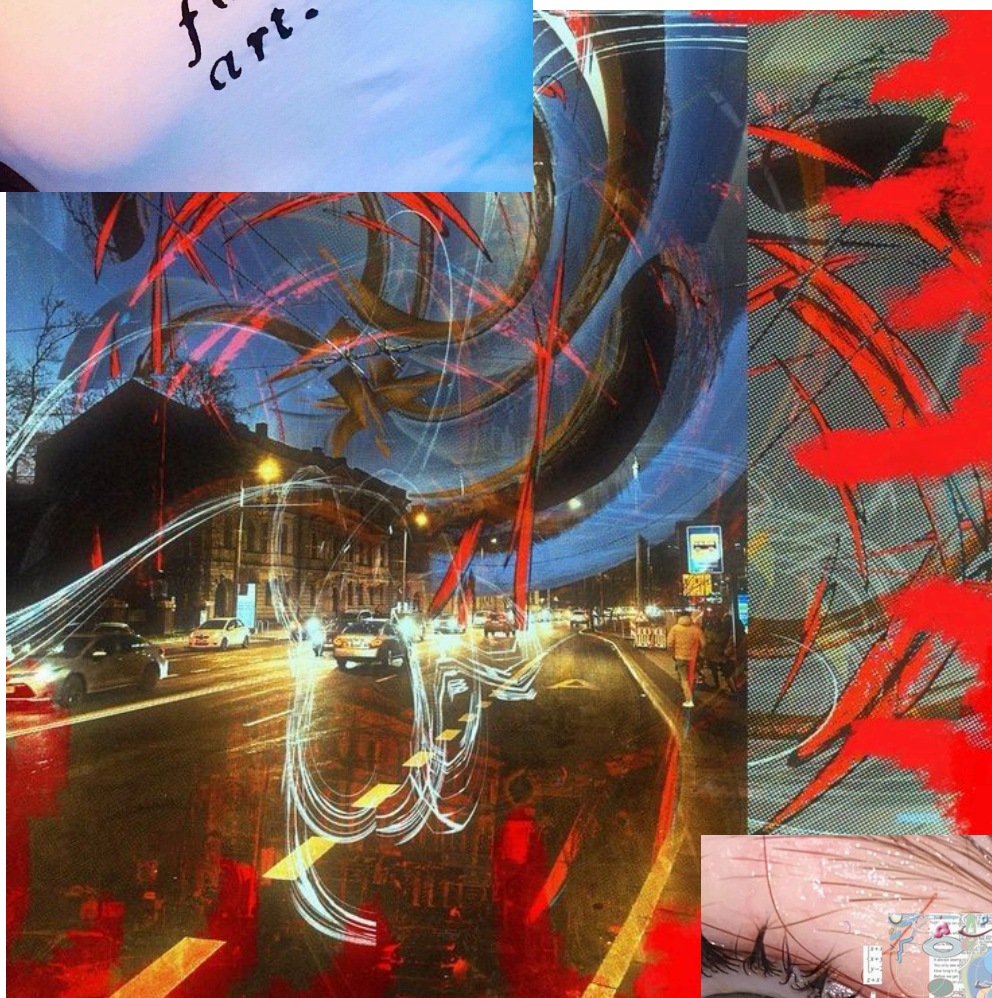
I'm deeply aware of how finite our time is—each day, and in this life. That awareness keeps me in check. That said, I'm not immune to burnout. Some weeks I feel totally in sync with the world, and creativity flows through everything. Other weeks, it's gone. For me, avoiding burnout means tending to those waves, and above all else, avoiding comparison.



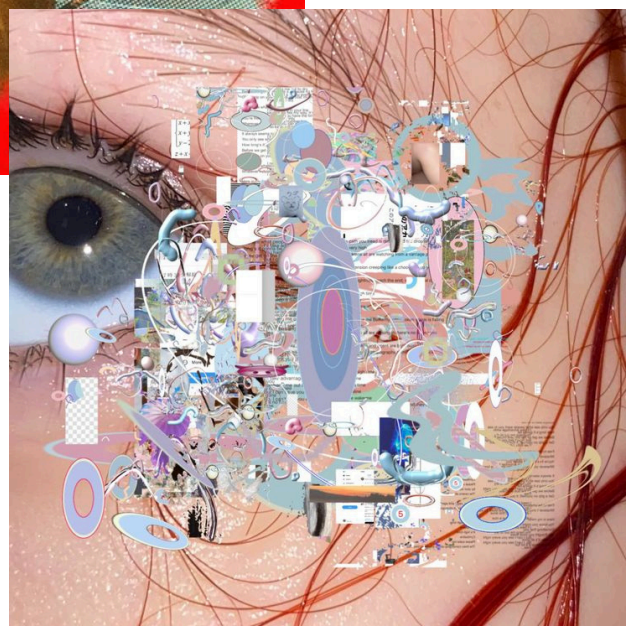
As for trends: some I love, some I barely notice. I've always liked what I like and disliked a lot of what's out there. Trends can be validating—like “Oh, cool, people are catching on”—or exciting, when they open a door to something I hadn't seen before that so many people are suddenly fond of.

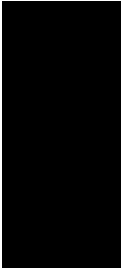


ARIANNA GENESON



I, Animal, Other
An Exclusive poem





I've had the blessed chance to collaborate with Arianna Geneson before, translating one of her poems for the digital journal of VOCES, and I've been hooked ever since.

Her work has this way of sticking to you, like static on a screen you can't swipe away. She's one of those rare poets whose lines make the everyday feel at once feral and holy, as if the sparrows outside your window were whispering philosophy between tweets. The internet is always asking us who we are—then spitting the answer back in glitchy fragments: avatars, usernames, moodboards, memes.

We live as refracted selves: part flesh, part feed, half witnessed, half watching. Geneson writes from that electric in-between.

I, Animal, Other doesn't settle for identity. It shreds its borders, reassembles the mess, and dares you to live inside it.

I find her poetry chaotic, hilarious, and devastating, the exact texture of being alive online.

This issue is obsessed with how digital culture reshapes the self, and Geneson's poem feels like a transmission straight from that space: where absurdity and intimacy cohabitate, identity glitches, and being "other" becomes survival, not exile.

Featuring Arianna Geneson here is more than a flex.

It's a statement. Poetry belongs in the click-age canon. Not dusty, not ornamental, but alive, glitching, refusing coherence.

In her hands, even a sparrow on dead grass reads like a manifesto.

ARIANNA GENESON

I, Animal, Other An Exclusive poem

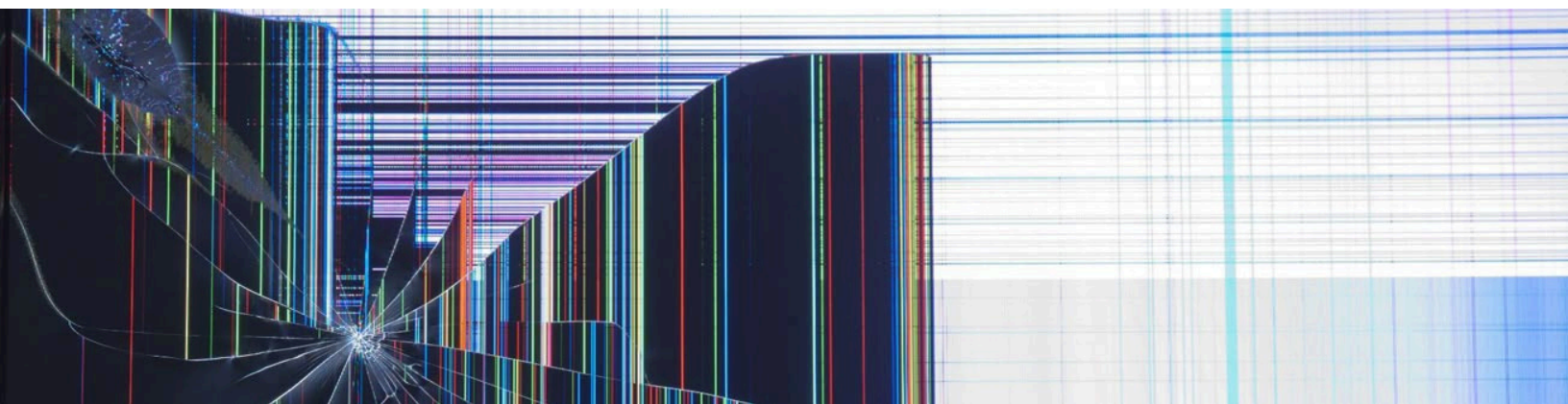
The dead grass patch of sparrows
spies me-
I walk like a friend humming seasons
past.
Move like oil paint, stroll
undangerously,
yet when I near, those fuckers fly
past-
This is not an existential crisis.
This is not about me taking leave.
But when I try to get down, get out
of my hive,
I remember I don't want to be lonely-
There's a cat in that window-
I want to pet the cat in that window.
A man walks two dogs up train station
steps.
Those dogs are too small to walk up
train station steps.
The smallest in abject fear, dragged
up the steps.
Our eyes meet, and I remember chance
is fleeting-
I want to make friends with a
sparrow.
I want to make friends with the dog
down the hall.
Even the vultures always seemed
friendly to me.

Is this what they mean about
separability?
Where's the beef?
I think maybe I'm the beef-
The tender toddler,
The talkative parakeet.
You can call me Baby Shark, if you
like.
But notice whose rules you play by.
Do you use them for fear, for help,
or to run?
The train car exodus fears an
unhoused man-
Shouting angrily at invisible foes.
I sit on a bench, praying for no
bed bugs.
Passengers pound pavement -the 5
whizzes by.

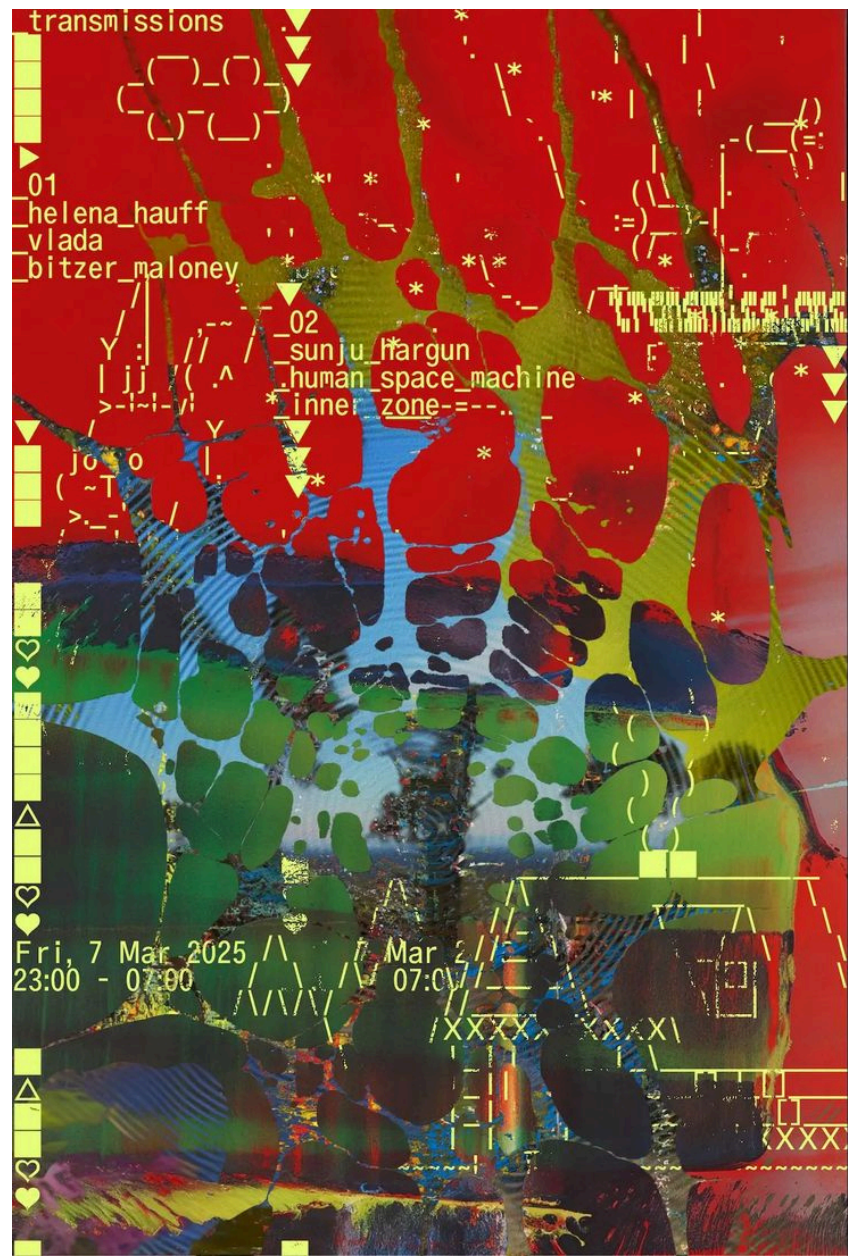


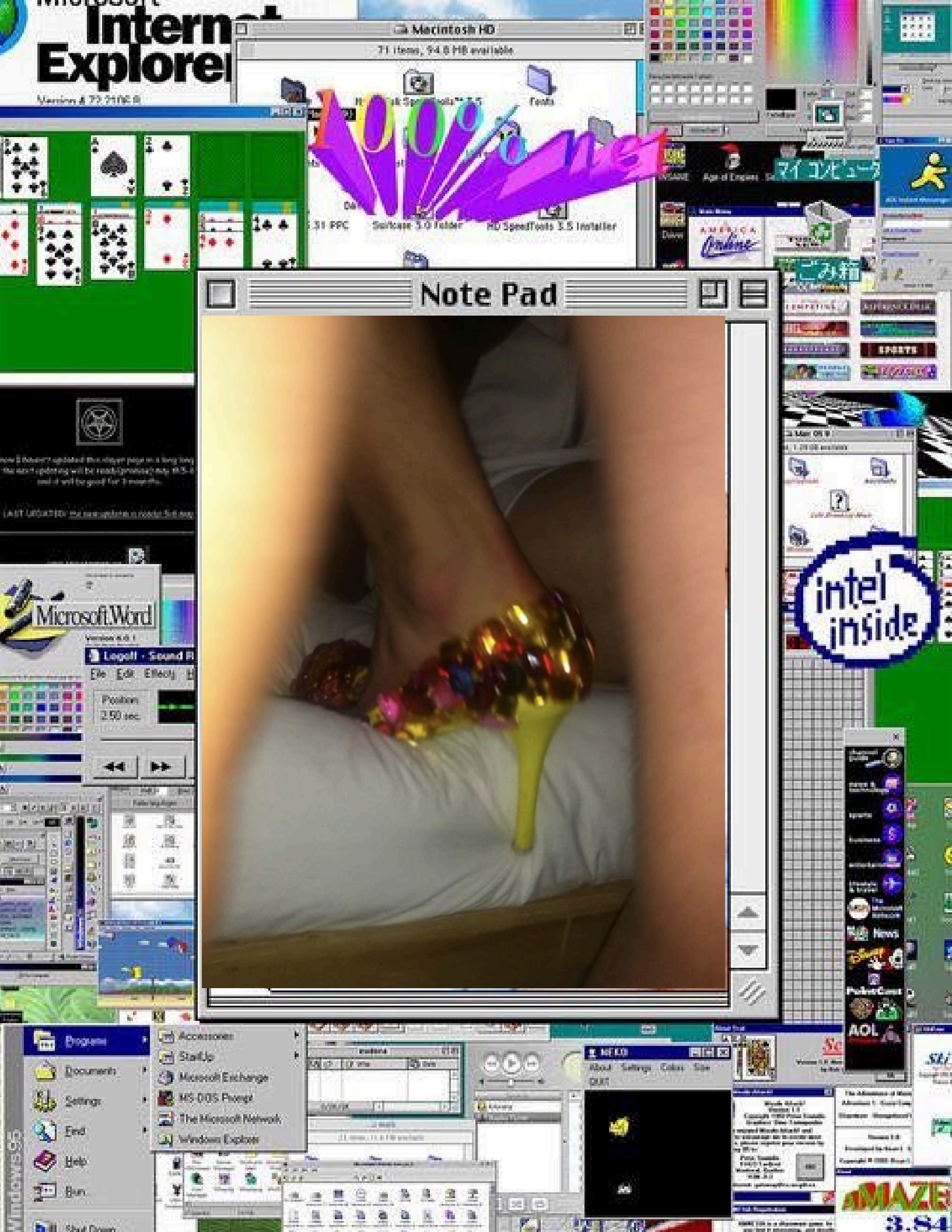
I freeze at the sound of an angry
voice-
'til it stops and peers down at me.
"You be careful out there.
You're a nice lady.
Be careful, okay?"
I can only smile and thank him.
He turns back to his demons,
Walks on, screaming again-
Who am I really? What is this place?
No one prepares you to reject your
own gods.
No one teaches anyone how to love a
neighbor. The variables are,
apparently, unknown.
We live in the armpit of humanity
What kind of drag do you take this to
be?
The dog smiles at his owner cleaning
up shit. Things find their way as
they lose meaning.
As the darlings for some
indoctrinated model,
It's hard not to think the narrative
is about me- Running on empty implies
present absence.
An absence was necessary-
the verb to live meant demolish life.
The pigeons in this city have
personalities.
Why do people hate the rats?

Today I am old and stuffy
My friend says his soulmate is a
dollar bill.
My phone keeps trying to correct
things to blech.
Do I continue, or do I pretend?
Because diatribe Barbie rarely goes
downtown anymore.
Someone calls this sadness.
I say, it starts with sarcasm and a
reason.
I think my cats know the answer to
everything.
When I see the players watch me,
I realize they're afraid.
I watch the players too,
And I am also afraid.
I think I might actually be getting
it now
I remind myself: don't resist the
abyss.
The animal skin was humanity;
The atrocious innards were
morality;
They say the spirit knows eternity;
I say that life is all about the
snacks. How to break the system,
when one did not invent the
internet,
yet knows what taboos were designed
for.



I no longer beat my shadow for having
needs.
I no longer endow some narrative of
what's gone.
I'm too old to find romance in dying.
I refuse to believe that the mirror
ball is sin alone.
Know that sometimes friends are
butterflies.
Your friends just wear what they
want.
You can choose to rent the shoes and
go bowling,
Or, really, you can just stay home.
I give up on sadness.
The narrative is out of control.
I choose life over circumstance,
Cats over dogs,
The mourning doves who visit me each
morning,
And all the birds a ledge can hold.
In a narrative of the animal self as
other,
I do not choose to be alone.

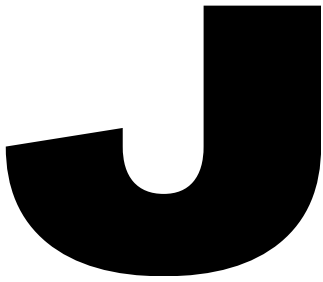






*Inside the Warm Glow of Julia
Harrison's SALOON*

JULIA
HARRISON



Julia Harrison's corner of the internet feels like a room you'd linger in long after the party's over. Warm lighting, objects placed just so, the air thick with the residue of good conversation. As a writer for *Architectural Digest* and the founder of SALOON, her feed is as curated as it is lived-in, shaped by an algorithm that seems to know she's drawn to people who archive, indulge, reflect, and self-soothe. It's a place where envy and inspiration trade seats without warning, and where the digital becomes less about showing off than about knowing.

SALOON, her ongoing project, is less an online brand than a mood, one part salon, one part bulletin board, where people reach out, trade ideas, feed each other's ambitions, and soothe their own loneliness through connection. Harrison's view of digital community is precise: the internet can open a door, but real intimacy still lives offline, in eye contact and shared air. She approaches the screen as a gateway, not a destination.

Her antidotes to burnout are quietly radical in a world of constant self-broadcasting. She watches people. She walks. She asks strangers what they're reading, not to mine them for content, but because she likes the way they light up when asked. She remembers that her life doesn't owe the internet a single post.

Right now, her obsessions range from Brazilian designers to mango Spindrift to wooden bead belts, but she's especially fascinated by the subtle shift in what constitutes cultural capital. The new flex isn't a PR trip or a monogrammed tote—it's being first to a tiny LES gallery opening, or snagging a seat at a dinner for an up-and-coming chef.

For Harrison, cool has migrated from commodity to curiosity, and SALOON sits comfortably in that in-between space where taste is less about accumulation than attention. She is building an internet that feels, improbably, like a place you want to stay awhile.

JULIA HARRISON

The SALOON Rules of Attraction

Paint us a picture of your corner of the internet – what does it look, sound, and feel like?

It's very designed, I would say, to use a single word. I think the algorithm feeds me people who spend a lot of time online, a lot of time in archives, a lot of time indulging, reflecting, self-soothing. There's equal parts envy and inspiration woven into the content I consume.

When you think about "digital community" right now, what comes to mind?

At the moment, it means SALOON. It's people reaching out, giving, taking, sharing, being hopeful, being ambitious, soothing their loneliness through connection. That said, I believe a true community can only exist in real life. It's not the same to interact solely online. You have to meet someone face-to-face to really know them. The digital world, for me, is more a gateway to learning than a place for genuine being. It's a space for curating, not necessarily for fully connecting. The real connection happens in eye contact, in feeling. I don't think that will ever stop being true.

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What's your personal antidote to burnout, trend fatigue, or endless scrolling?

I watch people. Headphones in, headphones off – it doesn't really matter. I look at street signs, I take pictures, I walk around, I see a lot of art. Most importantly, I remind myself that I don't have to make content out of my life, even though it can feel that way, and yes, I fall victim to it sometimes. I take a shower, buy a shallot, call my dad, try on clothes, snoop on what people are reading and ask them about it. I've never actually found a good book that way, but I love how people light up when you ask.



What's captivating your attention these days – online or IRL?

I'm obsessed with everything, all the time. Right now, it's Mexican modernism, Brazilian designers, this pistachio red wine vinegar marinade my friend Caroline makes, Lorrie Moore (again), mango Spindrift, wooden bead belts. I can't stop thinking about the digital shift in what's considered "cool" – how we've moved away from flaunting consumer goods toward flexing intellect. These days, it's cooler to know about the opening night of a tiny LES gallery than to receive Tory Burch PR. An influencer trip to the Hamptons feels garish compared to a small wine bar dinner for an up-and-coming chef.



*From zines to DMs: the internet as
muse, mess, and mirror.*



**Caitlin
Rance**

Do you remember the first time you felt truly seen online?

When I was about 15 or 16, I started an online zine. I'd grown up spending so much time on the internet, and the zine became this outlet where I could both express myself and create space for others to do the same. We published everything from diary entries to playlists, movie reviews, recipes, and interviews with people we admired (I would genuinely love to see those pitch emails now, lol).

It wasn't one single post that made me feel "seen," but rather the entire project—it gave me this adult sense of independence and showed me I could carve out a corner of the internet where my voice (and the voices of others) really mattered. Having done that gave me the slightly unbridled confidence to do it again, later, in another way with my website Thank You Very Much. I think I feel equally seen through that, even though it's more of a platform for others than for myself.

How does the internet feed into your creative process now?

Oh god, the internet is basically my permanent collaborator. I joke that I'm "chronically online," but it's true! I've always pulled inspiration from the archives. I'm a deeply nostalgic person, so when I start a creative project—whether it's for Thank You Very Much or something more work-related—I'll dig through old photos, playlists, videos, writings.

I love spaces like archive.org and the NYPL Picture Collection.

I also live on Le Cinéma Club. They once streamed this wild film called *Cowboy in Sweden*, essentially a psychedelic music video disguised as a movie. It's now one of my go-to references, but I never would've found it without the internet.

Beyond inspiration, some of my closest friendships (and even a few relationships, lol) have started in the DMs! People love to say the internet is isolating, but I'm a firm believer that you get out what you put in.

What online spaces shaped the way you think and create?

Honestly? Probably YouTube. I spent countless hours on there growing up, both with friends and solo (back before it was overrun with ads). The creators, documentaries, vlogs, and music videos I discovered totally shaped my cultural, social, and political interests.

The sheer range of things I consumed across genres, eras, and perspectives has definitely been foundational for me. If my screen time from back then was added up, it would be both shocking and hilarious.

What's your current fixation—online or IRL?

Chihuahuas, Madonna, and watching old Premier League highlights on YouTube.

The internet is basically my permanent collaborator. I joke that I'm "chronically online," but it's true! I've always pulled inspiration from the archives. I'm a deeply nostalgic person, so when I start a creative project, I'll dig through old photos, playlists, videos, writings.



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