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ISSUE 371  
VOL. 30

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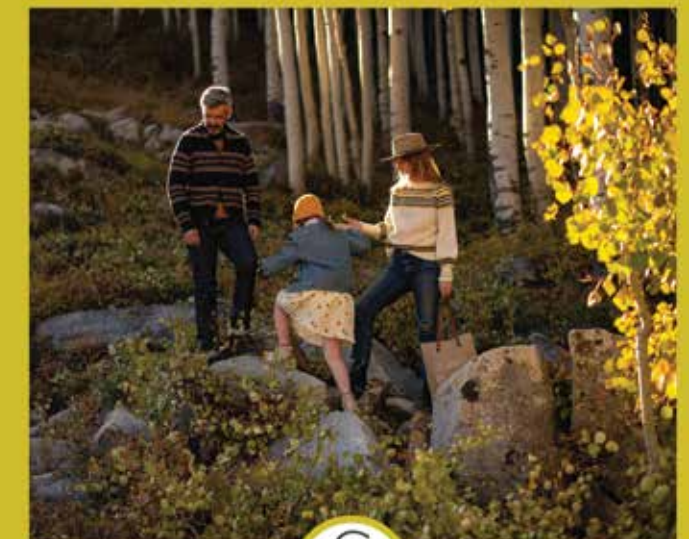


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# SLUG MAGAZINE



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## CONTRIBUTOR LIMELIGHT

### Benjamin Bigelow – Copy Editor

Benjamin Bigelow brings ebullience, brains and badinage to *SLUG*'s copy editing team, and we love him for it! He started on the team in January 2018 and quickly became a leader with his knowledge of grammar, punctuation and syntax—and an ever-present willingness to help others edit copy. The dude knows his craft beer, too, which comes in handy when he fact checks "Beer of the Month." Bigelow enjoys not only copy editing in and of itself but also sneak peeks at our content and the substance therein. It cues him in on new restaurants and events around town—and validates his passion for craft beer, of course. His favorite *SLUG*-related event was marching with us at the 2019 *Utah Pride Festival*, partly because of the people he got to meet. Bigelow's bonhomie couples with his team-oriented mentality, and we look forward to each meeting to copy edit together.



**ABOUT THE COVER:** For our third *Local Design* issue, letterer/muralist **Ann Chen** revitalizes graphic design innovator **David Carson**'s quote about the urgency of design. Chen hereby incorporates a hand throwing up the rock n' roll horns and holding a pencil, a symbolic fusion of the two art forms. You can read about Chen on pg. 16 and find more of her work at [annlettering.com](http://annlettering.com).

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# LOCALIZED

By Ali Shimkus • [alishimkus@gmail.com](mailto:alishimkus@gmail.com)

Photo: @robxequis



(L-R) Ben Dodds, Whil McCutchan and Josh West stay Together Forever to play and create music that they would want to listen to.

## TOGETHER FOREVER

November is upon us, so let us give thanks that we can get our faces melted off at *SLUG Localized* to keep us warm. Together Forever and **Voidsmen** will kick your ass with their alt-metal stylings, with **La La Diabla** opening up the set. November's *SLUG Localized* is a 21+ event held at *Urban Lounge* on Nov. 20 for \$5, and is sponsored by *Uinta Brewing*, *High West Distillery* and *Huge Brands*.

During Together Forever's *Localized* photoshoot, vocalist and guitarist **Josh West** finds a (mostly) empty bag of Doritos and commits to the photo, pouring the questionable contents into his mouth while vocalist/bassist **Ben Dodds** and drummer **Whil McCutchan** laugh and cringe. "We do this because we love it," says West. "I don't think anyone in this group is under the illusion that we're going to be in this huge band or that we're going to be rockstars ... we play the music that we would want to listen to."

Together Forever started in that same room at *Downtown Music* in which the photoshoot took place. Dodds, who was part of a different band at the time, heard McCutchan and West practicing in the next room over and decided to introduce himself. "I want to play to that because it sounds like we have a similar aesthetic," he says, describing that sound as "punchy and angular." Together Forever are defined less by any single genre of music and more by their trademark style of fast, attacking riffs that drive each song. "It sounds a little scary—but it's meant to be humorously scary," says McCutchan.

The band's first EP, *I DO*, is intense and driving, with elements of punk, metal and even prog rock. One song, "Mississippi Gamble," contains West's rapid-fire guitar riffs over the metallic tone of Dodds' basslines and McCutchan's dynamic and persistent drumming. The entirety of *I DO* is

hard and fast, oozing with a rock n' roll attitude and intense musicality. "'Mississippi Gamble' is a term for when you fart, but you end up shitting your pants," says Dodds, alluding to the high-strung nature of the song.

Together Forever are currently working on a new album—one they anticipate will be a departure from *I DO* in both sound and process. While *I DO* is a collection of revitalized songs that had previous incarnations in other bands, the new album will contain more material that Together Forever worked on as a group. "For this record, it's been pretty much coming up with riffs and lyrics, getting together, jamming and discussing it among the three of us," says West. Coming to practice sessions and turning a jam into a fully realized song is something that challenges Together Forever as musicians and keeps their musical ideas fresh. "This new record will be our first batch of songs we've written with no preconceptions," says Dodds.

This songwriting process can be arduous when it comes to writing the lyrics, particularly so for West. While songs like "Mississippi Gamble" have an obviously humorous touch, other lyrics often pull from a more serious place, such as his experiences as a father or the issues he deals with in his everyday life. While he normally describes Together Forever as a "noisy punk band" when people ask, he says that the lyrics are often what

bring Together Forever a little out of normative punk rock subject matter. "We're just people on the earth," West says, "kind of dealing with the climate of what life is right now with everything that's going on ... As far as writing the lyrics, it's been a catharsis of how I cope with what's happening right now." Together Forever are a release of artistic energy that, as musicians who have been in numerous other bands before, they express through the democratic songwriting process. "I feel like we're always trying to push ourselves to do something that is challenging," says Dodds. "Sometimes these songs take us a long time to perfect. The simple stuff is always the hardest."

As for Together Forever's live show, expect what you hear to be up to the standards of their recordings. "We try to keep everything as close to the recording as possible because we try to record live," West says. "It should sound like it does when it's recorded, ideally." With the high energy of Together Forever's music, McCutchan also says to expect few stops for talking, and to hear the best of what Together Forever have been working on. "It's a little sweaty," he says. "We try to play music through the whole [set]." In anticipation of the upcoming album, check out *I DO* on Bandcamp at [together4ever.bandcamp.com](http://together4ever.bandcamp.com) as well as Together Forever's upcoming performance at November's *Localized* on Nov. 20 at *Urban Lounge*. Doors are at 8 p.m., music starts at 9 p.m., and it's \$5 at the door.

# LOCALIZED

By Ali Shimkus • [alishimkus@gmail.com](mailto:alishimkus@gmail.com)

Photo: Bonneville Jones



(L-R) Todd Garcia, Taran Leu, Matt Bennett, Kyle Ruff and Jason Fairclough come together to create what they call "aggressive sludge."

## VOIDSMEN

You could stake the claim that Salt Lake-based Voidsmen are strictly a metal band, but you would only have one finger on the pulse of what the band is about. "I can list a lot of things that we're not," says **Taran Leu**, guitarist, who mentions **Leviathan** as a songwriting influence for himself and **Deftones** as a big influence for fellow guitarist **Todd Garcia**. Bassist **Kyle Ruff** likes to deconstruct the influences that he sees coming through on guitar in the songwriting process by changing the schematics with his bass riffs. "You can call it aggressive sludge," he says. Along with **Matty Bennett** on vocals/keyboards and **Jason Fairclough** on drums, Voidsmen balance the blast beats and chromaticisms of metal with harmonious moments, marking the band as a highly versatile, solid blend of genres.

One of Bennett's friends suggested that they are metal for non-metalheads. "That's pretty spot on," Bennett says. "Most of the people who like us are metalheads, but there's a lot of variety that we throw at you. There's a lot of 'pretty stuff' in there as well." Leu, who recorded and mixed Voidsmen's 2018 self-titled EP, says that for him, there were a lot of moments where he thought, "What would **Pink Floyd** do?" For Fairclough, Voidsmen's influences and genre definition are ever-changing, based on anything that anyone in the band is listening to at that given moment. "We explore different genres," he says, "but it's metal." Voidsmen songs tend to range in length from the

five- or six-minute mark to well into the 15-minute range. Each song, like a chapter in a novel, goes through a series of "moods," giving the band a unique feel and sound. "We play with metal bands most of the time, and a lot of our songs start out thrashing. People are expecting some metal show. But then, sometimes, we'll have a six-minute section that [has] a lot of harmonic accents on the guitar off of one note on the bass," says Ruff.

For the rest of the members, the metal influence looms in the background, but the most important element for the band is the story being told. "[Garcia] always has actual shit he's trying to express with his riffs," says Leu. "It's always [about] space and dragons." Bennett, who travels with his songwriting notebook, says that while some of the earlier Voidsmen songs contained lyrics based on stories like *A Game of Thrones* and *Final Fantasy VII*, the upcoming album is going to contain one singular story in more of the science fiction realm. "It's about humans leaving planet earth because it's too polluted," he says. "[They go on a] ship to go repopulate this new place, which will be our new earth, essentially." For Ruff, who has performed in bands like **Visions of Decay** before with the Leu and Fairclough, the songwriting process for the new album was cooperative from the start. "None of us feel like there is one person trying to force [anything], so it's really fluid," he says. "[Garcia] puts a lot of

direction to it, so it works really well. We try to make what he's doing not as straightforward ... It kind of morphs into something new."

Voidsmen are currently recording their upcoming album at *The Boar's Nest* with **Andy Patterson**, who, Leu says, is the "ideal" person to record them. In addition to recording their new album, Voidsmen had been spending time preparing for *Crucialfest 9* this past September, at the time of this interview. Voidsmen also performed at *Crucialfest Showdown* earlier in 2019, where they had a chance to test out their new material. "I really feel like we won that crowd over, playing our brand-spanking-new material, and that's a great feeling: [playing] something for someone who has never heard it before and have them [be] hyped on it," says Bennett.

As for the upcoming *SLUG Localized*, Voidsmen promise to bring variety, versatility and unrelenting metal mixed with the "prettier" moments. "It will start and end with heavy, hardcore-influenced metal, but with so much pretty stuff in there," says Bennett. "Clean guitar, clean vocals—I'm all about that stuff. That's kind of what Voidsmen is about, too." Voidsmen can be found at [facebook.com/voidsmen](https://facebook.com/voidsmen) and their self-titled EP can be found on [tribelessrec.bandcamp.com](https://tribelessrec.bandcamp.com).



There's a fine line between escapism and a clever reimagining of our current reality. Under the moniker *Mister Pauper*, Provo-based artist Jake Buntjer has taken his lifelong love for tinkering and world-building to massive proportions in both his creative and professional life. Buntjer's design work is rooted in the idea of "experiential design." Rather than appeal to a purely visual 2-D or 3-D aesthetic, he emphasizes the creation of lived-in spaces that connect with his audience on a more tactile level. Far from a viewer engaging with his art through passive reflection and contemplation, Buntjer hopes to draw people into his self-constructed worlds as a means of sparking compassion and togetherness in Utah's arts communities.

Part of these worlds' unifying effects is rooted in their strangeness. "I don't try to create periods of time—I don't try to create the 1920s or the future," Buntjer says. "I try to create alternatives, things that exist somewhere in between all of those different things. It makes the worlds I create very eclectic but with a purpose." The result is an instantly recognizable style, something of a cross between the nostalgic, mystical woodlands atmosphere of **Maurice Sendak's** *Where the Wild Things Are* and the surreal excess of **Fellini's** *La Dolce Vita*. Still, like these works of art, Buntjer doesn't fully retreat from the ills of modern life. Instead, he uses his fantastical elements as a means of processing distress. "What I do with my art is create opportunities for real understanding and shifts in narrative, not destruction of narrative," he says.

In just a few short years, *Mister Pauper* has turned from a solo art project to a full-fledged business. Along with his primary collaborator, **Jarid Hollywood**—a former construction worker who turned away from lucrative house-building in order to exercise his creative muscles—the pair has brought its skills to a breadth of Utah-based events and spaces. Their past projects range from a promotional campaign for **Honest John Bitters Co.** to a permanent installation at *The Rest*, from booths at the *Utah Arts Festival* and the *Craft Lake City DIY Festival* to private corporate holiday parties. The duo (as well as an ever-rotating list of other collaborators) thrive on the sheer uniqueness of their work in these design spaces.

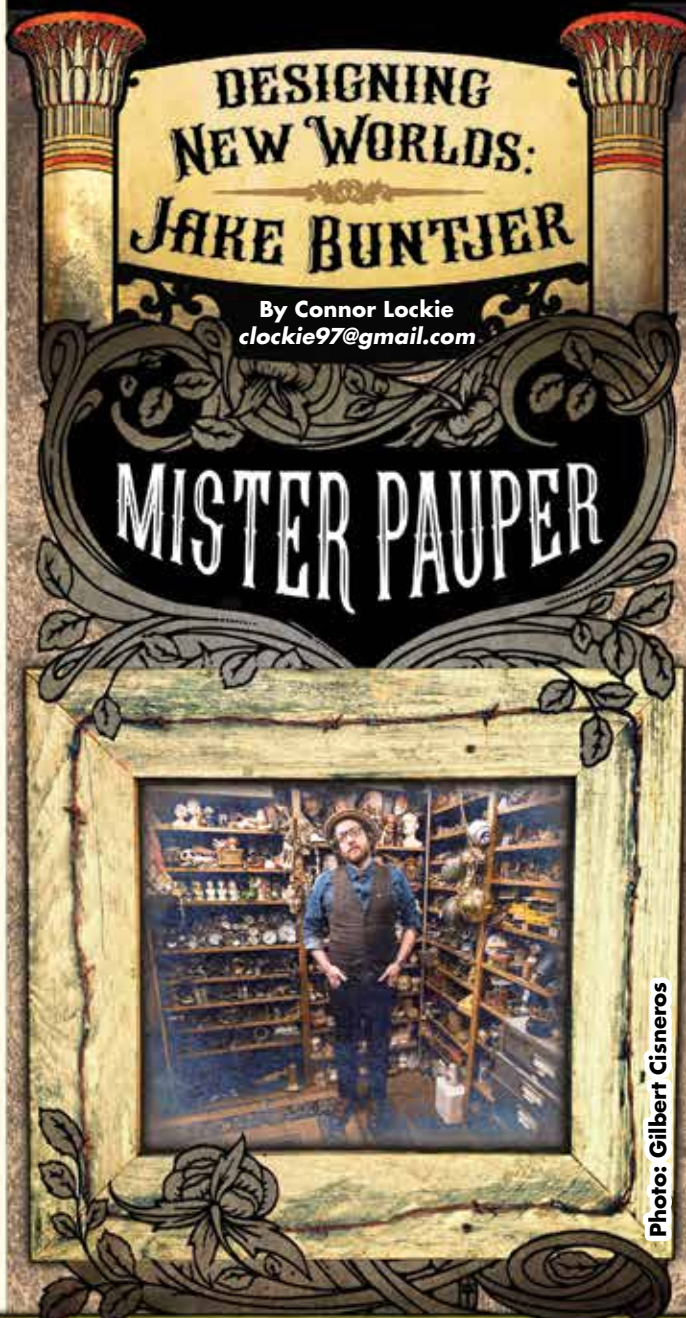


Photo: Gilbert Cisneros

As *Mister Pauper*, Provo-based artist Jake Buntjer creates dreamlike worlds from a variety of antiques and other found objects.

es. "That's our job, to really blow fucking minds," says Buntjer. "[The attendees] can be wowed and find something in themselves."

While the pair notes an initial uphill battle in trying to get clients on board with their unique approach to event design ("When people create budgets, oftentimes, it's really easy to pass over why you need the vibe and feel and the environment," says Buntjer), their commitment to excellence has steadily accumulated a hard-earned reputation. "People don't understand this in their budget until they go to one of our events," says Hollywood. "They saw the corporate party last year, and it was in a boring room with bright lights and undecorated picnic tables. Then they come into one of our worlds, and they're blown away and find themselves comfortable quickly."

At the heart of this comfort is also an inherent eeriness that defines the *Mister Pauper* style. Buntjer describes his work as a "whimsical nightmare," a quality reflected in the **Lewis Carroll**-esque hodgepodge of reconstructed antiques and repurposed found objects that frequently mark his creations. His studio is overflowing with pocket watches, disassembled dolls and a wealth of other curios, each awaiting some future purpose in a *Mister Pauper* project. "Taken out of context, I'm a hoarder," Buntjer says jokingly. "It's my crazy that we're all scared to show people. I'm learning how to own my crazy." Hollywood adds that, far from their combined idiosyncratic qualities leading to mutual destruction, "Our crazies mesh up and make something bigger. We fill in the gaps."

It's exactly this excess of perceived nonconformity that drives everything Buntjer and Hollywood do together. "It's super symbiotic, and it's egoless—which, in the art world, is impossible," says Buntjer. "Right now, I feel really comfortable being crazy, attracting other people who are doing their crazy and making our crazy better." The hub of this collaborative spirit is Provo's *Boxcar Studios*, a carnival funhouse of artistic spaces founded by Buntjer—studio spaces, a stage, a coffee house. During our interview, artists and musicians come and go, birds are chirping away and potential tenants are touring the spaces while a live act soundchecks for an upcoming show. *Boxcar* presents itself as a real representation of the insular utopia Buntjer and Hollywood strive for in all of their *Mister Pauper* work.

As Buntjer and Hollywood move forward, both with *Boxcar* and their event work, they hope to continue opening new doors for Utah's art community and using their designs to open up beneficial and sympathetic discussions. "I think art or creativity is not a weapon," says Buntjer. "[I want to] create a narrative that allows people to leave what they once believed as concrete truth, enter somewhere that's nonthreatening and stand next to someone who they would never get the chance to stand next to or talk to. In this world, they can exist together and they can find a purpose to understand. That's true art to me." Find photos of *Mister Pauper's* work, as well as information on *The Boxcar Studios* and other upcoming events, on Buntjer's website [misterpauper.com](http://misterpauper.com).

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I live just a few blocks from *Liberty Park*, so it was with some interest that I noticed the construction starting on a corner lot across the street in late 2016. The spot had been vacant for over three decades. I surmised perhaps the dilapidated, boarded-up former service station building was finally going to be torn down wholesale. To my surprise and pleasure, instead of scraping the property and starting from scratch, they stripped the building down and used the solid bones that remained. What emerged over the next few months was a clean-lined and simple restaurant building with a modest patio and fresh landscaping.

*Tradition* opened its doors in April of 2017, having been created by **Ashton Aragon** and **Max Shrives** to share their personal-experience-inspired version of comfort food within the SLC dining scene. The menu rotates seasonally but features pleasantly familiar dishes with a somewhat Southern feel, as well as a full cocktail program and a well-curated alcohol list. The complete remodeling job, done with the help of *MUSA Architecture*, complements this concept as the building is welcoming, calming and homey. If you go for brunch, don't be upset if the patio is full—the dining room is open and airy, with natural light streaming through numerous windows and a good view of the mostly open kitchen.

For dinner, try the 21+ bar area, a concession to our state's archaic licensing laws that houses the beer taps and liquor. This cozy section features the original brick from 1932, now left exposed and matched with smooth wood and black-and-white photographs. Edison bulbs over the eight-seat bar keep the light dim but relaxing, and the room is tight quartered enough to be intimate without feeling cramped. Ask the bartender about selections from the current cocktail list, including the Back to Basics (\$10), a take on a moscow mule with apple instead of lime, which is perfect for fall weather.

To start, a trio of appetizers shows off exactly what *Tradition* is all about: executing classic home-cooking with the flair and balance of New American cuisine. The Brussels Sprouts (\$7) are halved and flash-fried, leaving them with enough texture to be perfectly chewy. The nuttiness that comes from being cooked this way is both accented and cut by a pistachio vinaigrette, with the acidity providing a necessary balance. The Pigs in a Blanket (\$7) wasn't some ironic deconstruction but a loving homage to the classic dish featuring two nicely seasoned pork sausages from *Beltex Meats* right next door, wrapped in house-made pastry dough and served with dipping sauces. The Funeral Potatoes (\$8) are impossible to resist ordering and feel

# TRADITION

## COMFORT CLOSE TO HOME

BY RIO CONNELLY  
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Photo: Talyn Sherer

The Fried Chicken's hint of sweetness is a unique element that gently introduces the dish to the palate.

pleasingly honest and authentic. An individual ramekin of rich and cheddary potato casserole is topped with a corn-flake crust and broiled crispy to order, then topped with just enough sweet-and-smokey bacon jam. These would be the envy of any potluck.

The entrée selections are similarly hearty, and the two substantial portions are substantial. The Fried Chicken (\$22) is confited before being breaded and, as a result is perfectly cooked with a hint of sweetness. It sits on a bed of some of the richest grits you can get, with a healthy portion of meaty, peppery collard greens and a drizzle of nourishing potlikker. Pair it with the Fire and Ice (\$11), an interesting mix of botanicals from gin and sage, tart blackberry and a creamy heat from serrano-pepper-infused honey. The Gnocchi (\$18) preparation rotates, and the current offering is an exceptionally

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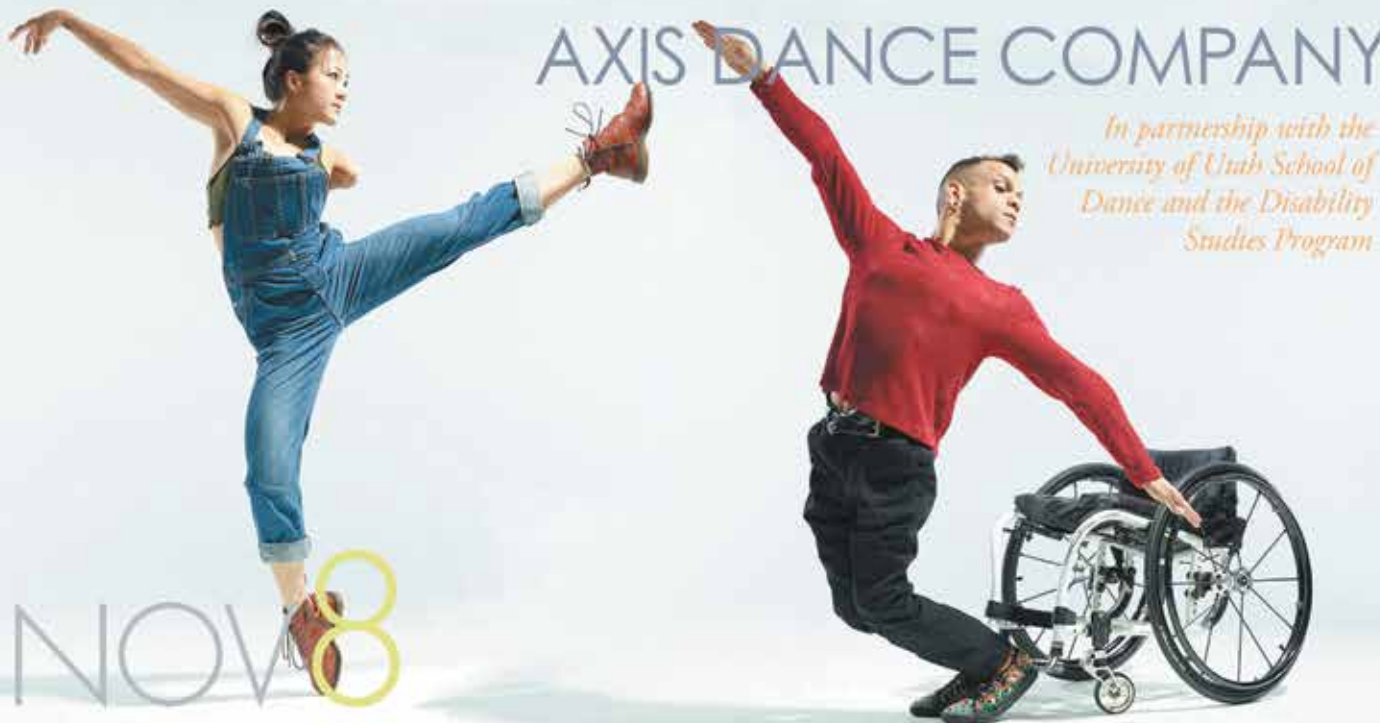
well-balanced and layered dish. The tender pasta dumplings are sautéed with mushrooms and served over tender cauliflower on top of an acorn-squash purée. The key here is the fried fennel fronds and earthy herbs that permeate the dish, making the different flavors and textures meld together and feel substantial and filling. The aroma alone brings to mind a home kitchen.

Despite being stuffed after dinner, don't neglect the ever-changing dessert options, which feature a rotating selection of fresh pies baked daily among other options. While I do love pie, I'm a sucker for donuts, and *Tradition's* take on Apple Fritters were more one of my favorite one-night specials to date. Thin rings of apple are battered whole and deep-fried, then coated in cinnamon sugar and served with a frosting drizzle and house-made vanilla ice cream. The result was the perfect mouthful that avoids being overly sweet like some interpretations—this small pile of the tempting pastries is the ideal size for sharing. This is just one example of what their rotating dessert menu can offer.

Aragon and Shrives have successfully made a modern restaurant that feels like a personal dinner table. Now in its third year, *Tradition* has earned a loyal following who enjoys the casual feel and the high quality of the food. I've had the pleasure of eating there several times (both for brunch and dinner), and the service and food have been consistently excellent. The menu rotates enough that I never have seen it get boring, and there's always a few things on the menu I think about having missed after the meal. Check it out the next time you need some comfort food to soothe your soul or warm you as the weather gets colder. And next time, I'm getting the pie. Make a reservation beforehand at [traditionslc.com](http://traditionslc.com)!

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## RACHEL HODSON

Kia McGinnis Wray • [mcginniskia@gmail.com](mailto:mcginniskia@gmail.com)

Designer Rachel Hodson strolls down 300 South in downtown Salt Lake City during golden hour. She stops to point out how the light filters through the busy dinner service at *Copper Onion*. She notes the planters, the rafter; brushes her hands against the door pulls, the Parisian tabletops. These are details that Hodson recalls easily because she scouted each of them by hand, pulling from flea markets in New York City or enlisting local makers and craftspeople. Hodson's impressive body of interiors, many of which happen to be located on the same block, are a collective sweet spot of historic renewal.

The intimate *Copper Common* patio, the cool bar, cozy waiting area at *Salt Lake Film Society* and the graphic punch of *Good Grammar* (a collaboration with **Kelly Schaefer**)—these are hallmarks of Hodson's hands-on approach to her craft. Though the interiors of these spaces were envisioned and brought to life by Hodson, the term "designer" (or "interior designer") doesn't fully align with the ethos of her work. "I think of what I do as place-making," she says.

What does making a place entail? For Hodson, it is a visual, intuitive process that is deeply informed by the passion of the clients she works with. Oftentimes rallying behind those with a food story to tell, Hodson focuses on the thesis

of the establishment and how she can create a meaningful backdrop for their dream. "I don't do well on projects where I don't understand, philosophically, what the underpinnings of the business are," she says. "I want to support people who do brave things."

While collaborating with the restaurant *Manoli's*, Hodson spent hours with the family flipping through cookbooks and eating meals in their home. Her vision for the space was built directly around a love and care for their food. Hodson says, "I think there's a kind of channeling that happens with the ownership about how they want their space to feel." For *Manoli's*, Hodson used water, wood, air and earth elements to emphasize a convivial, gather-round-the-kitchen feeling.

Working in restaurants and bars while studying industrial design led Hodson to think about the relationship between function and workplace comfort. "There are some things baked into the way I design that have to do with employees. Is it comfortable for someone to be doing their side work in the space? How can the space support better working conditions and therefore better service for the clientele?" This acknowledgement of on-the-ground operations translates to spaces that are easy to navigate and, quite simply, feel good to spend time in. Eat a meal in one of Hodson's visions

and you'll notice an immediately inviting atmosphere.

Hodson doesn't have a formal background in interiors, but also worked for a number of years in production photography and became skilled at turning creative concepts into a reality. Her friend and local restaurateur **Ryan Lowder** approached Hodson when developing the former *Plum Alley* and asked for her critical eye and good judgment. The project involved delving deep into historical photographs and lore, scouring the country for vintage Chinese paper lanterns and cross-examining the relationship between food and physical space.

The erstwhile *Plum Alley* space, which is now *Copper Common*, has a lustrous legacy that fed right into the hand of Hodson's conception. Located on Edison Street, the building was one of the first in Salt Lake City to have electricity. The area surrounding the building was a Chinatown of sorts from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. The nightlife was bustling. Hodson used this vivid imagery as a jumping-off point, and considers it her favorite project so far.

Hodson has gone on to work on a multitude of food-centric spaces (*Copper Kitchen*, *Amour Café*, *Provisions*) and is proud to work with businesses who are dedicated to ethical processes. "Philosophically, I'm inclined to push everybody in the direction of more sustainable thinking—top to bottom. We are so overdue on that as a society," she says.

For Hodson, socially conscious design is multifaceted, holistic and a little bit tender. "I'm interested in reusing things and will always look for ways to do that," she says. "I'm interested in bringing historical or cultural contexts in when I can. I'm really interested in eye contact and creating spaces where people are encouraged to interact."

Keeping an eye out for what she describes as "pinch points," or places where small, meaningful moments may occur, is at the core of Hodson's spaces. It's clear watching Hodson move through her productions that her design sensibilities revolve around experience. In a sense, good design is good customer service.

You can step into Hodson's light-filled and emotive world at a number of establishments across the Salt Lake Valley, most recently *SAOLA* and the Governor's Plaza Lobby, and find her online at [stunningdismount.com](http://stunningdismount.com). Hodson is currently working on *Visit Salt Lake's* Visitor Center as well as corporate offices for *The Healing Group*.

As is the case with her work on *Good Grammar*, designer Rachel Hodson thinks of her handiwork in the field of interior design more appropriately as "place-making."



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# A Cover By Its Book:

## Ummah and Understanding Islam

By Parker Scott Mortensen  
@\_coldbloom



The mission of the *Ummah* exhibit is to focus on faith and value systems connecting people in this case, connecting visitors to the tenets of Islam.



aspects of your identity and community are present in this space.” Common misconceptions and questions about Islam and Muslims litter the wall of the entryway. “What is Sharia Law?” “Why don’t they show their hair?” “Is Islam kind to Christianity?”

The answers to these questions are basic facts about Islam and Muslim life, and it’s telling that in 2019, it’s still helpful—and even necessary—to create an exhibit that amounts to a “My First Introduction to Islam.” The first real piece of the exhibit features two chairs on a rug sandwiching a small coffee table and facing a TV on which a visual poem plays. “I want you to stop and think about 9/11,” the poem implores. “The planes were not the only thing hijacked that day. That pain, that fear, that chaos, that drowning feeling of powerlessness. On that day, Muslims, Muslims like me, felt it twice. On that day they hijacked the airplanes, they hijacked Islam.”

The Emerald Project has provided headphones to listen to an audio interview with **Grace Song**, Executive Director of the *Usuli Institute* (an Islamic think tank for countering ignorance on the religion), in which she explains her young conversion and why she fell in love with Islam. For me, this was a highlight of the exhibition. Hearing Song talk about her experience of looking into Islam and eventually understanding it as a thing so different from what it appears to be resonated with my experiences of overcoming ignorance about the religion and the culture it carries. Song remarks that although it seemed strange at first, Islam was in line with her intuitive sense of what it means to be a good and just person in this world.

Other *Ummah* displays focus more on the core aspects of Muslim life and religious practice. For instance, the display on *sawm* (fasting) helps explain the concept of Ramadan and

how Muslims do not eat or drink between dawn or dusk. Another explains *Hajj*, the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca that a Muslim must make at least once in their life. Again, an audio narrative of one Muslim’s humbling account of their journey accompanies the display, and it reminded me of my young Mormon trek to Martin’s Cove. In this Muslim’s account, I found a shared sense of hard-earned humility. On the far wall of the exhibit are objects selected by local Muslims to express what Islam means to them, such as a mini Qur’an, small prayer rugs, necklaces and bracelets. That these are the personal objects of local Muslims is meaningful: Again, it speaks to the belief in generating a social geography that decentralizes Christianity through contact with other monotheistic religions and cultures.

There is much more to learn about Islam and Muslims in *Ummah*, but particularly fascinating is the end of the exhibit, where visitors are invited to share lingering questions or thoughts on Islam and Muslims after having seen the exhibit. These responses are telling. Some people remark that they are thankful for the opportunity to learn; some say they indeed see the parallels between Islam and Mormonism; some wonder aloud whether they believe in the same god as Muslims. One comment stuck out to me: “Why have people placed the blame on Muslims when [9/11] has gone beyond and completely against every single thing they believe in?”

The answer to this is simple and complex, and among the many conclusions is that one simply must educate oneself. *Ummah* offers itself as the first step. For more information on *Ummah*, which runs through Dec. 15, and on the Emerald Project, visit [umfa.utah.edu/ummah](http://umfa.utah.edu/ummah).



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# Ann Chen

## Writing History In Her Own Script

By Bianca Velasquez  
bianca@slugmag.com

Photo: John Barkiple

Ann Chen's demeanor bespeaks the tone of her hand-lettering. She is ebullient, positive and oftentimes quotes uplifting phrases that keep you enjoying the presence of both her as a human and her artwork. Chen says, "My work is heavily script-focused with round curves. I love extending line work from letters to create illustrations." Chen is drawn to vibrant colors like orange, teal, pink and yellow. "I like to work with bright palettes that convey energy and joy. I also work with black as the background a lot to create a strong visual contrast," she says. Since her more common artistic role is being a hand-lettering muralist, one could see how you would want an **Annlettering** commission to paint the walls of a space you in habit in order to invigorate the room.

Chen displays her penchant for hand-lettering, typography and graphic design on the cover of this month's *Local Design* issue. With an explosion of color and activated shapes and figures, Chen displays the theme of the issue along with a quote by renowned designer **David Carson**: "Graphic design will save the world right after rock and roll does." This *SLUG* cover was drawn entirely in an app called Procreate, something that Chen has been using quite a lot for her digital lettering. "It was kind of hard combining the two different concepts of rock n' roll and design," she says. She started thinking about what is symbolic about rock n' roll and how people relate to it. She resolved to move forward with the "rock n' roll" hand symbol gripping a pencil, tying the two themes together.

Chen's creative journey began in her adolescence. She says, "Because I grew up in Taiwan, I was super into anime as a kid. I just knew I wanted to be an artist." Turning to art and creativity became a way to triumph through Chen's move to the U.S. "When we moved to Utah, I had to learn English from scratch," she says. "It was super hard for me. I felt like it was easier sometimes to be drawing instead of trying to make friends." In high school, Chen was introduced to the world of graphic design. Through designing things like the school shirts and posters, Chen experienced a foreshadowing of her eventual career.

Chen's passion for typography and hand-lettering began a few years back while Chen was still a student in college. "I think my first encounter with lettering was in my graphic design history class. We learned about **Louise Fili**, one of the first few female typographers," she says. Chen's education in typography and

hand-lettering grew congruently with the style's increasing resurgence and popularity on Instagram. "I really dove into hand-lettering during my senior-thesis project," Chen says. "I wanted to do mine on Taiwan, where I lived until I was 9 years old." Not knowing how to do lettering, Chen chose to use this method for her project, which paid homage to Taiwan. The project was called *Letter My Name*, and Chen hand-lettered familiar names from home. She says, "At the end of it, you had to put on a BFA show. So I printed my work from the whole semester. We had an exhibit down in Orem." Witnessing her work framed on the walls was a huge, self-actualizing moment for Chen that helped kick off her eventual career.

Having a solid portfolio by the time Chen graduated landed her a full-time job as a designer at *Jane.com*. "While I was there, my freelance didn't start exploding, but things were starting to happen," Chen says. It was during the spring only two years ago that Chen had her first freelance gig, which was a "Build community with us" design for *SLUG Magazine* tote bags.

Shortly after, while Chen was working for another business called Letterfolk, she was asked to do her first mural commission. "So I'm working at Letterfolk, and I buy tickets to *Hall of Breakfast*," Chen says. "Literally five minutes after I bought those tickets, I go on Instagram, and I have a DM from someone who works at *Hall of Breakfast*. It read, 'Are you interested in doing a mural for us?' and I thought 'This is so weird!'" Chen was surprised by the inquiry, as she had never created a mural and didn't know where to start. She says, "I didn't know how to paint murals, but I said yes to it and frantically googled how to paint murals. It feels hard because it was a larger scale, but it is very similar to painting on paper and is surprisingly easy."

Since then, Chen has had commissions from Adobe, Prudential, Hitachi, Chatbooks, *Big Cartel* and many more. "I feel like someone is watching over me and sharing my stuff," she says. "It's like the magic of Instagram and the magic of constantly talking about what you want to do." These robust couple of years have allowed for Chen to leave her full-time design job and become part of the self-starter club. Since it hasn't been a full year of freelancing for Chen, she doesn't yet know what the full picture is but looks forward to the challenges and opportunities to come. You can visit Chen's work on Instagram @annlettering and at annlettering.com/home.

Ann Chen is a proud self-taught hand-letterer and typographer. She has recently started freelancing full time.

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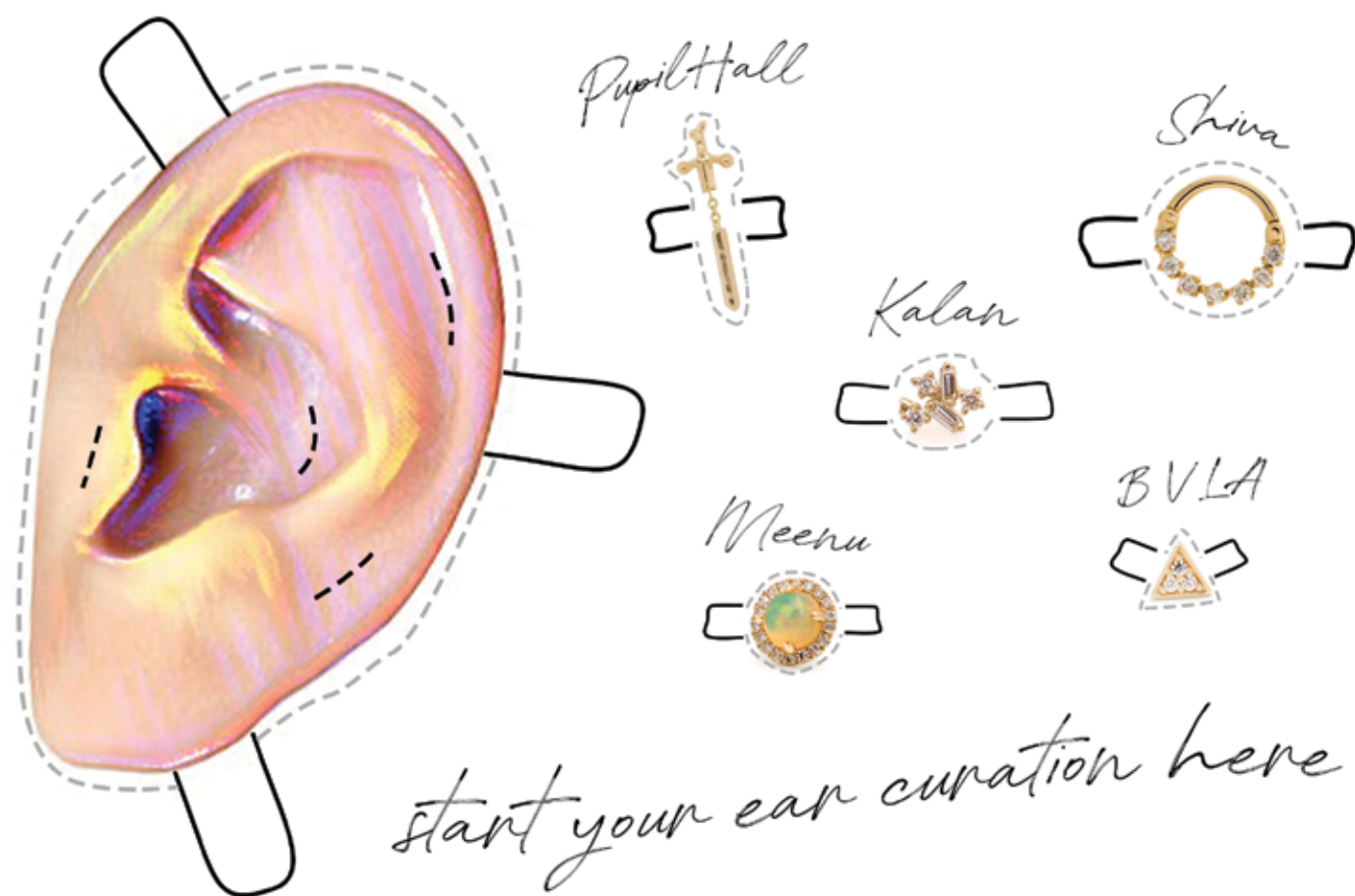
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# FUNKY, QUIRKY, CUTE

## Nicole LaRue designs a charming rebellion

By Paige Zuckerman [paigex@redwillowcounseling.com](mailto:paigex@redwillowcounseling.com)



LaRue uses her skill set to take part in meaningful movements such as the *Women's March on Washington*.

Photo: [lucapearlkhosrova.com](http://lucapearlkhosrova.com)

Designer, illustrator and author Nicole LaRue embodies her art. Wearing a grey wool blazer, laced, vintage-style leather boots and clear acrylic spectacles during our interview, notions of charming playfulness and a touch of ferocity are embedded in LaRue's work and persona. LaRue joins me in the early fall air to explore how she landed locally and the breadth of her creative career thus far, from work for various publications to the powerful imagery of the *Women's March on Washington*.

LaRue had recently returned to Utah after numerous meanderings, both domestically and abroad. "I had traveled to South Korea and Japan for about five years," she says. "While living in Portland, I decided I wanted a community again. I went to a trade show in New York where I met the Creative Director of *Gibbs Smith Publisher*," organization whose art director she later became. "I moved across the country from New Hampshire back to Utah two months later. I'm happy to be back ... I have a really nice community here—everything that is going on in Salt Lake makes me really excited."

LaRue's return to Utah is a bit of a gift to our growing creative community. Her portfolio spans several publications, promotional designs and branding for a cornucopia of companies, including Chronicle Books, Oxford University Press, Madison Park Greetings, Johnson & Johnson, Chatbooks, Tiny Prints, DC Shoes, American Eagle and beyond.

Arguably one of LaRue's most impactful designs came alive with the Washington *Women's March*. As part of the identity of a historical event in activism, LaRue's images for the event were simple yet powerfully representative. "I went to *BYU Idaho*, and when I was there, a friend and I were together," LaRue says. "She was the crafty person, and I was the big-ideas person. Her name is **Amy**

**Stelhorn**; she became the founder of design studio *Big Monocle*. She was at the *Women's March* in San Francisco, and she called me because the Vice President of Global Marketing for *Intel* decided it was going to be a big thing and ultimately brought *Big Monocle* and Amy on board, who brought me in."

This imagery needed to come quickly once LaRue came aboard, driven by the visual challenge of honoring the diversity of identities comprising "womanhood." "Let's try to encompass all women—good luck with that," LaRue says, acknowledging the challenge with a laugh of hindsight humor. LaRue's final product was a simple layered profile of three ostensibly femme-identified faces of different composition with a concise and bold statement: "I March On Washington." Though there was some pushback, "It was to unite people, and I think it did its job," she says, reflecting on the impact the image ultimately made in representing a historical moment in modern activism.

LaRue's design aesthetic reflects several key aspects of personality and worldview. "As an illustrator, I design funky, quirky, cute crap," she says. "I like little things and happy things, and that comes out." However charming and playful her artistic ethos may be, LaRue's work and overall lens isn't merely that. This becomes clear as she speaks to her most recent projects, saying, "I just finished two books for Gibbs Smith. One is called *Small & Mighty*; it's about kids being activists. The other is called *Girl Almighty*, about finding your power. They come out in March—I just finished them a week ago! It's all illustrated and about going out, doing rad shit and being a badass. That's my vocabulary."

One of LaRue's especially relevant products is the *Find Your Adventure Journal*, a fully illustrated

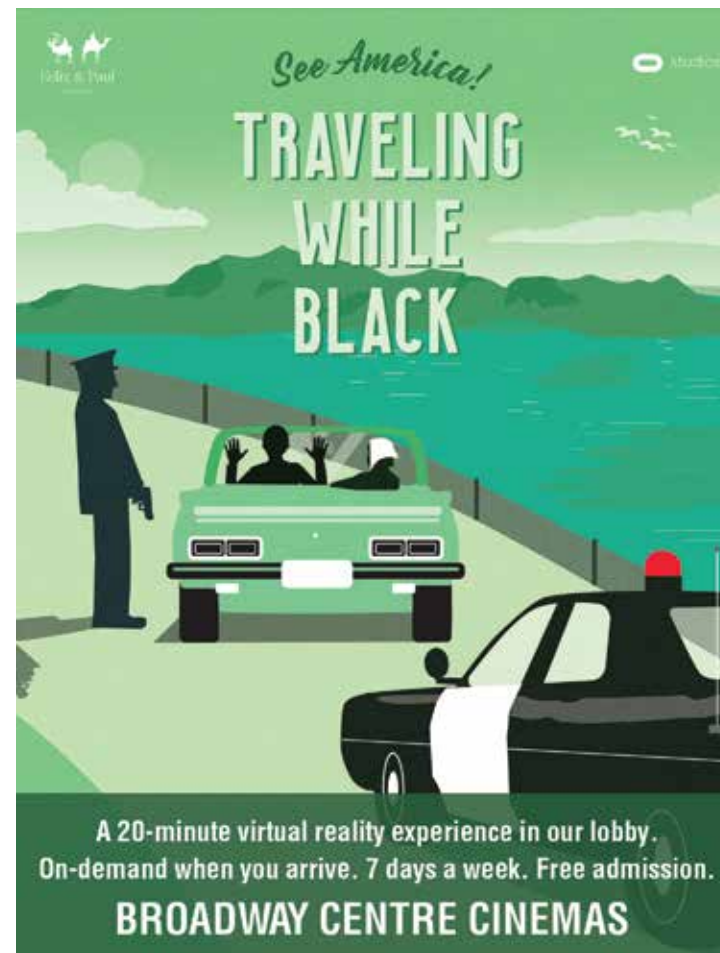
tome on seeking resilience and fun in any of life's journeys. "It was inspired by the time I was in Japan. I had no idea what I was doing, and every day, I had to try something new," she says. "I was definitely an introvert there ... I had to find ways to laugh at myself and stay silly."

From there, we ponder both the notion that design and illustration can have an impact on the world, and that LaRue's continued exposure to the feedback that her work leaves an important mark. "I used to look down on what I did, thinking it doesn't help anyone," she says. "To hear responses about the journal and *Women's March* poster [saying] it does have an impact is super rewarding."

LaRue excitedly details the coming treasures on the horizon alongside the two aforementioned books: "With my company, we are coming out with a gift line called Spumoni," she says. "We have this giant collection that I designed most of. We are going to launch that in spring as well!"

Further, LaRue daydreams about her fantasy project or collaboration. "My dream is definitely my graphic novel, *Food Fight*," she says. "It sounds funny, but it's actually serious; it's about eating disorders. I've been working on it for most of my lifetime. It's something I want to make happen in my lifetime. I just need to find the right home for it." LaRue divulges nearly nothing more about this project, yet beams as she refers to it. As more imminent projects come, she bubbles about one of the next big design projects on the near horizon. "I'm designing two decks of playing cards—I get to do all of the face designs. It's so rad!"

Nicole LaRue's work can be found and purchased online at [smallmadegoods.com](http://smallmadegoods.com). She can be followed with fittingly playful curiosity @smallmadegoods. Also visit publishing company [gibbs-smith.com](http://gibbs-smith.com), where she remains the current Art Director.





CAMILLE & SPENCER NUGENT

# METHOD TO THE MADNESS

Photo: @clancycoop

By Austin Doty

rdotytwo@gmail.com

Siblings Camille and Spencer Nugent have cultivated niches here in northern Utah working in the local design scene. Camille is a Senior Designer at *Dinng*, and Spencer founded *IDS KETCHING.COM* and *Sketch-A-Day.com*, and works in industrial design. Jointly, they've done work for companies like Nike, Adidas and Motorola. They have nearly 40 years of combined experience. However, it's only more recently that they've taken the opportunity to work together.



(L-R) Spencer and Camille Nugent find inspiration in deep conversations they've had in kitchens for the *Misplaced Showcase*.

After a Creative Mornings presentation about symmetry, they recently participated in the *Misplaced Showcase*. At *Misplaced*, they explored what it means to combine their skill sets. They had identified that a crux of their relationship was deep, meaningful conversations they've had in kitchens. "It started with us wanting to find a variety of cabinets on thrift sites and put something together," Spencer says. "We came up with this idea of a three-dimensional collage of sorts, and that idea evolved as we got ready for the presentation." Playing off of each other's strengths, they "came up with the piece that I feel we're both super proud of and really was a hit at the show," he says.

They've both always known how talented one another are, but lately, they've had to learn how differently they each work. "I feel like I have a ton to learn from him," Camille says. "[He's] the method and I'm the madness in the conversations we've been having lately—it cracks me up." Despite being siblings, it seems as though their work strategies couldn't contrast more.

Having grown up three years apart, they each had their own journey in developing their interests. Initially, they both found inspiration in the illustrations of cartoons and comic books, but when it came time for college, their paths diverged by quite a degree. Camille had wanted to go into *BYU's* fashion program, but "it was phased out the year of my application," she says. "I went with my second love at the time and studied for my BFA in drawing and painting." Camille achieved success in a different field, a testament to her ability to adapt to varying situations.

Spencer started his education on the more left-brain side of things by studying math. Soon after entering the study, however, he found that he wasn't able to express his thoughts and ideas as much as he wanted to. "I then quickly realized that was a mistake and discovered industrial design through a friend who was studying at *BYU* at the time," he says. "Turns out I sucked at drawing and had to work really hard, but my passion and drive resulted in me being pretty good at it."

Their career paths have always been about maintaining a level of passion and drive while not allowing what might be ahead to overwhelm them. "I heaped expectations on myself that weren't the kindest or gentlest, but pushed me to excel at my craft," says Spencer. "[However,] there were times in my career, as well, that having an expectation of greatness or comparing myself to others really put me in a bad place."

The balance lies somewhere between expectation and nonchalance, making the most of what comes down life's path. "I still have residual shyness sometimes, but I try my best to push past it because I don't want to live with many regrets," Camille says.

In their careers today, they are finding more expression for themselves than ever. "I just left corporate life after five years of learning and grow-

ing," says Spencer excitedly. "I'll be focusing on my new venture, **50/50 Creative Labs**. Inherent to the name is my vision for how I do my best work. I'll be making time to create art and design projects that come from a soulful place while making space for client work as well." His new venture will take on projects from multiple new clients while staying true to his art and craft. He says, "During my career, I've dabbled in interior design, furniture design, user experience, user interface and service design. So, what I do now, is all of that in the form of tackling whatever tough problems or needs my clients have using my skill set."

It's a nice place to be in, with his opportunity to use his expression not only to bolster his career but to continue his enthusiasm in his work. Camille is finding a similar opportunity herself as she is able to return to her educational foundation in painting. "Earlier this year, I worked with the diversity and inclusion team at Adobe and curated a small art show as part of a Juneteenth celebration, for which I did a new painting," she says. Having to usually work on a digital medium, it's compelling for her to return to using her brushes and oils.

It seems that no matter what they specifically do with their careers, the most important part of their work is expression. "I fundamentally believe that we do our best work when we can tap into our love within," says Spencer. "I also believe that when we create space for our own soulful work, the work we do for others is that much better."

Be on the lookout for work through Spencer's *50/50 Creative Labs*, which will be launching a website (*5050.design*) before the end of this year. In the near future, Camille hopes to exhibit art galleries of her oil paintings, large-scale mixed media and digital collages. They're special ventures that not only show the years and experience of their work but also the expression they've maintained through it all.

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An exposé on the unregulated public health impact of factory farming.

**Wednesday | Nov 13 | 7pm | Rose Wagner** **CHAINED FOR LIFE** Post-film Q&A with director  
An actress struggles to connect with her disfigured co-star on the set of a film.

**Tuesday | Nov 19 | 7pm | The City Library** **CHANGING THE GAME** Post-film Q&A with Exec. Producer  
Three trans high school athletes fight for acceptance in their sports.

**Tuesday | Nov 26 | 7pm | The City Library** **WARRIOR WOMEN** Post-film discussion to be announced  
Madonna Thunder Hawk's 50+ year career fighting for Indigenous & women's rights.

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As a senior in high school, Kevin Cantrell observed a friend creating a system of brand logos and fonts for a project and immediately knew it was what he wanted to do. "In my first year taking design classes [at *Brigham Young University*], I discovered I had a natural ability with typography," Cantrell says. "It wasn't until my senior year of college that I really started playing more with drawing custom typefaces from old reference material."

After receiving his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from *BYU*, Cantrell began delving more into lettering and ornate typography as his erstwhile profession grew more taxing and boring. "When I lost my love for my job," he says, "I rekindled my passion through lettering. It changed my entire course."

Cantrell runs *Kevin Cantrell Studio* along with **Erik Attkisson**, who focuses on business management and brand strategy. "If you are going to run a studio, you quickly realize you can't do it all yourself," Cantrell says. "You need to have someone whose abilities complement your own skill set." Attkisson and Cantrell work synergistically, often working from one another's discoveries and ideas. "I'll come up with something [whose] visuals feel right, and he'll discover that it fits perfectly in the strategic expression," Cantrell says.

While some artists might use pen and paper, Cantrell credits advances in digital technology for progressions in his work. "Digital tools have come so far that I essentially view my mouse and pen tool in *Illustrator* as an extension of my hand," he says. "In fact, I can draw more accurately in *illustrator* than with a pencil."

Using these digital tools, Cantrell has designed for some of the biggest brands in the country, including *Nike*, *Bacardi* and a number of popular magazines, just to name a few. Despite the raised stakes of working with a high-level client, Cantrell doesn't feel any added pressure, but is wary of the obstacles presented by working with larger companies. "I know my process and trust my judgment," he says. "With larger brand recognition typically comes more committees and voices weighing in on the final creative thought, and this presents more obstacles along the road of excellence. The more voices that weigh in, the more you play to the masses, which can often yield less-than-desirable results."

Working with a variety of clientele, Cantrell says he is most drawn to working on projects that fall into two categories: "ones that pay the bills and ones that appreciate excellence." He notes that he is fortunate to be in a position in which the majority of the work he takes on is in the pursuit of excellence while also being profitable. "Hotels and distilleries, especially ones that are privately owned, typically care



AND THE BUSINESS OF TYPOGRAPHY  
By Danielle Susi • [dsusi@saic.edu](mailto:dsusi@saic.edu)



Photo: John Barkiple

Type designer Kevin Cantrell balances the joy of illustration with nuanced systems in his typography.



more about quality and view it as indispensable to their longevity," Cantrell adds. "Privately owned companies also have less levels of bureaucracy. Middle management is theryptonite of excellence. I view excellence in my work the same way: essential to my longevity."

It's in the pursuit of excellence that Cantrell won the prestigious **Art Directors Club** Young Guns award in 2012 after leaving a design studio in Salt Lake City, where he says he acquired experience and knowledge of the industry. "Unfortunately, we just didn't have the type of work that interested me," he says. "Hence, I first began lettering as a side project in 2013 as a creative outlet to fill the void I was feeling."

Leaving his previous agency proved to be risky while he had two kids at home and a wife who was seven months pregnant. It seems that the risk paid off, however. Among receiving other honors, last year, Cantrell became a **Type Directors Club** Ascender, an award recognizing contributions to typography under the age of 35.

"Type design is system-based while lettering is illustration," Cantrell says. "It's harder to understand and appreciate systems. A good system functions without the viewer considering what makes it work, like a good machine." Cantrell approaches branding in a type-centric way, meaning that he sees a great beauty and humanity in the illustrative work he produces.

Much of Cantrell's work is defined by gilded letters and an art-deco style fit for the Prohibition era. Specifically, his work for distillery *Tom's Town* uses gold as the predominant color for multiple components of the branding and the kind of bold linework that is essential to 1920s architecture.

"Type as art, or [work that is] more illustration-based, is something that can grab your attention without such knowledge or utility," he says. "Interestingly, you can still appreciate beauty without understanding a specific medium, but usually, it takes originality or exceptional craft to instill a similar sense of awe. Illustration also humanizes the system. It personifies the mundane and inanimate. It's like looking at an instruction manual versus reading a novel; you read one out of necessity, the other out of joy. Lettering and typography as an art form yields joy."

From this joy, Cantrell hopes to forge more good fortune, hoping to do something more dimensional in stone or metal, or work more in music ("A deluxe vinyl album for **U2** would be a dream," he says).

Kevin Cantrell Studios can be found at [kevincantrell.com](http://kevincantrell.com).

# LEARNING THE POWER OF LETTERS

## How Becca Clason Turns Words into Art

By Caroline Jackson  
[caroline.e.jackson@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.e.jackson@gmail.com)



Photo: Bonneville Jones

Becca Clason's portfolio includes stop-motion and tactile lettering for Nordstrom and Facebook.

While working as a Junior Art Director at a firm in New York, Becca Clason quickly realized it wasn't all she had hoped. After a year at this job, Becca moved to Salt Lake and focused on her next journey, a graphic design job. "I'd made lettering in the past without even realizing what it was," she says. "Being able to put a name to it and realize that it was an actual career path gave me a lot of motivation to practice and improve and make it my career path, too." This change would lead Becca to establish her own venture, *LetterWest*, a two-day event where lettering enthusiasts can "improve their craft and business skills, meet and learn from industry leaders they admire, build face-to-face friendships with their peers and do it all in the spirit of inclusive community," she says. Along with this, Becca realized a local art popup, the *Love Letters Museum*, where she served as a curator in this large-scale, love letter to words.

Working as a corporate designer in SLC, Becca would spend her days fascinated by design blogs like **Jessica Hishche's** *Daily Drop Cap* and **Erik Marinovich's** *Friends of Type*. "They were my first introduction to lettering, and I felt like I'd found my calling," Becca says.

As a result, Becca was inspired to try out different techniques, such as creating words out of physical objects (like her work in the *Love Letters Museum*) and learning more about stop-motion production. "I found myself in a creative momentum cycle that brought me a lot of joy and satisfaction, as well as improving my skills," she says. From there Becca landed various freelance tactile writing gigs, where she would create words out of objects like food or flowers. With her job ending, Becca's decision to start her own lettering business was easy. Along with husband **Josh Clason**, who had been helping her behind the scenes for years,

they founded their full-service stop-motion studio, *So Mighty*, named after their son, whose middle name is **Mighty**.

Through *So Mighty*, the Clasons and In-house Editor **Matt McDowell** have created stop-motion and tactile lettering content for companies like Charles Schwabb, Nordstrom and Facebook, as well as content for Xfinity/Amazon Prime to promote their shows *Jack Ryan*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Homecoming*.

Becca has also made her mark more locally with the *LetterWest* workshop, where she and other lettering professionals host classes on all things lettering—from different lettering techniques and practices to elements on the business side, such as billing for works or a panel about the importance (or unimportance) of having an agent. The *LetterWest* conferences and retreats were designed intentionally by Becca to provide "something ... where everybody attending understood and related to the type of work everyone else was doing," she says. Becca has given the niche community a place to congregate and share nothing but their own type of art. She would like *LetterWest* to grow even larger so all those interested in lettering—either professionally or for fun—can have access to it.

Recently, Becca wrapped up a pop-up exhibit at *The Gateway*, known as the *Love Letter Museum*. The exhibit is her and Josh's brainchild and was based around her love for lettering, typography and the alphabet. They brought in **John Connors**, who curated the *Hall of Breakfast* pop-up, and along with Connors' partner, **Sophie Weichers**, they created "a place where we celebrated the alphabet in its many forms, from an individual letterform to creating a word, a story, a book, to help people consider that everyone can be an

artist and everyone has a story to tell," she says. "We wanted the exhibit to be more than just fun photo ops. We wanted it to have some layers of meaning, if people were interested in looking for and seeing them."

Becca brought in local artists **Jill De Haan**, **Ann Chen**, **Taylor Mitchell**, **Skyler Chubak**, **Hayley Barry**, **Matisse Hales** and husband-and-wife team **Fell**, as well as some friends outside of Utah, such as **Craig Winslow**, **Stefan Kunz**, **Mark Caneso**, **Elizabeth Gray**, **Joseph Alessio** and **Lisa Congdon**. The exhibit also featured her own creation: large-letter words on a foam base spelling "Write On" made from hundreds of erasers and over 6,000 pencils. "It's always a cool feeling to make something that didn't exist before, and it's even cooler when a lot of other people are able to experience it as well," she says of the gathering.

While Becca's success makes her extremely busy, she also has her priorities straight. "Following your dreams and being creative is important, but without people in our lives that we love, it would all be meaningless," she says. "It's important for me to continually try to find a balance between my family and professional work. Relationships are always the most important thing, and sometimes we forget that." Perhaps that mindset is why she's been so successful in not only her work, but within creating a local lettering community as well.

You can find more of Becca's work on her Instagram (@beccaclason), as well as *SoMighty's* Instagram (@soughtystudio) and website *soughty.com*. For More information on the upcoming *LetterWest* conference and retreats you can visit their website, *letterwest.com*.



# DISCIPLINED DREAMERS AT FLUID



Photo: Matt Nelson

Helmed by Executive Creative Director Ryan Anderson (black hoodie) and President Kyle Curtis (sky-blue dress shirt), the *Fluid* team seeks excellence in helping to execute inventive branding visions for their clients.

By Ben Trentelman | [bkdt0@yahoo.com](mailto:bkdt0@yahoo.com)

*Fluid Advertising* got their start around 1997 as a creative boutique focusing on a range of package designs and more traditional marketing strategies. As society has changed, so has the way we consume media, buy products and become exposed to an onslaught of marketing everywhere we look. *Fluid* has had to live up to their name and continually shift and evolve their strategies and philosophical outlook on how to produce high-quality work that is creative, appealing and stands out from everything else we see every day.

Partner/Executive Creative Director **Ryan Anderson** and Partner/President **Kyle Curtis** have a vision of how their creative and disciplined team can positively impact the marketing and advertising world while bringing consumers and clients products that are effective and appealing. Perusing their website, I saw custom woodcut tool cases, a plethora of brand logos and a number of photographs. While Anderson emphasizes the fact that they don't imprint their own branding into products they put together for clients, all of the work is warm, engaging and fun. *Fluid* has an expansive list of services they offer in advertising, graphic design and marketing and strategy development, with the additional services of search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, website design and digital marketing in 2012.

"A lot of design firms will do the same thing we do, so it really comes down to who is doing it better," Anderson says of their overall strategy. "We foster a culture of doing great and unexpected things for clients."

*Fluid* has what Curtis calls "award-winning creativity," evidenced by the wall of awards in their lobby, some stacked four-to-five deep. "The two things you need are someone who can recognize a good idea, and then you need the discipline to refine an idea until it is great," Curtis says. "I think that's where a lot of people fall short, is that they can't recognize

good work or they don't have the work ethic to just stick at it and say they're not going to stop until they get something great."

The firm's reputation attracts creative talent from around the nation to collaborate on projects. I see this firsthand as Anderson points out three posters they created for the *American Advertising Awards*. The posters feature dogs in the style of old circus fliers. One of the more striking posters depicts a serpent-like dachshund. The dog is elongated and intertwined in itself, taking bites out of its own torso, with the phrase "It's going to be a dog-eat-dog competition" adorning the top of the page. The illustrators worked on this project pro-bono—Anderson says, "Three different illustrators worked on a concept they liked because they were excited about the opportunity."

Anderson describes *Fluid* as not having a unique or distinct style because what they ultimately want to portray is the uniqueness of each client. "Different clients will have different brands, and we have to be nimble and versatile enough to create what they want," Anderson says. "The first thing we have to do is dive in and understand them by asking them a lot of questions about what they do. We also do a lot of research to know who they are; what they think about sites they visit, products they buy; and who they are at a core level."

Discipline and creativity are core principles at *Fluid* and come up frequently as Anderson and Curtis talk about how they meet the demands of clients. While it would be easy to assume that these are common principals at every design firm, the tenacity of other firms may vary. Curtis recently joined *Fluid* after working on high-profile advertising campaigns in Las Vegas and surrounding areas because he believes that *Fluid* has the atmosphere and drive to harness that creative discipline and move the advertising needle. "We can offer things to clients that they haven't gotten anywhere else," he says. "You take the best-of-class creative and couple it with experimentation, and you can really deliver something our clients can't get elsewhere."

This discipline takes great effort, and intentional-

ity is needed to cultivate a team of creatives who are empowered to produce good work. Anderson says, "Every single person you bring in affects the culture of an agency. We want to make sure that they are going to produce and have a passion for design and advertising."

Moreover, "Every project is challenging because, ultimately, you're trying to come up with great ideas," Anderson says. "You have to work pretty hard and dig pretty deep to get a good idea. Once that idea presents itself, you have to execute it in a way that is either beautiful or right on target. It takes a lot of work."

For example, the firm was surprised when a bank, an institution typically perceived to be more conservative, jumped on the idea of a six-part promotional comic-book featuring superhero bankers which were given out to customers. Anderson says, "You would think the client would say this was a little too risky for us, but they loved it and have told others how much they loved it through referrals."

Anderson and Curtis know that the creative team behind *Fluid* is creating the branding personality and atmosphere clients want. "Having a team here that instinctively pushes that creativity that you can't ignore is really exciting," Curtis says. "Where we are now isn't where we're going to be. We're going to build something different here. There is a willingness to invest in something different here."

You can find more information about *Fluid* on their website, [getfluid.com](http://getfluid.com).



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**MIKE BROWN** *Graffiti!!!*

By Mike Brown • [mgb90210@gmail.com](mailto:mgb90210@gmail.com)



Illustration: @karlyfries

*SLUG Magazine* doesn't condone vandalism. Mike Brown finds it fun, however, because it often entails graffiti.

This may be an unpopular opinion—but here it goes: Vandalism is fun. I've done more than my fair share, and as I get older, the need to destroy property has lessened. But yeah, I've had phases—from being a disgruntled teen, toilet-papering and egging the neighbors' houses and blowing up mailboxes, to this one phase in my late 20s where me and my roommate would maraud home drunkenly from a bar and see how many American flags we could steal.

Like a round peg in a round hole, graffiti blended into this culture of rebellion and teen angst quite seamlessly among my circle of friends in my high school days. A lot of dudes skated and bombed walls—sometimes simultaneously. Kids would start crews with silly, "thug"-sounding names—probably to overcompensate for the fact that we were growing up on the not-so-mean streets of east Salt Lake. Fun times, for sure.

I grew to love and appreciate graffiti as a beautiful rebellious art form, whereas my parents always embraced it as a dog pissing on a tree, just marking his territory. And as I get older, it's fun to watch kids I knew in high school and my early 20s blossom into legit paid artists while maintaining street cred.

I decided to interview one of my close friends who does. In the spirit of anonymity, which I've always considered one of the coolest and funnest aspects of legit street art, his name shall not be printed.

Although, many of you reading this would recognize his murals and contributions to Salt Lake's mural-art culture. I wanted to learn what was dope right now and what's not, and how not to be such a fucking poseur.

I picked his brain about what I would consider the unwritten rules of the medium. It's basically shit we all know, like don't tag on someone's mural, don't tag local businesses without permission, what walls are legal and aren't, etc.

You'd think most of this shit would be common sense, but when I was a stupid kid, I remember seeing some of my tagger buddies getting their asses kicked for tagging churches. No major beatings—sometimes kids have to learn the hard way. When I brought this up, my friend expressed an empathetic approach to following these "rules," emphasizing that we were all young and stupid at one point and deserve a chance to prove ourselves in any medium we are fucking up in.

Interestingly enough, a crew he's a member of in a large city in California actually abides by a code of ethics. For lack of a better term, I'll call these guys "professional" graffiti artists, some of whom have been painting since before I was a twinkle in my father's eye. They actually have a handbook, with things such as how to talk to the cops if you do get busted, where you can and can't paint and shit like that. I think that's pretty cool.

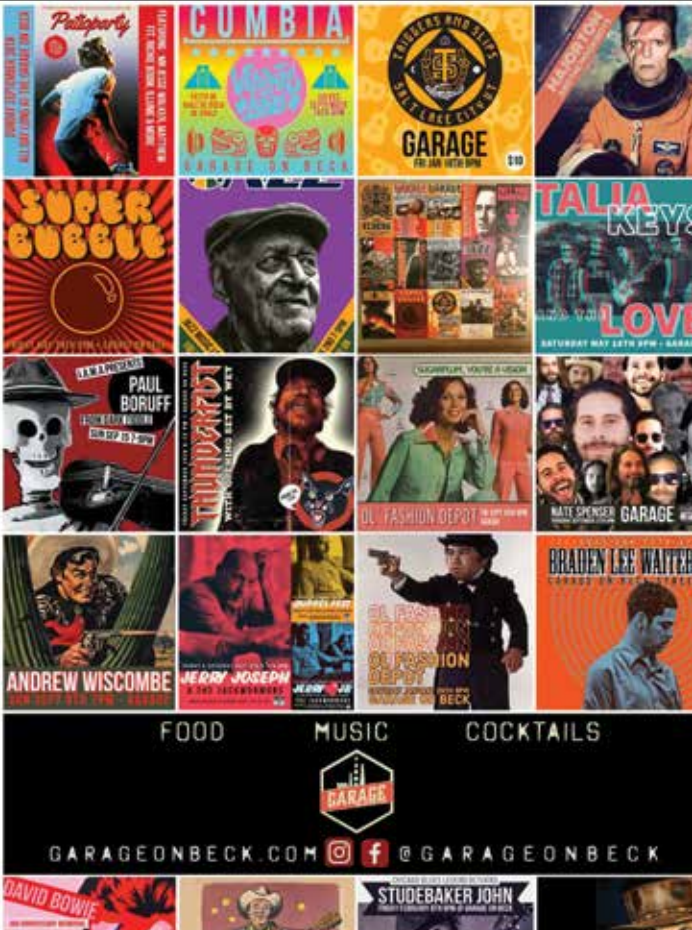
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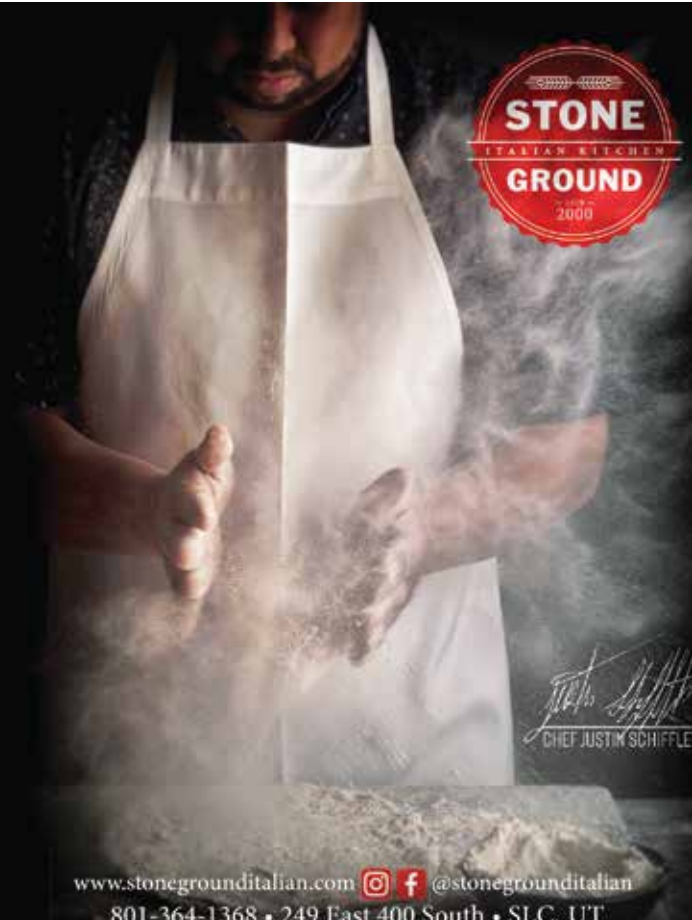
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**STONECUTTERS**  
11.03.19 // SLEEPING TIGERS  
**LTJ BUKEM**  
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**THE GET UP KIDS**  
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11.06.19 // WEEPING WOUND  
**THE MOSS**  
11.07.19 // SOAP  
**THE SPILL CANVAS**  
11.08.19 // THE JULIANA THEORY  
**PILE**  
11.09.19 // SLOW CODE  
**SUN SEEKER**  
DUNCAN FELLOWS  
11.12.19 // CARRIERS

**THE BERGAMOT**  
11.13.19 //  
**BRISTON MARONEY**  
11.15.19 // COVEY  
**KOLARS**  
11.16.19 // BRANSON ANDERSON  
**ZAC CLARK**  
11.17.19 //  
**TOW'RS**  
11.18.19 //  
**HEATHER MAE**  
11.19.19 // GUMMER ALBUM RELEASE  
**CONSIDER THE SOURCE**  
11.20.19 // TELESOMNIAC  
**KATIE KUFFEL TRIO**  
11.21.19 // GIRL BLUE  
**VERITE**  
11.22.19 // BEELLE JEWEL  
**HVVVDY**  
11.23.19 // NICK DORIAN

**LISA PRANK**  
11.25.19 // THE COOLAD  
**SHOW ME THE BODY**  
11.26.19 // UROCHROMES  
**CAUTIOUS CLAY**  
11.29.19 //  
**ADAM TURLEY**  
11.30.19 // MASON MURPHY  
**EMAROSA**  
12.02.19 // TOO CLOSE TO TOUCH  
**SPENDTIME PALACE**  
12.04.19 // THE BRAZEN YOUTH  
**DEAD CROWN**  
AVOID  
12.09.19 // TOO CLOSE TO TOUCH  
**CHRIS FARREN**  
01.20.20 //  
**MINIATURE TIGERS**  
02.10.20 //

VISIT OUR WEBSITES FOR ADDITIONAL SHOW INFO

# The First Annual Craft Lake City Holiday Market in Ogden

Saturday  
**December 7, 2019**  
11 a.m.-6 p.m.

**The Monarch**  
Nine Rails Creative District  
455 25th St. Ogden, UT.

**\$5**  
KIDS 12 &  
UNDER FREE

70+ Utah Artisans  
Craft Food  
Santa  
Holiday Spirits



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FOUNDATION





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