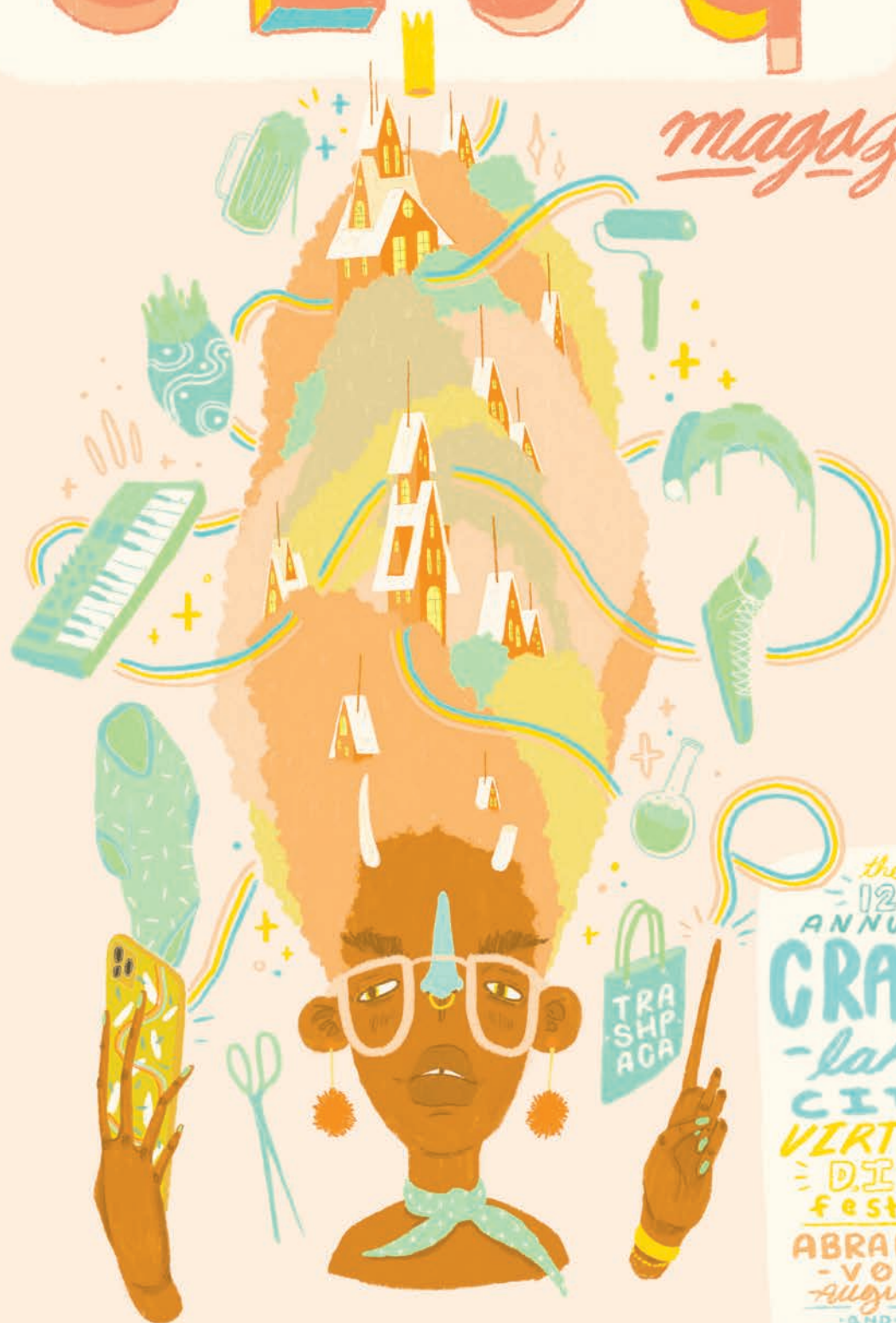


* SLUG *

magazine



the
12th
ANNUAL
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CONTRIBUTOR LIMELIGHT

Mekenna Malan

Since January of 2020, Contributing Writer Mekenna Malan has made her mark through a hefty, consistent output of music coverage. Whether its through reviews of artists such as **U.S. Girls** and **NIKA** or via interview features with the likes of **Born Ruffians**, self-described “indie-music junkie” and life-long *SLUG* reader Malan’s excitement for music and her empathy for her subjects’ craft and lived experiences shines. This month, find Malan’s vignettes on two *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival* performers, **Sonali Loomba** and **Milk Money** (pg. 15), and head to *SLUGMag.com* to read her recent online-exclusive interview feature with **Adam Klopp** of **Choir Boy**. With her vibrant, personable prose and her clear passion for a breadth of musical styles and approaches, Malan is vital to *SLUG*’s music discourse. We’re continually delighted to see what she writes next!



ABOUT THE COVER: Our August issue celebrates Craft Lake City’s upcoming *Virtual DIY Festival*. For this cover, participant **Abraham Von August** (@abrahamvonwaffles) depicts the *Festival*’s interactive experience of local creativity with colorful panache. Read about August’s work on pgs. 6–7!

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ABRAHAM VON AUGUST

CREATING A WHIMSICAL WORLD
WITH FASHION & ART

By Avrey Evans • avreyevans21@gmail.com
Photos courtesy of Abraham Von August

"I like the idea of something a little gross mixed with something a little beautiful," August says.

In the eyes of artist, business owner and the creator of *SLUG's Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Fest* issue cover, Abraham Von August, life should be boundless. For far too long, the tiresome constraints of binary categories have shaped the way humans express themselves, binding us into ways of thinking, acting and dressing. But on the other side of classification and marking lies a colorful world where authenticity awaits ripe for picking. This is where August finds inspiration to create unique visual art and curate one-of-a-kind vintage looks for their brand, **Trashpaca**.

Since childhood, August has surrounded himself with the avant-garde influences of art-house cinema and the eccentric personalities within. Naming directors such as **Wes Anderson**, **Hayao Miyazaki** and **Spike Lee**, August says they are drawn to "their way of creating oddball characters with these strange little idiosyncrasies." The ability to manifest eccentricity is something August centralizes in all of their artistic endeavors, including hand-crafted journals, whimsical illustrations and even jewelry made with human teeth.

As an illustrator, August describes their style as dreamy and nostalgic, creating drawings that evoke a sense of the past while playing with elements of fantasy. "I like for my art to feel a bit like

something from a kid's fairytale book cover, but it's not just for kids. It stimulates a part of the childlike mind," they say. Much like the quirky characters within August's favorite films, each illustration is given its own unique attributes. It's a charming aspect of their work that lends a part of themselves to each piece of art they create.

For instance, the whimsical design on *SLUG's* August cover has been given its own imaginative identity. August describes the character they have named Etheline Amaranth: "[They] eat food based on what color they're craving for the day, thinks beaches are 'overrated' and would definitely eat a waffle every morning for breakfast if they didn't believe sleep was actually way better than breakfast," August says. Relatable, Etheline, very relatable!

Etheline has been brought to life by August's innovative mind, but the illustration also captures the essence of Salt Lake's flourishing DIY community—a scene that has been a powerful influence in their creative journey. "What I think I was wanting was to really capture the overall feeling and emotion that I experienced the first time that I visited a Craft Lake City [Festival]," they say. After attending their first *CLC DIY Festival*, August left feeling inspired and renewed,

and in 2014, they became an official vendor. In those first few years, they focused on selling unique pieces such as hand-painted necklaces and witchy grimoires. After experiencing success and discovering a welcoming community, August decided to risk it all and pivot their interests toward their love of vintage fashion.

August's passion for clothing from the past stems from the same cinematic influences that inspire their visual art. "I think fashion has always been a way for me to connect with a lot of my favorite characters in these stories, films and even video games," they say. In the eyes of August, movie makers are magicians whose powers lie in the costumes in which they adorn their characters. And much like the wardrobes found on movie sets, vintage clothing exudes personality and mystery. August uses the enchanted clothing to embody the characters they admire on the screen, but they also believe it can be used as a powerful means of expression. "I really wanted to start speaking MY personal language through my clothing, and I wanted that language to scream nothing more than 'ART!'" August says.

After embracing vintage clothing's ability to bring authentic expression into their life, August realized they wanted to share that gift with others. In 2016,



Trashpaca, August's vintage clothing brand, focuses on gender- and size-fluid clothing.

August launched their very own curated vintage brand: Trashpaca. The origin of the brand's name is just as interesting as it sounds. "I liked the idea of something a little gross mixed with something a little beautiful," August says. "I love alpaca, like, A LOT. They're majestic creatures that are just sort of naturally stylish and beautiful, so I thought, 'that's my little something beautiful.'"

As for the less glamorous portion of the name, August believes it's all a matter of perspective. "A lot of the things that we have been taught [are] 'trash' [are] more of a matter of conditioning and perspective," they say. "They serve kind of an important purpose and a lot of them are clad in fancy and odd colors. They sort of just hide in plain sight while still being kind of cute in a gross way." Selling discarded clothing is August's way of redefining what "trash" really is, and showing others the many ways we define what it means to be beautiful.

Not only is Trashpaca providing an eco-friendly alternative to fast fashion, but it also focuses a non-gendered and fluidly sized approach to clothing. "I wanted to really create a shopping experience that was closer to what I was looking for when I was out shopping for clothing. I don't shop by gender or age or size so much—I shop

reactively," says August. As a nonbinary person themselves, August saw a gap in Utah's vintage community and an opportunity to shake up the fashion narrative. "I think if we can start to blur that bar of gender in clothing, then maybe we will see people not be so scared to express themselves a little more," they say.

Stepping outside the limits of gender allows people to express their true authenticity, but it also makes fashion a hell of a lot more fun! August loves to create standout outfits from an unlikely pair of vintage pieces, and finds even more joy sharing their origin stories. "It's such a sweet moment for me when I'm like, 'Oh, this is a vintage Victoria's Secret robe and these pants are just capris from an old lady!'" August says. When it comes to fashion, Trashpaca's philosophy boils down to this: If you like it, and it's comfortable, then wear it!

As life and fashion evolve, so will Trashpaca, and August has big plans for the brand's future. "I would like to eventually have Trashpaca be a sort of artsy boutique. It would include things [so] that you can decorate not only yourself, but also your space!" August says. People are partially defined by what they like—the things they surround themselves with and the items that



Charcoal In Chucks.

hold meaning to them. August wants to help others curate their lifestyle as much as they do their clothing: "I would like to be able to help people live a curated life, as well. A life full of choices that they have made with purpose," they say. August also hopes to incorporate more visual art into clothing sold by Trashpaca by making screen-printed totes, hats and T-shirts, as well as individually hand-painted items.

Seen through August's stylish lenses, the world is full of hidden treasures—shiny pieces of debris that go unnoticed by the average eye trained to see only black and white. As August illustrates fantastic characters and pioneers fashion without labels, they make Salt Lake a more inclusive and interesting place. It's people like August who remind us that the cycle of life is eternal, and that things once discarded can be reborn and loved over again.

Keep up with August and find more of their illustrations on Instagram [@abrahamvonwaffles](https://www.instagram.com/abrahamvonwaffles). Check out Trashpaca's ever-growing vintage collection at etsy.com/shop/trashpaca and follow them on Instagram [@trashpaca](https://www.instagram.com/trashpaca).

Despite growing up in a culture in which men are not allowed in the kitchen, **Abudujannah Soud** has been cooking for as long as he can remember. According to his grandmother’s rules, everyone in their family had to learn how to cook.

Soud, the Chef/Owner of *Kafé Mamai* catering and food truck, was led down this culinary path by a love of innovating in the kitchen. “I give credit to [the] women in my family, especially my grandma, for the inspiration,” Soud says, “thinking outside the box by trying to find ways and new methods of cooking.” In fact, “Mamai,” the business’ namesake, is a tribute to his grandmother’s nickname, meaning “mom water” in Swahili.

Originally from Lamu, an island off the coast of Kenya, Soud first realized he was a good cook when he was part of a boarding school team assigned to figure out how to feed 150 of his peers for the month of Ramadan. When he moved to the United States, Soud worked in construction and furniture making. Eventually, he ended up in professional kitchens, where he rose from washing dishes to running a restaurant.

In the early 2000s, Soud and a friend began a culinary pop-up business called *Love and Joy*. They served food at the busiest flea market in Santa Fe, as well as any outdoor music festivals in the area. He moved to Salt Lake City in 2016 and immediately began to find a way to get back in the kitchen. “That’s when a friend told me about *SPICE Kitchen [Incubator]*, and that has been the success of what [I] am doing now,” says Soud.

Inspired by the model used by *La Cocina* in San Francisco, *SPICE Kitchen Incubator* is “a food business incubator focused on creating opportunities for refugees and disadvantaged individuals.” *SPICE* aims to improve the chances of success for culinary entrepreneurs through affordable access to commercial kitchen space, proper food handling practices and other resources to help their business flourish.



Kafé Mamai’s Seafood Special features wild sock-eye salmon, scallops and shrimp.



Abudujannah Soud’s African-Carribean fusion creations are a nod to the dishes his grandmother created.

KAFÉ MAMAI

By Danielle Susi-Dittmore | dsusi@saic.edu
Photos: Lmsorenson.net

Soud says despite having great credit, his religious beliefs prevent him from taking out loans with interest. He considers this a “blessing.” Soud worked three jobs simultaneously to fund the start of his successful food truck.

Kafé Mamai’s African-Carribean fusion is split into two menus: one for catering and one for the truck. Catering is available for weekday dinners, as well as lunch seven days a week. Those interested in having *Kafé Mamai* cater an event or meeting can choose from a variety delicious options, such as beef or vegetable samosas, grilled pili pili shrimp, or Maharagwe Ya Nazi (kidney beans cooked in Swahili mixed spices and served over basmati rice or chapati).

If you’re lucky enough to run into the food truck, consider indulging in fried plantains dusted in cinnamon, the Moroccan lamb burger, or bhajia (a kind of crispy, black-eyed pea fritter). “It’s a trial and error process to make new items,” Soud says. “I mean, creating a fusion of any cuisine is harder than doing it as it’s [traditionally] done, and that’s my favorite thing to do.”

When I ask if he has encountered any racism in the United States, and particularly in Utah, Soud recognizes food as a bridge: “Food, as it has always been referred to as ‘breaking bread,’ is the best form of tearing down walls.”

While some Utahns may consider *Kafé Mamai’s*

food to be an entirely new culinary experience, Soud notes that he has encountered receptive and curious eaters. “Utahns are responding well to the food,” he says. “It’s about starting the conversation and educating skeptics or rather, addressing the fear of [the] unknown.”

It may seem like Soud is a hard-working, compassionate, creative culinarian, and you’re right. But when it comes to big dreams of what’s ahead for *Kafé Mamai* and the growth of his edible empire, Soud is taking an unwearied, come-what-may approach. “Dreams are for sleepers,” he says. “I don’t dream—I work hard and leave it to God. If it’s meant to be good for me, it [will] happen.”

Soud looks forward to continued success with the *Kafé Mamai* food truck and catering opportunities, hoping to convert even more voracious enthusiasts. “I do appreciate everyone that takes chances and comes and tries what [they] don’t know,” Soud says, “and hopefully we make you a fan.” You can become a fan of *Kafé Mamai’s* jerk chicken or curry goat stew by looking for their scheduled stops, typically posted on their Instagram account (@kafé_mamai).

One of those forthcoming stops includes the inaugural *SLUG Picnic*, an outdoor, socially distanced music showcase on August 22. You can learn more about *Kafé Mamai*, as well as ways to try their unique take on African-Carribean food, at spicekitchenincubator.org.

black LIVES matter

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SLUG Mag stands with you in demanding **equality** and **justice** for all.

An Acronym for Salt Lake UnderGround, *SLUG Magazine’s* mission is to amplify Salt Lake City’s thriving alternative and underrepresented music, arts, lifestyle and events subcultures with thoughtful media coverage and exclusive event curation.

SLUG Mag recognizes the long history of racism and discrimination that continues to live in the independent arts and lifestyle communities we exist within and cover, not just here in Salt Lake but across the country. We’re working internally to review our processes and practices to reevaluate whether we’re truly accomplishing our core mission of diversity and inclusion across all the fields and disciplines we cover.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback for us, please reach out to our Execitive Editor, Angela H. Brown, at: angela@slugmag.com.

SLUG PICNIC

By Audrey Lockie • audrey@spencerdaley.com

ELOWYN

Photo courtesy of Elowyn

SLUG Mag's first SLUG Picnic lineup features the various singer-songwriter stylings of Elowyn, **Cherry Thomas** and **Fur Foxen**. They've all been through some shit and want to throw life some punches by jamming it out. Come out on Aug. 22 to the new *SLUG HQ* at at 230 S. 500 W., at the *Artspace City Center* for \$15 a person for a socially distanced picnic featuring food from *Kafé Mamai*, with seating starting at 5:30 p.m. and music at 6 p.m.

growth. [She] ha[s] real things happening that are inspiring [her] to speak and talk and share ... That's what music's supposed to be like."

For instance, one of her current songs dates back to age 18, a melody and lyrics written shortly after her mother passed: "I had the melody in my head, but I didn't know how to play guitar—I was a singer," she says. "I've always had [the melody] in a notebook, and one day I was like, 'You know what? I could probably find chords. I know chords now. I can probably figure it out.'" And such was the genesis of what would become, a year later, this current project. With the musical input of Milo, Elowyn's music is expanding from bedroom-bound melodies into full-fledged songs.

If songwriting serves as a catharsis and mode of communal sharing for Elowyn, she hopes for the performance and release of this music to spread emotional salves to whomever might need them. As a self-professed "theatre geek" with a studied past of method acting, Elowyn says that, first and foremost, "I'm a performer. I want you to feel what I'm feeling." While she admits that broadcasting these highly personal songs to the public agitates some of her self-conscious tendencies, she ultimately relies on the assuredness of her self-expression. "I try to have [it] in the back of my mind [to] not try to necessarily be more than what I just am."

Milo, too, sees his role in Elowyn's art as the latest iteration in his reckoning of the relationship between himself, his music and the public. "Everyone has limitations to their platform and what they can do to make their world around them a better place," he says. "I feel like music is my best way [of] doing that, doing positive and productive [things] and also just finding my own balance. I

try to speak through that as much as I can and put the love into that."

Both from an aesthetic standpoint and through their group dynamic, Elowyn and Milo's music centralizes ideas of genuineness and raw, in-the-moment expression. The pair have a seven-plus year history of playing together in bands such as **Daisy and the Moonshines** and **Martian Cult**, and this close musical kinship breeds a full symbiosis in Elowyn and Milo's creative process. "He just knows me as a person," says Elowyn. "We've been best friends for many years, so he knows me on a different kind of level, instead of just as a fellow musician. He just knows how to bring it to life with a beat—I don't even have to give him direction."

With an ethos founded on pure expression, continued artistic exploration and emotional growth, Elowyn and Milo situate themselves on a forward-moving plane; like an airport automated walkway, their music progresses without extraneous effort, though still at a measured enough pace to avoid whiplash and retain sight of their core values and needs. Even if a seemingly infinite array of roadblocks have wedged their way into this project's musical trajectory in the year since its inception, their sturdy hearts, cunning minds and passionate relationship with art keep them persistent.

Catch Elowyn at the *SLUG Picnic* at the *Artspace City Center* on Aug.22.

SLUG PICNIC

By Mary Culbertson • mlbculbertson@outlook.com

CHERRY

Photo: A.J. Kerns

THOMAS

With a set of stunning, curly blonde locks, a colorful pastel sweater and a Fender Starcaster in hand, Cherry Thomas has opened a dialogue in Salt Lake around R&B, soul and what that looks like for a modern day woman. Thomas' beautiful aesthetic is a whole story in and of itself, but when she opens her mouth to sing, it's a new ballgame. With a hometown of Ogden, Utah, and both parents involved in music, she says "It was inevitable that I would have such a strong bond and love for music, and I feel grateful and lucky that I was given that kind of exposure to singing."

Thomas had worked up a arsenal of cover songs and eventually her original music on her SoundCloud page through a period where she struggled with the pressure of being an artist. Like many new artists, the anxiety of exposure is sometimes crippling. "I hadn't really shown too much of myself yet because I was nervous and didn't think I was ready to show it," she says.

When I ask if she had any surreal or special experiences while performing, she describes a time in 2017 where she was encouraged by her partner, **Josh**, to play at an open mic night at [Ogden's] *Grounds for Coffee*. "He knew I was ready before I did, and has always been so supportive and encourages me to challenge myself when I dont have

the guts! After I finally agreed—which I was very skeptical [about]—we went to that open mic night. I sang a couple songs that I had never shown publicly before; my hands were literally shaking and I felt like I was going to puke."

Thomas talks about being on stage now like it's walking on air. She describes how she felt this the first time she opened up musically at that open mic night: "After I got up there, all the stress went away. The room was full, and after I heard them applaud and cheer after my first song, I literally was so emotional. It's cheesy, but it was one of those movie moments," Thomas says.

Thomas has now performed shows with artists such as **Michelle Branch**, **Gostface Killah** and **Mavis Staples**. Since that time, she also released a single called "Black Panther" and has been working on an album, to come soon.

When Thomas talks about what performing now feels like, she says, "When I'm singing, that is when I feel the happiest, and it's an addictive feeling. Playing shows is the best therapy EVER. There is nothing better than going home after a gig. I feel recharged and just grateful. It's that feel-good vibe and you feel loved and heard." Thomas' listeners can definitely hear that in her music. There are some musicians that can communicate a whole world of emotion without having to come right out and say it, and Thomas is one of them. She has that type of sound and demeanor that was built for being on a stage and belting it.

Thomas describes her sound as inspired by a lot of classic artists from different genres. "As I got older I started listening to **Ann Peebles**, **Nai Palm**, **Etta James**, **John Mayer** and **Sade**." Thomas' sound exudes a presence that's clearly indebted to soul and R&B, but she has a mixture of jazz and pop in there as well. "I kind of just gravitate to whatever I'm feeling or whatever I'm playing. f I like it, I go with it and make [it] into something special that alters me and speaks to me," she says.

Thomas explained that she wrote her single "Black Panther" about a recurring dream she had as a kid. "At the time, I was nine or 10 years old, which was a time in my life where I was experiencing a lot of change. [I] didn't know that I would experience the passing of my dad later that year in October," Thomas says. "Looking back now as an adult, I hadn't thought of that dream in literally years, that dream seemed like a comforting warning now looking back. Like I needed to 'be brave' and prepare myself for something coming in the future."

The beautiful and heartbreaking story of how "Black Panther" came to be is just the first look at Cherry Thomas' art. She's working now on an album that's been a long haul. Thomas says it's taken some time to find the right team, but also "I am excited for the day when it's finally finished and I can share it with the world. It's going to be magic!" she says.

I for one, can't wait to hear it just based on the sound Thomas has created—it's absolutely stunning. Join us on August 22 at the *Artspace City Center* if you want to know what it's like to feel the same way. Doors are at 5:30 p.m., and the show starts at 6:00 p.m.!

CREATORS OF THE VIRTUAL 12TH ANNUAL CRAFT LAKE CITY DIY FESTIVAL

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Photos by John Barkiple

While the COVID-19 pandemic and related social-distancing measures have overhauled the face-to-face format of the 12th Annual Craft Lake City DIY Festival Presented by Harmons, Craft Lake City is still committed to upholding their vision of endlessly supporting the state's DIY engineers, craft foodies, performers, vintage

vendors and artisans with a brand-new *Virtual DIY Festival* (detailed on pages [20 and 22] of this month's *SLUG*). In the following pages, find vignettes on some of the talented individuals and organizations participating in this inaugural event, and keep an eye on virtualdiyfestival.com for continued updates on the *Virtual Festival*.

VINTAGE VENDORS



MISS MISC.

Among a slew of unique vintage vendors at *Craft Lake City*, *Miss Misc.* (owned and operated by vintage veteran **Missy Baber**) doesn't aim to outline a specific style as much as it does seek to serve its clients in their individuality and uniqueness. "The aesthetic and style I'm trying to cultivate is for my clientele to discover and develop their own aesthetic and style," says Baber of the loose ties that bind *Miss Misc.* together. After moving back home to SLC following a six-year stint in Florida, Baber is ready to outfit Utah's residents in their own personalized vintage wears.

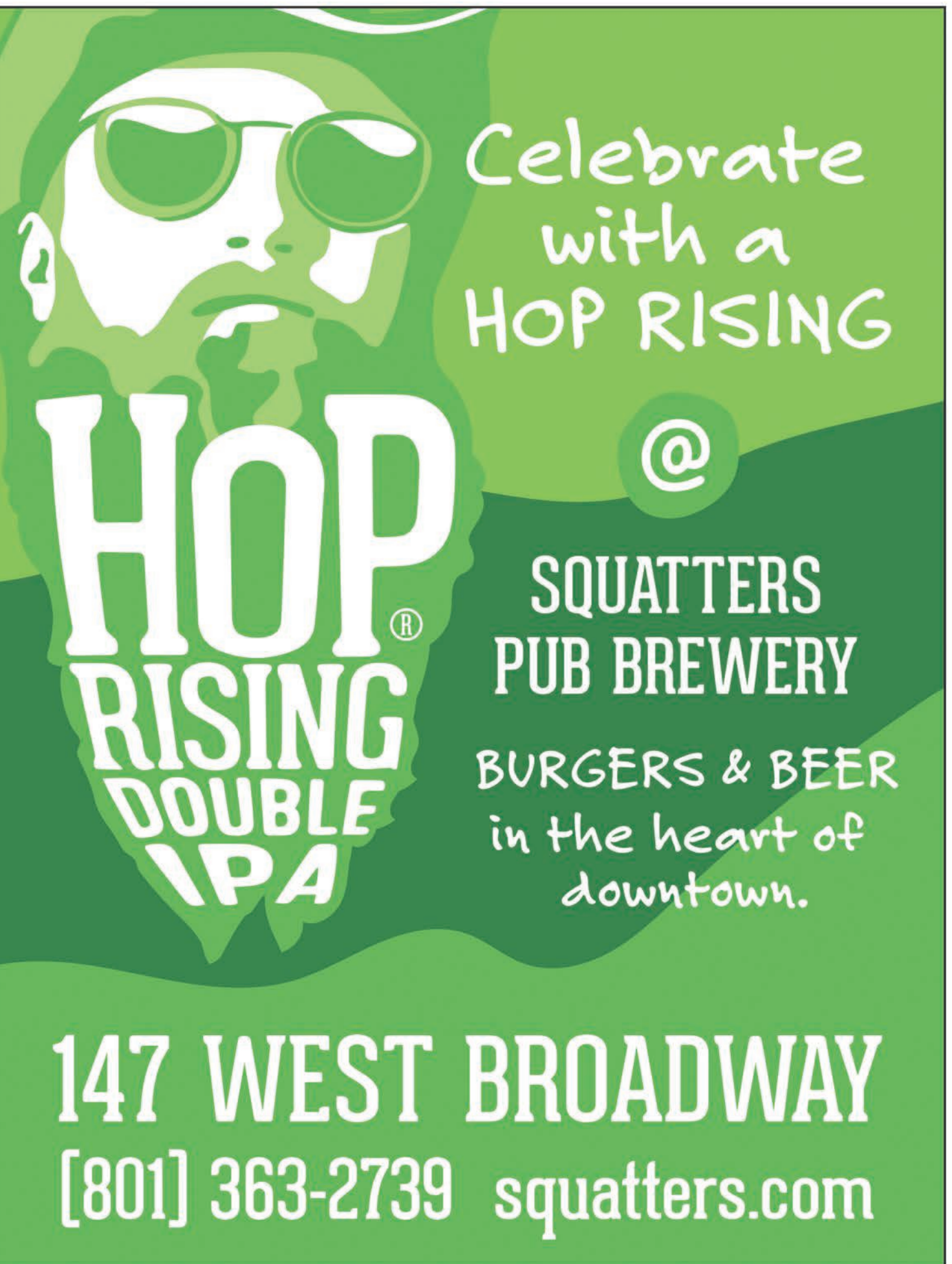
This artistic free-for-all doesn't equate to an absent curatorial touch, however, as Baber takes great pride in the quality of her found clothes. "My process for finding new items is pretty organic," she says. "I do a ton of poking around and over time, I've really learned to trust what I'm drawn to. The quality of the fabric is my first indicator, but the lines of the item are what really make or break it for me." In addition to this high-quality, craft-

ready eye, Baber is also interested in breaking down normative gender binaries, a goal easily afforded in the wild west of the contemporary vintage world.

Baber's defining characteristic, however, is her close commune with her clientele. "I have a great eye for how an item will fit best, and my favorite part is when I already know exactly who it will be perfect for," she says. "Ultimately, I pay close attention to what my customers are responding to."

Baber's connection to her customers doesn't stop in her storefront: "I've gotten more and more involved in my clientele's closets over time, from closet clean-outs to outfit planning and styling to personalized shopping trips to fill in the gaps," she says, also noting that she'll be adding more of these personalized wardrobe services to her business in the future. Keep an eye out on *Miss Misc.*'s Instagram (@misc_boutique).

—Audrey Lockie



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Freelance illustrator Hy Amenero has long relied upon art as a process of introspection and vital expression. Art allowed them to “dive into their own humanity fearlessly and effectively.” Ever since discovering this powerful utility as a teenager and developing a potent expressive drive as a result, it’s clear that Amenero is the sort of artist for whom creative output is essential.

Many of Amenero’s works have a surrealistic and deathly quality—subjects include hollow-eyed, furry humanoids and the floating skeletal heads of birds of prey. Though these creatures have qualities from the fantasy realm, each is rendered with such a caring treatment of light and detail that they are surely manifestations of something very real. “I have a hard time expressing myself in any other way,” Amenero says, “I am such an emotional artist that I don’t tend to plan things out and immediately jump into creating.”

As a Peruvian artist now based in Utah, the merging of cultures is a first-hand experience that lives within Amenero’s work. “It’s important to me

that I tell my story and show what the world looked like through my lens,” they say. Immigrating to a new country has fostered the empathetic realization within the artist that there is “more than one way to live life,” while the richness of Perú’s nature and culture also continues to inspire their work.

While out hiking with their pug **Kubo**, Amenero makes observations and takes photos of the natural world to use later as references. Ecological relationships seem to be a recurring theme in Amenero’s art, serving the work as both metaphorical representation and compositional structure. One graphite drawing depicts a bird and a serpent in an intimate entanglement of predator and prey. “I’ve personally learned from nature and how it balances itself and have tried to apply that to my own mind and way of living,” Amenero says.

Find prints, stickers and information about commissioned works on their Instagram [@HyAmenero](#).
—Austin Beck-Doss

HY AMENERO



Bandmates **Byron Colindres, Trevor Hale, Drew Davenport** and **Dan Fletcher** have been prominent members of Salt Lake City’s hardcore music scene for over 15 years, but were always involved in separate projects (including **Cherem, Tamerlane** and **City to City**). Thanks to “love and timing,” the four of them finally came together last year to form the ‘90s grunge-evoking, cowboy storytelling, unabashedly oppression-fighting supergroup Milk Money. Hard-hitting guitar riffs and passionate vocals combine for an evocative listen on their debut album, *Reckon*, which was independently released last winter. Restless, ruthless and hopeful, it’s exactly the kind of record that a similarly restless America needs right now.

Tuning in to *Reckon* may sound a little like turning back the clock three decades, but Milk Money puts a fresh face on the alt-rock genre through vulnerable lyrics and emotional tones while still staying

true to post-hardcore’s passionate roots. “Coming of age in the ‘90s, our brains are soaked in **Nirvana** and **Björk** and **Rage Against the Machine**,” the four-piece says of their musical influences. With an intuitive songwriting process and open-minded expectations for the band as a whole, Milk Money is certainly the group’s most evolved project to date.

The lyrics throughout *Reckon* are inspired, in part, by Fletcher’s budding interest in reading old paperback cowboy novels and the dangers that plagued the historically Wild West land on which he stands. Through these mythic storytellings of pioneers, plagues and outlaws, Milk Money write metaphorical songs as a backdrop for their modern activism and rage. And their current muse? Systematic oppression. “You could say [the local music scene] has always fit us like a pair of brass knuckles,” the band says. When it comes to fighting for a better future, Salt Lake City, buckle your spurs, turn up the volume and giddy-up. —Mekenna Malan

MILK MONEY

[milkmoneyrock.bandcamp.com](#)



Photo: Kessler Ottley

ARTISANS



When browsing the Etsy shop of Ogden-based Queerations, it is immediately clear that the hand-made merchandise is deserving of the maker’s own description of their work: It’s “quirky,” “kitschy” and oh so colorful. As a “proud Queer non-binary human,” **Psy Robison** decided Queerations would be the perfect brand name after first selling their wearable art at a maker’s market in 2018. Now, Queerations merchandise sells both online through an Etsy shop and at local markets. During this year’s *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival*, Queerations will be launching an expanded line of goods. In addition to the figurine earrings and rainbow-themed necklaces that can be found online, the brand has grown to include t-shirts and tote bags made with heat-transfer vinyl.

A self-described “Kawaii Queerdo,” Robison draws direct inspiration from the aesthetic of Japanese-cuteness culture. One of Queerations’ offerings, a wallet-sized zipper pouch, features the image of smiling, cherubic sushi pieces and the caption “let’s roll.”

Another punny item depicts a tender pair of blushing veggies and the phrase “love at first bite.” Other Queerations offerings include SpongeBob earrings, a teeny tiny pin shaped like McDonald’s french fries and beaded chokers complete with **Lizzo** lyrics.

“Ogden is such a diverse city, and because of that, I feel that I really try to create things for every type of person,” says Robison. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, Robison explains that their queer identity “always comes out in my work, whether it be intentional or not.” The Pride rainbow is ever present throughout the Queerations catalog.

Quirkiness is the brightly-colored basis of Queerations, and the brand holds nothing back in their pursuit of the kitsch. As long as there is a supply of Perler beads and plastic figurines, the creative juices of Queerations will continue to flow like a river. visit their Instagram [@queerations](#).
—Austin Beck-Doss

QUEERATIONS

PERFORMERS



Sonali Loomba is a storyteller. Her vivid facial expressions relay myths, her precise movements utter epics and her rhythmic ankle bells speak of time-worn legends. Loomba is a Kathak dancer, one of the eight Indian classical dance forms; a combination of movement, music and drama that originated in the 5th century BCE and has taken her years to master. An acclaimed performer in both Utah and Washington, D.C., Loomba guides viewers to a different time and place through this “difficult but joyous” practice. “I believe Indian classical dance is like an ocean, which is limitless,” she says. “The deeper you dive in, the more beauty you see.”

Introduced to Kathak dance by her mother, Loomba fell in love with the art form during her college years and began to study it diligently under the guidance of her gurus in Bangalore, India. Loomba eventually moved to Utah in 2017, and her first Kathak performance at the *Krishna Temple* in Salt Lake City was met with an enthusiastic response. She opened the *Kaladharaa Dance School* after

learning that Kathak dance was virtually non-existent in the area. “The community can benefit from the various aspects this dance has to offer the mind, body and soul,” she says. “An art form like this needs to be preserved.”

Loomba is both dancer and instrument, storyteller and character. To watch her riveting performance is an invitation to explore her vibrant culture, to remember our own roots, and to be inspired. “I feel I have achieved a milestone even if a single audience member is keen to know more about my culture,” she says. “That’s when I feel that I have gone beyond just going on stage and dancing to music. I always wish to connect with the audience on a deeper level and leave them with a feeling of wanting to see more.”

Follow along with Sonali Loomba’s artistic journey and learn about her upcoming performances on Instagram [@sonali.kathak](#). More information about the *Kaladharaa Dance School* can be found on the school’s Facebook page. —Mekenna Malan

SONALI LOOMBA

Founded by **Philip Sadler** and with the creative inspiration of his 8-year-old daughter, **Remy**, Home Glow Hydroponics is a local business that offers consultation, products and produce to help make soil-free gardening more accessible. Home Glow Hydroponics is displaying at the *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival*, showcasing how to start your own hydroponic project.

Home Glow started as a way for father and daughter to explore the world of science together in their own home. "I grew up in my father's lab, watching him bring life to experimentation. Home Glow Hydroponics started as a way for me to introduce my daughter to applied sciences," says Sadler.

Before long, Home Glow grew into a larger operation with the help of partners and volunteers, including the **South Salt Lake Permaculture Guild**. Home Glow began selling produce to local restaurants and helping other people and businesses grow a wide range of crops in their own hydroponic gardens. "With

hydroponics, you can design a watering system within your home, on your walls and windows, custom to your space, that can grow an assortment of plants through all seasons," says Sadler. By providing starter kits, installations and DIY tutorials, Home Glow makes home hydroponic projects accessible to anyone.

For the *DIY Festival*, Sadler plans on putting together virtual DIY sessions to help Utahns with home projects. The sessions will focus on the basics and benefits of hydroponics, hydroponic home systems and crops, and how to grow microgreens and tomatoes. "We'd like to take the chance to explain what exactly goes into hydroponics and the benefits it has on the food supply chain," Sadler says. "Hydroponic fruits and vegetables can be grown using considerably less water and space. In many cases, hydroponic produce is more nutrient dense and sustainable," says Sadler.

Visit their website or follow them on Instagram [@homeglowhydroponics](#) to learn more. —Tim Schoof

HOME GLOW HYDROPONICS



DIY ENGINEERS



U OF U THERAPEUTIC GAMES AND APPS LAB

Led by Director **Roger Altizer, PhD**, Associate Director **Greg Bayles** and Project Manager **Jesse Ferraro**, the Therapeutic Games and Apps Lab (or the GApp Lab) at the *University of Utah* is exploring how health sciences and game programming can be brought together to heal, nurture and teach. In Dr. Altizer's own words, the GApp Lab "brings clinical experts, game developers, and patients together to creatively and playfully make games, apps and VR/AR experiences to help users heal and learn," he says.

With the help of over 30 grad students and many collaborators from around the world, the GApp Lab unites great minds from the *University of Utah's Center for Medical Innovation* and the Entertainment Arts and Engineering program. "The GApp Lab started when I was approached by the *Center for Medical Innovation* and the Senior Vice President of Medicine to begin an experiment to see what would happen if we brought together the science of medicine with the creativity and design chops of game developers," says Altizer. The Lab has worked on a diverse

range of projects. Bayles says, "We've shown how a game can make a difference in a depressed, elderly person's life where medications cannot, or how perceiving information in virtual reality causes us to process and remember it differently, and we hope to use gaming technology to continue to push the boundaries of medical knowledge and practice."

The team at GApp Lab is looking forward to showcasing some of their projects at *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival*. Bayles, Altizer, Ferraro and some of the students on the team plan on giving the community a taste of what they have been doing while getting feedback and seeing what other teams have developed. "We'll most likely stream a combination of pre-recorded videos as well as conduct live, narrated playthroughs of a selection of games and apps," says Ferraro. For more information, visit the GApp Lab's website above. —Tim Schoof

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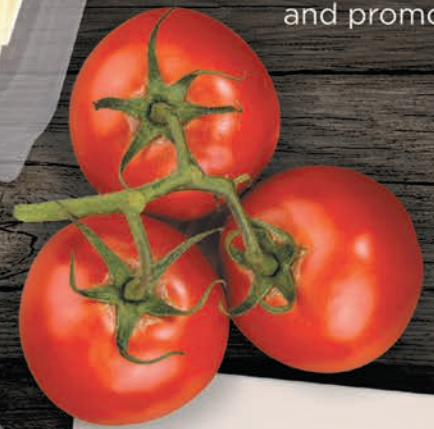
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A multi-year participant, Hudson Smith is returning to the *Craft Lake City DIY Festival*, and is becoming a familiar creative face on Kid Row. Smith, a 12-year-old maker of wearable art made from beads, plastic animals and found objects, is constantly on the hunt for cool new materials to work with.

A signature feature of Smith's necklaces and keychains is the plastic animal centerpiece. "I love animals!" says Smith, "I own two cats, but I am really trying to get my parents to buy me a dog." In addition to dogs, Smith is a huge fan of many other species, including fish and his grandparents' horses. However, his favorite animal is "for sure a dog!"

Because Smith's creations are wearable, each piece allows the wearer to express their own favorite animal choices to the world. Smith loves learning about the animal preferences of every new customer. "It makes me feel good because I know people are wearing them because they like them!" Smith says.

Though Smith mostly works on jewelry during the weekends, occasionally the artisan also finds time during the week. "Sometimes I work on my jewelry when I don't want to do homework!" Smith says.

Outside of jewelry making, Smith's other interests include "drawing and engineering stuff!" The entrepreneurial spirit Smith has showcased year after year on Kid Row extends into other endeavors: Smith has participated in school art competitions, as well as the engineering club.

Through all of this, it is clear that Smith's great joy as an artist is sharing his works with customers who find ways to express parts of themselves through Smith's creativity. If a single proclamation could ever encompass Smith's artistic drive, it is surely this: "I love that people like my necklaces!"

Smith's necklaces and keychains are available at this year's *DIY Festival* for \$6 or two for \$10. —Austin Beck-Doss

ANIMAL CLUB JEWELRY



Hudson Smith

In High Spirits is a Salt Lake City-based company where Owner **Claire Sessler** prides herself on making unique spirit infusion kits. These kits allow customers to infuse their alcohol of choice with natural flavors, creating a singular tasting experience. Over the course of a few days, the dried ingredients release their flavors and transform spirits into something new, complex and flavorful.

The inspiration for these infusing kits? Helping customers experience something delicious and easy. "After spending a lot of time learning how to combine flavors in the kitchen, I started to experiment with cocktails and infused spirits," Sessler says. These early kitchen experiments helped her create the flavors available through In High Spirits today.

The unique flavors that Sessler and her customers bring together in the finished cocktail make In High Spirits products something special. "Each kit has many stories that went into it, and hopefully many stories that will come

out of it," Sessler says. It's this union of her stories and ideas with those of her customers that creates not just delicious drinks, but special experiences and lasting bonds in communities.

Though In High Spirits is still a young company, Sessler has big plans to make it an even greater part of the community. Her motivation and love of learning inspires her to create new things and enable her customers to harness the DIY spirit that she brings to the table. "I personally find the DIY spirit infectious, which is one reason *Craft Lake City's DIY Fest* is so great to be a part of," she says. Sessler's love of creating and helping others create is an integral part of her mission of community building.

For today, In High Spirits infusion kits can be purchased online to make your next cocktail something really special. In the future, Sessler hopes they will become a greater part of the local food scene and available in specialty shops throughout the valley. —Corinne Bauer

IN HIGH SPIRITS



KID ROW



Mary Ann Jensen

After outgrowing her first book, *The Lost Mermaid*, Mary Ann Jensen spent the proceeds from sales of her second book on a new bicycle. Now, bike rides around her neighborhood help jumpstart Jensen's imagination to deliver fresh ideas for new stories. This is the mark of a dedicated imagist: When an idea leads to success, creatives like Jensen invest that success back into the pursuit of more creativity.

During this year's *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival*, Jensen is offering three books for sale. The first, entitled *The Lost Mermaid*, is a 63-page paperback written and illustrated by Jensen. The first copies of the book were printed at Jensen's home so that she could give them away to friends as gifts. After a great response from her friends, and a suggestion from her grandmother that the book should be published, *The Lost Mermaid* became Jensen's first published work, just in time for her 12th birthday.

Jensen's current project is the *Sundance Springs Series*, a multi-

book saga about a group of six girls who find themselves cast into fun and unexpected adventures. "I love when friends in books work together and make each other stronger," says Jensen, "I almost feel like my characters have my back." Each book in the series will focus on the perspective of a one of the members of the core group. The first two books in the series, *Would You Rather?* and *M.A.S.H.*, will be available for purchase during the festival.

As a writer and reader, Jensen pursues stories that "all come together in ways that you didn't expect." She enjoys crafting the setting and dialogue with equal enthusiasm, and prefers to draw illustrations after the story is written.

Jensen wants her books to find their way into the hands of as many kids as possible, with the hope that others become inspired to share their own stories and artwork. With this objective, Jensen keeps working, well-equipped with a keyboard and a bike. —Austin Beck-Doss

THE LOST MERMAID

CRAFT FOOD



Jessica Rovin and Kristi Bendick are on a mission to bring delicious nitro cold brew to everyone in the Salt Lake Valley and Park City areas. Their mobile coffee shop, *The Cart*, is their way of making that happen. With the freedom to meet customers anywhere in the beautiful outdoors of northern Utah, the women behind *The Cart* bring craft coffee straight to their community.

At *The Cart*, every cup of coffee is carefully created to be as smooth and flavorful as possible. "What we put into it is what we get out of it—there is no middle man," they say. "The coffee process allows us to be very hands on and make it how we want it from start to finish," including sourcing their beans from local coffee roasters.

Building off of years of experience in the coffee industry, *The Cart's* mobile shop exemplifies the DIY spirit. "Living in Park City, there were very few options for cold brew, let alone nitro-infused cold brew," they say. "We wanted to give the local community

an opportunity to grab a quick cup in an outdoor setting." As they expand into the Salt Lake Area, Rovin and Bendick say they "want to develop strong and positive relationships with those around us."

As *The Cart* focuses on bringing coffee to community members on the go, you may see them at a trailhead or local park, bringing you the caffeine fix you need to finish your hike or make it through the last few hours of work. There's something exciting about a chance meeting with a local coffee maker, and these coffee connoisseurs want to make that experience a reality for local coffee drinkers.

Eventually, Rovin and Bendick hope to bring their coffee to a brick-and-mortar location, but for now, they're excited to meet you where you are and make your day a little brighter with a surprise coffee run. Catch up with them for a quick cup around Salt Lake, or book them for a private event that will wow your friends! —Corinne Bauer

THE CART



The *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival* allows patrons to create a unique avatar and interact with other attendees and vendors in a digital gallery.

CRAFT LAKE CITY'S Virtual DIY Festival:

A How-To Q&A with Festival Developers

By **SLUG Staff** • info@slugmag.com

As is the case with many of Utah's beloved summer festivals, the events regarding COVID-19 have changed the way Craft Lake City thought about their *12th Annual Craft Lake City DIY Festival Presented by Harmons*. With an average of over 20,000 annual attendees, a safe and responsible in-person event was firmly out of the question.

But Craft Lake City committed to upholding their mission of consistently uplifting local DIY voices, and boldly pivoted to a brand-new, exciting format. The first ever *Virtual DIY Festival* will take place Aug. 7-9, and will feature a number of innovative adjustments to the

Photos courtesy of Craft Lake City

DIY Festival we've all come to know and love.

Chief among these developments is the interactive, virtual gallery format. Through the help of a talented team of guest developers, *Craft Lake City* has constructed a program where festival attendees can "walk" around, interact with artisans and other local makers and support their craft community. Across the following pages, check out *SLUG's* Q&A with the *Virtual Festival* developers that details some of the functionalities of the new format.

SLUG: How will patrons access the virtual festival?

Craft Lake City: Craft Lake City has set up an exclusive website for the virtual version of the event, virtualdiyfestival.com, that will become available during the festival weekend. Of course, we will also provide redirects on craftlakecity.com to guide attendees there, as well as pre-promotion campaigns, social links, etc. From there, patrons will be given two options—to enter the Festival by visiting alphabetical artisan profiles with links to their stores, or by clicking on a link to their virtual gallery. The second option offers a 3D virtual experience where attendees will select an avatar, enter a 3D lobby of the festival area and locate their exhibitors' gallery alphabetically. Once they have located the gallery, they may also enter and chat verbally with the exhibitor inside. They may shop by clicking on the exhibitors' store links.

Once inside the festival, there are a number of ways that attendees can interact with artisans and other vendors. To navigate the festival, you may use your computer, phone or an Oculus VR 20 **SLUGMag.com**

headset. Mouse, arrow keys and WSAD keys provide navigation options.

We will also have an option for attendees to visit the site in advance and sign up to receive emails specifically with updates and developments regarding the *Virtual DIY Festival*. We have a lot of cool promos coming down the pipeline, like a *Harmons* VIP Ticket that gets you exclusive access to the Festival an hour earlier than anyone else, a VIP Food box mailed to your house or available for pickup, and plenty more. People who sign up for the email updates will also get notifications about exclusive *Virtual DIY Festival* stuff first.

Here are the access hours for the Virtual DIY Festival:

Friday, Aug. 7: Harmon's VIP Ticket:

Early Access: 5-6 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 7: 6-10 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 8: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

// Kid Row: 1-3 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 9: 3-7 p.m.

SLUG: Can more than one person be in an artisan's "shop" at one time?

Craft Lake City: Yes, we have set up the preferences to include up to 25 attendees in a gallery at one time. If you are the 26th person, you will be added to a waiting list for when that gallery is available.

SLUG: I'm not very good with computers, and I'm worried that I won't have an easy time accessing and navigating the virtual festival. What type of live assistance will CLC be providing during the festival weekend?

Craft Lake City: Great question. For those that are uncomfortable using the 3D virtual environment, we will have a typical, profile-like artisan page with social media links, website links, etc. However, we would suggest you make a virtual date with a tech-savvy friend and ask them to screen share with you so you can experience the virtual environment. Once you

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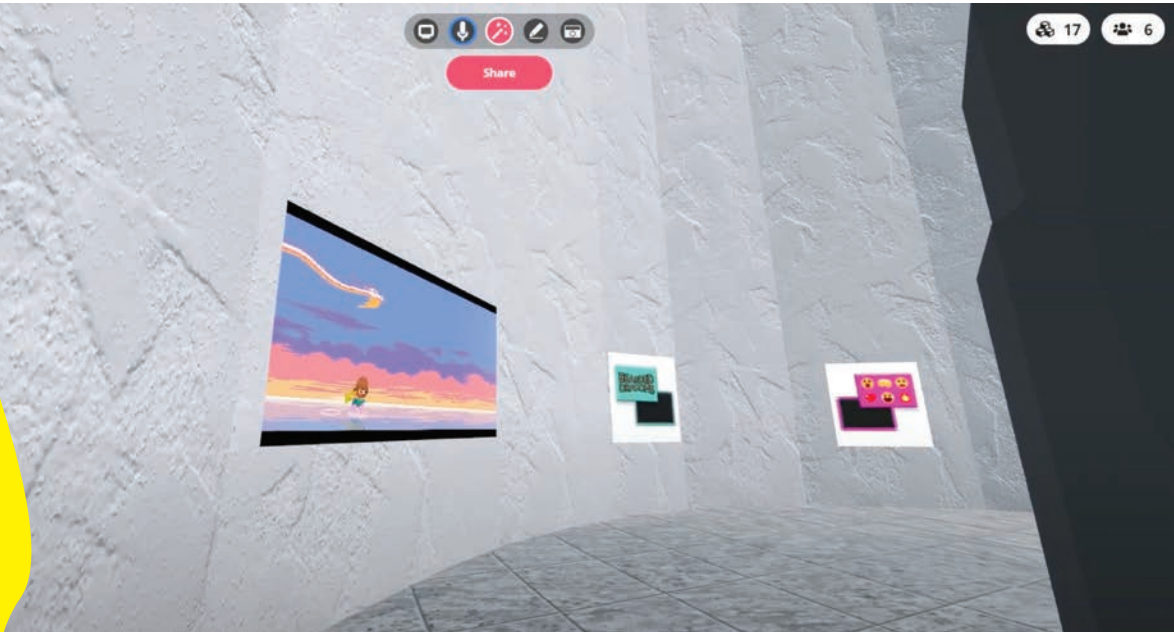
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Like previous, in-person incarnations of the *DIY Festival*, the *Virtual Festival* offers a number of unique “rooms” to explore, including the *Google Fiber STEM Building*.



see it and spend some time playing around with it, you will be hooked!

SLUG: One of my favorite parts of the *DIY Festival* is the festival food trucks. What form does festival food take in the digital format?

Craft Lake City: Craft Lake City is lucky to have had food trucks, craft-food creators and small commercial food vendors support us for years. Many of them are participating in the virtual festival by offering food truck specials the weekend of the event, secret menu items and extras such as videos explaining their story. Patrons will be notified of where to locate the Craft Lake City food trucks in real life during festival weekend.

SLUG: How can I “invite” my friends and family to the virtual festival?

Craft Lake City: Have them sign up to receive the email notifications for virtualdiyfestival.com. You can also invite them via Craft Lake City’s Facebook event page, as well as text them and send them a personal invite, or even send them a link to this very article!

SLUG: I’ve heard that the virtual festival will be accessible with VR technology. Can you please expand on this?

Craft Lake City: Correct. We are using an open-source platform called *Mozilla Hubs*. It is compatible with the Oculus headset. But can be used with a phone, laptop or tablet.

SLUG: I can’t attend the festival the weekend of Aug. 7–9. Will there be any way to access the virtual gallery after?

Craft Lake City: Yes, Craft Lake City will be working with exhibitors, partners and others to offer access during specific and predetermined times in the fall. We are currently in conversations with Utah title-one schools to offer our virtual environment as part of our local educators’ STEM and computer science learning objectives.

Head to SLUGMag.com for links to more resources on the *Craft Lake City Virtual DIY Festival*, and keep an eye on CraftLakeCity.com for updates and information as well.



Craft Lake Cityartisans have the opportunity to create their own virtual gallery spaces in which they can interact with potential customers.

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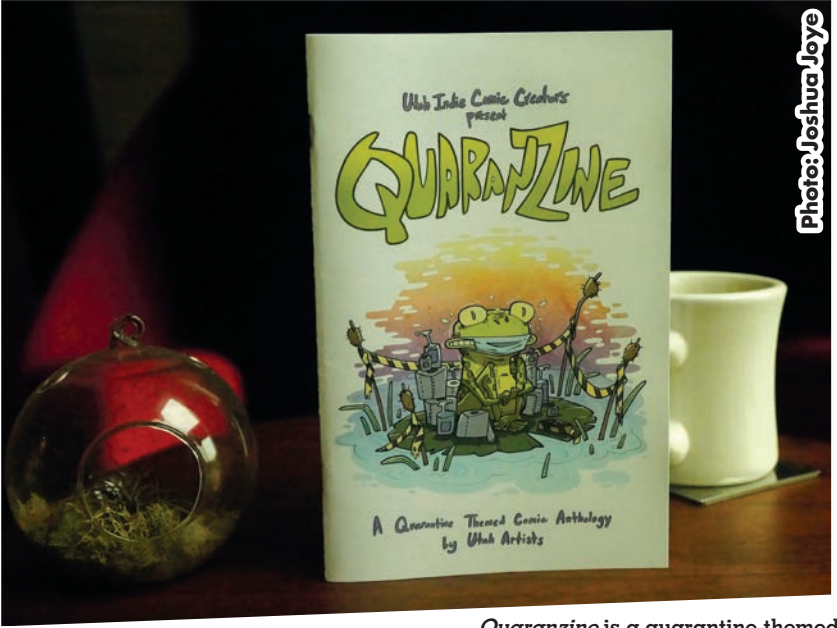
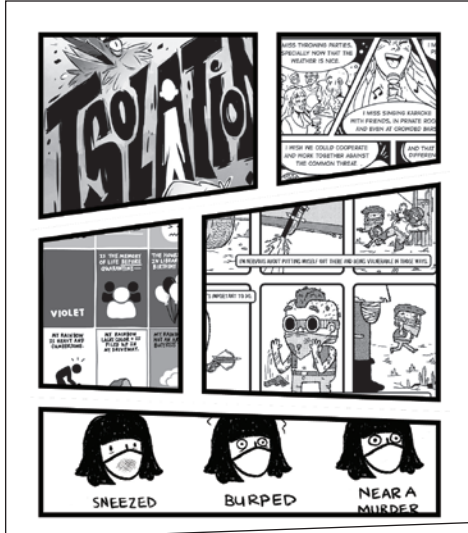


Photo: Joshua Joye

By Jamie Christensen
jamiec1331@gmail.com



Quaranzine is a quarantine-themed zine curated by D. Bradford Gambles and SLUG illustrator Spencer Holt, featuring local illustrators’ comics about living in the age of COVID-19.

Attempting to maintain schedules and routines during self-isolation has proven strenuous, while any reasonable balance between work, life and relationships has gone awry. When staying at home is mandatory, and there’s a perpetual risk when interacting with others, it’s also difficult to sustain a sense of community. Quaranzine is a series of quarantine-themed mini-comics that offer a creative solution to this dilemma. Two local Salt Lake City artists and illustrators, Quaranzine founders **D. Bradford Gambles** and **Spencer Holt**, have found a way to fulfill their creative needs and preserve community fellowship.

Gambles and Holt have been in the business of illustration for several years. When he was younger, Gambles would create comic strips, “mostly ripping off *Calvin and Hobbes*,” he says. His first larger-project opportunity was making a comic strip for SLUG, and he has since worked on a number of his own personal projects—graphic novels, mini-comics and a webcomic among them.

Similarly, Holt has also been creating comics for “as long as I can remember,” he says. “I really started taking it seriously after a feature film I was set to direct fell through. I wanted to keep telling stories visually and quickly realized comics were a perfect medium to do so.” Holt has a history of writing comics for SLUG, City Weekly and for personal enjoyment. The two artists also collaborate on their project *Token City Wondercade*. “[It’s] about four kids in a spooky, run-down arcade,” says Gambles.

A few years ago, Gambles and Holt created the “Utah Indie Comic Creators” Facebook group, which Gambles says was published “with the intention of creating a strong local community for comic creators. One of our favorite things to do is challenge ourselves to come up with new comics for some of the local small-press and indie comics/zine festivals in the area.” Amid quarantine, Gambles and Holt found

themselves in a situation where many of their creative events were being canceled. Suddenly, the two were positioned to find a new, unique way to continue creating. In a collaborative effort between local artists and illustrators to engage with one another and fulfill the creative void, Quaranzine was conceived.

“Quaranzine was started to help foster community with other local comic creators and make a collaborative piece of art that comments on these strange times,” says Holt. The quarantine-themed anthology will feature several artists from the comic creators’ Facebook group. The zine offers creative opportunity in a time when it has become more difficult to engage with community members and local businesses where illustrative work would have previously profited. “We know everyone’s experience [with quarantine] is different,” says Holt, “[Contributors] mentioned doing it for a wide range of reasons: a sense of accomplishment, a sense of community, to share a message of hope, to make people smile and to process their feelings through art.”

Those participating in the project are creating their own mini-comic to be placed in the zine, ranging from one to four pages long. The approach and style of the comics vary. Though being in “quarantine” and what that means to each individual contributor is the overarching theme, some chose to go along a more humorous route, while other comics illustrate the emotional strain of self-isolation. A wide range of comics, from fictional to personal and from metaphorical to narrative, will be on display.

Gambles says, “The challenge to everyone was to interpret the concept of ‘quarantine’ in whatever way they wanted, whatever that meant to them. So you’ll get to see very different ideas, styles, feelings and stories from each creator.” **Eleora Draws’** comic illustrates what she misses about normal life and concludes with the hope that, “we can come out of this a little less isolated from one another [as a so-

ciety].” Other comics, such as the “choosable” comic by **Cam Kendell**, offer relatable content about abandoning the familiarity of your home to purchase desperately needed toiletries.

The anthology will include work from contributors **Jess Smart Smiley, Ricky Vigil**, Eleora Draws, **Mitch Parker, Kade Whittle**, Cam Kendell, **Steve Anderson, Angela Sandberg, Noah Allen, Rachel Allen Everett, Chris Kirkham, Andrew A. Adams, Robert James**, Holt and Gambles. “We hope that this gets the word out to other comic creators looking to connect,” Holt says. “Our Facebook group is open to anyone who is serious about making comics in Utah.” While the two are hoping this project provides communal relief to all those experiencing the strain of self-isolation, they are also aiming to expand their group to others who are interested. “Give us that raw, sequential art, baby!” says Gambles.

In addition to satisfying the artists’ thirst for creative fulfillment, Quaranzine allows community members to interact with one another and share relatable stories at a time when sustaining communication and outreach is often unattainable. Sharing creatively about the experience of quarantine can be largely cathartic. “Our hope is that we create something that brings our community of comic artists closer together,” says Holt.

To obtain a copy of Quaranzine, visit gumroad.com/utahquaranzine, where you can buy a digital and/or physical copy. Suggested prices are available, though Gambles and Holt note that buyers can pay whatever they want beyond the suggestion. All profits will go to the **Utah Tribal COVID-19 Relief Fund** (indianlaw.utahbar.org/covid-19-tribal-relief-fund.html), which focuses its efforts on Native American communities that have been especially impacted by the pandemic.

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Horacio Rodriguez,
Lawn Gnomes, 2020.



Jared Lindsay Clark,
Lawn Gnomes, 2020.



Jared Steffensen,
Lawn Gnomes, 2020.

GNOME TWO WAYS ABOUT IT: LAWN GNOMES 2020

By Parker Mortensen • @coldbloom | parkermortensen@gmail.com

Lawn Gnomes 2020

When March came along and the world changed, so did the traditional opportunities for public art. Enclosed gallery spaces suddenly became a potential public health hazard, and the notion of gathering for a new exhibition became especially fraught. Since then, the *Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (UMOCA)* has been looking for ways to connect people to tangible things, says Executive Director **Laura Hurtado**. Enter *Lawn Gnomes 2020*, a growing exhibition of art installations that lives on the front lawns of artists.

The title of the exhibition is a bit of a misnomer, if you will—none of the 11 currently participating artists have actually installed garden gnomes. Instead, think of these as public sculptures. The name comes from a 2011 *UMOCA* exhibition, *Lawn Gnomes: Eat Your Hearts Own*. In that exhibition, Visiting Curator **Micol Hebron** organized the event under the idea that the public ought to have a chance to participate in communal art. “The front lawn is a private plot of land that is publicly visible and functions in urban and suburban society as an important signifier of taste, individualism and community,” said Hebron in 2011. “Lawns are a teeny slice of utopia: They can proclaim your political position, your ecological philosophy, your domestic ideal!” *Lawn Gnomes* works as a spiritual successor to that pitch, which may be stronger now than it was then: Let’s open our sense of property up to the idea that others may enjoy what we privately own.

For instance, **Jared Lindsay Clark**’s contribution uses old boxy home appliances and items—mini-fridges, microwaves and trunks—as building blocks for a colorful sculpture. There’s a sense of usefulness gleaned from the decrepit objects that make a home, of making use of the resources we might otherwise toss out. From one angle, it’s trash on a lawn; from another, it’s a mural. Clark’s sculpture reminds us of the way art makes use of materials we take for granted, even during times of abundance. During COVID-19, that revitalization is only more pronounced.

Lawn culture is particularly pronounced in Utah cities built for transportation by car more than walking. Our suburbs are sprawling and separated by wide streets, and in this moment, it serves us: Manicured gardens of grass and xeriscaping are gallery spaces of their own, but the goal of *Lawn Gnomes 2020* is to break down the intentional sense of boundaries and isolation that private property tends to reinforce. “Isolation was such a strong feeling in the beginning of quarantine for those who had the privilege of sheltering in place,” says Hurtado. “In the beginning, we asked ourselves as a staff what we could do to continue to serve our audiences and the community at large. We felt like people were looking for—beyond safety and health—a sense of normalcy, comfort, connection, community and something to do.”

The rapid onset of telecommunications reliance in 2020 has somewhat fatigued us against it. *UMOCA* Curator **Jared Steffensen** was tired of Zoom meetings and interfacing with screens. He felt that such an approach would only reinforce isolation. It was his idea to revive *Lawn Gnomes* for a new decade. “The main idea is to think outside of the gallery walls,” says Hurtado, “[to] expand the role of the artist, and to call upon everyone in the community to innovate and reimagine lawns as both private and public spaces. While we stay home, stay safe and social distance, we can still continue to create and to think about new ways to engage [with] our city and our neighbors.”

While the exhibition currently has 11 participating artists, it’s ongoing, and the museum invites anyone who desires to participate. Patrons can contact the curation team at lawngnomes@utahmoca.org for a yard sign designating them as a gallery space and opt to share their address on the growing list of sites that museum-goers can access to see installations in person. “To date, the project has spread from Toole to Ephraim,” says Hurtado. “It’s meaningful to see so many artists take on the project and make work.”

The body of work is already diverse. **Ruel Brown**’s work is a swirl of white lines on a black background, bending and curving like a zebra floral with the letters of the word “acceptance” stacked on each other. **Cara Krebs** used her canvas to affix a spill of iridescent streamers to what looks like broken porcelain. **Jared Steffensen**’s features a circular rack of mixed-media images, inviting the viewer to walk around the installation.

One of the more striking installations is **Colin Bradford**’s, which sits on his porch at night: A white neon sign oscillates between reading “FEAR” and “FEEDS,” looping into “FEAR FEEDS FEAR FEEDS,” ad infinitum. This was made long before the pandemic. “I saw a feedback loop of fear feeding more fear in our culture around lots of issues,” says Bradford. “Fear during the COVID-19 pandemic has motivated everything from toilet paper hoarding to brutal hate crimes against Asian Americans.” It’s one of the more heavy-handed installations for sure, but not so overt as to lose its edge. “Let’s find it in us to respond with love and empathy rather than fear as we reduce everybody’s risk by working together (apart) to prevent the virus’ spread.”

Visit utahmoca.org/lawn-gnomes-2020 or email lawngnomes@utahmoca.org for more information on the exhibit, to obtain an official map of currently participating artists or to join the project yourself.

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RILEY WINCH:

Hometown Culture

Written by Steve Goemaat | stgoemaat@gmail.com

Photos by Weston Colton | [@westoncolton](https://www.instagram.com/westoncolton)



Kickflip



Nose grind



Heber's Riley Winch celebrates the local community of skaters and advocates for more skating events that bring people together.



Nose grind yank-out

Front blunt



a wallie off the side of a box or a big pop into transition, his ATV style carries him naturally on his board. Guys like him signify the current state of what I think is a positive point in the skate scene—being an absolute killer while smiling through the session.

Winch's skate crew varies from day to day, with *Wasatch County Skate Park* being the daily spot and then to the streets on the weekend. "I'm always down in Salt Lake on the weekends skating with **NCP** [Natural Cause Productions] guys," Winch says. "We try to all get together and film at least one day a week. It's hard to coordinate, but everyone has been getting clips."

Check out Riley Winch on Instagram [@rileywwinch](https://www.instagram.com/rileywwinch) and YouTube for his Natural Cause Productions part from their last film, *Probablecause!*

From the hills and countryside of Heber, Riley Winch has been living and skating in the small town that grows by the day. From the humble beginnings of wooden ramps and crumbling parking lots to what is now a fully concrete skatepark in the heart of the city's recreation area, Winch has seen his town progress along with his skating. Small-town spots, tech innovation and a solid crew of close friends and family back him up in his pursuit of creative passion projects and further innovation on his skateboard.

Winch has that real-deal, fun-loving attitude toward skating, and you can see it in his style and demeanor. He has the technical skills to flip in and out of ledges and the pop to get on top of and over rails and gaps. Winch also has a seamless way of linking his lines together. With

Photo Credit: Nina Tekwani



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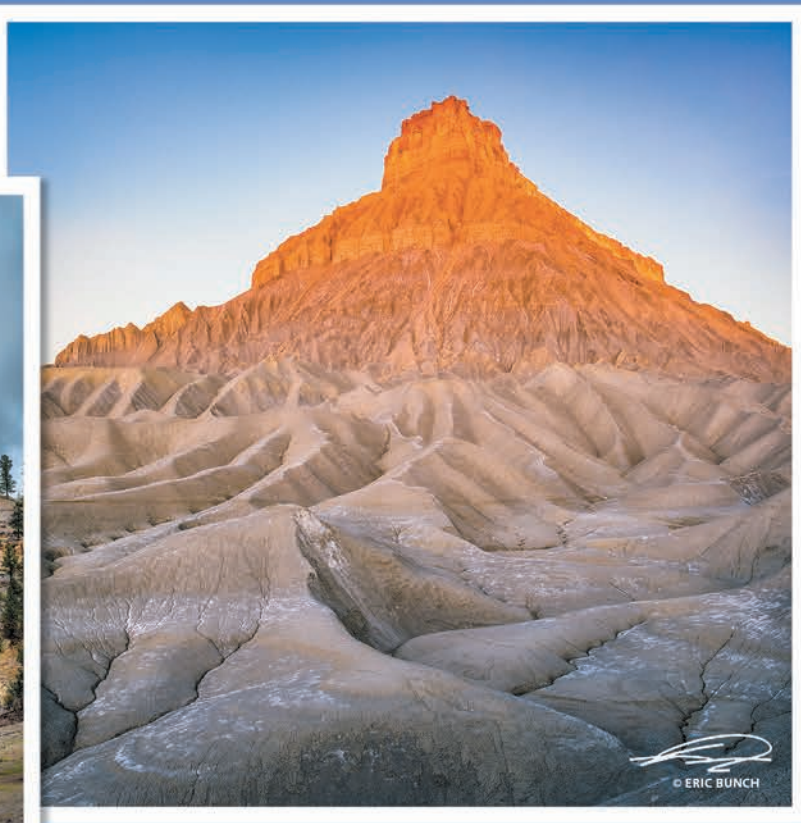
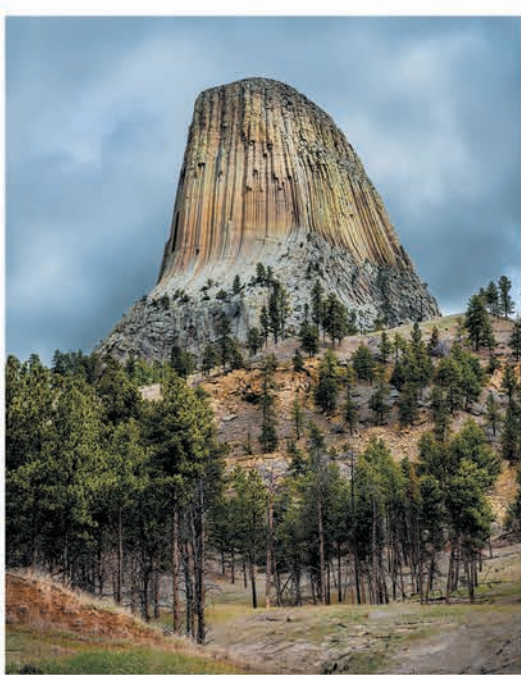
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This is what keeps my shutter clicking...

Like all photographers, I look for light, and it's fascinating to see the endless ways all the varied subjects we photograph can reflect that light. From a jagged stone cliff, or the sparkle in our friend's eye, to the translucent leaves of an aspen tree, light plays off the world around us and presents an opportunity wherever we gaze. I enjoy imaging landscapes because they constantly change. A craggy mountain peak will look one way during the blue hour, and completely different moments after sunrise. This keeps things interesting for me, and keeps my shutter clicking.

I primarily shoot with Nikon. One of my favorite vintage cameras has got to be the Nikon F, the very first SLR from the brand. Nikon is such a phenomenal brand not only because of the quality and longevity of their gear but also because of their willingness to continually innovate—giving photographers the tools we need to continue to be creative. My go-to camera store in Salt Lake City is pictureline because they only sell the best gear, and their staff is incredibly friendly and service oriented. They couldn't be located in a better state than Utah. This is one of the greatest places on earth to look for light.



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