



Magazine  
Issue 725  
Spring/Summer 2020  
**BRICOLAGE**



## **“BRICOLAGE”**

*In this edition of Pi Magazine, we work along the theme of “Bricolage.” We challenged our writers to consider construction, deconstruction, stability, instability and the piecing together of things from the resources we have around us. We wanted to capture chaos and precision, as well as consider the aspect of time in the materialization of all we have around us. At its core, “Bricolage” means “Brick-by-Brick”.*

*On the day we write this introduction, UCL have announced its closure in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of “Bricolage” is brutally relevant as we are reminded how fragile our reality really is. In a moment, everything that has been built, everything that appears to be stable and everything we seem to know can collapse, sending us into utter chaos. Within three months, 2020 has brought shocks and challenges that have tested the global community. The future is uncertain, and the way in which our world will reconstruct itself remains to be seen, but there is no doubt the world that will emerge will be very different to the one we left behind.*

*Nevertheless, we must not forget the potential our society holds to repair that which has been destroyed. The corona crisis has revealed a lot about our communities, and not all of those revelations have been good. But it has certainly shown us that we have the ability to create, and even in desperate times, to piece together solutions from what we have around us. Beyond anything, we see we have huge capabilities to build in the face of demolition, so long as we choose unity over division.*

*Just as with “SHIFT”, we are incredibly proud to say that 100% of the content in this magazine – writing, art, and photography – is sourced from UCL students, once again highlighting the talent this university truly holds. Thank you once again to our incredible team for making this process so smooth!*

*We hope you enjoy reading the 725th edition of Pi Magazine!*

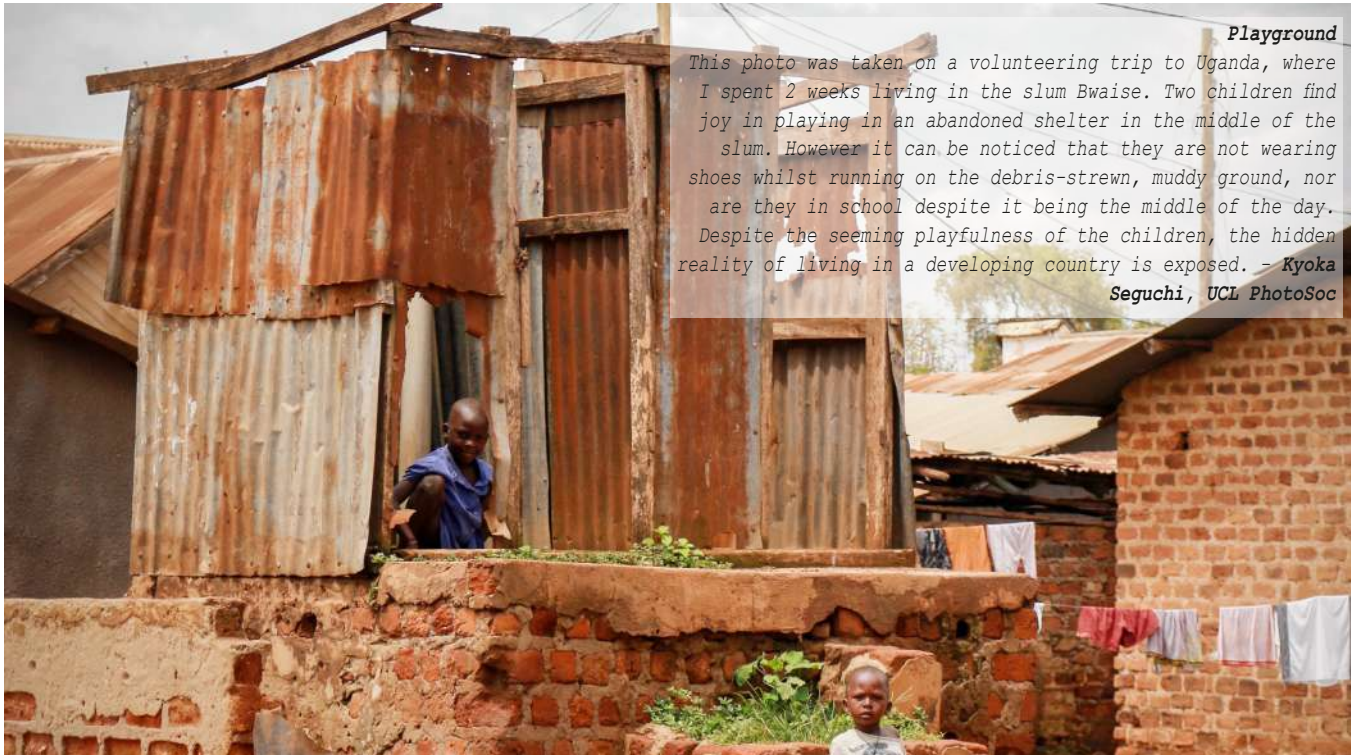
---

---

# Contents

---

---



## Playground

This photo was taken on a volunteering trip to Uganda, where I spent 2 weeks living in the slum Bwaise. Two children find joy in playing in an abandoned shelter in the middle of the slum. However it can be noticed that they are not wearing shoes whilst running on the debris-strewn, muddy ground, nor are they in school despite it being the middle of the day. Despite the seeming playfulness of the children, the hidden reality of living in a developing country is exposed. – *Kyoka Seguchi, UCL PhotoSoc*

## 4–5 Term 2 RoundUp: News to Know

*Rafael Jacobin, Mia Lui, Felicia Hu, Varun Vassanth, Anna Vall Navés / Olivia Rani Bessant*

## News

### 6–7 Building a New Culture, Free from Sexual Harassment

*Deepali Rose Foster / Hsin Liu*

### 8–9 Life of Pi

*Elly Chaw / Daria Mosolova*

## Opinion

### 10–11 Executive Aggrandisement

*Angus Colwell / Isabella Tjakve*

### 12–13 The Story of Feminism: a Wounded Soldier with an Unwavering Voice

*Abigail Jiaxin / Iulia Topan & Flynn Klein*

## Features

### 14–15 Making Money Greener: Building a sustainable economy

*Jamie Singleton / Kezhu Wang*

### 16–17 Before I Forget

*Sam Vladimírsky*

## Science

### 18–19 Rebuilding the Vaccination Movement

*Tharani Abillan / Erika Notarianni*

### 22–23 A Synthetic Nature

*Emily Hufton / Freya Parkinson*

## Lifestyle

### 24–25 Maquillage: The Everyday Bricolage

*Emma Ippolito & Tuula Petersen / Olivia Rani Bessant*

### 26–27 The Art of Reflection

*Cerys Mason / Zina Larbi*

## Culture

### 28–29 Women within Negative Space

*Lydia Popplewell / Iulia Topan & Flynn Klein*

### 30–31 “I Had Nowhere to Go”

*Jonas Mekas’ America*

*Leo Glavina / Sandra Engardt*

## “The BackPages”

### 32–33 The Music of London

*Laura Toms, Olivia Olphin & Kirese Narinesingh / Jennifer Oguguo*

### 34–35 Piece by Piece

*Zaya Gundalai & Christelle Troost*

### 36–37 Research to be Excited About

*Abigail Spreadbury, Derek Sim, Maria Carreira, Kristina Kostadinova, Emily Hufton, Elisha Malik / Pietro Sambuy*

### 38 The Dangerous Wold of Social Constructs

*Isabelle Osborne / Yuval Caspi*

### 39 Committee, Section Editors, Get Involved, Contact

### 20–21 Pi X PhotoSoc Competition Winner

# Term 2 RoundUp:

## Eugenics Town Hall Meeting

A Town Hall meeting was held on the 28th February to present the final report of UCL's inquiry into the history of Eugenics at the university. The chair, Iyiola Solanke, and outgoing provost Michael Arthur lauded its success in uncovering the development of this pseudo-science at UCL in the research of Francis Galton and Karl Pearson. Recommendations put forward by the commission include changing the names of the Pearson Building and the Galton Lecture Theatre, as well as the university issuing a formal apology and increasing the awareness of this harmful ideology around campus. Nevertheless, there was perplexion among students and staff who attended the event as two separate sets of recommendations were presented, as the majority of the commission disagreed with the final report.

*text by Rafael Jacobin*



## Dr Michael Spence Appointed New Provost

Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, was announced as the next President & Provost of UCL on 18th February. He will succeed Professor Michael Arthur, who is leaving the role of Provost after seven years. Dr Spence will begin at UCL in January 2021, concluding his 12-year term as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sydney.

Dr Spence will be taking on a number of challenges leading UCL into the future. One challenge is the construction of UCL's new campus, UCL East, where concerns have been raised in relation to the planned expansion and issues with funding. Dr Spence will also have to contend with calls for the new Provost to listen to academics in shaping how UCL is run.

The incoming Provost expressed his excitement at joining UCL, saying he was thrilled to be part of "a remarkable institution" and emphasizing its "important role in a time of great change for the UK and wider world."

*text by Mia Lui*

## UCU Strikes

UCL is among the 74 universities across the country to be affected by the University and College Union (UCU) industrial action. Two rounds of UCU strikes have taken place since November 2019. Following last term's 8-day strike, and the 14-day strike in 2018, UCU have called for further industrial action based on unresolved disputes regarding pay, working conditions, and rising pension costs. The latter is a result of changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

The second round of strikes at UCL was spread over four weeks between Monday 24th February and Friday 20th March, with a total of 14 strike days. An additional 14 universities have been involved in the walkout - up from the 60 institutions last term - as their UCU branches crossed the 50% turnout threshold required for industrial action. Institutions that joined the strike action this term include London-based universities King's College, Imperial College, and SOAS.

Academics from the English department have set up teach-outs in the midst of the strike. Speaking to Pi News, Dr Amy Faulkner commented that

*"being relatively new to UCL, I'm really impressed with the spirit everyone has; getting together in this way and arranging stuff like teach outs and poetry readings. I think that's really inspirational".*

Additionally, Dr Francesca Brooks concurred:

*"I saw teach outs and I thought it would be a good way of getting the students involved in the conversation rather than just being us, alone. To actually turn the picket line into a form of performance space where you can come and hear about why we're doing it and reflect on the broader issues".*

*text by Rafael Jacobin & Felicia Hu*



# News to Know

## Decolonising the Curriculum

Following on from the work carried out by the Inclusive Curriculum Project in 2019, headed by Dr Cathy Elliott, students in the Political Science Department have been working hard to lead a movement for a more inclusive university curriculum and environment.

The Inclusive Curriculum Project used content analysis on a sample of the School of Public Policy's reading lists to determine the level of representation and critical thought in our curriculum. The study found that an overwhelming 93% of content in the department's curriculum is written by white authors, with just 2% of the readings being authored by women of colour. These figures are not representative of our staff or student body.

The aim now is to gradually create some change and see our curriculum shift, with the next task being creating a website to make these statistics readily available. The Inclusive Curriculum researchers will be presenting their findings on Tuesday 19th May at the UCL Education Conference to suggest how more voices can be heard.

*text by Varun Vassanth*

## UCL introduces ban on student-staff relationships

UCL's new personal relationships policy has introduced a ban on "close personal or intimate relationships" between staff and the students they supervise, as well as between staff and underage students or adults at risk – which may include those with disabilities. The new guidelines have been put in place to avoid conflicts of interest and to prevent abuse of power and sexual misconduct in the university.

According to the document, staff should "maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from students," and they are advised to avoid forming special friendships with students, meeting them off campus or contacting them outside of official university channels.

The new policy does not prohibit intimate relationships between staff and students that are not under their direct supervision. However, these relationships must be reported to UCL within a month, or staff may face disciplinary action. UCL is the first in the Russell Group and the third in the UK to introduce such a policy.

*text by Anna Vall Navés*

## Varsity Update

The eighth week of term saw UCL's sports teams take to the field to face King's College in the annual Varsity tournament. Team UCL, having won the last three editions of the tournament, took a commanding 15-6 overall lead after just the first three days of events, including a thumping 23-2 win in the women's Lacrosse match, as well as the American Football team - the Emperors - convincingly beating their rivals 18-0. Despite a few losses, and the final matches being unfortunately postponed, Team UCL still secured the Varsity victory! London bleeds purple for the fourth year in a row!

*text by Rafael Jacobin*



## UCL updates on COVID-19

In February 2020, the outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) that began in Wuhan, China in December 2019 spread to Italy and the rest of Europe, and was soon declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation. The number of cases in the UK has been growing rapidly throughout February and March. A UCL student who had been in self-isolation for ten days tested positive for the virus on 12th March. UCL announced on 13th March that it would suspend all face-to-face teaching until the end of the academic year, moving towards online classes. All assessments scheduled to take place in exam venues in April and May have been cancelled, to be replaced by online alternatives. Similar measures are being taken in other UK universities and around the world. Europe has become the new epicentre of the pandemic, and many countries have introduced more aggressive steps including shutting down public activities.

*text by Mia Lui*

*art by Olivia Rani Bessant*

# Building a New Culture, Free from Sexual Harassment

*text by Deepali Foster, art by Hsin Liu*

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that humiliates, intimidates, or causes distress. It encompasses all from leering and catcalling, to rape and physical violence. Evidence consistently shows that sexual harassment follows the contours of inequality. The issue is a global one; Action Aid UK has discovered that three-quarters of women in the UK experience sexual harassment and assault, with the percentage increasing to 79% in India, 81% in the US, 86% in Brazil, and 87% in Vietnam. However, no country, no institution and no gender is immune to sexual harassment. The high rate of misconduct stems from feelings of entitlement and impunity, combined with the normalisation of sexual harassment that has been tolerated for too long.

However, despair not; the global fight against sexual misconduct has begun. The surge in revolutionary anti-sexual assault movements, such as #MeToo, #IBelieveHer and Time's Up, has inspired action closer to home. 'The Not Cool Club' is UCL's own example of a grassroots movement, aimed at building a new University culture. One free from sexual harassment.

Launched by activist Tarana Burke in 2006 to highlight the pervasiveness of sexual abuse in society, the #MeToo movement went viral in 2017, when Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein began dominating headlines. Suddenly gaining international attention, Burke's movement started a crusade within the industries of politics, business and entertainment to speak out, reigniting global conversation surrounding sexual victimisation. It marked an important step. The monumental impact of movements such as #MeToo is evident by subsequent legal victories: in China, changes to sexual harassment laws will come into force in 2020. Employers will be forced to take a more proactive stance when handling sexual harassment complaints and managers will be obliged to protect the wellbeing of employees. More than a hashtag, the #MeToo movement has rousingly spurred a revolution. A fundamental shift in culture is underway, from silence to empowerment.

Law student, Khadija Siddiqi, was stabbed 23 times in Pakistan in 2016 after refusing the advances of a classmate. She managed to win her appeal against her well-connected attacker, through gaining support over social media, using the hashtag #JusticeforKhadija. She declared 'a precedent has been set that if you raise

your voice for truth, you will taste victory'. However, according to ActionAid UK, two thirds of people harassed globally do not report to the police, with 50% deeming it pointless and 29% ashamed, scared or guilty. The statistics suggest that urgent action (including the erosion of male privilege encoded in law) is needed to continue the development of a society safe from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment prevention starts with a cultural change: beliefs, attitudes and expectations shape one's response to sexual harassment. 'The Not Cool Club' is questioning social norms. I spoke to the committee members about their mission to tackle sexual harassment and the exploitation of vulnerability on campus. Aware of both the complexity of the issue and their limitations, the student-led movement is not claiming the ability to abolish sexual harassment once and for all. Instead, the club pledges to stimulate positive and constructive dialogue on the issue, inspiring the confidence required to call out sexual harassment as #notcool.

---



---

*“if you raise your voice for truth, you will taste victory”*

---



---

When discussing the club with committee members Nehchal and Daisy, Nehchal explained that the society is building momentum through hosting club nights that feature student DJs, to both showcase new talent, and generate buzz around the club. Daisy said that their aspiration is to make the socials a safe and healthy environment, intolerant of the sexual harassment woven into clubbing culture. Supporting the significance of the Ask for Angela campaign - the 2016 initiative that encouraged people to ask for 'Angela' at a bar when in an uncomfortable situation - Daisy reiterated the society's aim to hold people accountable for their actions when clubbing. The club intends to do this by training its members to 'stand guard' during clubbing events, calling out inappropriate action to create a safe

environment. Anonymity and reduced responsibility means that nightclubs are breeding grounds for sexual harassment. But why should dim-lighting, loud music and boozy-fun result in freedom to abuse?

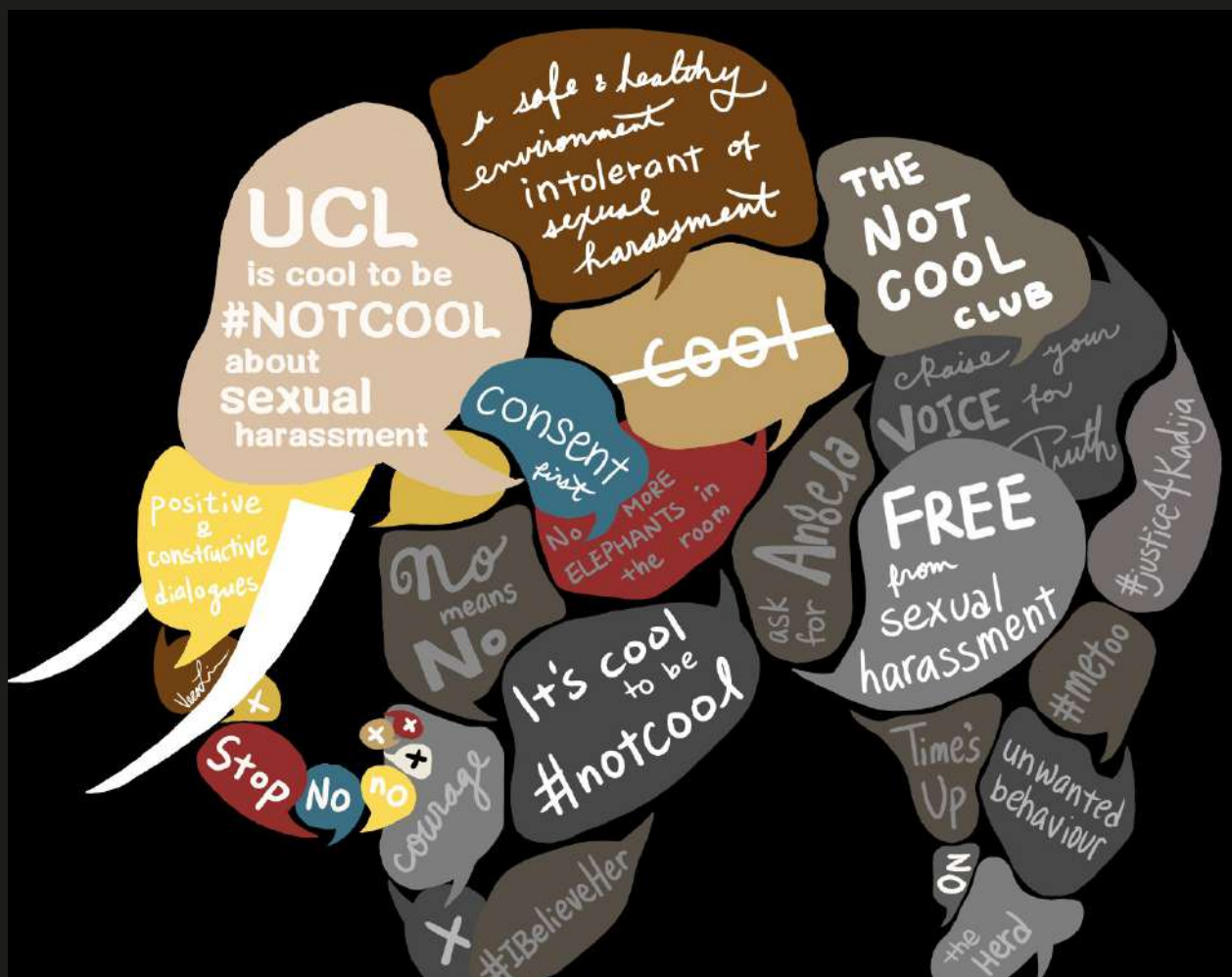
'The Not Cool Club' has gained attention through its iconic black and yellow branding seen on social media, posters and its members' hoodies. The designer, Mich, stressed the importance of branding to the club's cause. He explained that, as we are living in a visually dominated culture, 'the more memorable and better communicated the idea is, the more people it reaches'. Since the club was founded last year, voices of doubt have risen regarding the perceived lack of concrete action by the club to tackle the sexual harassment issue head on. A number of anonymous UCLove posts expressed uncertainty about the society's financial transparency, while others have questioned the culture of the club itself, even describing it as 'self-congratulatory'

as well as 'deluded and exclusionary'. Mitch addressed controversies around the club, stressing that the club's focus on clubbing events and publicity in term one was required to achieve recognition, and that the 'main crux' of the movement is The Not Cool Sessions.

The sessions launched on March 2nd and, for four weeks, members of The Herd - a group of passionate UCL students - will travel to societies to discuss sexual harassment within an everyday, student-centred context. Leaders will facilitate dialogue using ice-breakers such as 'speed-dating', where participants will have two minutes to discuss a realistic sexual harassment scenario with a peer, before moving to discuss with another. Having participated in this activity when attending a Herd training session, personally, I found that it was thoroughly engaging for students and created an open, safe and collaborative environment, certainly necessary when dealing with uncomfortable and sensitive truths. The Not Cool Sessions strive to raise awareness and

change mind-sets. The Club hope their advocacy of viewing activism as 'cool' will perhaps create a ripple effect within UCL, imploring students to take action by adopting a sense of personal responsibility to call out sexual harassment around campus. President of the Club, Ian, hopes the sessions will be the 'start of the conversation, not the end of it.

The growth of global movements, such as #MeToo, and the birth of The Not Cool Club as a result of the failure of universities to address cases of sexual harassment, suggests progression towards the creation of a culture rid of sexual misconduct. Although the battle has not yet been won, action combatting sexual harassment is being taken universally, at a national and local level, inspiring hope, energy, confidence and moral courage. Voice-by-voice we are disrupting all systems that allow sexual violence to flourish, in order to build a society that has conquered sexual harassment.



No, this will not retell Yann Martel’s fictional award-winning novel with Bengal tigers. This will, for the very first time, tell the non-fiction history of something much tamer and closer to us – the comprehensive life of Pi Media. Instead of “Pi” Patel, the narrative starts with UCL medic alumni Richard Lubback, who founded Pi in 1946, in his very first year at university. He named the newspaper after then-Provost Sir David Pye, and so, Pi was conceived. The paper was part of a community project to bind fellow U.C.-ites (yes, this was what we were called) together especially in the post-War period, when people were searching for a sense of belonging, and a yearning for solidarity and identity.

In this piece, the decades of well-preserved archives that date all the way back to the 1940s will come together to trace how Pi Media has changed, restructured, shaped, and ‘bricolaged’ itself over the past 75 years to become UCL’s oldest and largest student publication and journalism society today.

### 1940s and 50s

Originally launched as a fortnightly newspaper that was circulated and sold for a minimal sum around campus, Pi branded themselves as ‘The Newspaper of University College’. Founding editor Lubback spearheaded a small team of contributors, in-house student cartoonists, and graphic designers. There was a more distinct focus on campus affairs – think of a pre-modern version of the UCLove page we have today. In a column called ‘Through the Letter-Box’, students reported brick accidents on campus, complained at lengths about the inefficiency of The Refectory in serving hot meals, and reported celebrity headline news, such as Constance Cummings attending lectures at the Department of Anthropology in 1948.

Just like any other newspaper, Pi was also a platform for advertisements, many of which were interestingly related to hair – vegetable oil for hair by NUFIX, Marc the College Barber whose prices always remained the same, and it goes on. Pi’s presence on campus was



evidently very well-received by the student body, with one article (published in 1954) praising how it “fulfil(s) a very important function in the life of the College, particularly at the present time and under present conditions”.

### 1960s and 70s

During this period, Pi newspapers slowly expanded and lengthened to integrate more arts and sports coverage, with the addition of film photography, art exhibition reviews, and crossword puzzles. Sports clubs were given more of a spotlight too, with the ever-rife Varsity rivalry between University College and King’s. In the sports section that would always dominate the final page of each newspaper, King’s would be mentioned at least once.

The 1970s was also marked by a period of prolonged economic recession and rising inflation for Britain. This was reflected in the newspaper’s sharp shift in focus towards student finance and monetary concerns, with one of the frontpages aptly comparing UCLU bar prices with those of other London Student Unions. Back in 1977 at a UCLU bar, a pint of Guinness would cost 34p, IPA 27p, and Carling Lager 32p. Students also called for lower accommodation fees in the midst of this financial crisis.

### 1980s and 90s

Apart from Margaret Thatcher, Pi also welcomed a new face in the 1980s with a fresh layout similar to magazines – with page-by-page articles instead of their typical newspaper layout. Pi Diary was also introduced and functioned like a modern-day Facebook event calendar where clubs and societies were able to advertise their events to the rest of the student body. Unsurprisingly, political articles dominated this decade of the Thatcherite era, giving a more liberal and even rebellious tone to the newspaper-magazine.

Not only was there a resurgence of appetite for Pi’s original newspaper layout in the 1990s but the decade also opened avenues of discourse pertaining to ever-relevant campus politics that need to be addressed – sexual assault, rape, racism, discrimination, and LGBT-related topics. Moving away from reporting issues of relative triviality (such as The Refectory’s incompetence), this decade can be seen as a trailblazer in steering Pi’s direction towards being an opinionated publication challenging social norms.





# Life of Pi

text by Elly Chaw, photos by Daria Mosolova



## 2000s and 2010s

A new millennium, a better Pi. This century finally marked the start of glossy colour-printed Pi magazines with more distinct and organised sections within such as Opinion, Features, Travel, Fashion, and Science – some of which still prevail today.

This century is also where Pi really sought to adapt and modernise to evolving technologies. In 2011, Pi introduced Pi Online, where the majority of their content was posted regularly on their website to increase online readership. In 2012, PiTV, Pi's broadcasting arm, produced their first video project. Instead of the weekly newspapers Lubback started out with, Pi publications are now known as Pi Magazine, a bi-annual feature publication, revolving around a specific, carefully chosen theme.

This expansion into a diverse range of media platforms further cemented Pi's presence on campus. After many changes and some continuities, today, Pi is collectively known as Pi Media, with the three branching arms of Pi Online, PiTV, and Pi Magazine. With close to 160 contributors this year and more than a 2000 readership base on Facebook alone, we can see how over the decades, Pi Media has pieced, unpieced, and built upon itself according to the changing times to become the perfect embodiment of the theme of this issue. What the future of the Life of Pi will bring us is yet unknown, but we know one thing will always be constant – bricolage.

*“The paper was part of a community project to bind fellow U.C.-ites together, especially in the post-war period, when people were searching for a sense of belonging, and a yearning for solidarity and identity.”*



# Executive Aggrandisement: How a Seemingly Innocuous Term is Eroding our Democracy

text by *Angus Colwell*, photos by *Isabella Tjalve*

Travel to Budapest and you would mistake it for a free country. The associated hallmarks of an unfree country are nowhere to be seen — no martial presence, no police on every corner, no overwhelming government propaganda. Ironically, one of Budapest’s main attractions is its Parliament building.

Hungary is a democracy, in a sense. The elections are free. But beyond that, not much else seems democratic about this nation. 85% of the press are under state control, and the prime minister Viktor Orbán’s party *Fidesz* has control over the constitutional court and the courts of appeals. All of these power grabs have been achieved within democracy, and through democratic means.

Orbán calls this “illiberal democracy”. Political scientists have defined it as “executive aggrandisement”. It is not hard to discern which of the two sounds more ominous. Nevertheless, what Orbán has done is a coup. Not a coup d’état in which the generals appear on the television screens asserting that everything will be OK, but an unapologetic extension of his own powers using the mechanisms handed to him by liberal democracy.

Executive aggrandisement, therefore, is defined as a process whereby an elected executive gradually curbs the powers of democratic institutions using legal means. It is bricolage in an acute and political sense — it is removing, brick-by-brick, the democratic accountability and legitimacy of institutions, but using the resources

(“bricks”) available around us. In Orbán’s case, his weapon of choice has been the courts. As Michael Ignatieff, former politician and now Rector of the Orbán-abused Central European University put it, “It looks like law, it walks like law, it talks like law, it smells like law, but it’s not law.”

Looking at the British political structure, it is not unreasonable to think that we may be vulnerable to this kind of democratic coup. In our first-past-the-post electoral system, the checks and balances on an executive with a healthy majority are limited. With Boris Johnson’s 80 seat advantage, it seems unlikely that Parliament will restrict his capacities as effectively as the 2017-19 Parliament curbed prerogative powers.

But Johnson knows that his majority does not mean he has completely free rein. In fact, tense votes loom in the future — rebellions on Huawei and HS2 are not unfeasible. In light of this, his Downing Street operation’s antagonistic briefings emerge as machismo posturing rather than expressing any desire (or ability) to undermine democracy. Take Number 10’s ban on ministers appearing on the *Today programme* or *Good Morning Britain*, in retaliation to their “biased” coverage during the election campaign. *Today’s* 8:10am slot used to be an iconic daily grilling of a poor cabinet minister sent out on the airwaves to defend a government cock-up — for many, it felt part of the well-established cultural constitution. Why





does skipping the *Today programme* seem so blasphemous to us? Why does avoiding accountability from one radio programme feel like a cardinal sin? The answer to that is because of how entrenched our institutions are. And that is not the case in Hungary.

Ministers still appear on *BBC Breakfast*, *Andrew Marr, The World at One*. Skipping *Today* is a petulant raspberry towards the *BBC* from the government, and does not represent a genuine desire to erode the power of the media. As David Runciman, professor of politics at Cambridge, put it to me in an interview for *Pi Media*, “the Orbán version is that you shut down the *Today programme* and arrest the editor!”

The picture of Johnson and Cummings putting the handcuffs on Sarah Sands seems a long way off. Not due to the goodness of their hearts, but because of the opposition it would face. The government needs the news organisations to reach the people. Similarly, it is not hard to imagine a Tory rebellion, or a judicial verdict, that steps in.

Hungary meanwhile has been a Soviet state in living memory. The first free elections following the era of communism happened in 1990. Like a young child, Hungarian democracy has been more vulnerable to wounds, infections, and illness. The same cannot be said for Britain — a democracy which has a keen (if perhaps inflated) sense of itself, and its importance and evolution throughout history.

If anything looks ready to ignite a fire, our first-past-the-post voting system is ready to blow, and has been for a while in this post-coalition age. The collapse of the Lib Dems in 2015 meant two things — firstly, it made it unlikely that any “third party” would enter into a formal coalition again, but more importantly, it meant the return of two-party politics: Conservatives and Labour, on the

basis that no other party’s vote share looked significant enough to form a meaningful alliance.

Should another election return a minority government, we will be back in the same “logjam” we were in for two years. Brexit exposed, but did not create, the Parliamentary chaos of 2017-19. With no coalitions, we look set for *ad hoc* minority governments with next to no power, interchanged with unrestrained majority governments. In a future minority government, it is not hard to see a “people vs Parliament” rhetoric being espoused by a posturing strongman again to get us out of the mess. Yet the proportional representation revered by many is not the answer. It would be unwise to treat a problem caused by a hatred of coalitions with an electoral system fundamentally reliant on coalition-making.

Democracy is entrenched in Britain in a way that in Hungary it is (or was) not. Looking for parallels with Orbán or Erdogan raises the national rhetoric to a level beyond the requirements. The Johnson government must be opposed like every government has been opposed, which requires a recognition that more people voted for the government than any other party. Branding the governing party as ‘authoritarian demagogues’ when they are not only alienates the voters the opposition would be trying to win over. Instead, the government must be treated for what it is: childish and petulant. If the government is acting like a child having a tantrum, the opposition must look like the adult. Regrettably, so far it has failed to do so.

# The Story of Feminism: a Wounded Soldier with an Unwavering Voice

*text by Abigail Jiaxin, photos by Iulia Topan, art by Flynn Klein*



For many centuries, society has surfed along the waves of feminist movements and observed their widening reach. We saw their constant revival with the start of each new decade. To me, the most prominent revival of feminism's core ideas in 2020 is Jo March, the protagonist of Greta Gerwig's 2019 film, "Little Women". Jo is a writer of crazy, imaginative stories in the 1800s. But not only did her character struggle as a writer dreaming of publishing their work, she struggled as a woman. Jo stands out among

the March sisters due to her persistence against marriage and an emphasis on the need for self-preservation. This refreshing defiance was hard to come by in that era.

However, Jo, a symbol of relentless strength and undying passion in the film, is not a character Gerwig created. The film is an adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's 1868 novel "Little Women". Alcott's bold narrative of the independent woman was one of the first few known published works that have helped shape notions of "feminism" as we know

it today. Yet, the significance of this conception has been a product of countless years of construction, from its origins rooted in 1700s France to the breakthrough achieved in women's suffrage, all pitted against the tides of rejection and destruction. All these efforts have enabled us to identify feminism as an identity with a body of Her own today, one that protects society's women while empowering them with the knowledge to confront daily life with confidence and self-awareness. Amid all of the criticism and controversy surrounding feminism, I wish to pay tribute to the harrowing journey this movement and its participants have gone through, rather than defending the causes She stands for.

Undoubtedly, She is a force to be reckoned with, through the three waves of the movement. Feminism's ideological circle expanded to political spheres beginning with the pioneering wave in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Legislation to recognise women's right to property and marriage were passed at a progressive rate in many states, culminating in women's suffrage achieved in the US and Britain between 1919 to 1920. Then came the second wave, with the emergence of the iconic slogan, "The Personal is Political", which challenged the role of a woman's identity in relation to her husband and children. We saw Betty Friedman as a fierce proponent of this trend, encouraging women to build their own identities outside of the kitchen. However, this line of thinking received significant backlash, which paved the way for the birth of the third wave in the 1990s.

Ideology in this latest wave criticises Friedman's theory as one that merely privileges upper-middle-class women, thus advocating for a shift in focus to more inclusive, "intersectional" ideas of femininity. Here, Her voice should resound with all elements of a woman's identity, including race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and class. From this trajectory, one can observe patches of rough transitions as times changed, one that has induced countless fears and uncertainty in Her, highlighting the need for constant construction and reconstruction of Her walls. She has suffered and is still suffering. However, this should not signify stagnancy. If anything, this constant need for renovation represents the feminist construct as a work in progress, implying a sense of continuity in Her legacy.

As we progress into the 21st century, there is clear evidence of immense progress in different spheres of society. Today, we witness feminism's proper establishment in the political scene as a new norm, with public figures of all genders using their platforms to engage in activism. Within younger generations, there has also been significant participation in numerous gender equality campaigns, from the "MeToo" movement to UCL's very own "This Girl Can" campaign initiated by Project Active. However, as with any new era that brings new life to feminism, there lie loopholes within today's society that chip away at the fort She has built.

Most prominently is social media's new ability to shape opinions for the better and the worse. Today's feminist activists are commonly labelled online as "social

justice warriors" or "radical", even by other women. Social media has given Her a platform to amplify the voices of thousands from all walks of life, but this also provides a space for others to scream and shout at Her.

Moreover, the current turbulent political, economic and social climates have affected the lives of many women, from climate change to the refugee crisis. The rise of Populism and the increasingly polarised political environment in many Western countries also overshadow feminist goals, even though the implications of these challenges extend towards women as well. Slowly, the definitions of feminism have become even more confusing, insofar that many people hesitate to raise this discourse around feminists. Labels have come to dominate our intentions. What remains is the same tension lingering in the air as

---



---

*"Social media has given Her a platform to amplify the voices of thousands from all walks of life, but this also provides a space for others to scream and shout at Her".*

---



---

women desperately cling onto their identity, awaiting a new wave to crash ashore to enlighten another generation.

This only highlights the importance of focusing not just on the height of our construction and how many more bricks we can stack on top, but also the individual bricks of this fort and the need to unite them cohesively in order to strengthen the foundations of this tower. Each brick represents a feminist, be it a male or female, who holds the notions of feminism close to their heart. I believe that the one key material needed to achieve this spirit of unity is passion: something that both the French noblewoman in 1610 and Beyonce in 2010 had in common when crafting their work, something about Alcott's voice that Gerwig wished to retain in this new film. Passion has the ability to bind, and a unified people project a louder voice. Although She has been relentlessly pushed back by the journey She has struggled along, this has not stopped her from using her voice and continuing to fight. As much as she has been consistently injured by society, she has not crumbled in the face of fear.

Finally, a publisher agrees to print Jo March's book. This book, however, is not a romantic, enchanting fairytale where the young, beautiful princess is rescued by the charming prince. The eventual work that goes against the tide of convention was the one she wrote about herself, one written from the perspective of a woman who struggles to navigate in a world where times are changing, and so are the people in it. With the scaffolding still tightly wrapped around Her, Jo's passion burns bright in each and every one of us. Through the endless struggle, she found her voice, and it is this voice that has stood the test of time.

# Making Money Greener: Building a Sustainable Economy

*text by Jamie Singleton, art by Kezhu Wang*

Since the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that the only way of ensuring that global temperatures don't exceed the (now evidently nominal) 1.5-degree threshold is through a "rapid and far-reaching" transformation of human civilisation to be instituted by a 2030 deadline, the fate of the planet has embedded itself in the popular consciousness. But such an unprecedented problem demands unprecedented action, and action that surpasses mere recognition. The core principles of the economic model on which we depend must be subjected to a systemic re-evaluation and infrastructural reconstitution, and one that will take the remodelling of each instrument which makes up an economy.

Because the mechanisms for change will be inoperable without cash backing, the financial sector will be pivotal in opening the door for the green economy. Fortunately, this decade has swung open on promising news: the world's largest asset management firm, BlackRock, announced a new strategy geared more heavily toward stronger environmental, social, and governance (ESG) profiles (these help investors recognise a company's sustainability), a move they hope will amount to "fundamental reshaping" of finance. It's a momentous

declaration, but one building on a growing trend in the financial sector that the European Investment Bank helped spur last November, devising their own plans to phase out multibillion-euro fossil fuel funding by 2021, intending to release €1 trillion for "climate action and sustainable investment" in companies with cleaner ESG profiles.

Such moves are rather more talk than walk at the moment, however: ESG ratings are currently beleaguered by a high susceptibility to greenwashing – especially by companies of the more carbon-reliant variety. In order for dark-green investments (long-term projects and initiatives that curb carbon emissions in the long term) to fulfil their potential, thorough and reliable yardsticks must be innovated; these are, however, still largely under development. If provided, then between now and 2030, major change can be introduced to turbocharge a phenomenon which is already beginning to take place. Merrill Lynch recently estimated that ESG equity funds (high-risk, high-reward market investments) in Europe will burgeon to \$1 trillion between 2020 and 2030, redirecting capital towards real difference in the future of the economy.

Real assets and sustainable alternative



investments are crucial, but more direct action will be found in funding the tech innovation fuelling the energy sources renovation. While fossil fuels will spike with the increased demands for energy, oil is due to run out somewhere around 2050, some sources estimate. Modern civilisation being utterly at the mercy of energy provision, finding renewable energy solutions will satisfy more immediate as well as long-term needs. According to the International Energy Agency, integration is already moving more fluidly in this area, renewables accounting for one third of global energy last year. And forecasting for the years ahead is no less promising, the International Energy Agency recently reported that renewable energy is set to grow by 50% over the next five years, with an

---



---

*“Through an active engagement with the financial and political beasts that pull the strings for changing the landscape of the economy, change can be set in motion.”*

---



---

increased emphasis on solar energy. This is bolstered by major innovations like Dubai’s solar field, which is set to become operative by 2030, and thereafter capable of supplying enough energy to power over 1 million homes, according to CNN. The dream of green energy may very well begin to look like a reality by the end of the decade.

But well-intentioned technological innovation has leash only as long as policy is behind it. In Britain, policy is stifling a transition to renewables, the government spends just under £200 million annually curtailing wind-generated electricity in order not to overload grid capacity. This a problem that has less to do with a lack of available technological solutions than with political resistance to decentralising the national grid, a move that will permit the introduction of technologies that can store renewably-generated power. Despite the efforts of advocacy groups, this is currently one of the main roadblocks to an energy overhaul.

Perhaps confronting policy deficiencies with decentralization seems counterintuitive, and indeed Aymeric Amand, a UCL postgraduate working with the sustainability department at FTI Consulting, warns that “moving toward a decentralised economy makes policy harder to impose”. But he also maintains that “decentralisation should actually help cut carbon emissions and generate revenue opportunities for consumers who can sell power back to the grid”. And given that decentralisation may also help innovate policy more directly, allowing the creation of more agile multi-

stakeholder sectoral forums that will make organisations more accountable to consumers, policy likely needs to undergo enormous changes in the coming years.

One of the more likely purveyors of the comprehensive renovation required is the Green New Deal, a proposed overhaul that promises to institute many of the major changes required by 2030. Regrettably, currently extant models remain definitively more idealistic than realistic. But again, their existence seems to promise that change is due: Labour’s Green New Deal for example, is the result of a grassroots campaign launched by members of the party, and this crystallisation of democratic pressure into policy surely means that governments can hardly resist change any longer. Tie this in with Austria’s recent elections where the Green Party was elected into a coalition government, and a trend has been set. The future will enfranchise the generation most staunchly advocating for governmental action, suggesting that political bodies will soon recognise instituting impactful measures as paramount to their identity. Since major financial entities have cited last September’s global protests as instrumental to their move toward strategies reserving capital for a green economy, the people are looking like major movers in the future of the economy.

Popular engagement undeniably makes a difference: protest, campaigning, and ‘flygskam’ (flight-shaming) have bent businesses into more sustainable shape by forcing producers to adapt to demand for sustainable alternatives. But this kind of consumer engagement is, as Aymeric says, a scenic route: “the best way people can reduce their carbon footprint isn’t by cutting meat consumption or wearing big jumpers instead of putting the heating on, but by better managing their savings and making sure that they are invested in funds or pension schemes that prioritise companies with excellent ESG score”. Through an active engagement with the financial and political beasts that pull the strings for changing the landscape of the economy, change can be set in motion.

The green economy may very well be an answer to the monumental questions before us, but it is no miracle cure, and won’t be instituted without drastic conceptual revolution. The proposal is more than a reworking of civilisation’s constitutive materials, but a new method of construction, emphasising the ecology and interplay of components for the realisation of a responsible economy. And vitally, what the next decade must provide is a new model, one which will foster the building of a circular economy where a ‘loops not lines’ flow of material prevails, where economic growth is organic rather than meteoric. Its seeds are beginning to shoot, but need more intensive care and deliberate action.

For ten months last year, my bedroom closet was an impermeable barricade of boxes overstuffed with wigs, masks, miscellaneous prosthetics and props, mannequin parts, and dozens of carefully thrifted outfits. This arsenal, rivalled perhaps only by that of Mrs. Doubtfire, was stockpiled for a project in which I re-enacted a century's worth of family photographs.

Second-Hand Vision, as it came to be called, was a form of photo therapy for my mild identity crisis. I was suffering from the effects of "Postmemory," the idea that the children of a generation-wide "trauma" (i.e. the Holocaust, waves of immigration) try to relate to the culture that has been passed down to them indirectly through photographs, stories, and traditions, but are left unable to fully identify with either the culture of their parents, or that of their transplanted home. Not having experienced Soviet life first-hand, my adopted cultural

label of "Moldovan-American" remained largely inaccessible to me. I felt neither Moldovan, nor American, but caught in some "third space" in between. A ghost. A trace of someone else. As a first-generation American, was I responsible for remembering, identifying with, and preserving the culture of my ancestral lineage? How do we inherit this culture, and at what point does it devolve into myth?

Slowly but surely, my eBay basket filled with false teeth, cake toppers, and old lady wigs. I spent days combing through charity shops, pestering staff with questions like "what looks most early-twentieth century Soviet villager to you?" and complaints that particular items were "not peasant enough." I recruited a team of loyal friends whose tolerance was tested beyond measure under the suffocating grip of a latex mask (this can be my great-uncle!), or in a Soviet officer's winter jacket (this is no time to pass out, Scott, you're my grandpa, remember?) We re-enacted weddings,

fleeting childhood recollections, military campaigns, and formal studio portraits. Through maquillage and camera magic, I came to find myself standing in a late nineteenth century Jewish shtetl (village), a Second World War ghetto, in an old portrait studio with its trademark painted backdrop, in a Soviet apartment with tacky patterned wallpaper, making my final stop at the gate of my parents' first home in America.

I turned the tables around and became an immigrant myself, a voyager to a fictional Soviet Union that existed only as it has been described to me. I was not interested in re-staging a chronological history as it might have happened, but exploring the biased, twisted, subjective recollections with which I grew up. It is ironic then, that in my effort to insert myself into my family history by shapeshifting into various relatives long gone, I was left looking only at myself, vaguely recognizable through the eye slits of a latex mask.





# Before I Forget: My Ten Months Re-enacting Family Photos

*text and photography by Sam Vladimirsky*



*Untitled, from the series  
"Second-Hand Vision",  
2019*



*Untitled, from the series  
"Second-Hand Vision",  
2019*



*Untitled, from the series  
"Second-Hand Vision",  
2019*



*Untitled, from the series  
"Second-Hand Vision",  
2019*



# Rebuilding the Vaccination Movement

text by *Tharani Abillan*, art by *Erika Notarianni*

Ellie\* is 20 years old. As I sit opposite her, she tells me that she has to take a year off from university. The culprit? She had contracted mumps. The post-viral fatigue was preventing her from taking exams. She had not been vaccinated as a child, and didn't think it was something to worry about.

This story is all-too familiar. Across the world, cases of vaccine-preventable diseases are on the rise. With such a threat to public health and an unprecedented number of cases of previously-unseen diseases, the falling vaccination uptake rate poses a question for public health - how should we rebuild the vaccine movement?

## The Vaccination Movement

Immunisation has been practised for hundreds of years: Buddhist monks drank snake venom to try and acquire immunity to snake bite. However, it was only in the late 18th century that Edward Jenner, dubbed as the "Father of Immunology," would inoculate an 8-year-old boy to protect against smallpox. It was here that vaccinology was founded.

From there this field has grown in leaps and bounds, illustrated by the eradication of smallpox. In fact, UNICEF estimates that around five lives are saved every minute of every day, and the success of vaccines has led the World Health Organisation (WHO) to label it as the second most important public health intervention, behind clean water.

However, in 2019, the WHO labelled 'vaccine hesitancy', the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines, one of the top 10 threats to Global Health. But is this actually the case, and if so, what are we doing to tackle this health issue?

## Is the vaccination uptake actually decreasing?

According to NHS data, 2019 saw a decline in coverage for all routine vaccinations. Helen Bedford, Professor of Children's Health at UCL's Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, cautions that "the decline in uptake over the last five years has been small and uptake still remains high". However, Jonathan Kennedy, Senior Lecturer in Global Public Health at Queen Mary's University, explains that while the decline may be minimal, measles vaccine coverage is currently 90.3% in England and Wales, which is below the 95% target recommended by the WHO to avoid outbreaks. Within UCL, Emma Hughes, coordinator of UCL vaccination sessions, is positive. She says "vaccination uptake has always been very popular at UCL specifically,

and seems to have remained consistent over the years."

## What is the reason for the decrease?

'Vaccine hesitancy' dominates media coverage. As Dr Kennedy asks, "why [is it], when experts say vaccines are safe and effective, do people not believe them?". A "Vaccine Confidence Index" was created in summer 2019 to attempt to measure the levels of distrust. Whilst Europe had the lowest vaccine confidence globally, the UK ranked favourably within this: with confidence levels in vaccine safety at 75%, compared to, say, France which had confidence levels under 50%. Interestingly, lower income countries such as Bangladesh, Rwanda and Ethiopia had the highest levels of confidence in vaccines, at almost 100%.

---



---

*"In 2019, the WHO labelled 'vaccine hesitancy', the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines, one of the top 10 threats to Global Health."*

---



---

Dr Kennedy explains why this may be the case: "people in poorer countries are more likely to trust vaccines because these are the countries where vaccine-preventable diseases are more common and the threat is high. In high-income countries where vaccine-preventable diseases are rare, many parents have become complacent." He goes on to suggest that the rise in vaccine hesitancy could be related to the rise of populism and distrust towards politics and elites. This then manifests as distrust towards doctors, public health authorities, and pharmaceutical companies. "On some level this is understandable," he says. "Look at the opioid crisis and the role Big Pharma played in that. It is no wonder that people believe conspiracy theories about the dangerous side effects of vaccines being hidden from the public by greedy capitalists."

Certainly, the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine has suffered from a loss of public confidence. 20 years ago, a 1998 Lancet paper implied there was a link between the MMR vaccine and a "new syndrome" of autism and bowel disease. Following a vaccine scare, the findings were discredited, with numerous epidemiological studies consistently finding no evidence of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. The paper was finally retracted twelve years later. Yet Measles and Mumps cases continue to rise in the UK. Most of what we are seeing

now is the legacy of the low vaccine uptake 20 years ago, with outbreaks being predominantly driven by cases in older teens or young adults who weren't vaccinated as toddlers, not because uptake is low now.

This raises the question of what counts as 'misinformation' and whether citizens should be shamed for questioning taxpayer-funded health initiatives. Homeopathy International agrees, riling against its label as 'anti-vaxx'. Instead they describe themselves as "pro-children and pro-informed consent", emphasising the need to consider "all the possible benefits and complications of a planned procedure, and that the financial bonus given by NHS to GP practices may result in a lack of financial transparency and conflicted interests."

### Access to Vaccines

Access to vaccines is not what most people think of when they consider the reasons for rising cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. But timing, availability, and location of appointments can all be key barriers to vaccination, whatever the age. As Dr Kennedy explained further, "some parents face problems in accessing vaccination devices. This is particularly the case for poorer families, as parents might be unable to take time off work or can struggle to afford transport to the clinic."

The suggestion of mandatory vaccinations, however, has challenges in terms of autonomy, availability of choice, and parental rights and responsibilities. Indeed, Professor Bedford thinks that the situation in the USA, where states have mandatory vaccines as a prerequisite for pre-school, may have inflamed the anti-vaxx movement, and cautions against a similar story in the UK.

### What are the solutions?

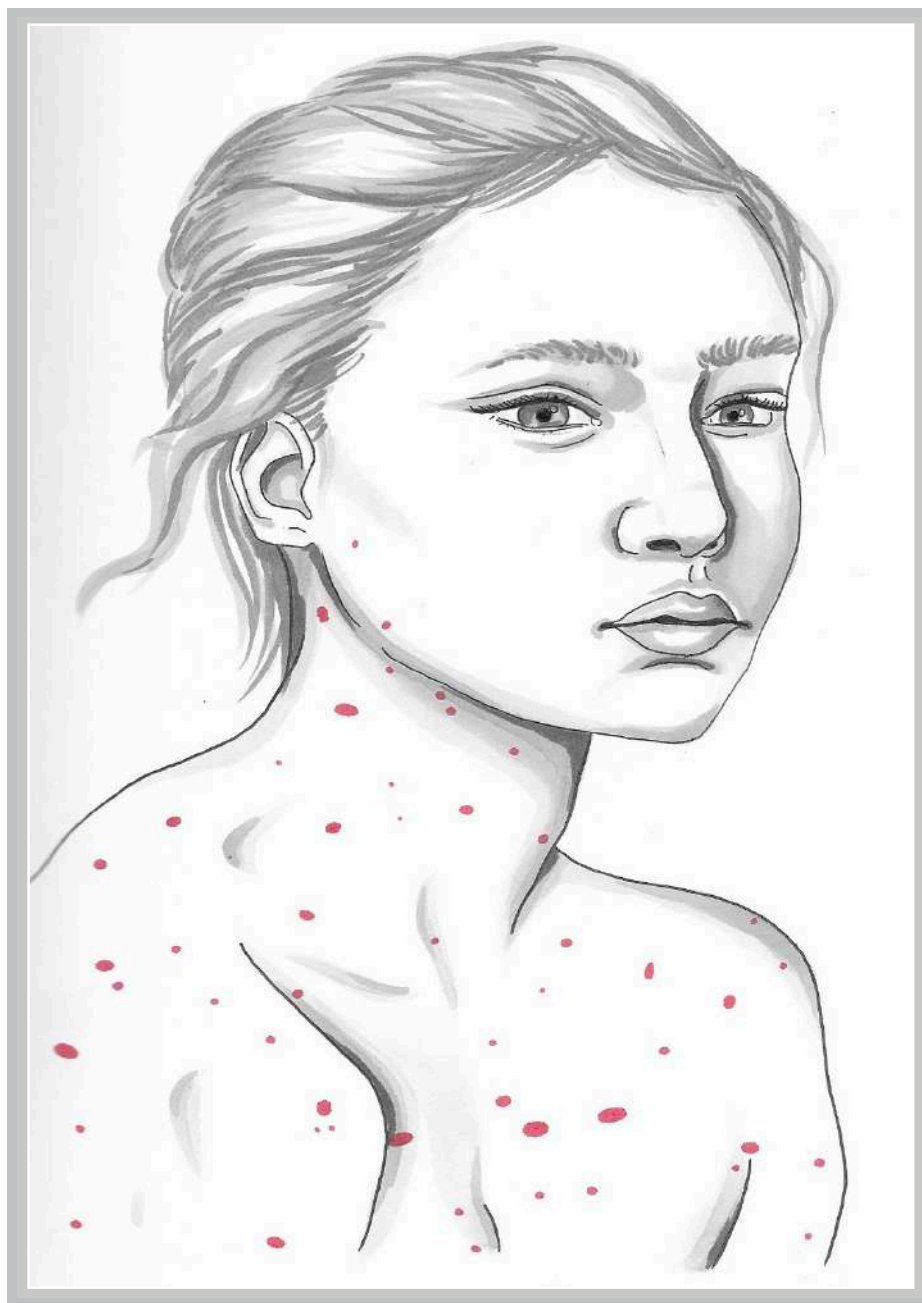
Professor Bedford instead emphasises the role of "flexible,

accessible, family-friendly immunisation services. This involves reminding parents of when vaccines are due, and ensuring that health professionals have time and are equipped to discuss parents' questions and concerns."

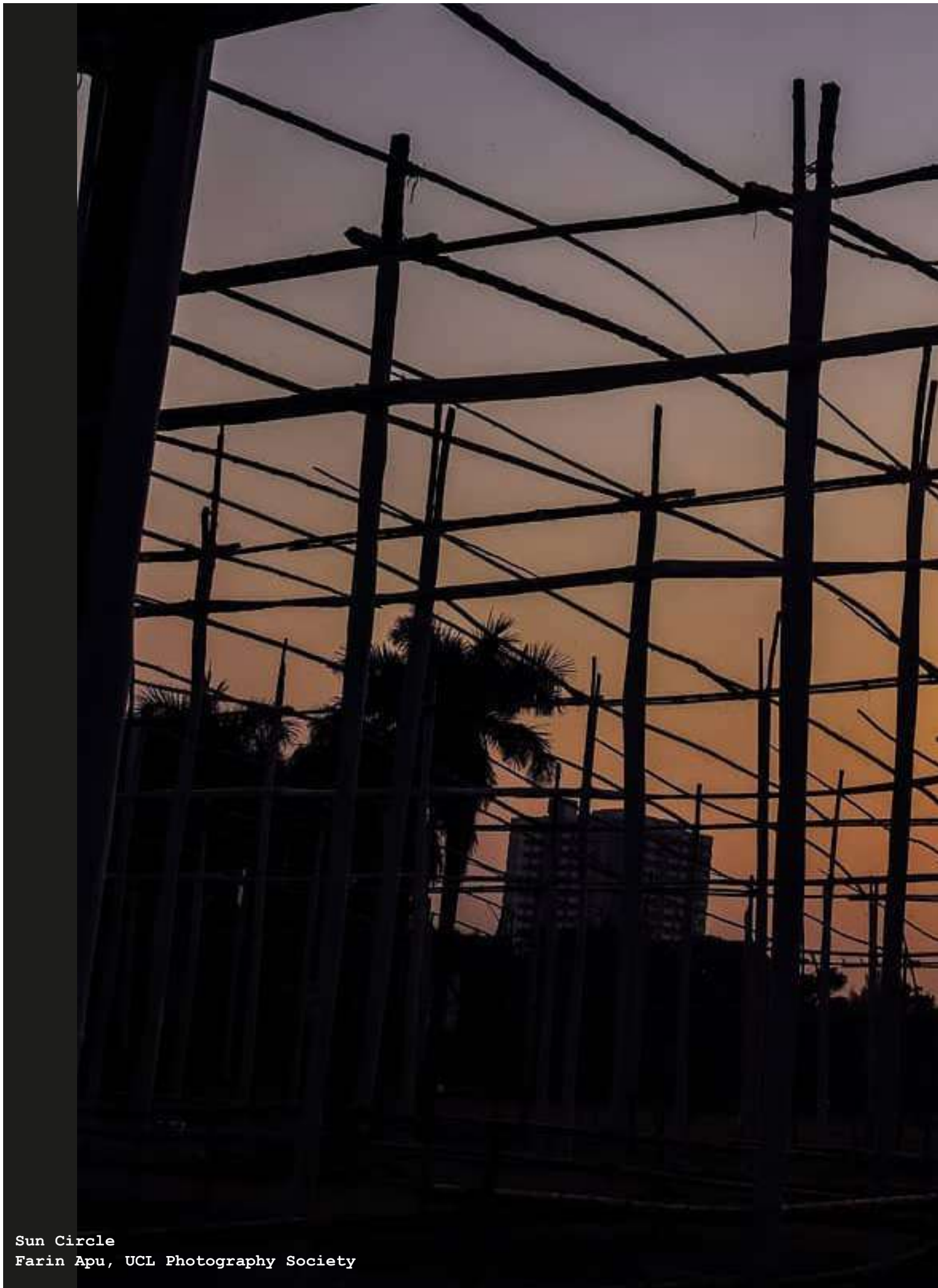
With regards to vaccine hesitancy, Dr Kennedy explained, "the public still have a large amount of trust in doctors and nurses. We need healthcare professionals to keep explaining the importance and safety of vaccines to patients." He concedes that public health has become very politicised in recent years: Matt Hancock's recent suggestion of making child

immunisations mandatory was met with fury online. He cites countries like Italy which have also received backlash for its mandatory vaccination programme. However he concedes that "public health is political, for better or for worse, and we need to consider this when improving vaccine uptake."

Meanwhile what did Ellie\* think about her experiences? "I'm definitely pro-vaccines now," she said, "it's not something you ever think about until it happens to you and I want to share my story to show that it's still very much a threat."

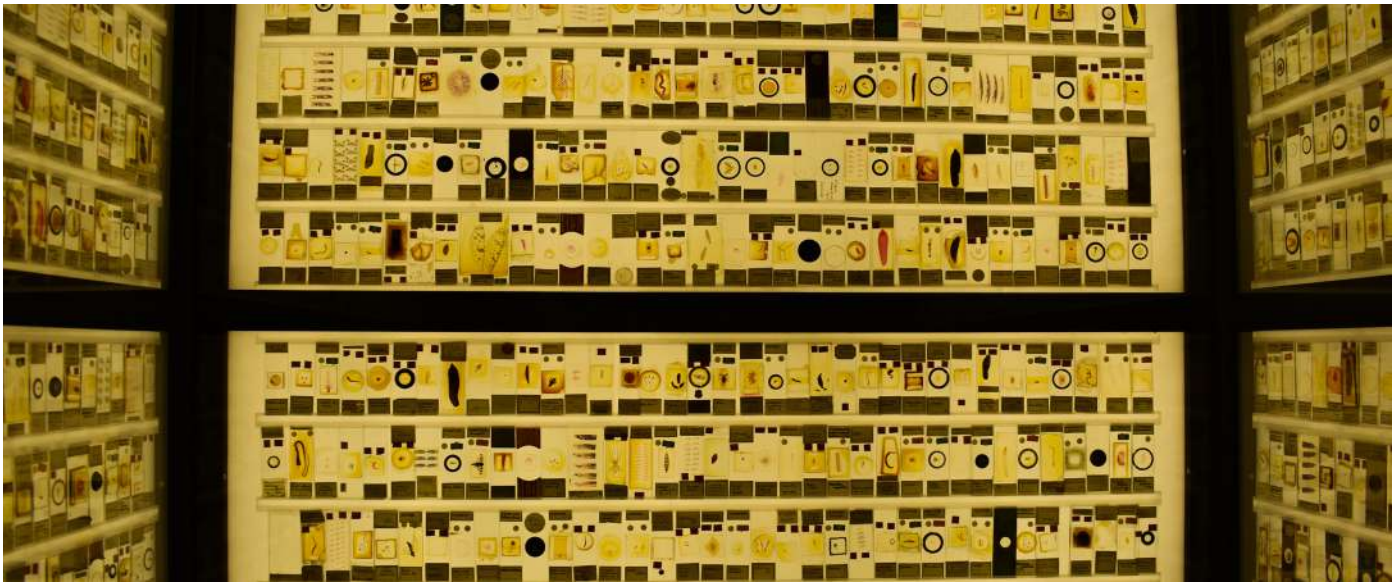


\*Name changed for privacy



Sun Circle  
Farin Apu, UCL Photography Society





# A Synthetic Nature

*text by Emily Hufton, photos by Freya Parkinson*

Science often gravitates towards the limits of life: the phenomena of birth and death spark endless curiosity. Up until quite recently, characterising these events was enough of a challenge for many scientists. Having successfully described much of nature, scientists now seek to deconstruct it, manipulating the fundamental components of life to mould it to human benefit. Despite much public uproar, genetic modification—the bogeyman of biological science—has quickly infiltrated daily life. But recent research advances might make it even more difficult to accept.

Whilst every project starts small, this is particularly true of synthetic biology. The first genetically modified organism was a bacterium to which Boyer and Cohen introduced a gene for antibiotic resistance in 1973. Manipulation

of natural methods was central to this process. Discovered two decades earlier, plasmids form the foundation of much of biotechnology. As small stretches of extrachromosomal DNA found in bacteria, plasmids often carry genes advantageous to the survival of carriers, and can be passed between different bacterial cells in a process called ‘conjugation’. Using restriction enzymes, a bacterial defence mechanism against viral invasion, genes of interest can be inserted into the plasmids, which are then taken up by host cells. By the 1980s, scientists were no longer using these to experimentally gift bacteria with characteristics for ease of identification; rather, the quest for profit had begun. Scientists from General Electric in the U.S. were granted a patent on bacteria they had engineered to break down crude oil for bioremediation. Two

years later, bacteria were being modified to produce vital human hormones for commercial use as drugs. These newfound abilities have fundamentally benefited society, allowing us to produce vast amounts of pure medicine and mitigate damage caused by pollutants. Yet they have also opened Pandora’s box.

The next step in conquering nature was mastering the molecule at its heart: DNA. Traditional genetically modified organisms usually retain most of their genomes, with genes encoding the desired characteristics inserted to supplement this. In Spring 2019, however, researchers created the first living organism with a fully recoded synthetic genome. The new strain, ‘Syn61’, was the product of extensive study and redesign of the ‘E. coli’ genome. Not only does it represent the longest artificially constructed



genome, the 18,000 edits made also ironically revealed a great deal about the bare essentials needed to survive by removing numerous instances of degeneracy. Modifying the result of intricate evolutionary processes was of some detriment, altering cell shape and slowing growth, but the similarity of the proteome to that of the original lab strain is a mark of the endeavour's success. This process offers huge opportunity to the biotechnological industry, with the potential to introduce resistance to viral infection into bacterial genomes, and prevent transfer of altered genes to natural strains. These would overcome challenges traditionally associated with recombinant protein production, whether it be spoilt batches or public concern.

As controversial as they have proven to be, the GMOs that stock our supermarket shelves bear a clear and reassuring resemblance to their natural counterparts and, crucially, do not present immediate ethical issues. Whilst the Victorian Gothic and modern scientific revelations often have little in common, the construction of 'xenobots' at the beginning of 2020 is remarkably Frankensteinian. Assembled from African clawed frog skin and heart cells using an evolutionary algorithm, these 'living robots' are capable of walking, wound healing, and cooperating with one another, and can survive for up to 10 days. Though currently only 1mm in size and relatively rudimentary, there is the hope that one day these could play a significant role in bioremediation and human health, bypassing issues

associated with more traditional machines. Possible developments include scaling up, adding a pouch for drug delivery, and incorporating blood vessels, sensory cells, and a nervous system. Here arise significant ethical issues: in potentially imbuing the creations with the capacity for feeling, the line between machine and life form becomes blurred. We have moved beyond Ginsberg's condemned age of 'robot studies in plastic cells' and into one where manipulated biology supersedes the synthetic.

Whilst these innovations look to the future, a certain sect of scientists is very much focused on the past. Using DNA preserved from now extinct species, the de-extinction movement is hoping to revive creatures of long ago. From more recent extinctions such as the passenger pigeon, to icons of the Pleistocene, the movement has caused extreme controversy but also achieved a measure of, albeit debatable, success. In 2003, an attempt to clone the extinct Pyrenean ibex bore fruit: a calf was born, but survived for only 10 minutes in huge distress. Similar suffering has historically been intrinsically intertwined with scientific breakthroughs, whether it be of the inmates participating in the Stateville Penitentiary Malaria Study, animal test subjects, or the first mammalian clones. A utilitarian 'ends justify the means' approach might be easier to apply to some of these cases than to de-extinction. Jurassic Park has ingrained the perils of dinosaur cloning in pop culture; whilst it was quite easy for viewers to anticipate potential problems in the captivity of these giant reptiles, the effects of

---



---

*“The GMOs that stock our supermarket shelves bear a clear and reassuring resemblance to their natural counterparts and, crucially, do not present immediate ethical issues.”*

---



---

reintroducing species to an ecosystem in which they died out are harder to predict. Aside from unforeseeable implications for food chains and human populations, de-extinction is seen by some as a diversion of funds and knowledge from the conservation and preservation of species currently under threat. Whilst a huge number of extinctions undeniably weigh heavily on humanity's collective conscience, so might the impact of de-extinction. A perceived obligation and the potential for biological benefits must be considered in light of huge ethical and ecological concerns, which are likely to serve as a barrier to significant progress in this field.

It is undoubtedly an exciting time for science, with novel techniques empowering researchers to deconstruct the world around them and repurpose it for human benefit. Whilst this has, to some extent, defined man's relationship with the natural world for some time, the post-genomic era has ushered in unprecedented power: a power with huge ethical implications.



# Maquillage: The Everyday Bricolage

text by Emma Ippolito & Tuula Petersen, art by Olivia Rani Bessant

Your face is a canvas. And you are the artist. You can gather together as little or as many tools as you want. You have in your hands a kaleidoscope of products in all imaginable shades, ready to be picked and mixed, to construct your daily masterpiece: your look. Maquillage is the everyday bricolage - and it sells.

Last year Business Insider reported that the beauty industry is worth \$532 billion and counting. This astronomical value is not actually that surprising: cosmetics not only dominate our bathroom shelves, but also our Instagram feeds, our TV adverts, and even the giant neon billboards in Piccadilly Circus. How did it become such a prominent part of our world? Well, beauty has not only existed in our present: it also has a past.

The first evidence of makeup dates back to the Ancient Egyptians, who were obsessed with self-image and were essentially the Kardashians of antiquity. They used black kohl as eyeliner and mascara, and coloured their cheeks and lips with rouge made from ground beetles. In Ancient Rome women learnt to cover blemishes and whiten their faces by using lead and chalk: you can thank them for creating the first foundation. A tan was not a trend but rather a shameful sight: it meant that you were poor and forced to work outdoors under the scorching sun. Pale skin was associated with the rich who were indoors busy doing nothing and thus was all the rage. This failed to go out of style, and even started to become a lethal fad: in Victorian times, mercury, arsenic and blood-draining techniques were used, as they were believed to enhance your

pale complexion (and you thought ground beetles sounded risky).

The turning point came with the birth of Hollywood: the public now looked to the stars as their ultimate makeup gurus. In a blink Max Factor was founded, the soon-to-be cosmetic heaven, followed by Coco Chanel who bequeathed us the classic dark eyes, red lipstick and suntan look. An explosion of bold colours defined the cosmetic landscape of the 70s and 80s, with icons such as Boy George and Bowie taking to the stage with eccentric eyeshadow and even lightning bolts painted on their faces. No matter what century you lived in, makeup was an ever-present essential. It transgressed time by learning to evolve with constantly changing societies, tastes and attitudes. By refusing to be matted down, concealed or brushed away, today the beauty industry has been crowned one of the most important and lucrative businesses of our time.

But if Netflix's *The Crown* has taught us anything, it's that a throne is never steady. In recent years customers have become much more vocal with their criticisms, urging cosmetic companies to offer products that tailor to all skin colours. Certain brands such as Rihanna's Fenty Beauty have responded to those calls: in 2017, after months of anticipation, she launched a line of foundation which contained an unprecedented forty different shades. Several other brands have since followed suit, taking conscious steps to ensure inclusivity for all to find their perfect tone. Gender has also been at the forefront of the makeup industry's agenda. In 2018, Chanel launched its first male makeup line, signalling the beauty industry's efforts to deconstruct outdated conventions.

Cosmetic companies have equally caught on to the fact that we are less

fooled by flashy packaging and much savvier about checking the back label. The shorter the ingredients list, the better; and extra points if it's clean and sustainable. The industry is constantly proving that their focus is on the future: in 2018, L'Oreal

---



---

*“No matter what century you lived in, makeup was an ever-present essential.”*

---



---

announced that it wanted to be called “the number one beauty tech company”. Turns out beauty and technology are the next Batman and Robin ready to take on the world. Lancome has already launched a custom-made foundation machine which uses artificial intelligence to digitally read a client's skin to create a specially blended foundation ready for you in a matter of minutes. You can thank robots for no longer having to share makeup with your younger siblings.

Nevertheless, the beauty industry is far from perfect: there are several scars that lie underneath the surface. It is still denounced by many as promoting superficiality and turning innocents into vanity-obsessed influencers. Whilst some may view makeup's ability to enhance any feature or cover up any insecurity as a superpower, others criticise it for offering the wearer a temporary mask of self-assurance. A 2014 study assessed the relationship between makeup and self-esteem by asking participants to fill in a self-esteem survey whilst researchers measured the amount of makeup that had been applied to the individuals'

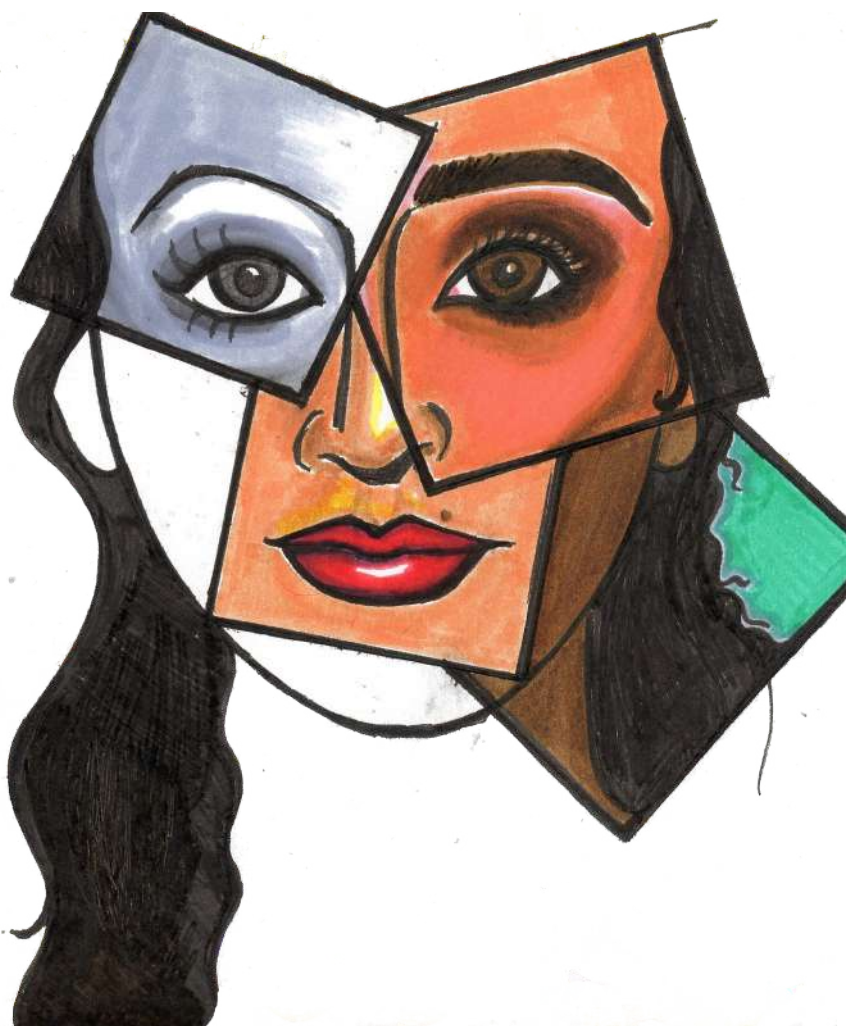


faces. They found that those wearing more makeup had significantly lower self-esteem compared to their clear-faced counterparts. This explains why some see makeup as “war paint”. Urban Dictionary, rather disdainfully, defines this as an “overabundance of cosmetics applied to a woman’s face for the purpose of hiding what lies beneath”. The idea of applying a layer of “protection” in order to face the day ahead has become so commercialised that habitual wearers can feel vulnerable and exposed if they choose to go a day without it.

In addition, tensions between cosmetics and professionalism continue to boil and remain

unresolved. While some studies have shown that attractive individuals tend to earn more money than less attractive individuals, other studies have found that wearing makeup can impede one’s ability to earn the respect of their colleagues. It is because beauty is such a universal phenomenon that it will always have to confront contradictions and criticisms. Just as there is no one shade, there is no one right way. Whether you choose to wear makeup as a confidence booster, to express a different side of your personality, for professional reasons or simply no makeup at all, your decision should first and foremost be a personal choice. Remember that it is your canvas, and no one else’s.

From Pharaohs to Fenty, the beauty industry has transgressed both time and traditions. It has destroyed conventions and created novelties, rebuilding itself each era alongside our ever-changing societies. What will the face of the future beauty industry look like you might ask? Well, here’s to hoping it blends together even more innovation and inclusivity, with a brush of confidence and eco-consciousness to give it that extra shine.




---



---

*“Whether you choose to wear makeup as a confidence booster, to express a different side of your personality, for professional reasons or to simply abstain from makeup entirely, your decision should first and foremost be a personal choice.”*

---



---

# The Art of Reflection

*text by Cerys Mason, photos by Zina Larbi*



The world we live in feels so chaotic, and as Londoners, we know things aren't about to slow down anytime soon. Between the incessant stream of red buses inching forward, the endless queues at Pret and battles to survive tube rush hour, the idea of finding the time to pause for some self-reflection may seem absurd. But with a brand new decade ahead, I've never felt more ready for a new chapter; and before turning a new page, I think it's important to stop for a moment and look back on previous ones.

Does it ever feel like everything that has happened in your life up until now has all been built towards some future purpose? If you have, you've been experiencing social bricolage. Without trying to bore you or overcomplicate it, social bricolage was first introduced by social anthropologist Levi-Strauss, who noted that we essentially construct our futures from past experiences and the tools we've collected in the process. So although you may not realise your own tool-gathering taking place, you are in fact already building your future piece by piece. This can occur in a progressive way, or as a sudden complete re-evaluation: either way, whether consciously or unconsciously, this reflexivity is an essential part of everyone's lives.

As a first-year, the notion of living in London is still relatively foreign to me, and I can sense myself moving to a whole new tempo with each passing day. While at times

this can be stressful, I equally enjoy marvelling at the beautiful madness that embodies this city, and the sheer amount of opportunities for growth which are constantly thrown my way. I've had the pleasure of meeting people from all corners of the globe, enabling me to appreciate and soak up the multiculturalism that envelops UCL. The importance of taking the time to absorb and reflect on these new experiences cannot be stressed enough.

An MIT Sloan study researched how relationships formed in an environment of multiculturalism would increase individuals' creativity and mental flexibility, strengthening, in turn, their personal growth and self bricolage process. However, the study concluded that mere exposure is not enough: we cannot just 'collect' these relationships, but must actively engage in a variety of cultural experiences in order for them to build on our own personality.

When I asked Ola, a fellow Social Sciences student, what impact her multicultural friendships have had on her, she replied: "They've made me more sensitive and appreciative to differences in cultures, because if everyone's the same, it's boring! When you move from Eastern to Western Europe you start viewing your own culture like it's inferior. I've only just started getting rid of this mindset and having a healthier, more constructive approach." She admits that she rarely finds the time to self-reflect on these aspects of life: "I'm rushing forward,



come to appreciate that there's more that unites us rather than divides us."

So why is all this wishy-washy reflective stuff important? Well, 'A Conscious Rethink', a popular self-help blog, gives us the lowdown: self-reflection ensures you'll be more transparent with yourself and what you want. Figuring out your own values is a vital part of embracing 'adulthood' and constructing the life you want to lead. Additionally, your personal relationships, anxiety, stress and sleep levels will all improve, as well as decision-making and clarity of thought. For example, a study conducted by Travers, Morisano and Locke in 2014 on self-set growth goals found that university students not only become more academically stimulated through self-reflection techniques, but their self-esteem increases and their stress management capabilities improve. With these tools, they can become their own perfect 'bricoleur'.

I admit it's hard to truly stop and think in a city like London (and as a UCL student drowning in assignments), but the ability to get lost in self-reflection in the midst of all the craziness is a skill worth pursuing. Think of where you've been and where you are now – maybe this will help you define where you one day want to be.

not really looking back, not really looking where I'm rushing, just rushing." Nonetheless, despite the fast-paced nature of city life, Ola does credit London for offering her a fresh understanding of her own identity, and acknowledges that it certainly will have an impact on her future in exciting new ways.

Rebecca moved from her home country Brazil to the US at age 10 without knowing a word of English. She felt like she was "thrown into a whole new world", mainly because of "the social shift from collectivism to individualism predominant in western culture." However, as daunting as this change was at the time, in retrospect she is thankful for the adaptability skills she gained from the experience.

"You have to ascertain who you are by yourself - what do you hold onto that is essential to your identity, and what do you let go of in order to adapt?"

Adaptability is in fact a key word that has made her think differently about the future. "What I've realised is that I don't need to be stuck to a single plan - I want to do something that will one day make an impact, but right now I'm more focused on the journey and what I'm learning on the way. If we keep our heads down focused on making plans, we lose sight of how far we can go."

What has self-reflection on London's multicultural surroundings yielded for Rebecca? The realisation that "once you interact with others from all walks of life, you



# Women Within Negative Space

*text by Lydia Popplewell, photos by Iulia Topan, art by Flynn Klein*

DC's latest release, *Birds of Prey*, has recently hit cinemas, starring an all-female anti-hero ensemble. Reminiscent of the Marvel movies, the women are seen toting guns, running headfirst into violence and just generally kicking ass. Trailers and posters for the film popped up all over London in the weeks preceding and coinciding with the news of the Oscars' director category. The Academy came under fire for the lack of featured female directors for the second year running. Considering women are heavily overlooked for prestigious accolades, such as the Academy Awards, the way women are presented and heralded in this popular superhero genre begs the question: how is space being simultaneously constructed and deconstructed for feminine voices and women in cinema?

Author and historian, Malcom Gladwell, posed the following theory: the global history of patriarchal dominance within societies and cultures has led to a phenomenon known as 'moral licencing'. Throughout

history, women have been accepted and welcomed into male dominated spaces, but in each case, the acceptance has been a unique event. Gladwell gives the example of countries that have had one female head of state. Just as with the Oscars, the woman is welcomed into the male dominated arena, but such an achievement is considered to be outstanding. The only female director to take home an Oscar in the feature film category was Kathryn Bigelow for *The Hurt Locker*, a film about a bomb disposal team in Iraq. The film was rife with themes which are undeniably masculine and featured an all-male cast. The fact that in their 92-year history the Academy has only awarded one woman with an Oscar for feature film direction shows that it 'subverts' the system and the accepted norms of the institution. The Oscars is a manifestation of the theory of moral licencing, conveying that permitting an outsider allows for the continuation of the system of exclusion indefinitely.

Considering the most popular and financially



successful films of late, questions should be posed: what is the role of the female character? How are women constructed on screen? The way in which we deconstruct meaning as a society is crucial in understanding culturally accepted norms and plays a role in empowering women to enter spaces within culture and business. Throughout the 20th century, performance art was a space in which women questioned these concepts, actively challenging places that were constructed for them by the persistent paradigm of patriarchy and white supremacy. Adrian Piper's work, *Catalysis*, involved the artist travelling on the New York subway with a sock stuffed in her mouth. This public performance of socially disrupting norms was an effort to bring light to and destabilise the idea of the oppressive socially constructed space for women. Piper was aiming to prove how, especially with women of colour, that space was one of invisibility.

In a recent panel discussion, Scarlett Johansson recounted her early roles in film: "in my early 20's ... I got, somehow, typecast. I was hypersexualised ... even though it wasn't a part of my own narrative, it was kind of crafted for me by probably a bunch of dudes in the industry." Johansson truly hits the core of this argument, that women are not empowered or in control of their own representation or the construct of their own image of success. How do women take back this power and begin constructing spaces of their own? Johansson continues, saying, it was asserting herself in a famous piece of theatre, and showcasing her classical talents, that allowed her entry into more fulfilling roles that were accurately reflective of women. It seems that women must forge their own spaces in cinema in spite of the space historically constructed for them, whilst also demanding female superheroes and sexually empowering roles are part of that space.

Natalie Portman's cape made headlines due to its inscriptive decoration: on the cape were the names of the female directors who had been snubbed the academy. Lulu Wang, an Asian American director, was amongst

the names. *The Farewell* had been recognised, in many other award ceremonies, bar the Oscars; Greta Gerwig, had been recognised for her *Little Women* screenplay, but not for her direction. Both films feature women as the central characters and depict spaces and themes of domesticity, femininity, compassion, compromise and community. Noah Baumbach was nominated for his film *Marriage Story* which features a family and centres around similar themes, but he was included in the Best Director category, begging the question of why other filmmakers, who made films that were lauded by critics, were not recognised.

Over the last 5 years, three women have won Oscars in the Documentary Feature Film category. Last year, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi won alongside her husband for *Free Solo*. Although it was a film which focused on the baffling sporting achievement of a climber, it encapsulated the qualitative aspects that contributed and affected his behaviour: performance, relationships and emotions, that defined his growth within the film. The documentary categories have a reputation for representation and inclusivity in their nominees, recognising work for its complexity and controversy, and challenging norms. However, these themes seem to be only recognised in feature films when men are at the helm of the project. Are women's spaces in these categories more profitable and are challenging cinematic spaces continuously being deconstructed to keep women out of the seats of power and influence in the industry?

Is constructing a space in cinema for women to be successful only possible in less profitable sectors, and if so, how can we demand recognition and intersectionality? Perhaps by continuing to demand the voices of women be heard, imposing public civil disruption to highlight when women are overlooked and investing in cinema that is reflective of the world around us and that empowers everyone will help us to move closer to a totally inclusive cinematic space.

---



---

*“Women are not empowered or in control of their own representation or the construct of their own image of success.”*

---



---

# “I Had Nowhere to Go”: Jonas Mekas’ America

*text by Leo Glavina, art by Sandra Engardt*



Commonly referred to as the “godfather of American underground cinema”, the influence of New York based Jonas Mekas (1922–2019) can be felt on a global scale, in both narrative and documentary filmmaking. A key figure of the New York art world from the 1950s onward, Mekas films chronicle not only his life and that of his affiliate artists, but also stand as a testament of one of the most distinct cinematic languages, a voice grown from a life of constant rebellion and a yearning for home.

Born in 1922 in the village of Semeniškiai, Lithuania, Mekas grew up in poor conditions, at a time when “nothing happened,” as he described it. When he was 18,

however, the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania and Mekas began to write for underground resistance publications, a task he resumed after Nazi Germany had taken over the country.

In 1944, he fled Lithuania together with his younger brother Adolfas, fearing persecution for their activities in the resistance. Originally bound for Vienna, their train was redirected to Hamburg by the Nazis, where they ended up in a labour camp. After the end of the war, they were first sheltered in various displaced persons camps, before going on to study at the University of Mainz, a return to Lithuania impossible due to renewed Soviet

occupation. Having been denied entry to Canada and Israel, they were ultimately shipped off to the United States in 1949 on the promise of work in Chicago. Upon arriving in New York City, however, the brothers decided to stay and settled in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, moving to Manhattan two years later.

Having spent a large part of their twenties in various DP-camps with little to do but read and write, they dedicated their first few years in New York to soaking up whatever culture they could find, “like a sponge” as Mekas would often say. Similarly, it was only two weeks after their arrival that they first rented a Bolex camera and began to record their everyday surroundings, a practice that would define Mekas’ distinct cinematic language over the course of his career. Furthermore, it was at this time that they first saw the works of experimental filmmakers such as Hans Richter, Maya Deren, and Kenneth Anger, artists with whom they would come to make up the core of twentieth-century American underground cinema. Soon after, the Mekas brothers founded their own film society, then a film magazine called *Film Culture* (1954) – now considered the American response to the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* – and in 1958 Jonas became the first ever film columnist for the *Village Voice*, a position he would hold until 1971, using it primarily to champion independent cinema.

---



---

*“Mekas’ work exemplifies not only his highly positive attitude, but also the refuge he found in cinema, the solace of a man displaced for all his life.”*

---



---

Attempts at more serious filmmaking soon followed: his first two narrative features consist of 1961’s *Guns of the Trees*, a document of Beat culture, considered to be his most dramatic work, as well as 1964’s *The Brig*, a collaboration with *The Living Theatre*, whose rawness and authenticity earned it the documentary prize at that year’s Venice film festival, paradoxically. After these two films, however, Mekas began to distance himself from narrative cinema, instead embracing the distinct documentary style that would make up most of his later work, first exemplified in 1968’s *Walden* (or *Diaries, Notes, and Sketches*) a three-hour-long film diary constructed from footage of his everyday life. Apart from *Walden*, his most notable films in this vein are *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania* (1972), shot during his first visit to Lithuania after an almost 20 year-long absence; *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1976), a film diary

spanning the years from his arrival in New York until 1963; and the five-hour-long *As I Was Moving Ahead, Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses Of Beauty* (2000), an attempt to reconstruct parts of his life through a composition of home movies. In contrast to many of the artists whose creative drive originated from the hardships of World War II, Mekas’ work exemplifies not only his highly positive attitude, but also the refuge he found in cinema, the solace of a man displaced for all his life.

With that being said, film was not Mekas’ only means of expression. A bookworm from an early age, he published over 20 books of his prose and poetry during his lifetime, as well as his diaries. Along with the aforementioned works, these written diaries trace his first steps in New York, his many involvements in film societies, the founding of *Anthology Film Archives* (a centre for the preservation and exhibition of avant-garde films), as well as conversations with numerous artists affiliated to his work in one way or another. Reading up on Mekas’ life in New York during the 1960s alone offers countless vignettes that help give context to that particular period: for instance, the time Harold Pinter helped him smuggle Jean Genet’s infamous 1950 film *Un chant d’amour* past U.S. customs, as well as Mekas’ subsequent arrest for screening it at several New York venues in 1964. Moreover, he introduced Andy Warhol first to underground film, then to Lou Reed, and maintained a friendship with both Jackie Kennedy, teaching her children to operate a film camera, as well as Yoko Ono and John Lennon, drinking espresso with them the night they moved to New York City in 1971.

Towards the end of his life, Mekas might have seemed less active due to his age, but was nevertheless chasing projects, giving talks, and putting on one exhibition after another, maintaining the same care and affection that marked his work in cinema. He also continued to voice his opinions on the art world as he did during his time as a film critic, though always keeping his positive attitude and distinct Lithuanian accent. In one of the last interviews before his death, for example, he mentioned his idea of the “shadow line”, a term inspired by the eponymous Joseph Conrad novella. According to Mekas, today’s art world is largely in a state of retrospection and constant respect for what has come before, that is, we are still “after the shadow line”. What Mekas was looking for, thence, was another cultural explosion, another break in art with a similar impact as that of the 60s. Whether such a turn of comparable severity and concentration can still take place in western society, however, is questionable, a world so inundated with information and distractions, our goal often just some peace of mind before anything else.

# The Music of London

## GRIME

'Grime is a way to vent, a way to express yourself. It's a form of release. Grime is still developing and defining itself, and I think it can only go from strength to strength'

-Rage from SlewDem Crew.

Grime music evolved directly out of, and in opposition to rap music in London in the early 2000's and has since become a potent and popular art form. It is a predominantly British commodity, prizing content about London and the experiences of young people in a gritty urban city. The style traditionally has around 140 beats per minute, focusing on syncopated 'breakbeats' for the main rhythm, a style of electronic/dance music that itself utilises genres of the past such as jazz, R&B and funk.

Grime artists often desire to distance themselves from traditional 'rap' music. Akala says in his song Shakespeare 'Don't ever compare me to rappers/ I'm so quick-witted that I split em like fractions'. There certainly is a need to define themselves against what has come before even whilst building on the influences of the past. These older influences include UK jungle and garage music, as well as hip-hop and R&B from America. Grime is not just a combination of different musical genres but also of countries and their cultures. A main influence on current Grime music is an Afro-Caribbean music, including reggae and dance-hall. Reggae music widely proliferated in the UK music charts in the 80s, coinciding with a movement of acceptance towards the mixing of cultures and influences. Those of the Windrush generation, from 1948 to 1970 were more integrated into society and thus so was the music they brought from Jamaica.

The standout artists from the Grime movement are Wiley, Skepta, Stormzy and Dizzie Rascal. Wiley has been coined the 'godfather of grime' and Skepta is not just a performer but a producer too. His most recent album 'Konnichiwa' not only takes inspiration from the past but references another culture even in the title. Grime has the ability to represent not only one's own culture but to look outside yourself and take influences

from other places. Stormzy is probably the most well-known grime artist of all time and works to promote black culture and black opportunity through his music, being both political and powerful. Dizzie Rascal's album 'Boy in da Corner' was a breakthrough, winning the Mercury Prize in 2003 and has since been transformed into a theatre show 'Poet in da Corner' at the Royal Court. Kano writes in his song This is England that he's from 'where reggie Kray got rich as f\*\*k', and that in England 'you can be a villain or a victim'. Kano proves that although taking influences from various countries and cultures, Grime is in fact very London-centric, it is the place where it was birthed and that is where its heart lies.

*text by Olivia Olphin*

## JAZZ

Jazz originated from New Orleans, in the United States, emerging from the African-American communities who bonded traditional and popular music as well as European tunes. A remarkable blend of the New World and the Old, with America and Europe amalgamated in a genre that's best known for improvisation at its finest. It's then no wonder that circa 1920s-1930s, it travelled, like many people of multicultural backgrounds, to the United Kingdom. What does this mean for music in a country like Great Britain? Why do we still enjoy jazz today, frequent jazz bars, clubs, festivals?

It's because jazz represents movement: the diachronic, dynamic musical movement of the different instruments (piano, horns, double bass, drums) of a unique cacophony, and also the movements of people, whose imprint has changed and is changing the jazz scene, much like the ever-changing harmonies of jazz. Even the origins of its name, *jasm*, signifies "pep, energy."

Jazz is a burst of energy, a flexible genre with a lack of inhibition, rules and strict conventions that pigeon-hole other genres. A jazz song is like poetry. And it has adapted with our times just as poetry has. In each era since its birth, jazz has commingled with its new hosts. The huge influx of Caribbean immigrants from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados into the United

Kingdom after World War 2 inevitably changed the culture of this country- not to mention British jazz.

The Windrush Generation of Joe Harriot, Harold McNair, among others, let jazz roam freely. With their ideas of the abstract and free verse, Jazz became like modernist poetry, fitting to the "pep" of the 60s, the smooth freeness of the 70s and continues today as an ever-changing, experimental genre.

How can something that seems as disjointed, blended and well-travelled as jazz still be in favour today? The London Jazz Festival and famous Ronnie Scott's Jazz bar are still widely popular. I'd wager that its uninterrupted popularity is founded on its jumbled, fragmented constitution. It was born in a time of division, but somewhere along the line, after much travelling, much fracturing and experimentation, it became the unifying symbol of a cosmopolitan culture. When we peel back the multicultural layers of jazz, we'd see that it's very similar to London's own culture of united difference.

*text by Kirese Narinesingh*

## SPOKEN WORD

Invigorating, testing, liberating, empowering: Spoken word blankets a wide range of genres and forms from poetry slams to poetry readings, prose monologues to hip hop, musically accompanied or unaccompanied. The deep connection drawing a link between these diverse works comes from an inherent and unstoppable pleasure taken from the sound of words. Having started with the first humans' utterances to the now vastly popular and ever expanding spoken word scene, the genre has developed alongside the evolution of storytelling. A space in which individuals can share their thoughts and feelings to ear pleasing rhythmic pentameter, spoken word is used by many artists to explore, create and solidify community and individual identities.

Spoken word has been most recently popularised by Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution will not be Televised"



African-American community, Scott-Heron expounds how the "revolution" cannot be televised and so must occur within a different space away from the crazed commercialism of 1970s America. As he so famously explained within the poem "The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal / The revolution will not get rid of your nubs / The revolution will not make you look five pounds thinner". Speaking in a later interview, Scott-Heron explains that "The revolution takes place in your mind. Once you change your mind and decide that there's something wrong that you want to effect that's when the revolution takes place." It is not something to be bought or shown off but internalised and deep. Such a profound comment could only have been effectively conveyed by the form of the spoken word.

Similarly up-and-coming British poet, Kate Tempest, uses language set to hypnotic beats to comment about the state of Britain post-Brexit in her piece 'Europe lost'. Explaining the sense of loneliness, futility and fickleness of modern society, the poem seems both a personal account of Tempest's fear for the future and her desperation with the society she sees around her. It is a wider comment on the social ills that need to be addressed collectively. Whether that be the warming climate, the unhealthy desire for physical perfection or police brutality, "Europe Lost" points at all the nation's faults in an attempt to raise awareness and enact change.

And so through spoken word the very personal process of writing poetry is shared and experienced with the society as a whole. Whilst reading poetry is a similar experience, one cannot compare it to hearing the anger, fear or excitement within the voice of the writer. No matter the diversity of the cultures or causes who use spoken word, the effects are the same. Inherently anti-establishment and political, spoken word allows for a candid and uncensored comment on the prevailing social order. An interesting intersection between literature, music, hip hop and traditional poetry, spoken word uses the intensely personal act of storytelling to explore and solidify the community's identity.



text by *Laura Toms*

art by *Jennifer Oguguo*

## PIECE BY



"HMLTD is a band and they had an album launch last Friday. I didn't really know anyone but everyone was well dressed. I went through a few weeks of dressing down because I was tired and then I got out of it."



"It's Valentine's day but I happen to have a lot of red in my closet. It's a powerful colour. This red coat and the hat is my favourite. I'm always wearing something on my head because that's my vibe."



"My favourite colour is lilac purple, so I wanted to wear this puffer jacket. I like vivid colours, and this is my favourite bag because every colour is vivid. It's from United Colours of Benetton, and I received it as my birthday present from my friend in January. I always wear strong colours: red, orange and green."

# PIECE

text and photos by Zaya Gundalai  
art by Christelle Troost



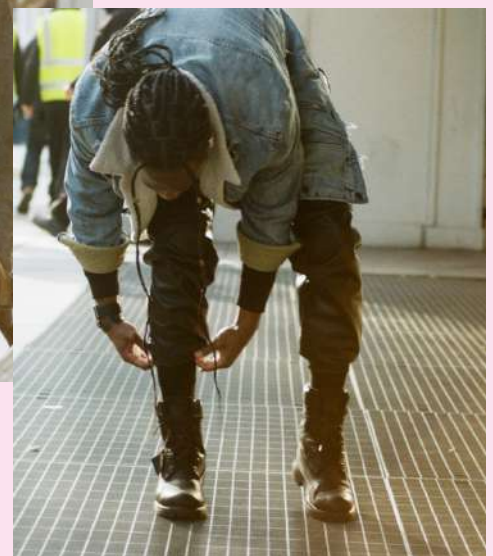
"I was wearing a Star Wars T-shirt, so I've got a Star Wars belt and I like colour-coordination, so the pink. I redye my hair every two weeks using this semi-permanent dye. I like the colour of my jacket and how it matches my hair. The song 'Watermelon Sugar' by Harry Styles would best describe my outfit."



"I come from Paris so this is all about the Parisian style: something classy and casual, like you try but not too much. Definitely my coat is my favourite piece. It's pretty unusual but I can wear it every day."



"My inspiration for my outfit today came from myself. I know these leather pants are back in fashion. This jacket I designed myself. I copped the Levi jacket from Levi Regent's street, cut it up, did the designs on the sides and spent about three hours on it. I did all the back distressing, everything a year ago. It's one of my favourite pieces because it's a little bit more me. Got a Fendi ring, Louis necklace, Fendi pants came out two weeks ago. Got my hair done recently as well so I'm feeling myself."



# Science

## CHEMISTRY

Chemical bond formation and dissociation was filmed at the atomic scale for the first time by scientists at the University of Nottingham and the University of Ulm. They used transmission electron microscopy to observe dirhenium molecules in a graphitic nano-test tube. Metal-metal bond character is of great importance for catalysis, and this research took our understanding a step further, revealing a new bonding state in this molecule before the bond breaking. The team hopes that directly following chemical reactions via transmission electron microscopy will become as common and powerful a technique for studying them as currently used spectroscopic methods.

*text by Kristina Kostadinova*

## INFECTION

According to the World Health Organisation, in 2017 alone there were 219 million cases of malaria and 435,000 deaths. This is why a promising report, published in Nature, on human trials of a new malaria vaccine is so exciting. 32 volunteers in a double blind placebo trial were given isolates of Plasmodium falciparum surface protein 1. It was found that those who had the vaccine had high levels of malaria specific IgG and IgM antibodies in their blood for 6 months after the injection, which is comparable to semi immune individuals. Although this is still in the early stages, it is an exciting new route to explore in response to malaria.

*text by Abigail Spreadbury*

## PHYSICS

What excites me in science right now is the exploration of Jupiter by NASA's space probe, Juno. In a highly-elliptical polar orbit between 4200km and 8100000km away from the planet, Juno has sent back breathtaking photos of Jupiter, my favourite being those of Jupiter's South pole. It is surprising what odd, otherworldly beauty can be produced by the hard, cold laws of physics in the form of immense, swirling storms, resplendent with bands of striking colour produced by the different components of Jupiter's atmosphere. Juno is also helping to answer fundamental questions about the beginning of the Solar system.

*text by Derek Sim*

## GENETICS

Last October, the development of the groundbreaking prime genome editing technique raised enthusiasm both within and outside the scientific community for its promising results and potential applications to treat disease. Building on the conventional CRISPR-Cas9 system, David Liu and colleagues at the Broad Institute demonstrated reduced off-target effects and increased precision in correcting disease-causing mutations using this new method, including for Tay-Sachs disease. Even though many questions remain elusive, these are undoubtedly exciting times for genome editing!

*text by Maria Carreira*

# Roundup

## ENVIRONMENT

In February 2020, a collaboration between electrical engineer Jun Yao and microbiologist Derek Lovley at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, produced a device capable of power generation from the humidity in air. Made from conductive protein nanowires, harvested from *G. sulfurreducens*, contacted with electrodes and exposed to humid air, each device produces a sustained 0.5V. The current and voltage generated can be scaled up by linking these to one another. Unlike other means of generating power renewably, this method does not depend on specific environmental conditions, and so has broad potential applications and is capable of continuous energy harvesting.

*text by Emily Hufton*

## DRUG DISCOVERY

February 2020 saw the first successes of a novel approach to antibiotic development. Machine learning was used by a team of researchers at MIT to screen a pool of millions of molecules for antibiotic properties. Halicin, a powerful antibiotic which combats a wide range of previously untreatable bacteria, is the first to be discovered using AI. This is particularly significant as, despite the rising concern of antibiotic resistance claiming more lives each year, development and approval of new antibiotics has slowed in recent years. There are even hopes that this approach could be extended to the discovery of other drugs in future, such as those combatting neurodegeneration and cancer.

*text by Emily Hufton*



## PSYCHOLOGY

Every university student reading this right now can relate to the concept of stress: the overwhelming feeling of having too many essays, too many exams and too little money to cope. But what if stress could be cured? We know there's a link between the immune system, inflammation and depression, but what if anti-inflammatory drugs could cure stress and PTSD? In 2016, Rebecca Brachman at Columbia University in New York found that treating mice with ketamine cured symptoms of stress in those suffering from PTSD. Research is now being carried out into developing a vaccination which harnesses the principle of this to combat stress and PTSD. Would being vaccinated against stress make us all happier - or would we be unproductive and lazy? Wait a few years and maybe we will see.

*text by Elisha Malik*

*photos by Pietro Sambuy*

# The Dangerous World of Social Constructs

text by Isabelle Osborne, photo by Yuval Caspi

Gender. Race. Beauty. Femininity. Masculinity. Money. Marriage. Valentine's Day.

In times gone by, these concepts have been seen as existing in an objective reality, things that already existed and should therefore be upheld as the truth. However, these are products of human invention; products society has constructed to make us believe they are everyday truths. These constructs develop into what is considered 'the norm'.

Having invented the world we live in today: society is actively manufactured by us human beings. If anything, such constructs are valued for how they allow us to make sense of the world - it is how people are differentiated. We have constructed a distinction between nature and nurture, yet nurture only exists as a representation of the codes society has laid out.

Social constructs create a suffocating reality which tells us what to think of certain individuals and communities. This leads to the development of hostility across different societies who hold different views to one another.

When behaviour is dictated by the constructs society determines, humans become governed by ideals that seek to divide. As a result, some people end up on the opposite side of what society deems as acceptable. Such is evident in race and gender debates prior to the 21st century. The Suffrage movement was a reaction to the belief that women were inferior to men, whilst the Civil Rights movement fought against the perception that white skin

made an individual superior to those with black skin. Social constructs are only as strong as we allow them to be, and can be destroyed by a little determination and will.

Whilst many of these issues have been rehabilitated and the wounds of the past are beginning to heal, social media has expanded to such an extent that one of its major roles in society has become one of driving and validating certain social constructs that threaten to undermine the progress that has been made. For example, a rise in negative perceptions of body image in recent years, can in part be attributed to the damaging concepts of modern beauty promoted by social media sites like Instagram: young adults, particularly women, often actively modify their behaviour and appearance to fit the standards of attractiveness.

When we don't fit the mould society constructs for us, we become outsiders. We believe we are doing something wrong, that we are 'weird', that we will never be accepted. The damage social constructs do is clearer today than it has ever been before.

Society needs to work to eliminate what we have constructed for ourselves. In a world where scientific and technological advancements beyond comprehension are being made, propelling society towards a brighter future, we are simultaneously taking steps backwards as we fashion an ideal world for ourselves that sees humans lose touch with reality.

---



---

*Social constructs are only as strong as we allow them to be, and can be destroyed by a little determination and will.*

---



---





**Segmentation**  
A column is divided in to different parts by the glass wall. - Stella Liu, UCL PhotoSoc

## 2019/20 Committee

**President:** Livvie Hall  
**Treasurer:** George Glover  
**Online EICs:** Matilda Singer & Joe Kenelm  
**Magazine EICs:** Kinzah Khan & Vanessa Tsao  
**PITV EIC:** Dom Borghino  
**Marketing Officer:** Rajiv Sinha  
**Social Media Officer:** Assel Issayeva  
**Events Officers:** Chloe Rossington & Roma Rodriguez  
**Design Officer:** Kezhu Wang  
**Photography Officer:** Yuval Caspi  
**Welfare Officer:** Georgie Bartlett  
**Diversity and Inclusion Officer:** Maisie Lee

## Section Editors

<b>News</b> Anna Vall Naves Mia Lui Raphael Jacobin	<b>Opinion</b> Izabela Zawartka Nik Koch Zoe West-Taylor
<b>Features</b> Connie Hatt Emily Schone Olivia Ward-Jackson	<b>Science</b> Emily Hufton
<b>Lifestyle</b> Emma Ippolito Jessica Maya Jones Tuula Petersen	<b>Culture</b> Kirese Narinesingh Laura Toms Olivia Olphin

Special thanks to UCL Photography Society!

## Get Involved!

Whether you're interested in writing, editing, video editing, reporting, design, photography and more, Pi Media will have a place for you! If you would like to get involved, please contact us on our social media or email one of our team members!

Visit our website: [www.uclpimedia.com](http://www.uclpimedia.com)

Follow us on:

      @uclpimedia

Back Cover: Underground, Stockholm

During the summer, I had the opportunity to see why the Stockholm Metro has often been described as "the world's longest art gallery." As a collaboration between architects, artists and engineers, its installations bring unexpected materials and motifs together. I found Kungsträdgården to be the most memorable, boasting colourful mosaics, cast sculptures and an exposed rock face - a bold and brazen bricolage! - Danielle Sargeant, UCL PhotoSoc



*Magazine*  
*Spring/Summer 2020*  
*COVID-19*