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CANCEL CULTURE	IIO)
DEMOCRACY IN THE WORKPLACE	TB
LO CORRECTO A HACER	22
THE UNCOMMON EXPERIENCE	26
MY RIGHT TO CHOOSE	<u> 30</u>
PUSHING THROUGH	32
UN RESPIRO	<b>DB</b>
BEAN & BEAN	<i>B8</i>
LILIES AND CLOWNS	
KEEPING ME ON MY TOES	A.
KEEPING TRADITIONS ALIVE	<i>50</i>
NOSTALGIA BAITING	5A
KIMBERELLA	53
PHOTO SERIES BY CECILIA GARZA	<b>62</b>
DIARY OF AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS	BI
REVENGE OF THE RAGZ	





A COMMUNITY OF CURATED CLOTHING VENDORS	90
THE RETURN OF ACL	DB
TUFT	102
SGA Q & A	TO E
CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS	
EVE & EVE	TIB
OREJAS WERE YOUR FAVORITE	TTO
SEE YOU AGAIN IN SPACE	122
MERCURY IN RETROGRADE	126
HOROSCOPE JAMS WITH PULSE	123
TIKTOK SERIES	1130
UNTITLED	132
UN DIA ESPECIAL	1133
DEJA VU	
LO BELLO DE MI VALLE	142
POLAROIDS	150



When my staff and I first discussed themes for Pulse 007, we thought about "metamorphosis." After all, one year into a global pandemic, we all needed hope that a beautiful transformation was in store for us and our readers. If our beautiful Rio Grande Valley can be home to the transformative monarch butterflies, maybe our issue could reflect that change in ourselves.

Yet, as the fall semester unfolded, we found ourselves wanting to connect with our past. There hadn't been some great change that restored everything. Instead, we found ourselves reminiscing about our childhoods and wondering if we had lost connections to who we were before we experienced something so rare as a society. We weren't clinging to the past but recognizing its lessons, its mistakes, its beauty, its flaws and its impact on who we are today.

We felt nostalgic about yesterdays, and you can feel that emotion in this issue. It's in our stories, and it's in our hearts.

Reconnecting to our past does not prohibit us from growing. In fact, one staff member said learning to love our nostalgia allows us to commence a rebirth. We can choose what previous parts of us we would like to carry throughout the rest of our lives.

As I write this, I am closer and closer to graduating. At the end of this semester, I will start a new chapter of my life. What it will be, I'm not sure. While my future may be unclear right now, I know I will look back at memories of 2021 and some of 2022 and feel waves of nostalgia about Pulse and my staff members.

I will miss discussing journalism documentaries as a team, hearing about UTRGV students' different music tastes through "What Are You Listening To? With Carlos and Priscylla" and talking about each other's horoscope compatibility. I am incredibly thankful to each staff member, and I hope they know their efforts went above and beyond what was expected. May you all love this issue as much as I do.





To the full-time Student Media staff, I am also grateful. Our faculty adviser, Dr. Aje-ori Agbese, was amazing in every step of the way. When it got hard, she was there for us with a calm and steady voice. Azenett Cornejo, Student Media director, and Jesus Sanchez, program adviser, ensured we thrived as well with every phone call and check-in. Maggie and Ana, our administrative assistants, thank you for everything you do for the entire program, too. Without each of them and without this department, this magazine issue would not exist.

To my family, words aren't enough to thank you all, but thank you all so much. You all were right. I did become a writer. Los quiero mucho.

Now, I thank you, reader. By picking up a copy, you have allowed us to share a part of who we are this year. You might feel our wistfulness and maybe it will cause a longing from your own past. Maybe you'll remember your favorite song as a child or what you always wanted to be when you grew up. Whatever you are nostalgic for, make sure it's worth missing. You might find out that part of your past remains with you forever.

Con amor, Sol Meztli Garcia



# CANCEL CULTURE

#### By SOL MEZTLI GARCIA

"Did you hear Ellen got canceled?!" Another celebrity?!

It feels like every month, there's a new celebrity who has been "canceled." One of them said the n-word; one was caught sexting minors; another's racist Facebook page was

ability from public figures." Cancel culture was built on the idea that celebrities and well-known figures should not be allowed to profit from their abusive or morally wrong behaviors.

In 2016, the #MeToo movement brought attention to sex crimes in all workplaces, especially in Hollywood. According to BBC News' timeline tracking his charges and allegations made against him, Harvey Weinstein, a Hollywood producer, was charged for raping and sexually assaulting women in March 2020. As he began serving his sentence, four other women said he had sexually assaulted them. He used his position and power to manipulate these wom-

disc o v ered. A never-ending cycle.

Yet, that cycle is necessary. Cancel culture may often be criticized but when used appropriately, it is a way to ensure household names are not taking their followers for granted or profiting off abuse.

According to Merriam Webster, canceling originated from the "conversations prompted by #MeToo and other movements that demand greater account-

As the survivors started to tell their truths, Weinstein became "canceled" before he was found guilty by the court. Consequently, people went online to encourage boycotting his films, a common action under cancel culture. He put these women through immeasurable pain. The least people could do was not support him financially. Right?

In March 2020, Harvey Weinstein was finally held accountable for his actions and sentenced to 23 years in prison. Before his sentencing, he was removed from his movie company, The Weinstein Co. To the world, this proved the #MeToo movement was successful, and it marked the beginning of cancel culture as we know it today.

World-famous author, J.K. Rowling, most known for writing the Harry Potter series, is another canceled figure. She has been labeled a "trans-exclusionary radical feminist" or a terf. Although Rowling has repeatedly said she is passionate about women's rights, she has tweeted several posts that people considered harmful to the transgender community. For instance, after an opinion piece on Devex.com used the term "people who menstruate," Rowling said the authors should have used women instead. Her exact words were, "People who menstruate.' I'm sure there used to be a word for those people? Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?" When people explained why this was harmful wording, she did not back down from her statement. Acts like that are the reason people, including myself, have stopped purchasing official Harry Potter merchandise. Instead, we will buy handmade merch from small businesses on Etsy or other sites. This way, she does not receive a dime.

However, many people have criticized this form of boycotting. "They are making billions anyway. You don't hurt them at all by refusing to buy from them." They may be right. That celebrity may be

making thousands of dollars a day, but they will not be making that from me. My hard-earned money will not fund someone who refuses accountability.

#### Accountabilty

Cancel culture is based the on premise of countability. C way to bar a person is not a from selfgrowth. That's where many may distort the original purpose of this ongoing movement. For Weinstein, that accountability required being legally held responsible. As for Rowling, people took the time to educate her on the subject so she could be accountable for her transphobic tweet and ensure she did not perpetuate any further harm. She chose not to.

Wealth and status should not excuse public responsibility, even if that person is a musical genius or an amazing star.

Pop sensation Billie Eilish is a prominent example of people avoiding responsibility.

Last summer during Pride Month, Eilish was accused of queerbaiting or implying she may be queer without confirmation to appeal to the LGBTQ+ community. She had posted photos of her and other women from one of her music videos in what some considered suggestive poses with the caption, "i love girls." LGBTQ+ community members explained how that was queerbaiting. For days, her social media platforms were full of disappointed and reprimanding One comment said, comments. "So now we're fetishising lesbians? Whoa..." It did not help that around the same time, she was spotted kissing a man who used to post racist and homophobic speech. Additionally, videos from when she was a child surfaced online where she used a slur against the Asian community and seemed to be making fun of their culture.

Regarding the videos, Eilish posted an apology on her Instagram Story. She explained she had been young and ignorant about the slur at the time and that she also had not been mimicking the community but speaking "gibberish" in one of the clips.

She wrote, "Regardless of my ignorance and age at the time, nothing excuses the fact is that it was hurtful. And for that I am sorry."

Nevertheless, many people were upset that she saw the criticism she received for her actions and she never acknowledged or apologized to the LGBTQ+ community, like she did to the Asian community.

#### The Necessity of Cancel Culture

Although cancel culture is said to be thriving, is it really?

Eilish's sophomore album, "Happier Than Ever," which was released after her controversies, topped several Billboard charts for weeks. The star even released a concert film for the album with Disney+.

As hurtful as she may have been to the LGBTQ+ community through her queerbaiting and association with her ru-

mored boyfriend, Eilish did not seem to face any impactful consequences.

Should Eilish be canceled and boycotted for a caption and a relationship? No. Her rumored boyfriend has apologized for his wrong actions from the past, and second chances should be given.

However, Eilish cannot be forgiven if her actions are not acknowledged by her or media consumers.

It is not a question of whether cancel culture is necessary. Rather, it is about whether it is being used appropriately.

The canceling of DaBaby last August represents the movement at its most effective. When DaBaby spread false information and made homophobic comments about HIV/AIDs, he was quickly dropped from music collaborations and music festivals while simultaneously facing backlash. DaBaby released an apology via Instagram. Hopefully, the rapper truly learned from his wrongdoings.





#### Selectiveness in Cancel Culture

Those who demand accountability from public figures must remember their activism cannot be selective. That means, our favorite musicians, actors and other media moguls must also be held accountable when they have done wrong.

The Kardashian-Jenner family has been the target of canceling several times, especially for their instances of cultural appropriation. Instances include Kim Kardashian wearing cornrows to award shows, and little sister Kendall Jenner's tequila campaign that appropriated Mexican culture. Some of the tequila bottles did not even follow basic Spanish syntax.

Although the Kardashian-Jenner family may be reproached for their behavior by non-supporters, it's plainly not enough. Their fans' loyalty is enough to overcome any accountability demanded of them, as proven by their 2020 multi-year contract for a new reality show with Disney and Hulu.

Another prominent example is Canadian rapper Drake. When teen actress Millie Bobby Brown revealed a few years ago that she and Drake regularly texted and discussed about Brown's "boy problems," the internet reacted negatively and called the situation inappropriate. Loyal fans refused to accept his canceled status though, and many people seemed to forget about the entire ordeal. In fact, Forbes reported Drake's sixth and most recent album, "Certified Lover Boy," had about 743 million plays in its first week and debuted as No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Backlash over the 35-year-old's history with underaged girls did resurface though, combined with the fact that R. Kelly had received songwriting credit for that album. But clearly not enough people were upset about the singer's actions.

Billie Eilish, the Kardashians, Drake

and many othproblematic
celebrities
may produce
amazing music,
contribute to the
biggest trends or practice philanthropy, but that
doesn't mean they should not
answer for their actions. Public
figures need to be held accountable,
even if they are our role models.

If people claim to care about accountability, they must ensure that also applies to their favorites.

Besides, don't these celebrities owe us basic human decency? If we are directly putting money into their pockets, whether it be via streams, merchandise sales or promotion, do we not have a right to ask them to recognize how their actions may be harmful and correct their behaviors?

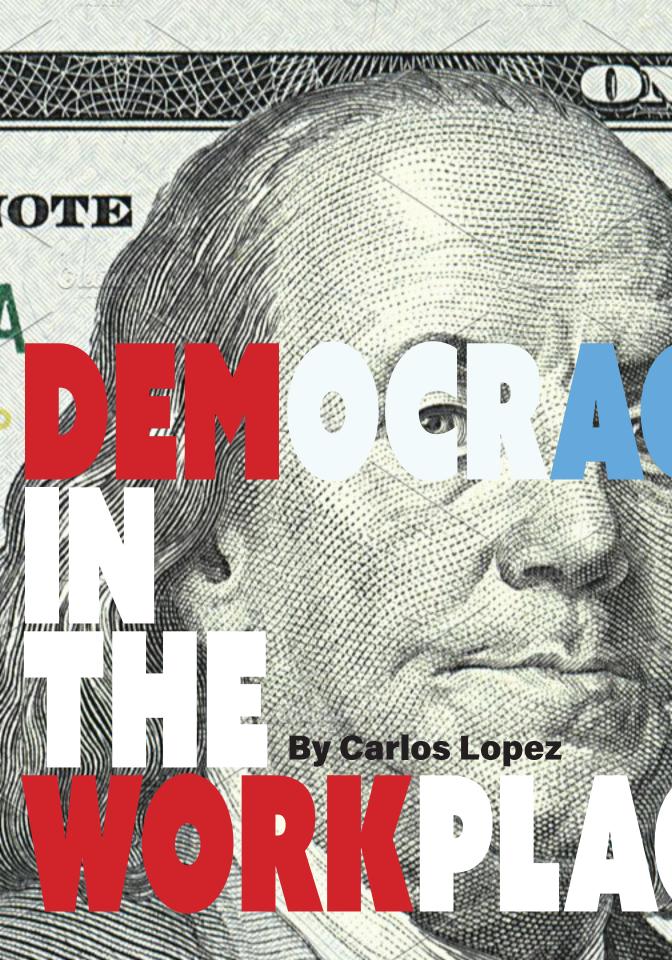
Instead of continuing to allow celebrities and well-known figures avoid responsibility, we need to keep them liable for their actions. Before they can profit off of our support, they must earn it first. For if they do not, let us hope they can gracefully accept their canceled status.

Photo By Daniel Gonzalez-Franco











In some businesses, there is an expectation that when you are hired, you will show up and shut up. You cannot ask questions about the tasks you are assigned and have no real say in the direction of the company. However, not all businesses are like this. One such business is a worker cooperative or co-op.

According to Mark Kaswan, an associate professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley whose area of study includes co-ops, a worker co-op is "a business that is owned and governed by the people who work there."

According to community-wealth. org, there are about 465 worker co-ops in the United States. Most of them are found in the childcare, retail, homecare and professional services industries. In its most basic form, it is a democratically run workplace. If you work at a worker co-op, you own part of the company. You can also vote on executive decisions and elect others for executive positions.

Andi Shively, the operation manager at Key Figures, a co-op-run financial management firm based in Austin, Texas, said, "We actively give everybody on staff the opportunity to be an owner. With that ownership comes the opportunity to share in the profits of the business and to guide the direction that [the company] would go in."

## TYORKOR COURTENING AND MICHER RESIGNATION

Worker co-ops have several benefits over conventional firms. For one, worker co-ops can handle economic turbulence better than a conventional firm.

"[Co-ops] tend to not grow as fast

as traditional businesses, but in down-turns, they are less likely to lay workers off," Kasawan said.

When there is a drop in the economy, companies have to do everything they can to stay afloat. When they fail and cannot afford to keep their employees, especially during a recession, such companies fire their workers to survive.

According to a study conducted by the National Statistical Office of Canada, during the worst months of the economic recession of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average monthly layoff rate was 12.4% compared to 2.5% just 10 years prior.

How do co-ops differ? Because coops are collectively managed, workers can agree to take a temporary cut from their pay until the economy stabilizes. This means that the company can keep the same workforce economic throughout the downfall. According to a 2019 census study by the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, U.S. small business worker co-ops that are between 6 years to 10 years old have a 25.6% average success rate. By comparison, businesses have traditional small an 18.7% average success rate. Additionally,

U.S. small business coops that are 26 years and older have a 14.7% success rate, compared to 11.9% for traditional firms.

"Evidence suggests that worker co-op start-ups have lower failure rates than most small businesses, in part because of the way risk is distributed and the willingness of workers to sacrifice to ensure the survival of the company through difficult times," Kaswan explained.

Worker co-ops also seem to outperform traditionally run companies

when it comes to resilience and success rates. But how do they compare when it comes to worker productivity and the overall wellbeing of the workers?

#### TYDREDR PRODUCTIVITY AND TYPLE—

Kaswan said traditionally run firms, especially big corporations, are unlikely to prioritize the welfare of workers.

"A large corporation that is owned by stockholders whose only interest in the company is to make money off of it is unlikely to consider the well-being of its workers, its consumers or the communities in which it operates," he said.

In a traditionally run workplace, workers do not have a stake in the company they work for. Take, for example, people who work at a fast-food restaurant. If they are paid at a fixed rate and they know the exact amount of work that is necessary to not get fired, why would they put any effort into working harder? It does not benefit them at all because they are already getting paid. This is the problem with traditional workplaces. The relationship between the worker and the employer is skewed.

Contrastingly, worker co-ops are run by workers, so their well-being is a point of focus. For example, the mission of Key Figures includes providing "the highest possible quality jobs to staff," Shively said. If we continue the fast-food analogy, in a worker co-op, the employee would own a part of that company. This means that if the company does better overall, they will be paid better, creating a direct incentive to

work harder.

Shively added, "The thing too, when we have a big profitable year ... a big chunk of that money goes back into the pockets of everybody who's chosen to become a member via patronage rebate."

According to commonmarket.coop, each year that the co-op is profitable, owners receive a patronage rebate, which is the amount of money you get back at the end of the fiscal year based on how much you spent at the co-op.

#### CEDAY

One of the most surprising and beneficial aspects of worker co-ops is fair wages and worker compensation. In a 2018 study, the Democracy at Work Institute and the U.S. Federation of Worker co-ops found that the average pay for a worker at these co-ops was \$19.67 an hour. In addition, these workers received an average of \$8, 241 when the business's surplus was divided among the members.

In a traditionally run company, who gets to decide the difference between the CEO's pay and the workers' pay? While it is not always the case, the worker-to-CEO pay ratio is often set by one person or a board of executives.

"The average wages at worker co-ops are usually higher than regular businesses because there is less need for supervision," Kawan said. "According to the Economic Policy Institute, the average CEO-to-worker ratio in the United States is 351 to 1, and that is just the average. According to a 2018 study by [former] Minnesota congressman Keith Ellison, CEO-to-worker pay ratio can go upwards of 5,000 to 1."

TE

The ethics of worker co-ops becomes clear when you compare these ratios to that of corporations. The CEO-to-worker pay ratio at Mondragon, the largest co-op in the world, averages from 6:1 to 9:1. Most worker co-ops in the United States have a similar pay ratio.

Additionally, because worker co-ops are democratically run by the workers, fair wages are always a focus at the forefront of discussion. At Key Figures, the staff strives to improve wages for its employees, said Shively.

"We're always focused on improving wages," she said.

#### DOWNSIDES

So, are worker co-ops the perfect system? Well, no. Like any business under capitalism, it has its problems. Co-ops are not as popular as regular firms, so investors are hesitant to help them, especially if there is no voting power associated with it.

In addition, "because they are unfamiliar to most banks, it can be hard for worker co-ops to get the financing they need to start up," Kaswan said.

Being part of a co-op also adds responsibilities to any job title, as the financial and social decisions of that company are now in your hands. This is something that may not be attractive to everyone. A worker who goes into a job is not necessarily educated in what it takes to run a business and would much rather skip the executive responsibilities.

"To be a member of a worker coop requires a willingness to share in [the] responsibility for the success or failure of the business," Kaswan said.

## TYPURB LOOK SCHOOL SCHO

Despite these challenges, worker co-ops may have a hopeful future for the American working class. "Two-thirds of small businesses in the U.S. are owned by Baby Boomers ... looking to retire soon. But there are substantial tax and other incentives in place (that are not well-known) to encourage business owners to sell the business to their employees," Kaswan said. These incentives mean there is hope for many small businesses in the United States to transition into worker-owned co-ops.

"The development of worker co-ops in the Rio Grande Valley, in particular, one of the poorest regions of the U.S., could have very positive impacts on the local economy and on the well-being of the people who live here. Something that would really help would be the development of a support infrastructure to help either convert existing businesses or help workers start their own businesses as co-ops. The UTRGV Texas Rural Cooperative Center has been moving toward developing that, but progress has been slow," Kaswan said.

There is no denying the importance of structure in a business. Organization is key to the efficient production of a good or service. Although the world has changed immensely since the industrial revolution and the creation of capitalism, America has seen little to no change in the way these business structures are handled.

As corporations get larger and CEOs get richer, it is important to keep the focus on the people who actually make everything possible. The workers.











#### Lo Correcto a Hacer

By Hania Rocio / Translation by Fatima Gamez Lopez / Photography by Carlos Lopez

BROWNSVILLE, Texas- La Serie de Oradores Distinguidos de la Universidad de Texas Rio Grande Valley, presentó a John Quiñones, presentador de "What Would You Do?" de ABC el 21 de septiembre del 2021 en el campus de Brownsville.

Quiñones es autor, periodista televisión galardonado orador motivacional. Según su página web, "What Would You Do?' es su última fase en una carrera de noticias televisivas que abarca 35 años." El recibió el premio Lifetime Achievement Award (Premio a la Trayectoria) de la National Hispanic Media Coalition (Coalición Nacional de Medios Hispanos) y el premio Guerra Lifetime Achievement Award (Premio Guerra a la

Trayectoria) de la Asociación de Periodistas Hispanos de San Antonio.

En UTRGV, Quiñones habló sobre su popular programa "What Would You Do?" Según las Noticias ABC, utilizando cámaras ocultas, John Quiñones observa y comenta cómo se comporta la gente común cuando se enfrenta a dilemas que les obligan a tomar medidas o pasar de largo y ocuparse de sus propios asuntos.

Él dijo: "Todo se trata de hacer lo correcto. Todos nosotros enfrentamos estos dilemas morales y éticos todos los días en nuestras vidas sin importar lo que hagamos para ganarnos la vida."

Quiñones dijo que en las etapas iniciales del programa pensó que solo estaría



haciendo algunos escenarios. Sin embargo, desde 2008, el programa ha tenido más de 137 episodios.

Además, Quiñones habló sobre los problemas actuales de inmigración y los crímenes de odio hacia las minorías que ocurren en los Estados Unidos. También habló sobre el tiroteo en Walmart en El Paso, Texas, ocurrido en el 2019.

"Repito, el presunto tirador, no venía de México ni de otro país. Vino del norte de Texas, decidido a matar a los que llamó invasores," dijo Quiñones. "Me sorprende que estemos construyendo todos estos muros y todas estas cercas a lo largo de la frontera, pero en mi humilde opinión, deberíamos estar construyendo puentes."

Quiñones también les dijo a los estudiantes que todos los días las personas enfrentan dilemas éticos y que les sucede "especialmente a las personas de color o que han sido marginadas por la sociedad," incluido él.

"He descubierto que una y otra vez, las personas que intervienen y hacen sonar la alarma y hacen lo correcto, son personas que han sido objeto de racismo, intimidación y ataques a los homosexuales," dijo Quiñones. "Es por eso que, en muchos sentidos, siento que nací, que estaba destinado a hacer este tipo de espectáculos, al crear 'What Would You Do' hace 14 años, debido al mundo en el que crecí."

Quiñones habló sobre su infancia y cómo cuando era un niño de 13 años, su padre fue despedido del trabajo. Dijo que su familia tomó la decisión que toman muchas familias latinas. Se convirtieron en trabajadores agrícolas migrantes. Luego habló sobre su primer viaje de San Antonio a Northport, Michigan, en un camión lleno de trabajadores migrantes. Dijo que viajaron

1,700 millas para recoger cerezas por 75 centavos el balde.

"Nunca olvidaré estar de rodillas, en el suelo, a las 6 de la mañana, mirando una hilera de plantas de tomate ... Y mi padre me dijo: 'Juanito, ¿quieres hacer este tipo de trabajo por el resto de tu vida, o quieres obtener una educación universitaria?" dijo Quiñones. "Fue una obviedad. Sabía que no quería hacer ese trabajo, ese tipo de trabajo agotador."

Quiñones terminó la noche con otra pequeña historia sobre un episodio de 'What Would You Do,' donde una mujer sin hogar ayuda a un anciano inconsciente. La mujer caminaba con un bastón porque había sufrido un derrame cerebral y comenzó a pedir a las personas de su alrededor que llamaran al 911 por el hombre inconsciente porque no tenía teléfono. Incluso le quitó la cerveza de las manos al actor para darle un poco de dignidad y que la gente no pensara que estaba borracho. La mujer sin hogar, Linda Hamilton, se quedó con el hombre hasta que finalmente una mujer llamó al 911. Hamilton no tenía idea de que la situación Después de que el era un montaje. episodio se transmitiera por televisión, los espectadores recaudaron \$1,000 para su medicamento para la enfermedad cardíaca y un nuevo teléfono celular a cambio de su buena acción.

Redondeando la noche, Quiñones dijo: "Entonces, los dejo con [este] mensaje esta noche. La próxima vez que seas testigo de una injusticia, ves algo mal, alguien está criticando, siendo racista, robando, acosando, ves eso y tu vocecita en la parte posterior de tu cabeza, dice: 'Haz algo. [Hazlo.]' Porque como diría mi querida madre María ... 'Es lo correcto."



# the UN COMMON experience

Story and Photography By Carlos Lopez

Award-winning hip-hop artist, actor, author and activist, Common, visited The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on Feb. 21, 2022, as the second speaker for the 2021-2022 Distinguished Speaker Series. The event was held at the Performing Arts Center on the Edinburg campus and livestreamed.

Common, whose given name is Lonnie Rashid Lynn, has collaborated with many artists, including Kanye West, Erykah Badu and will.i.am. He was the first rap artist to win an Oscar, Emmy and a Grammy. The son of a professional basketball player and educator, Common has pursued his passion for music for over 30 years. He released his debut album, "Can I Borrow a Dollar?" in 1992. According to IMDb, Common has gained cult popularity and mainstream success. His 1994 album,

"Resurrection," received critical acclaim and he achieved mainstream success as a member of Soulquarians, a rotating group of Black artists that included Badu, D'Angelo, Talib Kweli and Mos Def.

Throughout his career, he has won numerous awards, including the 2015 Oscar for Best Original Song for "Glory" in the movie "Selma," which also won a Golden Globe, the NAACP Image Award and three Grammys. He also received an Emmy for Outstanding Musical Performance in a Daytime Program for "The View," and another in 2017 for Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for "Letter to The Free," which was in Ava Duverney's documentary "13th."

UTRGV's Student Activities Director Cindy Mata-Vazquez opened the event and introduced Common.



She said, "Throughout his career, he has been nominated 15 times for the Grammys. Common has dedicated countless hours and has been deeply engaged in social justice and advocacy work around mass incarceration, mental health and voting."

She then welcomed Common to the stage and to UTRGV.

Common began his presentation with a freestyle rap.

"I was going back to Cali, but I said, let me stop in the Rio Grande Valley," Common said in his freestyle. He rapped for over three minutes and the audience was audibly excited. Following the rap, Common said he came to UTRGV to talk about "greatness."

"When I mind?" Common asked. He was referring Muhammed Ali, whom Common described as one

of his idols. He said when he was a child, he "wanted to be great. I wanted the world to know I was here. What things do all [the people] that we label and know as greats, what do they share?"

Common said the greatest people in life are always people who find something they love and pursue it. "Work is love made visible," he said.

Common then described how he learned he had a "purpose" to write music. "It was one late night in Cincinnati when I was visiting my cousins that we sat down to write some raps. Through that, I discovered something that I loved ... I found my Muhammed Ali-isms," he said.

He added that writing his first rap song helped him find what he loved and what he was good at. He said by doing so he "found a confidence in myself that I had

never expressed in my life at all. I found something that I felt was a part of something that I wanted to express to the world." However, it took a while for him to find success.

He said his first album was not successful despite how excited he was to make it. Common said the experience made him doubt whether music, his passion, was for him. However, three singles from the album appeared in the top 10 hot rap singles on the Billboard magazine chart in 1992 and 1993. In the end, he stayed because he loved music and art.

According to Common, "It's very important that we know our purpose in our journey; that we stay present because it's

say the greatest, "It's very important that we know our purpose You are going in our journey; that we stay present because it's ever-evolving. You are going to be tested, no matter what. You will be tested. Believe you will be tested."

ever-evolving. to be tested, matter no what. You will be tested. Believe you

will be tested."

"Faith in yourself is something you must cultivate," he added.

Common also discussed how his experience with COVID-19 taught him the importance of being grateful during hard times.

"I want you to take a few seconds to think about three things you're grateful for," he told the audience. "Now, check where your mind is. In gratitude, there is no way you can be in negativity. You can't be saying thank you and be mad."

After his point about gratitude, Common described what it was like to lose five Grammy nominations in 2005. According to Grammy.com, Common was nominated for four awards at the 48th Annual Grammy Awards. These included Best Rap Solo Performance for his song "Testify" and Best Rap Album for his album



"Be."

"I believed I would get those Grammys, but it didn't happen," he said. "But everything in divine time."

Common then described a phone conversation he had the morning after the Grammys with Kanye West. "[Kanye] said, 'Man, let's get back in the studio and go do it. They [are going to] have to give you something."

Common said that after the call, "We went back to that studio. The next year, I got a Grammy for a song called 'Southside."

Common then shifted his focus to his experience with activism. "When people were calling me an activist, I felt I wasn't doing enough," he said. "You know, I was rapping about the South Side and making that change, but I still felt like that 'T-shirt activist' or like Kendrick Lamar says, 'overnight activists.' But what's ironic about service is that when you end up truly serving, you start growing yourself. So when I stopped focusing on the T-shirts and really started focusing on the work, things started

to happen where I could truly claim that I was an activist."

According to GlobalCitizen.org, he is the founder of the Common Ground Foundation, a nonprofit organization that strives to empower underprivileged youth through education and leadership initiatives, and Imagine Justice, which is committed to ending the criminalization of poverty.

He then transitioned into the importance of service. He encouraged the audience to find an organization they agreed with and volunteer with them.

He said, "You don't need a college degree to serve, though we want y'all to get your college degrees."

He ended his presentation with some advice for the audience. Common said, "If you lend that gift to service, to serve yourself, your family, your community, I believe someday, someone will call you the greatest because we all have that greatness in us."



# My Right Choose

By Samantha Segura Illustration by Andres Mazzei



How can I keep my rights?

In the midst of all the cat fights

How can I get my voice heard tonight?

**Everything isn't alright** 

The news writes

"Should people have the right to choose?"

**People in Texas have lost their rights** 

Because abortion is taboo

There are two polar views

**Anti-Choice people accuse** 

Pro-Choice people know that there is too much at stake to lose

Whom do I contact about this bill that is causing people to lose their right to choose?

**Greg Abbott? Ted Cruz?** 

It doesn't matter whom I reach out to

They'll always want to take away my right to choose



# Pushing Through:

How an entrepreneur used the pandemic for growth

#### By Maria Ruiz

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many new obstacles globally. For small business owners and entrepreneurs, the pandemic was challenging, especially for those who were trying new ideas and suddenly had to close temporarily or adhere to new health guidelines. Some businesses also closed permanently while others thrived. For one Rio Grande Valley entrepreneur, the pandemic helped her achieve her goals and dreams as a restaurateur and a metaphysical coach.

Ingrid Monserrat, owner of McAllen's vegan eatery and juice bar, The Healing Factory, was building a second restaurant called Maria Cruz when the pandemic hit. She was forced to wait until after quarantine to continue construction.

"Some of the construction workers got COVID. We had to pause the project for a little bit, we ran out of funds," said Monserrat. Though they had to stop, Montserrat said, "I don't even see it as setbacks because ... luckily we had money saved, enough to kind of keep pushing, and we just had to keep working a little harder."

Small business loans also helped Monserrat with expenses at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We applied. We didn't get that much. But whatever we got, I immediately invested it in this one [Maria Cruz]," said Monserrat. "That's how I was able to take a bigger jump as far as a better location."

The cost of opening Maria Cruz was about 50% of The Healing Factory's earnings over the four years it has been in business. Maria Cruz opened on July 21, 2021.

Maria Cruz, a restaurant and bar named after Monserrat's grandmother, is also one of the first plant-based Mexican cuisine-based restaurants in the Rio Grande



Valley.

Monserrat said the idea for the restaurant involved having a larger kitchen and an emphasis on Mexican cuisine. The restauranter also said she took inspiration from passed-down family recipes for the menu items, such as sopes, molletes and empanadas.

"It's Mexican food, [and] it's artisan because we make it from scratch," said Monserrat.

Alcohol sale and craft was a new platform for Monserrat. Despite not knowing what she was jumping into, she crafted a small spirit menu with beer, sake, wine and cocktails used with fresh juices from Maria Cruz's sister restaurant, The Healing Factory.

Aside from her newest addition, Monserrat is itching with new projects. One involves a collaboration with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to introduce vegan options to college students, staff and faculty.

"I feel that veganism is growing in the RGV now, and it's high in demand, especially when it comes to universities and college students," Monserrat said.

She added that the dream, for now, is only an idea until she gets the right contacts.

"It's definitely something I want to do in the near future," Montserrat said.

Not only has the time and stillness of the quarantine helped this entrepreneur brainstorm and create new food for her community, it has given her time to enjoy what she described as her ultimate calling. Spirituality.

Monserrat established The Meditation Club in early July 2021, a woman-led and woman-based workshop to help women grow spiritually and learn the power of manifesting their best life. The Meditation Club was initially a side business that Monserrat said helped her generate income while construction continued at Maria Cruz when it was safe to.

"When it comes to the Meditation Club, that's where I'm really teaching," said Monserrat, who guides and creates the workshops. "I like being an entrepreneur, but I really love ... to teach people how to be their best selves."

As far as The Meditation Club, Monserrat added that she hopes to make the workshops into retreats. She also looks forward to expanding a beer garden in the back of Maria Cruz for patrons to sit outside and enjoy the evening. She also plans on starting a meal prep program for interested customers.

"I think I'm influencing the community to be a better, healthier you," Monserrat said.

Finally, Monserrat wishes to have her food throughout Texas. For now, she is focused on the Rio Grande Valley.







### Por Abby Davila

Ilustración Por Andres Mazzei

Respiro profundo y me miro Estoy confundida y me miro Grito pero nadie me escucha Estoy confundida y me miro Estoy temblando y me miro Hablo y nadie me escucha

Años pasan y todavía sueño ¿Qué son las cosas que pienso? Lloro y sonrío pero todavía duele Años pasan y todavía sueño

Miro hacia arriba y no lloro Ojos para llorar pero no lloro Aquí estoy pero nadie me mira Lagrimas pero no puedo llorar

Tantas personas en mi arredor No hay una persona que me mira Aquí estoy como alguien invisible Respiro profundo y me miro

## Bean: Bean: Bringing back chunky childhood cakes

### By Sol Meztli Garcia / Photography by Priscylla Guzman

One of Brenda Bazan and Gerardo Lopez's shared hobbies as a couple is watching cake decorating videos. The two Brownsville, Texas, residents who got engaged in 2021, said such videos inspired them to try baking. Therefore, when a friend encouraged the couple to post pictures of their cakes on Instagram last year, they did. The couple had no idea that it would lead to Bean & Bean Cakes, their homemade cake business.

"We started getting flooded by messages from people wanting cakes," said Bazan, who is 28 years old. "We never planned to make it a business. It just happened."

The name behind the business is a pet name for everyone involved, including their pet pug.

"We actually call each other Bean. Like that's our pet name for each other, and it was just Bean & Bean instead of our names," Bazan laughed.

Lopez, 31, followed with, "We also called our little dog Bean, so it's three of us actually."

From their home, the couple, who have been together since May 2020, said they also learned how to work together to bake and sell their creations.

While they do not have a specific system, they said they have learned how to use each other's strengths and weaknesses. When it comes to writing messages on cakes, Lopez said he trusts Bazan with that, while Bazan said she thinks he is great at cake art.

"Gerardo's really good at drawing the characters or the 3D," Bazan said. "We collaborate like that for some cakes. Sometimes, like if we have a few orders in a day, he'll take [one] and I'll take another and then we'll switch when it comes to the time to do something we know the other's better at ... It's mainly like whatever works for that day."

Lopez described their cakes as "classic vintage cake but quirky." Bazan said they are like "the 1970s or '80s Wilton decorating books, or the '90s weddings or birthday parties from before. The more classic style."

"But we look into making them more colorful or adding the glitter cherries or just something more modern."

Bean & Bean Cakes' Instagram biography also describes the business as one that targets people's memories. The biography asks, "Remember those chunky, vintage, ugly, cute, buttercream birthday cakes from our childhood? We missed them too."

For Lopez, those chunky cakes have stayed with him and Bazan throughout their lives.

"For example, I remember one of my cakes from my childhood, probably one that was around 7. It's just a very chunky, kind of like butter creamy, sunny cake from one of my birthdays," he said.

chunky, kind of like butter creamy, sunny cake from one of my birthdays," he said.

Bazan added, "I just remember being at weddings when I was a

chocolate and buttercream cakes, but I couldn't find good ones around [or] I had to order a whole cake. And I just wanted to have my slices of cake every now and then."

Cakes from Bean & Bean also come in various designs. These include Sanrio's Keroppi designs, teddy bears and Disney's Eeeyore. Looking back on all of them, Lopez said he could not choose a favorite cake design they have made. "All of the cakes that we've made, we fall in love [with]," he said.

As their business grows, the founders of Bean & Bean Cakes said they are also learning to navigate baking as a sideprofession.Bazan



environmental science and hoping to graduate this semester from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Lopezisalsofocusedonjoiningthemedical field and retouches Bazan's photography. To avoid overwhelming themselves,

Lopez and Bazan also take Sundays off from the cake business. One

> important lesson that

they have found is to, "Keep our ingredients always at hand.
Because when you're baking just for yourself, you don't realize how much—like sugar, eggs and flour and everything else—it takes," Bazan said.

Additionally, the duo has learned not to take too many orders at once. They typically accept two to three orders per day.

"We have done four or more in the past, but that's one of the things we've learned—to not do more than two orders a day if we can," Lopez said. "It takes a long time to do drawings or just to bake the cake from scratch."

Every now and then, the bakers also release about eight lunchbox cakes, which are usually for one or two people. Customers can reserve one through Instagram.

"Last time we had one sale like that—within the hour announcing, they were sold out. And people [were] commenting, like 'I missed it. I've been waiting for you,' which was totally unexpected," Bazan said.

Lopez said many people from Brownsville and the greater Rio Grande Valley have expressed their support for the vintage-styled cakes on Instagram.

"Mainly other small businesses and artists, like independent artists, have reached out to show their support, either by commenting, sharing our cakes or ordering cakes," Bazan said.

Both Lopez and Bazan said they were "in disbelief" about the support.

Since starting Bean & Bean Cakes, both Lopez and Bazan said they feel they have grown closer.

"We're just learning how to compliment each other, like giving really good feedback, criticism, just being more open on how to communicate," Lopez said. Bazan added that Bean & Bean Cakes is a role they share together.

"We have a lot of hobbies and a lot of things that we enjoy doing together

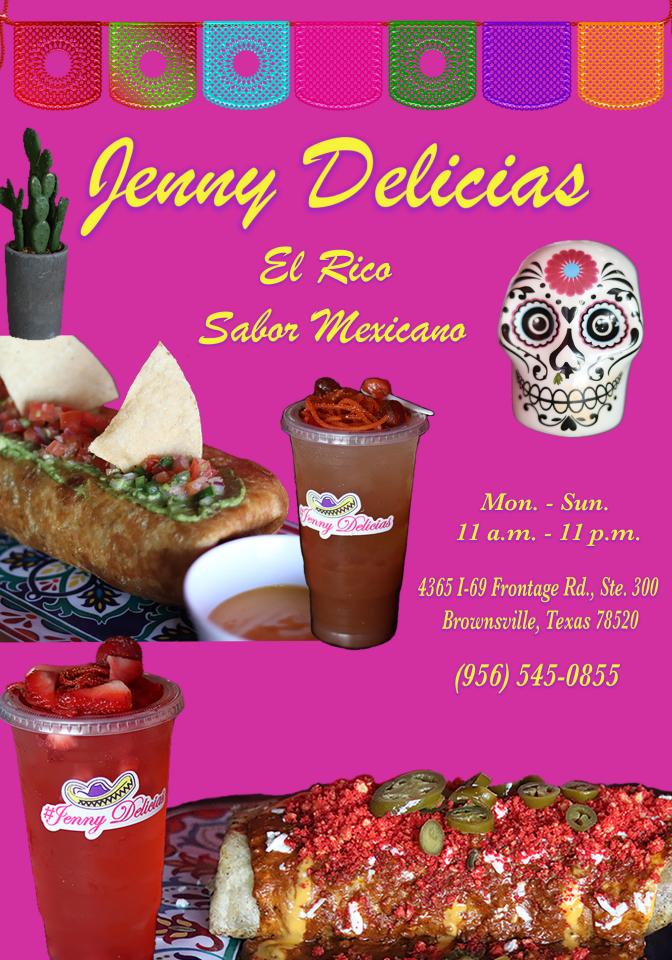


responsibility," she said.

Their "operation" is built on their love for the cakes they have enjoyed since their youth, and that is why Bazan feels people respond well to their business.

She said, "It sounds so cheesy, but it came from our heart to have that [types of] cakes and that quality of cakes and other people noticed. So because we felt that was missing, other people felt that was missing, and I really believe this is why we were so welcomed into the community—because we were doing something that we genuinely love."

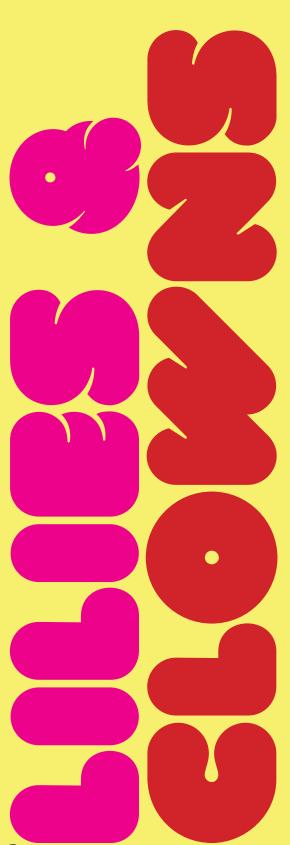
Illustration by Andres Mazzei







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### BY HANIA ROCIO/ PHOTOS BY CARLOS LOPEZ

There's nothing in the Valley.

Many may have heard this phrase before. However, the Rio Grande Valley has many things to be proud of. Food, culture, traditions and, especially, people. The RGV is also home to a variety of artists. One of them is Alejandra Martinez, who sees the world through her paintings.

Martinez graduated from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in May 2021 with a bachelor's of fine arts in art education. She said she enjoyed her time being a student at UTRGV and was able to learn and explore different art techniques.

"I think that it helps being in a space where there are other art students to help you," Martinez said. "And I really enjoyed the faculty too. I think that they really pushed me to create a large body of work and to explore and research, which is something that I really enjoyed during my time at the university."

Originally from Palmview, Texas, Martinez said she had an interest in art from a young age. That interest grew during middle school when she started to take theater and art classes. However, she always showed more interest in art. One of her earliest memories of drawing was in the fifth grade, when she was assigned to draw an animal in danger of extinction and chose to draw a panda. Later, her father gave her a book on how to draw animals, and since then, Martinez has been fascinated with drawing.

"I would just be drawing whatever," she said. "I would make caricatures of my family members or, like, the things that I would see. And then, it just became a natural thing."

Martinez never expected that years later her work would be displayed in various exhibitions. Her most recent one was at the Carla Hughes Art Gallery in Harlingen. She also had exhibits in Moonbeans in McAllen, the San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum and others. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Martinez could not showcase her artwork while she was a student. Now, she has more opportunities to display her work to the RGV community.

"It's very special to be able to create stuff like this," Martinez said. "I kind of became an outsider; I kind of looked at it as if I wasn't the artist. I was like, 'Wow,' like, it's such a nice experience to be able to create for others and for myself. I just really cherish that little moment."

Her artwork series may contain anywhere from 10 to 15 pieces. Counting sketches, Martinez has created over 1,000 pieces of work since she started drawing. She has worked on collages, paintings, drawings, printmaking and other projects. As an artist, Martinez said she finds it difficult to focus on a message she wants to give her viewers. She prefers to give a message to herself. A lot of her work

deals with self-doubt and with her art, she expresses her inner value.

"My work helped me be able to achieve a point in my life where I feel confident. I feel like I can express things that I wouldn't have otherwise expressed," Martinez said. "I don't know if that communicates something directly to others. I think all of that becomes a product of how others can interpret it. It's not so much a specific message to others, but I guess maybe it serves as an inspiration to other upcoming artists who might feel lost in their own ways."

One concurring detail in her work is the use of clowns. For some time, Martinez considered her work to be surrealist, thought-provoking and philosophical. The deep and dark subjects she addressed in her art made her not enjoy her work as much and caused her mental health concerns. She said she uses clowns as metaphors for performance and to express an alter ego of herself called 44waterlilies, a light-hearted vendor who is fascinated with everyday life.









Works from Martinez's "Absurdity and Monotony" exhibit

"I created an alter ego with that clown imagery," Martinez said. "What happened is that I took this self of mine that was always very serious and tackling the subjects, and then I converted it to somebody who didn't take themselves that serious with all of that."

44waterlilies is also Martinez's Instagram handle. She explained that 44 is her lucky number. She said when she started doing art, she was looking desperately for a sign that validated her actions. One day, she was driving from Palmview to Edinburg. She thought if she could find a license plate with the number 44 in it, that meant she was going on the right path. She did. To Martinez, water lilies are a sign of rebirth.

"The lily pad is like this kind of inner level between the outside world and underwater," she said. "It evolves over time, but that's where I associated myself with the water lily and the rebirth. This person was very dark most of the time, so

very lonely. This person, in a way, wants to reach out to the community and wants to actually be engaged with people."

Although Martinez does not have a set goal, she wants to continue creating art and inspiring people. She said that it's easy to compare oneself to other people, especially when the public is the one to decide an individual's success. Nonetheless, the key to success is to be kind to oneself and persistent.

"There's a lot of doubts; it's not easy being an artist," Martinez said. "Over time, people are gonna look at your work and there's gonna be people that you wouldn't even have imagined [would] appreciate your work, and they're going to see you for who you are."

This was the story of Alejandra Martinez, one of the many artists of the RGV. People may say that there's nothing in the Valley. Yet, even here, artists in the RGV are pursuing their dreams.



## Seeping ONWY-Discylla Guzman

According to the Merriam-Webster, ballet is a theatrical art form that uses dance, music and scenery to tell a story or convey a theme or atmosphere. For many, ballet is more than just a hobby. It is a lifestyle. A way of expressing their emotions and growing their creative freedom through the art of dancing.

Take University of Texas Rio Grande Valley alumna, Aliana Garza, who has been in ballet since she was 8 years old.

"It just starts out as a small thing. But as time goes by, you kind of put yourself into it. You express yourself through it as time goes by and I think when I became 12 years old, that's when I started to put my passion and heart into it more," said Garza.

Garza has been part of many performances, her favorite one being "The Nutcracker," where she played the Sugar Plum Fairy and Snow Queen in her senior year of high school.

"I remember when I was a kid, I would say 'someday I'll be that part' [Sugar Plum Fairy] and then I finally got it. That one and also Snow Queen. I think it holds a special place in my heart, and I still have the costume from it to this day and I'll just keep it there forever probably and the crown too," said the dancer.

When asked what ballet has done for Garza's life, she said it has given her a creative outlet where she uses her emotions to create a piece or distract herself whenever she is not feeling well. She also said that ballet also helped her overcome some fears as she was growing up.

"It's really kept me happy as a person because any time I have something on my mind, I just start dancing and then I clear my mind with it," said the dance major. "I think because I was such a shy kid. It always gave me that sense of stability and confidence growing up that I really needed. Now that I am an adult, I'm just thankful that I grew up with that because I don't know what I would have done or where I'd be if I hadn't found ballet. I really don't know," she added.

At UTRGV, Garza said she created a piece for her senior dancing final where she directed and choreographed a group of dance students who performed a routine about an emotional journey she went through.

"My senior project was inspired by my emotional journey, how I have trained my mind to start seeing things that happen in my life in a positive way rather than a negative way.



I used songs by Frank Ocean and Tyler, the Creator because their music is a favorite of mine," she said. "I wanted to do a piece that I personally liked and enjoyed making with the help of my dancers and it came out how I hoped it would. It was interesting working with my dancers. From messing around and playing around with the choreography in the dance studio to creating alongside people who love to dance is one of my favorite things to do."

As she prepared for her last dance steps in her educational journey, Garza, who graduated in December 2021 from UTRGV, aimed to become a ballet instructor, sharing and passing on her passion to other ballet dancers around the Rio Grande Valley while exploring her own journey in the precise world of ballet. She said she hopes to keep

the classical side of ballet alive.

According to her, "More and more people are trying to join ballet, which I love. I love it now because now my job after I graduate will be to keep on sharing it and make sure the classical side of ballet stays alive rather than kind of let it fade into all the other styles. It's very important and it's a very beautiful style."

### Photo By Priscylla Guzman



# TRADITION TRADITION ALIVE BY HANIA ROCIO

Dancing is part of many cultures. People dance at clubs, weddings, birthday parties and maybe even alone in their rooms. In Mexican culture, dancing has been used for centuries to represent its stories and people. One group that is keeping Mexican dance alive is the Frontera Dance Project.

The Frontera Dance Project is a new dance group in the Rio Grande Valley that seeks to reflect and speak about the experience of the people of the frontera through professional-level performances by local RGV dancers. Frontera, or frontier, is a border that divides two countries.

Erica Garza is one of the founders of Frontera Dance Project. She explained that the Frontera Dance Project wants to reconnect the Valley with its history, identity, and community and create new traditions and expressions of dance. It blends traditional and contemporary movement for a multifaceted fusion of dance.

She also said she gained most of her experience working at the Aztlan Dance

Company in Austin, Texas. According to Garza, her experience at the company greatly impacted the way she mixes dances to create something new and unique.

"I like coming up with the choreography, the pieces, the ideas and putting it all together and putting it on bodies," said Garza. "I mix it all together. Like I have jazz and I have contemporary, lyrical. And then we also do folklorico and flamenco. But it's a different style, more zapateado and not a lot of skirt work."

Vanessa Alvarado also developed the Frontera Dance Project. Alvarado and Garza attended the Aztlan Dance Company in Austin in 2005. Then in 2018, they reconnected when Garza invited Alvarado to teach an acting class where she was teaching dance.

Garza said she had the idea of creating a dance group in the Valley and Alvarado was excited to help make this idea a reality. Alvarado said, "We have this idea, this vision of a dance company in the Rio Grande Valley. But right now, we're going to start a project at a time."

The Frontera Dance Project debuted on Sept. 16, 2021, at the San Benito, Texas.

The show was about 15 to 30 minutes and about 100 people attended it. "We had a lot of people show up. I think people really appreciated what they saw. You could hear more gritos within the audience. People were up and it was upbeat and lively," said Garza. "We got a lot of good responses from different people in the audience. So that was really nice and special."

This year, they plan to perform another show. Garza said she is working on a story to mix with her choreography. She said her focus is on using a mythical perspective to tell the story of Aztec goddesses, Mexican traditions and women.

"It's based on our flight [Mexican women's history], you know, our forefathers, foremothers. So there would be four different sets. We would have the Indigenous set, various Aztec goddesses, anywhere from Tonantzin, Coatlicue, Chalchiuhtlicue. I'm reading some of these books [about them]. They're always looked at as bad or evil. So, I kind of want to flip it and change it and create a different story for them."

Garza added that she wants to tell the story of the strength and lineage of their

blood. By focusing on the history of women through her dance and choreography, Garza said she wants to celebrate and remind people in the Valley of their heritage.

Alvarado also explained that there is a lot of dance talent in the Valley. However, those who want to take dancing seriously are pushed to leave the Valley because they lack the resources to do so here. Therefore, Garcia and Alvarado said they wanted to create a platform for dancers who want to live and make a life here. Frontera Dance Project is always looking for new dancers. The group wants to recruit people who are passionate about dancing and hard working, even if they have little experience in dance. The group rehearses from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays at the Rio Grande Valley Arts Studio in Harlingen, Texas. According to Alvarado, "We want to recruit trained dancers or dancers from the RGV. Adult dancers especially, because we have many people who go to school for dance, and unless they become teachers, they don't necessarily practice that afterward."





Members of the Frontera Dance Project rehearse at the Rio Grande Valley Arts Studio in Harlingen. The project is always seeking new dancers.

"We are particularly looking for anyone, for dancers who are still in love with it, who still want to be on stage and working towards projects, especially if they're older than 25," Garza added. "So, we're talking late 20s, 30s, 40s even. Anything older than that, where they still feel like this is life; this is what I want to be doing."

Alvarado also said that the feelings people express through dancing can be different when they are older. As they have experienced more things in life, older people can transmit more emotions to the audience.

"When you are dancing a piece and

you're a little bit older, you tend to have different life experiences," said Alvarado. "Whatever dance piece it may be about, you can connect with it better."



For more information, you can reach Frontera Dance Project via Instagram @fronteradanceproject or via email fronteradanceprojectrgv@gmail.com.

STORY BY CARLOS LOPEZ



The Era of Nostalgia-Baiting: How Hollywood is Tricking You

If you grew up in the 2000s, things like Silly Bandz, Windows XP and Club Penguin might make you nostalgic. That is because all things from our childhood back fond memories. bring Nostalgia can be a great feeling, leaving one to be reminiscent of their past. However, in the last seven years, Hollywood is using nostalgia to trick its viewers into believing a movie is good. This is called nostalgia-baiting, whereby a movie company remakes a classic movie with the same characters and storyline, to draw you in.

Movies like "Jurassic World" (2015) "Ghostbusters" (2016) and "Robocop" (2014) are all popular remakes of classic movies from the past. However, these remakes have had mixed to bad reviews.

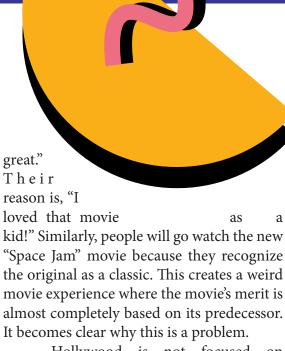
Surprisingly though, some remakes

have crushed it in the boxeven making more than the original movie they were based on. For

the original 1991 Disney classic "Beauty a n d the Beast" made worldwide. \$440.1 million This highly regarded film that kickstarted the Disney renaissance of the 90s was remade in 2017. How much money do you think that remake made? \$500 million? \$800 million? Nope. The "Beauty and the Beast" remake raked in a whopping \$1.3 billion in its boxoffice run worldwide. In fact, the "Aladdin," "Lion King," "Cinderella" and "Dumbo" remakes all made more money than their original movies. Why does this matter?

The thing is, these movies are mediocre which leaves one to wonder why people are flooding in to watch these movies. The answer is nostalgia. When one goes to watch the live-action "Mulan" movie, their reason isn't "because the story seems

example,



Hollywood is not focused on making good movies. Disney and other moviemakers' focus is on the profit they will generate, and granted, that profit is a lot. So much so that it would be even stranger if they were not making these movies. To Hollywood, it's a simple formula. Take a classic movie that we know everyone already loves, update some of its jokes and references for a modern audience, and remake it in live-action. Just like that, Hollywood steals from its devoted fans.

The sad part is that it works and it doesn't seem to be ending anytime soon. With the phenomenal success of 2017's "Beauty and the Beast" and 2019's "Lion King," Disney, for example, is more than ready to limit its creativity to making more reboots. Currently, Disney has more than 15 new live-action projects. Some movies are even sequels of already rebooted franchises. Although you still get your occasional excellent original Disney movies like "Zootopia" or "Frozen", it seems like Disney's primary goal right now is to

induce as much nostalgia as it can in people, convincing them to buy movie tickets. So, is the future of big corporate movies doomed? Not necessarily. There is still hope in the

gloomy wasteland of remakes, reboots and sequels. A great example of how to take inspiration from classic stories to make a new movie is Disney's 2021 "Cruella."

This movie stands from the rest of the reboots for one reason. It is an original story. While the movie has its own problems and is by no means perfect, the fact that it is original in its plot makes it miles better than any other Disney reboot thus far. What "Cruella" did was take a classic beloved film and create a brand new exciting the story from it. Sure movie characters and story cues from the original "101 Dalmatians" movie, but it is not a retelling of the classic film. Instead, those it puts

characters

new

you their backstory and

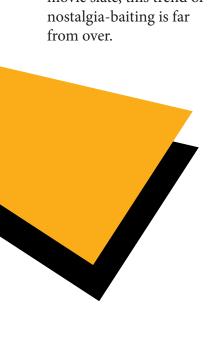
situations, showing

into

fleshing

them out more. This creates a more interesting and engaging viewing experience that isn't necessarily altered by whatever movies came before it. So far, the movie has made \$233.4 million worldwide. Hopefully "Cruella's" critical and financial success will at least signal to Disney that its fans still care about good storytelling.

At the end of the day, the purpose of a movie should be to tell an exciting story that entertains its public, whether that's a romantic comedy or a serious thriller. What this new wave of nostalgia-baiting is showing us is that Hollywood is getting lazy with its storytelling with no real consequences. Movies like "Cruella" and "Maleficent" show us a glimpse of hope for the future of big-budget movies. But by the looks of Disney's upcoming movie slate, this trend of from over.





### imberella By Hania Rocio

ar away in the 956 kingdom, known for its takuaches and flamboyant lowrider trokas que queman the streets (que queman is an expression used by takuchaches to say that a truck is nice. It literally translates to "on fire"), there lived a young woman named Kimberella.

Kimberella was a beautiful native of Las Milpas and she had two evil sisters who made her life impossible. She wasn't an orphan, but her dad spent so much time working on the oil rigs that she barely saw him. Her stepmother, Madastra, hated her and always made Kimberella do the nastiest chores, such as cleaning toilets, the chimney and the basement.

One day while Kimberella was cleaning the floors of their home, she heard her stepmother talking to her half-sisters, Espantosa and Repulsiva, about the party Prince Edgar was holding.

"Prince Edgar will be having a party to pick his new bride!" Madastra said, walking over the floor Kimberella had just mopped. "We have to go to La Plaza Mall to buy you both some pretty dresses!"

"Hay, Ma! Mejor vamos a los Mercedes Outlets!" said Repulsiva. "The clothes are better over there!"

Illustrations By Andres Mazzei

"You are right, mija. Grab your things. We are going to the Outlets."

Both sisters giggled with joy as they went to their room to grab their bags. Meanwhile, Kimberella was left alone with her stepmom.

"Hey, Mom, what about me?" Kimberella asked shyly. Her dress was dirty from cleaning the entire house. "I want to go to Prince Edgar's party too."

"No! You will only embarrass us. That dress you have is dirty and ugly," the stepmother said and then laughed as she walked around Kimberella, giving her a judging look. "But if you can find a pretty dress, maybe you can come with us to the party," she said.





After her stepmother and sisters left for the Outlets, Kimberella sneaked out and went to La Pulga. She looked everywhere until finally, she found the perfect dress. An old, used quinceañeara dress. It was a pink dress with white ribbons and a white corset. It had a few holes and some of the fabric was ripped, but it was beautiful. It just needed a few repairs.

When she got home, she called her friends to help her fix her dress. In an instant, 10 little takuaches appeared with needles, thread and fabrics to fix the dress. Kimberella sang her favorite songs from Bad Bunny, Karol G and Jenny Rivera as she revamped her dress. It took her several days to fix it. She put bows, fake jewels and beautiful flowers all over it.

Finally, the day of the party arrived. Kimberella's stepmother and sisters were ready to go and hopped into La Mamalona, their Chevy truck.

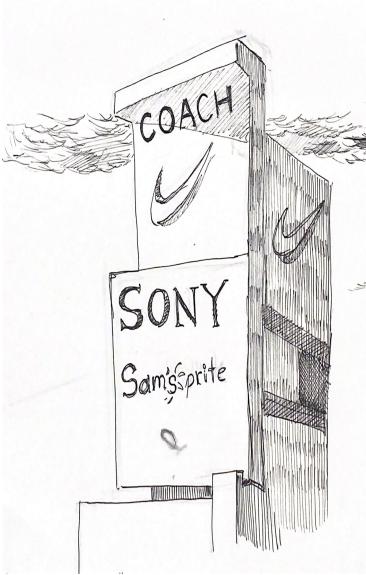
But before they could leave, Kimberella came running out of their house in her beautiful dress.

"I am sorry I am late!"said Kimberella as she ran down the stairs of the porch. "I am ready to go to the party and meet Prince Edgar."

"Oh no, you won't!" exclaimed Espantosa as she pushed Kimberella to the ground. She landed on a pile of dirt, instantly ruining her beautiful dress. "That's what you get for trying to steal my future baby daddy," said her sister Espantosa.

The stepmother and sisters laughed as they got inside their truck. They drove away, leaving behind a disgusting trail of smoke.

Kimberella was devastated. She ran towards the backyard, sad and alone. Tears filled her eyes and burned her sinuses. Overcome with misery, Kimberella wept. She could not hold the pain any more and wondered if she would ever be happy. Her little takuaches friends came and wondered how they could cheer her up....





Suddenly, smoke started to surround Kimberella and from the starry dark night, a woman appeared.

She wore tight, ripped jeans, heels, a green shirt and a Gucci belt. The strange thing was that she also had wings and a wand.

"Que onda mija? Por que andas moqueando?" the woman asked as she opened a bag of Cheetos.

"Who are you?" Kimberella asked as she cleaned the tears on her face.

"I am your godmother, la buchona. I am here to help you," Godmother said as she helped Kimberella stand up and immediately noticed her ruined dress.

"If you want to go to the party, we have to make you look bien chingona," Godmother said. She began to move her wand around and touched Kimberella on the head. Kimberella's dress started to change. Her dirty pink dress turned into a beautiful blue short dress. Kimberella's hair was now long and blond. She had become a güerita to fit the beauty standards and to

look wealthy. She had blue contacts and wore crystal heels.

"The heels are nice but they are uncomfortable. My feet are gonna smell too," said Kimberella. "What if I get tired?"

"Don't worry, honey. I got you some Crocs you can wear if you get tired," said Godmother. She then turned a little opossum into a Chevy truck. Another takuache turned into a young handsome man. He was the designated driver in case Kimberella drank too many Four Lokos.

"Thank you so much for helping me, Godmother," Kimberella said as she hugged La Buchona, who hugged her back.

"Don't worry mija, that's what I am here for," Godmother said. "Now, let's get you to that dance! But remember you have to come back by 2 a.m."

"Why 2 a.m.?" Kimberella asked.
"Because that's when Downtown closes.
Plus, the spell will wear off too!,"
Godmother replied. She gave Kimberella
her blessing before parting with her. "Now,
go and have fun!"

**E** 

People from all the kingdoms had come to celebrate with Prince Edgar at his party at DT in the biggest and most popular club, Magic. McAllen, Hidalgo, Edinburg, Las Milpas, Brownsville and other kingdoms were present. Even important scholars from the Kingdom of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley were there.

Everyone was gathered at DT. Kimberella arrived and went inside Magic. Everyone gasped when they saw Kimberella. She was so beautiful that her stepmother and sisters did not recognize her.

She looked so stunning that she got the attention of none other than Prince Edgar himself. He went to Kimberella and asked to dance with her. She could not refuse. After all, Prince Edgar was a very handsome man. He had a nice mushroom haircut and his pants were so loose that his underwear was visible.

They danced all night. Huapango. Cumbias. Reggaeton. You name it; they danced it. Perreando all night long, Kimberella got tired and stopped so she could switch from her crystal heels to her blue Crocs to continue dancing.

The night was going perfectly. However, Kimberella noticed a clock and gasped as she saw that soon it was going to hit 2 a.m. Kimberella had to go.

"I am sorry I have to go! But it was so nice meeting you!" Kimberella said. She made to leave but Edgar stopped her.

"Wait, there's an after-party at my cousin's house. Come with me," Prince Edgar pleaded.

"No. Sorry I have to go!" Kimberella ran away and she was in such a rush that she didn't notice that one of her Crocs had slipped off her foot. Within minutes, the magic spell wore off and everything was back to normal. All but the Crocs.

Kimberella barely made it home before her sister and stepmother. Tragically she had lost one of the Crocs at the party. Nevertheless, Kimberella was happy to have something that could remind her of the best night of her life.

A couple of days passed when a man came knocking at Kimberella's home. "By orders of Prince Edgar, we are here to make every lady in the kingdom try this Croc," said the man who seemed to be the prince's butler. "If the Croc fits, then this lady will be taken into the Castle to marry Prince Edgar," he proclaimed.

Her stepsisters tried the shoes. However, their feet were too big to fit the blue Croc. Then it was Kimberella's turn to try on the Croc. But her jealous sisters didn't want Kimberella to try it.

And so, before Kimberella could try the Croc on, they took it from the butler's hand and threw it into the hot fireplace.

The Croc was beyond salvation as it melted. Kimberella was heartbroken but she didn't cry because she quickly remembered that she had the other Croc hidden in her room. She rushed to her room and grabbed the second blue Croc, which she showed to the butler.

The butler took the Croc and put it on Kimberella. Of course, the Croc fitted perfectly!

Kimberella was taken to the Castle to marry Prince Edgar and she became Princess of the Valley Kingdom. Her dad even came from working at the oil igs for her wedding.

Princess Kimberella and Prince Edgar lived a long happy life, had many little baby takuaches who attended the Kingdom of UTRGV and became the next rulers of the Valley Kingdom.

And they all lived happily ever after.



My name is Cecilia Garza, aka "Ch3rryemojigirl," which is my artist name. I'm a junior at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. My photography and editing is how I see the world. I also want to encourage other photographers: You don't need to have a fancy photography studio to take great pictures.



**INSTAGRAM** 



TIKTOK











### Dinry of American College Students

### By Sol Meztli Garcia and Bianca Ramirez-Vale Illustrations By Sol Santana

Sol's Entry:

Feb. 2, 2022

Dear Diary,

It turns out that 2020 was not cursed because 2021 was just as chaotic and 2022 is proving to follow the pattern. From an ongoing pandemic to statewide abortion bans to protests in Canada against vaccine mandates, we have not been short of any history-making moments these last few years.

And let's not forget about homework on top of everything else.

COVID-19 is not just lurking in the shadows; it is sitting next to me in the classmate who takes off her mask to cough as my professor says Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz's intelligence shines in each line of her carefully executed letter to a bishop who published her work without her permission. It is a true shame that Sor Juana, the brilliant scholar from the 17th century, needed to undermine herself in writing for fear of her sexist society's retaliation for having a voice. It is a true shame that I could not focus on the lecture because I had to move my planner to the other side of me, away from the flying drops of saliva.

You know what else is a shame? The fact that it's the 21st century and we are still experiencing sexism. Not only from scholar peers but from our state officials. If you have a uterus, that means you cannot be trusted to make decisions for yourself. Texas Senate Bill 8, the law that prohibits abortion after six weeks, is proof of that. People of color, people who live in poverty and people who identify as LGBTQ+ are disproportionately affected since basic health

care is already often inaccessible.

In between worrying about my grades, grad school applications and escaping my classmate's germs, I have to worry about my period. The upcoming U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding Roe v. Wade is also pressing down upon my fears. I cannot even imagine how anxiety-ridden people who experience irregular periods must be right now.

It is so exhausting to be a working college student right now. It is so exhausting to be a

woman right now. It is so exhausting to be human right now.

I remember when my friends used to joke that I was the cheeriest friend ever, that my name fit me perfectly because I would brighten everyone's day with my positivity.

Then quarantine struck. Since then, I have lost that optimism and do not think people always

associate me with cheery anymore. I am angry.

COVID-19 continues to evolve and yet people still reject the vaccines on the premise that it is their own bodies, so it is their own choice. My anger makes its appearance as I notice those are the same people who spit on that same principle when it is used for abortion rights.

My 21st birthday is soon upon me, and I am angry that I will be staying home, like I always do after returning from school and work. Sometimes, I wonder if I am a bad person. Others have it so much worse and here I am upset that I had to refuse tickets to Marina in Austin. At what age do people stop discrediting their feelings?

How does anyone who cares so much about the world stay sane?

Bianca's entry:

Feb. 6, 2022

Dear Diary,

For the past two and a half years, the world has been faced with a pandemic. It's consumed us. It left a mark on everyone's lives and it's a thing that will not change. Needless to

say, it has been annoying.

Despite the hardships and downsides of COVID-19, there have been a few good things that came out of it. For example, we have the vaccine. Not a cure but a strong and important preventative measure. One would assume that everybdy would be on board with something that can really help pave a future for dealing with COVID. Instead, the vaccine, for everyone's benefit, is something that has been heavily politicized and broadcast in a negative light.

It's almost comedic. People who stand firm on banning abortion and taking away women's rights to choose suddenly hold up signs and believe in the "my body, my choice" movement. For most women, especially in the state of Texas, our choice has been taken away. Most do not get to decide when this notion stands for them; they simply have to obey the laws that have

been passed.



For months, and now years, I have watched a family member of mine go through the hell that is

fighting COVID. The 20-hour workdays, the exhaustion.

I don't think most people really see the toll that it takes on frontline workers. They just assume that there's a constant rotation of doctors and nurses. What most people don't know is that a lot of local hospitals underpay nursing and medical staff. In simpler terms, they are underpaying people who are working overtime. Because of this, a lot of nurses quit their jobs and became travel nurses, migrating to areas where COVID is peaking for better pay and move elsewhere again every couple of months. The majority of these nurses just go to the areas with the highest bidder. They go to hospitals where management is willing to pay a large sum of money for their help.

This problem of underpaying medical staff still stands, But could you imagine if everyone decided to get vaccinated? If someone decides to not get vaccinated, they are more susceptible

to gaining new variants and getting sick compared to someone who is vaccinated.

It's frustrating to see how things could be better but people refuse to believe it. I think that it can be easier to think of ourselves and imagine what's easy and comfortable for us. But in a moment like this, when so many people are suffering for different reasons, I think it is best to try and think of what could be good or helpful to everyone. I believe in science, and I like to trust that people with medical degrees and years of experience know what they are doing. I would like to imagine that most people think like this, but it's absolutely shocking to hear that they don't.



Sol's Entry:

Feb. 14, 2022

Dear Diary,

It's Valentine's Day! On a day full of love, I am in a brighter mood since my last entry.

As I have grown, I have come to love gifting presents more than receiving them. There is something so heartwarming about finding the perfect item for another person. It is comforting to know that with a gift, you are telling that person, "I see you."

Hopefully, my family will receive that message later today and enjoy the gifts I chose for them. For my grandmother, I found a Valentine's-Day-themed gnome that I know she will smile

at as I hand it to her.

On days such as these, it feels easier to find a hope in me. Like an ember, hope can seem easily extinguishable. But both elements can prosper into something resilient if you tend to them.

Today also marks the first day of early voting for the Texas primary election. Soon, we can vote out those who have shown they care more about control rather than my community's lives. The poll numbers do not always look promising, but today, I have faith.

Maybe that is my gift for today. Faith.

For next year, I am manifesting that we have state officials who realize COVID-19 is not something that we can continue to disregard; that Texans do not have the privilege to keep paying for officials' negligence. May our next state officials prioritize women of color, LGBTQ+community members and lower working-class residents before cells. May our supreme court judges prove they are for the people.

Tomorrow, I might feel differently. Some of my classmates might disregard safety protocols that are for both our protection. I have an exam next week that I am worried about. Homework is never-ending. Tomorrow might be coated in red as well....from anger rather than

love, though.

However, today, I am proud. I am proud to be a Chicana living in the Rio Grande Valley and studying at a Hispanic-serving university. I am proud to be a student during a difficult time, and I am proud of everyone who continues to fight for a better tomorrow.

Bianca's entry:

Feb. 20, 2022

Dear Diary,

Music Speaks to the Heart:

In life, there are so many inconsistencies. Everything changes in an instant. But there are always some things that I cling onto to help make myself feel constant. To me, the only constant thing is the five new songs that I obsess over every two months. It comes in waves: two months, five songs and the same unbinding, freeing feeling. They never fail to make me smile. "Apartment" by Young the Giant, "Your Best American Girl," by Mitski, the list could continue. Every, I play these songs at least IO times—in the car, doing homework, running,

1

every occasion.

When you're sad, there's music for it; when you're angry, there's music for it; there's always some way to express your emotions. Lyrically, the songs are like a diary or a letter from a loved one, depicting how you feel. You can feel comfortable in someone else's experiences and pain.

It's like if you're falling in love, classic songs such as "Can't Help Falling in Love" by Elvis Presley and basically anything by Kacey Musgraves, are perfect for these scenarios. If

you're going through a breakup, Paramore has just the right music to sing and cry to.

Music sets the tone and it can really add or take away from your mood. If you want to wallow or just simply smile, there's always a song to play. It speaks to the mind, body, soul and to the heart. There's a feeling that you get when you're connecting to someone who's connecting to millions of other people. It builds a community, otherwise known as fanbases. I, an avid member of the One Direction fanbase, understand just how tumultuous it can be. When the band takes a break, you mourn but you're never mourning alone. If they drop a new album, you celebrate all together as one.

It's such an interesting thing how people are peaceful and together when it comes to the love of music. Festivals. Concerts. Award shows. There's always an unsaid agreement that everyone is just there to dance, laugh, cry, enjoy and share their love of music with the people

around them.







Music cures everything. It's done so much for me. It's made me feel heard in the strangest of ways. Even when life is at a total low, I know just what songs to play. There's so much we can do with it. We can even make a playlist to help us to connect with people of the same zodiac signs, again connecting us to people we couldn't have ever imagined knowing.

Music is the best release, and it's the most touching and wonderful thing. I will forever

be thankful for music and the way it plays to the melodies of my heart.



THE REVENGE OF THE RAGZ WRITTEN BY HANIA ROCIO PHOTOS BY PRISCYLLA GUZMAN PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIEL CONTALEZ-FRANCO



#### WHAT IS VINTAGE CLOTHING?

The Rio Grande Valley is home to many small businesses and a wide range of local shops that provide the community with different services. Personalized Croc charms, hand-made crochet clothing, stickers, restaurants and many more. A type of business that has become more popular in the Valley is selling vintage clothing.

According to hellovintage.com, the term vintage can have different meanings depending on the item. Hello Vintage explains that in terms of clothing, vintage commonly refers to an item that is 20 years old or older.

In 2020, according to Vogue Magazine, vintage and second-hand clothing became popular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2021, Levi's also launched a second-hand website for previously worn Levi's denim pants and jackets. People are also turning to vintage clothing because they provide cheaper and more accessible options. In a 2012 study, Tracy Cassidy and Hannah Bennett, at the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom, found that people also turn to vintage fashion to fight mass-produced fast fashion and to be more individualistic in their styles.

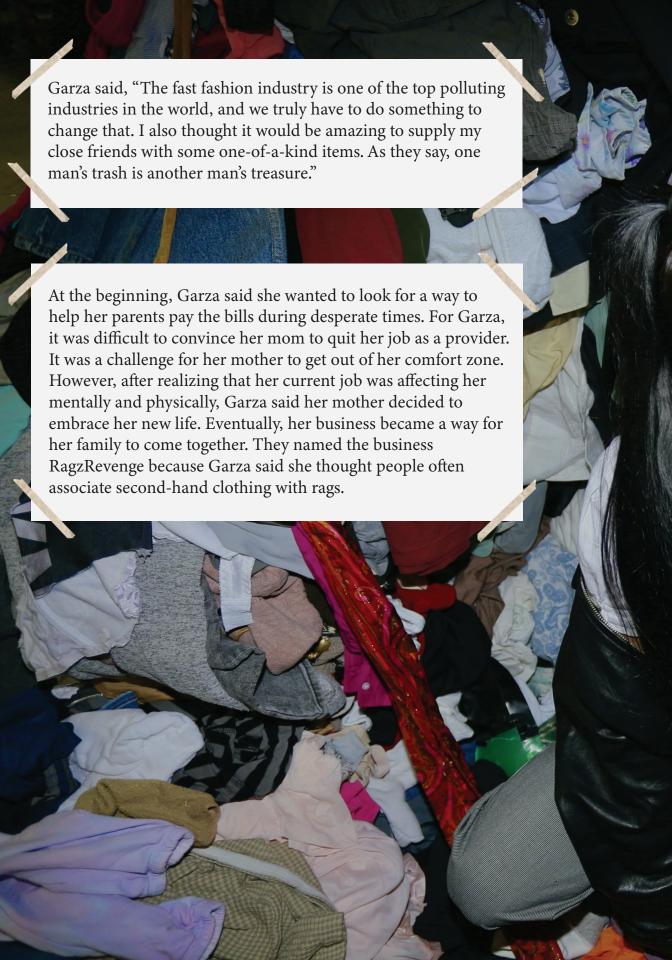


Perhaps in response to this, vintage shops are starting to appear in the RGV. One of them is RagzRevenge, owned by Yazmin Garza, a 20-year-old who started a vintage and reworked business shop with her parents. Her store, called RagzRevenge, is at 2217 N 10t St. McAllen, Texas. It opened its doors on July 28, 2019. However, Garza said she started her business when she was 14 years old. When she was in middle school, she said she enjoyed selling items online. However, the thought of opening a store did not cross her mind then.

She said she decided to sell vintage clothing because she liked the idea of giving old clotha second chance and reusing clothes can help reduce the use of fast fashion.



According to Adam Hayes, in a 2021 article for Investopedia, fast fashion refers to clothes that "move quickly from the catwalk to stores to take advantage of trends." He said fast fashion is common because of its cheaper and quicker manufacturing, which makes people want to buy them quickly. But according to Earth.org, fast fashion has become a problem for the environment. People buy and then throw away the products as soon as a new trend pops up. This creates too much waste and most of the clothes are made with cheap nonrecyclable plastic.





REVENGE REV WHAT DOES RAGZ REVENCE REVENCE REVENCE REVENCE REVENCE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REV "And from that moment I named my business RagzRevenge," said Garza. "I added the revenge because it's kinda like the revenge of the rags, like, coming back and having NGE REV a new purpose to someone new." Garza also described her business as eco-friendly, one that makes people feel good NGE REV when they buy something. She said that clothing is a way that people express themselves. Clothing also helps with creating the living environment people make for others. NGE REV At RagzRevenge, you will also find clothes that were made using pieces from old clothing. Garza said she enjoys creating these reworked clothing because they are something new that cannot endanger the environment. NGE REV "I think what makes RagzRevenge unique is all of our reworked items, which are taking pieces of shirts, denim, crewnecks. A whole new piece to reuse, already NGE REV made with material that can't harm our earth anymore since it's already been made," said Garza. NGE REV Garza added that her grandmother and mother are her inspirations. She said she watched them work every day and grew up with the mentality that if you want something, you have to work hard for it. Another inspiration for Garza is Sean Wotherspoon, owner of Round Two Vintage, a store in Los Angeles. NGE REV Garza said, "I would always watch his videos on YouTube and just absorb all the knowledge he would give on vintage and how he managed his business. Watching him always gave me that extra push to keep going because I knew what I wanted NGE REV and I knew I'd get it if I just kept going." REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE REVENGE "I ADDED THE REVENCE PECAUSE IT'S KINDA LIKE THE REVENCE OF THE RALL, LIKE, COMING BACK AND HAVING A NEW VENGE REVENG PURPOSE TO SOMEONE NEW!

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dropping the packages off at the U.S. Postal Service. Meanwhile, someone in the staff also uploads stories about the store on Instagram. Others are at the front desk attending

to customers and answering their questions.

Garza said she has learned a few things during her entrepreneurial journey. As a business owner, her top three priorities are marketing, making sure all the work is getting done and attending to the customers if they have any issues that need resolving.

Garza said, "Probably the biggest thing I learned about business operations is marketing. Your business will not succeed if you don't have a good marketing system. If you aren't putting your business in front of people's faces and reminding them you exist, then you more than likely won't have a successful business."

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Garza added that her goal is to keep the business going forever and have multiple stores across the United States. She hopes to open a store on Melrose Avenue, a popular shopping street in Los Angeles.

"All good things take time," said Garza. "Everything turned out perfectly fine and we couldn't be happier."

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It has been three years since Garza started RagzRevenge. Now, she encourages others to start their own business. She said that the most important thing is believing in yourself and pursuing something that will make you content with your work. She said she believes mistakes are necessary to learn and what matters is to keep moving forward.

"I feel like failures make you grow as a person a lot even if you really suck at the time. You learn and grow as you go," Garza said. She added, "Work hard for what you want because, at the end of the day, your daily actions will set the pace for where you truly want to be one day. The only person that will stop you from pursuing your dreams is you."

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RAUZ REVENGE: A PHOTO SERIES

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PHOTOD BY PRIDCYLLA GUZMAN &

CARLOS LOPEZ

EDITED AND DESIGNED BY
DANIEL GONZALEZ-FRANCO











## A COMMUNITY OF CURATED CLOTHING VENDORS

BY SOL MEZTLI GARCIA / PHOTOS BY CARLOS LOPEZ

Since s h e w a s a freshman in high Melody school. Hernandez has been discovering hidden gems at thrift stores, such as Thrift City and Goodwill. The Edinburg resident and theater performance major at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, said she loves to find fashion items that are from the early 2000s, such as low-rise and baggy jeans like the "clothing that we would see Britney Spears wear when we were younger."

When members and the mandez noticed that she kept finding items she thought others would like, she said she was inspired to create her own shop, where she would sell her finds.

"I was like, 'I'm just going to

open up a shop and see if anybody actually would want these items.' I want to keep the vintage alive. Maybe somebody else wouldn't buy this, but I know I would and then somebody else would buy it off of me. It's unique. I feel like I just can't leave it here at the store," she said.

On April 28, 2021, the 19-year-old launched her shop called 2 Cute Finds on Instagram. She said it was important to her that her prices were affordable, so most items are \$10 or less. "I wanted to make it affordable, not as expensive, so they would buy off of me." she said.

She also said her store quickly popular became people because thrifting the community started spreading the word about it. Hernandez said, "I really appreciated that, and then they would post on their page and then other people from there got on my page."

Once she had that following, Hernandez started selling her curated pieces at pop-up markets in McAllen, Texas where she met more people from the thrifting community. More local thrift pages follow started to her, and now, the shop has almost 500 followers on Instagram. Hernandez said community the is popular and supportive in the Rio Grande Valley.

She said. "You just support each other and buy from each other as well because thrifting-you're not going to find it anywhere else. There's only one, it seems, with the clothing you thrift. That's what kind of makes it really popular too. I feel people like iust know that nobody else will have that and they're just like, 'Well, I have to buy it because I won't find it "

One of Hernandez's favorite parts about owning 2 Cute Finds is that she gives other people the opportunity to find something that they could not have found in a physical store.

"That person wouldn't have been able to find it over there because they probably don't go there to the one that you do. It's just all about [how] vou never know where they even came from. Maybe something vintage from maybe somewhere else. and then it got donated there. It's just the way that it moves around. Every piece of clothing has a story," she said.

### PULSE

#### POLLON THE SUN

Every so often. starting at 11 a..m., Marcecy Hernandez. Brownsville, Texas local, will ao to thrift shops in her city, usually with her friend, Amber Marroquin, who also owns a curated vintage clothing store called That's Fire Vintage. Together, they browse the stores until 3 p.m. or 4 p.m.

Once Hernandez, 25. gets home. she sanitizes the clothes curated she bought to resell. such as T-shirts. iackets sweatshirts. and She then posts the items on her vintage clothing shop's Instagram Facebook or page when she is ready to release a drop, which is collection of products that are ready for buying. Her online shop is called Follow the Sun Vintage and has gained over 1,000 Instagram followers since its formation in August 2020.

When she can, Hernandez, who is an art education sophomore at UTRGV, also sells items at pop-up markets in the Rio Grande Valley.

"I find everything. I wash everything. I tag all my items for markets. I post on Instagram [and] Facebook. I'm in charge of all that," she said.

Hernandez said she has been thrifting since she was in high school, but it was Marroquin who motivated her to start the business after seeing how used clothing can be appreciated by others.

She said, "I would always find really cool things, but they're either a

size too big or a size too small. They're really cool, but I didn't have a need to buy them at the time, because it wasn't my size. But now, she inspired me to make my shop and now whenever I find something really cool, I know it's going to go to someone who really appreciates it and loves it and it's something super unique for them."

According to Hernandez, buying and wearing thrifted clothing has become more popular compared to when she was in high school.

"I would sometimes even get bullied for it, which is kind of crazy now that that's what people are into," she said. Band tees and sweatshirts are some of the more requested items. Hernandez said. She added. "People are really into them. even though in the Valley, it doesn't even get that cold. People are always requesting sweatshirts even in the summer, which is kind of crazy."

While Hernandez said that she does not "expand much" when it comes to her personal style, sticking to jeans and T-shirts, the price range she is willing to pay affects the way she prices her items.

"With my shop, I try not to overprice my items because know in this community people are like, 'Oh, this a really rare whatever shirt.' and they want like \$200 for it," she said. "l'm putting it into my perspective. wouldn't spend \$200 on a used shirt

so I like to price my items pretty low or reasonably, which is what I would pay."

According to Follow the Sun Vintage's description on Instagram, it sells "curated vintage gems under \$25."

Hernandez advised that people who buy vintage clothing should buy items that appeal to them rather than follow trends, regardless of what others may say.

others may say. advised. She "Whatever speaks to you, whatever you think is cool, get it. [It] doesn't matter what people say as long as you're happy, like if vou're feeling yourself. I think that's all that matters. Just try not to follow the trend. Just be your own person within."

2021. December That's Fire Vintage became registered business. But Amber Marroquin, its owner, has selling been clothing vintage on Instagram and Depop since early 2019.

Marroquin, who is 26, said the sustainable fashion movement is what first got her interested in becoming a clothing curator "because it saves the clothing from landfills."

" also wanted to show my find[s]," the Brownsville resident said. "Everything I find-I think it's so unique, and it's literally one of a kind. And I just wanted more people to be aware of vintage fashion, and I think it's really fun."

Besides shopping at local Goodwill stores and McAllen's Texas

Thrift, Marroquin buys clothing for her store when she Minnesota visits about once a year. "I love going to the thrift stores over there because everything is extremely vintage. and I never find double of the same item ever. love thrifting in Minnesota or when I go out of town," she said. Marroquin added

that she goes from aisle to aisle at thrift stores when she goes three times a week, since any aisle can have something great.

"I'm literally going through everything because you never know what would be in what aisle and sometimes you find really good things in an aisle where you wouldn't expect to go," she said.

Marroquin has been thrifting since she was 14.

"Every time I would wear something,

people would 'Oh, I be like, love what you're wearing. Where'd you get it?' And I would always say the thrift store. Then they would want me to go with them because I'd always find good stuff. And that's how I also thought about opening a small store," she said.

About twice a month. Marroquin sells what she finds at pop-up shops. While she tries to be a vendor at markets across the Valley, she has mostly sold markets at in Brownsville or McAllen. However, a challenge she said that she faces is that she does not always have someone to watch 2-vear-old her son. Nevertheless, selling at more pop-up shops is her goal.

This is because, according to







#### LOZQUE VONTRE

Jimenez, Tex Brownsville a resident. started selling vintage clothing through his shop called Lazarus Vintage about four years ago. But in October 2021, the 28-yearold was ready for his next business opportunity: owning a store with two friends who are also curators.

Before that October. Nelly Sanchez. the owner of Lazy Boy, had asked Jimenez to join her in her shop space in McAllen, because they were friends who owned businesses dedicated to vintage clothing. Jimenez said yes. However, after having successful many together, events they realized they needed a larger space.

That was when they recruited Xavier

Flores, the owner of Small Doses, who sells vintage clothing and makes customizations for denim items.

"[We] had a similar idea for what we wanted. So when it came time to find new location, we decided to all be equal partners in it," Jimenez said. "We would all be working towards a common goal that the name would be Juntos, so kind of all together."

J u n t o s Vintage Cooperative is at 403 N. Main St., Suite B. in McAllen.

While the three partners own the space together, they each continue to their "own sell niche," Jimenez said.

"I focus mostly on T-shirts and just building out little collections and releasing them at a time. [Flores] focuses mostly

on '80s and '90s, kind of like vintage athletic tags and just miscellaneous. But his main thing is he's pretty good with the sewing machine," he said. а customer needs alterations made to a denim item, Flores will manage that there in the shop.

Additionally, Flores sells customized When items. а friend found а Gucci bedsheet. Flores made it into a button-up shirt. Jimenez said the shared business places "a big emphasis on using what we have, upcycling materials and clothing."

Sanchez focuses on women's wear such as denim shorts, blazers, jackets and boots. Jimenez said, "She kind of dabbles in a lot of things, but her main thing is women's wear. She finds the cutest things and boots, and so we're just building that out and coming into our own with the shop."

From Monday to Friday, Jimenez is out looking for clothing items to sell. He often visits rag centers, where T-shirts are shredded and sold to recycling centers, he said.

"A lot of T-shirts these there's very little wrong with them," the curator said. "I can see them being one again or getting a second chance the at cycle of a garment so I'll save them and wash them, get them clean and bring them up."

When he is not shopping or at the store, Jimenez will sell items at pop-up events and farmers markets. He also lists items on Depop or Instagram to sell.

Jimenez added that his passion for the business stems from his love of





























clothing is a form of self-expression. always appreciated fashion how reflective is of someone's personality and their interest," he said.

In high school. he said clothing was how he expressed his love for music. He would wear band tees and buy jackets leather them, to paint symbolizing his interest in metal

and punk.

In addition, finding wearing clothes that others are not likely to have is one way that fashion can be very personal. "I just found an even more indepth way to express it by not just buying things out of a store, but taking time to find things that really resonated with me and then wearing them," he said. "They feel unique. They feel very

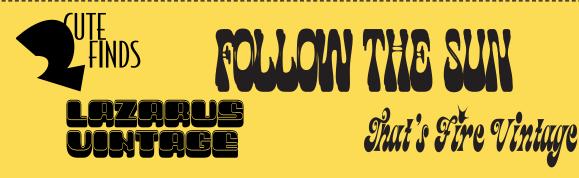
personal because a lot of times you are the only one that has them." Jimenez also believes that most sellers have relationship with vintage fashion.

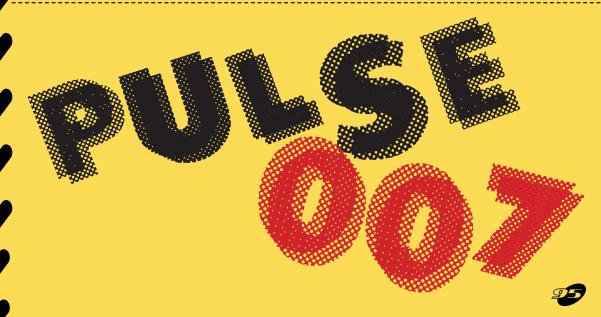
" believe lot of that а vintage sellers have a genuine connection to the passion of vintage. Some people do it as a hobby, and maybe they started out buying a few tees, but then they realized

they wanted this other one ... so they just built it up and it's kind of like trading cards," he said.

Jimenez added, "It's just a really cool way to explore one's entrepreneurship. But I believe that a lot of people that do it, do it because thev have a genuine love for the hobby and for sharing it with other people."







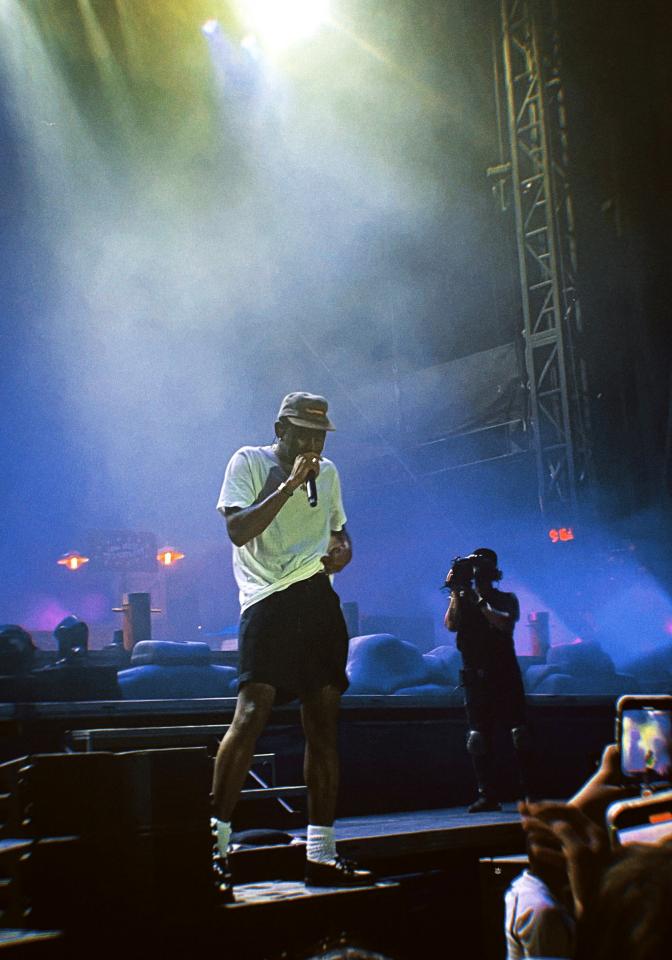




The Creator, Greta Van Fleet, Doja Cat and Billie Eilish (listed in order on

the following pages), and enjoy my experience of ACL from Oct. 8-10,

2021 through the eyes of my camera lens.











#### by emilia marroquin

photos courtesy illiana luna

To follow one's passion is to take a risk. For a recent University of Texas Rio Grande Valley alumna, Illiana Luna, this has proven to be true. After graduating in 2019 with a bachelor's in mass communication (broadcast), Luna struggled with establishing herself in the workforce. Her hardships within the workforce were mainly focused on job satisfaction. She found herself questioning whether or not the job she had was really for her. Ultimately, she decided to return to school for her master's in education through a fast-track program.

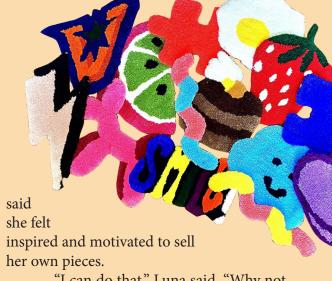
During the transition from working to returning to school, she discovered the world of tufting on social media. To her, tufting is, "Where you're making textile art using a machine or by hand."

"On my Tik Tok account, I was seeing a lot of people taking up new hobbies and interests during the pandemic," she said. After researching about tufting through YouTube videos, TikToks and tutorials, Luna's interest peaked. As she was beginning school again in March 2021, she also decided to launch her business, Tuft Designs by Illiana.

"I picked [tufting] up really fast and I figured why not make this a full-on business?" Luna recalled.

From marketing on social media to participating in local vendors' markets, there are many steps she has taken in order to grow her business to the fullest extent. To turn this passion into a reality, Luna said she "wanted to make sure [I] had the hang of it, so [I] kind of just practiced with different, weird, quirky designs."

Using a tufting gun, she practiced the movement of the machine and tested out the different fabrics. After visiting a local vendors' market at Southern Roots, Luna



"I can do that," Luna said. "Why not sell my rugs as unique pieces? I made 25 to 27 rugs for my first market."

Although she was a new business owner, she was also a graduate student at the same time. To her, the biggest challenge was making the time to make more products to showcase. Being a full-time student and dedicating yourself to a business requires a lot of time management skills, Luna said. Given that the fast-track program moved at a very fast pace, she said "the weeks were moving so fast in modules, so I never had a break to catch up on my business as much."

Despite the obstacles presented, she was able to overcome them and graduate with her master's all while finding time to devote herself to tufting. As far as the next step for Tufting Designs by Illiana, she hopes to add new projects.

"I am researching as I go, and I am learning from other tufters out there," Luna said. "I want to add coasters, and maybe some ornaments that can be used as car or purse charms."

In addition to the designs, her goal is to use different methods to tuft, such as punch needling.

"Tufting can be used by machine or punch needling which is by hand. Punch needling takes longer, but the texture of your product uses very different than when the gun is used, so that's why I wanted to try it out," said Luna.



## Q&A WITH STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT JOSÉ PABLO ROJAS

Compiled by: Emilia Marroquin Photography: Laura Segura

The Student Government Association (SGA) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is responsible for representing the student body in an official capacity. Its purpose is to address students' concerns, issues, petitions and participate in the policy-making process of the university community. There are three branches that make up the SGA: legislative, executive and judicial.

On Feb. 11, 2022, I sat down with José Pablo Rojas, the 2021-2022 president of the SGA. Rojas is a biology senior with a focus in biological science. We discussed his administration's successes, challenges and the relationship between the SGA and students.



# What were some pledges that your campaign staffers made while running for office? Have you been able to meet any of these pledges?

One of them in particular was the Open Educational Resources. It's an initiative that the university has in place. Basically, a program providing online resources, such as free textbooks for the student body regarding certain specific courses. So we've been able to meet with faculty throughout the summer, basically advocating for them to implement this program into their course so that students don't have to pay thousands of dollars every single semester just to be able to continue their education at university. So we met with basically all the deans, tried to advocate as much for it, went to their faculty conferences, gave presentations to faculty, so that they can add it into their courses [and] to prompt them to aid students in that way.

# This year, in what ways has the SGA connected with the student body and its concerns/issues?

Well, this year, we, as the executives, decided that it would be best to meet the students where they are at. There were some issues that we really wanted to tackle, and there was a Diversity

and Inclusion Task Force and being able to connect with migrant students. We're currently trying to find ways to connect us in a more focused way with the LGBTQI+ community. We've been able to also connect with the College of Fine Arts and specifically, because a lot of students have been raising concerns that there's not enough There's equipment. not enough resources, monitored resources, to ensure their success in academia. We decided, 'You know what, let's go out and meet them.' They got connected with one of the faculty there. They wanted us to go over there and speak about the referendum, what was going on and how it would affect them, but also to speak about SGA and what our role is, and we went over there and we spoke to the student population and Brownsville campus. Some of the pictures can be found on our Instagram. Members of leadership went ... We need their stories. We needed them to be part of our organization so that we can advocate even further because they have the experience of being in that college and with that experience, we can go miles basically advocating for more resources for the college, particularly in the Brownsville campus.

### As the SGA president, what are you most proud of?

Being able to basically help with the development of future years. Yes, we are doing a lot of these amazing things. Yes, we were able to facilitate a student vote.

Right now, we're currently working on amending the constitution so that we can provide a better representative structure for the student body. But at the end of the day, regardless of the amount of success you've done for the student body, my biggest highlights that I am really passionate about is just the development of future leaders. I developed 22 individuals for future leadership, and now some of them are in the organization. Some of them are doing other stuff in the university. They're all doing something to better the community.

4

What have been some unexpected challenges you have faced during your term, and how have you overcome them?

It's sometimes difficult managing everything because I, myself, work two jobs. And also student body president and I hold other leadership positions, and also at the moment [I am] studying for the MCAT. So I can be able to apply to medical school. But it all had to come down to time management. And if you really care about something, you make time for [it]. For myself, when I'm not in class, I'm in the meeting trying to speak to administration or advocating for students in some way or form. And some of those meetings are also my initiatives that I have to implement because of my executive agenda, and other meetings are with students. So I'm basically with students almost every single day throughout the entire

day, when I am not in class, trying to do work for them. Sometimes it's difficult to see from the outsider's perspective, mainly because the experience, it's kind of like the day in the life. Nobody know what you're through if they are not in your shoes. But for myself, overcoming all those things, and obviously, I guess there's some negative views on some of the things that we're doing. But at the end of the day, our biggest thing that is in our head, for myself, and also for the entire membership in the organization of the senators, and every form of leadership-our main focus into this is to ensure the academic community success of every single student at UTRGV no matter the campus.



# What would you say to students who feel the SGA does not represent the student body?

I would say connect with us, send us an email, go to our office, go to our events. It's been very difficult to ensure engagements and in governance. Because we have seen it online where people say "'Your meetings are so long," or "Your meetings [are at] a time that I can't go to them," or all these concerns that are going on with the university. But the thing is, our meetings-they're at 6 p.m. every single Tuesday, and you can go in person, you can go online, because we have them hybrid. They're online through Zoom. They're also in person here in the University Ballroom or one of the main rooms in the Brownsville



campus. We alternate between the campuses so that we can be able to allow students from different locations to engage and are transmitted live on Facebook ...

We need a physical representation of what their concern is. Just type it out, send it, send it as a tweet, email, and we can be better representatives for you. That's where a lot of the descriptions come from. There's a lot of "Oh, like, they're not representing me." But where's the email? Where's the information that we need to represent you? Yes, you can post it on social media, but we can't just take a screenshot and show it to administration because there's a lot of procedure in it and unfortunately, we have to wait ... You have to support your claim every single time. And that's something that we have to do in every single meeting: proving numbers, providing as much research as possible, testimonials ...

I have seen it happen multiple times when students make these polls. I remember one time it was a poll to extend a certain date. It was to extend the vacation time of spring break when the pandemic hit. These surveys are great. Surveys that students make with an online platforms, they're great. But they're obsolete to the university. Because there's an actual formal way to do it. And it's through SGA. And SGA basically speaks to administration, whenever some of these things happen, and we advocate for them. Just being up to date with the people that represent you really does help a lot.



#### What do you expect students to see by the end of your term?

Right now, we're working on the Constitutional Convention, which is basically the restructuring of the organization. For some parts of it, location base is going to be removed.



José Pablo Rojas (from left), president of the UTRGV Student Government Association, and Samantha Lara, the SGA vice president for Brownsville, discuss upcoming events with Student Activities Director Cindy Mata-Vasquez on Feb. 18, 2022 at the SGA office on the Edinburg campus.

But for other other positions, location base is going to be further focused into it. One position for the secretary of Graduate Affairs is going to be removed from the organizational structure to basically allow the possibility for graduate students to seek out their own form of representation. That's something right now I'm working with my graduate membership. I told them that the graduate school needs to have its own form of representation because the issues in the Graduate College are different from the issues in the undergrad. And the same thing with the School of Medicine.

The School of Medicine has their own Student Government Association, where their representatives become the house students. In that current structure, there's а difference between the representatives the undergrads [and] the number of representative positions to the graduate college, and we need more graduate representation. We've done everything we could [such as] sending emails. But for whatever reason, we're not getting as many applications from the Graduate College. So maybe they would like to do things differently. That's what we want to try to find out.



So my graduate membership is going to be connecting with the graduate school students and administration to see what conversations that I can be able to have and try to have a form of representation and association that accounts for any of its likeness. And whatever they decide to do, SGA will support them to the best of their ability.

"We need a physical representation of what their concern is. Just type it out, send it, send it as a tweet, email, and we can be better representatives for you."



José Pablo Rojas' term as president of UTRGV's Student Government Association will end this semester upon graduating. After speaking with him, it is clear how important it is for students to connect with the SGA and voice their opinions. For more information about the SGA and how to get involved, visit utrgv.edu/csi/student-government-association. You can also connect with the SGA via Instagram (@utrgvstudentgov).

# Frontera Devs Team Leaders Allyssa Villanueva (from left), Cassandra Garza and Belinda Alvarado talk to students about code development during a Feb. 17, 2022, Involvement Fair at the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus. The organization offers free membership and workshops. Photos By Laura Segura In the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus. The organization offers free membership and workshops.













I understand her now.

The woman who was born from a rib.

I understand why she did it, because I too, want to do it.

I do not need a snake to whisper in my ear.

I have you. Lying right there.

I wish to lean forward and bite into the apple.

Is it sweet? Am I willing to risk eternal damnation for this?

We know we are not bound for heaven, because we continue to fall for that tangy taste.

But, once again, I forget all about heaven and hell after that one bite.

By M. Lee
EVO
EVO





were ýour favorite

Dedicated to Olga Serna

I never liked orejas.

I thought they were never sweet enough.

Too dry on the tongue;

Crackling, brittle, flaky.

I preferred conchas.

The ones soft when broken.

That day in May

Was the last I shared with you.

I split your favorite bread in half

For you to eat with your dinner.

You were gone the next day

When all you wanted to do was go home

Instead of being surrounded by breathing machines



I never knew

I took a piece of you home with me

Before you left us.

I split your favorite bread in half

For you to eat with your dinner.

It's October now,

And I still have the half

Rotting away in a Ziplock

Tucked in your refrigerator door.

I never liked orejas.

I thought they were never sweet enough.

Too dry on the tongue;

Crackling, brittle, flaky.

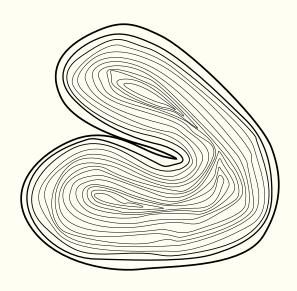
I preferred conchas.

The ones soft when broken.

But because they were your favorite,

I will always eat orejas in memory of you





By Maria Ruiz Illustrations By Andres Mazzei



Visit us at 718 W. University Dr, Edinburg

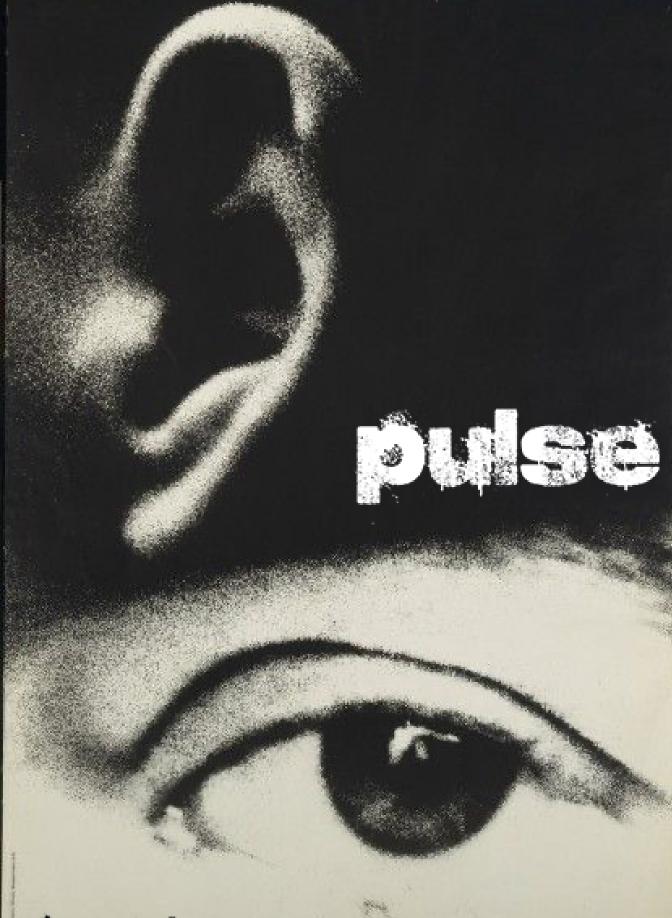
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#### "We're just two lost souls swimming in a fish bowl." - Pink Floyd

Grief comes in many ways. In fact, a Google search for types of grief will give you about 155 million results, each naming at least 10 types of grief, ranging from normal grief, which is an acceptance of loss, to absent grief, which is when one does not feel any grief.

Experiencing grief and loss is a tough journey that must be endured as part of being human. But could science help a person alleviate grief with its most simple, yet complex, concept of time and space?

Time, they say, is an illusion. A social construct that only exists to give society a sense of organization. Yes, time definitely helps life run smoother. But if we look at it from a scientific and philosophical perspective, using the block universe theory, the past, present and future are all happening at once in space time. Rather than having the present be our actual reality, this theory suggests our "reality" is simultaneously the past, present and future.

The block universe theory can be a hard concept to understand because we are accustomed to seeing time as a progression, meaning we commonly view time as moving forward toward the future. But according to the block universe theory, there is no linear progression of things. Things are not happening in a timely manner. Instead, it is all there. Everything is happening at once.

A simple way to understand this concept is by uisualizing something we all recognize. For example, a tree, which is what Ioan Muntean, a philosophy lecturer at the University of Texas Rio Grande Ualley, used to explain the block universe theory.

He said, "A tree is an interesting metaphor in which you can think that the roots are as equally real as the stem or the branches and the branches are a good metaphor because that is the future. The future is the branch and the past is the stem. The point there would be, that when you think about a plant, you think about the whole thing as being real. You can't say some parts are more real or less [real] because it's all still there."

For Muntean, the tree could be seen as the block universe, the stem as the past and the branches as the future. The analogy here is that the stem and the branches are all still part of the tree. They do not go away or disappear. In the same way, in the block universe, the past, present and future have not gone away. They are what make the universe. That something is in the past doesn't mean it does not exist anymore. Just like the stem of a tree.

So, what about grief? How does grief connect to the block universe theory? Well, it is quite simple. When you lose that special person or animal, in whatever way (death or non-death), you have to cope with the loss. The current perspective of time suggests that grieving involves looking into the past and reminiscing on the loving memories you created with that person. You might feel like this individual you lost is out of reach and just vanished. Or the memories you have are part of the "past" and no longer exist in your current reality. Not according to the block universe theory.

Our reality is the past, present and future in the block universe. Those memories that you may think are no longer "real" still exist. This time, let us use another metaphor to explain. According to Muntean, a spotlight is a good metaphor here. "If you move a spotlight on a wall, do you think the only thing that is real is what you can only see? That is not the case." said the lecturer.

The point behind the spotlight logic is that just because you are not shining a light on an object does not mean it is not there. It will be there even if you cannot see it. Just like the past, it is a memory now. But from the perspective of the block universe theory, the past is still alive and it is still happening. If you were to step out into space and look at the block universe, you would see everything happening at once.

Essentially, everything is floating in this block. All those memories are still breathing. Right now, I am writing this. But I'm also hugging that special person for the first time. Although we think of such moments as memories, they are not memories. They are still happening, and it is hard to not think of them as memories because we cannot travel back in time. But looking at this from a different perspective can help in knowing that nothing is ever lost in our universe. Perhaps that can be comforting to someone who is grieving. Who knew that a painful situation can be seen with so much love and with a smile by using physics and philosophy?

I like to think about it in this way using Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here." The song says, "We're just two lost souls swimming in a fish bowl." After learning about this theory and perspective, I think the fish bowl represents the block universe and the two lost souls represent you and that loved one. You and your lost one are just swimming in the same fish bowl. You can't t see him/her/them, but now you know that they are there and they are not just a memory. In this block universe, you are bound to see that loved one again because everything and everyone is out there. So, don't worry anymore.



### Poem By: Illiana Castellanos Illustrations By: Andres Mazzei



# HOROSCOPE JAMS WITH PULSE MAGAZINE

#### Intro By Sol Meztli Garcia

There is something so majestic about believing the alignment of celestial bodies, such as the planets and the moon. They impact who we are.

As an Aries, I am supposed to be passionate, impulsive and a little bit too honest. This past year, those characteristics typical of my sun sign were on full display. With Paola Raygoza, I created an ongoing playlist series curated for each horoscope sign.

Paola and I shared a love for astrology and wanted to combine that fascination with music. Both astrology and music are pow-

erful elements that reflect a lot about a person's inner spirit.

But, creating playlists was not as easy as we expected. There was a lot of research put into each playlist to ensure every single one of them would be true to their sign. Before this series, I only had an in-depth knowledge about my sign and a little bit of my best friend's.

Now, I am not an expert in each zodiac sign, but I have familiarized myself with each of them. For example I know that Pisces signs tend to get carried away with their dreams, Sagittarius people have the potential to be as wild as can be and Libras need to learn how to focus on themselves.

Whether you believe in the influence of astrology or not, check out your horoscope sign's playlist. Listen to each song and know that each of them is meant for your sign only. What are the songs telling you? What can you learn from them? And don't forget to jam out with Pulse. When you are in line for food at the UTRGV Student Union, meditating to discover your inner self or just need to sing along to some tunes, your horoscope playlist awaits you.









#### **Intro by Priscylla Guzman**

The "What are you listening to?" series was born when I first got inspired by TikTok user Shan Rizwan [@shan\_rizwan] who walks city streets and asks strangers what song they are listening to via their headphones.

This brought great inspiration to me because I was intrigued to learn what college students listen to, specifically UTRGV students. I asked my co-worker, Carlos Lopez, if he was interested in doing this series with me as my cameraman and video editor, which we called "What are you listening to? with Carlos and Priscylla." I knew that the results would be interesting, and they are. There is something so fascinating about knowing what music strangers are listening to. We hear the same songs over and over again every day on the radio, so that made me feel like everyone is listening to that mainstream music we hear all the time. But the truth is that every single person has a unique and interesting taste of music, and because of this, I have discovered songs I was never aware of. I hope that the same discovery happens to our readers and viewers

UTRGV students are listening to a variety of genres from Latin pop to reggaeton to heavy metal, rock, rap, hip-hop, country, alternative, house music and even mariachi. Enjoy! Perhaps you might find a song that will become an all-time favorite.







GO FOLLOW PULSEMAG ON TIKTOK





#### Photography By LEAH

My artwork comes from my sense of emotional detachment and avoidant personality in relationships, not only romantic, but in general. The portrayal given from the models I use, and myself, are to be presented in a distant world from the current scenario they are in-detached from reality, emotions and living in their own mind. Daydreamers.

My use of color with lighting is aimed at presenting a dream-like world for the character in the image, to enhance the feeling of curiosity for the viewer of what's happening and what the character is pondering about. It is a captured moment in time. A still of a thought.

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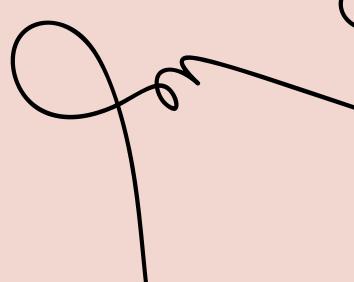




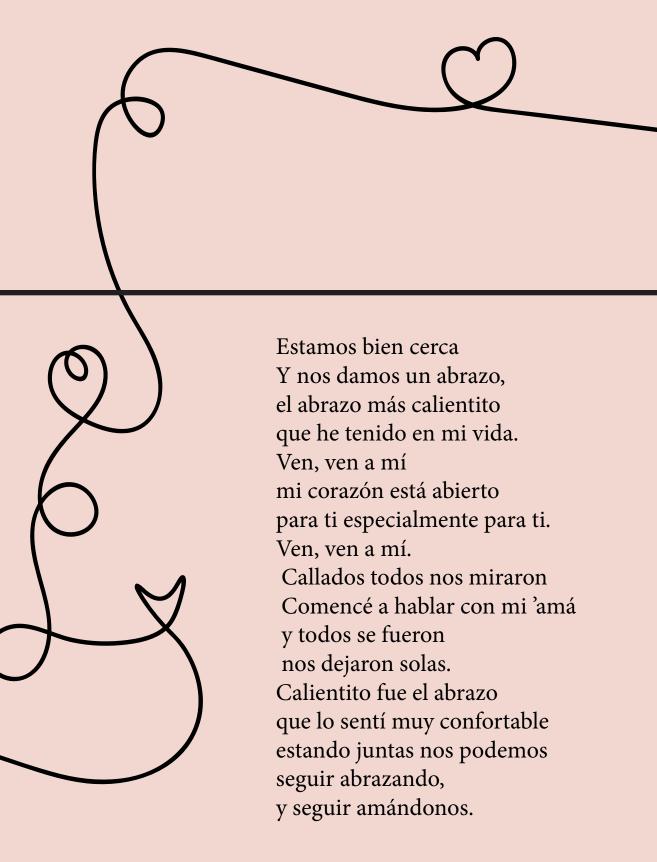
## UN DIA ESPECIAL

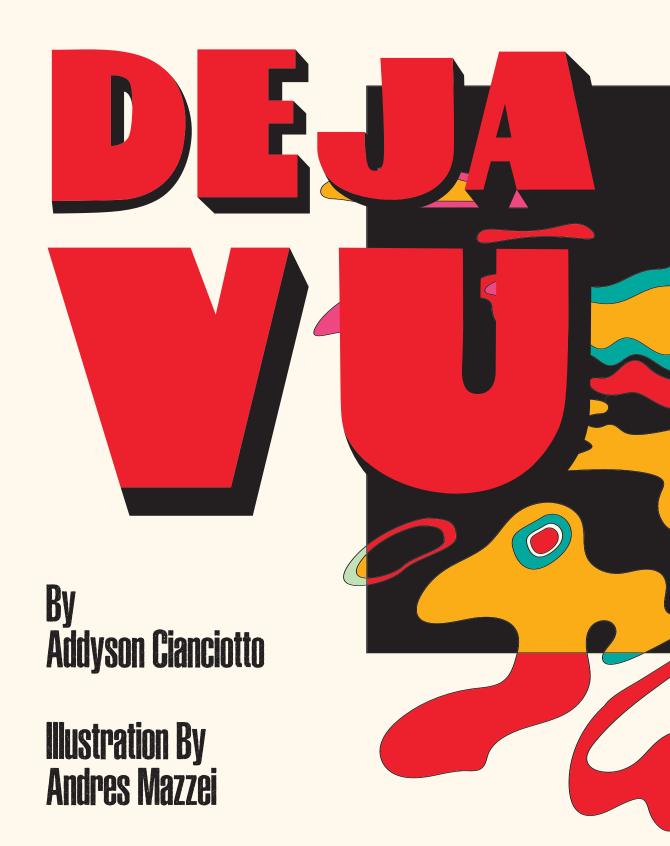
Por Abby Davila

Ha sido un largo día
Y cantó un especial melodía
Me pongo a pensar
Mi mama comienza a captar
Todo lo estoy haciendo
Para un momento
Oliendo esas especias deliciosos
Y todos están ansiosos
Tengo a mamá en un lado
Y está llorando
Le digo que está pensando
Pero todos están callando
Estoy llorando por tí
Y ella mira hacia mi.













It's so strange how I see him in you. It's like Deja Vu. His smile is your smile. His laugh is your laugh.

I'm almost nostalgic for him.

It's like my favorite show received a reboot.

I wonder how this plot will go.

Will you break me the same way he did?

Will it end just as it did before? With my heart freshly fraid?

I suppose this is my type.
The guy who pulls people toward him,
So much brighter than me,
So much more important than me.

He was blond and you are brunette.
He was short and you are tall.
It's not about these things for me.
Your personality is magnetically the same.
The way you talk to me and make me feel is what draws me towards you.
I see him in you.
I want to have with you...
What I could never have with him.

Deja vu has me remembering the motions of what it was like before, But God help me if it ends the same as that First foolish dream.

Then again, I wonder...
If I told you all of the ways I was different
All of the ways I was undesirable,
Would liking you be a waste of time?
Maybe, I'm not supposed to like anyone





INSTAGRAM: @borderlore\_

Photo Series By Sam Chapa





Our region has forever been revered as an escape; an escape from the cold, from the harshest downfalls of city living; an escape to new opportunities; an escape to better food. Our star in the southmost part of this state is a sentinel for beauty, rather it's not unmatched. The Valley's beauty lies within its people, within its acceptance and within its values. Nuestra estrella es bella porque nuestra gente es bella, gente como tu. Esta foto serie es una carta de amor a nuestra región, y está dedicada a ti. Muchas gracias por ser lo mejor del Valle.







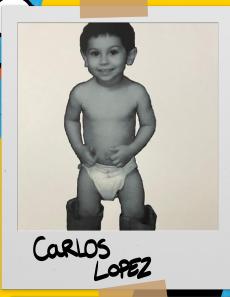














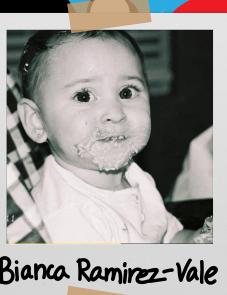
PANTEL GONZALEZ-FRANCO



Priscylla Guzman



Emilia Marroquin



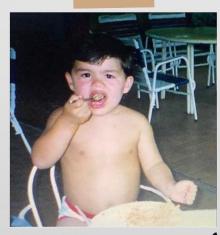




Sol Santana



Hania Rocio



Andres Mazzei



Laura Menchaca



Aje-Ori Agbese

