

Dustin Rivera

Spring, 2022

## **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Dustin Rivera is a transmasculine Taino artist who was born in the Bronx, but currently splits his time between Florida and Oregon.

He enjoys the inexplicable; ever since his mom passed away when he was 10 years old the only way for him to even relatively understand life is through art and constant questioning. Although he is mostly based in photography, Dustin ventures outside of that, doing whatever calls to him at the time. Whatever conveys emotions best. What will get the viewer to sink into his work. He likes people to think about the work and how it can relate to a bigger picture.

## THESIS PROPOSAL

Hello and welcome to my Thesis proposal. I want to start this out with a land acknowledgement:

Portland, Oregon lies within the traditional homelands of the Multnomah, Oregon City Tumwater, Watlala, and Clackamas Chinooks and the Tualatin Kalapuya Peoples who were relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation under the Kalapuya etc., 1855, ratified treaty (also known as the Willamette Valley Treaty, 1855). Today, these Tribes are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. The Grand Ronde people continue to maintain a connection to their ancestral homelands and maintain their traditional cultural practices.

Thank you for respecting the land with me.

I'm Dustin Rivera, a transmasculine Puerto Rican artist who was born in the Bronx. Currently I split my time between Oregon and Florida.

After I lost my mother at the age of 10, art became a necessary way to remember and capture the relationship I couldn't have and the loss I could not understand.

While my practice is primarily based in photography, I also use poetry, painting, and drawing to complete my expression.

I am Boriqua, I am Taino, I will change the world. In 1493 Columbus got lost and was wandering our shore, we discovered him. He changed Boriqua to "Puerto Rico."

I want to bring BIPOC people and culture into art, connect future generations to past ones, shine a light on social justice, and create my own history. We don't need to be defined to be comfortable.

The realization comes to me in the middle of the night as I lay in bed:

"Maybe I am comforted by the dark because I am a part of it."

In my thesis I will be questioning and exploring subjects such as Indigenous history/culture, beliefs/spirituality, social justice, and mental health. The container will be a 50 page book as well as an installation.

I want the viewer to open their mind: wonder, questioning, education, personal attachment yet distance/voyeurism. This project will be highly personal but also broad, causing people to look inward questioning themselves but also others around them. My research will bring to light things hidden as well as things generalized/gentrified that connect to my inner self and ancestors.

Breaking down my Thesis into its elements: what it is and why.

The legacy: my container is a book. A scrapbook reflecting my feelings of being a queer BIPOC.

Creating a world: my installation will be an altar

And putting my toes in the dirt of the world that was "created." : connecting to my people and land.

This will be a grimoire scrapbook depicting my inner thoughts and feelings while also exploring more meta ideas and world issues.

With textures and interesting visuals, including materials such as Yupo paper, fabric, and small illustrations, I want the viewer to interact with this fully. This book could be seen as a self-portrait.

This installation will be an altar, showing praise to my people and holding them high, a hand-dyed flag highlighting my people and amazing things that have been done.

Hand-dyed hammock, something the Taíno created, waiting for touch, Paper mache figures call for contemplation, but should you?

Comfort and distance further come into play.

What I will get from this work - Finding my roots. Hoping to find a place I feel happy, even if that means being undefined, still wandering, a mix of things. My Thesis will be the safe space I never had, somewhere to go, a home.. one inside me?

For the creation of my book I will be using: Dyeable leather for bookbinding, book-binding materials, online/local sources for printing the pages. I will work in a way that I can naturally dye my own cover and outsource the pages. Inside the book will be: Ink illustrations, digital/film photos, Pictorico/wax/tracing/Yupo paper, glue/tape/staples/etc.

For the hand-dyed hammock and flag I will use: Natural dyes will be made with, or to resemble plants important to the island and my people (such as guava or coffee.) Cotton is feasible and

easy, soft, and speaks to colonization, slavery, and commodification.

I am comfortable with most of these materials besides the paper mache, but that has come into practice.

Paper for the mache comes from old books about white people, local papers about concerning topics. This is mostly local news, Eurocentric and Phallocentric, often dismisses BIPOC/LGBTQ, tries to address and passively "help," or cover completely. Certain words are left visible through the paint to convey messages. This highlights social justice. Small cards or QR codes will be included to access more information on the figures.

My mom. Food. Animals/land talking to me. Spirituality. BIPOC excellence. Beauty/awe in the mundane, the way smoke swirls through the air. Waving to my grandfather through a frosty window. Mosquitoes on my sticky skin in the Florida heat. The feeling of the needle sinking into my flesh every time I do my T-shot. Burning my lip on a candle while on shrooms, and not feeling a thing. Laughing so hard I cry. Kissing someone I can fully melt into.

Most research is personal, lived-through, hands-on experience.

To start naming some specific influences, we will start with The 1975.

An alternative/pop/rock band I was introduced to in 2013, and I couldn't get enough of them. I still can't. The layers of sound mixed with deep meaning and references. Their songs call people to change, look inward, and also to live life. I chose two of my favorite songs from their second album, out in 2016. This album is titled *I Like It When You Sleep, For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It*.

The first song I will discuss is "If I Believe You," a song about God and finding a place in the world. This song reflects feelings of confusion. How/where are you supposed to find faith? Yourself. It also speaks to the commodity of religion.

The second is "Nana," revolving around the death of a close family member. This song reminds me of my mother who died when I was 10 years old, 10 years ago. References to long acrylic nails, "a grown up man dressed in white," and her soul living on through these songs apply heavily to me. My mom died in a

hospital, also liked to get acrylic nails, and I hope that my art makes her proud and allows her to continue living through me.

Honorable mention, "Love It If We Made It" off their 3rd album A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships, one of those "the world sucks but let's live" vibes.

A Ghost Story (2017) is a movie directed by David Lowery that is highly influential to my work. A Ghost Story revolves around a young, nameless couple who moves into a small house in the flatness of Texas, where he composes music and she yearns to leave. C (played by Casey Affleck) dies in a car crash and comes back as a ghost, observing his wife, M (played by Rooney Mara) grieves and eventually exits the home. He stays in the house as time goes on, even as time progresses and the house becomes a gigantic development, as if he's stuck in the denial phase of grief. This movie speaks to the mystery behind death, makes us question what it is we are so afraid of, a story of love and loss, and applies to a range of people.

The subject matter and beautiful visuals pushed me to further think about my culture and people. How will my soul live on, what is my legacy?

Adventure Time is a popular, young adult, animated show centered around Candy Kingdom and its defenders: Finn the Human, Jake the Dog, Princess Bubblegum, and Marceline the Vampire Queen. This show talks to huge, impactful messages and issues. Death of a parent, spiritualism, loneliness, and being LGBTQ+ are some of the subjects Adventure Time touches on that I relate to and create work about. This show is also animated pretty simply, allowing faces and gestures to speak. This style inspires my illustrations which will be seen in my book.

Season 5 Episode 11, "Bad Little Boy," is when Fiona and Cake come into play taking the place of Finn and Jake. Marceline comes in and takes over the Ice King's storytelling, introducing Prince Gumball and Marshall Lee. This impacted me highly as a child, opening my little 12 year old brain to the phrase "genderbent." This eventually led to the discovery of "transgender." Adventure Time also includes one of children's TV's first same-sex kisses, important to me and other LGBTQ+ people. This shows everyone that love is love.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña's performance Dancing With Fear Part 1: "Mirror Dance." This performance is Peña having an

interaction with his own reflection. He touches his body in both violent and intimate ways, speaking to gender, BIPOC expectations, and identity/image.

Nan Goldin and her performance/book *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1985.) Snapshot photography, personal work and behind-the-scenes imagery of LGBTQ+ and white & BIPOC interaction/spaces. I admire her for her rawness and "creation"/"popularization" of this style.

Taking walks, communicating with nature, keeping things, sketchbooking, it's my Thesis and also how I research. I have made some moodboards for my thesis research including natural dye, and my sketchbook shows the scrapbook style that I work in. This style will be exemplified in my Thesis book.

In addition to this research I am looking into performance (as I will be documenting the natural dying process of the hammock and flag) and Vaginal Davis.

I want to look more into Vaginal Davis and the inclusion of perfume and scents in her sculptures. Having this sensory engagement turns the sculptures into a visceral performance. These chemicals are nostalgic and comforting but also harmful and headache inducing. I want to incorporate scents in my work to further tap into the senses.

In my Thesis, as this will be an altar space, I would be looking towards scents such as sweetgrass or sage, tree/rainforest type scents. I may even recreate the tanning oil my mother would always wear, using natural scents. This would bring her into space, as one of my ancestors, they're all together.

My sketchbooks often look like scrapbooks, reflecting my childhood connection to them. The research that goes into my sketchbook will translate a lot into the final product. I use my art as a way to explore, "raise irritating questions," and "leave grains in the audience's psyche" (Gomez-Peña.)

And my Thesis will do that.

My "ghost photos" are based on *A Ghost Story*, the depiction of ghosts, and thoughts of the afterlife. Why are we so afraid of ghosts, they're just humans after all. My scanner works, which has a more trippy and alien-like aesthetic. Shows my interest in color, textures, and combining the analog with

digital. My "landscapes," speak to nostalgia, memory, and childhood. Self-portraiture which speaks to gender dysphoria and euphoria, and mental health. All of these components will come together to create a book that could be seen as a self-portrait.



## **THESIS ABSTRACT/PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

A handmade scrapbook about that bittersweet thing that is your early 20s.

Hard bound and made with local leather, this book is a personal work that combines several mediums to create an immersive experience. Nostalgic and interactive, with textures such as flowers and hair, Dustin hopes to tap into the viewer's senses and cause them to question life.

## ORAL DEFENSE

Hi I'm Dustin Rivera, a transmasculine Taino artist who was born in the Bronx but now split my time between Florida and Oregon.

My mom. Food. Spirituality. Beauty/awe in the mundane, the way smoke swirls through the air. Waving to my grandfather through a frosty window. Mosquitoes on my sticky skin in the Florida heat. The feeling of the needle in my flesh every time I do my T-shot. Laughing so hard I cry. Kissing someone I can fully melt into.

I enjoy the inexplicable; ever since my mom passed when I was 10 I find the only way to even relatively understand life is through art and constant questioning. Where did I come from? What am I? What happens after I die? What is life? Is anything real? Does it even matter?

Although I'm mostly based in photography, I venture outside of that doing whatever calls to me at the time. Whatever conveys the emotions best. What will get the viewer to sink into my work. I like people to think about the work and how it can relate to a bigger picture.

Some specific influences are the 1975's songs "If I Believe You," and "Nana." This alternative, rock/pop band shaped a lot of my teenage years. These songs discuss subjects such as loss and trying to navigate life. These are also songs I play a lot while working in the studio, the layers of sound coming together as my pieces do. For structure inspiration I looked at Don Mee Choi's DMZ Colony and Orion Carlotto's Film For Her, as well as my first little handmade scrapbook. Most of it is just my life, being 22.

As someone who grew up and went to school in America, I've heard a lot about Christopher Columbus. In 1492 he came across the Taino people in Puerto Rico, people that were insulated from Americas He got lost and wandered onto our land, we tried to help him but instead he turned against us. Colonized, commodified, seen as ghosts or aliens – something of fiction – "The Tainos are no longer among us," they say. They say we are extinct, but we are not; we are here. (Page 152)

I chose to write my introduction very bluntly, about me and my people. We have been commodified, objectified, fetishized.. our skin, hair, accent(s,) skills... just to be demonized at the

same time. I list things that have been seen as iconic and well enjoyed such as music and pina coladas. Overlaying the tracing paper poem is a darkroom print that I reprinted on Pictorico, adding another transparent layer but it's a bit harder to see through. You have to look closely at the poem, reflecting the way I feel like I'm constantly under a microscope.

This work is about self discovery and identity, but not telling a story. I like to describe it as that bittersweet thing that is being in your early 20s, realizing you are no longer a teenager and can't go back while trying to live in the moment and acknowledging that you are still a growing, learning human who hasn't even figured out what life is about. I'm not only making this for myself but for other BIPOC, other Taino people who walk the world not knowing where they fit in, the LGBTQ community, my family and friends.

Going to the store and getting stacks of books, not being able to choose just one to ask my grandfather to buy for me. Sometimes I got away with two. Making myself fully shower before I leafed through them, they're so sacred to me. They're a way of time travel. Books are living, they know so much more than we ever could. They're incomprehensible.

I started this project by measuring my childhood scrapbook and making a stencil that I would then cut book board and leather to fit, to create a hardcover. I also cut the printmaking papers down to the size of my book. The book is a great size for holding and viewing: 13.5 inches by 12 inches, 30 pages long, and 3 pounds. I want to take up space with this work. I'm used to being kinda quiet, but this is my time to talk all I want.

The hard cover is made from locally sourced cow leather. I wanted something that has life, something that has soul to it. This leather was once a cow, and I address that every time I come in contact with it. Remembering petting cows in Florida. The green color is a further reflection of me, pushing the self portrait aspect; my green hair is something I feel like people are starting to remember/recognize me by. When my hair is green I feel connected to nature, connected to everything. I am grass, I am the plantains that become those bussin ass tostones. The leather has an amazing smell as well as feel, it is comforting and nostalgic... like a hug.

Other details include printmaking paper, film and digital photographs printed on luster paper (a paper that is neither glossy or matte,) and pressed flower "stickers" as well as added in textures. These textures are created using materials such as clear nail polish, buttons, and a hammock.

After editing a bunch of photos and writing, it was time to print. I used a typewriter to print the text, the same way you'd see my poems in my notes app.. it just feels natural and nostalgic. I typed on newsprint, construction, and tracing papers; whichever felt right with the poem. I chose paper varying in color and weight (like skin and the Florida sunsets) creating a warm/neutral palette. Newsprint feels raw and aged, with a slightly toothy texture that allows a smooth text. Construction paper, seen in warm colors, emphasizes emotions and situations. The typewriter sinks a bit more into the texture of this paper, resulting in a deeper black. Lastly, tracing paper. This is used for poems that are more transparent; I wanted to show it literally. It was the weirdest paper to type on, the ink sitting on top is easily smeared so they had to dry a bit. I found it the most fun to work with, the way it smears and wrinkles and took on the texture of the objects sitting on top of it while the spray adhesive dried. I didn't really know what to expect and I liked that.

When the hard cover was done, I bound a signature of printmaking papers together with a 5-hole pamphlet stitch, and glued that to the inside of my cover. I fleshy tones to simulate that skin color component; Tainos/Puerto Ricans are not confined to a skin color. From peach to brown; I've seen the range in my own family. Not gluing the spine of the book to the book board of the cover and using book tape ensures that the signature is secure and able to lay flat.

Film and digital photographs were printed on luster paper. The luster paper allows a retainment of color and detail. Some photos were chosen specifically for this because of the subject matter, others just happened to fit the mood. The size of them depended on how they felt in relation to each other, the negative space, and the text. These are photographs and poems that vary in time and space; this scrapbook includes work ranging from late 2018 to the present year of 2022.

This progression is best seen in my selfie pages. As a queer person who has experienced loss, documenting myself and my

memories is super important to me. These pages feature Spanish moss I brought back from Florida during winter break: it looks like my hair, growing and tangling through the timeline, clumping up during times of stress or dissociation. It grows with me, I grow with it.

I gathered plants from my yard as well as peeped my little stash of flora/fauna. This resulted in a bunch of flower/clover stickers, and one butterfly wing sticker. These were made with parchment paper and packing tape!!! Other flowers were adhered using tape, I chose not to make those into stickers because they wouldn't crumble and fall out of my book. Turns out, they will.. so.. this is an ephemeral aspect that kind of speaks to time and change.

For the acknowledgments I found a sweet paper bag (in my art drawer) that perfectly fit. It was all coming together. It was time for the finishing touches, creating physical texture.

I rolled printmaking ink onto a hammock's carrying bag, made of the same cotton as the hammock. This was used to create a cloud-like texture beneath my fluffy "1-23-22" poem.

One of the many things that Columbus noticed when he was with the Tainos is our use of the hammok. Used now as a luxury item, it is also used out of necessity to keep people safe from insects, animals, weather, etc.

I wrote this while thinking about laying in my aunt's hammok as she makes food, everyone yelling and talking over the music while they swim in the pool. Now I have my own hammok that I am excited to lay in and make more good memories.

The poem was written on newsprint and put in a plastic page protector with a piece of polyfill, to resemble a cloud. It also makes a really fun noise when touched, and has an airy, soft texture. I further pushed this cloud motif with the hammok print; something a little less dimensional yet a little more textural going on. The three airplane photos were taken on a plane on the way from Oregon to Florida, the clouds so close yet I'll never be able to truly feel them. Suspended in time, going fast yet it feels so slow. Planes are an interesting place to think.

Written on tracing paper with clear nail polish texture to resemble water is "1-21-22" page. Contemplative and melancholic, this poem seeks to tap into the senses. How overwhelming yet numbing it feels when you dissociate; everything becomes so much

that it drowns itself out. Becoming a muffled silence. Sometimes when I'm having a hard day, I take what I call a sit-down shower. I feel like this is something people can relate to. The comforting feeling without committing to sitting in a tub of water, the sound of the water going down the drain causes you to sink deeper and deeper into this contemplation.

I juxtaposed this poem with 3 photos: A 35mm darkroom print placed above (reprinted on Pictorico) which shows me drying off after a shower. This photo is blurry and soft, yet dark. How it feels when I dissociate and the vignetting starts to happen. The other page features a film photograph I took while staying at a cabin in Washington, the dark clouds approaching the lake as we listen to music and jam all night. The photo seen at the bottom displays surface tension, an interesting moment to watch. Waiting for that tension to break and the liquid to go spilling, yet it sits there.

I used paper cement to adhere the pictures and poems to the paper. Because of the fumes and our lack of ventilation in our 100 something year old house, I had to do this outside. The elements caused the glue to dry way way faster than I anticipated. Where things didn't fully adhere, little pieces of tape were added, accenting the pages with light tan and clear.

I feel like I HAVE to mention one of my favorite add-ins. Film spokes that I glued on the book tape: these were from a roll of film I got developed, intended for this book that ended up being blank. It ended up in the book after all.

Although this is a very personal work, I still chose to keep some things hidden. Some of the poems read differently without their tracing paper component, some you will never be able to see. These are for someone that isn't known; they know who they are. "Him" and "them."

My people had our land taken from us, as many other cultures have. We are so used to turning ourselves inside out constantly; white people always need to know everything. They question and assume and wonder why we don't like to tell them things... the way their faces twist, the drop in the vibe, their tone might change, etc.

We believe in a way of life not based on land ownership, and it causes many people like me to question their place in the world. I moved from place to place to place yet none of them have ever felt really right. Having a chosen family

that I surround myself with has helped the most, I can wear things like crop tops around them and not feel weird, not get misgendered, not objectified. I get to share my culture with other people in a way that's comfortable and relaxed, having discussions about our different backgrounds and families. I feel like everyone should have this. I get to choose who, when, and how I talk about myself and my background. The same with these pages, I tell you what you do and when you get to do it. Consent is always key.

Part of "12-2021" is accessible to the audience, but only my partner is able to peel back that piece of paper and read the poem in its entirety. I wrote this poem in a way that it can be read separately as well as together as one poem. It reflects the feelings of anxiety yet excitement of a new relationship. The scary but beautiful beginning to something new.

"8-14-21" is a page with tracing paper, but used differently. This is one of the more carefully created pages, one that the reader has to spend extra time with. The poem is on red construction paper to convey the anger and intense emotions going on while I wrote this. Written in the bathroom as I overlook my body, thinking about all of the times people's faces change or eyes get bigger when they see my arms. The way they like to tell me I'm strong as if I don't have to be. It is written in a way that you can read just the tracing paper component, giving you my more internal thoughts, or the more general construction paper component. I'm strong, but why? How? For what? It isn't just for others, but for me.

I placed this poem next to two photos, my graduation and my brother's graduation. You can see the confidence grow, my dad still proud in both. Above is a photo of my skin, focusing on hair, scars, and wrinkles. The photos on the left are ones I took freshman year learning to use a film camera, when I fell in love with it. These photos of the lights were able to be juxtaposed in a way that speaks to dissociation with the vignetting and "wrong" orientation, but also to speak to a road.. to growth.

The last thing I did was stamp it with a linoleum stamp, my own little publishing stamp. Wormy Apple Press. A weird little play on things like life, education and apple juice.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1975, The. If I Believe You. Good Soldier Records, n.d.

An alternative/pop/rock band I was introduced to in 2013. The layers of sound mixed with deep meaning and references. Their songs call people to change, look inward, and also to live life. This song reflects feelings of confusion, and the commodity of religion.

Bowlin, Ben, Matt Frederick, and Noel Brown. Stuff They Don't Want You To Know, n.d.

Similar to "Dark History"; a podcast about things you won't see in history books, things kept low-key. "From UFOs to psychic powers and government conspiracies, history is riddled with unexplained events."

Brandon, George. "The Uses of Plants in Healing in an Afro-Cuban Religion, Santeria." *Journal of Black Studies* 22, no. 1 (September 1991): 55-76.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/002193479102200106>.

I read this and it ended up being more interesting and useful than I anticipated. Talks about the use of plants in Santeria which is rarely found, because people like to demonize it by focusing on the use of blood and sacrifice. Talks about past studies on this subject, the medicinal and ritual uses of plants, healing rites, and more surrounding this magick. It also includes an appendix of plants used in Santeria, both for medical and ritual use.

Burton, Johanna, Natalie Bell, and New Museum, eds. *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon*. New York, NY: New Museum, 2017.

This book discusses an exhibition titled *Trigger*, talks about the context around that word, and how queer artists have and will continue to change the world. I found a lot of inspiring works in this book and found some new artists to look into.

Coughlin, Brian. *Devil's Road: The True Story of Ed and Lorraine Warren*, 2020.



Ed and Lorraine Warren are some of the first people to expose the public to the supernatural, opening up their minds to exorcisms and the power of the afterlife. This documentary talks about them and their life: how they met, their children, their cases, etc. I find the afterlife, supernatural, and unknown interesting in my work and the Warrens are a big inspiration.

Cummings, David. TheNoSleepPodcast, n.d.

A podcast of original horror stories told by David Cummings. As a lover of horror and the weird, listening to this inspires me both in the way he talks and the way the stories are written.

Davis, Vaginal. Come On Daughter Save Me. December 20, 2015. Clay and nail-polish frieze sculptures.

<https://invisible-exports.com/exhibitions/vaginal-davis-come-on-daughter-save-me/>.

Sixteen clay and nail polish figures that turn sculptures into a visceral performance. The use of scent can be comforting yet harmful and headache inducing. This is inspiring and may come into practice with my Thesis.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States. ReVisioning American History. Boston: Beacon Press, 2014.

"... an absence of motivation to ask questions that challenge the core of the scripted narrative of the origin story. How might acknowledging the reality of the US history work to transform society?" (page 2)

Goldin, Nan. The Ballad of Sexual Dependency. Marvin Heiferman, 1985.

Nan Goldin is known for this slideshow/book. It is compiled of snapshot photographs taken by Goldin, from the clubs in New York with the gays to her personal life, she does not hold back. I find her style, work, and transparency amazing.

Gomez-Peña , Guillermo , and Zen Cohen. Dancing With Fear Part 1: Mirror Dance. Performance and Video, n.d.

<https://www.5dfutures.com/guillermo-gomezpena>.

In this performance Guillermo touches his body intimately and violently. Speaks to BIPOC expectations as well as gender dysphoria.

No words are even needed in the work. I cry every time.

Jabr, Ferris. "The Social Life of Forests." The New York Times, December 3, 2020, sec. Magazine.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/02/magazine/tree-communication-mycorrhiza.html>.

This article is about the mycorrhizal relationships between trees, and how their roots connect them all making it more like one big organism. They describe these threads as the weaving of the world, which is very much how I think of forests. The way the whole ecosystem can react to external forces makes you think about nature in a different way.

Kissel, Ben, Marcus Parks, and Henry Zebrowski. The Last Podcast on the Left, n.d.

A group of funny guys in their basement talking about various horrors from "both imagined and real, from demons and slashers to cults and serial killers." I really enjoy the creepy, weird, and true crime. This podcast is all about that and is told by a group of goofs who make it fun to listen to.

Lowery, David. A Ghost Story. A24, 2017.

A Ghost Story is an A24 produced film directed by David Lowery. This movie was released nationwide July 7th, 2017 and grossed 1.9 million USD in box office. A Ghost Story revolves around a young, nameless couple who moves into a small house in the flatness of Texas, where he composes music and she yearns to leave. C (played by Casey Affleck) dies in a car crash and comes back as a ghost, observing his wife, M (played by Rooney Mara) grieves and eventually exits the home. He stays in the house as time moves forward, even as time moves forward, even as it becomes a gigantic development, as if he's stuck in the denial phase of grief. This movie speaks to the mystery behind death, makes us question what it is we are so afraid of, a story of love and loss.

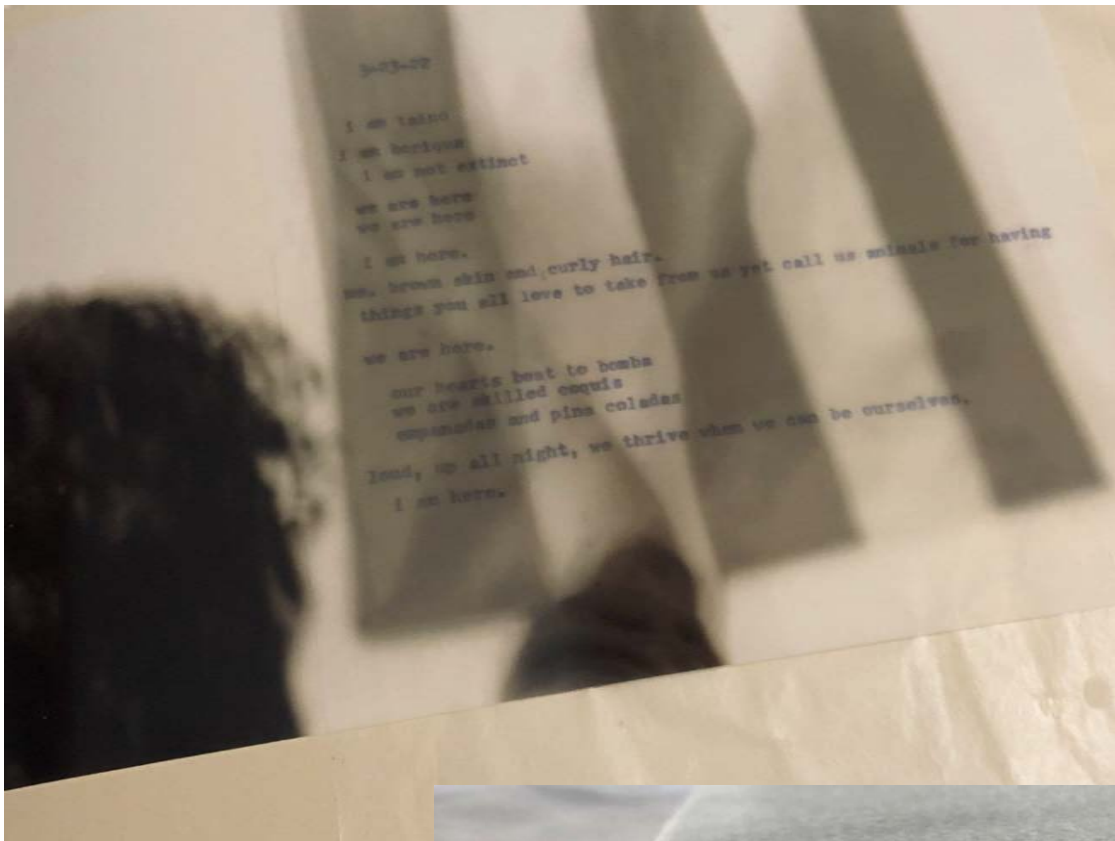
Sarian, Bailey. Dark History, n.d.

Bailey Sarian is known for her "Murder, Mystery and Makeup Monday's" on YouTube, where she does her makeup and talks about a true crime case at the same time. She recently created this podcast, "Dark History", revealing shocking and disgusting history that isn't usually talked about; you definitely won't see any of the things she talks about in a textbook. Some of these concepts bring to light a lot of the subjects I think about, such as BIPOC history.

Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. New York: Penguin Books, 2001.

An article about the history of walking, something I do often and use as a spiritual and creative practice.



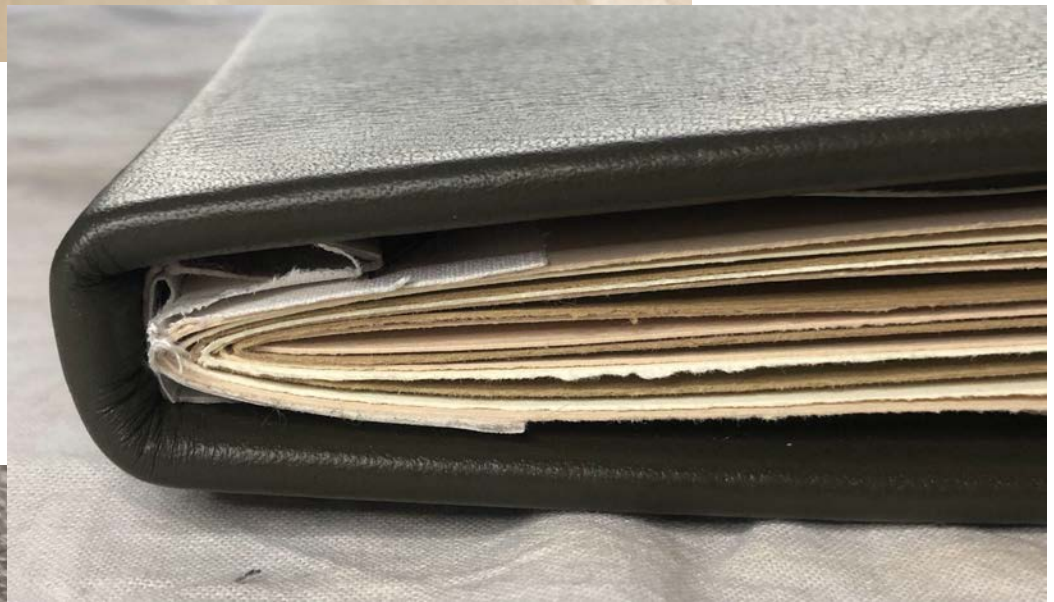


3-23-77

I am tired  
I am bored  
I am not extinct  
we are here  
we are here

I am here.  
we, brown skin and curly hair,  
things you all love to take from us yet call us animals for having  
we are here.

our hearts beat to bomba  
we are skilled cooks  
samosas and pina coladas  
loud, up all night, we thrive when we can be ourselves.  
I am here.



# "HAMMOCK"

a leisure item for wealthy families



Traditional hammocks originated in Central America

Arwakan word

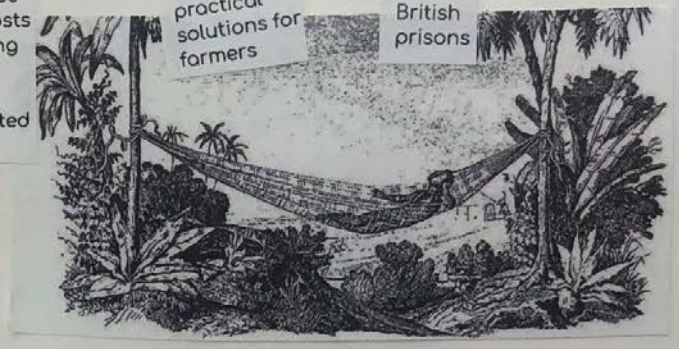
meaning fish net

During Spain's colonial period  
cotton and canvas  
brought to the Americas

saved space  
and cut costs  
by replacing  
cots with  
hammock  
in the United  
States

cheap,  
practical  
solutions for  
farmers

British  
prisons



Kept the people safe

From bugs and other creatures

can be traced back nearly 1,000 years  
ago to the Mayan civilization

woven from the bark of the Hamak

tree  
replaced by the Sisal plant,  
whose fibers could be softened

## PUERTO RICAN FLAG

FIRST USED ON DEC 22, 1895

group of 59 Puerto Ricans led by Dr. Jose Julio Henna, gathered at "Chimney Corner Hall" in Manhattan, New York City

to promote the ideal of Puerto Rican independence from Spain.



used in the Intentona de Yauco (the Attempted Coup of Yauco) (March, 24, 1897?)

In 1952 when Puerto Rico became a commonwealth

the flag was officially adopted

↳ blood from the brave warriors (3 red)

- victory + peace after obtaining independence (2 white)
- sky and sea (triangle)
- island (star)

symbolism was altered to distance the flag from its history

↳ WAS CHANGED TO A DARKER TONE TO MAKE IT SIMILAR TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

• 1.5 times the height  
~ 3 ft x 4.5 ft

<https://welcome.topuertorico.org/reference/flag.shtml>



<https://www.usflagsupply.com/u.s.-state-flag-history/puerto-ricos-flag-history.html>

- "blood" that nourishes the 3 branches of gov. (3)
- individual liberty + the rights that keep the government in balance (2)
- "Republican gov" represented by 3 branches (Δ)
- "the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico" (★)

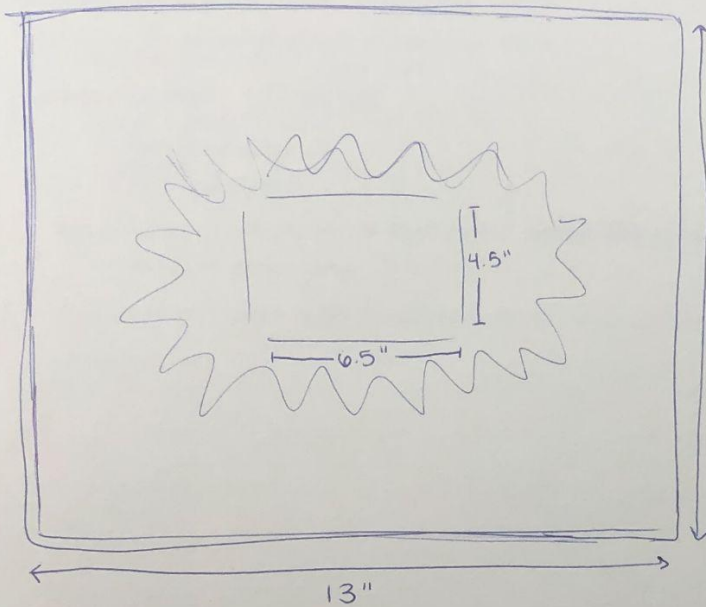
https://karmok.com/blogs/the-outpost/the-history-of-hammocks

# ★ CHILDHOOD SCRAPBOOK ★

- LEATHER
- BOOK BOARD
- PVA GLUE
- PAPER-TONED

## \* STRING FOR BINDING

↳ I have white, can buy others?

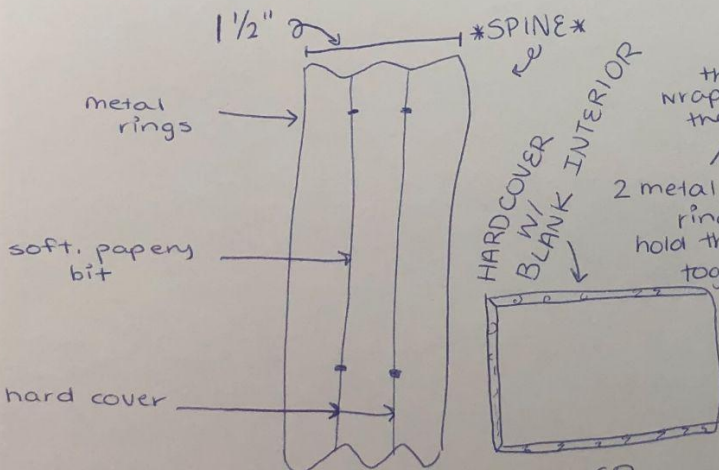
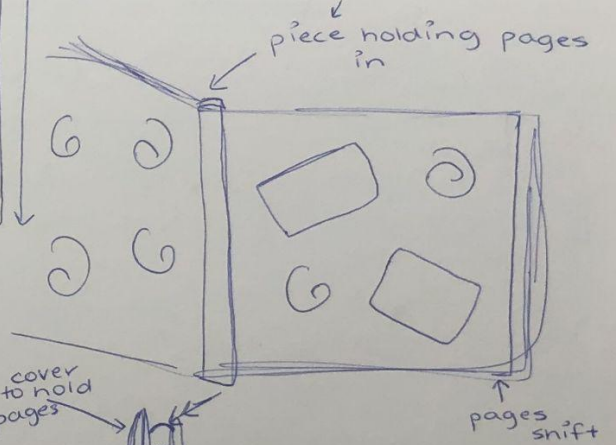


\* 12 x 13"

- \* funky, interesting cover
- \* space for photo on cover
- \* pages come to edge of cover

## \* BINDING:

\* NOT a lay-flat?  
↳ jk it is!



\* LOOKS LIKE AN 'M' → M \*

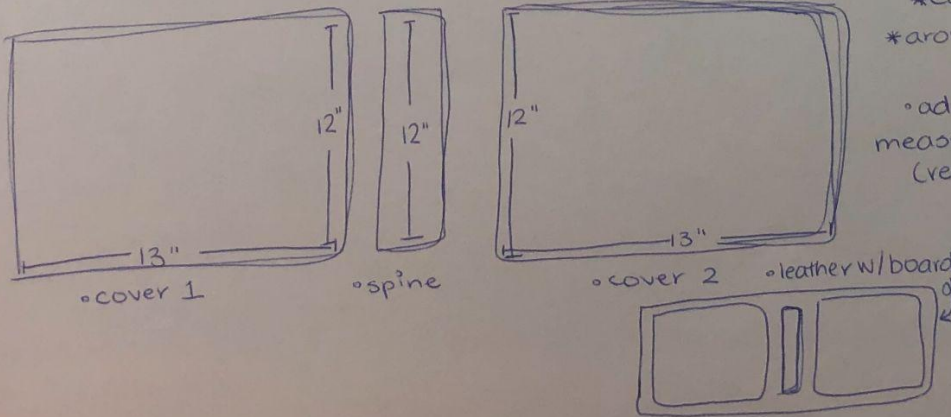
Adding 1/2" instead...

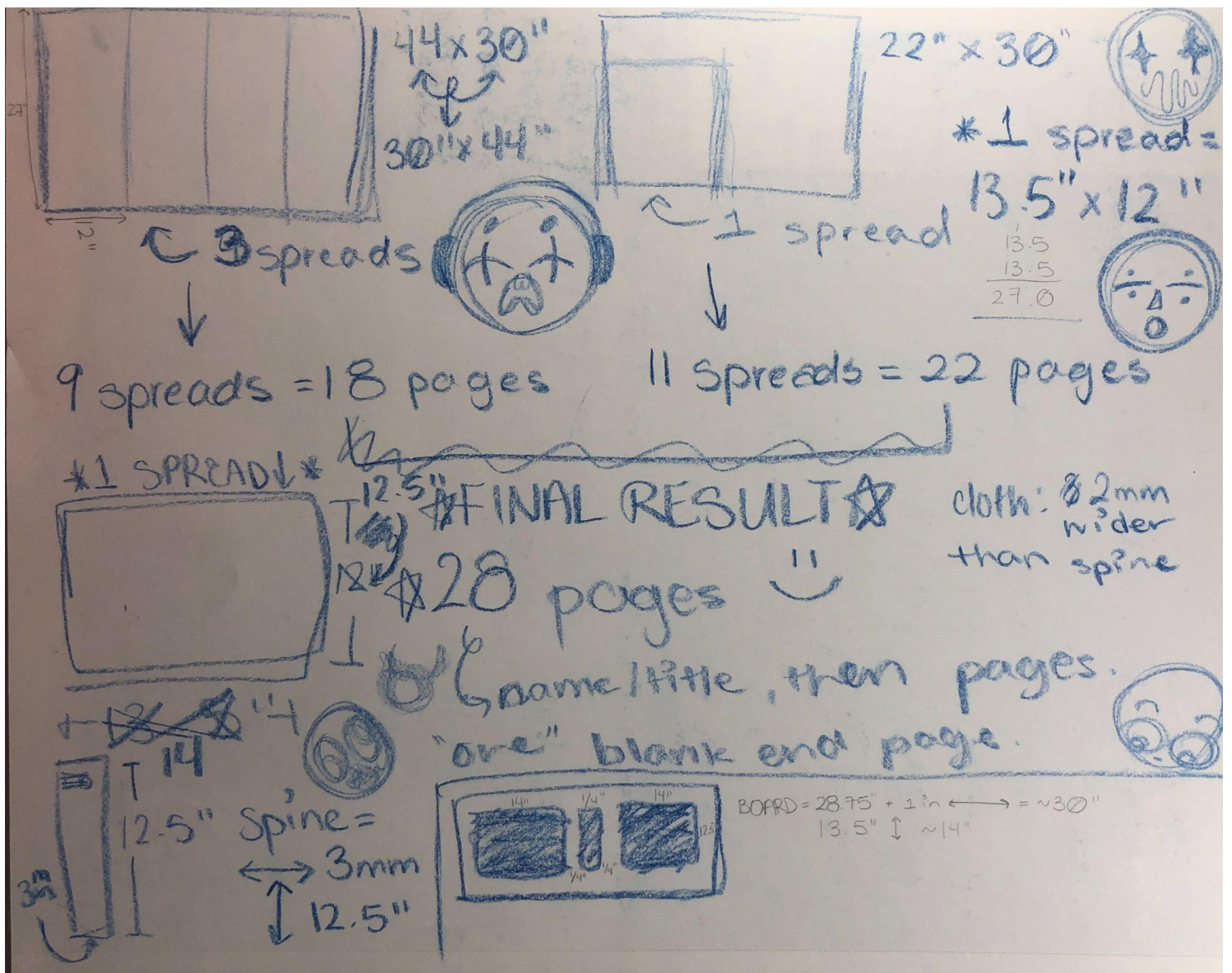
## \* MAKING the LEATHER HARD COVER

## \* MEASUREMENTS:

- \* cover: ~~13.5~~ 13.5" x 12"
- \* around book: ~~27.5~~ 27.5"

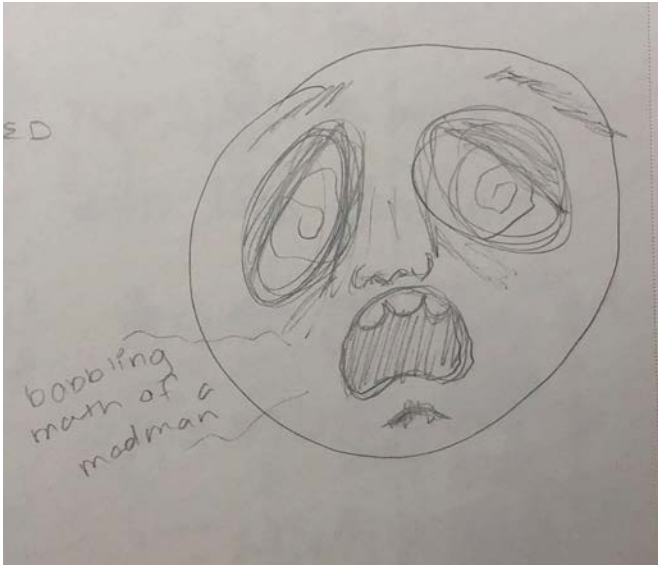
◦ add 9/16" to each measurement to cut leather (recommended measurement)





- POEMS + PAPER:
- IF SOS NEEDED
- ★ SUNSHINE STATE - newsprint
  - ★ SIT-DOWN SHOWER - tracing
  - ★ DEC 5 2021 - construction
  - ★ HIGH TIMES - newsprint
  - ★ BEING STRONG - construction + tracing
  - ★ THE FEELING OF MUSIC - newsprint
  - ★ 12-04-21 - newsprint
  - ★ DEC 2021 - newsprint + tracing
  - ★ BESO - newsprint
  - ★ "GIRL" INSPIRED WRITING - construction
  - ★ HIKE - newsprint





How I felt by the end of Thesis

bobbling  
mouth of a  
madman

either facing  
↑  
or toward  
audience

★401 | = chair

table  
shelf  
shelf  
projector

• have them face projector?  
• table caddy order?

★POTENTIAL  
SETUP

★WHAT TO BRING:

- \*book
- \*moss?
- \*instax/polaroids
- \*1st scrapbook
- \*pokeberry dyed fabric under book?
- + plants from the yard/my plant
  - ↳ flowers
  - ↳ ~~oak tree~~ oak tree needles

★SIGNS!

- please wear a mask / masks preferred
- DUSTIN RIVERA + blurp