

Issue 23



Foreword

Foreword:

Dearest readers,

As the end of the semester sneakily creeps around the corner, and Christmas decorations light the city streets, Scriptus presents to you the second issue of the year!

Despite the papers, presentations, exams and other deadlines, lots of lovely AUC students submitted a vast array of amazing articles for this issue.

In this issue, Scriptus has answered many great existential questions such as; How did Trump end up winning the election? Are sex tips obtained through the internet actually any good? What is home to AUC students? How can I make the world a better place? What on Earth is a mandala? For the non-existential souls out there, do not worry, we have some articles for you too, especially if you're into food, film and clouds. .

So relax, pick-up an issue and enjoy the wonderful array of pieces, and ignore the impending doom that comes with finals.

P.S do not forget to check out the majestic moustaches of AUC's movember heroes.

Love,
Nicole Brusa

Cover Artist Statement

Dear AUC folks,
this issue was born, as births usually go, in spasms. Through a joint effort, it came through, featuring the illustrations threefold in nature - of the staff, the authors (Eleonora Gelmetti's piece) and first freelance illustrator of this year, Tao Isabel Buck. Midterms behind and finals ahead, in the midst of books, computer screens and sounds of face-book notifications from all of the project groups, Scriptus has arrived. Take a 10, catch a breath, have whatever you like having, from coffee to chewing gum, enjoy whatever you have around and unwind, even if for a while. Should you like to create something visual - out of the moment of silence, passion, or contemplation over anything, from Dadaism, through natural law, Banksy, Schiele, Abramović, the guy who drew Calvin and Hobbes (Bill Watterson), shape of mala beads, little things that touched you during lonely journeys or the memories of your family arguing by the dinner table, the fact that it's cold outside or that your shower feels like lava - and have it printed here, contact me with the main address - scriptus@auca.nl. Thanks to all the humans who put their effort into this one - you're great.

And you, join the ranks, send me a "hi".
Have a good one and talk to you again,
Z.*

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Disclaimer:

Scriptus is written, edited and designed entirely by the students of Amsterdam University College. The news magazine does not reflect or express the official views of AUC. Comments, questions and criticisms are welcome at scriptus@auca.nl.

5 A.M., BERLIN

- Eleonora Gelmetti

At midday

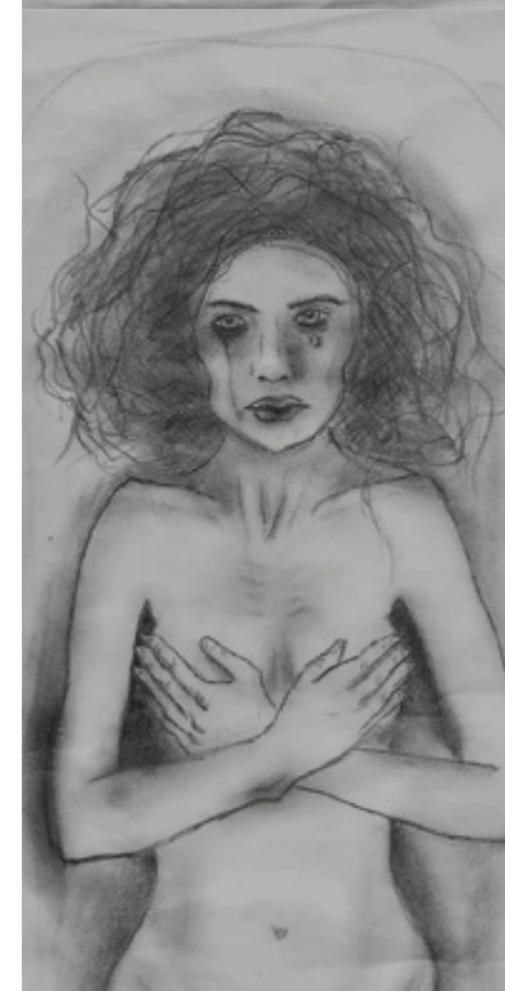
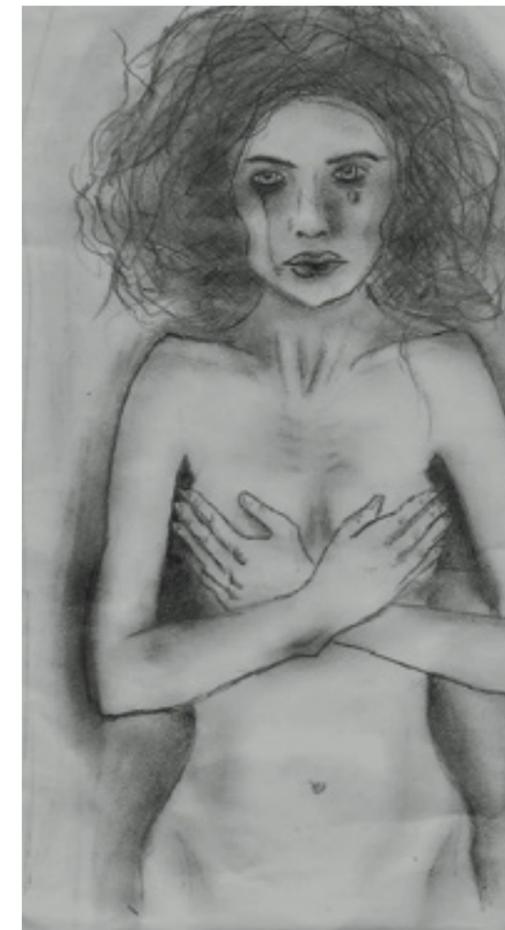
In the middle of
Trains people city
Still on your skin
the smell of last night
-which was already today-
Smell of
Alcohol man woman or whatever thing
Still the eyes vanished black,
A halo of solitude,
All-these-suffocating-people
All-around.

I am coming home from this too long night
And all that people can see are
Bony legs in ripped tights, messy
Make up, hair
Tight up
On the head

The head,
that is there but is not there
Distorted view enemy of my own body.

And the body and all the rest
Floating in the ice-cold-water of the bath
And in the middle of this paleness
Green eyes are
Still
Open

Waiting for.



Scriptus
scriptus@auca.nl



'The Best of Asia' with Happyhappyjoyjoy

- Diana Ghidanac

Happyhappyjoyjoy - it either makes me want to laugh or to say it ten times in one sentence until my words start to crumble. The name itself already brings on a happy vibe, so you can expect that the dining experience here is relatively the same. As you conquer your pilgrimage in the dark afternoon preceding your 5:30 and 6:00 o'clock classes, it's easy to want to do nothing but wrap yourself in bed with some tea and Netflix. That is of course until the dark reality hits, that you have an exam tomorrow, or a paper due at the end of the week that is in dire need of some words. "But everything in moderation, right?" is what you tell yourself after five episodes of Planet Earth (at least it's educational!). Now, if you really feel like there hasn't been a break since the start of the semester, go on ahead and treat yourself to an evening with friends at Happyhappyjoyjoy. The establishment is a vibrant and colourful restaurant that aims to recreate the hectic and eccentric vibes of busy Asian cities

such as Bangkok and Saigon. Along with the scenery, the food is meant to bring you a taste of the cheap eats unique to Asian street food vendors, thereby completing the whole experience. Happyhappyjoyjoy has a shared dining concept, so bringing a buddy or two would be ideal. Ordering 3-4 dishes equates to having a full meal at a restaurant elsewhere. I would recommend starting with some dim sum and Baos - I personally *love* the steamed buns, and even though I was restrained to the vegetarian options, I was not disappointed in taste. If you're going for the Baos, I would suggest ordering all three options. Other recommended eats would be the mussels in XO sauce, and the tjendol or lai wong pao as desserts. Next time I've got my eyes on their Mango Bao, which sounds just as tasty. If you're feeling thirsty, try their locally-made beer or some of their fresh Asian drinks - they've got flavours from Japan, Thailand, and Korea. I would personally opt for their roasted coconut juice or pimento ginger beer, but I have no doubt that



the other choices are just as refreshing. The OG location on Bilderdijkstraat is constantly welcoming an influx of happy dwellers that can't get enough of their Bao Buns. It's said that lineups stretching outside of the restaurant is an usual occurrence. Lucky for you, and the rest of us, they now have a location right beside Panama Club that opened last spring. Happyhappyjoyjoy in East has a bigger terrace and a more spacious interior with two floors, a large bar, high stool seating, and group dining. Since they're basically an extension of Panama, you might as well make use of their Dine and Dance Dinner Deal for 35 euros with an entrance to the club included. You'll be guaranteed a filling meal that will not

make you feel heavy but will rather keep you going for a long night of dancing. The next time you're looking for a good place, decent for big groups, at relatively good prices, and with food worth the mention (if it's reviewed then it's definitely pretty tasty), then Happyhappyjoyjoy should be your go-to. I would suggest this place whether you have friends or family visiting, you're celebrating a birthday, or you're looking for your next date night spot for you and your S/O. I ensure you a fun and vibrant night with happy and joyful vibes!

Happyhappyjoyjoy East - Oostelijke Handelskade 4, 1019 BM Amsterdam

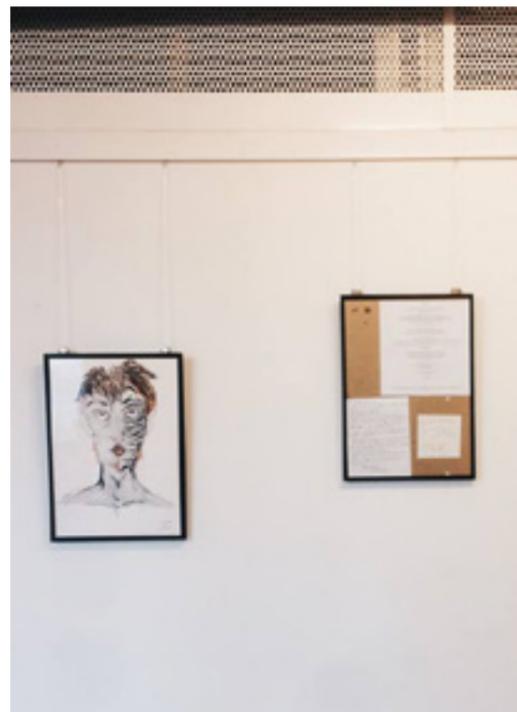
Mental Health Awareness Week

Tackling Taboo & Spreading Support!

- Hien Le,
Antonia Nicholls
and Simone Ritson

From the 7th to 11th of November, Peer Support hosted the second Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) at AUC. This week aimed to bring to light the taboo placed around mental health issues and how inadequately they are often perceived and dealt with. More importantly, it drew attention to how mental health can be a serious issue at university. To a lot of people, starting university means having to leave home for the first time and becoming much more independent. With this newfound liberation can come loneliness, anxiety and stress. Thus, we wanted to emphasise its significance as well as the different aspects surrounding mental health here in the context of the AUC community. At the same time, we sought to inform students about what and where they can do/go for help, for themselves and for their friends.

To start off the week, we hosted a session in our beloved Living Room, which was officially launched in September, accompanying the success of the “Eating disorder stigma” session. To those of you who still wonder what the Living Room sessions are – they were created to give AUC students an environment to share their own experiences and engage in discussions with the assurance of confidentiality, respect and understanding. They allow people to come together and bring light to mental health awareness. The Living Rooms is also a place where everyone attempts, as a group, to understand situations which may seem incomprehensible to the majority. The second session, which was especially scheduled for MHAW, addressed another heated issue – anxiety and mood disorders. Two current AUC students came to speak about their past and current experience with anxiety, bipolar disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), anorexia and paranoia.



They told their story and, with the Peer Supporters, led a thought provoking discussion, in which more students started sharing their own stories and by doing so realising that they are not alone. Another highlight of the week was the guest lecture delivered by Monique Post, who spoke about how differently men and women deal with stress and anxiety. Monique specifically stressed that with emancipation and the development of equality between men and women in terms of rights, we seem to have forgotten that there are significant biological differences between the sexes and these in turn have a certain impact on the way men and women handle stress. These differences are often not so simple and should not be ignored as they are also key to better understanding and communication within a community. Other activities of the week included the “What makes you happy?” board, the exhibition on Mental Health in collaboration with the Art Board, the Meditation session with Zen Board, and an amazing group activity called “If you really knew me”.

We were so grateful to see everyone’s participation in our activities and hope to bring another amazing MHAW next academic year!

Until then,

Your Peer Supporters x



The Fallacy of the 'Overwhelmed Feeling'

The little things that really do make a difference.

- Lisa van Holsteijn

Here in western Europe it is from time to time that we briefly glance down at these sad children's faces whenever a flyer is pressed into our hands by the nagging person on the street. In general, these people are trying to convince us to donate, but they remain detached from our lives as we are encouraged to simply 'turn a blind eye' to these far-away problems. Turning a blind eye to all foreign troubles is somehow the most comfortable option; trying to ignore the fact that we are incredibly privileged and unfairly better off than the vast majority of the world's population. Frequently to try and justify the fact that we're not really doing much to improve the great inequity around us, we have heated conversations with friends about how tragic the situation is in Syria, or how terrible it is that Trump is planning to deport all Mexicans, yet these conversations very rarely lead to action of any kind. That is the case in most of my conversations that are of this format anyway.

One evening when I was sitting with a friend who had also been a volunteer in Honduras, our conversation about the country's vulnerable children led us to the conclusion that there *must* be something we could do about their heart-rending situation. As Honduras suffers from very high levels of gang violence, it is extremely common to see young street children attracted to the notion of being part of a tight-knit group that has such power, money and guns. Faced with abandonment and the prospects of a dire future, thousands of children do not attend schools of any kind, instead they



resort to crime and eventually gang membership. This phenomenon is a vicious cycle, largely fueled by the stream of drugs moving upwards from South to North America.

When discussing this topic and all the children we had worked with in orphanages, it became very clear that there was really only one effective solution to this problem: education. Consequently, we decided we had to try something. After spending many more hours discussing specific schools, orphanages and individuals that we knew were all in serious need of support, we decided to try to set up a project of some kind that could help towards improving many of these people's difficult situations.

A couple of weeks later (during which three days had been spent solidly typing), we had written a comprehensive 25-page



constitution, 30-page business plan, created a website, made flyers, talked to several people in Honduras and decided that we should try to raise funds to support small scale *specific* projects. To gain some form of traction and recognition when fundraising we decided it was necessary to 'make things official' and try to become a registered charity. Currently - who knows what will happen. The documents are under evaluation, and whether or not we gain registered charity status still remains to be ascertained. To give you an idea - here is a short description of one of the girls we really hope to support.



Jenny is a very timid, vulnerable girl of age 22, who suffers from HIV-AIDS and was abandoned by her family at the age of 5. As she reaches the age where she needs to be capable of tackling difficult situations and fending for herself, Jenny needs to be given the opportunity to practice her independence. Jenny essentially needs a place where she can live alone and simultaneously receive a certain level of support from the orphanage itself. After discussing this with the orphanage's director we came to the conclusion that we should build a small house that will be located on the edge of the orphanage's property. Here Jenny will be given the opportunity to live independently whilst still receiving a form of protection from the orphanage.

Other projects that we have in mind include: providing nutrients for some of the little children who live in the aforementioned orphanage (featured in the bath tubs), many of them suffer from severe malnutrition and need supplements to help them develop. Amongst several other things, we hope to build playground sets for seven of the public schools I worked in, so as to encourage more children to go to school; install mosquito nets in several classrooms, and provide university tuition for two talented girls, Stephany and Tanya.

Whether or not this spontaneous project leads to the realization of tangible improvements is still unclear. However, I do believe that the action of *trying* in itself is nevertheless worthwhile. The little things do make a difference, and often these small changes are not as hard to make as we initially envisage.

Trump the election

- Teodor Duevski

So the US election is finally over, and to the surprise of many, Trump managed to pull off a victory. Although Hilary Clinton won the popular vote by a 2% margin, Trump won decisively carrying 30 states and winning 306 Electoral College votes. Immediately after Trump's victory, huge crowds gathered on the streets of major US cities to protest his presidency, chanting "not my president", "dump the trump", protesting some of the misogynist and racist comments made during the campaign trail, as well as his policies on illegal and Muslim immigration in the US. Here I want to state a couple of reasons why I think Trump won the election and why that should not come as a big surprise to anyone following the election process closely.

1. Trump won the biggest number of votes in the history of the Republican primaries. In this election cycle the Republican Party embraced the values of democracy, giving voices to 17 other candidates from various backgrounds and diverse policy ideas. On the other hand, the Democratic Party establishment, seemed to have decided on the frontrunner before a single vote had been casted. Furthermore, the GOP held four more presidential debates than the Democrats, allowing for their voter base to become acquainted with all the candidates before choosing the one to represent them in the general election.

2. The left progressives lost the culture war. The trigger warnings and safe spaces recently emerging on many college campuses in the US did not seem to help anyone. They only shield students from experiencing different ideas and philosophical world-views. Being exposed to diverse ideas does not mean that you necessarily need to change your mind and embrace them, nor does it "invalidate your experience". It can simply mean that you will have the chance to learn more about why you hold a certain belief and help you defend it, using sound and solid arguments, which do not include "you're a racist", "white privilege", "cis male privilege".

3. Foreign Policy. Although Trump doesn't really have any consistent policy ideas, his "America first" non-interventionist talking points seems to resonate with the anti-war movement. On the other hand, Clinton, serving as a Secretary of State, has been involved in the conflict in Libya, and has on numerous occasions called for a no-fly zone over Syria which could eventually undermine the prospects for world peace.

4. The Democratic Party. During the election cycle, the system of super delegates and the media bias gave Hilary Clinton an upper hand in the race against Bernie Sanders. Additionally, instead of being champions of working class Americans, the Democratic Party establishment has been pushing neoliberal policies and trade agreements that benefit big corporations. This undoubtedly benefited Trump in a multitude of states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin where the message of creating and protecting American jobs resonated well with the majority of the people.

Although it is very understandable why many people are upset with Trump winning the election and should exercise their first amendments' right, I believe that the protest should first and foremost address the inability of the Democratic Party to nominate a better candidate. Furthermore, I would argue that the Trump presidency is going to benefit the left more than the right in the long run, because it is going to force the progressive left to rethink the basic assumptions behind their arguments and give them an opportunity to actually stand up for the things that they claim to believe in. If you truly believe that illegal immigrants should not be deported, you ought to realize that Obama, along with support from Congress, has deported more than 2.5 million illegal immigrants from the US in the last seven years. If you are truly anti-war you should stand up against the foreign interventions in Libya and Syria. Donald Trump, unlike Barack Obama puts an ugly face on bad policies and that is going to awaken factions of the American left that have been asleep during the last eight years. The rise of Donald Trump, his populist nationalist message and his takeover of the Republican Party, have brought Republicans success in the short run. However, Trump's policies do not represent many of the important conservative principles that the Republican Party claims to stand for. Trump doesn't stand for a small federal government, he wants to increase tariffs on foreign imports and he wants to undermine federalism by mandating that the local State level governments comply with his stance on illegal immigration. All in all I think that Trump's victory should not be seen as a great catastrophe that is going to destroy the world, but rather as a wake-up call helping us to move in the right direction.

8th of November – A night to remember

- Laura Wennekes

Even though it sounds very poetic '8th of November – a night to remember', it certainly was not. Some friends and I decided to attend the VU Election Night event that was screening a livestream of the election with some lectures to go along with it at the VU building in Amsterdam North. We thought it would be exciting to experience history writing in real-time. What we did not anticipate was the kind of history that was going to be written...

Upon arrival at the VU, we were welcomed with a drink before we made our way up to the big auditorium and took our seats. Because of the time difference, we had a lot of hours to kill before we could actually start watching any kind of livestream. The first talk was a bit too long and monotone and overall not the most interesting talk ever heard. It didn't go into specifics and basically was a collection of random banter about the US, Hillary and the elections. The fact that we were mostly interested in what was going to happen later that night, may have also played a role. A second talk by the youth president of the Young Socialists in the Netherlands was about her campaigning adventures. She had flown out to the States to campaign for Hillary and informed us of the proceedings of such efforts. This seemed a little out of place during this

night, and the talk itself wasn't very structured or enlightening. It focussed too much on the strange system that they had to work within. None of us understood why she, as Dutch president of a political youth organisation that favoured Bernie over Hillary, had to go out to America to campaign for Hillary. It seemed like an amazing experience for her personally, but didn't seem to have to do anything with the Young Socialists or with the VU election night event.

After a break, spent on a lower level equipped with some couches and a bar, André Krouwel joined us for a talk. He is the creator and CEO of the Kieskompas, or electoral compass. He had flown out to the US to join in conversation with democrat campaigners. This was an interesting speech during which he explained the agenda for the night, and when or in what scenario's we should start getting worried. His speech took place when the live stream had already started. This meant that when something interesting happened in America, he would update us immediately about what it meant and whether it was something expected or not.

Initially, my friends and I had expected to be ready to go home by around 3 in the morning. Hillary would have been elected and all would be good. However, as we all know by now, this is not what happened. Tensions at the VU started to rise as more and more results came in. People started to get nervous. Especially André, we could tell. He had just told us what states Hillary would need to win, and as we saw them turn red one by one, a desperate feeling overcame us. Where in the beginning of the event everyone was relaxed and talkative, no smile could be detected by the end of the night. Apart from the two Trump supporters in the room who seemed to be having a good time. When it became clear that Florida held a decisive Trump majority, we decided it was time to go home. Hillary had no more real chances to win and we were tired and sad. The auditorium had emptied out slowly but surely by then. The feeling of shock and disappointment had gotten the better of us. When all of us had gotten home, at around 5:30 am, we texted some more about the disbelief. The next morning, the sadness hadn't gone yet and the realisation of what had actually happened and what that was going to entail was even more real...

Ever wondered what it would be like to write a book at 14?

When I tell people I wrote a book at 14, it would be an understatement to say that I get a lot of responses. But beyond the look on people's faces, writing the *Necromancer* changed my life in many deeper (though sometimes subtle) ways. Firstly, allow me to address the obvious factor here: commitment. Writing a 108,000 word high-fantasy book is not something you do on a whim. Indeed, it took me over six months to complete the first draft—a feat that required writing multiple hours per week—and a whole 18 months to get feedback, edit, seek agents, do more edits, and eventually hire professionals to do the artwork. This leads me onto the second obvious question: motivation. Why, exactly, does a fourteen-year-old undertake such a quest? In my experience, laymen often draw on analogies with entrepreneurs: perhaps, they think, I wrote because I want to build something. Maybe I want to make the world a better place. Maybe I'm just in it for the money, or the pleasure of throwing down a 500 page book and saying 'I wrote that.' But this is only a small part of the reason I write.

To understand my motivation, you need look a bit deeper, and trace the origin to my love of reading. I have always loved reading, even from an early age, and this was particularly true of the years just before I began writing. A transcript from the school library showed that I read about 400 books between the ages of 11 and 14. The old adage is true: behind every writer there is a profligate reader. So how did my love of reading affect me? It is safe to say that I became enraptured by the world of fantasy. Like the children in Narnia, I had opened the wardrobe and found a whole world waiting for me. *Eragon* and *Northern Lights* kept me up at night. I saw myself in their shoes: I fought urgals on the back of a dragon; I met angels; I fought dark magicians and consorted with vampires. I was, in truth, smitten by the occult. My fascination was endless. It seems almost inevitable that I came to write about it; that my ideas grew, morphed, and took a life of their own. One grey October afternoon, I began writing. I believe the necromancer compelled me to write that day; that the curve of his arrogant jaw, the icy

power held in his 'cold orbs of sight,' all but forced me to put him down on paper. Laymen often ask writers where their inspiration comes from. This, I am afraid, is the best answer I can give you. The first few chapters I wrote were not worth the paper they would have been printed on, however, so I had to rewrite them from scratch. This is true of nearly all first time writers—you can blame it on the fact that writing fiction is... hard. It is difficult for a non-writers to understand just what kind of challenges writing presents: the elaborate art of writing itself; the magnificent difficulty of capturing whole personalities, often in few words; the intricacies of plot—all to name a few. The rest of the book was a journey. I followed Linaera—apprentice mage and unwitting protagonist—through her journey into the Northern Mountains. I watched on as Nateldorth, Great Mage, uncovered dark conspiracies in the capital, Dresh. Most of all I followed the necromancer. I was witness to him: to his betrayal, his descent into madness, and his ultimate redemption. Books are journeys. The journey of my book was

in a way my journey: where my characters struggled, I struggled with them. For them it was question of facing up to existential challenges. For me it was knowing their motivation, and building all the twists and turns of plot that made up their lives. Writing the *Necromancer* was often a pleasure. I liked the dark, unexpected turns of the plot; the characters' inner lives; and most of all, I enjoyed writing in the world of Arachadia. I loved the towering mountains, the vast, sprawling forests; the great stonework of the mage buildings and the fine craftsmanship of the wooden cathedrals; the world of dormant dragons and powerful magics. Of course, writing the *Necromancer* was often a challenge. I was young, and devoid of experience. I often struggled to write fluently—it took much work to correct the early mistakes. It was as if a vast realm had been entrusted to a young king; a king with many ideas but few ways to actually conquer. But conquer it I did. Perhaps I did not quite succeed. Perhaps there are other worlds yet unconquered—other vast and distant places full of promise. But writing the *Necromancer* was not the finishing line; it was only the first milestone of a long journey. I do not know what dragons still slumber in the path I am taking. Nor does it matter. My advice to my younger self—as well as to other would-be writers—is perseverance. Many monsters lie in wait (some of them are called publishers, critics, and yourself) but the treasures they guard are beautiful.

Alex Stargazer,
published author,
shares his story.



International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam 2016

- Tekla Tevdorashvili

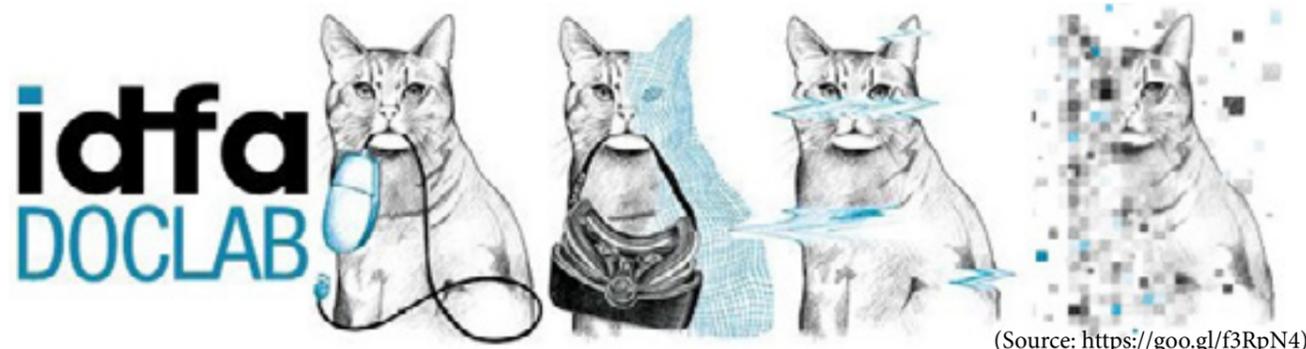
From the 16th to 27th of November Amsterdam hosted the world's largest documentary film festival IDFA 2016. The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) has been held in Amsterdam since 1988 and it offers international premieres, debutantes' films, student documentaries, international guest speakers, exhibitions, competitions and DocLab. Since the introduction of DocLab in 2007, IDFA has become a great opportunity to explore the intersection between documentary and digital technology.

DocLab, is an 11-day exhibition that presents different types of artworks. In DocLab one can experience different types of VR installations, dark rooms, audio walks etc. One of my favourite VR experiences was "Notes of Blindness"; virtual reality exploring the world as a blind person. This Emmy-winning interactive VR experience is based on writer John Hull's audio cassettes. Hull went blind in 1983, shortly before his son was born, and through audio diaries, he started making sense of the world, despite his blindness. The whole visual

experience is in dark colours. The documentary presents several different cassettes that talk about different occasions. The viewer only sees blue figures on the black background, which step by step follows Hull's explanation of his surroundings, feelings, sounds etc. at that particular moment, which step by step creates the whole skeleton of the reality Hull is part of. It is an interactive VR, and so throughout the experience a viewer is also exploring the reality by walking, finding different objects, and observing. Also, I am not sure if it was part of the experience or not, but when Hull spoke about the wind I could feel the wind, maybe there was an air conditioner behind me, or maybe it was my brain playing some game, it nevertheless sure added up to this amazing journey.

This year, IDFA screened more than 300 documentaries at various locations like Pathé Tuschinski, EYE, Pathe de Munt etc. The main goal of the IDFA is to promote documentaries and to present them to an international audience. Apart from screening the already well-known films, IDFA also features debutantes and it hosts workshops to encourage new talent in documentary production. It also has training programmes and an IDFAcademy Summer School for beginner filmmakers. IDFA is a great opportunity for people interested in filmmaking. They not only screen documentaries, but also, most of the times host Q&As with the filmmakers. I attended "Anukatop: The Metamorphosis", the docu-fiction about the Wayana indigenous tribe in Guyana. Beautiful shots and fascinating sound editing, united with the fictional elements of the story, made me lose the sense of reality presented in the film. However, the most important experience was asking the filmmakers about the process of shooting, editing, ideas etc.

If you are an aspiring filmmaker or want to have an amazing experience watching and understanding insight of documenters created in the last year, IDFA is definitely a place to be for you.



THE CLOUD FORMATIONS

- Simone

They dripped from our fingers and eyelashes.
We lived through them and they composed us.
We are made up of stories.

Dear All,
On behalf of the storytelling group and to mark the start for the storytelling column inScriptus; I am sharing with you one of my poems, I hope to here from anyone who is interested in storytelling. (my email: storytellingauc@gmail.com).

Clouds constantly change,
They form shapes that we here on Earth often try to understand,

Clouds constantly change, in colored skies, as if reflecting troubled minds of people who walk beneath them.

Let us finally run behind feelings,
Feelings that come in forms of objects,
Objects that are nothing but sponges of their users ego.

Let us kill and cut our throats in half
because of terms we no longer understand.

Let us forget our reasoning,
Let us create more and more and drown in oblivion,

Because we as humans What?
And we as Who?
And we Why?

Let me go numb,
melt,
become one with the floor,
Let the questions go silent and leave only their anonymous question marks parade in my brain.

Clouds constantly change,
and we stay the same
because it's safe to believe that time develops us,
Time includes an evolved future
there somewhere in time ...

We believe in the future, we praise it,
we live in it now and we created it before,
we,
we all did.

So let us finally run around our little globe,
Let us lose our minds,
Let us forget about gravity and drop in starry skies with no oxygen,
Let us forget we need it ...

Let us...?
Who will let us?
Humans to humans?
Flesh to flesh?

The ones standing at the top balcony of this vast pyramid smiling to the rest stuck below and all gazing at the Cloud formations.



(Source: <https://pinterest.com>)

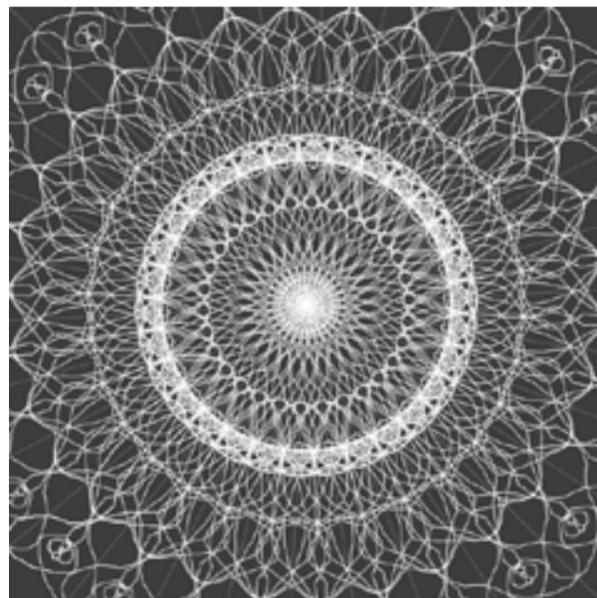
Mandalas Uncovered

- Blijde Ligthart

Mandalas are all the hype these days. They're all over Pinterest, Tumblr and Instagram. Getting Mandala tattoos seems to be the hip thing to do nowadays. Commodification of Mandalas has also taken the West by storm, where mandala colouring books or colourful Mandala tapestries can be found everywhere. Koen, a member of Zen committee, showed us the other day an online Mandala drawing program: mandala designs have even been taken into programming. In this particular program you draw lines that are then formed into a symmetrical Mandala. You can check out a Mandala I drew myself using this program (image on the right)! Or go to the website and see for yourself (Type: Digital Doilies into google. <https://codymoose.github.io/web-applications/DigitalDoily/index.html>)

As much fun as I had drawing the Mandala online, it was more rewarding to do some background reading about Mandalas and where they've come from. I remembered that in Malaysia, on Deepavali (or Diwali), the Hindu festival of lights, streets are adorned with Kolams. Kolams are created using rice and coloured chalk powder, which is then carefully poured and placed on the ground in mostly, round Mandala forms. Below you can refer to the middle design as an example. Deepavali, the festival of lights, is a Hindu festival and

therefore I knew the rice Mandalas had some spiritual meaning, but I had never questioned what exactly they mean. Although us Zen members could come up together with a rough idea of the Mandala's roots, we needed to dig deeper. It is not just some beautiful hipster-chic drawing. It's actually a spiritual and ritual symbol based in Indian religions (as in Hinduism). The Mandala has often been used as a spiritual guidance tool, to help create a sacred place and to also to help meditation and trance induction. This clearly links back to why it is used during Deepavali. Mandalas are used in Hinduism, where a deity is placed in the centre of the design and is encircled by geometric shapes; these forms are said to help evoke the power of the deity present in the centre. On the bottom right designs shows such a Mandala, this one of Vishnu. Buddhist traditions also use the Mandala, and in the Vajrayana Tibetan branch of Buddhism, the Mandala can represent the visual form of teachings, and as a place separated and protected from the ever-changing world. Mandalas are also used to represent the whole universe, and even Christianity has forms comparable to the Mandala present in the church, in some stained glass and in paintings of religious figures.



Mandalas are said today to help stabilise and re-order inner life. This relates to the ideas in Buddhism of the Mandala being representative of the pure mind, the core goodness present in

every human being. Could this be why so many colouring books use Mandalas? That colouring the Mandala becomes a form of meditation, aiding a journey to a purer mind? Or is that going too far? Colouring books are advertised as helping with stress and aiding relaxation. Although not the main reason for mediation, relaxation is one of the "extra" effects a person experiences.

I think that as the world becomes more globalised, ideas and practices rooted in religion and old traditions become increasingly commercialised. The question here is not whether Mandalas are being culturally appropriated by the West. But instead that we should stop and ask ourselves where things come from, to explore the things we experience around us with a level of curiosity. To gain an understanding about different people and places in the world, and thereby learn to see that different cultures have amazing things to offer. A few examples of this are Mandalas but also yoga and Chinese food. How grateful are you for yoga and Chinese food? How much do you know about the Chinese culture of cooking and eating for example?

I only ask you to take a moment to realise how special it is that ideas, practices and food from other countries travel the globe. It is important to understand that the history and the roots of a certain practice can be something special to discover, even if nowadays most people just see Mandalas as hip, circular, symmetrical drawings.



Internet's terrible sex tips

&

The better version

- Bee Lydford;
Charlotte Verboom

Have you ever read such terrible sex tips in a magazine or somewhere online (yes we are looking at you Cosmopolitan) that have made you roll your eyes and wonder 'how is that even pleasurable?!' Here is a list of some of the most awkward sex myths (that for some reason are still circulating) and their better version!

The Myth

The Englightment

Whipped cream:

"First, I would use it on her eyebrows and lids to be gently licked off. Next, I would use it in her hair to be massaged in. Then, little dollops one by one all over her body, scooped up with strawberries, which I would share with her."
-Sheknows.com

Ew. This is just a sticky, sour, smelly mess. Whipped cream is delicious, but not if the great amounts on your body start smelling like vomit. How about you just up your oral skills and eat each other?
#eatcleaneatraw

Handcuffs:

"There's a reason fuzzy pink handcuffs exist, and it's not for fashion purposes. If your partner secures the cuffs tight against your wrist, moves you around a lot, and doesn't remove them for a long period of time, they'll dig into your skin. You could end up bleeding or with in-criminating marks that'll let your friends know exactly what you were up to. So if you aren't a fan of pain, use those fuzzy handcuffs, no matter how funny they look."
-Newscult.com

Ugh. Stop with the safe play and health lecture. Handcuffs are old and done with, they break, and are covered in weird troll doll hair. For a better alternative try cable ties - those things are indestructible and do not require a possible key to lose.

"Doing oral sex with chocolate taste - here you have 3 options: take a chocolate cube in your mouth and melt it while you kiss him in the intimate zone; put chocolate sauce on his penis and do oral sex; you are doing oral sex but he puts a condom with chocolate."
- Neolisa

This one is sort of similar to the whipped cream one. But for this one, instead of sickly chocolate drool melting onto all your furniture and into every crack in your body, how about you take body shots off your partner. Everyone knows tipsy sex is great.

"Do something unexpected with toys you already have lying around the house... A hard-bristled hairbrush is perfect for gently scratching his skin."
- Cosmopolitan

Eh a hairbrush?? Screw the gentle and use your own nails. The best spot for this is right up the center of the spine, up the back of the neck, to the base of the skull. Extra points for massaging the 'heavenly pillars' pressure points.

"Tickle his feet with your nipples: climb on top of him in reverse cowgirl position, then bend over until your nipples reach the tops of his feet."
- Cosmopolitan

Wait what? Maybe some of you are very into feet and toes and everything, but this would look very awkward with your teabag tits hanging there. Rather as a build up to foreplay, or as a way to be intimate with your partner, give them a luxurious full body massage from head to toe (with your hands!). Extra points if you use hot oil or a massage bar.

Aphrodisiacs:

"Well everyone has heard of or even tried some sort of outside element that they believed may improve their sex life. No, I'm not referring to Viagra or the family dog; I'm talking about aphrodisiacs."
- Askmen

Not sure what they mean with the 'family dog' improving your sex life, but either way there is no evidence that aphrodisiacs actually work. How about cooking a nice meal together rather than stuffing yourself up with fishy foods. Besides kitchen worktops are a great playground...

Stimulating the girl orally:

"The alphabet with your tongue trick"
-Men's Health

There's this thing called the clitoris. Look it up

"Slip a doughnut around his penis, and slowly eat it off."
- Cosmopolitan

OK enough. Just fuck. Then eat a doughnut. Everyone happy!



Michiel Vriens



Frank Van Der Wulp

Movember 2016



Steffan Oberman



Ilen Madhavji



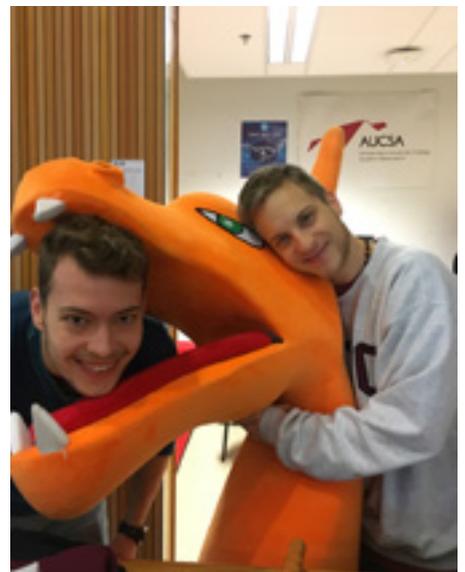
Johan Fredsted



Ilen Madhavji and Frank Van Der Wulp



Lasse Rogie



Lubomir Leegwater and Goordon Lucas