

Dear Reader,

"We're in this together": a phrase we've seen a lot recently. It has, through its ubiquity, lost some of its power and meaning. But perhaps it's still apt for the theme of this issue: Pop.

Pop refers to popular culture, and this issue explores everything from TV to music to ancient Greek plays (once a very fashionable form). But what does it mean for something to be popular? Who does the collective "we" refer to? Who does it include and who does it leave out? The pieces here examine popularity, as well as how culture might connect or divide people. Lucas Mann discusses modern forms of nostalgia and rewatching *The Office*; Elise Anderson writes about how pop music has shaped the political struggle of an ethnic minority; Nate Sloan and Charlie Harding examine Selena Gomez and the rise of vulnerability in pop; Louise Munson imagines an encounter between a distressed shop girl and Winona Ryder; Felicia Angeja Viator provides a short lesson on hip-hop history; and much more.

We're in this together; we're into this together.

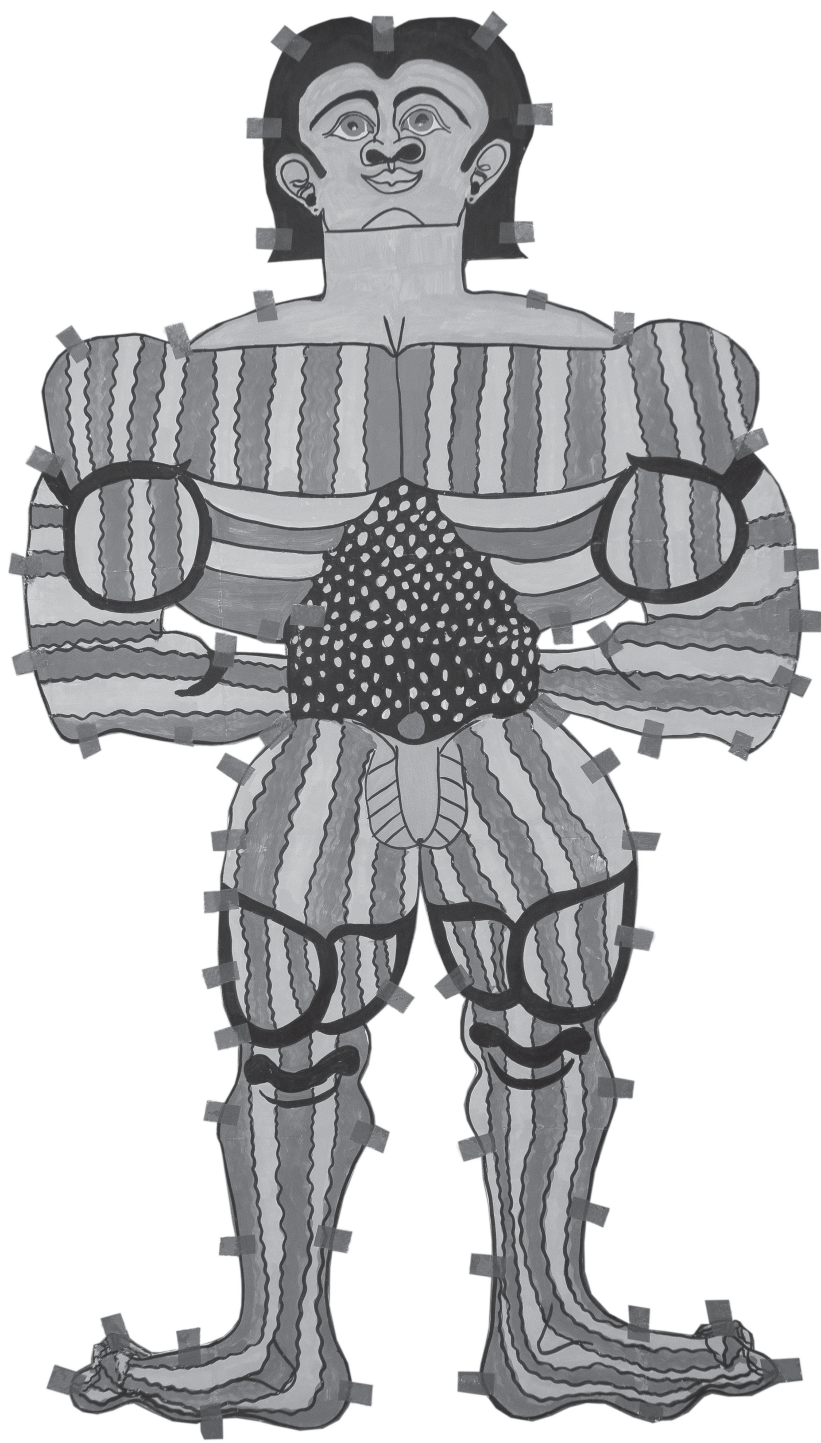
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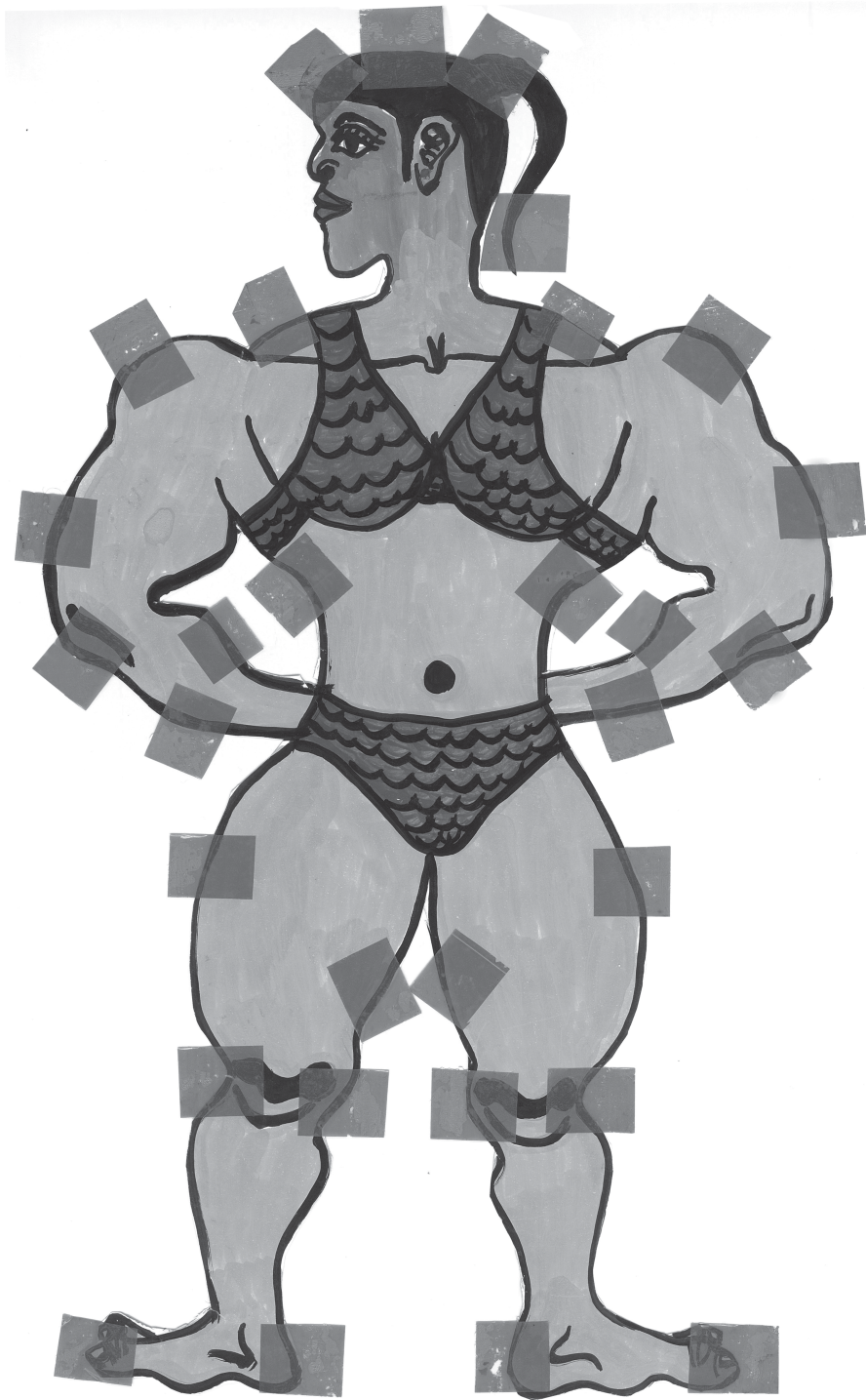
Misleidys Castillo Pedrosa, *Untitled*, c. 2015, Gouache on paper, 54.72 x 43.7 in. Courtesy of christian berst art brut, Paris.



Misleidys Castillo Pedrosa, *Untitled*, c. 2018, Gouache on paper, 14.75 x 12.5 in.
Courtesy christian berst art brut, Paris



Misleidys Castillo Pedroso, *Untitled*, c. 2017, Gouache on paper, 76.4 x 47.25 in.
Courtesy christian berst art brut, Paris.



Misleidys Castillo Pedroso, *Untitled*, c. 2015, Gouache on paper, 23.2 x 17.7 in.
Courtesy christian berst art brut, Paris.

include migration, celebration, warfare, nostalgia, homeland, and borders, often within realms of Islamic influence, through both traditional forms and kaleidoscopic reinventions via pop culture. She is the founder of Discostan, a collaborative decolonial project working with cultural production from the SWANA (South and West Asia and North Africa) region.

Rabz Lansiquot is a filmmaker, programmer, curator, and DJ. They were a leading member of *sorryyoufeeluncomfortable* (SYFU) collective from its inception in 2014. Now, they are a member of artistic and curatorial collective Languid Hands alongside Imani Robinson. Languid Hands are the Cubitt Curatorial Fellows for 2020–21. Rabz was Curator In Residence at LUX Moving Image in 2019, developing a public and educational programme around Black liberatory cinema. Their first solo exhibition where did we land was on view at LUX in Summer 2019. They have put together film programmes at the ICA, SQIFF, Berwick Film & Media Festival, were a programme advisor for London Film Festival's Experimenta strand in 2019, and are on the selection committee for Sheffield Doc Fest 2020. Rabz is also training to deliver workshops in working with Super 8 and eco-processing at *not.nowhere*, and is a board member at City Projects.

Misleidys Castillo Pedroso was born in 1985, in Havana, with a severe hearing impairment; she later showed signs of developmental difficulties, and was placed in a specialized facility. When the signs of autism became clearer, she returned home to live in total isolation from society. One day, she began to paint and cut out silhouettes of bodybuilders — sometimes larger than life-size — soon adding wildlife, demons, and organs. This assemblage ended up decorating all the rooms in the house.

Those close to her claim that Misleidys displays an exceptional capacity for clairvoyance and that it isn't rare to come upon her in the middle of "conversing" with her works through gestures — a sign that these figures are the bearers of some power beyond the fascination they may exert on the beholder.

Helen Rae was born in 1938. She has been creating art since 1990 when she first joined the progressive art studios of the Tierra del Sol Foundation in Upland, California. Her drawings, in colored pen-

cil and graphite, are immediately striking for their vivid imagery, resonant use of color and innovative reworking of source material. Using fashion magazines as a point of departure for otherworldly journeys into the subconscious, Helen transforms the original images into something uniquely expressive, which possess a strange beauty and power.

Helen had her first solo exhibition at The Good Luck Gallery in 2015 and in 2017 received her first New York solo exhibition at White Columns. Helen's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions and she has received features in *Art Forum*, *Vogue*, and *The Los Angeles Times* among many other publications.

Carmen Winant is the Roy Lichtenstein Endowed Chair of Studio Art at The Ohio State University and a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow in photography. Winant collects and alloys found photographs as a method of looking closely feminist modes of survival, revolt, and innermost feeling. She lives in Columbus, OH, with her partner Luke Stettner and her two and three-year-old sons, Rafa and Carlo.

Alice Wong was born in 1980, Hong Kong. Her interpretation of the natural world is an enlivened — often neon — version of animals, plants and landscapes, where the color dial is always turned to its peak saturation. Both in her drawings and ceramics, Alice often takes liberties with color, intensifying the true shade of the animal so that it translates on the psychedelic rainbow spectrum. An introduction to vintage postcards and found photos has since led to a new course of work that recalls a Baldessari-like approach of color-blocking over appropriated imagery. Alice reconfigures family album kitsch or cliché macro shots of plants and landscapes, consuming the original with a contemporary, slick sheen of artificial color. Using her vibrant palette as a vehicle to enhance and abstract, Alice obscures what might be considered the central focal point of the image, recalibrating the viewer's vision.