

a guide to a creative summer

issue #1

Tarantula: Authors And Art

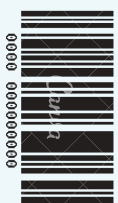


Photo by Tijana Pakic, from her series 54m2, March 17th - May 11th 2020

- 3 summer vibes by
maja milanovic
- 4 planting a garden in the basement of my soul
kristina aleksynaite
- 9 fredagsmys #1
- 10 with no screens around, your bbq party can turn into a segment from
national geographic
maja milanovic
- 13 a little inspiration
daisuke takeya
- 14 an art teacher's guide to getting back to nature
karen grace
- 17 fredagsmys #2
- 18 a little bit of inspiration
tijana pakic
- 19 a chocolate taster's guide to an autumnal reawakening of our senses
sanja vladovic
- 21 fredagsmys #3
- 22 a call for action by
sandra vitaljic
- 24 summer vibe playlist
- 25 have a nice summer!

summer vibes

Most of us have a romantic view of summer, the sun burning against our skin relaxing our muscles, the suddenly warm wind caressing our hair, if we are lucky, there will be a beach involved, some salt water, a hike: talk about nature's power of healing the body and soul!

However, with all the itineraries, planning and traveling, we might find ourselves constantly chasing for happiness and that special moment instead of surrendering to these new warm days. Summer gifts us with space for outer and inner journeys, and why not add to that a little bit of effortless creativity. All one needs is a little bit of preparation, thus in celebrating our first birthday here at Tarantula: Authors And Art, in addition to our summer issues on tarantulaauthorsandart.substack.com, we gift you with a guide that will hopefully remind you of the potential of the next few warm months.

Why not start with planting a garden on your balcony or in your soul, already at the end of spring, so that you can indulge in the late summer blooms? Make a quick cozy desert to melt in your mouth? Trade your screens with books, or bbqs in nature? Carry a small notebook and some pencils to go back into the wild?

And don't worry, for those end-of-summer blues, we also have a little bit of advice on how to open up your senses, say goodbye to the bright days and embrace the coming of the fall

We've got you!

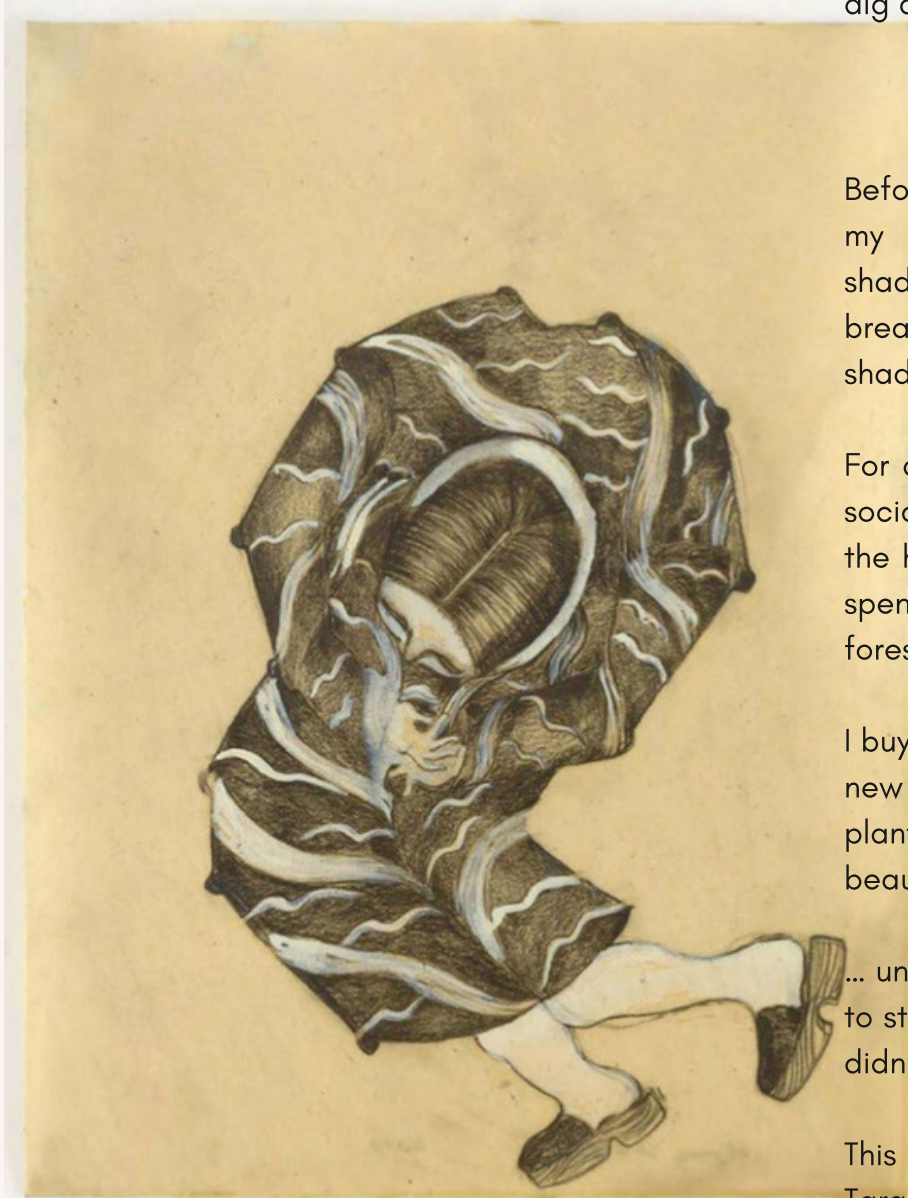
maja milanovic

editor and writer

planting a garden in the basement of my soul

written by kristina aleksynaite

art by sandra vasquez de la Horra



Sandra Vasquez de la Horra, *La Geisha Danzante*, 2019,
Graphite on paper, wax

Every spring, just before my birthday, I go into the basement of my soul. After celebrating and rejoicing in the achievements of the previous year, I open the door to the black spots, which I have buried away from sight during this last year.

Somewhere lurking deep in our own shadows, we will always find the demon that we are afraid to face. After drawing a few of them, as Karen Grace advised in her article "Play With Your Demons," I laughed and decide to dig deeper.

A Shadow Needs Light

Before I start this process, I always carry in my mind the knowledge that to see our shadow we need light in order that we don't break down. When the light shines, the shadows are not so scary.

For a while, I close myself off at home from social networks, events, and friends. I scrub the house, prolong my meditations, fast, and spend hours walking by the lake or in the forest.

I buy seedlings, put my hands in the soil of my new home and nourish them as babies; but plants nourish me back as I pick some edible beauties near my home.

... until I feel ready to take a deep breath and to start a conversation on the painful topics I didn't want to face.

This spring, I'm calling on the work of Tarantula: Authors And Art's artist of May, Sandra Vasquez de la Horra.

Sandra's work invites all kinds of women - prostitutes, mothers, shamans, goddesses - to start a conversation, and I'm caught up in its creative magic. Looking at one artwork after another, I reflect on which of my demon shadows of the past year they evoke.

Identity

First, I start with the question of identity. The Chilean-born, Berlin-based artist talks about migration in the broadest sense as a question of our existence.

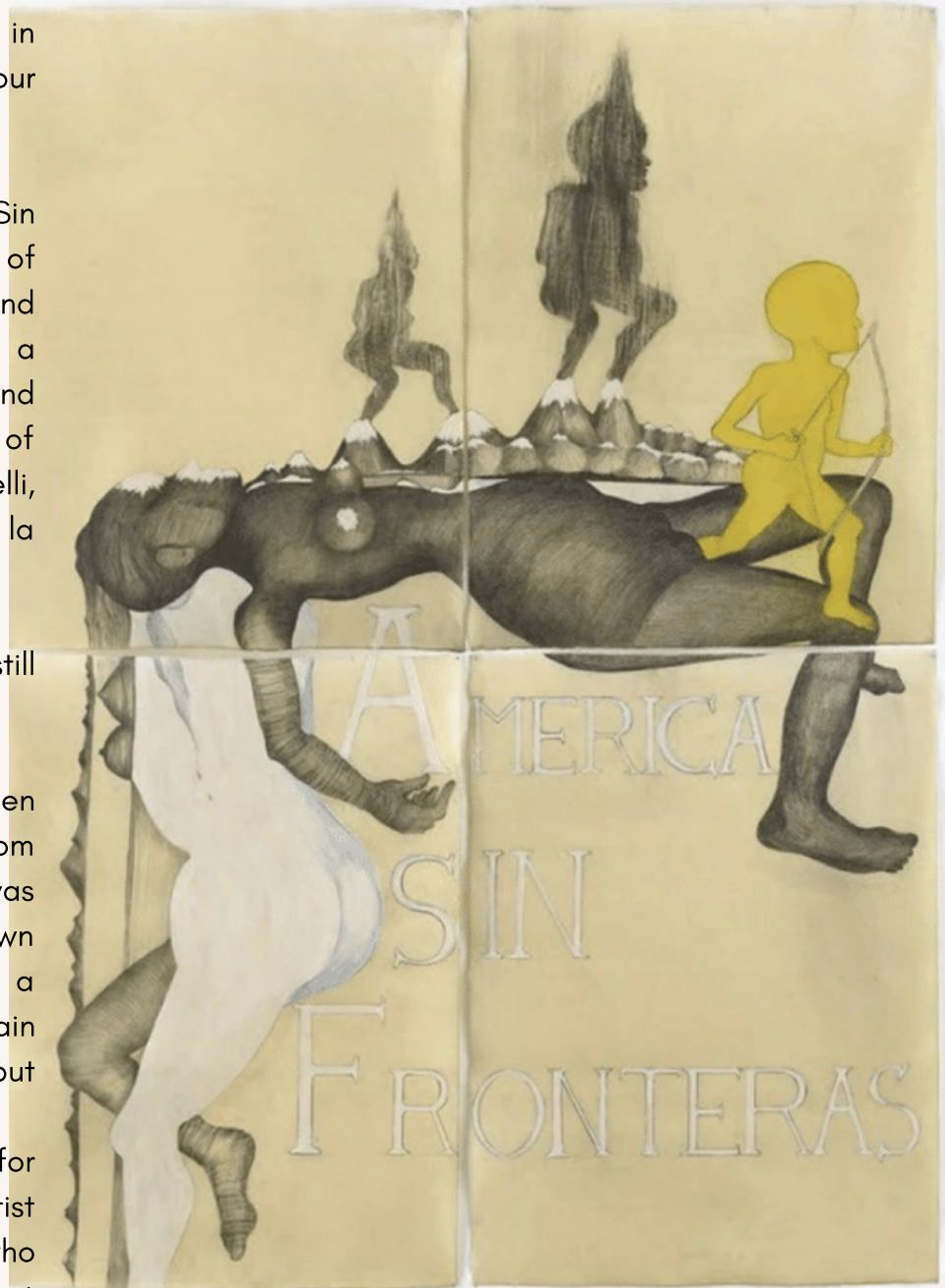
I am looking at her work "América Sin Fronteras". The drawing speaks to us of "passages, displacements and transnational humans, showing us a Mother Earth that people enter and exit in total freedom, in the fluidity of confines." (Rubina Romanelli, Magazzino, Sandra Vasquez de la Horra, Selected works 2010-2020)

She asks how much is Latin America still in her, in this broader sense.

The theme of migration has been central for me this year. I moved from Lithuania to Sweden. The decision was somewhat unexpected. Having grown up in a homogenous community, in a small country, I thought I would remain in my Lithuanian cocoon forever, but now a whole other world is opening. Why was this transition so painful for me? Who am I here? What kind of artist am I, what kind of journalist am I, who knows me here? It seems I must reinvent everything, I have to deconstruct myself from the beginning.

On the other hand, the world that has opened gives me the opportunity to be bolder, to experiment. In the end, Mother Earth still embraces me wherever I live.

Am I too scared of the vastness of the world?



Sandra Vasquez de la Horra, América sin Fronteras, 2017, Graphite, watercolor, and wax on four pieces of paper

I loosen the earth in the pot and plant a beautiful rose. My mother's garden always smells of roses. And now, I will have a rose garden in Stockholm.

Adaptation

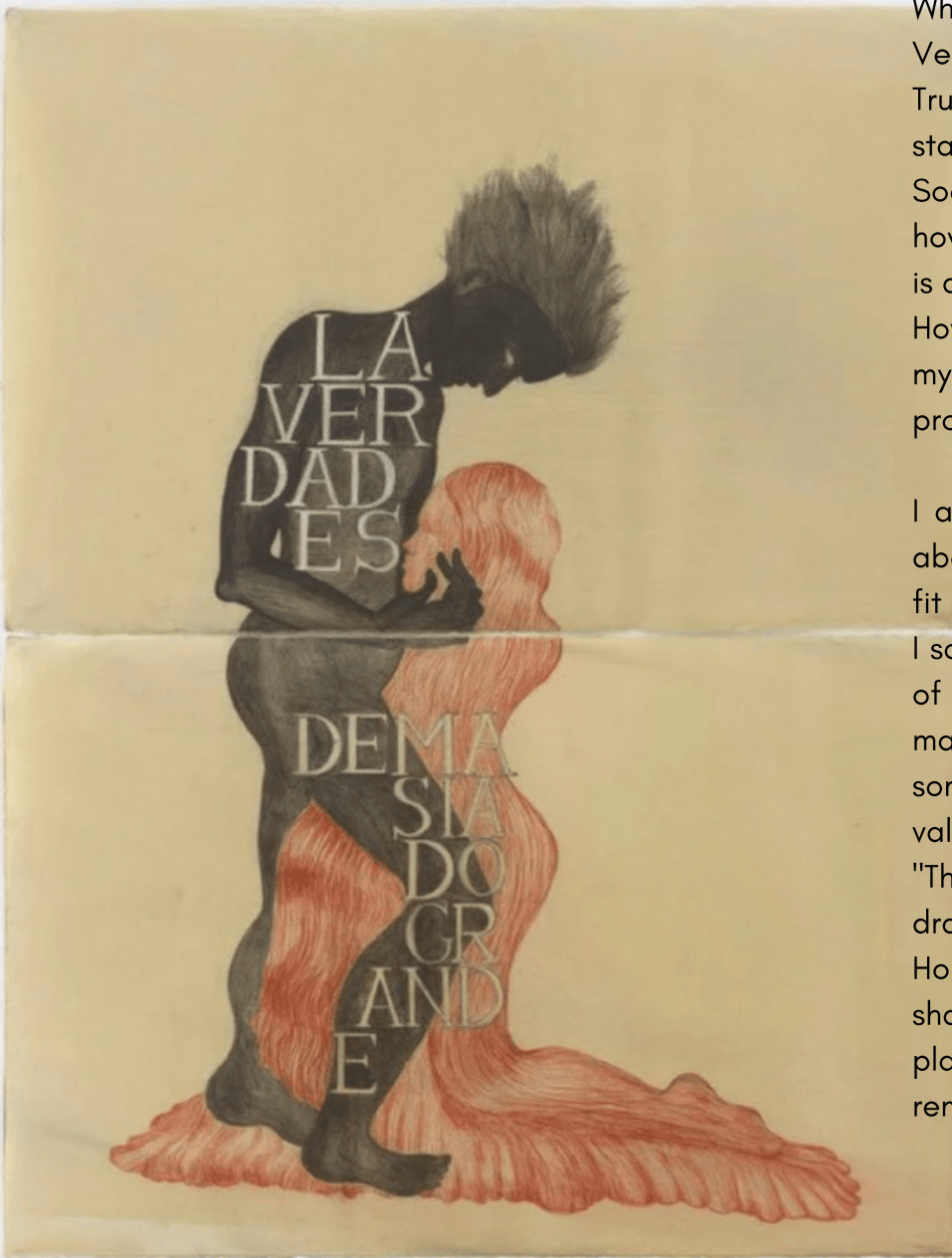
Growing up under the oppression of the Soviet Union, and then experiencing all the hardships Lithuania had to go through to build a state during the coup, I feel a great need to adapt.

The totalitarian system taught me: "don't talk, don't show off, listen to the other person until they finish talking".

When I look at Sandra's artwork "La Verdad Es Demasiado Grande" (The Truth Is Too Big,) I see myself standing in a whirlpool of influences. Society, relatives, the great truths of how we should or ought to live, who is a good mother, woman, profession. How I should position or present myself in various ecosystems of professional and private life.

I ask myself how many times have I abandoned myself in an attempt to fit in this year? How many times have I sacrificed my creations for the sake of family peace and stability? How many times have I trusted that someone else's opinion is more valuable? It breaks my heart.

"The Truth is Too Big" is written on the drawing of Sandra Vasquez de la Horra. I can no longer hide this shadow of inferiority. I get up and plant a forget-me-not plant to remember how valuable I am.



Sandra Vasquez de la Horra, *La Verdad es Demasiado grande*, 2017,
Graphite on paper, wax

The Body Remembers

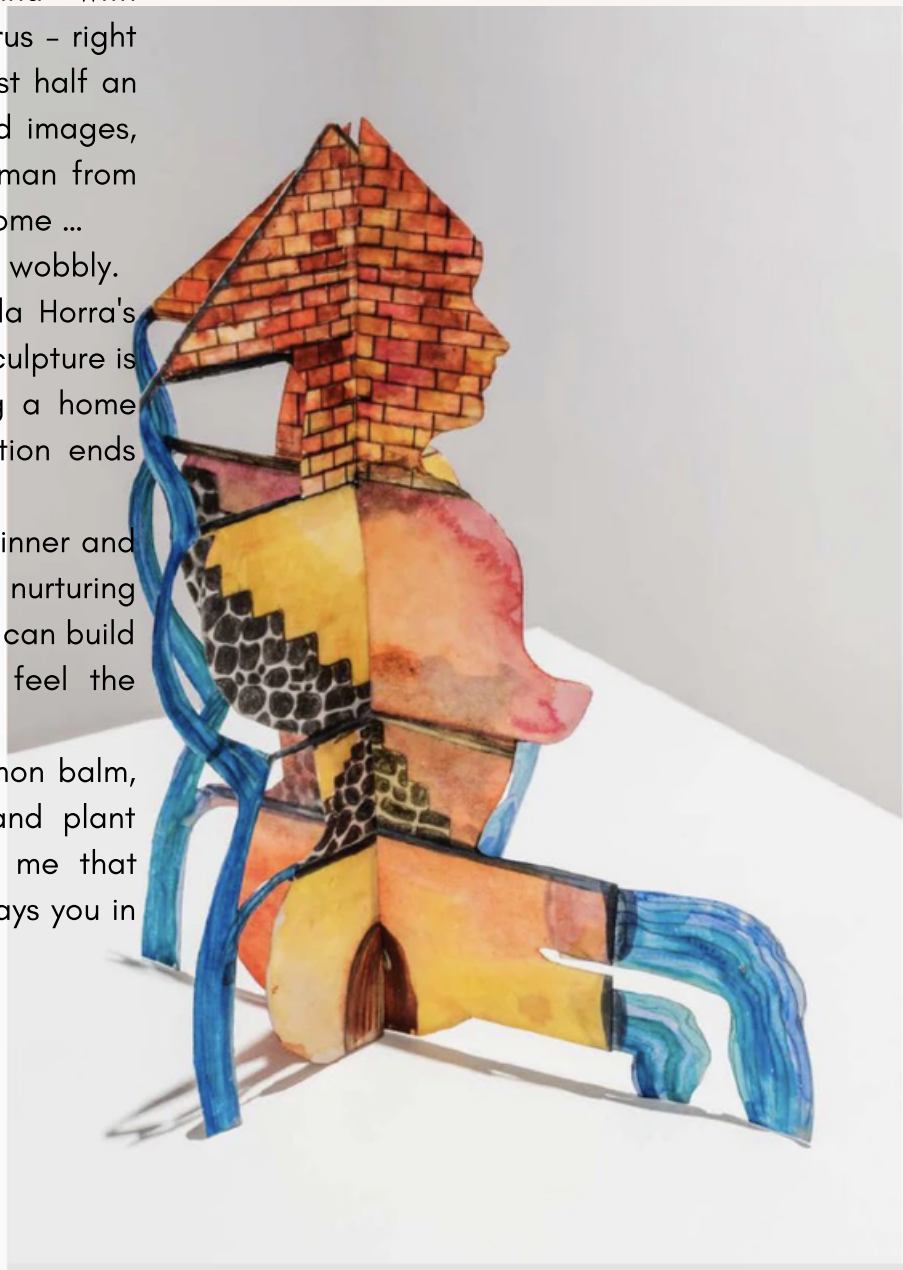
When I moved to Stockholm, I lost the ground under my feet. I felt like I had lost my home. Where is it? I looked at the beautiful garden we had moved into, full of apple trees, ripe raspberries and currants, and was not happy. Nothing looked beautiful or tasty.

Then the war in Ukraine broke out, and I lost my body completely. Everything shook for weeks. Having experienced first-hand what it is like to live under oppression, I felt as if my own nation was under attack again. The subconscious trauma was so painful that I could neither eat nor sleep. My parents and friends were left behind with aggressive neighbours – Russia and Belarus – right next door, and a nuclear power plant just half an hour away from Vilnius. Painful news and images, the tears of relatives and a refugee woman from Ukraine taking shelter in my studio back home ...

I was floating in the air and am still a little wobbly. However, I look at Sandra Vasquez de la Horra's "Yo Soy Casa" and I feel at peace. This sculpture is her autobiographical work about having a home and not looking for another. Her migration ends here.

For me, this work gives me hope that my inner and outer garden will grow; that by slowly nurturing every corner of my skin and living space, I can build a solid, peaceful home; my body will feel the ground again.

I bring all the nutritious herbs – basil, lemon balm, oregano, rosemary – together in one and plant them in a large pot. They will remind me that everything that is nurtured eventually repays you in kindness.



Sandra Vasquez de la Horra, Yo Soy Casa, 2019, Watercolor, Graphite, Crayon

Vitality

In her interview for Hyper Art, Sandra declares that her work is mostly unconscious, and more like a diary of her life. Looking at her art, I realized that we all share different but common experiences. One woman's creativity, felt and shared openly, can evoke the most painful shadows of my own basement.

As soon as I name the demons, they don't seem so scary; and most importantly, I finally feel alive. More alive than I've ever been, and the blood starts to circulate again throughout my body, without stopping the flow.

At this point, I remain silent to let my dreams, my intuition, my body sensations speak louder, so that all that is important doesn't hide in the basement again and return to becoming a shadow. I remind myself, that all experiences must be nurtured with love from now to my next birthday. Like beautiful gardens.



Sandra Vasquez, de la Horra, Columnata, 2019, Graphite on paper, wax



fredagsmys #1

swedish for "cozy friday"

The work week is over! What better way to start a weekend than to have a little cozy fun (lite mysigt) together. Invite your family and friends and get messy in the kitchen together. And while you are at it, why not change your perspective a little by using a bit of culinary imagination. Turn every Friday this summer into a Fredagsmys day!

This summer's Friday's mys is Rosé Sorbet!

Frozen Strawberries
A bottle of Rosé
Sweetener of your choice
Mix it in a blender and put it in a container. Freeze.

Add some whipped cream of your choice and fresh fruit for some extra deliciousness.

Bon appetit!

with no screens around, your bbq party
can turn into a segment from national
geographic



written by maja milanovic
art by sandra verine

Picture this: you are standing on the small beach in your backyard BBQ-ing with your family and friends, across the bay on the jetty a bunch of teenagers are having a blast jumping into the water, giggling and just enjoying the summer. An ordinary summer day, right? Suddenly, two elks, known as one of the largest species within the deer family with males growing up to 1.5 meters and reaching 320-330 kilograms in weight, female height 1.3 m and 220-240 kg of weight, decide to parade themselves in front of the humans by jumping into the water and swimming across this small intimate bay.

The teenagers continue making somersaults in the water just a few meters away from these massive bodies, the grown ups with plates and BBQ tools in their hands stand with their mouths open. Suddenly, they remember that they have two little ones in the house glued to their iPads. A commotion happens, screams for the little ones to come out, dropping the BBQ tongs to reach for the good old fashion but digital camera. The teenagers suddenly realizing that they are in presence of something awesome, quickly jump back to safety onto the jetty and with their wet hands reach for the smart phones to get photos of the elks.

The two seven year olds come out of the house and watch for a minute or two as the elks gracefully swim like Ester Williams carrying their antennas elegantly above the water; then they smile and go back to their screens. They miss as the two animals nonchalantly walk out of the water to the small line of trees. The animals are hungry and they don't care about the human viewers around them. As they chomp on the leaves, the teenagers continue to swim, the grown ups complain about their 7 year olds and how iPads are ruining their lives. A few seconds later, they reach for their own smart phones to upload the images on all of their social media. It's only a coincidence or the fact that they were also hungry that they experienced this rare moment of pure wonder which they usually have to seek out on You Tube or National Geographic.

"I feel we live in a Zombie world where people don't "see" or "hear" each other anymore. The screens are always with us and like a bag of candy we can't control ourselves. We have to take a candy every second minute and we miss out on so many special moments and conversations when we loose ourselves and even worse our kids to the screens. We need to learn to turn them off now and then and be fully present," writes Mia Ljungberg Nevado, the founder of the Look Up Movement.

When Mia was vacationing in the Maldives, she had a similar experience. Herself a luxury editor for Family Travel Magazine, she would often take her laptop to the beach. When her kids came excited because there were two manta rays in the shallow waters in front of the resort, she followed her boys to see the fish, only to realize when she looked up that most kids and grown ups were sitting on the beach with their iPads in their hands.

"My biggest struggle with screens is how society has accepted them as the most natural part of our lives - how they have moved into our classrooms, bedrooms, dinning tables, busses, cafes, restaurants planes. There is no more room for spontaneous conversations."

Mia decided to be proactive and wrote to the hotel's management to keep the outside public spaces of the hotel a WiFi free zones. To her joy, a month later, she received a response that the resort will be wifi

free. That was a changing moment in her life and she knew that she wanted to inspire more people to put their screens down and stay present as they experience any given moment.

As we are in the midst of summer trying to relax and create some special moments with our families, we asked Mia for some hacks on how to break our own screen addiction.

Look Up Movements' 6 tips to help you disconnect from your phones and reconnect with your life

1. Practice Intentional Tech Delay

Don't start your day looking at your phone. Allow your mind and body to start the day slowly and mindfully.

2. Disable Phone Notifications

Set your phone notifications to "off" for anything that isn't urgent.

3. Unplug your phone and screens at Meal Time

Talk to your kids, friends, colleagues or family instead. Be present and have real face to face conversations.

4. Find Your Phone a Home

Make your own Look Up Box, one that will make you smile and remind you why you do this. (Mia's sons gifted her with a beautiful vintage wine box for this special occasion.)

5. Leave a Book by Your Bed

Replace your phone with a real book. The best way to fall a sleep and to wind-down is with a good book.

6. Tech Sabbath Friday

Try and take a break from technology, from your phone and screens from Friday 6pm to Saturday 6pm. It will be a reset for your mind and will give you quality time with your friends and family.

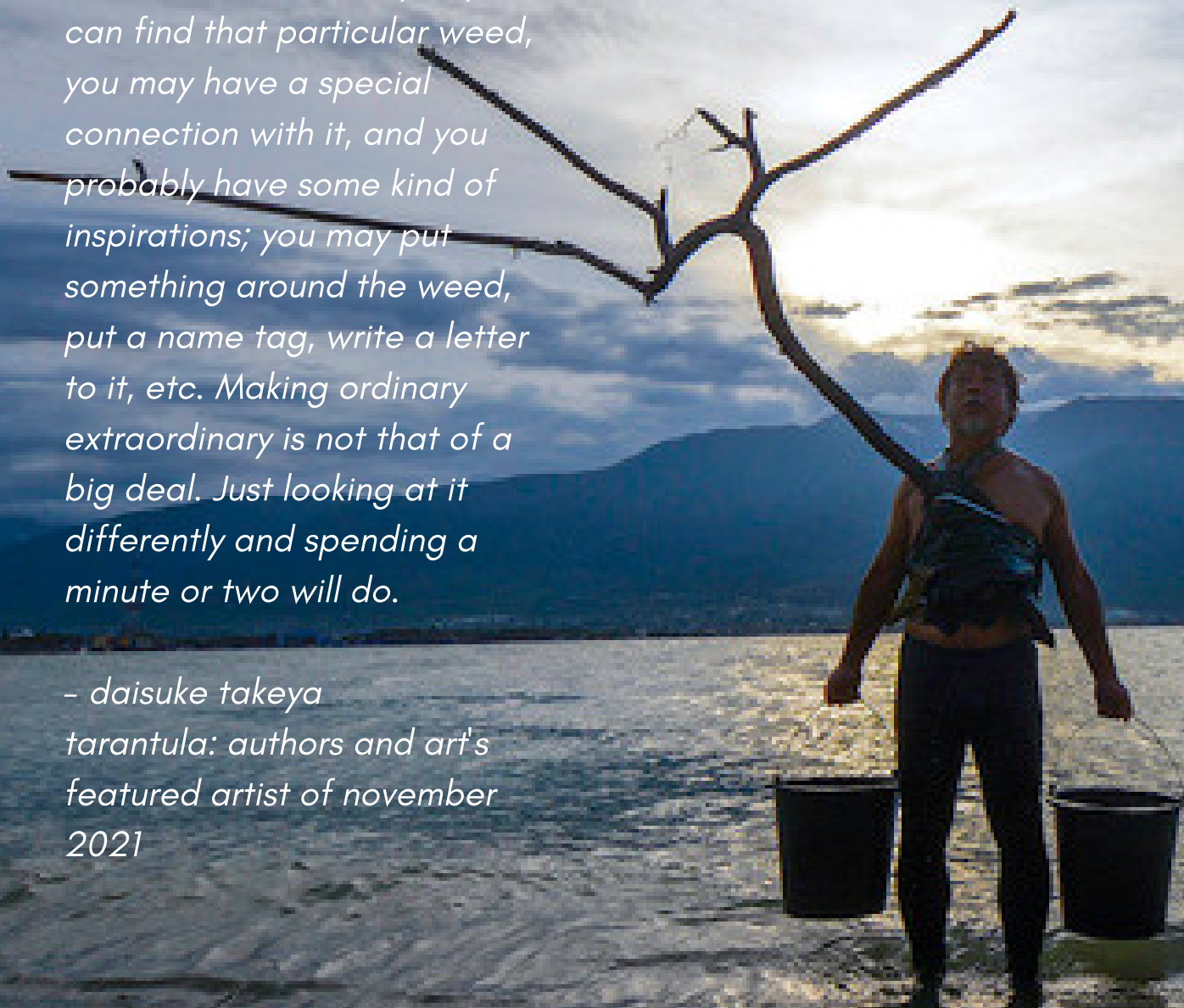
Remember the youngsters whose parents were worried that they didn't pay attention to the swimming elks? In a phone call with their grandparents later that night, they mentioned that they saw the elks. Arguing with them to get them off their screens to witness the grandeur of nature left an impression after all. Maybe it's just that they already saw these animals swimming at a close proximity at the age of 7, while the parents had to wait 4-5 decades to enjoy the sight. Or maybe this is a sign of hope that there is still room for wonder in our lives if we put down our screens and pay attention.

Follow the **Look Up Movement** on Instagram @LookUpMovement2020 for further inspiration.



You walk the same street everyday to go to school or work. You do not notice small things like weeds around. Stop for a few minutes and look for a particular one and give it a name, and think about why you picked that one. Then, come back to it the next day. If you can find that particular weed, you may have a special connection with it, and you probably have some kind of inspirations; you may put something around the weed, put a name tag, write a letter to it, etc. Making ordinary extraordinary is not that of a big deal. Just looking at it differently and spending a minute or two will do.

*- daisuke takeya
tarantula: authors and art's
featured artist of november
2021*



an art teacher's guide to getting back to nature

written by karen grace
photos courtesy of karen grace



"To practice any art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow. So do it." - Kurt Vonnegut

It can be easy to think of nature as out-there and not-here, somewhere far off and distant from us. Something you have to venture forth to find. But nature doesn't have to be all Grand Canyon and ancient forests. Nature in truth is all around us, we need only stand still a moment and witness.

Nature is both the grandest rocky sea coast and the little dandelion poking up through a crack in the pavement. We would like our Nature to be Instagram-ready, untouched and pure, but I hate to tell you this...it never is. A garden is planted by people but definitely nature in action. That little dandelion is a bothersome weed to some but it's a perfect example of nature adapting to our city's leftover spaces. Everyday my children tumble out of school to play in the grassy green and tree-filled park across the street that also happens to be a graveyard. And that, my friends, is nature too. So finding nature can be just as much about finding the right mindset as it is the right physical place. Nature is everywhere!

Appreciating nature is first and foremost about standing still and seeking it out. My favorite way to visit with the nature around me is to make a little sketch of what I can see. Committing pen to paper helps me slow down and really pay attention to what's right here, right now.

So perhaps you'd like to try this too? Let's give it a go. Grab something to write on and something to write with. I carry a little sketchbook but you could use an index card or any old piece of paper. A pencil is perfectly fine, a pen works too. Keep the supplies for your first outing simple, comfortable.

Step one. Go outside. It doesn't have to be anyplace special. Look for something green and go that way. The rest of the rainbow is lovely too. (And frankly, the little brown bird bouncing in front of me as I write this seems to be begging for a cameo.) Whatever calls your attention and draws you in. And of course, sometimes we can't get outside, but don't let that stop you. Crack open the window, smell the fresh air, and look out there.

Step two. Stop and look. Usually down. Sometimes up. The best bits are not likely to be found at eye level. Find something that grows and get close to it. Observe it as up-close as you can, like ten centimeters close if you can. Don't rush. This is not a race. Let your eyes linger. Take a couple deep breaths while you're there. I like to hold smaller objects like flowers, pinecones, or twigs in my hand but sometimes that's not possible. (Please resist the temptation to steal flowers from your neighbor's garden!) We usually think of nature as vast and awe inspiring but try here to think little - it's much less intimidating that way.



Step three. Draw something. Don't overthink it, just begin. I like to do a type of drawing called "blind contour" where you allow yourself to focus very closely on the thing you're looking at and not the drawing. Allow your eyes to carefully follow the edges and lines in what you are looking at, put your pen point on the paper and let it follow along with the movement of your eyes on the paper. Imagine they are in sync, moving the same direction and at the same speed. Drawing this way makes you slow down... sometimes I have to remember to breathe. After a minute or so pick up your pen and see what you've got. Maybe it looks like something, maybe not. Maybe it's just a little scribble on the page. Whatever you've done is absolutely fine. It's not about the drawing so much as the seeing.

Step four. Keep going. You can jump back in to the same drawing, or you can start again at a different spot on the page. You can look at the same little treasure, you can look at it from a different angle, or you can look at a different part of it, just keep going. Try again. Stay curious.



Eventually you'll tire of such focus. Or the page will fill up, or something else will demand your attention. If it takes five minutes or fifteen or fifty, it's all good.

There is no pressure in this exploration. Whatever you draw doesn't have to be beautiful and it doesn't even have to make sense. It is the act of drawing that matters. It is what allows you to notice some little part of the natural world and get to know it in a new way, more completely, and to appreciate its complexity and variety. The whorl of a snail's shell, the tiny stamens deep inside the rose, the arrangement of spots on the ladybug are all surprisingly intricate upon closer inspection.

Usually when I am back indoors I like to add a little color. Maybe I took a photo or maybe it's just from memory but a hint of watercolor or marker always adds dimension and life. I also like that it makes me go back and consider my drawing later. It's nice to take a moment to appreciate the time I spent outside in communion with mysteries I do not yet understand.



fredagsmys #2

swedish for "cozy friday"

The work week is over! What better way to start a weekend than to have a little cozy fun (lite mysigt) together. Invite your family and friends and get messy in the kitchen together. And while you are at it, why not change your perspective a little by using a bit of culinary imagination.

Today's Friday's mys are Marinated Artichokes!

1. Chopped Artichokes Hearts already marinated
2. A few drops of olive oil
3. Sea salt
4. A slice of lemon
5. Basil, parsley (if not bought marinated, or what the heck, add some more!)
6. Toast of your choice (I like to use gluten free)

Eat as is or put the artichokes on top of the toast and voila! Enjoy!

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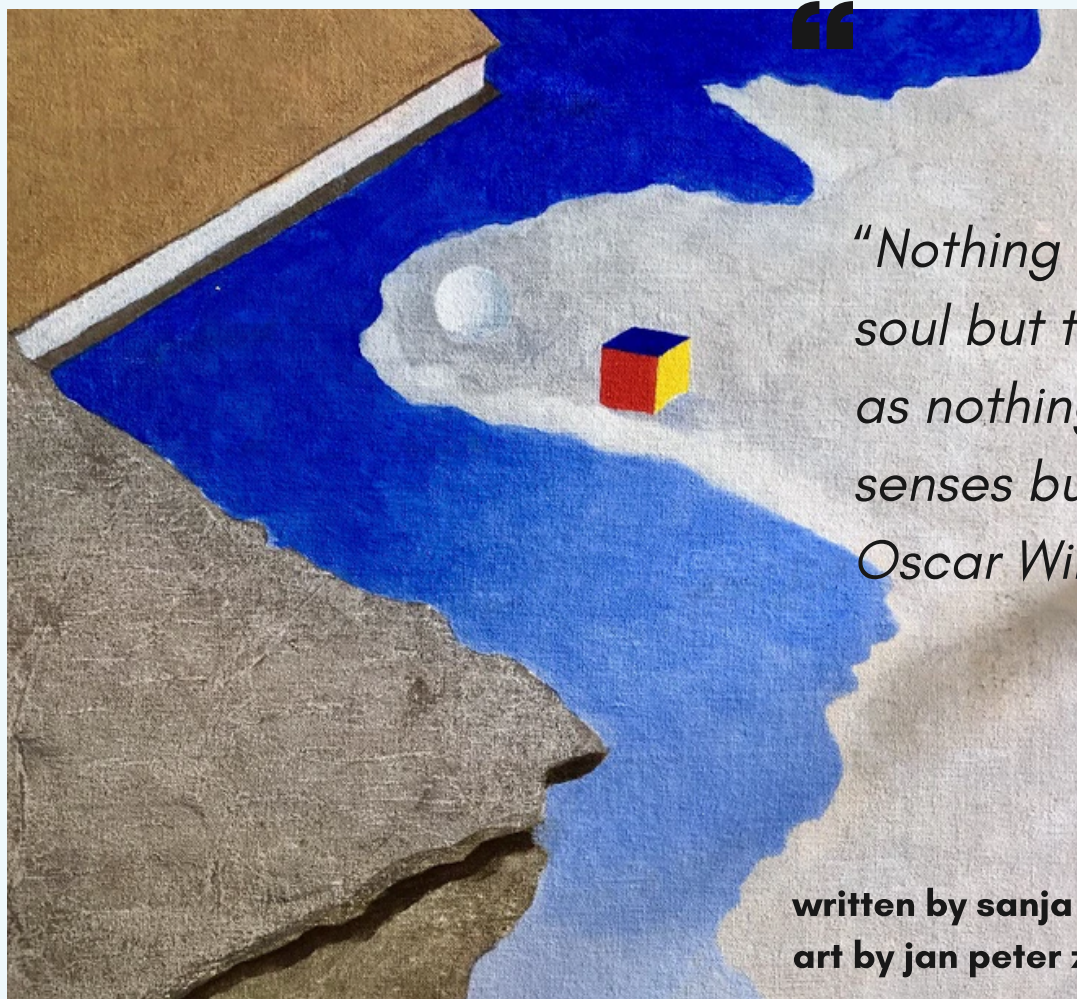
I don't want to tell people what to shoot, I would just like to inspire them to open up their eyes.

Have any kind of camera with you, could be a phone. Take photos of what attracts you all day, do it over a period of time and after some time review all your photos. What do you see?

*-tijana pakic,
tarantula:authors and
art's featured artist of
June, 2021*



a chocolate taster's guide to an autumnal reawakening of our senses



“Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.”

Oscar Wilde

**written by sanja vladovic,
art by jan peter zetterström**

As September unfolds and woods are starting to change the colors of the foliage, mourning the loss of summer can sneak into our minds. Many of us think of summer as the peak of life in nature, and autumn as its end, the fall, the big drop. The mundanity, as we return to our day-to-day lives in September, easily takes away the magic of the careless life that summer awakes in us. The burden of everyday life can make us question what is the point of it all. To a chocolate taster, there is one simple answer to that question: “Chocolate!”

Chocolate, in all her decadence and glory does not like summer heat too much. She prefers the coziness of autumn and the crispness of a fresh

September’s evening. Chocolate can help us remember that the magic of life’s joy is not in hot and careless summer nights, but it is within us and that we have all that is needed to enjoy life, in all its manifestations, at any time and season.

Our senses are instruments of our body which we use to experience the world and life around us. Yet, we tend to take them for granted; we focus on basic functionality, forgetting the magic that our senses can reveal to us. Our moods are affected by what we take in through our senses, and if our senses are numb, our emotions are as well. Oscar Wilde said: “Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.”



Jan Peter Zetterström, final works, 2018-2020.

Mindful tasting of chocolate is one of those activities that can awake our senses, connect our outer and inner worlds, engage our memories and emotions.

Much more than just munching on chocolate, tasting means using all of our five senses in a mindful, focused way. We start tasting the chocolate by looking at the design of the wrapper, the color and the shine of the chocolate bar, hearing the snap as we brake the piece of chocolate, smelling the aroma, feeling the warmth of our fingers softening the chocolate, how chocolate melts in our mouth (yes, do not chew, but let it slowly melt on your tongue) and finally ponder into the waves of flavors that chocolate brings.

With over 400 flavour compounds, chocolate is one of the most complex foods in the world. Mindful tasting is not only a sensory exploration, it is about respecting the tree that gave the fruit that the chocolate is made of, respecting all the people who worked hard to make that chocolate, from the seeds in the tropical rainforest to our cozy rooms so that we can enjoy it. At the end, it is about respecting the very moment we took to enjoy this piece of chocolate; about appreciating how this chocolate made us feel, emotions aroused, memories evoked.

Chocolate is maybe one of the tastiest ways to engage our senses, to awake our souls, to explore worlds inside and around us. But the explorations never

end. Using the same tools as in chocolate tasting, go for a walk and discover the sensuality of the autumn. The vibrant colors of the woods, the rustle sounds of fallen leaves, the rich taste of ripe fruits, the smoky smell of the first stove fires, the warm touch of the blankets we snuggle under in the evenings ...

Autumn is a season of transitions that connects two worlds, the outside world of nature and the inner world of our souls. Its gifts invite us to go inside ourselves, to discover what the summer energy has changed inside of us, to rediscover who we are now, in the new season.

Greet autumn as not just the end of summer, but as a beginning, the beginning of the everlasting cycle of growth. As the trees have to let go the leaves in order to be ready for the new green leaves in the spring, we also have to let go of what is not longer needed and nourish the seeds of the new us so we can rebirth every day and grow. And when the summer comes again, we will have new space within us to fill it with its life-giving energy again and again. Don't let your joy of life fade away with summer, let the richness of the autumn help you make it a part of you, snuggle up under the blanket, take a piece of chocolate, melt on your tongue and let it take you to the journey to the center of your soul.

fredagsmys #3

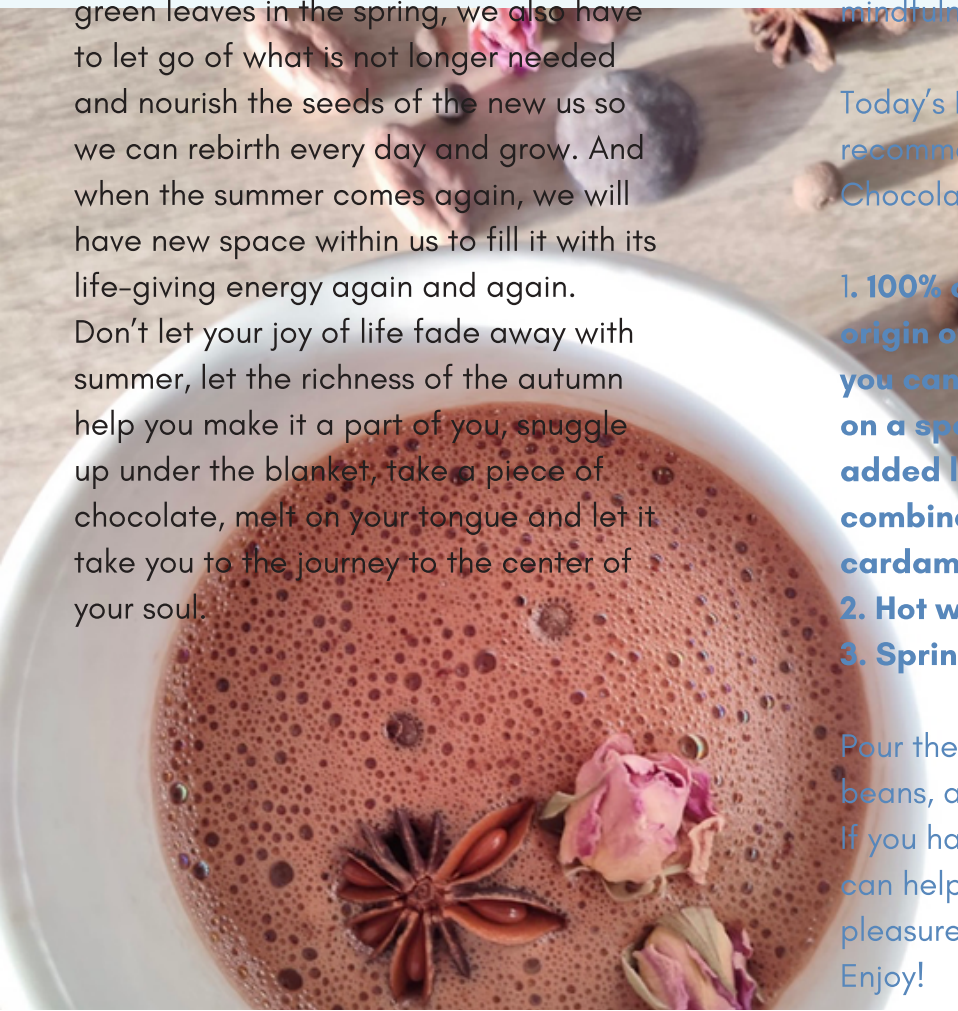
The work week is over! What better way to start a weekend than to have a little cozy fun (lite mysigt) together with your family and friends. Inspired by our latest article, [A Chocolate Taster's Guide To An Autumnal Reawakening Of Our Senses](#), we welcome you to this first autumn "fredagsmys" with a cup of hot chocolate. If you ask our friends at Taman Chocolates, hot chocolate has been a perfect fika from the beginning of time.

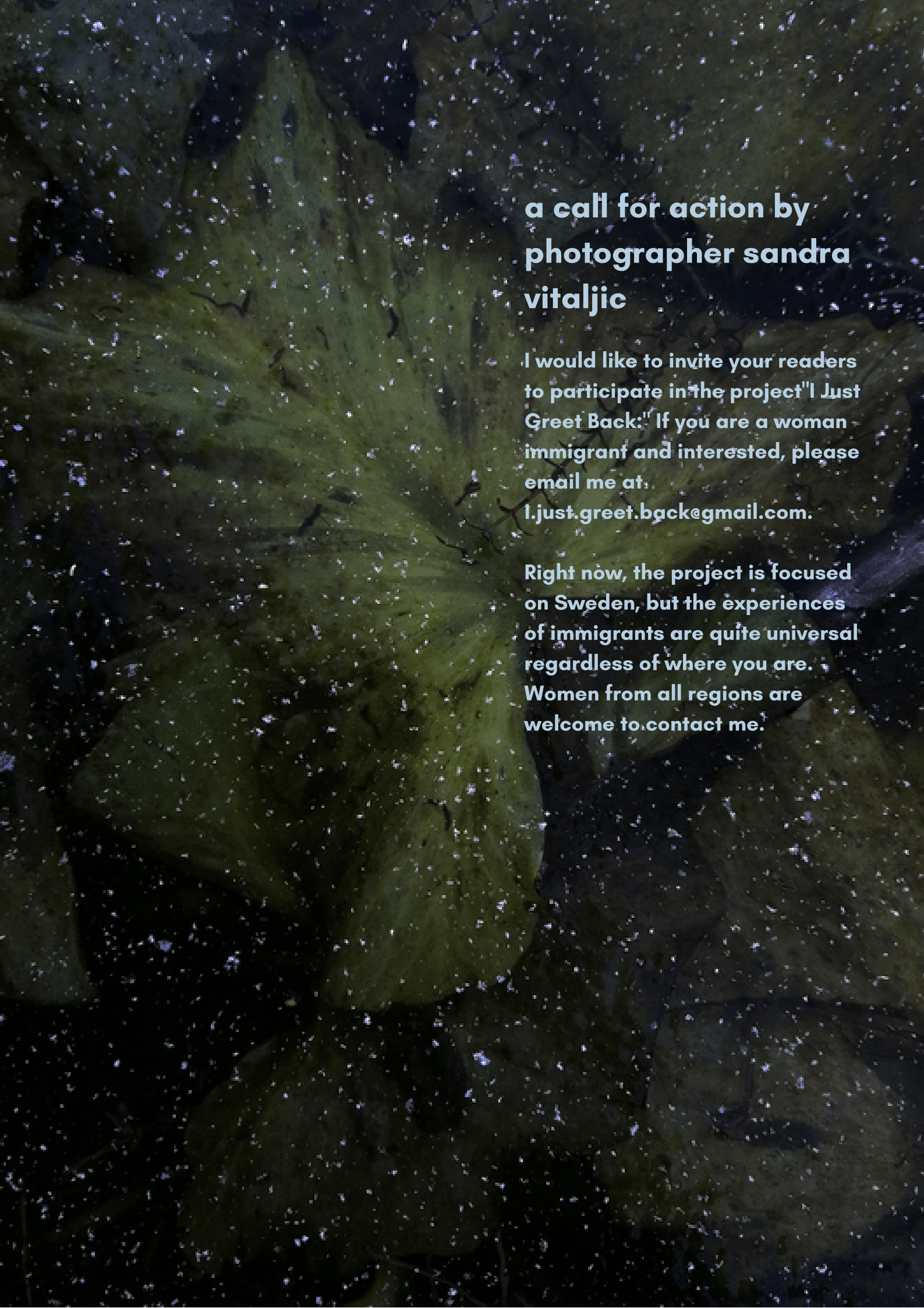
"For the most part of its history, chocolate was enjoyed primarily as a bitter, ceremonial drink for indigenous people of South America, and a decadent drink for European aristocracy. In modern days drinking a hot drink with cocoa is becoming a ritual of mindfulness."

Today's Friday mys is Hot Chocolate recommended by the founders of Taman Chocolates!

- 1. 100% chocolate liquor from single origin of Colombian cacao beans (or you can use one of Taman chocolates on a spoon for easy melting, with added lavender, mixed herbs, or a combination of coffee and cardamom.)**
- 2. Hot water**
- 3. Sprinkle with rose buds**

Pour the hot water over the cacao beans, and stir as it melts into the water. If you have a small milk frother wand, it can help. Add some roses. Simple pleasures are often the best. Enjoy!





**a call for action by
photographer sandra
vitaljic**

I would like to invite your readers to participate in the project "I Just Greet Back." If you are a woman immigrant and interested, please email me at:

i.just.greet.back@gmail.com.

Right now, the project is focused on Sweden, but the experiences of immigrants are quite universal regardless of where you are. Women from all regions are welcome to contact me.



ivan petrovic,
climate place
2021

summer vibes playlist

japanese breakfast - Boyish
arcade fire - Lightning I, II
wet leg . Too Late Now
florence + the machine - Free
jon batiste - Freedom
harry styles - As It Was
dakh daughters - Rozy
the damned - Alone Again Or
iggy pop - Passanger
the dø - Despair, Hangover & Ecstasy
lady blackbird - Collage - Calibre Remix

Tarantula: Authors And Art's
guide to a creative summer, issue #1

writers:

maja milanovic
karen grace
sanja vladovic
kristina aleksynaite

artists by order of appearance:

tijana pakic
sandra vasquez de la horra
sandra verine
daisuke takeya
jan peter zetterström
sandra vitaljic
ivan petrovic

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have a great and an effortlessly creative summer!