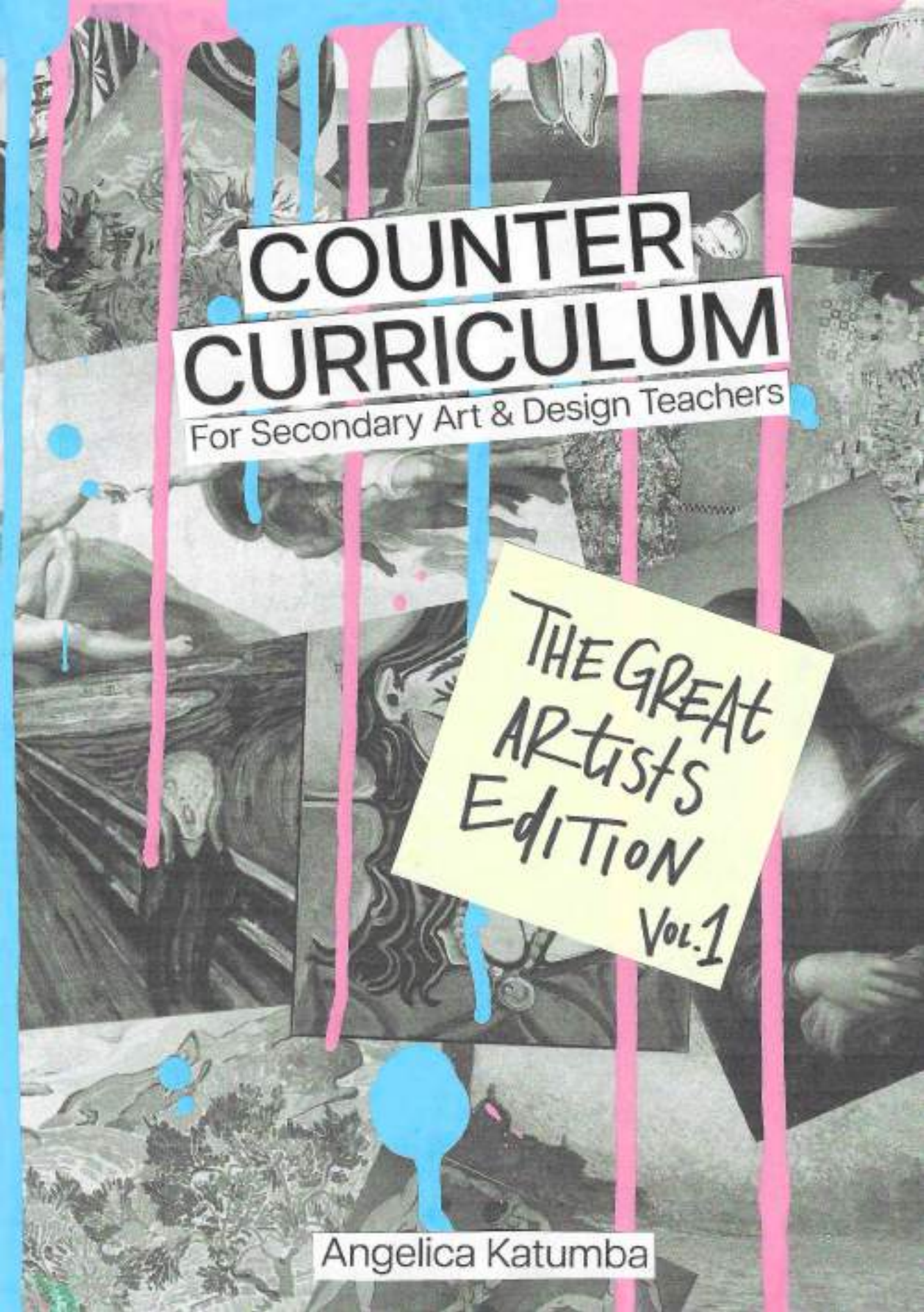
COUNTER
CURRICULUM
For Secondary Art & Design Teachers
THE GREAT ARTISTS EDITION
Vol.1
Angelica Katumba

NOT FRAGILE

COUNTER
CURRICULUM

Introduction

As someone who has been in every level of art education for over a decade, I have felt invisible as an artist. It was not until I got to my undergraduate studies that I experienced a sense of belonging. At the front of my classroom stood a lecturer who looked like me and shared similar experiences. That was the first and last time I was ever taught by a Black lecturer, and I continue to feel its effects now.

At key stage 3, England's National Art & Design Curriculum states that pupils should *'know about great artists, craft makers and designers and understand the historical and cultural development of those art forms'*. Art teachers are given the privilege of picking lesson content to bring this to life, tailoring it to their skills, and adapting it as they please to achieve excellence in the classroom, yet why are students still not pushed to their true potential?

The system is broken. Due to the lack of standardised guidance in the curriculum, opportunities for growth and change in the art system are missed. Nowhere in the curriculum is an explicit name or definition given, and over decades, we've seen teachers misuse the privilege of picking lesson content. They appear in the tokenistic form of Native American dream catchers and African masks, continuously providing students

with a strained perspective on the artistic world. The curriculum structure needs to be challenged. Counter Curriculum was created to form a teaching standard within the Art & Design National Curriculum. As an artist and future educator, I feel this resource is vital to my journey.

Counter Curriculum provides teachers the space to learn about artists in a simple way, using critical multiculturalism as a pedagogical practice. The textbook is laid out in order to get an insight into the artist, the themes and the materials around which they work. This edition specifically focuses on artists you can refer to during your lessons, providing you with example lesson plans for your teaching.

Less than 3 % of artists named in GCSE art exams are Black or South Asian. Our art classrooms are dominated by Eurocentric scaffolding. Africa is stereotyped and essentialized to a mask, and teachers fail to critique power or consider how cultural identity influences people from various cultural groups. The walls are craving to be exposed to more colour. As teachers, it is our duty to make students feel safe and provide them with the information they need to see themselves in the current and future art world. Like myself many creative pupils find solace in their art classroom, so imagine this peace is overthrown by inferiority.

This textbook was created to encourage educators to participate in counter-constructions of the art curricula, as we are all negatively impacted by overprescribed stories. Critical multiculturalism belongs to everyone; thus, it should be treated as such. It is imperative that art educators respond by providing new entry points to different narratives for a diverse student population. It is time we give voice to those who have been silenced by our current teaching practices and confront systemic injustice. If we don't solve this problem, we miss out on people's narratives, stories, and experiences. We risk perpetuating tokenistic mindsets toward future artists, hindering the progression of all students. This work is never finished and requires us to continuously engage in critical examinations from our future and practising art teachers.

COUNTER CURRICULUM

For Secondary Art & Design Teachers

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How to use this textbook

This is a space for creative enquiry. Counter Curriculum aims to push your sense of criticality. Art educators must actively research new and different artists, interrogating the techniques, themes, and methods used by them, the same way I have on each page. I urge you to play and to question.

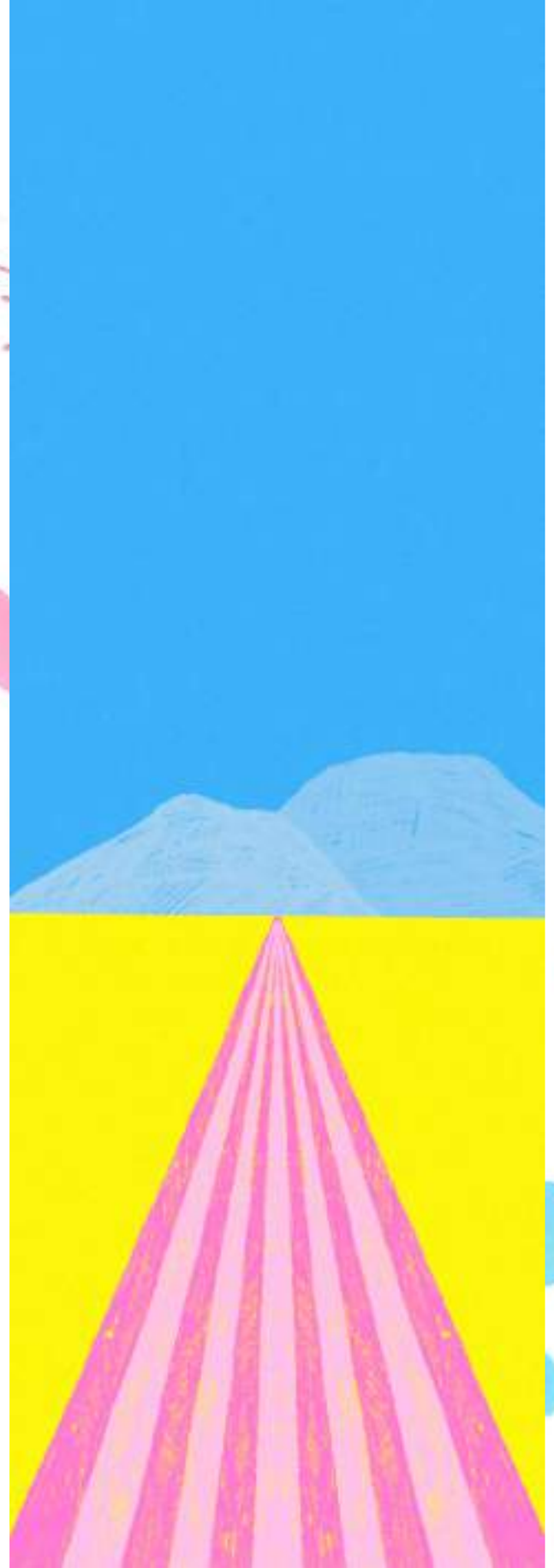
Critical multiculturalism requires community practice, and I hope that at the end of this textbook, you can add to this ever-growing list.

AIDA MULUNEH

Known for her vibrant use of primary colours, Ethiopian-born photographer Aida Muluneh expresses what it's like to be an African woman within the post-colonial world by interrogating the foreign gaze and playing with photography and cultural perceptions.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES
photography / body painting

THEMES
Afrofuturism / traditional cultures / body ornamentation / perception



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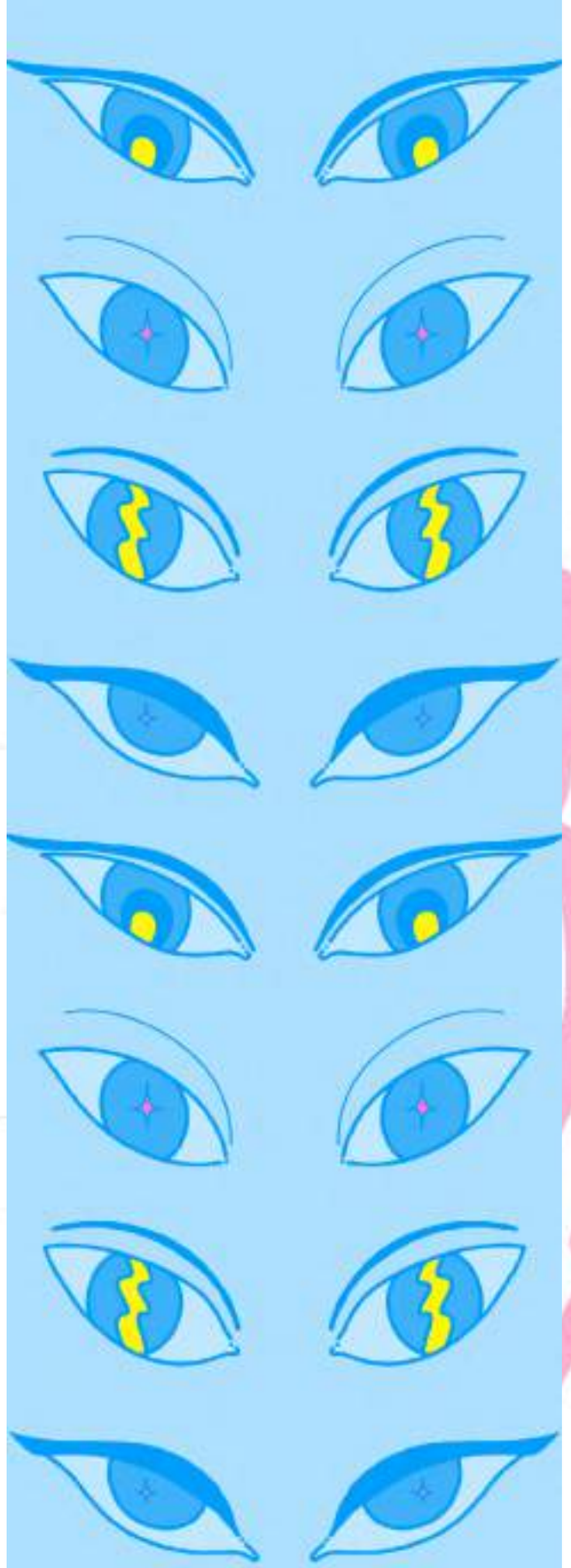

MIRA F MALHOTRA

Mumbai-based artist Malhotra uses punk rock ethos', DIY and alternative culture to help dress up social issues and be playful with her work. Growing up, having a multicultural friendship group shaped her approach as she explores being an outsider and an insider in different settings.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

visual artist / illustrator

THEMES

feminist themes for modern India / gender / mental health / family / systems / pop culture

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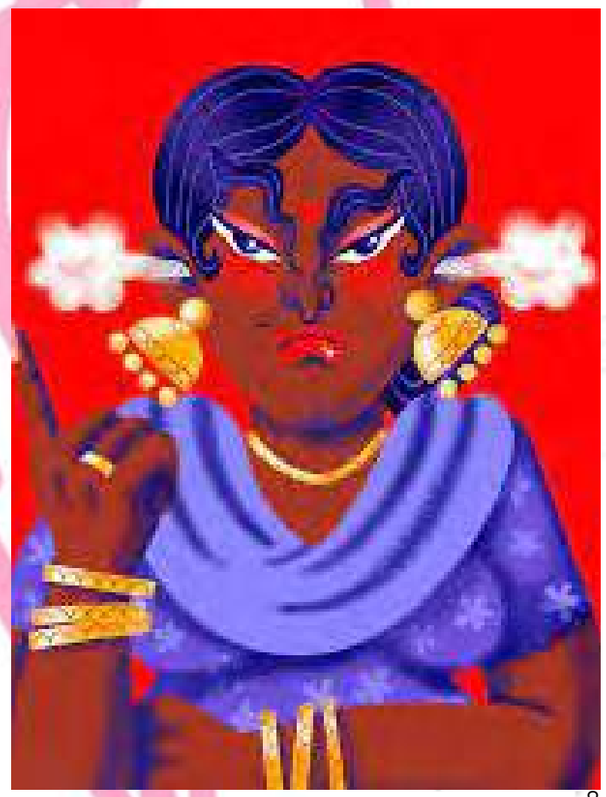

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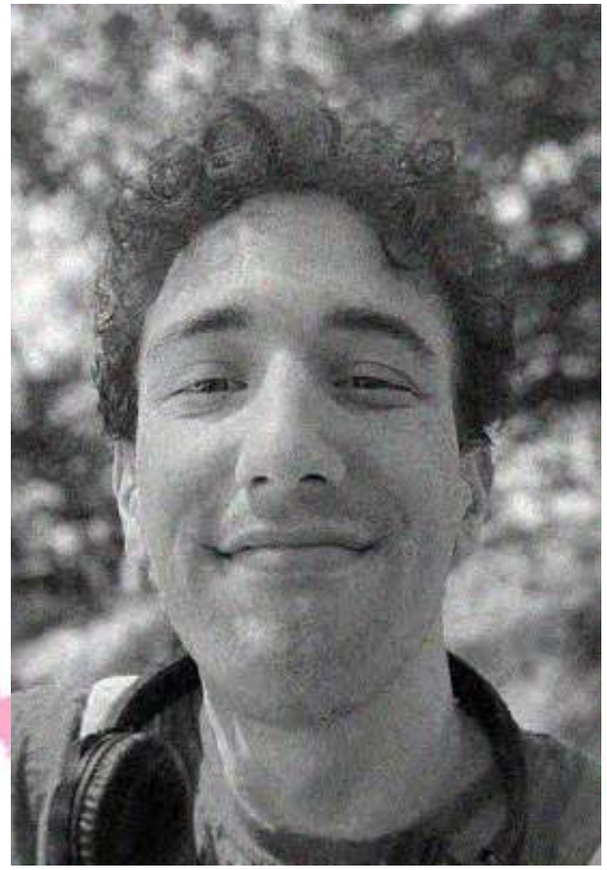

KALAKAL

France-based illustrator Kalakal, has used growing up with several different cultures as an influence in their art. Colour is emphasised throughout their practice as they continue to question how injustice works, whether in editorial settings or in book cover designs.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES
digital illustration

THEMES
queer Muslim identity / social injustice

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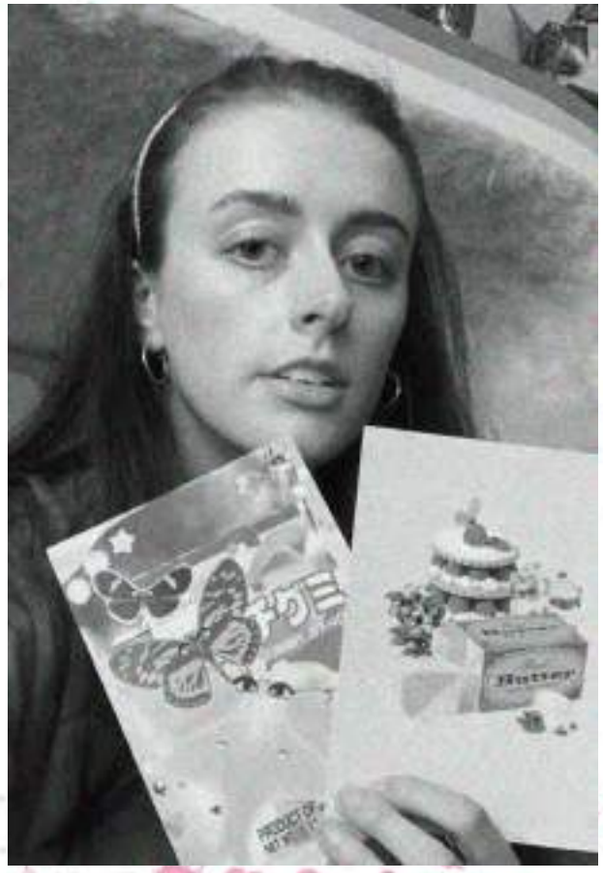


SAVANA OGBURN

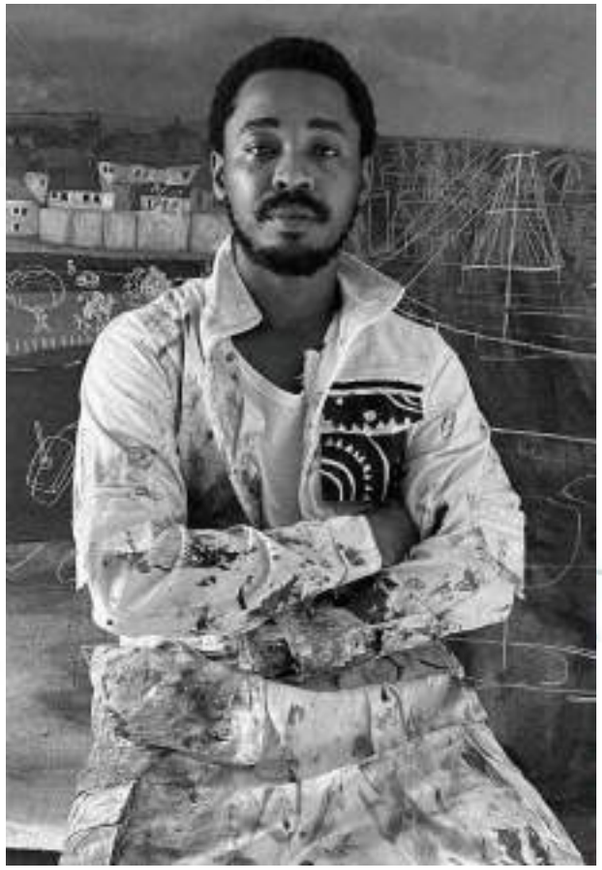
Based in Atlanta, Georgia, photographer Savana Ogburn uses a theatrical and textural lens to explore femininity and queerness. She uses a variety of textures and bright colours to tell surreal stories.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

photography / collage / animation / set design

THEMES

fantasy / transformation / pop culture / femininity / camp / queerness



KELECHI NWANERI

Originally known for their pencil realism, Nwaneri is a Nigerian-born artist who experiments with a variety of materials. His work is defined as contemporary surrealism, and his use of West African iconography in his Black Hybrid Figure is a major characteristic.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

acrylic / watercolour / oil paints / collage

THEMES

surrealism / psychology / social values / history / mental health / the interaction between man and environment

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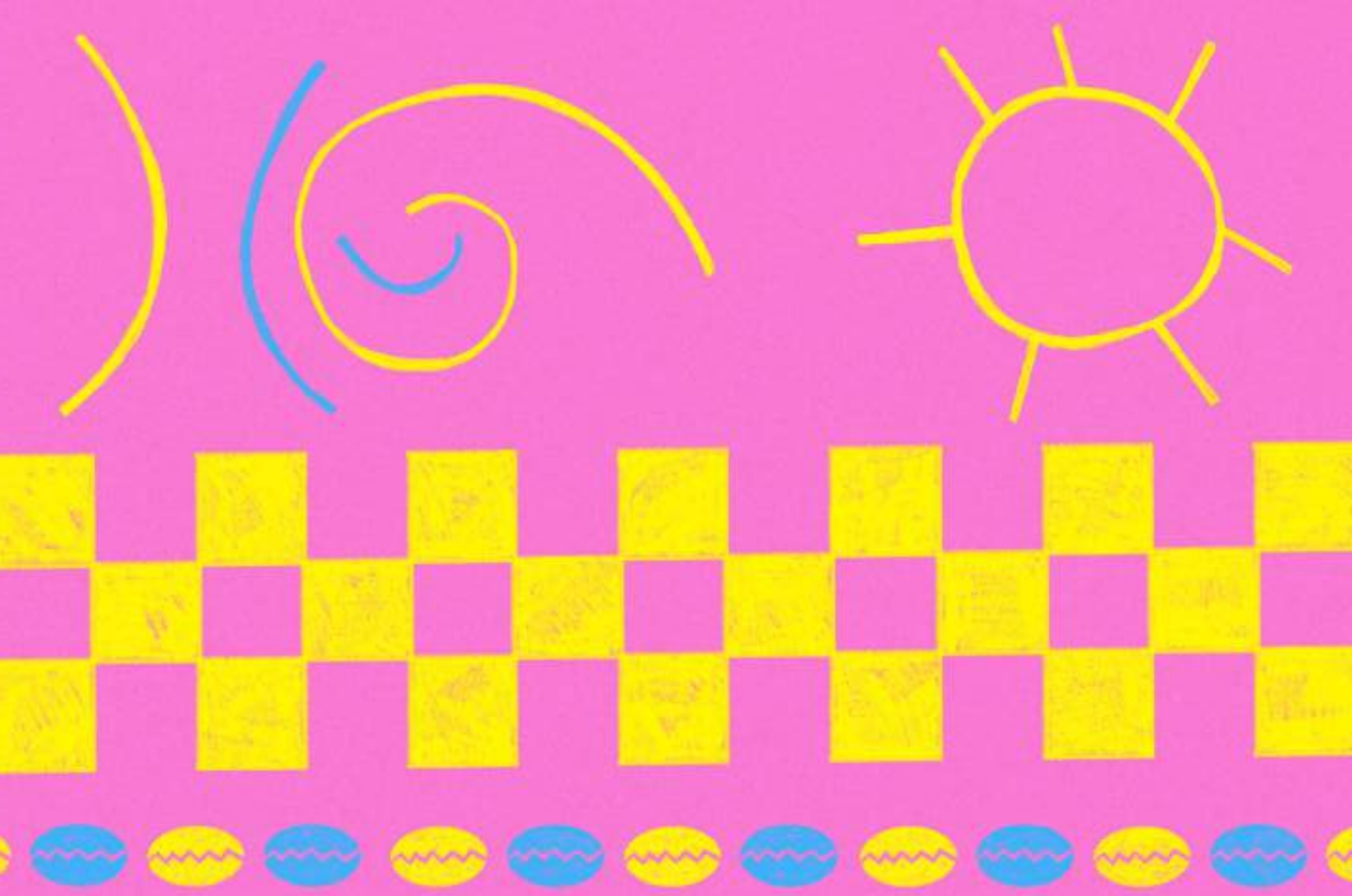


ASMA ISTAWANI

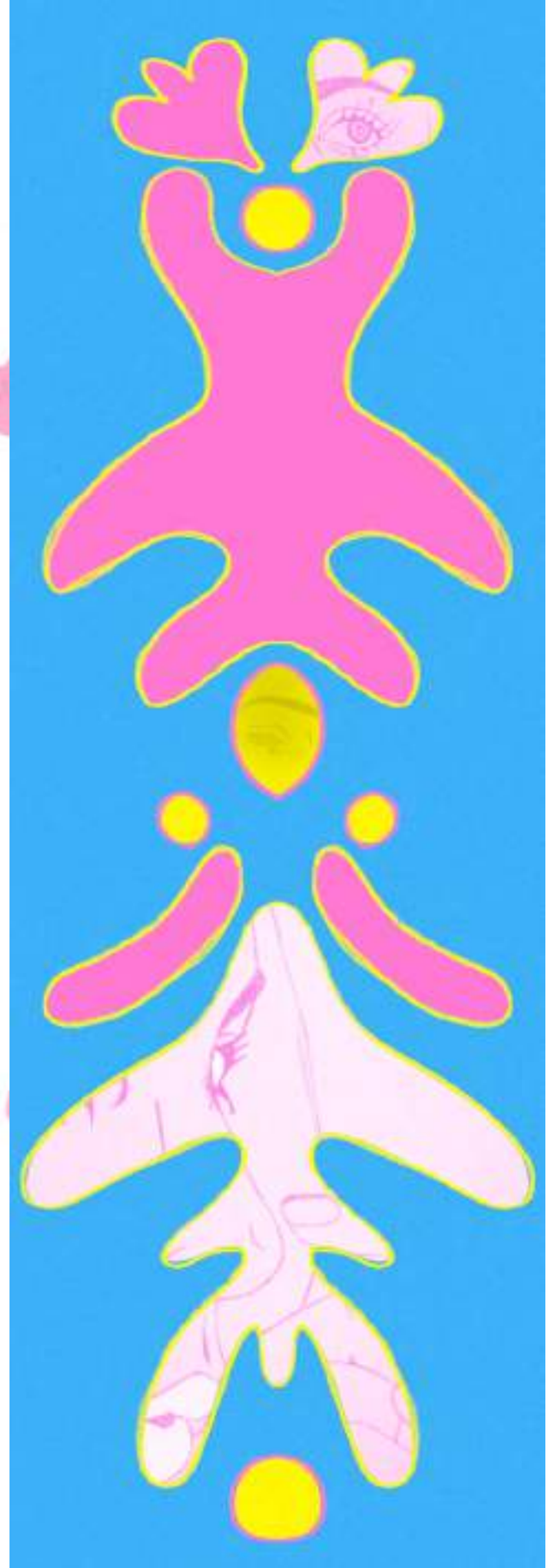
Working in London, Asma uses a combination of digital and analogue techniques to challenge constricting narratives of women from the South West Asian and North African diaspora.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

print media / photography / ephemera / analogue assemblage / digital techniques

THEMES

connections between personal experience and social structures / women's health and beauty / diasporic traditions superstitions



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MARCUS CADMAN

Cadman is a Native American painter who is inspired by his own interpretations of history as well as personal feelings. His work is about depicting Native American life today and explores his personal experiences of growing up between native and American cultures.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

acrylic / watercolour / ink / collage / sculpture / pastels / coloured pencils

THEMES

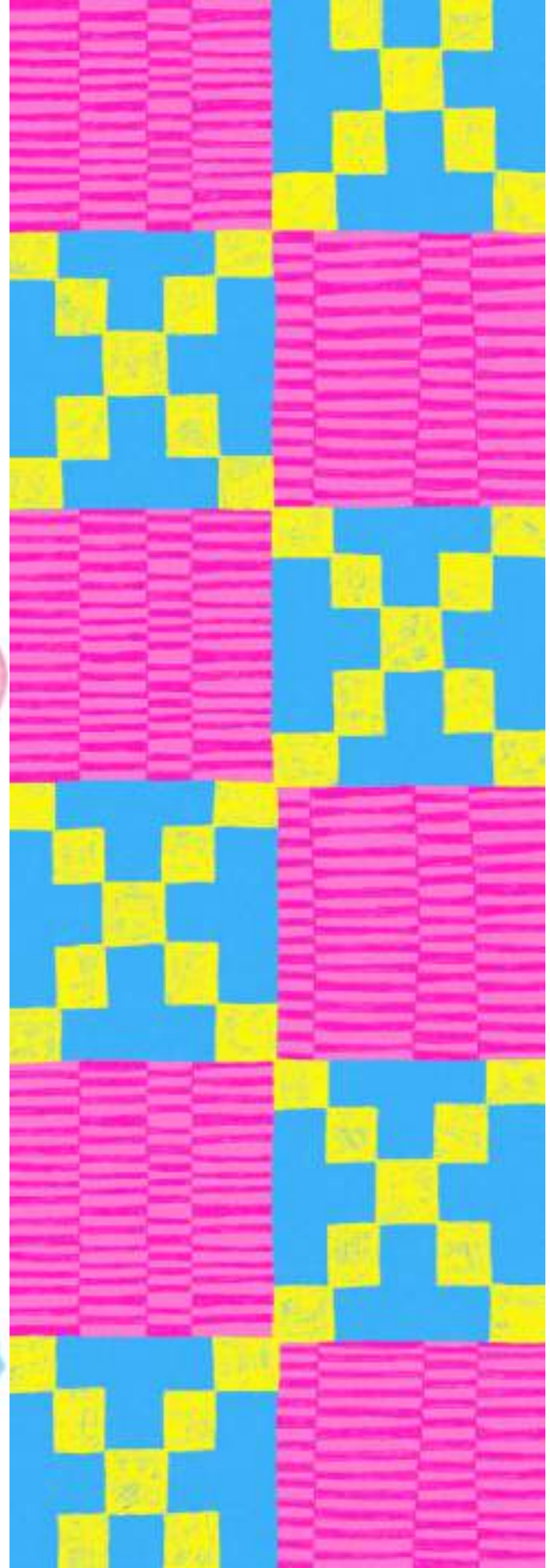
elements from the modern and the tribal world / world of the Sacred / realism / surrealism / abstraction

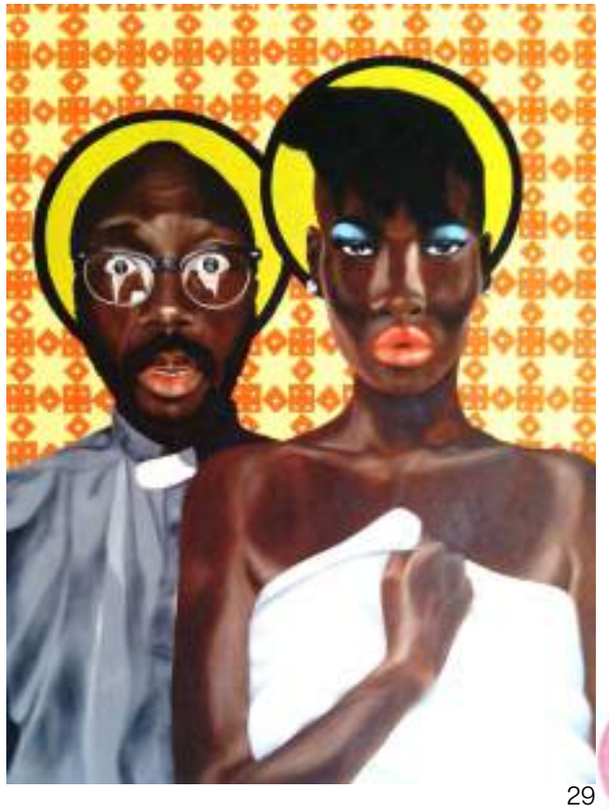
PAUL NDEMA

Paul Ndema is a Ugandan painter who uses satire throughout his paintings. His work tends to be portraits which address the influence and ethics of powerful people using blatant humour and undertones about Ugandan society.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES
acrylic / plastisol inks

THEMES
politics / religion / cultural identity / sexuality





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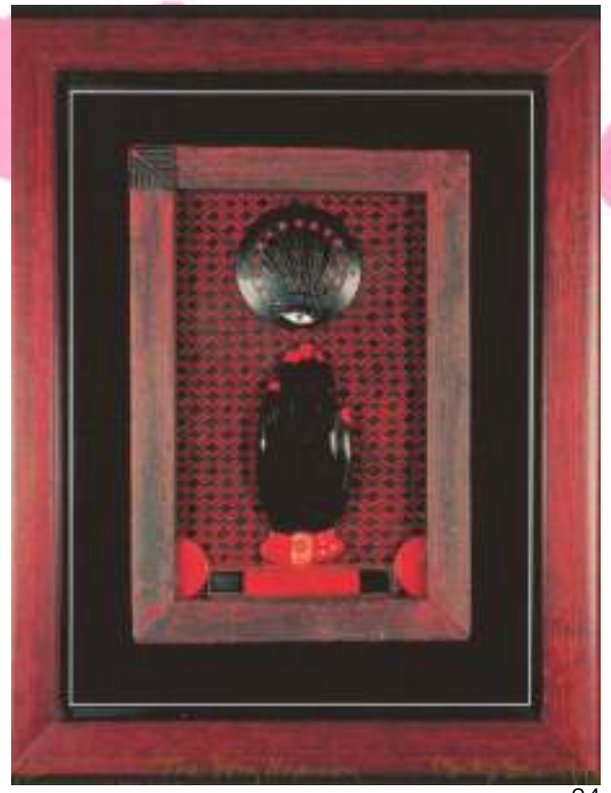

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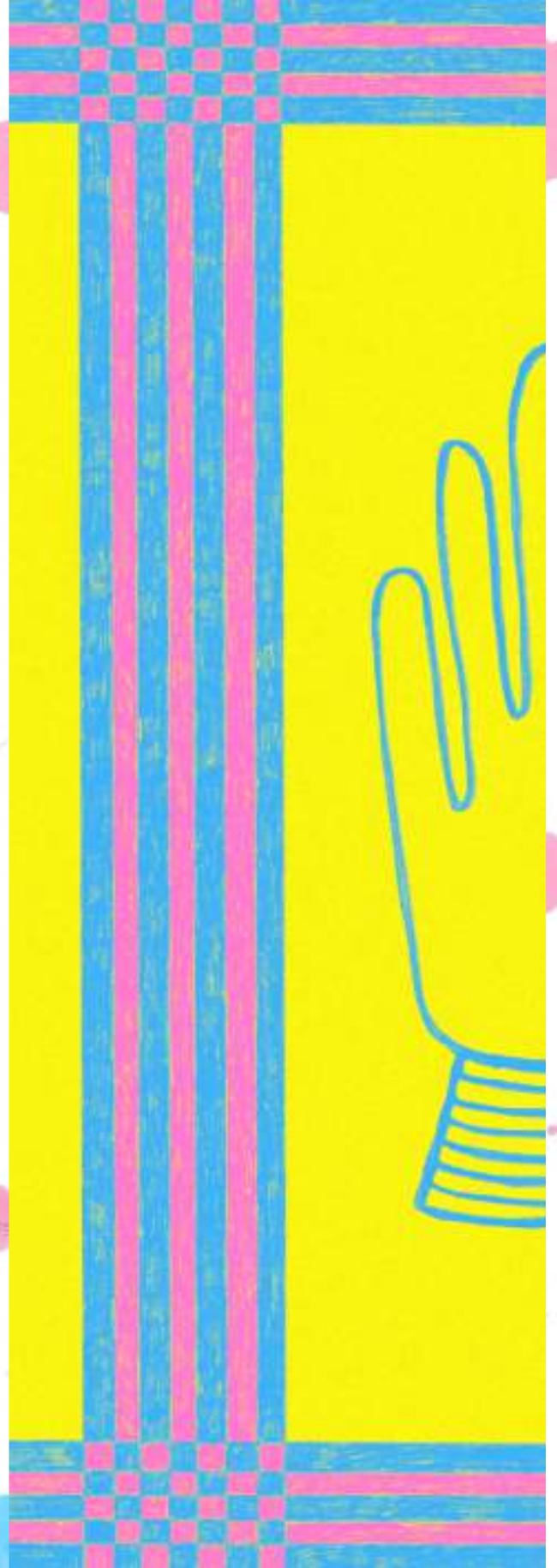

BETYE SAAR

Saar uses the medium of assemblage to explore spiritual themes and mysticism in the digital age. Over the years, through collecting Black collectibles and heirlooms her work has touched on the environmental, cultural, political, racial, technological, economic, and historical context in which it exists.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES

assemblage / printmaking

THEMES

spirituality / cosmology / race and feminity / African American identity / the connectedness between different cultures

CHARLENE KOMUNTALE

Komuntale is a digital artist based in Uganda. She draws inspiration from the experiences of other women as well as her own. Her digital paintings deconstruct narratives while encouraging the viewer to inquire about different visions for the future.

MEDIUMS + TECHNIQUES
digital artist / illustrator

THEMES
perspectives on women's roles / deconstructing patriarchal narratives

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