

**the MOTHER  
F\*\*KER**





**CUS! 'Zine**  
Edition I – December 2015

**CUS! 'Zine** is a quarterly collaborative 'zine which combines art and politics.  
For more information go to: [tankgreen.com/cus-zine/](http://tankgreen.com/cus-zine/). Twitter: [twitter.com/cuszine](https://twitter.com/cuszine).

<b>Table of Contents</b>	
Page 2:	Who's cussing this edition
Page 3:	Christiane Eck
Page 4:	Christiane Eck
Page 5:	Dawn L. Hollis
Page 6:	Dawn L. Hollis
Page 7:	e bond
Page 8:	e bond
Page 9:	Garry Freckleton
Page 10:	Garry Freckleton
Page 11:	Leonie Wieser
Page 12:	Leonie Wieser
Page 13:	Mo Mack
Page 14:	Mo Mack
Page 15:	Sawandi
Page 16:	Sawandi
Page 17:	Tank Green
Page 18:	Tank Green

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The voices in this edition of **CUS!** are:

**Christiane Eck** is a London-based culture worker who pursues a gallery day job and is also following a newly found passion for graphic design. Informed by an academic background in history of art and architecture and inspired by an eclectic love of music, films and fiction, she occasionally blogs/tweets/instagrams as (@)frankandfloyd.

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**e bond** is a maker working in Northern California after recently completing an MFA in Creative Writing and Book Arts from Mills College in Oakland, CA. Under her studio roughdraftbooks, started in 2003, e makes one-of-a-kind hand crafted books, journals, stationery and art pieces that blur the line between fine art and utilitarian objects. Her artwork has been exhibited at The Paley & Levy Galleries, The Kimmel Center and in conjunction with the Philadelphia Center for the Book. It has been published in *500 Handmade Books: Inspiring Interpretations of a Timeless Form*, by Lark Books and *1,000 Artists' Books: Exploring the Book as Art* by Sandra Salamony. Find her work online at [cargocollective.com/ebondwork](http://cargocollective.com/ebondwork), [365daysofwork.com](http://365daysofwork.com) and [roughdraftbooks.com/blog](http://roughdraftbooks.com/blog).

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**Mo Mack** lives in Burlington, Vermont, USA where she works for "teh man" as a Quality Assurance Engineer. She also founded her local chapter of Girl Develop It, a non-profit that teaches women how to code. Mo is on the constant search to find Champy, Burlington's legendary lake monster. Twitter: @Mo\_Mack.

**Sawandi** was born in, and currently resides in, Kingston, Jamaica. He spent about a decade of his formative years in Antigua with his family. He currently works as a medical doctor in general practice, is an electronic musician/producer and DJ after hours, and devoted father to a pretty cool pre-teen girl. Twitter: @mrseven65.

**Tank Green** is a hoarder and a wanderer and a site of opposition. She very much doubts that any of it will ever make sense, but she'll keep working through things nevertheless. She's currently in the final year of her PhD and is lining up her current next life goals which include: dying and becoming a puppy shoved up Tom Hardy's jumper, donning a vintage white leather racing suit and motorbiking across America, and ending the tyranny of monolingualism. You can get her at [tankgreen.com](http://tankgreen.com).





## **I try not to worry... but sometimes I fail**

I am often appalled by the rhetoric in the mainstream UK media. I shake my head in disbelief, open-mouthed, speechless and angry, when I read or hear stories about, for example, EU migrants, at how skilfully the media creates a spiral of negativity and fear. And I imagine how my everyday life here would change if Britain left the EU.



It particularly saddens me because I am a firm believer in the EU; I grew up in Germany and my political and cultural coming of age falls into a time that I remember as an era of optimism, especially concerning Europe, and the EU in particular: twenty-five years ago, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, young people were looking to the future with great confidence that everything was going to be alright, although the Cold War was of course quickly replaced by other conflicts.

Nevertheless, hope and excitement were in the air, and not even the UK media could deny it. For a brief period, straight out of the heart of Camden Town, London, came a youth channel for the newly united Europe; a cable TV station that broadcast across the continent, in English, with an international team of presenters: MTV Europe.

The channel was by and large modeled on the US original, covering, in the main, a wide range of popular music genres, but also fashion and film. Its flagship programme, *Most Wanted*, was presented by Ray Cokes and ran from 1992 to 1995. Broadcast live from the MTV Europe headquarters on weekday evenings, it soon became a must-see across the continent, featuring a mix of viewer interaction (you could phone or fax in), music videos and top notch musical guests. The show had a somewhat improvised vibe and sits, media-historically sandwiched, perhaps somewhere between 1980s music concept programmes such as *The Tube* and trendy 1990s shows like Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast* and *TFI Friday*.

MTV Europe also had excellent news programmes and did not shy away from discussing political issues. In an aim to focus on analogies between the concerns of young people across Europe, regardless of their nationalities, MTV Europe's output included HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, *Free Your Mind*, which tackled racism in 1992, and, in the lead up to the European parliament elections in 1994, *Vote Europe*, an initiative to get young people to vote (similar to the *Choose or Lose* campaign run by MTV US in the run-up to the 1992 American elections).

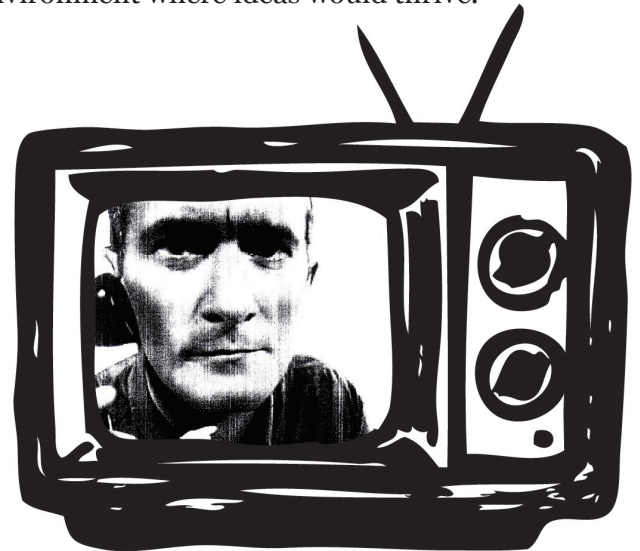
MTV Europe news presenter Steve Blame recalled in *The Independent* on 23 October 2011:

*"On regular overseas assignments, I have observed similarities and parallels between the lifestyles of young people of different European nationalities. They feel that what is common to them as Europeans is more important than what divides them. ... We felt that if we could determine the paramount concerns of our viewers, this positive attitude towards Europe could be directed towards political action. As we saw it, these concerns were issues that transcend borders, language, religion and social differences: issues such as crime, drugs,*

*nationalism, unemployment, environment, racism and prostitution."*

Thinking about it now, *Most Wanted* and much of MTV Europe's output essentially brought cutting edge entertainment TV – something the UK is extremely good at – to a wider European audience who otherwise at that time had to rely on comparatively old-fashioned radio and TV formats.

Personally speaking, the MTV package installed the belief in me that London was the cultural heart of Europe, a place where artists and thinkers from all over the world could come together in a fruitful environment where ideas would thrive.



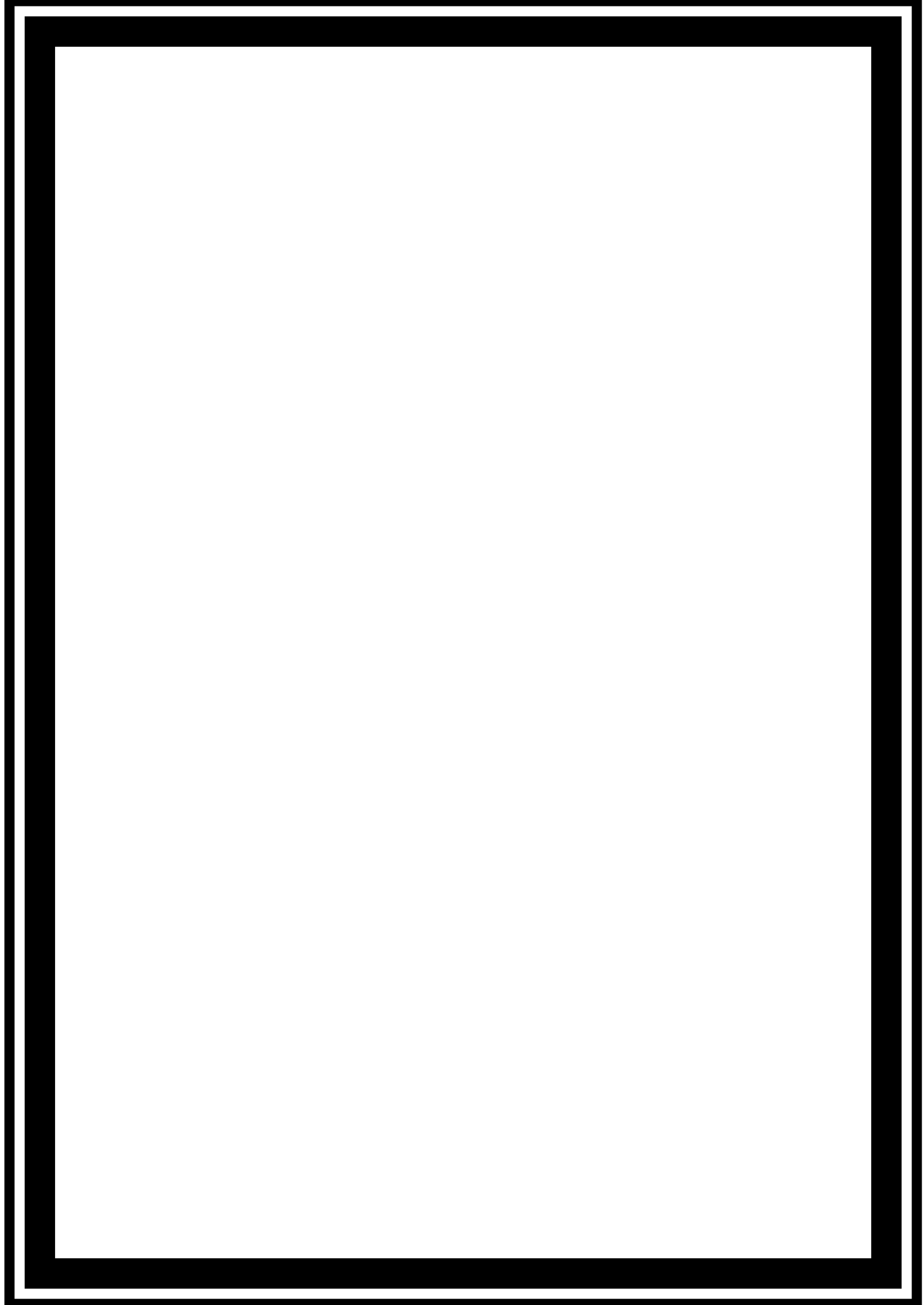
*Ray Cokes presenting Most Wanted (still: YouTube)*

Fast forward fifteen years and I packed my bags to live in London, that mythical place... where pretty soon it became clear to me that whereas artists and thinkers and their wonderful ideas do indeed come together in this metropolis, too often, they are not thriving. Both the mainstream UK media and the arts establishment I am exposed to in the capital seem incredibly inward-looking and weirdly disconnected from the European continent, by much more than a few kilometres of water.

I still hope that common sense will ultimately win, but I am worried. I am not necessarily suggesting that the EU itself provides solutions to, or better ways of dealing with, any of the challenges the UK is facing – but open-mindedly looking at its European neighbours should be a welcome tool for UK journalism as we are all experiencing more or less the same issues across the continent. MTV Europe changed its course in 1997, when it was split in different regional channels, but its pan-European prototype can still inspire today's media, in the UK and elsewhere, and provide a level-headed alternative to stirring stereotypes or utilising global situations of conflict to generate a short-lived superficial sense of community.

Christiane Eck







# Can't Un-See

*Dawn L. Hollis*

The name chosen for this 'zine has felt, as I've thought about what to write for this first issue, almost like a pathetic fallacy: like the moment in a play when you hear thunder and know that something bad is about to happen. So many un-seeable, unthinkable things have happened that what I've planned to write about has changed with every passing week.

My chosen image, however, has not. In the Victorian period, people used to use 'mourning stationery' to announce a death: sheets of paper and envelopes marked by thick black borders. It is simple, straightforward, stark. Space is left for the message within.

In this age of images I have grown increasingly doubtful about the ability of photographs to truly inspire change or action, and ever more concerned about the potential for symbols to obscure the variety of possible responses to complex and painful situations.

In terms of photographs, there is one image that half a world cannot un-see: that of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year old boy, lying drowned and drenched at the point that the waves met the beach of Turkey. Expressions of horror and distress ensued: donations and positive community action to help refugees increased. But still talk of borders and dangers and swarms continued, and governments around the world offered quotas of the humiliatingly small numbers of human beings they would offer refuge to.

It is a horrible, freezing, poignant image: it shows the awful, unnecessary end to a small boy's life. But still, grieving for the dead is somehow easier than offering succour to the living. Even now, people talk of economic migrants, of the possession of smart phones somehow disqualifying someone from genuine need. There were two other photos that, for me, struck even deeper: one, of Laith Majid, on the beach at Kos, holding onto his family and sobbing, his expression one of relief and horror. Relief, at being safe; horror, at what his family had just passed through. A second, of Abdullah Kurdi, Aylan's father, leaving the morgue after seeing the bodies of both his children and his wife laid out for identification. It seems to me that these images of the living are just as hard to un-see, and harder to un-feel: both these men were fleeing something so bad that they put all they loved most into a flimsy boat to cross an unforgiving sea. Only one was able to feel relief.

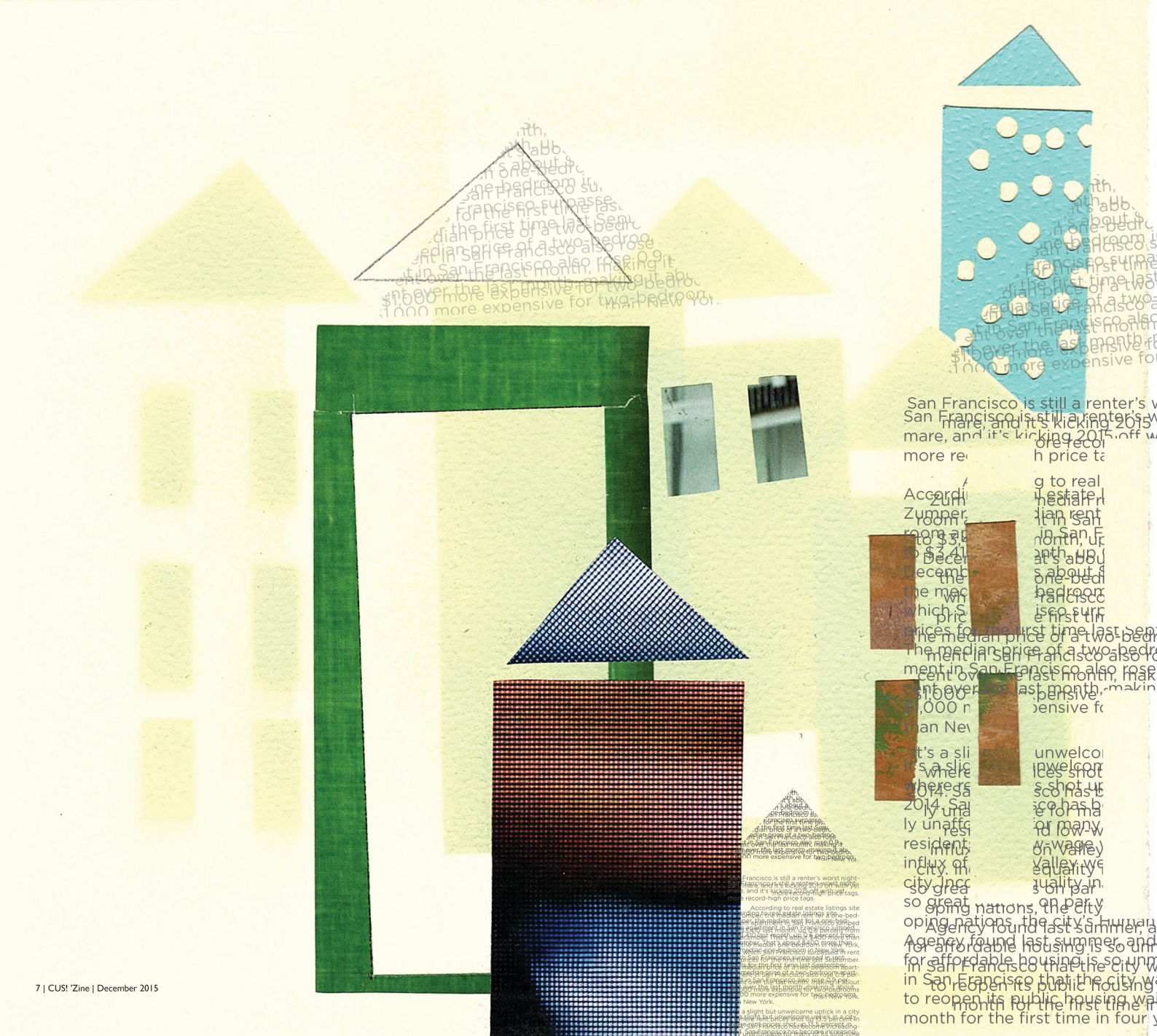
Then, November 13<sup>th</sup>: Paris, and more families torn apart. Social media would suggest a virtually unified response: hashtags across Twitter, the tricolor across Facebook. Are these the black-bordered envelopes of the modern age? I have to wonder if they leave the same room for individual messages and opinions. Half of Facebook flew the tricolor – but scrolling down one can find every possible response to the tragedy, from the anxious truism that refugees are running from exactly the same people as perpetrated the attacks, to people signing petitions to close Britain's borders. A shared symbol: but not unity. The spectrum of individual reactions is more diverse than blue, white, and red.

That is not to say that people are in any way wrong for expressing their grief and horror in these ways, nor that the photographs I described above have not had a positive impact on the level of support that has been offered to refugees in recent months. But, for all that they can be interpreted and transformed, images and symbols have their own stories to tell. We can communicate through them, but they should not be the only thing to speak for us. The people the refugees are fleeing from and the people who ripped apart the peace of a Paris night know well the power of stark, symbolic gestures. In responding to them, let us leave enough blank space within and around our own symbols to fill with our emotions and words, in all their complexity: with our fear, with our love, with our compassion. We may not be able to un-see, but we should always keep re-thinking.





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Zumper, the median price of a two-bedroom in San Francisco rose 4.4 percent in December, making it the most expensive for two-bedroom in the city.

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It's a slight but unwelcome uptick in a city where rents have been rising for years. San Francisco has become increasingly unaffordable for many residents, and it's kicking 2015 off with a bang.

San Francisco is still a renter's worst nightmare, and it's kicking 2015 off with a bang. The city is still a renter's worst nightmare, and it's kicking 2015 off with a bang.

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UTURE RIGHT HERE.

# America's Most Expensive City Just Got Even More Expensive

"You know the basic problem is this: Housing is treated as a commodity for profit rather than being treated the way it should be, as a necessity for people. Everybody needs a place to live and everybody deserves a place to live and in the richest country in the world everybody should have a place to live."

quote from video, Million Dollar Shack: Trapped in Silicon Valley's Housing Bubble

San Francisco is still a renter's worst nightmare, and it's kicking 2015 off with yet more record-high price tags.

According to real estate listings site Zillow, the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco jumped 1.4 percent from \$3,400 in November to \$3,440 in December. That's about \$100 more than the median rent in New York, which rose 0.9 percent in September. The median price of a two-bedroom apartment in San Francisco also rose 0.9 percent over the last month, making it about \$1,000 more expensive than in New York.

It's a slight but unwelcome uptick in a city where rents have shot up 14.4 percent in the last year. San Francisco has become a magnet for many of the nation's fastest-growing tech companies, and the city's Services Agency found last summer, and demand for affordable housing is so unmanageable that the city was just able to reopen its public housing waitlist last month for the first time in four years.

But the nation's fastest rising rents, Zumper reports, may be in Denver. The city experienced a 7.4 percent increase in rents over the last year.

America's Most Expensive City Just Got More Expensive by Lydia O'Connor, Huffington Post 02/04/2015

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THIS IS YOUR FUTURE





## Forlorn Hope

Hundreds of years ago, the Dutch had a military term *verloren hoop*, which literally means 'lost troop'.

These were the guys who were sent in first when the army was attacking a strongly defended or fortified position. The odds of them surviving were low, musket balls raining down on them from the securely dug in enemy. However there was a slim chance they could gain some ground, get a foothold, or at least force the defenders to pause and reload then the second wave could advance with more success.

The phrase *verloren hoop* was misheard and mis-translated into English as 'forlorn hope', and this type of expendable soldier seems to have fought for the armies of many countries in countless campaigns throughout the years. The tradition is that the troop is drawn from volunteers from the available men, though if not enough stepped up, criminals sentenced to death marched forward with a bayonet pricking their back. As a reward for their bravery any survivors were bestowed with honours, promotions and cash. For some it was their only chance to be raised up to the officer ranks.

Over the years the need for an advance unit was met with more formalised Sappers & Pioneers, hacking at enemy defences, building bridges, cutting and mining. *Les Pionniers* of The French Foreign Legion still ceremonially march with leather aprons and shining axes, and big bushy beards too - since they were not expected to survive they were the only troops not required to shave before battle.

It struck me when reading of these soldiers, taking risks and breaking their bodies to try and move forward, that they have a lot in common with the working people of the time, through the industrial revolution, right up to the present day. The most difficult and dangerous work is of course given to those with little or no choice in the matter, and if you want to survive, you've got to take part.

Nowadays I'm living in a relatively rich country, so imminent death is less of a threat, but the most available option is still just to offer yourself up as grist to the capitalist mill. No bayonet at your back, or rifles of the second surge behind you, but a cultural & financial obligation to keep on marching.

Autonomy is mostly reserved to those who can afford it by winning the ovarian lottery, or who have had multiple generations between themselves and the 'forlorn hope' in their family tree. I'm lucky that my great-grandparents and my grandparents & my good old mum did the hard work and sacrificed so much to make my life a cakewalk in comparison.

For the people without that autonomy, right now being crushed at the bottom of the heap, choice does not really come into it. They are compelled to do the hard work of breaking new ground just like the pioneers. They are being fed the same shit, just a slightly different flavour. Make *better choices* or *work harder* is the advice from those who don't have to face the same problems, and it's bullshit.

Once the way has been made through the sweat and blood of those that came before, it's easy for complacency to creep in. I think the mistake people like me with relatively easy, comfortable lives make, is in forgetting that these battles are still being fought. If politics in its widest sense is supposed to be about finding a way to live together that is fair, just and humane, then I think we as humans on planet Earth are fucking it up right now.

I suppose what I would like to see is a whole lot more empathy, more solidarity with the people who are still fighting for every inch of ground. Their hope should not be in vain.

- Garry Freckleton





## Why does Maud Watts want the Right to Vote?

Leonie Wieser. With thanks to Adam Fusco.

In the film *Suffragette*, the main character Maud Watts gives testimony in a parliamentary hearing into voting rights for women. Maud, who works in a laundry, testifies about her working conditions and is asked how the vote would improve her work and life. She answers that she doesn't know and she's never thought about it, as she never expected that she would be given a say. *Suffragette* has been commended for telling this story from the perspective of a working class woman, rather than focusing solely on the upper middle-class campaigners, who are represented in most suffragette narratives. Despite this addition, however, *Suffragette* does not redefine this substantially middle-class narrative. The political tensions, which arise from class dynamics, are not explored in the film. We see Maud's anger and frustration, and then suddenly she chooses to remedy her grievances through the campaign for the vote. But why does she decide that the vote is something worth fighting for – will it really bring any change to her life?

Many working women who campaigned for the vote in Britain had their roots in unions or co-operatives, or other, often regional, organisations. Groups of women developed a shared understanding, that formal political representation can bring change in their lives. But how does one single woman develop this idea, and resolve that she shares the aspirations of middle-class campaigners – and they share hers? But this does not mean a woman working in a laundry would never have been part of a wider movement that crossed class boundaries. Let's imagine a conversation Maud might have had with her husband Sonny.

**Photos opposite. Above.** Grey's Monument in the Centre of Newcastle. The plaque reads "After a century of civil peace, the people renew their gratitude to the author of the Great Reform Bill." The Act enfranchised 1 out of 5 adult men. **Below.** 98 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, where four women broke the windows of the Liberal Club on 9 October, 1909, the date of Lloyd George's visit, to protest against the government's inaction on women's votes.

Sonny: What do they know about your life, these women you campaign with?

Maud: They understand that I need to make my own decisions!

Sonny: Really? So what's the vote gonna change for you?

Maud: Why can't I try, just like you do? If we all stick together we can be heard too.

At a time when to many it is not apparent that parliamentary politics is something that people in this country can have an impact on, *Suffragette* could have given us some ideas on

why people decide that formal political engagement is a valuable means to pursue their goals. But we will have to think about this ourselves.







This past summer I saw a whale for the first time on the ocean coast highway between San Francisco and Los Padres National Forest from my passenger side window.

I happened to lazily gaze down, out the window, over the cliff side to the sapphire waves below. My eyes settled onto a glistening jet of water being shot into the air from a gliding grey body and then mere seconds later a wide fanning tale appear and disappear.

For the past three years I've lived not far south of the border of Canada in Burlington, Vermont. This place is a 4-hour drive from the ocean, squashed in a valley between two mountain ranges, the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains. It's a breathtaking landscape. Burlington is tucked away on the banks of Lake Champlain, surrounded by farmland and tiny mountain towns.

There are no whales in Lake Champlain, unless you count the mystical lake monster, Champy.

Burlington is a particularly lovely place to live, but you need to be of sturdy constitution to survive the winters here. The snow will start to fall in late October and doesn't really stop until May. Last winter was particularly trying, as the temperature didn't rise above freezing for weeks, even months, at a time. After what felt like eternity running from shelter to shelter to avoid frostbite, it was time to plan an adventure.

I booked a flight to San Francisco and reserved a campsite in Big Sur.

I gasped at the sight of that giant majestic body and immediately tears came to my eyes. There happened to be a pull off point in the yawning road, and we skidded to a stop in the dirt, red clouds settling behind us.

Peering out across the ocean, we saw dozens of whales, swimming in all directions. Farther out across the breaks toward the horizon, we saw breaching whales bursting from the ocean, and waving to us as they descended back into the sea.

Lurching further through the eternal sunshine of Highway 1, past Monterey, past the Carmel Highlands, and across Bixby Bridge, we soon entered the Redwood stands of Big Sur.

The whole drive down the coastline we witnessed hundreds of whales playing together in the ocean. Performing dances that have been perfected over millions of years of evolution. For me the ocean has now taken on new life. Where once my only experience was my limited time paddling in the breakers, oiling the water with my suntan lotion lathered skin. Now the ocean is a vast world of endless life and unseen treasure.

Seeing that first shimmering spray of ocean mist filled a void I never knew I had.





That Cozy Flat  
Off The Beaten Path  
Up A Hill  
Just Outside The City

Letter #1 To Daughter : Praise

Dear Daughter,

They're all well intentioned...I'm sure....It's just gets annoying sometimes...It's great to be appreciated, but sometimes I find it almost condescending when fathers are praised for doing what I consider to be normal stuff....It makes me feel like they think most fathers aren't attentive and responsible.

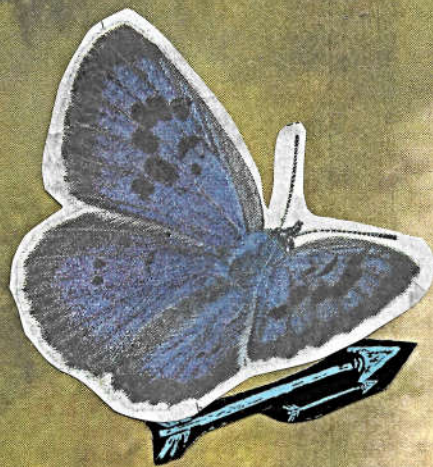
Having you with me in the supermarket shouldn't be a praiseworthy feat, but it is at times.....Mothers don't get praised for doing these things....Is it that fathers are overpraised? Or are mothers being under-praised? I don't know. I don't like it, though. What do you think?

Big Love,

Daddy



butterfly to elephant:  
acts grow in the world.  
justice becomes injustice.



Asia  
Singapore  
Korea Chile  
Romania  
Europe  
Iran  
Vietnam  
Mali  
CARIBBEAN  
Lebanon  
Myanmar  
Jordan  
India  
Tunisia  
Zimbabwe  
Ireland  
Haiti  
Israel  
Australia  
Philippines  
Botswana  
Nigeria  
Turkey  
Saudi Arabia  
Syria  
Peru  
West Bank  
Bangladesh  
Pakistan  
Thailand  
China  
Cuba  
Africa  
Mexico  
United Arab Emirates  
SRI LANKA  
Russia  
Malaysia



local to global  
UK





# This much I know

the failure of many  
activists and campaign groups to seri-  
ously challenge the status quo.

*'I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means—except by getting off his back.'*

Tolstoy

...and tank green

## apocalypse: **could tackle inequality**

I don't say this with the confidence and certainty of knowledge, I say it as someone confused: I don't think we've ever been in

a time like we are in now. Whilst I'm sure that people have felt like this countless times before, we are also in a time where,

with the build-up and residue of human experience, we have been in some places before. We do have some understanding of

the way things can, could, and do play out. But not now. Not this time. Not now.

Now there is nothing from which to learn from, nothing with which to guide us. It is new, this time, it is pressing, this time, it is

unknown and we are blindly trying to negotiate a mess of tangled, global relationships – human, animal, ecological – as bound

and as knotted as the tightest knitted stitch. Every act we make, every decision we take, affects unforeseen others in ways we

cannot imagine. No matter how righteous our decisions and our actions, someone somewhere suffers.

And what is all this? A legacy of colonialism, the effects of technology, the ramifications of greed and war. That is all this is. And

all those who suffer, suffer for that; for those, for us. We touch everyone, yet those others are so often [faceless] and [absent].

It is this complicated and intersecting nature of globality which makes it so difficult to know how to think our way out of our

present condition.

And so I touch you, [nameless] [faceless] person, and I apologise because I don't know how that feels to you. I don't know if it

hurts or if it hinders, if it helps or if it's a case of the devil you know. But I do know, I do know that other people – by which I

mean the system, the complicated hierarchy that is the neoliberal world order – touch me and I experience that as

oppressive. And I'm in one of the richest countries on earth, I'm poor in it, but I'm there in it and I'm touched in ways that

stifle and coerce and hinder. So many of us never get to be who we are because we carry the weight of a thousand feet above

us using us for a better view. Of what..?

I want, in the end, to stop. To get off. Now. But I can't. I can't because to unplug from neoliberal capitalism, I need first to

engage with it in ways which I can't and in ways which I'm too late to do anyway. So I'm stuck on a bewildering merry-go-

round knowing that even as I am oppressed, I oppress [nameless] [faceless] others further. And I don't know how to solve

that. Because even if I could unplug, I know too the selfishness of that, the luxury of withdrawing from a fight I'm not entirely

clear on how to tackle.

How do we even begin to solve injustice when we don't, in any real sense, understand or comprehend it in its entirety? When

we don't even know when we are being unjust. And I speak here not in an interpersonal sense, but in a complicated global

sense wherein our every decision impacts the lives of [nameless] [faceless] others.

This isn't about what's wrong. We all know what's wrong. We've known what's wrong since at least the sixties. Capitalism is a

demon and a scourge and a locust. It consumes and we mimic it daily. This is instead an admission that I don't know how to go

about fixing it. It's an admission of tiredness and of a need to conserve energy so that when the strike comes, it is fearsome

and potent and meaningful. It's about feeling that protest politics are a waste of time and that helping kids from disadvantaged

backgrounds learn to read isn't enough. No, this isn't about what's wrong; instead, it's an admission of guilt and of failure and

of sorrow. It is, finally, a statement of paralysis.

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18 | CUS! 'Zine | December 2015



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