

THREADS :

archives of student voice
at evergreen

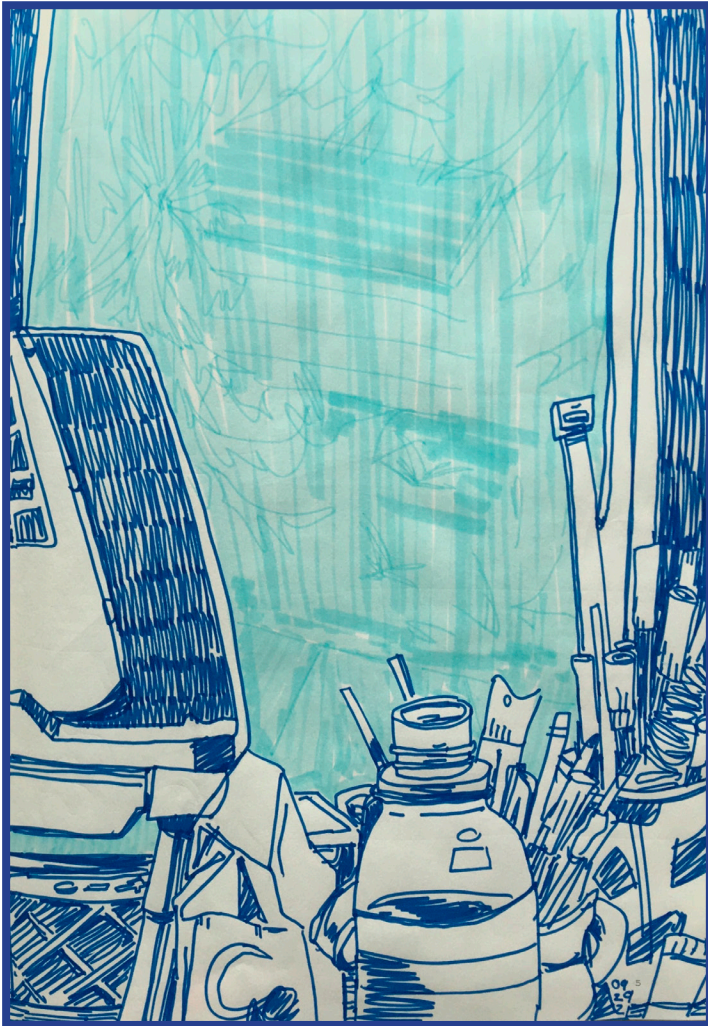
zine by SAKO!

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Olympic
National Park

Olympic
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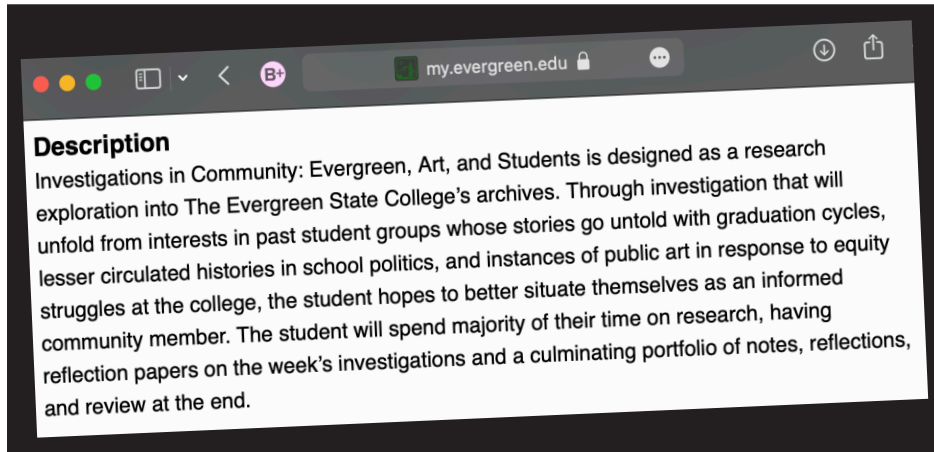
The Evergreen State College
2021-2022
Sako Chapman
Investigations in Community: Evergreen, Art,
& Students

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Hello!

And welcome to my zine—a review of my **archival research** into **student voice at Evergreen**. This work and this output were all done as a part of a **Winter 2022 Independent Learning Contract (ILC)** with my sponsor, Catalina Ocampo. In what seems to be great Evergreen tradition, this ILC was conceptualized within the span of two weeks and lengthily titled **“Investigations in Community: Evergreen, Art, & Students.”**



So who am I, and why have I done this research? An excellent couple of questions to keep in mind as you browse my findings, and ones I think are entirely tied together!

I'm Sako, and at the time of writing this, I'm a sophomore at Evergreen with a light emphasis in visual arts. **My first quarter was Fall of 2020**, having closed out my senior year of high school in lockdown. Despite Evergreen's pandemic-informed decision to keep classes & activities online, I moved from my home in **Richmond, California** to the sopping-wet city of **Olympia, Washington**.

I spent my first year **physically in a new place but with little sense of establishment**. I found myself encountering Evergreen as a **sunken city**, something once full of life but observable now only in artifacts. Trees that mysteriously grew LED strings in the winter. A College Activities Building lacking the activities—hosting the promises of clubs that had disappeared with little trace outside of the rain-soaked bulletin boards. As I adapted to the new look of community in the pandemic,

I mourned the fact that there were **few people to explain the stories I would only know in object**. They had come and gone with the students they'd grown from. Even if I didn't know what they were, **it still felt like they were missing**.

There is more connection now, in my second year. I know more people, offices are reopening, and I have a sense of familiarity with the physical space. Yet, I've still heard this observation of **disconnected past** echoed with almost every student I've talked with. I've continued to feel it myself, too. We've been handed a fraying sweater of a college. It still functions, we may still love it. But we can feel the places that threads have been pulled out and worn thin, leaving a question of **how we can patch it**. If it's even **worth** the effort.

I am in far too deep to tell you that it's not. And if you're still at Evergreen, I think you might be down here with me.

My quarter has been a process of **uncovering the histories** that were missing and preventing me from really **orienting myself** here. It's taken me all across campus, had me talking to many different people in the community, and stamped my brain all over with Evergreen trivia. I started this research because I wanted to fix my experience of constant unknowing I felt last year. Honestly and simply, I kept going because it was fun. The more I uncovered, the more it started to **contextualize my time here**, and the more my interest grew. Evergreen is a truly unique place, but **it's only as interesting as its students are interested in it**.

This booklet is not an index, but a **narrative record of my quarter**. I've included breaks with my art from winter, each piece building from the feelings that brought me to this investigation in the first place. You can find further description of why they're there at the back. As I recap the new relationship I've built with this college as a place, as a community, and as an institution, I hope that you will be able to ponder your own relationship—**how can knowing some of this incredibly insular history better your time spent here?** Together, by knowing what was possible in the past, I think we can clarify what's possible for the future.



STUDENT WORKS:

Best hidden in plain sight, I found the trails of Evergreen's student publications nestled in many neglected corners of campus. The more backstory I uncovered, the clearer this tradition of creative works and collaborations became! These are some of my more notable finds.

Cooper Point Journal (CPJ): The only of the following pubs still active, and has been since 1971. Despite working there for over a year, rifling through old issues revealed a completely new history. The old CPJ used to be able to focus in on community issues and gather student input on the matter¹. While chasing the trails of letters to the editor, I got jealous of how much interaction the paper used to get... even if it wasn't all positive.

Counter Point Journal: From 2009-2012, the Counter Point Journal actively challenged the CPJ's dominating hold over student voice. It was wild to think about the need for alternative pubs when current students barely know about CPJ. But back then, with the CPJ's pro-Israel stance of omission, the community wanted a new forum for their opinions and felt connected enough as a group to make it happen.

Tales from the Steam Tunnels: an anthology of the CPJ's comic section over the years, published in 1981. Most of the humor hinged on the types of digs at political correctness that still thrives nowadays, just stamped with a '78. For all the forlorn buzz about our lost tradition of comics, I was very unimpressed. Seeing the type of work from the early CPJ, I could really imagine trying to start an alternative.

Students of Color Anthology: I had found old submission calls to these in old First Peoples newsletters. I spiraled trying to locate any of the 6 editions printed between 1990-1999. Turned out that I didn't have to look any further than the 3rd floor of the CAB². Multiple offices had them! It was really grounding to see that there was once a united enough body of color that they could come together on this, if a little bittersweet. I want to see something like this in the future.

Slightly West: A literary magazine with a long history at evergreen. From the disorganized shelves of the CPJ office, it was hard to tell the timeline of how long Slightly West ran-- but I'd guess there were at least 25 different editions. While most were DIY zines, many editions were professionally bound and printed. Holding these works felt like distilled creativity.

Vanishing Point: a subsequent iteration of an Evergreen literary magazine that seems to have run as recently as 2017 with its 4th volume. It ran a wordpress site in addition to physical copies, taking submissions from students and faculty for a final compilation in spring. It seems like it fizzled out post 2017.

I was surprised at the amount of artistic and journalistic output Evergreen used to foster, when nowadays it seems like the CPJ is back to being the sole publication. Each of these old works represent a level of investment and interconnectedness that I am sorely jealous of. But the most amazing thing about seeing these materials was the precedent of possibility. While the dip in popularity for journalism (plus the disbanding of many publications) makes it hard to get new things off the ground, these old works let me see the potential.



from the Evergreen State College Archives



from the Evergreen State College Archives



COMMUNITY HEALING :

I won't tell you what happened in 2017 here, and it seems hypocritical. I got to build my understanding of the protests and media controversy from hearing my friend's personal experience. It felt like finally being old enough to hear the family drama. Being able to identify the threads of that story as they related to my present is largely what drove the conception of this research.

There is a deep need for this **history to be transparent**. It represents a vital breaking point. To one degree, this incident tangibly severed ties between our community. To another, **it was the culmination of years of equity struggles, increased militarization, and platforming of oppressive views**. But I can't get into detail without the story consuming all of what I think Evergreen has been and could be—all of what I'm exploring here.

Even the "short version" spirals and leaves an unfair emphasis on the very same threads that were pulled and pulled to the detriment of this community. The May 25, 2017 edition of the CPJ is linked in my references. For a full timeline and multiple student perspectives, start there. The articles from this issue centers the part of the 2017 story that I find most relevant to today: **what the community had to recover from, and where they tried to start.**



Sarah Gluck, May 31, 2017 CPJ

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR RE: HARRASSMENT

On December 1, an article about The Cooper Point Journal column POC Talk was published on The College Fix, a right wing college news site that brands itself as "your daily dose of right minded news from across the country." The article was later cross posted on Fox Nation, the opinion website for Fox News, and as of the writing of this statement we are lucky enough to sit on the front pages of both sites. Although the article itself was relatively kind, the responses we have received have not been, with emails spanning a broad spectrum of racially loaded commentary ranging from accolades about free speech to dreams of "beheading every one of you".

As individual writers we feel desensitized to the violence they are describing, having been exposed to threatening emails, comments, and messages both online in our personal lives and as a newspaper for the past six months. But it is also clear to us that the threats of violence we are experiencing should not be normalized, and we feel that it is our responsibility to be clear in saying that these kinds of threats are unacceptable.

Internet harassment has emerged as a clear threat to the personal safety of students, staff, and faculty here at Evergreen, and because we are an organization and not an individual, we feel called to address the particulars of the harassment we are experiencing as a way of acknowledging that the experiences of others are not singular.

Digital harassment takes a variety of forms, but it holds in common an emphasis on intimidation. Although interpersonal bullying could be examined as simply a sadistic bent, digital

forms of harassment almost always lack the kind of gratification traditionally related to sadism, gleaned from watching an enemy suffer. Instead, this kind of harassment works to silence targets because, coming from anonymous individuals, it feels larger than life and inescapable. This intimidation is meant to make us afraid to write, speak, or act for fear of retribution.

Taken from their own words, it seems that what our particular antagonists want is for us to disappear, stay quiet, to 'grow up', and go away, explicitly demanding that our 'college should just disband' or aggressively hinting that we should stop writing the newspaper because it is a "treasure trove of black ideology, degeneracy, racism and all around ghetto antics." They will be mad regardless of what we publish, or regardless of what does or does not happen at this school, because it is not our actions or words that make them angry, but our very existence that makes them angry—something they make clear by ending their emails wishing that we will stop writing or die. The letters and emails, all of which feature verbal abuse of a racial nature, center around the anxiety produced by a column that is explicitly not written for them, that thus challenges the idea that the world as a whole is produced for them.

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Feel free to respond to my letter with your own! Email us at coopoint@stanford.edu. No matter what you say you can rest assured that we have heard yours.

Clipped article "Re: Harrassment"

"Re: Harrassment" comes from Jazmine Kozak Gilroy a 2017-2018 school year issue by the CPJ. I was drawn to this more so upon revisiting my notes than when I first encountered it. For the first half of the week, I was swimming with this fundamental question of **"what good comes from knowing the past?"** As I sifted through the thumbnails of videos that capitalized on the same **false narratives that so clearly frustrated, harmed, and scared students**, clips of gun threats, and videos of later doxxed staff members⁵ I really struggled with the thought of bringing these issues back up. **If sharing stories was capable of bringing such harm, was there merit in letting things just stay to the side?**

I find it so funny (and a fair bit concerning) that I was able to entertain this thought for as long as I did, because I fundamentally believe that **no issue can ever be addressed by ignoring it.**

I think it speaks to the emotional effect reading this week's materials had on me, and to why I appreciate this piece so much. Of the online harassment that her school, team, and particular coworker was facing, Jazmine wrote that "...it seems that what our particular antagonists want is for us to disappear, stay quiet, to 'grow up,' and go away... They will be mad regardless of... what does or does not happen at this school, **because it is not our actions or words that make them angry but our very existence.**"

While it speaks to the events in the time it was written, it hits me as the reaffirmation of **why not talking about this part of Evergreen history is so damaging. It aids** in the suppression of truth in favor of the dominant, consumable narrative that desparate-for-views youtubers, even five years later, can still capitalize on. **There is real, logical fear, that explains staying silent.** But it's the easiest solution, not the one that heals, not the one that recognizes the power in re contextualizing the narrative for ourselves. **Even as the people who were directly hurt move away, I think those wounds still permeate the air.**

I'm left wondering how we begin to heal from far removed trauma in the wider, conceptual state, and **how we as the Evergreen community would heal from this particular harm.** It's not a one-person job to figure it out, and it's absolutely something not everyone would agree on. But this solution of silence to avoid controversy is not working, not with the sense of unsafety among students still so nicely mirrors what's written in the CPJ archives.



First Peoples Multicultural Trans and Queer Support Services is lengthily named office with just as lengthy a history at Evergreen. Outside of my classes, it was the only real source of connection in my 1st year. First Peoples has always served as a place to get support and connect with students of similar identities. But for all the years before 2018, it was focused specifically on supporting POC. Despite having Evergreen's highest recorded percentage of students of color⁴, there isn't a lot of connection between us. Other students have echoed my frustrations but have often ended with a resigned "that's Evergreen for you."

But this isn't true at all! Wherever there are people of color, we build spaces for each other. This became clearest to me, especially in terms of this college, in my deep dive into ..

THE FIRST PEOPLES BASEMENT:

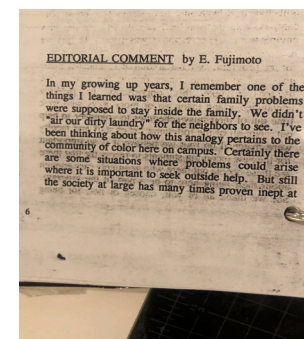
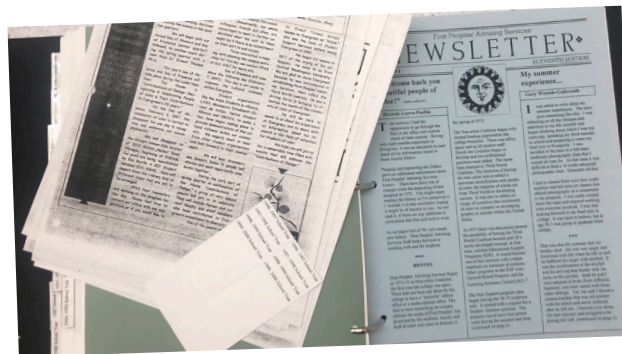
Nestled in the lowest corner of the CAB, the First Peoples basement is filled with piles of random event supplies, and towers of looming boxes labeled "misc. Archive."

I was granted the key to this space by my boss who, quote, "gets way too stressed out by looking at all this stuff." After spending so much time in there, I'm inclined to agree. While it was clear someone at one point had sorted the boxes, **their logic remains indecipherable to me.** My first day, I spent 3 hours rifling through piles and several afterwards pouring over what I'd found. I had no idea how deeply a rabbit hole could go once you get some hands on some papers.



My most exciting find was a binder labeled "The History of First Peoples' Advising Services," a collection of orientation manuals, pamphlets, and catalogs from pre-1980 to the 1996-1997 school year. While not a "history" in an expressed narrative sense, I was really enamored with the discovery of the **First Peoples newsletter series.**

While there were many interesting discoveries from the newsletters⁵, the "Editorial Comment" from former First Peoples director Eugene Fujimoto really stuck with me. He was writing to POC at Evergreen, how there had been a lot of **inter-community discourse** of varying intensity and productivity. He balanced the diversity of thought and need for discussion with the **"hope that the conflicts are not exploited by those external to further split in our community."** It was thoughtfully worded to not be dismissive of hurt but took time to really emphasize that **cutting off communication** because of hurt is a "major error" as **avoiding conversation can pit us against each other.**



Eugene's words highlighted a current lack of strength in our community of color. There is **no real forum** in which we have discourse, and a concerning low initiative in **nurturing a community of color** here⁶. This goes hand in hand with the current experience and consequence of Evergreen not wanting to acknowledge the protests and community trauma of 2017. **We can't be so afraid of weaponized disagreement that we will not clarify things for ourselves.**

We need to develop forums for open discourse about frustrations and harm in our community. We need to solidify our community of color **without fear of retaliation** or a championing of whiteness. I think this could come from creating a **shared narrative history** here, particularly from our students. As Patricia Vazquez Gomez outlined in her artist lecture⁷, **"research lets you enter a relationship with a subject."** This lack of open knowledge, history, conversation of the past is a tangible block how these relationships form.

THE ARCHIVES:

Evergreen's Archives are housed on the bottom floor of the library, across from my favorite study room. For only being 50 years old, they're absolutely packed. Not just with documents, but also with things; art, sculptures, ball pit balls⁸... Unfortunately, the **selection of materials related to student narrative is slim in comparison.**

From the archives, I got my hands on some of Evergreen's Disorientation Manuals. **Disorientation manuals** are a tradition at many other colleges: not just unique to us⁹. They're **designed by students for students** as a "Here's what the school won't tell you" survival guide.

The DisMans have been the most exciting thing I've gotten to look at. It documents the **sort of stories a new student might verbally learn from a student who's been here longer**, answering questions of "what's there to do around here," "what's up with the cops on campus," or generally "is there anything I should know about?"

I was most excited by the '2017 Evergreen Protests' section of the 2017-2018 DisMan because it offered both a unique student perspective and a **uniquely** student perspective on what info was important to share. Jaqueline Littleton starts with vague reference to "The Evergreen Story", "a certain professor and accusations of racism." It **assumes a certain level of community awareness** and drifts its focus to the "nuances" of the protests that were too boring for the media to cover. The construction of a full timeline or counter-narrative wasn't a relevant to a community who had witnessed the events firsthand.



This concept of irrelevancy makes it all the more shocking to encounter this writing now, knowing that a year ago I would have **lacked the context** for Evergreen's "2017 story" in its entirety. It's shocking of how time has passed, and how the **college has committed to their silence on the matter.**

If the need in the Evergreen student community circa September 2017 was a call to action and organizing over these suppressed contexts of the protests, what are the needs of students today? Many of the injustices mentioned in this article are the **same issues that are relevant to students right now.** Yet we lack the same venue and collective voice for those needs, as well as the same shared base knowledge to form thoughts of what we might want to see grow.



I had a bitter taste of jealousy in my mouth the whole time looking over the DisMans. I try not to focus on it, but there has been such a deep **unanswered yearning for care, cohesion, and largely information** around being a part of the Evergreen Community that I think it's easy for me to be over-romanticizing the manuals as the solution-to-my-problems that could have been.

A more critical eye shows me that the parts I'm most attached to from the disorientation manual is this practice of **information sharing** and the idea that there is a group of people **invested enough to do that collaboration**¹⁰.

The sense of loss may still persist, but I really want my takeaways to focus on an aspect of inspiration. **Is this circulation of knowledge, of narrative, something that could be practiced now in a similar way?** I believe so, and with enough investment from other students it could be great. I don't know the 'how' just yet, but there are ideas brewing.



Tying it Together:

I think of my investigation into the insular history of **Evergreen as a case study** for how communities sustain themselves. With each material I read, I realized the ways in which connections had grown and strained in trends-- not solely big moments. I saw how active **investments of time and energy had once been commonplace**, even with the temporality of a college setting.

I recognize the general **air of hesitation that seems to interrupt those investments now**. A fear of failure at putting time in for no reward permeates our school culture and wider society. But a lack of forward inertia makes for stagnating communities. My research into Evergreen's more active past let me see this issue in full. The jealousy I experience, the yearnings I identify-- they're a **reminder that these risks have payoffs**. Events, connection, community... These things may never happen in the exact same way, but researching the past gives us the precedent to try.

This investigation into community recalibrated me, reafixed myself to the fabric of this place. It's made me rethink my **position as a student** and has asked me to think deeply and specifically about the things that I want out of college.

Having ended last year more unsure of my path and my passions than I started with, this investigation has **never been to celebrate Evergreen** or to document its past in any formal way. It's always been to rediscover what I wanted from my time here, and to **envision what of that I could do**.

Research is an act of investment, a process of relationship building. It's not just the practice of holding the past in your hands or reflecting on the insights they provide. It's the conversations that come out of and around it. This experimental phase of college means something to people, and they want to get the most out of it. This was clear with every story shared with me, the bonds we were able to form there. **It was reaffirmed every time I was able to carry that excitement forward** and share those stories with other people.

I'm glad to have done this work. As full as my head now feels, I still gained a lot of clarity. Closing out this zine means sewing an end to this particular research... and while new information is always there to be had, I am excited for a bit of closure. **Student voice** is a string that **will keep evolving** and changing in form as the years go on. At times overwhelming to try and untangle, but a fun puzzle nonetheless.

I am grateful for this chance to have followed the trail as long as I did.

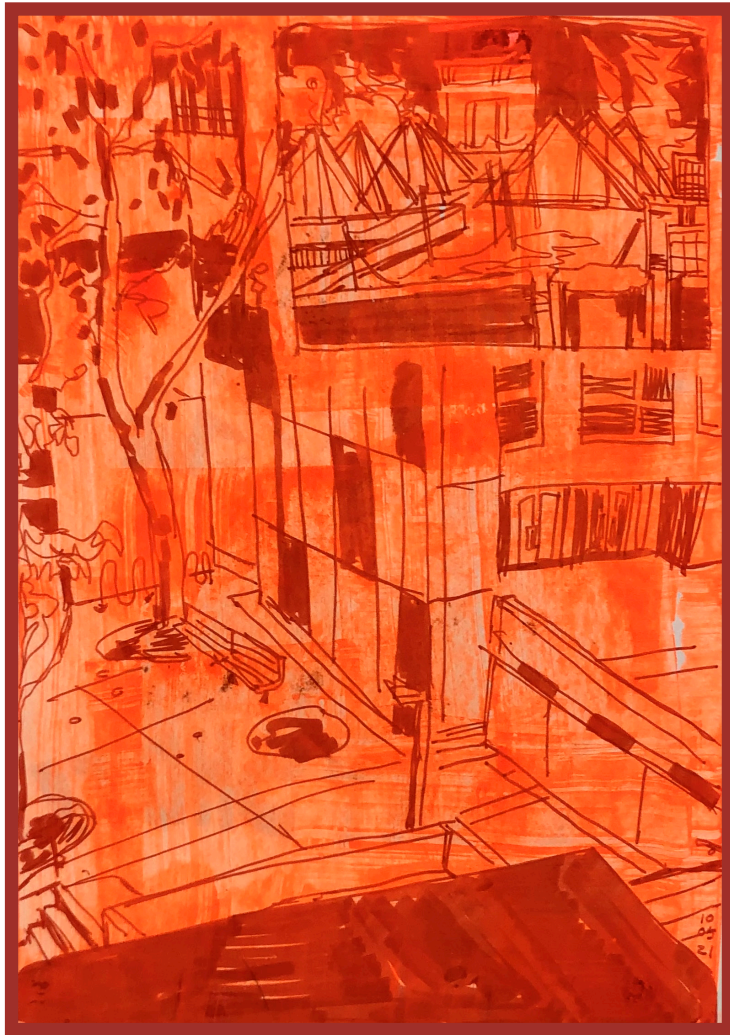
Footnotes:

1. The Cooper Point Journal also used to be published weekly, or bi-weekly compared to the now monthly editions. The CPJ of 30 years ago also didn't have to deal with the dying practice of print journalism.
2. I found copies of the anthology in the Student Equity and Arts Lounge, Student Activities (by the printer) and to the right side of the CPJ's library.
3. These videos are fairly easy to find with a search term of "Evergreen State College." If you are inclined to do the same, be prepared to encounter the wall of video essays on the "most liberal college in America's epic freak out"
4. 32% of enrolled students at the start of 2021-22 were of color. Though, with low enrollment trends out of 2017 and COVID we have the same headcount of students of color as 2000.
5. One of the reveals from the newsletters was a longstanding rivalry with the CPJ. Not a lighthearted rivalry mind you-- it seems that the CPJ editors during 1992-1994 were extremely tolerant of racism, and the First Peoples newsletter was a forum to call them out. Their comic section was particularly offensive, as evidenced by the tone of *Tales from the Steam Tunnels*.
6. The interest in rebuilding spaces for students of color is high, but with the stalling of clubs for our identities has made this process more intimidating! There isn't really an awareness or encouragement of precedent.
7. Patricia Vazquez Gomez was a part of the Winter art lecture series on January 26, 2022. She talked about the social functions of her art as a community-based artist.
8. Ball pit balls from Happy land, 1991-2009-- a crawl space in the pre-rennovation CAB that [REDACTED]

9. Evergreen's manuals specifically reference UC Berkeley as a pioneer for the tradition of disorientation week in higher education. A google search of "Disorientation Manual" yields lots of examples of other colleges works!
10. From 1997 to 2007 the Evergreen Political Information Center (EPIC) organized the Disorientation Manuals and had emphasis on campus resources and your rights as students. Olympia *Students for a Democratic Society/Sabot* Infoshoppe picked it up from 2008 to approximately 2014. As an anarchist group, they gave the manual a visually more punk look and had more emphasis on the history of Olympia as well as protesting guides. In 2017, personal blogs and sites like the college fix fixated on the anarchist affiliations of the disorientation manuals as a point of ridicule. The credited Sabot Infoshoppe in brainwashing the students to an anarchist agenda. The Disorientation Manual had been picked up from at least the 16'-17' year prior by the Black Cottonwood Collective who, as an anti-authoritarian collective, on campus kept up a strong balance between the earlier two styles. They also hosted Disorientation Week for students.

Extra LINKS,
ARTICLES, and
REFERENCES at
tiny.cc/threadref
OR scannable
here -->





Cover: *Restiching* - Collage and screen print

I built this piece out of old CPJ issues (February 2022 and May 31, 2017), an admissions catalogue, and some paint chips. In the back you can see a visible mending texture. The relationship that comes from an act of research is a process of reweaving contexts.

Inner Flap: *Sketchbook 1* - Marker

Drawing from the desk of my dormroom for 2021-22.

Pg 4: *Deep End* - Stencil screen print

Building off the impression of Evergreen as a sunken city, I drew this piece thinking about water. In terms of the sense of isolation and ungrounded-ness that overshadowed my first year in a new place, the phrase “it hit me like a wave” kept coming to mind.

Pg 5: *Double Vision* – Two color screen print

I often draw myself or my hands as a way of grounding—my sketchbook is full of this. When I was picturing what would encapsulate the feeling of not quite knowing myself away from my known world (“known” was very much uprooted in the first year of COVID lockdown, and still is), the image of not quite aligned hands popped into my head. The line art somewhat out of focus.

Pg 10: *Sense of Place* - screen print

Most of my Evergreen experience last year was framed through my dorm window. I got outside a fair amount, but this view of the path sticks in my brain as the main symbol of my isolation.

Pg 11: *Unplugged* - Two color screen print

I love a good framing silhouette! Thinking back on this piece, it came from a lot of my frustrations in the research process, getting really tied up in details. The ropes from the ceiling drip down, rippling through the figure.

Pg 16: *Cover Illustration* – Ink and digital coloring

Illustration I made for my Cooper Point Journal artist feature back in November! It’s since come to my attention that not everyone recognizes the pyramids on the top of the library building... but they light up at night. I spent a lot of time crawling around on rooftops that first year, so this is an iconic fixture to me.

Pg 17 *Knot* – Two color screen print

To offset the density of the illustration it’s paired with, I decided to go simple. In the idea of threads, I wanted to think about how things could be turned into a solid grip with a knot.

Pg 22: *Sketchbook 2* - Paint and marker

Views from the roof of the library.

Pg 24: *Notes Collage* - Pen and marker

Cut and pasted excerpts from my sketchbook where I stored notes from this quarter.

Back Cover: *Mending* - screen print on construction paper

I made this mending texture to use on my collage. The patterns are ripped from sachiko mending styles, a method of artfully showing patching and mending on clothes. This act of research and revealing the past is sort of an act of this visible mending.

