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## Independent - Apr. 26, 2022

Monty Stites

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# NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

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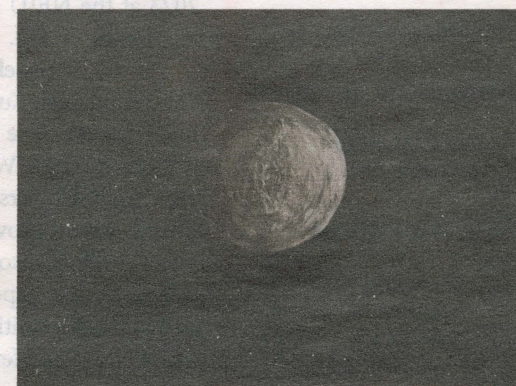
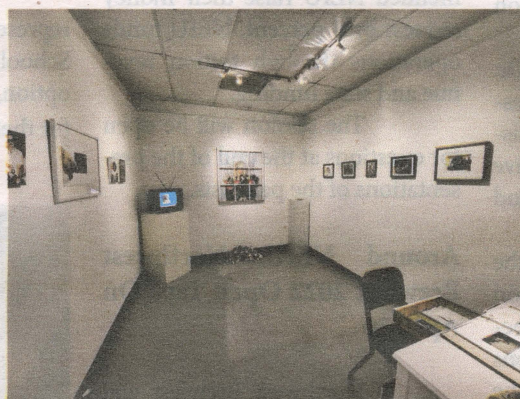
Student-run newspaper since 1962

VOLUME 41 ISSUE 7

## Artravaganza Showcase Features NEIU Talent at Fine Arts Center Gallery

By: Monty Stites, Editor-in-Chief

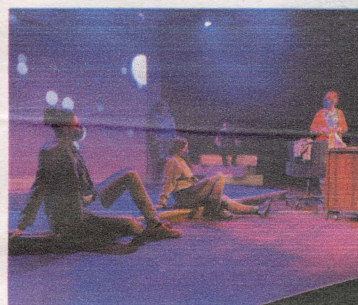
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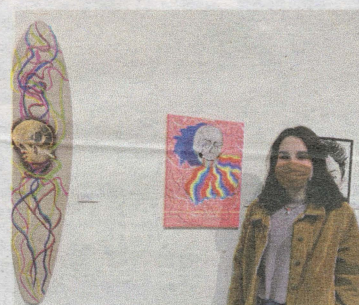
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EDUCATION PAGE 4



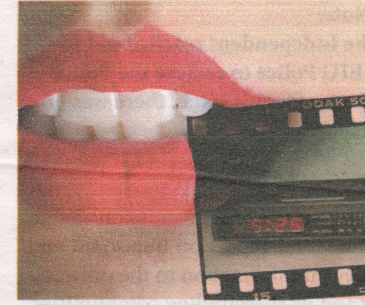
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# News Nuggets No. 2

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

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#### \*Note:

The Independent reached out to NEIU Police to receive the Police Blotter for this issue, there was no response.

#### Mission Statement:

The Independent's mission is to gather and report on important and relevant information to the university and its surrounding communities, as well as to be a creative and critical outlet for community members to express their views and concerns and to offer examples of potential solutions to ongoing problems.

## NEIU Administration Will Discuss 2023 Budget With Community in April 27 Town Hall

NEIU President Dr. Gloria Gibson's administration will explain the status of the school's budget for the fiscal years 2022 and 2023 at the NEIU Auditorium on April 27 at 10 a.m.

The panelists will be Dr. Gibson, Manish Kumar, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Michael Wenz, Executive Director of University Budgets and Dennis Rome, Provost.

Dr. Gibson said that the university can expect a reduction of 6 percent in tuition revenue because NEIU had fewer admissions and a lot of drop outs during the two years.

In 2018 NEIU had more than 8,000 students and as of Spring 2022 the total of registered students dropped to 5,762.

This discussion of NEIU's budget comes amid a push from the State's authorities to increase Illinois funding for education, which is spearheaded by initiatives to diversify new faculty hires at

state schools and create programs to retain them and to offer prepaid tuition to students through the College Illinois program.

During the State Assembly session on April 7, Governor Pritzker approved increments to the education budget and recommended NEIU raise their money request by 5 percent. NEIU funds operations through tuition revenue and state funding.

The session will be open for questions at the end of the presentations of the panelists.

## Around NEIU: Northwest Brewfest 2022 Open Taps On April 30

Northwest Brewfest will host 15 local breweries for its 2022 event at Sway Dance Chicago on April 30, tickets are \$35 per adult older than 21 years old.

The venue, located on 3317 W Irving Park Rd. is offering attendees two sessions, 1:00pm and 3:20pm, for a two hours long beer tasting. Revolution Brewing, Metropolitan Brewing, and Old Irving Brewing Co are among those

invited to the event organized by the Albany Park Chamber of Commerce.

Proof of vaccination is required for all of those attending the event. People will receive a 5oz official Northwest Brewfest sample glass upon entry.

A group of volunteers representing Bateman Elementary School will be selling the only food option, \$5 pretzels to collect funds for their school.

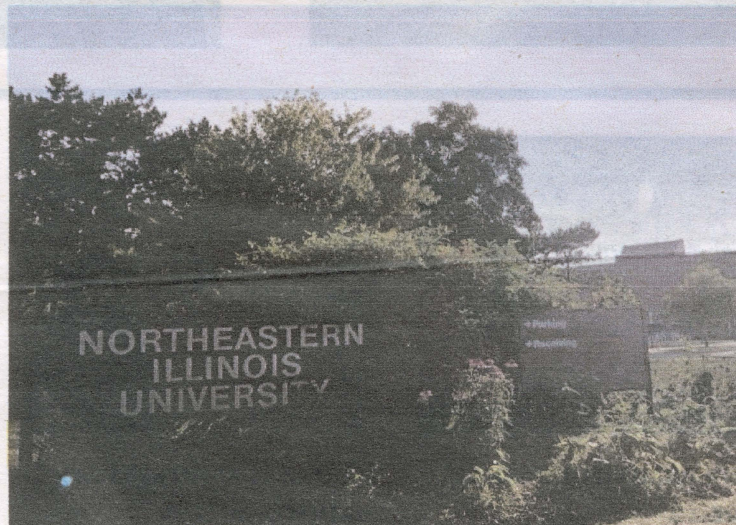
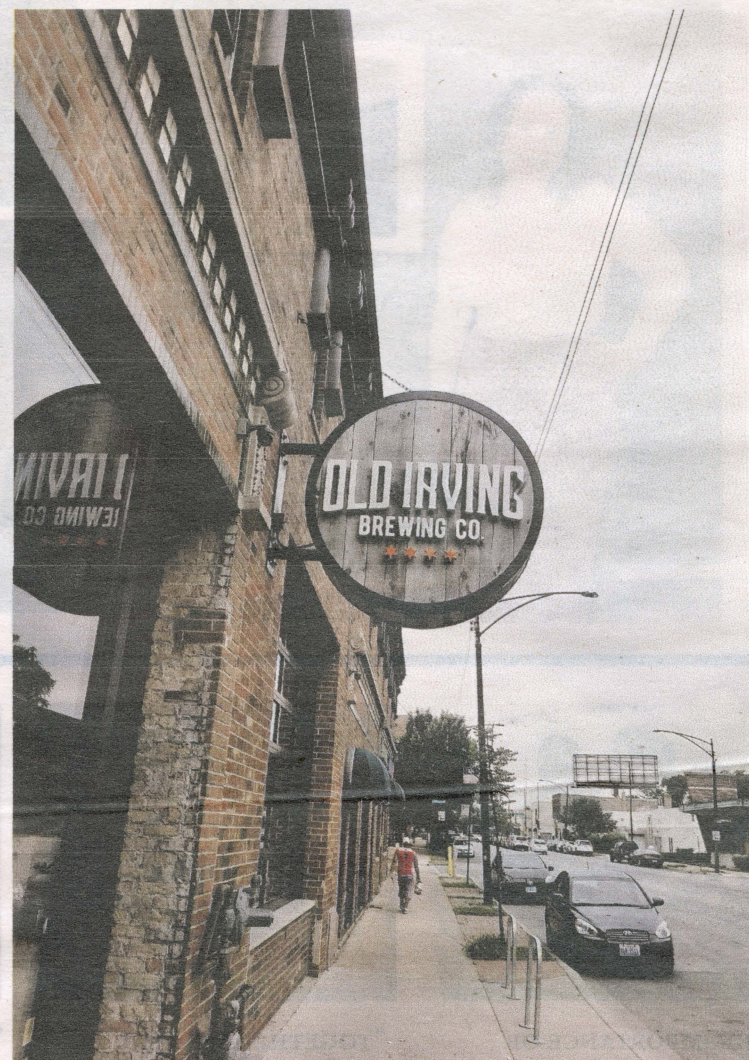


Photo Credits: Jack Poskus | The Independent



Old Irving Co. is one of the Breweries participating in the event. "Old Irving Brewing Co." by howderfamily.com is marked with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



# NEIU Event Addresses Brutality of War, Future Scenarios in Ukraine

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

"We have not seen something like this in 80 years." That is the most common thing you hear on the streets about Ukraine. "I thought we were over this kind of behavior," is another common opinion. Of course, we have seen human brutality and destruction as a result of the Cold War and the clash of the West against Islamic nations, but not to the scale of what Russia is allegedly perpetrating right now in Ukraine, particularly the killings documented in the northern suburbs of Kyiv.

On April 7, Dr. Martyn De Bruyn, chair of the Political Sciences department, Dr. Charles Steinwedel, chair of the History department, and Alumna Krystyna Naryzhna participated in a Zoom event called "The War in Ukraine After Five Weeks: What Is Happening Now? What Is Next?" to discuss the future of the war in Ukraine after the defeat of the Russians in Kyiv and the discovery of executed citizens.

Social Sciences librarian Edward Remus moderated the conversation that was attended by approximately 50 members of the community who actively participated.

The two NEIU academics began the discussion with an overview of the current state of the conflict. Professor Steinwedel said that the events in Bucha, and the bombardment of civilian buildings across Ukraine is "how they [Russians] address civilian populations in opposite areas," adding that Russians are doing the bombing intentionally, and that they used this strategy twice on Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, when this region attempted to break ties with Russia.

Aleppo received the same treatment. The Syrian city was the center of the resistance to Kremlin's supported Bashar Al Assad's regime until Russian bombers and artillery wiped it off the face of the Earth in 2016.

Naryzhna referred to the bombings and assassinations impassionedly, "I am sorry, I say this for Ukrainians expressing their anger," she said, "[But] the events at Bucha turned us into a different nation. We are becoming aggressive. We are talking about not being weary of the dark side."

Renouncing your sense of mercy and becoming aggressive—these are other consequences of the war for a nation that is fighting for survival, and that by doing so has accumulated a lot of hate. Naryzhna is not alone in her feelings. Even Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy publicly recognized in an interview with the American magazine *The Atlantic* that "he hates the Russian military," and cannot help doing so.

Images of abuse of Russian prisoners by Ukrainian soldiers had surfaced now and then in the Western media, in some cases the abuse implies the summary execution of the captives. Although Ukrainian officials said that these violations of international rules of war are being investigated, they represent a small glimpse of the horror that is happening everywhere in the country.

Russian bombardments of civilian areas around Kharkiv and the obliteration of Mariupol and thousands of its residents account for war crimes that will be

difficult to forget. Professor Steinwedel said that although "there is a cultural connection between Russia and Ukraine" he is afraid "the conflict will be so bitter that they won't be able to live alongside each other again." Naryzhna agreed, saying that actually "the sense of brotherhood [with Russians] died in 2014. We considered them our bigger brothers."

## No end to the war in sight

The horrors of the alleged war crimes committed by Russia all over Ukraine drove public opinion in Western Europe and the United States to support the delivery of more weapons and resources into the conflict. Professor De Bruyn said that in Europe "there is a sense of what is at stake" in the Ukrainian war.

Still, he says that Western countries "need to be careful with sanctions because countries can find their way around." He also cautioned against the consequences of the sanctions in Europe, saying that the continent will be able to hold the sanctions, but also stressed that "as agonizing as the situation is, NATO cannot cross the line of looking like making a direct aggression to Russia." He added, "we don't want to hurt

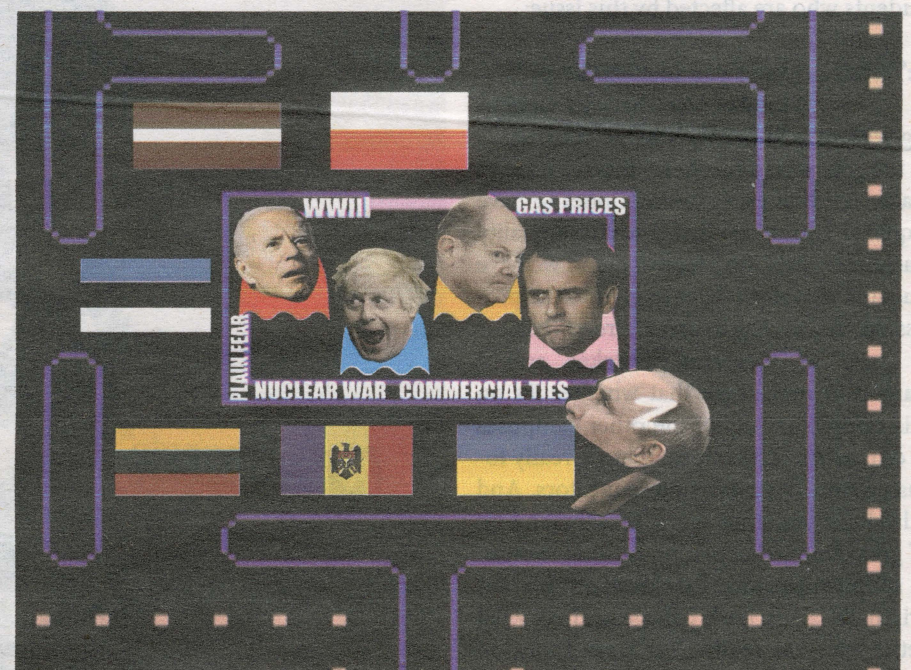
Ukrainian people more by escalating the conflict with, for example, a no-fly zone."

Naryzhna replied to De Bruyn saying that "Russia won't dare to attack NATO planes." As Americans, British and Europeans pour heavy weapons into Ukraine to make the country capable of defending its eastern flank, Russia has limited itself to softly warn Ukraine's allies about the delivery of weapons that can contribute to an ultimate upset Ukrainian victory.

The negotiations for peace are continuing at a lower level, but Zelenskyy is refusing to give territory away after what was discovered in Bucha and witnessed in Mariupol—before he had agreed to a referendum in Crimea—and Putin has also made indications that he does not want to negotiate. Yet,

Western intelligence and Ukrainian officers affirm that Russia wants to claim a big victory before the celebrations for the anniversary of the victory against Nazism on May 9.

As of today, exactly two months into the war, Ukraine still holds much of its positions against the Russians in the East, keeps the Russians out of their Capital province, pushes them out of the Black Sea region of Kherson, and holds the Azovstal stronghold in Mariupol. Looking into the future Naryzhna voiced what Zelenskyy said a couple days ago "Western support is what keeps the Ukrainians fighting. You give us hope."



Russian military officers suggested that Kremlin's objectives had extended up to Transnistria, in Moldova.



# The Importance of Teachers and Education

By: Eterniti Wiley, Writer  
Photos provided by: Eterniti Wiley

Juliana Stratton, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Illinois, paid a visit to NEIU on April 21, 2022 and spoke about the issues of education in the state, among them are teachers dropping out of the system. Stratton said that Governor Pritzker's main goal is to make education more accessible, diverse and affordable for everyone in Illinois so no one is left behind or denied access to education.

The other goal of the administration is to get teachers better pay and work care, so we can have more teachers back into the education field. Teachers all over Illinois have been leaving positions in numbers due to not being paid enough or feeling their profession is disrespected.

This is especially crucial in minority areas of the state where students find themselves with limited access to education like in Chicago's west and south sides.

During the interview with Stratton, The Independent asked two questions that related more to her goals and to the students who are affected by this issue:

**Q: "What inspired you to come here?"**

A: "I kind of saw what was happening with, you know, the teacher shortage... so the goal was to recognize that we need to make sure that everyone continues to have a quality education. But if we have quality teachers leaving the profession and we have students who don't want to go into the profession, that's going to create a real crisis."

"So Governor Pritzker and I wanted to make sure that whether it's on this campus or any of the other campuses of our public institutions, that we really focus on how to support our educators. And I think the last thing is just that there's a lot of great things happening on this campus to support teachers. I understand this was originally a teacher's college and so what better place to really hear from those on the faculty and staff and to hear from the students...who could tell me a little bit

more about what is important to think about. How do you get into this profession and what the state can do to better support our educators and those in the Teacher preparation program."

**Q: "What would you advise for those who are trying to become teachers?"**

A: "Let me pick up on something you said first, Eterniti, and that is that we do want to get every student, every young person in our state knows that they're being supported as they're pursuing their dreams. And you're so right, a teacher

shortage doesn't just affect the field of education, a teacher shortage affects every field, because we need teachers to teach those who want to be engineers, and lawyers, and doctors, and nurses and artists."

"And then in terms of the advice that I would give, one of the things that we're trying to do is we're trying to listen to students to hear what those solutions are. It's one thing for me as an elected official to come in and say 'well this is what I think' But I think it's really important to hear from students about what they need and how to better meet their needs. And

we're hearing everything from the issue of scholarships and making more scholarships available, and that's why in our fiscal year 23 budget we see more investments in our MAP grants and also that MAP grants can now cover up to 50% of the tuition for college students."

"We have minority teachers, scholarships that we have funded, we are trying to make college more affordable for young people...students need to recognize that there are a lot of people trying to help support them. And you might look and say, 'maybe I'm the first one going to





college in my family. And maybe I looked at the website and when I saw how much college costs, I'm not sure that that's something that I can do.'

"Don't stop there. Contact the university, contact your high school counselor, talk to people who have some knowledge about what scholarships are available, what are some of the things that you can do that they might be able to work out so that you can have the support you need to go and help you get into the college you need to go to."

"Don't look at it and say 'yeah, it's a barrier.' Look at it as, 'okay, it's a hurdle, but it doesn't mean it's a hurdle I can't get over.'"

### NEIU OPPORTUNITY FOR A WEST SIDE CHICAGO GIRL

After this interview, I reflected on myself as I was that student who couldn't get the help I needed and was looked down upon. When I was graduating from my high school, I was told by a few teachers that due to my low ACT score, I could only go to a community college for higher education. I come from a violent area of West Chicago where education was quite hard to achieve satisfactorily and getting help with disabilities was a hurdle at the time.

I was given an opportunity by NEIU, a scholarship deal from Project Success. I also had some support from my disability teacher to convince my mother that commuting is just an hour or two by bus and that I am a talented child who needed this push to improve her art and skills.

When I decided to give Project Success and the university a shot, my opportunities and life changed greatly. I learned to be more reasonable, taking risks with my arts and skills, and more importantly I am able to meet a lot of friends who accept me as a person, teachers in my field of interests who are willing to not only help me improve my skills but let me go beyond and take class as my career, and I was given open doors to be a illustrator, reviewer of video games, and journalist at The Independent team.

So there are many young students out there like me, who have not gotten this chance and now are the pure force of the education movement.

Looking back now, if I didn't take the opportunity from NEIU and let those

words and fears get to me, as Lt. Gov. Stratton said, I would never be in the life I'm in right now, so I hope many other students will be granted a chance to show more than just a test score number, they are the future and all people in America who need a little push and lots of love and support.





# Your Vote Does Count: What Is Needed to Register to Vote

By: Angie Ybarra, Writer

"My one vote doesn't count anyway." Have you said that before? Do you know anyone who has said that? Think about that statement. Elections are won or lost because so many people are apathetic about voting. If you are aware of anything that is happening in our country, then you know that the right to vote is under attack. The attacks are getting worse every day under the guise of ensuring there is no voter fraud happening.

Whatever your political affiliation, it is everyone's civic duty to vote and vote for what is right for all of society, not merely party lines. Restricting when and why one may vote through the mail, limiting the amount of ballot return boxes, and prohibiting giving bottled water to the people waiting in line to vote are just some of the new laws that have been put in place in an attempt to reduce voting access.

In the state of Illinois, you are not required to have picture identification to vote but can still register to vote. The ID that is presented must be valid and any supporting documents must come from the approved voter's identification list. If you are still not sure, please visit the website run by the United States government which gives you all the information you will need from how to register to vote and everything else you could possibly want to know about voting. It is very important to have your voice heard by making it necessary to ensure

that nothing blocks your ability to vote. The time is right now to find out just who and what is set to be voted on. <https://vote.gov>

First and foremost are you a registered voter? Do you have a current voter registration card? What is your ward number? Are you an out-of-state student and can you vote in your state's elections? Over its 250-year history, people have voted in many ways. Voting is the bedrock of our democracy and we must exercise this right.

NEIU is a state-run university and we as a campus community rely on the elected officials to have what is best for our education in mind, therefore, it is in our best interest to vote for the candidate that has our best interests at heart. If you are unaware of when the upcoming elections are, you can visit the Illinois State Board of Education website to discover what is happening in Illinois and see what dates are of interest to a voter. <https://www.elections.il.gov/>

You might not think that your one vote matters but I was made aware at a university-sponsored event that some students who have called the United State home for their entire lives are not able to vote. These students are undocumented students. Our friends and our family are not able to vote because they do not have the ability to do so, but your one vote could be for an issue that they are passionate about or that will impact their lives

forever. Your one vote could be their voice. Your one vote can and does affect so much more than you will ever know.

Listed below are days that you should be aware of in Illinois and if you are an out-of-state student, make sure to know your home state's voter information so you don't miss out.

Elections in Illinois, 2022

Election date: Nov. 8, 2022

Mail-in registration deadline: Coming soon

Online registration deadline: Coming soon

In-person registration deadline: Coming soon

Early voting starts: Coming soon

Early voting ends: Coming soon

Poll times: Coming soon

Absentee/mail-in voting deadline: Coming soon

Voting may seem like a daunting task, but remember that you need not vote along party lines. Vote your conscience, vote for what is not just right for you and yours but for what is right for all people, regardless of their skin color, the religion they practice, or who they chose to love or be.

Jun 28, 2022 is the Illinois primary and yes this is also very important to

take part in because this process will allow for a person who then runs in the general election in November.

Please be on the lookout for more information on the upcoming election, who will be up for re-election, what are the candidate's campaigns, who has NEIU's and other state universities' best interests at heart, and even information on appearances for various candidates that you might like to attend. I hope that as I walk the campus grounds this fall I see many "I Voted" stickers. Happy Voting.

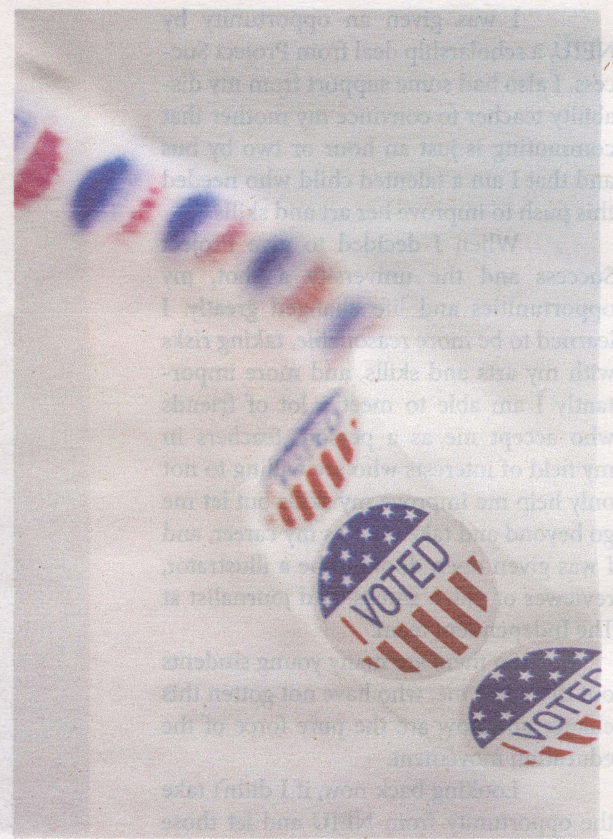


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# Review: "Navalny"

By: Elizaveta Kildishova, Writer

"Navalny" is a 2022 documentary about Alexei Navalny, a Russian opposition leader, Putin's enemy, and threat number one. After his successful anti-corruption investigations of the most powerful, high-ranking Russian government and officials, Navalny received a lot of "attention" from the Kremlin. In 2020 a politician was poisoned by the Federal Security Service (FSB) spies, but he survives. He recovered in Germany, participated in the investigation of his own poisoning, and returned to Russia where he was put in jail for 11 years and 8 months. This series of events sounds like a plot for a thriller movie. Well... it did become a movie.

This documentary needs no special effects; real events happening in front of your eyes are enough to shock anyone. While Navalny was in the Berlin hospital, Christo Grozev—an investigative journalist at Bellingcat—found a group of eight men from the FSB who have been following Navalny for the last few years after he announced his decision to run for the presidency. Christo contacts Navalny's team to share his suspicions.

It is in this way that Navalny becomes a part of the investigation of his own poisoning. At the same time, the director Daniel Roher becomes a part of the team and starts filming everything that was going on. So the story is happening in front of our eyes in the real-time of the events. You can feel it in the film. You see real emotions and feel the tension until the very end. Daniel Roher managed to be a storyteller in the epicenter of the events at the same time.

Something happens that no one could ever expect during the filming. Navalny applies his creative abilities and sense of humor and decides to make a prank phone call to one of his own attempted-murderers Konstantin Kudryavtsev. Navalny pretends to be his boss and asks "for the details for the report." As a result, Kudryavtsev tells the facts of the poisoning which no one knew about before. A couple of months later Na-

valny makes an extraordinary decision to go back to Russia. The plane literally turned around in the skies of Moscow and landed in a different airport.

Officially it was explained by technical problems at the destination airport. Many people, including Navalny's team and allies, don't believe in this coincidence. They think it was done on purpose, to prevent Navalny from meeting/seeing his supporters, to deprive him of emotional support and attention, and to prevent people from protesting. Thousands of people were waiting for Navalny to welcome him back home. As a result, most of them had no time to get to another airport by the time the politician landed.

He gets arrested at the passport control and receives three years in prison for a fabricated case. Russians all over the country demonstrated and around 18,000 people were arrested. Currently, Navalny is still in prison. His new sentence is nine years in a strict regime colony. A touching moment of saying goodbye to his wife at the airport becomes his last moment at large, but considering how strong he stands and fights for the truth against the authoritarian regime, is he not a free man after all?

This documentary could not be more relevant today considering Putin is still in power. Alexei Navalny became a hope for a better future in Russia and this movie allows us to see history. Roher displays not just the process and details of the investigation, but also a politician's life from the inside throughout the whole movie. Navalny appears on the screen as a naturally charismatic, smart, direct, brave and lucky man, as well as a loving husband and father. It is also curious to see his wife, children and closest associates in the film.

Navalny's family is a typical family living in very atypical circumstances. All family members realize the level of danger Navalny is subjected to. Since his daughter, Dasha, was 13-years-old, she has been imagining what she would do if her father was ever killed. It sounds insane when you

hear this, but you also understand the high level of support Navalny's family provides him. Feeling threatened is a part of the Navalny's life; it's their reality. It impresses how much this family personally sacrifices every day for what they believe in.

As a Russian citizen, I felt truly happy to have a chance to see this movie in a theater because it is forbidden in Russia. It is precious to have this opportunity here in the United States. It is absurd to see how much recognition Navalny's figure receives by the international community and at the same time he does not have basic human rights in his own country. The film and my review end with his appeal to Russian citi-

zens, but in fact it can be a message to everyone in the world standing on the side of truth and justice. His last words followed by applause are, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil, is for good people to do nothing. So don't be inactive."

If you want to see this history-making movie for yourself, it will be available on streaming platforms HBO Max and CNN Plus later this Spring.

Freedom to Alexei Navalny.

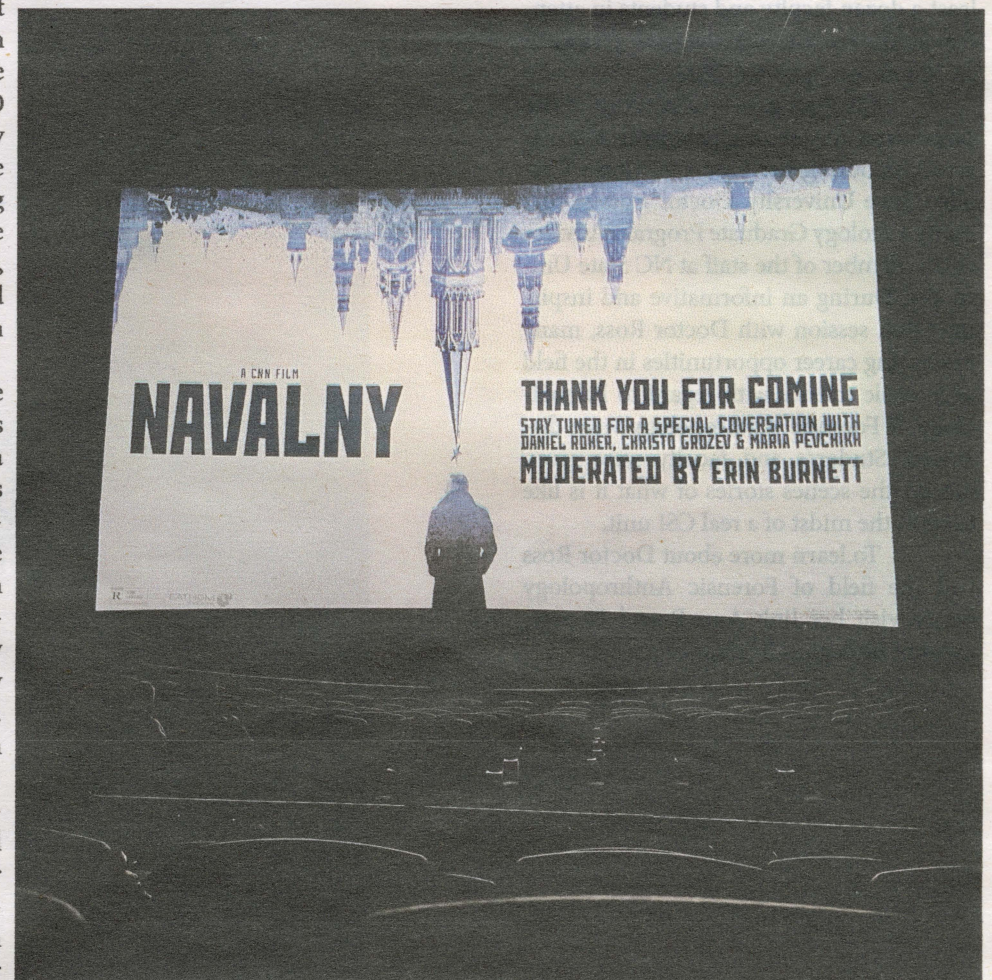


Photo Credits: Lisa Kildishova



# NEIU Celebrated Women's History Month: Dr. Ross, Forensic Anthropologist Speaks With Students

By: Angie Ybarra, Writer

The month of March 2022 offered NEIU students the opportunity to celebrate the successes of women and their accomplishments within many disciplines. During March, topics such as human rights, women of color in politics, Trans Day of Visibility resource pop-up, and women in science were showcased through talks, fairs, and speakers.

The Independent had the opportunity to sit in via Zoom with Doctor Ann Ross's event Women in Science: Informal Discussion with Students. The event took place in person and via zoom, there were at least a dozen faculty and students in attendance. The event took place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on April 1st, 2022.

Dr. Ross gave a brief recap of her career and the accomplishments she has achieved during her tenure at North Carolina State University. Doctor Ross is currently a Biology Graduate Program Advisor and a member of the staff at NC State University. During an informative and inspiring Q&A session with Doctor Ross, many interesting career opportunities in the field of forensic science with regard to Paleobiology & Forensic Anthropology were discussed. Students and faculty were given behind-the-scenes stories of what it is like to be in the midst of a real CSI unit.

To learn more about Doctor Ross and the field of Forensic Anthropology please visit her link [Ann Ross | Department of Biological Sciences](#).



Photos Provided by Rfstudio on Pexels



# Know More of NEIU's K(no)w More

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor

There are several issues that never make it to the forefront of people's minds or are not talked about in public spaces. Some of those issues involve some form of sexual violence towards survivors. When a survivor goes through something like sexual assault or domestic violence, oftentimes what they know of at that moment informs what action they would take when it comes to escaping their situation.

At NEIU there is at least one centralized place for survivors to go to and receive information on sexual violence, resources, and workshops about sexual violence.

Created in 2018 and fully established in 2019, Know More, a play on the phrase "No More," has helped survivors in getting the resources they needed, as well as sharing information to the general public in order to help prevent sexual violence, stalking, and domestic abuse. Beginning in 2020 and during the time that NEIU had to deal with the pandemic, Know More laid the foundation for the program, while doing a large amount of online programming for the NEIU community. Additionally, it also built up more resources and connections for survivors.

The Independent sat down with Annette Brandt, the Grant Director for the Know More program, to learn more about the program.

One of the first things Know More did as a program was create a list that can be viewed on their website about the places survivors could go to get help on campus as well in the general Chicagoland area. The list also includes confidential resources if someone would like to disclose without reporting what had happened.

"We want people to have a choice in what parts of the system they participate

in, and know they are the experts in what they need," said Brandt. When it comes to the options for survivors, there might be survivors that might be hesitant in going to the police to report, and that is something that can be accommodated for at NEIU. "We do have confidential resources for people to talk

being able to reach out to other departments in NEIU or outside organizations or for accommodations that they will need. "Because it's such a sensitive topic, that triggers a lot of shame and embarrassment, people won't... share, if it's gonna get out to other people." As well as the possibility of the perpetrator find

there will be more opportunities for tabling events that Know More will have throughout NEIU. Know More is also open to offering workshops to the NEIU community like to organizations or classrooms, "We are here, we can put on these workshops, we just need to be invited into spaces in order to do so."

Brandt said.

To know more about Know More, check out their page on the NEIU website. They can also be found on Facebook, Instagram @neiu-knowmore, as well as a Youtube channel where they will continue to upload more events.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. If you or someone you know are in need of resources but you don't want your situation to be reported on, here are the numbers for the confidential advisors.

Jennifer Knuepfer  
Counseling Services  
Phone (773) 442-4650

to, the confidential advisors, the ombuds or a counselor, or the nurses," said Brandt. "These all are confidential places where people could go to get information about what their choices are, and without having to have it reported to the administration or to Title XI or to the police."

Brandt stressed the importance of what survivors could gain in going to these confidential resources, especially that of the confidential advisors. If someone is in need of any resources for their situation, they would be able to "carve out a plan" to fit the current needs of the survivor. Whether that is

ing out, which could put the survivor in more danger.

Over the last semester Know More has created events for the general public to attend and hear about the information they have to offer. Know More recently held a panel on Women Healers, as well as a collaboration with spoken word poet e nina jay, all lowercase, for a slam poetry event at the Caruthers Center for Inner City Studies campus in Bronzeville.

There are plans to create more events—as events such as these are relatively new to the program. Brandt mentioned that

Luz Rodriguez  
Assistant Director, Student Leadership Development  
Phone (773) 442-4686

Both can be reached at this email: confidentialadvisor@neiu.edu

# KNOW MORE



# "Together We Heal" CCICS's Poetry Slam

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor  
All photos provided by Terry Barfield

Poetry is in everyone. There are only a selected few that can broadcast it into the world.

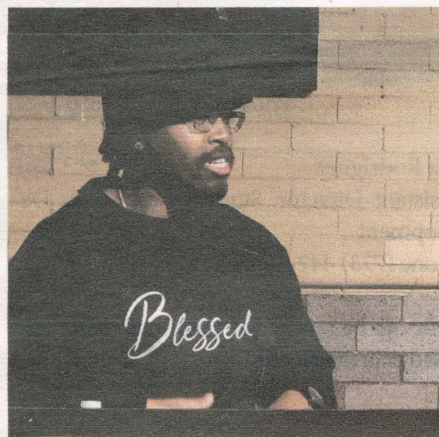
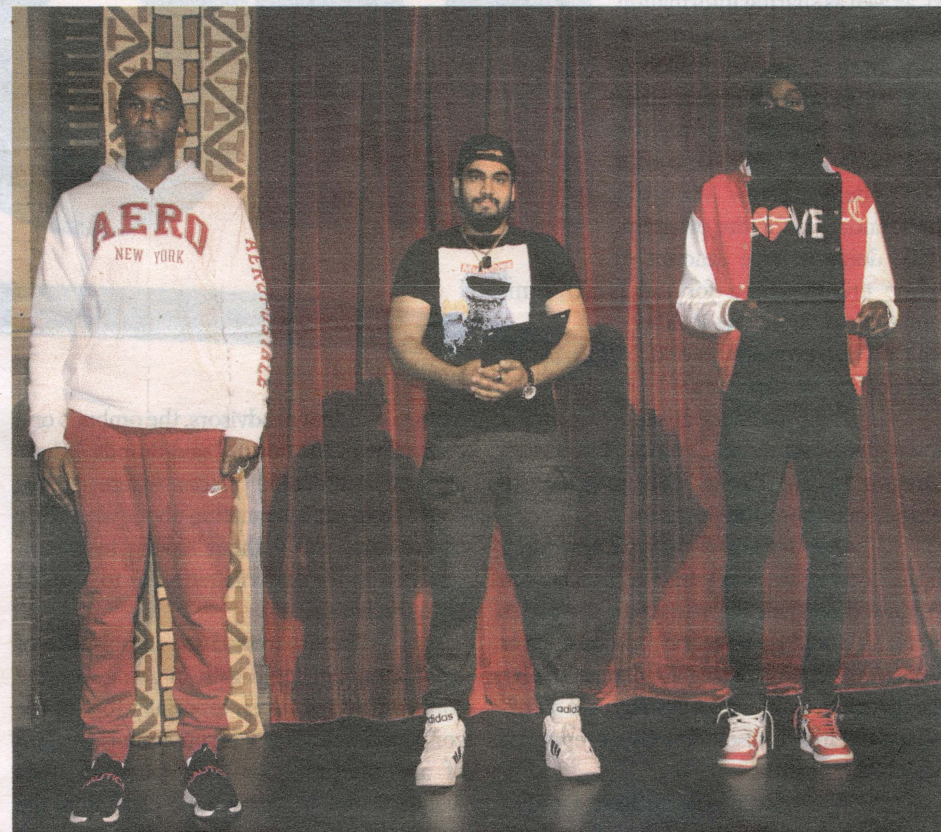
Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS) had their fourth annual Poetry Slam on April 14, 2022, at the Donn F Bailey Legacy Hall, after having the last Poetry Slam online in 2021. Like some of the events from this semester at CCICS, transportation was provided to bring students and participants from the main campus to the Bronzeville campus. There was also a light dinner for everyone involved before moving things into the Hall.

Alexx Brown, the host for the event, started off the night. There was a bit of a rough patch, with some of the performers not showing up to perform as listed on the program, but everything was smoothed over, with each performer present giving their all. One performer, Cortez Thomas, had a moving piece that was fast paced and captivating, as it built on the unnamed "she" and her struggles in abusive situations.

While the judges deliberated to determine the winners, there was ample time for an open mic section for anyone in the audience to perform a piece. There

was a wonderful off the cuff spoken word performance by Sarator Whitehead, the office administration for the CCICS campus, that brought the entire audience to turn in her direction, her voice booming throughout the Hall sans microphone.

The winners of the event were; Shuaya Qadri in third place, Orion Meadows in second place, and Cortez Thomas in first place.



Northeastern  
Illinois  
University

Jacob H. Carruthers



# Interdisciplinary Climate Change Stories

By: Ryland Pietras, Managing Editor and Arts & Life Editor

Spring not only brings life back to all of those who have laid dormant over the winter, but it also brings revitalization back to the NEIU campus and its community. It is only fitting then that Earth Week occurs right in the middle of it.

This year, NEIU held six Earth Week related events throughout the week that began on April 19. The Independent was only able to cover one of the events—the Interdisciplinary Climate Change Stories held that same evening.

Students presented different cases for combating climate change that ranged from the medicinal purposes of plants in the rainforest to changing one's perception of what an electric car can be.

Hiba Salman made the case for saving tropical rainforests for their medicinal benefits alone. Salman said that only 1 percent of known plant species have been examined in rainforests while 2 percent are wiped out each year. Additionally, forests act as carbon sinks and so the act of deforestation releases the carbon dioxide that is stored in the vegetation.

Following Salman were Isabelle Curran and Mac Austin who presented on replacing industrial agriculture practices with regenerative agriculture. Curran and Austin said this type of practice focuses on ecosystem health as a whole and that it actually returns carbon dioxide to the soil.

It has five main principles: minimize soil disruption, keep the soil covered with plants, maintain plant diversity, no use of synthetic chemicals and incorporate planned grazing. According to Curran and Austin, roughly 96 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> is stored in soil using regenerative practices. Whereas, only 10-30 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> are stored in soil using current industrial practices.

The long-term strategy of the United States is to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. "Net-zero" implies offsetting emissions by implementing strategies of capturing carbon. Currently, one-third of the U.S.'s emissions come from agriculture production. Curran

and Austin pointed out that regenerative agriculture is an excellent example of achieving this.

However, they said that out of the 895 million acres of farmland in the country only 159,000 use regenerative agriculture.

Jessi Gessner presented on the importance of community gardens and tree canopies in cities. Gessner pointed to a recent study that showed that trees not only aid in filtering our air; they also help with our mental health. The Journal of Physiological Anthropology study found that after walking through urban parks, there were high scores in feelings of being comfortable, natural and relaxed and lower scores of tension-anxiety and fatigue.

Gessner also stressed the importance of community gardens in impoverished neighborhoods. She found that community gardens relieve stress, build unity amongst its members and knowing the food is local gives producers a positive feeling while eating it.

Additionally, Gessner noted that many impoverished communities are also in the middle of what are called urban heat islands. These are zones where there is little to no tree canopy and as a result, during the summer months, temperatures can be 15-22° F warmer than adjacent areas.

Another point that Gessner made was that because of the sparse plant coverage that exists within larger cities, flooding is more likely to occur because there isn't a soil system that allows for the dispersal of water. Instead, cities are reliant upon their infrastructure which can easily become overtaxed and back up.

Lucas Bernardi and Ryan Lundahl separately spoke on the topic of electric vehicles (EVs). Bernardi covered the benefits and life cycles of EVs whereas Lundahl spoke on how all EVs are not made the same. In fact, some are even faster than traditional gas-combustion vehicles.

Bernardi pointed out EVs eliminate tailpipe emissions—a huge contribu-

tor to carbon emissions. With that being said, they help with overall respiratory health. Additionally, over time they cost nearly 50 percent less than traditional gas powered vehicles.

Though any action taken against climate change is important and truly needed, one of the standout cases was presented by Yang Jin and involved the implementation of microgrids into our current electrical grid.

Jin said that a microgrid is a small grid that can generate electricity locally within a building or community and can run independently—this is called an "island" when it does. These grids are usually powered by discrete renewable power sources such as wind and solar, which account for roughly 37 percent of renewable energy as of 2020.

To act independently from the main grid, the energy needs to be stored and not continually cycled. There are many different ways of storing energy. As a renewable source, mechanical energy can be found in hydropower and wind. The best way to store this energy is through pumped hydroelectric storage and gravity batteries. Chemical energy, which could potentially be the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> into a fuel source using wind and solar, can also be stored in batteries and used as hydrogen. And thermal energy can be stored as compressed air and can even regulate other sometimes unstable renewables.

The US electrical grid has nine central hubs with thousands of smaller stations running off of them. According to the Energy Information Administration, ensuring that these hubs are properly maintained is paramount to keeping the lights on for thousands of people.

"A balancing authority ensures, in real time, that power system demand and supply are finely balanced," its page said. "This balance is needed to maintain the safe and reliable operation of the power system. If demand and supply fall out of balance, local or even wide-area blackouts

can result."

In the last few years we have seen this come to light in a couple of ways. Last February, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas said its grid was about four and half minutes away from a near total collapse that could have left millions in the dark for weeks.

Irregular freezing temperatures brought Texas's grid to a halt and power plants across the state went offline. About three months after that, the Colonial Pipeline on the East Coast was hacked and prevented access to fuel for millions of Americans in the southeast.

Jin pointed out that a microgrid already exists in our own backyard at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). IIT was experiencing multiple outages a year and it would have to pay around \$500,000 each time to have power restored. They solved the issue by implementing a "self-healing, learning, and self-aware" microgrid.

However, for further integration throughout Chicago and the rest of the country, Jin said we will need a massive amount of new infrastructure. According to a recent report by Princeton, to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, we would need to invest \$320 billion into electricity transmission infrastructure alone by 2030. That does not include investments into the production of energy generation such as wind or solar plants.

Each student made an excellent argument for each of their respective responses to climate change. With such a variety of solutions covered during the Interdisciplinary Climate Change Stories event, it can go without saying that there will need to be many solutions implemented to tackle the onerous threat that is climate change.



# "Tiny Beautiful Things" A Love Letter to Theater and Life

By: Almudena Yebra Romanillos, Writer  
Photos provided by: Sarah Fabian

Dear Sugar,

I just saw a play that left me speechless and I have to write a review. Where do I start?

Signed,

Amazed Critic

Dear Amazed Critic,

Perhaps the easiest thing to do is start telling your readers that to fully understand you, they can't miss the new play presented by NEIU Stage Center Theater "Tiny Beautiful Things."

Then you can continue talking a bit more about the plot (but not too much!). You can say that the play is based on the real letters that were sent by the readers of the online magazine The Rumpus between 2010 and 2012 to Sugar, an anonymous advice columnist that was actually Cheryl Strayed, a best-selling writer. Some of those letters were compiled into a book that later, with the adaptation of Nia Vardalos, was transformed into a play that, since its off-Broadway premiere in 2016, has deeply moved viewers.

That sounded a bit corny ... I think you have to better explain what makes a play about letters interesting and special. What is particular about the letters that Sugar receives is that they cover almost the whole scope of human emotions, feelings, and troubles ... from authentic hilarious teasings, adolescent problems, and love-related dramas, to dark traumas and mourning for the loss of a loved one.

Everybody can see themselves reflected in one way or another in the problems and questions of the people who come to Sugar for advice or simply to let off steam. The common thread—everyone wants to feel heard and accompanied in the loneliness of pain and doubts.

Sugar, for her part, only responds to a few of the hundreds of letters that accumulate in her email inbox. Her judgment is highly selective and subjective: "I'll answer anything, so long as it interests or challenges or touches me," she says. But what is it about her replies that so many would seek to receive a text from her? Radical empathy. Sugar does not avoid or try to keep light on the pain, worries, or suffering of those who write letters.

She goes down with them into the mud reliving her own experience and the times she felt thwarted and lost, but also how she got up from the ground, brushed off her clothes, and kept walking. However, Sugar does not deprive herself of giving general advice, with a certain aphoristic touch that does not restrict the freedom of her recipients. Though maybe it is not the kind of advice we are used to hearing in bland self-help books. Things like "don't be afraid to break your own heart," or "Write like a motherfucker." are the finishing touches to some of her responses.

Ok, I think that is enough about the plot (remember no spoilers). It's time to write about the NEIU Stage Center Theater version of the play. The curtain opens and Sugar played by Hannah Barbeau appears sitting at her desk, but...wait a moment! Is that a giant computer behind her? A giant cup of coffee? A giant pile of post-its? Yes, the entire play takes place on a giant desk with a tiny desk on it—and I think that is wonderful. Different scenarios are projected on the computer screen allowing for a change of scenery and to visualize what the writers of the letters and Sugar experienced or imagined.

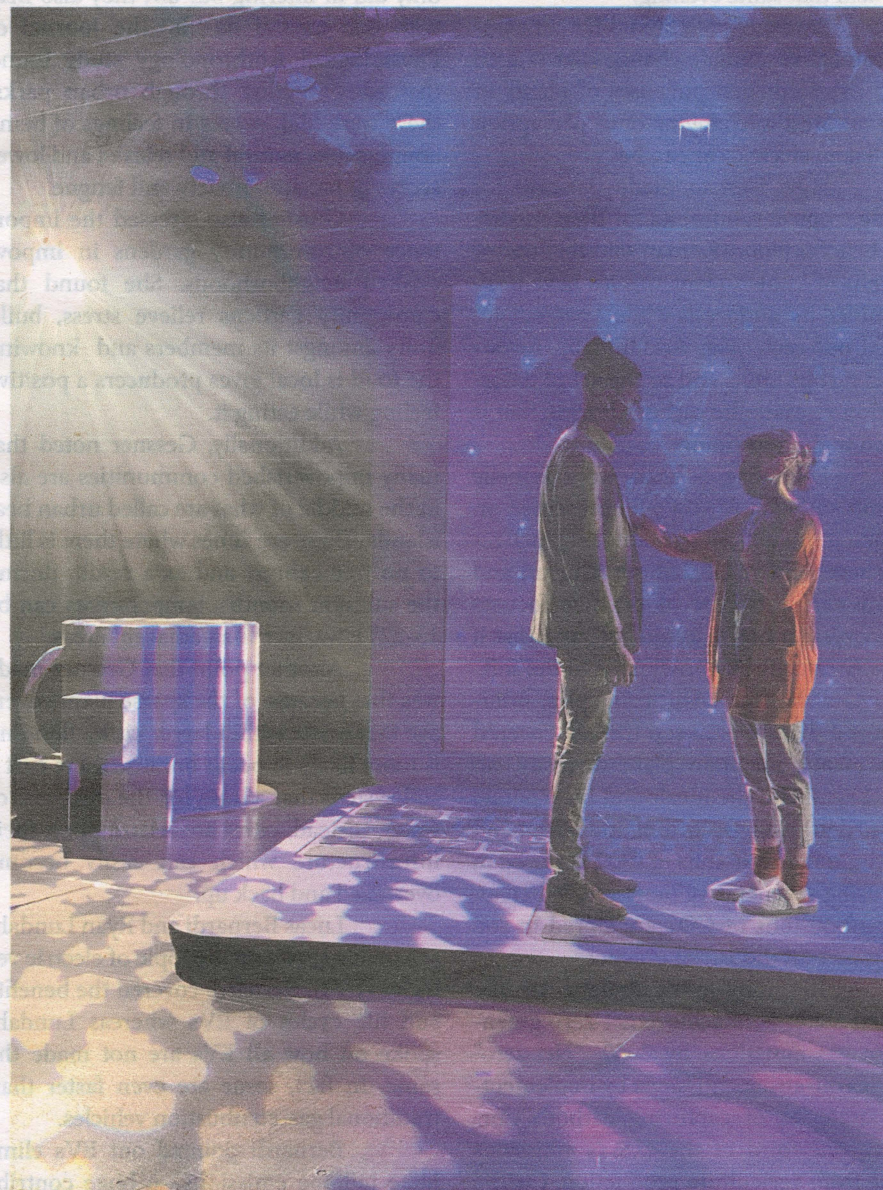
As for the letter-writers represented by Sade Cooley, Elizabeth Sacha, SaraJane Fein, and Xavier Becerra, you cannot fail to mention their brilliant performance in which they not only got into the skin of a single character but of differ-

ent letter-writers.

Their performance of the most disparate stories and experiences on stage with very few changes in their outfits is really outstanding. Not only are their stories and feelings shifting, but also their attitudes towards Sugar, that change from suspicion

and distrust to sincere and deep gratitude.

To finish, it is worth mentioning the final discussion of the opening night. In plays with a strong emotional charge like this one, it becomes more than necessary to process and reflect on everything that the spectators have seen on stage, but





also in some way—thanks to the magic of theater—experienced in its own flesh.

For this occasion, the cast and director Leslie Hull were joined by Michael McPartland from Student Counseling Services who brought a mental health perspective to the conversation.

Ok, and for the final drum roll, you need something memorable that sticks in the minds of your readers ... try a quote, a powerful quote like... for Leslie Hull, this is a necessary story that can help to feel and heal from the wounds of the current times. "This play just struck the core of me. It was a love letter to theater, to our community, and to our students really just like the humanity that we needed at the end of this really just arduous, drag-

ging, the drudgery of change, heartbreak, and loss. It hits all those bells for me because I feel like that's what theater job is, is to comfort you and hold you, to make you feel something."

I think that could work, but if something left you speechless words are useless, so just tell them to go there and make up their own mind. Probably like you, in the end, they will also have a letter to write.

Yours,

Sugar





# NEIU Artist Interview: Madison Miller

Interview By Savannah Owens,  
Images provided by Madison Miller

## What's your background and how do you think it has affected your work?

I became interested in art when I was 6 years old and my younger sister became very ill. As I spent a lot of time waiting and traveling back and forth from hospital visits, I kept busy by drawing and attempting to recreate the beautiful and colorful images I saw spread throughout the interior of the building. During the few years before my sister's recovery, I was introduced to art therapy and taught how to express my feelings through art which permanently influenced my body of work. Both my work as a child and my current work as a senior in college are a sense of an inner dialogue that happens within myself.

## What type of art do you create and what motivates you to make it?

The medium I focus on is painting, but I have also worked with mediums such as sculpture and drawing in my overall body of work. I create surreal and psychedelic works with a fluorescent color palette with imagery that expresses the thoughts that roam freely in my brain that feel far too complex for me to verbalize. Over the past few years I have struggled with mental health so a lot of my motivation to create these works come from the healing aspects that I experience when the piece is completed.

## What's the purpose or goal of your work?

The goal of my work is to find clarity in my own mind and urge my viewers to explore within themselves. For as long as I can remember, I have always felt like my imaginative mind is so much bigger than words can speak. As I continue to practice this, the narrative happening in my head becomes more clear and gives me a sense of freedom from the thoughts tangled within.

## Who are your biggest influences?

This may sound a bit cliché but I consider the biggest influence on my art career to be my grandmother. The first memory I can remember about my work was a picture I had recreated of Dora the Explorer and my grandma showing it off to everyone she possibly could. To this day she continues to show off my work, support me, and push me to the best of my ability. If I didn't have the type of positivity and push, I truly don't believe I would be where I am today.

There are many people in the cur-

rent art world who have also influenced my work such as Michael Reeder and Mel Cook. Both talk about the use of identity in their work and how it has helped them better understand themselves. They create their work in a similar bright fluorescent manner that catches the viewer's eye but also makes them question the imagery within. There is always a bigger message within their work and I aim to do something similar on my own.

## Where do you find inspiration?

I find inspiration in all different kinds of ways. When going into a new piece of work, I try to connect with different emotions and memories that can relate to the topic I want to explore. Recently I have noticed that I find a lot of inspiration from the children I surround myself with every week. Their imaginative and curious minds open me up to think about things a little more deeply. I have been a nanny for the same two children for almost two years now, and let me just say, these kids have some major artistic abilities. As I inspire





them to keep creating when they want to give up, they do the same for me while also giving quite the influence on my child-like aspects within my work.

**If you could give one piece of advice to another artist trying to navigate their way in the artworld, what would it be?**

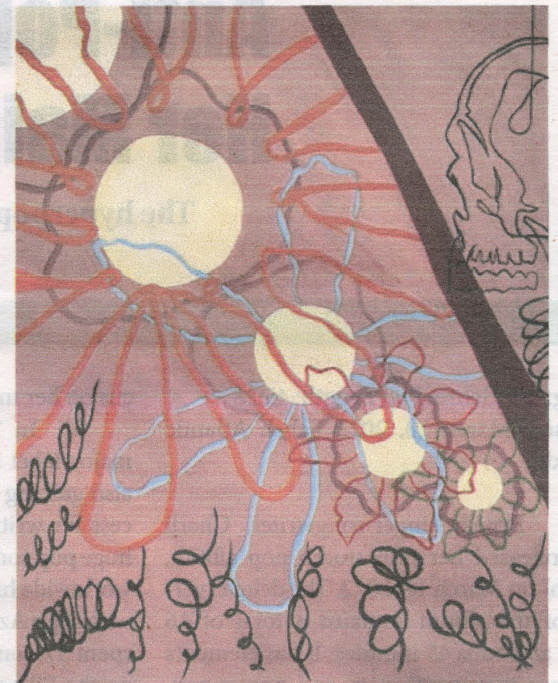
One of the biggest pieces of advice I would give to another artist trying to navigate their way in the artworld is something I just started to do and regret immensely for not starting sooner. Writing about your work and the process will help you so much in keeping track of the path you are on in your artistic career. This past year I have started doing studio journal entries that started out as an assignment, and are now part of my regular practice. When keeping track of the things that worked in the piece and the things that didn't you are able to keep those in mind as you continue onto the next piece.

**What are your handles, or contact information so people can check out your work?**

You can check out some of my work and get more info by checking out my Instagram and my website!

Instagram: @madmilart

Website: madmilart.com





# Anti-Pop Star Charli XCX Embodies Her Main Pop Girl Status on 'Crash'

The hyperpop connoisseur gives in to peer pressure from her record label.

By: Enrique Cerros, Writer

Rating: 4/5 Genre: Pop Length: 45:28  
Released: March 18, 2022 Label: Atlantic Records

British singer-songwriter, Charli XCX released her fifth studio pop album, "Crash" on March 18, 2022. The deluxe-version of the album contains a total of 16 tracks and runs 45 minutes. It has elements of dance-pop, synth-pop, and power-pop. XCX has referred to this mainstream project as her "main pop girl-era," and it is considered a big departure from the singer's previous underground work. XCX describes "Crash" as a breakup album that talks about moving on after a failed relationship.

The album covers feature the 29-year-old songstress on top of the hood of a car in a bikini and heels, staring through a shattered windshield with a gush of blood pouring from her forehead. XCX shared with Zane Lowe from Apple Music that the album was named "Crash" and its artwork depicts a car crash because, "they are fast, dangerous, and over in a flash, similar to a breakup," she explains.

"Crash" will also mark the end of XCX's five-album recording contract she signed at just 16-years-old with Atlantic Records—the home of artists like Bruno Mars, Cardi B, and Ed Sheeran.

XCX, which stands for "Kiss Charli Kiss," who's real name is Charlotte Emma Aitchison, was born on August 2, 1992 in Cambridge, England to a Scottish father and Indian mother. XCX began posting self-written songs on her MySpace page in 2008 while in high school. Her musical talent was then discovered by a music promoter who invited her to perform at warehouse raves in London. During her sophomore year of college at University College London's Slade School of Fine Arts she decided to drop out and move to Los Angeles to fo-

cus on her music career.

In 2013, XCX released her first major label album "True Romance" while also gaining international commercial success for writing and lending her vocals on huge pop songs. First, with Ikon Pop's 2012 worldwide hit "I Love it," then collaborating with Iggy Azalea in 2014 on "Fancy," which spent 17 consecutive weeks at the top spot on the Billboard Hot 100. XCX also earned her first solo top ten hit in 2014 with "Boom Clap," and it became part of the soundtrack for the film "The Fault in Our Stars." Her witty songwriting skills and unique falsetto voice caught the attention of pop pioneers Gwen Stefani, Britney Spears, and Lady Gaga who all praised XCX's talent and reached out to work with the British starlet.

However, despite XCX's mainstream success she revealed that she hated this time of her career because she lacked creative freedom and Atlantic Records forced her to work with music producers she disliked, specifically, Dr. Luke, who fat shamed her. Charli XCX tweeted her negative experience with Dr. Luke, who allegedly overheard him say, "She better lose some weight if she wants to be a pop star." to another producer.

The singer confessed to Pitchfork how Dr. Luke wouldn't give her the time of day until she made a name for herself in the pop industry.

"When True Romance came out, some people still doubted me as an artist and a songwriter. But once 'I Love It' appeared, and later 'Fancy' and 'Boom Clap,' people began to really pay attention," XCX said. "I find it difficult to deal with someone who rejects me and then kisses my ass later—even though I know that's what the whole music industry is."

XCX also called out the toxic producer, Dr. Luke on the title track of her sec-

ond studio album, "Sucker."

The hyperpop artist believed she did not fit within the mainstream pop scene. XCX has labeled herself as an "anti-pop star" and instead wanted her music to have an experimental, avant-garde sound. This led to her incorporating hyperpop music in her following projects, such as 2016's "Vroom Vroom EP." The hyperpop genre has quickly grown in recent years, thanks to XCX who helped popularize it. Spotify even published a playlist titled "The Sound of Hyperpop" for listeners who are fans of the futuristic, anti-pop genre.

XCX's fans loved the sound of her new music, but her record label executives at Atlantic Records were not on board with XCX quitting pop music in favor of the underground hyperpop genre. This led to a lot of arguments and canceled albums because XCX was not willing to sing pop music she did not care for. XCX managed to keep her record label happy by generating income through her song writing. The hyperpop connoisseur knows a thing or two about crafting a catchy tune—XCX has written several mainstream pop hits for other artists including Selena Gomez, BTS, as well as Camila Cabello and Shawn Mendes. When asked about why she gives away her hit songs the singer-songwriter replied, "I have millions of songs that I'm never going to sing but someone else could sing a lot better than I could, so I'd rather give them to other people than have them sitting in my brain, festering away."

Because her five album deal with Atlantic Records is coming to an end, XCX decided to finally give them what they want, a mainstream pop record. On April 6, 2020, XCX announced through a Zoom call with her fans—known as Angels—that she would begin working on her new "main pop girl" album. At the time she did not have a

name for the "main pop girl" album and referred to it as the "Janet album." XCX cites Janet Jackson as her influence and wanted to recreate a sound similar to her '80s hits. This resulted in "Crash," a pop album that would reintroduce XCX to the mainstream. It would include radio airplay, high budget music videos, interviews, live performances, a worldwide tour, and tons of press. The album features a more conventional and commercial sound that takes inspiration from past and present pop icons. XCX's final major label album, "Crash" is filled with elements of pop music from the '80s, '90s, and early 2000s.

In an interview with Zane Lowe from Apple Music the singer talks about her last hurrah.

"I knew with this album [Crash] because I was talking a lot about pop music and pop rhetoric, I wanted to finally, in all the years that I've been signed to a major label, utilize the major label infrastructure in a way that I've never done before. I wanted to explore the idea of what it meant to be a 'traditional' pop artist," XCX said.

"Good Ones"

XCX began the promotion of "Crash" in early September 2021 by releasing the first single, "Good Ones." In this track, the singer shows us she can let go of her hyperpop persona and immerse herself in the radio friendly pop landscape. The singer effortlessly embodies pop icons before her and delivers a catchy hook that oozes confidence. Although it's only 2 minutes and 17 seconds long, her falsetto and synth production remain stuck in your head after the first listen. She has mentioned that the best pop songs are short and prefers them over longer songs.

"New Shapes" feat. Caroline Polachek & Christina and the Queens



The second single, "New Shapes," was released in November 2021 and features a collaboration with American singer, Caroline Polachek and French singer, Christine and the Queens, both of whom XCX has collaborated with on past albums. The track can be considered electro-funk; it is '80s influenced and filled with synth-heavy production, the same sound Janet Jackson incorporated in her iconic 1986 album "Control." XCX made sure each artist had enough time to shine in the song. Polachek's vocals are soothing and sound beautiful on the bridge, while Christine and the Queens' voice adds a certain je ne sais quoi.

"Beg For You" feat. Rina Sawayama

The third single was released in January 2022 and this time Japanese-British singer, Rina Sawayama joins XCX on the song, "Beg For You." The two went on tour together in 2019 and there has been rumors of recorded demos they did together, but unfortunately none were ever released. Both of their fan bases are glad to see the two finally release something, and it was well worth the wait! This 90's house music influenced track pays homage to Swedish singer September. It samples September's 2006 RIAA Gold Certified song, "Cry For You." Sawayama and XCX recreated the song in a unique way that showcases both of their creativity. The track is an addicting club-anthem, and I can see it doing very well on the radio airwaves.

"Lightning"

The standout song on "Crash" is undeniably the eighth track, "Lightning." Here, we find out that XCX was not kidding when she said she wanted to utilize every resource a major label can provide, which is why she hired Britney Spears' producer Rami Yacoub, who worked on the groundbreaking 1999 track "...Baby One More Time" and helped make Spears the pop princess she is today. On this track we see XCX living her full pop star fantasy, while still incorporating her unforgettable hyperpop sound. The song is very '80s and is backed with electronic beats, drums, smooth flamenco-inspired nylon guitars, and a keyboard.

"Crash" can easily be labeled a pop masterpiece. The album was a huge milestone for XCX. This is her first album in her

decade-long career to reach the top 10 on the U.S. Billboard 200 Chart, where it debuted at number 7, and in her home country, the United Kingdom, it became her first number one album. It is a body of work that shares a glimpse of XCX's personal life, while simultaneously creating lyrics that tell stories that are relatable to all listeners.

The singer also criticized the pop industry and showcased in her music videos and social media what the industry does to new young artists. Despite the pressure she faced from her record label and her negative feelings towards the pop industry, XCX delivers a mainstream pop album with cohesive production, all while staying true to her hyperpop roots. The grammy nominated artist proves that you don't need to be a traditional pop star to achieve success.

You can stream and purchase "Crash" by Charli XCX on all major music platforms.

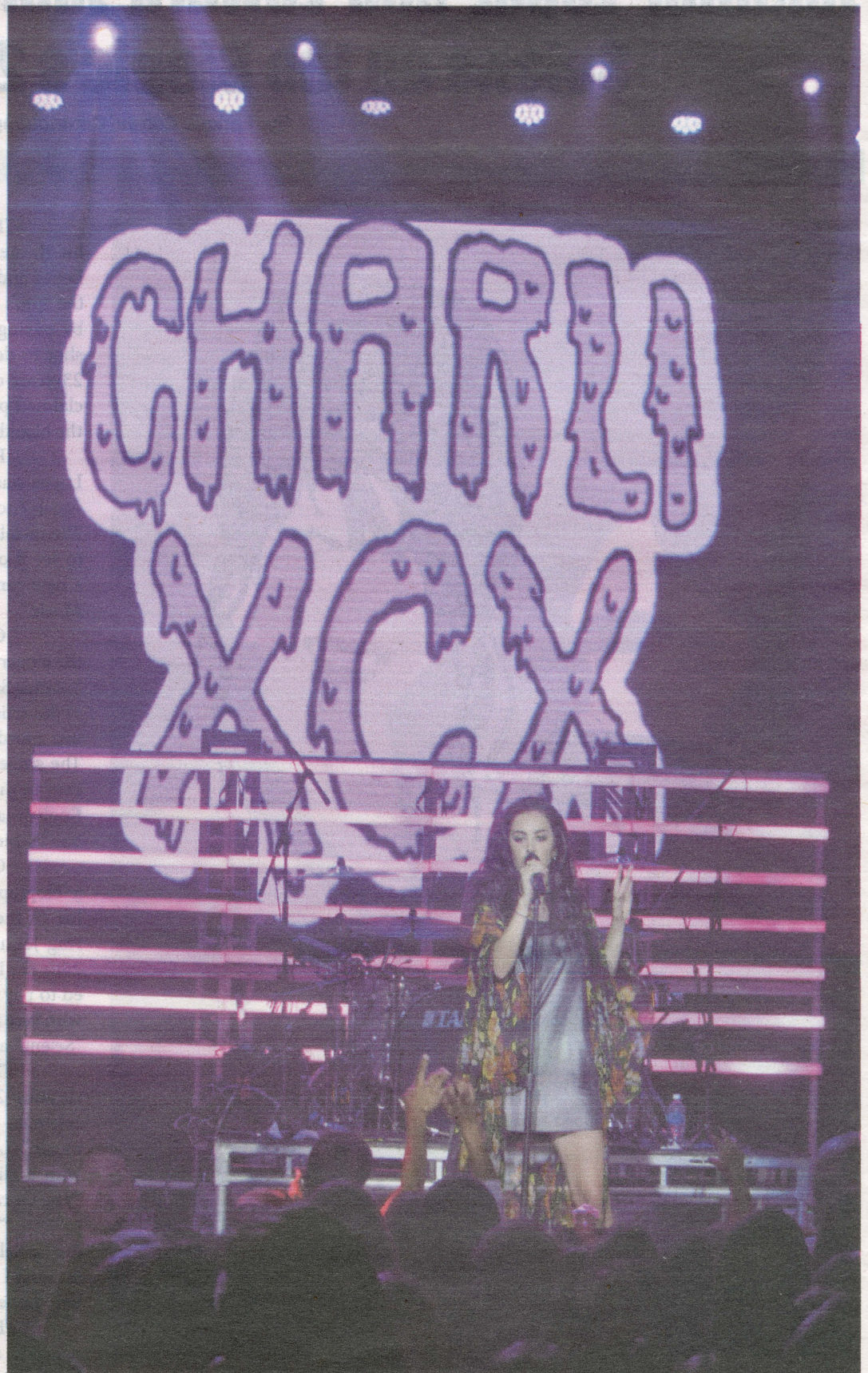


Photo Credits: flickr, Justin Higuchi "Charli XCX 8/23/2014 #8"



# Jennifer Lopez and Edward James Olmos Pay Tribute to Selena on the Biopic's 25th Anniversary

By: Enrique Cerros, Contributing Writer



Artwork Created by Xareni Uriostegui

Twenty-five years after "Selena" hit theaters on March 21, 1997, Jennifer Lopez and Edward James Olmos celebrated the film's re-release and 25th anniversary by paying tribute to the singer, who was shot to death in 1995 when she was only 23-years-old, and fondly recalled her acclaimed performance as the Texan icon in the blockbuster film.

Fans rejoiced as the film starring Lopez was re-released in select theaters on April 7 to celebrate the 25th anniversary. The re-release also gives new fans a chance to see it on the big screen, and introduces a new generation to the "Queen of Tejano Music."

On March 31, 1995, the voice of the singer Selena was extinguished forever: Yolanda Saldívar, the founder and president of the artist's fan club, shot her dead. Selena was murdered at the height of her career. The singer was in the process of crossing over to the American market with her first English-language album, "Dreaming of You", which she never finished recording.

Only two years after this tragedy, a biographical film was made about the life of the "Amor prohibido" singer, starring Jennifer Lopez, and in honor of the 25th anniversary of the film, Lopez wanted to pay tribute to the singer and recalled with love for her acclaimed performance in "Selena" as the Mexican-American icon.

"What a special day... We are celebrating 25 years of 'SELENA'! Today we celebrate and honor Selena's legacy and music," Lopez wrote on Instagram along with a clip of herself from an episode of "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

"This movie means so much to me ... Selena and her family mean a lot to me, and I was so lucky to be chosen to play her," Lopez tweeted.

In the video Lopez recalls how nervous she was while filming "Selena" because she was a new actress at the time and wanted to do her justice. However, her

co-star Edward James Olmos reassured her she was doing a great job.

"When I did the movie 'Selena,' I remember this so clearly, I studied her tapes, to the steps, to the fingers, to her lips, everything I did was five steps to the right. I just didn't wanna get anything wrong. And then Edward James Olmos, who was playing my father in the movie, he is an amazing actor, came to me and said 'you know everything, just let it go, don't think about it, and be.' We filmed that big scene in the astrodome with the purple outfit and it was magic. You have to let it go at some point and just do your thing," said Lopez.

Lopez shared credits in the Warner Bros film directed by Gregory Nava, alongside costars Edward James Olmos, Constance Marie, Jackie Guerra, Jacob Vargas, and John Seda who played the family of the ill-fated interpreter. Lopez described her acting experience with her cast members as magical.

"I'll never forget this time in my life and it's an honor as an artist to have been part of the magic that is this movie," said Lopez.

Lopez's performance as Selena completely transformed the actress/singer's career and gave her a significant boost, thus she was able to make a name for herself and became known as "JLo" or "Jenny From the Block," an ordinary Latina girl from the Bronx who took Hollywood by storm.

The Quintanilla family and movie cast celebrated the film's achievement after being inducted into the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress last December.

"Selena's life, music and the film became touchstones in Latin American culture, and her infectious appeal crossed over to audiences of all kinds," the Library of Congress said.

Olmos shared with the Library of Congress that the film "stands out as a universal family story that happens to be about Mexican-Americans along the Texas-Mex-



ico border."

"It will stand the test of time," Olmos added. "It's a masterpiece because it allows people to learn about themselves by watching other peoples' culture."

It's worth mentioning that this comes after the big announcement from Selena's father, Abraham Quintanilla, that a new album will be released in April. The highly anticipated album will have 13 songs recorded by the artist before her death and with new arrangements by her brother, A.B. Quintanilla.

Selena managed to overcome the barriers that came her way as a female artist. The Tejano music scene was largely dominated by men in the early 1990s. Many warned her she was doing the wrong type of music, but she loved the genre so much that she ignored their comments. When Selena arrived on the scene she proved them wrong. The 23-year-old quickly became the Tejano genre's biggest and most successful star.

In 1994, "Selena Live!" won the Grammy for best Mexican-American album, and Selena was credited with bringing Tejano music into the mainstream.

The film does a fantastic job at following Selena's journey from a small kid in Texas with a dream to becoming an international musical legend. Despite not speaking Spanish fluently at the start of her career, Selena took her father's advice and studied the language as much as possible to become fully bilingual and proudly represent her Mexican identity. Selena is considered an icon of Latin music, she was the first Mexican-American pop star to achieve mainstream success.

Although not exactly a box office hit when it was initially released in 1997, "Selena," 25 years later, has become a cultural touchstone among Latinos and is recognized in today's society as historically and culturally important. Selena managed to fully capture both of her cultures in her art and keeps inspiring people to this day.

WRITING THE NOW PRESENTS...

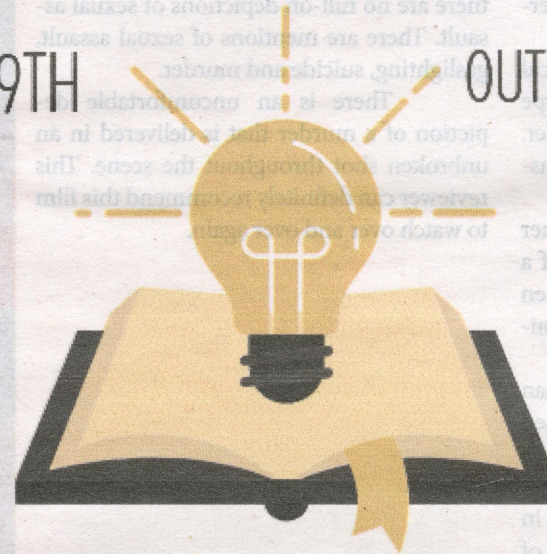
# SPEAKING THE NOW

MONDAY MAY 9TH

2:15PM

OUTSIDE IN B BUILDING

COURTYARD



JOIN US AS WE TALK ABOUT:

ABORTION RIGHTS. LABOR RELATIONS. THE WOMEN OF JUAREZ.

DISABILITY. FOOD REDLINING. MISTREATMENT OF MUSLIMS.

CORPORATE GREED.



# Can You Guess What Every Woman's Worst Nightmare Is?

## Promising Young Woman Review

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor

"Promising Young Woman," a film that was released in late-2020, is centered around how people respond to sexual assault and how rape culture persists in our community in various ways.

This is director Emerald Fennell's debut, having worked as an actress in several other shows and films before this film.

Cassie Thomas, a former medical student who dropped out due to the rape and suicide of her best friend, Nina Fisher. Fisher was raped by Al Monroe, who assaulted her at a school party.

Ever since what happened to her friend, Thomas has been working out of a coffee shop, while occasionally holding men accountable for their crimes involving misogynist actions.

Along the way, she formulates a plan to bring justice to the crime that happened against her best friend, as well as to be able to hold people accountable for said actions.

Out of the people she encounters in this plan—her old college friend, the dean of the college she and Nina were in as well as the culprit who assaulted Nina—only one person is truly repentant for their part in the event.

Part of what makes the film so effective is that the characters are in denial as to what happened to Nina or will not take responsibility for their actions in the film. I was blown away by the scene with Dean Walker and Thomas, where when it came to Nina's sexual assault, the Dean went by the "He said, she said" argument.

However, when it came to her daughter, the dean was driven in a instant to find her daughter so as to prevent her from being sexually assaulted.

This film makes for an effective take on how much rape culture permeates throughout several social circles as well as how women, when it comes to situations like rape between a male and a female, will perpetuate this mindset of not taking the situation seriously.

Even when it came to seeing the

actual perpetrator denying his part in assaulting Nina, it felt hard to look at how much people did not want to see the reality of what had happened.

For those that want to see the film, there are no full-on depictions of sexual assault. There are mentions of sexual assault, gaslighting, suicide and murder.

There is an uncomfortable depiction of a murder that is delivered in an unbroken shot throughout the scene. This reviewer can definitely recommend this film to watch over and over again.



Photo by Rodolfo Clix from Pexels



# Michael Pollan Demonstrates That Humans Love Psychoactive Plants

By: Monty Stites, Editor-in-Chief

"This is Your Mind on Plants," is journalist and author Michael Pollan's second consecutive book to cover the topic of drugs, in this case two illicit substances and one licit and commonly used drug.

His last book, "How to Change Your Mind," focused entirely on psychedelics and reviewed lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), psilocybin (magic mushrooms) and N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT). The book was a wonderful three-part read whereby Pollan covered the history of psychedelic research and its banishment, the global resurgence and renaissance of this psychedelic research and essays of his own personal experience taking each of the three above chemicals.

In "This is Your Mind Plants," Pollan again uses a three-part style in his writing, except in this case each part covers not only a different drug but a different class of drug: a sedative, stimulant and a psychedelic.

The first section consists almost entirely of an essay Pollan wrote in the mid-90's detailing his experiences growing poppy flowers, making and ingesting poppy tea out of these plants and navigating the cloudy rules

and regulations surrounding the manufacture, as the federal government calls it, of opium poppies.

The second section is entirely about caffeine, with which the author experiments not by taking it—as he has been a regular user for decades—but rather by abstaining from caffeine for a month. Pollan dives deep into the nature of caffeine, how many people use it, what its withdrawals are like and how his productivity

and motivation was affected by its absence.

The third covers mescaline, which is found in the peyote and San Pedro cacti. The former is actively used in the Native American Church as part of its religious practice and is therefore, constitutionally protected by the First Amendment.

Of these three drugs, mescaline is the closest to the category of drugs Pollan covered in "How to Change Your Mind" and is that which Aldous Huxley—author of "Brave New World"—wrote about taking in his 1950's essay, "The Doors of Perception."

Pollan's writing is filled with honesty, a thorough exploration of the information—and disinformation—surrounding these compounds and the not-so-infrequent witty quip at the expense of federal and state governments and the regulations regarding drugs and their medical and recreational use.

At just over 200 pages, compared to the—fun to read—tome that is "How to Change Your Mind," "This is Your Mind on Plants" is a breezy but informative read for those who find themselves flustered by the continuing war on drugs, the emergence of the "opioid epidemic" and the complicated relationship we individually and culturally have towards psychoactive substances.





# Book Review: "My Dark Vanessa"

By: Leslie Lozada, Campus Life Editor

"My Dark Vanessa," written by Kate Elizabeth Russel, is a book concerning the long-term effects of childhood sexual assault. The year is 2000 and Vanessa Wye, a 15-year-old student who recently transferred to a boarding school, is manipulated by her English teacher, Jacob Strane. Seventeen years later, Wye, now an adult, is still dealing with the repercussions of what happened, with a tinge of denial, even as a former student of Strane is shouting about who Strane is on social media. Over the course of the book, it flashes back to her life before and after Strane starts to abuse her, leading up to the point where she had to leave her school, because of Strane.

Wye is not what you call a "perfect victim," a myth that is perpetrated as a response to sexual assault. As the book centered around her life, we are privy to her internal thoughts, some of which are hard to sit through, as at times, Wye would go as far as defending Jacob, even talking with him about his students. Yet, there is a clear distinction between how much the situation affected her and how much in denial she is in due to it.

There are several commentaries on rape culture in this book, as there are different responses to what Wye goes through, and later Taylor Birch, who, in comparison to Wye, went through a less brutal situation with Strane, yet she was more outspoken of what Strane has done to Birch. It also sheds light on how certain institutions are complicit in how they respond to certain cases, given the length that Strane was able to stay as a teacher

after what happened to Vanessa.

This was a tough book to read in one sitting, due to how Russel's detailed prose makes what happened to Wye very life-like, from the manipulations Strane put her through during the beginning stages of them getting to know each other, as well as the sexually explicit scenes. There was one scene in particular where Wye has a sexual encounter with Strane, and while she is going through the assault, the thoughts that she had throughout were very disheartening to see, as it is clear, even if she didn't want to admit it, she didn't want to go through with it.

It was also tough to see how much Wye ended up depending on romanticizing her relationship with Strane, in part to

make sense of what ended up happening to her. Similar to other real-life situations, where there are survivors that end up either in denial or didn't know any better. It was tough to feel for Wye when one moment, she's is all for Strane, another moment, she feels this disgust.

—  
If you are planning to read this book, there are a lot of scenes involving sexual assault. There are additional depictions of suicide, pedophilia, gaslighting, and physical abuse. For myself, it took months to get through the entire book, due to how many of the manipulations went on throughout the book by Strane as well as how much Wye ended up in her present. If you are able to read this book, it is worth

the read, and this reviewer would highly recommend it to others.



Photo by Ivan Aleksic on Unsplash



# "You Sound Like A White Girl The Case For Rejecting Assimilation" by Julissa Arce Review

By: Angie Ybarra, Writer

Julissa Arce's book "You Sound Like a White Girl: The Case for Rejecting Assimilation" NAILED IT! I loved this book because even though I was born in the United States, and am American, this book told my story. I did not know this happens to us all to some degree or another. I was a happy young Mexican-American girl who went to school with a sea of white people. Blonde hair, blue eyes, and pierogies everywhere.

I was happy just having these people as my friends, I was a pre-teen and new to the school and neighborhood. I wanted to fit in and my parents wanted that too. I was told not to speak Spanish, not even at home. I had to fit in and be a good girl. It would be the only way that I would be able to make it, to have a chance, and make the American dream come true for me.

Arce is able to weave in and out of this relationship, that those of color crave to be accepted, and that we were able to assimilate accordingly. The most important thing that the author was able to do was to broach the subject of why we want to be white, what pain we take because of wanting the white to rub off, and when or will we ever be really accepted into white America.

It seems like I never really knew that I was in the midst of this war, the war between our Latinx and American heritages fighting to be seen as equal. I went to a Catholic private school, my skin is a warm caramel color year-round and I had flowing curly thick hair but I still fit in, or so I thought.

I was a novelty. It was good to have a friend of a different race. It also did not hurt that I had six older brothers that the girls all seemed to have crushes on. Blindly I went through life without giving it all a second thought, I was Mexican-American and I never gave it a thought. In all honesty, not every one of my white school friends had me as a friend just because I was Mexican-American.

In fact, almost 40 years later I call many of them my friends. We see each other

as a family regardless of the color of our skin.

Thankfully Arce takes the reader back and tells our tales. We are given a re-education on the history we should know. I do not say we were intentionally lied to, but we do not have the full story for many things in history.

The Latinx stories are varied, the Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Honduran, Spanish, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Dominican, and so on are all different. But white is just white, right? Arce takes the reader to some very uncomfortable places and asks questions we might not want to be asked.

The questions are about examining our own attitudes. Do we make it harder on each other simply because the color of our skin is different from one another? In order to do better, we must learn more. I highly recommend this book, not only to those of Latinx communities but to those that wish to be allies to their Latinx brothers and sisters. Take your time reading this. I ask that you research what you question and make yourself aware of what history really is and not what some want it to be.



Photo by Justine Camacho on Unsplash



# Artravaganza Showcase Features NEIU Talent at Fine Arts Center Gallery

By: Monty Stites, Editor-in-Chief  
Photos provided by Xareni Uriostegui

NEIU held this semester's art student showcase, titled Artravaganza, that displayed selected art of art students in the Fine Arts Center Gallery, Building E.

The event drew dozens of attendees and presented various mediums of art: photography, sculptures, pastel drawings, paintings, mixed media, and an interactive display to name just some. Below are photos of some of the Artravaganza exhibits.

The Fine Arts Center Gallery is open every Monday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays.



A photo from Diego Cruz's Installation.



Some of Lauren Kelly's work from her Senior Show.



Mary Sheehan posing with her award.



Photo of the Awards Ceremony in the Gallery.





## Sports Snacks

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

***Did you know*** that the US spends over \$1 billion a day paying the interest on our national debt?



Want to know how that impacts you?



Make a change! Scan the QR code and sign the pledge sheet!



SCAN ME





# Sports Snacks

By: Erwin Lopez Rada, News and Sports Editor

## Chicago Fire Goes Scoreless 3 Games Loses Positions On Table

Chicago Fire's brilliant start of the season had suddenly become opaque: in the last 3 exits of the team, they lost 2 games, 1-0 to Orlando City and 3-0 to Minnesota and collected only one point from the LA Galaxy visit to Soldier Field.

The main issue of the squad, as it has been in the last four years, is their inability to produce goals. A superb Gabriel Slonina and the defense commanded by Rafael Czichos have completed 5 clean sheets in 8 games, but the team has just scored 5 goals, one from the penalty point, in those same matches.

Ezra Hendrickson, Chicago Fire's coach, said to the club's website: "I don't think there's a lack of communication. I thought maybe we just made some bad decisions tonight, especially in the first half. You know, we have opportunities, like you said, to play a guy who may be in a better position and we chose to do otherwise with the ball. So these are things that we have to look at this game again and talk about it and discuss it with the team because we need to improve going forward."

Chicago received 3 goals by the end of the game, after losing midfielder Federico Navarro when he received his second yellow card of the night. The Fire hosts the New York Red Bulls at Soldier Field, on April 30 at 7:00pm.

## Bulls Suffer Crushing Defeats Against Milwaukee In Playoffs Weekend

The Chicago Bulls disappointed the fans that packed the United Center on two consecutive weekend nights by losing both games by more than 20 points against the Bucks.

The Saturday game saw the Bulls missing easy shots, which made it impossible for them to follow the scoring peace of



The team needs to keep the winning spirit to make it this year to the playoff. Picture: Archive Chicago Fire plays at home during MLS 2021 Season. Erwin Lopez Rada/ The Independent.

Atentokounmpo and company. The final score was 119-95. The Bulls started the campaign with an impressive record that pinched slowly, like Chicagoans' tires in winter. They qualified 6th to the playoffs and for that reason had to face the Milwaukee Bucks—NBA Champions—in their first round. They now are at the cliffs edge, losing the series 3 to 1 and having to mount a comeback in their last game at Jordan's house and then take that momentum across the State line and beat the Bucks twice away.

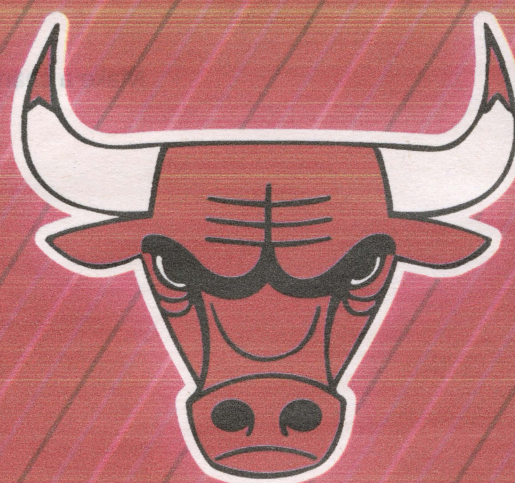


Photo Credits: flickr, Michael Tipton, 2009.



# Meet The Media

## Que Ondee Sola The First 50 Years

Northeastern Illinois University  
AUDITORIUM  
5500 N St Louis Ave,  
Chicago, IL 60625

Thursday, April 28th, 2022  
Presentation 11 AM - 4 PM

Conversatorio with Co-founder of  
Que Ondee Sola, Yale Professor,  
former NEIU professor, NEIU alumni,  
and WZRD alumni, **Dr. Carlos Torre**

Including Student media visual slideshow

Latino and Native American  
Film Festival film screening



### After Party Celebration

Eat together celebration in cafeteria  
4PM - 5PM

*\*Event attendees will receive a ticket  
to the after party*



Including panel of NEIU Student  
Media Board Members  
Lecturas de Revista Que Ondee Sola  
SEEDS Literary Journal stage readings  
INDEPENDENT Newspaper  
stage readings  
WZRD Chicago DJ sets  
& Special Guests







# NEIU Events Calendar



## April 26-May 10th

### Tuesday April 26

Percussion Studio Showcase  
3:05- 4:05 p.m.  
Main Campus, Auditorium

NEIU Wind Ensemble  
7:30 - 9:00p.m.  
Main Campus, Auditorium

### Tuesday May 3

Spring Plant Sale  
10 am- 5pm  
Main Campus, Village Square

NEIU Jazz Combo  
3:05-4:05pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

NEIU Choral Program Social  
Justice Sing-Along  
7:30-8:30pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

### Thursday, May 5

Clarinet Masterclass with John Bruce Yeh  
4:00-5:00pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

### Wednesday April 27

Panel: NEIU Students and Alumni Engaged in  
Community-Based Health Equity Work  
6:00-7:30p.m.  
Virtual, Zoom

Chicago Film Society Presents "The Marrying  
Kind"  
7:30 - 9:00pm  
Main Campus, Auditorium

Woodwind Studios Showcase  
7:30-9:30pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

### Wednesday May 4

Chicago Film Society Presents "City Lights"  
7:30-9:30pm  
Main Campus, Auditorium

Voice Studios Showcase  
7:30-9:30pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

### Repeat Events

Fracture: Data, Diagrams, and the Material  
World  
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday May 2, 9  
and Wednesday May 4

11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday May 5  
and Thursday May 7  
10 a.m.- 2p.m. Friday May 8  
Main Campus, Fine Arts Center Gallery  
-Through May 20

### Thursday April 28

#ProudToBeNEIU Day: Table event  
11:00am-3:00pm  
Main Campus: Village Square

Meet the Media: Que Ondee Sola - The First 50 Years  
11:00am-4:00pm  
Main Campus, Auditorium

Arbor Day: Wishing on the Leaves of Change  
12:15-1:30pm  
Main Campus, starts at BBH lobby  
For more info: Melinda Storie ms-storie@neiu.edu

Transfer Social  
3:00-4:00pm  
Main Campus, Golden Eagles Room (SU 103)

String Studio Showcase  
3:05-4:05pm  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award  
Lecture: Dr. Sarah Cordell  
3:30-4:30 p.m.  
Main Campus, Alumni Hall South

U.S. Army Band Clarinet Trio Masterclass  
4:30- 5:30pm Thursday, April 28  
Main Campus, Recital Hall

NEIU Guitar Ensemble  
7:30 - 9:30pm  
Main Campus, Auditorium