

KAY DUNHAM-TORRES

NOBODY CALLS ME KAYLA



ILLUSTRATOR



GRAPHIC DESIGNER



STORYTELLER

HELLO

I'M KAY, NOBODY CALLS ME KAYLA

My partner calls me a cartoon character, my friends call me a force of nature, but I call myself a storyteller. I'm Kay, an illustrator and graphic designer based in Seattle, WA, on a mission to make the world a little different—and a lot better—through art. Fueled by adventure and the stories I collect along the way, I create with the goal of leaving a positive impact wherever I go.

My journey has taken me across animation, illustration, and design, giving me a wealth of experiences to draw from, literally and figuratively. From creating a hit animated music video to interviewing authors and movie stars, my career has been anything but ordinary. And the adventure is far from over.

If you're looking for a creative collaborator, a fellow storyteller, or just someone to swap wild ideas with, let's connect. Whether it's working together, sharing stories, or just geeking out over great design, I'd love to hear from you.

— Kay



Quarantine (Interzone) 2024 @ Lazeretto, Spain

MY SKILLS AND SUPERPOWERS

PROGRAMS

Adobe Illustrator



Adobe Photoshop



Adobe InDesign



Adobe After Effects



Procreate



Google Workspace



Microsoft Office



TECHNICAL

Digital Illustration



Traditional Illustration



Graphic Design



Vector Design



Typography



Animated Illustration



Art Direction



SUPERPOWERS

Public Speaking



Love it, used to teach it, makes me happy

Teaching

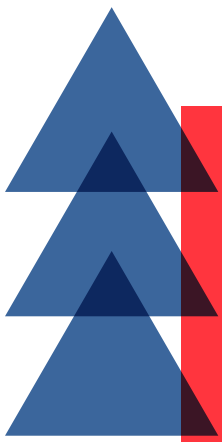


Art, leadership, presentation skills, and more

Synesthesia



For lack of a better explanation: I can taste color (???)



GRAPHIC DESIGN
BOLD AND BRIGHT TO
TELL THEIR TALES



A PARENTS' LOVE

The story behind Caffeto 21 is built on a parents' love for their child.

Caffeto 21 was an American Dream pursued by Mexican immigrants to make a better life for their child with Down Syndrome. When they realized the world wasn't designed for a child like theirs, they packed up their life as successful café owners in Mexico and moved to America in search of more assistance and support.

The Caffeto 21 brand is designed around their child. The 21 refers to the additional or malformed 21st chromosome that children with Down Syndrome have. The three squares represent the appearance of the 21st chromosome, only adding to the visual story so important to these loving parents making a world for their child.



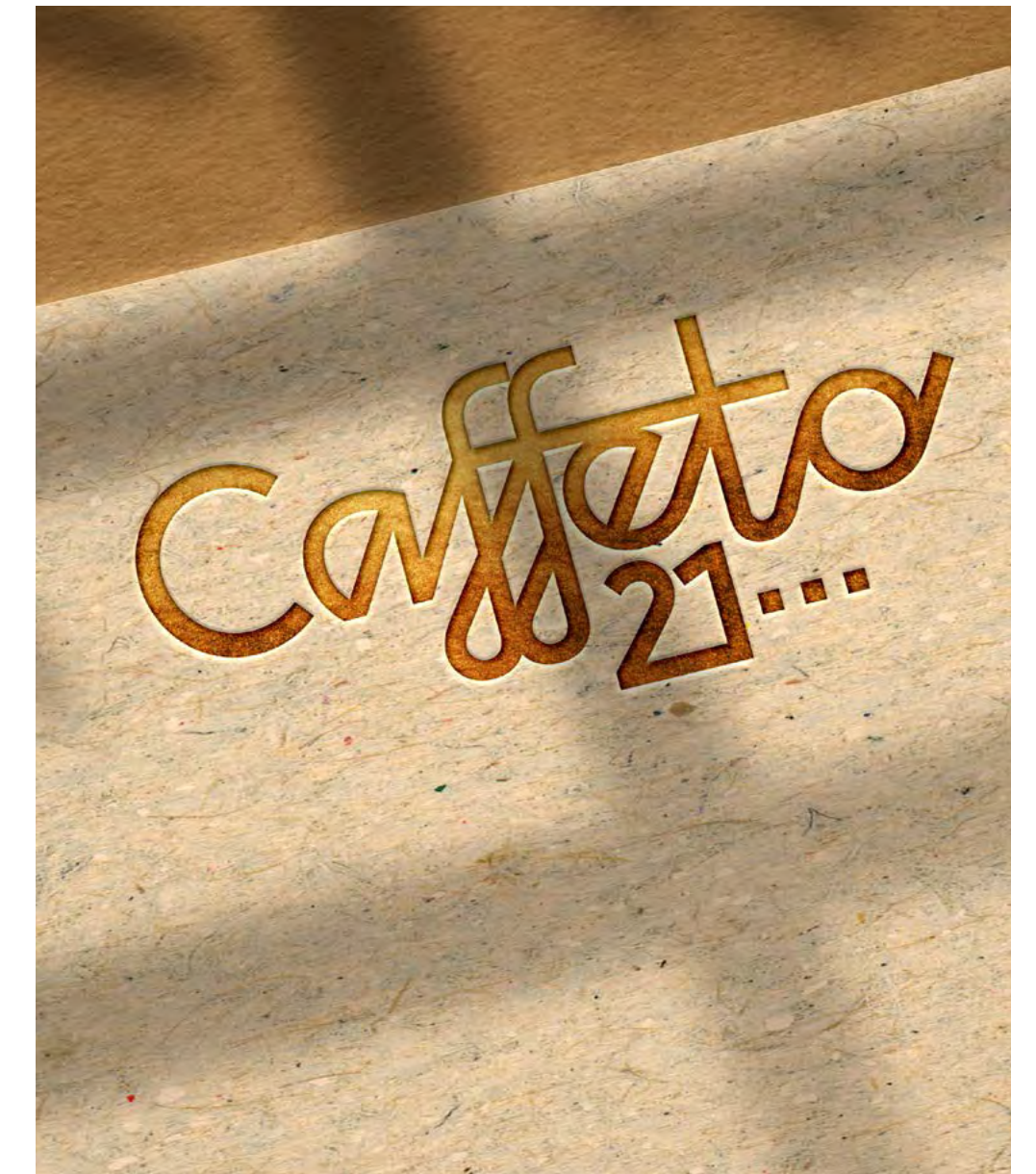
STAFF UNIFORM SHIRTS

The uniforms are kept simple with the logo design front and center. But as important the logo is to the brand, so are colors. Each uniform fits into a classic coffee color from a milky latte to a dark roast.



TO-GO CUPS

The beauty of the to-go cup is the ease of advertising your business. The design best features the brand without deliberately saying "café". This is done through color and shape language that follow the Caffeto 21 brand.



PRINT MATERIAL

Sustainable material is important to the owners as they strive to not only improve Down Syndrome awareness, but to advocate for the environment. Fortunately for the brand as well is most environmentally sustainable products come in tans and warm colors.

CREEPY PUPPETS

ASSET BUILDING

They may look a little unconventional, but these little guys were designed to help children learn maths and English. With engagement and questions like “Can you count all the buttons?” or “Tell us the story of Pebble and where he comes from.”, the off-natured look to these characters is what makes them such great teachers. Research shows that children, and even some adults, create strong relationships with fictional characters and narratives. Even something seemingly unimportant like helping a character achieve a mission has been shown to contribute to information retention and build empathy in developing children. Archie, Richie, Pebble, and Ike help kids all over the world learn, grow, and become better people.



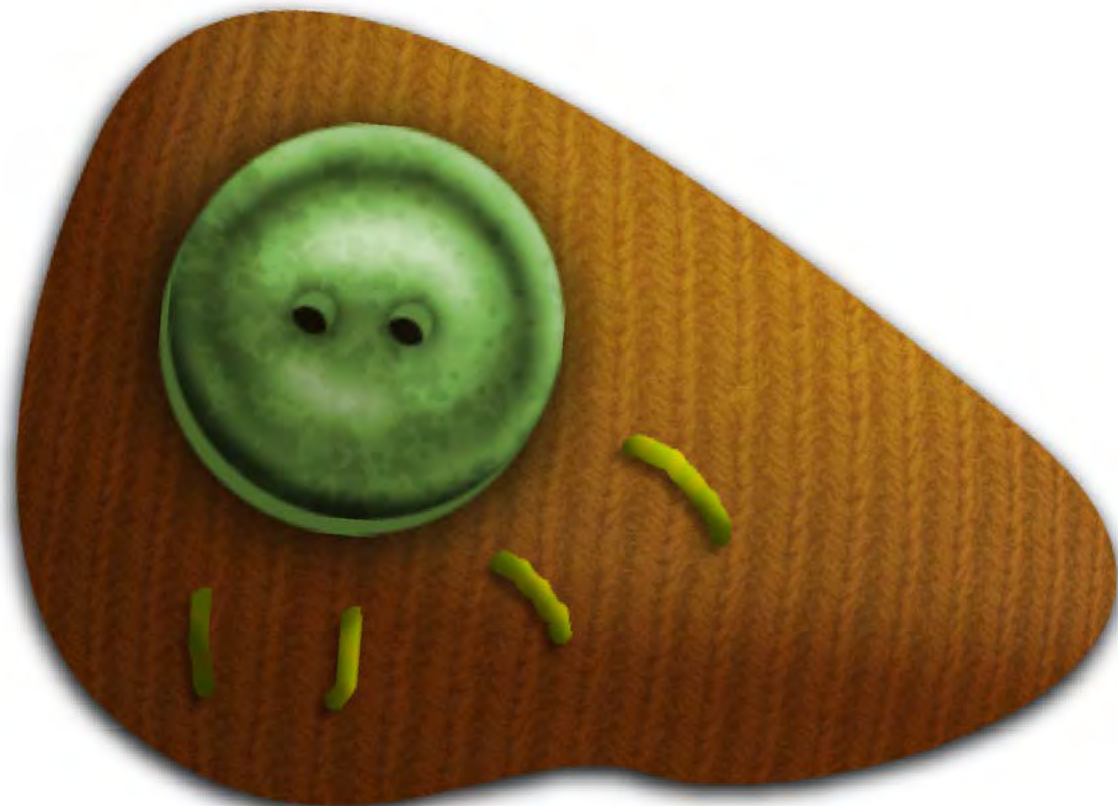
Arnold



Richie



Pebble



Ike

CREEPY PUPPETS

TEMPLATES

To go along with the puppet characters, I created a world (templates) for these characters to exist in while teachers show lessons and create interactive educational games and activities.

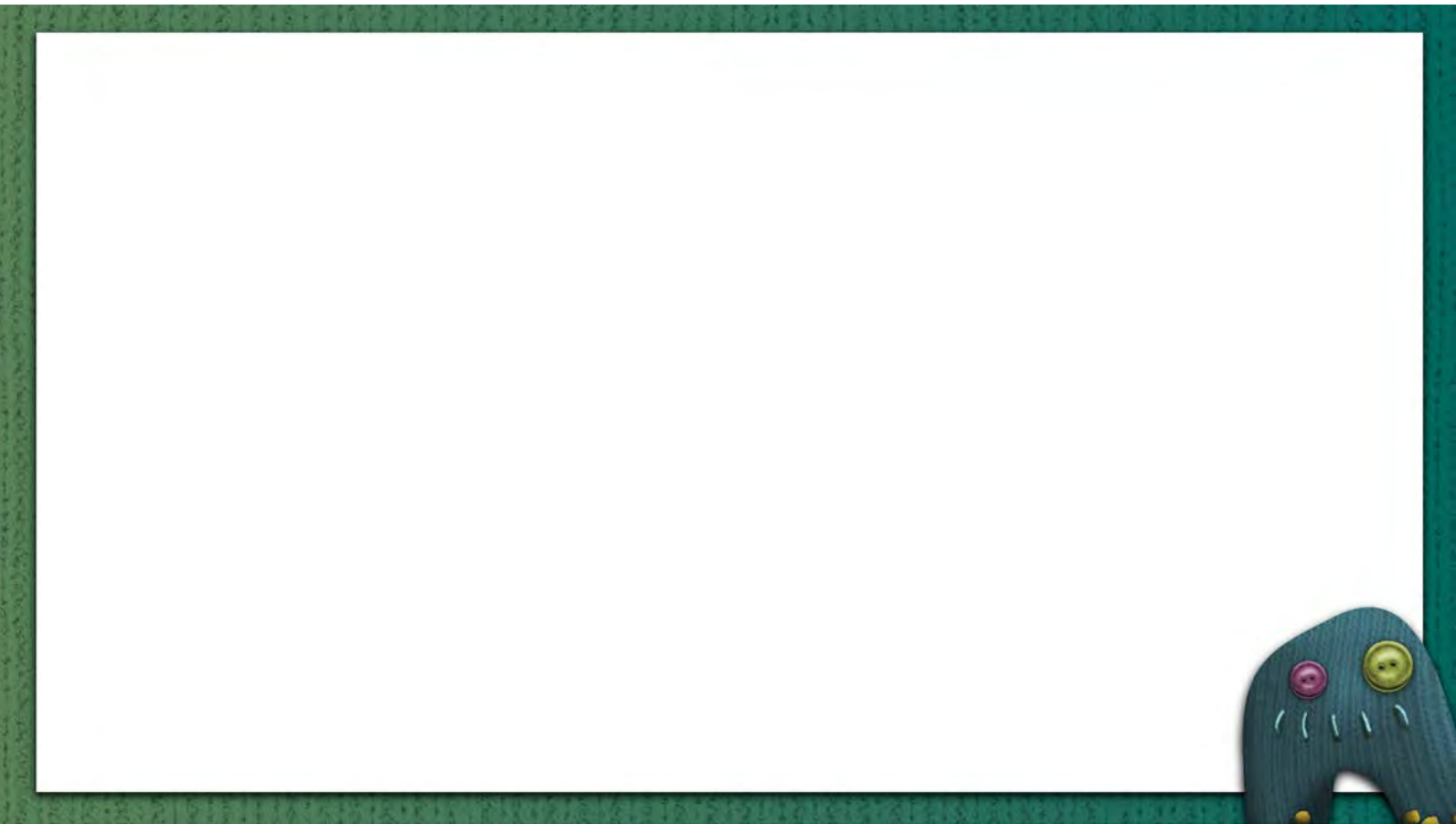
It's been shown that early educational templates that utilize a theme for learning are powerful tools in childhood education. Through world building, they provide structured, engaging, and developmentally appropriate ways for children to explore key learning areas in a variety of subjects. These themed templates are not the traditional rigid documents but instead can be used as flexible frameworks to integrate the natural benefits of play-based learning with guided activities centered around a unifying world.



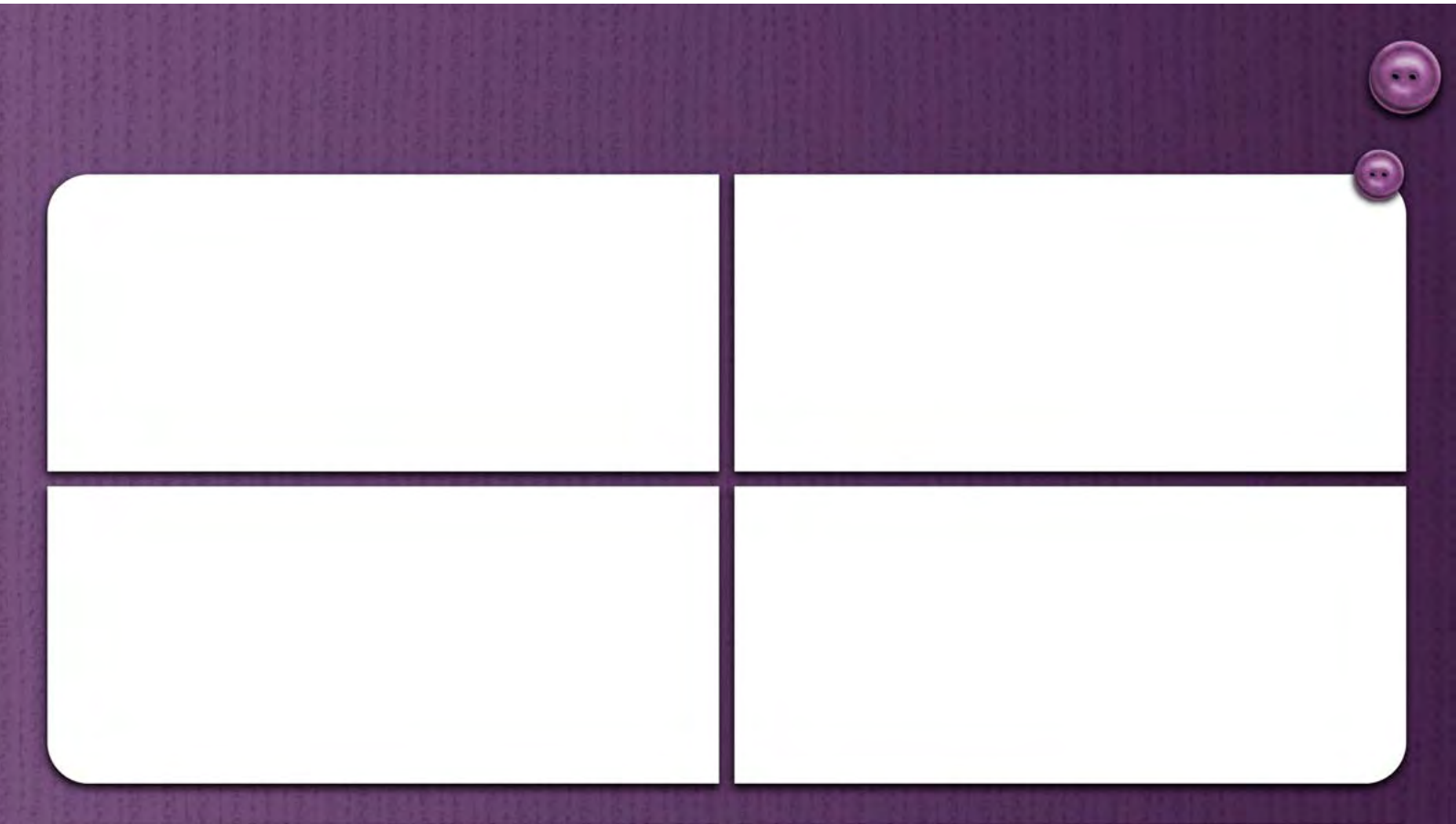
Header Page



Title Page



Whiteboard Page



4 Column Page

INKTOBER

A BRANDING CHALLENGE

In October of 2024, I took on the challenge of the Internet trend “Inktober” and applied it to branding. Inktober is traditionally done by illustrators and painters across social media, who respond to a daily prompt with an ink drawing. But I thought: why not apply it to design?

By interpreting each daily prompt as a branding opportunity, I created a fictional brand identity from scratch every day. This approach not only sharpened my creative agility under time constraints, but it also allowed me to explore a wide range of industries, visual styles, and tone-of-voice strategies. The daily themes forced me to think quickly, conceptually, and outside of my comfort zone, simulating the kind of rapid ideation and pivoting often required in real-world client work.

It also proved to be a powerful portfolio builder. While the brands were fake, each and every one had the potential to showcase a different facet of my design capabilities: logo creation, color theory, typography, packaging, and brand storytelling. Inktober became a month-long sandbox of experimentation, pushing me to develop ideas that were not only visually compelling, but also strategically sound and plain cool.

Using Inktober as a branding framework transformed a primarily illustrative challenge into a multidimensional design exercise. It was both creatively liberating and practically useful, giving me a self-imposed structure to generate a cohesive body of work in just 31 days.



Expedition



Exotic



Nomadic



Remote

ILLUSTRATION
THE WORLD THROUGH
MY EYES

ALIVE

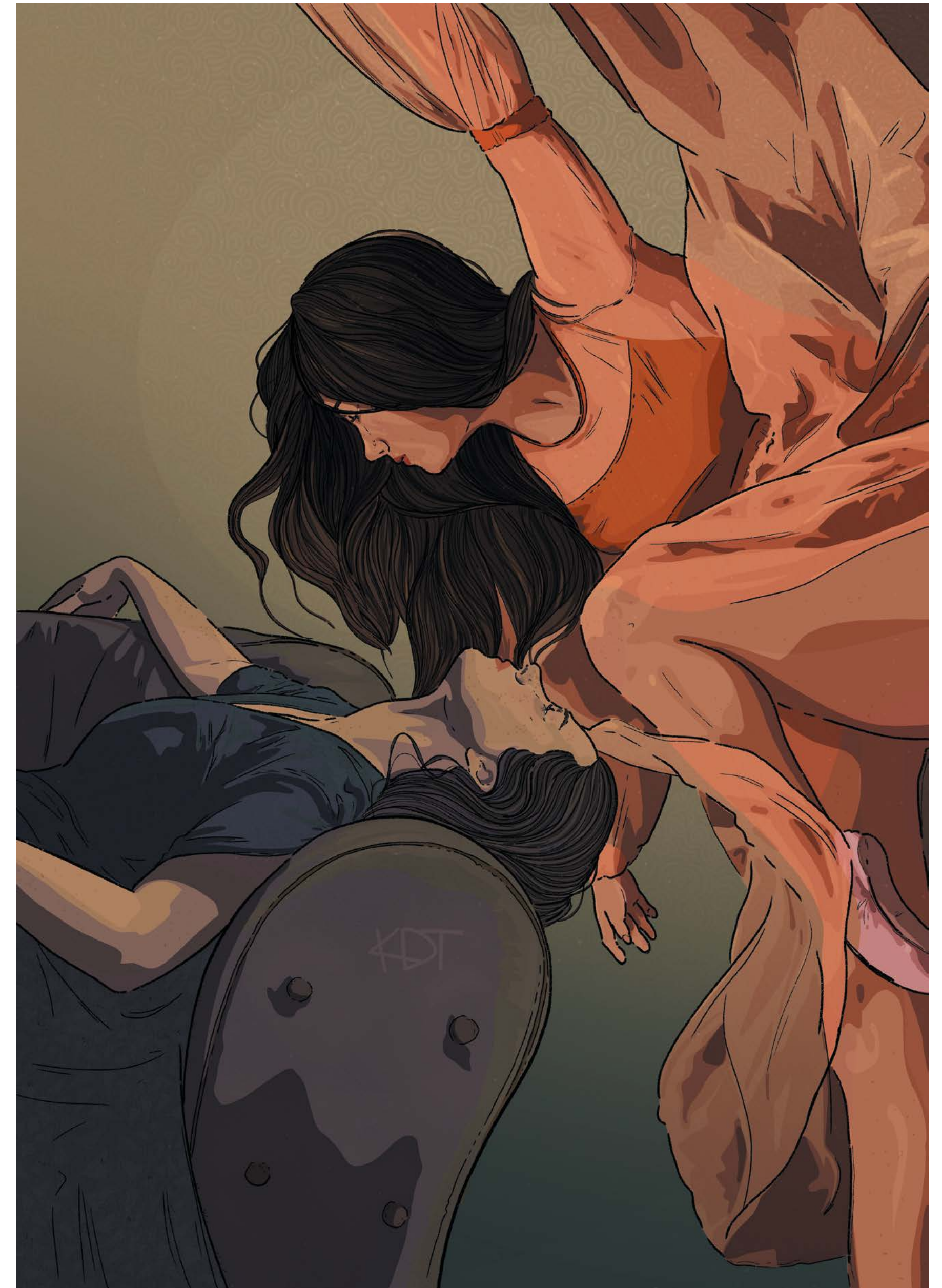
OCT. 2023

Procreate

Inspired by the journey of a cancer survivor, this story captures the profound struggles of living in a body that feels like a prison that you can't escape.

As my friend endured the trials of a cancer diagnosis, chemotherapy, and the relentless fight she must face everyday, she revealed that the most harrowing aspect wasn't the treatment or the illness itself. Instead, it was the heartbreaking realization that her own body was betraying her, holding her back from the simple joys of life—dancing, laughing, and moving freely in a body that once felt like her own. Making the feeling worse was not being understood by those around who aren't facing the same constant battle for their own survival.

Movement was the very essence of her existence. "Alive" embodies the unseen challenges of inhabiting a body that no longer feels like it's working for you, highlighting the internal battle of a life yearning to be lived fully.



BALLERINA

DEC. 2024

Procreate

My whole life, my grandmother told me, always with pride, stories from her years as a ballerina. They weren't just memories; they were rituals passed down, woven into the rhythm of daily life. Even now, in her late seventies, she spins around the kitchen with the same quiet grace, a spoon in hand, stirring soup like it's choreographed. She pliés while putting on her makeup and she rises into a soft and masterful relevé to reach the top shelf of the fridge.

Once a ballerina, always a ballerina.

But beneath the elegance lies a body shaped by discipline, and pain. The artistry of ballet is inseparable from the secret physical toll it takes on the delicate ballerinas. The arch of a foot may look effortless, but it's been molded through years of strain. Her back aches. Her ankles cramp. And nothing bears the weight of her career more than her feet, scarred by years en pointe. Pointe shoes, those iconic symbols of grace, are worn until they bruise the skin, break the toes, and are dried with blood. Then they're thrown away, quietly, like spent tools of beauty.

This piece is a meditation on that duality. On the reverence we give to grace, and the invisibility of the cost behind it. Ballet—like much of womanhood, like much of art—is expected to be effortless, silent, beautiful. But it's not. It's repetition. It's pressure. It's performance built on pain.



MOURNING ROUTINE

In recent years, each morning has felt like a battle. Across the globe, we as humans have been quietly carrying our own personal, professional, and environmental struggles; each one a weight that builds until some mornings feel impossible to face. The heavy weight of existence weighing deep in our bones. It's a collective ache, a quiet grief that lingers behind our routines and smiles.

This turmoiling, emotional landscape is the foundation of this work.

In this piece, a palette of deep greens and blues wraps around a figure with pale, almost sickly skin, creating a visual tension between internal heaviness and our fragility. The lighting is dramatic and unforgiving, carving shadows across the canvas like scars. The eyes are vacant of hope and happiness, intentionally so, not out of apathy, but exhaustion. They echo the way grief hollows a person from the inside out.

These elements work together to hold space for the kind of pain that often goes unspoken. It's a portrait not just of a person, but of the emotional residue that loss, fear, and uncertainty leave behind. Through it, I'm not just telling my story, I'm honoring the stories we all carry.



CONTACT
LET'S CREATE STORIES

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