



VAST/O

an exhibition by Carolina Martins, Alexandra Alberda and Natalie Woolf for Bournemouth University

July 2019

## Experience more!

To access our animations, please follow the instructions.



1. Install the **Artive** app



2. Look for images marked with the **Artive icon**



3. Hold your smartphone **over the image**

cover: Natalie Woolf painting on glass tests with Francisca Coutinho

design: nystagmus

©authors

## *VAST/O*

*or a disease of body language*

My first name is Ana. If I were a word, I would be the word vast. Ana is a palindrome. When I look at this name, I see it simultaneously expanding and contracting, containing in itself the wholeness of emptiness, the paradox between that which is simultaneously boundless and delimited. Boundless beyond what I cannot see, and delimited by my own sight. When I look at my first name, I see an intermittent bridge, connecting what is inside with that which is outside of my body. Then, as I gradually pull away from it, mentally spinning the “A” upside down until it becomes a “V”, the bridge collapses, and the abyss emerges.

While reading Bachelard's analysis on the use of the French word *vaste* in Baudelaire's work, I became aware of the differences between the sound of the English word *vast* (open) and the Portuguese word equivalent, *vasto* (closed). At first these phonetic cues lead to an exploration of breathing and the respiratory system, which Natalie found particularly interesting, having led her to reflect on the movements made by the mouth while uttering those words. Following this awareness of the oral mechanics involved in the enunciation of these words, I began to visualise the letter "O", the last letter of the Portuguese word, enclosing the English word in its entirety, realising that this was in fact a visual symbol of my own agoraphobia: the "O" swallowing all the other letters, disorientating them and making them vanish within its circularity. Through her use of painting on glass technique, Natalie was able to give expression to the idea of space as something slippery, the trap of agoraphobia having the ability to quickly metamorphose into claustrophobia, contradicting Yi-Fu Tuan's famous quote:

"Place is security, space is freedom", which I borrowed for the title of one of my first pieces, consisting of a set of glass panels that went to make up a multicursal comics poem.

Taking advantage of my own experience suffering from space-related anxieties, the concept of *VAST/O* was thought out so as to reflect paradoxical spatial experiences, combining actual and animated spaces, the use of both static and moving images in relation to a specific architectural space, as well as the use of animation not only through its traditional channels, but also by means of apps. As we are still in its developmental stage, we are still testing the viability of using the latter, experimenting and attempting to figure out in which context(s) they could fit, or, on the contrary, in which context(s) they would disturb the reading with non-meaningful pauses. As such, our main issue at the moment is how these apps may be able to expand the installation beyond its architectural space without working merely as emulative or archivist devices.

*VAST/O*'s spaces are (un)habitable, repelling one's presence, like entities for whom the human body is perceived as something foreign. *VAST/O* is about feeling detached from one's own body, which simultaneously reveals itself as both a mobile site and an immobile alien that is not able to relate to the surrounding spaces. *VAST/O* may be viewed as a metaleptic body, an alien that, ironically, is unable to make use of all its vast muscle to walk. This immobility is a physical consequence of a psychological state triggered by trauma, an emotional blast that brings with it phobic responses to consequent situations. As it so happens, it was also a catastrophic blast that gave birth to Phobos and Deimos, the Mars moons named after the mythological twins: Deimos, dread, always lurking just behind Phobos, fear, waiting for him to set in and attack. These satellites serve as perfect metaphors for the brain-body interactions and the physicality of emotions such as fear, panic

and detachment that *VAST/O* aims to both embody and elicit.

It is our goal that *VAST/O* allows for a fracture where interior and exterior spaces expand in different directions, as prompted by both visual and textual cues, resonating throughout its multiple layers and beyond its reading.

— Carolina Martins

## the exhibition at BU

The exhibition at BU is a preview of VAST/O. The final work will take place at Atelier Concorde in Lisbon later this year from November 25-December 5. The works shown will translate the thoughts that have helped them come to life. João Carola's and Carolina Martins' like glass, for instance, a poem concerning interior struggle and resilience, paved the way for discussions concerning mental health. Following on from this, Natalie Woolf's and Francisca Coutinho's drawings and animations served as aesthetic vehicles for Carolina Martins' words and talks regarding her experiences, also evident in her exhibit postcards.

The exhibition was also greatly enriched by the inclusion of works by other artists within the graphic medicine field, including Zu Dominiak, Tyler Page, Jac Batey, Nervous Comics, Candice Cummings and Rebekah

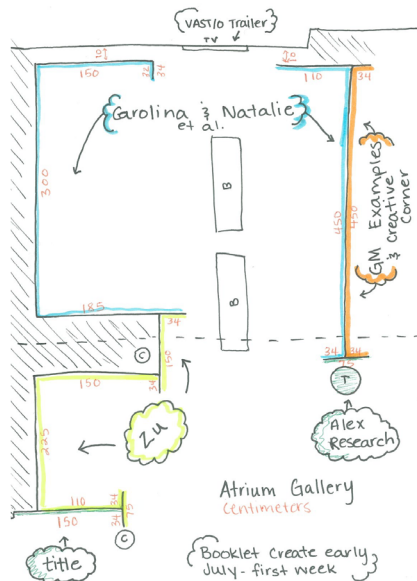
McDougall. By enabling visitants to visualise how mental health, related issues and other health matters may be so differently experienced and expressed, we are not only posing the opportunity for learning or for finding a creative way to express oneself, but also (and especially) highlighting the importance of these works, which serve as comforting reminders that we are not alone.

This exhibition is part of the PhD research projects of Alexandra P. Alberda and Carolina Martins. Alexandra's approach and research on curatorship for graphic medicine exhibitions will benefit from the feedback and input by participants to the visits, talks and/or workshops, and will in turn be relevant to the development of the next stage of VAST/O, where a focus on spatial and embodied experience, concerning Carolina's research.

## exhibition plan (first sketch)

Alexandra P. Alberda

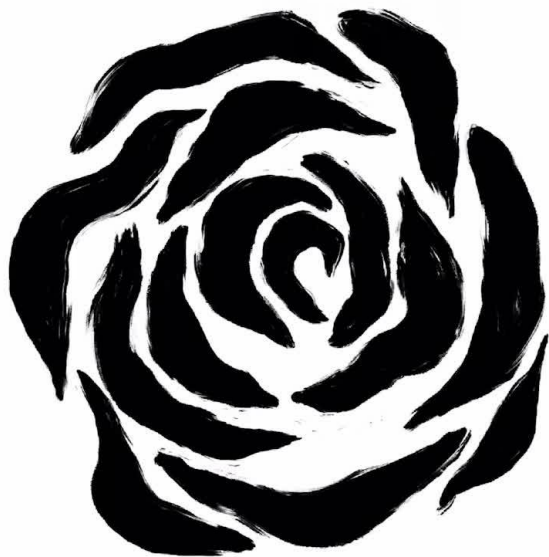
Alexandra P. Alberda is a PhD researcher in Graphic Medicine and Curatorial Practice at Bournemouth University, where she is researching public engagement and experiences with comics. Her research interests include the comics medium, inter- and transdisciplinarity, collaborative practices and ethics, narrative experiences, and illustrated and practice-based research. She is also an artist and researcher with the Civic Media Hub at Bournemouth University.





**like glass**  
João Carola





## **like glass**

drawings by João Carola and poem by Carolina Martins  
artist edition. 60 units. signed and numbered.

**João Carola** is an illustrator and comics writer. He graduated from the Arts and Design School of Caldas da Rainha and he studied illustration and comics at Ar.Co, where he also teaches. He is part of Implosão Plataforma and he frequently publishes and exhibits either solo or with other artists. He also collaborates with independent publications such as *Postas de Pescada* and *A Batalha*. You can find his works on Instagram: *@ofulanocarola*





VAST/O (paint on glass animation test)  
Natalie Woolf with Francisca Coutinho

VAST

**Vast Text Animation** (detail)  
**Inner Voice** (drawing in process)  
**Inner Voices: Cage** (from the series Tied Up)

**Natalie Woolf** graduated from Leeds Metropolitan University (Leeds Beckett University) in Fine Arts (Painting Practice) and completed her PhD in the Design Products at the Royal College of Art with the research “Plastic: A Material Metaphor”. She is a Professor of Drawing in the Animation and Design Courses at Lusófona University and the Curator of Drawing for the Design programme. As an artist she is part of *Atelier Concorde*, where she develops visual research drawing and experimental animated film.





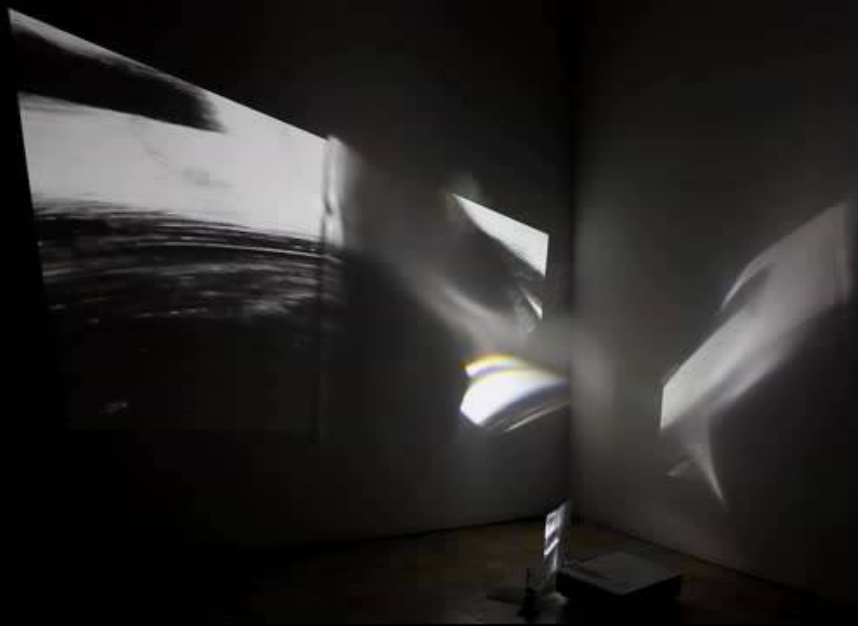






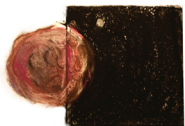
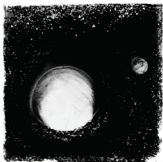
**breath at Atelier Concorde (Lisbon)**

Natalie Woolf with Francisca Coutinho



## two windows, same reality (series)

**Francisca Coutinho** is a visual artist and filmmaker, having completed the Animation Cinema course at Lusófona University. Her two short films, including the award-winning *Still Life* have been shown in film festivals in Portugal, New York and Stuttgart. She is currently working on collective audiovisual projects, in addition to developing her individual work in cinema, as well as other fields such as painting and music. You can find her at Behance: *franciscacecdd*



vast/o (tests for text)

**Carolina Martins** is a PhD researcher in Graphic Narrative Installations at the University of Coimbra, where she is currently researching how actual and virtual spaces influence both composition and narrative in the context of comics and animation based installations. Her research interests include the void, the error, the cryptic in the context of space-based anxieties. She is also an artist and a producer. You may find her work at *[www.carolinamartins.space](http://www.carolinamartins.space)* or reach her at *[topophobiaproject@gmail.com](mailto:topophobiaproject@gmail.com)*

the body stops



becomes a place



a whetstone cage insists  
on a false  
sense of  
security

notion of existence  
perception of existence

\* acknowledging the body \*

... the cage stands as before...

and I wonder if I can get in

impossibility to leave  
the corporeal centre for  
**orientation**

like landing on  
**Phobos**



paralyzed in the safe spot

exile <sup>abuse</sup>  
without shape  
state of weightlessness  
demarcated space  
fragile doubt

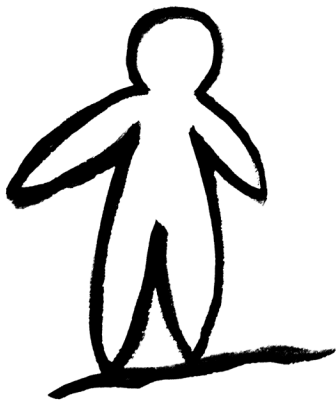
to be in space  
is not always  
to have a space  
to feel in place

the body, a  
knot in space

why  
doesn't  
the body  
recognise  
a place  
it knows  
?

on your feet  
face it  
look back  
rise up  
every possible option is a spatial one

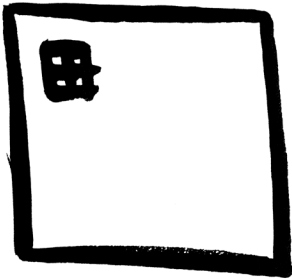
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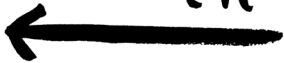
on your  
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look  
back

face it

rise up



every possible option is a spatial  
one

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**l'âme glitchée**  
Carolina Martins

L'ÂME GLITCHÉE

## wild child

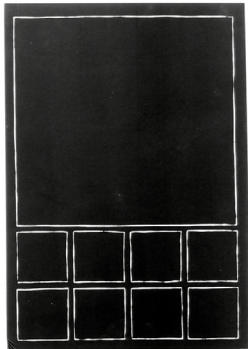
**Zu Dominiak** studied illustration at Edinburgh College of Art and graduated in 2011. In 2017 they took Masters of Design course in Comics and Graphic Novels at University of Dundee, which they completed in 2018. They are currently a PhD student at University of Dundee, researching ways of exhibiting comics in museum, galleries and public spaces. Zu has worked as a freelance illustrator, designer and cartoonist since 2007, mainly doing work for print and web, for various international clients.

Twitter: @zucomics

Instagram: comicszu

Etsy: zyzanna

Website: [zucomics.com](http://zucomics.com)



## Raised on Ritalin

### **Raised on Ritalin: A Personal Story of ADHD, Medication, and Modern Psychiatry**

is part memoir, part historical and scientific narrative. It is a book about being diagnosed with ADHD and prescribed Ritalin when I was 8, and how ADHD and medications impacted my life from then on. It is also about the history of ADHD, where the definition came from and how it developed along with the rest of modern psychiatry, treatments and medications, and potential causes. It's kind of like an episode of This American Life in comic format.

**Tyler Page** does comics and illustrations.

- Director of Print Technology Services at Minneapolis College of Art & Design
- Xeric Grant recipient
- Eisner Award nominee
- likes to ride bikes
- married to author/illustrator cori doerrfeld
- has two kids
- lives in MPLS
- contact me: tyler at stylishvittles dot com
- Represented by Britt Seiss at Martin Literary.

Titles: Raised on Ritalin  
Twitter: @tylerpage  
Instagram: @tylerpage12  
Facebook: @TylerPageArt



## Marshland

### Jac Batey

I produce limited edition hand made Artist's Books, Zines and single images, many of them satirical, under the brand name of Damp Flat Books. My artist's books are held in many permanent collections such as the V&A Museum, Tate Britain, The Getty Institute in Los Angeles and the Joan Flasch Collection, Chicago. I am featured on the V&A Website as an example (one of 6) representing U.K. Book Artists. Many of the themes I enjoy working with are, anxiety, satire and modern living. I make limited editions that vary between 10 and 50. I use my own photography, illustration and hand drawn type within my books along with composing the text, designing, printing and binding. I have attended conferences internationally to

present my artist's books and to talk about art-zines and illustration. Currently I am working on new artist's books and zines as well as exploring digital versions for ipads, e-readers whilst having fun exploring printmaking and collage for artist's books and single images. I am currently Course Leader for the MA Illustration course and a Senior Lecturer on the BA (HONS) illustration course at the University of Portsmouth, UK.

Twitter: @JackieBatey

Websites:

[futurefantasteek.blogspot.com](http://futurefantasteek.blogspot.com)

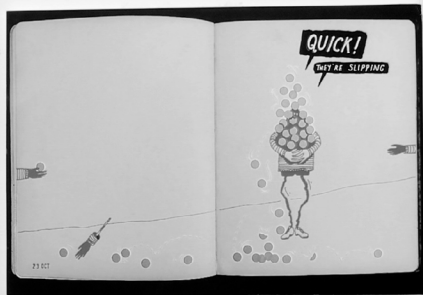
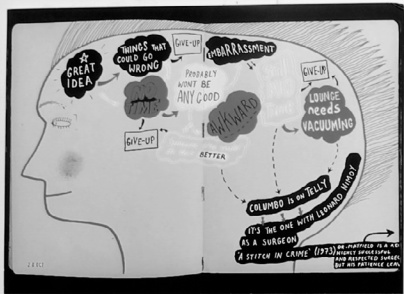
~AND~

[zineopolis.blogspot.com](http://zineopolis.blogspot.com)

~AND~

[dampflat.blogspot.com](http://dampflat.blogspot.com)





## Journey to Wellness

**Rebekah McDougall** is a passionate and dynamic counsellor with expertise in counselling across a broad range of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, grief, stress, relationship issues, family issues, self-esteem, alcohol and other drug use, sleep issues, self-harm, sexuality, risk, post natal depression... Illustrator and creator of @journey\_to\_wellness\_ the Instagram community page for well-being, mental health advocacy and self-care. Journey to Wellness is also a platform to order custom cartoon and illustrations - I work with lots of people in the mental health field to create original illustrations and content...

As well as just good old fashioned caricatures and book illustrations!

Instagram: journey\_to\_wellness\_  
Etsy: JourneyToWellness  
Linkedin: rebekah-mcdougall



@journey\_to\_wellness

WHAT IS 1 THING I CAN DO TODAY TO LOOK AFTER MY MENTAL HEALTH?

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



WE NEED THESE 'BASES' IN ORDER AND BALANCED

@journey\_to\_wellness

THESE MEANS "BRING THE BEST VERSIONS OF YOU THAT YOU CAN BE"

WITHOUT THESE

WE CAN'T WORK ON THESE

WE CAN'T WORK ON THESE UNTIL WE HAVE OUR FOUNDATIONALS IN PLACE



BALLOON BREATH



STEP 1. PLACE YOUR HANDS ON YOUR BELLY & MAKE FLUTE SOUNDS. YOU BELLY IS BLOWING UP LIKE A BALLOON

STEP 2. SLOWLY EXHALE ALL THE AIR FROM YOUR BELLY & INHALE AS YOU PULL YOUR BALLOON SOURCE

HOT CHOCOLATE BREATH



- 1 HOLD YOUR HANDS OUT IN FRONT OF YOU AS IF YOU WERE HOLDING A PLUG OF HOT CHOCOLATE.
  - 2 BREATHE IN SLOWLY, IMAGINING YOU ARE INHAALING THAT WARM, COZY SWEET, THROUGH YOUR NOSE.
  - 3 GENTLY EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH, LIKE YOU WERE TRYING TO GOO DOWN THE HOT CHOCOLATE BEFORE YOU TAKE A SIP.
- CHRYSTAL: WHILE IT ISN'T ALL THERE CAN YOU MAKE SURE YOU'RE FEELING WARM.

## **Panic Zine**

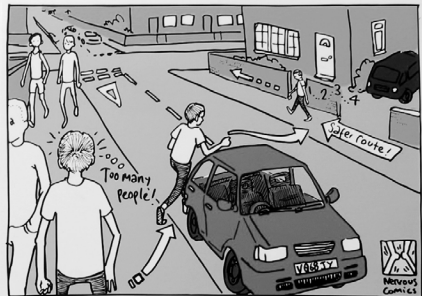
### **Nervous Comics**

I hope to raise awareness of Anxiety and related issues by producing some relevant material on the subject of Anxiety that both sufferers and anyone in a supportive position can relate to.

Twitter: @Nervous Comics

Facebook: @Nervous Comics

Website: [nervouscomics.wixsite.com](http://nervouscomics.wixsite.com)

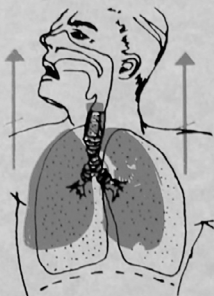


# Anxiety

## Candice Cummings

Small 'foldy' all about anxiety attacks, following the sequence of feeling fine through to major panic. Created as part of Candice's final submission for her Illustration BA(HONS) Degree at the University of Portsmouth, 2008.

Website: [zineopolis.blogspot.com/](http://zineopolis.blogspot.com/)



3. Nervousness, repetitive breathing



4. Anxiety(noun)  
a state of uneasiness  
or tension  
caused by apprehension  
of a possible misfortune

Anxiety

Candice Cummings, Zoroopolis

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July 2019

## know more

[www.carolinamartins.space/vasto](http://www.carolinamartins.space/vasto)



## our thanks to

all the artists who submitted their works to our the open call

